

THE
HOLOCAUST

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA
AND DOCUMENT COLLECTION

PAUL R. BARTROP AND MICHAEL DICKERMAN, EDITORS

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THE HOLOCAUST

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An Encyclopedia and Document Collection

VOLUME 1: A-K

Paul R. Bartrop and
Michael Dickerman,
Editors



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To Our Grandchildren
The next generation to carry a sacred tradition,
and the memory that accompanies it

Paul R. Bartrop
Jacob, Madeline, Mila, Asher, Max, Xavier

Michael Dickerman
Ethan, Holden

Grandchildren are the crown of the aged (Proverbs 17:6)

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Preface

Alongside World War I, World War II, and the convulsions of the Cold War, the Holocaust, it could be said, has defined the character of the past one hundred years. It is one of the most written-about and discussed topics in all of modern history.

In view of this, a question arises: Why have we produced yet another encyclopedia of the Holocaust when so many already exist, in addition to vast numbers of other studies, reflections, and memoirs from survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses? While there are by now dozens of encyclopedias on the Holocaust, hundreds of reference works, and many thousands of monographs, new material on this mammoth event is surfacing every day. It is our contention that, despite this immense output, there is still room for one more work that can provide a window to understanding; indeed, given the complexity of the Holocaust and the enormous amount of history that took place then, anything that can help to generate such understanding is, in our view, to be welcomed.

The current work, consisting of two volumes of reference entries, one volume of personal accounts, and one volume of primary source documents, provides what we consider to be an appealing mix for educators and students looking for fresh content on the Holocaust. We have developed a very wide range of reference entries (which in many cases go well beyond the “standard” topics covered in encyclopedias of this kind), while a majority of the personal testimonies have rarely been seen before. The comprehensive documents volume, furthermore, provides a wealth of original sources rarely seen outside of archival collections.

For all that, given the magnitude of the Holocaust, it would have been an impossible task for us to have included here every possible leader, idea, movement, event, upstander, rescuer, witness, or perpetrator—though we have attempted to provide as complete a collection, of sufficient breadth, to satisfy the needs of most users as a first step to further research. In this endeavor, we hope we have been successful.

A few general notes are in order here by way of explanation and clarification. Certain terms have been rendered in such a way as to conform to the most appropriate contemporary usage. “Gypsy,” for instance, has been replaced throughout by the less disparaging term “Roma,” and, in line with an increasing number of scholars, “anti-Semitism” has given way to the unhyphenated “antisemitism.” A great deal of effort has gone into the task of standardizing spellings, though this has often proven difficult where issues of transliteration have been present. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the reference entries have been written by a wide variety of authors, and that, as a result, styles of expression will differ. Where possible, we have attempted to rectify major deviations in style through our editors’ prerogative.

A list of further readings accompanies every reference entry. For the most part, we have elected to utilize the first edition of a work, on the understanding that users can employ this as their “base camp” for any subsequent editions they might encounter. We have also adopted this approach in the bibliography. In addition, given the anticipated readership that will comprise the majority of those using the encyclopedia, we have usually chosen to restrict

our lists to English-language literature. Works in other languages can be found, more often than not, by reference to the specialist bibliographies in many of the works we have listed.

In the multitude of tasks accompanying the editorial process, we have accumulated a number of debts, which we would like to recognize. Two outstanding graduate students in history at Florida Gulf Coast University, Danielle Jean Drew and Elizabeth Snyder, gave of themselves unstintingly in much of the “heavy lifting” such as photocopying, hunting down obscure references, and the like. Danielle, in particular, undertook these tasks while also engaging in her own thesis research, and, at the same time, writing several of the reference entries in the encyclopedia itself.

Compiling volume 3, the testimonies volume, presented us with a problem in that one of the largest subgenres in Holocaust literature, broadly defined, comprises survivor accounts. The challenge we set ourselves was to locate testimonies that were largely new to the widest readership. In this respect, we were indeed fortunate to secure the very willing cooperation of three remarkable initiatives across three countries: the “Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program” (through the Azrieli Foundation, Toronto, Canada); the “Writing as Witness” project (through the Sara & Sam Schaffer Holocaust Resource Center at Stockton University, Galloway, New Jersey); and the “Write Your Story” project (Lamm Library, formerly the Makor Jewish Community Library, Melbourne, Australia). Quite clearly, the volume would not have appeared without the assistance of these three superb establishments, and we would like to thank, most sincerely, Elin Beaumont at Azrieli, Maryann McLoughlin at Stockton, and Adele Hulse and Leonie Fleiszig at Lamm, for all their help as our project unfolded.

Thanks are also due to the library staff at Temple University, Philadelphia, for providing a text that was critical to locating documents on specific topics among the hundreds of thousands of documents constituting evidence accumulated and, in many cases, submitted to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg as part of the post–World War II trial of major war criminals.

As with previous projects, our editor at ABC-CLIO, Padraic (Pat) Carlin, has been an exceptional guide and leader through the production process, from his initial contact with us right through to the work you see before you. It is a pleasure to work with such a caring professional.

Eve Grimm, who has written several of the reference entries, provided stalwart service on volume 3. Not only did she manually input everything into a readable format; she actually did it twice, after there was a major hitch involving our original selections. Were it not for her yeoman and uncomplaining service, there would not be a volume 3 in this encyclopedia at all.

A very large and lengthy project such as this requires support of a different kind beyond that offered at a professional level. We are delighted, therefore, to express our appreciation to our life partners at home, who have lived through the many distracting moments the project has imposed upon their otherwise happy domestic lives.

Michael Dickerman would like to thank Ruth for all she has had to put up with these many months, perhaps not realizing back in 2014 that this project would keep her husband away from her for such long periods. Paul Bartrop would like to thank Eve for her constant inspiration, knowing only too well that a project of this nature is as much a family affair as it is an academic undertaking. To both Ruth and Eve we direct our love and our heartfelt thanks.

The study of the Holocaust can be a lifelong task. Teaching about it is simultaneously an enormous challenge and an enormous responsibility. We hope that the current work will be of benefit in addressing both of these, because, when all is said and done, as educators we see the need to make the Holocaust as approachable as possible for generations to come.

It is with this in mind that we have dedicated this work to our grandchildren, with the earnest desire that it might assist them in the awful undertaking of trying to understand what happened in those dark years of 1933 to 1945—and why it must always be remembered if their own future is to be free of such terrible events.

Historical Introduction

The Holocaust is the term in English most closely identified with the attempt by Germany's National Socialist regime, together with its European allies and collaborators, to exterminate the Jews of Europe during the period of World War II—particularly during its most destructive phase between 1941 and 1944. While an exact number of those murdered is impossible to determine, the best estimates settle at a figure approximating around 6 million Jews, one million of whom were children under the age of 12 and half a million of whom were aged between 12 and 18.

While the term “Holocaust” has more and more entered common parlance in order to describe the event, two other terms are also employed, particularly within the Jewish world. The Hebrew word *Churban*, or “catastrophe,” which historically has been employed to describe the destruction of the two temples in Jerusalem, is one of these; the other, utilized increasingly today, is the Hebrew term *Shoah* (“calamity,” or, sometimes, “destruction”).

The first step on the road to the Holocaust can be said to have taken place on the night of February 27, 1933, when the Reichstag building in Berlin, the home of the German parliament, was set on fire. The day after the fire, on the pretext that it had been set by communists and that a left-wing revolution was imminent, newly appointed chancellor Adolf Hitler persuaded President Paul von Hindenburg to sign a Decree for the Protection of the People and the State, suspending all the basic civil and individual liberties guaranteed under the constitution. It empowered the government to take such steps as were necessary to ensure that the current

threat to German society was removed. In a mass crack-down, hundreds were detained in the first few days, and tens of thousands in succeeding weeks.

Then, on March 20, 1933, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler announced the establishment of the first compound for political prisoners, about fifteen kilometers north-west of Munich, on the outskirts of the town of Dachau. Other camps soon followed, among them Oranienburg, Papenburg, Esterwegen, Kemna, Lichtenburg, and Börgermoor.

These camps were originally places of political imprisonment. In their most basic sense they removed political opposition from the midst of the community and intimidated the population into accepting the Nazi regime.

Jews had often previously been arrested for transgressing within the framework of the existing political classifications, but from 1935 onward, due largely to the effects of the so-called Nuremberg Laws on Citizenship and Race, they were frequently victimized for their Jewishness alone. According to these laws, the formal status of Jews in the Nazi state was defined and enacted. Jewish businesses were boycotted, Jewish doctors were excluded from public hospitals and only permitted to practice on other Jews, Jewish judicial figures were dismissed and disbarred, and Jewish students were expelled from universities. Jews were excluded increasingly from participation in all forms of German life. The Nuremberg Laws also withdrew from Jews the privilege of German citizenship. It became illegal for a Jew and a non-Jew to marry or engage in sexual relationships. Life was to be made so intolerable for Jews that they would seek to

emigrate; those who did not often found themselves arbitrarily arrested and sent to concentration camps. These arrests did not become widespread until 1938, and in most cases the victims were only held for a short time. The emphasis was to terrorize them into leaving the country.

The first large-scale arrests of Jews were made after November 9, 1938, as “reprisals” for the assassination of consular official Ernst vom Rath by Jewish student Herschel Grynszpan in Paris. The event precipitating these arrests has gone down in history as *Kristallnacht*, the “Night of Broken Glass.” The resultant pogrom was thus portrayed as a righteous and spontaneous outpouring of anger by ordinary German people against all Jews, even though for the most part it was Nazis in plainclothes who whipped up most of the action in the streets. The pogrom resulted in greater concentrated destruction than any previous anti-Jewish measure under the Nazis and spelled out to those Jews who had up to now thought the regime was a passing phenomenon that this was not the case.

Henceforth, Jews were targeted for the sole reason of their Jewishness. Prior to the *Kristallnacht*, Nazi persecution of Jews was not premised on acts of wanton destruction or murder; the November pogrom, however, had the effect of transforming earlier legislative measures against Jews into physical harassment on a broader and more indiscriminate scale. From now on, physical acts of an antisemitic nature became state policy. At the same time that Germany’s Jews began frantically seeking havens to which they could emigrate in order to save their lives, however, the free world began to close its doors to Jewish immigration. And, with Hitler’s foreign policy appetite growing and new areas becoming annexed to the Third Reich, the number of Jews coming under Nazi control increased to less manageable proportions.

The outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, saw the establishment of a system of ghettos in occupied Poland from October 1939 onward, in order to confine Poland’s Jewish population. Here, they were persecuted and terrorized, starved and deprived of all medical care. From the summer of 1942 onward the ghettos began to be liquidated, with the Jews sent to one of six death camps located throughout Poland.

Prior to this, mobile killing squads known as *Einsatzgruppen* (“Special Action Groups”), accompanying the German military during the Nazi assault on the Soviet Union beginning in June 1941, had been at work murdering all Jews found within their areas of domination and control. The initial means by which they operated was to round up their

captive Jewish populations—men, women, and children—take them outside of village and town areas, force the victims themselves to dig their own mass graves, and then shoot them to death. When the repetition of that activity proved psychologically troublesome, mobile gas vans using carbon monoxide poisoning were brought in, both to remove the intimacy of contact and to sanitize the process. While technologically at times quite inefficient, from an economic perspective it was cost-effective regarding the use of both men and material.

It is estimated that between 1941 and 1943 the *Einsatzgruppen* were responsible for the deaths of more than one million Jews. It is not known precisely when the decision to exterminate the Jews of Europe was made, though best estimates settle on sometime in the early fall of 1941. At a conference held at Wannsee, Berlin, on January 20, 1942, the process was systematized and coordinated among Nazi Germany’s relevant government departments, and in the months following a number of camps were established in Poland by the Nazis for the express purpose of killing large numbers of Jews. These six camps—Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chełmno, Majdanek, Sobibór, and Treblinka—were a departure from anything previously visualized, in both their design and character. With the exception only of Auschwitz, these camps were different from all others in that they did not perform any of the functions—political, industrial, agricultural, or penal—attributed to those farther west or north. These were the *Vernichtungslager*, the death (or extermination) camps.

The death camps were institutions designed to methodically and efficiently murder millions of people, specifically Jews. These mass murders took place in specially designed gas chambers, employing carbon monoxide from diesel engines (either in fixed installations or from mobile vans), or crystallized hydrogen cyanide, which on contact with air oxidized to become hydrocyanic (or prussic) acid gas. The commercial name of this gas was Zyklon-B.

As the Nazi armies on the Eastern Front began to retreat before the advancing Soviet forces (and later from American and British troops in the west), renewed efforts were made at annihilating Jews while there was still time. Then, in March 1944, a shock of cataclysmic proportions fell upon the Jews of Hungary, the last great center of Jewish population still untouched by the Holocaust. Four hundred thousand Jews were murdered in the space of four months, with the killing facilities working nonstop, day and night. This was the fastest killing operation of any of the Nazi campaigns against Jewish populations in occupied Europe.

When viewing this campaign and the means employed to attain it, one reservation must be made: Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibór, and Chełmno had by this time already been evacuated. Only Auschwitz remained to carry out the massive undertaking of spring 1944, as April had already seen the start of the evacuation of Majdanek. With the Soviet armies continuing their advance toward Germany throughout the latter half of 1944, the position of Auschwitz itself seemed uncertain, and the complete evacuation of the complex was ordered for January 17, 1945. The earliest date of free contact with Soviet forces was January 22, 1945; when the site was formally occupied on January 27, there were only 2,819 survivors left.

Any prisoners still alive in the eastern camps at the end of the war were evacuated by the Nazis so as not to fall into the hands of the advancing Russians. These evacuations have properly been called death marches, as vast numbers of prisoners died or were killed while en route. Evidence that the Nazis tried to keep their prisoners alive is scant; any prisoners who did not make it to their final destination were treated with the same contempt as they would have been had they remained in the camp. Evacuated in the winter and early spring of 1944–1945, they had to contend with bitter cold, fatigue, hunger, and the SS guards themselves, as well as their own debilitated condition, and for those who had

already reached the limit of their endurance the death marches could have only one result. For others, the experience represented yet another challenge that had to be overcome. Often, the Russians were so close while the prisoners were marching away that the sounds of battle could be clearly distinguished, further adding to their distress. When they arrived at their new destination their trials were hardly eased, as they faced massive overcrowding in the camps to which they had been evacuated.

The prisoners, dropped into places like Bergen-Belsen to await liberation through death or an Allied victory, had little time to wait in real terms, though each day dragged by unendingly. Painfully slowly, as German units both west and east surrendered, the camps were liberated. On April 12, 1945, Westerbork was set free. The day before, Buchenwald's inmates rose against their SS guards and took over the camp, handing it to the Americans on April 13. Belsen was liberated by the British army on April 15, and on April 23 the SS transferred Mauthausen to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The next day, Dachau was overrun by the U.S. Army. Five days later, on April 29, Ravensbrück was liberated. Theresienstadt was handed over to the Red Cross by the Nazis on May 2, and on May 8 American troops occupied Mauthausen—the last major camp to be liberated in the west.

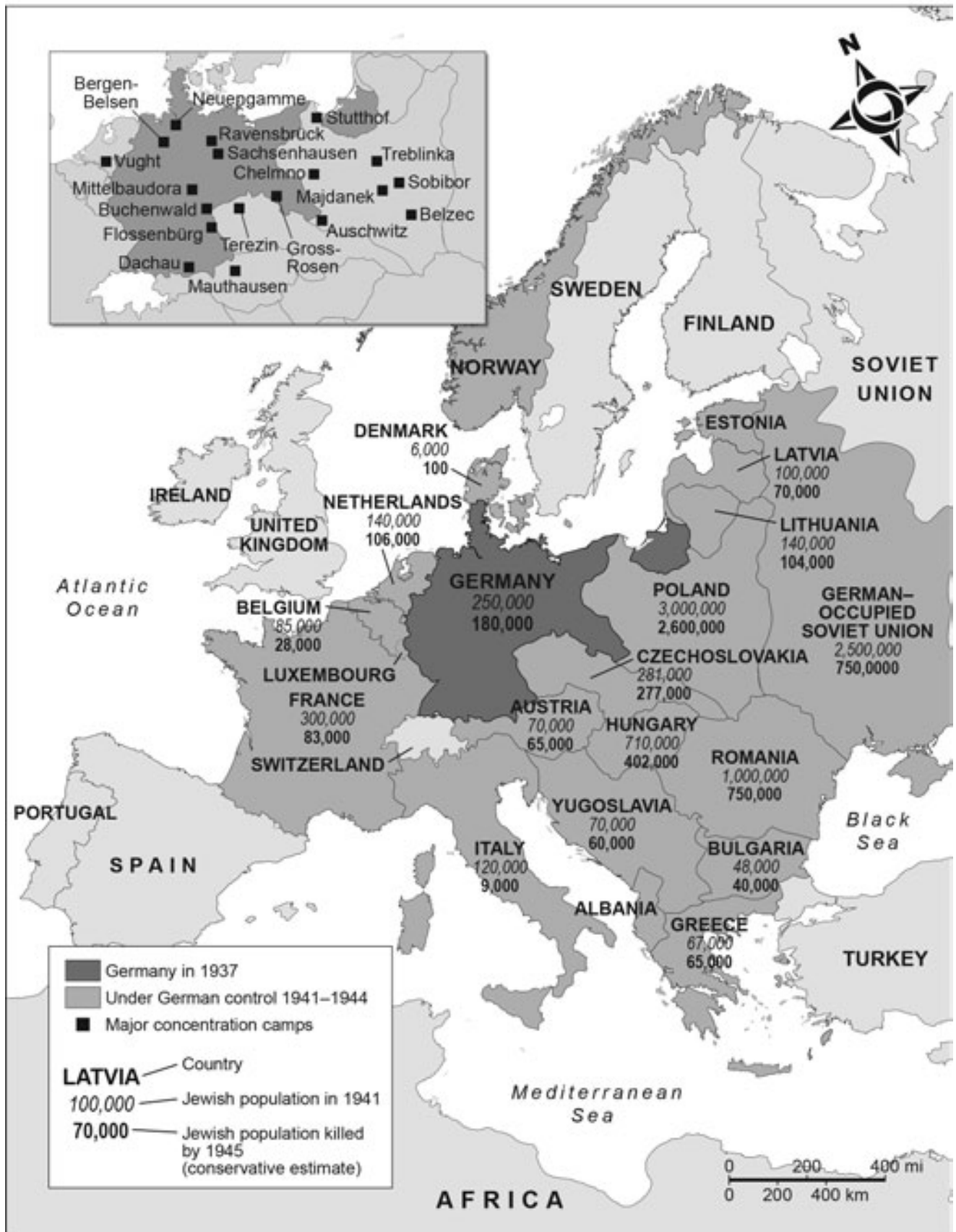
THE HOLOCAUST, 1939–1945



JEW IN EUROPE, 1937-1941



HOLOCAUST DEATHS, 1941–1945



Essays

What Caused the Holocaust?

The factors leading to the Holocaust usually cited by historians are multifaceted. For many years scholars of the Holocaust were roughly grouped as being either “intentionalists” or “functionalists.” The former grouping includes those who see the Holocaust as an event primarily centered in the person of Adolf Hitler, his antisemitism, and his commitment to bringing to realization a world “cleansed of Jews” (*Judenrein*). Functionalists, on the other hand, argue that the Holocaust was not the result of a planned, carefully organized, or orchestrated agenda of Adolf Hitler because of his overwhelming antisemitism, but was, instead, an evolving and sometimes even chaotic program of death and destruction that really began to assert itself only after the invasion of Soviet Russia in June 1941—prior to which it was done by low-level bureaucrats in a somewhat haphazard and inefficient manner. (A third strand of historians falls somewhere in the middle of the two camps, acknowledging and building their own interpretations on the strengths of each of the other groups’ perspectives.)

Beyond these interpretations, it can certainly be said that the roots of the Holocaust were actually very long. Nazi antisemitism built on a much longer-lasting hatred of the Jews as a people and/or Judaism as the religious/cultural/social traditions of the Jewish people, but with an important variation. The origins of anti-Jewish antipathy can be traced back to the Hebrew Bible, but with the birth and success of Christianity and the New Testament’s orientation of the Jews as being

primarily responsible for the murder of Jesus, antisemitism took on a religious or theological expression. By the Middle Ages, the violence of religious antisemitism saw Crusades, pogroms, and persecutions based on the false charge that Jews murdered innocent Christian children to drain their blood for the preparation of unleavened bread during Passover, as well as the added accusation that Jews poisoned the wells, resulting in the Black Death (bubonic plague), which ravaged Europe during the middle of the 14th century. While throughout much of European Christendom Jews were demonized for their religion, however, this in itself does not explain the Holocaust. Conversion to Christianity, in most cases, spared the convert from any further harassment.

Along with being forbidden from owning and farming land, the rise of mercantilism and capitalism in Europe left unconverted Jews, who could not join guilds, as economic (as well as religious) outsiders. The secularization of civil society accompanying the European Enlightenment, which saw the waning of the church’s power, brought new forms of social and political antisemitism to the fore. The ultimate expression of antisemitism, which saw Jews as a biological category and Jewish identity as innate, created the preconditions for the most virulent and violent expression of antisemitism: that of the racial antisemitism of the Nazis.

Much discussion regarding the roots of the Holocaust lay in the impact of the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 on the radicalization of German nationalism. The Treaty of Versailles was signed by a defeated Germany and the victorious

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Allies of France, Britain, and the United States on June 28, 1919. According to the terms of the treaty, Germany was to surrender Alsace-Lorraine, Eupen and Malmedy, Northern Schleswig, Holstein, West Prussia, Posen, Upper Silesia, the Saar, Danzig, and Memel; reduce its standing army to only 100,000 men; admit to full responsibility and guilt for World War I; and pay massive reparations, among many other clauses.

Adolf Hitler referred to Versailles as a “*Diktat*” and was motivated to utilize the document as one of the primary arguments for revenge against Jews, communists, socialists, and others who, he said, not only contributed to Germany’s defeat in 1918 but were also primarily responsible for the country’s continuing social, political, economic, and military devastation during the years before he became German chancellor in January 1933. In large part, Hitler looked at Versailles as an instrument of “world Jewry’s” attempt to reduce Germany to a vassal state. This, added to the general antisemitism that certainly preceded Hitler’s ascent to office, provided an important outlet for his racial conception of how the world operated.

In this context, Nazi ideology must be considered. The following essential features of Nazism, in particular, stand out: racial antisemitism; social Darwinism and eugenics, in which civilization could be understood as an ongoing struggle for the survival of the fittest and most adaptable, coupled with a process of selective breeding of the human species; a mythical understanding of the German people (the *Volk*) and its inherent right to integrate into those populations that were truly Germanic (i.e., “Aryan”); and the necessity of the *Volk* to occupy by right the land required for its expansion. The granite foundation upon which these ideas rested was racism, which viewed the world in terms of superior and inferior human groups. Most of the latter had only one function—to serve the former. The exception was the Jews, who had no place whatsoever in the Nazi new order.

The Jews’ presence was seen as a racial problem of the first magnitude. The only way to resolve it was to arrange for their total disappearance from Germany. Different solutions were tried: voluntary emigration, forced emigration, and a variety of plans for deportation—to “the East,” to Poland, to Siberia, to the island of Madagascar. All these plans had to be dropped, however, owing to the outbreak of war in 1939 (even though all continued, in one form or another, through 1940).

The Nazis had already gained experience with systematic mass murder in the form of the so-called Euthanasia (or “T-4”) Program. According to this, Germans with physical and psychological disabilities were murdered by the state in

the name of “selective breeding” for biological “purity.” Later, during World War II, this quest would be translated into outright extermination.

Finally, the suffering of the German people during the Depression, which led to massive hardship and poverty throughout much of society, permitted the transference of blame by the Nazis onto the Jews, as a minority who were disproportionately represented in the professions and thereby possessed greater wealth and access to privilege.

Taking the Holocaust to mean the mass extermination of the Jews by the Nazis and their allies, it can be said that the process really began only after Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. The invasion was accompanied by a *Führerbefehl* (“Führer-order”) from Hitler in which he reinforced his often proclaimed role of Savior of Europe against Bolshevism. Prior to Barbarossa, on June 6, 1941, Hitler issued his *Kommissarbefehl* (“Commissar Order”), in which he directed that any Soviet cadres and political leaders captured would be summarily executed. By extension, within the Nazi conception of communism, this included all Jews, as they were viewed as the chief disseminators of Bolshevik ideology.

Accordingly, special mobile killing squads, the *Einsatzgruppen* (“Special Action Groups”), were ordered to accompany the combat troops of the German army, following close behind in the weeks following Barbarossa. These squads were tasked with the total annihilation of all Jews in the areas to which they had been allocated responsibility. It is estimated that more than one million Jews were murdered between 1941 and 1943. While this was not in itself one of the causes of the Holocaust, it nonetheless precipitated the massive murderous actions that were to have their greatest expression in the death camps established by the Nazis in Poland during 1942.

Overall, it can be said that some of the more important causes of the Holocaust can be found in the following: the long, sordid history of Christian antisemitism; the advent of political and racial antisemitism; social Darwinism; extreme nationalism; totalitarianism; industrialism; and the nature of modern war. The simplest answer, of course, lay with Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, but this raises more questions than it answers. Hitler was the driving force behind the obsessive and fanatical Nazi persecution of the Jews and their mass slaughter that followed, but he could not achieve his ambitions alone. In order to learn what allowed Hitler and his party to implement their ideas, deeper causes must be considered.

Who Were the Perpetrators of the Holocaust?

The National Socialist German Workers' Party controlled Germany from 1933 to 1945, and during that time the Nazis persecuted and murdered political opponents, Jews, homosexuals, Roma, Slavs, and German citizens with mental and physical disabilities. Despite a recent trend to include all those killed by the Nazis as victims of the Holocaust—thus leading some to refer, erroneously, to “11 million Holocaust victims”—the clearest definition of the Nazi terror lay in the deliberate attempt to annihilate every Jew who fell into the Nazi net. No other group was targeted in this way.

The Holocaust was thus a time in which the most revolting mass atrocities were committed by humans against other humans. Who were the perpetrators of these crimes? For the mother forced to choose between two children on the ramp at Auschwitz, it was the Nazi doctor forcing the choice; for the adolescent girl torn from the embrace of her little sister because she was old enough to work while the younger girl was not, it was an SS officer; for the old man beaten to death by the side of the road by a Nazi soldier because he couldn't move fast enough when ordered to, it was that soldier; and for the newlyweds who were forced into the squalor of the ghetto where the bride watched her husband die of starvation and disease, only to die herself immediately afterward, the Holocaust was represented by the soldiers who brought them to this condition.

Moreover, one did not have to be a German in order to be a Nazi. This was made clear through the experiences Jews had with the Arrow Cross Party in Hungary, the Hlinka Guard in Slovakia, antisemitic Poles who denounced Jews to their German occupiers, Vichy French officials and police, Ukrainian collaborators, and so on. For many people who never saw a Nazi German, the Holocaust was visited upon them by a wide variety of messengers.

While an immediate response to the question of who the perpetrators of the Holocaust were might settle on the person of Adolf Hitler, it must always be borne in mind that Hitler could not have achieved the destruction of the European Jews unaided. Within Nazi Germany all sectors of society played their role in planning, facilitating, and executing what was euphemistically termed the “Final Solution.” They ranged from the major leaders of the Nazi Party—Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Hermann Göring, Josef Goebbels, Reinhard Heydrich, and many others—through bankers, senior officers of the German Army, police, civil servants, university academics, railway workers, chemists, doctors, journalists, engineers, and the judiciary. Not all were necessarily aware of the full extent of the role they were playing, but all

fit into the bigger picture, and few questioned what the logical outcome of their actions could be.

Perhaps the most important agent of death was the SS (*Schutzstaffel*), an arm of the Nazi Party formed in 1923 as a specialized unit of fifty men to act as Hitler's personal bodyguard. After Hitler's failed putsch of November 11, 1923, the SS was banned, though it was reconstituted under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler as a racially elitist unit in 1929. Suggestions have been made that he was inspired by his Roman Catholic upbringing and his admiration for the strength and obedience of the Jesuit order. In its creation, Himmler conceived of a paramilitary organization consisting of members of high moral caliber, honesty, and decency, who would be committed to the Nazi vision and agenda and thoroughly antisemitic in their personal orientation. Its infamous black uniform and *Totenkopf* for “Death's Head” insignias were introduced in 1932. By 1933 it was a force of more than 200,000 men. Under Himmler's guidance, the SS not only developed the Nazi concentration camp system but also took responsibility for staffing the camps, instituting the discipline policies within them, and planning how best to exploit the prisoners as slave labor.

From the summer of 1941 onward, the SS took control of the annihilation of Europe's Jews, first through the *Einsatzgruppen* and then, after 1942, through the extermination camps located in Poland. Thus, those primarily responsible for the murder of European Jewry in the various slave labor, concentration, and death camps came from the ranks of the SS. After the war, at Nuremberg, the SS was formally declared a criminal organization and compulsorily disbanded. Himmler committed suicide, but the overwhelming majority of SS members were never brought to trial.

Many Nazis of high rank (though not Hitler or Göring), as well as many members of the SS, were well educated. Josef Goebbels held a PhD from the University of Heidelberg; Heinrich Himmler studied agronomy at the Munich Technische Hochschule (now the University of Technology, Munich); Hans Frank, appointed governor-general of occupied Poland, was a lawyer, as were a majority of the fifteen attendees at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942. Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi Party's leading race ideologue, possessed a PhD in engineering from a university in prerevolutionary Russia. Three out of the four commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* operating in the Soviet Union had earned doctorates. The list goes on. These were all part of a genocidal project that formed a central platform of the Nazi state.

After the war it was recognized that many people involved in the process of murder had volunteered eagerly to be part

of the process. Others, however, always saw themselves as simply obeying orders, such as several members of Reserve Police Battalion 101, a unit of 500 middle-aged, lower- and lower-middle-class family men from Hamburg, who were drafted into the so-called “Order Police” and were active in murdering up to 38,000 men, women, and children in 1942 and 1943. A variety of hypotheses can be proffered regarding their behavior: wartime brutalization, racism, segmentation and routinization of their tasks, careerism, obedience to authority and orders, ideological indoctrination, conformity, quasi-military status, and a sense of elitism. No single explanation, however, provides an all-embracing explanation, and this can be extrapolated beyond this single unit.

Throughout Nazi-occupied Europe there were many ordinary people who enjoyed the power Nazi authority gave them, while others employed the situation for personal gain. Perpetrators and collaborators were to be found in every country, and the Nazis relied upon them in order to carry out their terrible acts against individuals and communities across Europe.

Who Were the Victims of the Holocaust?

The Nazi regime is responsible for the deaths of up to 11 million civilians from all parts of occupied Europe. About two out of every three Jews living in Europe before the war were killed in the Holocaust. By 1945 nearly 6 million Jewish women, men, and children (1 million younger than 12 years of age, and half a million between the ages of 12 and 18) had been murdered as a deliberate policy intended to completely destroy what the Nazis saw as the “Jewish race.” All of Europe’s Jews were targeted for destruction: the sick and the healthy, the aged and the young, the rich and the poor, the religiously observant as well as converts to Christianity.

While two-thirds of all Jews living in Europe before the war were killed in the Holocaust, the destruction was not spread evenly. Despite the Nazi ambition to wipe out all of Europe’s Jews, most of those who survived lived in areas not occupied by Germany: Allied states such as Britain and the eastern areas of the Soviet Union, or neutral states like Spain, Turkey, Portugal, Switzerland, and Sweden. Most of Denmark’s Jews were rescued en masse through being smuggled to Sweden, while the Jews of Bulgaria were saved owing to a refusal on the part of the Bulgarian government to allow their deportation. Tens of thousands of Jews also survived in German-occupied Europe. Some survived in the forests, fighting the Nazis as partisans (though this was extremely hazardous, and many were killed by non-Nazi and non-German

antisemites); others lived in hiding, or managed to hold on as prisoners in concentration camps until liberation.

Millions of others, including Roma, German and Austrian homosexuals, political dissidents, Russian prisoners, and Germans with physical or mental disabilities, also lost their lives, though the fundamental difference between their fate and that of the Jews is that the latter were targeted on account of their very birth, a fact embedded into the core of Nazi ideology.

Starting with the Nuremberg Racial Laws of 1935 and aided by theories of eugenics, social Darwinism, and post-Enlightenment thinking regarding the progress and scientific perfectibility of human beings, the Nazis turned to the physical sciences for solutions to their question of how to improve society. The Nazi conception saw that all human life constituted an ongoing confrontation for supremacy between competing races of people, a *Rassenkampf*, or “racial struggle,” and that this struggle was both typified by and expressed at its most extreme through an abiding conflict between the Aryan “race” and the Jewish “race”—a conflict forced by the Jews for the purpose of subverting the perfect world order in which the Aryans should, by virtue of their superiority, rightly predominate. The *Rassenkampf* was relentless and had to be fought until the death of one of the two parties would see either an ideal future for the world under the unchallenged rule of the Aryans or a hopeless future dominated by the forces of darkness unleashed by the “satanic Jew.” The racial struggle, of necessity, had to be genocidal in scope; neither compromise nor mercy would ever be possible if the required victory was to be achieved.

From early experiments in the mass killing of Hitler’s own people (the so-called “T-4” or euthanasia program), such efforts were incorporated into all Nazi actions by the Nazis (and their allies), thereby transforming beliefs into concrete actions. These actions took place through the Jews’ ghettoization, the onset of the Einsatzgruppen on the Eastern Front, and the introduction of death camps throughout Poland. From 1941 onward, the killing of Jews was conducted systematically in virtually all areas of Nazi-occupied territory, frequently with the active cooperation of local collaborators.

On January 20, 1942, a meeting of 15 high-ranking Nazis, representing the leading departments and agencies responsible for Jewish affairs in the Nazi empire, met at a villa in Wannsee, Berlin, to coordinate the actions required for the mass murder of the Jews. The minutes of the meeting made it clear that the Nazis intended to carry their “final solution

of the Jewish question” beyond the occupied areas of Europe and into Britain and all the neutral states, such as Ireland, Switzerland, Turkey, Sweden, Portugal, and Spain.

Once in train, the killing was at its most severe in Eastern Europe (and Hungary, in Central Europe, from March 1944 onward). About five million Jews were killed there, including three million in occupied Poland and more than one million in the Soviet Union. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Greece were also murdered, for the most part deported to the Nazi killing centers in Poland. The Jews of Romania were also slaughtered between 1941 and 1944, with at least 270,000 Romanian Jews killed at the hands of Romanians and German Nazis.

Given this, it must be at all times remembered that the Holocaust was a deliberate and explicit attempt by the Nazis to destroy completely and permanently a Jewish presence in Europe. While others—the disabled, Roma, Poles and other Slavs, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, dissenting clergy, communists, socialists, “asocials,” and political opponents of all sorts—were also persecuted and in many cases murdered in huge numbers, it was the campaign against the Jews that was the ideological “ground zero” for Nazi racial ideology. That others were murdered, often on a genocidal scale, should be remembered and acknowledged; but it was only the Jews who were murdered as part of a calculated policy of genocide.

Some scholars have argued that the Roma should also fall into this category. In late 1942 SS chief Heinrich Himmler ordered that all Roma would be deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were set aside in a special “Gypsy camp” (*Zigeunerlager*). Most sent there did not live to see the liberation, killed by gassing, through disease, debility, or hard labor. Overall, the number of Sinti, Roma, and Lalleri whose lives were lost during what Roma refer to as the *Porrajmos* (“The Devouring”)—that is, the whole period of the anti-Roma persecution by the Third Reich—is difficult to determine. So far as scholars can estimate, the number lies anywhere between a quarter and a half a million, representing a percentage higher than that of most victims of the Nazis.

The fundamental difference between the experience of the Jews and the Roma, however, is that the Jews formed for the Nazis a cosmic force that had to be destroyed for the good of all civilization, whereas the Roma were victimized and murdered on grounds of behaving in unsettled ways that did not fit ordered German social norms, of having perceived inferior or mixed heredity, or being of “innate criminality.”

What Was the Response of Bystanders to the Holocaust?

Even though the perpetrators of the Holocaust saw themselves as noble servants undertaking a necessary racial struggle for the future of all humankind, their victims obviously did not agree. Nor, for the most part, did the vast majority of bystanders, though all too often they were either frozen into immobility by the sheer horror of what they witnessed, or silently acquiesced to the Nazis’ actions. While in occupied Europe many agreed that the deeds being carried out were vicious, violent, inhumane, and morally wrong, it took exceptional courage and commitment to stand against them.

During the Holocaust, a bystander was one who was at least aware of the perpetration of the Nazis’ crimes but could do nothing to halt them. In that regard, bystanders were neither perpetrators, collaborators, nor victims. Individuals and organizations (for example, the churches) became bystanders for various reasons. Some, for example, were hostile toward the Jews though not sufficiently so as to want to carry out harmful actions against them, for whatever reason. As in any society, some were simply apathetic with regard to what was happening to “the other.” Others—often a majority—genuinely feared for their lives or those of their loved ones should there be repercussions for speaking out against the Nazi measures (and, even more so, for attempting to halt them). Further, the benefits that some people received through the dispossession and murder of the Jews added to the mix of why a person might stand by and not wish to get involved. There are, of course, many other reasons as to why bystanders did not speak out or act on behalf of the persecuted Jews of Europe. None of this, of course, is to excuse their behavior, though it does help to explain their motives, decisions, and lack of action.

Another category of bystander was those who knew what was happening, tried to inform the world of what they knew, but were helpless in their efforts. Take, for example, Gerhard Riegner, the Swiss representative of the World Jewish Congress and author of the now-famous Riegner Telegram of August 29, 1942. Acting upon information received from a German industrialist who knew firsthand of Nazi plans for the extermination of the Jews, Riegner sent a cable to a number of Allied governments alerting Western leaders of Nazi plans—which, by that stage, were already well underway. The communication was sent to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in the United States and Samuel Silverman, MP in Britain. Wise forwarded the cable to the U.S. State Department, after which months of delay ensured that no action was taken to save the

lives of millions of Jews at that time being murdered in what was the most intensive period of sustained Nazi killing. Riegner, from Switzerland, had to watch helplessly while this was being played out, in what was for him a time of immense and depressing frustration.

While the Holocaust did not introduce the phenomenon of the bystander, it nonetheless illustrated the consequences of indifference and passivity toward the persecution of others. There could be little doubt that the vast majority of people in Germany and occupied Europe were aware, to at least some extent, of how the Nazi regime was treating the Jews. The largest of the groups involved in the Holocaust were the bystanders.

One of the many factors militating against action was bystander ignorance. Nazi actions, though coordinated throughout the Reich, were not conveyed to the peoples over whom the Nazis ruled, and besides, the Nazis had effectively taken over all news outlets in Germany by the mid-1930s. Within Germany, people could only act on the information they had available to them—and no one, outside of a very few at the highest levels of the government, had any idea of the “big picture.” Once war broke out in 1939, control over information became even tighter and spread throughout all of occupied Europe. The Nazi regime used tactics of fear and terror to suppress any possibility of resistance or rescue, and for the most part (with a few important exceptions) any efforts to do so were only localized and not national in scale. All too often, moreover, there were no means to resist, and some bystanders were literally paralyzed with fear or helplessness.

A major concern in studies of bystander behavior relates to the question of why bystanders remain passive, of why they do not help when a fellow human being is facing a dangerous situation. By way of response, some have considered the question of apathy as being an important indicator of behavior: genocide thereby became possible through an unquestioning obedience to evil leaders. Yet bystanders were often more than just cooperative citizens of Nazi Germany, Austria, or the German-speaking areas of the Reich; they all too often were also to be found in Nazi-occupied countries, encouraged not to get involved by collaborationist governments and their church leaders.

Nevertheless, the pressures of being and remaining a bystander were too much for some people. The pressures of wartime—and, frequently, the intimacy of occupation—sometimes led those who had stood back to eventually become resisters or rescuers. At other times, through their actions in standing by, many became victims themselves, as

in the case of those caught in reprisal roundups by Nazis. By trying to live their lives beyond the fray, adopting a life of “business as usual,” and not appearing to be conspicuous, some bystanders in fact made targets of themselves through their very anonymity—another tragic dimension of inaction in the face of Nazi terror.

Individuals, groups, and entire nations were forced to make choices as to whether or not to resist the Nazis and rescue Jews and other victims, and knowing about their persecution but deciding to remain silent often became a daily torment. The issues raised by such situations provoked profound moral and civic questions, though often people were under too much stress to consider them at the time: Under what circumstances could injustice and Nazi violence be confronted? Further, knowing of this, was it possible to do anything so long as the injustice was sustained? As with all such moral questions, the answers were not—and are not—easy of resolution and had to be considered on a case-by-case and individual-by-individual basis.

How Did the International Community React to the Holocaust?

The role of the international community (including international organizations) is highly complex and detailed, and cannot be summarized easily. Before 1939 the major international responses to the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany and Austria ranged between avowed horror on one hand and indifference on the other. Rarely was any serious action taken against the Nazi regime, though in the early days several Nazis were concerned that internal antisemitic measures might have a negative impact on Germany’s economy should other countries respond to defend the Jews’ human rights. Such action, however, never materialized.

The major response to Nazi measures against the Jews during the 1930s took the form of restrictive refugee immigration policies. Just as the Nazis were keen for Jews to leave Germany, most countries of the world sought to deny them entry. The Evian Conference, called by U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt in March 1938 and convening in July that year, saw delegates from 32 countries meet to consider the resettlement of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. By the end of the nine-day meeting, no resolution for the alleviation of Jewish distress had been reached, affirming for Hitler and the Nazis the unwillingness of the Western democracies to extend themselves on behalf of the Jews.

Once the war broke out in September 1939, however, the Allies were keen to find ways to paint their enemy in the worst possible light and used the Jewish question as a means

to do this. Still, they did not extend their own efforts to helping rescue Jews. The preference was always to assert that the best way to help the persecuted Jews of Europe was to win the war, and no other distraction could be allowed to stand in the way of achieving that objective.

On December 17, 1942, by which time Nazi Germany had deported more than two million Jews to death camps (and up to a million more had been murdered by Einsatzgruppen and police battalions), a joint statement was made simultaneously in London, Washington, and Moscow condemning the Nazi mass murder of the Jews. The statement identified specifically that the crimes being described were targeting Jews—not Allied nationals or citizens, but, explicitly, Jews. Second, the Allies promised to punish those perpetrating the crimes identified. And third, they had no hesitation in employing the word “extermination” to describe what they had by that stage categorized.

Such condemnation, the most damning indictment issued against Nazi mass murder to date, was in fact to be the only multilateral denunciation of German actions toward the Jews throughout the duration of the Holocaust. Before this time and subsequently, no other inter-Allied declaration mentioned the Nazi extermination of the Jews in this manner.

Jewish hopes were buoyed by the announcement, however, and at another conference, convened by Britain and the United States and held in Bermuda on April 19, 1943, some anticipated that definite action on behalf of the Jews would follow. The supposed purpose of the conference was to discuss the Jewish plight, but, held at this remote site in order to control the flow of information by the news media, no official representatives of Jewish organizations were permitted to attend, and the agenda was severely curtailed. The particularity of specifically Jewish sufferings was masked by use of the term “political refugees.” The conference placed more attention on prisoners of war than on refugees; the possibility of Palestine as a site for refugees, then under British control, was not discussed; there was no debate entered into regarding any direct negotiations between the Allies and Germany; and even discussions of sending food parcels to those already incarcerated in the concentration camps was curtailed. At its conclusion, on May 1, 1943, the Bermuda Conference was viewed as more of a public relations exercise than a serious attempt to address the issue.

On another level, alternative approaches to assisting Europe’s Jews saw requests to bomb the rail lines leading to Auschwitz (and even the camp itself), and the refusal of the United States to enter into negotiations with the “Architect of the Final Solution,” SS Obersturmbannführer Adolf

Eichmann, to “sell” the Jews of Hungary late in the war in what became known later as the “Blood for Goods” scheme. Only in 1944, under pressure both inside and outside his government, did President Roosevelt call into being the War Refugee Board, which, ultimately, was responsible for the saving of 200,000 lives.

While the record of Allied governments in saving Jews was, on the whole, poor, those of international bodies such as the Roman Catholic Church and the International Committee of the Red Cross were hardly better—though both organizations have worked hard since 1945 to rehabilitate their reputations. At the Vatican, Pope Pius XII, who was intensely opposed to communism, theologically conservative, and a Germanophile, repeatedly refused to offer any public condemnation of the Nazi assault against the Jews. Some have argued that his public silence and failure to speak out, given his position as the acknowledged moral voice of the Western world’s conscience, possibly increased the tragedy. His supporters, on the other hand, hold that the actions of the Vatican to give comfort and succor to Jews, much of it in secret, were all done with the pope’s knowledge and support.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which also had a huge role to play internationally as the world’s premier humanitarian organization, did not issue a public appeal on behalf of the Jews, claiming that its policies of neutrality, impartiality, and confidentiality had to be measured against whatever good it was capable of doing—and what the effect would be if it was denied access to prisons, detention centers, concentration camps, and the like during the war. The ICRC’s ability to see to its core tasks—monitoring of prisoner conditions, carrying messages between prisoners and their families, advocating more humane conditions, providing food for prisoners, delivering emergency aid to victims of armed conflicts, among others—was put under immense strain during the Holocaust, when the ICRC’s mandate did not extend to civilian prisoners. Many critics, however, have argued that the ICRC failed to live up to its core mandate of serving populations in danger. In an official statement made on January 27, 2005, the ICRC stated that Auschwitz represented the greatest failure in its history.

Overall, one of the key questions coming from the Holocaust has to be whether or not Allied actions—beyond winning the war—could have prevented the Holocaust or reduced the number of those murdered by the Nazis and those supporting them throughout occupied Europe. While there is no easy answer to this in view of the fact that things did not work out that way, there can be little doubt that the

silence and inaction of the world community, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, resulted in the avoidable loss of countless lives.

What Were the Consequences of the Holocaust?

The period of National Socialist rule in Europe was a time of immense upheaval and dislocation, accompanied by deliberate political violence that, to a large degree, characterized the entire regime. It was at first confined to Germany, then spread to Austria, and then Czechoslovakia; its brutality was, until 1938, directed largely against political opponents. The aim of the SS was the elimination of every trace of actual or potential opposition to Nazi rule, even from those “enemies” who posed a threat through their very existence, in a situation where any traditional concept of justice was put aside. The Nazis intended that all opposition would be crushed. The regime’s totalitarian style of control thus served the purpose not only of intimidating all those under Nazi control so that they accepted the authority of the government without question, it also enabled the wholesale removal of entire populations standing in its way.

Clearly, when considering the consequences of the Holocaust we must first consider the enormous loss of life generated by Nazi rule. Owing to the industrialized and impersonal nature of Nazi mass murder, historians have found it difficult to provide a single, definitive figure of Jewish losses, though most estimates have settled at around 5.7 million (78%) of the 7.3 million Jews who inhabited the countries and regions of what became German-occupied Europe. These losses included the Jews of Poland (up to 3 million lost from a prewar population of 3.3 million), Hungary (at least 550,000 from a prewar population of 825,000), Lithuania (at least 140,000 from a prewar population of 168,000), the Netherlands (at least 100,000 from a prewar population of 140,000), Romania (up to 275,000 from a prewar population of 609,000), and the Soviet Union (at least over 1 million from a prewar population of 3,020,000).

Owing to the fact that the Nazis transported the majority of their victims from one place to another in order to murder them, the names of some localities will forever be associated with mass annihilation and human destruction. The six death camps established by the Nazis in Poland—Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibór, Belzec, Chełmno and Majdanek—became the site of the most horrific, purposeful, and sustained killing in the twentieth century. At least three million people, it is estimated, were killed in these and other murderous locations. In the Soviet Union, more than one million Jews were murdered by the Einsatzgruppen,

while in the ghettos established throughout Eastern Europe perhaps up to 700,000 were killed through various means.

The loss of two-thirds of European Jewry—representing more than one-third of world Jewry in 1939—led to devastating results from which the global Jewish population has not yet recovered. In 1939 there were 17 million Jews in the world, and by 1945 only 11 million. The loss of so many lives deprived the world of generations unborn, talent that did not see realization, and contributions to civilization that were never made. Most of the survivors, particularly in Eastern European countries, found they did not have homes to which they could return. Not only had their countries been devastated by the war but in many cases they were not even welcomed back into their original communities.

As a result, the Holocaust impacted the European Jewish community long after the killing stopped, as it ended communal life that in some cases stretched back beyond a thousand years. The war left 250,000 displaced Jews languishing in camps awaiting a new home. While a new dispersal out of Europe took place, the Holocaust also served to hasten the return of Jewish populations to the Jews’ ancestral homeland in Palestine, which by 1948 had become the independent Jewish state of Israel. An important consequence of the Holocaust thus saw an end—in part—of the Jewish Diaspora. (The majority of the world’s Jews continue to live outside of Israel, but this is in most cases by preference rather than by any sort of official dictate forbidding them from doing so.) The distribution of the Jewish population now is completely different from what it was before World War II. Europe, where the Jewish presence was thoroughly devastated, gave way to Israel and the United States as the new major Jewish population centers.

Beyond the killing, the Holocaust had other consequences affecting the way in which people thought about the very nature of the world’s population. Prior to the Holocaust, the Nazi belief in eugenics—the science (or, rather, pseudoscience) advocating the use of practices aimed at improving the genetic composition of a population—was a given in racial conceptions of the world. *Rassenhygiene* (as it was termed in German) was understood to mean the improvement of the human species through selective breeding and the elimination of those hereditary factors that “weakened” the species. By the time Nazis assumed power in 1933, they were able to apply such ideas to so-called “racial” categories, specifically Jews and Roma. Nazi scientists and propagandists were thereafter able to “prove” the inferiority of non-Aryan peoples, and thus lay the groundwork for the latter’s ultimate extermination.

After the Holocaust, notions of eugenics and racial superiority were thoroughly discredited. Ideas of racial antisemitism were exposed as thoroughly fallacious, and the thought that a “superior” race could be bred artificially was brought to an absolute end (other than in the view of those who refused to see the political dimensions of where their thinking could lead, namely, to the Nazis’ agenda of annihilation).

Another important consequence of the Holocaust came as a result of the very destruction itself. After six years of total war—and its accompanying massive loss of life—the Holocaust awakened the conscience of humanity. In 1945 there seemed to be no difficulty in people identifying the horror for what it was. People knew instinctively what the carnage represented for the future of the world, and in Allied capital cities reports through both official channels and the media had already been conveying for some time the realities of the Nazi Holocaust as evidence of one of the worst expressions of inhumanity. From this, the cry of “Never Again!” was raised, resulting in two important initiatives: the quest for post-Holocaust justice, and a search for ways to ensure that it could never recur.

Already in 1944 the term “genocide” had been coined by Polish-Jewish legal scholar Raphael Lemkin; now, at the end of the war and in response to the revelations exposed with the liberation of the concentration camps, the Allies conducted the Nuremberg Trials between October 18, 1945, and October 1, 1946—prosecutions of 22 leaders of Nazi Germany by the International Military Tribunal. Nuremberg was more than simply a trial sitting in judgment on the

Holocaust, as nothing was seen in the first instance as being more criminal than the Nazis having foisted a war of aggression upon a world that had previously been clearly committed to avoiding it. In the popular awareness, however, the Nuremberg Trials were seen as a judgment on the Holocaust, owing to the shocking revelations and film footage that came to light in evidence. The Charter of the International Military Tribunal was unprecedented in international law and a vital step on the road to a universal antigenocide, anti-crimes against humanity, and anti-war crimes regime that would be binding upon all. This would see its crowning moment in 2002 with the institution of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

In this sense, an important consequence of the Holocaust was the emergence of a worldwide civil rights movement after 1945. While the Nuremberg Trials came to an end in 1946, enshrining the principle of individual responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity, two other crucial legacies were instituted by the United Nations two days apart across December 9–10, 1948: the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. With these, it seemed as though the world’s conscience had learned an important lesson from the ashes of the Holocaust, namely, that a repetition of the horrors of the Holocaust would not be tolerated again. Sadly, although an awakening such as this was long overdue, the message did not penetrate to all sectors of society, as the genocides of the second half of the 20th century were to testify.

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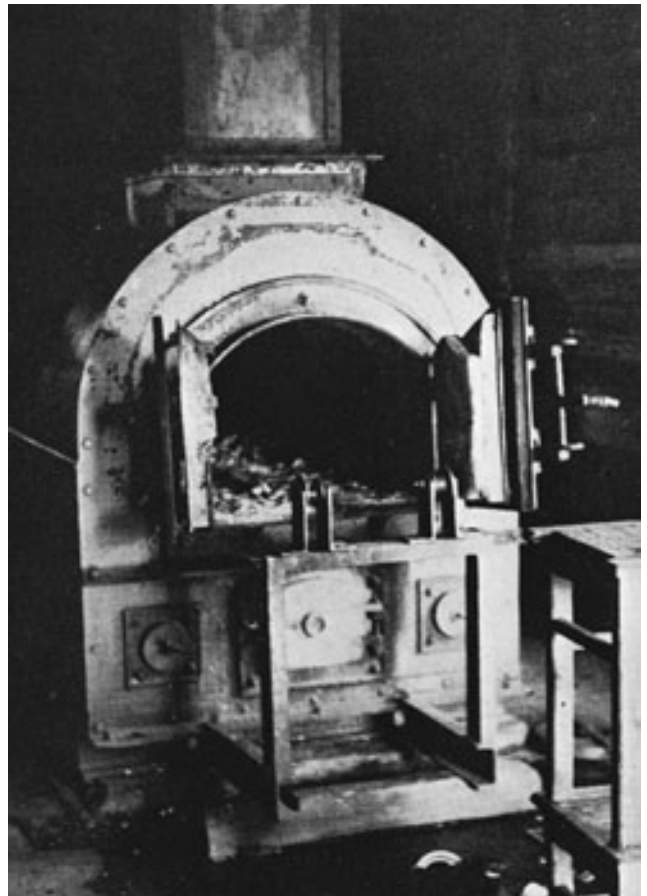
A Crime without a Name

On August 24, 1941, British prime minister Winston Churchill delivered a live broadcast from London in which he described the barbarity of the German occupation in Russia. His speech was made just over two months after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa and the introduction of brutally repressive measures against the civilian population.

Among his comments was the statement that the Nazis were instituting “frightful cruelties,” in which “whole districts are being exterminated.” He declared that “Scores of thousands . . . of executions in cold blood are being perpetrated by the German Police-troops,” and that nothing since “the Mongol invasions of Europe in the Sixteenth Century” had there been “methodical, merciless butchery” on or approaching such a scale. Further, he said, “this is but the beginning,” as famine and pestilence would be likely to follow. In short, he concluded, “We are in the presence of a crime without a name.”

What Churchill could not say, at the time, was that the world was witnessing genocide. The term itself was yet to be coined; this would only happen when it was introduced by Raphael Lemkin in 1944 in a book he published in the United States titled *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*. With this, Lemkin gave a name to the crime identified by Churchill: genocide.

PAUL R. BARTROP



An oven at Auschwitz, a symbol of what British prime minister Winston Churchill referred to as “a crime without a name.” Soon, the term “genocide” would be developed by Raphael Lemkin in order to provide the crime with a name. (Gabriel Hackett/Getty Images)

See also: Genocide; Lemkin, Raphael; UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

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Abetz, Otto

Otto Abetz was the German ambassador to Vichy France during World War II. He was born on March 26, 1903, in Schwetzingen, Germany, and worked as a teacher in Karlsruhe where he taught art and biology at a school for girls. He held an interest in French culture from an early age, and while in his twenties he founded the Sohlberg Circle, a youth group focused on French and German culture.

Abetz pledged his support for the Nazi Party in 1931 and in 1932 married his secretary, a Frenchwoman, Susanne de Bruyker; later, in 1934, he transformed his Sohlberg Circle into the Franco-German Committee. In 1935 Abetz joined the German Foreign Office as a French expert. He formally joined the Nazi Party in 1937 and attended the Munich Conference as a staff member in September 1938. While he spent the majority of his time in France, Abetz was forced to leave the country in June 1939 by the French fascist association known as the Cagoulaards (the secret Committee of Revolutionary Action) for apparently bribing two French newspaper editors to publish pro-German articles.

After the successful German invasion of France in May 1940, Abetz returned to France with the first German troops in June. He gained control of the German Embassy in Paris and assumed the role of German minister, where he shared his power with the military commander of the Wehrmacht. In August 1940 Abetz was named ambassador to the Vichy government under Philippe Pétain, a position he held for four years. His official residence and office was located in Paris, the capital of Nazi-occupied France, and not in Vichy. Abetz chose the Palais Rothschild in the Rue Saint-Honoré as his headquarters; today this building is home to the U.S. embassy. Under the terms of the Armistice, Pétain and his representatives were not authorized to come to Paris, so Abetz made occasional trips to Vichy when there was a need

to deal with the collaborationist government in person. His duties included the handling of political matters in both the occupied and unoccupied zones of France, providing counsel to the German military, and the administration of the Paris police. In 1942 he was appointed SS brigade commander.

Abetz presented a German cultural face to the French by establishing the German Institute in late 1940. The institute offered German-language courses and cultural events to more than 30,000 individuals. Prior to Abetz's position as ambassador to Vichy, Germany's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, instructed him to seize various pieces of art in Paris. His position provided Abetz with substantial influence over the direction of art, culture, and propaganda in occupied France, and from this point on he was largely involved with the collection of art looted by the Nazis. Shortly after his arrival in the French capital he began to organize a number of raids on museums and from private collectors. The collections thereby gathered, including valuable tapestries, were housed in a number of rented outbuildings organized by the embassy prior to being transported by train to Berlin. Abetz attempted to outsource 1,500 pieces of art from the castle of Chambord, but at the last minute he received opposition from the Wehrmacht leadership in Berlin, concerned that French resistance would see this as a predatory act and retaliate against the German occupiers. However, Abetz did not receive any resistance from the military leaders regarding the seizure of Jewish property. Many of the stolen Jewish-owned pieces were hung in Abetz's residence, as well as inside Ribbentrop's Foreign Office.

During his four years as ambassador, Abetz strongly attempted to convince the French to cooperate with Nazism. He also aimed to uphold his main responsibility by making sure the French collaborated with the Nazis in furthering their antisemitic goals. Abetz himself held antisemitic beliefs, which was one of the reasons he was recruited, personally, by Adolf Hitler. He proposed to deport stateless Jews to France's unoccupied zone, and then arranged for them to continue on to extermination camps in the east. He played a large role in the deportation of both foreign Jewish refugees and French-born Jews, especially after Germany occupied southern France in the fall of 1942. On July 2, 1942, Abetz advocated in a telegram for the deportation of 40,000 Jews from France to Auschwitz, claiming that all measures should be taken to remove them within both the occupied and unoccupied zones.

In November 1942 Germany occupied southern France and Abetz was ordered back to Germany for a year owing to

power struggles in the Foreign Ministry, where rivals were displeased with the degree of power Abetz had managed to accrue. In 1943 he returned to France and was reinstated as ambassador in Paris. Upon the advance of the Allies in France following the Normandy landings of June 6, 1944, and the retreat of German troops, Abetz fled with Philippe Pétain to Sigmaringen, Germany. Dismissed as German ambassador, he then retired to his villa in Baden-Baden along with his collection of stolen art, gold, and money. Abetz attempted to go into hiding, but on October 25, 1945, he was arrested in Todtmoos in a clinic and sent to Paris for trial by a military tribunal. In July 1949 Abetz was convicted by a French court to twenty years' imprisonment and forced labor for war crimes, including involvement in the deportation of Jews. However, he was released in April 1954, having served only five years of his sentence. He denied that he participated in the murder of French Jews, despite his awareness of the "Final Solution" while it was in progress.

Otto Abetz and his wife died on May 5, 1958, in a car accident in Langenfeld on the Cologne-Dortmund motorway. His car, moving at a very high speed, ran off the road and was engulfed in flames. Speculation has since been raised that his death was possibly due to revenge against Abetz by a Frenchman who gave Abetz the car, which had steering damage, shortly before his death.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Confiscation of Jewish Property; France; Pétain, Philippe; Vichy France

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Action Française

Action française (French Action) was an influential radical French right-wing antisemitic and antirepublican movement during the first 40 years of the 20th century. Charles Maurras, a writer and political theorist, founded the movement during the Dreyfus Affair in 1894 in order to oppose the liberal intellectuals who supported Alfred Dreyfus, the Jewish army captain fraudulently accused of treason. The Dreyfus Affair polarized French political opinion on the right and left, and prompted Maurras to become a monarchist, devoting his movement to an old-new form of radical nationalism, which



Charles Maurras, the organizer and leading thinker behind the French movement *Action Française*. His ideas were monarchist, anti-parliamentarist, and counter-revolutionary, and in several ways anticipated and, later, developed fascism. (Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)

focused on the supremacy of the state, the national interests of France, and the notion of a national security.

Those supporting the movement included Roman Catholics, small businessmen, and professional men, all of whom advocated the overthrow (in some circles, the violent overthrow) of the parliamentary Third Republic (1870–1940). The disruptive tactics of *Action Française* and its youth group, the Camelots du Roi (“Hucksters of the King”), brought prominence to the movement among the right-wing groups prior to World War I.

The name *Action française* was also given to a daily newspaper founded by Maurras and Léon Daudet, a journalist and novelist known for his satirical, polemical writing. The newspaper was published from March 21, 1908, to August 24, 1944, and expressed the movement’s ideologies. As a newspaper *Action française* had a relatively small readership, but it was still able to have an influence in France intellectually, and this spread to other European countries as well.

As a political movement, *Action Française* regarded France as a superior motherland and advocated for the destruction of the republic and the return to the monarchy.

14 Aktion

It held beliefs that Jews, foreigners, Protestants, and Freemasons were enemies who were attempting to destroy France. Members of Action Française were opposed to a democratic society and modernity, preferring instead traditional values and aiming to return to a preindustrial society. The goal was to remove all so-called enemies from France and to clamp down on the growth of democracy. Maurras claimed that democracy suppressed the liberties of individuals and ended in tyrannical rule.

Maurras was the movement's inspiration with regard to antisemitism, and he remained so for the next 50 years. By the time of World War II, he considered himself the basis for the Vichy government's "national revolution," fully supporting its anti-Jewish laws (*Statut des Juifs*) that were passed in October 1940 and again in 1941. These anti-Jewish laws were created at the initiative of the French government, and not as the result of pressure from the invading and occupying Nazis. The first Jewish law called for the drastic reduction of all aspects of Jewish involvement in French life, which is what Action Française had been calling for since 1894—nothing less than the exclusion of Jews, and Jewish influence, from society.

Action Française was highly admired by the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini. However, the ultraconservatives of Action Française had little support from the French people, and even the movement's newspaper was not widely circulated. Believing they could achieve a unified and exalted France, members of Action Française favored the recognition of France as a Catholic nation. By the early 1920s the movement consisted of 200,000 supporters, many of them schoolteachers, white-collar workers, and civil servants, who felt they were at a disadvantage due to their support for monarchism and the church. Membership was largely Catholic and strongly antisemitic. As 20–30% of the members were in the lower middle class, they blamed their status on the competition from big business and Jewish merchants. Maurras was able to appeal to these lower middle-class individuals due to his ideology concerning the well-being of rural France. In his view, rural poverty drove peasants into the city in search of jobs. This concern for the peasantry led to little support from those working in or owning factories in the city, but even small farmers were reluctant to give much to Maurras, as they saw little to no benefit in returning to a preindustrialized society.

Members of Action Française followed the direction of Maurras as an intellectual and as a critic, but the movement was also active in protest demonstrations and occasional street brawls. Individuals who participated in these brawls

were often veterans of World War I or, occasionally, priests. However, Maurras did not intend to gain power for his movement through street violence. Instead, he hoped that military leaders would eventually accept his ideas, overthrow those supporting the republic, and arrest the individuals he considered to be subversive. Maurras believed that if he could convince the leaders of the elite to support his cause, the majority of the French people would follow suit. He was, however, incorrect. The French people did not want to return to the monarchy, including the younger priests belonging to the church. As the leaders of the movement began to attack their opponents within the church, they were met by rapid denunciations from the Vatican, and in 1926 Pope Pius XI condemned the actions and publications of Action Française, leading to the group's isolation. The movement also found itself competing with the small organization called the Young Patriots, which was recruiting young men interested in fascism.

This public condemnation by the papacy caused a setback for Action Française. However, between the wars, the movement still influenced some sectors of French public opinion, including Catholics. The group held enough power in 1934 to direct a serious attack against the Third Republic and lead the way for the new state established by Philippe Pétain in 1940. Xavier Vallat, the coordinator of Jewish Affairs in France's Vichy government during 1941 and 1942 under Pétain, was strongly influenced by Action Française ideology, often attacking Jews in Parliament.

When the war ended, Maurras was sentenced to life in jail for collaboration. Action Française was discredited and ceased to exist after World War II owing to its antisemitic and collaborationist past.

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See also: Antisemitism; France; Pius XI; Vichy France

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Aktion

The German term *Aktion* was employed predominantly by the SS to describe the nonmilitary campaign of roundups and deportations of Jews and other so-called "undesirables"

in the eastern territories under German occupation. While there were thousands of *Aktionen* (plural) during the Holocaust, two stand out. The first, *Aktion Reinhard*, was named in honor of the head of the RSHA, Reinhard Heydrich, after his assassination in Prague on May 27, 1942. Its purpose was to murder all the situated Jews in the five districts of the *Generalgouvernement* (General Government) encompassing Krakow, Warsaw, Radom, Lublin, and Galicia; it was later expanded to include all Jews deported to occupied Poland. The second of the best-known *Aktionen* was *Aktion 1005*, which was developed in the summer of 1942 to obliterate all traces of the Nazis' "Final Solution" by the use of slave laborers, including Jews who were subsequently murdered, to both exhume and burn the bodies of the Nazis' victims.

While nearly 400 named anti-Jewish *Aktionen* took place between November 1939 and October 1944, any such measure, named or not, could be classed as an *Aktion*.

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See also: Aktion Reinhard; Operation Harvest Festival

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Aktion Reinhard

Aktion Reinhard was the code name given to the Nazi implementation of the deadliest phase of the Holocaust, embracing the so-called "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) from 1942 onward. The name was conferred on the operation as a memorial to the head of the Reich Security Main Office and the Gestapo, Reinhard Heydrich, who was assassinated by Czech partisans in June 1942.

Initially, the plan was to inaugurate measures that would lead to the eradication of the Jewish population of the area of occupied Poland known as the *Generalgouvernement*, but the scope of the plan broadened to include Jews transferred to Poland from throughout Nazi-occupied Europe. Aktion Reinhard was thus an undertaking embracing the resettlement and mass murder of millions of Jews, accompanied by the plunder and transmission of Jewish property back to the Reich.

The operation, which also became known as *Einsatz Reinhard*, eventually saw the establishment of three purpose-built

extermination camps in eastern Poland: Sobibór, Belzec, and Treblinka. These were established solely for the purpose of realizing the Nazis' murderous aims and were subsequently known as the Aktion Reinhard camps, a term that has gone down in the history of the Holocaust. By the time of their termination at various times during 1943, the three camps had resulted in the murder of nearly 2 million Jews: 250,000 at Sobibór, 600,000 at Belzec, and 900,000 at Treblinka (making that camp second only to Auschwitz as the greatest single killing site of Jews during the Holocaust).

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See also: Aktion; Belzec; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Final Solution; Heydrich, Reinhard; Medical Experimentation; Operation Harvest Festival; Poland; Sobibór; Trawniki Men; Treblinka; Wirth, Christian

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Albania

During the Holocaust, the small Balkan state of Albania was the only country in which the Jewish community actually grew. The circumstances by which this took place were both remarkable and unexpected.

Albania was a country with little in the way of an antisemitic history. A small Jewish presence had been in the country since as far back as 70 CE, but by 1930 the census listed just 24 Jews living in Albania. By 1937, however, owing to antisemitism in Nazi Germany, the Jewish community had risen to nearly 300. Indeed, the Albanian embassy in Berlin was one of the last to continue issuing visas to Jews, right up until the end of 1938.

On April 7, 1939, the Italian fascist regime of Benito Mussolini invaded Albania and installed a collaborationist regime that soon sought full annexation with Italy. As Italy had instituted anti-Jewish laws in 1938, the new situation in Albania led to a change of status for the country's Jews. The Italian administration implemented laws prohibiting further Jewish immigration to Albania, and all foreign Jews were ordered to be deported. In addition, Jews were expelled from the coasts and sent to live in the interior, and at the same time were excluded from the professions.

Owing to these measures, Jews from Germany and Austria were able to use Albania as a country through which they

could transit on their way to other havens, and many passed through Albania on their way to Palestine.

When war came in 1939, there was a measure of sympathy extended to the Jewish refugees, who were, on the whole, treated well by the Italian occupiers and the local population. Particularly among the Albanians, a code of conduct known as *Besa*, which means “keeping a promise,” helped the Jews in innumerable cases. In accordance with this code, people will keep their word and protect each other. This was an Albanian way of life, with *Besa* having been invoked on numerous occasions in the past: over time, Albanians had, for example, provided comfort to other neighboring peoples in need such as Italians, Greeks, Croats, and Hungarians. Now, as Jewish refugee families began to scatter throughout Albania, they were able to assimilate into society in accordance with the code. Jewish children continued to attend school, but under false names and religions, while adults were often helped to hide “in plain sight.” In the spring of 1941, Nazi Germany invaded Albania’s immediate neighbor, Yugoslavia. With this, the Jewish community in Albania grew, with more refugees seeking entry into the Italian-controlled country. This was enhanced by Italy’s annexation of the Serbian province of Kosovo, which had a majority ethnic Albanian population.

During the Italian occupation, many Jews were harassed at the official level, with the Italian authorities prevailed upon by their German allies to either hand them over or incarcerate them in local prisons and concentration camps. After the surrender of Italy in September 1943 and that country’s occupation by Germany, the situation intensified. German forces began to target all Jews living in Albania and Kosovo, demanding that Albanian authorities provide them with lists of Jews to be deported. The local Albanian population, in turn, sought to protect all Jews, both locals and refugees (of whom perhaps as many as 2,000 arrived in the country during the war). Under the code of *Besa*, many were hidden in remote mountain villages, while others were spirited off to Albanian ports, where they boarded boats and braved the crossing to Italy.

In 1944 Kosovo Albanians began to be recruited for an Albanian Waffen-SS division, and on May 1, 1944, the Waffen-SS Skanderbeg Division was formed. Members took a religious oath, swearing jihad against unbelievers on the Qur’an. Accordingly, on May 14, it raided Jewish homes in Pristina, where 281 local and foreign Jews were arrested and handed over to the Germans. On June 23, 249 were subsequently deported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where many were killed.

With the fortunes of war going against them, German forces were driven out of Albania in late 1944 due to the efforts of Yugoslav partisans with Allied assistance. During the war approximately 600 Jews from Albania, Kosovo, and western Macedonia had been killed, though up to 1,800 Jews were living, hidden, in Albania at the end of the war, making Albania the only Nazi-occupied territory to experience an increase in Jewish population during the Holocaust.

In 1995, after extensive research, Israel’s Yad Vashem decided to recognize Albanian citizens Vesel and Fatima Veseli, and their children Refik, Hamid, and Xhemal, as Righteous among the Nations. With this status, they became the first Albanians to be so distinguished, starting a process that has since led to almost 70 such recognitions—a remarkable number for such a small country with little tradition of religious plurality, where the majority of the people were Muslim, and in which the Jewish population began as a tiny number.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Upstander; Yugoslavia

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Algeria

In 1932 Algeria was a colony of French North Africa, along with Morocco and Tunisia. The largest population of the three colonies consisted of Arabs, along with settlers from France and other southern European countries, especially in Algeria. Jews made up the smallest percentage of the population in French North Africa at approximately 400,000. Around 1% of this Jewish population perished in the Holocaust.

The status of Algeria differed from that of the other two colonies in that it was considered part of metropolitan France; Tunisia and Morocco, on the other hand, were French protectorates. Algeria became a French colony during the 19th century when French troops invaded in 1830 and established power over the territory across the next 30 years, turning it into a region for colonial settlement.

Antisemitism was widespread in Algeria. In 1934 Muslim antisemitism reached its peak with a pogrom and the murder of 25 Jews in Constantine. Antisemitism was whipped up

by agents from Nazi Germany in Algeria who directed propaganda at Muslims in Arabic newspapers calling for pogroms against the Jews. As a result of this, and for other reasons as well, there was a significant rise in Muslim anti-Jewish sentiment and violence during the 1930s.

On the eve of World War II there were approximately 120,000 Jews in Algeria. The western Algerian department of Oran had significant numbers of Spanish- and Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jews. Algeria was also home to Jews with roots in the Italian trading center of Livorno. These Jews spoke Judeo-Arabic, although French had largely overtaken their language. Prior to being placed under Vichy rule, Algerian Jews were French citizens under legislation from 1870 known as the Crémieux Decree, which meant they could participate equally in French social and educational institutions. However, the majority of Jewish families in Algeria were considered poor and made their living as blue-collar workers or artisans. The Jews in Algeria had been largely assimilated into French society and culture.

When France fell to the Nazis in 1940, Vichy rule was consolidated in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The armistice with Germany signed by Marshal Philippe Pétain granted the Vichy regime power over the southern third of metropolitan France and the colonies; under these terms, the colonial administration, under the control of the French armed forces, remained largely intact. Most Europeans in North Africa supported the Vichy regime.

One of Pétain's first acts was to deprive Algerian Jews of their French citizenship by revoking the Crémieux Decree of 1870, which set up the Algerian Jews to suffer the same fate as the German Jews under the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. Admiral François Darlan and General Henri Giraud then imposed the antisemitic legislation in Algeria more severely than in France itself. Algerian Jews, now socially and economically alienated, were stripped of their French nationality and were subject to quotas and restrictions in most areas of daily discourse. These developments, of course, posed a huge threat to the well-being of the Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews who formed the majority of those ancient Jewish communities. Fascist Italian control of Libya also posed a danger to the Jews who lived in French North Africa.

On October 3, 1940, Vichy passed its first domestic anti-Jewish law (*Statut des Juifs*). This deprived Jews of the right to hold public office, confiscated property, and imposed strict quotas on the number of Jews who could work in the professions. While the anti-Jewish laws were copied from Nazi ordinances, they were more rigorous in their classification of race. This legislation was subsequently applied to

Algeria on October 7, 1940. Algerian Jews who had migrated to France and developed small communities within Paris, Marseille, and Lyon also lost their citizenship.

Under Vichy, the Jews of Algeria were stripped of all their civil rights, required to wear an identifying mark, and suffered limited access to education. Vichy authorities established committees for Aryanization to seize Jewish businesses and looked for conservators of confiscated Jewish property. Jews were restricted regarding where and on what they could work, rendering their ability to make a living even harder than it had been prior to the war. There were no death camps in Algeria; however, approximately 60 labor camps were set up in Morocco and Algeria, where the stateless Jews were forced to work in the extreme African heat. The Bedeau camp located near the town of Sidi Bel Abbès acted as a concentration camp for Algerian Jewish soldiers, where the men were assigned to a Jewish work group to perform extensive forced labor.

The anti-Jewish measures put in place by the Vichy regime aimed to gain the favor of the North African Muslim population, though Arab reactions to the persecution of the Jews varied. Most Arabs were indifferent to the fate of the Jews, while many participated in their persecution. However, there were also some instances when a few Arab officials and private individuals went out of their way to save Jews. The level of Arab support varied depending on the location and the circumstances.

Algerian Jews were very active through participation in the resistance. They believed that the Germans pressured the French authorities into instituting the anti-Jewish laws. Many joined the Algerian underground after it was formed by a group of young Jews. Their initiative and resistance activities aided in averting the total destruction of Jews in Algeria and helped neutralize Algiers while the Americans and British, through Operation Torch, invaded on November 8, 1942.

The Algerian Jewish community survived due to this early Allied liberation. The Americans negotiated a cease-fire and allowed François Darlan, the Vichy high commissioner of North Africa, to remain in power. Amazingly, under a compromise agreed to by the Americans and Darlan, the Jews of Algeria did not receive a reinstatement of their citizenship until General Charles de Gaulle took control of Algeria in May 1943, after Darlan's assassination.

Between 4,000 and 5,000 North African Jews were murdered during the Holocaust, including an additional 1,200 North African Jews held in France who were sent east to the Nazi death camps. Those who survived did so because the

Allies drove the Germans out of Africa before they had time to carry out their full intentions against the Jews.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Aryanization; France; Jewish Resistance; Pétain, Philippe; Vichy France

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Al-Husseini, Haj Amin

Mohammed Amin al-Husseini was a Palestinian Arab nationalist and Muslim leader in what was to become Mandated Palestine. He was born in Jerusalem in 1895, the son of Mufti Tahir al-Husseini and scion of a family of wealthy landowners claiming direct descent from the grandson of the Prophet. He received an education in an Islamic school, an Ottoman school (where he learned Turkish), and a Catholic school (where he learned French). Sent to Cairo for his higher education, he studied Islamic jurisprudence at Al-Azhar University and then at the Cairo Institute for Propagation and Guidance. He went on to the College of Literature at Cairo University and then the Ottoman School for Administrators in Istanbul, which trained future leaders of the Ottoman Empire. In 1913 he made a pilgrimage to Mecca, earning his honorific “Haj.”

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914 he joined the Ottoman Army as an artillery officer assigned to Izmir. After the war he moved to Damascus as a supporter of the Arab kingdom of Syria, but with the collapse of Hashemite rule in Damascus he moved back to Jerusalem.

On the death of the then mufti of Jerusalem on March 21, 1921, elections were held to choose a new grand mufti. Although al-Husseini only came fourth in the votes, the British governor, Sir Herbert Samuel, in an attempt to maintain the balance of power between the rival elite Husseini and Nashashibi clans, appointed al-Husseini as the new grand mufti.

Al-Husseini’s preaching of anti-Jewish hatred led to a speech on August 23, 1929, which generated riots that killed 133 Jews and wounded 339 more. As a demonstration of his authority, al-Husseini later played a role in pacifying rioters and reestablishing order.

On March 31, 1933, al-Husseini met with the German consul general in Jerusalem, who advised Berlin that the mufti was an excellent ally in Palestine. He stated that the mufti aimed to terminate Jewish settlement in Palestine and saw that a holy war of Islam in alliance with Nazi Germany would remove the Jewish problem everywhere.

In 1936 the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine to investigate the establishment of a two-state solution for the mandate. Arab anger against the proposal resulted in riots against Jews breaking out in Jaffa on April 19, 1936. Before and after these riots, which continued to 1939, al-Husseini was establishing Nazi connections and later indicated that without funding from Germany the riots could never have been engineered.

By 1937 al-Husseini was in charge of a youth group, the Holy Jihad, inspired by the Hitler Youth. British police were sent to arrest al-Husseini in July 1937 for his part in the Arab rebellion, but he managed to escape to the sanctuary in the Muslim area on top of the Wailing Wall.

Al-Husseini’s lobbying in response to the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt resulted in the British White Paper of May 17, 1939, approved by the House of Commons on May 23, 1939. It called for the establishment of a Jewish national home in an independent Palestinian state within 10 years, rejecting the creation of a Jewish state and the partitioning of Palestine. It also limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 for five years. Additional immigration was to be determined by the Arab majority. This created huge problems for Jews because of their increasing suffering in Europe under the Nazis since 1933 and the failure of the Evian Conference to find any resolution to the settlement of Jewish refugees.

In a letter of June 21, 1939, to Hitler, he wrote of Arab readiness to rise against the common enemy, Anglo-Jewry, and once war broke out, al-Husseini went to Iraq and set up his base of operations there on October 13, 1939. On April 3, 1941, he attempted a takeover of the Iraqi government with Nazi support. In the resultant pogrom 600 Bagdadi Jews were killed, 911 Jewish houses were destroyed, and 586 Jewish businesses ransacked. When Britain suppressed the takeover, al-Husseini blamed the failure of the Nazi takeover on the Jews.

On July 22, 1941, al-Husseini fled to Tehran. After the Allied occupation of Iran on October 8, 1941, and the new Persian government of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi severed diplomatic relations with the Axis powers, al-Husseini was taken under Italian protection and smuggled through Turkey to Italy in an operation organized by Italian military intelligence. He arrived in Rome on October 10, 1941.

He then began serious discussions with the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini. In discussions with Mussolini, he secured an agreement with the Italians that in return for Axis recognition of a fascist Arab state that would encompass Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan, he would agree to support the war against Britain. The Italian foreign ministry also urged Mussolini to grant al-Husseini 1 million lire.

Over the next few days, al-Husseini drafted a proposed statement of an Arab-Axis cooperative effort by which the Axis powers would recognize the right of the Arabs to deal with Jewish elements in Palestine and approve the elimination of the Jewish National Homeland in Palestine. Mussolini approved the declaration and sent it to the German embassy in Rome. Al-Husseini was invited to Berlin as a guest of the Nazi regime, which gave him a luxurious home on a fashionable street, a full staff of servants, a chauffeured Mercedes, and a monthly stipend of \$10,000. He remained headquartered in Berlin until May 1945. Then, on November 28, 1941, he met with Adolf Hitler, concluding afterward that Nazis and Arabs were engaged in the same struggle to exterminate the Jews.

From the mid-1930s al-Husseini had been friends with SS officer Adolf Eichmann. When he visited Eichmann's office at the end of 1941 or the beginning of 1942, he was briefed on the Nazis' final solution to the Jewish question in Europe. His involvement with the Holocaust saw him allegedly visit Auschwitz and Majdanek; he was on close terms with Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Hoess, and the commandants of Mauthausen, Theresienstadt, and Bergen-Belsen. He also organized antisemitic Arab radio propaganda, espionage in the Middle East, and the establishment of the Arab Legion and the Arab Brigade, Muslim military units that fought for the Nazis. He had at his disposal six freedom stations for his radio broadcasts (Berlin, Zeissen, Bari, Rome, Tokyo and Athens), from which he urged Muslims to kill Jews everywhere.

As early as January 1941 the mufti had traveled to Bosnia to convince Islamic leaders that a Muslim Waffen SS Division would bring honor and glory to Muslims (on the ground that they shared four principles: family, order, the leader, and faith). As many as 100,000 Muslim fighters were thereby recruited and fought for the Nazis. The mufti assured Bosnian Muslims that Islamic and National Socialist principles were compatible, with the largest Bosnian killing unit the celebrated 13th Handschar Division of 21,065 men.

In January 1942 Haj Amin discussed with German leaders the formation of a German-Arab military unit, and on May

3, 1942, sought from the Italian and German governments another declaration supporting, among other matters, the liquidation of the Jewish national home in Palestine. In consultation with the mufti, Eichmann had created an *Einsatzgruppen Egypt* ready to disembark for Palestine.

In July 1942 Haj Amin and the Iraqi Rashid Ali broadcast that it was the duty of Egyptian Muslims to kill the Jews before the Jews killed them, as the Jews were preparing to violate their women, kill their children, and destroy them completely. On December 11, 1942, the mufti urged Arab Muslims to "martyrdom" as allies with the Nazis, as "the spilled blood of martyrs is the water of life."

In late 1942 Heinrich Himmler gave his permission for 10,000 Jewish children to be transferred from Poland to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt, with the eventual aim of allowing them to go to Palestine in exchange for German civilian prisoners. The plan was abandoned, however, because of the protests from al-Husseini, and in all likelihood these children were murdered subsequently in Auschwitz.

In a speech delivered to the SS on January 11, 1944, SS leader Heinrich Himmler argued that the bond between Nazism and Islam was built on enduring common values. Inspired by his words, the Waffen-SS Handschar Division went into action in February 1944 and played a major role in rendering the Balkans *Judenrein* ("free of Jews") in the winter of 1943-1944, cutting a path of destruction across the Balkans that encompassed a large number of Catholic parishes, churches, and shrines and resulted in the deaths of thousands of Catholics as well as all Jews they could find. By the end of the war, al-Husseini's fanatical soldiers had killed more than 90% of the Jews in Bosnia.

In the spring of 1943 al-Husseini learned of negotiations between Germany's Axis partners with Britain, Switzerland, and the International Red Cross to transport 4,000 Jewish children to safety in Palestine. Al-Husseini sought to prevent the rescue operations with protests directed at the Germans and Italians, as well as at the governments of Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Demanding that the operations be scuttled, he suggested that the children be sent to Poland where they would be subject to "stricter control" (exterminated). They were duly sent to a concentration camp, meeting al-Husseini's demand that they be killed in Poland rather than transported to Palestine. In September 1943 intense negotiations to rescue another 500 Jewish children from the Arde concentration camp in Italy collapsed due to an objection from al-Husseini, who blocked their departure to Turkey because they would end up in Palestine.

In 1943 al-Husseini organized a chemical attack on Tel Aviv, but the five parachutists sent to complete the mission were captured near Jericho before they could complete their task. Their equipment, found by the British, consisted of submachine guns, dynamite, radio equipment, £5,000 cash, a duplicating machine, a German-Arabic dictionary, and enough toxin to kill 250,000 people by poisoning water for the towns.

The mufti also tried to convince the Nazis to bomb Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Concerned over the turning of the tide of war, the mufti wrote to Himmler on June 5, 1944, and July 27, 1944, asking him to do all he could to complete the extermination of the Jews.

After the war, Britain, France, and the United States refused to prosecute the mufti as a war criminal, although Yugoslavia had placed him on the list of war criminals for organizing SS Muslim divisions in the Balkans. He attempted to obtain asylum in Switzerland, but his request was refused. Taken into custody at Konstanz on May 5, 1945, by French occupying troops, he was transferred to the Paris region on May 19 and put under house arrest. French authorities hoped that his presence could lead to an improvement in France's status in the Arab world, and thus accorded him special detention conditions and other benefits. As a result, satisfied with his situation in France, Al-Husseini stayed for a full year.

He arrived in Egypt on June 20, 1946, where King Farouk provided him with sanctuary. Even with the fall of Farouk and the rise of Gamal Abdel-Nasser as head of Egypt in 1952, al-Husseini remained safe. His last public appearance came in 1962 when he delivered a speech to the World Islamic Congress. He used his final opportunity to speak to the world to call for the ethnic cleansing of the Jews. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, died in Beirut, Lebanon in 1974.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Eichmann, Adolf; Himmler, Heinrich; Hoess, Rudolf

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Alice, Princess Andrew of Greece

Alice, Princess Andrew of Greece and Denmark, born Princess Alice of Battenberg in 1885, was a great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Congenitally deaf, she used this disability to her advantage on a number of occasions when, for example, she did not want to accept unwelcome news. A deeply spiritual person, Alice visited Russia in 1908, during which time she talked with her aunt, Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, regarding a new religious order Elizabeth was planning to establish. This would have a profound impact on Alice's life in later years; she herself became increasingly religious, entering the Greek Orthodox Church in 1928.

Upon her marriage in 1903 to Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark, she moved to Athens. Fluctuations in Greek political life saw the royal family exiled and reinstated a number of times, until the situation stabilized in 1935.



Princess Alice of Battenberg, later Princess Andrew of Greece and Denmark, was a great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She married Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark in 1903. She remained in Athens during World War II, sheltering Jewish refugees. For this she was later recognized as one of the "Righteous among the Nations" by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. (Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis/Corbis via Getty Images)

In the meantime, Alice was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and spent a number of years undergoing treatment. This eventually led to her estrangement from her husband, who had received sanctuary in France after having been among those blamed for Greece's military defeat in Asia Minor in 1922.

Princess Alice returned to Athens in 1938 and dedicated her life to working with the poor, a cause that had been one of her core interests from a young age. She did not resume her life in the palace, preferring to live in a tiny apartment in downtown Athens. At this time she sent her daughters to live with their relatives in Germany and her son, Philip, to England, where he stayed with his uncles Lord Louis Mountbatten and George Mountbatten.

When war came to Greece in 1940–1941 the royal family left Athens, first going to Egypt and then Cape Town. Alice, however, decided to remain in Athens with her sister-in-law, Princess Nicholas of Greece. She devoted herself to helping the local population, as Greece suffered increasing cycles of starvation; she worked for the Red Cross, organized soup kitchens, and traveled to Sweden to help facilitate that country's aid program—the same program that saw the efforts of Sture Linnér bring succor to Greece's starving people. Princess Alice also organized shelters for orphaned children.

At first, the Nazi authorities anticipated that Princess Alice would be pro-German, given that her four daughters were married to German princes. One of her sons-in-law, Prince Christoph of Hesse, was an SS officer, and another, Berthold, Margrave of Baden, was a German army officer. She did not, however, evince any support for the Nazi occupiers, and she became an object of suspicion when it was learned that her son, Prince Philip, was serving as an officer in Britain's Royal Navy.

Although torn, Princess Alice continued working to undermine the German occupation of Greece, and her efforts extended to aiding Jews, who were hit hard by the Holocaust. During 1943 well over 50,000 Jews were deported from Salonika to Auschwitz, and these measures were accompanied by unanticipated brutality. In September 1943 the Germans occupied Athens, until then under Italian control, and the search for Jews began.

One member of the Greek Jewish community, Haimaki Cohen, a former member of Parliament who had died before the occupation, was known to the royal family prior to the war. Now his widow, Rachel, and her five children were in danger. When Alice heard of their plight, she immediately offered them shelter, and so, on October 15, 1943, Rachel Cohen and two of her children, Michel and Tilda, found refuge in Alice's apartment.

During the occupation, Princess Alice's behavior inevitably attracted the attention of the Nazi authorities. At one point she was even interviewed by the Gestapo, who demanded to know who was living in her apartment. She feigned ignorance and hid behind her deafness, pretending not to follow their line of questioning; with this, the Cohens were thus able to stay in Princess Alice's residence at the royal palace until Athens was liberated in October 1944.

By this time, her own living conditions had deteriorated. The famine and Nazi occupation had cut deep into Greek society, and Alice had little on which to live. Still, she did her best to ensure that her guests did not go without, despite her own straitened circumstances.

After the war Princess Alice remained in Greece, and in January 1949 she established a nursing order of Greek Orthodox nuns, the Christian Sisterhood of Martha and Mary. This was a tribute to her aunt, Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna of Russia, and their spiritual discussions way back in 1909.

Princess Alice left Greece in 1967. Her daughter-in-law, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, invited her to live permanently at Buckingham Palace, London, where she died on December 5, 1969. One of her last wishes was to be buried at the Convent of St. Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem, and on August 3, 1988, her remains were accordingly transferred to a crypt below the convent.

In 1993 Yad Vashem acknowledged the wartime actions of Princess Alice by recognizing her as one of the Righteous among the Nations. On October 31, 1994, her surviving children, Prince Philip and Princess Sophie of Greece and Denmark, traveled to Jerusalem and planted a tree in her honor at Yad Vashem. In accepting the award, Prince Philip said that his mother was a person "with deep religious faith" who would have considered the need to help the Cohen family as "a totally human action to fellow human beings in distress." This was endorsed by Jacques Cohen, one of Rachel's sons. When he had earlier tried to thank Princess Alice, her response was that she was only doing what she believed to be her duty as a human being.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Greece; Upstander

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Altman, Tova (Tosia)

Tova (Tosia) Altman was an underground leader in the Warsaw Ghetto. She was a member of the Hashomer Hatzair youth group working alongside Mordecai Anielewicz in the Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa (Jewish Fighting Organization, or ŻOB) during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943.

Born on August 24, 1918, to Anka (Manya) and Gustav (Gutkind) Altman in Lipno, Poland, she was raised in Włocławek, where her father was a watchmaker. At the age of 11, Tosia joined the local chapter of Hashomer Hatzair; at 16, she was chosen to represent the movement at its Fourth World Convention, and eventually she became a member of the organization's central leadership in Warsaw. On August 30, 1939, she was appointed to the *Bet* (i.e., Secondary) Leadership, a core group of young women who would serve as a substitute governance cohort in an emergency. In 1938 she joined the *hachshara* (training) kibbutz at Czestochowa but was soon placed in charge of youth education for the central leadership of Hashomer Hatzair in Warsaw, postponing her *aliyah*, or migration to Palestine.

With the outbreak of war in September 1939 Tosia and several others left for eastern Poland, and she made her way to Rovno. With the entry of the Soviet army into Poland in the middle of the month, the leadership of Hashomer Hatzair decided to relocate to Vilna (Vilnius), where they were able to set up a central headquarters.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 caused communication opportunities between Warsaw and Vilna to be reduced considerably. With this, the Warsaw leadership of Hashomer Hatzair became responsible for the movement across Poland. As reports of the systematic slaughter of Jews throughout Poland began to arrive, Tosia, then in Warsaw, returned to Vilna, arriving on December 24, 1941. Discussing the situation with local members of Hashomer Hatzair, she reported on the depressing conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto and then sought permission to return to Warsaw in order to work with those remaining.

She thus became the first senior member of the central leadership to return to occupied Warsaw, and upon her arrival she began shaping the movement's different branches for resistance activities. She traveled to many different cities encouraging young people to become involved in a range of activities, her travels made easier by her blonde hair and fluent Polish. To ease her travel and stay ahead of antisemitic Polish informers, she used forged and outdated identity papers.

She then returned once again to Vilna, where she confirmed the rumors of mass killings of Jews in the east, and

visited several cities in eastern Poland before returning to Warsaw. Here, she reiterated the message that Jews all over Poland were being methodically murdered and that the storm would soon reach Warsaw. The warning was difficult to accept, but it was reinforced by continual reports gathered independently about the death camps.

In July 1942, following the first wave of mass deportations of Jews to Treblinka, the ŻOB was formed. Tosia was sent outside the ghetto to consult with members of the Polish underground. The two main organizations contacted, the *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army, or AK) and the communist *Armia Ludowa* (People's Army, or AL), provided minimal direct support for the ghetto, though Tosia and others managed to bring in crucial armaments such as hand grenades and small arms.

Tosia continued her travels to other ghettos as an emissary of the ŻOB, and she was sometimes able to save young men and women from the deportations. In Kraków, for example, she met with two underground groups, *Hechalutz Halochem*, led by Aharon Liebeskind, and *Iskra*, led by Zvi Hersch Bauminger, both of which were effective contributors to the Jewish fighting effort in the Kraków ghetto.

Back in Warsaw, Tosia was involved in the first armed resistance in the ghetto after the Germans recommenced deportations on January 18, 1943. A party of fighters attacked the Nazis; in the chaos, several Jews were killed and others, including Tosia, were captured and taken to the *Umschlagplatz* (collection point for deportation). She managed to escape with the aid of a Jewish ghetto policeman acting on behalf of Hashomer Hatzair.

Placed in charge of maintaining contact with ŻOB members outside the ghetto, she spent a large part of her time on the Aryan side. But, always prepared to fight, she returned whenever she heard of an impending roundup.

On April 18, 1943, the final Nazi deportation was launched, and the revolt erupted. Tosia relayed messages and information to the ŻOB leaders, reporting by phone to Yitzhak Zuckerman. When Anielewicz moved his command structure to a bunker at Miła 18, Tosia served as liaison between him and the other leaders scattered elsewhere. The ghetto was by this stage in flames, so she went out on missions each night to rescue those who were known to be wounded or burned.

As the fighting continued, the struggle was made more difficult by the fires. When the Nazi forces closed in on Miła 18 and the Germans located the bunker, they pumped in gas to try to compel the fighters to surrender. On May 8, 1943, Anielewicz and most of those with him took their own lives

rather than capitulate. Tosia was among the tiny group of survivors who managed to get out just before the final moments.

Suffering head and leg wounds, she left the ghetto on May 10, 1943, traveling via the sewers to the Lomianki Forest. She was found by Zivia Lubetkin and Marek Edelman, who took her to the Aryan side where she was hidden in the attic of a celluloid factory. On May 24, 1943, a fire broke out; Tosia, badly burned, was picked up by the Polish police and handed over to the Germans. They, in turn, transferred her to a hospital, where she was cruelly interrogated. She died, untreated, on May 26, 1943—one of the first to see the need to resist the Nazis, and one of the last to leave the Warsaw Ghetto.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Fighting Organization; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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André, Joseph

Father Joseph André was a Belgian Roman Catholic priest who helped save hundreds of Jews—mainly children—from deportation and likely death during World War II.

Joseph André was born in Belgium on March 14, 1908, and in 1926 joined a Jesuit order as a postulant. Plagued by poor health, however, he was compelled to leave the Jesuits two years later. Still committed to a religious calling, he entered seminary and was ordained a priest in 1936.

For several years thereafter, Father André taught at a Catholic high school in Floreffe before being named curate (assistant pastor) of St. Jean-Baptiste Church in Namur, Belgium.

Father André was particularly committed to helping the poor and marginalized, and was especially drawn to aiding Jews. Indeed, he had an abiding respect for Jewish religious and cultural traditions and was a strong advocate of religious freedom. Unlike some other Christian clergymen, Father André did not attempt to proselytize or convert Jews to

Christianity. In the months leading up to the war, he had been operating a parish youth center, which would later provide him with a perfect cover behind which he would build a significant child aid network designed to shelter and hide Jewish children after the Germans occupied Belgium in May 1940.

By early 1941 Father André had cobbled together a significant network designed to hide Jewish children from German occupation officials. He did so at great risk to his own safety, as aiding Jews could have resulted in his own arrest and deportation. Even more striking was the fact that Father André operated this network across the street from the local Nazi military commander's office. Although the Gestapo periodically suspected that something was amiss, Father André managed to elude serious scrutiny. He temporarily housed and fed Jewish children at his parish, sometimes going into the countryside to solicit food for them from Belgian civilians. When one young boy under his care became seriously ill, he personally took him to the hospital under a false name. The boy was treated and released without being detected.

Father André was in touch with many other parishes as well as convents and monasteries, where he would help transport Jewish children. He probably never had more than 20 children at his parish at any one time to avoid suspicion. He also placed children in the care of Belgian families that were willing to take them in on a temporary basis. It is not possible to say for certain how many children Father André helped, but it was certainly in the many hundreds.

Father André continued to administer to indigent Jews after the war, and from 1957 until his death in 1970 he served as the chaplain of the Namur jail. In 1967 Israel's Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations. In 1968 he traveled to New York City at the invitation of the United Jewish Appeal, where he was lavishly praised for his efforts during the Holocaust. Father André died in Namur on June 1, 1970.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Belgium; Catholic Church; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Anielewicz, Mordecai

Mordecai Anielewicz was a resistance leader in the Warsaw Ghetto in January 1943 (when Jews attacked Nazi soldiers to avoid imminent deportation to the Treblinka death camp), and then, most notably, the leader of the Jewish fighters during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April–May of that year. Although the Nazis defeated the uprising, it served as a rallying force for further Jewish rebellions against the Nazis during World War II, and Anielewicz became the preeminent symbol of Jewish resistance.

Anielewicz was born into a Jewish working-class family in Wyszki, Poland, in 1919. He attended a Hebrew high school in Warsaw and was briefly a member of Betar, a Zionist youth organization advocating self-defense for Jews. At the time of the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Anielewicz was a leading member of the Warsaw branch of Hashomer Hatzair, a Zionist youth organization.

On September 7, 1939, Anielewicz fled Warsaw with some fellow members of Hashomer Hatzair and headed east to stay ahead of the German advance. He attempted to escape to Palestine in order to establish an escape route for other Zionist youths. However, he was caught by the Soviet Army at the Romanian border and jailed. After release, he went to Vilnius, Lithuania, which had recently been absorbed by the Soviet Union. Vilnius was a refuge for many Zionist youth groups and Jewish refugees.

By the time Anielewicz returned to Warsaw with his girlfriend, Mira Fuchrer, in January 1940, the Nazis had sealed off the ghetto and appointed a 24-member Jewish Council, or *Judenrat*, to administer what was now a closed community. As conditions in the ghetto worsened, many Jews began to die of starvation and disease, and in response Anielewicz became active in the underground and set out to organize a resistance movement. He requested that other Hashomer Hatzair members return to Warsaw to continue their activities. Anielewicz established *Neged Hazerem* (*Against the Stream*), an underground newspaper, and began to transform Hashomer Hatzair into an armed resistance group. In addition, he studied Hebrew, sociology, economics, and history and began to write and give lectures to other Zionist groups.

By October 1940 the SS was deporting Jews to concentration camps, and Anielewicz stepped up his efforts against the Nazi occupiers. He established contact with the Polish government-in-exile in London, which ordered him to ally with Polish forces outside of the ghetto. This was a task fraught with difficulty, and he was unable to carry out his orders successfully. During the spring of 1942, however, he helped

establish a short-lived antifascist group, which was dispersed by the arrest of its communist members.

On July 22, 1942, the Nazis began mass deportation of Warsaw Jews to the extermination camp at Treblinka, 50 miles northeast of Warsaw. More than 5,000 Jews were deported each day until September. During that time, Anielewicz had escaped to southwest Poland on an underground mission to organize other branches of his movement; returning to Warsaw to try to organize an armed resistance, he found the ghetto devastated by the deportation of approximately 265,000 of the ghetto's 330,000 Jews.

Most of the Jewish elders disapproved of armed resistance out of fear of provoking a devastating German retaliation. However, Anielewicz and another Zionist leader, Yitzhak Zuckerman, established what became known as the Jewish Fighting Organization. There were also some other small, unarmed resistance groups. Anielewicz garnered support for an armed resistance to block deportation, and he reorganized his group. The members elected him chief commander of the Jewish Fighting Organization that November. The group was able to contact the Polish government in London and procure a few weapons, with difficulty, in Warsaw.

In early January 1943 Heinrich Himmler visited the Warsaw Ghetto and ordered another deportation. The deportation began unannounced on January 18. In response, the Jewish Fighting Organization and several other small fighting groups began uncoordinated guerrilla warfare against the Nazis. Anielewicz developed a plan in which his fighters obeyed the deportation orders until they reached a certain part of town, where they received a signal to attack. Despite the death of all of the Hashomer Hatzair fighters except Anielewicz, many Jews escaped. The Nazis stopped the deportation four days later, after they had lost about 50 soldiers. Anielewicz and his fellow resisters thought this was a victory.

With the deception of peace, the Nazis then tried to coax the remaining Jews to board boxcars to Treblinka. Anielewicz continued to command underground operations, as the groups planned and prepared for further combat by procuring arms and building bunkers. In April, Himmler ordered the Warsaw Ghetto cleared of all Jews before Adolf Hitler's birthday on April 20. On April 19, the first day of Passover, more than 2,000 Nazi soldiers and Polish police began the final deportation. Approximately 1,500 Jews armed with two machine guns, 15 rifles, 500 handguns, hand grenades, and Molotov cocktails began to attack the Nazi invaders of the ghetto. The resistance achieved a remarkable victory on the first day, forcing the Nazis to retreat after attacking

their tanks and artillery. The Nazis suffered heavy losses and left behind weapons.

The second day, the Nazis returned to drive the Jewish fighters from their hideouts by using gas, smoke bombs, and flame throwers. On the third day of battle, the Nazis used small patrols for street-to-street fighting. The Jewish resistance was outnumbered and outgunned. The Jewish fighters refused to surrender and often hid in sewers. The Nazis began to burn every house in the ghetto and flood the sewers in order to force them out. After the first few days of battle, Anielewicz moved from the streets to the headquarters of the Jewish Fighting Organization.

After a four-week battle in which the Nazis shelled and bombed the ghetto and killed 60,000 Jews, the Nazis captured and gassed the Jewish Fighting Organization's headquarters at Miła 18 on May 8. There, they found Anielewicz and most of the remaining ghetto fighters dead. Many had committed suicide to avoid capture. On May 16, 1943, General Jürgen Stroop, the Nazi commander, reported that "the former Jewish quarter of Warsaw [is] no longer in existence." The Nazis executed and deported the remaining Jews. Only about 100 survived. However, the uprising rallied other Jews to resist Nazi occupation.

Anielewicz's last communication was a letter to Zuckerman, who was stationed outside the ghetto. He wrote: "The main thing is that the dream of my life has come true. I have had the fortune to set my eyes upon Jewish defense in the ghetto in all its greatness." In Israel, Kibbutz Yad Mordecai was named after him, and a monument was built there in his honor.

PHILIP J. MACFARLANE

See also: Edelman, Marek; Jewish Fighting Organization; Lubetkin, Zivia; Stroop, Jürgen; *Uprising*; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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Anne Frank House

Over a million people each year visit an unassuming canal house in Amsterdam to pay respects to Anne Frank, a young

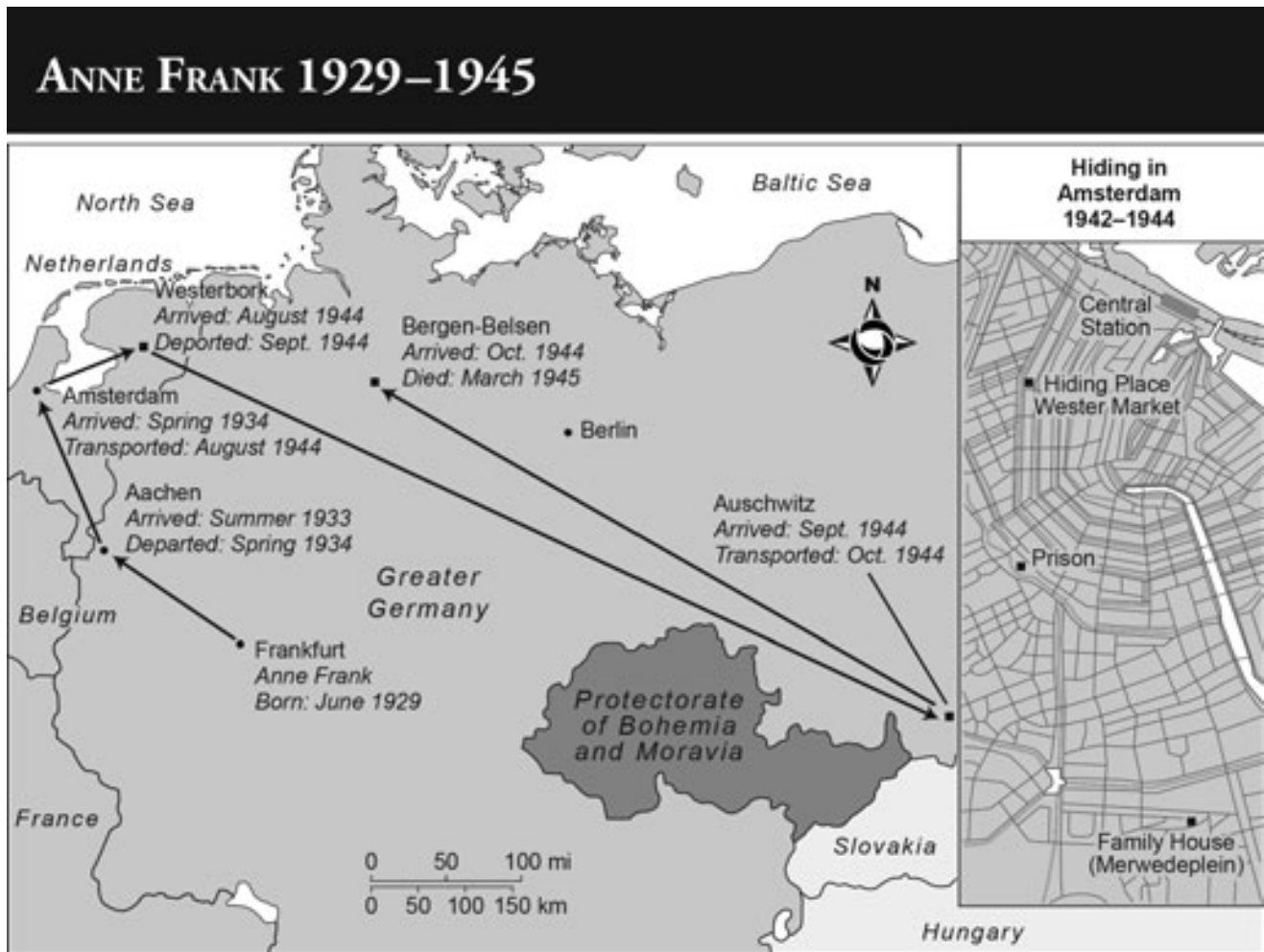


The Anne Frank House is the headquarters of the Anne Frank Foundation. It contains a museum dedicated to commemorating the life of the young Jewish diarist Anne Frank, who was killed during the Holocaust. (AP Photo)

girl who has become a symbol of the Holocaust. During the German occupation of the Netherlands, Anne, a young Jewish girl, and her family hid in a secret apartment in Amsterdam. The Franks had fled Nazi Germany in 1933, after Adolf Hitler came to power, but the occupation of the Netherlands in 1940 left them no further refuge. The apartment was their last hope. Anne Frank was 13 when the family went into hiding in 1942, and she was only 15 when she died.

The canal house was built in 1635 and remodeled several times through the years. During one of these remodels, a small extension was built on the back, shielded from view by buildings in a quadrangle. The rest of the building housed Otto Frank's spice business and its offices. As the arrests of Jews intensified under the Nazi occupation, the family went into the annex with the connivance of several of his employees.

On August 4, 1944, acting on a tip from a collaborator, the Nazi police broke into the secret annex and captured the two Jewish families that had been in hiding there, including the Franks. After terrorizing the employees and vandalizing the



hidden apartment, they left. Shortly after the raid, Miep Gies, one of those who had smuggled food to the families, snuck into the apartment and gathered up the scattered pages of a diary that Anne had been keeping. Fearful that the Gestapo would find it and hunt down those mentioned in it, she kept it in her home in an open drawer, which she guessed would cause the least suspicion.

The Franks and their companions, the Van Pels family and Fritz Pfeffer (whose names Anne changed to Van Daan and Albert Dussell in her diaries), were sent to concentration camps on the last transport to leave Holland, full of Jews bound for their deaths. Only Anne's father, Otto, lived to be liberated from Auschwitz. All the others perished within a few days of one another. Anne and her sister died of typhus at Bergen-Belsen.

Anne Frank's story is only one among thousands of similar stories during World War II. What set it apart and made Anne Frank a symbol of Jewish suffering during the

Holocaust was her diary. After Miep Gies returned the papers to Otto after the war, the diary was published in an edited edition and became an immediate international bestseller. It appeared in 50 languages and was made into both a play and a film. In 1995 the complete edition was published. Personal and touching, the diary records the family's life and Anne's own maturing. It also relates the horrors of the Nazi occupation reflected in the lives of a small group of people who take on personality as the diary unfolds.

The diary is surprisingly well written for a young person, detailing Anne's emergence from childhood to early womanhood. She explores her developing romantic feelings and her adolescent tensions with her mother. She speaks of her fear and the atmosphere of oppression that lay upon them in the annex. Prophetically, she wrote, "The perfect round spot on which we're standing is still safe, but the clouds are moving in on us, and the ring between us and the approaching danger is being pulled tighter and tighter."

The Anne Frank House was established in 1960, after a public outcry prevented the building's demolition. Many of the ongoing streams of visitors are merely curious when they enter but fall silent as they move through the annex. The apartment has been left as it was at the end of the war, stripped of furniture but with many little reminders of the family. Anne's movie-star posters are still pasted on the wall, along with a few mementos. The feeling of the place, above all, is claustrophobic. But somehow, what rings through is Anne's triumphant testimony: "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart." The Anne Frank Foundation, which owns the building, also engages in antiracist education programs and organizes traveling exhibits.

NORBERT C. BROCKMAN

See also: Children during the Holocaust; Denial of the Holocaust; Frank, Anne; Gies, Miep; Museums and Memorials; Netherlands; Rescuers of Jews

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Anschluss

The Anschluss was the annexation of Austria by Germany in March 1938, representing the first effort by Hitler and the Nazis to expand the Reich. Although clearly prohibited, Hitler's expansion into Austria drew no intervention from the Western powers that wrote the prohibition into the Treaty of Versailles following the defeat of Germany at the end of World War I.

Documentaries about this time period accurately show the Austrian people greeting Nazi soldiers with wild enthusiasm as they marched into Austria, treating the Germans as liberators, clearly happy to be reunited with Germany, and excited by the prospect of joining in Germany's economic recovery. While it is true that millions of Austrians identified as Germans-living-in-Austria, and for whom the unification of these two countries was a logical and compelling correction of a too-long separation, the annexation itself was the result of a far more complex and violent evolution than the enthusiasm of Hitler's reception reveals.

This was not the first time Germany had sought the annexation of Austria. Twenty years earlier, in 1918, with the

demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the "Anschluss movement" tried to unite Germany and Austria as "The Republic of German-Austria" (*Deutsch-Österreich*). This newly declared republic was short lived, given its gross violation of the terms of the World War I peace treaties. There were those, however, in Austria who continued to push for Anschluss with Germany, among them and most ardently the Austrian Nazi Party (the Austrian National Socialist Party). When Hitler, who was born in Austria, came to power in Germany he was in a position to bring to fruition his long-standing goal to unite the two countries. To that end, he ordered the Austrian Nazi Party to continue its violent opposition to the Austrian government of Engelbert Dollfuss (1892–1934), the chancellor of Austria from 1932 to 1934 who was staunchly against annexation. It was Hitler's plan that the violent tactics of the Austrian Nazis would create a need for Germany's intervention to restore law and order. The plan backfired, however, as many Austrians grew increasingly concerned about the actions of the Nazi Party and became even more intent on maintaining Austria's independence. After repeated failed attempts to overthrow the Dollfuss government, the Austrian Nazi Party assassinated Dollfuss in 1934.

Kurt von Schuschnigg (1897–1977) succeeded Dollfuss, continuing his predecessor's policy of opposing Anschluss and also banning the Austrian Nazi Party and imprisoning thousands of its supporters. With the hope of appeasing Hitler, Schuschnigg entered into an agreement with him in 1936 that assured Austria's independence, but later in that year, when Hitler and Mussolini formalized their alliance, Schuschnigg recognized that those assurances were meaningless. On February 12, 1938, Schuschnigg and Hitler met, with Schuschnigg hoping to convince Hitler to abandon his efforts to annex Austria, and Hitler demanding that Schuschnigg lift the ban on the Austrian Nazis; release those who had been arrested from the internment camps in which they were held; and appoint Arthur Seyss-Inquart (1892–1946), a supporter of the Austrian Nazi Party, as minister of the Interior. Schuschnigg, still believing he might be able to avoid annexation by giving Hitler what he wanted, reluctantly agreed.

On March 9, in a final effort to forestall union with Germany, Schuschnigg scheduled a plebiscite to be held on March 11, assuming that it would result in overwhelming rejection of Anschluss and debunk Hitler's argument that Austria was seeking Germany's help to maintain order. The plebiscite was cancelled, however, when Hitler claimed it was fraudulent. This claim was not without some basis, as Schuschnigg disenfranchised voters not yet age 24 in order

to eliminate a demographic that was generally pro-Nazi. Recognizing there was nothing more he could do, Schuschnigg resigned on March 11 and was replaced as chancellor by Seyss-Inquart, who, as had been prearranged, then appealed immediately to Hitler for help. The result was that Hitler's Eighth Army marched into Austria without resistance on March 12. On March 13, with the annexation of Austria by Germany a fact, Seyss-Inquart—having now completed his job of providing Hitler with an excuse to enter Austria and having welcomed him into the country—resigned his two-day role as chancellor.

Although it is likely the percentage of Austrians supporting the Anschluss was considerably less than the 99.73% the Nazis claimed in an after-the-fact plebiscite held on April 10, for most Austrians this was a union very much hoped for. But for millions of other Austrians, and for the pre-Seyss-Inquart Austrian government, this was a forced annexation, meaning, from their perspective, an occupation.

Austria had always been rife with virulent antisemitism—according to his book, *Mein Kampf*, it was in Vienna that Hitler first saw Jews as “others”—but after the Anschluss, the antisemitism became far more severe. It has been suggested that antisemitism played a more significant role in Austria than in Germany, and that one reason for the reception Hitler received in Vienna was that it now appeared possible that the so-called Jewish Question would be addressed. Following Germany's lead, Austria imposed harsh anti-Jewish laws resulting in legal separation of the Jews from all aspects of Austrian society, instituting measures designed to “encourage” mass deportation, including beating and arresting Jews, and humiliating them publicly by, for example, requiring Jewish men and women to clean streets using a toothbrush while being subjected to venomous taunts by onlookers. In 1938 the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna, established by Adolf Eichmann, achieved a level of efficiency in persecuting and deporting Jews that made it a model for Germany and other countries in the Reich. Its success can be seen by the dramatic reduction in the number of Jews in Austria—due to emigration and forced deportation—from 192,000 in 1938 to 57,000 in late 1939.

Kristallnacht, often thought of as a phenomenon unique to Germany, also played out in Austria in November 1938, some eight months after the Anschluss, and in some respects it was more violent than in Germany itself. Thousands of Jewish businesses were destroyed and looted. Synagogues were burned and Jewish homes destroyed. As in Germany, thousands of Jews were arrested and sent to Dachau, and a

staggering fine was imposed on the Jewish community for the destruction done during the pogrom.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Austria; Confiscation of Jewish Property; Globocnik, Odilo; Lebensraum; Nazism and Germany; Refoulement; Shirer, William L.

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Antisemitism

Antisemitism is an umbrella term for what is a variety of negative beliefs or actions held or taken against Jews for the sole reason that they are Jewish. Its history is long, earning it the designation “the oldest hatred.” Although there have been many causes, philosophies, and manifestations of antisemitism over the millennia, they all share in some level of hatred, contempt, or disdain for individual Jews, Judaism, or the Jewish people.

The term “antisemitism” is complex. Although, as noted, the animus of antisemitism has been long held, the term itself is relatively new. The German writer Friedrich Wilhelm Adolph Marr coined it as *antisemitismus* in 1879 to mean what in German is *Judenhass*, or Jew hatred. It is a compound noun, where “anti” is “against” and “semitismus” or “semitism” is, at least according to its common usage, “Jew” or “Jewish.” In fact, “semitism” has nothing to do with Jews per se. It is, instead, a philological term representing a particular linguistic group. More specifically, it is a branch of the larger Afro-Asian language group, and it includes ancient languages such as ancient Hebrew (which itself is a language in the larger group of Canaanite languages), as well as languages in current use, including Modern Hebrew, Arabic, Maltese, and some languages from Ethiopia.

Marr's use of the term reflected a belief that language was related to race. In this case, the term “Semite” was used in reference to a single component of the Semitic language group, namely, the Jews. As with “Semitic,” so too “Aryan” is a linguistic group, currently a reference to Indo-Aryan languages, part of the Indo-European language group, but is used to refer to the Germanic and Nordic “race.” Thus, the

fallacious confluence of linguistic groups and race led to what would become a deadly distinction between the “Aryan race” and the “Jewish race.”

There is no single type of antisemitism. Throughout its history, antisemitism has morphed from one type of Jew-hatred to another, and from one type of anti-Jewish action to another.

Since the first and second centuries of the Common Era, antisemitism has been expressed primarily on religious grounds. Perhaps the most persistent of all forms of religious antisemitism is the belief that the Jews not only rejected Jesus as the Messiah but they also killed him—which, from the Christian perspective, constitutes a charge of deicide. The charge has been leveled against the Jews who were alive at the time of Jesus’s death, as well as all Jews of all time. It became a basic tenet of Christianity, integral to the Gospels and other sections of the New Testament, and thus Christians were reminded throughout the year—especially during Easter—of the unforgivable sin of the Jews.

A related theological component of Christianity is supersessionism, a Christian belief that, among other things, Christianity has superseded Judaism; that Christians have replaced the Jews as the Chosen People in covenant with God; that Judaism is obsolete; and that the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament. Thus, Judaism’s purpose is relegated to that of a precursor of Christianity, and, having fulfilled that role, no longer has value.

Once Christianity was adopted by the Roman Empire, its charge of deicide and its theology of supersessionism were spread wherever the church was, and they remained in place and unchanged over the centuries. For example, in the middle of the 16th century, pronouncements by Roman Catholic and Protestant leadership reflected a level of religious antisemitism that shows how embedded it was in the Christian worldview. In 1555 Pope Paul IV issued a papal bull that spoke of the Jews’ guilt, perpetual servitude to Christians, and arrogance. He consigned them to limited living areas, prohibited them from eating with Christians or owning land, and sought some kind of outer marking—a hat perhaps of a certain color—that would identify Jews everywhere. Just 12 years earlier, Martin Luther had issued his scurrilous tract *On the Jews and Their Lies*, wherein he characterized the Jews in some of the most inflammatory language found in any antisemitic tirade, telling fellow Christians to deal with these “rejected and condemned people, the Jews” by burning their synagogues and schools, razing their houses, taking their holy books, restricting rabbis from teaching Judaism, and so forth. The Catholic Church disavowed its position on the

guilt of Jews as perpetrators of deicide only in the mid-20th century, as did Protestant denominations in or about the same time.

Religious antisemitism is only one manifestation of “the oldest hatred.” Jewish culture was also seen as separating Jews from Christians. The Jews’ style of dress, rules regarding food, their holidays, the language of their prayers, and religious rituals all distinguished Jews from Christian society. These distinctions, rather than being at least tolerated, became infused with a fantastical mythology, including what is called “blood libel,” a belief that as part of the Jewish Passover holiday the blood of Christian children was used to make matzo, the unleavened bread eaten by Jews during the holiday. Although this was a preposterous charge, it served as a trigger for actions ranging from suspicion to pogroms (local violent outbreaks against Jews, often encouraged by those in authority) whenever a Christian child went missing or was killed, especially near or during the Passover holiday. This charge of blood libel first surfaced in the 12th century in England and remained an ongoing source of antisemitism even into the 20th century.

Another manifestation of cultural antisemitism was the association of the Jews with modernity, many aspects of which the citizens of Germany and other countries in Europe found frightening and destabilizing. The Enlightenment and the French Revolution introduced a new way of thinking, emphasizing the power of rational thought and the importance of individual rights, both of which were seen as undermining the traditional authority of the church that formed the foundation of most European societies. The Jews, with a higher level of literacy and education than most other groups, were closely identified by conservatives and the general populace with these changes, including the profoundly disorienting movement from a rural, agrarian society to an urban, industrial one.

The Enlightenment’s call for individual rights and its recognition of a universal family of man spurred a wave of emancipation of the Jews throughout Europe, primarily in the 19th century. This meant that countries chose to expunge their anti-Jewish laws and treat the Jews as equals, giving them the same opportunities as any other citizens. There were strings attached, however: Jews were to assimilate into the dominant culture and pledge loyalty to the state. Assimilation became widespread, especially in Germany, where many Jews intermarried, abandoning their faith for that of their spouse, converted to Christianity, or retained their Jewish identity but did so in a far less visible way, dressing in the same clothes, eating the same food, and otherwise appearing

and acting the same as Christians. In fact, it has been said of a large number of German Jews during the late 19th and early 20th centuries that they saw themselves as “Germans of the Mosaic persuasion.”

Despite the prospect that emancipation and its resulting assimilation would reduce, if not eliminate antisemitism, such was not the case. The effect, instead, was twofold. First, assimilated Jews were now viewed with suspicion, seen as Jews hiding behind a Christian appearance but still capable of delivering all of the dangers that had always been attributed to them. This led to an increase in antisemitism, seen, as it was, as a means of defense by Christian society against the duplicitous Jews. Second, as Jews already in-country assimilated, Jews who were new to Western Europe—especially those from Poland and Russia—generated new rounds of antisemitism because of their strange dress, their beards and long, uncut sideburns, their language (often Yiddish, a Germanic language that was widespread in the *shtetls* from which these new Jews came), their food, their large families, often their poverty, and their insistence on the study of holy books that were foreign and impenetrable to non-Jews. Not just the Christians of Germany saw these Eastern European Jews as foreign and outside of German society, but so too did the assimilated Jews who had been trying so hard to be seen as no different than any other Germans. Emancipation and assimilation only served to highlight the strangeness of these Jews that exacerbated antisemitism wherever they came to settle.

The combination of religious and cultural antisemitism are two factors that led to an element of Nazi antisemitism that called for the Jews—and only the Jews of all the Nazis’ victim groups—to be exterminated, every Jewish man, woman, and child from the face of the earth. Jews uniquely were viewed as the devil incarnate, as evil itself. This was a belief going back to the Middle Ages. Because of their purported role in the death of Jesus and because of the strangeness of their culture, Jews had long been accused of having satanic powers. The Nazis took this one step further by viewing the Jews as an existential threat to all of Western civilization, and especially the Aryan race. Thus, Nazi antisemitism included a cosmic element that posited a battle between the superior Aryan race and the inferior Jewish race for nothing less than the future of Western civilization.

In addition to religious and cultural antisemitism, economic antisemitism was a well-established component of Jew-hatred by the time the Nazis came to power in Germany. Having long been restricted by Christian society from owning property, Jews were unable to earn a living off the land,

forcing them to look to urban centers for opportunities. By dint of education, hard work, and determination, a disproportionate number of the Jews of Europe were able to achieve a higher standard of living than their under- or uneducated neighbors by entering professions such as medicine, law, and journalism, as well as the arts, all of which generally were not only financially sound but also very visible, increasing resentment among the non-Jewish citizenry and exaggerating the perceived presence of Jews in the national population. This was exacerbated by the Jews fulfilling a role that was critical for any market-based economy to operate—the lending of money at interest—but a role that Christianity forbade of its adherents. Thus was borne the charge of usurious money lending by Jews, generating distrust by Christians of the Jews’ role in the marketplace.

The Jews that were most visible to Christians were those who were economically successful, spreading the inaccurate impression that all Jews were wealthy. This impression not only generated widespread resentment among non-Jews, it soon became part of a larger and widespread belief: that Jews controlled the world economy through the machinations of an international cabal. Given the amount of supposed power this myth vested in the Jews, it is not surprising that whenever financial difficulty befell an individual, a community, or a nation, it was seen as caused by the Jews and their international conspiracy.

Yet another form of antisemitism emerged, this time based on political concerns. Jews were rarely considered loyal citizens by the countries in which they lived. Because Jews lived all over the world, and because of the supposed Jewish financial conspiracy, they were regarded as seditious internationalists, a fifth column in any country in which they lived, trying to manipulate governments and policies to their own advantage at the expense of ordinary Christians and Christianity itself, all in the service of Jewish world dominance.

One of the most effective and ultimately deadly examples of this belief in an international Jewish plot intent on controlling the world is *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Supposedly the record of a meeting of the leaders of the Jewish international conspiracy, *The Protocols* was presented in 1903 as proof positive of the Jews’ commitment to world domination. Completely debunked and exposed for the fraud that it was, *The Protocols* nonetheless was seen as providing credence to what antisemites had been declaring for so long. It continues to this day to be published and circulated all over the world.

Jews’ political leanings were assumed to be liberal in the sense of upholding the principles of the French Revolution

and the Enlightenment. When that perception was added to the Jews' association with the perils of modernity, including the concept of democracy, they, as a group, were reduced still further in the eyes of German non-Jews. Germans viewed the failed attempt at democracy known as the Weimar Republic, with its libertine ways so destructive of conservative bastions of governance and morality, as the fault of the Jews. That short-lived form of government, in place for the 14 years between the end of World War I and the ascension to power of Hitler, was, like communism, closely associated with the Jews.

Despite the inherent contradictions, Jews were accused of being cowards unable or unwilling to serve in the military or work with their hands, and, at the same time, powerful enough to cause countries in which they lived to lose wars, even a world war. Germany attributed its military loss in the Great War and the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles to the Jews' influence. Unwilling to acknowledge that it was defeated in the war due to its own weakness and errors, Germany blamed its loss on having been "stabbed in the back" by the Jews who were living in Germany during the war. Further, unwilling to accept the terms of the Treaty of Versailles as proportionate to what they had done, Germany blamed the Jews for advancing and then assuring the inclusion of the onerous terms imposed by the Allies.

This reflects a broad role that the Jews were forced to play in countries throughout Europe and throughout the millennia: the role of scapegoat. They were blamed specifically for the death of Jesus, for Christian children who went missing, for economic downturns, for the loss of World War I, for the resulting Treaty of Versailles, for the communist revolution in Russia, for all things modern and threatening, and generally for all evil in the world. In many European countries the Jews were the ultimate scapegoat on which were heaped any and all individual, communal, and national failures, generating vast waves of death and destruction.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, it was France, not Germany, that seemed most likely to erupt in antisemitic violence. The Dreyfus Affair of the 1890s revealed a deep-seated antisemitism as a Jewish French officer was wrongly accused of treason. But certain concepts key to understanding the German mindset help explain why Germany was the most volatile. The term *Volk* (people, nation) conveyed more than its literal meaning. It evoked a common past of Germanic glory, a sense of transcendent purpose and cultural superiority, and it served to differentiate a closed group from those outside that group. When combined with other concepts such as *Blut* (blood)

and *Reich* (empire, kingdom), which also conveyed elements of mytho-historical Germanic greatness, the underlying beliefs that supported strong feelings of superiority and distinction from others were well defined.

The results of antisemitism have been profound. Whether it was the Crusades, the charge that the Jews were the source of the bubonic plague, the Spanish Inquisition, the pogroms that swept many countries, especially Russia, the mass expulsions, or numerous other explosions of violence—much of it government driven—the Jews suffered dearly due to the power of antisemitism.

But as much as the Jews suffered during the first 19 centuries of the Common Era, the Nazis deemed it insufficient because the Jewish people as a collective was still alive. The Nazis' goal was to effectuate the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). To do so they adopted racial theories advocated by Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, among others, as well as the pseudoscience of eugenics and, taking them to their extremes, developed the most deadly iteration of antisemitism: racial antisemitism.

Racial antisemitism is premised on the belief that all aspects of an individual and a group—their strengths and weaknesses, intellect, creativity, athleticism, moral composition, and, ultimately, right to survival—are dependent on the person's or group's race, or more specifically, on blood: a person's blood was the source of all these things. Thus, all of these aspects of a person or a group were inherited and immutable. No matter conversion, assimilation, way of life, or beliefs, individual and group superiority and inferiority were predetermined by biology.

By applying Darwin's law of the survival of the fittest to individuals and groups (social Darwinism), the role of the strong—those with the right blood—was to dominate, and the role of the weak—those with inferior blood—was to serve the dominant group. The Jews, as the ultimate "inferior race," in fact, a race of sub- or nonhumans (*Untermenschen*), were seen by the Nazis as a race that had no value, who brought nothing but parasitic destruction to host nations and therefore, because of their blood, were a threat that had to be eliminated. By contrast, the Aryan race—that is, the Germanic and Nordic race—possessed the blood of supermen (*Übermenschen*) and therefore had the right and obligation to prevail over all other races. Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, written in 1923—fully 10 years before his role as leader of the German people began—is rife with such theories.

Thus, by focusing on the concepts of blood, race, and racial superiority, Hitler and the Nazis established a biologically

based antisemitism that confirmed the supremacy of the Aryan race and that presented an ultimatum to civilization: either eliminate the Jewish race from the face of the earth or forever be subject to the pernicious and ruinous contamination they would inevitably—by dint of their racial characteristics—foist on the Aryan race and all humanity.

Antisemitism has for millennia been a multifaceted hatred, one that has presented itself in numerous and varied ways, all of which share an underlying enmity toward the Jews because they were Jews. As limiting, humiliating, and deadly as other forms of antisemitism were, the form of antisemitism that prevailed during the Holocaust was uniquely lethal: it was based on immutable characteristics of blood and therefore offered no alternative for the Jews other than flight or death. As it turned out, the opportunity for flight was sorely limited while the hatred and mass murder driven by the Nazis' racial antisemitism swept across Europe with seemingly unlimited abandon.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Action Française; Aryan; Aryanism; Blood Libel; Coughlin, Charles; *Der Stürmer*; Facing History and Ourselves; German Census, 1933; *Hitler's Willing Executioners*; *Jud Süss*; *Mein Kampf*; National Socialism; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nazism and Germany; Oberlaender, Theodor; Olympic Games, 1936; Propaganda in the Holocaust; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; Schönerer, Georg Ritter von; Streicher, Julius

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Antonescu, Ion

Romanian marshal and dictator Ion Antonescu was born into an aristocratic military family in Pitesti on June 14, 1882. He graduated from Romanian military schools in Craiova (1902) and Iasi (1904). A cavalry lieutenant during the 1907 Peasant Revolt, he fought in the Second Balkan War and was an operations officer during World War I. From 1922 to 1927 he was Romanian military attaché in Paris, Brussels, and London, and was chief of the Army General Staff in 1933 and 1934.

As with most others among the nationalistic Romanian military elite, Antonescu favored British and French political influence. However, he closely monitored both the Third Reich's ascendancy and the looming Soviet Union in his vigilance regarding Romanian territorial integrity, pragmatically preparing for a German accommodation should such a choice become necessary. As minister of defense, Antonescu became embroiled in and frustrated by the corrupt governing vicissitudes of King Carol II, especially after 1937. Protesting Carol's February 1938 establishment of the Royal Dictatorship and his suppression of the fascistic Legion of Saint Michael (the Iron Guard), Antonescu defended the Iron Guard's leaders in court and was briefly jailed and outposted to Chisinau (Kishinev) near the Soviet border.

Following the Soviet Union's occupation of Bessarabia and the ceding of Transylvania to Hungary in the summer of 1940, in September Carol was coerced into naming Antonescu head of the troubled government before abdicating under pressure in favor of his son, Michael, age 19. Antonescu's title, Conducator, was the Romanian equivalent of Duce or Führer, and he used his broad powers to oust the Iron Guard from government in January 1941. That June he assigned 14 Romanian divisions to Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, Operation Barbarossa. For reclaiming Romanian lands from the Soviets, Antonescu was proclaimed marshal by the young King Michael on August 23, 1941. Antonescu continued to supply the German war effort with troops (ultimately, Romania lost substantially more men than Italy) in exchange for German military favor, but on the home front he sought to temper his ally's overbearing appetite for Romania's oil and agricultural bounty.

In coming to terms with Romania's "Jewish question," Antonescu—like Benito Mussolini in Italy—preferred his own solution to anything dictated by Berlin, employing policies that (officially) allowed Jews to emigrate in exchange for payment or to face deportation to Romanian-administered work camps in the Ukrainian region of Transnistria. Nonetheless, Antonescu's regime was responsible for the deaths of more than 250,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews and Roma as a result of its "Romanization" policies during 1940–1944, despite its refusal to join formally with Germany in pursuing the latter's "Final Solution."

Antonescu was deposed by King Michael on August 23, 1944, and turned over to the occupying Soviet forces. His war crimes show trial, held in Bucharest during May 4–17, 1946, led to the death sentence, and he was executed there on June 1, 1946.

GORDON E. HOGG

See also: Iron Guard; Jagendorf, Siegfried; Popovici, Traian; Romania

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Antwerp Pogrom

Antwerp, a city in northern Belgium, had a Jewish population of about 50,000 on the eve of the German invasion in May 1940. Of those, only some 20% were actually Belgian citizens; the rest were either recent immigrants from Eastern Europe or refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria. With the Nazi attack on Belgium, about 20,000 of Antwerp’s Jews fled before the advance of the Nazis, the vast majority moving south through Belgium and into France.

At first, despite the Nazi occupation, daily life in the city continued more or less as it had before, but as time progressed things began to deteriorate for Antwerp’s Jewish population. Within days of the occupation the Germans had already begun instituting anti-Jewish measures across Belgium and, from these first days, Jews were subject to a curfew from dusk to dawn, and Jewish-owned businesses had to carry special markings. In December 1940 a German decree was issued opening the possibility for foreigners to be removed from certain areas of Belgium. Pursuant to this, the German military administration in Antwerp began expelling foreign Jews who had arrived in Belgium after 1938, and eventually some 3,334 Jews were deported in this way during the winter of 1940–1941, mostly into rural regions.

Moreover, the Germans were supported in their anti-Jewish measures by local pro-Nazi and antisemitic parties and groups. In Antwerp these collaborationist sectors were both more numerous and radical than in other Belgian cities, especially the Vlaams Nationaal Verbond (Flemish National Union, or VNV), De Vlag (the Flag), and the Algemeene-SS Vlaanderen (Germanic SS in Flanders).

Easter Monday on April 14, 1941, saw Flemish antisemitic attitudes boil over into what became a wartime pogrom against Antwerp’s Jewish quarter. A screening of the viciously antisemitic German propaganda film *Der Ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew) saw the various Flemish paramilitary groups (including also the Volksverwering [“People’s

Defense”] and the Anti-Jewish League) launch an offensive directed solely at the Jewish population. In scenes reminiscent of the Kristallnacht in Germany just two-and-a-half years earlier, some 200 rioters, armed with iron bars, sticks, and other weapons, and spurred on by the German occupation authorities, marched their way down the Oostenstraat, the main street in the Jewish district, where they set fire to the Van den Nestlei and the Oostenstraat synagogues, burned a number of their Torah scrolls, smashed the windows of Jewish-owned shops, and harassed the Jewish population. They then turned their attention toward the home of Rabbi Marcus Rottenburg, Chief Rabbi of Flanders.

As had happened during the November Pogrom in Germany on Kristallnacht in 1938, the police (unarmed) and fire brigade were called, but were forbidden to intervene by the German authorities. Encouraged by their accomplishments, the rioters made another attack three days later.

Appalled, the Antwerp city council, following the lead of a horrified population, assumed responsibility for the attacks and offered compensation to the Jews who had suffered damage. The Germans, however, refused to allow this to be put into place.

Having shown the Jews of Antwerp what they could expect from the Nazi administration and the local Nazis in the vicinity, a few months later the Germans began a process of “Aryanization” of Jewish property. Soon, all of Belgium’s Jews were required to wear a yellow star. Then, during 1942, deportations of Jews began. On August 28, 1942, the first mass arrests of Jews took place: first, foreigners—specifically, Romanian Jews—were picked up and taken to a transit camp in Mechelen (known to French-speaking Belgians as Malines), but soon others were also rounded up. In September 1942 Jews were arrested on the streets, and only those who could prove that they held Belgian citizenship were released. It was only a short step from there to arresting all Jews, regardless of nationality. A year later, in September 1943, the Nazis began arresting and deporting Belgian Jews as well.

The Jews of Antwerp proactively tried to save themselves and others, and local Zionist youth groups, in particular, became active in helping to smuggle Jews to secure hiding places. It has been estimated that perhaps as many as 3,000 Jews managed to hide in the Antwerp area during the war, including some eight hundred who actually remained in the city.

Antwerp was finally liberated on September 4, 1944. During the war, 65% of the city’s Jews perished as a result of the Holocaust. This was a staggering loss, and it stands in stark contrast to the Jewish losses in Brussels, where “only” 35% of Jews were deported and murdered. When reasons are

called for to explain the difference, three stand out: the fact that a large proportion of the Jewish population was foreign and not of Belgian nationality; that there were very distinct Jewish districts, making it easier for the Nazis to target their victims; and, above all—as demonstrated during the Antwerp Pogrom of April 1941—there was a willingness on the part of some in the Antwerp populace to eagerly assist the Nazis in their murderous aims.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryanization; Belgium; Collaboration; Propaganda

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April Boycott

An economic boycott against the Jews of Germany directed by the newly installed Nazi government took place on April 1, 1933. Given the years of antisemitic rhetoric flowing from the Nazis before they assumed power on January 30, 1933, there were intense fears throughout the Jewish world that it was only a matter of time before the Jews of Germany would be hit badly should the Nazis put their statements into practice. Driven by this anxiety on behalf of their German co-religionists, a series of anti-Nazi protest rallies organized by American Jewish organizations took place on March 27, 1933, in New York, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and 70 other locations across the country. The New York rally, which took place before a packed house at Madison Square Garden, was broadcast around the world. The result saw a number of Jewish organizations, among them the American Jewish Congress, American League for Defense of Jewish Rights, B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Labor Committee, and Jewish War Veterans, join together in a call for a boycott of German goods in the hope that it would make the Nazis realize that they could be hurt economically should they decide to introduce any antisemitic measures. In the United Kingdom and other European countries, also, a Jewish boycott of German goods was implemented as a symbol of resistance against the Nazis' policies.

In response, the Nazi leadership decided to stage an economic boycott of their own, against the Jews of Germany.

The avowed reason was to exact revenge against the so-called “atrocities” (*Gruehpropaganda*) that, the Nazis maintained, were being spread about Germany overseas. It was the first avowed government action against Germany's Jews, built on earlier expressions of the same type of behavior. In the 1920s, for example, Nazi newspapers frequently called for a boycott of Jewish businesses, and this theme was often repeated even before the Nazis assumed power.

In March 1933 the Nazis, after conducting a manipulated election that saw them returned with a large majority, took control of the Reichstag. On March 23 they passed the Enabling Act, which confirmed Hitler's complete control of the country. An SA presence now increased throughout Germany, and harassment and violence against Jews was stepped up.

In response to the overseas boycott of Germany by Jewish businesses, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels announced that a one-day boycott would take place against Jewish businesses in Germany. This would commence on April 1, 1933. In announcing the boycott, he stated that it would only be lifted once anti-Nazi protests overseas were suspended. In a statement threatening the Jewish community in Germany, he declared that if the protests did not then cease, “the boycott will be resumed . . . until German Jewry has been annihilated.” Julius Streicher, the viciously antisemitic editor and publisher of the newspaper *Der Stürmer*, was placed in charge of organizing the boycott, and he began planning on March 29. He then issued a series of orders calling for a nonviolent boycott to begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 1.

That morning, many Jewish shop owners woke to find the windows of their businesses painted with Stars of David, the word “*Jude*” (Jew), and antisemitic phrases. SA Stormtroopers stood menacingly in front of Jewish-owned department stores and retail establishments and the offices of professionals such as doctors and lawyers, intimidating anyone who dared to walk in. Signs were posted throughout Germany saying “Don't Buy from Jews” (*Kauf nicht bei Juden!*) and “The Jews Are Our Misfortune” (*Die Juden sind unser Unglück!*). In addition, acts of violence were perpetrated against Jews throughout Germany.

Despite this, many Germans did not pay attention to the boycott, preferring to shop in the Jewish-owned stores with which they were familiar. Those customers who defiantly tried to enter Jewish shops were taunted and often verbally abused by Nazis and their supporters outside. Furthermore, numerous Jewish veterans of the First World War stood outside their businesses wearing their medals from 1914,

eliciting more sympathy from non-Jewish Germans. Perhaps realizing that their measure was called too early to be obeyed by an unprepared public unaccustomed to Nazi methods, the boycott was called off after only one day, ending officially at midnight.

The boycott, though quickly abandoned, at least demonstrated, from the earliest days of the Nazi regime, their intent to undermine the viability of a Jewish presence in Germany. Moreover, it marked the beginning of a nationwide campaign by the Nazi Party against the entire German Jewish population. One week after the boycott, on April 7, 1933, the government passed the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, a measure that dismissed all Jews from employment in government service; this meant that Jews could no longer be civil servants or employed in education or, given that lawyers were also employed by the state, practice law. Doctors and hospital employees soon followed.

There were three exceptions: Jews who were veterans of World War I; those who had been in the civil service continuously since August 1, 1914; and those who had lost a father

or son in combat in the war. Although they were excluded from the measures introduced by the law, this, too, would change over time.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryanization; Lichtenberg, Bernhard; Sturmabteilung; Weltsch, Robert

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Arbeit Macht Frei

“*Arbeit Macht Frei*,” generally translated as “Work makes you free,” or “Work will set you free,” was the aphorism shown at the entrance to several Nazi concentration and



Arbeit macht frei is a German phrase meaning “work sets you free.” The slogan is known for appearing on the entrance of Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps. This image shows the entrance gate to Auschwitz. (Corel)

extermination camps, usually at the top of the gates to the camp, during the Holocaust. It was SS General Theodor Eicke, inspector general of concentration camps, who ordered the sign to be posted. First used at the entrance to the Dachau concentration camp, where Eicke was commandant, the slogan was also posted at the entrance to the Sachsenhausen, Gross-Rosen, Theresienstadt, and Flossenbürg camps, among others, and, most infamously, at Auschwitz. The iconic lettering was created by a communist prisoner at the order of the SS.

Given that work in these camps almost always led to death, and not freedom in the literal sense, the question is, what did the phrase mean? Otto Friedrich, who survived Auschwitz, and who attributes the wording of the sign to Rudolf Höss, observes that Höss did not mean it to be a mockery or a false promise, but as something that speaks of the almost mystical relationship between labor and freedom. Most other characterizations of the sign, however, employ words such as cynical, ironic, and cruel. It has also been suggested that the Nazis' stereotype of the Jews as being unable or unwilling to engage in physical labor was another source of the wording.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Auschwitz; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Museums and Memorials

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Arendt, Hannah

Political philosopher and German-Jewish refugee, Hannah Arendt was one of the most important and controversial Jewish thinkers of the 20th century. While she was a prolific author, her fame rests primarily on three major works: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951); *The Human Condition* (1958); and, especially, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963).

Arendt was born on October 14, 1906, in Linden, Germany, and spent her formative years in Königsberg and Berlin. Her parents were middle-class secular Jews, and she was raised with little knowledge of Jewish religious traditions and observances. Her father died when she was only seven years old, and it was her mother who encouraged her to pursue an academic career and make good use of her intellectual gifts. From 1924 to 1929 she studied at the University of Marburg, the University of Freiburg, and the University of Heidelberg.

Arrested by the Gestapo in 1933 for her work documenting German antisemitism and briefly interned, she fled to France where she remained until 1940. After the Nazi invasion and occupation of France in 1940, she escaped with her mother and her second husband, Heinrich Blücher, a Marxist philosopher and former Communist Party member. Her safety was facilitated through an American Righteous Gentile, Varian Fry, who managed to rescue a considerable number of intellectuals from the Nazis through his underground activities in Marseille. Arendt arrived in New York in 1941.

During the remaining years of World War II she worked as a journalist for the German-Jewish newspaper *Aufbau*, and after the war for the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, under whose auspices she returned to Germany on many occasions. In addition, she worked as an editor at Schocken Books and with Youth Aliyah, which arranged for surviving Jewish young people to emigrate from Europe to pre-state Palestine. She later held academic appointments at the University of California, Princeton University, Northwestern University, Yale University, Wesleyan University, the University of Chicago, and the New School for Social Research in New York. She died on December 4, 1975.

The Origins of Totalitarianism, written in the aftermath of World War II, is divided into three parts: first, an analysis of antisemitism; second, an analysis of imperialism; and third, an analysis of totalitarianism. Arendt understood that the roots of imperialism and totalitarianism lie not only in their making common cause with antisemitism (and racism) but in the fact that both Marxism and National Socialism are linked by their use of terror in the service of an ideology that is used to control the masses—and that both were thus radically new forms of government.

Arendt was far more publicly controversial as a result of the conclusions she drew when covering the trial in Jerusalem of Nazi SS Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, in particular her analysis of his “ordinariness” and his seeming inability to think through the consequences of his actions in relation to other human beings. At the same time, she also offered a critique of the members of the various *Judenräte* (Jewish councils), which showed them to be tragically complicit in their own destruction.

Arendt argued that Eichmann was, at most, a reasonably intelligent, though hardly introspective, person, a bureaucrat who saw the SS and his role in it as one that provided career advancement. By all accounts, he was not an antisemite

in the classic Nazi mold; he had studied Jewish history, visited Palestine, and even attempted unsuccessfully to learn Hebrew. Physically, there was nothing distinguishing about either his size or his features. He was, in the final analysis, just an ordinary man, but one who found himself in a situation and role that evidently suited him, regardless of its ultimate consequences. For Arendt, the question was how he could justify his behavior. Observing him almost daily in the courtroom and responding to the judges, his defense attorneys, and the prosecutors, she came to perceive no insight on his part regarding his behavior toward other human beings and adopted the term “banal” to describe the ordinariness of the man. For Arendt, the term “banality” tended to characterize too much of the contemporary human condition. The overwhelming majority of human beings, for her, lack the ability to think about their behavior, and their lack of self-insight (introspection) thus allows some to engage in horrific behaviors without the necessity of either rationalizations or justifications. Eichmann was thus emblematic of too many in too many societies and, by extension, what continues to be wrong with much of the world.

Beyond her comments on Eichmann, Arendt’s remarks on the *Judenräte* produced a storm of controversy for which she was somewhat unprepared. However, she wrote that her examination of the data presented at the trial had led her to conclude that those Jews tragically tasked with leadership responsibilities under the Nazis had, for the most part, at least initially unknowingly, participated in their own destruction and the destruction of their fellow Jews.

To sum up the main threads of Hannah Arendt’s thinking concerning the Holocaust is no easy task. For most of her adult life she remained something of a marginal figure on the periphery of the organized Jewish community and, ultimately, far more welcomed within the larger academic and intellectual communities wherein she found a home to think and write. She remains, however, one of the seminal thinkers and writers on antisemitism, communism, Nazism, and the Holocaust, whose insights cannot be cavalierly dismissed but must be addressed directly. Her insights were astute and highly influential (as well as controversial) in their time; how relevant they will remain for future generations of scholars and thinkers will await further determination.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Banality of Evil; Bingham, Harry; Bureaucracy; Desk Killers; *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; Eichmann Trial; *Judenrat*

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Armée Juive

The French *Armée Juive* (Jewish Army) was founded in January 1942 by Jewish partisans who were active in various already-established resistance groups. A number of these by this time held leadership roles; for example, Jews made up 90% of the first detachment of the communist FTP-MOI (*Francs-Tireurs et Partisans—Main-d’Oeuvre Immigrée*), a subgroup of the FTP organization (*Francs-Tireurs et Partisans*), an armed resistance organization created by leaders of the French Communist Party (PCF). The second detachment of the FTP-MOI was nearly 100% comprised of Yiddish-speaking, foreign-born Jews. The FTP-MOI, despite having a severe weapons shortage, increased its attacks over time. By 1943 it was able to conduct more daring and frequent attacks against the Germans, at the rate of fifteen per month. The *Armée Juive* assisted the FTP-MOI by attacking German military trucks and trains and by carrying out sabotage missions. Hundreds of these French Jewish resistance fighters joined the ranks of the *Armée Juive*, France’s all-Jewish partisan force.

The *Armée Juive* managed to smuggle thousands of Jews to Spain and Switzerland, and launched a number of attacks against the German army in both the northern and southern parts of France. Other forms of resistance included attacking informants and Gestapo agents, and smuggling funds from Switzerland to rescue organizations in France. The majority of *Armée Juive* fighters were dedicated Zionists, but it also accepted all Jews, regardless of whether or not they were Zionists. The *Armée Juive* military chief, Jacque Lazarus, inspired the group by coupling the act of resistance to Jewish heritage.

In August 1940 Dovid and Ariane Knout, along with Abraham Polonski and his wife Eugenie, all revisionist Zionists, established a secret organization in Toulouse known as

the “strong hand.” Dovid Knout based the goals of the organization on the creation of a Jewish state, while also defending the right of Jews to live outside Palestine and to fight against the Nazis. The recruitment of Aron Lucien Lublin, a socialist Zionist, expanded the organization. Polonski and Lublin began recruiting activists in Toulouse, Montpellier, Nice, Grenoble, Lyon, and Limoges. The first members were recruited with participants in a circle of Jewish studies led by Rabbi Paul Roitman. Initially, members assisted with supplying the inmates of internment camps attempting to escape in the Toulouse region.

On January 10, 1942, the Armée Juive was officially created by an agreement between Polonski and Lublin. Their agreement formulated the objectives of the group, which included the forms of action and organizational structure. The recruitment process of the Jewish Army was by the “friend brings a friend” method, thus reducing their risk of exposure. Each member of the Armée Juive was required to swear on the Bible, before the blue and white Zionist flag, and recite an oath swearing loyalty to the Jewish Army and obedience to its leaders. Individuals who joined the Jewish Army were subject to severe, secret, and obedient recruitment standards. The Armée Juive reinforced its ranks with the MJS (Mouvement des Jeunesses Sionistes) and the Zionist Youth Movement that was created in May 1942 by Simon Levitte and Dika Jefroykin. In 1943 the Jewish Army was able to widen the circles of its members and activities through cooperation agreements with the MJS and the Jewish Scouts of France (EIF).

The Jewish Army signed an agreement in 1943 with the Zionist Organization of France, which provided them the assistance of the organization’s president, Marc Jarblum, while he was seeking refuge in Switzerland. Through this agreement, the Jewish Army received money from Switzerland in order to assist with rescue activities and the ongoing armed struggle. In addition to assisting with the rescue of French Jews and their difficult passage to Switzerland, the Armée Juive simultaneously assisted in illegal crossings across the Spanish border under the cover of their false “Aryan” papers; these were intended to help young people to join the Allied forces or flee to Palestine. The evacuation and regrouping service to Spain was hit hard in May 1944 when a Jewish Army leader, Jacques Roitman, was arrested by the Gestapo at the station near Toulouse, along with Rabbi Leo Cohen and five other resistance fighters. However, despite this setback, the Jewish Army still managed to send several hundred people across the Spanish border. Through their evacuation and child reunion service, the

Armée Juive successfully smuggled thousands of children by September 1944 to both Switzerland and through Spain to Palestine.

During the French uprising of 1944, the Armée Juive consolidated the Jewish partisan force into one coordinating body as a joint effort of the leaders of the Jewish organizations in order to strengthen and contribute to the general French Resistance movement. The new organization became known as the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Organization Juive de Combat*), or OJC. The OJC cooperated in the campaign against the retreating German army, and thus participated in the liberation of Paris, Lyon, Toulouse, Grenoble, and Nice. The OJC successfully captured a German train that held soldiers, food, weapons, and ammunitions. The soldiers of the OJC all wore Star of David armbands and proudly declared to the German prisoners that they were Jewish. Because of its contributions to the war effort, the Jewish Fighting Organization was officially recognized as a unit of the French Forces of the Interior.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: France; Jewish Partisans; Jewish Resistance; Resistance Movements

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Armenians, Hitler Statement

This statement is attributed to German Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. In all probability it was made on August 22, 1939, in a speech to his military chiefs and commanding field generals at his mountain retreat, the Berghof, at Berchtesgaden.

Exhorting his officers of the need to be brutal and merciless in the campaign against Poland that was about to begin, Hitler is reported as having said: “I have issued the command—I’ll have anybody who utters one word of criticism executed by a firing squad—that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death’s head formations in readiness—for the present only in the East—with orders to exterminate without mercy, men, women and

children of the Polish-speaking race. Only thus shall we gain the living space [*Lebensraum*] that we need. Who, after all, today speaks of the annihilation of the Armenians?" (*Wer redet heute noch von der Vernichtung der Armenier?*).

Recognizing that a new Turkish state had been constructed after World War I, in large part owing to an ethnic resurrection and the accompanying destruction of the Armenians, Hitler noted that Germany could do the same because "the world believes only in success" (*Die Welt glaubt nur an den Erfolg*). A much-quoted statement, its veracity has for several decades been rigorously challenged by anti-Armenian Turks and their supporters, who claim that it is a forgery prepared by a Pulitzer Prize-winning U.S. journalist, Louis P. Lochner. He, in turn, had asserted that the document in which the statement was made had been obtained through diplomatic sources, and it is known that he transmitted it to the British ambassador in Berlin, Sir Nevile Henderson, on August 25, 1939.

Despite expressions of doubt in some quarters, several Armenian genocide scholars, such as Vahakn N. Dadrian and Kevork B. Bardakjian (among others), have confirmed the veracity of Hitler's statement, showing the circumstances and context in which the statement was made. It is important to recognize that Hitler was speaking about the Poles when addressing his generals; often, well-meaning but erroneous commentators and teachers make the claim that Hitler presaged the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews by reference to the genocide of the Armenians, but a close reading of the document shows this to be incorrect. On the other hand, Hitler's statement is a clear recognition of the understanding on his part that there had been, in fact, an Armenian genocide, even though the word itself had not yet been coined at the time when the speech was made.

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See also: Genocide; Lebensraum; Turkey

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Arouch, Salamo

Salamo Arouch was a Greek Jewish boxer who was interned for two years (1943–1945) at Auschwitz-Birkenau. There he

agreed to box as an attraction for the Nazi guards and in doing so was probably saved from the gas chambers.

Salamo Arouch was born in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 1923, the son of working-class parents. Despite his small stature (he was only 5' 6" tall), he began fighting when he was 14, quickly becoming a formidable boxer. By the time he was 17 he had become the Balkans light-middleweight champion and was undefeated.

In May 1943 Arouch's life changed forever when German troops marched into Thessaloniki and began rounding up Jews for deportation to Nazi death camps. On May 15, Arouch, his parents, and four siblings arrived by train at Auschwitz. His three sisters and mother were promptly exterminated. Shortly thereafter, camp officials learned that Arouch had been a successful boxer, and they arranged a series of fights with fellow inmates to entertain prison personnel. He fought some 200 bouts, winning all but 2, which were deemed a draw. Arouch was spared hard labor as a result and was given the coveted position of file clerk. His father, meanwhile, was eventually gassed as his health declined, and his brother was shot to death for disobeying guards' orders.

In January 1945 Arouch and the other Auschwitz survivors were liberated by Soviet troops. In April 1945 he met another death camp survivor, Marta Yechiel, and the two soon married. The young couple took up residence in Palestine, and Arouch participated in the 1948 Israeli War of Independence. He remained in Israel thereafter, operating a moving and shipping company based in Tel Aviv. In 1989 Arouch's experiences during World War II were documented in a motion picture, *Triumph of the Spirit*, with Willem Defoe playing Arouch. Arouch was an adviser to the film crew, which shot the movie on location at Auschwitz.

Salamo Arouch died in Israel on April 26, 2009.

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See also: Auschwitz; *Triumph of the Spirit*

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Arrow Cross

Installed by the Germans after their invasion of Hungary in March 1944, the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross Party (*Nyilas* in

Hungarian) led the Hungarian government from October 1944 to March 1945, during which it was responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Jews. The ferocity and breadth of those murders reflects the complex and poisonous environment in which the party came to power.

Under the virtual dictatorship of its regent, Miklós Horthy, Hungary reluctantly allied itself with Germany in November 1940. Even more reluctantly, it followed Germany in declaring war on the Soviet Union in June 1941. The stunning casualties Hungary sustained against the Soviets led the Horthy government to negotiate with the Allies over the possibility of switching sides later in the war. Hitler's response to these efforts, as well as his growing impatience with Horthy's reluctance to commit to the extermination of the Jews, was one of outrage. Horthy chose to back away from his plan of siding with the Allies and, instead, prove his fealty to Germany by instituting limited deportations of Hungary's Jews (something that he did not want to do), but he held firm in rejecting German demands in 1942 to require Jews to wear yellow stars and to further ostracize them from Hungarian society. Of greater significance, he did not begin major deportations of Jews to extermination camps, as the German government ordered. As the Soviet forces advanced on Hungary, Horthy switched sides again and sought an armistice with Moscow, triggering the immediate invasion and occupation of Hungary by Germany on March 19, 1944.

Beginning in April 1944, the Horthy government—with little or no choice to do otherwise—took several steps that began the ruination of Hungary's Jewish community, a process that would fall to the Arrow Cross Party to complete just six months later. The first step was the concentration of some 500,000 Jews who were living outside of Budapest into ghettos established in cities around the country. These ghettos—where conditions were atrocious—were short-lived, as the Nazi plan of extermination unfolded.

In the next step, beginning in May 1944, Adolf Eichmann organized and implemented the deportation of more than 400,000 Jews from Hungary to their ultimate destination of Auschwitz in just two months. In July 1944 Horthy ordered a halt to the deportations even as he sought an agreement with the Soviet Union. On October 15, 1944, in response to Horthy's announcement that Hungary was going to surrender, Hitler removed Horthy from office (the so-called *Nyilas* coup) and installed Ferenc Szálasi and his Arrow Cross Party to head the government, a leader and a party far more likely to embrace deportation and extermination of Jews than was Horthy and his government. Horthy had ordered Szálasi's arrest in mid-September, but that was thwarted by Hitler's

agents in Hungary. Thus it was that the Arrow Cross Party, under Szálasi's leadership, began what would become a shocking six-month reign of terror.

Born in 1897, Szálasi, who had a history of association with extreme right-wing organizations, founded the Party of National Will—the precursor of the Arrow Cross Party—in 1935. Two years later he formed the Arrow Cross Party. Combining elements of Italian fascism and German National Socialism, the party's ideology embraced nationalism, anti-semitism, anticommunism, and the concepts of racial superiority (with Germans and Hungarians as the most superior) and social Darwinism with its central belief in the eternal contest between the strong and the weak. This ideology (sometimes referred to as "Hungarism") along with a central role accorded to agriculture, resulted in the party growing to approximately 500,000 members and garnering 25% of the votes in Hungary's 1939 election. Although fashioned after the thinking of the Nazi Party, the Arrow Cross Party had its differences with Germany. For example, its position on Jews admitted a religious component in addition to the Nazis' purely racial element, and it sought expansion to create a "Greater Hungary." This would require revision of the Treaty of Trianon, the Allied-imposed World War I treaty that greatly reduced Hungary's territory. Despite the fact that the Arrow Cross Party's vision of a growing Hungary was especially incompatible with the Nazi intention to conquer and control all of Europe, in 1944 Hitler reversed a ban on the Arrow Cross Party that Horthy had imposed at the beginning of the war.

On October 15, 1944, Szálasi, now the Nazi-installed "Nation Leader" of Hungary, began the process that would decimate the remaining Jews of Budapest, the only remaining Jewish community extant in Hungary. It started with virulent anti-Jewish propaganda spewed across radios throughout the country, emboldening gangs of Arrow Cross youths to roam the streets and Jewish "yellow-star" houses into which the Jews had been consigned, assaulting Jews at will. Hundreds were killed in the first night of mayhem alone, some being shot into the Danube River.

On October 18 the Arrow Cross government worked to curb the gangs, even as it promised dire actions against the Jews. On the same day, Eichmann and the government finalized their plans for the Jews. Approximately 25,000 Jewish men between the ages of 15 and 60, and 10,000 Jewish women between the ages of 18 and 40, were marched from the city to build fortifications around the city. It was, as expected by Eichmann and the Arrow Cross, a deadly task forced on the Jews, with many tortured and shot along the

way and with the survivors facing a horrific sentence of hard labor. The situation only got worse as the Soviet forces came closer to the city.

Beginning in early November, tens of thousands of Jews were forced into a death march toward the Austrian border, with thousands dying along the way due to horrible conditions that included starvation, exhaustion, and execution. A small number of Jews, however, fared better. They were the holders of various types of certificates of exception, for example, those with certificates of protection from the Vatican and neutral countries, or with certificates from the Horthy government that were approved by the Arrow Cross government. The protective policy toward these Jews—some 15,000 in number—was part of a broader effort by the Arrow Cross government to mitigate protests from churches and neutral countries against treatment of the Jews. Even these Jews, though, were living in squalid conditions, remaining subject to ongoing terror by Arrow Cross gangs, and dealing with ever increasing struggles to survive as the Soviets continued their advance.

In late November 1944 most remaining Jews were forced into a ghetto in Budapest that at its peak held almost 70,000 people in an area of one-tenth of a square mile. The conditions in such a situation were as terrible as could be imagined.

With the Soviets now surrounding the city, the terror of the Arrow Cross government against the Jews actually increased, if such was possible. Attacks by Arrow Cross gangs in the ghetto resulted in random murder, executions of Jews marched out to the banks of the Danube, and even the murder of Jewish patients in hospitals.

The Soviets liberated Pest in mid-January 1945 and Buda a month later. Thousands of Arrow Cross members were arrested and brought to trial in Hungarian courts. Among those who were executed was Szálasi, on March 12, 1946.

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See also: Horthy, Miklós; Hungarian War Crimes Prosecutions; Hungary; Rotta, Angelo; Salkaházi, Sára; Slachta, Margit; Szálasi, Ferenc

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Art and the Holocaust

Art is a very powerful tool. It expresses inner feelings and emotions and translates the mind's view into a type of visual reality. As difficult as it may be to interpret and, in some cases, complete, it is even more so when the art is intended to reflect or represent an event as devastating as the Holocaust. It has been said that there “can be no art after Auschwitz,” but this does not seem to be the case.

Art is a far-reaching term, to be sure. Usually, one thinks about visual art, yet there are many different aspects to the term. Paintings, drawings, prints, and the like represent the artist's foray into the realm of the two-dimensional. Sculptures, installations, and a number of other classifications belong in the three-dimensional category. As the 20th century unfolded, new forms of art evolved that included photography, film, theater, and dance. All types of media have been used to represent the Holocaust. In addition, art was created during and after the Holocaust and is still being created today in more contemporary variations.

The Nazis used art as a means of propaganda and were the early masters of documentation (of atrocities and programs) through the use of film, photos, and even television.



Ideas relating to art shaped the cultural atmosphere and political policies for all of Germany. Many artistic styles from earlier times were denounced and banned as “degenerate,” and artists were encouraged to produce works in conformity with the “Aryan” ideals. The Nazis were also inveterate thieves who looted the galleries of Europe. Here we see an image of such art returned to its rightful owner in 2001. (AP Photo/Tina Fineberg)

Prisoners, survivors and victims alike, also created art in places such as ghettos, camps, displaced persons camps—in short, wherever and whenever they could. Using what materials were at hand, the prisoners engaged in art for a variety of reasons. Art historian Ziva Amishai-Maisels identifies five major themes/reasons: official art, produced at the behest of the perpetrators; spiritual resistance through the assertion of individuality, keeping one’s humanity under the most dire circumstances; the affirmation and commemoration of life—particularly important after the fact, and in order to honor both victims and survivors; catharsis (for the artist) in the release of emotions and experiences; and witnessing, as some works of art were used as evidence at the Nuremberg and subsequent trials of perpetrators.

Some of the artists were amateurs; others involved were already established practitioners. One may ask why this was done and how it was carried out under such appalling circumstances. Possibly the most important reason that artists created during such a time of duress was that they were artists, first and foremost.

Propaganda played an important part in Nazi ideology. During the rise of the party in the 1920s, its acceleration and power in the 1930s, and all throughout both the war and the Holocaust, the party and then the Reich utilized various forms of propaganda to influence people and to consolidate and maintain power. Josef Goebbels, officially the minister of Culture and Enlightenment, was effectively the “propaganda minister.” Antisemitism, anticommunism, and fascism were recurrent themes in all media, especially in film, radio, print, and posters. Goebbels supervised a network of agencies and people whose responsibility was to control every aspect of media and edit and disseminate the party line. In addition, Goebbels supervised the acquisition of works of art that were deemed dangerous and degenerate.

In 1937 Goebbels and the Ministry of Culture staged two gala art exhibitions simultaneously in Munich. One gallery hosted the Great German Art Exhibition, with what was hailed as the “best” of German and Germanic-inspired art; across the street, the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition was held. The opening ceremonies were preceded by a parade, with most of the top Nazi officials and national dignitaries in attendance. The German exhibition featured classic paintings, drawings, and sculptures. This “Pure German Art” included portraiture, biblical and mythological themes, heroism, landscapes, still lifes, and other approved paintings and sculptures. The *Entartete Kunst* exhibition, which was

better attended, had at its core the works of “degenerate” artists (modernists, cubists, surrealists); it was billed as “degenerate” as it included works by “communists, Jews, Bolsheviks, degenerates, the mentally ill,” and the like. Works by German Expressionists as well as foreigners were exhibited in a hodge-podge milieu, while across the street the museum was set up in a bright, charming, and orderly fashion. It is interesting to note that, while these works were termed “degenerate” and “undesirable,” many of them were later found in the private collections of such notables as Heinrich Himmler, Hermann Göring, and Hitler himself. Others were auctioned off in Switzerland prior to the outbreak of war.

The Nazis were obsessed with art. They confiscated art belonging to Jews and other deportees before and during the Holocaust and ransacked museums, private collections, churches, and synagogues. While many of these works ended up in personal collections, many works were scheduled to be deposited in Hitler’s planned Fuhrermuseum in Linz, Austria.

Artists practiced their craft in ghettos, concentration camps, death camps, and displaced persons camps. In Theresienstadt (Terezín), inmates, especially children, were encouraged to draw, paint and sculpt, write poetry, and perform plays. Many items were salvaged from this camp after the war.

Art was produced for the reasons listed above; artists often had to use whatever materials were available to them. Much of the artwork has been lost, yet a substantial amount survived the devastation. While many of the artist’s names are unknown, some of the more prominent ones were as follows: Yehuda Bacon, a Czech artist/survivor from Auschwitz-Birkenau, who began his artistic career after liberation, painting in a very sophisticated style; Dana Gottliebova (Babbitt), who was instrumental in working with Dr. Josef Mengele at Auschwitz in the primary role of portraying Roma (Gypsy) prisoners in her paintings; Alfred Kantor, whose works portrayed “everyday life” in the concentration camp and are collected in his published work *The Book of Alfred Kantor*; Jan Komski, a Polish painter who studied painting, anatomy, and art history at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts and, during World War II, worked in the resistance movement and was interned at Auschwitz; Josef Nassy, a black expatriate artist of Jewish descent, who was living in Belgium when World War II began and was one of about 2,000 civilians holding American passports who were confined in German internment camps during the war;

Felix Nussbaum, a German-Jewish surrealist painter, who gave a rare glimpse into the essence of one individual among the victims of the Holocaust, usually including himself in his paintings in some way; David Olere, a Polish-born French painter and sculptor best known for his explicit drawings and paintings based on his experiences as a Jewish *Sonderkommando* inmate at Auschwitz; and Simon Wiesenthal, who documented his experiences through drawings that were later used as evidence against the perpetrators.

While much painting, drawing, and sculpture was done by those who experienced it, other artists reacted to the horrific events. Famous artists such as Pablo Picasso and Marc Chagall used the terror of genocide and, in some cases, the Holocaust itself as subject matter. American artist Thomas Hart Benton completed several paintings in the 1940s that attempted to portray the horrors of fascism, war, and the Holocaust. Arthur Szyk was a famous contemporary cartoonist, and Art Spiegelman is famous for his MAUS series—two books of cartoons based upon the experiences of his father, a survivor, and starring mice, cats, and dogs in various “roles.” Many artists were themselves refugees from fascist Europe and the Holocaust, including Paul Klee, Vasily Kandinsky, Jacques Lipschitz, and Chagall.

Like some authors (and Holocaust survivors in general), many artists did not begin to express their feelings and experiences until years after the fact. In addition, second- and third-generation (children and grandchildren) who are practitioners of art have also joined in expressing the emotions and paying tribute to the lives and experiences of their relatives.

There is no dearth of examples of Holocaust art, or those relating in some way to this subject matter. Artists created, and still do to this day, based on experience and feeling. Although the events happened three-quarters of a century ago, the artistic legacies are preserved for the modern critic, scholar, and student. Art continues to dominate the discussion due to renewed interest in stolen art and its return, as well as the powerful nature of the subject matter itself. Memorials, monuments, and museums, in and of themselves works of art, have sprung up throughout the world to honor the memory of those lost and to celebrate survival and return to life. The legacy of the art of the Holocaust will be apparent for a long time to come.

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See also: Haas, Leo; *Maus* and *Maus II*; Music and the Holocaust; Propaganda in the Holocaust; Salomon, Charlotte

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Aryan

A term taken originally from Sanskrit, initially referring to a nobleman or gentleman. By the 1920s German Nazis, including Adolf Hitler, began to employ the term when referring to the “master race,” the allegedly pure Germanic/Nordic race of people who were supposed to be racially, physically, and intellectually above “lesser” peoples. This was part of the Nazis’ larger and deeply flawed theories involving “racial hygiene” and race. The Aryan ideal was a Nordic type—tall, with blond hair, high cheekbones, and blue eyes. Ironically, many Nazi leaders, including Hitler, did not fit this set of physical characteristics.

Within the Nazi conception, beneath the “master race” were various Indo-European speaking peoples, who were deemed “partly Aryan” because they had mixed or intermarried with so-called “inferior” races. Jews, along with blacks, Roma, Indians, and other peoples from the subcontinent and Asia were not considered Aryans and were thus undesirable. The concept of the Aryan race helped drive and rationalize the Holocaust against Jews and other minorities.

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See also: Antisemitism; Eugenics; Fischer, Eugen; *Lebensborn*; “Life Unworthy of Life”; *Mein Kampf*; Nazi Criminal Orders, 1941; “Racial Hygiene”

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Aryan Paragraph

The Aryan Paragraph was a provision or clause in a German legal document under the Nazis, excluding so-called “non-Aryans” from participation in a particular activity or membership in a group. First found in the constitutions of political, social, or similar groups in the 19th century, the most consequential and far-reaching use of the Aryan Paragraph was in anti-Jewish legislation promulgated by the Nazis in an effort to remove Jews from all aspects of German society.

On April 1, 1933, just two months into the Hitler regime, one of the earliest anti-Jewish laws, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, included what would become the norm for all such legislation. Paragraph 1 of Article 3 stated: “Officials, who are of non-aryan descent, are to be retired; insofar as honorary officials are concerned, they are to be removed from official status.” This represented the first time since emancipation of the Jews in 1871 that a government-driven legal exclusion of the Jews was promulgated.

The wording of this exclusion of non-Aryans would be changed over time. At the request of Japan, “non-Aryan” would no longer be used; instead, reference would be made specifically to Jews. Also, the many exceptions to the exclusionary provisions that were allowed in April 1933 were soon greatly minimized or eliminated altogether. Despite these changes, the impact would be the same as the Aryan Paragraph made its way into numerous pieces of subsequent legislation.

For example, the Law Regarding Admission to the Bar, April 7, 1933, applied the Aryan Paragraph to the cancellation of the admission of lawyers of non-Aryan descent, and did so by reference to the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service: persons considered to be non-Aryan under that law would be refused permission to practice under this law. The same reference to the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was made in the Law against Overcrowding of German Schools and Higher Institutions, April 25, 1933, which limited the number of Jewish students in German schools.

Restrictions on Jews resulting from the application of the Aryan Paragraph can be found in numerous other pieces of anti-Jewish legislation. The paragraph is the basic statement of intent for all such legislation, reaching its apogee in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, which denied German citizenship to non-Aryans.

Given the impact these anti-Jewish laws had on the lives of Jews throughout Germany, it became crucial to define the

meaning of a non-Aryan. Thus, the First Decree for the Implementation of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, April 11, 1933, included this definition of the term “non-Aryan”: “A person is to be regarded as non-Aryan if he is descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents. It is enough for one parent or grandparent to be non-Aryan. This is to be assumed especially if one parent or one grandparent was of the Jewish faith.” As the anti-Jewish laws became more draconian, the need for a more precise definition of a non-Aryan resulted in complicated definitions of the term “Jew” as part of and following the Nuremberg Laws.

The Aryan Paragraph and its resulting restrictions on the Jews met with little or no protest from German society, except for its application to the Protestant Church. The pro-Nazi German National Church, the Reich Church, sought to apply it to all Protestant churches so the churches would not be open to non-Aryans. This meant that Jewish Christians (Jews who had converted to Christianity) and Germans who were brought up and were living as Christians but who had “Jewish blood” in their ancestry—even if they were unaware of it—were no longer able to consider themselves Christians and were therefore to be barred from worship and subject to anti-Jewish legislation. This was seen by some Protestant pastors and other religious leaders as an infringement of the authority of the church to determine who is or is not Christian. This led to the establishment of the Confessing Church, in part in opposition to the application of the Aryan Paragraph to the churches.

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See also: *Gleichschaltung*; Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; Protestant Churches, German; Stein, Edith

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Aryanism

Aryanism was one of the most important ideological elements in German National Socialism, and it remains important for many modern neo-Nazi movements in various countries today. Adolf Hitler and the early Nazi ideologues

believed in an Aryan master race that had a mission to dominate all other peoples and races. The term Aryan was popularized in the late 19th century by the Anglo-German scholar Max Müller as an alternative to Indo-European. “Indo-European languages” were treated as a particular category of languages that included Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic. Müller used the term Aryan only of language speakers, but others began to apply it to racial groupings, a practice that he himself never considered acceptable.

The story of how so-called Aryanism came to play such an important role in Nazi thinking is complex and goes back to the early modern era. In the 16th century, there developed in German-speaking Europe an aspiration to find ways of expressing the cultural unity of German-speakers, or “Germanness,” which some felt transcended actual territorial political divisions. That gave rise to attempts to “unmix” Germany as a melting-pot of different peoples in favor of a “pure Germanness.” The specifically “German” peoples were pictured as set apart from their neighboring peoples; the Germans were depicted as men who were original, rooted in the soil, free-spirited, and with a developed sense of honor, distinguished from other peoples by their positive qualities. Ulrich von Hutten contrasted the “manliness” of the Germans as a “world-dominating” people with the “womanliness” of the Romans. The development of the notion of a “German special way” in spirit, culture, and race was encouraged by the German Reformation, especially in its sectarian form. That movement soon acquired (as did later the whole Aryan myth) a decidedly anti-Church and anti-Roman tendency, on the basis of theories that claimed that the originally free Germans adhering to a “natural religion” had been weakened in spirit and enslaved by the yoke of the Roman Catholic Church and had become “mixed in” with other culturally inferior peoples. Some humanists saw German as “the language of heroes” and aspired to “purify” it from supposedly later admixtures. Even Leibniz believed that German was closer to the lost “Adamic primitive language” than Hebrew or Arabic. When Aryan studies began in the 18th century, the Germans were portrayed as the leaders of the noble Aryan master race, set apart from other peoples by their “purity.”

Inspired by the discovery of new peoples and continents, and following older medieval theories according to which there were “pre-Adamic peoples” who did not go back to the forefather Adam, some Enlightenment thinkers developed a theory of the distinct origins of the human races. This was intended as a rival to the Christian teaching that saw

Adam and Eve as the original couple of all of humanity. These Enlightenment figures assigned to the blacks, whom they regarded as standing on a low spiritual level, all the lowly and primitive qualities, and to the creative white master races (Aryan and European) all the noble and higher qualities. Carl von Linnæus, the great classifier of nature, called the European “inventive . . . white, full-blooded. He is governed by laws.” At the other end of his scale (below the intermediate stages of Americans and Asiatics) stood the African: “foolish, lazy, apathetic . . . black, phlegmatic . . . ruled by the arbitrary power of his master.” Pupils of Linnæus developed dualistic theories according to which the whites were the original race while the blacks had emerged through a “mixture” of the whites with apes. David Hume called “Negroes and generally all other species of men . . . inferior to whites by nature. . . . There has never been a civilized nation of other than white skin, not even a single one, which distinguished itself in trade and thought.”

Again as part of an anti-Christian propaganda war, Voltaire attributed to the spiritual culture of India temporal precedence over biblical Hebrew culture, tracing “Abraham” back to the Indian “Brahma.” Along with other rather bizarre theoreticians, he inspired the German Romantics in their love affair with India.

In Germany, both Enlightenment and Romantic thinkers aspired to look beyond the Jewish-Christian horizon of the West. They were fascinated by the early Indian thinkers, now seen as the earliest representatives of a spiritual culture of humanity. India was regarded as the source of “the ways of humanity” and the “lawgiver to all peoples” in the words of travel writer Pierre Sonnerat. Johann Gottfried Herder inspired a Romantic cult of “Mother India”; India was for him both the source and place of origin of mankind itself and the source of the “religion of natural revelation,” of which the Hebrew Bible was only a “faithful copy.” For Herder, the Indians were perfect representatives of wisdom, science, nobility, and restraint; he celebrated the common origins of the “Indo-Aryans” and the racial and cultural-linguistic relationship between Indians, Persians, and Germans as representatives of the “high and noble.” Herder’s contemporaries at the German universities now sought to draw the outlines of an Aryan high culture that had developed separately from “Semitic” cultures and languages. In his work *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier (On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians, 1808)*, Friedrich Schlegel claimed that a people of Aryan culture came from north India to the West, which meant that many ideas from ancient India were to be found among the old Germans.

His brother August Wilhelm Schlegel was the first to give the Aryan idea a nationalistic turn, making an association between the root “Ari” and the German word “Ehre” (“honor”). Through E. M. Arndt and F. L. Jahn, “Aryan” or “Indo-German” studies in Germany took on a decidedly antisemitic coloring by the mid-19th century, initially on the basis of the idea that the old Indian wisdom books represented the original revelation of God more perfectly than the Hebraic-biblical texts. This idea was formulated in increasingly dualistic terms: the original pure texts of the Indo-Aryans, a world-dominating master people, were watered down and falsified by the uncreative and ultimately culturally “parasitic” Semites.

The French historian Jules Michelet spoke in his *Histoire romaine* (1831) of the “long struggle between the Semitic world and the Indogermanic world”; for him, too, India was the “Mother of the Nations.” Other propagandists of Aryan studies, mostly theologians and Sanskrit scholars, constructed an “Aryan Christ” who had taught a master religion of the noble and the subjection of non-Aryan peoples—for example, the French Orientalist Ernest Renan, in his extremely successful work *The Life of Jesus* (1863–1883). Others accepted that the roots of Christendom were Semitic but argued that it had experienced its high point in the Middle Ages, when it was marked by the culture of the German Reich.

In the course of the 19th century, Aryan theories got mixed with a series of ideas prevalent at the time into an inextricable tangle; thus with race theory, which propagated the “racial pride” of the white races as the “motor of history”; with a crude form of Social Darwinism that started from the struggle of the races with each other; also with “physiological” anthropology, which argued from physical racial characteristics, especially through skull measurements, to the spiritual and ethical superiority of the whites or the inferiority of the blacks. In Germany, Great Britain, and France, antisemitic cultural theories constructed the “cultural genius” of the Aryans against the “cultural sterility” of the Semites. The Genevan linguistics scholar Adolphe Pictet called the Aryans the “civilizers of the world”: “The race of the Aryans, chosen before all others, is the most important tool of the plans of God for the destiny of humanity,” he wrote. For Gobineau, who brought together almost all of these theories and had his greatest influence in Germany, the white Aryan races had arisen in north India and were from the beginning led by “Providence” (later a favorite term of Hitler’s). Gobineau categorized nearly all known races according to the degree of their “mixture” with others,

especially with Aryans or Semites. He saw in the “bastardizing of the Aryans” the main reason for the collapse of civilizations and cultures, which were condemned to general “mediocrity” by it. It was Gobineau who gave a history-of-philosophy orientation to the Aryan/Jewish polarity.

The theory of the different origins of the Aryan and Semitic peoples became virtually a religious dogma for all antisemitic currents in Germany. Prescription of the separation of races and depiction of the dangers of a “mixing of races” became a fixed idea, with prophets of doom forever repeating the claim that the “inferior races” damaged the “higher” ones. In the 19th century, race researchers had speculated that an Aryan woman who had been “tainted” even just once by a Jewish man could thenceforth bring into the world only “Jewish bastards.”

In parallel with the cult of the Germans in the second half of the 19th century there developed a no less exaggerated cult of the Aryans with religious-type features, and that also drew many representatives of early National Socialism under its banner. One of the main prophets was the German Orientalist Lagarde, who wanted to set the figure of Jesus Christ free from a Jewish context and outlined a Germanic or Aryan “religion of the future.” His example inspired a whole flood of writings that aimed at “Aryanizing” Jesus. Most of them were rather comical, such as the theory of Ernst von Bunsen, according to which the Bible had originated in an Aryan religion of the sun, and the first man, Adam, was an Aryan; the serpent in Paradise, by contrast, had been “Semitic.” The young Richard Wagner had in 1850 compared Christ to the highest Germanic god, Wotan, while the expatriate Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain was a tireless “prophet of Aryanism” who claimed that he had “demonstrated” the “non-Jewish descent” of Jesus Christ. His antisemitic *Foundations of the 19th Century* (1899) had a direct influence (down to the choice of title) on Rosenberg’s “Myth of the Twentieth Century” and on his Aryan mysticism.

Clearly, then, in many respects the Nazi ideologues with their Aryan mystifications needed only to harvest where others—including some of the leading minds of the 19th and 20th centuries—had already sown. But in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler gave to the idea of the Aryan as “founder of culture” a peculiarly violent turn, claiming that the Aryan alone was worthy to bear the name “human,” so that all other peoples and races were no more than “subhumans.” This strict dualism between the “racially pure” Aryans and all others—especially Jews and Slavs—led in Nazism to the radical outlawing of all “non-Aryans” and to their enslavement and

attempted annihilation. The “Aryan Paragraph” formulated for the first time in the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* (Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service) of April 7, 1933 (which went back to a demand of Georg von Schonerer in the 19th century), decreed that all civil servants of “non-Aryan descent” be retired. After this, the Aryan Paragraph served for the systematic outlawing of Jews from all areas of public life. The identification of Aryanism and Germanness was recognized by the National Socialist state in a memo from the Reich Ministry of the Interior of November 26, 1935, in which the concept “Aryan” was replaced by “of German blood,” and later by the formula “those belonging to German or related blood.” The accompanying “Aryan proof” obliged Germans, especially applicants for official posts, to show an unbroken “testimony of descent” of “Aryan purity of blood” of their ancestors back to the year 1800. Official Nazi linguistic usage designated the taking of Jewish property into Aryan hands as laid down in the Aryanizing Decrees of April 26 and November 12, 1938, as “Aryanization”: the alienation of Jewish property without compensation in favor of “Aryan members of the nation,” who could acquire alienated Jewish goods. This is a typical example of the way that the “Aryan” idea served the Nazis both as a propaganda tool in their war against the Jews and as a cover for robbery and exploitation.

MARKUS HATTSTEIN (TRANSLATED AND
ENLARGED BY CYPRIAN BLAMIRE)

See also: Antisemitism; “Racial Hygiene”; Volksgemeinschaft

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Aryanization

The process known as Aryanization (*Arisierung*) was the Nazi Party’s initiative to diminish Jewish influence in all aspects of life in Germany. It essentially consisted of two components, one cultural, the other economic.

The cultural dimension of the Aryanization process began in 1933 with the government’s efforts to drive Jews out of the Reich’s cultural life. Jewish intellectuals, actors, journalists,

and musicians lost their posts in important cultural institutions, and Jewish enrollment in universities was severely restricted. Literature, music, art, and science created by Jews was described as “degenerate.” So-called degenerate books were banned, removed from schools and libraries, and burned. Degenerate music (created by Jews) was not to be played, nor were Jews permitted to play music in orchestras. Public “degenerate art” was removed from display or otherwise eliminated from German cultural life, along with its creators.

The economic component of Aryanization was implemented by the Nazi policy, adopted in 1933, of establishing a “controlled market economy.” This was to be achieved through the triad of Aryanization, autarky, and rearmament.

Boycotts of Jewish businesses, laws excluding Jews from the public service and the professions, and the program of Aryanization all evidenced strong duress from the lower ranks and legal repression from the leadership that steadily drove Jews out of the German economy. Before 1938, perhaps due to the 1936 staging of the Berlin Olympic Games and the desire not to be seen internationally as repressive, the Nazis stopped short of across the board Aryanization legislation and confiscation of Jewish property. However, from the outset of the Third Reich, many Jews found it prudent to sell their property at a loss and flee the country. Aryanization also included the indirect expropriation of Jewish property in the form of a confiscatory “flight tax” (*Reichsfluchtsteuer*). Emigrating citizens had to relinquish most of their property to the government before they could leave the country. The aim of this was to punish Jewish or political refugees, deprive them of their property, and thereby reduce the export of German money or goods.

By January 1, 1938, German Jews were prohibited from operating businesses and trades, and from offering goods and services. On April 26, 1938, Hermann Göring announced the “Order Requiring the Declaration of Jewish Property,” and on June 14, 1938, the Interior Ministry ordered the registration of Jewish businesses. All German Jews had to register and declare the value of their economic holdings, both at home and abroad. They had to itemize everything they owned including land, houses, businesses of all kinds, cash, bank deposits, stocks and bonds, jewelry, valuable pictures and carpets, claims against insurance companies, pensions, authors’ rights, patents and annuities, and statements of all debts and mortgages. Their access to bank accounts was restricted. These listings gave the government accurate information that the Nazis needed to implement their policy of Aryanizing the German economy.

Increased pressure forced Jews to sell their businesses at 30–60% of their value, with the state setting the sales value of Jewish firms at a fraction of their market worth. Government economic counsellors within each district organized Aryanization to ensure that the best businesses were given to longstanding Nazi Party members. Sometimes Jewish business owners were jailed until they agreed to give up their ownership. The proceeds from Aryanized firms had to be deposited in savings accounts and were made available to their Jewish depositors only in limited amounts, so that in the final analysis Aryanization amounted to almost compensation-free confiscation. The effects were devastating for Germany's Jews, severely undermining the economic well-being of the Jewish community. By the fall of 1938 only 40,000 of the formerly 100,000 Jewish businesses were still in the hands of their original owners. The pogrom that occurred on November 9–10, 1938, *Kristallnacht*, further hardened the fate of German Jews.

On November 12, 1938, a new Regulation for the Elimination of Jews from German Economic Life was made. The Jewish community was “fined” one billion Reichsmarks for the damage done to its own property during *Kristallnacht*. Jewish businesses not yet sold were put into trusteeship, and Jews were forced to register all their property with the Nazis. A confiscatory tax of a billion marks was then imposed upon German Jews whose property exceeded 5,000 marks. The tax rate was 20%, and the tax had to be paid in four installments. Hence, inventory, liquidation, and confiscatory taxes resulted in the economic obliteration of the Jews.

Businesses were transferred to non-Jewish owners with the proceeds taken by the state. Jewelry, stocks, real property, and other valuables had to be sold. Either by direct force, by government interventions such as sudden tax claims, or by the weight of the circumstances, Jewish property changed hands mostly below fair market value. Jewish employees were fired, and self-employed people were prohibited from working in their respective professions.

After November 1938 Jews were forbidden to do business and had to liquidate their properties under the supervision of a governmental trustee (*Treuhänder*). The trustee would arrange for the Jewish owner to receive a nominal payment for the enterprise that was generally paid into a blocked account, and then sell the very same business to an Aryan for market value—thereby turning a sizeable profit for the Reich. Gradually, all Jewish property came into the possession of the Reich.

On December 3, 1938, the value of Jewish landed property was frozen at the lowest level, and valuables and jewels were

permitted to be sold only through state offices. The impoverishment of the Jewish population caused by Aryanization often stood in the way of its goal—of promoting emigration through persecution—because those affected lacked the means to emigrate. Later, they would become victims of the Final Solution. Aryanization combined the racial motives of National Socialism with traditional antisemitic resentments within the middle classes and the expansionist tendencies of big business. The fear of being too late to share in the booty produced a fateful coalition of greed, so that little opposition to Aryanization arose.

With the onset of war from 1939 onward, the treatment of other non-Aryan property as the Reich occupied Europe was essentially the same as what it had been during the 1930s in Germany. The goals were identical—to completely Aryanize the Reich economy, to destroy the Jews economically, and to turn a healthy profit for those able to take advantage of the situation.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Algeria; Antwerp Pogrom; April Boycott; Confiscation of Jewish Property; Degussa; Deutsche Bank; France; *Kristallnacht*; Krupp Case; Names under the Nazis, Legislation; Reich Citizenship Law; Reich Flight Tax; Schindler, Oskar; Teudt, Wilhelm

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Asocials

“Asocial” was a term given by the Nazis to all those deemed to stand outside the “national community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Such people came from a very wide sector of society and included habitual criminals, prostitutes, drug addicts, juvenile delinquents, homosexuals, the chronically unemployed, and vagrants. Owing to their nomadic lifestyle, they also included all members of the Roma community. The Nazi perspective was that those designated as “asocial” were genetically and racially disposed to their condition; as such, they could not be redeemed for the national community and were thus a drain on society whose ongoing existence could not be tolerated. Arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps, most were forced to wear black triangles on their

clothing as an identifying symbol. Male homosexuals among the “asocials” wore pink triangles; Roma sometimes, though not always, wore triangles of brown.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Sachsenhausen; Sondergericht; Thierack, Otto; Volksgemeinschaft

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Auschwitz

Auschwitz (Oświęcim in Polish) was the name given to a German concentration camp complex in eastern Poland that

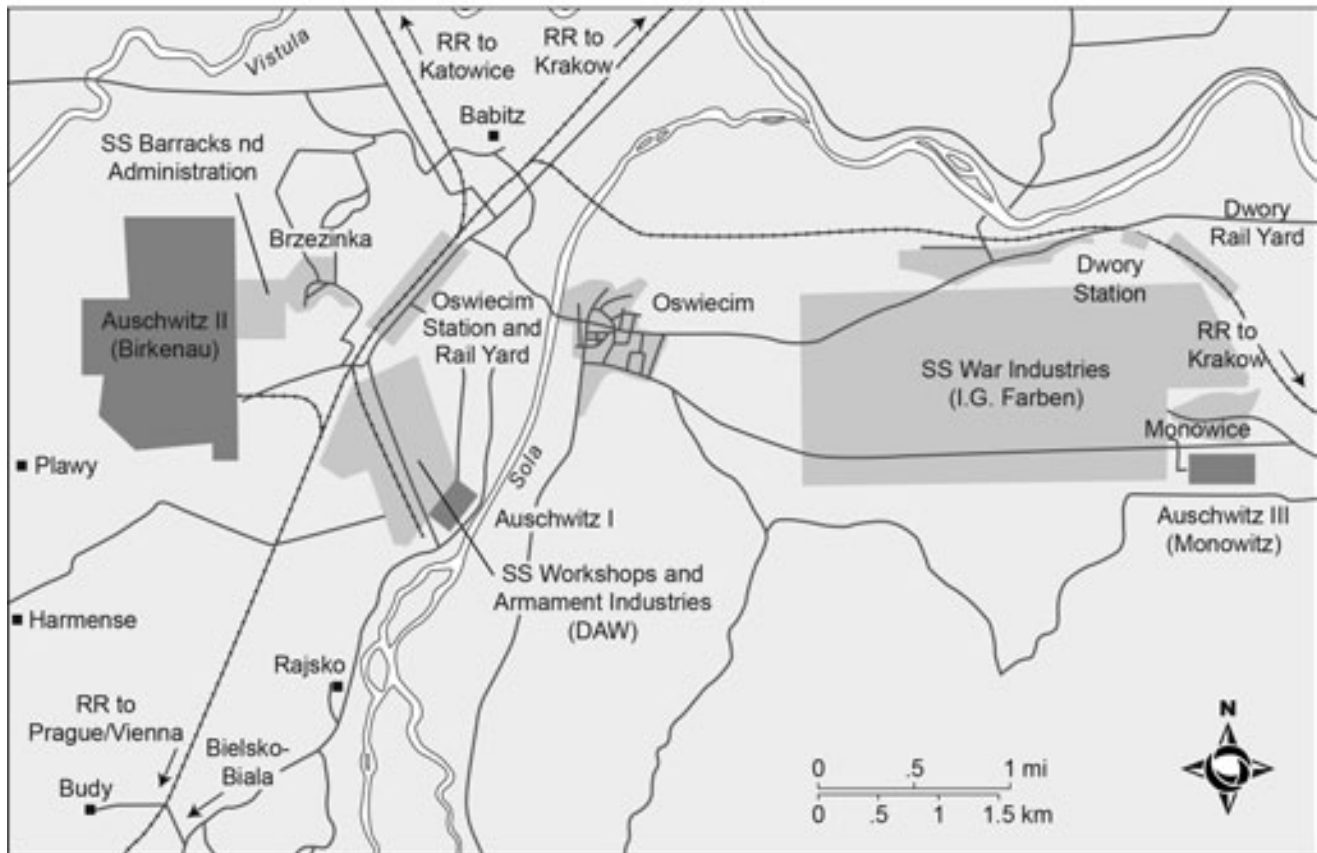
served as one of the epicenters of the Holocaust. More Jews were killed in Auschwitz during the war than in any other single location. Since the victims came from every part of Europe, and because Auschwitz operated longer than any other death camp, it has come to symbolize the Nazi determination to destroy the Jews.

Understanding the history of Auschwitz is a challenge because of the complexity of its story. Initially, Auschwitz was established as a concentration camp for Polish soldiers and political prisoners. After June 1941, Soviet prisoners of war were added to the prison population. During the first two years of its operation, little distinguished Auschwitz from any other Nazi camp, or indeed could predict the role it would play in the Holocaust. It must also be remembered that there was not a single Auschwitz, but rather three main camps—Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II (Birkenau), and Auschwitz III (Monowitz)—along with approximately 50 satellite camps located over a wide geographical region.



Auschwitz was a network of Nazi concentration and extermination camps built and operated by the Third Reich in Polish areas annexed by Germany during World War II. It consisted of Auschwitz I (the original camp), Auschwitz II-Birkenau (a combination concentration/extermination camp), Auschwitz III-Monowitz (a labor camp complex), and 45 satellite camps. The photograph shows forced laborers working in a locksmith shop at Auschwitz. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

AUSCHWITZ ENVIRONS SUMMER 1944



Thus, even at the height of the killings, Auschwitz concentration and work camps continued to exist next to the Auschwitz death camp of Birkenau.

In the winter of 1940–1941 the German industrial conglomerate I.G. Farben, taking advantage of governmental tax breaks for industrialist building in the newly conquered territories, chose the Auschwitz area as the site for the construction of a new plant. The availability of a railroad junction and raw material, along with the chance to utilize cheap concentration camp labor, added to the allure of the area. An arrangement was made between I.G. Farben and the SS, whereby the latter would provide slave labor (drawn from Auschwitz inmates) and I.G. Farben would pay the SS for the use of the workers. At the same time, SS chief Heinrich Himmler ordered the camp system expanded to accommodate over 100,000 inmates, probably in expectation of a massive number of Soviet prisoners.

In the fall of 1941 a local Nazi official, ordered to kill a number of Soviet POWs, decided to experiment with the use

of Zyklon-B (a hydrogen cyanide gas compound manufactured by I.G. Farben commercially for delousing). A small farmhouse was sealed off and the first tests involving the gassing of prisoners were carried out.

In accordance with Nazi antisemitic ideology, the character of Auschwitz underwent a change in late 1941. It maintained its original features—political, industrial, agricultural and penal—but now, through the murder installation at Birkenau, it became also an elaborate and gigantic factory of death created for the purpose of methodically and efficiently murdering millions of people, specifically Jews. These mass murders took place in specially designed gas chambers utilizing Zyklon-B gas. Auschwitz seemed a logical place as a site for the implementation of the Holocaust because it was remote from major population centers. Moreover, the presence of the rail lines and junctions referred to earlier ensured that access was not subject to unreliable roads. When high-ranking Nazi officials learned of the effectiveness of Zyklon-B in killing Jews, they adopted it as the method of

choice, thereby merging industrial production with mass slaughter.

While the first killings took place at Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II (Birkenau) became the focal point for the gassing of Jews brought from all over Europe. Initially, two converted farmhouses were employed in this task. By the middle of 1942, however, specially built gas chambers and crematoria were in use, enabling the Germans to gas and then incinerate several thousand people per day.

To clean the bodies out of the chamber and sort the clothes and valuables of those who were murdered, the Nazis created several groups of *Sonderkommando* (special squads) of prisoners, who were in turn murdered every two to three months. The SS (and I.G. Farben) intended that by replacing weak and ailing prisoners with slightly healthier inmates, they would be able to maintain production levels. On October 7, 1944, members of the *Sonderkommando* revolted, not in any expectation of escape, but in order to destroy as much of the gas chambers and crematoria as possible. They were also hoping to buy time to bury manuscripts, evidence of the horrible work they were forced to carry out. Over 400 *Sonderkommando* men were killed, along with approximately 15 SS guards. The manuscripts they hid were not discovered for more than a decade.

As the Soviet armies continued their advance towards Germany throughout the latter half of 1944, the position of Auschwitz seemed uncertain. In September Heinrich Himmler ordered the Auschwitz commandant, Rudolf Hoess, to oversee the camp's liquidation. When delay threatened and the Soviets drew nearer, on November 26, 1944, Himmler issued another order concerning the destruction of Auschwitz. On January 6, 1945, four Jewish women who had smuggled gunpowder to the *Sonderkommando* for their revolt were executed in Auschwitz. They were among the last prisoners murdered in the camp.

After considerable administrative difficulties—and much debate concerning the method of withdrawal—the complete evacuation of the complex was ordered for January 17, 1945. One day later, some 22,000 men and women left the camp; the next day a further 3,500 were evacuated. They were about all that was left of a camp complex which at one time could boast a population of possibly 200,000. The earliest date of free contact with Soviet forces was January 22, 1945. When the camp was formally occupied two days later, there were only 2,819 survivors left in the camp.

Much of the Auschwitz complex has been preserved and serves today as a grim reminder of the Nazi attempt at

destroying the Jewish people. It has become the symbol *par excellence* of the Holocaust, a place where over a million Jews and countless numbers of others were murdered.

FRED KROME

See also: *Arbeit Macht Frei*; Arouch, Salamo; *The Auschwitz Album*; Auschwitz Protocols; Bielecki, Jerzy; Birkenau; Concentration Camps; Delbo, Charlotte; Dinur, Yehiel; Final Solution; Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial; Gebhardt, Karl; Glücks, Richard; Grese, Irma; *The Grey Zone*; Hoess, Rudolf; *Holocaust*; I.G. Farben; Jewish Resistance; Jonas, Regina; Mann, Franczeska; Mechelen; Mengele, Josef; Monowitz; Münch, Hans; Museums and Memorials; *Night*; *Night and Fog*; Robota, Roza; Roma Genocide in the Holocaust; Rosé, Alma; Salonika; *Shoah*; Slave Labor; Slovakia; Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français; *Triumph of the Spirit*; *The Truce*; Venezia, Shlomo; Weiss, Helga; Westerbork; Wiesel, Elie; Zimetbaum, Mala; Zyklon-B

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The Auschwitz Album

The Auschwitz Album is the only extant photographic record of the step-by-step process by which the victims of the Nazi genocide moved from their arrival at “the ramp” at Auschwitz-Birkenau to their ultimate destination, whether that was the gas chambers or the slave labor camp. Intensive efforts by the Nazi regime to prohibit all visual evidence of the actual steps leading to extermination make this album a unique resource. The pictures provide visual evidence and confirmation of the process described by Auschwitz survivors.

The 193 photographs in the album capture the detaining of the Jews, the separation of men and boys from women and young children, and the selection that determined who went immediately to the gas chambers and who to the slave labor camp. In addition, photographs show the individuals condemned to the gas as they walked to and then waited outside the building housing the gas chambers (having been told they were waiting for showers that were required before they could enter the camp). It also shows those assigned to the slave labor camp as they moved from being civilians to prisoners, with their heads shaved and wearing the requisite

uniforms: striped pajama-like shirts and pants for the men; plain dresses for the women.

The photographs in the album are thought to be the work of Ernst Hofmann and Bernhard Walter, SS men whose job it was to fingerprint and to take identification photos of those prisoners sent to slave labor (of course, no such efforts were made with regard to those sent to the gas chambers). It has been determined that the photographs were taken in late spring or early summer of 1944 as transports were arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau from Carpo-Ruthenia, an area that was then a part of Hungary, but it remains unclear why they were taken.

The photographs were taken from different angles, heights, and proximity to the victims. One wide-angle photograph was taken from what appears to be the roof of a train car at the front of the transport train. Because of the angle and height from which it was taken, it captures hundreds—soon to be thousands—of bewildered Jews as they emerged from cattle cars, most carrying a large sack of their belongings. Most of the photographs were taken at ground level, some of them at close proximity to the subjects. Almost all of the photographs are candid, taken as groups of men and women were moving past the camera, with only some of the subjects looking at the camera. However, there are several photographs that appear to be posed, with small groups of men or women lined up and facing the camera. In both cases it is clear that Hofmann and Walter made no efforts to hide what they were doing, supporting the possibility that the pictures were sanctioned, perhaps to be part of an official report on methods of processing victims at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

One of the photographs is important for understanding how the album was found. Taken from a raised height, it shows hundreds of women lined up in rows, all wearing their own dresses but already shorn completely of their hair, awaiting orders. Standing in the first row, almost centered in the picture is Lilly Jacob (Lilly Jacob-Zelmanovic Meier), the woman who would discover the *Auschwitz Album* after the war. As the Soviet military approached Auschwitz, Jacob and others were marched to several camps, arriving finally at the Dora-Nordhausen camp. After liberation, while recovering from illness in an SS barracks, she discovered a hidden album. Opening it, she saw herself and many others whom she knew, most of them now dead, but captured forever in these photographs. She held onto the album for many years after she left the camp, never hiding the fact that it was in her possession. In 1983 she gave it to Yad Vashem where it was restored for all to see.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; Final Solution

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Auschwitz Protocols

The Auschwitz Protocols is the name given to a report that provided detailed, firsthand information about the exterminatory actions—including the workings of gas chambers and crematoria—that had been and were contemporaneously being committed by the Nazis against the Jews in Auschwitz. It is based on the written and verbal testimony of five prisoners who escaped from Auschwitz.

The major portion of the report was provided by two prisoners, Rudolf Vrba (born Walther Rosenberg) and Alfred Wetzler, both Slovakian Jews, who escaped in April 1944. Because the information that they provided was the most extensive, the name Auschwitz Protocols is sometimes used to refer to their testimony only (it is sometimes also called the Verba-Wetzler Report). The full report, however, also included the written and verbal testimony of Jerzy Tabeau, a Polish medical student who escaped from Auschwitz in November 1943 (his report is sometimes referred to as the “Polish Major’s Report”), and of Czesław Mordowicz, a Polish Jew, and Arnost Rosin, a Slovakian Jew, both of whom escaped in late May 1944. They, like Vrba and Wetzler before them, reached Slovakia where the information was typed and collated.

Although not the first report to assert that mass murders were occurring in Auschwitz, the Protocols were far more detailed than prior reports, and its authenticity could not be denied. It described the administration of the camp and provided sketches showing its layout. The comprehensive information about the gas chambers and the crematoria reflected a level of detail that could only be known by prisoners. In Vrba’s case, the prisoner who provided that information was Filip Müller, a member of the *Sonderkommando*, a work unit of Jews who were assigned to the gas chambers, and whose book, *Eyewitness Auschwitz*, is considered one of the most important sources on the industrial death machine that was Auschwitz.

Another aspect of Vrba's and Wetzler's section of the Protocols was its extensive list of transports that arrived at Auschwitz from 1942 to the time of their escape. The accuracy of the list was confirmed by other sources of information, further solidifying Vrba's and Wetzler's credibility. In addition, they provided a detailed explanation of the system of assigning numbers to transport survivors who were not sent immediately to the gas chambers.

Given the nature of the information contained in the Protocols, where each day of delay meant thousands of lives lost, the way in which the report was circulated, to whom and when, is controversial even today. The haunting question is whether the information was handled with the urgency it deserved.

Despite concerns about its distribution, the Auschwitz Protocols had an impact on the events of the Holocaust beyond documenting the deadly procedures in Auschwitz. First, the time in which the Protocols first surfaced coincided closely with Nazi efforts to exterminate the 725,000 Jews of Hungary, the only major Jewish community not yet decimated by the Nazi juggernaut. Their deportation began shortly after Germany's occupation of the country in March 1944. Vrba, knowing this, pressed the Jewish Council in Slovakia to immediately warn Hungarian Jewish leaders of what awaited the Jews upon their arrival at Auschwitz, but a warning was not received in time. By mid-July, 1944, more than 430,000 of Hungary's Jews had been deported, almost all to Auschwitz. There was already great pressure on the then-regent of Hungary, Miklós Horthy, to end the deportations. That pressure was further increased by the existence of the Auschwitz Protocols, which left no doubt as to the fate of the deportees. Horthy relented and stopped the deportations, although in October, after the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross Party took control of the Hungarian government, an outraged Hitler ordered them to be resumed.

Second, the Protocols raised the question even more acutely than in the past of whether the Allies should bomb Auschwitz, or at least the rail lines into the camp. Although the Allies decided not to divert resources to bomb the camp, the existence of the Protocols made both sides of that debate keenly aware of the stakes, which could no longer be ignored or minimized on the basis of a lack of credible eyewitness testimony.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; British Response to the Holocaust; Fleischmann, Gisi; Soos, Géza; United States Response to the Holocaust; Vrba, Rudolf

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Austria

Austria is a landlocked nation in central Europe, which in 1939 had a population of about 7 million. Although most of its citizens were ethnically German, Austria had sizable minority populations that included Italians, Slavs, and Jews of varying ethnicities. Until World War I, Austria had anchored the far-flung Austro-Hungarian Empire; after that conflict, it became a singular sovereign state that had been forbidden from uniting with the much larger and more powerful Germany to its north. Despite its independent status, the interwar years in Austria were not happy ones, and the small nation was wracked by economic crises and political turmoil.

After Adolf Hitler and the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, they carefully groomed Austria for eventual unification, a process known as *Anschluss*. Hitler, himself originally an Austrian, ordered a propaganda campaign to prepare the Austrians accordingly. Meanwhile, the Austrian Nazi Party, which was controlled by Berlin, made steady inroads into the Austrian political scene while Germany placed economic pressures on Austria and aided armed groups within Austria who were resisting left-wing militias.

In 1938 the Anschluss became a reality when German troops invaded and Hitler declared the union a fact on March 13. Many Austrians applauded the move, which was retroactively "vindicated" by a rigged plebiscite that showed that 99% of the voting population approved the union, a figure that was clearly too high. Jews and other minorities had been barred from voting. The incorporation of Austria into Germany proved catastrophic to Austrian Jews. The pogrom known as Kristallnacht ("Night of the Broken Glass"), which occurred in November 1938, burned or destroyed nearly all of Vienna's synagogues and looted or destroyed hundreds of Jewish-owned shops and businesses. Several thousand Jews were rounded up and sent to concentration camps.

These tragic events commenced a huge exodus of Jews from Austria. Jews represented about 4% of the total

Austrian population in 1938 and numbered some 192,000; however, the number of Austrian Jews plummeted by the beginning of 1940, when only 75,000 remained. Meanwhile, during the summer of 1938, the Nazis erected the first concentration camp on Austrian soil—the Mauthausen complex—which began as a forced labor camp outside Linz. There, untold thousands would die between 1938 and 1945 from overwork, starvation rations, and illness and disease. Mauthausen actually increased exponentially in size during the war, as it became a major armament-producing center. There were at least 60 subcamps of Mauthausen by late 1944. Austria was also home to the Strassof and Lochau concentration camps.

As World War II progressed, Nazi policies toward Austrian Jews, Roma, and other people deemed “undesirable” gradually changed from emigration and expropriation to mass deportation to concentration camps and ghettos further to the east. Nearly 35,000 Jews who had remained in Vienna were forcibly deported between 1940 and 1942, and a great majority of them died. It is estimated that just 7,000 Jews were left in Austria by late 1942, a stunning 96% reduction of the pre-war population. The human losses involved with the Holocaust in Austria are frightening and incalculable, but the permanent destruction of Jewish culture in Vienna, which had historically been one of the great world centers of Judaism and Zionism, was nearly as complete.

As in almost all of the belligerent nations, Austria suffered heavy damage from the war, first by air raids beginning in 1943. The following two years would see even more destruction in military campaigns waged between the Germans and the Red Army. After Germany’s collapse in the spring of 1945, Allied armies overran Austria; by the late spring, the country had been divided among the Soviets, Americans, French, and British. Austria would remain occupied until 1955 and recovered slowly and fitfully from World War II. The Jewish population, however, would never recover, and the wealth of cultural and educational contributions that had been made by Austrian Jews would likewise never be revived.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Anschluss; Brunner, Alois; Central Office for Jewish Emigration; Globocnik, Odilo; Hitler, Adolf; Ho Feng-Shan; Joint Distribution Committee; Kaltenbrunner, Ernst; Lange, Rudolf; Lebensraum; Mauthausen-Gusen; *Mein Kampf*; National Socialist Program; Seyss-Inquart, Arthur; Slave Labor; Waldheim Affair

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B

Babi Yar Massacre

A large massacre of Soviet Jews by German Nazis outside Kiev, Ukraine. Following the German Army's invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, four Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads) entered Soviet territory, their task being the physical annihilation of Communist Party functionaries, Red Army commissars, partisans, and Jews.

As the Wehrmacht drove ever deeper into the Soviet Union, the Einsatzgruppen followed, rounding up and slaughtering their intended victims in mass shootings. Consequently, by the time of their disbanding in 1943, when the war on the Eastern Front swung irreversibly in favor of the Red Army, the Einsatzgruppen—with the assistance of the German Army and a host of enthusiastic collaborators from the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian populations—had committed a multitude of unspeakable atrocities and murdered an estimated 1.5 million Soviet Jews and others.

Among the numerous Einsatzgruppen crimes, the slaughter of Jews at Babi Yar in late September 1941—perpetrated by Colonel Paul Blobel's Sonderkommando 4a, a subunit of Otto Rasch's Einsatzgruppe C—was arguably the most notorious. On September 19, 1941, units of the German Army Group South occupied Kiev, the capital of Soviet Ukraine. In the days immediately following, a series of explosions rocked the city, destroying German field headquarters, burning more than one-third of a square mile of the Kiev city center, and leaving some 10,000 residents homeless. Although these explosions were likely the work of the Soviet political police

(NKVD), the Germans saw in them a convenient justification to massacre the city's Jews, a task Blobel's Sonderkommando would have carried out regardless.

After discussions between Blobel, Rasch, and Major General Kurt Eberhard, the German field commander in Kiev, the latter ordered the city's Jews to assemble with their possessions—including money, valuables, and warm clothing—near the Jewish cemetery no later than 7:00 a.m. on Monday, September 29. The posted order indicated that the Jews were to be resettled and warned that failure to comply would be punishable by death.

Once assembled, Kiev's Jews were marched to Babi Yar, a partially wooded ravine just outside the city. There, the Germans, following the procedure used by Einsatzgruppen since the mass shootings of Soviet Jews began in late June, forced the Jews to strip, dispossessed them of their belongings, and shot them to death in groups of 30 to 40 people. In the course of two gruesome days, Blobel's men, relying exclusively on automatic weapons, murdered 33,771 innocent men, women, and children. Subsequently, they reported that the Jews had offered no resistance and until the last minute had believed they were to be resettled.

During the months that followed the initial Babi Yar Massacre, the Germans periodically used the ravine as a murder site, killing several thousand more Jews there, plus an untold number of Roma and Soviet prisoners of war. In July 1943, with Soviet forces having seized the military initiative and advancing rapidly, the Germans launched Operation Aktion

1005 to eradicate evidence of their crimes in the Soviet Union. Blobel, who had been released from his duties as commander of Sonderkommando 4a in early 1942 and transferred to Berlin, returned to Kiev, where he oversaw efforts to obliterate traces of the executions at Babi Yar. Throughout August and September, Blobel's men and conscripted concentration camp inmates reopened the mass grave, crushed bones, and cremated the remains of the dead. Despite the Germans' effort to hide their crimes, significant evidence of the massacres remained and was discovered by Soviet forces following the liberation of Kiev in November 1943.

The Babi Yar Massacre of late September 1941 was a precedent for other, similar actions, and another, in October 1941, saw the Germans and their Romanian allies murder an estimated 50,000 Jews at Odessa. Nonetheless, more than any other, Babi Yar has come to symbolize an aspect of the Holocaust—mass shooting—that is invariably overshadowed by the horrors of Auschwitz and the other death camps.

BRUCE J. DEHART

See also: Einsatzgruppen; Holocaust by Bullets; Ukraine

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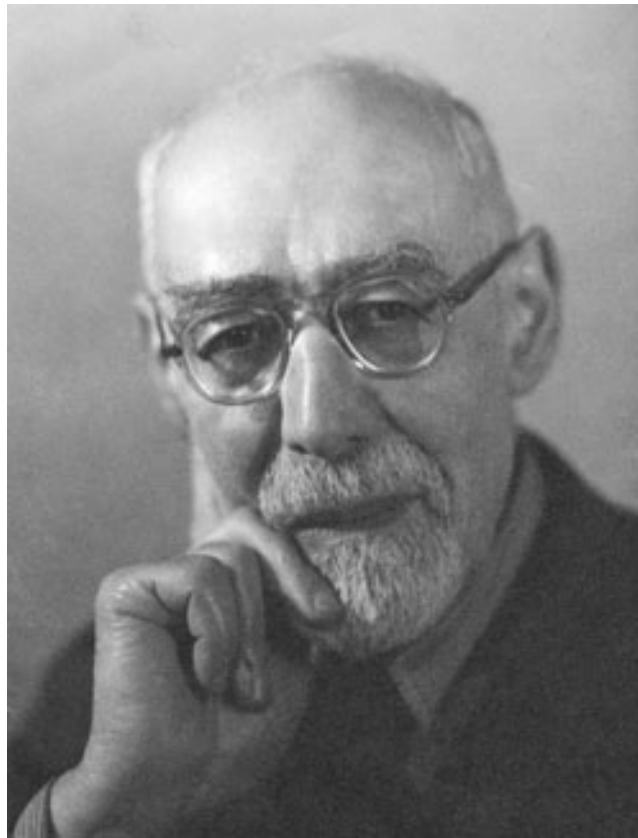
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Baeck, Leo

Rabbi Leo Baeck was the undisputed spiritual leader of German Jewry during the years of the Third Reich, providing hope where little was left, and standing up to the Nazis through his efforts at maintaining a Jewish communal existence at the time when it was under greatest threat. He was born on May 23, 1873, in Lissa (Leszno), Prussia, the son of Rabbi Samuel Baeck. After attending the conservative Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau (Wrocław) from 1894, he moved to Berlin to study at the more liberal *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (School of Jewish Studies) in Berlin. By 1897 he had secured his first post as rabbi in Oppeln (Opole). Here, in 1905, he published *Das Wesen des Judentums* (*The Essence of Judaism*), attracting notice



Leo Baeck was a German rabbi, scholar, and theologian. He served as one of the foremost leaders of German Jewry before and during the Holocaust, representing all German Jews, before being incarcerated at Theresienstadt concentration camp. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Michael Brodnitz)

as an up-and-coming rabbi and thinker. The book argued strongly for the continued relevance of Judaism in a changing world and showed Baeck to be a leader for the Jewish people in modern times. In 1912 he went to Berlin, where he worked as a rabbi at the Fasanenstrasse synagogue and taught at the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Higher Institute for Jewish Studies).

A product of his time and culture, Baeck joined the German army in World War I and served as a Jewish chaplain. In 1918 he returned to Berlin and worked at the Prussian Ministry of Culture as a specialist in Jewish Affairs and Hebrew, while maintaining his pulpit and teaching duties. In 1922 he became president of the Union of German Rabbis (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Rabbinerverband*) and in 1924 was elected president of the German B'nai B'rith Order.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933 Baeck was elected president of the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*

(Reich Representation of German Jews), an umbrella organization of German-Jewish groups established in September 1933 to advance the interests of German Jewry under the new Nazi regime. The organization was forced to change its name to the *Reichsverband der Juden in Deutschland* (Reich Association of Jews in Germany) in 1935 to reflect the Nazi view that there were no “German Jews” but only “Jews in Germany.” As president, Baeck saw his role as being one of maintaining the morale of German Jews under the ever-tightening restrictions of the Nazi regime, working to mitigate the effects of antisemitic discrimination and persecution.

On the night of November 9–10, this persecution accelerated with the so-called Kristallnacht, or “Night of Broken Glass.” Jewish businesses and synagogues throughout Germany, including Baeck’s Fasanenstrasse synagogue, were burned and looted. While the Reichsverband under Baeck facilitated a good deal of Jewish emigration from Germany, he refused to leave Germany or his community despite a number of offers of help to do so. He famously was reported to have said that he would only leave Germany when he was the last Jew remaining there.

In the aftermath of the pogrom, the Nazis reconfigured Jewish communal arrangements and renamed the organization the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* (National Association of Jews in Germany). Baeck remained president until it was forcibly disbanded in 1943.

On January 27, 1943, at age 70, he was deported, along with his family, to the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. At Theresienstadt Baeck became head of the Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), a position that conferred certain privileges such as exemption for himself and his family from deportation to “the East.” He had slightly better accommodation, healthier food, and could even receive mail, and from this position he was able to provide leadership to those around him. He helped others, gave lectures on philosophy and religion, participated in interfaith dialogue between Jews and Christians of Jewish origin, continued teaching among the youth, and refused to lose his sense of self or dignity. All these measures served to provide those around him with hope and an awareness of self-worth. While in the camp he also managed to begin a manuscript that would later become his second book, *Dieses Volk: Jüdische Existenz (This People Israel: The Meaning of Jewish Existence)*.

Although elderly and weakened by his experiences in the concentration camp, Leo Baeck outlasted the Holocaust. Few other members of his family did, with none of his four sisters

surviving Theresienstadt by the time the camp was liberated by the Red Army in May 1945.

After the war, Rabbi Baeck moved to London, where he became president of the North Western Reform Synagogue. He was invited to teach at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, and became chairman of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. In 1955 an institute to preserve the history of German-Jewish culture was established in Jerusalem. Among those behind the initiative were Hannah Arendt, Martin Buber, Robert Weltsch, and Gershom Scholem. The resulting Leo Baeck Institute named him as its first president, and it subsequently became an international organization, with Leo Baeck Institutes in New York and London. Also situated in London is the Reform/Progressive rabbinical seminary, Leo Baeck College. Leo Baeck died in London on November 2, 1956, universally recognized as one of the great Jewish leaders of the twentieth century.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Fackenheim, Emil; Jonas, Regina; Theresienstadt

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Banality of Evil

“The banality of evil” is a term and concept first coined by the noted political philosopher Hannah Arendt. The phrase is part of the subtitle to her award-winning (and controversial) 1963 book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, in which she detailed the war-crime trial of the infamous Nazi SS officer Adolf Eichmann. That trial took place in Israel in 1961. Arendt, a Jew who had fled Nazi Germany in 1941, was commissioned by *The New Yorker* magazine to cover the trial and write a detailed article on it; the book emerged from that article. Arendt’s unorthodox interpretation of Eichmann’s motives and actions upended the more traditional interpretations of Holocaust perpetrators, which at that time tended to portray them unerringly as evil, depraved, and psychopathic individuals.

Arendt concluded that Eichmann was neither inherently evil nor psychopathic. In fact, she asserted, he presented himself as a rather ordinary individual who demonstrated no

inherent hatred toward Jews or guilt for the deplorable acts that took place on his watch and as a result of his orders. Eichmann had been primarily responsible for carrying out the Holocaust because he oversaw the deportation of Jews to concentration camps beginning in the early 1940s. She further argued that Eichmann's seeming lack of antisemitism and his relative nonchalance toward Nazi ideology made the evil he unleashed seem "banal" because there appeared to be no psychological or moral explanations for it. And the fact that he felt no responsibility or guilt after the fact compounded that banality.

Arendt also asserted that Eichmann was incapable of independent thinking and was unable to connect and communicate with others outside a military setting. This rendered him more immune to the moral consequences of Nazi policies and made it easier for him to carry out the Final Solution with no lingering guilt. She also ably demonstrated that Eichmann was not a bright man intellectually, which may have predisposed him to participate in activities that most people would have found repugnant. In the end, however, Arendt concluded that even though Eichmann appeared "normal" on the outside, his complete willingness to follow morally repugnant orders indicated his exceptional inclination toward evil, not because it was ingrained in him, but because he chose not to recognize evil acts even as he carried them out.

Not surprisingly, Arendt withstood withering criticism for her "banality of evil" thesis. More recently, her ideas have found much traction among certain Holocaust scholars, most notably Christopher Browning, whose 1992 book, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, builds upon the premises of Arendt's "banality of evil" theme. Arendt's ideas regarding the Holocaust were frightening perhaps because she implied that the Holocaust could be repeated and that many people could be complicit in such a cataclysm without consciously choosing to do so. Subsequent genocides in the Balkans, Rwanda, and Darfur have appeared to vindicate Arendt's observations.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Arendt, Hannah; Eichmann, Adolf; *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; Eichmann Trial; "Ordinary Men"; *Shoah*

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Barbie, Klaus

Klaus Barbie, the infamous "Butcher of Lyon," was the head of the Gestapo in Lyon, France, and earned a reputation for his sadism and brutality during World War II.

Nikolaus Klaus Barbie was born on October 25, 1913, in Bad Godesberg, Germany. In 1923 he moved to Trier. Attracted to Nazism's fierce nationalist ideology, Barbie joined the local Hitler Youth group in April 1933 and rose within its ranks. In September 1935 he joined the SS and was accepted into the Sicherheitsdienst (SD, Intelligence Service).

With the outbreak of war in 1939, Barbie rose quickly within the ranks of the SD. In May 1940 he was dispatched to the SD office in the Netherlands. During his time there, he organized and participated in mass arrests and deportations of Jews. After being promoted to Obersturmführer, Barbie next returned to Germany to receive training in counterinsurgency. In November 1942 he was sent to Lyon and appointed head of the Gestapo.

In Lyon, Barbie became renowned for his brutal policies aimed at accused French resistance fighters and Jews. He personally tortured prisoners, regardless of whether they were men, women, or children. In June 1943 he succeeded in capturing Jean Moulin, a leading member of the French Resistance. Mercilessly tortured, Moulin later died of his wounds.

Barbie also oversaw the deportation of Jews to the death camps in the East. In April 1944 he ordered the residents of the Jewish children's home at Izieu to be transported to Auschwitz. Forty-one children, aged three to eleven, were gassed. As American forces approached Lyon in August 1944, Barbie ordered the execution of 120 prisoners. Fleeing the city, he later returned to Lyon to execute 20 former collaborators.

Following the war, Barbie switched allegiance and provided information to both British and American intelligence. In 1949 France requested that Barbie be turned over to stand trial for his crimes, but stalling and bureaucratic red tape allowed Barbie time to flee to Bolivia with his family in 1951. Assuming the name Klaus Altmann, Barbie remained unidentified for 20 years.

In 1971, Nazi hunters Beate and Serge Klarsfeld succeeded in locating Barbie, but at this time he enjoyed the protection of Bolivia's right-wing government. By the early 1980s, however, the moderate leftist-oriented government that replaced it proved far less hospitable to Barbie. Moreover, a Socialist government in France exerted pressure on the Bolivian authorities, who finally arrested and extradited Barbie to France in 1983.

On May 11, 1987, Barbie's trial began in Lyon. He had already been tried and convicted *in absentia* by a French court and now faced a sweeping indictment on charges of murder, torture, unlawful arrest, summary execution, and the deportation of dozens of Jewish children. Overall, he was held responsible for some 26,000 killings. His defense attorney, Jacques Verges, attempted to argue that Barbie was no worse than the people who had arrested and placed him on trial and that the charges were therefore hypocritical. Found guilty on July 4, 1987, Barbie was sentenced to life imprisonment. He died in Lyon on September 25, 1991.

ROBERT W. MALICK

See also: Drancy; France; Gestapo; Sicherheitsdienst; Touvier Case

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Barmen Declaration

Issued in May 1934, the Barmen Declaration was a statement of the theological position of the Confessing Church, a federation of German Confessional Churches, in direct response and opposition to the draconian changes to basic Christian theology that the pro-Nazi German Christian movement made in its efforts to "Aryanize" the Protestant churches of Germany.

The Barmen Declaration can be understood only in the context in which it arose. As part of the Nazi government's program of *Gleichschaltung* ("coordination," whereby all aspects of German society were to be brought under rigid conformity with Nazi ideology), Hitler sought the establishment of a single Reich Church to replace the twenty-eight regional Protestant churches in Germany. To that end, the German Christian movement was established under which Christianity was to be suffused with, and in many respects subordinated to, Nazi ideology. One of the goals of the German Christian movement was to totally remove any reference to Jews or Judaism in Christian worship. Thus, the Old Testament was to be expunged from Christian theology and worship, and the New Testament was to be rewritten without any mention of the Jews, except in their role as perpetrators of deicide. In addition, Jesus was to be portrayed as an Aryan in a cosmic struggle against the Jews for the salvation of humankind.

In April 1933 the new Reich Church was established, with Ludwig Müller, a former naval chaplain and, perhaps far more important, a sycophant of Hitler, as Reich bishop. This church took its authority not from scripture but instead from the *Führerprinzip* ("leader principle"), a concept that ascribes the ultimate authority in all matters to the Führer and makes it the responsibility of the people to "work up" to that authority. In addition, the Reich Church chose to apply the Aryan Paragraph to the Protestant churches of Germany. This meant that Jewish Christians (Jews who had converted to Christianity) would be considered to be Jewish despite their conversion, confession of faith, and full welcome into the Christian church, on the basis that conversion does not "cure" Jewish blood. Thus, the Nazis defined and identified not only who was Jewish but also who was to be considered Christian.

The theology of the German Christian movement was seen by some Protestant leaders as a corruption of Christianity, one that elevated Hitler to a prophet, if not a savior; that raised nationalism and Nazi racial theory to the level of revelation; and that built its dogma in direct contravention to the Gospels. In response, Martin Niemöller, a Lutheran pastor, formed the Pastors' Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*) in September 1933 in an effort to organize opposition within the church to the Reich Church and its theology. The league grew into the Confessing Church, a federation of the Lutheran, Reformed, and United Protestant denominations in Germany's Confessional churches, to stand against the Reich Church and what it saw as the desecration of traditional Christian theology.

On May 29–31, 1934, the pastors who affiliated themselves with the Confessing Church met in Barmen, in the Ruhr area of Germany, where they adopted the Barmen Declaration as its founding statement. Drafted primarily by Karl Barth, a Swiss theologian in the Reformed tradition, along with Lutheran theologian Hans Asmussen, the declaration set forth six articles that clearly distinguished the Confessing Church from the Nazi-backed German Christian movement.

The articles stated that: "God's revelation" comes exclusively from the "Word of God," and not from "other events and powers, figures and truths"; all areas of life "belong to Jesus Christ, but [not] to other lords"; the church's message will not be affected by "changes in prevailing ideological and political convictions"; the church will not be given over to "special leaders vested with ruling powers"; the state should not become "the single and totalitarian order of human life"; the church will not become "an organ of the

State”; and the church will not “place the Word and the work of the Lord in the service of any arbitrarily chosen desires, purposes, and plans.”

There is no doubt as to what or whom the Barmen Declaration meant when it referred to “powers,” “figures,” “other lords,” or “special leaders,” nor is there any doubt as to what it meant when it spoke of “ideological and political convictions,” “totalitarian” states, or arbitrary “desires, purposes and plans.” When the declaration also refused to give the church over as an organ of the state, it was clearly defying the Nazi ideological concept of *Gleichschaltung* by asserting that it would maintain itself institutionally and theologically free of any Aryan influence.

The Barmen Declaration was a courageous statement that put its adherents in immediate lethal danger, and as such is deserving of the respect accorded it in the record of religious opposition to the Third Reich. It must be noted, however, that it does not speak of antisemitism or the moral issues associated with the Nazis’ treatment of the Jews. Instead, it focuses only on the infringement of the government on its institutions and theology. Although any document must be understood in the context of its time—and May 1934 was a dangerous time, indeed, to protest antisemitism and the treatment of the Jews—many saw the declaration as more concerned with the church itself, and less with the suffering of innocent victims in its midst.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Barth, Karl; Dahlem Declaration; *Gleichschaltung*; Protestant Churches, German

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devout Catholic whose parents were married by Cardinal Elia Angelo Dalla Costa. In 1936 and 1937 Bartali won the Giro d’Italia, and then the Tour de France in 1938. Thus, before the war Bartali was one of Italy’s biggest sports stars and the hero of his nation. Remarkably, he also won the 1946 Giro and his second Tour de France in 1948, ten years after the first.

Following Italy’s capitulation on September 3, 1943, and Germany’s subsequent occupation, the force of the Holocaust came to bear fully against Italy’s Jews. Although the country had a long history of tolerance for its Jews, who formed one of the most assimilated populations in Europe, the Nazi assault built upon Benito Mussolini’s antisemitic laws of 1938. These laws prevented Jews from working in government or the education sector, forbade intermarriage between Jews and other Italians, and removed Jews from positions in the media, among other restrictions. By the end of World War II some 7,680 Italian Jews had lost their lives as a result of the Holocaust, with many of those killed in Auschwitz.

Gino Bartali would come to play an important role in the rescue of Jews during this time. When the Germans began the deportations, Archbishop Dalla Costa recruited Bartali into a secret network he was then establishing with the spiritual leader of Florence’s Jews, Rabbi Nathan Cassuto, who would be deported and killed by the Nazis in November 1943. The system of rescue involved convents, monasteries, and members of the general public hiding Jews. It ultimately was responsible for saving hundreds of Italian and refugee Jews from territories previously under Italian control, mostly in France and Yugoslavia.

Bartali’s role was to act as a courier for the network, hiding forged documents and papers in his bicycle and transporting them between cities. He would do so by concealing them in the seat of his bike, the handlebars, and the bicycle frame. These counterfeit papers, when delivered to their intended recipients, saved many lives. Given an address, Bartali would ride to Jews in hiding and deliver the documents, which often also contained exit visas allowing their recipients to avoid deportation to the death camps. Under the guise of long-distance training, he would ride hundreds of miles across Tuscany and northern Italy to make his deliveries. Italian fascists, knowing who he was, let him pass without further ado; when he encountered Germans, he asked that his bike not be touched owing to sophisticated calibrations designed to assist him in achieving maximum speed. They always left him alone.

While his many adventures led to the salvation of hundreds of Jews, it was inevitable that Bartali would eventually

Bartali, Gino

Gino Bartali was an Italian cycling champion who won two Tour de France titles and helped save more than 800 Jews during the Holocaust. Born in Florence in 1914, Bartali was a

be identified and forced to go into hiding. When this happened, he took refuge in a cellar in the town of Città di Castello in Umbria. Here he hid with a Jewish family, the Goldenbergs, with whom he lived until the liberation of Florence in 1944.

After the war, Bartali never spoke about his exploits in resisting the Nazis through the saving of Jewish lives, nor did he ask for any kind of reward for what he had done, preferring to believe that a person should not perform acts of goodness for a reward. His preference was that people would remember him for his performances as a cyclist, rather than for anything he did during the war.

It was, in fact, his son Andrea who was in the forefront of the campaign to have his father recognized. After representations, Yad Vashem began an investigation into this modest hero of the Holocaust. Testimony was sought through the Italian Jewish monthly *Pagine Ebraica*, and an important contributor came forth in the person of Giorgio Goldenberg, a member of the same family that was hidden by Bartali in the cellar prior to the liberation.

The result saw an emotional acknowledgment of Bartali at a ceremony in Jerusalem on October 10, 2013. The previous month, Yad Vashem had honored him when he was named as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Attending the ceremony were his son, Andrea, and Giorgio Goldenberg, representing his family and the survivors whose lives Bartali had secured seven decades before.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Italy; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Barth, Karl

Karl Barth's role and influence as one of the foremost Protestant theologians of the twentieth century began prior to the Holocaust and extended far beyond it. However, his anti-Nazi position during the Holocaust, a position grounded in his Christian theology, is seen today as a significant contribution to the record of the church's protest against Nazism.

Born in Switzerland in 1886, Barth served as a pastor of the Reformed tradition from 1911 to 1921. He then served as



Karl Barth was a Swiss Reformed theologian, often regarded as the greatest Protestant theologian of the twentieth century. Barth vigorously attempted to prevent the Nazis from taking over the existing church and establishing a state church controlled by the regime, culminating in the Barmen Declaration, a document that criticized Christians who supported the Nazis. (Library of Congress)

a professor of theology at universities in Germany, including Münster from 1925 to 1930 and Bonn from 1930 to 1935. It was here, especially during his years in Bonn, that Barth was exposed to the rise of National Socialism and its efforts to “Aryanize” Protestant theology by the establishment of a single Reich Church, into which Nazi ideology was integrated, which was intended in many ways to supplant traditional Christian theology. His protest against the Nazi movement resulted in his dismissal in 1935 from the faculty at Bonn.

Barth considered the national Reich Church, established by the pro-Nazi German Christian movement and led by Ludwig Müller, the apotheosis of Nazi corruption of Christianity, with its near-deification of Hitler and its intent to eliminate Jews and Judaism from Christian theology and worship by removing the Old Testament altogether and limiting any reference to Jews in the New Testament to their

alleged perpetration of deicide. By way of sharp contrast, Barth's theology considered the Old Testament and the covenant between God and Israel central to an authentic, scripture-based Christianity, writing that "the Word did not simply become any 'flesh.' . . . It became Jewish flesh." Despite this, Barth remained committed to traditional anti-Jewish supersessionism. Thus, at the same time that Barth condemned antisemitism, he also believed in the tradition of anti-Judaism that has been a part of Christianity since its inception.

The most concrete way by which Barth manifested his Christo-centric theology and its total rejection of the Aryanized Christianity of the Nazis was his central role in the writing of the Barmen Declaration in 1934. This was the founding document of the Confessing Church, a federation of Reform, Liberal, and United Protestant churches that refused to allow the church to become an organ of the state and pushed back on the government's efforts to infringe on the role and authority of the church. As the principal author of the declaration, Barth set forth the distinctions between the role and theology of the national Reich Church and the Confessing Church. However, he was disappointed that the Confessing Church's members at Barmen did not go farther by clearly condemning antisemitism and the treatment of the Jews.

After his expulsion from the faculty in Bonn, Barth returned to Switzerland, where he was a professor of theology in Basel for the next 27 years. He remained a driving force in Christian theology until his death in 1968. He is remembered as much for his unwillingness to acquiesce to Nazism generally, and the Nazis' Aryan theology in particular, as he is for his very significant contributions to Christian theology.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Barmen Declaration; Bonhoeffer, Dietrich; Protestant Churches, German; Theological Responses to the Holocaust

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Battel, Albert

Albert Battel was a German Army officer during World War II who helped save as many as 100 Jews from deportation

and near-certain death in July 1942. In 1981, nearly three decades after his death, he was recognized by Israel's Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations.

Battel was born on January 21, 1891, in Klein-Pramsen, Prussian Silesia (modern-day Prezynka, Poland), that portion of Poland then controlled by Germany. He studied economics at a Berlin university and received a degree in law from a university in Breslau (Wrocław). He served in the Germany Army during World War I and in 1933 joined the Nazi Party.

Well before the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Nazi Party had reason to suspect the depth of Battel's fidelity to Nazi ideology. He seemed unwilling to participate in anti-Jewish activities and was eventually reprimanded by the party for having arranged a loan for a Jewish friend in the late 1930s. Although he was already 48 years old in 1939, Battel entered the Germany Army with the rank of lieutenant. By 1942 he was stationed in Przemysl, southern Poland, where he served under Major Max Liedtke, the local military commander who also had charge of the Jewish ghetto at Przemysl. While there, Battel was officially reprimanded for having given a warm greeting to Dr. Ignatz Duldig, head of the local Judenrat (Jewish Council) at the Przemysl ghetto.

On July 26, 1942, the SS moved against the ghetto in order to liquidate its inhabitants and deport them to the Belzec death camp. Battel and Liedtke, in an attempt to shield some of the Jews, requested that about 100 Jewish workers be exempted from deportation because they were "valuable" to the Germany Army. When the SS rejected that request, Battel, with Liedtke's backing, barred access to the ghetto by closing a bridge over the River San, effectively blocking the only way into the ghetto. As an armed SS unit prepared to cross the bridge, a sergeant-major under Battel warned that the SS unit would be fired upon if it continued its approach. This showdown between German forces occurred in the morning, surprising many local inhabitants, including those in the ghetto, who witnessed it at firsthand.

Several hours later, Battel and several other German army officers commandeered a small convoy of German army trucks, drove them into the ghetto, and evacuated some 100 Jews to a barracks building at the local military headquarters. The final disposition of the evacuated Jews is somewhat uncertain, but they avoided deportation to Belzec. Within days, the rest of the Jewish ghetto at Przemysl was liquidated.

Battel's action prompted an SS investigation, which reached the top levels of the Nazi hierarchy. Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, vowed to have Battel arrested after the

war ended. In 1944 Battel developed a heart condition and was released from army service; he then returned to Breslau, his hometown. Some months later, he was forced to join a German militia unit and was captured by Soviet troops toward the end of the war.

Battel remained in West Germany until his death in 1952, but a denazification court forbade him from practicing law because of his past Nazi Party membership. At the time, few people knew of Battel's heroic deed. Indeed, Battel's actions were effectively unknown until years after his death, when Dr. Zeev Goshen, an Israeli attorney and researcher, brought them to light. Battel was posthumously honored as one of the Righteous among the Nations on January 22, 1981. Max Liedtke was also given the same honor by Yad Vashem.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Bauer, Yehuda

Yehuda Bauer is one of the world's foremost scholars of the Holocaust. He was formerly the director of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry and professor of Holocaust Studies, and director of the International Centre for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. Born in Prague in 1926, he came from a family with a committed Zionist background. During the 1930s his father sought to enter Palestine, then under the British Mandate. He was successful in obtaining entry permits in 1939, and the family arrived on March 15, 1939—the same day the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia.

He studied at Cardiff University, Wales, returning to Palestine in 1948 in order to fight during Israel's War of Independence. After the war he continued his studies, graduating in history. Upon his return to Israel he commenced advanced work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and received his doctorate in 1960. In 1961 Bauer commenced his academic teaching life with a position at the Institute for Contemporary Jewry at Hebrew University, and he became one of the early scholars of the new field of what became known as Holocaust Studies. He served as chairman of the Department of Holocaust Studies at Hebrew University and

quickly became a leading voice on the Holocaust, antisemitism, and the Jewish resistance movement during the Holocaust years. In 1986 he became the founding editor of the journal *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. He acted as the historical adviser to the film *Shoah* (1985, dir. Claude Lanzmann); served on the editorial board of Yad Vashem's *Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust* (1990); served as an academic adviser to the International Task Force for Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research; and acted as a senior adviser to the Swedish government's International Forum on Genocide Prevention. In 1998 he was the recipient of the Israel Prize, the highest civilian award in Israel, and in 2001 was elected a member of Israel's Academy of Science.

As a historian of the Holocaust, Bauer broke new ground in numerous areas, as well as challenging those with whose approach he has disagreed. Three key areas may be considered here: Jewish resistance during the Holocaust, the issue of Jewish collaboration via the *Judenräte* (Jewish councils), and the so-called "intentionalist/functionalist" debate over how the Holocaust unfolded.

In the first of these, Bauer made a major reconsideration of the dynamics of Jewish ghetto and partisan resistance against the Nazis, holding that resistance (*Amidah*) encompassed more than physical opposition, but embraced any activity that reinforced dignity and humanity. Bauer's interest focused on the often referred-to issue of perceived Jewish passivity in the face of the Nazi assault, in which the Jews have sometimes been referred to as having gone to their deaths as "sheep to the slaughter." Bauer disputed the popular view that most Jews went to their deaths passively. Given the options available to Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, together with the conditions under which they had to try to survive, he held that what is surprising is not the dearth of resistance but, to the contrary, how extensive it actually was.

Where unarmed resistance is concerned, the act of clinging to the trappings of a "normal"—even a "civilized"—life represented a determination that the Nazis would not be successful in their aim to debase Jewish society and thereby gain a moral as well as physical victory over the Jews. Leading a "normal" life in the ghettos through creating libraries, conducting weddings, organizing schools, and the like was often the only resistance option open to the Jews.

In Bauer's work regarding the *Judenräte*, Bauer asked whether or not the actions of those in charge of the *Judenräte* could have led to the survival of more Jews, and, while recognizing the appalling dilemma faced by these leaders, concludes that what matters more than casting blame—for no one could have prevented the Nazis from carrying out their

murderous plans—was the effort that was put into trying to keep at least some Jews alive despite those plans. No one knows whether more Jews would have survived without Jewish participation in the Judenräte, but Bauer held that with more research on the question of complicity or collaboration in the ghettos, a conclusion based on the balance of probabilities might be reached at some time in the future—based on the vital premise that only the Nazis could have stopped the Holocaust, and that only they could have prevented the deaths of most of the victims.

Finally, consideration can be given to his views on the so-called “intentionalist” and “functionalist” debate. This was primarily a debate among historians, especially during the 1980s, based on two schools of thought over the issue of whether the Nazi annihilation of the Jews was planned by the Nazi Party based on the thinking of Adolf Hitler, or whether it was a policy that evolved slowly over time. Bauer’s view was that Hitler was the key figure in causing the Holocaust, and that at some point in the latter half of 1941 he gave a series of orders for the genocide of the entire Jewish people. This was not, however, a long-held goal of the Nazis or the *Führer* himself. As Bauer saw it, the perspectives of both the intentionalists and the functionalists are unsatisfactory, and he was more comfortable with a synthesis of the two schools. He did not consider that there was a master plan for genocide going back as far as the time when Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*, but he also found it difficult to concede that the decisions for the Holocaust were taken at the initiative of less senior members of Hitler’s government, as though the *Führer* or his inner circle were unaware of it.

A further issue into which Bauer brought an authoritative voice concerned the passionate debates that ensued after the publication of *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, a book published in 1996 by Harvard University political scientist Daniel Goldhagen. His argument was that ordinary Germans permitted themselves to be transformed by the Nazis into genocidal killers of Jews because of cultural characteristics within German society that allowed for a specific type of what Goldhagen termed “eliminationist antisemitism.”

Bauer appreciated Goldhagen’s attempt to provide an answer to the question of why the Holocaust happened (something he considers many scholars have been either unable or unwilling to do), and that in doing so Goldhagen placed antisemitism at center stage of this analysis. Bauer considered the thesis to be simplistic, however, and was critical of Goldhagen for only selecting evidence favorable to his thesis and for tailoring his arguments to fit a preconceived position.

An area to which scholars turned frequently in Bauer’s writing related to his perspective on the so-called “uniqueness” of the Holocaust. Bauer did not refer to the Holocaust as “unique”; indeed, he rejected that word, preferring to use the more defensible term “unprecedented.” As he saw it, the Holocaust was an extreme example of genocide: it was unique in the same way that all historical events are unique unto themselves, though even when comparing it to other events it had specific characteristics that had never happened before. These were, in summary form: (1) the ideological motivation of the killings, unlike other genocides in which ulterior motives based on physical acquisition (of land or loot) can be traced; (2) the totality of the Nazis’ aims, according to which *every* Jew in the world, without exception, was the intended target; (3) the breadth of the Nazis’ scope, which transcended borders and spread across all lands occupied and yet to be occupied by the Nazis and their allies and/or supporters; and (4) the nature of the Nazi concentration camp system, in which mass imprisonment, ritualized degradation, and, ultimately, purpose-built factories for the killing of huge numbers of people were developed for the first time in human history. In Bauer’s view, none of these four features had ever before been a characteristic of what could be considered genocide. Because of this, he argues, the Holocaust’s “unprecedentedness” renders it of universal importance.

Thus, in Yehuda Bauer’s overall analysis the Holocaust was the most extreme form of genocide on a continuum that ends with the Shoah as its ultimate point. It is the definitive yardstick against which all antihuman activities should be measured, and as a result of it having taken place, society can never again be the same as it was.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: “Functionalists”; *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*; “Intentionalists”; Jewish Resistance; Judenrat; Yad Vashem

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Baum, Herbert

Herbert Baum and his wife Marianne were the founders, at the end of summer 1937, of an anti-Nazi resistance group in Germany. Baum was born in Moschin, eastern Germany, on February 10, 1912. His family moved to Berlin when he was a baby. Upon leaving school he became an electrician. By 1926 he was an active member of a number of left-wing Jewish youth movements, and in 1931 he joined Germany's Young Communist League. Marianne Cohn, whom he had known since the two of them were young, had joined in 1930. In 1934, after she and Herbert were married, they were directed by the Communist Party to make contact with a number of



Herbert Baum was a German-Jewish anti-Nazi resister and leader of a group that bore his name. On May 18, 1942, the group organized an arson attack on an anticommunist and antisemitic propaganda exhibition in Berlin's Lustgarten. Arrested soon after, Baum and several others were sentenced to death. He died in Berlin's Moabit Prison on June 11, 1942. (Ullstein Bild/Getty Images)

Jewish organizations with which he had worked earlier. A small circle of friends and acquaintances formed and then grew. Most of them were Jewish, and they met frequently to discuss ways to circumvent Nazi antisemitism. Almost immediately they nominated Baum as their chairman.

By the time of the November 9–10 Kristallnacht pogrom, the little group had grown to nearly 100 young Germans, who would attend meetings at various times to discuss their options. After Jewish organizations were banned in 1939 the group grew larger—and, of necessity, more secretive. It retained its leftist and communist identity while recognizing and maintaining its Jewish origin.

In 1940 Baum was drafted into a forced labor unit at the electromotive works of the Siemens-Schuckertwerke, an electrical engineering company based in Berlin. While here, he engaged in party propaganda, leading to many more recruits from among those at the plant. For some who were communist but not Jewish, the idea of resistance proved to be a problem on account of the alliance signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in August 1939. For the Jews, there was little option; they could not afford any political dilemmas.

From 1941 onward, members of Baum's network among the Siemens workers saw that if they were to escape deportation to concentration camps they would have to mount some sort of underground resistance while at the same time making it appear as though they were vital to the war effort. Their underground activities at this time focused on the preparation and distribution of anti-Nazi propaganda leaflets rather than physical confrontation.

At the beginning of May 1942 Nazi Germany's minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels (who was also the Gauleiter of Berlin), organized an enormous exhibition at the Lustgarten, right in the heart of Berlin. This exhibition, titled "The Soviet Paradise," was intended to dehumanize the Russian enemy and reinforce an anti-Soviet (and, through this, an anti-Jewish) mindset among the population. Its fundamental goal was to justify the war against the Soviet Union, and well over a million people visited while the exhibition was running.

Baum and his circle, recognizing that their actions could always be only symbolic—they knew that they could not by themselves topple the Nazi regime—decided to let symbolism confront symbolism. On May 18, 1942, a group of seven Baum members—Herbert and Marianne Baum, Hans Joachim, Gerd Meyer, Sala Kochmann, Suzanne Wesse, and Irene Walther—set a number of fires around the exhibition

that were timed to ignite simultaneously. Some members had been cautious about such an action, fearing that Nazi retribution could well see the plan backfire against the Jews of Berlin. Others thought the time was ripe for such an act, and that delay would lose the initiative.

Once lit, the fires were quickly extinguished, and within days hundreds of Jewish Berliners, including all seven participants and most of the other members of the Baum group, were arrested by the Gestapo. Marianne and Herbert Baum were arrested on May 22, 1942. He was taken to the Siemens plant and ordered to identify fellow workers who were part of the conspiracy; refusing to reveal anything, he was subsequently tortured mercilessly in Berlin's Moabit Prison and died on June 11, 1942. The Gestapo reported his death as a suicide. Marianne was executed in Plötzensee prison on August 18, 1942, along with Joachim Franke, Hildegard Jadamowitz, Heinz Joachim, Sala Kochmann, Hans-Georg Mannaberg, Gerhard Meyer, Werner Steinbrink, and Irene Walther.

Other resisters in the Baum group were caught and tried in succeeding months. Most were executed at Plötzensee on March 4, 1943: Heinz Rotholz, Heinz Birnbaum, Hella Hirsch, Hanni Meyer, Marianne Joachim, Lothar Salinger, Helmut Neumann, Hildegard Löwy, and Siegbert Rotholz. Overall, the deaths of the Baum group members represent a tragic roll call of lost youth and dashed hopes. The average age of those in the group's inner circle was 22; Charlotte Päch, aged 32, was the oldest in the group, and was nicknamed "Grandma" by the others.

Moreover, not all were Jewish; Franke, Jadamowitz, Mannaberg, and Steinbrink were all non-Jewish communists. Ultimately, of the 32 members of the group who lost their lives, 22 were executed by decapitation, nine died in death camps, and one—Herbert Baum himself—through torture. Only five members of the Baum group survived the war.

As an act of resistance to the Holocaust, the question must be asked: was it worth it? The press was forbidden to report on the fire, and no official news was released regarding the Baum group or the fate of its members. Yet the partial destruction of the exhibit on the Lustgarten must have presented something of a shock to Goebbels and the Berlin Nazis. A small but well-organized resistance circle of Jewish communists had challenged a major Nazi propaganda enterprise, in the heart of the German capital, more than nine years after the Nazis had come to power. Little wonder, it might be argued, that the punishments were so overwhelming and devastating. The Baum group, quite simply, rocked

the Nazi establishment as few other resistance movements in Germany had to that time.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Resistance; Kristallnacht

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Beck, Gad

Gerhard Beck, born in Berlin in 1923, was a German Jewish homosexual living before and during the Third Reich. He is remembered today as the longest living known male homosexual to survive the Holocaust. Under the Nuremberg Laws, he and his twin sister Margot were classified as *mischlinge*, that is, Jews of mixed descent, in that they were the children of a Jewish father and a Protestant mother who had converted to Judaism. Participating in Jewish youth organizations when young, they changed their names to the Hebrew "Gad" and "Miriam" in order to express themselves in a more Jewish way—a form of symbolic resistance to the Nazis.

Beck suffered greatly in his younger years under the Nazi regime. When antisemitism became a part of public education in Germany he was frequently taunted, and his familiar classroom soon became filled with Hitler Youth uniforms. After the "J" stamp was introduced in October 1938, Beck was forced to display a yellow Star of David with that letter on it, singling him out for ridicule among those who had formerly been his classmates. Soon after, he was obliged to leave his school and attend a wholly Jewish institution. While he ended up preferring this owing to the curriculum (which favored, among other things, foreign languages), he was eventually forced to drop out altogether as his family could no longer afford to send him to what was now a private school with much higher fees.

As Beck entered young adulthood and became aware of his homosexuality, he developed a gay lifestyle despite the potential risks this carried in a Third Reich that had passed harsh antigay laws. Homosexuals were persecuted heavily under the Nazis' extension of Paragraph 175, a provision of the German Criminal Code dating from May 15, 1871. In defiance of this law, Beck's first lover was another Jew, Manfred Lewin; this relationship did not last long, however, as a

result of the Nazis capturing Lewin and his family and then deporting them in 1942. In another act of defiance, Beck borrowed a Hitler Youth uniform and gained access to the place where Lewin was being held prior to his deportation, in the hope of saving him. With this ruse, Lewin would in fact have been able to walk out of the holding area with the disguised Beck, but he decided to remain with his family. All were later murdered at Auschwitz.

The act of trying to help Lewin propelled Beck to participate in resistance activities against the Nazi regime. He began this in earnest during 1943, when Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels sought to declare Berlin free of Jews in time for Adolf Hitler's birthday on April 20. Beck and his father were arrested and held in the former Jewish community building on Berlin's Rosenstrasse, where protests by women outside eventually secured the release of all the men being held captive.

After this, Beck went underground with *Chug Chaluzi* (Clan of Pioneers), a Zionist youth group in Berlin dedicated to the cause of helping Jews and *mischlinge* escape Germany. This included educating members in Jewish traditions and religion. Beck's most important underground accomplishments came during his time in Chug Chaluzi, where he and his friends were all actively involved in helping others escape. As a result, Beck spent much of the war dodging the Gestapo, as there were times when he took huge risks by smuggling rations, money, and clothes to fellow Jews in hiding.

During 1944 Beck became the leader of Chug Chaluzi. The group itself was very small, comprising only about 40 young Jewish boys and girls, with eight of those, including Beck, comprising the inner circle. Their actions helped many Jews flee to safety in Switzerland through the provision of forged papers. The nature of Beck's resistance activities focused more on teaching culture and providing help than on violent acts of retaliation, such as hiding Jews, enhancing Jewish values, and assisting with escape attempts.

These activities came to an end when Beck and some of those around him were betrayed by a Jewish spy working for the Gestapo and were arrested in the spring of 1945. They were sent to a transit camp in Berlin awaiting transport to an unknown destination. In his cell, he narrowly escaped death, suffering a number of broken bones after he became pinned under debris during an air raid. He was liberated by Soviet troops after the capture of Berlin.

In 1947 Beck moved to Palestine, helping Jews migrate to the new homeland then being established. He lived in Israel for several years, until he began traveling and giving lectures

on his life experiences. For a short time Beck participated in youth work through the Jewish community in Vienna. He moved back to Berlin in 1979, served as director of Berlin's Jewish Adult Education Center, and became a prominent gay activist.

He retired after ten years of work at the center, where he taught students about the Jewish culture that had once flourished in their country. During this time he gave many interviews and participated in numerous documentaries, as well as writing his own memoir, *An Underground Life: Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin*. Gad Beck died on June 24, 2012, just six days before turning 89. He was survived by his partner of 36 years, Julius Laufer.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Homosexuals; Jewish Resistance; Mischling; Yellow Star

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Becker-Freyseng, Hermann

Hermann Becker-Freyseng was a German physician who participated in medical experiments on concentration camp internees before and during World War II. He was born in Ludwigshafen, Germany, on July 18, 1910, and received his medical degree from the University of Berlin in 1935. The following year, he was given the rank of captain in the Medical Service and was posted to the Department of Aviation Medicine, where he became an expert on the effects of high-altitude, low-pressure conditions on human beings. In the meantime, he had become a member of the Nazi Party.

Becker-Freyseng's work became well known, if notorious, at Nazi concentration camps, where he both conducted and supervised a number of experiments involving unwilling prisoners. Through the use of various low-pressure chambers designed to mimic the effects of high altitudes on the human body, Becker-Freyseng and his colleagues killed a number of prisoners at Dachau. Other experiments attempted to record the effects of extremely cold temperatures on the human body. One of his more sinister experiments involved forcing 40 internees to drink saltwater to measure their bodies' reactions. Some also had saltwater injected directly into their bloodstreams. The subjects were then subjected to liver biopsies—without the benefit of anesthesia—to measure that organ's reaction to the saltwater. All of the people involved ultimately died.

With the end of World War II in 1945, Becker-Freyseng was taken into custody by U.S. occupation authorities and put on trial for his medical experiments, along with other Nazi doctors. In 1946 he was found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Shortly thereafter, however, American officials took the German doctor to the United States, where he was put to work in the fledgling U.S. space program. He was in fact one of a number of German scientists taken to the United States as part of Operation Paperclip, which was designed chiefly to prevent such individuals from going to work for the Soviets during the early Cold War period. Becker-Freyseng died on August 27, 1961, in Heidelberg.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Medical Experimentation

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Beitz, Berthold

Berthold Beitz was a German industrialist who saved hundreds of Jewish workers during the Holocaust by declaring them to be essential workers at the Beskidian Oil Company (later renamed the Carpathian Oil Company) at Boryslaw (Boryslav), in Poland's eastern Galicia region. Born on September 26, 1913, in the German city of Zemmin, Beitz trained to become a banker like his father. In April 1938 he was employed by the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company in Hamburg, which led to a military deferment when war broke out in September 1939. He remained an employee of Shell during the first years of the war.

In 1939 Boryslaw was annexed by the Soviet Union, but in the summer of 1941, with Operation Barbarossa, it came under German control and was attached to the newly formed *Generalgouvernement*. Because of Beitz's expertise in the oil industry, he received a wartime commission as manager of oil supplies in the Boryslaw oilfields.

This gave him the opportunity to identify which residents would be employed as "essential to the war effort." As the area around Boryslaw had a large Jewish population with many Jews employed in the oil industry, it was inevitable that Beitz would employ Jews as local workers, and he used his office to create superfluous positions, which saved

hundreds of Jews and Poles from being deported to death camps. While he certainly engaged professionals able to assist in oil production, there were also a large number of Jews who were unqualified, in poor physical condition, and unable to make any contribution to the oil industry. He would later say that while he should have employed more professionals, he instead chose "tailors, hairdressers and Talmudic scholars," issuing work cards classifying them as "vital petroleum technicians."

In his managerial capacity Beitz was part of a regional network of senior Nazis, and through his connections could learn of impending anti-Jewish actions. Soon after arriving in Boryslaw, for example, he began witnessing atrocities perpetrated by the *Einsatzgruppen* (special action squads), whose sole task was the murder of Jews and other racial and ideological enemies of the Reich. He was notified in advance when any anti-Jewish measures were being planned, and so took it upon himself to choose which Jews were to be saved once they had all been assembled for transport. In this way, in August 1942, he took 250 Jewish men and women off a train heading for the Belzec extermination camp; for him, they were needed for the oil industry, and thus were "vital war workers."

Earlier that same month, on August 7, 1942, he witnessed an SS action in which they viciously "evacuated" the Jewish orphanage of Boryslaw; babies and toddlers were thrown out of windows, and children driven barefoot to the train station in the middle of the night. Seeing this, he decided to act, so from this point on, whenever he could, he issued false work papers and hid Jews in his home. He also tipped off local Jews whenever he learned of an impending anti-Jewish action.

It helped that the oil industry in Boryslaw was such a focused location for Jews. After the region was taken over by the Nazis, management passed to the Carpathian Oil Company, which stationed its workers and their families in segregated work camps. A special badge was sewn onto their clothes bearing the letter "R," identifying the wearer as a *Rüstungsarbeiter*, or armaments worker. This provided Beitz with a ready reservoir of employees, and a location he could watch should knowledge of any new pogroms come his way.

In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1983, Beitz explained his motivations as having nothing to do with politics. He did not act because he was opposed to Nazism or fascism, and did not see himself as being part of any organized resistance movement. "My motives," he said, "were purely humane, moral motives." His main concern was with the saving of endangered lives.

Because of this approach, Berthold Beitz has been credited with saving up to eight hundred Jews. He remained at his post in Boryslaw until March 1944, when he was drafted into the army. While he did not see himself as a resister, the fact was that by going out of his way to deliberately save the lives of Jews he was opposing one of the most sacred principles of National Socialism, for which he could have been denounced and arrested, at the risk of his own life, at any moment.

After the war, Beitz became one of the leading industrialists in postwar Germany, playing a critical role in rebuilding the country into an industrial powerhouse. In the 1950s he became the head of the powerful steel conglomerate ThyssenKrupp and helped in the reindustrialization of the Ruhr Valley. While these were immense achievements, his work on behalf of Jews during the Holocaust was well remembered and garnered him a number of important awards of recognition. These included the Leo Baeck Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Central Council of Jews in Germany, awarded to him and his wife Else in 2000. He also received awards from Poland.

On October 3, 1973, however, the highest recognition came to Beitz when Yad Vashem named him as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his work in saving Jewish lives. His original nomination for this award received strong support from most of the survivors from Boryslaw. Upon further research and deliberation, on February 5, 2006, Else Beitz was also recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations. On July 30, 2013, at the age of 99, Berthold Beitz died at his holiday home on the island of Sylt, off Germany's northern coast.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Operation Barbarossa; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Belarus

A landlocked country situated in Eastern Europe, Belarus (known historically as Belorussia) was occupied both by Poland and the Soviet Union prior to the beginning of World War II in 1939. Between 1922 and 1939, the western portion of Belarus was controlled by Poland; the eastern part was

controlled by the Soviets as the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Even before the outbreak of war, Belarus was no stranger to antisemitism and atrocities against Jews. Forming part of the Pale of Settlement established by Russian empress Catherine the Great in 1791, the region of Belarus was home to a sizable Jewish population. However, beginning in the second half of the 19th century, pogroms aimed at Jews forced many to flee and resulted in severe persecution (and even death) to those who remained. Antisemitism waned a bit after Belarus became part of the Soviet Union, but by the early 1930s Joseph Stalin's government had adopted a harder line against Belarusian Jews.

When Germany attacked Poland in September 1939, a move that sparked World War II, part of western Belarus came under Nazi control. In June 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union, and Nazi troops overran all of Belarus by the end of August. Within weeks, the Germans began implementing the systematic eradication of Belarusian Jews in the region. Minsk, the historic capital of Belarus, became one of the largest Jewish ghettos in the east. As many as 150,000 Jews were concentrated there, and most were killed on site or died after deportation. Over a period of just three days in June 1942, the Germans killed some 30,000 Jews in Minsk alone. Thousands of others were sent to labor or death camps, where the vast majority perished.

Mobile killing squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) were primarily responsible for rounding up Jews and other “undesirables” during the early stages of the German occupation. They were frequently aided by non-Jewish locals, who were exhorted by the Germans to establish pogroms against Jews. As the occupation progressed, the mobile killing squads and German occupation officials supervised the mass murder of at least 1 million Jews in the occupied region, which included Belarus; some estimates place the total killed as high as 2 million. Many were killed in their own cities or towns, or in the Minsk ghetto—others died after being deported to concentration camps.

The brutal German occupation ended in the summer of 1944, as Soviet troops pushed the Germans west toward Germany. Minsk was retaken that July. The German invasion and occupation of Belarus decimated that region and its inhabitants. One-quarter of the total population died between 1941 and 1944, and perhaps as much as 90% of the Jewish population perished. Indeed, Belarus suffered more than any other Soviet republic during the war. The Germans completely destroyed 209 cities and towns, more than one

million homes and other structures, and eradicated 85% of the region's industrial capacity. The damage was so catastrophic that Belarus's population remained below the pre-1939 level until 1971.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Collaboration; Einsatzgruppen; Ghettos

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Belgium

Belgium is a small nation located in northwestern Europe. Broadly speaking, it is divided culturally and linguistically between Flemish-speaking Belgians in the north and French-speaking Walloons in the south. There were an estimated 90,000–100,000 Jews living in Belgium in 1939, many of whom were foreign nationals from Poland and other Eastern European countries. A liberal and independent constitutional republic since 1830, Belgium largely avoided the widespread antisemitism that had swept other nations in the 20th century.

Despite Belgium's declared neutrality, German forces invaded the country in May 1940 and quickly established a military occupation there. The country was administered by German occupation officials and the Belgian civil service, although most policies were set by the Germans. Although the Belgian government reestablished itself in exile in London, King Leopold III refused to leave Belgium, where he remained under a loose form of house arrest.

The Germans wasted no time in implementing anti-Jewish measures once Belgium had been secured. Various religious ceremonies were banned, and Jews were forbidden to practice certain professions, including education, medicine, and law. The occupiers also expropriated Jewish property and businesses, confined Jews to inner cities, established curfews, and, beginning in 1942, required all Jews to wear identifying yellow badges in public.

Even worse, by late 1943, German occupation officials began rounding up Jews and forcibly deporting them to concentration and death camps in the east. As many as 25,000

Belgian Jews were sent to Auschwitz, where nearly all were murdered. Other Jews were compelled to work at forced labor both within Belgium and beyond, and several thousand are estimated to have died from overwork or squalid living conditions.

Compared to other nations under Nazi occupation, many Belgian Jews managed to survive the Holocaust and the Nazi occupations, thanks in part to a robust resistance movement that developed soon after the German conquest. Jews and non-Jews alike participated in this movement, which was aided by the Catholic Church and the government-in-exile. Most Belgians refused to aid the Nazis in their attempts to identify, round up, and label Jews, and many actively helped Jews elude the Germans' clutches, chiefly by hiding them or helping them to remain hidden. In all, perhaps 25,000–30,000 Jews from Belgium died during the war, most of them having been deported to concentration camps. The German occupation of Belgium ended when Allied forces liberated it in September 1944.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: André, Joseph; Antwerp Pogrom; Collaboration; Comité de Défense des Juifs; Degrelle, Léon; Geulen-Herscovici, Andrée; Kerkhofs, Louis-Joseph; Mechelen; Resistance Movements

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Belzec

In early 1940 German officials built a number of forced labor camps along the Bug River. Just outside the village of Belzec, in southeastern Poland, the Germans erected a labor camp, which also served as the headquarters for all of the regional labor camps. Administered by the SS, the camp at Belzec interned Jews from the Lublin district, where they were compelled to build various military facilities on the Bug River. By year's end, the labor camp was deactivated; its laborers were either shot or deported to other detention facilities. In November 1941 the SS and local police officials began erecting an extermination camp at the site of the old labor camp. It was to be the Nazis' first dedicated extermination facility. The new camp commenced operations in March 1942, when Jews deported from Lublin, Lvov, and Kraków began arriving by rail cars. Belzec quickly became a

death camp, where several hundred thousand people were murdered.

Belzec was ideally suited as an extermination camp because it was situated less than one-quarter of a mile from a major rail line. The camp, which measured 886 feet per side, was supervised by 20–30 SS and police officers along with an auxiliary police unit of 90–120 men. This group was multiethnic, constituting Ukrainian and Polish civilians as well as former Soviet prisoners of war. Commanding the facility were SS major Christian Wirth (March–June 1942) and SS first lieutenant Gottlieb Hering (June 1942–June 1943). The Nazis went to considerable trouble to conceal the activities inside the facility in an effort to keep the local population in the dark about the mass killings there.

The Germans had the deportations and killing down to a science: trains of 40–60 boxcars, with 80–100 people per car, arrived at the Belzec station. The prisoners were brought into the facility, stripped of their possessions, and usually separated by gender (men were kept separate from women and children). Deportees were then forced to disrobe and told to walk through the “tube,” a narrow, concealed walkway that led to the gas chambers. The unsuspecting prisoners were told they were going to communal showers. Once a chamber was full, the doors were sealed and carbon monoxide gas was pumped into the room via a large machine. This process was repeated until all deportees were killed (a few, however, were temporarily spared to work as slave laborers in the camp). These prisoners were compelled to work in the killing areas, separating newly arrived prisoners’ possessions, removing bodies from the gas chambers, and burying them in mass graves adjacent to the facility.

Fearful that their nefarious activities might be discovered, German officials ordered the mass graves exhumed in October 1942. The remains were incinerated in open-air furnaces, while machines were employed to crush any surviving bone fragments. Meanwhile, between March and December 1942 alone, at least 435,500 Jews, Poles, and Roma were murdered at Belzec. Most had come from southern Poland, but there were also Jews from Austria, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile, by June 1943 conscript laborers had finished the task of exhuming bodies and burning them. The workers were subsequently shot or deported to other facilities. To mask their activities, German officials bulldozed the entire site, constructed a large home, and planted crops and trees. The Soviets uncovered the horrors of Belzec when they occupied the area in July 1944.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Death Camps; Final Solution; Franz, Kurt; Gas Chambers; Gerstein, Kurt; J.A. Topf and Sons; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Majdanek; Nisko Plan; Wirth, Christian

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Bergen-Belsen

Bergen-Belsen was a German concentration camp during World War II, situated near the village of Bergen in north-western Germany. It was originally designated a camp for political prisoners and was not equipped with gas chambers or crematoria. Prisoners were subjected to a very limited diet, and most deaths at the camp resulted from starvation, malnutrition, or diseases like typhus and dysentery resulting from unsanitary water. The guards at Bergen-Belsen were notoriously brutal, especially the female contingent, and the camp was considered an especially tough place to be imprisoned.

In December 1944 Josef Kramer was transferred to Bergen-Belsen from Birkenau as camp commander, and the regime of brutalization intensified dramatically. Kramer, whom the British called “The Beast of Belsen,” created at Bergen-Belsen perhaps the most brutal of the concentration camps. Beatings, torture, random shootings, and senseless cruelty were the order of the day. The incompetence of Kramer’s administration was magnified as prisoners from other camps were sent to Bergen-Belsen beginning in the late winter of 1945.

Bergen-Belsen’s regular prisoner muster was about 10,000. As Allied armies threatened to capture various concentration camps on the Eastern and Western fronts, however, prisoners were moved to camps deeper in Germany, and by April 1945 Belsen held almost 80,000 prisoners in a space designed to hold barely one-tenth that number. The acute shortage of food, together with the poor water quality and next to no medical care, saw prisoner welfare transformed into a catastrophe, and Kramer lost control of the situation. The camp guards stopped keeping track of prisoners and decided to refrain from contact with them because they were afraid of catching typhus. Any semblance of order simply disappeared. No one disposed of the growing number of dead, and some prisoners reportedly resorted to cannibalism.



Bergen-Belsen was a Nazi concentration camp. Originally established as a prisoner of war camp, it was converted into a concentration camp in 1943. Toward the end of World War II, massive overcrowding, lack of food, and poor sanitary conditions led to outbreaks of disease and the deaths of tens of thousands of people prior to, and after, the liberation. (Popperfoto/Getty Images)

The British captured Bergen-Belsen in April 1945, and Kramer was taken into immediate custody. Upon touring the camp, British soldiers found about 30,000 starving and diseased survivors, and about 35,000 corpses lying in various parts of the camp, including entire barracks blocks. It was one of the most horrifying scenes of the entire war, and film footage from the time became an iconic testament to the brutality of the Nazi regime. Kramer, for his part, was sentenced to death by a British military court on November 17, 1945, and hanged a few days later.

LEE BAKER

See also: Concentration Camps; Grese, Irma; Kramer, Josef; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Mann, Franczeska; Westerbork

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Bergson Group

The Bergson Group took its name from the alias used by Hillel Kook—Peter H. Bergson—a Palestinian Jewish activist, right-wing Revisionist Zionist, and follower of Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Kook was also a founding member of the Irgun Zeva'i Le'umi, the underground military organization in Palestine created by Jabotinsky modeled on the Jewish Self-Defense League he had founded earlier in Odessa, Russia, and which Kook took to Poland in 1937 to help organize Jewish immigration to Palestine.

In 1940, the year of Jabotinsky's death, Kook was sent to the United States, along with a small group of others—Aryeh Ben-Eliezer, Yitzhak Ben-Ami, Alexander Rafaeli, Samuel Merlin, and Ari Jabotinsky—to organize political action and fundraising as, increasingly, news of the fate of the Jews of Europe was becoming more and more well known. Their first activity was the creation of an organization called the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Pal-

estinian Jews, an initial attempt to organize Jews to fight the Nazis under the British. (The British were the mandated authorities in Palestine, and the United States had not yet entered the war.) In addition, Kook, now Bergson, and his colleagues staged rallies—the most famous of which was that of 400 Orthodox rabbis in Washington, D.C., on October 6, 1943, three days before the holy day of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)—lobbied Congress; recruited celebrities, Jewish and non-Jewish, to the cause of Jewish survival, including screenwriter and playwright Ben Hecht; and placed dramatic advertisements in major newspapers including the *New York Times* (e.g., “For Sale to Humanity 70,000 Rumanian Jews,” February 18, 1942; “Four Million Jews Waiting for Death,” September 14, 1943). Their constant political pressure resulted in a congressional resolution and, with the support of Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr., convinced then-President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to create the War Refugee Board in January 1944, which ultimately saved more than 200,000 Jews. One of the group’s most successful events was staged at Madison Square Garden, New York, with a script written by Hecht titled “We Will Never Die.” It has been estimated that more than 40,000 people saw this elaborate dramatic production the first night and before it went to five other cities including Washington, D.C., where it was seen by then-First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and members of both the Congress and Supreme Court.

In 1943–1944 the Bergson Group created three additional groups: the Emergency Committee for the Rescue of European Jewry, American League for Free Palestine, and the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, the latter two campaigning heavily for a future Jewish state. The group’s efforts, and their brashness and determination, caused a rift vis-à-vis other American Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress (AJC), especially their president, Rabbi Stephen Wise of New York, a close friend of President Roosevelt and, perhaps, the leading spokesperson of the American Jewish community at that time, who regarded them as unrepresentative and unwanted intruders. Significantly, the AJC and several American Jewish Zionist groups also tried unsuccessfully to have Bergson either deported back to Palestine or drafted into the U.S. Army.

At war’s end, the Bergson Group disbanded. Bergson returned to Israel in 1948 (the year of the state’s founding) and served one term in the Israeli Knesset as a representative of the Herut (Freedom) Party. He resigned a year later after serious disagreements with the party’s leader, Menachem

Begin, who would later serve as prime minister of Israel. In 1951 Kook and his wife, Betty, and daughter, Astra, left Israel and returned to the United States where he worked as a stockbroker in New York. He returned to Israel in 1968 with Astra and her younger sister Rebecca, after Betty’s death. He later remarried and lived outside of Tel Aviv until his death in 2001. Until he died, he continued to grant interviews, published, and spoke out, seriously critiquing successive governments for what he regarded as their failures of Zionist philosophy.

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See also: Rescuers of Jews

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Berlin Jewish Hospital

The Berlin Jewish hospital was originally built on Oranienburger Strasse in 1756, not far from the Jewish cemetery. In 1760 a Sephardi Jew, Benjamin Lemos, became medical director; he, in turn, was succeeded by his son-in-law Marcus Herz in 1779. In 1857 the Jewish community bought new premises on August Strasse and built a new Jewish Hospital there. From its inception in 1861, it was regarded as one of the most modern hospitals in Europe with much of the most advanced equipment of that time. Finally, in 1914, a new (and final) location for the hospital was found in Berlin’s Wedding district, and the hospital moved there.

By the time the Nazis came into office in 1933, therefore, Berlin’s Jewish Hospital was already well over two centuries old. After the advent of the Nuremberg Laws on Race in 1935, however, the hospital saw major changes to the way it operated. Henceforth, the treatment of “Aryans” at the

hospital was forbidden, and non-Jewish employees were forced to look elsewhere for work. It truly became a *Jewish* hospital in more than just name.

In the years that followed, the hospital was repeatedly threatened with closure. Looting of hospital stores was frequent, and medical supplies were increasingly difficult to obtain. In December 1941 the Nazis began pressuring hospital administrators to keep detailed lists of everyone inside the walls: medical staff, auxiliary staff, and patients. With this, they would have a ready-made pool of possible Jewish deportees should the order ever come through to close down the hospital and move the Jews out.

The medical director and chief administrator of the hospital during the Nazi period was Dr. Walter Lustig, who was obliged by the Nazis throughout the war to compile lists of patients and hospital personnel for deportation—to Theresienstadt at first, and then, ultimately, to Auschwitz. While doing so was reprehensible and a crass betrayal of those around him, by doing so he was nonetheless able to placate the Nazis (who saw him as a pliable tool bending to their will) and thereby keep the doors of the hospital open. This provided some measure of relative safety to those who had not yet been deported. By the time of the liberation, the Berlin Jewish Hospital had remained an island in which some 600 Jews had survived, deep in the Nazi capital.

Born in 1891, the son of a Jewish merchant, Lustig converted from Judaism to Christianity while young. At the outset of World War I, before he had finished his medical studies at the University of Breslau, he volunteered for the German army in the medical corps and served throughout the war.

In 1920 he became a medical officer in Koblenz. In 1927 he moved to Berlin, and by early February of that year had joined the Berlin police as an administrator. He moved through a number of offices in the police department, essentially with responsibility for health care in schools and homes—a kind of police medical welfare officer.

This lasted only until the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, passed on April 7, 1933, was intended to restructure the civil service in such a way that tenured civil servants could be dismissed if they were not of “Aryan descent.” As a World War I veteran Lustig was at first exempt from the ban, but by October 1933 he was dismissed. His exemption was rejected on the ground that he had not seen front-line service during the war but had stayed as a military doctor in Breslau. With little alternative but to work in Jewish enterprises, by 1936 he was working in the Jewish community

administration in Berlin. In July 1939 he became responsible for health care within the organized community’s Department of Welfare.

On October 20, 1942, Lustig became medical director of the Jewish Hospital, which, over time, became a de facto ghetto for Berlin’s Jews. Lustig worked to keep the hospital viable and aimed to have the medical staff seen to be useful.

The Nazis had a different set of agendas, with the hospital employed for a hodgepodge of purposes during the war, some having little to do with medical treatment. In order to potentially weaken the bonds of marriage between Jewish husbands and non-Jewish wives, Jewish men were forcibly interned there. Some, thinking that the hospital could serve as a kind of Noah’s Ark, bought their way in. Jews who fell ill or were injured in police stations, prisons, or concentration camps were brought to the hospital by the Nazis, only to be murdered once their health was restored.

Through it all, however, the Nazis demanded that numbers be kept at a constant low. The hospital, which came under the direct supervision of Adolf Eichmann’s office, was watched very carefully. Indeed, Eichmann visited the hospital on many occasions and personally selected patients and staff to be deported.

These deportations were frequent, and actions to clear a certain number of Jews from the hospital were a constant reality. Realizing what the raids held in store for those being deported, the staff sometimes allowed elderly patients to die and helped younger or more robust patients, with a better chance of surviving the camps, instead. Transports, which left Berlin on a weekly basis, always had some patients from the Jewish Hospital on board. Sometimes, in order to avoid deportation, staff performed unnecessary elective surgery; pregnant women and new mothers with babies, however, were never spared. Sometimes, in order to deceive the victims, Jewish doctors and nurses were sent along with the patients. No hospital staff ever returned, their fate the same as that of the patients in their care.

On February 27, 1943, the so-called *Fabrikaktion* (Factory Action)—the roundup of the last Jews in Berlin still to be deported—began. In order to ensure that the entire hospital was not closed down and the whole population removed, Lustig arranged that some 300 hospital employees (with their families) be selected and sent to concentration camps. Here is possibly the clearest example of his intentionally sacrificing some in order to save a larger number of others. However, as 300 Jewish employees and their families might have totaled up to 900 or even 1,000 people, it is not

necessarily clear that by sacrificing that number of Jews a greater good was served, to say nothing of whether or not the sacrifice was ethically justified. Lustig himself was exempt from deportation owing to his being in a mixed marriage; his father, however, was deported to Theresienstadt.

The Fabrikaktion was just the beginning. In June and November 1943 patients were again deported, and from early March 1944 the hospital's pathology building was used as a collection point for Jews—no longer patients—who were deported from there to Theresienstadt, then Auschwitz. All the while, Lustig was expected by the Nazis to be the person to make up the deportation lists.

When the Red Army fought its way into Berlin in 1945 it found the Jewish Hospital intact, with some 370 patients, nearly 1,000 internees, 93 children, and 76 prisoners held in police custody. It seemed impossible to believe—and, at first, the only explanation was that Lustig, in collaborating with the Nazis, was a Nazi himself.

Looked at more carefully, however, it soon became apparent that there was more here than first met the eye. Lustig was far from being a Nazi. An ambitious, assimilated Jew in Berlin's professional class, baptized and married to an Aryan, Lustig nonetheless had his medical license revoked under the Nuremberg racial laws and had few options open to him other than working within the Jewish community as permitted by the regime.

Given this, some of those around him vilified Lustig as an unscrupulous sociopath bent only on his own self-preservation. There is no doubt that by choosing some Jews for deportation he proved his (temporary) indispensability to the Nazis by doing their work for them. And herein lay a major dilemma when assessing Lustig's actions, as he found himself drawn more and more into the Nazi scheme of manipulating Jews through deception.

Walter Lustig was appointed by the Gestapo to preside over the hospital in the last years of the war. His personal characteristics made him a suitable candidate for both hero and villain. He showed his courage in standing up to the SS on a number of occasions, and he was aware of the byzantine internal dynamics of the German bureaucracy, which gave him the opportunity to exploit the system. The hospital's status as an exclusively Jewish institution thereby held fast throughout the war almost until the very end, and it was not until the last days of the war that wounded non-Jewish patients were treated at the hospital.

For his part, Lustig remained director. The Soviet occupying forces were hardly convinced that he had acted honorably, and he was last seen leaving the hospital with two Soviet

officers at the end of June 1945. Opinions differ as to his fate. The most common account was that he was murdered by the Soviets. Another possibility was that he might even have staged his own disappearance. The bottom line must be that the fate of Walter Lustig remains as much a mystery as why he acted as he did during the war. On October 19, 1954, the District Court of Berlin-Wedding gave his official death date as December 31, 1945.

The story—and the enigma—of Walter Lustig still stirs heated debate today among families of those deported to the camps at his order and those who were saved in the hospital through his negotiations. It is truly a “gray area” of upstanding against (or connivance with) the Nazis, and determining how it should be assessed is likely to be one of the last areas for discussion and resolution coming out of the Holocaust.

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See also: Eichmann, Adolf; Fabrikaktion

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Bermuda Conference

The Bermuda Conference, held in Hamilton, Bermuda, from April 19 to April 30, 1943, was a joint Anglo-American wartime meeting convened ostensibly to discuss the plight of European Jewry. By the latter half of 1942, grisly news of the Nazis' plan to exterminate the European Jews had been made public. Although the American press tended to downplay these reports, the British press paid more attention to them. Before long, Anglican Church leaders and some political leaders in Parliament began lobbying Winston Churchill's government to do something to alleviate the mounting humanitarian catastrophe in Europe. On March 23 William Temple, the archbishop of Canterbury, gave an impassioned speech to the House of Lords imploring the British government to address the as-yet unnamed Holocaust. His remarks received wide press coverage and prompted the British Foreign Office to propose an Anglo-American conference to address the issue.

From the start, however, the Foreign Office warned others in the British government, as well as the U.S. State Department, that if a comprehensive plan to rescue European Jews did come to fruition, it might force the Germans and their satellite collaborators to abandon their policy of extermination in favor of mass deportation. That would create a flood of several million Jews into areas and nations controlled by the Allies, which would quickly overwhelm Allied logistics, destabilize governments, and possibly further imperil Jewish refugees.

The Americans took several weeks to respond to the British proposal, and the Bermuda Conference did not begin until April 19. Both the British and American governments tried to lower expectations of the meeting and opted to keep its deliberations secret. Indeed, Bermuda was chosen as the venue largely because of its isolation and the lack of a large media presence. Although a number of Jewish organizations asked to participate in the meeting, the conference was limited strictly to government officials, and no reporters were permitted to attend the sessions. To further lower expectations, the conferees referred to the Jews only as “political refugees,” a vague and general term that could be applied to a large number of people, including non-Jewish prisoners.

The general topics of what to do with Jewish refugees who had been liberated by the Allies and what to do for Jews who remained under Nazi control were discussed, but no solutions were forthcoming. Furthermore, neither the Americans nor the British offered to raise their restrictive immigration quotas, and the British made it clear that they would continue the ban on Jewish immigration to Palestine, an area they controlled as a League of Nations Mandate. The conferees did not even discuss sending food and other supplies to Jews interned in concentration camps. In the end, the only substantive agreements to emerge from the talks were policies dealing with prisoners of war, and the establishment of a small Jewish refugee camp to be located in northern Africa.

The Bermuda Conference was a major disappointment to British and American Jews and those who sought to aid Jews under the Nazi yoke. The conferees even failed to mention or acknowledge the start of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which had commenced the same day the talks began, on April 19. A week after the conference ended, a U.S. Jewish-Zionist organization placed an advertisement in the *New York Times* sharply critical of the Bermuda Conference, claiming that the American government had broken promises made to the Jewish people and had all but ignored the suffering of European Jews.

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See also: British Response to the Holocaust; United States Response to the Holocaust

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Best, Werner

Dr. Karl Rudolf Werner Best was a German Nazi, jurist, police chief, SS-Obergruppenführer, and Nazi Party leader from Darmstadt, Hesse. As a leading constitutional theoretician and Nazi jurist in the Third Reich, Best gave respectability and legitimacy to the political police and the concentration camps. He considered that as long as the Gestapo was carrying out the will of the Führer, it was acting legally.

Best was born on July 10, 1903, in Darmstadt. In 1912 his parents moved to Dortmund and then to Mainz, where he completed his education. His father, a senior postmaster, was killed during the first few days of World War I. After the war Best founded the first local group of the German National Youth League and became active in the Mainz group of the German National People's Party. In his involvement with the German youth movement Best was inspired by its return to nature, its Germanic legends, and its *völkisch* worldview.

From 1921 to 1925 he studied law at Frankfurt am Main, Freiburg, Giessen, and Heidelberg, where he received his doctorate in 1927. In 1929 he was appointed a judge in Hesse but was forced to resign when the so-called “Boxheim” documents were found in his possession. The documents, bearing Best's signature, set out a blueprint for a Nazi *putsch* and the subsequent execution of political opponents. The disclosure of the Boxheim documents embarrassed Adolf Hitler at a time when he was seeking power by legal means. Despite this, Best was made police commissioner in Hessen in March 1933, and by July 1933 he was appointed governor.

Over the next six years Best advanced rapidly, becoming chief legal adviser to the Gestapo and chief of the Bureau of the Secret State Police at the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Best helped the Gestapo destroy much of the old Weimar legal system and showed the Gestapo how to use orders for preventive detention without judicial checks.

In 1934 Hitler decided that Ernst Röhm had to be eliminated as an independent political force. On June 30, 1934, the

SS and Gestapo acted in coordinated mass arrests against Röhm and the Sturmabteilung (SA) in a purge that became known as the Night of the Long Knives. Best was sent to Munich to arrest SA members in the southern part of Germany, during which up to 200 people were killed.

By 1935 Best was the closest collaborator of Reinhard Heydrich in building up the Gestapo and the Security Services (SD). Then, in April 1936, he assumed a leading role in ideological training for the Gestapo. Using biological metaphors, he described the role of the Gestapo and the political police as being to fight “disease” in the national body; among the implied sicknesses were communists, Freemasons, and the churches—and above and behind all these stood the Jews.

On September 27, 1939, the security agencies of the Reich were folded into the new Reich Main Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or RSHA), which was placed under Heydrich’s control. Best was made head of Department I: Administration and Legal, with legal and personnel issues relating to the SS and security police. Heydrich and Heinrich Himmler relied on Best to develop and explain legally the activities against enemies of the state and in relation to the Nazi Jewish policy. In this capacity he was charged after the war with complicity in the murder of thousands of Jews and Polish intellectuals.

As a Himmler favorite, Best was being groomed for the very top of the SS, but an internal power struggle saw him dismissed by Reinhard Heydrich in 1939. He left the RSHA on June 12, 1940. He then served for two years as civil administrator in occupied France, involved in fighting the French Resistance and in the deportation of Jews, during which he was nicknamed “The Butcher of Paris.”

In November 1942 Best was appointed the Third Reich’s supreme power in Denmark. In this role he supervised civilian affairs. He kept this position until the end of the war in May 1945, even after the German military had assumed direct control over the administration of the country on August 29, 1943.

With an increase in sabotage attacks in 1943, Best was instructed by Berlin to deliver a statement to the Danish resistance by making Denmark completely reduce the country’s Jewish population. With limited German troops at his disposal, and fearing a civil uprising if he deported 8,000 Danish Jews to certain death, he went about fulfilling Hitler’s order to the letter, although not in the spirit the Führer intended.

Best’s urgent and repeated requests for additional SS battalions were not met. During the time in question, from

September through early October 1943, all available SS troops had been deployed by Heinrich Himmler to Italy (where they were needed to shore up Mussolini’s puppet regime) and thus could not be spared for Denmark.

Best knew that unless he could mount a swift roundup with surgical precision, requiring ruthless and massive SS involvement, his future career would be in jeopardy. He therefore sent his naval attaché, Georg Duckwitz, to Sweden to arrange safe passage and accommodation for Denmark’s Jews, and then himself walked into a Jewish tailor’s shop in Copenhagen and warned the tailor and his family that a roundup of the Jews was imminent, telling them to flee. The word was then spread quickly through the Jewish community.

Almost all Danish Jews survived the “Final Solution” by escaping to Sweden, ferried over at night on the boats of their non-Jewish Danish neighbors. Only 477 out of more than 7,000 Danish Jews were finally rounded up by German troops, who were forbidden by Best to break into Jewish apartments. Half-Jews were let go, and patrols were not especially vigilant.

Arguably Best undermined the “Final Solution” outcome not out of an altruistic desire to save human life, but out of a pragmatic need to maintain a stable status quo in occupied Denmark and preserve the Reich’s influence. His success depended on the willingness of the Danish people to save their Jewish neighbors—to refuse to see them as anything but fellow Danes. That, in the end, is perhaps the true miracle of the Danish rescue.

To avoid deportation of Danes to German concentration camps, the permanent secretary of the ministry of foreign affairs, Nils Svenningsen, in January 1944 proposed establishment of an internment camp within Denmark. Best accepted this proposal, but on condition that the camp should be built close to the German border. Frøslev prison camp was opened in August 1944. In deliberations on May 3, 1945, when preparing for the impending German defeat, Best fought to avoid implementation of a scorched earth policy in Denmark.

After the war, Best testified as a witness at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and was later extradited to Denmark. In 1948 he was sentenced to death by a Danish court, but his sentence was reduced to five years in prison (of which four years had already been served). This created outrage among the Danish public, and the Supreme Court changed the sentence to 12 years. Best was granted a clemency release in August 1951.

He then returned to West Germany, working for a time in a solicitor’s office and then as a lawyer for Stinnes & Co., one

of the largest German trading concerns. In 1958 he was fined 70,000 marks by a German denazification court for his past actions as a leading SS officer, and in March 1969 he was held in detention for new investigation concerning responsibility for mass murder. He was released in August 1969 on medical grounds, though the accusations were not withdrawn.

In 1972 he was charged again when further war crimes allegations arose, but he was found medically unfit to stand trial and was released. After that, he became part of a network that helped former Nazis. He died on June 23, 1989, in Mülheim.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Christian X, King of Denmark; Denmark; Duckwitz, Georg; Gestapo

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Bettelheim, Bruno

Bruno Bettelheim was a professor of psychoanalysis who was incarcerated in Nazi concentration camps during 1938 and 1939. Prior to the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939 he managed to leave the Third Reich and migrate to the United States, where he became best known for his educational methods in addressing the needs of emotionally disturbed children. In another context, he also became an authority on prisoner behavior in Nazi concentration camps; in this regard the principal theory he advanced and developed over four decades was pioneering, though in later years it was challenged owing to its oversimplification of highly complex issues.

Bettelheim was born in Vienna, Austria, on August 28, 1903. He pursued a degree in psychology at the University of Vienna, which awarded him a PhD in 1938. With the

Austrian Anschluss in March 1938, Bettelheim, as a Jew, became subject to Nazi antisemitic policies, and in May of that year he was arrested. First incarcerated in Dachau in September 1938, he was transferred to Buchenwald but through good fortune and friends on the outside managed to be released in April 1939.

Bettelheim arrived in the United States on May 11, 1939, where he began a new life during which he became one of the world's leading psychotherapists. In October 1943 he published his first study of prisoner behavior in the Nazi concentration camps, based largely on his own experiences in Dachau and Buchenwald. Arguing that the Nazis had instituted a highly complex camp regime designed to break the prisoners' will to resist the Nazis' directives, Bettelheim noted that the major effect of this was to produce changes in the prisoners' own psychological perceptions of themselves, such that the longer they remained incarcerated the more they came to identify with the goals of their persecutors, along the way regressing to a state of childlike helplessness and dependence. It was a highly controversial position, which he would be required to defend increasingly throughout succeeding decades. But as the first major attempt to analyze and explain the behavior of individuals living under the stresses imposed by life in the Nazi concentration camps, Bettelheim's work was influential on a generation of younger scholars. Other Bettelheim theories were less so, such as his views on Jews who went passively to their deaths in the concentration camps, in ghettos, or at the hands of the Einsatzgruppen in which he argued that the Jews were suicidal, or his suggestion that Anne Frank's family cooperated with the Nazi war machine by not resisting it.

Never one to shy away from a fight, Bettelheim took on his critics vigorously, especially (though not exclusively) Colgate University English professor Terrence Des Pres, primarily over the nature of survivorship. Despite his success, influence, and authority, throughout his life Bettelheim fell into deep depressions; during one such bout, on March 13, 1990, he committed suicide.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Buchenwald; Dachau

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Białystok Ghetto

Located in northeastern Poland, the city of Białystok, with a Jewish population prior to 1939 of approximately 50,000 Jews, was the site of a ghetto established in mid-1941 and liquidated in late 1943. It is estimated that fewer than 1,000 Jews survived of the 60,000 Jews in the ghetto at the peak of its density. It was also here, in August 1943, that the second largest ghetto uprising took place, behind only that in the Warsaw Ghetto.

On September 15, 1939, just two weeks after Germany invaded Poland, Białystok was occupied by the German Army. One week later, on September 22, the Soviets took control as agreed to in the nonaggression pact signed by Germany and Russia just prior to the start of World War II. Soviet control ended about two years later—in June 1941—when Germany took all of Poland as part of its ill-fated assault on Russia code named Operation Barbarossa.

June 27, 1941, shortly after Germany's reoccupation of the city, is referred to as "Red Friday" in the history of Białystok. On that day troops from Einsatzgruppen B murdered 2,000 Jews, beginning an onslaught of murder that resulted in another 4,000 Jews killed in the next two weeks. Shortly thereafter, on August 1, 1941, some 50,000 Jews were confined in the Białystok ghetto, established in the center of the city, divided into two sections by the Biała River.

Much like the Łódź ghetto, the Białystok ghetto hoped to fend off liquidation by becoming a source of industrial value to the Nazis, with thousands of Jews working in the many textile and weapons factories established there. The ghetto was required by the Nazis to establish a *Judenrat*, a Jewish leadership council to administer the ghetto and facilitate Nazi orders. Efraim Barasz was appointed its chairman.

As conditions in the ghetto worsened, a resistance movement grew, one that found itself more unified as it appeared that liquidation of the ghetto was imminent. It was not long after the slaughter of 2,000 Jews in February 1943 and the deportation of 10,000 Jews to Treblinka that the Nazis ordered the liquidation of the ghetto. At that time, there were less than 30,000 Jews still in the ghetto. When, on August 15, 1943, the ghetto was surrounded by German SS, supplemented by Ukrainian, Estonian, and other Eastern European auxiliary forces, and all Jews were ordered to report on the next day for evacuation, the revolt began. For the next five days the poorly armed and undermanned Jews fought the Nazis and stalled the onset of the liquidation transports. On August 20 the inevitable happened, and with the death of the last of the Jewish resisters, the Białystok ghetto uprising came to an end.

For three days, the deportations robbed the ghetto of virtually its entire population, with most of the Jews deported to several camps, including Treblinka and Auschwitz. Some 1,200 children were deported to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz, their final destination.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Ghettos; Globocnik, Odilo; Jewish Resistance; Operation Harvest Festival

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Biebow, Hans

Hans Biebow, the Nazi chief administrator of the Łódź ghetto in Poland, reflected in his actions the extraordinary cupidity and ruthlessness of the Nazi regime. While he personally profited from the labor of the Jews that he oversaw in the ghetto, the Jewish population declined due to death or deportation to extermination camps from more than 200,000 to less than 1,000.

Biebow was born in 1902 in Bremen, Germany. He initially sought to join his father in his insurance business, but when that did not work out, and after several years of moving through various jobs in the food industry, he began a small business in the coffee trade that over the years proved to be very successful. He was educated—he completed secondary school—was brought up with little or no want, and was a successful businessman, so there was little reason in those early years to think that he would develop into the malevolent ghetto administrator that he became.

When the Łódź ghetto was established in April 1940, Biebow was put in charge of the food stock and its distribution and was soon made the chief of the ghetto government (*Ghettoverwaltung*). It was in the exercise of his authority in this capacity that Biebow's commitment to greed, and his willingness to transport tens of thousands of Jews from Łódź to Nazi extermination camps, became clear.

Biebow, perhaps because of his successful business career, saw the ghetto as an opportunity to create and profit from the establishment of more than 100 factories and workshops manned by Jewish slave labor for the purpose of producing goods for the German war effort. Establishing and leading a German staff in the ghetto of some 250 people,

Biebow's transformation of the ghetto into something more akin to a slave labor camp managed to forestall the liquidation of the ghetto until the summer of 1944.

Biebow was not alone in his conviction that producing goods needed by the German army was the best way for the ghetto to avoid liquidation. Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski, the head of the Łódź ghetto *Judenrat* (Jewish Council), was also convinced that producing needed goods was the only way for the Jews entrapped in the ghetto to survive. Thus, Biebow and Rumkowski had similar goals of a high level of productivity from the ghetto and seemed to have a good working relationship as a result, even though Biebow's policy of food distribution was the direct cause of widespread starvation in the ghetto. Their strategy was successful in that Łódź was the last ghetto in Poland to be liquidated.

Biebow's significant wealth derived from his unfettered exploitation of slave labor and expropriation of Jewish valuables and property, but his enthusiasm was not limited to self-aggrandizement; he brought that same enthusiasm to his task of arranging and transporting thousands of Jews from the ghetto to the Chełmno and Auschwitz extermination camps even as he was trying to keep ghetto production going as long as possible. It was with ruthless efficiency that Biebow saw that his orders to transport Jews to their death were carried out without delay or the interference of moral concerns. He also organized the collection of personal possessions and clothing of Jewish victims at Chełmno to be warehoused and eventually sent to Germany.

Biebow's cruelty was also seen in the ghetto's conditions. Tens of thousands of Jews died of some combination of mass starvation, overcrowding, exposure to the elements, arbitrary shootings and beatings, and disease that was the inevitable result of horrid sanitary conditions.

When it became clear that Germany was going to lose the war, Hitler made a last-ditch effort by calling up any German men capable of fighting. This increased the need for trained workers, even if Jewish, and so the factories in the Łódź ghetto continued turning out needed goods and equipment. Deportations continued, and the ghetto was completely liquidated by August 1944.

As the war was ending, Biebow went into hiding, only to be recognized by a ghetto survivor and arrested. At his trial in April 1947 he, like most Nazi war criminals, claimed that all he did was follow orders. However, after a seven-day trial from April 23 to April 30, 1947, he was found guilty, convicted, and sentenced to death. He was executed by hanging, in Łódź, on June 23, 1947.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Chełmno; Łódź Ghetto

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Bielecki, Jerzy

Jerzy Bielecki was a Polish social worker best remembered as a prisoner who escaped from Auschwitz in 1944 with his German Jewish girlfriend, Cyla Cybulska. Born on March 28, 1921, in the town of Słaboszowie, near Kielce, he was finishing school in Kraków just at the time war broke out in September 1939. With the rapid Polish defeat, he decided to join the Polish army then being reestablished in France. While crossing into Hungary on May 7, 1940, with five friends, however, he was arrested by the Gestapo. At first he was incarcerated in prisons in Nowy Sacz and Tarnow, but on June 14, 1940, he was sent in the first transport of 728 Polish political prisoners to the newly created concentration camp at Auschwitz, registered as prisoner number 243. For the next 18 months he worked on *ausse narbeit* (work outside the camp), in particular at a mill in Babice, where his excellent German language skills enabled him to move freely among the other workers. It was under these circumstances that he came into contact with members of the Polish resistance.

In the fall of 1943, while working at a grain warehouse, he met a Jewish prisoner named Cyla Cybulska. She came from Łomża, a town about 50 miles from Białystok, and had been a prisoner at Auschwitz since January 19, 1943. Her family had been murdered upon arrival. Despite the strict separation of the sexes in Auschwitz, the two fell in love and began to meet in secret. Bielecki promised her that he would find a way to survive Auschwitz by escaping.

On July 21, 1944, wearing a stolen SS uniform, he masqueraded as a guard and “ordered” Cyla to come with him. Armed with forged documents “authorizing” him to take the prisoner away, he marched her out of the camp through the front gate. The daring escape went undetected, and they managed to get away.

They then walked, mostly by night, for the next ten days. Exhausted, they reached the village of Przemęczany, where Cyla was hidden in the home of Bielecki's uncle. After a short while, she was placed with the Czernik family, friends of

Bielecki's living in the village of Gruszów. She remained here until the end of the war. Bielecki joined the *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) and fought as a partisan. They promised each other that they would meet again after the war, but sadly their separation became permanent. Cyla was told that Jerzy (known by the familiar Jurek) had been killed in guerrilla fighting, while he heard that Cyla had gone to Sweden and died there.

After the war Cyla moved to the United States, settling in New York. In May 1983 she learned from a Polish woman who cleaned her family's apartment that Jurek was alive, having seen a television documentary in which he had told his story. Cyla followed this up and obtained Jurek's phone number in Poland. They spoke, and on June 8, 1983, she traveled to meet him. He greeted her with a bouquet of 39 roses, one for each year of their separation.

In the meantime, since the end of the war, Bielecki had co-founded and become honorary president of the Christian Association of Auschwitz Families, an organization bringing together former prisoners, their families, and those interested in the history of Auschwitz. In 1985, for his work in helping Jews during the Nazi occupation, he was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations and accorded a further tribute by being awarded Honorary Citizenship of the State of Israel. In 2006 he was one of 32 former prisoners who met with Pope Benedict XVI at the so-called Black Wall in the courtyard of Block 11 at Auschwitz.

Jerzy Bielecki's escape from Auschwitz with Cyla Cybulska has been the subject of a number of documentaries and books, including Bielecki's own autobiography, *Kto ratuje jedno życie . . .* (*He who saves one life . . .*), published in 1990. In 2011 the story of Jurek and Cyla was made into a feature-length movie in Germany, *Die verlorene Zeit* (*The Lost Time*), directed by Anna Justice and starring Alice Dwyer and Mateusz Damięcki. The movie was released in English as *Remembrance*. Jerzy Bielecki died in Nowy Targ on October 20, 2011, at the age of 90.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Bielski Partisans

Jewish partisans fighting the Nazis in the forests of Belarus, Ukraine, and Poland (among other places) faced considerable obstacles to both survival and success. One celebrated case among many is that of Tuvia Bielski and his brothers Asael, Alexander (known as Zus), and Aron.

The children of David and Beila Bielski from a family of twelve (ten boys and two girls), this was the only Jewish family in Stankiewiczze, a small village then situated in eastern Poland, between the towns of Lida and Navahrudak. Born in 1906, Tuvia Bielski could speak Polish, Yiddish, and German. Recruited into the Polish army in 1927, after demobilization he married and became a store owner in the small town of Subotniki, which was occupied by the Soviets in September 1939. Here, after the Nazis invaded in June 1941, Tuvia, Zus, and Asael were called up for home defense against the invaders. In early July 1941 the Nazis moved Jews from across the region into a ghetto in Nowogródek, but the Bielski brothers hid instead; after they learned that the rest of the family had been killed in the ghetto in late 1941, they fled into the forest.

Together with 13 neighbors who had also survived the initial Nazi assault, they established the nucleus of a partisan combat group in the spring of 1942. Originally this consisted of some 40 people, but it grew quickly once word got around that the group refused to turn away Jews.

In the forest, however, there was a great deal of uncertainty. Should they fight back through joining a partisan unit, or create one of their own? And what form would such fighting take? Further, what would be the objectives of such a unit? Eventually the Bielskis established a community of fighters, which also cared for nonmilitary combatants, women and children, those too young, too old, or too sick to fight.

As commander of what became known as the "Bielski *otriad*" (partisan detachment), Tuvia's priority was to save Jews rather than kill Germans, and in pursuit of this he sent emissaries to infiltrate ghettos in the area and recruit new members to join the group in the Naliboki Forest. Hundreds of men, women, and children, individually or in small groups, eventually found their way to the Bielski camp. At its peak 1,236 people belonged to the *otriad*, with up to 70% of its membership consisting of women, children, and the elderly. Fewer than 200 actually engaged in armed operations.

The partisan community was housed in underground dugouts (*zemlyankas*) or bunkers. In addition, several utility structures were built: a kitchen, a mill, a bakery, a bathhouse,



The Bielski partisans were a Jewish partisan group operating in the vicinity of Nowogrodek and Lida in German-occupied Poland and Belarus. They are named after the four Bielski brothers, who led the group. Under their protection, 1,236 Jews survived the war. This image is a group portrait of former Bielski partisans taken in the Föhrenwald displaced persons camp on April 3, 1948. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Jack Kagan)

a medical clinic for the sick and wounded, and a quarantine hut for those who suffered from infectious diseases such as typhus. A small herd of cows supplied milk. Artisans made goods and carried out repairs, providing the combatants with logistical support that later served Soviet partisan units in the vicinity as well. More than 125 workers toiled in the workshops, which became famous among partisans far beyond the Bielski base: tailors patched up old clothing and stitched together new garments; shoemakers attended to footwear; and leather workers labored on belts, bridles, and saddles. A metalworking shop repaired damaged weapons and constructed new ones from spare parts. A tannery, constructed to produce the hide for cobblers and leather workers, became a makeshift synagogue owing to the fact that several of the tanners were observant Jews. Carpenters, hat-makers, barbers, and watchmakers served the community, nicknamed “Bielsk” in honor of the leadership. The camp’s many children attended class in a *zemlyanka* set up as a

school. The camp even had its own jail and rudimentary court of law.

The Bielski group’s partisan activities were aimed at the Nazis and their collaborators, such as Belorussian volunteer policemen or local inhabitants who had betrayed or killed Jews. They also conducted sabotage missions.

In 1943 the Nazis led major clearing operations against all partisan groups in the area, and some suffered major casualties. The Bielski partisans, however, fled safely to a more remote and impenetrable part of the forest and continued to offer protection to noncombatants. They raided nearby villages to seize food (much like most other partisan groups), and on occasion locals who refused to share were subjected to violence, generating hostility toward the partisans from peasants in the villages.

The Bielski partisans eventually became affiliated with Soviet organizations in the Naliboki Forest. Several attempts by Soviet partisan commanders to absorb Bielski fighters

into their own units were resisted, and under Tuvia's command the Bielski *otriad* retained its separate identity. This allowed him to continue protecting Jewish lives as well as engaging in combat. According to partisan documentation, Bielski fighters overall killed a total of 381 enemy troops, sometimes during joint actions with Soviet groups. Only 50 members who sought protection with the Bielski *otriad* did not survive.

Immediately after the war, Tuvia Bielski returned to Poland; later he moved to Palestine, which became the State of Israel in 1948. Eventually, he and Zus settled with their families in New York, where they built and maintained a successful trucking business over the next 30 years. In 2008 a major motion picture focusing on the Bielskis, *Defiance* (dir. Edward Zwick), was released to critical acclaim around the world. It starred Daniel Craig as Tuvia, Liev Schreiber as Zus, Jamie Bell as Asael, and George MacKay as Aron.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Partisans; Rufeisen, Oswald

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Bilecki, Julian

Julian Bilecki is a Pole who, along with his family, shielded 23 Jews on a farm near Podhajce (Eastern Galicia, Poland) during the Holocaust in 1943 and 1944.

He was born on the outskirts of Podhajce in 1928 to a poor farming family. Prior to World War II, Podhajce had been home to some 3,000 Jews, a number of whom the Bileckis had befriended. By the spring of 1943, however, the Nazis had either killed or deported the vast majority of the Jewish population in the area. In June 1943 several of the Bilecki family's Jewish friends arrived at their farm, along with a number of others the Bileckis had not known. Fearing for their lives, they asked the Bileckis for help. Without hesitation, the family took them in and vowed to keep them hidden from the Germans.

The logistics of hiding, feeding, and clothing 23 people were daunting, but a plan was quickly hatched. Julian Bilecki, just 15 years old at the time, helped prepare a hidden bunker in some nearby woods. Fearing that they would be caught

harboring Jews, the Bileckis painstakingly rationed what little food they had so that they could feed themselves as well as their charges without raising suspicions. When the bunker was nearly discovered by a passerby, Julian Bilecki helped construct another one, this time completely underground, and very near to the Bilecki farmhouse. In the winter, to avoid leaving telltale tracks in the snow, Julian would jump from tree to tree while delivering food and other supplies to the Jews hidden in the bunker.

Several times a week, the Bileckis would gather after dark and sing hymns, read from the Bible, and pray for their Jewish friends; they would also relay to them any local news or developments about the war. Julian Bilecki was involved in every aspect of the subterfuge, which went on for nearly a year. Finally, in March 1944, Soviet troops moved into the area and liberated it; the 23 Jews who had lived in a bunker underground for more than 10 months were freed. The survivors stated categorically that if not for the Bileckis, they would have surely died at the hands of the Nazis.

After the war, the area in which Julian Bilecki had been reared became part of Ukraine, which in turn was under Soviet domination until the early 1990s. Julian became a bus driver, earning a meager living. At the time of his retirement in 1992, he, along with six other Ukrainians, were declared Righteous among the Nations by Israel's Holocaust remembrance authority, Yad Vashem. In 1998 the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous sponsored a reunion, bringing Bilecki to New York to meet with several of the Jews he had helped more than a half century before. The trip, which was the first time Bilecki had ventured out of his country, was widely covered by the American press. Meanwhile, Roman Bilecki, Julian's brother who had migrated to New York after the war, was also honored for his efforts during World War II.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Bingham, Harry

Harry Bingham IV was a U.S. diplomat who helped rescue as many as 2,500 Jews from deportation and possible death in France during World War II.

Hiram Bingham, who went by “Harry,” was born into a wealthy and prominent family on July 17, 1903, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His father, Hiram Bingham III, had served as governor of Connecticut and as a U.S. senator; his mother was the heiress of Tiffany and Company. Harry Bingham graduated from Yale University in 1925 and then traveled widely. He also taught school and was a civilian secretary in the U.S. consulate in Kobe, Japan. Upon his return to the United States, he earned a law degree from Harvard Law School and then pursued a career in diplomacy.

Upon entering the U.S. Foreign Service, Bingham was first posted to the U.S. embassy in Beijing, China, where he cultivated a lifelong interest in Eastern philosophy and religion. He later served in embassies in Warsaw and London, where he was third secretary beginning in 1934. In 1939, the year World War II began in Europe, Bingham was sent to the U.S. consulate at Marseille, France, to serve as vice consul.

On May 10, 1940, German forces invaded France, resulting in a French defeat in the space of six weeks. France negotiated an armistice agreement with Germany, and the country was divided by the collaborationist Vichy government and German occupation authorities. Many French Jews, as well as several thousand Jewish refugees from other countries, were now herded into squalid internment camps. Their ultimate fate was deportation to forced labor or concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Within weeks of the French defeat, several thousand French and foreign Jews clamored into Marseille to seek travel visas to the United States or other nonbelligerent countries.

In the summer and fall of 1940, the U.S. government, which was not yet involved in the war, instructed its diplomats not to actively aid refugees. The reasoning for this was that the Americans hoped to continue their neutrality and maintain diplomatic relations with Vichy officials. Bingham, however, was deeply moved by the plight of the Jews in France and paid no heed to his orders. He personally visited some of the refugee camps, where hunger and disease were rampant and the general living conditions appalling. What he saw shocked him, and he successfully lobbied American relief organizations to rush food and other aid to the Jewish internees.

Bingham’s greatest contribution to the plight of the Jews in France was his eagerness to help them obtain passports and visas so that they could seek asylum in other nations, including the United States. Many of these documents were provided to “stateless” Jews, foreign nationals who had fled to France before the government fell in June 1940. It is

estimated that Bingham personally guaranteed safe passage to as many as 2,500 Jews. Most had no money and only the clothes on their backs. Some, however, were famous—or would become famous—people, including the political philosopher Hannah Arendt, and the artists Max Ernst and Marc Chagall. Bingham went so far as to hide the novelist Leon Feuchtwanger in his home until he could secure passage for him to Spain. Bingham also worked closely with the American journalist Varian Fry, a renowned rescue worker in France.

In 1941, probably because it did not approve of his activities, the U.S. State Department reassigned Bingham to Portugal. He was later posted to Argentina, where he aided in the tracking of Nazi war criminals. He retired in 1945 after failing to receive a promotion. Thereafter, he dabbled in several business ventures and took up painting and playing the cello. He now spoke little about his role in the Holocaust, and it was not until after his death on January 12, 1988, in Salem, Connecticut, that his activities came to full light. In the early 1990s, his children found documents that Bingham had hidden in his home detailing what he had done during the period 1940–1941.

In 2005 Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust remembrance authority, sent Bingham’s heirs a letter of appreciation. The following year, the Anti-Defamation League bestowed its Courage to Care award on Bingham, and the U.S. Episcopal Church declared him an American saint. In 2011 the Simon Wiesenthal Center remembered Bingham with its Medal of Valor Award.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Arendt, Hannah; France; Rescuers of Jews; Yad Vashem

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Birkenau

One of three Nazi extermination camps in southern Poland, situated some 37 miles west of Kraków. There were three separate concentration camps at the site—Auschwitz I, Birkenau (Auschwitz II), and Monowitz (Auschwitz III). The largest of the three, Birkenau was built to alleviate overcrowding at Auschwitz I; construction commenced in October 1941. Birkenau’s “provisional” gas chamber, in which prisoners were herded and killed, was operational by early 1942. It was known as the “little red house” because the



The concentration and death camp complex at Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest killing center in the entire Nazi universe; the very heart of their system. Birkenau, or Auschwitz II, was by far the largest of the many subcamps affiliated with Auschwitz. Most of the mass extermination apparatus was located in Birkenau, and the majority of the Holocaust's Jewish victims were murdered there. This picture shows child survivors after Birkenau's liberation in 1945. (Votava/Imagno/Getty Images)

Germans had converted a small brick house into a makeshift gas chamber. A second, larger gas chamber was constructed and became operational by June 1943; it remained Birkenau's primary killing facility and was nicknamed the "little white house" because it was a converted brick house painted white. Prisoners were killed with a gas derived from prussic acid, known by its brand name Zyklon-B. It was far faster and more efficient than carbon monoxide, which had initially been used to murder detainees in Nazi death camps. It is believed that as many as 1 million people were exterminated at Birkenau between 1942 and late 1944, when the Germans suspended operations there.

The process of mass killing at Birkenau was virtually identical to that in other extermination facilities. Prisoners typically arrived by rail—in overcrowded boxcars—and were separated by gender upon arrival. They were then ordered to surrender all personal possessions, disrobe, and move toward "communal showers," a cruel euphemism for

the gas chamber. After the detainees were killed by the poison gas, prison workers emptied the chamber of bodies and deposited them in large crematoria. By June 1943 Birkenau had four large crematoria, which operated almost around the clock. The vast majority of prisoners were Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, although there were also a large number of Roma as well.

Like most of the Nazi death camps, Birkenau was staffed by SS officials along with locally recruited police forces. Prisoners also helped run the facility. Prisoner functionaries known as *kapos* helped maintain order and discipline in the barracks, while crematoria personnel *Sonderkommandos* were drafted to process newly arrived prisoners and readied them for the gas chambers. They also gathered detainees' personal possessions, removed any gold that murdered victims might have had in their teeth, and moved the corpses into the crematoria. Including prisoners, Birkenau may have had as many as 2,000–3,000 slave workers. For security

reasons, to ensure the truth about Birkenau would not be disclosed to the outside world, these prisoners were also killed on a regular basis, to be replaced by newly arrived Jewish slave laborers.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz; *The Auschwitz Album*; Auschwitz Protocols; Death Camps; Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial; Gas Chambers; Greece; Hautval, Adelaide; Hoess, Rudolf; J.A. Topf and Sons; Łódź Ghetto; Monowitz; Pivnik, Sam; Robotka, Roza; Salonika; *Shoah*; Sonderkommando; Stein, Edith; Süskind, Walter; Vel' d'Hiv Roundup; Zimetbaum, Mala

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Bloch, Marc

Marc Leopold Benjamin Bloch was born in 1886 in Lyon in a secularized Jewish family. When he was two years old, his father, Gustave, was appointed as *maître de conférences* of Ancient History at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. He remained there until 1904 when he received a professorship at the Sorbonne.

Bloch was raised in a highly intellectual milieu. He was a brilliant student at the Louis le Grand high school before joining the Ecole Normale Supérieure. Thanks to a scholarship, he spent a year studying in Germany before joining the Fondation Thiers. He prepared his thesis on rural population under serfdom in the area of Île-de-France. At the end of 1913 he began teaching history at a high school in Montpellier.

In August 1914 he was mobilized a sergeant in the 272nd infantry, eventually becoming a captain at the head of his regiment, the 72nd RI. He was first sent to the Meuse on the Franco-Belgian border but saw action in some of the major battles of the war: the Marne, the Somme, the Chemin des Dames attack, and the Champagne. He wrote of this wartime period in *Souvenirs de guerre (1914–1915)*. He was in Lorraine when the Armistice was declared, and in May 1919 he was demobilized.

He was then appointed at the newly opened University of Strasbourg. It was here that he met another historian, Lucien

Febvre: they were closely linked with a deep friendship and trust that never waned despite their differences during World War II. Strasbourg was as well the cradle of a historical journal, the *Annales*, which launched a new trend in the way human sciences were perceived. Focusing on interdisciplinary concerns, it has continued to attract the attention of scholars the world over.

In 1936 Bloch occupied the only chair in economic history existing at that time in France. In addition to his teaching at the Sorbonne, he also lectured at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. He was then at the pinnacle of his career, but this would only last three years. Mobilized on August 23, 1939, Bloch began his duty as a recruiting officer in Strasbourg. During the winter of 1939 he was transferred to the Major Command of the French First Army stationed in Bohain (Picardy). Caught up in the *Débâcle* (the fall of France in mid-1940), he was later evacuated via Dunkirk. He traveled by train through south England until he could embark for passage to Cherbourg a few days later. He was surprised by the arrival of the Germans in Rennes and had to flee with a civilian disguise. After the Armistice, he managed to slip through the line of demarcation and joined his family in Creuse in central France. On July 11, 1940, he was released from military duty. On October 23, 1940, he was compulsorily transferred to the University of Strasbourg to teach at the Faculté de Lettres, relocated since the beginning of the war in Clermont-Ferrand.

The full force of anti-Jewish laws was now brought to bear. As a reaction to state antisemitism, Marc Bloch didn't want to be confined in a kind of ghetto. In Bloch's view, there were two Jewish communities in France: the assimilated community, who should fight to defend forced integration; and the foreigners who should emigrate to survive. Thus he was deeply opposed to the *Union Générale des Israélites de France* (UGIF), which was established as a directive of the Nazis in November 1941. He considered that accepting this as a *fait accompli* would lead to the eviction of the Jews from the French community.

Bloch had considered seeking exile with his family in the United States as early as July 1940, and he obtained an appointment as a professor at the New School for Social Research in New York. He managed to secure a visa for himself, his wife, and three underage children, but had difficulty doing so for his aged mother and his eldest children. Then, in April 1941, a new law was passed forbidding all men between the ages of 18 and 40 from leaving French metropolitan borders. His mother died the following month, and in August 1941 his teaching position was cancelled.

Marc Bloch was nevertheless allowed to continue teaching. He was granted an exemption by virtue of Article 8 of the law, which specified that “the *Conseil d’Etat* may decree on a case-by-case basis, that Jews who have rendered exceptional literary, scientific or artistic contributions to the French State may be absolved from the proscriptions stipulated by this law.” Due to his wife’s poor health, he was transferred to Montpellier during the school year 1941–1942.

In November 1942, after the German invasion of the free zone, the Bloch family had to seek refuge in Creuse. Bloch was allowed to take an early retirement on his own initiative starting January 1, 1944.

Marc Bloch never accepted France’s defeat; as he explained in his book *l’Etrange défaite*, the battle to free France had never ceased. Strongly patriotic, he was a real pioneer of the Resistance. He also wanted to maintain the link between his Jewish identity and France, his country; through the underground struggle, he could proclaim and reinforce his citizenship. He met the leaders of the organization known as Combat in Clermont-Ferrand, and as a member of the Cercle de Montpellier, a group of Resistance fighters in Montpellier, he probably undertook resistance activities there.

But he led a more active resistance when he went underground in Lyon. He joined the Franc-Tireur movement thanks to a friend from Strasbourg, Dr. Robert Waitz, who introduced him to a young activist student, Maurice Pessis. He was officially recruited at the beginning of April 1943 and given a diverse range of responsibilities. He first worked in the writing of a clandestine newspaper, and in July he was appointed regional delegate of the Franc-Tireur movement at the regional directorate of the *Mouvements Unis de la Résistance* (Unified Movements of the Resistance, or MUR). With this, he had to lead organizational activities. For his safety, he assumed different names: Arpajon, Chevreuse, and Narbonne. In Lyon he lived under a false identity, Maurice Blanchard. Throughout this time, nonetheless, he managed to stay in touch with members of his wider family.

In February 1944 he established his head office in a sewing workshop in the area of Croix Rousse. That was the place where the main leaders of the MUR were supposed to meet on March 8, 1944. The day before, however, the Gestapo with the help of some collaborators organized a roundup in two cafes. R. Blanc, known as Drac, the leader of Combat, was the first to be seized. The next day, Marc Bloch was trapped next to his dwelling; while his personal secretary, Nina Morguleff, had time to conceal secret documents and flee, Bloch was arrested. He was questioned and tortured, but maintained

his silence. He was transferred to Montluc prison in Lyon, but on June 16, 1944, he and 29 comrades were loaded into a truck and led to the edge of an enclosed field near the village of Saint-Didier-de-Formans, where they were murdered.

A monument was erected on the spot where Marc Bloch was executed. His corpse was later transferred to the family vault at Bourg d’Hem. He was later posthumously awarded the French medal of the Resistance and many other military decorations.

CINDY BIESSE

See also: France; Jewish Resistance

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Blome, Kurt

Nazi German doctor and medical researcher who conducted or supervised unethical medical experiments on concentration camp internees. Kurt Blome was born in Bielefeld, Germany, on January 31, 1894. After his medical education and training, he was appointed Deputy Reich health leader and head of cancer research in the Reich Research Council. The latter post was, however, a cover for Blome’s far more sinister undertakings. Blome would later confess that beginning in 1943 he had been ordered to conduct experiments with bubonic plague on concentration camp detainees. He also admitted to experimenting with various cancer-causing agents and biological and chemical substances. Among these were typhoid, cholera, anthrax, bubonic plague, malaria, and nerve agents like sarin and tabun. Prisoners were routinely exposed to or infected with these various diseases and agents to test the efficacy of vaccines and antidotes. Many of Blome’s experiments were conducted at the Dachau and Auschwitz camps during the war.

In May 1945, after the defeat of Germany, American military intelligence operatives arrested Blome in Munich. When his sordid past came to light, other U.S. intelligence agents interrogated him as well. They were chiefly interested in his knowledge of chemical and biological warfare. In 1947 Blome was acquitted during the so-called Doctors' Trial, and it remains unclear if American officials intervened in the judiciary process because they saw Blome as a potentially valuable scientist for U.S. weapons projects. Just two months after his acquittal, U.S. chemical weapons experts interviewed him at great length. In 1951 he was asked to join the U.S. Army Chemical Corps but was denied a visa to work in the United States. He was later arrested by French officials and was tried and convicted of war crimes. Imprisoned, Blome died in Dortmund, Germany, on October 10, 1969.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Medical Experimentation

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Blood and Soil

“Blood and Soil,” or *Blut und Boden*, refers to the ideology focused specifically on the relationship between blood—a person’s ethnicity—and soil—one’s sense of place. Such thinking celebrates the relationship held by a certain ethnic group to the land they inhabit and places an emphasis on a rural way of life. The concept of “Blood and Soil” became especially popular before and during the Nazi period.

The German application of “Blood and Soil” was first devised in the 19th century, accompanying a rise in national romanticism following the unification of the German states. This continued after World War I. The concept was widespread before the rise of the Nazi Party in the early 20th century. In 1930 Richard Walther Darré popularized the phrase “Blood and Soil” in his book *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden (A New Nobility Based on Blood and Soil)*. In this book, Darré suggested an efficient eugenics platform for the people of Germany and argued that breeding was a remedy for the troubles that Germany faced.

Nazi “Blood and Soil” thinking called for an agricultural, rural approach to German living. It also held that German land was tied directly to German blood, contributing to the

Nazi ideal of the German peasant woman, seen as a strong female able to work the land and produce healthy Aryan children. Nazi-era German art often portrayed women as well muscled, strong, and tanned, all signs of living a wholesome rural life. The “Blood and Soil” belief system placed the peasant farmer—tough, rugged, and tied to the land—above those who worked in cities. Nazi folklore glorified peasant rebellions against unjust landowners and applied this thinking to their enemies of the 20th century.

The Nazis blamed the decline of rural life in Germany on the Jewish population, and during the Nazi regime schools were obliged to teach German youth that land in the countryside had not only been bought up by Jews, but that, as a result, German rural families had been removed from their inheritance and forced into the cities to find work. “Blood and Soil” thinking was thus exploited by the Nazis as another means to blame the Jews for the decline in what they believed to be the true German way of life.

“Blood and Soil” thinking was also the basis for the concept of *Lebensraum*, or “living space,” with the Nazis utilizing the concept to advocate for German expansion into Eastern Europe. Such expansion was a bolster to the agricultural living that “Blood and Soil” ideas maintained. During World War II, *Generalplan Ost*, or “Master Plan East,” permitted the murder, deportation, and enslavement of the Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, and other Slavic populations in Eastern Europe by the German troops because they were considered racially inferior or “non-Aryan.” It was then the Nazi expectation that the Germans would repopulate Eastern Europe with Germanic people to complete the *lebensraum* ideal.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Himmler, Heinrich; Lebensraum; Nazism and Germany; Volk; Volksgemeinschaft

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Blood for Goods

On June 25, 1944, SS Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, who had arrived in Hungary at the end of April to oversee the deportation of the Jews, “invited” Joel Brand of

the Hungarian Aid and Rescue Committee to make him an offer to save Jews with the following words: “I have carried out the *Aktionen* [actions] in the Reich—in Poland—in Czechoslovakia. Now it’s Hungary’s turn. I let you come here to talk business with you.” He continued that certain Jewish aid agencies, such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency for Palestine, had drawn the same conclusion as he had done, namely, that Brand’s organization had the resources to be able to make a deal with the Nazis. As a result, Eichmann said, “I am ready to sell you—a million Jews.” His bizarre offer was a simple one: “Goods for blood—blood for goods. You can gather up the million in countries in which [they] still have Jews . . . from Hungary, from Poland, from Austria, from Theresienstadt, from Auschwitz, from wherever you want.” He concluded with the chilling words, “Sit down and talk.”

In exchange for Jewish lives, Eichmann wanted 10,000 trucks for the Waffen-SS, 200 tons of tea, 200 tons of cocoa, 800 tons of coffee, and 2,000,000,000 cakes of soap. In return, Eichmann would arrange for Brand to travel to Turkey and present this proposal to Jewish representatives from Palestine as well as both American and British Jewish delegates. Brand was also to be accompanied by one Andor (Bandi) Grosz, who he did not know was a double agent with his own agenda. With the approval of SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, Grosz was to transmit an invitation to the Americans and the British (but not the Soviets) to negotiate an end to hostilities with Himmler as the as-yet-unacknowledged leader of Germany in the event that Adolf Hitler did not survive.

Brand, a complicated man who died believing not only that he failed but that others did not do all they could, truly believed the offer was genuine, and he agreed to be transported to Istanbul, after first traveling to Vienna, where he was given a false passport with the name Eugen Band. Upon arriving in Turkey he was initially incarcerated by the authorities due to the lack of a visa. Finally, after much pressure, he was able to meet with Palestinian Jewish Agency representative Moshe Shertok, who would later become Israel’s second prime minister after changing his last name to Sharett. Brand told him of the crisis that existed back in Hungary, though he did not himself yet know that his fellow Jewish countrymen and women were already being taken to Auschwitz. Brand did, however, urge all those around him to do whatever was possible, including bombing of the railways, gas chambers, and crematoria at Auschwitz. His information was in all probability based on that supplied

by Auschwitz escapees Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler. Shertok, too, believed the offer was genuine and sought out both British and American contacts. After Brand was released from prison, he went to Cairo to enlist British support, where he was again incarcerated and prevented from returning to Budapest. Later, he went on to Palestine.

The British and Americans quickly rejected the offer of exchange for the following reasons: (1) they did not wish to sever their connection to the Russians, whom they needed in order to fully vanquish the Nazis; (2) they did not believe the offer of “blood for goods” was a serious and genuine one; (3) they were not willing to supply the Nazis with any material aid that would prolong the war; and (4) both countries were unwilling to address what they saw as an influx of 1,000,000 Jewish refugees to their countries.

Equally, the Allies did not accept the real offer of negotiation with Himmler, who would later be captured trying to escape, but would cheat the hangman’s noose at Nuremberg by swallowing cyanide on April 29, 1945. More than 550,000 Hungarian Jews were murdered in the Holocaust; how many were sacrificed due to Allied reluctance to save them, and how many could have thus been saved, remain open and debatable questions.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Brand, Joel; British Response to the Holocaust; Kasztner, Resz ; United States Response to the Holocaust

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Blood Libel

The accusation that Jews engaged in ritual murder of Christians for religiously prescribed reasons seems to have first emerged in England during the 12th century. The story of

the events in 1144, in which William, a 12-year-old Christian boy from Norwich, was allegedly tortured, crucified, and murdered during Passover week, was the first of many in which Christian children were said to have been ritually murdered by Jews at the time of Easter or Passover. The core of the accusation was that Jews murdered Christian children at Easter in emulation of the crucifixion of Jesus. Over many centuries, widely spread folktales throughout Europe added that Jews also used the blood of these murdered children for their Passover rituals, most often through mixing the blood into matzo dough so that the Jews would literally devour the Christian life force throughout the Passover festival.

The libel of a Jewish quest for Christian blood—often focusing on infants or small children, at other times on virgin girls—became a central charge motivating peasant reprisals in the form of pogroms and other acts of persecution. Given the proximity of Easter and Passover, March and April became months in which anti-Jewish violence often peaked in European countries. As Christians observed the death of Jesus (at the hands of the Jews, as the Church taught) and his resurrection, stories that Jews were “still” engaging in horrific practices against the innocent stirred up intense antagonism toward them. (A practice emerged in some Jewish communities, as a result of these apocryphal stories, to abstain from drinking red wine at their Passover meals so as to avoid the impression that they were actually drinking blood.)

In the modern era, blood libels took on an added dimension; although the influence of the religious struggle between Christians and Jews had begun to recede, racial antisemites built on the blood libel tradition in Europe in order to harass, kill, and uproot a Jewish presence in lands developing modern forms of national identity and expression. The Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman empires saw the most frequent expressions of the blood libel. Well-known examples of these included the Damascus blood libel of 1840, in which the murders of a Capuchin friar and his servant were blamed on Jews; and the Beilis affair in Russia in 1911, in which Mendel Beilis, the Jewish manager of a brick factory in Kiev, Ukraine, was accused of murdering a boy for ritual purposes. (After a trial and appeal process lasting two years, Beilis was acquitted.) Even into the 20th century, successor states of the old Central and East European empires experienced violence “justified” on account of ritual murder accusations.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Antisemitism; Kielce Pogrom

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Bogaard, Johannes

Johannes Bogaard was a Dutch farmer who rescued 300 Jews during the Holocaust. Coming from a devout Christian family and taught by his father to respect the Jews as the people of the Bible, Bogaard—with only a poor formal education—nonetheless felt a responsibility toward helping Jews fleeing from the Nazis.

Born in 1881 in the small farming community of Nieuw Vennepe, not far from Amsterdam, Johannes Bogaard, known as Hannes, was raised in a Calvinist family where the Jews were known as God’s “chosen people.” In view of that, he had little difficulty in recognizing his duty when the Nazis began deporting Jews from the Netherlands in July 1942. Unhesitatingly, Bogaard and his family decided to try to find a way to help Jews escape deportation. He would do this by hiding Jews on his farm and prevailing upon his relatives and neighbors to do likewise.

Before the war, Bogaard had had only a very limited experience of Jews. He was acquainted with only one Jewish family, the Mogendorffs, who lived in Amsterdam. Knowing them to be in danger, he took a train—for the first time in his life—and visited them in Amsterdam. He offered them a refuge, initiating a series of actions that saw him contact other Jews to whom he made the same offer. He began making the trip to Amsterdam more frequently, once or twice a week, and shuttled the Jews back to Nieuw Vennepe. He also visited Rotterdam and other cities, and repeated the process. So keen was he to collect as many people as possible that at one time he was harboring as many as 100 Jews.

The help he provided extended beyond simply hiding Jews. He also organized ration cards, money, and false identity papers, and arranged for most of the Jews to be moved to safer locations afterward. Two of Bogaard’s brothers, Antheunius and Willem, were responsible for ensuring a supply of rye, wheat, and other food to the refugees.

The rescue network Bogaard created operated for a year and a half, quite independent of any institutional support

from the organized Dutch resistance movement. This came to an end in November 1942, however, when the farm was raided by Dutch Nazis, and 11 Jews were found and deported. Over the next few months the farm was raided twice more, with other Jews captured.

What the raids pointed to was the extent to which the rescuing of Jews was a Bogaard family affair. The hidden Jews were to a large degree cared for by Bogaard's daughter, Metje, and his sister, Aagje. Most of the Jews were concealed at the farm of Hannes Bogaard's father, the 77-year-old Johannes "Grandpa" Bogaard Sr.

On October 6, 1943, the farm was again raided, with 34 people found and deported. During the raid, Willem Bogaard managed to save a large group of Jewish children, who were hidden elsewhere by Antheunius once the SS men had left. All of them save one subsequently survived the war. Bogaard's daughter Metje managed to save another group during the raid. However, the Jews who were hidden with another of Bogaard's brothers, Pieter, were caught.

Grandpa Bogaard was arrested and detained for ten weeks at the Amstelveenseweg prison in south Amsterdam. He was offered his freedom by the Gestapo only if he undertook not to repeat his offense, but this he refused to do. It would cost him his life; sent to Sachsenhausen, he was murdered there on February 15, 1945. Pieter Bogaard died at his home on September 15, 1944, after months of imprisonment at Holland's Vught concentration camp.

After this, Hannes Bogaard went into hiding, but this did not see an end to the family's efforts on behalf of Jews. His wife Klaasje continued the work of her husband, hiding four Jews on the farm. She was, however, denounced, forcing her to flee and join Johannes. The Jews she was shielding were killed, along with other members of her family.

Although Hannes and Klaasje Bogaard survived the war, their family had been devastated. On the positive side of the ledger, however, estimates placed the lives of some 300 Jews directly at their feet. The number of their descendants by now can be measured in the thousands.

Johannes Bogaard died on May 31, 1963, at the age of 83. On October 22, 1963, Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his selfless actions in saving the lives of Jews during the Holocaust. Several years later, on August 15, 1974, Antheunius and Willem Bogaard were similarly recognized. The example set by this family, who refused to acquiesce to the Nazi horror, is both inspirational and an outstanding witness to their religious faith during the darkest of times.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Netherlands; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Bonhoeffer, Dietrich

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor and theologian, was one of the leaders of the relatively small group of German clergymen to advocate against the Nazi regime and



Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the Confessing Church. Bonhoeffer was a staunch resister of the Nazi dictatorship and voiced his opposition to the Nazi euthanasia program and persecution of the Jews. He was arrested in April 1943 by the Gestapo and was ultimately executed by hanging on April 9, 1945, just days before the Nazi surrender. (Walter Sanders/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty Images)

its efforts to integrate Christian theology with Nazi ideology. His writings continue to influence Christianity to this day.

Born in 1906 in Breslau, Bonhoeffer was ordained a priest at age 25. Though on two occasions he left Germany to teach elsewhere, he insisted on returning to his homeland despite the growing evidence that to do so would be dangerous.

Bonhoeffer immediately opposed Hitler's ideology when the Nazis rose to power. Just two days after Hitler became Führer, Bonhoeffer made a radio address that spoke of his opposition and introduced a concern that would be integral to his actions and writings in the years ahead: that Nazi ideology must not elevate Hitler as a substitute for Jesus, and nationalism a substitute for Christianity.

None of his writings so perfectly reveals the complexity of the man and the difficulty of his times than Bonhoeffer's April 1933 essay, "The Church and the Jewish Question." It is a courageous and deeply felt reminder to the church that its obligations include questioning the state about the legitimacy of its actions, helping the state's victims whether or not they are part of the church, and even going beyond that by "seizing the wheel [of government] itself" by direct political action if the state has failed to take legitimate steps in its pursuit to create law and order.

This is not the only way in which Bonhoeffer professed his strong anti-Nazi position. He also rejected as injurious to the church's authority the Nazi position that Judaism is a racial/biological construct, not a religious one, arguing that "a Jewish Christian [a Jew who has converted to Christianity] is a religious and not a racial concept." Here Bonhoeffer did nothing less than strike at the very foundation of Nazi ideology in which Jews constitute a race, and on that basis are not just biologically inferior but are also unable to change that inferior status.

But Bonhoeffer's essay also includes attitudes and teachings of another sort, reflecting, as they do, the environment in which he lived. First, it could be argued that his concern for the status of Jewish Christians trumped his concern for Jews. In his 1933 essay, Bonhoeffer argued against the application of the Aryan Paragraph to the church, under which Jews who had converted and been welcomed into the church on the basis of their baptism and profession of faith were still considered by the state to be Jewish if they otherwise met the Nazi racial definition of a Jew, even if in the extreme but very real situation where they were priests or nuns. This represents a key concern of Bonhoeffer's: that the Nazi government not infringe on the legitimate role of the church, a role that must include the exclusive authority to determine who is Christian and who is not. Arguing in support of

Jewish Christians, as Bonhoeffer does, is not synonymous with arguing in support of Jews.

Second, and most significant, is the inclusion in his essay of a paragraph containing the traditional Christian supersessionist tirade against Jews and Judaism, where Judaism was seen only as a precursor to Christianity; where the suffering of the Jews was because of their refusal to accept Jesus as the messiah; and where the charge of deicide was once again leveled at the Jews. Note should be made, however, that recent scholarship reveals that the offensive paragraph was not in any of Bonhoeffer's three drafts of the essay; it appeared only in the published version. It is not known if the inclusion of the paragraph was a reflection of Bonhoeffer's theology or the publisher's. Given the times in which he was raised, the former would be more likely, but that does not mean that Bonhoeffer did not seek to overcome that in some of his later writings.

Moving beyond this essay, Bonhoeffer refused to accept the nazification of Christianity that was enthusiastically espoused by members of the German Christian (*Deutsche Christen*) movement, a group that sought to blend Christianity and Nazism. This group advocated that the New Testament be rewritten to eliminate any references to the Jewish roots of Jesus and his disciples, and that Jesus should be seen as an Aryan fighting a cosmic battle with the Jews.

In response to his fear of the German Christian movement as an existential threat to the life of the church and true Christianity, Bonhoeffer undertook a number of efforts to combat it, most of them at great personal risk. First, he joined Martin Niemöller in founding the Confessing Church, whose members stood against the German Christians' distortion of Christianity. The position of the Confessing Church was best expressed in the Barmen Declaration of 1934, which made it clear that Hitler and nationalism do not supersede in supremacy Jesus and the church.

Second, he did all that he could to maintain a Confessing Church seminary, even though Himmler declared in August 1937 that educating Confessing Church ministry students was illegal. Third, through the efforts of his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnányi, Bonhoeffer worked in the *Abwehr*, the German military intelligence unit, where he began making contact with others who also saw a desperate need to remove Hitler from power. It was in his capacity as an *Abwehr* agent that Bonhoeffer began his involvement with the German resistance, which included, among other things, helping German Jews cross into Switzerland.

On April 5, 1943, Bonhoeffer was arrested and sent to Tegel military prison, from which he wrote his now well-known

Letters and Papers from Prison. When his connection to the conspirators in the failed July 20 plot to kill Hitler was discovered, Bonhoeffer was moved to a different prison and then to Buchenwald, and finally to the Flossenbürg concentration camp. On April 9, 1943, Bonhoeffer was executed.

Bonhoeffer's theology and related writings continue to provide inspiration and provoke thought. He was a man in conflict, subject to the theological traditions of his time and yet recognizing that the Nazis' treatment of the Jews represented not just a civil liberties issue but also a moral and theological challenge to the Christian church and its role of serving and protecting the suffering.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Barth, Karl; Protestant Churches, German; Resistance Movements; Theological Responses to the Holocaust; Upstander

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Borkowska, Anna

Anna Borkowska was a Polish-born Roman Catholic nun and upstander who sheltered 17 Jews in her monastery during the Holocaust. She also helped supply the Jewish ghetto in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania), with arms and supplies in order to stage an uprising.

She was born in Poland in 1900, graduated from the University of Kraków, and then entered the Dominican monastery near Vilna as a novice. She eventually took her vows and became known as Sister Bertranda. By the time World War II had begun in 1939, she was the mother superior of the monastery.

In June 1941, after the Nazis invaded eastern Poland and the Soviet Union, they began murdering Jews en masse and rounding up others, placing them into ghettos or sending them to death camps. Vilna soon housed a huge Jewish ghetto. Sister Bertranda immediately commenced efforts to shield Jews in the area and even asked the local Catholic hierarchy for help in doing so, but she was rebuffed. The Catholic leadership feared that the church and Christians in general might be targeted if the Catholic Church aided the Jews, but Sister Bertranda was undeterred.

Acting on her own initiative, she permitted 17 male Jews to take refuge in the monastery. The men were members of a local Zionist organization, Hashomer Hatzair, and were determined to lead an insurgency against the German occupiers. The leader of the group, Abba Kovner, began plotting an underground resistance movement at the monastery and wrote a manifesto in late 1941 that was widely distributed to Jews being held in the nearby ghetto. In early 1942 Sister Bertranda traveled to the ghetto to offer her help, but Kovner feared that she would be harmed or killed if the Germans discovered her there. Instead, he asked her and the other nuns to help secure supplies to the underground movement. Sister Bertranda readily agreed.

Between the winter of 1942 and the late summer of 1943, Sister Bertranda and the other nuns in the monastery regularly provided the ghetto with supplies. Among these were guns, ammunition, hand grenades, and other weapons that would be employed in the planned ghetto uprising. In August 1943 the Nazis began deporting large number of Jews from the ghetto to concentration and death camps in Estonia. Kovner and others began their uprising on September 1, 1943, which was promptly crushed by German forces. By December the entire ghetto had been liquidated, and that same month Nazi occupation officials arrested Sister Bertranda and several other nuns; they also ordered the monastery closed. The mother superior was deported to a labor camp near Kovno (Kaunas), where she remained until the Soviets liberated the camp many months later.

After the war, Sister Bertranda secured a dispensation from her vows and left her religious order. She once again became known simply as Anna Borkowska and lived a simple, quiet life in Warsaw. She remained a devout Catholic, however. In 1984 Israel's Yad Vashem honored Borkowska as one of the Righteous among the Nations, a recognition it also extended to several other nuns in Borkowska's old order. Abba Kovner traveled to Warsaw to bestow the award upon her personally. When Borkowska asked why she deserved the honor, Kovner explained that: "When angels hid their faces from us, this woman [Anna] was for us Anna of the Angels." Anna Borkowska died in Warsaw in 1988.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Kovner, Abba; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Vilna Ghetto

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Bormann, Martin

Martin Bormann was a close friend of Adolf Hitler. From May 1941 he was head of the Nazi Party chancellery and from April 1943 “secretary to the Führer.”

Bormann was born on June 17, 1900, in Wegelben. After World War I, he was involved with different radical Right organizations and associations, and in 1924 he took part in a lynching and was condemned to a year’s imprisonment. After he entered the National Socialist Party in 1927 his career in the party began to take off. In 1928 he was active in the party head office in Munich. After the rise to power of Hitler and the Nazis, he advanced in July 1933 to the position of chief of staff with Hitler’s deputy in the party, Rudolf Hess. In October 1933 he was promoted to the rank of a Reich leader. With the “Adolf-Hitler-Contribution to the German Economy” organized by Bormann in 1933, which brought money from employers into the party coffers, he demonstrated (not for the first time) his skills with financial affairs. In 1933 Hitler entrusted him with the administration of his own finances, and that brought him access to Hitler himself and to the close circle around him.

The powers of Hess’s staff, and later those of the party chancellery, were never clearly set out and were constantly extended. Its principal task was to implement the will of the party over the state apparatus. This meant participation in legislative activity, a deliberate assertion of influence over appointments, and frequent interventions on the state and party political levels. After Hess’s flight to England in May 1941, Bormann was appointed to succeed him. His department had the title of Party Chancellery and he was given the authority of a Reich minister; his actual power, however, went beyond his formal positions in the party and state apparatus. He has often been ascribed the role of actual deputy to Hitler—though that must be nuanced—and he was certainly one of the most influential individuals in the regime. This found expression in his subsequent appointment in April 1943 as “secretary to the Führer.” Factors that assisted him in his rise to the position of grey eminence of the National Socialist state and confidant of Hitler were his administrative and financial abilities, his unscrupulousness, and his intriguing and unconditional loyalty to Hitler. He

remained at Hitler’s side right up to the latter’s suicide, and he pursued to the end—though with decreasing success—the implementation of Hitler’s lunatic orders, including the destruction of Germany’s remaining infrastructure.

Bormann pursued the aims and the ideology of the Nazis with the utmost brutality. He pushed through the exclusion of the Christian churches from public life, favored extremely harsh treatment of the Slav population in the territories occupied by German troops, and an intensification of the antisemitic measures of the Nazi state. Bormann’s ultimate fate remained unclear for a long time. In October 1946 the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg condemned him to death in absentia. In spite of frequent reports that Bormann had survived, the search for him proved fruitless. In 1972 the state prosecutor at Frankfurt came to the conclusion that a body found that year in Berlin was unquestionably his. It is likely that at the beginning of May 1945 Bormann was killed in an attempt to escape the encirclement of Berlin. Doubts, however, have been repeatedly expressed as to this version, and a shadow of uncertainty over his final end still lingers.

MICHAEL SCHÄBITZ

(TRANSLATED BY CYPRIAN BLAMIRE)

See also: National Socialist German Workers’ Party; Nuremberg Trials; Rosenstrasse Protest; Sauckel, Fritz; Speer, Albert; Wegner, Armin T.

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Borromeo, Giovanni

Giovanni Borromeo was an Italian medical doctor responsible for hiding hundreds of Jews after fabricating a so-called “deadly” disease that kept the Nazis away from the hospital in which he was working. Born in Rome on December 15, 1898, he came from a line of distinguished physicians. When Italy joined World War I in 1915 he was already enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Rome, and at the

age of 18 joined the Italian army. During the war he won a Bronze Medal for bravery. With peace he returned to his studies and at the age of 22 graduated with honors. When he turned 30 he became chief physician of the United Hospitals of Rome.

Refusing to join the Fascist Party during the 1920s—a move that reduced his career possibilities—in 1934 he was appointed to the Fatebenefratelli hospital, located in the San Giovanni Calibita church complex on Rome’s Tiber Island. With the help of the prior, Father Maurizio Bialek, he worked to transform the hospital (then being used as a hospice) into the most modern and efficient hospital in Rome.

Under Borromeo’s direction, the Fatebenefratelli hospital became a safe haven for Jews after the introduction of Italy’s antisemitic laws in 1938. At first, this was on a small scale. One of those protected was Dr. Vittorio Emanuele Sacerdoti, who was able to work in the hospital on false papers. By late September 1943, after Nazi Germany had occupied Italy and initiated severe antisemitic measures against Rome’s Jews, Sacerdoti, with the approval of Borromeo and Father Maurizio, arranged for Jews to be brought into the hospital and admitted as “patients.” Many of these were from the Jewish hospital, not far from the Fatebenefratelli, which also became a haven for others: police, partisans, and antifascists.

On October 16, 1943, the Nazis raided the Jewish ghetto in Rome, and a major *razzia*, or roundup, took place. Desperately seeking to escape, many Jews managed to get to the hospital, where they were admitted. From this point on, Borromeo began announcing that they were being diagnosed with a new strain of fatal disease, which he called “*Il Morbo di K*.” Just what this might be was open to interpretation, but for the most part the German occupiers decided to play it safe and refused to intervene. Not only did the fake disease scare the Nazis off, it also prevented them from entering and searching the hospital. In this way, Borromeo saved many people—by some accounts, at least 100, but perhaps more.

The deception meant that the Jews inside the hospital had to play their part too. The “patients” were instructed to cough and appear sick so that any inspectors would be terrified by what they saw. Coughing, in particular, was an important device: it made it seem that *Il Morbo di K* might have some relationship to tuberculosis, which was particularly frightening.

Throughout this time the hospital also served as a place for genuine patients. It has been suggested that Borromeo’s designation of “K” for the Jewish refugees was a way of

marking them off from those who were actually sick—“K” being an inside joke relating to German General Albert Kesselring, who commanded the German troops in Rome.

Borromeo did not restrict his efforts only to sheltering Jews. He and Father Maurizio also resisted the Nazis through the installation of an illegal radio transmitter and receiver in the basement of the Fatebenefratelli, placing them in continuous contact with local partisans—particularly one of Borromeo’s personal friends, Italian air force General Roberto Lordi.

Borromeo (with Father Maurizio’s help) did not act alone. Many of the young doctors who served on the staff of the hospital volunteered to assist in the deception, and all knew that one slip-up could cost them dearly. Given that, a shuttle service was created ferrying certain of the “patients” to safe houses when it was possible, where they remained for a few days. The hope was that places would be found to enable them to move on quickly, the better to ensure that they would not be vulnerable targets should the Nazis decide to raid the hospital—which actually happened at the beginning of May 1944. On that occasion, however, such was the care with which the ruse was carried out, only five Jews, all refugees from Poland, were taken.

After the war, some among those who knew of Borromeo’s work questioned his motives, arguing that his chief concern was to protect partisans, not Jews, and that his protection of them was unintended. This does not, however, sit well with his earlier care for Jews facing fascist persecution before the war. Moreover, the fact that he did not turn Jews away—which he could well have done in order not to jeopardize his partisan activity—was something that never seemed to occur to him.

After the war, Borromeo received a number of honors from the Italian government, including the Order of Merit and the Silver Medal of Valor. He was also made a Knight of the Order of Malta. On August 24, 1961, at age 62, he died at his own Fatebenefratelli hospital in Rome.

He was not, however, forgotten by those he had helped during the Holocaust. Several of those whose lives he had saved kept his memory alive, and two in particular, Claudio and Luciana Tedesco, alerted Yad Vashem as to how their family had been sheltered at the hospital. Other families also furnished proof of their own salvation owing to Borromeo’s efforts. As a result, on October 13, 2004, Yad Vashem posthumously recognized Giovanni Borromeo as one of the Righteous among the Nations for resisting the Holocaust and saving Jewish lives.

See also: Italy; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Boss, Hugo

Hugo Boss was a German clothing manufacturer whose enterprise embraced the Nazi period and, in more recent times, has become a global fashion house. Born in the small Württemberg town of Metzingen on July 8, 1885, Boss was the youngest of five children in the family of Heinrich and Luise (*née* Münzenmayer) Boss, owners of a lingerie and linen shop. After a routine upbringing for a young middle-class German of the time, he assumed control of the store in 1908, the same year he was married. After serving in World War I, Boss established his own clothing company in Metzingen in 1923, followed by a clothes factory the following year. This produced shirts, jackets, workwear, sportswear, and raincoats.

One of Boss's earliest clients was Rudolf Born, a textiles distributor. He contracted with Boss to produce some brown shirts for a small but growing political group known as the National Socialist Party; this was, of course, the nascent Nazi Party, which would assume office in January 1933. Boss himself at this time was relatively apolitical; he produced clothes for a variety of clients, including other political parties, the police, and the postal service.

With the onset of the Depression, Germany's economic climate deteriorated and then collapsed, and Boss was forced into bankruptcy. In 1931 he reached an agreement with his creditors that enabled him to start his business over, and he found that he had an ally in the Nazis. On April 1, 1931, he joined the Nazi Party as membership number 508,889 and became a sponsor of the SS. Over time, his economic situation improved.

Boss's reasons for becoming a Nazi, it appears, were two-fold; as a businessman it made good commercial sense to align himself with a growing political power that seemed likely to take power at some time in the future. And, given the economic and social turmoil in which Germany found itself, Boss saw Hitler as the only man able to regenerate Germany from the situation in which the country found itself.

The design of Nazi uniforms eventually saw the involvement of the Hugo Boss company, and the all-black uniform of the SS, introduced in the fall of 1932, was designed by artist and SS-Oberführer Professor Karl Diebitsch, and a graphic designer, Walter Heck. It has often been asserted that the black SS uniform was designed by Boss himself, but this was not the case. However, the Hugo Boss company did produce the uniforms, together with the brown shirts of the SA and the uniforms of the Hitler Youth. In 1934 Boss claimed that he had been supplying the Nazis with uniforms since 1924, but it is more likely that he became entrenched in this role in 1928 when he received the status of official supplier to the Nazi movement.

In 1938 Boss had his best year to date and became a supplier of army uniforms to the German army. Yet by 1940 Boss was employing only 250 workers; he was successful, but not yet a major provider to the Nazi state. This changed as a result of the outbreak of war in September 1939.

By 1941 his sales and profits had skyrocketed, but this came at a price; like most private manufacturers in Germany, Boss found it hard to find employees during the war, and, unable to fill his factories with workers, he was obliged to use prisoners of war and forced laborers from countries occupied by the Nazis, such as from the Baltic States, Belgium, France, Italy, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. During the course of the war Boss used 140 such workers, swelled by 40 French prisoners of war from 1940 onward. Conditions in Boss's factory were considered by all to be appalling; the barracks were pestilential, food was inadequate and of poor quality, and medical facilities for the workers were practically nonexistent. Evidence exists to the effect that managers and foremen were enthusiastic Nazis.

With the end of the war in 1945, Boss was subjected to the process of denazification, whereby he was tried for his complicity in the Nazi state. His early Nazi Party membership now counted against him, as was his financial support of the SS and his supplying of uniforms for both the various Nazi Party organizations and the German army. He was denounced as a war profiteer and classified as an activist member of the party and "beneficiary of National Socialism." In 1946 he was fined and forbidden to vote as a German citizen or to run a business. Upon appeal, Boss was retried and reclassified; he now became a "follower of National Socialism" rather than an activist, and his penalties were reduced.

Hugo Boss died on the night of August 8–9, 1948. While his company survived to become one of the leading fashion houses in the world today, there still remains a stigma

attached to the company owing to its association with the Third Reich.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: SS-Totenkopfverbände

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Bousquet, René

René Bousquet, secretary-general of the Vichy French police during World War II, was largely responsible for mass deportations of Jews from France.

Born in Montauban in the department of Tarn-et-Garonne on May 11, 1909, he studied in Toulouse and received a bachelor's degree in law. During the early 1930s he served as chief of staff for several governmental ministers. In May 1936 Bousquet was named assistant bureau chief of the Interior Ministry.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Bousquet became secretary-general of the Marne Department. In May 1940 Nazi Germany invaded France. Following the armistice, Marshal Philippe Pétain, head of state for the collaborationist Vichy regime, named Bousquet prefect of the Marne. The following August, he became regional prefect of Champagne. Finally, on April 18, 1942, Prime Minister Pierre Laval named Bousquet secretary-general for police in the Ministry of the Interior.

Along with Laval and Louis Darquier, commissioner for Jewish Affairs, Bousquet entered discussions with his Nazi counterparts concerning the status of Jews in France. He held talks with SS leader Reinhard Heydrich, Karl Oberg, head of the SS in France, and Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS. Bousquet soon expanded the function of the French police and agreed to have his personnel participate in the roundup of Jews throughout France.

On July 17, 1942, Bousquet ordered the mass arrest of all foreign Jews in Paris, in what became known as the *Vel' d'Hiv* Roundup. Consequently, approximately 13,000 Jews were arrested and deported. The Jews were sent to the Drancy internment camp in Paris and then taken to Auschwitz, where the vast majority were killed. During Bousquet's term as secretary-general, the majority of the

approximately 76,000 Jews to be deported from France were arrested.

In December 1943, under pressure from the Germans, Bousquet resigned his position. In June 1944 he was detained and sent with his family to a villa in Germany. After the end of the war in Europe, in May 1945, Bousquet returned to France and was arrested. He stood trial for treason in June 1949 before the High Court of Justice and was found guilty of national indignity, but his five-year sentence was commuted.

After his trial, Bousquet launched a successful career in business and finance. However, in October 1978, Darquier gave an interview in *L'Express* revealing the extent of Bousquet's involvement in the mass deportation of Jews. After a lengthy investigation, on March 1, 1991, Bousquet was indicted for crimes against humanity. On June 8, 1993, Christian Didier, a deranged writer, entered Bousquet's Paris apartment, shooting and killing him. Consequently, Bousquet never stood trial for his wartime actions.

MARK CELINSKAK

See also: Dannecker, Theodor; Operation Spring Wind; Vel' d'Hiv Roundup; Vichy France

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Brack, Viktor

Nazi war criminal and German government official, Viktor Hermann Brack was born on November 9, 1904, in Haaren (modern-day Aachen), Germany, and studied economics at a Munich university. He was soon befriended by Heinrich Himmler, for whom he worked for a time as a personal aide. In 1929 Brack joined the Nazi Party and subsequently became a member of the SS. In 1932 he took a staff position at Nazi Party headquarters in Munich. In 1936, despite the fact that he had little medical or scientific experience, Brack, now a colonel, was appointed chief liaison officer with the health ministry in Berlin.

Beginning in late 1939, Brack was tasked with implementing the Nazi euthanasia program, known as Action T-4. This effort resulted in the murder of tens of thousands of Germans and Austrians with physical or mental disabilities.

In 1941 Brack's benefactor, Heinrich Himmler, sought ways to reduce the population of "enfeebled" individuals at concentration camps while at the same time retaining prisoners who were able to provide forced labor. Brack advocated a two-part system; the first part simply referred to the mass gassing of internees who were unable to work. The second part, aimed at "useful" laborers, would introduce forced sterilization to prisoners, so they would not be able to reproduce. Forced sterilization was carried out mainly through the use of massive doses of radiation aimed at prisoners' reproductive organs. In some cases, male prisoners were physically castrated. This program saw widespread use at Auschwitz and Birkenau in particular. As many as 4,000 prisoners per day were sterilized between late 1943 and early 1945.

After the defeat of Germany, on May 20, 1945, Brack was taken into custody by U.S. counterintelligence officers. He was tried in the so-called Doctors' Trial that began in late 1946, charged with various crimes against humanity. Found guilty in 1947, he was sentenced to death. Brack died by hanging on June 2, 1948, in Landsberg Prison.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Euthanasia Program; Sterilization

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Brand, Joel

Joel Brand was a Hungarian-born Jew and Zionist leader best known for his abortive effort to rescue Hungarian Jews from deportation to Nazi concentration camps in 1944. Brand was born on April 25, 1906, in Naszod, Transylvania, Hungary (now part of Romania) and moved to Germany with his family in 1910. At age 19 he traveled to the United States, holding a variety of odd jobs and joining the Communist Party. He subsequently traveled widely in Asia and South America, often as a sailor on merchant vessels. He did not return to Germany until 1930, when he secured a job with a telephone company and served as a Communist Party functionary. In late February 1933, only weeks after Adolf Hitler's rise to power, he was arrested, along with hundreds

of other communists and socialists. After his release from jail the following year, he settled in Budapest.

In Budapest Brand became an ardent Zionist and a member of a Marxist-Zionist political organization. He was also on the governing board of the Jewish National Fund. During the early 1940s, as the Nazis implemented their plans to exterminate European Jews, Brand also became heavily involved with the Hungarian Aid and Rescue Committee, a group that helped Jews in Nazi-occupied areas to seek refuge in Hungary. Brand's world changed forever when the Germans invaded Hungary in March 1944. The invasion now imperiled all of the Jews living in Hungary.

Only weeks after the German occupation began, Brand was informed that Nazi SS official Adolf Eichmann, who had arrived in the city to oversee the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews, wished to meet with him. Brand was stunned to discover that Eichmann was offering to release as many as a million Jews in exchange for 10,000 trucks and vast quantities of coffee, tea, and soap to be delivered by the Allies. Brand and Eichmann met several times between March and May, at which time Brand, who would be sent to the Allies to act as an intermediary for high-ranking SS officials, including Heinrich Himmler, was sent to Vienna. There he allegedly met with U.S. intelligence operatives to set up a meeting between Allied and German officials in Istanbul, Turkey. At that meeting, the particulars of the Hungarian rescue mission (which the Germans called "Blood for Goods") would be ironed out. Some historians believe that Himmler and other German officials were using Brand to negotiate a larger deal in which Germany would secure a peace deal with the Allies.

Brand, however, was denied entry to Turkey because he had an invalid passport. In the meantime, Allied officials were wary of these machinations, believing Eichmann's offer to be insincere, perhaps even a ruse to distract and divide the Allies. British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden flatly refused to investigate the offer, declaring that his government did not negotiate with the enemy. Even the Jewish Agency for Israel was suspicious of the offer and worked to prevent Brand from carrying out his mission. Brand pleaded with the Agency and the British government to permit him to return to Budapest, but his entreaties were denied. In June 1944 British officials arrested Brand in Aleppo (Syria) and detained him in Egypt. Later that summer, British intelligence leaked news of the German offer, which derailed Brand's mission for good.

Released from British detention, Brand went to Palestine and tried—unsuccessfully—to enlist the help of the World

Zionist Organization. His quest to ransom the Hungarian Jews failed, and for the rest of his life he harbored deep resentment and guilt over the affair. It is not known whether the Germans were serious about their offer, but the Allies, along with leading Jewish groups, refused to even entertain it, believing that it was a ruse and/or a propaganda ploy. Brand became an Israeli citizen in the early 1950s and died there on July 13, 1964.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Blood for Goods; Hungary; Kasztner, Resz

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Brandt, Karl

Karl Brandt was a German war criminal who served as Adolf Hitler's personal physician and participated in the Nazi T-4 "Euthanasia" program, which systematically murdered handicapped and mentally challenged individuals and others deemed "unworthy of life."

He was born in Muhlhausen, Alsace-Lorraine on January 8, 1904, and received his degree in medicine from the University of Freiburg in 1929. Brandt became an adherent of "racial hygiene" policies, which were based on a pseudo-science contending that medical professionals could treat a nation or racial group in the same way that they treated an individual, by removing hereditary and other defects. In 1934 Hitler appointed him as his personal physician, and from that point on Brandt became a member of Hitler's inner circle. He appears to have been both a believer in eugenics and a career-minded opportunist.

In 1939 a request from a German family for the mercy killing of their handicapped child served as the pretext for the initiation of the Nazi "euthanasia" program. Brandt, along with Philipp Bouhler, head of Hitler's Chancellery, were placed in charge of its planning and execution. They received a rare explicit authorization from Hitler, allowing them to "grant mercy deaths" to "incurable" patients, as of September 1, 1939. Brandt and Bouhler then organized what became known as *Aktion T-4*, which referred to the mass murder of mentally ill and handicapped German adults and children. This program eventually expanded into the gassing of patients at six euthanasia centers throughout Germany.



Dr. Karl Brandt was a German physician and (SS) officer. He joined the Nazi Party in 1932 and became a member of Hitler's inner circle, from where he was appointed to organize and run the *Aktion T-4* euthanasia program. Accused of involvement in human experimentation and other war crimes, Brandt was sentenced to death and hanged by order of the Americans on June 2, 1948. This image is of Brandt standing trial at Nuremberg in 1945. (Corbis via Getty Images)

Patients were also murdered by starvation and lethal injection at other institutions. Public concern forced the program underground, but Brandt soon expanded it in 1941 to include other nationalities. As euthanasia slowed, its specialists brought their expertise in killing to the extermination of the Jews.

By 1942 the ambitious and idealistic Brandt became chief of medicine and health for the Third Reich and was certainly the most powerful medical doctor in Germany. As such, he now presided over not just the "euthanasia" program, but also other Nazi criminal enterprises, including a wide variety of human experimentation projects carried out on concentration camp prisoners. Brandt sought increasingly greater control over the medical establishment and health-related industries before falling out of favor with Hitler in 1944. He

was then arrested for allegedly planning to surrender to the Allies. Although Brandt escaped his Nazi death sentence, he was arrested by the Allies on May 23, 1945.

As the leading Nazi doctor, and because of his involvement in a large number of medical criminal enterprises, Brandt was a main focus of prosecutors at the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial, which began in December 1946. Karl Brandt was found guilty of crimes against humanity and membership in a criminal organization and was executed on June 2, 1948.

WAITMAN W. BEORN

See also: Doctors' Trial; Euthanasia Program; Nuremberg Code

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Bretholz, Leo

Leo Bretholz was an Austrian-born Holocaust survivor who managed to elude capture and deportation numerous times between 1938 and 1945.

He was born in Vienna, Austria, on March 6, 1921, the son of Polish immigrants. In the spring of 1938, when Germany annexed Austria, he fled by train to Germany, and with the help of a smuggler swam across the Sauer River to Luxembourg. He spent several nights at a monastery but was arrested soon thereafter and deported to Belgium. Arriving in Antwerp in November 1938, Bretholz took up temporary residence there. For some 18 months he lived in the city, but in May 1940 he was hospitalized and scheduled to have surgery to repair a hernia. The very next day, however, the Germans began bombing Antwerp, and Bretholz was forced to leave the hospital. He was then promptly arrested as an enemy alien.

Bretholz was deported to an internment camp in St. Cyprien, France, near the Spanish border. He soon managed to escape and found refuge with relatives before going to Cauterets, France, where he was hidden. Remaining there until late August 1941, when the Germans began to deport all the Jews from the area, he fled, ultimately making his way—largely on foot—to Switzerland. When he presented forged identification papers to a Swiss Mountain Patrol officer in October 1942, however, he was escorted back to France.

Promptly arrested, Bretholz was eventually sent to Drancy, a sprawling concentration camp near Paris. Most internees there were deported to death camps in the East. On November 5, 1942, Bretholz and some 1,000 other internees were herded onto a train bound for Auschwitz. During the night, as the train rumbled eastward, Bretholz and an accomplice pried open bars covering a window, pushed it open, and jumped into the dark night as the train rounded a sharp curve. They chose this moment because they knew it would be harder for guards to detect their escape while the train was negotiating a curve.

Using falsified papers, Bretholz tried to enter Vichy France, but he was arrested yet again. After nine months in prison, he was released in September 1943. The next month he was sent to the Atlantic coast to help build defensive fortifications. En route, he again managed to escape when the train stopped in Toulouse. Attaining new falsified papers, he joined the Jewish resistance group known as La Sixième (The “Sixth”). On May 8, 1944, while in Limoges, Bretholz’s hernia ruptured and he underwent emergency surgery. After a few weeks of convalescence he rejoined the resistance movement, remaining in Limoges under an assumed name. He stayed there after the war as well, until, in January 1947, he left France for a new life in the United States.

Later that same month, Bretholz arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, where he stayed with relatives. In 1952 he married Florine Cohen, and the couple had three children. Bretholz worked as a textile salesman, a co-owner of a liquor store, and owner of a bookstore in Pikesville, a Baltimore suburb. In 1962 Bretholz learned what he had already surmised—his mother and two sisters had been deported to Poland in 1942, where they were murdered. This confirmation made Bretholz far more determined to tell his story, and so he began addressing local audiences, especially schoolchildren, about his experiences during the Holocaust. In 1998 he published a memoir, *Leap into Darkness*, which tells his harrowing tale in much detail. Beginning in 2000 Bretholz became involved in a class-action lawsuit against SNCF, France’s national railway company. The suit sought monetary reparations from the company for its involvement in the Holocaust. Bretholz was a star witness, as he had been herded onto several SNCF trains during World War II. That case was finally dismissed in 2010, however.

Bretholz then helped mobilize an effort to prevent a SNCF-affiliated company from receiving a multi-billion-dollar contract to construct and manage a new light-rail line in Maryland. He testified numerous times in front of the Maryland legislature, which finally agreed that unless SNCF

were to acknowledge its complicity in the Holocaust and pay its surviving American victims reparations, it would be unable to bid on the lucrative project. Bretholz died on March 8, 2014, only weeks before the legislature's decision.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Jewish Resistance; Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français

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British Response to the Holocaust

Following the end of the Great War, both the British people and its leaders were terrified of another worldwide war with massive casualties. The German National Socialist Party began to gain traction in Germany in the 1920s, but both then and following Adolf Hitler's appointment as chancellor in 1933, Britain did very little to combat the spread of Nazism in Europe.

Britain's prime minister between 1937 and 1940, Neville Chamberlain, knew that Britain had not yet recovered from the aftereffects of World War I, providing his premiership with the distinction of adopting a policy of appeasement in its relationship with the European dictatorships. In order to keep his word and keep Britain from war, Chamberlain and Britain did nothing when Hitler and the German army marched into Austria in March 1938; then, in late September 1938, Chamberlain signed the Munich Agreement, awarding the Sudetenland regions of Czechoslovakia to Germany. Sensing Chamberlain's weaknesses, Germany then invaded what remained of Czechoslovakia on March 19, 1939.

During this time of political appeasement, most British citizens supported Chamberlain's efforts to keep the nation out of war. However, due to Chamberlain's desperate attempts to keep Britain at peace, Hitler soon understood that the prime minister would not interfere in German affairs, despite the fact the British press reported and printed the news of what took place in Germany and discussed the motives of Hitler and the Nazis against the Jews of Europe, right up to the outbreak of war.

Chamberlain's appeasement policy was not enough when the German army invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Despite its previous appeasement efforts, Britain chose to

honor its defensive guarantee with Poland on this occasion. Chamberlain regrettably declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. At 11:15 in the morning he took to the radio and informed Britain that his appeasement policies had failed: "You can imagine what a bitter blow it is to me that all my long struggle to win peace has failed. Yet I cannot believe that there is anything more or anything different that I could have done and that would have been more successful."

Chamberlain's failed policies caused his support and his health to plummet, and upon resigning from his position as prime minister on May 10, 1940, he was replaced by Winston Churchill. From this time onward, Britain's efforts were devoted to surviving Germany's assault and then to defeating Germany.

As early as the 1930s Winston Churchill had opposed Chamberlain's appeasement policies and was disgusted by way that Germany treated its Jews. In 1937 Churchill wrote that the Jewish boycott of German goods in Britain was "a perfectly legitimate use of their influence throughout the world to bring pressure, economic and financial, to bear upon the governments which persecute them." Given that Churchill's premiership coincided with the war, his government was of necessity obliged to drastically limit European immigration for security reasons—particularly from Nazi-occupied territories. This did not assist Jews who were trying to escape the atrocities of war-torn Europe. Moreover, Churchill was opposed to the prevention of European Jews trying to reach Palestine.

Churchill, who was aware of, and horrified by, Germany's extreme violence committed against the Jewish community from as early as 1941, chose to focus most of his energy on defeating Germany rather than helping those who were in immediate need. However, when the German army invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 in Operation Barbarossa, addressing the treatment of Europe's Jews became unavoidable. Churchill was informed of the hundreds of thousands of Jews being killed in the Soviet Union, and during a radio broadcast to the British people in November 1941 he stated of the Jewish people: "None has suffered more cruelly than the Jew the unspeakable evils wrought upon the bodies and spirits of men by Hitler and his vile regime." As he saw it, "The Jew bore the brunt of the Nazis' first onslaught upon the citadels of freedom and human dignity. He has borne and continued to bear a burden that might have seemed beyond endurance. He has not allowed it to break his spirit; he has never lost the will to resist. Assuredly in the day of victory the Jew's suffering and his part in the struggle will not be forgotten."

Britain and the Allies had evidence of what the Germans termed the Final Solution in 1942, but the overall consensus was that a quicker victory against Germany would end the war and ultimately end the violence against the Jews of Europe. Churchill argued that concentration camps such as Auschwitz and railway lines to the concentration camps should be bombed by Allied planes in order to put a stop to Nazi activities. Other members of the Allied Powers argued that they did not have enough information in order to bomb the camps and rail lines accurately, and such efforts would ultimately be a waste of time and resources.

Churchill did his best to help Jews who were able to escape Europe. In March 1944, for example, he circumvented the previous restrictions that Britain had made against immigrants fleeing to Palestine. Jews who made it to Istanbul were taken by train to Palestine, a measure that helped thousands of European Jews fleeing Nazi Europe.

In 1945 the Allied Powers were finally able to invade the Nazi Reich, and in doing so to liberate the concentration camps. As the reality of the Nazis' horrific regime was revealed, Churchill reached out to Britain's government to describe "the proofs of these frightful crimes now coming into view." Churchill was and is often described as a "bulldog" for his abrasive and forward leadership during World War II, but he did much in his power to help the Jews of Europe—even though the position of Britain and its response to the Holocaust is often the subject of alternating opinions. Many critical historians and Jewish organizations hold that Britain could have done more not only to avoid a war with Germany but also to help the Jews of Europe by allowing more immigration, reporting on the state of concentration camps and the Jewish communities instead of keeping them hidden, or bombing concentration camps or the rail lines to the camps in order to halt Germany's Final Solution.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Al-Husseini, Haj Amin; Auschwitz Protocols; Bermuda Conference; Blood for Goods; Displaced Persons; Evian Conference; Gibraltar Camp, Jamaica; Hess, Rudolf; HMT *Dunera*; Kindertransport; Munich Agreement; Riegner Telegram; *Struma* Disaster; Winton, Nicholas; World War II, Outbreak of

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Browning, Christopher

Christopher Browning is an American historian of the Holocaust. Born in 1944 and educated at Oberlin College, Ohio and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, he taught at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington, from 1974 to 1999 before moving to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as Frank Porter Graham Professor of History.

Browning's primary early interest in the Holocaust led him to investigate the role played by the German civil service in the formation of policies leading to or carrying out the Holocaust. His first book was *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office* (1978), in which he considered the relationship between antisemitic ideology and the implementation of Nazi foreign policy. Most of his research took place in the political archives of the German Foreign Office located in Bonn, after which he began examining other records in German hands for insights into how Nazi bureaucrats and others had carried out the Final Solution. This led Browning into a series of intellectual confrontations known as the *Historikerstreit* then taking place among historians of the Third Reich. Scholars who became known as "functionalists" were led by the German historians Hans Mommsen and Martin Broszat, who argued that the Holocaust was not the result of a planned, carefully organized, or orchestrated agenda of Adolf Hitler, but was, rather, an evolving and sometimes even chaotic program of death and destruction that really began to assert itself after the invasion of Soviet Russia in June 1941, prior to which it was done by low-level bureaucrats in a somewhat haphazard and inefficient manner. The functionalists viewed the Nazi hierarchy as one of competing vested interests and power centers, with Hitler not in supreme control.

Pitted against them were those known as "intentionalists," who included authors such as Lucy S. Dawidowicz and Eberhard Jäckel. They argued that the Holocaust was primarily centred in the person of Adolf Hitler, his antisemitism, and his commitment to bringing to realization a world free of Jews. Critical to their understanding are Hitler's many public speeches vilifying the Jews and promising them harm, as well as his own masterwork *Mein Kampf*. The

intentionalists also argued that with the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the Wannsee Conference of January 1942, Hitler was able to mobilize the Nazi effort to carry out his long-sought agenda.

Browning stood somewhere between these two poles. While he agreed that there was a good deal of improvisation in the formation of Nazi policy toward the Jews, he could not accept the arguments of Broszat, Mommsen, and others in their totality regarding Hitler. This designated Browning as what might be called a “moderate functionalist.” As a result, he published a short article in 1981, for which he attracted considerable notice within the academy. Notably, he was contacted by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust museum and research center, with a view to taking part in a projected multivolume comprehensive history of the Holocaust. Browning’s area of responsibility would involve researching and writing on the origins of the Final Solution.

In 1992 he published a book entitled *Ordinary Men*, a study of German Reserve Police Battalion 101. This unit was used by the Nazis to round up Polish Jews in 1942, either for massacre or deportation to the death camps. Browning employed the postwar court records of 210 former members of the unit in order to ascertain what drove them to murder up to 38,000 men, women, and children in cold blood, while arranging the deportation of 45,000 more; this, from a unit of about 500 men in a period of just 16 months. Browning’s chilling conclusion was that these men—ordinary, middle-aged men of working-class background from Hamburg, who had been drafted but found unfit for combat duty—were neither Nazi fanatics nor sociopathic misfits. Within their cohort, Browning argued, the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 killed as a result of peer pressure and a fundamental obedience to authority. The broader implication of his study was that people do not have to be maladjusted individuals or political fanatics in order to commit mass murder, but that, rather, group pressure and comradeship plays an important role when it comes to obeying even the most horrific orders.

The release of *Ordinary Men* caused considerable consternation among those who had preferred to believe that there was something demonic in the Nazis that led them to committing atrocities during the Holocaust; it also received substantial praise from among a majority of Holocaust experts. Browning was, however, castigated by Harvard University scholar Daniel Goldhagen, whose alternative argument was that an innate German antisemitic culture caused the Holocaust. Goldhagen’s own contribution to the discussion—a controversial book produced in 1996 titled *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*—was seen as the most logical

response to *Ordinary Men*, though many scholars of the Holocaust thought it was a poor attempt at a rebuttal that did little to shake Browning’s essential position.

As a result of his rapidly escalating image as a leading scholar of the Shoah, Browning was engaged in a number of high-profile legal cases in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom during the 1990s as an expert witness advocating the veracity of the Holocaust. In addition, he served as an expert witness in the cases of *Crown v. Ernst Zündel* in Toronto in 1988 and *David Irving v. Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt* in London in 2000.

Browning’s work in Holocaust studies culminated in 2004 with the appearance of his long-awaited study, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942*. Insofar as a comprehensive study can ever be written about such a topic, it was definitive. Here, he again asked whether the Nazis always meant to kill the Jews, or whether their actions simply evolved gradually, radicalizing over time when other solutions to the “Jewish question” became unworkable. Browning’s response was a much more detailed study than anything he had produced before, and in a systematic analysis he worked through a number of issues that had hitherto thrown up a variety of responses. These included the argument that prior to 1939 Hitler’s intention had been to drive the Reich’s Jews out of the country through emigration, but that the conquest of Poland in September of that year forced a shift in tactics from emigration to expulsion—whether to Madagascar, or the *Generalgouvernement*, or, later, through forced removal into the territories that would be conquered in the Soviet Union.

A second key argument was that the Nazi “Final Solution” evolved slowly as the bureaucrats sought ways to respond to the policy challenge laid before them by their political leaders. The notion of expulsion developed into one in which the Jewish population could be reduced, as they would be worked and starved to death after having been removed from lands coveted for ethnic German resettlement. As Browning showed, however, the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing squads) moved in brutally as the German combat soldiers conquered newer and newer territories within the Soviet Union, their intention being to wage war on the communist government and all those perceived to be its supporters (including, principally, the Jews). With this aim in mind, the Jews were now transformed into an enemy that was both racial and political, and that had to be eradicated completely. The “solutions” of emigration and expulsion were in fact no solutions at all; only the Jews’ utter destruction, for all time,

could be countenanced if the glorious future mapped out by National Socialism could be realized.

Browning's third major argument was that the timing of the decision to completely annihilate the Jews of Europe thus took place sometime in the summer of 1941, as the Nazis saw the ease with which they were destroying the Jewish population of the Soviet Union and concluded that the process that had now started could—and should—be extended Europe-wide. The Wannsee Conference of January 1942 therefore played very little role in Browning's conception; the crucial decisions had already been taken, in an improvised manner, back in the summer of 1941. All that remained was the rationalization and, if possible, simplification of the policy already decided.

Browning's study concluded in March 1942. At that point, the majority of Europe's Jews were still alive, and the Final Solution had not yet reached its apogee in the six death camps that the Nazis established in Poland.

After the publication of *The Origins of the Final Solution*, Browning's research continued along the lines established earlier in his career, and early 2010 saw the appearance of *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp*, a case study of the Jewish factory slave labor camps in Stara-chowice in central Poland. As he did in his work on Reserve Police Battalion 101, he based his research on a wide range of testimonial literature, in this case, some 265 accounts by survivors of the camps. It was a remarkable story of survival for those who lived to recount the brutalities of the Nazi work camps there. Drawing on the rich testimony of survivors, Browning examined the experiences and survival strategies of the Jewish prisoners alongside the policies and personnel of the Nazi guards. Through asking "how," "when," and "why," and then painstakingly working through vast amounts of documentary material in order to find answers, Christopher Browning established himself as one of the leading Holocaust scholars of the later 20th century.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: *Historikerstreit*; *Hitler's Willing Executioners*; "Ordinary Men"; Reserve Police Battalion 101

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Brunner, Alois

Alois Brunner was an Austrian war criminal who was instrumental in the implementation of the Holocaust.

Born in Nádkút Vas, Austria-Hungary (modern-day Austria) on April 8, 1912, Brunner rose to the rank of Hauptsturmführer-SS and served as Adolf Eichmann's personnel secretary in the *Zentralstelle* (Central Bureau for Jewish Emigration, Vienna). He joined the Austrian Nazi Party in May 1931 at the age of 16. In 1933 Brunner relocated to Germany and served five years in the Austrian Legion. With the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938, Brunner served in a number of minor posts prior to volunteering for the SS. In November 1938 he was reassigned to the *Zentralstelle*. There he helped Eichmann in the development of the "Vienna Model," which oversaw the robbing and forced emigration of Jews from Austria.

In April 1939 Brunner was dispatched to the newly acquired Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (formerly Czechoslovakia) in order to hasten the deportation of Czech Jews. With the outbreak of war in September 1939, the decision to transport Jews east to concentration camps under the newly established *Generalgouvernement* (formerly Poland) was undertaken. Brunner, now heading the *Zentralstelle*, organized the transport of over 1,500 Viennese Jews to Nisko in October 1939. In total, Brunner oversaw the removal of 56,000 Austrian Jews, and his success in Vienna earned him a promotion. In October 1942 he was transferred to Berlin to implement the "Vienna Model."

As the war continued, Brunner emerged as Eichmann's favorite troubleshooter. In Salonika, Brunner was responsible for sending the entire Jewish population of 43,000 to death camps in the east in less than two months. In July 1943 Brunner was appointed commandant of the Drancy internment camp outside Paris. There he oversaw the transport of 25,500 Jews to Auschwitz. Brunner took special delight in the arrest and deportation of children. In September 1944 Brunner participated in the arrest and transport of 14,000 Slovakian Jews.

Sought by the Allies following the end of the war in 1945, Brunner escaped arrest and took up residence in West Germany. Discovered in 1950, he fled to the Middle

East, where he was recruited by former Nazi Otto Skorzeny into a U.S. CIA program designed to train the Egyptian secret service. He relocated to Syria in the 1960s, where he remained under the protection of the Syrian government. Condemned to death in absentia by a French High Court in 1954, all attempts at extradition have been denied by the Syrian government. Although reportedly injured by a letter bomb, Brunner is believed to still be in Syria, although it is highly unlikely that he remains alive. On November 30, 2014, information was received by the Simon Wiesenthal Center that Brunner had died in Syria in 2010, but the exact date of his death and place of burial are unknown.

ROBERT W. MALICK

See also: Austria; Drancy; Ratlines; Salonika

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Buchenwald

Buchenwald, located outside Weimar, south of Berlin, was the largest Nazi concentration camp on German soil. The irony of the location is that the city of Weimar was long the center of German democratic thought.

Buchenwald was established in 1937, and from then until the end of World War II in 1945 it held 239,000 Jews, Roma, homosexuals, and political prisoners. By 1938 the majority were Jews, although at first German policy was to pressure Jewish prisoners into leaving Germany by 15-hour days of forced labor in Buchenwald's quarries. In such circumstances, about 10,000 Jews were freed when their families arranged emigration. After 1942, when the Nazis had decided on the "Final Solution"—the total destruction of Europe's Jews—all Jewish prisoners were either shipped to their deaths in the east or placed in permanent slave labor, often worked to death. Some 1,000 children were also kept at Buchenwald in special barracks, and most of them survived the war. As the war progressed, several hundred captured British, Canadian, and American prisoners of war were also kept at Buchenwald. They were deemed spies by the Nazis because they had crashed their planes in France and

tried to return to the Allied lines aided by the French Resistance.

Buchenwald was not an extermination camp like Auschwitz. It was a concentration and forced labor camp, where the slave laborers were exploited as thoroughly as possible. Most worked in stone quarries or at an armaments factory operated by the camp; some were shipped out from Buchenwald to 130 "factory camps" to aid the German war effort. Arrivals were greeted by an iron sign, *Jedem das Seine*—"To each his own,"—or, more accurately, "You get what you deserve."

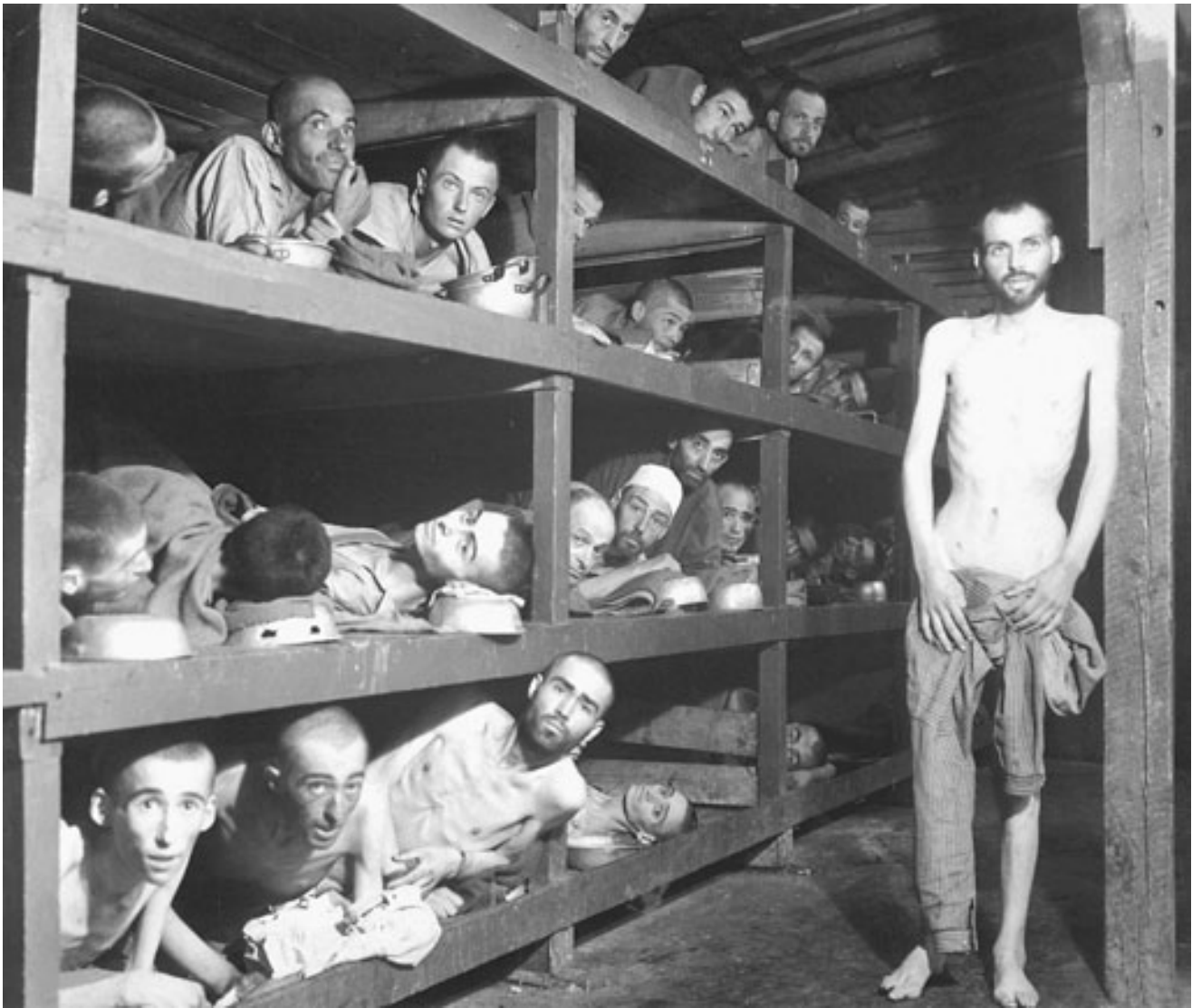
Prisoners at camps such as Buchenwald were often beaten to death, and many died from malnutrition and exhaustion. Ten thousand died at Buchenwald of neglect and disease; they are remembered with a simple memorial. Thousands of Soviet prisoners of war were summarily executed. More than 1,000 women prisoners were brought to Buchenwald to serve in the camp brothel for staff members.

Some prisoners were subjected to gruesome medical experiments aimed at improving Nazi medical treatment for its own troops. Prisoners were subjected to poison experiments, burned with phosphorus, and infected with diseases. The evil of Buchenwald has often been symbolized by the camp commandant's wife, Ilse Koch, who made lampshades from the skin of Jewish victims, particularly those with tattoos. In April 1945, as the Allied armies advanced toward Weimar, the Nazis began evacuating Jewish prisoners. In the forced march to the west that followed, one-third of the prisoners died.

In 1945 Buchenwald became the first Nazi concentration camp to be liberated by American troops, a day after the prisoners rose up against their captors and killed most of the guards. At liberation, Buchenwald still held 25,000 prisoners, of whom 4,000 were Jews. A total of about 56,000 people perished at Buchenwald. Most died from being worked to death under harsh conditions and inadequate food, but gallows were built at the very start of the camp, and arbitrary executions were common. More than 1,000 victims died by hanging.

From 1945 to 1950, occupying Soviet forces ran an internment camp at Buchenwald for 32,000 Germans; at first it was for suspected war criminals, but it soon turned into a prison for opponents of the communists. More than 7,000 prisoners died during this period.

As at the site of every former Nazi concentration camp, debate rages over the meaning of the site and how it should be presented. One position considers all Holocaust sites hallowed ground to be left untouched as memorials to those



Buchenwald was a German Nazi concentration camp established in July 1937. Between April 1938 and April 1945 some 238,380 people of various nationalities were incarcerated at Buchenwald, with up to 56,000 deaths recorded during the camp's existence. This image shows survivors at Buchenwald immediately after their liberation by members of the U.S. 3rd Army in April 1945. (National Archives)

who died there. Others see the moral and educational value of showing the details of the Holocaust to future generations; they want the camps preserved and restored to the state they were in as part of the Nazi attempt to destroy the Jewish people. Both sides agree that as the remaining survivors age and die, the camps are the most important tangible reminder of the Holocaust.

At Buchenwald this conflict is especially acute. For 40 years, Buchenwald was part of communist East Germany. The communists denied any responsibility for the Holocaust, blaming it on the Nazis, whom they identified with the West Germans. With the unification of Germany in 1990, Buchenwald generated furious argument until communist

administrators were removed from their jobs. The site is gradually being restored.

The present-day camp reflects the ambiguities of modern German attitudes toward the Holocaust. Most of the original buildings were destroyed shortly after 1945. The current administration uses the former SS officers' rooms, and a backpackers' youth hostel has been placed in the camp guards' barracks. A museum recounts in pictures and artifacts the stark realities of camp life and shows a documentary film. The film, a relic of the communist past, tells more about communist political prisoners than about Jewish victims. In a recent about-face that still manages to avoid the full horror of Buchenwald's place in the Holocaust, the

present German authorities have focused on Buchenwald's history after the liberation. There is a memorial at the site of the children's barracks.

NORBERT C. BROCKMAN

See also: Bettelheim, Bruno; Concentration Camps; Franz, Kurt; Hinzert; J.A. Topf and Sons; Kalina, Antonin; Koch Trial; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Medical Experimentation; Roma Genocide in the Holocaust; Schacter, Herschel; Wiesel, Elie

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Bulgaria

While many people know how Denmark rescued 8,000 Jews from the Nazis, the story about the 50,000 Bulgarian Jews saved through the organized effort of Bulgarian civil society during World War II was hidden for decades. All relevant records were sealed by the Bulgarian communists who did not want the world to know that the czar, the church, and the noncommunist parliamentarians resisted the German plans to exterminate the Bulgarian Jews. After all, those were the same people who were declared fascists and killed by the communist regime. Until the communist downfall in 1989, the story remained one of the last great secrets of the Holocaust era.

Bulgaria is a small country in southeastern Europe, which at the beginning of World War II had a population of 7 million people, among them a small Jewish community of approximately 50,000 people. Most of them had been living in the territory of present-day Bulgaria since the second century CE. There were also some Sephardic Jews who were allowed to settle in the Ottoman Empire after being expelled by Spain in the 14th century.

Despite being an ally of Germany during World War I, Bulgaria resisted the pressure to join the Axis until circumstances beyond its control forced the government to take sides. The Italian debacle in Greece and the anti-German coup in Belgrade meant that the German armies sent to crush the resistance of the two countries had to go through Bulgaria either as allies or occupiers. In order to spare his country the devastation of possible German occupation, Czar

Boris III reluctantly agreed to join the Tripartite Pact on March, 1, 1941. This alliance allowed Bulgaria to recapture Macedonia from Yugoslavia and Thrace from Greece, territories that the country lost after World War I.

Under German pressure, Bulgaria enacted antisemitic laws even before the country officially became an ally of Germany. On January 23, 1941, the so-called Law for Protection of the Nation, which copied the Nuremberg system of anti-Jewish legislation, came into effect. This law, along with additional anti-Jewish measures voted in the summer of 1942, placed restrictions on the economic and professional activities of Bulgaria's Jews, excluded them from public service, and among other things forced them to pay a one-time 20% tax on their net worth. In 1942 the government set up a special Commissariat for Jewish Affairs. The law also suppressed Freemasonry and all other secret organizations. If the Bulgarian government and the czar thought that by enacting these anti-Jewish laws they could preempt possible German attempts to force on Bulgaria their views on the so-called "Final Solution" of the Jewish problem, they were wrong.

On January 21, 1943, Theodor Dannecker, Adolf Eichmann's former representative for the "Jewish Question" in France, arrived in Sofia with the mission of forcing Bulgaria to deport its Jewish population. On February 22, 1943, he reached a secret agreement with the head of the Bulgarian Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, Alexander Belev, for the deportation of 20,000 Jews from the newly acquired Bulgarian territories in Thrace and Macedonia to the German eastern regions by April 15. The Jews in these territories numbered around 13,000 but the Germans were also hoping to deport some 8,000 Bulgarian citizens of Jewish ancestry living in "old" Bulgaria.

While the first arrests began as early as March 3, the public opposition became more vocal after 1,000 Jews were arrested in the town of Kyustendil near Sofia on March 7. The following day a delegation from Kyustendil met with Dimiter Peshev, the deputy speaker of the Parliament and former justice minister, who was close to the Bulgarian Jewish community.

While all this was happening, the deportation of the Jews from Macedonia and Thrace began. On March 18–19, 1943, Jews in Thrace were taken to Lom in Bulgaria; from there they were shipped to Vienna, and then transferred to trains going to Auschwitz and Katowice. All Macedonian Jews were interned by March 11. On March 22 and 25 some were deported by train to Auschwitz; on March 29 the rest were deported to Treblinka.

The protests in Kyustendil reverberated in the Parliament, where a letter, initiated by Peshev and signed by 43 members of the majority party, was delivered to Prime Minister Filov. The representatives opposed all attempts to hand over Bulgarian citizens to a foreign power. In order to quash the rebellion the prime minister removed Peshev from his position as deputy speaker. Nevertheless, the organized efforts of the public, the church, and the parliamentary opposition led by Peshev succeeded in stopping the deportation of the Bulgarian Jews.

The popular resistance temporarily derailed the German efforts, but in May 1943 Belev submitted new plans to Minister of the Interior Poitor Gabrovski to deport all 50,000 Jews in Bulgaria by September 30. Nissim Levy, a leader in the Bulgarian Jewish community, learned of these plans and quickly spread the word. Once again ordinary Bulgarians mobilized to save their compatriots. On May 24, thousands of people participated in a demonstration in the Jewish quarter and later marched to the palace.

It is important to mention the role of the influential Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which firmly objected to the government plans. One of its leaders, Metropolitan Kiril, went as far as to enter the holding area where the Jews were kept and stated, "Wherever you go, I go." Another church leader stated that he would lie on the tracks in order to stop the trains bound for Germany. Nevertheless it looked as if the government would carry on with the deportations.

Ultimately Czar Boris ordered the Jews to be interned in Bulgaria but not deported to Germany. The role of the czar in saving the Bulgarian Jews is hotly debated, but it is an undisputed fact that Boris had the final word in all matters of state, and he refused to authorize the deportation of Bulgaria's Jewish subjects. He justified his actions before the Germans with the need to use Jewish labor for important infrastructure projects in Bulgaria.

While Bulgaria saved the Jews within its pre-1941 borders from extermination, 11,343 Jews from the so-called "new territories" were deported to the Nazi death camps and killed there. From the distance of time it is easy to blame the government for not doing more to save them, but it should not be forgotten that small and militarily insignificant Bulgaria was playing with fire when it defied the Third Reich on an issue that was of extreme importance to the Führer.

Hitler could have ordered the occupation of the country or forced the czar to abdicate, which could have brought a pro-German puppet government to power in Sofia. Faced with extremely difficult choices, the czar did what he could to protect his subjects while preserving his throne, but there

were limits to his resistance. At the time many other countries in Europe willingly deported their citizens of Jewish origin to Germany. Boris III died on August 28, 1943, under suspicious circumstances shortly after a stormy meeting with Hitler where he again refused to deport the Bulgarian Jews and send troops to fight the Russians alongside Germany.

SAMOUIL PANAYOTOV

See also: Dannecker, Theodor; Greece; Peshev, Dimitar; Yugoslavia

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Bunel, Lucien-Louis

Lucien-Louis Bunel, better known as Père Jacques de Jésus, OCD, was a Carmelite friar and teacher responsible for accepting several Jewish children into his school for refuge, and for his efforts he was arrested and imprisoned in a number of Nazi concentration camps. The combined effect of these experiences was to cost him his life.

Born in 1900, he was the third of seven children from a hard-working family in Normandy. Inspired by his father's deep piety, strong sense of social justice, and commitment to work, he decided to become a priest. In 1925 he was ordained in the diocese of Rouen and served in the St. Joseph seminary in Le Havre. He combined prayer and seclusion with social activism and was noted for his sermons and preaching. As a teacher of religion and English, he employed modern approaches to classroom management and was renowned for his intellect and sense of humor.

His longing for solitude and a life of contemplation, mixed with service to the poor, saw him consider joining a monastery. In 1930, upon deeper reflection, he entered the novitiate of the Carmelite Order and took his vows as Père Jacques three years later. In 1934, at the suggestion of his superiors, he opened a new Carmelite boarding school for boys, the Petit Collège Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus in Avon, Seine-et-Marne.

Père Jacques remained at the school as principal until 1939, when he was called up for military service. When France surrendered to Germany in June 1940, however, he

had little intention of resuming a quiet life. Returning to the school, he became an active member of the French Resistance.

He decided to resist in a novel way—not through physical confrontation, but through the act of rescue. He made the school a refuge for Jews and opened its doors to young Frenchmen seeking to avoid conscription for forced labor in Germany. In January 1943 he enrolled three Jewish boys—Hans-Helmut Michel, Jacques-France Halpern, and Maurice Schlosser—as students. A fourth, Maurice Bas, was hidden in plain sight as a worker at the school, while Maurice Schlosser’s father was protected by a local villager. When Lucien Weil, a distinguished botanist from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, sought sanctuary, Père Jacques placed him on the faculty. In addition, he sought every opportunity to place Jewish children with Catholic families so their lives might be spared.

On January 15, 1944, however, these initiatives came to an end. A former member of the school had been captured and tortured by the Gestapo into revealing what Père Jacques had been up to, and they learned of the hidden Jews’ whereabouts. On February 3, 1944, the three students—Michel, Halpern, and Schlosser—together with Lucien Weil, his mother, and his sister, were taken to Auschwitz and gassed. Père Jacques was also arrested and the school immediately shut down. One of the students in the school was Louis Malle, who grew up to become an Academy Award-winning film director. He later remembered that as Père Jacques was being led away he turned to the watching students and said: “*Au revoir et à bientôt*” (“goodbye and see you soon”). This farewell was to be the inspiration for Malle’s celebrated autobiographical film from 1987, *Au Revoir les Enfants*.

At first Père Jacques was interned in the prison at Fontainebleau but was moved to a brutal German “reprisal camp” at Neue-Bremm, where he remained for three horrendous weeks during which 44 of the 51 prisoners who arrived with him perished. On April 22, 1944, he was transferred to Mauthausen and immediately set about the task of trying to help others, sharing his rations, hearing confession, and bringing whatever comfort he could. On May 18, however, he was sent to Gusen, a subcamp of Mauthausen. When the priests imprisoned there were transferred to the “priest block” at Dachau, Père Jacques hid his identity in order to remain at Gusen so he could continue ministering to the prisoners.

The eighteen months of his captivity left him sick and exhausted. When American troops arrived to liberate the camp

on May 5, 1945, Père Jacques, suffering from tuberculosis and weighing only 75 pounds, tried to restore order among the prisoners and helped organize the relief effort. On May 20 he was moved to a hospital near the Carmelite Friars in Linz, but he succumbed several days later and died on June 2, 1945, aged just 45. His body was returned to France and buried in the cemetery of Avon.

On January 17, 1985, Yad Vashem recognized Père Jacques as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his efforts in hiding Jewish students and saving their lives in his school during the Holocaust. Within the Catholic Church he was honored further, when the cause for his canonization was opened in 1990.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: France; Priest Block, Dachau; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Bureaucracy

National Socialist bureaucracy stands at the center of Holocaust scholarship. Asking how the mass murder of the Jews was possible, some historians have concluded that the Nazi administrative system was the key to organizing genocide. Bureaucratic structures, it has been argued, radicalized policies of mass murder and made the implementation of the Final Solution possible. The Holocaust was organized by enormous administrative machinery that played a crucial role in every step of the mass murder process. Defining who was considered to be a “racial” enemy, German bureaucracy compiled information about Jews, Sinti and Roma, and so-called “genetically diseased” persons. The regime employed thousands of people to record data. Segregating Jews from the rest of the population and restricting their private lives, state administrators issued antisemitic decrees and regulations by the hundreds. Bureaucrats on all levels of government planned, adopted, and enforced anti-Jewish legislation. Stealing their victim’s property, moreover, the Nazis required the help of administrators to register and manage Jewish assets. Finally, the deportation and annihilation of Jews relied on the bureaucratic apparatus. Transportation to the killing centers as well as systematic mass murder involved the assistance of administrators who rarely participated

in the killings themselves. The bureaucratic organization of the Holocaust consisted of impersonal paperwork that combined hierarchical structures with informal chains of command. Constituting the backbone of the Third Reich's genocidal policies, Nazi bureaucracy merged modern administrative structures with ideological convictions and individual agency.

After National Socialism's seizure of power at the end of January 1933, the Nazis transformed the apparatus of state into an instrument of terror. Even though the legal system of the Weimar Republic remained largely in effect, National Socialism incorporated the party into existing administrative and legal structures, thus creating a parallel bureaucracy that stood above the law. The Nazis placed the SS and German police at the center of the new order. The Decree for the Protection of the People and the State, dated February 28, 1933, provided the Gestapo and SA with the authority to arrest people at will, a move which laid the foundation for a dual administration that simultaneously preserved and undermined existing laws. Although the planning and organization of the Holocaust was driven primarily by the core group of perpetrators within Heinrich Himmler's SS, its implementation required the cooperation of larger networks that reached deep into industry, military, party, and state institutions. Bureaucracy, in other words, bound the Nazi regime together.

With the merger of party and state, bureaucratic structures became increasingly intertwined. Legal scholar Franz Neumann depicted the Third Reich as a vast network of conflicting agencies with overlapping responsibilities, comparing it to a monster that transformed justice into chaos. Disagreement was a frequent occurrence in the Nazi administrative system. For example, scholars noted frictions between economic calculations and the rationale of genocide. Some agencies involved in war production tried to prevent killings of skilled Jewish laborers as general shortages of qualified workers slowed down the war effort. Skirmishes within the administrative system dissolved when the stronger party held sway. Mass murder prevailed in the case of the decision to kill the Jews or exploit their labor. Both generating and regulating conflict, moreover, the Führer stood on top of the bureaucracy. Adolf Hitler provided his underlings with ideological guidelines and practical goals that were to drive Nazi policy. At the same time, he promoted rivalry. Endorsing the most extremist faction, Hitler navigated the state toward genocide.

"Functionalist" historians such as Raul Hilberg, Martin Broszat, and Hans Mommsen explained the Holocaust by

referring to the radicalizing effects of Nazi bureaucracy. They argued that, rather than ideological convictions, the structure of the National Socialist state drove the German system of mass murder. Downplaying the role of National Socialist beliefs as a motivating factor for genocide, functionalism left no room for individual agency. Political theorist Hannah Arendt, for example, explored perpetrators through a functionalist lens in her reports on the Eichmann Trial. Regarding the Holocaust as a crime of desk murderers who killed Jews out of careerism, sense of duty, and perfectionism, she depicted Nazi bureaucrats as cogs in a system of terror that had developed a life on its own. Completely removed from their victims, she claimed, Nazi administrators just did what they were told to do. Studies of SS bureaucrats, however, have shown that antisemitic convictions loomed large in the minds of the desk murderers. Ideology and bureaucracy cannot be separated.

While functionalists argued that the competition between different agencies of the Nazi regime generated radicalization, empirical studies have demonstrated that consensus usually overrode interagency conflicts. The argument that cooperation, not friction, constituted a main feature of National Socialist bureaucracy brought individual agency back to the forefront of scholarship. Genocide, most historians of Nazi Germany now concur, was not embedded into structures that delegated orders from top to bottom but unfolded in the cooperation of center and periphery. National Socialist bureaucracy, historian Michael Thad Allen argues, emphasized low-level autonomy and individual agency. Far from following orders, bureaucrats played an active role in crafting antisemitic and racist policies on their own volition. The Final Solution relied heavily on local and regional administrators who developed their own exclusionary measures, provided the impetus for the regime's policies, and modeled the system of mass murder. Processes for identifying and segregating the victims, confiscating their property, and deporting them to annihilation camps were assigned to a proliferation of agencies.

To unite the various agencies of Nazi bureaucracy, the Third Reich created both visible and invisible means of coordination. On the one hand, National Socialism generated organizational mechanisms to synchronize the process of destruction. The office of Adolf Eichmann, for example, was in charge of orchestrating deportations to the death camps and ensured that local authorities, transportation, and killing centers functioned seamlessly. On the other hand, shared beliefs and common goals underpinned Nazi administration. The antisemitic consensus permeating the Third

Reich guaranteed that most Germans raised few objections to Hitler's genocidal plans. Backed by a committed bureaucracy, eager to fulfill Hitler's wishes, the perpetrators prepared and carried out the Holocaust. Nazi ideology eased tensions within the bureaucratic apparatus and fostered partnership between competing factions within the regime.

MICHAEL NOLTE

See also: Arendt, Hannah; Desk Killers; "Functionalists"; Hilberg, Raul; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Third Reich

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Büro Grüber

Heinrich Grüber was a German Protestant theologian and anti-Nazi opposed to National Socialist antisemitic racial hatred, risking his life to offer active assistance to the Jews of Germany. Born on June 24, 1891, in Stolberg, Germany, he was the eldest son of a teacher, Dr. Ernst Grüber, and his wife, Alwine Clevén. His mother, who came from Limburg, gave her son an early knowledge of the Dutch language and culture, while he learned French from his father, who had been raised in France. After initially studying philosophy, history, and Protestant theology, at Easter 1914 he undertook his first theological exam before seeing front-line service as a volunteer in the German artillery in World War I. After the war, in 1920, he was ordained as a pastor in Berlin and obtained his first pulpit in Dortmund-Brackel before moving in 1926 to Brandenburg as director of a home for retarded boys at Templin.

In early 1933 he joined the Nazi Party, though his membership was short lived as Grüber soon became a dissident. He joined the *Pfarrernotbund* (the Emergency Association for Protestant Pastors), formed in September 1933 by Pastor Martin Niemöller as a protest against the introduction of Nazi antisemitic legislation into the church.

As a result, he was dismissed by the Nazis from his position at Templin, and he was only able to find employment again in February 1934. As a member of the Confessing

Church, Grüber now found himself in constant conflict with his parish council, which was for the most part dominated by conforming "German Christians" who fell in behind the regime. He was given responsibility for the Dutch community in Berlin, but in May 1938 he assumed a new role: establishing an "auxiliary body for non-Aryan Christians," looking after Christian families of Jewish background as determined by the Nazi racial laws. This became known as the Büro Grüber (Grüber Bureau) and opened in central Berlin just three weeks after the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938. Its core function, as Grüber saw it, was to help organize the emigration of Jews facing imprisonment in concentration camps. It would soon become one of the more important rescue offices for racially persecuted Jews.

Grüber ran his office without any formal church authorization, but his work was supported by the Nazi authorities on the ground that by facilitating Jewish emigration he was actually helping the Third Reich remove Jews from Germany. Further, over time the line between "non-Aryan Christians" and Jews became indistinct, and Büro Grüber found itself working more and more closely with the representative body of German Jewry, the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* (Reich Association of Jews in Germany), established by the Nazis on July 4, 1939, under the presidency of Rabbi Leo Baeck.

Overall, until its dissolution in December 1940, Büro Grüber helped to facilitate the emigration of between 1,700 and 2,000 Jews. Pastor Grüber was able to achieve this remarkable feat through exploiting his status as an Aryan minister with connections to government departments that had the same objective as he did, albeit for different reasons. It was those reasons, however, that made all the difference for Grüber's eventual fate. He did not simply attempt to expedite the emigration of Jews from Germany; he also tried to make the lives of those remaining as sustainable as possible. This, in the government's view, only acted as an incentive for Jews to stay. Moreover, with each successive antisemitic move from the regime, Grüber became more and more vociferous in his protests.

Finally, on December 19, 1940, he was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Sachsenhausen. From there, in 1941 he was transferred to Dachau and incarcerated in the so-called "*Pfarrerblock*" ("priest barracks"). The next two years saw him having to endure severe beatings from Nazi guards together with psychological torments. He witnessed the suffering of his former assistant (and protégé), Werner Sylten, who was deported to the "euthanasia" plant at Hartheim

Castle in Austria and murdered in August 1942. The Büro Grüber was dissolved, and most of its staff were deported to death camps.

Grüber was released from Dachau on June 23, 1943, after suffering a series of heart attacks. Later, with the war over, he became dean of St. Mary's Church in Berlin. He spent much of his remaining energy trying to bring about a meaningful and lasting dialogue between the government of West Germany and the State of Israel, in whose cause he remained a constant advocate. He was a witness for the prosecution at the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel, which necessitated him traveling to the Jewish state.

For his wartime work in opposing the Nazis and rescuing Jews he was honored widely in the years that followed. Just a few of his awards included the establishment of a Heinrich Grüber forest in Jerusalem on October 18, 1961; a knighthood of the Order of Oranje-Nassau bestowed by Queen

Juliana of the Netherlands on June 21, 1966; and, also in 1966, election to the position of honorary president of the German-Israeli Society. Of greatest significance, perhaps, was his recognition by Yad Vashem on July 28, 1964, as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Heinrich Grüber died of a heart attack in Berlin on November 29, 1975, aged 84.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Priest Block, Dachau; Protestant Churches, German; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Calmeyer, Hans

From the moment Hans Calmeyer started work for the Nazi administration in occupied Holland on March 3, 1941, he realized that doing so would afford him the opportunity to help persecuted Jews. Utilizing his position, he later became known in some circles as the “Dutch Schindler.” So far as can be ascertained, he had no ulterior motive for saving Jews, only his own moral code of doing the right thing. From this, and working within the Nazi system, he was able to save thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

Calmeyer was born on June 23, 1903, in the German city of Osnabrück, Saxony. His father was a judge. Relatively little is known of his childhood, though it is recorded that because of his father’s profession the concepts of law and justice, as well as notions of morality, were instilled in him at an early age. Inevitably, Calmeyer studied law, and after qualifying as an attorney he opened his own practice in Osnabrück.

After the Nazis came to power in 1933, Calmeyer’s straightforward and contented life began to change. His legal practice took on many cases concerning communists, resulting in the regime questioning and closely monitoring his work.

Soon after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, one of the many restrictions against Jews in public life saw a rule banning Aryans from employing Jewish assistants. Calmeyer’s small practice had only two employees, one of whom was Jewish. When he refused to dismiss her, he attracted the attention of the Nazi regime and his license was revoked for a year.

Called up for the army in May 1940, Calmeyer took part in the invasion of the Netherlands, after which a friend offered him a job with the occupation authorities in the General Commissariat for Administration and Justice in The Hague. This would involve examining and adjudicating “doubtful” racial cases, ruling on the appropriate classification of each person in question, and declaring the person either fully Jewish, partly Jewish, or Aryan. It was here that he saw his opportunity to aid Jews, though he knew he would have to avoid arousing any suspicion that he was acting outside of the rules.

The team he built around him was comprised of several dependable local lawyers, who worked with him in helping to draw up false credentials. Contrary to the Nuremberg Laws, Calmeyer argued that the legitimacy of Jewish heritage should not be based on a person’s membership in the Jewish community but rather should be determined from other forms of evidence such as birth and baptismal certificates. The distinction made all the difference in the world for the Jews whose cases he was to adjudicate. It created a legal loophole, leading to a deception allowing Calmeyer to save thousands from deportation. Of the 4,787 cases brought before him, he decided that 42% were to be considered half-Jews (*mischlinge* first degree) and another 18% one-quarter Jews (*mischlinge* second degree), creating a total of 60% who were thereby exempt from immediate deportation.

He referred to his work as “building a lifeboat,” not only to help Jewish families remain together but also to provide them with a sense of hope. With the help of only his closest

and most trusted friends, he turned a blind eye to fabricated baptismal certificates and falsified documents so he could save Jews, or at the very least stall their deportation to Auschwitz.

Given that he had to be seen as incorruptible, Calmeyer was not personally involved in any of the forgeries. In fact, he sidestepped any personal contact with lawyers who approached his department on behalf of Jewish clients so that he would not be suspected of being overly sympathetic. Further, he did not attempt to intervene personally on behalf of Jews in any official capacity.

The SS leadership was highly suspicious of Calmeyer's work and constantly urged the higher authorities to close down his operation. He knew this, and, playing for time whenever possible, continually added more names to his special list while trying always to find ways to extend his field of operations.

In June 1943 Calmeyer's team was put under close inspection after SS Police Chief Hanns Albin Rauter asked for a complete reexamination of the "Calmeyer Jews." While Rauter had been suspicious of Calmeyer's work for some time, there had been a series of internal power struggles in the Nazi establishment that had delayed Calmeyer's evaluation. The committee appointed to investigate him included a Dutch SS member, Ludo Ten Cate, who had been appointed in early 1942 to the position of official representative for genealogical certificates. Eventually, however, Ten Cate became involved in a vehement quarrel with other Nazi experts, leading to his dismissal in August 1944 and his transfer to the Eastern Front. After Ten Cate's removal, the SS continued to investigate Calmeyer's practice and kept a close eye on every document that passed through his hands. The following year Calmeyer was openly confronted about trying to save Jewish lives through swindling and deception. He persevered to the end, however, and through his efforts at least 3,000 Jewish lives were saved, the majority as a clear result of his judicious manipulation of the rules.

Hans Calmeyer died in 1972 at the age of 69. On March 4, 1992, Israel's Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Hans Georg Calmeyer had both the moral determination and a position in the Nazi apparatus that enabled him to bring about real change. His is an example of a humanitarian leader during a dangerous period, and his moral leadership saved the lives of thousands of Jews in an act of resistance all too rarely replicated during the period of the Third Reich.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Netherlands; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Cargas, Harry James

Harry James Cargas was a professor of literature at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, and one of the leading Catholic voices examining Christian-Jewish relations in light of the Holocaust. His work transcended the world of the classroom and the lecture circuit. Through the pen, through radio and television, and through interfaith dialogue, Cargas spread his message widely. In 35 books, 2,600 printed articles of all kinds (ranging from commentaries on religion, to the Holocaust, to baseball, and innumerable other topics in between), through speaking appearances at more than 200 universities around the world, and across the airwaves via a radio talk show he ran on Missouri Public Radio for 24 years, Cargas reached an audience that was simultaneously diverse, discerning, and receptive.

Born in 1932 to an American mother of Polish descent and a Greek immigrant father, and raised in a tough neighborhood in Detroit, he began (and quit) his university studies four times, working instead at various jobs around the United States. He rarely thought about Jews, and even less about the Christian-Jewish relationship. It took almost until the onset of early middle age before he even encountered the word "Holocaust," and that by accident, in a magazine excerpt of Elie Wiesel's *Night* that he read one evening in his living room.

Turning his attention to the Holocaust was at first no easy matter. With practically no background in the history of the topic, Cargas read as much as he could find on the Nazi persecution of the Jews. It was whilst doing this that he had, as he put it, a surprising illumination: the realization that probably every Jew killed in the Holocaust was murdered by a baptized Christian. Cargas henceforth found it increasingly difficult to reconcile his Catholic Christianity with the reality of the Holocaust and those who were its perpetrators. He would now begin a sincere questioning of what had become a vital part of his very existence.

It was his search for an answer that led him to make the statement that would define all of his subsequent work: “To call myself a Roman Catholic is to describe my spiritual development incompletely. It is more honest for me to say at this time in my life that I am a post-Auschwitz Catholic.” He stated further: “to identify myself as a Roman Catholic, in the shadow of recent history, is inaccurate, incomplete, even misleading.”

Such enlightenment led Cargas on a quest that reconsidered what Christianity meant now that its fundamentals had been challenged so radically. For Cargas, Christianity failed during the Shoah; by its ongoing refusal to come to terms with that failure, the church was demonstrating that it did not recognize a need for repentance. But there was more to it than that. One of the features of Cargas’s writing that made him such a commanding voice was an ability to offer practical suggestions for the future alongside criticism about past and present. His most important contribution, first put as early as 1979 and repeated many times after that, was a list of 16 proposals that, if adopted, would establish a proper foundation for Christian-Jewish reconciliation:

1. The Catholic Church should excommunicate Adolf Hitler;
2. The Christian liturgical calendar should include an annual memorial service for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust;
3. We Christians must publicly and officially admit the errors of our teachers where they were wrong concerning Jews;
4. The Christian Church must insist on the essential Jewishness of Christianity;
5. Jesus should be recognised as a link between Jews and Christians;
6. The Church’s teachings on the subject of evil need to be re-evaluated;
7. Traditional Christian theologies of history must be re-examined;
8. The Vatican’s historical archives for the twentieth century need to be opened to historians;
9. Chairs of Judaic Studies ought to be established at more Christian colleges and universities;
10. We might look to see if a redefinition of the notion of inspiration in Christian scripture is appropriate;
11. Christians must find new terminology to what we now designate as Old Testament and New Testament;
12. The Christian Sabbath should be changed to Saturday;
13. Catholics must demand an encyclical letter which deals specifically with the sins of antisemitism and with the sins of Christians in their actions toward Jews;
14. The heavy Christian emphasis on missionising should be re-directed toward perfecting individual Christian lives;
15. We Christians need to get on our knees and repent our sins against the Jewish people;
16. The Vatican should recognise Israel.

These 16 points would remain intact until Cargas’s death in 1998.

Being a “post-Auschwitz Catholic” meant, in the first place, that one acknowledged the inadequacies of the church during the Shoah and faced up to the responsibility of individual Catholics who participated in it. Second, it meant that one would henceforth seek atonement for the church’s past sins toward God’s first covenant people. And finally, it meant that one undertook to work, in a practical sense, for reconciliation between Catholics and Jews in the future. Then, and only then, could one address the question of how best to serve God through the medium of the church. Cargas’s hope was that every professing Catholic would achieve this realization, and that, because of it, the doctrinal foundation of the church would itself undergo change.

Cargas also sought to learn where others stood, and he engaged in a series of dialogues with scholars, clergy, and laity for the purpose of opening up discussion. In 1992 he republished (and expanded) an earlier discourse with one of the Shoah’s leading voices in *Conversations with Elie Wiesel*. A year later came the highly acclaimed *Voices from the Holocaust* (1993), a series of conversations conducted between Cargas and a number of leading thinkers in the area. These included such notables as Simon Wiesenthal, Jan Karski, Leo Eitingor, Emil Fackenheim, and, again, Elie Wiesel.

Even after his death his influence was felt in the area of dialogue: first, through the completion of a project that had been dear to his heart for some time, *Holocaust Scholars Write to the Vatican* (1998); and second, through the appearance of his 35th (and last) book, another edited volume titled *Problems Unique to the Holocaust* (1999)—problems not qualitative or quantitative, but rather of a theological and moral nature, problems still yet to be resolved despite the considerable distance the church had traveled since Cargas first began his quest nearly three decades earlier.

Harry James Cargas was, in short, one of the most important lay Catholic voices in Christian-Jewish relations in the

second half of the 20th century. In general terms, we may evaluate his work in the following ways. First, he was a scholar of Christian thought who found it extremely difficult to reconcile the church's past with his own spiritual present; he managed to do so by a rigorous and emotionally painful confrontation with that past and an acknowledgment that only through full repentance could a meaningful future be established. Second, he taught that others should imitate him in this quest if the religion overall was to have any credibility as a faith system. Third, he was an activist who strongly believed in letting his behavior speak with the same degree of exertion as his pen. Harry James Cargas was a man who could *do* his theology as well as *write* it, and who took a genuine Christian interest in his fellow human beings.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Catholic Church; Theological Responses to the Holocaust

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Catholic Church

The role the Catholic Church played in the Holocaust remains a murky and divisive issue. Scholars simply remain in the dark on many issues, while others disagree sharply regarding what the church knew, when it knew it, and what it did about the systematic persecution and murder of European Jews during the 1930s and 1940s. The study of the church's stance toward the Holocaust may be divided into two periods: the first begins in 1922, upon the ascension of Pope Pius XI to the papacy and ends with his death in 1939;

the second begins with the papacy of Pius XII in 1939 and ends with the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945.

On February 6, 1922, Achille Ratti became Pope Pius XI; coincidentally, later that same year Benito Mussolini instigated the world's first fascist dictatorship in Italy. Although the new pope fundamentally distrusted Mussolini and the fascists, in 1929 the pragmatic Pius negotiated the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini's government, which formed an uneasy understanding between church and state and permitted the Vatican to operate independently. At the time, Italian fascists had not yet made antisemitism a major part of their ideology. By the early 1930s, however, Pius began to criticize Mussolini's regime as well as the activities of Germany's up-and-coming Nazi Party. In 1931 Pius proclaimed that one could not be a Catholic and a fascist at the same time; this soured relations with the Mussolini government. Nevertheless, just two years later, the pope signed a concordat with the new German government under Adolf Hitler.

Pius XI entered into this agreement for several reasons. First, he hoped to protect the considerable number of clergy then operating in Germany from state repression. Second, he desired to keep the Catholic Church a viable institution in Germany to ensure the faithful that they would have churches in which to worship. Finally, and perhaps most important, Pius hoped that Germany would continue to act as a bulwark against "Godless communism," which he feared more than fascism and Nazism. The pope negotiated the concordat with Hitler even though Hitler had made no secret of his hatred of Jews and Nazi ideology that specifically called for the oppression of Jews. In Pius's mind, however, the agreement was better than permitting Hitler to repress or even outlaw the church. Despite this, during the late 1930s Pius spoke out against Nazi ideology—including antisemitism—and also openly criticized Mussolini's move toward antisemitism, which began in 1938.

When Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli became Pope Pius XII in March 1939 the clouds of war were gathering on the horizon, and the Nazis had already begun their program of brutality against the Jews. In Italy, Mussolini, now allied with Hitler, had begun his own campaign of oppression against Italian Jews. Pius XII, who had served as the papal nuncio to Germany during the period 1917–1929, was well aware of Nazi ideology and the position of German Jews. But the new pope was above all a diplomat schooled in *realpolitik*, and he worked hard to maintain civil relations with the fascist regimes. Perhaps even more so than his predecessor, Pius XII viewed communism as a larger existential threat to the

church than fascism. Finally, after Mussolini was ousted in 1943 and the Germans began fighting the Allies in Italy, the pope feared that the Vatican itself might come under attack, thereby destroying the Holy See and destroying priceless art and artifacts. Thus, from Pius's perspective, avoiding overt hostility with the Nazi regime seemed to be the only palatable alternative.

This stance, of course, opened him up to considerable criticism. Some argued that he turned a blind eye toward the Holocaust. In fairness, he did make public statements condemning racial laws, deportations, and the plight of Italian Jews. On the other hand, he never openly challenged the Nazi regime and did not speak in public about the Holocaust. He was reportedly deeply torn and troubled about this, but believed that challenging Hitler directly would result in serious negative consequences for the church. Research in recent years has revealed that Pius XII quite likely knew about the extent of the Holocaust. After World War II ended, the pope came under more criticism because the Vatican apparently issued passports to suspected war criminals that allowed them to escape to other parts of the world, where they would not be prosecuted.

Clearly, the Catholic Church as an institution could have done more to protect Jews, publicize the horrors of the Holocaust, and perhaps even stop the killing. But the price of such action was deemed dangerously high, and Pius XII chose the safer of two options. Outside the hierarchy of the church, however, are countless stories of priests, nuns, and Catholic lay people who aided Jews throughout Europe. The church began a systematic reappraisal of its relationship to world Jewry beginning with the papacy of Pope John XXIII and that began a long-term trend that continues today. In 1986 Pope John Paul II became the first pontiff in history to visit a synagogue.

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See also: André, Joseph; Cargas, Harry James; Coughlin, Charles; Croatia; Degrelle, Léon; *The Deputy*; Friedländer, Saul; Galen, Clemens August Graf von; Gerstein, Kurt; Hesselblad, Maria Elizabeth; Hudal, Alois; Kerkhofs, Louis-Joseph; Kolbe, Raymond; Lichtenberg, Bernhard; Marie-Benoît, Père; Microstates during the Holocaust; Pius XI; Pius XII; Priest Block, Dachau; Ratlines; Rotta, Angelo; Salkaházi, Sara; Schönerer, Georg Ritter von; Slachta, Margit; St. Hedwig's Cathedral; Stein, Edith; Tiso, Jozef; Touvier Case; Von Faulhaber, Michael

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Central Office for Jewish Emigration

The Central Office for Jewish Emigration (*Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*) was a German government office established to facilitate and expedite the emigration of Jews from Nazi-controlled areas. Eventually there was a network of these Nazi *Zentralstelle* institutions in Vienna, Prague, Berlin, and Amsterdam

In March 1938 Germany occupied Austria, and a reign of terror broke over the Austrian Jews. In July 1938 SS-Obersturmführer (first lieutenant) Adolf Eichmann was given the task of accelerating Jewish emigration and easing the numerous bureaucratic bottlenecks through which aspiring emigrants had to pass. Eichmann used business practices to create order. He surveyed the relevant agencies and ordered them to locate their offices in one place. He ordered the creation of a central Jewish organization so that he would have leaders with whom to negotiate, and he allowed Zionist organizations to operate within them. Money was extracted from well-off Jews to fund the emigration of the mass of poor Jews.

The Vienna office was founded in August 20, 1938, via a notice headed "Jews in Nazi-Occupied Austria" to all offices of the Nazi Party and State of Austria. It stated that the *Zentralstelle* was being established to overcome undesirable interruptions and delays occurring in the emigration of Jews, and inefficiencies between offices when dealing with the question of Jewish emigration.

The Central Office was to deal with the following matters, in cooperation with other related government agencies: creating opportunities for emigration through negotiations for entry permits with the competent German and other emigration organizations; obtaining the foreign currency required for emigration; establishing and supervising professional retraining centers; cooperating with travel agencies and shipping companies to ensure the technical arrangements for emigration; supervising Jewish political and other emigration associations with regard to their attitude concerning emigration; and issuing guidelines and continuous contacts with all offices connected with the emigration of Jews from Austria.

All party offices and other authorities were instructed to pass on all applications for emigration to the Central Office for Jewish Emigration immediately upon receipt without taking action of their own, and sending to the office all Jews desirous of emigrating. Jews who wished to emigrate were in future to apply only to the Central Office for Jewish Emigration. The *Zentralstelle* was to control further procedures and, in particular, obtain the permits required for

emigration from the competent office and supervise the final emigration.

Every organization, public or private, associated with emigration was required to have a representative at the office. The office answered to the inspector of the security police, SS Standartenführer Dr. Franz Stahlecker, later notorious as the commander of Einsatzgruppe A, the most murderous of the four Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads during the Holocaust).

The inception of the Zentralstelle resulted from Adolf Eichmann seeking an effective and efficient way of getting around the red tape faced by Austrian Jews trying to leave Austria. His view was that because of the red tape of the various authorities, and particularly their lack of coordination, Jews who were prepared to emigrate found it extremely difficult to leave the country. For example, when the Revenue Office had issued the requisite certificate of lack of impediment, the exit visa from the passport police would, in the meanwhile, have expired, or it was no longer possible to obtain passage by sea. It was because of such experiences that the Central Office for Jewish Emigration was set up.

Eichmann had effectively established an “assembly line” system whereby a Jew could show up at the Central Emigration Office with his papers and proceed from desk to desk until he arrived at the end, with a passport and an exit visa but stripped of his property, cash, and rights, only a passport in which was written: “You must leave this country within two weeks; if you fail to do so, you will go to a concentration camp.” Within a few months, the office had processed the emigration of 150,000 Jews.

The methods introduced by Eichmann in the Zentralstelle in Vienna were later used as models for the expulsion of European Jewry. He moved all of the Jews of Austria into Vienna and established quotas for the number who had to emigrate. He then made the Jewish community responsible for filling those quotas and for paying for the expulsion themselves. Jews with more money were made to pay for Jews who could not finance themselves.

Following the success of the Vienna Zentralstelle, Eichmann opened another branch in Prague on July 29, 1939, after the Nazis occupied Bohemia and Moravia. This office was headed by Adolf Eichmann himself, and it ultimately dealt with the expulsion of the Jews of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to Theresienstadt.

After the Germans occupied Poland in September 1939, Eichmann was put in charge of banishing the Jews who lived in those parts of western Poland that had been annexed to Germany. On December 21, 1939, he was placed in charge of

all security police affairs relating to the clearance of the eastern areas. He moved to Berlin to run the Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration and consolidated the Vienna and Berlin offices into one. The office soon became a department of the Reich Security Main Office and later helped supervise the deportation of European Jews to the extermination camps.

Eventually, Eichmann set up a Central Office so that all arrangements for emigration could be made in one location. On January 24, 1939, the Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration was established with Reinhard Heydrich at the head. It was charged with the task of using all available means to prompt Jews to emigrate, as well as establishing a Jewish organization that would incorporate all of German Jewry and coordinate emigration from the Jewish side.

Between 1938 and 1941 expenditures of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for swift Austrian Jewish emigration amounted to close to \$2 million. The funds, administered via the official Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien (IKG)—the only Jewish organization allowed to function following the Anschluss (under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Loewenberg)—benefited more than 130,000 persons. Other organizations, such as the Council for German Jewry (Britain) and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Service (United States) also contributed funds until the Americans’ entry into the war on December 7, 1941. At this point, U.S. relations with Austria were completely severed.

For those lucky enough to escape, the price was heavy; special taxes of all sorts were imposed on them (for visas, passports, health certificates, and the like). Some had to renounce their nationality, and pledge never to return to their homeland. Most left everything behind.

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See also: Austria; Eichmann, Adolf

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Channel Islands

The British Channel Islands, occupied by Nazi Germany on June 30–July 1, 1940, were subordinated to the authority of the military governor in France (*Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich*) for the purposes of civilian administration. The

Holocaust in the islands therefore followed the pattern in occupied France, though with some important idiosyncrasies, such as the absence of political and ideological projects on par with Vichy's *Révolution Nationale* and official antisemitism.

Anti-Jewish measures in the islands comprised a dozen orders originating with the military governor. Most of these were registered into the laws of the islands. This gave them a legal seal of approval that made them more likely to be complied with by the population than unilateral German measures. The first order, requiring all islanders with more than two Jewish grandparents to register as Jews, was passed in October 1940. If the authorities in both bailiwicks conformed, they seem to have taken a casual approach to the fact that not all Jews had left the islands during the British evacuation of June 1940; and they did not want to antagonize the occupiers, especially in the early stages of the occupation, when the well-being of the community seemed to depend on German goodwill. When the whole dossier was investigated by the returning British in summer 1945, Bailiff Alexander Coutanche, the highest civilian authority in Jersey, justified the stance of his administration with the reasoning that the number of people concerned by the measures was small, that moderation was shown in the execution, and that undue harshness was avoided due to the intervention of the island authorities. Of these claims only the first was entirely correct.

The order that stands out most is the eighth order of 1942, the requirement for Jews to wear the six-pointed star. It is to the credit of Coutanche to have opposed its registration in Jersey. The reasons are unknown, but it is likely that Coutanche's political (and moral) instincts told him that this measure constituted an important threshold that should not be crossed. By contrast, in Guernsey, the eighth order passed unopposed on June 30, 1942, but was never enforced. Here the only principled intervention seems to have occurred before, when Abraham Lainé, a member of the Guernsey governing entity, the Controlling Committee, refused to give his consent to the first order.

Of the 18 individuals registered as Jews in both bailiwicks, four died in Jersey during the war and three were deported to Auschwitz in 1942. The remainder survived the war. In most of these cases survival was owed to holding British nationality (in the widest sense) or to being married to a non-Jew. In February 1943 five of the remaining Jews were deported to civilian internment camps with their families in a transport that also included other categories of islanders.

The fate of the British Jews is cast into relief by the fate of Jews of other nationalities. One of the Channel Islands Jews

interned in Germany was John Finkelstein, a retired British colonial employee. Being a Romanian national, Finkelstein was removed from Laufen internment camp in late 1943, when Romanian Jews in Nazi-controlled Europe were rounded up and sent to concentration camps. Finkelstein survived Buchenwald and returned to Jersey after the war. A particularly tragic case is that of three single women with German and Polish nationality who, after having fled Central Europe in the late 1930s, became trapped in Guernsey in 1940 due to British Aliens legislation. Therese Steiner, Auguste Spitz, and Marianne Grünfeld were deported to France in April 1942 and then, three months later, to Auschwitz, where they perished.

The issue that has continued to intrigue historians is why the civilian authorities put up no administrative resistance to the exposure of this small group of people when the price for noncompliance would have been negligible (chances are the Germans wouldn't have even noticed). As is attested by several cases, the Germans demonstrated more elasticity on the issue than the civilian authorities. Appealing the decision to send her to an internment camp, Esther Lloyd, one of the Jews deported in February 1943, managed the extraordinary feat of being released and sent back to Jersey in 1944. The attitude of the *Feldkommandantur 515*—the German civil affairs outfit in the islands—had a similar *laissez-faire* attitude with regard to Annie Wranowksy, a Czech citizen registered as a Jew in Guernsey and trying to prove her "Aryan" status in 1942. By contrast, the implementation of anti-Jewish measures on the part of the authorities of the islands displayed an unsettling proactivity. This applies in particular to the Jersey aliens officer, Clifford Orange, who registered a number of individuals as Jews although they did not correspond to the legal definition stipulated in the first order.

In a book that first appeared in 2000, David Fraser portrays the administrations of the two bailiwicks as mindless and inhuman bureaucracies, obsessed by legal positivism and staffed with closet antisemites. He underpins this argument by contrasting the surrender of the Jews with the protection accorded by the authorities in both islands to certain in-groups, most prominently the Freemasons. This interpretation misses a number of important points. One is the fact that the Jews remaining in the islands—of modest or no wealth, foreign, often advanced in age or ill—were the part of the community least suited to influence this environment. By contrast, the wealthier and more influential members of the community, who had evacuated to England in June 1940, benefited from asset cloaking on the part of islanders who

stayed behind. The importance of patronage also appears in the case of the Jewish wife of the Jersey artist Edmund Blampied, who was altogether exempted from the February 1943 internment order. In addition, Jews were not the only out-group in the islands that could not rely on the civilian authorities for cover. This also applies to the large group of islanders tried by German courts for various offenses and sent to prisons and concentration camps as a result. Moreover, Fraser's focus on antisemitism clouds over the incidence of xenophobia; non-British outsiders, especially those arriving as labor migrants, always were at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the islands. Taking into account that two-thirds of the registered Jews (12 of 18) were foreign or naturalized British, the conduct of a Clifford Orange echoes instances of arbitrary use of power and anticipatory zeal that are also known from other bureaucratic contexts during the Holocaust. Orange acted "in character," treating this group entrusted to his authority with the same mix of parsimoniousness and suspicion as other groups of foreigners before the war. The sacrifice of this small group mirrored the general utilitarian attitude: this was one bureaucratic battle—among a certain number of others—that the authorities did not elect to fight; the objective being to create a debt that could be invoked in situations where "more important" issues or numbers were at stake.

On the upside, despite the official imprimatur given to the orders against the Jews, the creation of an atmosphere conducive to reporting of Jews and Jewish assets seems to have had only limited effect. That the local populations were not prepared to turn on Jewish islanders is attested by the fact that only two documented denunciations of Jews (or residents believed to have been Jewish) exist for the entire period of the occupation. In addition, an unspecified number of Jews (or people with Jewish names), among them three Guernsey spinsters by the name of Cohen, chose not to register and successfully hid their origin. The pinnacle of civilian resilience is the case of Albert Bedane, who sheltered Mary Richardson, a nonregistered Jewish woman, from 1943 to 1945. In 2003 Bedane was the first Channel Islander to have been recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem. A second nomination, of Jersey-woman Dorothea Weber, is pending at the time of writing.

This entry would be incomplete without a mention of the 590 French Jewish men married to non-Jews and deported to the island of Alderney for forced labor from the summer and fall of 1943 to May 1944. Initially scheduled to have been distributed to worksites across the islands, this idea had been dropped due to German concerns over potential

fraternization with the local populations—a problem that could not occur in Alderney, where the entire civilian population had been evacuated to England in June 1940.

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See also: France; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Chelmno

Chelmno (Kulmhof in German) was a Nazi death camp administered by the SS, established on December 8, 1941. It was situated 30 miles to the northwest of the Polish city of Łódź, along the Ner River, in modern-day west-central Poland. The camp was located in the Wartheland administrative district, which the Germans established after they began their occupation of Poland. Chelmno has the dubious distinction of being the first dedicated death camp built by the Germans and was the first stationary camp that employed poison gas to kill its internees. Most of the victims at Chelmno were Polish Jews, although there were also Roma interned there, as well as Polish political prisoners and Soviet prisoners of war. Many of Chelmno's Jewish victims—especially during the early stages of the camp's operations—came from the large ghetto in Łódź, which the SS and local police began to liquidate on January 16, 1942. Chelmno operated as a killing center from December 8, 1941, until March 1943, and again during June–July 1944.

The SS perfected the system of mass killing at Chelmno, which operated with factory-like precision. Most of the exterminations occurred at the *Schloss* (castle), where internees were sent a short distance from the main camp, usually by truck or rail. They were told that they were being transported to a forced labor camp. Once the prisoners entered the *Schloss*, they were stripped of their clothing and any personal possessions. They were then led into a cellar and through a short ramp, which emptied into a large truck-like van with no windows. Once the van had reached capacity

(which was 50–70 people), the doors were closed and locked and camp personnel attached a tube to the truck's exhaust pipe and directed it into the truck's interior. The engine was started, and usually within 10 minutes all of the internees had died from carbon monoxide poisoning. Any prisoners still found alive were shot dead.

The van full of corpses was then driven to an outlying series of mass graves, where the bodies were dumped and buried. Later, several crematoria were constructed adjacent to the mass graves, and most of the victims' bodies were thereafter incinerated. In the latter stage of the camp's operations, Jews from Austria, Bohemia, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, and Moravia were also deported to Chełmno and killed.

It is estimated that at least 152,000 people were killed at Chełmno, including at least 5,000 Roma from the surrounding areas in Poland. After July 1944 SS officials deported the remaining prisoners at Chełmno; most were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In September 1944, fearing that the Allies would uncover their despicable deeds at the camp, German authorities ordered Chełmno's mass graves to be exhumed. The remains were then incinerated in crematoria. By the end of the year, the extermination vans were sent to Berlin. The camp was permanently decommissioned on January 17, 1945, as Soviet forces approached the area. Thirteen individuals were tried and convicted of war crimes in connection with Chełmno. Nine were tried at Łódź in 1945, right after World War II ended; the remaining four were tried between 1962 and 1965 in Germany.

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See also: Biebow, Hans; Death Camps; Final Solution; Gas Vans; Lange, Herbert; Łódź Ghetto; Roma Genocide in the Holocaust; *Shoah*

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accounts that evoke images that speak to us across generations and age groups; indeed, both are studied, at various levels, in most schools across the world today.

During the Holocaust the Nazis murdered more than one and a half million children under the age of 12, and teenage youths up to the age of 18. In addition, tens of thousands of Roma children, German children with physical and mental disabilities, Polish children, and many thousands of others were also murdered. Untold numbers of children from all over occupied Europe were deported to their deaths in the extermination camps situated in Poland.

In Germany from 1933 onward, Jewish children were subjected to a bewildering array of new rules and regulations that must have been incomprehensible—and, to their young sensibilities, deeply hurtful. At school, they were separated from their non-Jewish friends and classmates, prior to being expelled altogether if the schools they attended were state institutions. They would then be denied membership in the sports clubs to which they had belonged prior to the ascent to office of the Nazis. Inevitably, name-calling and bullying of Jewish children by other children became acceptable forms of behavior. At home, Jewish children saw their parents descend into a welter of despair, as adult worries penetrated the fabric of family life.

Once the war broke out and Germany began to expand its territory, Jewish children became especially vulnerable to murder. Not only were they considered nonproductive, but they also symbolized the very Jewish future that the Nazis were determined to destroy. On the principle that “nits make lice,” children were frequently among the first victims sent to their deaths—or were killed outright—when a Nazi unit entered a Jewish area, or when deportations to death camps arrived. Babies, infants, and small children were, for obvious reasons, exceptionally vulnerable; not only were they themselves incapable of self-defense, but their parents, in trying to shield them from harm, often inadvertently took them into harm's way. Older children and adolescents might have more of a chance of survival if they could convince the Nazis of their ability to work as slave labor.

After the Nazis established ghettos throughout Poland, Jewish children were especially susceptible to starvation, disease, and the ravages of climate—particularly when winter came and there was a lack of housing or other accommodation. When the ghettos were liquidated from 1942 onward, children were first among the elderly and the sick to be “selected” for deportation to the death camps. With their mothers, they were also in the forefront of those murdered “by bullets” when the Einsatzgruppen came

Children during the Holocaust

Among the best-known names associated with the Holocaust are two people who were children during that horrible time: Anne Frank, who did not survive, and Elie Wiesel, who did. Through Anne's diary and Elie's book *Night*, we have



The vulnerability of children during the Holocaust was caused in large part by the Nazi obsession to destroy the next generation of Jews, with the killing of children viewed as a necessary part of the “racial” struggle. Overall, during the Holocaust up to 1.5 million children were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators throughout Europe. This picture shows children and other prisoners liberated by the 3rd U.S. Army at Buchenwald concentration camp in April 1945. (AP Photo/Byron H. Rollins)

rampaging through the Soviet Union. On other occasions, children were selected to fill the deportation trains as a result of decisions made by the Jewish Council (*Judenrat*) leaders, working from the awful premise that by holding back stronger and more robust sections of the population, the ghetto might be spared on account of its labor productivity.

Jewish children were killed when they arrived at the death camps, or, if babies, murdered at birth. They were worked to death; they were abused and tormented by local Nazis or collaborators; they were murdered during reprisal raids and antipartisan operations. The Nazis murdered Jewish children on the grounds of racial ideology or because they

possessed (or were perceived to possess) physical or psychological disabilities.

Although children were among the first to be murdered, at Auschwitz some were deliberately spared—to be exposed to pseudoscientific medical experimentation. Here, SS doctor Josef Mengele ran a laboratory for such purposes. Mengele’s research subjects were better fed and housed than other prisoners, and temporarily safe from the gas chambers. But he was personally responsible for the deaths of an unknown number of victims, whom he killed via lethal injection, shootings, beatings, and through selections and deadly experiments. Mengele was especially renowned for his experiments on twins, and in his pseudoscientific endeavors

he amputated limbs or infected one twin with typhus or other diseases to see how it would impact the other. He experimented with trying to artificially change a child's eye color by injecting chemicals into his or her eyes and engaged in blood transfusions from one twin to the other to see what would happen. Many of the victims died while undergoing these procedures, or they were killed once an experiment was over. Frequently, he would then dissect their bodies.

Some children managed to find ways to survive, despite everything ranged against them. Before the war, some children were saved through emigration programs, such as the *Kindertransport* initiative that saw thousands of Jewish children from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia taken to Britain. Other children were hidden in boarding schools or religious establishments such as convents and monasteries, forced to change their identity with the resultant danger that they could lose contact with their families and religious heritage. Others were not so fortunate and were forced to roam on the run through forests and villages, relying entirely on their wits in order to stay alive.

Where it was impossible to save a child's life, some courageous adults would seek to alleviate the distress generated by sharing the child's experience. Not only parental love, but also other forms of love and care made a child's final moments a little easier to bear. Thus, for example, Dr. Janusz Korczak (born Henryk Goldszmit), the head of Warsaw's Jewish Orphanage, accompanied the children in his care to the gas chambers of Treblinka, singing songs and keeping up their spirits, even as the doors were slammed shut behind them.

In other contexts, children's morale was maintained through keeping diaries, or creating artwork and poetry. At the Theresienstadt (Terezí) concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, the staging of a famous children's opera by Hans Krása, *Brundibár*, is still remembered by survivors to this day as something that gave them hope when they were in the camp.

From time to time, particularly in occupied Poland and parts of the Soviet Union, SS "race experts" would scour regions looking for children who fit the "Aryan" stereotype: blond(e), with blue eyes, fair skin, high cheekbones, and a strong physique. Such children could be simply kidnapped and transferred to the Reich, where they would be adopted by racially acceptable German families. This was far less likely for Jewish children, though hundreds—perhaps thousands—of Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian children were taken in this way. If, however, a racially unacceptable sexual liaison were to occur resulting in a pregnancy, it was frequently decided by

these same "race experts" that the child would have to be aborted for the good of the Aryan race.

The aftermath of the Holocaust brought forth its own tragedies for the Jewish children who managed to survive. Tens of thousands of orphans now roamed the highways and byways of Europe, all too often just as vulnerable as before, but this time susceptible to rape and murder. In time, Jewish care agencies managed to locate such children, or to retrieve them from possible death in the pestilential remnants of what remained of the concentration camps. Often, they would be placed in displaced persons' (DP) camps, there to await an uncertain (though safer) future. From here, many were uplifted to Palestine (and then, after 1948, independent Israel). Others would receive sponsorship from countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Brazil. Only in these places, at last, could there be any possibility of starting a new life—in many cases, for the first time.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Anne Frank House; Children's Literature of the Holocaust; Cohn, Marianne; Comité de Défense des Juifs; *The Diary of a Young Girl*; *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*; Frank, Anne; Gunden, Lois; *Kindertransport*; Korczak, Janusz; Kraus, Gilbert and Eleanor; *Life Is Beautiful*; Mengele, Josef; *Night*; Sheptytsky, Andrey; Süskind, Walter

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Children's Literature of the Holocaust

Over the past few decades, the library of Holocaust-related children's literature has grown significantly. There are children's books about the Holocaust for every age level, from picture books to novels. Yet the Holocaust, as a topic, does not fit nicely into the basic model of children's literature. The "happy ending" that is a hallmark of children's books

does not exist in the stories of the Holocaust. The topic itself can be frightening or even traumatizing to a young audience while most children's books seek to provide comfort.

At the foundation of Holocaust education is the understanding that there are some things that can never be understood, which presents significant problems for children's literature as a genre. Then too, the events of the Holocaust require a historical context to be fully appreciated. The Holocaust existed as part of a larger landscape of legalized discrimination and hate. Addressing the culture of a society that fosters such an environment goes beyond the scope of most children's literature. Finally, essential to every literary work related to Holocaust education is the need to teach, and while it is not unusual for a children's book to have a moral or teach a lesson, a successful children's book cannot feel preachy. The lesson must be second to the literary merit of the book. Within the message of Holocaust education lives an inherent morality of right versus wrong, but there is a labyrinth of worthy lessons presented in current Holocaust literature that is based on this common theme, all intertwined yet uniquely their own: respect and appreciation for diversity, the role of a bystander, empathy for others and the need to champion the oppressed, the importance of one person's actions and how one person can make a difference, the role of God in the midst of evil, the importance of remembrance, and the list goes on. Finding the balance between story and message is essential for successful children's literature on the Holocaust.

Children's literature on the Holocaust falls into three main categories: fiction, nonfiction, and allegory. There are positive aspects to each of these styles, and also potential pitfalls. Fictional tales of the Holocaust have the ability to soften its reality. This is often a positive for young audiences. However, since it is important that the softened message not diminish the atrocities, this style works best for children's books that address a theme of the Holocaust instead of being a historical account. There are many books that do this well. For example, *The Secret Seder* addresses the role of God and faith in the Holocaust; *Don't Forget* addresses the importance of remembrance; and *One Yellow Daffodil: A Hanukkah Story* addresses empathy for others. Fictional accounts can relate more information to a young audience by blending multiple stories into a single character's experiences. This was masterfully done by *Daniel's Story*, a blended account of a child's life used as an exhibit for children who visit the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The potential pitfall of this style is in making the story so big that no one individual could possibly have experienced all of it.

Fictional accounts can also tailor the story to elicit the most emotion or to be more relatable to a child audience. Again, even in fiction, there needs to be truth in the storyline. An author who creates fictional events or unbelievable occurrences does readers a disservice as inaccurate information can emerge. *Benno and the Night of Broken Glass* balances this well, by relating the events of Kristallnacht through the eyes of a cat. It is relatable and story-like in presentation, while still being true to the details of the event. Finally, all fictional literature has to be mindful of the pitfalls of happy endings. There were, in fact, real stories of survival and reunion after the Holocaust, but none of them can truly be considered a happy ending. The literature must, in some way, tell the wonder of the survivor's tale without minimizing the horror of the survival. *The Number on My Grandfather's Arm* is a children's book that does this beautifully. It is a story of a young girl who asks her grandfather about the tattooed number on his arm, and he finally shares with her his story as a Holocaust survivor. Although fictional, there is a sense of authenticity to the basis of the book; such a conversation could easily have occurred many times in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The story is told with the voice of a grandparent trying to be honest and open, while still providing comfort.

Nonfiction literature on the Holocaust can take many forms. Memoirs are the most powerful form of literature for audiences studying the Holocaust, but they can be a difficult and even traumatizing medium for children. One memoir that does work well is the memoir of Inge Auerbacher titled *I Am a Star: Child of the Holocaust*. The book's honest presentation is tempered with a softened language. The book also uses an approach that puts the story into a broader context and provides the audience with tools to learn more without putting all of the details of the experience front and center. Nonfiction that tells about a specific experience or event is another literary approach. These books have a responsibility to be factually accurate with no embellishments, while still appealing to and being sensitive to the needs of a young audience. *The Champion of the Children: The Story of Janusz Korczak* accomplishes this well. It speaks to both the importance of one person's actions while providing a glimpse of the ghetto experience. *Fireflies in the Dark: The Story of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Children of Terezin*, a book that tells the story of the children of Terezin, is also successful in this model. Even in factually based children's books, it is easy to slip into the fairy tale model when describing the events of the Holocaust, but this does the subject a disservice. Viewing Hitler as a "monster" or a

“bad guy” has the potential to make the events feel make-believe, while simultaneously diminishing the reality that ordinary people perpetrated this evil. In the nonfiction category, there are also several children’s books that display the events of the Holocaust through artifacts including photographs, children’s drawings, and poetry. Books like *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children’s Drawings and Poems from the Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942–1944* and *The Children We Remember* can be very powerful visual representations of the Holocaust that can be used to cultivate a conversation. *A Camera in the Ghetto* has a similar approach, although it is probably better suited for older children due to some graphic visuals.

Allegory is a powerful form of Holocaust-based literature for the youngest audiences and can be revisited for older children to be examined at a deeper level. The most well-known, and probably most successful, allegory of the Holocaust is *Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust*. This book can be read on many levels, by the very young to older adolescents. The message of the book speaks to the role of a bystander, but it can be read within the context of several backdrops: a forest full of animals that are learning the need to protect each other, standing up for fellow classmates or teammates who are being picked on, or on the deeper allegorical level of the events of the Holocaust. This multi-leveled approach makes this one of the most successful children’s books on the Holocaust. *Sneetches and Other Stories*, although there is debate about whether this was strictly written as an allegory of the Holocaust, is certainly successful as an allegory relating the message of Holocaust education to a young audience—respect for people who are different from you. This story is used throughout schools in antibullying campaigns and can be read to a much younger audience than most books of its kind. The potential pitfall of metaphor and allegorical works of literature is that they can trivialize the events. There is also the potential to get so lost in the allegory that the message of the Holocaust becomes obscured or belabored. Most allegories need a guide, someone who can help children make the connections to the events of the Holocaust in an age-appropriate way. This is certainly true of *The Little Boy Star: An Allegory of the Holocaust*, a charming allegory but one that requires a directed audience. The success of an allegory is often in the hands of the adult who helps the child make the necessary connections.

Holocaust education is an important and timely topic. The resources for teaching this topic to children are plentiful, but there is a need to understand how and when it should be

taught. The value of children’s literature on the Holocaust is clearly tied to the ability of the adult to use the tool well. Whether we are using these books in a classroom or in the home, the conversation that these tools evoke is as important as the books themselves.

JUDITH A. VOGEL

See also: Art and the Holocaust; Children during the Holocaust; *The Diary of a Young Girl*; Korczak, Janusz; Kristallnacht; Rescuers of Jews; Survivor Testimony; Upstanders

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Christian X, King of Denmark

Christian X was the king of Denmark from 1912 to 1947. Born on September 26, 1870, he became the symbol of Danish resistance to Nazism during the German occupation between 1940 and 1945.

On April 9, 1940, Nazi Germany invaded Denmark without declaring war, quickly overwhelming the Danish military. Within hours, the government, supported by the king, surrendered in exchange for the country being permitted to retain its political independence. This began a relatively gentle form of military occupation. Germany controlled Denmark’s external relations, but there was no interference in Denmark’s internal affairs. Parliament was still permitted to sit; the Danish government continued to run most aspects of the country; and the small Danish army and navy was able to preserve its freedom of action.

At the outset of the occupation, Denmark had a 1939 population of approximately 5 million people. It is estimated that there were about 7,500 Jews living there at the time, mostly in Copenhagen. There was no tradition of antisemitism; the small Jewish population did not suffer persecution, and Jews practiced their religion in the open and were not restricted from full participation in all elements of national activity. This did not change after the arrival of the Germans. Jews were not required to register with the government, live in Jewish-only areas, or wear a yellow star or a badge in public. Initially, German occupation officials did not interfere with these liberal policies. As a result, the Danish Jews lived in relative peace.

This changed dramatically in 1943. That year the Danish resistance movement began to gain traction, emboldening many among the Danish population to fight the occupation. By the summer of 1943 sabotage and labor strikes clearly threatened the German occupation, a situation made worse for the Germans by military reverses elsewhere. As a result, the Germans declared a state of emergency on August 29 and initiated a crackdown against suspected saboteurs and troublemakers. Hundreds of Danes—Jews and non-Jews—were arrested and detained, and King Christian was forced to leave his throne.

In the years leading up to this, he provided inspiration for his people at this difficult time. In contrast to many other leaders from across occupied Europe, Christian refused to leave his capital or his country after the Nazis arrived. Beloved by his people before the war, he was renowned for taking a ride on his horse through Copenhagen streets each day, unguarded and confident that he was safe from harm. These unaccompanied daily rides made him popular to the point of being a beloved national symbol, as the people stood and waved to him. Over time, a number of apocryphal stories emerged surrounding the king, one of which concerned a German soldier's expression of surprise that the king would ride with no bodyguard. A young Dane was reputed to have responded that "all of Denmark is his bodyguard." For the king, it was important that he did this for reasons beyond simply the maintenance of morale; he had to show the Nazis that he still saw himself as the sovereign ruler of his nation, despite the occupation. A fall from his horse on October 19, 1942, brought these rides to an end, however, as the injuries he sustained as a result rendered him an invalid for the rest of his life.

Just prior to that event, however, came one of greater significance for international relations—and signaled the continued determination of King Christian not to be intimidated by Denmark's situation. On the occasion of the king's 72nd birthday, Adolf Hitler sent him a long telegram congratulating him. In response, on September 26, 1942, Christian sent a curt message back to Berlin: "*Spreche Meinen besten Dank aus. Chr. Rex*" ("Giving my best thanks, King Christian"). Hitler was reportedly outraged as this perceived slight, triggering what became known as the Telegram Crisis. He not only recalled his ambassador from Copenhagen and expelled the Danish ambassador from Germany; he also arranged for the Danish government of Vilhelm Buhl to be dismissed and replaced by the more pliant Erik Scavenius, who, as it turned out, was in the

king's confidence. In early November 1942 a new German high representative, Werner Best, was sent to Denmark, indicating a change of direction on the part of the Nazis. The Danish resistance movement was beginning to be more restive, and Best had a long record of suppressing dissent in occupied countries. While he was in France, for example, he was nicknamed "The Butcher of Paris."

The king's attitude at this time had been noticed by the Germans, but it was also recognized by the Danish people that he was, indeed, the country's First Patriot. Although his official position was one of cooperation with the occupiers, he was seen by the Danish people as a psychological resister who, through maintenance of morale, refused to be cowed by the Nazis.

This was no more apparent than where the country's Jews were concerned. When the Jews of Denmark were finally targeted for deportation by the Nazis in the fall of 1943, King Christian gave encouragement and support to those who sought to protect them. Danes of all backgrounds now rallied to the cause; when the Nazi roundup started on October 1, the Germans were able to locate and arrest only a handful of members of the Jewish community. Although threatened by the Germans, Danish law enforcement refused to take part in the roundup. Soon, Danish civilians had hatched a plan to move Danish Jews to the coast. For several days they were smuggled onto fishing boats and other vessels, and ferried across the narrow straits to freedom in Sweden, which in turn readily accepted the influx of émigrés. In all, at least 7,500 Jews made it to safety in Sweden. Since that time, it has been widely held that Christian served as the inspiration in this heroic rescue effort.

His overall attitude, moreover, led to the emergence of one of the most lasting legends concerning his response to the anti-Jewish measures imposed by the Nazis. According to this, the king chose to wear a yellow star when riding in the streets of Copenhagen, in support of the Danish Jews. It never happened; if it did take place, he would have been the only one in the country to do so, as the yellow star was never introduced into Denmark. Another version of the story has it that when he wore the star all the people of Denmark came out and did, too.

In 1958 the story received wide coverage when it was related in *Exodus*, a novel by American author Leon Uris; it was then popularized even further when a film version of the book, directed by Otto Preminger and starring Paul Newman, was released in 1960. Although completely fictitious, the story of the king and the star accurately reflects his

opposition to any persecution of the Jews during the Nazi occupation.

King Christian X of Denmark died at the Amalienborg Palace in Copenhagen on April 20, 1947. He was buried at the traditional resting place for Danish monarchs, Roskilde Cathedral.

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See also:

Best, Werner; Denmark; Resistance Movements

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Churban

Churban is one of several terms used to refer to the Nazi genocide of the Jews during the Third Reich. It is a Yiddish word that is sometimes represented in English as *churbn*, *churb'n* or *khurbn*. The term is generally translated as “catastrophe” or “destruction.” Because the word is also used to refer to two catastrophes that befell the Jewish people thousands of years ago, it is sometimes referred to as *Churban Europe* to make clear that it is being applied to the Nazi genocide of the Jews.

Each of the two earlier events that are referred to by the term *churban* involves the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was the center of Jewish worship, and its destruction was seen at the time as a truly catastrophic event that threatened the very existence of the Jews as a distinct religious and cultural group. It was first destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE, resulting in the first Jewish diaspora (i.e., dispersion outside of the land of Israel). In 538 BCE the Persians allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple.

The rebuilt Temple (the “Second Temple”) was destroyed in 70 CE, this time by the Romans, and the Jews were dispersed again, although there was always a Jewish community—albeit, sometimes small—extant in the land. This is the diaspora that continued until the Jews returned to what was then called Palestine and created the modern state of Israel, declared officially in 1948. The loss of the Temple forced the Jews to create another place and way of worship, one that was not tied to one particular locale, nor made use of animal sacrifice as a means of approaching God. That resulted in the creation of the synagogue and in the use of prayer as a form of worship.

Each of these events constituted an existential threat that was—and still is to this day—referred to as a *churban*. What links the two events is not just that each resulted from the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. They each represent dramatic markers in Jewish history, separating what was before the event from what came after. What is most often referred to as the Holocaust is also viewed as both a catastrophe and a marker after which the very nature of Jewish existence became fundamentally different from its nature before the event.

Those who refer to the Holocaust by the term *Churban* do so for two very different reasons. Some use it as the “third *churban*,” linking the catastrophe of the Nazis with the history of the two *churbanim* (plural of *churban*) that preceded it, thereby seeing it as a part of—and not apart from—Jewish history. Others use it in the opposite sense, trying to separate it from all of Jewish history that preceded it, and emphasizing its uniqueness within the Jewish experience.

The terms Holocaust and *Churban* share a characteristic that has made some use another phrase altogether: Shoah. The characteristic is that each term—“Holocaust” and *Churban*—has a connotation that may be seen as investing the Nazi genocide of the Jews with the character of a religious sacrifice or punishment. “Holocaust” is derived from the Greek translation of a Hebrew word meaning the complete burning of a sacrificial animal, while *churban*, as noted above, relates to the destruction of the holiest of temples, often characterized as a punishment by God for the straying of the Jewish people from their covenant. The term *Shoah* has no such religious connotations and, therefore, for some—including all in Israel—that term is considered the one that conveys catastrophe and destruction in the most appropriate way.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Final Solution; Holocaust; Shoah

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Cohn, Marianne

Marianne Cohn saved Jewish children during World War II as a member of the French-Jewish resistance, and she lost her life doing so. Born on September 17, 1922, in Mannheim, Germany, she was the eldest child of Dr. Alfred and Grete (known as Radt) Cohn. The family was Jewish but not religiously observant. In 1929 they moved from Mannheim to Berlin, and in 1934, after the Nazi seizure of power the previous year, to Spain. With the onset of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, they moved again in 1938, this time settling in France.

When World War II started, Marianne's parents, as German nationals, were detained at the Gurs internment camp, and she and her sister were sent to a farm. In 1940, after the fall of France, she became subjected to Nazi-imposed antisemitic legislation and took refuge in a home for Jewish children in Moissac. She was informally taken under the care of the *Eclaireurs Israelites de France* (the Jewish Scouts), and in 1941 she joined the *Mouvement de la Jeunesse Sioniste* (Young Zionist Movement, or MJS). It was through this that she was brought into resistance activities.

In 1942 Marianne was active in producing forged passports for the MJS, and she began to smuggle Jewish children out of France. This led inevitably to her arrest, though after three months' detention in a Vichy prison in Nice she was released. It was during this period of imprisonment that, in early 1943, she wrote her famous poem "I Shall Betray Tomorrow." This has become an immortal statement of defiance in the face of the Holocaust:

*I shall betray tomorrow, not today.
Today, pull out my fingernails,
I shall not betray.
You do not know the limits of my courage,
I, I do.
You are five hands, harsh and full of rings,
Wearing hob-nailed boots.
I shall betray tomorrow, not today.
I need the night to make up my mind.*

*I need at least one night,
To disown, to abjure, to betray.
To disown my friends,
To abjure bread and wine,
To betray life,
To die.
I shall betray tomorrow, not today.
The file is under the window-pane.
The file is not for the window-bars,
The file is not for the executioner,
The file is for my own wrists.
Today, I have nothing to say,
I shall betray tomorrow.*

At the end of the war one of the children saved by Marianne Cohn passed the poem to the head of MJS. It is a testimony of courage, and one of the great poems of the Resistance.

In 1943 Marianne was living in Grenoble. Volunteers known as "*passeurs*," who escorted Jewish children to Switzerland, undertook hazardous missions under constant risk of detection by Nazis or French collaborators. When one of the *passeurs*, Mila Racine, was captured on October 21, 1943, Marianne was sent by the MJS to replace her. Using the false identity of Marie Colin, she then undertook nine further transfers of children, taking groups of about 30 into Switzerland on each occasion.

In January 1944 Marianne began working with another resister, Rolande Birgy, with whom she ferried groups of up to 20 children across the southern border into Switzerland. Rolande, who had earlier teamed with Mila Racine, was known as the "Blue Beret" in resistance circles. In 1984 she was recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

By the start of 1944 Marianne had taken hundreds of children to Switzerland, but on the evening of May 31, 1944, a German patrol arrested her near Annemasse, just 200 meters from the border. She was at this time escorting a group of 28 children ranging in age from 4 to 15, and she was held at the local Gestapo jail, known as the Prison de Pax. The Vichy-appointed mayor of Annemasse, Jean Deffaugt, who sympathized with the Resistance (and was later also recognized as one of the Righteous), intervened on behalf of the children. The younger ones were sent to local orphanages, while Marianne and the older children were paroled to work in Annemasse during the day provided they returned to the prison at night.

This worked for a short time, but the Resistance knew that Marianne was in extreme danger; not only this, but the

whole escape operation was in jeopardy. A plan was arranged to rescue her, but she refused to leave the children, fearing reprisals.

The underground then sent a message to the Gestapo, threatening to kill its members if the detainees were harmed, but the Gestapo began their interrogation nevertheless. On July 3, 1944, a special squad was sent to Annemasse from Lyon with the assignment of removing six of the prisoners, including Marianne. In her defiance, she refused to hide behind her alias, and revealed her true identity; for her rebelliousness, she was tortured horribly. She did not, however, speak—other than to say that she had no regrets for her actions.

On the night of July 7–8, 1944, only three weeks before the liberation of Annemasse, she was taken to the nearby Ville-la-Grand and murdered along with two other prisoners; it is recorded that the Gestapo continually hit them with shovels and kicked them until they were dead. They were buried hastily, and their mutilated bodies were discovered after the war. The 28 children imprisoned with Marianne were all saved and released as a result of the liberation in August. When Marianne Cohn was murdered, she was just 22 years old.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Children during the Holocaust; France; Jewish Resistance

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Collaboration

For many years the topic of collaboration in the Holocaust remained largely taboo. Only in the years after 1990 did historians in a number of countries begin to examine the dark side of their countries' wartime histories more closely. They reflected on local collaboration with Nazi Germany and complicity in Nazi crimes, including the Holocaust. Collaboration of course took on various forms, partly in accordance with the degree of independence respective states retained.

While some countries such as France, Italy, or Hungary undertook a policy of state collaboration, in others, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Ukraine, the idea of an independent state was largely excluded by the German authorities. Nevertheless, individuals and groups throughout Europe cooperated with the Germans in different ways for a variety of reasons, especially when their own goals to some extent overlapped with those of Nazi Germany.

Some historians, such as Christoph Dieckmann, prefer to use cooperation rather than collaboration to describe the broader phenomenon of working with the Germans during World War II, due to the heavily tainted nature of the term collaboration in the eyes of the public after the war. However, with regard to assistance given to the Germans in implementing the Holocaust, the more pejorative term may be appropriate, especially for those who willingly assisted without direct coercion.

One of the arguments often used in their defense by government officials, such as those in Belgium, who decided to work with the Germans, was that of the lesser evil. It was better to remain in place and implement German demands preemptively, with the aim of limiting the damage, to prevent more brutal actions being taken by the Germans on their own. In Belgium, bitter lessons learned during World War I encouraged both sides to make some compromises; and the pragmatic approach of the German military administration permitted the Belgian authorities to retain some freedom of action. In France, the Vichy administration implemented much of the German antisemitic legislation itself, with the aim of demonstrating its retention of sovereignty. However, the subordinate role of the Quisling government in Norway became the symbol for a mere puppet regime.

An important consideration in evaluating cooperation and collaboration in World War II is to view it as operating on a sliding scale that was susceptible to constant changes in the power balance of the relationship. For individuals, organizations, and governments, it was common to adopt a wait and see attitude, not to commit too strongly for or against the Germans, until the outcome of the war seemed clear. In this sense the relationships between the Germans and their collaborators were constantly being renegotiated, as new information changed the picture. Some states allied to Nazi Germany, such as Romania and Bulgaria, backed away from plans to deport Jews from their home territories by 1943, once they began to sense the increasing likelihood of a German military defeat.

As the above examples demonstrate, many of the states collaborating with Nazi Germany retained a considerable

degree of independence and even initiative. Most introduced their own economic measures against the Jews, based on the German model, but often aiming also to limit the extent of German penetration of their economies. While collaborationist leaders knew that ultimately they could expect little mercy from the Allies, it was possible for states such as Italy or Romania to switch sides as the tide of war turned.

An important form of collaboration was armed participation in Nazi German forces. As Adolf Hitler initially was opposed to Slavs and even “Baltic peoples” participating at the front, the first auxiliary units to be raised after the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 were local police squads and battalions, intended to maintain security in the rear areas. Once Germany became increasingly hard-pressed militarily, hundreds of thousands of auxiliaries served with the Germans, mainly on the Eastern Front, assisting the Wehrmacht as “Hiwis” (voluntary helpers) or serving in the Waffen-SS. These forces included units of various ethnic groups, such as Kalmuks, Cossacks, and Tartars, as well as Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians. However, these forces all remained firmly under German command and the Germans exploited figures such as General Andrey Vlasov, the nominal head of the Russian Liberation Army, mainly for propaganda purposes. There were even voluntary Waffen-SS units composed of western nationalities such as Danes, Dutch, French, and Belgians.

The collaborationist units that assisted with the hands-on implementation of the Holocaust in the east were auxiliary police detachments manned by thousands of mostly voluntary collaborators, subordinated to the SS Einsatzgruppen or the Order Police. These units were especially diligent in tracking down Jews in hiding after the ghetto-liquidation *Aktionen*. In much of German-occupied Poland, the infamous Trawniki guards, who manned the extermination camps and assisted with ghetto clearance *Aktionen*, also played a prominent role. This force consisted of more than 5,000 men recruited mainly from among Soviet POWs, who were unlikely to have survived if they had turned down the offer to collaborate. Once in service, however, these men enriched themselves from stolen Jewish property, and many deserted once assigned to more arduous and less lucrative posts.

In countries such as France and Hungary, indigenous police forces took part in the roundups of Jews for deportation to Auschwitz and other camps. But it remains difficult to prove how much these police officers knew about the actual fate of the Jews following their deportation. Recent

research in Poland, inspired by the work of Jan Gross and the national debates that followed the publication of his book *Neighbors* (2002), is now also unveiling the active role played by the so-called indigenous “Blue Police” in hunting for escaped Jews and murdering them, sometimes to prevent the Germans from conducting reprisals against other Poles who had been hiding them.

MARTIN DEAN

See also: Antwerp Pogrom; Belarus; France; Hlinka Guard; Holocaust by Bullets; Jedwabne Massacre; Jewish Honor Courts; Kapos; Kasztner, Resz ; Laval, Pierre; Lithuania; Mussert, Anton Adriaan; *Neighbors*; Netherlands Tribunals; Ochota Massacre; Operation Spring Wind; Papon, Maurice; P tain, Philippe; Ponary Forest; Quisling, Vidkun; Riga; Rumbula Massacre; Salonika; Sobib r; Trawniki Men; Vichy France

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Comit  de D fense des Juifs

The *Comit  de D fense des Juifs* (Jewish Defense Committee, or CDJ) was a Belgian resistance organization during World War II affiliated with the larger Front de l’Ind pendance (Independence Front). The Jewish communist Hertz Jospa and his wife Yvonne, members of the Jewish revolutionary organization *Solidarit  juive*, founded the CDJ in September 1942. Jospa and his wife, along with Zionist groups and the Front de l’Ind pendance, established the Comit  de D fense des Juifs as part of the Belgian underground in order to aid and rescue Belgium’s Jews. It not only physically defended Jews but also provided them with opportunities to defend themselves. The CDJ was recognized by the Belgian government-in-exile in London as the representative body of the Belgian Jewish community. Although the majority of the leaders of the CDJ were Jews, there were also a few cases where non-Jews were given a higher rank within the leadership echelon.

Many thousands of Jews participated and played an active role in Belgian resistance groups during the German occupation, though their exact numbers and roles are unclear. Belgium’s Jewish partisans formed an active and armed resistance of their own and were joined by their non-Jewish

countrymen. An extensive Nazi nighttime raid on the Jewish quarter of Brussels in September 1942 provided an incentive for many Belgian Jews to join both rescue and armed resistance groups, including the CDJ.

The CDJ contributed to the hiding of thousands of Jewish children with non-Jewish families and religious organizations; published secret anti-Nazi publications such as *Unser Worth (Our Worth)*; and created false identification papers for Jews in hiding. The members of the CDJ came from all political and religious backgrounds and formed an effective committee to unite and save Jewish children. The organization had approximately 30 members in the children's section and developed a vast network for hiding Jews. Their department for forged documents not only provided Jews with false papers, but also supplied the entire resistance movement. The CDJ also provided payment to their protectors to ensure Jews would find a haven while the Nazis controlled Belgium. Overall, it was successful in saving between 3,000 and 4,000 of the 5,000 children who were placed in hiding, as well as saving about 10,000 adults. The CDJ also functioned as a national organization of social services. The section *Kinderen* was responsible for the hiding and support of individuals who had gone underground. The CDJ was able to rescue more than 3,000 Jews from deportation due to the cooperation and assistance from the non-Jewish sector and unarmed resistance fighters.

The organization was also involved in other aspects of the resistance such as sabotaging the German war machine by setting fire to the factories and derailing trains. They specifically targeted individuals and organizations that provided aid or information to the Nazis. The CDJ also successfully impeded the activities of the *Association des Juifs de Belgique* (AJB), the local Belgian *Judenrat* (the Jewish council imposed by the Nazis). The AJB ordered members of the Jewish community to report to the Nazis for forced labor by threatening punishment by the police and placing responsibility at the feet of the entire community (thus opening the door to collective punishment) if they did not comply. Due to this constant fear, several thousand Jews were reporting as ordered until the Committee disabled the AJB's efforts.

The most important act of resistance by the CDJ took place on the evening of April 19–20, 1943, when they derailed a train leaving the Mechelen (Malines) transit camp that was heading for Auschwitz. The CDJ was able to learn the exact date and time of the deportation from Mechelen and smuggled tools from the camp's workshop onto the train cars in order to pry open doors and floorboards to aid escape. Three members of the CDJ unit Group G, under the direction of

Georges Livchitz, forced the train to a halt by signaling it with a red lantern. While Livchitz held the engineer at gunpoint with his revolver, the other two members, Robert Maistriau and Jean Franklemon, aided in the escape of several prisoners within the cars. The three members were able to escape under gunfire with some prisoners. The group was able to save 231 Jews out of 1,631 heading for Auschwitz. Many were able to escape due to the tools left behind for them. This is the only instance of a known armed assault anywhere in Europe in order to halt a train transporting Jews en route to their deaths. Georges Livchitz was arrested and executed in February 1944 by a German firing squad.

The Comité de Défense des Juifs is the most important achievement of Belgian Jewry during the German occupation. The organization played a critical role in rescue and resistance from 1942 to 1944. Its campaign was especially risky and dangerous, and the occupying Nazis authorities arrested many members of the organization and their collaborators.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Belgium; Children during the Holocaust; Geulen-Herscovici, Andrée; Jewish Resistance

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Communists in the Holocaust

Communist organizations offered the most prolonged and consistent resistance to the predations of the National Socialist regime—save perhaps for the uncomfortable period from August 1939 to June 1941 when the Soviet Union was allied with Germany. Inside Germany, within the Nazi concentration camps, and in the partisan struggle against the Germans in central and Eastern Europe, communists emerged as the leaders of organized resistance to the wars of annihilation waged by the Nazi regime. Both Jews and communists featured prominently among the many groups targeted by the Nazis. The relationship between communists and the Holocaust, however, is less straightforward.

Officially, communists see the Holocaust only as part of a larger struggle; this means they are often accused of ignoring or—in the worst cases—denying the Holocaust.

Ideological communism had no place for religious identity. Although National Socialism conflated Jewishness and communism, and a significant proportion of communist leaders (in particular) were of Jewish origin, communist officials generally refused to acknowledge Jewishness as a special category of Nazi persecution. During the war, communists organized resistance in accordance with their own political agenda. Sometimes this led them to save Jews, and sometimes it led them to sacrifice Jews. Some partisan groups welcomed Jews, while others shunned them as an unnecessary danger or on other grounds. Soviet partisan units, particularly those sanctioned by the Red Army and the Communist Party, were usually the most receptive.

After the war, many Jewish survivors joined the local Communist Party, seeing it as the only organization that clearly and consistently opposed antisemitism. They were often bitterly disappointed. Antisemitic pogroms broke out under communist-dominated governments in Hungary, Poland, and Romania in 1946; and in keeping with Joseph Stalin's antisemitic-tinged purges of 1948–1953, prominent communist Jews faced show trials in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Within the Soviet bloc in particular, discussions of the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime thereafter were strictly controlled and often censored completely, now in accordance with the political agenda of the Soviet Union. Both during and after the Holocaust, communist officials spoke of “victims of fascism” without delineating among the millions arrested, tortured, and killed. The fate of Jews is thus elided with that of “Soviet citizens,” partisans, and political prisoners.

To some degree, categories did overlap. Within Germany, Jewish resistance groups—the Schwarze Haufen and the Ring-Bund, for example—often had Marxist connections; a considerable proportion of German communists were of Jewish heritage. Inside the Vilna ghetto, the Jewish-led United Partisan Organization included several communists, including its military commander, Itzak Witenberg. Communist and Zionist resistance organizations also collaborated closely in Kovno and in Slovakia. In the Soviet Union, a significant percentage of the Communist Party hierarchy had Jewish origins; and while some 3 million Soviet Jews perished in the Holocaust, the overall death toll for the Soviet Union was roughly 27 million—which includes 3.5 million soldiers taken prisoner and 18 million civilians. The refusal

of communist officials to recognize that the National Socialist program specifically targeted and affected Jews, however, remains problematic.

TIMOTHY C. DOWLING

See also: Delbo, Charlotte; Einsatzgruppen; Fascism; February Strike; Kommissarbefehl; Operation Barbarossa; Pius XI; Soviet Union; Weimar Republic

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Concentration Camps

Concentration camps are most often associated with Nazi Germany, but the modern concentration camp is generally thought to have originated with Spanish general Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau in 1896 during the Cuban insurrection against Spain. Weyler sought to concentrate the civilian population near army installations, isolating these *reconcentrados* from the guerrillas. In Cuba at that time—and also in the Philippines during the 1899–1902 Philippine-American War and in South Africa under the British during the 1899–1902 Boer War—large numbers of civilians died in such camps as a consequence of overcrowding, disease, and inadequate supplies.

During the period of the Third Reich, Nazi Germany established a number of different types of concentration camps. These began as penal institutions employed for the incarceration of real and perceived opponents of the Nazi regime. Initially, the Nazis held these opponents in “protective custody quarters,” of which the first was a camp established on March 20, 1933, at a compound about nine miles northwest of Munich on the outskirts of the town of Dachau. Other camp establishments soon followed, among them Oranienburg, Papenburg, Esterwegen, Kemna, Lichtenburg, Borgermoor, and Columbiahaus, the SS “special” prison at Berlin.

For the most part, these were rapidly established, highly improvised affairs. Little regard was paid to administration, discipline, or utilization. Some were run by SS officers; many were staffed by SA men, often locals who knew or were known by those they were guarding. Nicknamed “*Wilde-KZ*” (“wild concentration camps”), they frequently operated without any apparent system or direction and little in the way of planning or procedure. Often, their very location was

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impromptu. Dachau was a former gunpowder factory; Oranienburg was originally a brewery (and later, a foundry); and Borgermoor and Esterwegen were initially simply rows of barracks set down on open expanses of marshy heathland. Elsewhere, prisoners had to build their own habitations and started their camp life living in tents.

It is important to emphasize that these camps were originally places of political imprisonment. They had political aims and selected their captives using political criteria, removing political opposition from the midst of the community and in so doing intimidating the population so they would accept the Nazi regime.

In mid-1934 an Inspectorate of Concentration Camps was created to coordinate these diverse camps, with Theodor Eicke as the first inspector. He selected Dachau as the model by which all concentration camps were to be run, resulting in many of the more haphazardly built camps being closed down.

Despite these closures, by the middle of the 1930s the range of those who could be sent to the concentration camps had been broadened considerably. By now the Nazis were arresting not only political prisoners but also Jehovah's Witnesses, those whom they termed "antisocials," homosexuals, and common criminals, some of whom had the added "distinction" of also being Jewish.

Despite this growth, by early 1938 only three camps were operating: Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen. After the *Anschluss* (union) of Germany with Austria in March 1938, a camp for Austria, Mauthausen, was added, and a camp exclusively for women was established at Ravensbrück in 1939.

The onset of war in September 1939, however, saw the expansion of the concentration camp system to levels hitherto not contemplated. Originally, the Nazis intended their system to be a device to suppress political dissent, but as the Third Reich expanded the rationale was broadened to

include religious prisoners of conscience (Roman Catholic priests, Protestant clergy, Jehovah's Witnesses); "racial" prisoners (Jews, Roma and Sinti); "antisocial elements" (vagrants, itinerant merchants, and "work-shy individuals"); prisoners based on sexual preference (male homosexuals); foreign opponents of the Nazis (resistance fighters, political opponents); and prisoners of war (in particular, prisoners from the Soviet Union). In almost all cases, the Nazis exploited the labor of their prisoners, often working them to death in conditions of utmost privation. In many of the camps a separate compound for women was also built, to complement that at Ravensbrück.

More camps were an obvious necessity to accommodate these new prisoners. Accordingly, late in 1939, the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps was authorized to examine the possibility of setting up new camps that could begin operation as soon as possible. One of the first of these, located in southwestern Poland near the confluence of the Vistula and Sola Rivers, was to be built just outside the town of Oswiecim. In German the name was Auschwitz.

Auschwitz was not constructed on the Dachau model. The region in which it was located was a source of raw materials that could be exploited, and accordingly the camp eventually grew to become a vast complex covering 15 square miles. As a result, several subcamps were also established in which prisoner slave-workers would be housed. Few of these subcamps served any other purpose than that of industrial or agricultural production.

In March 1942 concentration camp administration was transferred to the SS Economic and Administrative Department (the SS-*Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt*, or WVHA), which saw a transformation of the camps' original political character to one of economic exploitation as well as political torture. This was paralleled by the development of camps outside the Old Reich. Many new centers were built in the Nazi-occupied countries, as it was not always practicable to transport the prisoners to Germany or Poland. A vast array of new types of camps also evolved, with 43 different categories of camps existing at the height of the Nazis' power. The camp system lost its purely German content and became a continental phenomenon, spreading throughout Europe for the multiple tasks of exploitation of slave labor, extending the network of terror over occupied populations, and conducting mass annihilation of those targeted for this purpose by the SS.

While not all camps fit into the Dachau model, they nonetheless fell under the general jurisdiction of the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps and were thus differentiated from

ghettos or military prisoner of war camps. These included *Schutzhaftlager* (protective custody camps), *Aussiedlungslager* (resettlement camps), *Durchgangslager* (transit camps), *Straflager* (punishment camps), *Arbeitslager* (labor camps), *Judenarbeitslager* (Jewish labor camps), *Zivilgefangenenlager* (camps for civilian prisoners), *Sonderlager* (special camps), *Zwangsarbeitslager* (forced labor camps), *Arbeitserziehungslager* (labor education camps), *Juden-durchgangslager* (Jewish transit camps), *Polizeihaftlager* (police detention camps), *Umerziehungslager* (reeducation camps), and *Isolationslager* (isolation camps). To all these, of course, could be added the colloquially termed *Vernichtungslager*, the extermination camps.

The range of the camps, in purpose, method, size, and duration, was thus extremely wide. Together, they blanketed Nazi-occupied Europe in a terror system as comprehensive as it was effective. The concentration camp, regardless of the form it took, came to symbolize the true essence of the Nazi regime.

Six of the *Vernichtungslager* located in Poland—Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibór, and Treblinka—altered the nature and course of concentration camp development. They were a departure from anything previously visualized, in both their design and character. Auschwitz has already been referred to. Belzec, near Lvov, was established at the end of 1941, as was Chelmno. Majdanek, located at Lublin, had already been formed by the end of 1940, while Treblinka, near the village of Malkinia Gorna, was set up during the course of 1941. Sobibór, a camp built near Vlodawa, was established in March 1942. With the sole exception of Auschwitz, these camps were different from all the others in that they did not perform any of the functions—political, industrial, agricultural, or penal—attributed to those further west or north.

Because of the existence of these *Vernichtungslager*, the image of the Nazi concentration camps was irrevocably transformed, such that *all* are now mainly viewed as elaborate and gigantic factories created for the purpose of destroying human lives en masse. Until the creation of the extermination camps, however, this was not always the case, with the system performing numerous other functions besides killing. The death camps, on the other hand, were institutions designed to methodically and efficiently murder millions of people, specifically Jews.

The nature of the eastern camps is well understood now, but the people of Europe at the time could not even imagine the truth. Prisoners elsewhere, particularly in the transit camps awaiting transportation to the east, certainly had no

idea what awaited them in Poland. Once transported, they still had little notion of the true character of the eastern camps, often finding out only after the doors to the gas chambers had slammed shut behind them.

Overall, the concentration camp system underwent huge transformations over the 12-year course of the Third Reich, until the camps were liberated by British, United States, Canadian, and Soviet forces during 1944 and 1945. Literally millions had been incarcerated, with untold numbers murdered as a result of their existence.

By 1943 the concentration camps could be seen to function in the following ways: as the means of removing real or potential opposition from the mainstream of German politics; as penal institutions for German criminals; as unofficial prisoner of war camps, generally for Soviet soldiers; as huge reservoirs of slave labor; as centers of agriculture, mining, and industry; as collection and transit points for so-called racial prisoners; and as extermination installations. The singular political aims originally envisaged for the camps had become almost completely submerged within 10 years.

Throughout the war, the camps remained detention centers for political prisoners, but their essentially political nature had almost disappeared by 1943–1945. The character that replaced it—forced labor and economic exploitation—was reflected not only in the part Auschwitz played in the German war effort but also in the important roles of camps such as Dora (for rocket and missile research), Ravensbrück (for the manufacture of armaments), and Westerbork (for the development of electronic instruments). Thousands of camps and subcamps played their part in producing something of benefit to the German war effort, an activity that intensified with the deteriorating fortunes of the war from 1944 onward.

The concentration camps established in Germany and throughout Europe thus underwent massive changes of role and function during their 12-year existence. From originally being a practical response to the challenges arising from the Nazi accession to power, they moved into other fields of operation and justification, while still containing the political nucleus that gave them birth—a nucleus that contained all the elements of a repressive and antihuman ideology that rejected the most fundamental ideals and freedoms fought for since Europe had emerged from the Dark Ages. From being “wild” institutions, the camps became massive cities housing tens of thousands of people, all of whom the Nazis identified as some sort of political “criminal.” Anybody who fell within the orbit of “enemy” did so because they had

committed a “political” offense, even if that was only to have been born into an ethnic or religious group the Nazis had proscribed. The camps’ very *raison d’être* changed, from being compounds for political prisoners to huge economic concerns comprised of giant industrial plants whose sole design was to exploit the abundant slave labor they possessed for the greater good of the German Reich. That itself changed with the establishment of a third strain of camps that served as extermination centers for those the Nazis deemed racially undesirable.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aktion Reinhard; *Arbeit Macht Frei*; Auschwitz; Bergen-Belsen; Buchenwald; Dachau; Dehumanization; Dora-Mittelbau; Drancy; Eicke, Theodor; Final Solution; Flossenbürg; Fossoli di Carpi; Funktionshäftling; *Good*; Gross-Rosen; Hinzert; Homosexuals; Italian Jews and Fascism; Jasenovac; Kapos; Kraków-Plaszów; Lange, Herbert; Levi, Primo; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Majdanek; Mauthausen-Gusen; Mechelen; Müller, Heinrich; Neuengamme; *Night and Fog*; Pohl, Oswald; Poland; Sachsenhausen; Salaspils; Schutzhaft; Slave Labor; SS-Totenkopfverbände; Theresienstadt; Trawniki Men; Vaivara; Vittel; Vught; Westerbork; Wiedergutmachung; Wilde-KZ

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Confiscation of Jewish Property

The seizure, confiscation, and theft of Jewish property during the Holocaust took place throughout Europe on a massive scale. Historian Raul Hilberg included in his analysis the expropriation of Jewish property as one of the main stages that comprised the Holocaust. Nazi Germany introduced a wide variety of confiscation measures from 1933, which were implemented by both the financial bureaucracy and the police. The “Aryanization” of Jewish businesses (that is, their transfer to non-Jewish ownership) during the 1930s saw many companies and private individuals competing to grab the spoils, as the Jews were driven from most branches of the economy. Similar anti-Jewish economic policies were pursued in the territories annexed and occupied by Nazi Germany from the late 1930s. Most states

aligned with Nazi Germany (including Vichy France, fascist Italy, and Hungary) also introduced their own extensive legal measures to confiscate Jewish property.

Soon after the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Jews were excluded from the civil service and other key professions, such as the law. A highly visible boycott of Jewish businesses in April aimed to demonstrate public pressure for action against the Jews. The first new laws specifically authorizing the confiscation of property were directed mainly against the Nazis' political opponents in July 1933. Some Jews were affected immediately by these laws. By the start of World War II, the law for the denaturalization of emigrants, passed in July 1933, was being applied to expropriate the remaining property of thousands of Jewish emigrants.

The Aryanization of businesses gathered pace during the 1930s as successive measures limited the access of "Jewish-owned companies" to state contracts and government-controlled raw materials. Currency exchange and tax laws were applied in a discriminatory way to seize Jewish property and encourage Jewish emigration. Many Jews were dismissed from employment and forced to resign from company boards, even before specific laws made this compulsory. Business ownership was transferred into "Aryan" hands, sometimes directly through blackmail and coercion. In other cases, Jews sold cheaply, anticipating still harsher measures to come. The guiding Nazi principle was that the Jews must leave, but their property should remain behind. Onerous taxes on emigration and property transfer meant that even Jews who successfully fled Germany could export only a fraction of their former wealth.

The annexation of Austria in March 1938 accelerated the process of expropriation. Here, so-called "wild Aryanizations" took place on a massive scale, as Austrian Nazis simply seized hundreds of Jewish businesses. Both the registration of Jewish property and decrees regulating compulsory Aryanization reflected efforts by the Nazi authorities to reassert state control over Aryanization. The Kristallnacht violence (the "Night of Broken Glass") on November 9-10, 1938, which included much looting as well as wanton destruction, was exploited by Reich Marshal Hermann Göring, in charge of the Four-Year Plan, to impose a 1 billion Reichsmark fine on the Jews. This was collected over the following year through the regular tax offices. It took the form of a special wealth tax of 25%. Meanwhile, the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna, supervised by Adolf Eichmann, also sought to tax wealthier Jews to help cover the emigration costs of those lacking sufficient means.

On the outbreak of war in September 1939, the blocking of bank accounts was applied to all propertied Jews to secure what little wealth remained. Largely excluded from employment, Jews faced forced labor for little or no pay. Initial expulsions of Jews into the *Generalgouvernement* (a part of German-occupied Poland) and also France in 1939-1940 were accompanied by efforts to seize their remaining property for the state. Mass deportations of Jews from Germany to the ghettos and extermination camps then commenced in October 1941. Shortly after this, the infamous Eleventh Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law removed the citizenship of Jews on crossing the Reich border, thereby confiscating all remaining property from that instant. The Gestapo sealed the apartments and collected detailed inventories from the deportees; the financial administration used this documentation to clear out the apartments, sell off the contents, and wind up remaining accounts "legally."

In the occupied east, the Nazis and their collaborators seized Jewish property in each phase of persecution. During ghettoization, sudden relocation forced Jews to leave property behind to be looted. Then Jews in the ghettos had to barter away most of what remained to obtain food to survive. At the mass shooting sites, property was taken directly from Jewish victims, with the most valuable items being sent to Berlin. Considerable efforts were made also to recycle every last item transported by train with the Jews to the extermination centers, such as Auschwitz or Treblinka.

It is important to note that the Axis-aligned and occupied states, including Bulgaria, which did not deport its own Jews to be killed, all implemented extensive confiscation measures, except for occupied Denmark. Bulgaria created a Commissariat for the Jewish Question in imitation of the French model and also imposed a stiff property tax on Jewish wealth. Vichy France introduced its own confiscation legislation in response to German measures, in part to assert French sovereignty in these matters. In Hungary, full-scale confiscation began in May 1944 concurrent with the deportations to Auschwitz; the Hungarian government declared that Jewish assets were now viewed as Hungarian national property. In practice, however, confiscation in Hungary became a competition between private looters, various state agencies, and also the Germans to secure what they could under the chaotic conditions of sudden ghettoization. Meanwhile, the Allied nations and governments-in-exile warned that Axis property seizures, including those implemented against Jews, were regarded as illegal, and would be reversed on the conclusion of the war.

Clearly, the mass confiscation of Jewish property was integral to the Holocaust. However, it would be an exaggeration to imply that the Holocaust was motivated primarily by greed. Nazi racial antisemitism contained various key elements, of which economic opportunism was only one strand. Nevertheless, economic discrimination and plunder acted as a catalyst, facilitating the Nazi process of destruction in several ways. The incentive of Jewish property provided an additional motive for some perpetrators and bought more widespread complicity from large sections of the general population, while the effect on the victims was demoralizing, debilitating, and stigmatizing. Ever-diminishing means reduced the opportunities for Jews to emigrate or flee, and ultimately it also wore down their physical ability to resist.

MARTIN DEAN

See also: Abetz, Otto; Anschluss; Aryanization; Deutsche Bank; France; Ghettos; Haavara Agreement; Hilberg, Raul; Jonas, Regina; Kristallnacht; Wiedergutmachung

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Conspiracy

A made-for-television film jointly produced by the BBC and HBO in 2001, *Conspiracy* is a movie that dramatically brings to the screen the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, in which leading Nazi bureaucrats and department heads in the Third Reich met to coordinate the details that put into practice the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” (*Die Endlösung der Judenfrage*). Chaired by SS General Reinhard Heydrich, with minutes taken by SS Lieutenant Colonel Adolf Eichmann and with many senior Nazis in attendance (such as Dr. Wilhelm Stuckart and Dr. Roland Freisler, among others), the meeting revealed a plan for the complete industrialized mass murder of every Jew in Europe, to the figure of 11 million. *Conspiracy*, taking as its foundation the sole surviving record of the meeting, is an intimate movie in which nearly every scene takes place in the meeting room itself. The movie provides a psychological, cultural, and ideological profile of the Nazi thinking that could even discuss the mass extermination of millions of people, and this is clearly its greatest strength. The director, Frank Pierson, is

positively clinical in permitting as little subjective emotion as possible show through. His preferred strategy is to allow the words of the participants themselves to provoke the audience revulsion he seeks. As a penetrating snapshot into this definitive moment in the Nazi annihilation of the Jews of Europe, *Conspiracy* is an important work of cinematography. It won numerous media awards, notably an Emmy for Kenneth Branagh as Best Actor for his portrayal of Heydrich, and a Golden Globe for Stanley Tucci as Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Eichmann.

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See also: Eichmann, Adolf; Final Solution; Heydrich, Reinhard; Wannsee Conference

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Coughlin, Charles

Father Charles E. Coughlin was an American Roman Catholic priest from Little Flower Parish, Detroit, Michigan, notorious for his antisemitic invective throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. He was born in 1891 in Hamilton, Ontario, to Irish Catholic parents and educated at St. Michael's College, Toronto. He was ordained a priest in 1916 and moved to Detroit in 1923, where he began his work as a parish priest.

He first took to the airwaves in 1926, providing a weekly hour-long local radio program. In 1930 this was picked up by CBS and became nationally syndicated. Dubbed “the radio priest” because of his weekly broadcasts of sermons, he spoke for the most part on religious issues. With the onset of the Depression, however, he began covering political topics. Over time, these became more and more radicalized, as he searched for conspiracies everywhere as a way to explain the tumultuous nature of the world and society as he saw it.

Coughlin was an early and enthusiastic supporter of U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but he turned against him when Roosevelt's sweeping reforms during the New Deal seemed to go too far. While Coughlin's major interest during the Depression years was one of economic rehabilitation and the enrichment of the dreadful conditions being experienced by unemployed American workers, increasingly



Father Charles Edward Coughlin was a controversial American Catholic priest based at the National Shrine of the Little Flower church in Detroit, Michigan. In 1934, Coughlin, one of the first political leaders to use radio to reach a mass audience, established a political organization called the National Union for Social Justice. During the 1930s he used his radio program as a vehicle for spreading antisemitic remarks, during which he supported some of the policies of Adolf Hitler. He was forced off the air after the entry of the United States into World War II. (AP Photo)

his sermons adopted an antisemitic tone as the 1930s progressed. A populist, he inspired his listeners to feel hatred for Jews by attacking prominent Jewish figures, famously condemning Roosevelt for failing to drive “the money-changers from the temple” and “overstating” the extent to which Jews were being persecuted in Germany.

In 1936 Coughlin began publishing a weekly newspaper, *Social Justice*, in which he reprinted excerpts from the notorious antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Seeing his following expanding beyond anything he had previously anticipated, in 1938 he created an organization called the Christian Front, which won approving support from Irish Catholic Americans in considerable numbers. With the development of the Christian Front movement, members were soon seen in the forefront of antisemitic activities, and

frequently conducted meetings at which American Nazis and fascist sympathizers were also present. Often such meetings would end with the Nazi salute. At such rallies, Christian Fronters were often called upon to “liquidate the Jews in America.”

On the night of November 9–10, 1938, the Kristallnacht pogrom took place across Germany. Two weeks later, on November 20, Coughlin unsympathetically stated that “Jewish persecution only followed after Christians first were persecuted,” referring to the millions of Christians killed by the communists in Russia. For those with ears to hear, he drew a direct parallel between the “Jewish” regime in the Soviet Union and the anti-Jewish measures being adopted in Germany. For some radio stations, this was going too far, and they refused to air his broadcasts without prior

vetting of some sort. Others dropped Coughlin altogether, leading to protests from his supporters outside the stations themselves.

With this, Coughlin was lauded by a great many across America as the man of the moment, and he received diocesan support from New York, Boston, Chicago, and many other cities with large Irish or Catholic populations. At no time was he publicly criticized by the archbishops of Brooklyn, New York, or Boston.

At its height, Coughlin's radio program had a weekly listening audience of nearly 16 million, of whom 67%, in a poll, said they agreed strongly with his major claims. With the entry of the United States into World War II from December 1941, Coughlin was ordered by the U.S. attorney general to cease broadcasting, and he returned to his work as a parish priest in Detroit until his retirement and death in 1979.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Antisemitism; Catholic Church; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*

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Credit Suisse

Credit Suisse is the largest bank in Switzerland and was a significant factor in making Swiss banking a worldwide power. It was one of the first European banks to tap the important North American market for bonds and has imported American ideas and practices into the more conservative European field. The bank has come under fire for its cooperation with Nazi authorities during World War II and for its failure to release money deposited with it by Jews exterminated by the Nazis.

Credit Suisse was founded in 1856. At the time, the Swiss federal constitution was only eight years old. The country was beginning to shift from an agriculture-based economy to one based on industry and manufacturing. Alfred Escher, a young Zurich politician, was interested in building a railroad to service the northeast part of Switzerland. His talks with foreign banks for financing were unsuccessful, so he decided to set up an independent bank in Zurich. He offered shares valued at 3 million Swiss francs to investors. Within three

days, he had received offers for 218 million shares. Credit Suisse opened for business on July 16, 1856, and quickly earned a reputation for financing business ventures in Switzerland.

The bank's first years were profitable as industry grew in Switzerland. The American Civil War caused some hardship, since the emerging textile industry in Switzerland depended on cotton imported from the southern United States. The sudden flood of cotton at the end of the war led to the collapse of the cotton market, and as a result Credit Suisse posted its first, and only, loss in 1867. The growth of other industries and the continuing expansion of railroads soon made up for the setback. Credit Suisse contributed to the development of the Swiss monetary system. By the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, Credit Suisse was the largest bank in Switzerland.

Credit Suisse was aided in its growth by the revision of Switzerland's federal constitution in 1874. Proportional representation in state and federal governments supported more stability in the country. Savings increased markedly, enabling Switzerland to become an exporter of capital by the mid-1880s. The continuing industrialization of Switzerland and Europe during the years before World War I led to greater demands for credit. Credit Suisse provided money to pay for the construction of factories, power plants, and phone systems. The founding of the Swiss National Bank in 1907 and the growth in foreign investments by Swiss banks laid the foundation for Switzerland to eventually become the banking capital of the world. By the beginning of World War I in 1914, Credit Suisse had 13 different branches throughout Switzerland.

During the war, foreign investment halted. Credit Suisse helped place Swiss securities returned by foreign investors onto the Swiss market. The company also defended the interests of Swiss investors abroad. Following the war, Credit Suisse played a leading role in the electrification of the country. When a coal shortage occurred, the bank financed the conversion of Swiss railroads to electric power. Foreign investment increased rapidly during the 1920s and came to an end with the Great Depression. The depression caused increased national barriers to investment. As a result, Credit Suisse concentrated on investment with English-speaking countries. By 1939 the bank had established the Swiss-American Corporation to concentrate on the securities business. In 1940 Credit Suisse opened its first foreign branch in New York City.

During World War II, Credit Suisse extended large amounts of credit to the Swiss government, which was in turn

owed 1.7 billion Swiss francs by the Germans. Along with other Swiss banks, Credit Suisse had financial dealings with the Nazis that were later criticized. Credit Suisse also was later revealed to have held millions in deposits by Jews who were killed in the Holocaust. When Jewish groups pushed for Credit Suisse to open its records to possible heirs, the bank resisted, citing traditional Swiss banking secrecy. Lists of people who had opened accounts before 1945 and which were inactive were eventually made public in the 1990s. In 1997 Credit Suisse and other major banks set up a \$70 million humanitarian fund for victims of the Holocaust.

After the end of World War II, Credit Suisse helped to finance the reconstruction of Europe. It also extended its services, including issuing credit cards and providing consumer credit. By the 1960s Credit Suisse had established a partnership with White Weld, a leading American investment bank, to sell Eurobonds to the American market. In 1968, with the creation of a free gold market, Credit Suisse became a major gold trading house. The bank's growth continued in the 1970s, although a fraudulent scheme at the Chiasso branch caused a scandal in 1977 and eventually cost \$1.2 billion.

During the 1980s Credit Suisse eventually expanded to control assets of \$46 billion and manage \$75 billion to \$150 billion. Additional banks were acquired worldwide during that time as well. By 1987 the leading officer of Credit Suisse was Hans-Jeorg Rudloff, an American-trained banker who brought a nontraditional aggressiveness to Credit Suisse. Rudloff helped end the close relationship between Credit Suisse and Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation. The three largest banks in Switzerland had been known as a syndicate, and they worked closely with each other to promote deals. Under Rudloff, Credit Suisse went its own way and often expanded into areas traditionally shunned by the others, including insurance and other financial services. By the end of the 20th century Credit Suisse was one of the most important financial institutions in the world.

TIM WATTS

See also: Switzerland

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Crimes against Humanity

A legal category within international law, “crimes against humanity” identify punishable offenses for gross violations of human rights, atrocities, and mass murder of noncombatant civilians. Such offenses are a relatively new category, largely the product of international human rights legislation enacted during the 20th century.

Certain crimes—war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide—are considered *hostis humani generis* (“an enemy of all mankind”). In that regard, they are considered crimes of “universal jurisdiction,” a principle in international law whereby states claim criminal jurisdiction over persons whose alleged crimes were committed outside the boundaries of the prosecuting state, regardless of nationality, country of residence, or any other relationship to the prosecuting state. The notion of universal jurisdiction thus means that any state should have the obligation to try a perpetrator of such crimes. The concept is closely linked to the idea that certain international norms are *erga omnes*, obligations owed by all states toward the community as a whole. Not all states have enacted the principle of universal jurisdiction, as it is viewed in some quarters as compromising the codes pertaining to state sovereignty.

Often, crimes against humanity are bracketed alongside of war crimes, though they differ from these in that they are not, for the most part, violations of the laws of war; indeed, crimes against humanity need not occur in wartime at all. A lengthy list of acts that can be considered as crimes against humanity include, but are not confined to, the following: murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape, and persecutions on political, racial, and religious grounds. Other inhumane acts not listed there can also be included, rendering crimes against humanity as an evolutionary category over which international (or, less likely, national) courts have some degree of discretion. There is no generally accepted definition of crimes against humanity, and, to date, no universal international legislation covering such crimes exists.

Despite this, several groundbreaking initiatives have placed the category of crimes against humanity in the forefront of major international humanitarian issues requiring attention. Important case-law precedents were created through the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1946, when the category of crimes against humanity was actually listed as one of the four counts facing the accused Nazi leaders in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Since then, the category has been included in the Articles establishing

the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (ICTY and ICTR, respectively). On July 1, 2002, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established at The Hague, and it incorporated a lengthy list of acts which were to be included as crimes against humanity. The category is, generally speaking, a useful one for covering acts which are not considered as genocide according to the UN Genocide Convention 1948. Given that there is no universally recognized or binding definition of crimes against humanity, and that the term is therefore legally imprecise, heinous acts that cannot be prosecuted as genocide can be prosecuted as crimes against humanity. But the two categories are not interchangeable, and genocide is now usually considered to be a crime of greater magnitude. While genocide is a single crime, crimes against humanity is a category embracing a number of different, though often related, crimes.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Ferencz, Benjamin; Flick Case; Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial; Gebhardt, Karl; I.G. Farben Case; Judges' Trial; Krupp Case; London Charter Agreement; Majdanek; Moscow Declaration; Nuremberg Principles; Nuremberg Trials; Papon, Maurice; Sauckel, Fritz; Schlegelberger, Franz; Speer, Albert; Touvier Case; UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; War Crimes; Zuehlke Trial

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Croatia

Croatia is a Slavic country located in the mountainous Balkans region of southeastern Europe. During the 1930s many Croats had become highly nationalistic and joined separatist movements, the most extreme of which was the Ustashe (singular, Ustasha), which was strongly fascist in ideology.

Upon the outbreak of World War II in 1939 Croatia was part of western Yugoslavia, a polyglot political entity created after the end of World War I. Croatia had a population of approximately 3.78 million, of whom perhaps 40,000 were Jewish. It also had sizable minority populations of Serbian Muslims and Eastern Orthodox Serbs. Most Croatians, who

had sided with the Central Powers during World War I, were Roman Catholic, and unlike the Serbs, they employed the Roman rather than the Cyrillic alphabet. During the interwar years, the Croats sought an independent Croatia; to achieve this, nationalist leaders formed the Ustashe, a right-wing paramilitary political party that was pro-Italian and pro-German in outlook. Before World War II began, Italy had provided material and military aid to the Ustashe group.

When Yugoslavia decided to join the Axis alliance in March 1941, most Croats applauded the move. In early April, when Italian and German troops entered Croatia, they were welcomed by a majority of Croats. After Croatian soldiers serving in the Yugoslav Army defected, Ustashe leaders established the independent state of Croatia on April 10, 1941; the new nation also incorporated Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ustashe leader Ante Pavelić now became president of the upstart country.

This puppet state, the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna drzava Hrvatska*—NDH), was created by Croat fascists under Italian fascist and Nazi supervision. The NDH governed most of modern Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and parts of Serbia. Its leaders implemented a policy of ethnic cleansing. The Ustashe forced thousands of Serbs to convert from Orthodoxy to Catholicism. Orthodox Serbs and Jews had to wear armbands in public identifying their religion before most were deported to death camps. The Catholic Church was complicit in this murderous scheme, and the Croatian archbishops did nothing to prevent the mass murder of Jews and Serbs. Many Jews, Serbs, and Roma were sent to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, but a sizable number were deported to death camps within Croatia. Six were set up along the banks of the Sava River, about 60 miles south of Zagreb. The worst was Jasenovac, where over 100,000 civilians were murdered. Other camps were Zemun, Sajmiste, Donja Gradina, a women's camp at Stara Gradiska, and a children's camp at Sisak. Sajmiste was run by the Nazis as an extermination camp for Serbian Jews. It is estimated that between 4,000 and 8,000 were killed there. Others were also killed there as well, including Roma and Serbian opponents of the Nazis and the Ustashe.

Toward the end of the war, as Yugoslav partisans under Josip Broz Tito battled Axis forces in the region, many Ustashe officials fled Croatia and sought refuge in Austria. In May 1945 the remnants of the Ustashe army surrendered to Allied Forces. By the end of the year, partisans had rounded up and summarily executed as many as 250,000 Croats who had fought for or supported the Ustashe and/or Axis powers.

Pavelić, meanwhile, managed to escape justice and died in exile in Spain. At least 32,000 Croatian Jews were killed between 1941 and 1945, along with 26,000 Roma and 350,000–400,000 Serbs. Croatia was reintegrated into a greater Yugoslavia and remained a part of that union until the end of the Cold War in 1991.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Catholic Church; Jasenovac; Pavelić, Ante; Serbia; Ustashe; Yugoslavia

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Csatory, Lazlo

Lazlo Csatory was a suspected Hungarian war criminal who is thought to have played a role in the Holocaust during World War II.

He was born on March 4, 1915, in the village of Many in central Hungary (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). He went into police work, and after the Germans occupied Hungary in early 1944 he became an assistant to the collaborationist police commandant of Kassa, Hungary (now Kosice, Slovakia). It was there that Csatory allegedly committed wholesale war crimes against Hungarian Jews. Among other things, he was accused of having physically brutalized Jews in detention, beating them with his hands and a dog whip. Csatory was also suspected of having helped deport to death camps as many as 15,000 Jews. Most were sent to Auschwitz, where virtually all of them perished.

In 1948, based on the testimony of witnesses and survivors, the Czech government convicted Csatory of war crimes *in absentia* and sentenced him to death (by then, Csatory was living in Hungary). The following year he sought asylum in Canada, expressing his desire to remove himself from the yoke of Hungarian communism. Csatory became a Canadian citizen in 1955 and eventually settled down in Montreal, where he became an art dealer. He thereafter led a quiet and obscure life until 1997, when allegations of his past activities during the war came to the attention of the Canadian government. Csatory vehemently denied the accusations, claiming that he had been stationed elsewhere in 1944–1945. Nevertheless, the Canadian government began deportation

proceedings, and Csatory fled the country by year's end, eventually making a home in Budapest.

By 2012 the Simon Wiesenthal Center had managed to track Csatory down and revealed evidence against him to the Hungarian government. On June 18 of that year, Hungarian authorities questioned Csatory and indicted him for war crimes. On June 20, the Slovaks notified Hungarian officials that they wished to try Csatory in Slovakia, and Hungary suspended its case on July 8, citing Csatory's indictment and conviction *in absentia* in 1948. Csatory remained in Budapest and died there on August 10, 2013, before proceedings against him could begin.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Hungary; Slovakia; War Crimes

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Czechoslovakia

Created from the ashes of World War I in 1918, in 1938 Czechoslovakia, situated in central Europe, was a nation with a population of some 15 million people. It had been carved out of portions of Bohemia and Moravia (historically part of Austria) as well as Hungary (Slovakia) and Ruthenia. This meant that Czechoslovakia was a polyglot nation of multiple ethnicities, including 7 million Czechs, 3 million Germans, 2.5 million Slovaks, and 1 million Hungarians. In addition, there were about a half million Ukrainians living in Ruthenia and also a number of Poles. Jews represented approximately 1.3% of the total population.

Despite this complex mixture of ethnicities, cultures, and religions, Czechoslovakia remained relatively stable politically during the interwar years, with a functioning democratic parliamentary system. Indeed, it was central Europe's only true democracy, and the nation enjoyed the highest standard of living in the region. It also boasted a well-equipped 400,000-man army.

Since the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, Adolf Hitler had set his sights on seizing the German-speaking area of Czechoslovakia, known as the Sudetenland. The Western democracies capitulated to Hitler's demand that Germany annex the Sudetenland at the September 1938 Munich Conference, where Hitler pledged not to seek any additional

territory or wage war in the future. This precipitated a full-blown political crisis in Czechoslovakia, which resulted in the exodus of Czech democrats and the installation of a right-wing rump regime known as Czecho-Slovakia. Soon, Hungary and Poland took advantage of the situation and also annexed Czech territory.

On March 15, 1939, Hitler completely abrogated his earlier pledges, and German forces swept into what remained of the country and established a puppet regime. Bohemia and Moravia were now made into a German “protectorate” governed by Konstantin von Neurath (and, later, Reinhard Heydrich, Kurt Daluge, and William Frick). Slovak territory was governed by the Slovak People’s Party, under the leadership of Monsignor Jozef Tiso, a Roman Catholic priest. A puppet German state, Slovakia was nominally independent but quickly established a one-party dictatorship along the lines of Germany and Italy. Tiso remained in control until April 1945, when Allied troops liberated Slovakia. By May of that year, much of the rest of Czechoslovakia was liberated, with Prague falling on May 9.

Czechoslovakia was the scene of two notorious massacres perpetrated by German forces in the aftermath of Reinhard Heydrich’s assassination on March 27, 1942, when British-supported Czechoslovak commandos ambushed and killed him. In Lidice, on June 9–10, 1942, German troops murdered 198 civilian men and 76 women in reprisal for the Heydrich attack. In addition, 184 women and 98 children were taken to concentration camps; most of the children were gassed to death. Days later, all of the adults in the village of Lezaky were killed; meanwhile, in October 1942, relatives and friends of those killed at Lidice were rounded up and killed at the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp. Between 1938 and 1945 at least 275,000 Jews living in Czechoslovakia were killed. Many were deported by the Germans and sent to concentration and death camps, while others died at the hands of right-wing fascists in Slovakia.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Herz-Sommer, Alice; Joint Distribution Committee; Kalina, Antonin; Lebensraum; Munich Agreement; Shirer, William L.; Slavs; Slovakia; Tiso, Jozef; Winton, Nicholas

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Czerniakow, Adam

Born on November 30, 1880, Adam Czerniakow showed no indication as a young man that he would one day be the head of the *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) of the Warsaw Ghetto, established by the Nazis in late 1939. Czerniakow received degrees in Warsaw and Dresden, Germany, in engineering. He entered public life in 1927 as a member of the Warsaw Municipal Council, where he continued to serve until 1934. He was elected to the Polish Senate in 1930, but for technical reasons he was unable to take his Senate seat.

It was from his position as a member of the executive committee of the Jewish community that he came to the attention of the Nazis. In 1939, shortly after Germany’s successful invasion of Poland, Czerniakow was ordered to establish a 24-member *Judenrat* and to take the role of chairman.

Czerniakow’s appointment to be the head of the Jewish Council was not accepted positively by all members of the leadership of Warsaw’s Jewish community. Czerniakow spoke poor Yiddish, the language of the vast majority of Jews in Poland. He was considered to be an “assimilationist,” and he did not seem to be able to engage effectively with the masses of Jews confined in the ghetto. Perhaps it is for this reason that he was unable to assert the level of control in the Warsaw Ghetto that his peers did in the Łódź and Vilna ghettos.

Like leaders in all of the *Judenräte* (plural of *Judenrat*) established in Nazi ghettos, Czerniakow and his fellow members of the Warsaw Jewish Council were tasked with two distinct areas of responsibility. The first was the administration of the ghetto, including organization of food distribution, creation of hospitals and an entire network of medical care, establishment of schools, development of a system to deal with sanitation and housing concerns, along with building a Jewish police force to maintain order in an environment that held 400,000 Jews in a space less than one and a half square miles.

The second was the facilitation of the Nazis’ orders, including the responsibility of providing the number of Jews ordered by the Nazis to be assembled for deportation “East,” meaning to their death in extermination camps. In the case of the Warsaw Ghetto, Treblinka was the extermination camp to which hundreds of thousands of Jews would be sent.

It was this role—having to issue lists of Jews to be sent to their death—that was the most difficult for the members of the Warsaw Ghetto *Judenrat*, and especially for Czerniakow. On July 22, 1942, when Czerniakow was told to round up 6,000 Jews to be transported the next morning, and 6,000

each morning thereafter (referred to as the Gross-Aktion Warsaw), Czerniakow made impassioned efforts to get the Nazis to agree to exemptions to the deportation orders. While he was successful in some respects—certain sanitation workers, or husbands of women working in factories, for example—he was unable to obtain an exemption for Jewish orphans.

On the next day, July 23, Czerniakow committed suicide. He was unable to bring himself to participate in the awful job of choosing every day who would die and who would live until the next day. Some look at Czerniakow's act as one of great courage and moral commitment to the fundamental commandment of not taking another's life, directly or otherwise, while others see it as an act of cowardice, leaving to someone else to do what he himself could not.

Czerniakow kept a diary from September 6, 1939, to the day of his death on July 23, 1942. That diary represents a chilling window into the day-to-day world of the Warsaw Ghetto and the responsibilities of its Judenrat. The diary has been published and serves to this day as one of the most important diaries to survive the Holocaust. The original is housed at Yad Vashem.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Judenrat; *Uprising*; Warsaw Ghetto; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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D

Dachau

In Dachau, a pleasant suburb outside Munich, Germany, the first Nazi concentration camp was built in 1933, just two months after Adolf Hitler and the Nazis took power. Dachau was used as a training camp for SS camp personnel, instilling in them the attitude that prisoners were *Untermenschen*, or subhumans, and creating a climate of fear through intimidation and violence.

During its 12 years of existence, Dachau was a camp for political prisoners, and its population was largely made up of dissidents and members of groups considered inferior. The former included Socialists, Christian leaders, and some Jehovah's Witnesses; the latter was largely made up of Roma, Jews, homosexuals, criminals, and Polish intellectuals. Dachau was an important camp for religious dissidents. More than 3,000 clergy, mostly Catholic, were imprisoned there, including bishops and one cardinal. The Vatican has since beatified six of these priests as martyrs, while the Orthodox Church recognizes a Serbian bishop as a saint.

Dachau was not an extermination camp, so German Jewish prisoners were often shipped to the death camps in Poland. However, Hungarian and other Jews were brought to Dachau in 1944 to work as slave laborers in munitions factories. By the time of the liberation in April 1945, about 30% of the camp population was Jewish. The "politicals" were made up of prominent leaders from every country invaded by the Nazis. In all camps, the prisoners formed an internal government, but at Dachau the prisoners' experience in leadership

made it possible to control the criminal element that preyed upon the weak in many other camps.

Among the 206,206 prisoners registered at Dachau during its existence, 31,591 deaths were recorded, though the number is certainly higher. This figure does not include the mass executions of Soviet and French prisoners of war, who were dispatched by firing squads shortly after arrival. It also does not include invalids shipped away and executed elsewhere. Most of the Dachau prisoners were used as slave labor, with upward of 37,000 working in armament factories in 36 subsidiary camps. Both work and living conditions were harsh, with insufficient food, regular beatings, and unsanitary crowding. Each barracks housed some 1,500 people in unheated wooden buildings built for 200. By the end in 1945 typhus was rampant in the camp, and the Red Cross tried to keep the prisoners from being freed before the American army arrived for fear of spreading the disease through the countryside.

Many prisoners suffered from medical experiments performed on the living. Some were kept in freezing water to see how long they could survive and still be revived. More than a thousand were infected with malaria, including numbers of Polish priests, and some with tuberculosis. Experiments with pressurization left victims permanently deaf and disfigured.

The camp, with more than 30,000 prisoners (almost 10,000 had been marched off three days earlier), was liberated by the American Seventh Army. Some American soldiers were so traumatized by what they saw that a number of Nazi guards were shot even after they had surrendered. The



Dachau was the first Nazi concentration camp, established in March 1933. It was intended initially that the camp would house political prisoners. Over time, the camp developed into a complex for imprisoning Jews, German and Austrian criminals, and foreign resisters from German-occupied countries. The complex expanded to include nearly 100 subcamps located throughout southern Germany and Austria. Dachau was liberated by U.S. forces on April 29, 1945. At least 32,000 people died at Dachau during its 12 years in operation. This image shows mounds of clothes belonging to dead slave laborers found at Dachau when the U.S. Seventh Army liberated the camp in April 1945. (National Archives)

troops were never prosecuted. The shocked and infuriated American commanding officer ordered the citizens of Dachau to march through the camp to see its devastation so that they could never deny the evil that had existed among them. Forty camp staff members were tried for war crimes, and 36 were sentenced to death.

Dachau is probably the most visited of the Nazi concentration camps. One barracks has been reconstructed to show the living conditions, and an introductory film and display convey the horror of the place. The gas chamber (never used), the gallows, and the crematorium have been maintained. Where the ashes of the dead were thrown is now a park marked with a Star of David and a cross. Three memorials—a Protestant chapel, the Catholic Christ in

Agony church, and a Jewish memorial—honor the dead. In the field used for roll call each day is a sculptured memorial to the dead. Behind the camp is a Carmelite convent of nuns who offer prayers for reparation.

A Russian Orthodox chapel commemorates the celebration of the Orthodox Easter that took place a week after the camp fell to the Americans. Using makeshift vestments pinned together from Nazi towels, the Russian, Greek, and Serb prisoners chanted the entire liturgy from memory, including the traditional commentary of Saint John Chrysostom, recited by a monk from Mount Athos. The main feature of the chapel is an icon of Christ leading the prisoners out of the camp gates.

NORBERT C. BROCKMAN

See also: Bettelheim, Bruno; Concentration Camps; Eicke, Theodor; Heydrich, Reinhard; J.A. Topf and Sons; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Medical Experimentation; Münch, Hans; Priest Block, Dachau; Wilde-KZ

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Dahlem Declaration

The Dahlem Declaration was the statement issued by the Second Confessing Synod of the German Protestant Church in Berlin-Dahlem, on October 20, 1934. Issued just five months after the founding document of the Confessing Church at its first synod—the Barmen Declaration—it represented a controversial change in the direction of the Confessing Church.

Although Adolf Hitler spoke of preserving and protecting Christianity, especially from the threat of so-called “godless communism,” he in fact sought to coordinate it with Nazi ideology as part of the broader Nazi program of *Gleichschaltung*, bringing all aspects of German society into conformity with the Nazi vision. This effort at coordination was a step toward Hitler’s true intent, namely, the elimination of Christianity altogether.

Being sensitive to public opinion and mindful of how deeply religious Germany was, Hitler initially sought to mollify any concerns the churches might have with the Nazi Reich. To this end, he entered into an agreement (Concordat) with the Vatican in 1933 promising that the Catholic Church could continue its worship, education, and social programs without interference by the government, in return for which the Catholic Church would withdraw from all aspects of the German political scene. Though this agreement was honored by the government more in the breach than in fact, it nonetheless defined a relationship between the Catholic Church and the Reich.

The relationship the government sought to establish with the Protestant Church—representing two-thirds of the population—was quite different. When the government established the German Christian movement (*Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen*) and made efforts to unify all of Germany’s

Protestant churches in a national German Protestant Church (*Deutsche Evangelische Kirche*, or Reich Church), some pastors rejected the goal of the Reich Church to create an “Aryanized” form of Christianity. The Confessing Church was formed to protest the changes sought by the Reich Church.

In May 1934 the Confessing Church, at its first synod, released its founding document, the Barmen Declaration, which declared the gospel of Jesus Christ as the sole authority, and focused its protest on the efforts made by the German Christian movement to intervene in church theology and in so doing usurp the traditional authority of the church to determine who is to be considered a Christian. Although some pastors in the Confessing Church saw this protest as not going far enough, it nonetheless garnered great support at the synod, creating the first step toward unification of the Confessing Church’s message.

Five months later, in October 1934, the Confessing Church met for its second synod in Barmen in the church of Martin Niemöller, one of the leaders of the Confessing Church movement. The synod acted under the precept of Church Emergency Law (*Kirchliche Notrecht*). There, at Dahlem, ruptures within the movement that had been subsumed in efforts at unity at Barmen became all too clear. In fact, two sides emerged regarding the future direction of the Confessing Church. One sought to continue in the spirit of Barmen, that is, asserting the church’s supremacy in theological matters but not otherwise protesting or opposing other aspects of Nazi rule. The other side saw Barmen as only the beginning of a position that had to go further: to protest more strongly the fundamental errors of the German Christian Church and to declare that the Confessing Church—not the Nazi-established and supported German Christian Church—was the one true church of Protestant Christianity in Germany.

The Dahlem synod’s call for complete separation of the Confessing Church from the Reich Church and its directive that “the Christian communities, their pastors and elders” should “accept no directives from the Church Government” was a step that many pastors who had supported the Barmen Declaration could not bring themselves to support. Those pastors saw in the Confessing Church’s proclamation (that it was the only legitimate Protestant Church) a challenge not only to the Reich Church but also indirectly to the legitimacy of the government that established it.

The Dahlem Declaration announced a position that was incompatible with the German Christian movement and its Reich Church. It also created a schism in the Confessing

Church. It was supported by a minority of the Confessing Church pastors, which, in turn, was a minority of the Protestant Church pastors in Germany. It created a very difficult question to be answered by each Confessing Church pastor and church: How and to what extent would it support the Confessing Church and oppose the Reich Church? Would the pastor and his church take a moderate position—one that stood more with the limited protests of the Barmen Declaration—or would they take a radical position (whose adherents were called Dahlemites)—one that sought to extend their opposition to the Reich Church and perhaps thereby find themselves in a position of opposition to the state, a position that in those times was seen as being an enemy of the state?

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Barmen Declaration; Protestant Churches, German

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Damaskinos of Athens, Archbishop

Dimitrios Papandreou, as Father Theophilos Damaskinos, was archbishop of Athens during World War II. Born in Dorvisti, Greece, in 1890, Damaskinos was educated as a lawyer at the University of Athens, and upon graduating he enlisted in the Greek army and served during the Balkan Wars as a private. After this he was ordained as a priest of the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Greek Holy Synod soon thereafter appointed him abbot of the Penteli Monastery in Athens. In 1938 he was elected archbishop of Athens, but due to the opposition of Premier Ioannis (John) Metaxas, his appointment was voided, with Bishop Chrysanthus appointed instead. After the Germans invaded Greece in April 1941 the city of Athens was handed over to the Italians, and Damaskinos was reappointed as archbishop.

On March 23, 1943, when the Nazi deportation of the Greek Jews began, Damaskinos sent an appeal to Prime Minister Constantinos Logothetopoulos to put a halt to the deportations. As these were continually denied, however, Damaskinos was forced to take a different approach and appeal to the Germans directly. Therefore, the next day, March 24, 1943, he published a letter composed by the

famous Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos and signed by 29 prominent Greek citizens. He also sent a petition to Günther Altenburg, Reich plenipotentiary for Greece.

The letter protested the treatment of Greek Jews, stating that it was contrary to the Nazis' own rules given that all Greek citizens, without distinction of race or religion, were to be treated equally. Damaskinos appealed to the Germans by explaining the history of the Jews in Greece, praising their citizenship and the integral role they had played in the country's economic and military development. Damaskinos wanted to emphasize the unity between the Jews and the Orthodox Christians, seeing the Jews just as much his people as were the Orthodox Greeks. On this basis, he refused to allow them to be deported without taking a stand.

The letter enraged the German military commandant in Athens, SS General Jürgen Stroop, who threatened Damaskinos with death by firing squad if he persisted with his criticisms. In response, Damaskinos voiced his opposition that "according to the traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church, our prelates are hung and not shot. Please respect our traditions!" His boldness might also have led the way for other resisters to stand up to the Nazi regime. It can even be conjectured that by showing this level of communal leadership, Damaskinos helped initiate a Greek movement to resist the German occupation.

In order to help save as many Jews as he could, Damaskinos also convinced Angelos Evert, the Athens police chief, to resist. Evert, who was later named one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem, ordered that thousands of new identity cards, bearing Christian names and specifying the holder as a Christian, be issued to Jews. Evert later testified that he drew his inspiration from Damaskinos.

As the Nazi measures against the Jews intensified, Grand Rabbi Elias Barzilai was ordered to compile a list naming all the Jews residing in Greece. He sought help from Damaskinos regarding how to proceed, and so, following the archbishop's advice, he destroyed important documents pertaining to the Jewish community and encouraged all Jews to flee Athens.

Damaskinos stalled the Nazis in order to give Jews time to flee the city and find refuge in the countryside. He urged religious leaders and citizens across Greece to aid Jews by providing them with shelter and protection, and he ordered convents and monasteries in Athens to hide Jews within their walls. With his help, more than 250 Jewish children were protected by the Orthodox clergy. Damaskinos also

aided Jews through the provision of falsified government documents, and instructed priests to spread the word to their congregations that Greek Jews needed to be helped by other Greeks if they were to survive.

At the end of the war, due to the work and dedication of Archbishop Damaskinos, the remaining Jews in Athens were left to rebuild their community. In the political vacuum that followed the removal of German and Italian control in 1944, fighting broke out between pro-royalist Greek soldiers and communist partisans; in order to bring some semblance of order to the country Damaskinos appointed himself prime minister, and he was then proclaimed regent until the return of King George II from exile. After the monarchy was restored in September 1946, Damaskinos resigned as regent and commenced a quieter lifestyle, focusing less on politics and more on his clerical duties until his death in Athens in 1949. For his role in aiding Jews to escape Nazi rule in Greece, Archbishop Theophilos Damaskinos was recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem on May 27, 1969.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Greece; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Dannecker, Theodor

Theodor Dannecker was an SS officer who helped organize the deportation of Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe. As the head of the *Judenreferat* (“Jewish Desk”) at the SD post in Paris, Dannecker ordered and oversaw the raid and arrests of Jews by French police during the Vel’ d’Hiv roundup that resulted in the deportations of more than 13,000 Jews to Auschwitz, where the majority of them perished.

Dannecker was born in Tübingen, Germany, on March 27, 1913. He was trained as a lawyer and worked in Munich before joining the Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) in 1932. He became a permanent member of the party in 1934 and joined the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*) headquarters in Berlin three years later. In 1937 Dannecker joined the staff of SS-Obersturmbannführer (lieutenant colonel) Adolf Eichmann, who ran the Jewish Affairs Department of

the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA). Dannecker was put in charge of the subdepartment for assimilated Jews. In 1938 he participated in the creation of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna. Following the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, Dannecker was sent to set up the Lublin Reservation, a concentration camp complex located near the borders of Lublin and Nisko, developed by the SS and designed to resettle the Jews of Europe. In the spring of 1940 he was sent to Prague to create a system for Jewish emigration similar to the one he established in Vienna.

In September 1940 Eichmann selected Dannecker as his director and representative adviser of the Jewish Affairs Department in Paris, due to his experience with assimilated Jews. Dannecker headed the Jewish Bureau, under the control of Military Command. As one of Eichmann’s personal acquaintances, he remained the most experienced member of the group and held the largest amount of responsibility for the fate of the Jews in France. Dannecker remained in close contact with Eichmann, though he was placed under the authority of Helmut Knochen, a senior commander of the security police and SD in Paris. Knochen was in charge of rounding up French Jews and deporting them to concentration camps. Dannecker, however, claimed credit for being the first to propose continuous Jewish deportations from France to the east.

Between 1940 and 1942 Dannecker had the task of arranging for Jews in France to be deported to Auschwitz and other concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Among other things, this allowed him to oversee the names of the French Jews who were arrested in May and August 1941. He formulated the regulations for the deportations of native-born French Jews and Jewish immigrants, referred to as stateless Jews. Dannecker held extreme antisemitic beliefs and actively encouraged the Vichy authorities to increase their deportations of Jews to the east. He continuously placed pressure on the Vichy authorities to take more antisemitic measures. Xavier Vallat, the coordinator of Jewish Affairs in Vichy, created the Union of French Jews in late 1941 on Dannecker’s initiative. Vallat’s responsibilities included instituting and carrying out France’s anti-Jewish legislation. However, the two men clashed over Dannecker’s extreme antisemitism and Vallat’s unwillingness to be subservient to the Nazis.

On July 10, 1942, Dannecker telexed Eichmann regarding the raid and roundup of French Jews to be held at the Vélodrome d’Hiver stadium in Paris, prior to their deportation to Drancy (and, eventually, Auschwitz). Dannecker

stated that the raid would be conducted by the French police from July 16 to 18 and include approximately 4,000 children in the arrests. The French police agreed to collaborate and organize the roundup and placed themselves at the disposal of the Germans during the *Aktion*. Indeed, it transpired that it was the French police, not the Germans, who undertook the whole operation. Jean Leguay, of the national police in Vichy, and René Bousquet, the Vichy police secretary general, agreed to negotiate with Dannecker.

Dannecker's continuous confrontation with Helmut Knochen and Xavier Vallat with regard to his extreme views on Jewish deportations, together with his unwillingness to collaborate with Vichy authorities, was becoming a problem for the management of the "Final Solution" in France. In early August 1942, following the roundup of Jews in Paris, Dannecker was recalled to Berlin for abusing his power. SS-Obersturmführer Heinz Röthke took over the Paris branch of Jewish Affairs from Dannecker.

In 1943 Eichmann transferred Dannecker to Sofia, Bulgaria, in order for him to continue to supervise the deportation of Jews of Europe and implement the "Final Solution" there. Dannecker was the highest German official in charge of the "Final Solution" in all of the Bulgarian territories, with the rank of SS-Hauptsturmführer (captain). While there, he arranged for the deportation of 11,000 Jews from Macedonia and Thrace to the death camp at Treblinka.

In October 1944 Eichmann transferred Dannecker to Italy as commissioner for Jewish affairs, where he organized the rounding up of Jews in Italy and Hungary. He was responsible for the transport of 1,259 Jews from Rome to Auschwitz, and remained one of "Eichmann's men" until the end of the war. With the conclusion of the war, Dannecker was arrested by Allied troops. While he was in an American prison camp located in Bad Tölz, Germany, he committed suicide on December 10, 1945.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Bousquet, René; Bulgaria; Eichmann, Adolf; Operation Spring Wind; Vel' d'Hiv Roundup

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Dawidowicz, Lucy S.

Lucy S. Dawidowicz was a historian of the Holocaust and the originator of the notion that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis waged a war against the Jewish people that was concurrent with the military war against the Allies. Born in 1915 to secular Jewish parents in New York, she received her BA from Hunter College in 1936 but never completed her MA at Columbia University.

Concerned about the fate of the Jews in Europe, she developed an academic interest in Jewish history, and in 1938 she went to Vilna (Vilnius) in Lithuania. This visit would later result in her first important book, *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe* (1967), a documentary collection with a lengthy introductory essay written by her as a tribute to the world extinguished by Nazi brutality. From 1940 until 1946 she worked in the New York offices of YIVO, and in 1946 she traveled to Germany where she worked as a refugee aid worker with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, later marrying a Polish Holocaust survivor, Szymon Dawidowicz. Between 1948 and 1960 she worked as a researcher for the American Jewish Committee (AJC), later becoming its director of research. In 1969 she left the AJC to teach Holocaust studies at Yeshiva University, where she remained until her retirement.

Her most important work was *The War against the Jews, 1933–1945* (1975), which was later supplemented by a collection of documents titled *A Holocaust Reader* (1976). In the introductory essay to the book she raised four questions that framed the entire book: How could the Holocaust have happened? How was it possible for a modern state to carry out the systematic murder of a whole people for no reason other than that they were Jews? How was it possible for a whole people to allow itself to be destroyed? And how was it possible for the world to stand by without halting the destruction? Her answer was that the annihilation of the Jews was the centerpiece of the overall Nazi agenda, and for Dawidowicz, as for the Jewish people, the Holocaust was something that would henceforth remain at the very heart of existence.

What set *The War against the Jews* apart from other histories of the Holocaust were her two appendices: (A) "The Fate of the Jews in Hitler's Europe," and (B) "The Final Solution in Figures." Appendix A was an attempt to put on record the essential facts about the Jewish experience during the Nazi period as it played out in each European country. Her accounting in Appendix B put the total number of Jews killed at 5,933,900. In approximately 50 pages she thus cogently

summarized the key elements of her much larger text of more than 350 pages.

Dawidowicz's approach was careful and methodical, as she considered many of the social, political, and economic dimensions of German life before and during the Holocaust. The first part of the book detailed the origins and growth of the phenomenon of Nazi antisemitism, and how the Nazi campaign to destroy the Jews of Europe drew inspiration from deep wells of centuries-old Jew-hatred. The second part of the book, titled "The Holocaust," described how the plight of the Jews—already made untenable owing to confinement in barbaric conditions in Nazi-imposed ghettos—worsened with the acceleration of the war crisis from mid-1941 onward, and how antisemitic violence intensified the longer the war lasted. She described how the nature of existence for those living in camps and ghettos was intended to wear them down, until a vast number succumbed through general hardship, mistreatment, disease, starvation, and exposure. The most telling element of the work, however, related to her argument that the Nazis waged a war against the Jews that was no less real than that against the Allies, only employing different means.

In 1981 she began examining the issue of the centrality of the Holocaust from the perspective of other national groups and non-Jewish historians. The six essays comprising *The Holocaust and the Historians* (1981) looked at how the event has been treated by British, American, German, Russian, Polish, and, finally, Jewish historians. While recognizing that the "Jewish story" is not at the heart of other national narratives, and that those scholars who choose to address it would not necessarily share the same empathy and moral concern as Jewish historians might, her key question was why so many contemporary historians seem to have neglected the topic, rendering it either a subject of relative neglect (by historians in the English-speaking world), benign denial (in the case of the then-USSR and Poland), or exculpation (as part of a longer German historiographical tradition).

Dawidowicz recounted part of her life's journey in 1989 in *From That Place and Time: A Memoir, 1938–1947*, an elegant and powerful description of the vibrancy of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, the horrors of the war, and the relations she shared with both survivors and perpetrators afterward. It simultaneously presented the seminal moments in modern Jewish history and the formative moments in the life of its author.

The historical issues with which Lucy Dawidowicz concerned herself—painstakingly constructing the actual

record based upon the documentary evidence, letting the accuracy of the record serve as its own memorial and keeping the memory of the victims alive, refuting those on both the political right and left who she truly believed distorted that record for other purposes, contesting what she regarded as the baseless charges of complicity and passivity (potentially to be misinterpreted as "cowardice"), rejecting the idea of impersonal forces in place of human choice, Jewish concerns with antisemitism framed by the full awareness of the Holocaust—remain at the forefront of Holocaust history and historiography, not only within the academy but in the Jewish community as well. In so doing, they mark her as a strong and feisty advocate not only of the Jewish people but of historical truth as well.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: "Intentionalists"

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Death Camps

Death camps, sometimes referred to as extermination camps, were killing factories established by the Germans in order to carry out the so-called Final Solution, or the eradication of European Jews. Although Jews were the principal victims of the death camps, the Nazis also used the facilities to engage in the mass murder of Roma, Soviet prisoners of war, and other groups deemed to be "subversive" or "undesirable." Historically, Holocaust scholars usually categorize six Nazi-run camps located in Poland as strictly death camps. They included: Chełmno (the first of the dedicated death camps, which began operations on December 8, 1941); Auschwitz-Birkenau; Belzec; Majdanek; Sobibór; and Treblinka. Hundreds of thousands of other Jews and those targeted for persecution died in various concentration and forced labor camps throughout Europe, but the main mission of those camps was not mass extermination as such. In the death camps, immediate extermination was the only reason for their existence.

By 1943 the death camps were engaged in a system of mass killing that resembled a finely tuned and managed factory. Some have termed the system an "assembly line of

death.” At places like Auschwitz, where the killing was on a truly frightening scale, as many as 1,000 people at a time could be killed in a single gas chamber using Zyklon-B gas, which led to a slow and agonizing death. Once the victims had been killed, *Sonderkommandos*, prisoners who worked for the camp administration, removed gold teeth or fillings from the corpses and took them to mass graves or crematoria for disposal. Most of the victims’ bodies were incinerated. At Auschwitz, the crematoria worked virtually 24 hours a day.

In the latter stages of World War II, the death camps were either decommissioned or relocated as Soviet troops advanced from east to west. In some cases, German officials ordered bodies in mass graves exhumed and incinerated so that Allied troops would not find them. They also attempted to disguise or cover up the activities that occurred at some of the camps. In the winter and spring of 1945, as Germany was close to collapse and Allied troops converged on Germany and Poland from both the east and west, the liberators found unmistakable evidence of the atrocities that had been perpetrated there. Among some of the most haunting photos of World War II were the pictures of victims’ corpses stacked like cordwood outside gas chambers and crematoria.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Belzec; Birkenau; Chełmno; Dehumanization; Final Solution; Frank, Hans; Franz, Kurt; Funktionshäftling; Generalgouvernement; Hitler, Adolf; J.A. Topf and Sons; Jewish Women and the Holocaust; Kapos; Lange, Herbert; Levi, Primo; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Lithuania; Majdanek; Müller, Heinrich; Music and the Holocaust; *Night and Fog*; Poland; Project Paperclip; Sobibór; Sonderkommando; SS-Totenkopfverbände; Trawniki Men; Treblinka; Wirth, Christian; Zyklon-B

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greater Germany. These forced mass retreats with camp prisoners ushered in the final phase of the Holocaust and became known as the “death marches.”

Despite Germany’s undeniable military defeat, Nazi ideology continued to be implemented. Death march guards subjected their prisoners to starvation, psychological torture, physical cruelty, and mass murder. Holocaust survivors have testified that on occasion the death marches surpassed the horror of the concentration camps.

While some concentration camp guards left debilitated prisoners alive in their barracks, other guards slaughtered every prisoner too weak to walk. Those who remained behind were locked in the camps without access to food or water. The chaotic evacuations allowed for inconsistent procedures. Some prisoners were rushed out of the camps and ordered not to take anything, yet other evacuees were able to grab a few items. Taking an extra piece of clothing, a crust of bread, or a small blanket could increase one’s chances of survival.

The majority of marches covered hundreds of miles and the guards had orders to deliver those in their charge to camps deep within Germany. During the marches, guards were often isolated from their superior officers, and they flaunted their sadism. Prisoners who moved too slowly or fell out of line were immediately shot. On some marches, prisoners were locked in barns and deceived into thinking they could rest until morning. But instead of permitting them sleep, guards would set the structure on fire and burn the occupants alive. Other prisoners perished from starvation, exhaustion, or disease.

One death march from the Stutthof camp complex on the Baltic Sea illustrates the gratuitous brutality exhibited by guards. Celina Manielewicz, a Polish Jew, was 23 years old when she was evacuated from Stutthof. After days without food, the column of several thousand Jews, mainly women, arrived near the coastal village of Palmnicken. The group was forced to the edge of a cliff, and machine-guns opened fire. Celina fell off the cliff into the icy sea and landed atop a pile of wounded and dead prisoners; she was one of only 13 people who survived the massacre. Even with Germany’s imminent surrender, guards chose to continue genocidal operations.

Although each death march varied in duration and destination, all prisoners experienced hunger, exhaustion, and constant threat of death. However, even during the extreme suffering, many Jews shared their remaining strength with those who were weaker. Acts of mutual assistance between prisoners have been reported by countless

Death Marches

By the summer of 1944 the Soviets were advancing through German-occupied territory in Eastern Europe, and the Americans and British were invading from the south and west. Fearing capture, guards in Nazi concentration camps ordered their prisoners onto marches and headed into



The term “death march” refers to the forcible movements of prisoners in Nazi Germany. They occurred at various points during the Holocaust, but are frequently associated with movements of prisoners between the fall of 1944 and late April 1945 as Nazi concentration camps in Eastern Europe were evacuated in the face of Soviet military advances. These death marches resulted in a horrific death toll as columns many miles long spread all over Europe, in atrocious conditions. The illustration here is of a memorial plaque placed in March 2010 at the site of a death march. (INTERFOTO/Alamy Stock Photo)

survivors. Words of encouragement, a morsel of bread, or a supportive arm were small kindnesses that could help another survive for one more day. The spiritual and material lifelines given to fellow marchers created friendships and family-like bonds, and they also demonstrated a profound resistance to the Nazi crusade to dehumanize their victims.

BETH E. LILACH

See also: Death Marches, Austrian; Pivnik, Sam; Stutthof; War Crimes

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Death Marches, Austrian

Beginning in the summer of 1944, Hungarian Jews were carried off by the Nazis to Austria as forced laborers. Many of them were assigned to the building of the so-called Reich Defense Line on the then German-Hungarian border (also called South East Rampart, or *Südostwall*). Those laborers, some of whom had already performed forced labor for the Hungarian army, were in very bad health. Hard work, little rest, and meager food rations had caused diseases, especially typhus, which became epidemic. By now, they had lost their “worth” as workers for the Nazis, so many of them were murdered. For example, in March 1945 in the little town of Rechnitz, Nazis killed 180 Jews. The next day, 18 Jews were forced to bury the bodies, after which they too were killed.

Many more crimes were committed when the front lines approached Austria in late March 1945. The work camps

were closed, and the Jews were moved to the concentration camp at Mauthausen. Prisoners who were deemed too weak to survive the trip were killed. That happened, for instance, in the camp of Engerau near Bratislava, where nearly one in four prisoners had already died or were murdered before the evacuation of the camp began.

Comparable crimes were committed in other places too. For example, near Persenbeug on the Danube River, 223 Jews were murdered by unknown members of the SS at the beginning of May 1945. The prisoners were not only killed in the vacated camps but also on the way to Mauthausen. They had to walk and were not allowed to take the main roads, which were being used by the German army; these marches on back roads were carried out in a most brutal and exhausting manner. The escorts, in most cases members of the SS or SA, and assisted by local units of the Nazi home guard (*Volkssturm*) or the local police (*Gendarmerie*), killed the weak and footsore prisoners, as well as many relatively healthy ones, arbitrarily. Such atrocities took place on numerous transports (“death marches”) in Styria, Lower and Upper Austria, and in many other regions along the Eastern Front of the Third Reich. The cruelest crime was committed on the Prábichl, a pass in the Styrian Alps near Eisenerz. Early in April 1945 members of the local SA fired their guns randomly at the passing prisoners, killing more than 200 of them.

The prosecution of these crimes fell under the jurisdiction of the Austrian People’s Courts (*Volksgerichte*) as well as special military courts of the Allied occupation powers. During the early postwar years, some Austrian war criminals received severe sentences for their acts. Out of the 43 death sentences handed down by the Austrian People’s Courts between 1945 and 1948, 15 were imposed on perpetrators who had committed crimes in the camps along the “South East Rampart,” or during the death marches after the evacuation of those camps.

MARTIN F. POLASCHEK

See also: Death Marches; War Crimes

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Degrelle, Léon

Belgian fascist leader and Waffen-SS commander. Born in Bouillon on June 15, 1906, Léon Degrelle attended the University of Louvain, where he became interested in journalism and active in student politics. Invited by Catholic authorities

to take over a small Catholic publishing house, Christus Rex (“Christ the King”), in Louvain, Degrelle produced a series of successful mass-circulation magazines combining popular articles with short stories on Catholic themes. Soon, Christus Rex was publishing pamphlets about major news events. In 1933 Degrelle assumed sole control of the firm, and he was soon holding political rallies marked by his own powerful oratory promoting both a populist program and purge of corrupt officials. The Catholic Church disassociated itself from the movement, which became a political party, Rex, by 1934. It remained for several years a dissident movement within the Catholic Party of Belgium.

In 1936 Degrelle broke with the Catholic Party. Rex contested the Belgian elections that year as an independent party and haven for those unhappy with the status quo. Degrelle attempted to appeal to the Belgian middle class and spoke of emphasizing Catholic values of solidarity and community.

Degrelle’s praise of Adolf Hitler brought his arrest and that of other potential fifth columnists by Belgian authorities in May 1940, when the Germans invaded. On his release in France in July, Degrelle promptly proclaimed to German authorities his wish for a greater Belgium to include parts of the Netherlands and northern France. In July 1941, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Degrelle founded the Walloon Legion, although few Belgians were attracted to join. Listed on the Waffen-SS order of battle as the 28th SS Division, the legion actually numbered no more than 2,000 men. Degrelle led the Walloon Legion in fighting in the Soviet Union. Awarded the Knight’s Cross with Oak Leaves, he was the highest-decorated foreigner in German service.

Degrelle was in Belgium from December 1942 to January 1943. Although he claimed he and his legionnaires were Belgian patriots fighting to secure a place for their country in Hitler’s New Order, in discussions with SS leaders he expressed a commitment to restoring the Walloons (as opposed to the Flemish) to their “rightful” place as a Germanic people within the Reich.

More than half of the legionnaires were killed in the war. Degrelle abandoned the survivors in the defense of Berlin. In late April 1945 he fled north to Oslo, Norway, which was still under German control and where he commandeered an aircraft. He and five others then flew to San Sebastian in northern Spain, where they crash-landed. Negotiations for Degrelle’s extradition to Belgium foundered on Spanish demands for a quid pro quo.

In 1946 Degrelle vanished from the hospital where he had been recuperating. The Spanish government denied

knowledge of his whereabouts, but he was protected by influential Spaniards. A decade later, Degrelle resurfaced in public but did not leave Spain. He remained an unabashed admirer of Hitler until his death in Malaga on April 1, 1993.

SPENCER C. TUCKER

See also: Belgium; Catholic Church

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Degussa

Degussa was a German company in which I.G. Farben had controlling interests and which made accommodation with the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) from the 1930s. While initially not being close to the NSDAP, Degussa “swam with the current,” on the basis that if it did not do so, others would.

Degussa “Aryanized” its company, ridding itself first of Jewish directors and then of Jewish staff. It benefited from the transfer of major purchases of Aryanized Jewish property and after 1938 acted ruthlessly to obtain property stolen from Jews. Between 1939 and 1944 Degussa employed civilian workers, prisoners of war, and detainees from ghettos and concentration camps as forced labor. From Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938, pursuant to the Nazis’ “precious metals campaign,” Degussa refined gold, silver, and platinum owned by Jews. During the war years, Degussa’s Berlin refinery received direct shipments of gold from the Łódź ghetto, much of which was refined and processed, but some of which came with teeth attached. Degussa’s wholly owned subsidiary Degesch, which it bought in 1922, held the patent for Zyklon-B gas, which was used after 1939 primarily for pest extermination; from 1942 onward, the SS used 1% of the production, which had its smell removed, to kill approximately 1 million people.

Degussa (*Deutsche Gold- und Silber-Scheideanstalt vormals Roessler*, or “German Gold and Silver Refinery, formerly Roessler”), was incorporated in January 1873. A gold and silver separation factory, it became successful in precious metals and distributing chemical products, including sodium perborate, used in Persil soap powder. In 1898 Degussa set

up a chemical factory to process by-products needed for its cyanide manufacture. In 1922 Degussa took over exclusive ownership in Degesch (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingsbekämpfung mbH, or “German Society for Pest Control, Ltd.”). The same year, in a technological breakthrough, Degesch perfected a process for canning pellets of its principal product, Zyklon, which contained volatile hydrogen cyanide.

With the onset of the Depression, Degussa remained exposed commercially. To head off competition, Degussa was forced to enlist I.G. Farbenindustrie AG, a dominant rival in the chemical business, in some of its projects.

In 1933 the Nazi government introduced a policy of “Aryanization,” leading to the six Jewish members of the Supervisory Board being forced to resign. In addition, members of the Nazi Party now joined the board. To continue to grow, Degussa chose to comply with the Nazi regime. Over the next few years, Degussa also Aryanized 10 of its subsidiary companies, three holdings, four extensive blocks of shares, 10 parcels of real estate in Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna, and Prague, and purchased a confiscated patent in August 1944.

Degussa’s products were useful for armament production in Germany’s attempt at attaining economic self-sufficiency. Sodium metal, for example, was an intermediate product for manufacturing aircraft fuel. Acetone cyanohydrin was required in the production of Plexiglas, which the Darmstadt-based firm of Röhm & Haas had developed and which was used to build aircraft cockpits.

Degussa’s products were vital to the war effort, so Degussa benefited from work orders; but a shortage of German workers owing to conscription saw the introduction of desperate measures in staffing. German women were forbidden to undertake any hazardous work, and so, between 1939 and 1944, Degussa employed civilian workers and prisoners of war, and slave labor from ghettos and concentration camps. Degussa filled out its workforce in its carbon black factory until February 1943 with a compulsory work battalion of elderly German Jews who were given the most unpleasant work. After their unit was “completely dissolved,” these men were replaced by Poles and prisoners of war.

In Degussa’s main factories, forced laborers were employed to the same extent as in most German industrial companies. In 1943 approximately one-quarter of the employees consisted of forced laborers, while in 1944 they accounted for as much as one-third and more. Nevertheless, the number of workers allocated was still too low to meet Degussa’s needs.

The treatment of the forced laborers depended on the ranking their nationality had in Nazi racial thinking, and after Stalingrad, in the winter of 1942–1943, the situation worsened for all such workers. Degussa used forced laborers from ghettos and concentration camps in four factories in the east of the Reich. Those on the Fürstenberg building site came from the Łódź ghetto. In Gleiwitz, Jewish men and women from Auschwitz were used. There were no other workers available and Degussa wanted to meet the demands of the Reich to increase production quantities.

From 1933 foreign exchange controls slowed Degussa's precious metals business, but this changed with the "precious metals campaign" implemented after Kristallnacht in 1938. The Reich confiscated all gold, silver, and platinum owned by Jews as "punishment" for the damage caused.

Jews had to hand in their precious metal at state-run pawnshops. Technically they received compensation, but this was paid into frozen accounts that were soon confiscated by the state. From the pawnshops the precious metal went to the refineries, and as the biggest precious metals refinery in Germany, Degussa received numerous refining contracts. In line with that part of its business that processed dental gold, between 1940 and 1945 Degussa's Berlin refinery received direct shipments of gold from Łódź. For many deliveries the metal arrived in an already molten state in order to prevent theft during transport. However, in some unprocessed deliveries, gold dental fillings, which had been forcefully removed from the mouths of concentration camp inmates, arrived with teeth still attached.

During World War I, TASCH, the *Technische Ausschuss für Schädlingsbekämpfung* (Technical Committee for Pest Control), was founded by the War Ministry. Degesch developed in 1919 out of TASCH. By 1922 Degussa assumed financial control of Degesch, which developed a process by which the highly poisonous gas Cydon (an acronym for the main ingredients cyanogen and chlorine compounds) was enclosed in tiny cotton wool-like balls. As soon as these came into contact with air, the end product, Zyklon-B, was created. The stabilizer for the gas came from I.G. Farben, while another firm, Schering, supplied a pungent warning ingredient.

Degesch underwent internal restructuring back in 1925. To cut costs, Degesch awarded the distribution and usage rights to Zyklon-B to two companies: Heerdt & Lingler GmbH (Heli) and Tesch & Stabenow GmbH (Testa), Hamburg. Initially Degesch held shares in both companies, but in 1942 it sold its stake in Testa. The two distribution companies divided the market between them, but Testa was the exclusive supplier for the German military and the SS.

To thwart the competition in the pest control market, Degussa had to sell Degesch shares in 1930 and 1931 to I.G. Farben (42.5%). It retained a minority stake of 42.5% of Degesch, and profits from distributing Zyklon-B until 1938 came mainly from abroad.

After the start of the war, the armed forces and the SS grew to become major clients of Testa, as both military accommodation and concentration camps barracks had to be disinfected. Through Testa and Heli, Degesch sold Zyklon-B to both the army and the SS.

At the same time the SS used 1% of the production, which had its warning pungent smell removed, to annihilate approximately 1 million people. When Zyklon-B was being used as a pesticide, it was required by law to contain an indicator odor to warn humans of its lethal presence. The SS demanded that new orders of Zyklon-B omit the indicator. Degesch at first refused to comply—not for humanitarian reasons, but because the request endangered Degesch's monopoly. To remove the indicator was to open up the possibility of unwelcome competition.

During the I.G. Farben trial after the war, the director of Degesch, Dr. Gerhard Friedrich Peters, implicated himself; he received information by SS officer Kurt Gerstein about murdering people using Zyklon-B and was informed that the German army needed the gas without the usual additives that were included to warn people of its poisonous nature. In 1949 Peters was charged with murder in the Frankfurt court, convicted, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. In 1952 the conviction was confirmed in an appeal and set to six years. Peters went to prison but was acquitted in a new appeal in the mid-1950s. The law had changed; he was no longer considered guilty of assisting in murder. Degussa provided him with legal aid and offered to pay bail to keep him from being held in custody during the appeal period.

The chairman of the Degesch board of directors from 1939 to 1945, Hermann Schlosser, was arrested in February 1948 and acquitted in April 1948; later, he once again took over as chairman of the board. The owner and the director of Tesch & Stabenow were convicted and sentenced to death by a British tribunal and executed in Hamelin prison.

Members of the Degussa board were never charged. After the war, they underwent the process of denazification, and at the end of the 1940s they returned to their positions. For a long time, as a result of the Nuremberg trials, the public associated the topics of Degesch and Zyklon-B only with I.G. Farben.

All but two of the enterprises taken over by Degussa as a result of the Aryanization process returned substantial profits during the 1930s and 1940s; most remained in Degussa's possession through the 1950s, and three of them still persisted at the end of the 20th century. Degussa's representatives used every legal possibility to keep, at the lowest achievable cost, what the enterprise had obtained. The buildings of the Frankfurt headquarters of the Degussa complex until recently stood in large part on land acquired from two Jewish families in 1934–1935.

The historical significance of Degussa appeared again in the publicity surrounding their involvement in the construction of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, because the plasticizer and the antigraffiti coating were produced by Degussa. Therefore, the work on the memorial was suspended, but in November 2003 the trustees decided to finish the building with the involvement of Degussa.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Aryanization; I.G. Farben; Zyklon-B; Zyklon-B Case, 1946

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Dehumanization

Dehumanization is a psychosocial process in which people are removed from what may be considered acceptable contact with other members of a society owing to a perceived change of their person, whereby their public identity is transformed into something looked at as lower than that of the majority. In its most basic form, dehumanization aims at redefining public perceptions of such people so that society in general will no longer consider them to be deserving of the same degree of decency, sympathy, empathy, or sensitivity as other human beings.

The identity transformation process that takes place as a result of dehumanization can take many forms and was practiced in numerous settings during the Holocaust. In the Nazi concentration camps, for example, the SS systematically applied tactics of personal terror toward their prisoners, ritually degrading them until they no longer felt the dignity required to resist the Nazis' brutal treatment. The

nadir of a prisoner's degradation came when he or she ceased resisting it and allowed its effects to swamp them. At that moment, it could be said that a person's self-image had literally become dehumanized. Accounts abound of how victims no longer saw themselves as human beings, but as "animals" or "objects." This can be further reinforced by reference to victims no longer having names, but numbers (as happened in Auschwitz), or of having other trappings of their individual humanity—their clothing or their hair, for example—taken away.

The process of dehumanization in this environment was not restricted only to the victims, however; both the Nazi perpetrators and the general public underwent various forms of psychological or behavioral modification regarding their image of the targeted population. Thus, to take one example, in the Nazi death camps the prisoners were referred to as so many *stücke* ("pieces"), rather than as human beings, while through constant propaganda the German population were enjoined to see Jews during the Holocaust years as germs, bacilli, a cancer, vermin, parasites, and lice.

Dehumanization is very frequently a necessary process in the preparation of a population that is going to commit genocide, as a person is transformed from being seen as equal in their humanity to one who is less than human. The process does not of itself cause genocide, but it is certainly one of a number of steps on the road to it.

In seeing Jews as a degraded "other," the Nazis were able to both justify their actions and to convince the German people as a whole that Jews were less than human. This was necessary if National Socialist ideology was to convey the added notion that the Jews were dangerous to German society. With this as a motivator, the Nazis were able to communicate the further image of the Jews as "life unworthy of life" (*Lebensunwertes Leben*).

Of course, the Nazis went far beyond simply referring to Jews in a negative or dehumanizing manner. They also systematically classified who was Jewish, collected them together, transported them as if they were cattle, exploited them for purpose of slave labor, conducted horrific experiments on them as if they were without feelings, killed them in an industrial manner, and then burned their bodies and used their remains as fertilizer. The process of dehumanization, therefore, played a vital role on the road to the Holocaust and was one of the most important constituent parts of the mindset leading to mass murder.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Concentration Camps; Death Camps

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Delbo, Charlotte

Charlotte Delbo, together with her husband Georges Dudach, was a member of the French Resistance. She is best known for the recollections she set down of her experiences in Auschwitz, retold in her three-part collection of prose and poems and translated into English as *Auschwitz and After*. The collection is really a trilogy of separately published shorter works: "None of Us Will Return" (*Aucun de nous ne reviendra*); "Useless Knowledge" (*La connaissance inutile*); and "The Measure of Our Days" (*Mesure de nos jours*).

Charlotte Delbo was born on August 10, 1913, in Vigneux-sur-Seine, near Paris. She came from a family of Italian immigrants and was the eldest of their four children. Her father, Charles, specialized in ironworks. During her early life, she held an interest in theater and politics, and she joined the French Young Communist Women's League in 1932. This was an organization that focused on spreading the ideas of communism throughout Paris.

Charlotte met and married her husband Georges, also a communist, in 1934. She was in South America traveling as the administrative assistant of the writer Louis Jouvet when France was invaded and occupied by Germany in 1940. Returning to France in 1941, she joined Georges, who was already active in the Resistance, in Paris, where the couple printed and distributed anti-Nazi pamphlets. They became part of the group around the communist philosopher Georges Politzer and took an active role in publishing the underground journal *Les Lettres Françaises*, a literary publication of the National Front resistance movement. Then they went into hiding and began publishing another underground magazine, *Free Thought*, with Politzer and Paul Nizan.

The Delbos were arrested by French police on March 2, 1942, for distributing anti-German pamphlets in Paris and were handed over to the Gestapo. Georges was executed in prison on May 23, 1942, after saying goodbye to his wife. Charlotte was transported to a transit camp in Paris and

spent almost 11 months in various French camps before being deported to Auschwitz. On January 24, 1943, she, together with 230 other Frenchwomen (the majority of whom were also members of the Resistance) were transported from Compiègne to Auschwitz. This was the only convoy of women, and one of only a few convoys of non-Jewish prisoners from France to Auschwitz, as most political prisoners were sent to Mauthausen or other camps.

The women attempted to keep up their spirits upon their arrival at the camp through the singing of the French national anthem, *La Marseillaise*. In the first section of *Auschwitz and After*, Charlotte Delbo begins her journey into Auschwitz as well as her experiences as an inmate, and details the hard labor they were forced to undertake in the swamps. Many of the women died from typhus, and by August 3, 1943, only 57 of them remained alive. They were placed in quarantine.

The following year, on January 7, 1944, Charlotte Delbo was sent to the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück, located in northern Germany north of Berlin. The majority of the rest of the survivors from her original convoy were transferred to Ravensbrück in the summer of 1944. Due to the assistance of the Red Cross, Delbo was able to leave the camp with a group of women on April 23, 1945. They arrived in Sweden, and after recuperating in Switzerland, Delbo returned to France in 1945. Charlotte Delbo survived as one of only 49 women from the transport of January 24, 1943.

Charlotte Delbo was not detained due to her race or religion but because of her political opinions and her role in the French Resistance. Her experiences at Auschwitz describe the horrors she and the other prisoners lived through, as she struggled to keep count of the days in order to remember the death dates and last words of individuals who perished during their time at the camp. Her memoir provides the stories of all of the individual deportees who arrived with her at Auschwitz, both those who survived and those who perished. The next two volumes of Delbo's memoir, written 20 years after the first, recount her struggle to return to the normal life she had once lived.

After the war, Charlotte Delbo worked at the United Nations and the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). She died on March 1, 1985, from lung cancer, never having remarried. She was survived by a son. Her memoir is remembered for her unconventional, experimental, narrative techniques in order to convey her experience of Auschwitz and how she and her fellow survivors coped in the years after their haunting experience.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Auschwitz; Communists in the Holocaust; France; Resistance Movements; Upstander

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Denazification

“Denazification” (*Entnazifizierung*) is the name of a program instituted by the Allies following the end of World War II. It had two objectives: to purge Germany of all elements of Nazi culture and ideology that had permeated every aspect of German society during the 12 years of the Third Reich, including disbanding the many organizations and eliminating all related physical symbols of the Nazi period; and to remove from positions of authority Germans who were more than “followers” in the Nazi Party.

With regard to the first goal of the program, denazification can be thought of as the antithesis of the concept of *Gleichschaltung*, a component of Nazi ideology that sought to coordinate all aspects of German society with the Nazi vision, to unify all activities so they fell within the purview of that vision. The Nazi *Gleichschaltung* effort was successful, affecting every form of social interaction—the large numbers of clubs (shooting, sports, choral, band, drinking, and music), societies (teachers, lawyers, doctors, artisans, and shopkeepers), workers’ groups (unions, civil servants), newspapers, political parties, and any and all other groups—to bring each in line with the Nazi program. All of those organizations and other elements of society that had been “nazified” in accordance with the concept of *Gleichschaltung* were now to be denazified.

The second goal of denazification—removal of Nazi Party members from public office or from other positions of authority in postwar Germany based on their involvement with the party—was as broad in scope as the cultural component but in many respects more difficult and complex. Its success rested on the ability to accurately categorize the role of Nazi Party members according to a scale ranging from No Involvement (or Exonerated) to Major Offender. As might be expected, the largest number of Nazi Party members fell somewhere between these extremes.

To make the process of denazification more difficult, each of the four major Allies—Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States—occupied one of four zones into

which Germany had been divided. Each approached the process of denazification according to its own standards of stringency or leniency, and according to its own interests.

The impetus for the denazification program came first from the Yalta Conference and was confirmed in the Potsdam Conference. Both conferences were meetings of the leaders of the United States (Franklin D. Roosevelt at Yalta; Harry S Truman at Potsdam), Britain (Winston Churchill), and the Soviet Union (Joseph Stalin). At Yalta, held in February 1945 in the Crimea, it was agreed that Germany, upon its defeat, would face demilitarization, of course, as well as denazification. A decision at Potsdam, held in late July through early August 1945, reiterated the intent of the Allies to rid postwar Germany of all traces of Nazi influence and to have “all members of the Nazi Party who have been more than nominal participants” removed from public office and other positions of responsibility in the private sector.

Looking at the American Zone, a German citizen’s participation in the Nazi Party was determined by answers submitted on a lengthy questionnaire (*Fragebogen*) asking about the person’s activities during the applicable years. A Special Branch of the Office of Public Safety, after making efforts to verify the accuracy of the answers to the questionnaire, assigned the individual to one of the following five categories: No Involvement (or Exonerated); Follower; Lesser Offender; Offender; Major Offender. People in the first category would face no sanctions; those in the last would be arrested and tried. How those in the largest categories—Followers, Lesser Offenders, and Offenders—were treated depended on the zone in which the decision was being made, and when it was made.

For example, the American Zone approached this aspect of denazification diligently, if not zealously. It was reluctant to allow Lesser Offenders and Offenders to go without punishment, resulting in large numbers of people being held for trial. In the initial months of the program, the American Zone moved carefully through the process of reviewing and verifying the questionnaires and was cautious about assigning a person to the category of No Involvement or Follower. The problem with this was the math: the number of individuals who needed to be processed was well into the millions.

It was not just the numbers that made this system of denazification highly inefficient. The United States sought to walk a very fine line: it wanted to remove from office and other positions of responsibility German citizens who had shown a significant degree of involvement with the Nazi Party; at the same time it wanted to leave postwar Germany

in a position to create and maintain a stable economy and government, on the assumption that this would lessen the likelihood of future conflict. In many instances those two goals were incompatible. Many of the people who were in public office or were in positions of authority were the very same people who would be critical in the effort to establish a stable economy and government.

These concerns led to a change over time in the American Zone from a strict, intensive examination to a far more flexible one that moved the process along faster. Despite these efforts, in 1946 the entire process (in all of the zones) was turned over to the Germans themselves to determine the appropriate category and treatment of Nazi Party members and to try those individuals who were to be punished. As might be expected, this further accelerated the pace of the process and resulted in more and more citizens being given a determination of “Rehabilitated,” without which employment opportunities were severely curtailed, often limited to physical labor.

As noted, there was no consistency from one zone to the next. For example, the British Zone was run on a more lenient basis, so as to keep Germany economically sound and to lessen the likelihood that impoverished refugees from a struggling Germany would seek help from Britain. The only reason a questionnaire had to be completed in the British Zone was as part of the application process for public office or a job of authority in the private sector. Restrictions on German lawyers were lessened, thereby helping to meet the needs of an overcrowded court system.

The French took a different approach altogether. The denazification program in the French Zone was run so as to weaken Germany—a longtime enemy of France—and to make use of German assets in its zone to help France recover from the destruction caused by the Germans in the war.

The Soviet zone conducted an intensive denazification program with an eye toward creating a communist government, despite a pledge to promote the establishment of a democratic one. It allowed Nazis who committed themselves to communism to avoid punishment and remain in public office or other positions of authority.

The denazification program ended at different times—ranging from 1948 to 1951—in different zones. By most standards of measurement, it was a limited success. The denazification of the cultural aspects of German society was effective, but the combination of the sheer numbers of individuals who would have had to be scrupulously vetted for the other aspect of denazification to be a success, and the lack of coordination among the four occupying powers, resulted in

an effort that, although able to process some 3.5 million party members through the program, still left many millions of Nazi supporters actively participating in postwar German society with impunity.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: *Gleichschaltung*

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Denial of the Holocaust

The Nazi genocide of European Jews during World War II that claimed the lives of some 6 million Jews has been fastidiously studied and documented, yet there are some, operating from political motives, who deny the authenticity of the event and rebuke scholarship of it. Such individuals, who prefer to call themselves “revisionists,” are referred to as Holocaust deniers. Holocaust denial is the attempt to invalidate or distort the historical truth of the Nazi genocide of European Jewry.

The brutality of the Holocaust shocked the world and many found pictures of murdered bodies and discoveries of gas chambers too horrible to believe. While historical research and stories from witnesses and survivors helped people accept the truth of the genocide, others aimed to discredit them.

The central and most common arguments Holocaust deniers make are: (1) the notion that 6 million Jews died is a myth; (2) gas chambers were never used to kill Jews; (3) Nazis had no official policy to murder Jews; and (4) Anne Frank’s diary was a forgery.

Austin Joseph App has gained notoriety as one of the first American Holocaust deniers and was the first to list many of the above-mentioned denials. App, a professor of English at La Salle College and the University of Scranton, denied that the Holocaust ever occurred and has been credited with leading the path for many other deniers. By the late 1950s, App had published his claims and had appeared before audiences boasting that the figure of 6 million was nothing more than a hoax made up by Jews.

Robert Faurisson, a former literature professor, helped fuel denial activities in France. He refuted the use of Zyklon-B, the chemical used to murder Jews at Auschwitz and other death camps. He argued that Jews made the whole thing up in order to benefit Israel and international Zionism. Faurisson did not deny that Jews died in German camps; however, he did not believe Germans murdered Jews in gas chambers. Faurisson denied that Zyklon-B could have effectively killed Jews. He pointed to the manufacturer's instructions for using Zyklon-B to exterminate vermin, concluding that as it was safe enough to use as a household pesticide, it could not have been used to murder Jews.

He chose to ignore the fact that gas chambers and home fumigation were two separate things, occurring in drastically different environments. Windows could be left open in a home to expel the gas, for example, but a gas chamber was sealed shut. Faurisson's attempt to discredit the use of Zyklon-B as a killing agent was part of his overall attempt to normalize the mass death of Jews during the Holocaust as a result of maltreatment, a natural occurrence during war.

Faurisson's protégé Henri Roques took up Faurisson's arguments and aimed to discredit proof of Nazi gas chambers for his doctoral dissertation. To this end, Roques attempted to discredit the testimony of former Waffen-SS officer Kurt Gerstein. During the genocide, Gerstein had been charged with the task of visiting German death camps with the goal of improving upon the efficiency of the gas chambers. The experience weighed heavily on Gerstein's conscience and inspired him to submit a detailed report to the Allies on the gas chambers at Belzec and Treblinka. Gerstein's account of the atrocities at those camps has proven an obstacle to deniers. For his dissertation, Roques tried to expose discrepancies in Gerstein's report and even managed to find a professor at the University of Nantes willing to support his research and approve his dissertation. Roques was awarded his doctorate in 1985. Following a public uproar, however, the French minister of higher education revoked Roques's degree the following year and in so doing discredited Roques's erroneous research methods and false conclusions.

David Irving, a British Holocaust denier, is a master of fact manipulation. Like App, Faurisson, and Roque, Irving views the gas chambers as Jewish propaganda and has gone on to write some 30 books denying the Holocaust. Irving started publishing denial histories in the 1960s and by the late 1980s was the face of mainstream denial movements. Irving does not deny that Jews were systematically murdered; instead, he reinterprets the genocide in a way that

paints Hitler in a more favorable light. In *Hitler's War*, for example, Irving claimed Hitler never instituted a policy to kill all of European Jewry. To support his argument, Irving constructed a revisionist history of events. For example, he claims that following Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, he only made antisemitic remarks to maintain popularity and that Hitler played no part in the creation of anti-Jewish policy. To assert these false claims, Irving weaves a historical fantasy using German documents that reflect propaganda of that time.

The Germans did their best to avoid outright declarations of their murderous plans, and when it was clear that Germany would be defeated they went to great lengths to destroy and purge wartime documents that might incriminate them. For this reason, they used opaque terms. They referred to "deportation," for example, as "resettlement" and "evacuation." Instead of saying "killing" or "murder," they called it "special action" and "special measures." The workers at Auschwitz were even instructed to never refer directly to gassing or to gas chambers. Holocaust revisionists and deniers prefer to use the coded language the Germans employed as evidence that gas chambers were never used and that the Germans never outright planned to commit genocide.

Irving's revisionist approach to the Holocaust came under public scrutiny in 1996 when he sued American history professor Deborah Lipstadt and her publisher for libel. Lipstadt published a book in 1993 entitled *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, in which she refutes the false claims of Holocaust deniers, Irving among them. The defense engaged British historian Richard J. Evans as an expert witness in the case. Evans studied Irving's work for two years and meticulously exposed Irving's false claims. Evans proved that Irving had forged documents and made up source material. The judge ruled against Irving's libel claims and in his final remarks called Irving a racist, antisemite, right-wing extremist, and neo-Nazi.

One of the best-known Holocaust deniers is Arthur Butz, a professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Northwestern University, Illinois. In 1976 he wrote the key Holocaust-denial text, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, published by the Holocaust-denial Institute of Historical Review, Torrance, California. This work remains one of the classic works of anti-Holocaust literature. Because of his academic credentials (MS and PhD from the University of Minnesota), his book presents the appearance of a scholarly publication with copious footnotes and an

extensive bibliography. Among those involved in Holocaust denial, Butz remains one of the few legitimate academics active in writing and presenting at Holocaust denial conferences. His work is accorded absolutely no scholarly credibility whatsoever—despite its seemingly scholarly apparatus of both copious notes and bibliography.

Many European countries have outlawed Holocaust denial in an attempt to suppress neo-Nazi movements. In the Netherlands, Faurisson's denial claims about the authenticity of Anne Frank's diary helped motivate legislators to make Holocaust denial a punishable public offense. Frank was a young Jewish girl who went into hiding in the Netherlands with her family to escape the Nazis. She received a diary for her 13th birthday and used it to record her and her family's life in the secret attic annex. Frank's family was discovered and she died at Auschwitz. Her father, the family's sole survivor, published Anne's diary after the war. Faurisson, among others, claimed the diary was a forgery and accused Anne's father of making the whole thing up. The Dutch decision to punish Holocaust deniers has helped suppress public efforts to discredit *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Despite the Holocaust being one of the most documented events in history, deniers try to rewrite the facts to suit their objectives. Deniers try to minimize the number of Jews murdered, disprove the use of gas chambers, absolve Nazis of responsibility for organized genocide, and discredit Anne Frank's diary. Misrepresentations of the Holocaust serve to undermine the historiography of the genocide and deflate Nazi crimes.

ALEXIS HERR

See also: Anne Frank House; Frank, Anne; Gas Chambers; International Holocaust Remembrance Day; Zyklon-B

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the time, mostly in Copenhagen. Denmark had traditionally prided itself on neutrality in foreign affairs, and indeed had not participated in World War I. Despite the Danish government's dislike of Nazi Germany and its policies, it nevertheless signed a nonaggression pact with the Germans in the spring of 1939. Still, Adolf Hitler ignored that agreement, and in April 1940 German troops occupied Denmark, annexing the country chiefly because it was a rich agricultural region and because they viewed the Danes as fellow "Aryans." The first years of the occupation, until the late summer of 1943, were relatively uneventful. The Germans permitted the Danes to set their own domestic policies, and most Danes reluctantly collaborated with occupation officials to some extent or another. A resistance movement, however, was already afoot, and that effort would gain much traction in the latter stages of the war.

Unlike many other places in Europe, antisemitism had never gained much of a foothold in Denmark. The small Jewish population did not suffer persecution, and Jews practiced their religion in the open and were not restricted from certain professions. This did not change after the Germans moved into Denmark; Jews were not required to register with the government, live in Jewish-only areas, or wear a yellow star or a badge in public. Initially, German occupation officials did not interfere with these liberal policies. Denmark's Jews also benefited from King Christian X's outspoken advocacy for his Jewish subjects. Life for Danish Jews remained relatively unchanged until 1943.

That year the Danish resistance movement began to gain traction, which emboldened even more people to fight the occupation; this was aided by a strong underground press. By the summer of 1943 sabotage and labor strikes clearly threatened the German occupation, a situation made worse for the Germans by military reverses elsewhere. As a result, the Germans declared a state of emergency on August 29 and initiated a crackdown against suspected saboteurs and troublemakers. Hundreds of Danes—Jews and non-Jews—were arrested and detained.

The following month, German occupation authorities decided to take advantage of the crackdown by rounding up and deporting Danish Jews. Non-Jews now rallied to the cause, helping to hide Jews; when the roundup started on October 1, the Germans were able to locate and arrest only a handful. Although threatened by the Germans, Danish law enforcement refused to take part in the roundup. Soon, Danish civilians had hatched a plan to move Danish Jews to the coast, where they would be smuggled aboard fishing

Denmark

Denmark is a small northern European country that had a 1939 population of approximately 5 million people. It is estimated that there were about 7,500 Jews living there at

RESCUE OF DANISH JEWS, FALL 1943



boats to freedom in Sweden, which in turn readily accepted the influx of émigrés. In all, at least 7,500 Jews made it to safety in Sweden. Meanwhile, most Danes cast off their earlier—if reluctant—collaboration with the Germans and intensified their resistance efforts.

In the end, only 472 Jews were caught by the Germans. They were deported to Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. Danes were so insistent that they not be harmed that the Germans did not send them to the death camps. Many Danes also sent foodstuffs and other supplies to the exiled Danish Jews. It is believed that 52 Danish Jews at Theresienstadt died, while another 70 or so died by various means in other locations. The Jewish survival rate in Denmark was among the highest in any nation occupied by Germany. The German occupation of Denmark ended in May 1945.

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See also: Best, Werner; Christian X, King of Denmark; Duckwitz, Georg; Iceland; Rescuers of Jews; White Buses

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Denunciation

Denunciation—the act of informing those in authority that someone has already committed a perceived criminal act or will do so in the immediate future or is a suspected or (un)wanted person—must be carefully nuanced when referring to the period in which the Nazis exercised control over

Germany. For ease of entry, the 12 years of the Nazis' reign—sometimes referred to as the years of “Nazi terror”—should be divided into two halves: 1933–1939, when Hitler and his minions were building up and implementing their vehicles of domination and control inside the country; and 1939–1945, from the start of World War II on September 1, 1939, to its horrific dénouement, marked somewhat symbolically by Hitler's and his mistress-wife Eva Braun's suicides (April 30–May 1, 1945) and Germany's unconditional surrender on May 7, 1945.

Care must also be taken to distinguish between those who denounced and/or were denounced within Germany's borders, and those who denounced and/or were denounced in those countries under Nazi hegemony, as the reasons for the former might sometimes be significantly different from those outside Germany. In addition, the persons and objects of denunciation—Jews, first and foremost; communists; political dissidents; economic enemies, personal enemies, and their various allegiances—were given wider latitude inside Germany (e.g., a German “Aryan” married to a Jew; someone seen “fraternizing” with a single Jew); less so outside the country (e.g., agents provocateur, saboteurs, spies, resisters, even those chafing under restrictive legislation and/or military control). This must be further contrasted with those who were themselves the denouncers, for example, those motivated by class distinctions; the evil-minded and mean-spirited; those who embraced the Nazi ideology and were “true believers” in the cause and did so for the present and future welfare of their nation-state; those who did so for perceived political or economic advantage (a decided minority); those recruited to do such work (again, a minority); and, in the rarest of cases, fellow Jews (the fewest of all, and usually for their false understandings of their own prolonged survival). Researchers have determined that the primary institutional beneficiaries were (1) the Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei, the secret state police), (2) the SS (the paramilitary Schutzstaffel), (3) SiPo (Sicherheitspolizei or security police), (4) the Wehrmacht (the German army), and/or (4) the various local constabularies.

However, it must be noted as well that the common myth regarding Nazi Germany as a nation-state wherein the population was thoroughly controlled in the vice-like grip and under the heel of these various agencies and institutions is not borne out by the research. Throughout the 12 years of its existence, Nazi Germany remained a “porous” nation-state wherein secrecy was of continual concern to Hitler and his inner circle and difficult to maintain; various forms of resistance (both active and passive) continued to function; the

Nazi ideology was *not* 100% embraced by its citizenry, especially its more initial brutal and violent expressions of anti-semitism (though the Nazis were somewhat more successful in their ongoing attempts at “social antisemitism,” that is, distancing the German people from any or limited contacts with Jews, at least early on); and fears of “official” retaliations and consequential horrific punishments, while ever present, did not fully manifest themselves in total impotence on the part of all German citizens.

Between 1933 and 1939, once the Nazis were seemingly fully in control, denunciations of fellow citizens took place relatively quickly, further speeded up by two significant events: (1) the Nuremberg Racial Laws of September 15, 1935, which effectively separated “Aryans” from Jews in marriage, medicine, law, and education; and (2) the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, which gave vent to a carefully organized outbreak of violence against Jewish persons, Jewish-owned businesses, and synagogues. The various media—radio, newspapers, and so on—strongly advocated turning in one's fellow citizens—especially Jews and communists—to the proper authorities “for the good of Germany.” In the major cities (e.g., Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, Munich), such activities were made somewhat easier as these were locales wherein both populations were clustered. In the countryside and rural areas, however, such activities tended to slow down considerably. Both groups were far fewer in number; Jews were more successfully integrated into the larger populations; and communists were few and far between.

Then, too, Jews and communists were not the only ones denounced by their neighbors. Initially, those who were unsupportive of the new regime and/or opposed to this or that policy, and were brash enough to express themselves in public, would find themselves on the receiving end of a visit from the authorities. Even the threat of being informed upon or being visited by those in power was enough to prompt some to turn in their neighbors, often without foundation, to remain in the good graces of the authorities.

Outside of Germany, to be sure, the successful military incursions into the surrounding nation-states found all-too-willing allies among those now willing to give full vent to their antisemitism by turning in local Jews and exacting retribution for perceived grievances from their neighbors. Every nation-state under Nazi military control found willing collaborationists who thus enabled their “overlords” to maintain control. After the end of the war, many of these same collaborationists were brought to trial, up to and including execution.

Lastly, the tragic instances of the few Jewish denouncers (German: *Anklägers*) about whom we know of only a few cases—the most well-known being that of Stella Kübler Goldschlag—present an uncompromising moral dilemma: What would one do to prolong one’s own life as well as that of one’s family? That so few Jews either denounced their fellow Jews or covertly attempted to participate or collaborate in the Nazi annihilationist agenda speaks well of a community that was the first and primary focus of extermination.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Gestapo; Gies, Miep; Nuremberg Laws

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The Deputy

The Deputy, a play written by Rolf Hochhuth that premiered in 1963, explores the long-standing controversy about the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust. Considered one of the most important and controversial plays of the 20th century, *The Deputy* is still today regarded by some with great admiration and by others with scorn.

Rolf Hochhuth was born on April 1, 1931, in the town of Eschwege in central Germany. A member of the Hitler Youth, Hochhuth spent several years after the war working in various areas of bookselling. His play, the full title of which was *The Deputy: A Christian Tragedy (Der Stellvertreter. Ein Christliches Trauerspiel)*, was published in the United Kingdom under the name *The Representative*. It also was the subject of a feature film, *Amen* (dir. Costa-Gavras), released in 2002.

The Deputy tells the story of a young Jesuit priest in the Vatican, Riccardo Fontana, who is deeply moved by the words of warning that Kurt Gerstein, a young SS officer, brings to the papal nuncio of Berlin, Cesare Orsenigo, about the mass gassing of the Jews by the Nazis. Greatly distressed

by Orsenigo’s dismissive response to Gerstein, Fontana goes to Gerstein’s apartment where he promises to convince the pope to make a strong statement in condemnation of the Nazi extermination of the Jews. To test the sincerity of Fontana’s promise, Gerstein asks Fontana to give his cassock and passport to Jacobson, a Jew who is hiding in his apartment, so that he may escape from the Nazis. (The ploy does not work; Jacobson is sent to Auschwitz.) Fontana agrees and is left holding Jacobson’s passport—with its mandatory *J* stamped on it—and his yellow star.

The Pope Pius XII that we meet is someone who seems less concerned about the plight of the Jews than about the protection of Vatican assets and the preservation of a chance to play a significant future role as peacemaker at the end of the war. Fontana implores the pope to speak up, especially when Jews in Rome are being rounded up for deportation “under his very windows.” Pius insists that he can best help the Jews by avoiding a direct confrontation with the Nazi regime, claiming that his most useful work can only be done behind the scenes through diplomatic channels. Fontana is further frustrated by the pope’s position that the Nazi government serves as protection against godless communism and that he has allowed churches and monasteries to hide Jews.

Fontana remains convinced that the Catholic Church must do more, and in a confrontation with Pius urges him to issue an unambiguous condemnation of the government’s treatment of the Jews. Pius’s response is chilling and calculating, insisting that his role and the plight of the Jews are best served by public silence. Further, Pius refuses to abrogate the Vatican Concordat that his predecessor, Pius XI, entered into with the Nazi regime in 1933. This compounds the impression that Pius XII has no intention of making the kind of public pronouncement that alone could rally the 500 million Catholics around the world in resistance against the Nazis. Recognizing that thousands of Jews will continue to die each day as long as Pius remains silent, and convinced that his silence represents a mortal failing of the Catholic church, Fontana affixes the yellow star he got from Jacobson to his cassock and makes the stunning announcement that he is going to join the Jews being deported to Auschwitz.

Fontana enters the camp in a cattle car along with others deported from Rome. His presence there represents a serious problem for the Nazis, who assume, of course, that he was deported by accident and that this could lead to a stern protest by the pope, something that Hitler, we are told often throughout the play, fears more than anything else.

In the camp, Fontana meets “the Doctor” (who is never named but is clearly based on Dr. Josef Mengele, the cruel and pathological “Angel of Death” of Auschwitz), who represents all the evil of the gas chambers, the crematoria, and the Nazi regime as a whole. Gerstein comes to the camp (without orders) to rescue Fontana, who insists he must stay. He once again gives his cassock to Jacobson, the Jew from Gerstein’s apartment, with the hope that Gerstein can walk Jacobson out of the camp as if it were Fontana who was being taken out. The attempt fails, with Fontana killed, Jacobson sent directly to the crematoria, and Gerstein being taken under guard to what, no doubt, will be his death.

The Deputy was first performed in West Berlin in February 1963, followed in the same year by productions in seven countries throughout Europe. Its first production in English was in London in September 1963, with its debut on Broadway six months later, where it enjoyed a run of more than 300 performances and garnered its producer, Herman Shumlin, a Tony Award in 1964 for “Best Producer (Dramatic).” A review of the English translation of the book that appeared in the *New York Times* in March 1964, by Robert Gorham Davis, gave no accolades “because of originality in thought or form, or . . . [for] any unusual talent on the author’s part,” but it did observe that “the power of ‘The Deputy’ derives from Hochhuth’s ability to bring to bear the full weight of mass suffering caused by the Nazi anti-Christ, and yet keep alive a sense of individual option and responsibility.” The lengthy review ends with the observation that no matter how “brash and cumbersome it may be, ‘The Deputy’ has evoked throughout the West a passionate moral and religious response that is intensely needed at this time.”

Hochhuth based many of the play’s characters on real people. For example, the moral courage of Fontana reflects a combination of the real-life actions of two Catholic clerics. The first was Father Maximilian Kolbe—now St. Maximilian Kolbe—a Franciscan friar who, as a prisoner at Auschwitz (imprisoned for his rescue efforts on behalf of Jews), took the place of a prisoner who was selected for the gas chamber, thus giving that prisoner a chance to survive and return to his family. The second was Cathedral Provost Bernhard Lichtenberg, a Catholic priest who condemned the violence of Kristallnacht, insisted on praying for the Jews from his pulpit, denounced the deportations of the Jews, and chose to accompany the Jews who were condemned to deportation. Hochhuth dedicated his play to these two men.

The impact of Hochhuth’s play cannot be overstated. In many ways it started the debate about the actions of the

Catholic Church during the Holocaust, and specifically about the actions of Pope Pius XII. That debate pits the characterization of Pius XII as the morally weak, narcissistic, and cold person that Hochhuth portrayed against the caring and courageous person whom the Vatican is considering for beatification.

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See also: Catholic Church; Gerstein, Kurt; Mengele, Josef; Pius XII

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Der Stürmer

A rabidly antisemitic tabloid published weekly between 1923 and 1945 that was an important propaganda tool for the German Nazi Party. Under the direction of Julius Streicher, *Der Stürmer* (“The Stormer,” but more colloquially, “The Attacker”) was aimed chiefly at Germany’s lower and working classes. Its content was invariably simplistic, one-sided, and overtly antisemitic. The paper took as its motto “*Die Juden Sind unser Unglück!*” (“The Jews are Our Misfortune!”). Some senior members of the Nazi Party were clearly embarrassed by the tabloid’s content and appeal, and they tried to distance themselves from it. Others, however, including Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS, endorsed *Der Stürmer*. Adolf Hitler acknowledged the primitive nature of the publication but nevertheless saw it as an effective propaganda tool aimed at the lower and uneducated classes.

The newspaper emphasized the worst caricatures and stereotypes of Jews, including Jewish men’s alleged sexual depravity, purported Jewish aims to make a fortune at others’ expense, and the alleged Jewish propensity to be anti-capitalistic and pro-communist. Worse still were repeated charges that Jews had been responsible for the death of Jesus and were engaged in rituals that sacrificed the lives of non-Jewish children for the expiation of Jewish sins (the so-called blood libel fallacy).

A major feature of the tabloid involved cartoons and caricatures that portrayed Jews in the worst possible light. Streicher’s stated aim was to “educate” Germans on how to

spot a Jew. The cartoons featured grotesque figures of Jews that showed unkempt, overweight characters with overly prominent noses and thick lips.

Streicher supplied plenty of details to “substantiate” his lurid and wildly inaccurate stories, often times printing the names of Jews who had supposedly committed various crimes, including those involving rape, incest, and child abuse. Rarely were such details ever properly investigated, and almost all were likely fabrications. Nevertheless, *Der Stürmer*’s circulation grew enormously after Hitler came to power—from 25,000 copies per week in 1933 to nearly 500,000 copies per week in 1938. When Germany was defeated in World War II in 1945, Streicher was arrested by Allied authorities and tried at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg; found guilty for crimes against humanity on October 1, 1946, he was executed on October 16.

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See also: Antisemitism; Propaganda in the Holocaust; Schmeling, Max; Streicher, Julius

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De Sousa Mendes, Aristides

Aristides de Sousa Mendes was the consul-general of Portugal in Bordeaux, France, during World War II, responsible for issuing visas to thousands of refugees (including about 10,000 Jews) fleeing the Nazis during spring and summer 1940. In doing so he deliberately defied the orders of Portuguese dictator António Salazar.

He was born in Cabanas de Viriato on July 19, 1885. His father, José de Sousa Mendes, was a judge. Studying law at the University of Coimbra, he graduated in 1908. The same year, he married Maria Angelina Coelho de Sousa, with whom he was to have 14 children. As a young diplomat he was posted to such assignments as Zanzibar, Brazil, Spain, the United States, and Belgium. In 1938 he was assigned as consul-general in Bordeaux.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, the Portuguese capital of Lisbon became Europe’s refugee capital and principal port of embarkation for sanctuary in the New World. Salazar’s government did not accept many Jews for permanent



Aristides de Sousa Mendes was a Portuguese consul stationed in Bordeaux, France, during World War II. He defied the orders of his government in order to save Jewish lives through the issuing of visas and passports to refugees fleeing Nazi-controlled France. For his efforts to save Jewish refugees, in 1966 Sousa Mendes was the first diplomat to be recognized by Israel as one of the Righteous among the Nations. In this image, Luisa Pacheco Marques delivers a speech next to a photograph of Sousa Mendes during the inauguration of an Internet-based virtual museum dedicated to Sousa Mendes in February 2008. (AP Photo/Armando Franca)

residence, preferring to act as a temporary haven; Jews could remain only until they could arrange a further passage to somewhere else. Most refugees arrived in Lisbon only on a two-week transit visa, issued in the refugee’s home country by the local Portuguese consul upon presentation of a valid entry permit for a third country. Many of these third-country entry permits were fictitious, elicited through bribes involving vast amounts of money or precious gems. Portuguese consuls throughout Europe were only too aware of the traffic in bogus entry permits but in many cases turned a blind eye to the practice and processed transit visas regardless.

Following the Nazi invasion of France in May 1940, the population of Bordeaux swelled as refugees from across the country fled the advancing Nazis. Cities all over southern

France began to overflow with desperate refugees. On June 17, 1940, France surrendered, and Sousa Mendes told his family: “From now on I’m giving everyone visas. There will be no more nationalities, races or religions.” Announcing that “The only way I can respect my faith as a Christian is to act in accordance with the dictates of my conscience,” and seeing the terrible plight of the refugees, he set up an assembly line process in the consulate. With help from two of his sons and several volunteers, he began issuing entry permits; those who could not pay the visa fees, he said, would receive the documents without charge.

In issuing these visas, Sousa Mendes was deliberately and knowingly disobeying his own government’s decree. As a devout Christian, he saw that his actions were the right thing to do in accordance with his religious obligations.

During the period June 15–22, 1940, Sousa Mendes issued a total of 1,575 visas, working nonstop for days and nights at a stretch—but this was only a beginning. When he left Bordeaux for the far western port city of Hendaye, on the border with Spain, in order to provide visas to those stranded there, he was therefore not at the consulate when two cables arrived from Lisbon ordering him to stop issuing more visas. To add to the ever-increasing numbers, he also directed the honorary vice-consul for Portugal in Toulouse, Emile Gissot, to issue transit visas to any who applied.

Sousa Mendes’s actions were therefore clearly known back in Lisbon; they could hardly have been missed. On June 24, Salazar again ordered his immediate return to Portugal, and this time two detectives were sent to escort him back. Starting the journey, and deliberately moving slowly, he continued issuing Portuguese visas as he went. As they passed the Portuguese consulate in Bayonne, he entered and ordered the local consul to issue visas to hundreds of people lined up outside. He stamped the visas personally, adding in handwriting, “The Government of Portugal asks the Government of Spain kindly to allow the holder of this document to cross Spain freely. The holder of this document is a refugee from the conflict in Europe and is *en route* to Portugal.” He then personally escorted them to a Spanish border post and made sure they crossed safely.

When the party returned to Hendaye, Sousa Mendes learned that the visas he had previously issued in that town were not being honored. He ordered his driver to slow down and waved those bearing such visas to follow him to a border checkpoint without telephones. The border officials there, unable to phone in for verification, had no alternative but to recognize the diplomatic entourage they now encountered, and Sousa Mendes led the refugees across the border.

The disgraced consul-general arrived back in Portugal to face charges on July 8, 1940. In Lisbon he was brought before a disciplinary panel, and on October 19, 1940, was found guilty of “disobeying higher orders during service.” On October 30, 1940, Salazar decreed that Sousa Mendes would be subjected to “a penalty of one year of inactivity with the right to one half of his rank’s pay, being obliged subsequently to be retired.” His career in tatters, he was stripped of his title and assets, and became an outcast. The public dishonor that followed reduced him to poverty, led to the fracturing of his family, and brought on lasting health problems.

While some scholars have disputed the generally recognized figure of 30,000 people saved as a result of Sousa Mendes’s actions—of whom perhaps 10,000 were Jews—it is clear that the number of refugees granted visas on his watch came to many thousands. Those reducing the number often only consider his efforts in Bordeaux, omitting the actions he took in Hendaye (twice), Bayonne, and Toulouse, among other places.

In 1945 Aristides de Sousa Mendes suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed. Clearly, the strain of the previous few years was a contributing factor, as it was also to his early death on April 3, 1954. He died in poverty and obscurity, with one of his nieces the only person present.

The rehabilitation of his reputation only began after his death. On October 18, 1966, Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations, the first diplomat to be so honored. Within Portugal, his children worked to clear his name, but it was only on March 18, 1988, that the Portuguese government gave some measure of recognition when the Parliament dismissed all charges and posthumously restored him to the diplomatic corps. In 1995 President Mário Soares declared Sousa Mendes to be “Portugal’s greatest hero of the twentieth century.”

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See also: France; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Desk Killers

“Desk murderers” or “desk killers” (in German, *Schreib-tisch-ta-ter*) is a term sometimes given to the process whereby bureaucrats administer murderous policies devised by politicians or military leaders. Within the context of the Holocaust, the term refers to civil service bureaucrats, primarily in the Berlin offices of the SS, who maintained the paper flow of documents regarding the mass murder of European Jewry. These documents most often related to personnel and resource allocations, contracts, transportation schedules, and other areas requiring specialist input at the government level.

The most infamous desk killer was SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, who was given responsibility by his superior, SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, for devising the means and coordinating the process of deporting and transporting Jews to ghettos, labor, and concentration camps, and, ultimately, the Nazi death camps situated in Poland. As policy is a response to a perceived administrative challenge, Eichmann threw himself into his work with enthusiasm and efficiency. He saw himself as an effective administrator dealing with a major policy issue that had been entrusted for resolution to his care. That it involved the murder of millions of people was of little concern; the important thing for him, in his bureaucratic capacity, was to deal with the task assigned to him as efficiently and commendably as possible.

At the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942—a meeting of senior Nazi officials held in Berlin to put into administrative terms the manner in which the “Final Solution” would be carried out—the minutes reflected the consensus reached by the 16 delegates (who included Eichmann and Heydrich). Of those present, eight had earned doctorates, and a majority possessed legal degrees. Though directly responsible for the mass murder of the Jews of Europe, none were instrumentally involved in the actual extermination process; most never experienced at firsthand the killing practices of the Holocaust, and, more often than not, never even visited the sites of the various killing centers.

Both before and during the Holocaust, desk killers have typically addressed their tasks in a similar vein to that of Eichmann, regardless of their national or ideological background. They have been detached, deliberate, speedy, and highly focused on meeting their objectives without succumbing to the temptation of considering human morality that might deflect their attention. Indeed, if pressed, many would argue that by doing their job as effectively as they are able, humanity is being served with a minimum of harm being done to their own population because of the clarity and precision they bring to their tasks. It is because of their detach-

ment that desk killers often fail to see the criminal nature of their work—but it is that work that facilitates modern genocide, the more so in highly developed states. In fact, it could be said that the more modern a society, the greater the reliance on desk killers in planning and carrying out policies of genocide.

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See also: Arendt, Hannah; Bureaucracy; Eichmann, Adolf; Wannsee Conference

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Deutsche Bank

Founded in 1870 in Berlin, the Deutsche Bank today is the largest bank in the European Union. It operates internationally with 1,500 branches in Germany alone and more than 90,000 employees in more than 60 countries. In 1999 the Deutsche Bank made a profit of 2.6 billion euros.

The financial demands of rapid German industrialization in the 1860s and a developing nationalism led to the establishment of the Deutsche Bank as a competitor to the then-dominant British banks. Branches were established in Bremen, Hamburg, Yokohama, Shanghai, and London during its first three years. The bank supported the development of the internationally successful German electrical industry and in 1903 helped finance the Bagdadbahn, a railroad connecting Istanbul and Baghdad, which served German expansionist interests. It had cooperated with the German foreign ministry, the *Auswärtiges Amt*, and had established after some prodding the *Ueberseeischen Bank* (Overseas Bank) in 1886 and the *Deutsch-Asiatischen Bank* (German-Asiatic Bank) three years later.

World War I, the loss of foreign investment, and the hyperinflation in Germany in the early 1920s hit the bank hard and led to a period of consolidation. However, the Deutsche Bank was soon in business again, financing the creation of *Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft*, the first German film studio, and the merger of Daimler and Benz into Mercedes-Benz. In 1929 Deutsche Bank merged with its major German competitor, the *Disconto-Gesellschaft*. The name *Deutsche Bank-Disconto-Gesellschaft* was used until

1937, when it was changed back to the original shorter name. The Great Depression found the Deutsche Bank unprepared. Short-term foreign loans on the one side and debtors who were unable to pay back credit on the other led to a drastic shortage of liquid assets.

After Adolf Hitler had been made German chancellor and the Nazis took power in 1933, the Deutsche Bank submitted without resistance to the racist policies of removing Jews from among its staff and from high management positions. The last Jewish member of the board had to leave the bank in 1938. When, in the course of the Nazis' economic war against the Jews, Jews were prohibited any kind of enterprise after 1938, the Deutsche Bank facilitated the so-called Aryanization of Jewish businesses (forced transfer of Jewish-owned businesses to German "Aryan" ownership) in more than 350 cases by giving credits to the new owners and as an intermediary. By the end of the war the Deutsche Bank had handed over all Jewish assets to the German government. Between 1942 and 1944 the bank helped in the transfer of a large amount of gold to be sold by the German government to finance the war. More than 1,500 pounds of the gold was from victims of the Holocaust.

In 1948 the Deutsche Bank was broken up into 10 regional banks by the occupying forces, but in 1957 they were recombined in what again was named the Deutsche Bank. Today the Deutsche Bank is the most dominant financial institution in Germany and in Europe.

MICHAEL WALA

See also: Aryanization; Confiscation of Jewish Property

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The Diary of a Young Girl

Along with Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1960), Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* is the most internationally well-known and well-received book addressing the reality of the Holocaust from the viewpoint of a young person's trauma.

Born in 1929 in Germany, Anne Frank and her family—mother, father, and sister—went into hiding in a "Secret Annex" in a factory in Amsterdam, Holland, to escape the Nazis. A talented writer, the years encompassed by her diary

were 1942 to 1944, when she was aged 13 to 15. In the diary she records not only her thoughts, dreams, and aspirations, but also details of life in hiding, for this Jewish family and the others who would join them, along with the daily tensions among them. Although befriended by non-Jews, she, her family, and the other inhabitants were betrayed by a Dutch police officer and transported to Bergen-Belsen, where she died of typhus three months short of her 16th birthday in 1945. The diary itself was retrieved after the war by her father, Otto Frank, the only member of the family to survive. The diary was edited by him and subsequently published in numerous languages beginning in 1952. In the United States it was turned into a stage version, originally by Meyer Levin, and later into a movie starring Susan Strasberg, daughter of famed director Lee Strassberg. Both versions provoked controversy, particularly over the universalization of her experiences versus the particularity of her Jewish identity.

The Diary of a Young Girl has become a standard in both middle school and high school language arts curricula in many nations around the globe. In the Netherlands itself the diary remains akin to a "book above reproach" (although a critical edition of the original manuscript was published there), and Anne herself has become something of an icon.

International Holocaust deniers continue to attack the authenticity of the diary, but to no avail. Objectively speaking, while acknowledging both its merit and popularity, *The Diary of a Young Girl* must not be equated with the whole of the Holocaust; it is a window of insight into one small part of the spectrum of the victims' experiences, specifically, those who went into hiding but, tragically, did not survive.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Children during the Holocaust; Children's Literature of the Holocaust; Netherlands; Rescuers of Jews

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The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak

The published diaries of a 15-year-old Polish Jewish boy who endured the horrors of the Łódź ghetto between 1939 and 1943. The ghetto, located in central Poland, was the

second-largest of its kind in Nazi-occupied Poland. At its peak it contained more than 200,000 people. Dawid Sierakowski made his first diary entry on June 28, 1939, when he was 15. Writing in seven different notebooks (the last two have yet to be published), Sierakowski created an entry for most days, although their length and detail vary widely. The entries reveal the horrors of being forced to live amid the constant fear of starvation, disease and sickness, paralyzing terror, and the knowledge that one faced an almost certain death. Although the entries are not deeply philosophical, they offer great insight into the day-to-day struggles of Sierakowski and his family (before the diary ended, Dawid lost his father to tuberculosis and his mother to deportation and extermination). Most poignant perhaps is the overall narrative arc in the entries, which describes—many times in heart-breaking detail—the slow and steady deterioration of Sierakowski's health and the slow unraveling of his family.

Notably, Sierakowski also wrote about the underground resistance movement in the ghetto, comprised mainly of youths, and agonized over class divisions therein. A believer in Marxist utopianism, Sierakowski was chagrined that Jews could divide against themselves even when faced with the same terrible circumstances and fate. He also wrote of the growing sense of alienation he and his family experienced because they were not connected to the ghetto's tyrannical leader, Chaim Rumkowski, who played favorites, tried to pit one group against another, and ensured that his family and cronies received more food and supplies than the others.

At the same time, the entries deal with more mundane things, like the author's attempt to secure work and food rations. He also writes of school and sometimes analyzes literature he has read. Despite his hardships, Dawid Sierakowski consistently demonstrates an inquisitive mind that constantly seeks out new knowledge. As a whole the diary offers an unparalleled view of a ghetto during World War II. Dawid's last diary entry was made in April 1943, a time in which his health had begun to deteriorate. He died of tuberculosis on August 8, 1943, and nobody knows for certain what happened to him in the last four months of his life or why he stopped writing in April.

The diaries were discovered when Soviet forces liberated Łódź in January 1945. By then there were perhaps only 10,000 survivors of the more than 200,000 people who had initially resided in the ghetto. It took many years to translate Sierakowski's work; his diary was published in 1998 by Oxford University Press.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Children during the Holocaust; Ghettos; Łódź Ghetto

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Dinur, Yehiel

Polish-born Jewish writer whose work graphically portrayed various aspects of the Holocaust, partly based on the two years he spent in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. Yehiel Dinur, who wrote in Hebrew beginning in 1945 under the pen name Ka-Tzetnik 135633 (Yiddish slang for “concentration camp prisoner”; the 6-digit numeral was Dinur's concentration camp number at Auschwitz), was born on May 16, 1909, in Sosnowiec, Poland. He attended a traditional yeshiva (religious-based Jewish school) in Lublin, Poland, and was an early adherent of Zionism. In 1931 he published his first volume of poetry, which he composed in Yiddish.

Most of Dinur's works were published after 1945, and a great majority of it dealt with his personal experiences as a concentration camp internee or examined the Holocaust from various angles. Dinur downplayed his life prior to World War II and refused to discuss any aspect of his existence before 1943. Indeed, it was as if he had been born in the concentration camp. His first work dealing with the Holocaust was *Salamandra* (*Sunrise over Hell*), published in 1946. Other more notable books included *House of Dolls* (1955), *Star of Ashes* (1966), and *Shiviti: A Vision* (1989). Dinur's major works were written in a memoir format, which blended actual events and eyewitness accounts with accounts that seem to be fictional or quasi-fictional. That left him open to criticism by some scholars that his work makes it difficult to sort fact from fantasy. Regardless, Dinur's stories were meticulously detailed and, many times, exceedingly graphic. *House of Dolls*, for example, is a lurid account of the Nazis' sexual exploitation of women interned in concentration camps. Dinur frequently stated that he believed he had a mission to narrate the Holocaust on behalf of the millions who had not survived it.

Dinur's true identity was a carefully guarded secret until he elected to testify at the war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann

in 1961. During his testimony Dinur became so emotional that he passed out in the courtroom. He revealed that his two years as a prisoner were akin to life on another planet, in an alternate universe. It was clear that Dinur's experiences had radically altered his life and worldview. These experiences also brought about a severe case of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which plagued Dinur for the remainder of his life.

Dinur stayed engaged in projects that sought to educate people about the Holocaust, and he also became involved in the antinuclear movement. He continued to write until his death in Tel Aviv on July 17, 2001.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz; Eichmann Trial

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Displaced Persons

In the aftermath of World War II and the defeat of the Nazis and their allies, it has been estimated that by 1947 more than 8 million persons found themselves displaced from their homes throughout Europe, including more than 250,000 Jews. Some have estimated that the actual numbers were even higher—between 11,000,000 and 20,000,000—the majority of whom were released from the various Nazi concentration, labor, and extermination camps.

Many of these people, now free, fled westward, fearful of finding themselves in the Soviet zone of occupation and subject to repatriation (or worse). For those who either had no homes to which to return, no countries who wished their return, or did not themselves wish to do so, how to house, clothe, and feed them, and provide medical services, both physical and psychological, became an Allied nightmare. Initial assumptions were that both their return and their welcome could be easily achieved within a matter of six months to one year, but such would not prove to be the case. As a way around this, the necessity of so-called "DP Camps" for these people grew at an alarming rate throughout Germany, Austria, Italy, and, to a lesser degree, other countries formerly conquered and occupied by the Nazis.

At their maximum level of operation, approximately 850,000 people were housed in these camps; they included

Armenians, Croats, Czechoslovaks, Estonians, Greeks, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, Serbs, Slovenes, Ukrainians, and Yugoslavs. The plight of the Jewish refugees, however, was somewhat unique: all too often they found themselves in the same camps where the antisemitic proclivities of the others manifested itself, up to and including violence. Ultimately, in many situations, this necessitated their segregation into separate camps. In the main, such segregation was the result of U.S. President Harry S. Truman's strong encouragement in response to the report he requested from University of Pennsylvania vice president and Law School dean Earl G. Harrison, who visited the camps between July and August 1945, found the situation of the camps intolerable, and submitted his written report on August 24. As regards the Jews, he wrote that many were "living under guard behind barbed-wire fences" and "had no clothing other than their concentration camp garb." The camp environments were substandard, with many of the buildings "clearly unfit for winter." Speaking of the Allied administrations, Harrison noted: "We appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of S.S. troops. One is led to wonder whether the German people, seeing this, are not supposing that we are following or at least condoning Nazi policy."

Harrison was equally critical of the military administration under Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and tension developed between the two as Eisenhower attempted to explain and rationalize to his president the reality of the conditions that existed, though ultimately resolving such concerns positively. Of necessity, as Eisenhower understood it, the Allies found themselves having to make use of whatever facilities were presented: military barracks, hotels, hospitals, castles, and even private homes. Camp conditions ranged from deplorable and harsh to livable. Sometimes foodstuffs were rationed; other times there was enough to feed all. Sometimes curfews were imposed and residents were forbidden to interact with townspeople; other times easy egress and ingress was the norm. It should also be noted that one of the senior members of Eisenhower's command, U.S. Army General George S. Patton Jr., was and remained an avowed antisemite in regard to the fate of the Jewish survivors.

On October 1, 1945, UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), which had already begun directing such camp efforts, now took responsibility for such work, while still relying on the military for

transportation, security, and supply-lines. By the end of the year, more than 6,000,000 refugees had been repatriated. These did not include so-called “ethnic Germans,” between 12,000,000 and 14,000,000 of whom had been expelled from Eastern and Central Europe by 1950, when all but two of the DP camps had been closed—Föhrenwald in 1957 and Wels in 1959.

Relatively quickly, once camp life assumed a reasonable measure of stability and routine, the residents themselves were hard at work, establishing synagogues and churches, newspapers, and cultural and educational endeavors. They were aided in these efforts by various international humanitarian organizations and agencies, including (for example) the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; American Friends Service Committee (“the Quakers”) and their British counterpart, the British Friends Relief Service; Catholic charities; the International Committee of the Red Cross; the International Lutheran World Federation; and many national and international organizations as well.

Those displaced persons (by far the majority of whom were not Jewish) who could emigrate did so as well: to Argentina (17,000); Australia (182,159); Belgium (22,000); Brazil (29,000); Canada (157,687); France (38,157); French Morocco (1,500); Norway (692); the United Kingdom (213,000); and the United States (400,000). By 1953, however, more than 250,000 refugees still remained throughout Europe with no place to go, largely elderly, crippled, infirm, or disabled as a result of their traumatization.

As noted previously, Jewish refugees posed a separate and distinct set of problems and difficulties. Approximately 185,000 were in camps in Germany, 45,000 in Austria, and 20,000 in Italy. Referring to themselves as the *She'erit Hapleitah* (“The Saving Remnant”), they very quickly organized themselves out of their overwhelming concern for their own safety and own future. The overwhelming majority of those who survived, whether in hiding or liberated from the camps, did not wish to remain in Europe but preferred to emigrate—primarily to Palestine, which was under British control. The difficulty here was that the British denied Jewish admission so as not to offend the Arab population there, though for Zionists entry to Palestine remained a primary objective. Both the Jewish Agency, representing the Jews of Palestine, and British Jewish soldiers from the Jewish Brigade, continued to encourage such thinking. David Ben-Gurion, who would later become Israel’s first prime minister, visited European DP camps several times between 1945 and 1946 to encourage emigration. Even the British- and

American-sponsored Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry encouraged emigration to the tune of 100,000 Jewish refugees (along with other recommendations including maintaining the British mandate, close supervision of all holy sites, and close consultation and cooperation with both the Jewish Agency and the Arab States); still, the British refused the recommendation. Between 1945 and 1948 the illegal underground organized effort known as “*Bricha*” (escape) accounted for more than 100,000 to 150,000 Jews being smuggled into Palestine, and this may have been a decisive factor in Britain’s decision to abandon its control of the area.

The DP camps were an immediate necessity in the aftermath of the chaotic days following Germany’s defeat and the end of World War II, coupled with both the devastation existing throughout Europe and the tensions already beginning to surface between the West and Soviet Russia. Successful efforts at meeting refugee needs were coupled with limited repatriation efforts and failures as well (for example, overt violence in some camps fueled by antisemitism, or an inability to meet needs in some locales), all of which were heightened by the specific plight of the Jews, the focused enemies of Hitler’s and the Nazis’ annihilationist agenda.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Concentration Camps; Liberation, Concentration Camps; *Exodus 1947*; International Committee of the Red Cross; Joint Distribution Committee

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Doctors' Trial

The Doctors’ Trial occurred in Nuremberg, Germany, between December 9, 1946, and August 20, 1947. Known officially as *United States of America v. Karl Brandt et al.*, the Doctors’ Trial is not to be confused with the trials supervised by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. The Doctors’ Trial was conducted strictly by a U.S. military

court. The proceedings tried 23 Nazi German defendants, all of whom were charged with Nazi human experimentation, euthanasia, and mass murder. Most of the defendants were medical doctors, although some were scientists or lower-level functionaries who aided in the commission of the crimes. The formal indictments were handed down on October 25, 1946.

The defendants were accused of having engaged in cruel or inhuman medical experiments, many of which were conducted on nonvolunteer subjects who had been internees at concentration camps or prisoners of war. Others were accused of having carried out Nazi euthanasia laws, which were designed to murder individuals who were mentally or physically ill or were disabled. The litany of accusations were truly horrific—they included exposing individuals to dangerous or poisonous chemicals or gas to determine the body's reaction to them; surgical experimentation without the use of anesthetics; unnecessary amputations; exposing people to deadly bacteria such as typhus; and forced sterilization, among other things.

The defendants' defense team argued—unsuccessfully—that the experiments were not illegal because they were designed to save the lives of German soldiers and that their chief intent was not to inflict suffering or death on subjects. The defense also argued that euthanasia was not a war crime because German law had sanctioned the activity and the program had provided mercy to the afflicted. This line of argument was also unsuccessful. All the defendants were found guilty. Seven were given death sentences, five were given life imprisonment, and the remaining men were given sentences ranging from 10 to 20 years imprisonment.

The Doctors' Trial also informed the enactment of the Nuremberg Code, which is an internationally applied convention of medical ethics that control medical experimentation. Informed by the trial, the code mandated that all human subjects be voluntary participants and that experiments be conducted to avoid pain or permanent injury.

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See also: Brandt, Karl; Gebhardt, Karl; Medical Experimentation; Nuremberg Code; Oberheuser, Herta

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Dora-Mittelbau

Dora-Mittelbau was a Nazi forced labor and concentration camp situated in central Germany, north of the town of Nordhausen. Known also as Dora-Nordhausen or Nordhausen, the facility was also close to the Harz Mountains. It began as a subcamp of the Buchenwald concentration camp and became an autonomous facility in October 1944. The year before, prisoners from Buchenwald were forced to start construction on a sprawling industrial complex and prison, which eventually became Dora-Mittelbau. Prisoners at Dora-Mittelbau were forced to work in the factories and quarries nearby. Most of the prisoners were Jews, but there were also some Roma, criminals, and “asocials” (mainly homosexuals). Eventually, Dora-Mittelbau would have more



Dora-Mittelbau was a German Nazi concentration camp located near Nordhausen. It was established in late summer 1943 as a subcamp of Buchenwald, supplying for manufacturing the V-2 rocket and the V-1 flying bomb. In the summer of 1944 Dora-Mittelbau became an independent concentration camp with numerous subcamps of its own. In 1945 most of the surviving inmates were evacuated by the SS. On April 11, 1945, the remaining prisoners were liberated by U.S. troops. This photo shows a French slave laborer sitting inside a hangar the day after the liberation. (Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images)

than 30 subcamps and a permanent prisoner population of 12,000–13,000.

Most prisoners worked and lived underground, where they slaved on weapons development projects and labored in various war-related industries. The Germans had placed much of this activity underground after Allied air raids had destroyed above-ground facilities. The conditions in which the prisoners lived and worked were appalling; they saw no daylight and breathed no fresh air for weeks at a time, which increased sickness and disease. Indeed, the death rate at Dora-Mittelbau was higher than at most other concentration camps because of these circumstances. Food was scarce and bad, and medical care was virtually nonexistent. When prisoners became too ill or exhausted from work, they were shipped out to Mauthausen or Birkenau, where most were killed. Discipline, which was harsh and arbitrary, was meted out under the supervision of the SS, which ran the camp.

As more war production was relocated to the area, prisoners built a vast array of subcamps, linked by tunnels and often built into the sides of mountains. The more important subcamps included Nordhausen, Niedersachswerfen, and Neusollstedt. In addition to working in munitions plants, prisoners also labored at a nearby ammonia works and stone quarry. Dora-Mittelbau had an active underground resistance movement, through which some prisoners purposely sabotaged items or slowed production. Individuals suspected of such activities were summarily killed. It is estimated that at least 200 detainees were put to death because of their resistance activity.

As Allied forces pressed into Germany from the east and west in the spring of 1945, the Germans sought to liquidate Dora-Mittelbau. Many detainees were sent to Bergen-Belsen, but many died on the forced march to northern Germany. When U.S. troops liberated the camp in April 1945, only a few critically ill prisoners remained there. In all, as many as 60,000 prisoners worked at or transited through Dora-Mittelbau. About 9,000 alone died from overwork; several thousand more died from starvation and disease.

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See also: Concentration Camps

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Drancy

The Drancy internment and transit camp, located just outside of Paris, was used as an assembly center for arrested Jews who were later deported to extermination camps during the German military administration of occupied France during World War II. More than 65,000 French, Polish, and German Jews, including approximately 11,000 children, were exported from Drancy on 64 rail transports from June 1942 to July 1944. The overwhelming majority of the prisoners that passed through the Drancy camp were Jews; however, a small percentage of the prisoners at the camp included members of the French Resistance. The camp at Drancy was liberated on August 17, 1944.

The Drancy camp was located to the northeast of Paris in the suburb of Drancy. Prior to World War II, architects Marcel Lods and Eugène Beaudouin conceived the facility as a modern urban community. The building was noteworthy for its integration of high-rise residential apartments, making it one of the first structures of its kind in France. The complex was named La Cité de la Muette, meaning “The Silent City,” when it was built, as it stood for peaceful ideals. The multistory U-shaped building was confiscated by Nazi authorities shortly after the occupation of France in 1940 and was initially used as police barracks before becoming the primary detention center for Jews (and other individuals labeled as “undesirable”) who were arrested in the Paris region. The facility was designed to accommodate 700 people, yet at the height of its use it housed more than 7,000 prisoners.

In August 1941 the Drancy camp was created by the Vichy government of Philippe Pétain in cooperation with the Nazi occupation authorities. The facility was established as an internment camp for foreign Jews in France after the arrest and roundup of more than 4,000 Jews in Paris in August 1941. Drancy later became the major transit camp for deporting Jews out of France. French police initially staffed the camp under the supervision of the German security police, and several thousand prisoners managed to obtain

release in the first year of the camp's existence. Documented testimonies exist of brutality by the French guards, including the execution of 40 Jewish prisoners in retaliation for a French attack on German personnel.

The conditions in the camp were very harsh due to a neglect of basic human needs. The Jews at Drancy suffered from a lack of personal needs, inadequate food, unsanitary conditions, and overcrowding. In addition to the brutal conditions inside the camp, small children, upon arrival, were immediately separated from their parents. Evidence exists that more than 3,000 Jews died in French camps including Drancy; other camps, such as Noe, Gurs, and Rebecedou also saw many deaths due to starvation and lack of medical care.

Beginning in the summer of 1942, Germans began the systematic deportation of Jews from Drancy to killing centers located in occupied Poland. Sixty-four railway transports left Drancy carrying Jews on rail cars designed for cattle. The first was on June 22, 1942; the last on July 31, 1944. In total, more than 65,000 Jews were deported from Drancy to Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Sobibór killing centers. One-third of the Jews who had been deported from Drancy were French citizens; the others were foreign Jews who had immigrated from Poland, Germany, Austria, and elsewhere. A number of distinguished French Jewish intellectuals and artists were held in Drancy, including René Blum, a famous choreographer and younger brother of Prime Minister Léon Blum; Tristan Bernard, a philosopher; and poet Max Jacob, who died while imprisoned at Drancy.

Beginning in the early hours of the morning of July 16, 1942, and lasting through the next day, an event occurred known as "The Great Raid of the Vel' d'Hiv," when nearly 13,000 Jews were arrested in Paris. The adult men were sent directly to Drancy, while many of the women and children were held for five days without food or medical care inside the Vélodrome d'Hiver, an indoor cycling stadium, before being transferred to Drancy. The adults were then transported to Auschwitz and gassed; the children remained in Drancy for weeks without proper care or adequate food. Several babies and young children died due to neglect and the uncaring treatment of the French guards. Eventually all of the children were also transported to Auschwitz, to be gassed upon arrival.

In July 1943 Nazi Germany took direct control of the Drancy camp under the leadership of SS officer Alois Brunner, an Austrian who worked as Adolf Eichmann's assistant.

The Germans taking over the day-to-day operations at Drancy was part of an intensification of all facilities for the mass exterminations of all Jews throughout Nazi-occupied Europe.

On April 6, 1944, SS-Hauptsturmführer and Gestapo member Klaus Barbie, known as the "Butcher of Lyon," captured Jewish children in a raid on a children's home in Izieu, where the children had been hidden. He arrested all 44 children and seven adults. The children were shipped directly to Drancy and then put on the first available train to the death camps in the east. Of the 44 children of Izieu, not a single one survived.

As Allied forces neared Drancy on August 15 and 16, 1944, the German authorities there burned all the camp documents prior to fleeing. On August 17, 1944, the Swedish Consul-General, Raoul Nordling, took control of the camp. He found 1,542 surviving Jews at the camp and asked the French Red Cross to care for them. Of the 65,000 Jews that were exported from the Drancy camp to killing centers between June 22, 1942, and July 31, 1944, fewer than 2,000 survived the Holocaust.

For more than 40 years the government of France did not admit responsibility for the actions of the Vichy government of Philippe Pétain and the French police in the arrest, detainment, and exportation of French Jews during World War II. It was on July 16, 1995, that, in a historic speech, then-President Jacques Chirac recognized the responsibility of the French state in seconding the "criminal folly of the occupying country," and in particular, the role of the French police in organizing the 1942 Vel' d'Hiv Roundup.

In 1973 a memorial sculpture titled "The Gates of Hell" was created by Shelomo Selinger, the French-Israeli sculptor, to commemorate the French Jews who had passed through Drancy. In 2012 French president François Hollande opened a Holocaust memorial museum. The museum provides details about the persecution of the Jews in France and includes many personal mementos of the inmates. Some of the items include personal belongings left by inmates (some of which are inscribed with their owner's name), aluminum drinking mugs, messages written on the walls, and an archive of cards and letters written by prisoners to their relatives prior to deportation.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Barbie, Klaus; Brunner, Alois; Concentration Camps; France; Pétain, Philippe; Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français; Vel' d'Hiv Roundup; Vittel

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Duckwitz, Georg

Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz was a German maritime attaché stationed in Denmark during World War II who warned the Jews of Denmark of their imminent deportation at the hands of the Nazis in 1943. This action saved almost the entire Jewish community.

He was born on September 29, 1904, in Bremen. After finishing commercial college, he pursued a career in the international coffee trade. He became a member of the Nazi Party in 1932, and in 1939 the Nazi Foreign Ministry assigned him to the German embassy in Copenhagen as an expert in maritime affairs.

When Germany occupied Denmark in April 1940 there were no immediate threats to the Danish Jewish community, but things seemed about to change in 1942 when a new Nazi plenipotentiary, Werner Best, was appointed to Denmark. Best, a former deputy chief of the Gestapo and hard-core Nazi ideologue, had previously been known for his ruthlessness in planning a new Europe on racial lines. After his appointment to Denmark, however, he chose at first to retain a policy of moderation.

In August 1943, after an increase in resistance activity, a state of emergency was declared across Denmark, paving the way for the Nazis to move against the country's Jews. In September Adolf Hitler approved their deportation, with the operation to commence at 10:00 p.m. on October 1, 1943. Two German passenger ships were ready to move approximately 5,000 Jews to Germany, while buses would take the remaining 2,500. The destination of all was to be Theresienstadt.

Duckwitz learned from Best of the deportation plans on September 11, 1943. In a state of shock, he flew to Berlin two days later to try to have them stopped, though he was, predictably, unsuccessful. Two weeks later he flew to Stockholm and contacted Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson with the request that Sweden receive Jewish refugees from Denmark should they be smuggled across the Øresund. Two days later, Hansson responded in the affirmative.

Returning to Denmark on September 29, 1943, Duckwitz leaked news of the deportation order to a leading Danish Social Democrat, Hans Hedtoft, who later recalled that Duckwitz made his announcement in a state of “indignation and shame.” Hedtoft immediately warned Carl Bertelsmann Henriques, the head the Jewish community, and Rabbi Dr. Marcus Melchior, the acting chief rabbi of Denmark. They took immediate action and spread the warning, realizing that the deportation was to begin on the Jewish holy day of Rosh Hashanah. By October 2, when the Gestapo set out to implement their plans, there were practically no Jews left to deport.

In what became a national underground project, both the organized Danish resistance movement and everyday citizens worked to evacuate as many members of the Jewish community as could be located. Phone calls were placed, homes opened as safe houses, and Jews were spirited to hiding places in the countryside while arrangements were made to move them across the Sound. From all walks of life and in all parts of the country, Danes felt that the persecution of minorities was an intolerable breach of Danish culture.

Once the Jews were out of the gaze of the Nazis, a safe passage was arranged across the water to Sweden. While some were transported in large fishing boats, many others—individuals or families—were ferried to freedom in much smaller vessels, even rowboats. A mass escape thereby took place of more than 7,200 Jews and 700 of their non-Jewish relatives. Only 500 Jews, many of whom were elderly and sick, were caught and deported to Theresienstadt. Once in Sweden, the Jewish refugees remained protected by their Danish neighbors back home, who oversaw the protection of their property in their absence.

For those who had been captured and deported, the Danish government arranged for food, medicine, clothes, and other supplies to be delivered, and the government prevailed upon the Nazis to allow the Red Cross to regularly inspect their conditions. Although, tragically, there were some fatalities, by the end of the war most of those who had been captured returned to Denmark.

Once Duckwitz had tipped off the Jewish community and witnessed their rescue, he resumed work as Germany's maritime attaché to Denmark. He kept his head down for the rest of the war, conscious of the possibility of exposure to the Gestapo, and knowing full well that there would be severe consequences for him if he was caught—especially as he was a member of the Nazi Party himself. Certainly, the likelihood of death or a concentration camp, if caught, was ever present.

After the war, Duckwitz remained in the German Foreign Service and became West Germany's ambassador to Denmark between 1955 and 1958. Later he became ambassador to India, and in 1966 he was appointed secretary of state in West Germany's Foreign Office until retirement in 1970. On March 29, 1971, Yad Vashem recognized Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his efforts to assist the Danish Jews in escaping to Sweden. He died on February 16, 1973.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Best, Werner; Denmark; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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E

Eckart, Johann Dietrich

Referred to by Hitler as his “North Star,” Johann Dietrich Eckart had a tremendous influence both on Hitler and on the Nazi Party during the early years of the movement. One indication of Hitler’s regard for Eckart can be seen in the last two words of Hitler’s book, *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*). There, following the last sentence and standing alone, are the words “Dietrich Eckart.”

Eckart was born to a wealthy family on March 23, 1868, in Neumarkt, Bavaria. His mother died when he was 10 years old; his father when he was in his late twenties. After squandering much of the inheritance his father left him, and after studying law and later medicine, Eckart abandoned both to pursue a career as a poet, playwright, and journalist. He moved to Berlin in 1899, bringing with him his long-term morphine addiction, and for years he struggled while his plays were poorly received. In 1912, however, Eckart’s adaptation of Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*, a play that ran for more than 600 performances in Berlin, restored his coffers and allowed him to make important social contacts that would ultimately work to Hitler’s advantage. Eckart’s version of the play has been called a “racial allegory,” in which Gynt symbolized the German *Übermensch* (superman) caught up in a heroic battle against the Jews.

Eckart’s concept of a “genius superman” portended what would become the role played by Hitler, first in the Nazi Party and later throughout the Third Reich. Eckart is also responsible for the concept of the Jewish “stab-in-the-back” (*Dolchstoßlegende*) that became the accepted explanation

for Germany’s loss in World War I and served as one of the rationales for the Nazis’ treatment of the Jews.

Perhaps the most concrete of Eckart’s contributions to what we now know as the Nazi party was his co-founding of the German Workers’ Party (*Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) in January 1919 with Anton Drexler, Alfred Rosenberg (who earlier worked with Eckart on an antisemitic periodical), Karl Harrer, and Gottfried Feder. It was through this that Eckart met Hitler. Eckart saw in Hitler the “German Messiah” that a group with which he was involved—the Thule Society—believed would lead Germany to its proper place of glory. Eckart and Hitler became close friends, with Eckart writing poems that extolled Hitler as a “super genius” and standing near Hitler when he spoke at rallies. In February 1920 the party changed its name to the National Socialist German Worker’s Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*), which soon became known as the Nazi Party due to the German pronunciation of the first two syllables of *Nationalsozialistische*.

Other contributions made by Eckart to the Nazi Party include his role as the first publisher of the *Völkischer Beobachter* (“People’s Observer”), the party paper that provided Hitler a daily platform to espouse the party’s policies and ideology. He also introduced Hitler to prominent people of Eckart’s acquaintance, whom Hitler in his early years would otherwise not have met.

Perhaps Eckart’s most lasting contribution was the discussions the two men had on issues and theories that helped form the ideological foundation on which the Nazi Party was

built. Eckart shared his strong sense of nationalism—which was often seen in his poetry—and antisemitism with Hitler. He no doubt also shared his conviction—revealed in a book published soon after his death—that Hitler, alone among all others, saw the Jews' exodus from Egypt for what it really was: an escape after having failed to overthrow the pharaoh and his ruling clique. Thus, it was not only Nazi ideology that Eckart helped shape but also Hitler's self-image as the German savior.

Eckart participated with Hitler in the Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923, the failed attempt to overthrow the government of the Weimar Republic that resulted in the arrest of Hitler and, among others, Eckart. Soon thereafter, Eckart was released from prison due to failing health. He died on December 26, 1923. His memory was perpetuated, however, as, in addition to Hitler's honor to him at the end of *Mein Kampf*, his name was incorporated into the city name of his birthplace, and a monument was erected in his honor.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: *Mein Kampf*; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Rosenberg, Alfred

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Edelman, Marek

Marek Edelman was a leader of the Jewish fighters during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943. It is unclear in which year he was born, though September 19, 1919, is the date quoted most often. Born in Homel (now Gomel, Belarus), he was an only son. Both his parents were socialists: his father, Natan, was a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, and his mother, Cecylia, was an activist in the Jewish Labor Bund. Orphaned by the time he had turned 14, he had already been thoroughly indoctrinated into socialist ways; as he grew to maturity, he became an active member of the Bund.

After Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Edelman, barely 20, found himself herded into what became the Warsaw Ghetto. On July 22, 1942, the Nazis began deporting Jews from the ghetto at a rate of 6,000 a day. In response, Edelman and other young Jews—among them Mordecai Anielewicz—formed a resistance group determined to

confront the Nazis. Comprised largely of youth groups that anticipated the Nazi intention to liquidate the ghetto entirely, they created what became known as the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, or ŻOB).

The ŻOB was a formation that united three usually incompatible groups: Zionists, communists, and Bundists, and given the ideological gulf separating them it proved difficult for ŻOB to mobilize the inhabitants of the ghetto for the struggle to come. Still, this did not hold Edelman back from trying to develop a viable and effective force. As an employee of the ghetto hospital, he was able each day to visit the *Umschlagplatz*—the square in Warsaw where the Nazis concentrated Jews for deportation to Treblinka—carrying passes authorizing him to take people who were too ill to travel off the trains. He took advantage of this to save fit younger Jews who could be recruited to fight.

By September 1942, after wholesale deportations had taken place, only 60,000 Jews remained. In advance of the anticipated confrontation, the ŻOB began acquiring whatever weapons it could obtain for a possible revolt—not, as Edelman said later, in order to defeat or destroy the Nazis, but to at least give those who were already doomed the opportunity to choose how they were to die.

On January 18, 1943, ŻOB fighters opened fire, forcing the Nazis to withdraw and suspend the remaining deportations. Then, when it seemed certain that the final liquidation of the ghetto was about to take place on the eve of Passover (April 19, 1943), the ŻOB struck. Firing from every vantage point, they forced the Germans onto the defensive and obliged them to retreat in what became the most extensive act of armed urban resistance in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The ŻOB could only muster 220 men and women as their fighting strength. This was ranged against Nazi units numbering a daily average of more than 2,000 troops, backed by tanks, artillery, and aircraft. The ghetto fighters were largely untrained, woefully underequipped, and lacking in food and clean water. Edelman led the medical teams assisting the wounded in a constant struggle to alleviate pain caused through gunfire, falling masonry, and, above all, burns after the Nazis decided to reduce the ghetto by fire.

When Anielewicz lost his life during the fighting at Miła 18 on May 8, Edelman—who had been one of three subcommanders—took over as leader of the ŻOB. Overall, the resistance struggle with the Germans lasted three weeks. While the fighters took some German lives and wounded many others, the Jewish losses were significantly greater—and this was to say nothing of the remaining civilian

population, which was deported in the tens of thousands. As the fighting intensified, the Nazi military, led by General Jürgen Stroop, decided to clean out the ghetto block by block. Instead of fighting for the buildings, Stroop ordered that they be burned, leaving the remaining fighters with nowhere to turn for cover.

The scorched-earth tactics worked. The remnants of the ŻOB—only about 50, by most estimates—fled through Warsaw’s sewers with the help of couriers from the Polish underground outside the ghetto. Edelman then joined the left-wing People’s Army (*Armia Ludowa*), fighting alongside the Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) in the equally ill-fated Warsaw Uprising that began in August 1944. After the failure of the Warsaw Uprising, Edelman and other ŻOB fighters hid in the ruins of the city before being rescued and evacuated.

After the war Edelman elected to remain in Poland, where he studied at Łódź Medical School. Upon graduation, he specialized in cardiology and became one of Poland’s leading heart specialists. He maintained an active interest in issues relating to social justice and workers’ rights, and in 1976 became an activist with the Workers’ Defense Committee. He was an early member of the Solidarity free labor union movement, and was among those interned when General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law in 1981. Following the fall of communism in Poland in 1989, Edelman became a member of various centrist and liberal parties.

In recognition of his activities as a fighter against Nazism, Edelman was awarded Poland’s highest decoration, the Order of the White Eagle, on April 17, 1998. Before his death in 2009 at age 90, Marek Edelman was recognized by all as the last surviving leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and a hero to the memory of those who fought back during the Holocaust.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Anielewicz, Mordecai; Resistance Movements; Stroop, Jürgen; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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Edmonds, Roddie

Roddie Edmonds was an American infantry soldier in World War II who was recognized by Israel’s Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his efforts in rescuing Jewish servicemen at the Stalag IXA POW Camp in Germany. Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, on August 20, 1919, Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds of the United States 422nd Infantry Regiment participated in the landing of U.S. forces in Europe and was taken prisoner by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge on December 17, 1944. He was interned at Stalag IXA, a POW camp near Ziegenhain, in Germany’s Rhineland. As the senior noncommissioned officer, the 25-year-old Edmonds was responsible for the camp’s 1,275 American prisoners of war.

In an exchange in January 1945, the camp commandant, a Major Siegmann, ordered Edmonds to tell only the Jews among the American soldiers to attend the next morning’s *Appell*, or roll call. They would then be separated from the other prisoners, in line with a practice that had been adopted by the German army on the Eastern Front, where many Jewish POWs were sent to extermination camps or murdered. Siegmann gave his order in English, so that there could be no doubt what was required of Edmonds.

Instead, the next morning Edmonds ordered all 1,275 American prisoners, Jews and non-Jews alike, to assemble outside their barracks. When Siegmann saw all the inmates reporting, he exclaimed, “They cannot all be Jews!” Edmonds replied, “We are all Jews,” and, citing the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war, which ruled that they were only obliged to provide their name, rank, and serial number, he refused to identify any prisoners by religion.

At this, Siegmann became enraged, and in a fury he pulled out his pistol and placed it against Edmonds’s head, demanding that he identify the Jewish soldiers under his command. Defying the threat of imminent death, Edmonds told Siegmann, “If you shoot, you’ll have to shoot us all,” and that, should any of Edmonds’s men be harmed, the commandant would be prosecuted for war crimes once the war ended. Major Siegmann, realizing he was at an impasse, backed down; turning around, he left the scene.

Roddie Edmonds’s act of defiance on that January day in 1945 spared the lives of as many as 200 American Jewish soldiers under his command. He then survived the next 100 days of captivity and returned home after the war. He never told his family of his actions. Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds died on August 8, 1985, in his home town of Knoxville, Tennessee.

On February 10, 2015, he was posthumously acknowledged by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his action in January 1945. It was recognized that his choices and behavior set an example for his fellow American soldiers, for, at the risk of his immediate death, he defied the Germans with the unexpected consequences that the Jewish prisoners were saved. He became the first American soldier and one of only five Americans to be recognized by Yad Vashem. He joined Varian Fry, Waitstill and Martha Sharp, and Lois Gunden in the honor. Then, on January 27, 2016, a ceremony was held at the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. The Israeli ambassador to the United States, Ron Dermer, and Yad Vashem Council Chairman Rabbi Israel Meir Lau presented the medal of the Righteous and a certificate of honor to Roddie Edmonds's son Chris. The ceremony was attended by the president of the United States, Barack Obama.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Eichmann, Adolf

Adolf Eichmann is one of history's most notorious figures. As Nazi Germany's head of the Gestapo's Department IV B4, he planned and carried out the Nazis' so-called Final Solution—the murder of 6 million Jews in what would become known as the Holocaust.

Eichmann was born on March 19, 1906, in Solingen, Germany, near Cologne. His family moved to Austria, and he grew up in Linz, the city of Adolf Hitler's youth. Eichmann failed in his attempt to become an engineer, so he went to work for a mining company his father owned and later took a sales position with an American company, Vacuum Oil. In 1932 Eichmann joined the Austrian Nazi Party but a year later moved to Germany. In 1934 he joined the SS and was assigned to work at Dachau, the first Nazi concentration camp. Later that year he went to work for Reinhard Heydrich in the Security Service (SD) of the SS.

Eichmann first worked on files concerning members of the Freemasons, also persecuted by the Nazis, but quickly became an expert on Jewish matters. He headed the SD's Sci-

entific Museum of Jewish Affairs and in 1937 traveled to Palestine to explore the possibility of transporting Germany's Jews to the Middle East. Following the Austrian Anschluss (union with Germany), Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler appointed Eichmann head of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna. It was there that Eichmann established the process of extortion of Jews who were desperate to escape the Third Reich.

In 1939 he was recalled to Berlin and appointed head of the newly created Gestapo Section IV B4, with responsibility for Jewish policy throughout what would eventually be 16 Nazi-controlled European countries. With the early German successes in Western Europe in the summer of 1940, he first proposed a mass emigration of Jews to the island of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, but the Madagascar plan was considered impractical. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, however, Eichmann sent special killing squads of SS (known as Einsatzgruppen) to begin murdering the millions of East European Jews who fell under Nazi control.

Even this was not efficient enough, however, and in January 1942 Eichmann helped organize the Wannsee Conference to coordinate the mass extermination of all 11 million Jews calculated to be living at Europe at that time. The result was a string of death camps, including Auschwitz, Treblinka, and others, that would process, rob, gas, and cremate tens of thousands of human beings every day. Eichmann personally oversaw the massive logistical operation of rounding up, transporting, murdering, and disposing of millions of Jews. He was a very efficient bureaucrat who complained about delays caused by the lack of zeal in some of the occupied zones. Eichmann actually continued the terrible work unabated during the final months of the war, when transport and other military resources were desperately needed for the defense of the Third Reich.

At the end of the war in 1945 Eichmann was arrested and interned by occupying U.S. forces, but he soon escaped. He hid for a time in Germany, but in 1950 escaped to Argentina, which had a sizable population of German expatriates where Eichmann could feel comfortable. In 1952 he even sent money home to allow his family to emigrate. By the mid-1950s he was settled in Buenos Aires and working as a foreman in the Argentine Mercedes-Benz factory.

The revelations of the Nuremberg Trials following the war made Eichmann the most infamous Nazi still at large, and war-criminal hunters—particularly, though not exclusively, from Israel—were determined to bring him to justice. In

1959 the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad, learned that Eichmann was living in Buenos Aires under the name Ricardo Klement. Following months of observation and planning, in May 1960 Mossad agents kidnapped him and smuggled him back to Israel. Despite the protests (from prominent American newspapers as well as the Argentine government) of the breach of Argentine sovereignty, Eichmann went on trial in Jerusalem as a war criminal.

Eichmann was charged on 15 counts—eight for crimes against the Jewish people, four for crimes against other groups, and one each for membership in the SS, the SD, and the Gestapo, all of which had been declared illegal organizations at Nuremberg. During his four-month televised trial in the summer of 1961, more than 100 witnesses testified against him. Eichmann sat inside a bulletproof glass booth in the courtroom and did not deny the facts. Like the other Nazis who preceded him at Nuremberg, he simply claimed he was following orders. He testified: “It was my misfortune to become entangled in these atrocities. However, these misdeeds did not happen according to my wishes. It was not my wish to slay people. The guilt for the mass murder is solely that of the political leaders.” The court found him guilty on all 15 counts and sentenced him to death on December 15, 1961. Eichmann was hanged at Israel’s Ramleh Prison on May 31, 1962.

CURTIS COLE

See also: Al-Husseini, Haj Amin; Banality of Evil; Central Office for Jewish Emigration; *Conspiracy*; Dannecker, Theodor; Desk Killers; *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; Eichmann Trial; Final Solution; Gestapo; Kasztner, Resz6; Lubetkin, Zivia; Müller, Heinrich; Nisko Plan; Nuremberg Trials; Rademacher, Franz; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Szálasi, Ferenc; Vel’ d’Hiv Roundup; Wannsee Conference; Wiesenthal, Simon

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Arendt and first published in book form in 1963. The work covers the trial for war crimes of the infamous Nazi SS officer Adolf Eichmann, which took place in Israel in 1961. Arendt, a Jew who had fled Nazi-occupied Europe in 1941, was commissioned by *The New Yorker* magazine to cover the sensational trial and write a detailed article on it; the book emerged from that article. At the time, Arendt’s conclusions about Eichmann and the Holocaust upended the more traditional interpretations of Holocaust perpetrators, which tended to portray them unerringly as evil, depraved, and psychopathic individuals.

Arendt, having viewed all stages of the trial, having listened to hours of Eichmann’s testimony, and having read all pretrial material, including the reports of Eichmann’s mental state by six different psychologists, concludes that Eichmann was neither inherently evil nor psychopathic. In fact, she asserts, he presented himself as a rather ordinary individual who demonstrated no inherent hatred toward Jews or guilt for the deplorable acts that took place on his watch and as a result of his orders. Eichmann had been primarily responsible for carrying out the Holocaust because he oversaw the rounding up and deportation of Jews to concentration camps beginning in the early 1940s.

Eichmann claimed at trial that he was simply doing his job and following orders; Arendt, however, counters that as a human being, Eichmann had a choice—he could have refused to follow orders or left Germany if he believed that doing so would be a threat to his life. Moral decisions, she insists, are always available, even in a totalitarian atmosphere like Nazi Germany. She further argues that Eichmann’s apparent lack of antisemitism and his nonchalance toward Nazi ideology made the evil he unleashed seem “banal” because there appeared to be no psychological or moral explanations for it. And the fact that he felt no responsibility or guilt after the fact compounded that banality.

Arendt also drew her own careful psychological study of Eichmann in her attempt to understand his motivations (or lack thereof). She asserts that he was unable to think for himself and was unable to connect and communicate with others outside a military setting. This rendered him more immune to the moral consequences of Nazi policies and made it easier for him to carry out the Final Solution. Eichmann was also a chronic “joiner,” meaning that he could only define himself within the milieu of the many organizations to which he belonged, including the Nazi Party. She also ably demonstrates that Eichmann was not a bright man intellectually, which may have predisposed him to participate in activities that most people would have found repugnant. In the end,

Eichmann in Jerusalem

Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil is a book written by the celebrated political philosopher Hannah

however, Arendt concludes that even though Eichmann appeared “normal” on the exterior, his complete willingness to follow morally repugnant orders indicated his exceptional inclination toward evil, not because it was ingrained in him, but because he chose not to recognize evil acts even as he carried them out. Eichmann was found guilty, sentenced to death, and executed in 1962.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Arendt, Hannah; Banality of Evil; Eichmann, Adolf; Eichmann Trial

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Eichmann Trial

The trial for war crimes of Nazi German official Adolf Eichmann, held in Israel from April 11 to December 11, 1961. Before and during World War II, Eichmann had been chiefly responsible for the mass deportation of Jews from Germany as well as other parts of Europe to concentration and extermination camps. He carefully planned each step in the process and was also responsible for the deportation of thousands of Roma, many of whom were also exterminated. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Eichmann eluded capture, eventually settling in Austria under a pseudonym. Later, he fled Europe entirely, taking up residence in Argentina, where he took the name Ricardo Klement. On May 11, 1961, Israeli Security Service agents captured Eichmann and took him to Israel, where he was to stand trial for war crimes and crimes against the Jewish people. He arrived in Israel on May 21.



After World War II, Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi officer instrumental in organizing the Nazi “final solution” of the Jewish people, fled from Austria and made his way to Argentina. In May 1960 Israeli Security Service agents seized Eichmann and took him to Jerusalem for trial in an Israeli court, where he testified from a bulletproof glass booth. The trial brought Nazi atrocities to the forefront of world news for an entirely new generation. (Library of Congress)

Israel's attorney general, Gideon Hausner, drew up a 15-charge indictment against Eichmann, which not only accused him of crimes against humanity and the Jewish people but also membership in criminal organizations, including the Gestapo. The trial, which generated international attention, began in the district court in Jerusalem on April 11, 1961. A three-judge panel headed by Moshe Landau, an Israeli Supreme Court justice, presided. Hausner was the principal prosecutor. Eichmann's defense attorney was Robert Servatius, who had served as a defense counsel during the 1945–1946 war crimes trials held at Nuremberg, Germany.

The trial featured more than 100 witnesses for the prosecution, many of whom were Holocaust survivors. They included the writer Yehiel Dinur, who became so emotional during his testimony that he fainted, and Zivia Lubetkin, a famed Jewish ghetto resister. The prosecution also admitted into evidence some 1,500 documents that substantiated the charges against Eichmann as well as much of the testimony of the witnesses. Practically all of the defense witnesses were former high-ranking Nazi officials who had been granted immunity from prosecution. The trial ended on August 14, at which time the judges secluded themselves to deliberate. On December 11, 1961, the judges found Eichmann guilty on all counts.

The three-judge panel sentenced Eichmann to death on December 15, 1961. Eichmann's defense team immediately filed appeal petitions. Among other things, they asserted that Israel did not have a right to try Eichmann, who was not an Israeli citizen; that the judges were biased; that the charges were based on *ex post facto* laws; that Eichmann was merely "following orders"; and that Eichmann had been illegally abducted from Argentina. All of the bases for the appeals were rejected. Eichmann also appealed for clemency with Israel's president. That motion was also denied. On June 1, 1962, Eichmann was executed by hanging at an Israeli prison in Ramla, Israel.

The Eichmann trial not only brought to the international forefront the horrors of the Holocaust but also encouraged greater openness among Israelis to discuss the Holocaust and what it meant for Jews and humanity as a whole. Indeed, many Holocaust survivors were more willing to open up about their experiences.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Arendt, Hannah; Banality of Evil; Dinur, Yehiel; Eichmann, Adolf; *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; Nuremberg Defense

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Eicke, Theodor

German Waffen-SS general. Born in Hampond in Alsace (then in Germany) on October 17, 1892, Theodor Eicke fought in World War I, rising to sub-paymaster. After the war, he joined the border police and served in the Freikorps before entering the police force in Thuringia in 1920. Active in right-wing politics, Eicke joined the National Socialist Party in December 1928. He initially achieved prominence in Adolf Hitler's Third Reich as a member of the SS, serving as commandant of the Dachau concentration camp in 1933 and 1934 and as inspector of concentration camps and leader of SS guard formations between 1934 and 1939. Eicke played a leading role in the Blood Purge of the party (known colloquially as the Night of the Long Knives), when he and a subordinate shot to death storm troop (SA) leader Ernst Röhm on July 1, 1934.

Eicke set ruthless standards in the concentration camps, warning guards that they would be punished for showing any compassion for the inmates. He centralized SS control over all concentration camps in the Reich, established uniform regulations for the treatment of inmates, and organized the elite guard formations known as the *Totenkopfverbände* (Death's Head units). He also oversaw their expansion into five battalions, which became the Obeybayern, Brandenburg, and Thuringian regiments. With the beginning of World War II, he formed the SS Death's Head unit for service in Poland.

In November 1939 Eicke took command of the first SS-Totenkopf division, a motorized unit and one of three original Waffen-SS divisions. He personally led it in combat in both France and the Soviet Union. Brutal, fanatical, and violently antisemitic, Eicke molded the Death's Head Division in his own image, a development that helps explain both its military effectiveness and its perpetration of numerous atrocities. His unit committed the first SS atrocity in France—the May 27, 1940, murder of 100 British prisoners of war at Le Paradis. In Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, his division served with Army Group North.

Eicke died when an aircraft in which he was flying was shot down behind Soviet lines in Michailovka, Ukraine, on February 26, 1943.

BRUCE J. DEHART

See also: Concentration Camps; Dachau; Glücks, Richard; SS-Totenkopfverbände; Waffen-SS; Wilde-KZ

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Einsatzgruppen

The Einsatzgruppen were special extermination squads that followed the advance of the German Army into areas to be

occupied, most notably Poland, beginning in September 1939, and the Soviet Union, beginning in June 1941. Most of these mobile killing squads were composed of Nazi SS, Gestapo, and special police units.

In Poland, between 1939 and 1941, the squads were primarily responsible for rounding up Jews, communists, and Polish dissidents and placing them into ghettos (segregated areas) or concentration camps. However, after the German invasion of the Soviet Union commenced on June 22, 1941, the Einsatzgruppen's activities increased dramatically, and their primary mission became one of mass extermination, chiefly of Soviet Jews, communists, political commissars, and Roma. Although many think of the Holocaust only in terms of the systematized extermination of Jews and others at Nazi death camps, the fact is that many were killed in or near their home towns or villages by the Einsatzgruppen. It is estimated that mobile killing squads murdered as many as 1.3 million people between 1939 and 1945.



Einsatzgruppen were SS paramilitary mobile death squads responsible for mass killings, primarily by shooting, during World War II. They played an integral role in the implementation of the killing phase of the Holocaust in Eastern European territories conquered by Nazi Germany. The Einsatzgruppen also murdered Soviet political commissars and Roma, and engaged in anti-partisan warfare. One of the worst of the many massacres they perpetrated was at Babi Yar in 1941, pictured here. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

HOLOCAUST: EINSATZGRUPPEN AKTIONEN IN EASTERN EUROPE



The killing squads followed close on the heels of advancing German Army troops, moving into towns and villages rapidly and heavily armed to take the civilian population by surprise. Once the victims were identified and rounded up, they were usually stripped of all their possessions, including their clothing, marched into a field, cemetery, or other open area, shot to death, and buried in shallow mass graves. Many of the victims included women and children. In places like Ukraine, Lithuania, and Latvia, the killing squads were aided by non-Jews and others not targeted by the Nazis. Perhaps the worst single atrocity occurred at Babi Yar (Ukraine) during September 29–30, 1941, when some 34,000 Jews were shot to death. By December 1, 1941, one killing squad reported having killed 137,346 Jews in Lithuania alone.

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See also: Babi Yar Massacre; Belarus; Communists in the Holocaust; Final Solution; German Army, Role in the Holocaust; Heydrich, Reinhard; *Hitler's Willing Executioners*; Holocaust by Bullets; Kappler, Herbert; Kommissarbefehl; Lange, Herbert; Latvia; Lithuania; Lubny Massacre; Müller, Heinrich; Nazi

Criminal Orders, 1941; Nisko Plan; Ohlendorf, Otto; Operation Barbarossa; Ponary Forest; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Schmid, Anton; Schöngarth, Karl Eberhard; Sicherheitsdienst; Soviet Union; Ukraine; Vilna Ghetto; Waffen-SS

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Enabling Act, 1933

On March 24, 1933, the German Reichstag passed the Enabling Act, a constitutional amendment that gave the

German Cabinet—in effect, Chancellor Adolf Hitler—plenary powers to enact laws. It followed one month after the Reichstag Fire Decree, which abolished most civil liberties and transferred state powers to the Reich government. The combined effect of the two laws was to transform Hitler's government into a de facto legal dictatorship.

The final two years of the Weimar Republic were unstable: political, social, and economic crises were frequent. President Paul von Hindenburg issued many emergency decrees and dissolved the Reichstag twice in 1932, during which period the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) transformed from a radical splinter group to a party of government. In the two elections to the Reichstag in 1932 the NSDAP won the largest share of the vote. On January 30, 1933, Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor, placing him at the head of a coalition cabinet comprising conservatives, nationalists, members of the NSDAP, and representatives of the German National People's Party (DNVP).

On February 27, 1933, the Reichstag Fire was allegedly started by 24-year-old Dutch communist Marinus van der Lubbe. Hindenburg accepted Hitler's request following the fire for a decree suspending all political and civil liberties as a "temporary" measure for the "protection of the people and state." The subsequent Reichstag Fire Decree, enacted the following day, severely curtailed fundamental rights and subjected the police largely to the control of the national government. This created all manner of opportunities for the persecution and elimination of political opponents, which the police and the so-called auxiliary police forces formed by the SA and SS exploited to the full. Blaming the communists, Hitler had all political opponents rounded up and put into "protective custody" (*Schutzhaft*). This temporary measure was never revoked.

In March 1933 the last parliamentary elections took place. The SA, using violence and intimidation, silenced all other parties. The Nazis polled 44% of the vote, not enough for a majority but enough to quash any future political resistance.

Hitler then proposed the "Act for the Removal of the Distress of the People and the Reich," more commonly known as the Enabling Act (*Ermächtigungsgesetz*), ostensibly to allow him greater time to deal with political unrest. This act, consisting of only five articles, vested the government of the Reich with almost unlimited powers to enact laws, even in cases where the legislation encroached on core provisions of the constitution.

Just before the vote, Hitler made a speech to the Reichstag in which he pledged to use restraint and to use those powers only insofar as they were essential for carrying out vitally

necessary measures. He also promised an end to unemployment and pledged to promote peace with France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. But in order to do all this, Hitler said, he first needed the Enabling Act.

Since the act entailed an amendment to the Weimar Constitution, its adoption required both a two-thirds majority and the presence in the Reichstag of at least two-thirds of all its members. The prospects of achieving the requisite number of votes were good, since the mandates of the 81 deputies from the Communist Party of Germany had been rescinded under the Reichstag Fire Decree. Moreover, many Reichstag members had already fled, been imprisoned, or murdered.

The Reichstag convened in the Kroll Opera House, Berlin. After eliminating the communists, Hitler was still 31 votes short. The support of the German Center Party was particularly important to secure the remaining votes. Hitler and his interior minister, Wilhelm Frick, gave the Center Party far-reaching guarantees on the continuing existence of the supreme organs of the constitution and the states, and promised to respect the rights of the churches, to safeguard fundamental rights, and to establish a parliamentary committee to scrutinize legislative bills. With these promises (most of which were never honored), the government gained the parliamentary support it required.

Only the deputies from the Social Democratic Party voted against the bill as a bloc, in spite of massive intimidation by the SA and SS, whose troops had moved in to surround the Kroll Opera House. The chairman of the SPD parliamentary group, Otto Wels, combined the explanation of his group's rejection of the Enabling Act with a passionate profession of faith in parliamentary democracy. In spite of the clear depiction of the intended consequences of the act, a mere 94 deputies voted against the bill compared with 444 who voted in favor. The Enabling Act passed on March 24, 1933, and was signed by Hindenburg later that day.

The adoption of the act enabled Hitler's government to enact laws without the consent of the Reichstag, which continued to exist, and without the countersignature of the president. These extensive powers also applied, almost without restriction, to constitutional amendments and to treaties with other states.

The act thus marked the final eclipse of the democratic state based on the rule of law and the abolition of parliamentary democracy. There would be neither further elections nor a constitution to keep Hitler in check. The Reichstag had, in effect, voted away its power.

All subsequent legislation of the Nazi state was based on the Enabling Act. It served to centralize the public

administration, the judiciary, the security apparatus, and the armed forces in accordance with the “Führer principle,” to standardize political life in accordance with National Socialist principles (*Gleichschaltung*) by banning political parties and mass organizations, and to abolish freedom of the press. The concentration of power in the hands of the government, and hence in the person of Adolf Hitler, sealed the transition to dictatorship.

Within three months after the passage of the Enabling Act, all parties except the Nazi Party were banned or pressured into dissolving themselves, followed on July 14, 1933, by a law that made the Nazi Party the only legally permitted party in the country.

Within a matter of weeks it had become illegal to criticize the government. A new secret police force was established, the Gestapo, which immediately began arresting “unreliable” persons. Dachau, the first concentration camp, which opened within weeks of the Nazis coming to power, catered for their custody. Trade unions were banned, freedom of the press curtailed, and all other political parties were declared illegal, leaving only the Nazi Party. Germany had become a one-party state with Hitler its dictator.

The Enabling Act was initially adopted for a four-year period but was extended in 1937, 1939, and 1943. It remained the basis of all legislation throughout the Nazi dictatorship and was finally abolished after the capitulation by Law No 1 of the Allied Control Council on September 20, 1945.

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See also: Frick, Wilhelm; Führerprinzip; *Gleichschaltung*; Sondergericht; Sturmabteilung; Volksgerichtshof; Weimar Republic

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Estonia

Estonia is a small Baltic country with a 1939 population of 1.13 million people, of whom about 4,500 were Jewish. Estonia was an independent state from 1920, although it would be continually overshadowed by its much larger neighbor, the Soviet Union, to its immediate east. In August 1939 the Germans and Soviets sealed Estonia’s fate by agreeing in secret that Estonia would fall under the aegis of the Soviet

Union in the forthcoming war. When Germany invaded Poland the next month, sparking World War II, the Soviets began to pressure the Estonians into acquiescing to their demands, including a mutual assistance agreement, which Estonian officials grudgingly signed. By June 17, 1940, the Soviets had occupied Estonia, and in August they annexed it completely. The Soviets wasted no time in imposing a repressive occupation regime, arresting thousands and deporting many to rural gulags within the Soviet Union. Estonian Jews did not escape Soviet clutches.

At the time, nearly half of Estonia’s small Jewish population lived in the capital city of Tallinn. This made it easier for Soviet occupation authorities to single them out. Many Jewish organizations and synagogues were disbanded, which compelled at least half the Jewish population to flee the country. When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Estonia was quickly overrun, and a brutal occupation was established. The Nazi authorities compelled Jews to wear identification badges in public, restricted their movements, and confiscated their money and property. By late 1941 virtually all of the remaining Jewish population in Estonia had either been murdered or deported to death camps.

The Germans began establishing forced labor camps in Estonia during 1942; most of these were set aside for thousands of Jews sent from other areas of Europe. There they worked on German military projects, or mined shale oil. The largest of these camps was Vaivara, where untold thousands of Jews died; many more were killed at the Kalevi Liiva camp system. By late 1944, when Soviet forces had begun to push the Germans out of Estonia, the Germans abandoned these camps and transported some of the remaining prisoners to other camps further west. Several thousand Jews died on a ghastly forced march along the Baltic Sea coast. In the meantime, Estonia had become a bloody battleground between Soviet and German forces, which destroyed huge swaths of the small nation.

In the fall of 1944 the Soviets re-annexed Estonia, and the little country would remain under the Soviet yoke until the end of the Cold War. Estonia lost approximately 20% of its prewar population. Sadly, almost no Jews living in Estonia prior to 1941 remained alive in 1945. Some Jews who had managed to flee the country before the German occupation returned after the conflict, but their number was small. Estonia achieved independence for a second time in August 1991.

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See also: Soviet Union; Vaivara

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Ethnic Cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is a broad concept that encompasses actions ranging from nonviolent pressure on a specific ethnic group or groups to the deliberate extermination of a people to effect their removal from a particular place; it is distinguished from genocide in that the ultimate goal is not the destruction of its victims but rather their complete removal from a specific area. Ethnic cleansing can be accomplished through genocide, but not all cleansings are genocides.

Like the term “genocide,” the term “ethnic cleansing” is ambiguous and has a number of different meanings ascribed to it; in fact, the term is often misused as a synonym for genocide. Although the term was popularized in the 1990s during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, antecedents exist in the Nazi use of the phrase “racial cleansing.” Ethnic cleansing lacks a standard legal definition as a war crime. As an activity, elements of it are encompassed within the definition of genocide in the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

There is debate over whether or not ethnic cleansing is a strictly modern phenomenon. A number of premodern examples have been suggested: the events of the exodus in the Old Testament, Roman and Greek enslavement of enemy peoples, the devastation of Native Americans, the expulsion of Jews and Moors from Spain, and the English conquest of Ireland. Because the formulation of the term is *ethnic* cleansing, however, the phenomenon is usually regarded as a result of the spread of the concept of the nation-state in the 19th century. The ethnic character of a state defined it and was synonymous with “nation.” Ethnic minorities were thus seen as potentially disloyal and in need of assimilation. Some states turned to expulsion, such as the expulsion of Muslims from the newly independent Balkan states in 1831 and 1877–1878. European colonial powers also engaged in cleansing in their colonial possessions.

Technological changes allowed for greater organization and execution of ethnic cleansing in the 20th century, which facilitated greater lethality. Events in Anatolia overshadowed incidents of cleansing during the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913.

The Ottoman Empire, and its successor, the Republic of Turkey, feared that resident Armenians and Greeks were potentially disloyal, and that Greece and Russia would use their presence to advance claims on Turkish territory. The Turks thus expelled approximately 1.5 million Armenians in 1915, half of whom died during the expulsion, and 1.5 million Greeks during and after the Greco-Turkish War of 1921–1922. Quixotically, the response of the League of Nations was less to regard ethnic cleansing itself as a crime than to attempt to regulate it as a necessary evil. While creating a system for minority protection, the League of Nations oversaw compulsory population transfers in the 1920s among countries such as Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria.

Nazi German policies of redrawing both the political and ethnic maps of Europe utilized ethnic cleansing in the 1930s and 1940s. The Nazis, for example, pressured the Jews to leave Germany after 1933; after 1939, there was discussion of deporting all Jews from Europe. Beginning in 1941, Jews were slated for extermination, and some 6 million would be killed in the Holocaust. The Nazis targeted other ethnic groups, slating Roma for extermination as well as Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians for removal from conquered territories; however, the “cleansing” of Jews was unique in its importance to Nazi ideology. Similarly, the German-allied Independent State of Croatia sought to cleanse itself of Serbs, helping to drive the 1941–1945 civil war in Yugoslavia. Other German client states engaged in cleansing on a more limited scale.

The Soviet Union engaged in ethnic cleansing before and during World War II, shifting nearly a dozen groups of non-Russian nationalities perceived to be potentially disloyal away from its borders. Imperial Russia had deported Jews and Germans away from the front during World War I, but Soviet operations were more brutal. The forced resettlement of the Chechens-Ingush in 1944 killed 100,000 out of the 494,000 involved, and half the 189,000 Crimean Tatars resettled in 1944 also died.

The postwar expulsion of the *Volksdeutsche*, ethnic Germans living outside of Germany, proved to be the largest cleansing in history. Over 10 million were forced to relocate from Eastern Europe in 1944–1947, with perhaps a million killed in the process. The Soviets’ redrawing of borders led to forced resettlements of Poles from Ukraine and Ukrainians from Poland during 1946–1947. Allied leaders regarded such cleansing as necessary to remove future German territorial claims.

Cleansing also accompanied the end of the European colonial empires. Colonial borders had not been drawn along

ethnic divisions, and conflict often emerged along ethnic lines in the new states. The worst case was the transfer of Muslim and Hindu populations between India and Pakistan in 1946–1947, with millions forced to relocate. Numerous lesser incidents occurred in both postcolonial civil wars and international conflicts. Claims of ethnic cleansing accompanied the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli Wars, as well as the Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974. Iraq relocated or destroyed Kurdish populations in sensitive border areas during the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War.

Ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1996 attracted widespread international attention. The wars in Croatia and Bosnia resulted in the deaths of some 250,000 people and a million forced relocations. All sides used cleansing as a deliberate weapon to reinforce claims to specific territories by driving out rival ethnicities. Although attention focused on the Serbian use of cleansing, hundreds of thousands of Serbs also became victims. These actions were repeated in the 1999 Kosovo conflict, during which Serbian security forces cleansed Albanians during the bombing campaign; Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerillas cleansed Serbs afterward.

Events in Rwanda in April 1994, which followed similar events in Burundi in 1972, are more complicated because the Hutu and Tutsi are not “ethnicities” in the strict European sense of the term. In its effects, however, the intentions were the same: the Hutus intended to drive Tutsis out of the country. At least 500,000 Tutsis died in the massacres, and the resulting war led to hundreds of thousands of Hutus fleeing to the Congo.

Ethnic cleansing in both Yugoslavia and Rwanda was frequently portrayed as the result of “ancient hatreds.” In each historical case, while ethnic tension did exist, the cleansing operations themselves were the result of deliberate manipulation and organization by political leaders. Ethnic cleansing possesses a political utility that has made it attractive in the past. It remains to be seen if international regulation will change this.

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See also: Genocide; Madagascar Plan; Oberlaender, Theodor; Serbia; Ustashe

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Eugenics

Eugenics is a term coined in the last years of the 19th century, originally referring to the improvement of human beings through selective breeding and the elimination of genetic characteristics deemed to be undesirable. These included—but were not limited to—hereditary diseases, intellectual disabilities, physical handicaps, and the like. At the time, the theories behind eugenics were supported by many scientists and social commentators, although the science that underwrote those theories was suspect and later found to be deeply flawed. In general, eugenics theories were not initially aimed at eliminating entire groups of people; rather, they were designed to minimize the number of persons born with certain “defects.” It was the Nazis who used the pseudoscience of eugenics to categorize “lesser peoples” by race and ethnic background, which was then used to justify the extermination of such people, including Jews and Roma, among others.

Over the years, Nazi adherents developed elaborate hierarchies based on race and ethnicity to fit their flawed theories involving “racial hygiene” and racial supremacy. This they accomplished largely by determinations of one’s ethnic heritage, or by bogus physical and anatomical determinations, including eye and hair color, height, shape of the skull and body, and so on. In Nazi thought, the so-called Aryan race, to which pure Germans belonged, was the “master race.” Beneath the master race were Indo-European-speaking peoples, who were deemed “partly Aryan.” Jews, along with blacks, Roma, Indians, and other peoples from the subcontinent and Asia were not considered Aryans and were thus undesirables. The Aryan ideal was a Nordic type—tall, with blond hair and blue eyes. Ironically, many Nazi leaders, including Adolf Hitler, did not fit this set of physical characteristics.

Hitler had read deeply in books and articles that discussed racial hygiene and eugenics, and so he had come to believe that many of Germany’s modern problems stemmed from the fact that the German people had been weakened by intermarriage between Aryans and non-Aryans and corrupted by the likes of the mentally and physically challenged and other individuals deemed undesirable. The answer to reversing this was to eliminate those who were categorized as non-Aryans, or who otherwise did not mesh with Nazi



Nazi Germany's racial ideology placed the biological improvement of the Aryan race at the center of all its social policies. The pseudo-science of eugenics saw to it that in this way a "master race" could be bred through selective breeding and the destruction of those with so-called "defective genes." An important part of the process was the application of scientific standards for the measuring of human imperfections. In this picture, for instance, Nazi officials use calipers to measure an ethnic German's nose. (Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis via Getty Images)

ideology concerning racial purity. Aryans were to be encouraged to mate only with other Aryans; the physically and mentally sound were encouraged to have more children while the racially inferior and weak were to be marginalized or eliminated. The German creation of Jewish ghettos and the ritual extermination of Jews, Roma, and homosexuals during the 1930s and early 1940s were thus logical extensions of the Nazi belief in eugenics.

These beliefs became the basis for government policies in Germany beginning with Hitler's ascent to office in 1933. That same year, the Nazis enacted a law that required all doctors to report all hereditary illnesses of their patients to the government; doctors who failed to comply were fined or

prohibited from practicing medicine. Soon "Hereditary Health Courts" were established throughout Germany, and more than 400,000 German citizens were forcibly sterilized to ensure that they would not pass their "defective" genes to others. Some 70,000 others were killed as part of the so-called "euthanasia" program. Strict laws were passed regarding marriage, and all who sought marriage licenses were tested for hereditary and other diseases.

The infamous Nuremberg Laws, enacted in 1935, were based partly on eugenics and were designed to marginalize and ghettoize German Jews. They placed a great many prohibitions on Jews and served as the foundation for the horrors of the Holocaust during World War II.

Many of the eugenics beliefs that suffused Nazi ideology were absurd from both a logical and scientific perspective. Based on pseudoscience, deeply flawed social scientific analyses, and rabid bigotry—particularly antisemitism—eugenics played a major role in German social policies between 1933 and 1945 and most certainly drove policies that gave birth to the Holocaust. In addition to the physically and mentally infirm, Jews, and the Roma, homosexuals were also considered “defective” by the Nazis. As many as 100,000 homosexuals were arrested during 1933–1945, with about 50,000 serving prison sentences. At least 15,000 are thought to have died in Nazi concentration camps. In other parts of Europe, Nazi officials routinely castrated, imprisoned, or killed homosexuals.

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See also: Aryan; Euthanasia Program; Fischer, Eugen; Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; Medical Experimentation; Nuremberg Laws; Ploetz, Alfred; “Racial Hygiene”; Ritter, Robert; Roma and Sinti; Social Darwinism; Sterilization

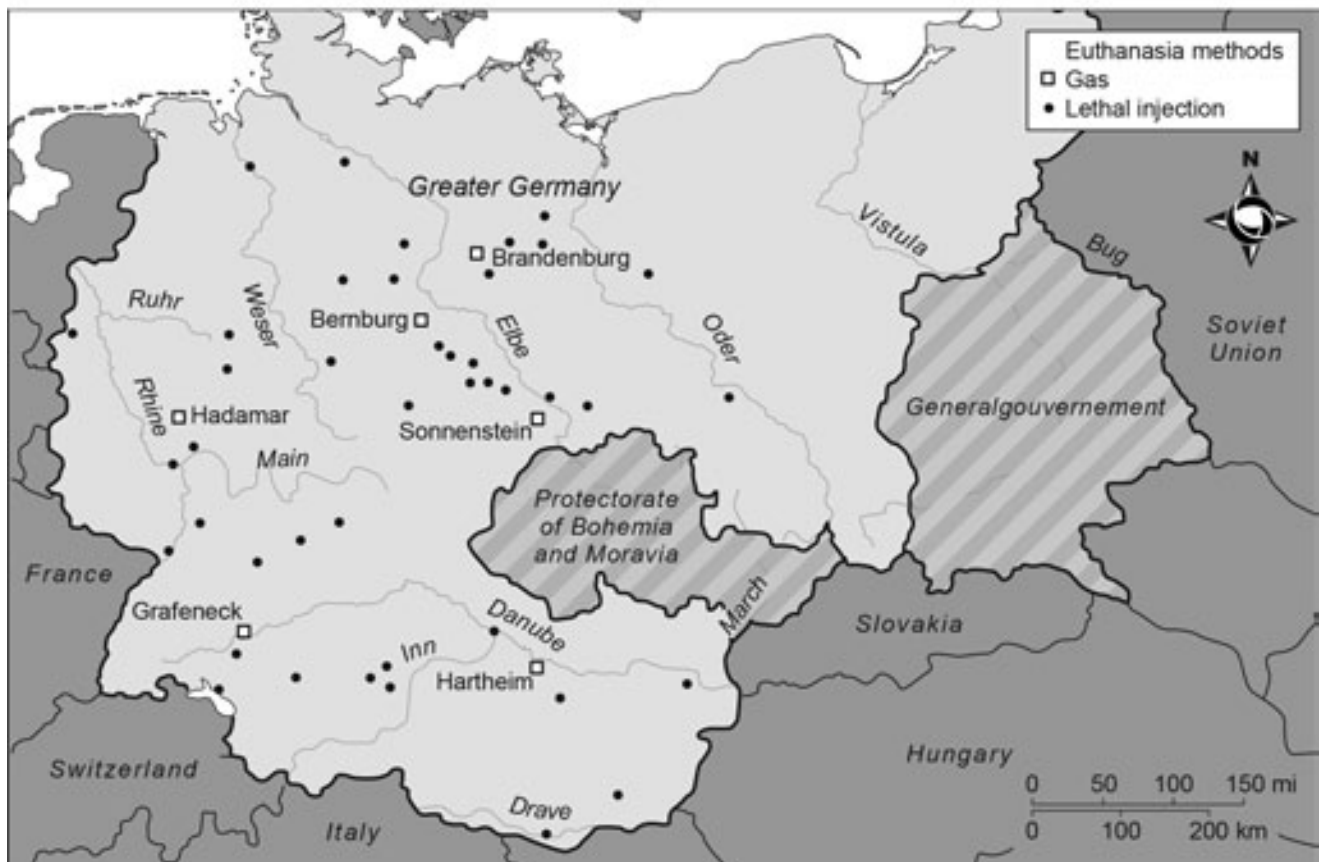
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Euthanasia Program

Hitler’s secret program to euthanize “life unworthy of life”—men, women, and children deemed mentally and physically ill or disabled. Initiated in October 1939 and headed by Reich Chancellery chief Philipp Bouhler and Dr. Karl Brandt,

“EUTHANASIA” CENTERS IN GERMANY 1940–1945



the program's original intention was the euthanization of disabled infants and young children, based on the pretext of the Knauer family's request to have their baby euthanized due to multiple birth defects. Before the program entered into action, however, Hitler authorized its expansion to euthanize disabled adults. The Reich Chancellery established several organizations such as the Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Severe Hereditary Ailments and the Reich Cooperative for State Hospitals and Nursing Homes, which provided an outwardly benign façade.

Aktion T-4—the “T-4” coming from the address of its administrative headquarters at Tiergartenstrasse 4—was rooted in the larger clinical discussions of eugenics and racial hygiene in Europe and the United States at the turn of the 20th century. The Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases, passed in 1933, set a precedent for the T-4 program, requiring compulsory sterilization for Germans suffering from a hereditary disease. Over 300,000 people were sterilized under this law. Hitler's euthanasia program was a natural extension of racial hygiene and the product of increasingly radical Nazi policies.

Aktion T-4 was responsible for the death of approximately 250,000 mentally and physically disabled individuals. Of this, at least 5,000 were children. Questionnaires disseminated by the various front organizations to public and private clinics and institutions gathered information and functioned as the means of finding the program's victims. For children, killing centers were set up as specialized pediatric clinics catering to physically and mentally disabled adolescents. Once there, children received lethal injections or were simply starved to death. The Nazi assault on mentally and physically disabled adults began with those already institutionalized. Victims were transferred to one of the six killing centers—Brandenburg, Bernburg, Hadamar, Sonnenstein, Grafeneck, and Hartheim—where they were herded into fake showers and gassed with carbon monoxide. Their bodies were cremated and their remains sent to their families along with medical documents giving a fictitious cause of death. Although T-4 staff worked meticulously to conceal their actions, the rash of mysterious deaths among the mentally disabled quickly aroused the suspicion of families. Outrage and protest over these extralegal killings—voiced perhaps most famously by Catholic clergyman Clemens August Graf von Galen—gathered tremendous public pressure. In August 1941 Hitler officially halted the euthanasia program. Unofficially, however, the killings continued until the end of the Third Reich, only now executed in

a decentralized and even more clandestine fashion with local physicians administering lethal injections.

Just as the sterilization law was a precursor to euthanasia, so too was *Aktion T-4* for the “Final Solution,” marking the logical conclusion of Nazi radicalization. The killing centers, gas chambers, and crematoria that became hallmarks of the Holocaust were all developments, first, of Hitler's euthanasia program.

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See also: Brack, Viktor; Brandt, Karl; Einsatzgruppen; Eugenics; Franz, Kurt; Galen, Clemens August Graf von; Gas Vans; Gerstein, Kurt; *Good*; Hadamar; Hadamar Insane Asylum Case; Höppner, Rolf-Heinz; Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; Kreyssig, Lothar; Lange, Herbert; Lichtenberg, Bernhard; “Life Unworthy of Life”; Medical Experimentation; Nazism and Germany; Ploetz, Alfred; “Racial Hygiene”; Schlegelberger, Franz; Stangl, Franz; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Thierack, Otto; Wiedergutmachung; Wirth, Christian

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Evian Conference

The Evian Conference of July 6–15, 1938, was called in response to American president F. D. Roosevelt's invitation to the nations of the world to meet to discuss what had by now become a global refugee crisis. His motives in calling the conference appear to have emanated from his desire to deflect some sectors of American public opinion, which were beginning to lean toward a liberalization of immigration regulations. This deflection would take the form of a new organization to manage refugee resettlement. Inviting the nations of the world to participate in the formation of this organization would also show that the United States was playing a leading role in trying to find a solution to the refugee issue, and that the problem was not to be dumped onto any specific countries.

Roosevelt's initiative was not intended to compromise the existing policy of any country; none would have to make a

commitment to receive refugee Jews. Yet the initiative was received cautiously, particularly by Switzerland. Roosevelt had hoped to locate his meeting in a Swiss city, the better to establish it as a legitimate gathering of a genuinely international kind. The Swiss refused to host the meeting, however, and so it was decided that a French city near the Swiss border would have to be chosen as the next best option in order to retain the internationalist spirit as far as possible.

The United States sought to convene a committee comprised of all interested countries for the purpose of “facilitating the emigration from Austria, and presumably from Germany, of political refugees.”

The plenary meeting of the conference took place on the morning of July 6, 1938. The French delegate, Henri Bérenger, took the chair as host in order to welcome representatives of the thirty-two nations who were attending. Speeches of welcome then followed from the American and British representatives (the former of whom, Myron C. Taylor, was elected president of the conference). The public formalities over, the conference then proceeded to hear statements from all the nations present. The representatives quickly got to the point, and it was not long before the gist of the Evian Conference was made clear: all countries understood the need for international cooperation, but in almost every instance it was pointed out that the opportunity for absorbing refugees was limited owing to economic conditions. The countries represented at Evian were unable, or unwilling, to agree to anything like mass migration. Some countries—particularly those from Latin America—indicated a willingness to accept agricultural refugees or those who could bring a degree of wealth with them; others agreed to consider plans for refugee settlement in rural colonies only. The inviting nation, the United States, did nothing more than publicly affirm its already existing annual quota of 27,370 Germans and Austrians, a figure that had to include nonrefugee German immigrants and non-Jewish refugees, as well as Jews.

The British government had misgivings about the whole conference, and much preferred to utilize the already existing League of Nations High Commission for Refugees. It was also wary about drawing too much attention to the refugee problem in case the representatives assembled at Evian began to make disquieting noises about Palestine as a Jewish haven. Indeed, British concern about the possibility of Palestine as a target area for mass Jewish migration led to an insistence on the part of the British delegation that the president of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Dr. Chaim

Weizmann, not be permitted to address the delegates, even privately. The issue of Palestine was one on which the British preferred to avoid discussion altogether. Consequently, the matter of British refugee policy took something of a back seat at the Evian Conference—though the British delegation head, Lord Winterton, was elected conference vice president.

The representative from Australia, Sir Thomas White, summed up the general tenor of many at the conference with the statement that “as we have no real racial problems, we are not desirous of importing one by encouraging any scheme of large-scale foreign migration.”

Once all the speeches had been made, the conference broke into two subcommittees, designated the Technical Subcommittee and the “Subcommittee for the Reception of Organizations Concerned with the Relief of Political Refugees coming from Germany (including Austria).” This latter subcommittee was established in order to accommodate the numerous refugee organizations, which were registered as participants at the conference but which could not take part in the general sessions. Myron Taylor, the president of the conference, invited the major organizations to amplify their views, if they so wished, and as a result some 39 organizations stepped forward to take advantage of the offer and to put forth their case.

With extreme haste, the subcommittee proceeded to hear the depositions of 25 of these organizations on the single afternoon of July 8. As time was limited, speed was of the essence. When members of the subcommittee began to grow weary, the period of 10 minutes per hearing was reduced to five. The depositions, moreover, had to be translated into French if not presented in that language, and consequently there was little enough time for a deposition to be heard before it was time to make way for the next organization.

The upshot of the subcommittee’s hearings was a distillation of all the memoranda presented into a single, three-page Synopsis, which was presented to the conference but which made no difference to its ultimate outcome.

The conference broke up on July 15, its main outcome being the establishment of a permanent organization in London, the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees. This convened on July 19.

In the long run, the existence of the Inter-Governmental Committee did not change the outcome for the Jews of Europe in the slightest. Attitudes such as those expressed by Australia’s Thomas White at Evian demonstrated to Hitler that the Jews he did not want were also unwanted

throughout the rest of the world, an argument that was clearly apparent to perceptive observers at the time. The tragedy is that while all saw the dangers of inaction—and that, after all, was the ostensible reason for Roosevelt's calling of the meeting in the first place—none were prepared to put their words of sympathy into practice. The Evian Conference clearly demonstrated that the nations of the world did not yet fully understand the implications of what was happening in Germany in any terms other than their own.

On one level, it is not surprising that Evian saw no grand commitments to refugee acceptance: that had never been part of Roosevelt's proposal when calling the meeting back in March. It will be recalled, for example, that the original invitation indicated how no country would be expected to receive a greater number of immigrants than was already permitted by its existing legislation, which was an attractive reason for attendance in the eyes of many of the attending countries. It was perhaps an optimistic hope, then, that these countries would have agreed to some great liberalization of their refugee policies. Far from the nations of the world letting down the Jews of Germany, to some extent the opposite was true; the Jews—not only of Germany but also of the Free World—put too much faith in the concept of an international conference the object of which was to only talk about the refugee crisis. Jewish hopes were misplaced, and their expectations too high.

For all that, the gathering at Evian did serve the purpose of concentrating the minds of government leaders, if only for a short time, on the refugee crisis. It *could* have acted as an occasion for caring administrations to voluntarily make some kind of announcement that they would agree to an increase in their refugee quotas. None, however, with the exception of the tiny Dominican Republic, chose to do so, and in this lay Evian's real tragedy. Few of the nations of the world can claim to have been helpful in receiving Jews or alleviating their plight.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Soos, Géza; United States Response to the Holocaust

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Exodus 1947

The ill-fated voyage of the ship *Exodus 1947* (July 11–August 22, 1947) highlighted the plight of Jewish refugees attempting to immigrate to Palestine after World War II. The British government had from 1939 continued to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine; indeed, during the war Britain had maintained warships off Palestine to intercept ships bound for Palestine carrying Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust.

British policies of blocking illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine continued after the war. Jewish leaders responded by encouraging and facilitating illegal immigration (Aliya Bet). From 1945 to 1948 Mossad Le-Aliya Bet, a branch of the Haganah headed by Shaul Avigur, organized 65 voyages transporting in all some 70,000 displaced Jews to Palestine. One of the vessels involved in this effort was the former *President Warfield*.

The *President Warfield* was a Chesapeake Bay ferry that had been transferred to the British under Lend-Lease and had participated in ferrying operations to Normandy after the June 6, 1944, D-Day landings. It had been returned to the United States after the war. This worn-out ship was then sold as scrap to the Jewish immigration effort for slightly more than \$8,000.

Renamed the *Exodus 1947* and packed with 4,515 refugees bound for Palestine, the ship departed Sète, France, on July 11, 1947. Eight British warships—the cruiser *Ajax*, five destroyers, and two minelayers—eventually trailed the *Exodus 1947*. On July 18, when only 12 miles beyond Palestinian territorial waters, the British surrounded the ship and boarded it.

Hand-to-hand fighting ensued. In the *melée* that extended over several hours, the British finally resorted to small arms fire. Two passengers and one crewman were killed, and 32 others were injured. The crewmen surrendered only when the British began a ramming operation, threatening to sink the ship and those in it.

The British towed the *Exodus 1947*, now listing badly, to Haifa. Ordinarily, the refugees would have been sent to camps in Cyprus, but these were now packed with 26,000 people, and the British sought to make an example. They reembarked the passengers on three troopships and sent them to the port of Marseille, France, in effect returning them to their point of origin. There the deportees rejected orders to go ashore, and French officials, who were willing to see them reenter France, refused to remove them by force. Only 130 passengers, most of them sick or pregnant, disembarked.

The remaining passengers, including many Holocaust survivors and orphaned children, began a hunger strike.

French authorities offered supplies, which the refugees rejected despite desperate sanitary conditions and extreme heat.

After 24 days, and fearing the outbreak of an epidemic, the French ordered the three ships to depart. The British government, reeling from growing adverse worldwide public outrage over what had transpired, ordered the ships on to Hamburg in their zone of Germany. There, British soldiers forcibly removed the refugees, who were then sent on to two displaced persons' (DP) camps near Lübeck. Demonstrations and protests occurred in DP camps throughout Europe over the events.

The British then changed their policy, ending the effort to return illegal immigrants to Palestine to their port of origin. Instead, they sent them to Cyprus. Media coverage of the events also led to a swing in public opinion in favor of the Jews and establishment of a Jewish state in 1948.

Many of the passengers on the *Exodus 1947* continued to try to reach Palestine. Although some gained illegal entry, more than half of them were detained again and deported to

Cyprus. There they remained until they were allowed to immigrate to Israel after its founding in May 1948. The *Exodus 1947* itself burned at Haifa in August 1952 and was scrapped in 1963.

Writer Leon Uris loosely based his novel *Exodus* (1958) on the *Exodus 1947* incident and the lives of David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin. Paul Newman received an Academy Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of the fictional Ari Ben Canaan in the film *Exodus* (1958), directed by Otto Preminger.

RICHARD EDWARDS AND SPENCER C. TUCKER

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Displaced Persons

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F

Fabrikaktion

The *Fabrikaktion* (“Factory Action”) was a euphemism given to what was deemed to be the last roundup of Jews remaining in Berlin in February 1943. Despite the large number of Jews who had left Germany through emigration before the war, and subsequently through various Nazi roundups and deportations during the war, by September 1942 there were still more than 75,000 Jews left in Germany. Their names and places of abode were known to the government, and their ongoing presence was tolerated as a cheap labor force.

However, on September 22, 1942, German dictator Adolf Hitler demanded that they be removed and replaced with non-Jewish workers. The result was a planned *Aktion* that would see the Jews deported out of Germany altogether, presumably to their death in places like Auschwitz. Wartime logistical issues meant that the earliest this could take place was the later winter or early fall of 1943.

Once worked out, the plan was to pick up the 15,000 or so Jewish workers in Berlin and another 5,000 living in other cities. On February 20, 1943, SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, the Jewish “expert” at unit IV B4 of the Reich Security Main Office, announced how the operation would work in a document titled “*Technische Durchführung der Evakuierung von Juden nach dem Osten*” (“Technical Procedures for the Evacuation of Jews to the East”). According to this, most of the Jews remaining in Berlin and elsewhere would be taken into custody and deported, though with some exceptions. These would be Jewish partners in mixed

marriages; married people considered to be Jewish under the Nuremberg laws living with “Aryan” relatives; Jews over the age of 65 unless married to Jews below that age; decorated Jewish veterans of World War I; and a designated list of others listed by name. All these exceptions would not be deported, but they would be removed from their existing places of employment.

On February 26, 1943, Jewish men were notified that they were required to register the next day with the Gestapo for a check of their labor papers, and when they arrived the next morning they were detained by the SS or the Gestapo at the office they attended, in what the authorities called the “*Evakuierungsaktion*” (Evacuation Action). Jewish men were imprisoned before they were deported to concentration and extermination camps. In most parts of the Reich the *Fabrikaktion* was completed within two days, but in Berlin, where the biggest Jewish population lived, the situation was slightly different. Here, the action took over a week.

Berlin was different from other cities around the country in that no prior warning was given to the Jewish men the day before. In factories all over the city, Gestapo, police, and SS, in a coordinated action, simply entered and rounded up the Jews at their workplaces. Also different was that because there were so many detainees they had to be concentrated in a variety of different places around the city—a concert hall, two barracks, a synagogue, a Jewish senior center, and the former Jewish Community Center at

Rosenstrasse 2–4. In this latter location, the “Aryan” wives and mothers of Jewish men and boys held prisoner protested in front of the building for their release—a protest that was ultimately successful despite the determination of the SS to quell the dissent.

Overall, the Fabrikaktion saw 8,000 Jewish men from Berlin rounded up for deportation. Once collected, they waited in their temporary places of detention until their transport could be arranged. Most were first deported to Theresienstadt before being sent on to their deaths at Auschwitz.

At the time of the roundup, about 4,000 were able to escape the initial assault, but many were later captured, often as a result of denunciations. It is estimated that only 1,500 Jews were able to hide away until the end of the war. Known both to themselves and the authorities as “U-boats,” they, like submarines, lived under the surface; they were not seen until the end of the war.

The context in which the Factory Action took place is an important indicator of how the Nazis viewed both the Holocaust and the wartime situation. Occurring less than a month after the surrender of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad, it showed that there was no little concern that the objective of making Berlin “*Judenrein*” (“free of Jews”) had to be speeded up while the opportunity still presented itself.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rosenstrasse Protest; Weidt, Otto

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Facing History and Ourselves

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization for secondary-school teachers focusing on the study of prejudice, racism, antisemitism, and civic and moral responsibility. Facing History, as it is known colloquially, accomplishes its mission through the employment of resource books, curriculum guides, lesson plans, teaching strategies, seminars, online

courses, group workshops, and individual instruction sessions. Founded in 1976 by Margot Stern Strom and headquartered in Brookline, Massachusetts, the organization began as a lone course taught in a single school district. It now maintains offices in Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, London, Los Angeles, Memphis, New York, San Francisco, and Toronto, and boasts a staff of more than 150. Facing History has also created partnerships with educators in Northern Ireland, Israel, Rwanda, China, and South Africa. In all, some 29,000 educators instruct almost 2 million students per year.

In its mission to fight bigotry and promote civic responsibility, Facing History has developed in-depth investigations of the Holocaust and other, more recent, genocides. This is accomplished through a variety of online and print resources, including *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*, and *Elements of Time: Holocaust Testimonies*. Printed resources concerning citizenship and democracy include *Choosing to Participate: A Critical Examination of Citizenship in American History*. The idea is to expose students to the root causes of bigotry and genocide so that they can readily identify intolerance and indifference in an effort to avoid the mistakes and tragedies of the past. By instilling knowledge and the ability to think critically, Facing History and Ourselves seeks to mold and nurture proactive citizens by giving them the tools to recognize intolerance and injustice before they become problematic.

The study of the Holocaust continues to be a central theme for the organization, and it has been reinforced by stories told by Holocaust survivors, both in oral and written formats. Research sponsored by Facing History and Ourselves continues to connect theories with practice through the development of new partnerships and scholarship as well as innovative pilot projects. The group has earned many awards and recognition of its work, including the Courage of Conscience Award from the Peace Abbey.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Antisemitism

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Fackenheim, Emil

Emil Fackenheim was a Jewish philosopher and rabbi, and scholar of the relationship between God and man in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Born in 1916 in Halle, Germany, he studied at Halle University before enrolling in the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin. After studying under Rabbi Leo Baeck, he was ordained a rabbi in 1938. In the aftermath of the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, however, he was interned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp for three months. In 1939 he and his family escaped to Scotland, but they were transported to Canada and interned as enemy aliens after the outbreak of World War II. In 1945 he received his PhD from the University of Toronto and then joined its faculty in 1948. He remained there until his retirement in 1984. Moving to Israel that same year, he died there in 2003.

The main thrust of Fackenheim's work was rooted in an ongoing attempt to assess the relevant validity of German idealistic philosophy and bring it into conversation with the intellectual richness of the Jewish religious tradition, while reassessing both in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The imperative that drove Fackenheim's thought was the search for an answer to the vexing question, "Where was God at Auschwitz?" While there could be no immediately rational explanation, he felt, at least one fundamental truth stood out as a result of the Jewish people's experience. In the aftermath of the Holocaust an ongoing Jewish commitment to survival would deny Hitler a posthumous victory; accompanying this, only a strong Israel could prevent the Jews from vanishing as a people. Thus, in 1968 Fackenheim introduced what became his most well-known theological notion, the idea of a "614th commandment" stemming from the Holocaust. Here he built on the rabbinic tradition of 613 *mitzvot* (divine commandments) to be found in the Bible. Developing his notion more fully, he wrote that after Auschwitz Jews must henceforth be commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish, and in so doing deny Hitler a posthumous victory.

A less controversial matter for Fackenheim was the question of the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Because all historical events are at the same time similar and different, Fackenheim preferred the term "unprecedented" (as does historian Yehuda Bauer) and reminded readers in the preface to his new edition of *God's Presence in History* (1997) that (1) the Holocaust is a *novum* in history and, within the Jewish faith, is irreducible to evils perpetrated by pharaoh or Amalek, the Spanish Inquisition or the Cossacks' Chmelnitzki, or even the enemies of Jerusalem—Nebukadnezar, Vespasian,

Titus, Hadrian; (2) no meaning, redemptive or other, religious or secular will ever be found in the Holocaust; (3) Hitler's victories did not end with his death; and (4) this prohibition is a "614th commandment."

In all of Fackenheim's writings, the Holocaust was ever-present. He did not limit himself to the event as a Jewish tragedy only, but he saw it as the central crime of the West, the result of centuries of falsely stereotyping the Jewish people. In working through the many issues the Holocaust raised, Fackenheim produced *To Mend the World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought* (1982), wherein he confronted such philosophical thinkers as Franz Rosenzweig, Baruch Spinoza, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Martin Heidegger, as well as Judaism itself, in an attempt to answer the question "how Jewish (also Christian and philosophical) thought can both expose itself to the Holocaust and survive."

Finally, as almost all who have made an attempt at assessing Fackenheim's writing and thinking have correctly noted, it is the centrality of the historical experience (his own as well as that of the Jewish people collectively) in its relationship to Jewish thought which has been his ultimate philosophical confrontation, thus making the "lived experience" foundational to both present and future, shaping indelibly what is and what will be. It is no accident, therefore, that both *To Mend the World* and *Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy* have the word "Future" in their subtitles. For Emil Fackenheim, changed not only by his own experience of the Holocaust but also that of the Jewish people as a whole—and a Western world yet to fully confront it as well—both the present and future have been irrevocably altered.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Baeck, Leo; Rubenstein, Richard; Sachsenhausen; Theological Responses to the Holocaust

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Fascism

Fascism is a political movement born out of the intellectual ferment following World War I. It was at its strongest in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s but was expressed through numerous variants in other parts of the world.

Although reaching its peak in the two decades prior to 1945, as an ideology it has prevailed as an important force in many countries since then. Fascism can be characterized as a movement that defines itself more by what it stands *against* rather than what it stands *for*; hence, during the period between the 1920s and 1940s, it was anticommunist, antiliberal, anti-Marxist, and anti-individualist. Fascism's only goal was the strengthening of the state over the liberalizing forces that could weaken it, and as a result fascists advocated a strong central government (depending on local variants, even a one-party state or a dictatorship), mass obedience, a party army, suppression of trade unions and civil liberties groups, a culture of youth glorification, and a rigorous repression of dissent.

Groups adhering to fascism attained political office in a number of European countries before 1945, notably Italy, Portugal, and Spain. It had an impact (sometimes powerfully) on local politics in France, Austria, Britain, Hungary, Romania, and elsewhere. Fascist movements or parties also appeared in most other Western democratic countries.

While fascism is a right-wing ideology, it is not conservative; in its purest form, it can be socially and economically radical, even revolutionary, while always invoking the ideals of a lost "golden age" as something to which the modern nation should seek to return. Through manipulation of the organs of the mass media, education, and popular culture to the greater glory of the state, fascism offers many people an emotional anchor at a time of increasing social alienation and fragmentation. Its potential as a genocidal force, however, lay in the fascist tendency toward dictatorship, its inclusivity of all members of the nation and utter rejection of those who were perceived not to fit into it, its glorification of the military, and its rejection of individualism and humanitarian values in favor of the sanctification and elevation of the state.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Communists in the Holocaust; Graziani, Rodolfo; *The Great Dictator*; Italian Jews and Fascism; Mussert, Anton Adriaan; National Socialism

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February Strike

In February 1941 a general strike against the Nazis was called throughout Amsterdam in the Netherlands. This strike was called, furthermore, on behalf of Jews and in opposition to the Holocaust.

Willem Kraan, a road worker with the Amsterdam city council, was a member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN). Along with his friend Piet Nak, a worker in the sanitation department and a fellow CPN member, Kraan made the decision on Sunday, February 23, 1941, to initiate a strike to protest the German treatment of the Dutch Jews.

In early 1941 the persecution of the Jews of Amsterdam had begun to intensify. Already there had been protests against the occupation, and on February 19, 1941, a group led by Ernst Cahn and Alfred Kohn, two German Jewish émigrés, raised their voice against the Nazis. Arrested for fomenting dissent, Cahn became the first resister executed by the Nazis in the Netherlands, and the February strike that followed was a direct outcome of Cahn and Kohn's protest.

On Saturday, February 22, the Germans raided Amsterdam's Jewish Quarter and more than 400 Jews were arrested. A second raid took place the next day. Kraan witnessed at firsthand the Sunday arrests, returning home with tears in his eyes.

Without hesitation he spoke to his friend Piet Nak, and together they decided that strike action was needed to paralyze the city so the arrests and deportations would stop. They began approaching workers on the street and at the docks, pleading with them to go out on strike on behalf of the Jews. They also sought the cooperation of the public transport workers, who, it was anticipated, would strangle the city and stop all movement.

On Monday evening Nak spoke before some 300–500 workers at the Noordermarkt (North Market). Another communist comrade, Dirk van Nimwegen, also made a speech, in which he emphasized that the Dutch people should not be seen to be behaving like the Germans. Strike action was agreed to from those attending, and the strike call then went

out. Posters were made and distributed throughout the night, along with thousands of handbills.

By Tuesday, all municipal and government services in Amsterdam and nearby areas were on strike, with tens of thousands not showing up for work. News of the strike spread through the city like wildfire. The only widespread strike against a Nazi antisemitic action thus became reality. It only lasted two days, however, before it was called off on February 25, 1941.

In response, the Germans introduced draconian reprisals: the mayor of Amsterdam was threatened with punishment and dismissal, 4 strikers were executed, 22 were imprisoned (with another 40 taken as temporary hostages), and the city of Amsterdam was fined 15 million guilders.

The Gestapo then sought desperately to find and apprehend the organizers. Piet Nak was arrested and beaten severely, even though the Nazis were unaware of the extent of his involvement. Upon his release he went underground, but in November he was picked up again and interrogated under torture for four months as the Gestapo sought information on the nature and extent of the communist resistance. Eventually he was freed, but in May 1943 he was once more arrested on charges of helping Jews before again being released.

On November 16, 1941, Willem Kraan was also arrested. After a brutal period of imprisonment, he and 32 others were executed at the Soesterberg airport on November 19, 1942.

In 1966 a monument to the strike and the memory of Willem Kraan was unveiled in the newly renamed Willem Kraanstraat. The bronze statue was supposed to be of Kraan but was, instead, of an anonymous dock worker. Its appearance caused consternation among many of the survivors, particularly Piet Nak, who emphasized that the strike was organized by municipal employees, not dock workers. The monument—titled *De Dokwerker*—was cast in 1952 by Mari Andriessen and based on a 1930s volunteer from the Spanish Civil War. Nonetheless, the monument, located in Jonas Daniel Meier Square, is the focus of an annual commemoration of the February Strike.

On May 31, 1966, Yad Vashem recognized Willem Kraan and Piet Nak as Righteous among the Nations for their remarkable efforts in resisting the Nazis. Their attempt, of course, was ultimately unsuccessful, as the full-scale deportation of Jews from the Netherlands began in the summer of 1942 and over the next two years more than 107,000 were deported to their deaths, mainly to Auschwitz and Sobibór. Only 5,200 of those sent to these places survived.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Communists in the Holocaust; Netherlands; Resistance Movements; Righteous among the Nations

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Ferencz, Benjamin

Benjamin Ferencz was a field investigator for the War Crimes Branch of the United States Army, Judge Advocate Division, in Germany in 1945, and chief prosecutor of the Einsatzgruppen Trial (September 1947–April 1948). He was born in Soncutta-Mare, Romania, on March 11, 1920. Not long after his birth, his family migrated to the United States. Ferencz grew up in New York City and in 1940 received a bachelor's degree from the City College of New York. He earned a law degree from Harvard University Law School in 1943. After enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1943, he then spent two years in Europe in an anti-aircraft battalion.

Because of his legal training, the Army transferred Ferencz to the Judge Advocate's Section of the Army in February 1945 to help investigate war crimes perpetrated against American servicemen. As the war came to a close and more and more atrocities came to light, much of his work involved traveling to various concentration camps to gather evidence before they were destroyed. Field work of this type was gruesome and had a lasting impact on Ferencz, who thereafter committed his life to working toward lasting peace.

He remained a war crimes investigator with the Judge Advocate Division until December 26, 1945, when the Army gave him an honorable discharge. Not long after returning to the United States, however, he was again recruited for war crimes work; he was now hired to work for the Office of American Military Government, United States (OMGUS) whose chief legal representative, Telford Taylor, was preparing cases against leading Nazi figures in a series of additional war-crime trials to be held in the American zone of occupation.

Taylor's Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes was the U.S. organization devoted to the investigation and prosecution of Nazi war criminals subsequent to the Nuremberg Trials of major war criminals; the office had encountered great difficulty recruiting American personnel. Thus, when



Benjamin Ferencz is an American lawyer who served as a key investigator of Nazi war crimes after World War II. He was the chief prosecutor on behalf of the U.S. Army at the Einsatzgruppen Trial, one of the supplementary trials conducted by the United States military authorities at Nuremberg from 1946 onward. In this photo, taken on November 21, 2010, Ferencz addresses the opening ceremony of an exhibition commemorating the Nuremberg war crimes trials. (AP Photo/Armin Weigel)

Ferencz arrived in Germany, as both a lawyer and an experienced field investigator, he was immediately dispatched to Berlin to head up a team of researchers and analysts assigned to sift through the tons of Nazi records housed there.

Perhaps Ferencz's greatest contribution as a war crimes investigator was his recognition of the significance of the *Ereignismeldungen*, the top-secret daily reports of the SS-Einsatzgruppen or mobile killing units. These papers became the evidentiary basis of a case against 24 leaders and officers of the Einsatzgruppen who were tried in Nuremberg by the Americans in 1947 and 1948. A shortage of staff led Taylor to appoint Ferencz chief prosecutor of the case; it would be his first case.

Ferencz and a team of four lawyers prosecuted the case, in which the defendants were charged with the murder of roughly 1 million civilians, most of whom were Jews, in the occupied area of the Soviet Union between June 1941 and July 1943. While the defendants were charged with crimes

against humanity, war crimes, and membership in criminal organizations, the heart of the case was their participation in the Nazi "Final Solution." In spite of its relative inexperience, the American trial team presented a solid case and, on April 8, 1948, a panel of three judges found all but one of the defendants guilty. Fourteen were sentenced to death, and the remainder received sentences of varying prison terms.

The Einsatzgruppen Trial and Ferencz's leading role as prosecutor paved the way for future such high-profile trials, and also prepared him for work as an advocate for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court. To that end, he has lectured and published widely on the subject. Ferencz continues to work closely with organizations devoted to the advocacy of international criminal law. In 2002 he witnessed his lifelong dream come true with the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC).

HILARY EARL

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Einsatzgruppen; Taylor, Telford; War Crimes

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Film and the Holocaust

Holocaust film is a specific genre of motion pictures that has generated an enormous literature, and entire books have been written chronicling the extent to which movies about the Holocaust have been made. As a subject for movies, it presents the broadest range of themes possible, covering nothing less than the entirety of the human experience *in extremis*—social, political, cultural, economic, military, administrative, religious, gender, age, race, and so on. Film has become one of the largest contemporary topics dealing with the Holocaust, and only a bare introduction can be made in this entry.

Motion pictures were used extensively by the Nazis (and their collaborators in other countries) for the purpose of propaganda, but it was outside the Nazi realm, both before and during World War II, that film was at its most effective in bringing the Holocaust to the viewing public. Further, motion pictures on both Holocaust and World War II themes have formed a significant element of the movie industry's output—and have increased dramatically in number since the 1970s.

The study of film as history is not new; nor, of course, is the study of film as Holocaust history. Filmographies covering the Holocaust are immense in size and growing each year. For each film studied the essential tools can remain the same, however, with examinations proceeding from a subject matter analysis that explores issues such as content, period representation, historical and social construction, character empathy and moral responses, and textual composition. Where the Holocaust is concerned, one must always be wary that the filmmakers do not fall into the trap of maudlin sentimentality, as this can detract from the impact that a movie on the Holocaust can have on an audience—and, in particular, an uninformed or underinformed

audience, such as those found among younger viewers today.

For the most part, however, it is simply not possible for filmmakers to recreate with complete accuracy everything that happened in any historical situation, so liberties have to be taken—perhaps not with the truth, so much as with representations of the truth. While filmmakers might have a commitment to telling the general outline of a story, in doing so they are often forced to select specific vignettes, themes, or exchanges in order to best express themselves. The ambiguous caption “based on a true story” can lend credibility to even the most tenuous of movie tie-ins, but filmmakers seem generally content to employ the term if their movie has even the remotest grounding in real-life events.

Of course, there is a danger here; those who would detract or deny the veracity of the history being portrayed could well see that flaws in a movie generated by poetic (or dramatic) license can negate the entire account. Yet it is rare that filmmakers set out to lie or deceive; rather, all too often they are confined by the limits of their medium, conscious of the fact that they cannot “do it all,” and that, as a result, they will seek to create an understanding or interpretation of a particular historical event in accordance with the tools they have to hand. In this regard, the skills of the historian can meet those of the filmmaker in order to produce works that enhance understanding of the Holocaust.

In approaching an issue such as the Holocaust, the study of film can be useful in providing a window to achieving a deeper understanding of why it is that such extraordinary violence took place. This is not to say that all the answers can be found in movies; indeed, the Holocaust was a phenomenon more likely to be inexplicable than understandable. Nonetheless, a few questions—common to all students of film and its relationship to historical phenomena—can be asked in the hope that deeper insight can be achieved: How useful is this film in developing an understanding of the causes and nature of the Holocaust? Do you think you learned more about the Holocaust from this film than from other sources of information? Are you able to personally relate or identify with certain characters in this film? Did this film have any biases? Was the filmmakers' point of view obvious? Could you tell if the director was a man or a woman? How? Do you think the film would have been different if the alternative was the case? Can you identify any specific scenes that best describe this movie?

It goes without saying that the last 30 years have seen a sharp increase in people's interest in the Holocaust. Vast libraries of books, movies, and documentaries have been

produced, and these keep coming every week. Interest in learning *about* the Holocaust seems not, however, to have been translated into an interest in learning *from* the Holocaust and remembering those who were its victims. Motion pictures are one way in which this trend can be countered. Indeed, it can be argued that helping younger generations to learn about the Holocaust through critical consumption of film might be a way to engage them emotionally as well as intellectually, particularly as audiences today are likely to glean much of their knowledge about the Holocaust through films, both before and after their formal education.

The most fundamental of questions regarding filmic portrayals of historical issues can be addressed through a viewing of such movies: first, is the movie true to the historical reality (so far as it can be understood) upon which it is based? Second, is the movie useful in providing an understanding of, for example, what the death camps looked like? And third, how effective can graphic depictions, say, of prisoner revolts in these same camps be for a new generation of viewers seeing such images for the first time?

Movies stemming from Holocaust themes play an important role in helping to provide a sense of “place” and “period” for viewers. They are not documentaries, nor do they try to be. This is one of the major concerns some people have with regard to any movies that take historical episodes as their theme; namely, that because films employ actors speaking contrived dialogue, on movie sets that are re-creations of what might have been, they have as little validity as if they were fiction. Yet an argument can be made that filmic portrayals of the Holocaust (indeed of any historical event) are often just as much an interpretation of historical realities as other forms of analysis—and in particular, of historical writing. Certainly they evoke images and emotions that have an immediacy rarely found in all but the most outstanding written forms.

While movies on the Holocaust are a window to understanding, however, they are often no more than that. They are not a substitute for solid instruction, even though they can be a wonderful adjunct to it. Like Plato’s shadows on the wall of the cave, they show an image of reality but not reality itself. For this reason, an appreciation of the Holocaust must always proceed from the premise that there is *no* substitute for solid research, a commitment to the provision of context, and an in-depth knowledge of both the issues and the period in which they were played out. In this regard, while movies can be a start, they are not (and cannot be) the only medium for generating a full grasp of

what that awful event signified—or of what it represents for the future of the world and the society in which viewers will be living once they leave the theater or turn off their television set.

The Holocaust as a theme in motion pictures generated a number of important titles between the 1950s and 1980s. These include, but are not restricted to, such movies as *The Diary of Anne Frank* (George Stevens, 1959), *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer, 1961), *The Pawnbroker* (Sidney Lumet, 1964), *The Shop on Main Street* (Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, 1965), *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (Vittorio De Sica, 1970), *The Last Metro* (François Truffaut, 1980), *Playing for Time* (Daniel Mann, 1980), *Sophie’s Choice* (Alan J. Pakula, 1982), *Au Revoir Les Enfants* (Louis Malle, 1987), *The Nasty Girl* (Michael Verhoeven, 1990), *Europa, Europa* (Agnieszka Holland, 1991), and *Korczak* (Andrzej Wajda, 1991).

Since then, the Holocaust has remained central, and interest in movies on the topic actually intensified after the appearance in 1993 of the multi-award-winning *Schindler’s List*, directed by Steven Spielberg. Since that time, the genre has seen an escalation of major movies, many of which have won critical and popular acclaim; these include *Life Is Beautiful* (Roberto Benigni, 1997), *Sunshine* (István Szabó, 1999), *Conspiracy* (Frank Pierson 2001), *The Grey Zone* (Tim Blake Nelson, 2001), *Uprising* (Jon Avnet, 2001), *Amen* (Costa-Gavras, 2002), *The Pianist* (Roman Polanski, 2002), *Fateless* (Lajos Koltai, 2005), *Black Book* (Paul Verhoeven, 2006), *The Counterfeiters* (Stefan Ruzowitzky, 2007), *The Reader* (Stephen Daldry, 2008), *God on Trial* (Andy DeEmmony, 2008), *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Mark Herman, 2008), *Defiance* (Edward Zwick, 2008), *Good* (Vicente Amorim, 2008), *Sarah’s Key* (Gilles Paquet-Brenner, 2010), *La Rafle* (Rose Bosch, 2010), *In Darkness* (Agnieszka Holland, 2011), *Wunderkinder* (Markus Rosenmüller, 2011), *The Third Half* (Darko Mitrevski, 2012), *Ida* (Paweł Pawlikowski, 2013), and *Son of Saul* (László Nemes, 2015).

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See also: *Conspiracy*; *Good*; *The Great Dictator*; *The Grey Zone*; *Hippler, Fritz*; *Holocaust*; *Jud Süss*; *Judgment at Nuremberg*; *Life Is Beautiful*; *The Mortal Storm*; *Night and Fog*; *Paper Clips*; *The Pianist*; *Schindler’s List*; *Shoah*; *Triumph of the Spirit*; *The Truce*; *Uprising*

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Final Solution

Adolf Hitler's euphemistically named "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) was the plan settled (though not decided) at the Wannsee Conference in 1942 by Reinhard Heydrich and others (at Hitler's direction) to persecute, deport, and exterminate the Jews of Europe. By the end of World War II in 1945 the Final Solution had resulted in the deaths of approximately 6 million Jews in what became known as the Holocaust.

The Jews of occupied Europe had struggled to stay alive, as individuals and as a people, for more than two horror-filled years before the fateful decision to annihilate them all was put into action. For the rest of the war, from the later summer of 1941 until the defeat of Germany in May 1945, a state-sponsored policy of murder was undertaken throughout Europe in pursuit of the policy.

The Final Solution was unique to history. It was a deliberate, systematic, all-encompassing program of genocide, dictated wholly by state policy. The entire legal system participated—passing laws, decrees, and directives that condemned an entire innocent people group to death.

All branches of the government that were needed to accomplish the task were enlisted. People at every level of German society and from every bureaucratic office participated. Churches and the Interior Ministry supplied birth records and prevented Jews from hiding their identities, even those who had been baptized. The newspapers and post office notified them of each new abuse: the loss of jobs, restrictions on whom Jews could marry or befriend, expulsions from their homes, and deportation to the ghettos and camps. The Finance Ministry confiscated all wealth and property and, ironically, used some of it to finance the Final Solution.

Private firms fired Jewish workers, company officers, and board members. The universities refused entrance to Jewish students, denied degrees to those already enrolled, and fired Jewish professors. Private industries bid on contracts to supply the gas for extermination and to build the ovens for cremation. One company supplied one camp with 46 ovens capable of burning 500 corpses an hour. Pharmaceutical

companies used camp inmates to test drugs without having to worry about negative side effects. Doctors performed experimental operations, many simply innovative methods of torture, with no legal repercussions. And the transportation bureau paid the railroad companies' bills for taking the Jews to their death.

Unlike instances of genocide in the past, the Final Solution was not incidental to some other national goal. The Jews did not stand in the way of national expansion, as settlers perceived the Native Americans, for example. Nor was there any way Jews could escape death by moving outside of Germany to some other European nation, or even by converting to Christianity as Jews had done in other countries in earlier times. Nor did the killing stop when Germany began to lose the war and needed the trains and labor to supply the troops.

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See also: Aktion Reinhard; Auschwitz; *The Auschwitz Album*; Belzec; Chelmno; *Churban*; *Conspiracy*; Death Camps; Eichmann, Adolf; Einsatzgruppen; Generalgouvernement; Göring, Hermann; Heydrich, Reinhard; Hilberg, Raul; Hitler, Adolf; *Hitler's Willing Executioners*; Holocaust; Höppner, Rolf-Heinz; Jewish Question; Kaltenbrunner, Ernst; Majdanek; Müller, Heinrich; *Neighbors*; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Riegner Telegram; Schlegelberger, Franz; Shoah; Sobibór; Third Reich; Treblinka; Wannsee Conference

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Finland

Finland's involvement with World War II, Nazi Germany, and the Holocaust began on November 30, 1939, when the country was attacked and invaded by the Soviet Union in a conflict that became known as the Winter War. Finnish Jews fought alongside their non-Jewish countrymen to fight off the Russian advances. A total of 204 Finnish Jews fought in the Finnish Army during the Winter War, and of these 27 were killed. The Winter War ended on March 13, 1940, with the Moscow Peace Treaty. This surrendered certain important strategic areas of Finland to the Soviet Union, but it also conserved Finland's independence and ended the Soviet Union's attempt to seize the whole country. Jews

were among those made refugees from the surrendered territories.

The nationwide Finnish disgust at the conclusion of the Winter War led to Finland's involvement in the Continuation War, which saw conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union from 1941 to 1944. This aggression between the two countries resumed on June 22, 1941, the day Germany launched its invasion of the Soviet Union, Operation Barbarossa, accompanied with surreptitious Finnish operations. While Nazi Germany launched its invasion of the Soviet Union, Finland concurrently continued operations against the USSR. This ultimately resulted in Finland fighting alongside Nazi Germany against Russia. Roughly 300 Finnish Jews fought in the Continuation War, and eight of them were killed in action. Even though Finland's military had considerable numbers of German forces supporting their operations, the Finnish battle front had a field synagogue functioning in the company of Nazi troops. Jewish soldiers in the Finnish Army were approved for leave on Saturdays, as well as Jewish holidays.

In November 1942 nine Jewish Soviet refugees, along with 19 other exiles, were transported to Nazi Germany when the leader of the Finnish police agreed to hand them over. Seven of the Jews were murdered straightaway. The nine Jews surrendered to the Germans were Georg Kollman, Frans Olof Kollman and his mother, Hans Eduard Szubilski, Henrich Huppert, Kurt Huppert, Hans Robert, Martin Korn, and one unknown individual. As the Finnish media reported the news, it resulted in national outrage, and religious ministers resigned their positions in protest. After objections by Lutheran ministers, the Archbishop of Finland, and the Social Democratic Party, no more foreign Jewish immigrants were extradited from Finland. About 500 Jewish refugees came to Finland during World War II, with about 350 of them moving on to other countries.

In 1942 an exchange of Soviet POWs took place between Finland and Germany. Between 2,600 and 2,800 Soviet prisoners of war, of various nationalities and held by Finland, were traded for 2,100 Soviet POWs from diverse Finnish ethnic groups, including Finns, Karelians, Ingrians, and Estonians, who were held by Germany. About 2,000 of the POWs handed over by Finland joined the Wehrmacht. Later on in the war, Germany's ambassador to Helsinki, Wipert von Blücher, stated in a report to Adolf Hitler that the Finns would not jeopardize their people of Jewish origin in any situation. Yad Vashem recounts that 22 Finnish Jews perished in the Holocaust, all of them fighting for the Finnish Army.

Finnish Jewish soldiers later took part in the Lapland War against Germany. The Lapland War was fought from September 1944 to April 1945 in Finland's northern Lapland Province. In spite of their cooperation in trying to push back the USSR, as early as the summer of 1943 Nazi authorities began making plans for the prospect that Finland might make a separate peace arrangement with the Soviet Union. A revolution in Finnish leadership in early August 1944 led the Germans to consider that Finland would try to achieve such an arrangement. The Germans, therefore, anticipated withdrawing their forces northward, to protect their supplies of nickel near the Pechengsky (Petsamo) District in northwest Finland. On September 2, 1944, after the Finns told the Germans of the ceasefire between Finland and the Soviet Union, the Germans began seizing Finnish shipping in the Baltic Sea.

Three Finnish Jews, Leo Skurnik, Salomon Klass, and Dina Poljakoff, were presented Germany's Iron Cross for their wartime service. Major Skurnik, a district medical officer in the Finnish Army, prepared the clearing of a German field hospital when it fell prey to Soviet shelling. Due to Skurnik's actions, more than 600 patients, including SS soldiers, were evacuated from the hospital. Captain Klass, also from the Finnish Army, led a Finnish unit that saved a German company that had been encircled by the Soviet Army; while Dina Poljakoff, a member of Lotta Svärd, the Finnish women's auxiliary service, was a nursing assistant who assisted in tending to German wounded and came to be greatly venerated by her charges. All three individuals refused the award.

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See also: Operation Barbarossa; Soviet Union

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Fischer, Eugen

It has been held by some authors that the roots of Nazi racism can be traced back to Eugen Fischer, a German anthropologist who conducted experiments on African victims

during the Herero Revolt, which is considered by many to be the first genocide of the 20th century.

Fischer was born on July 5, 1874, in Karlsruhe, a city in the Grand Duchy of Baden in southwest Germany. Little is known about his early life, although he was identified in an early 20th-century academic paper as a professor at the University of Freiburg. By 1906 Fischer had made a name for himself as an anthropologist after winning the Parisian Anthropological Society's esteemed Broca Award for a study he conducted on the skull width of Papuans from the island of New Guinea. A short time later he was invited to visit German South-West Africa.

In 1885 Germany had claimed parts of Africa as new colonies. German South-West Africa was home to indigenous Herero and Nama communities. In 1904 the Herero people rebelled against colonial rule; in response, by the time the revolt had been crushed in 1907 German forces had wiped out about 80% of the Herero and 50% of the Nama populations. When Fischer arrived in 1908, he focused his study on a community of mixed race people known as the Basters, who descended from the Nama and white Europeans. He concluded that the Basters were racially inferior because of the traits they had inherited from their Nama ancestors. His research, although deeply flawed and unscientific, was embraced by the German colonial administration, and Fischer's authority in racial ideology was established.

Upon returning to Germany, Fischer became a leader in eugenics, the political and social movement that sought to improve society by preventing births of "inferior" groups while promoting births of "superior" people. In 1921 he and two colleagues published an anthology titled *The Principles of Human Heredity*. It became a standard in the field of eugenics, and in 1924 a copy was presented to Adolf Hitler in Landsberg Prison during his incarceration for the failed overthrow of the Bavarian government. Hitler embraced Fischer's theories and incorporated them into his own book, *Mein Kampf*.

Fischer's rise to power was meteoric. In 1927 he secured his career as director of anthropology in the newly created Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics (KWI). After the Nazis came to power in 1933 Fischer began to teach Nazi "racial hygiene" to SS doctors, an elite cadre of Nazi physicians responsible for racial policy and implementation. The KWI became integral to the development of Nazi biological racism.

In the mid-1930s Fischer was informed of racially mixed children living in the Rhineland. These children were the offspring of white German mothers and French colonial sol-

diers from northern Africa who had been deployed to the Rhineland as a result of the 1919 Versailles Treaty at the end of World War I. Fischer's previous research on biracial children in German South-West Africa was brought to the forefront and he advocated drastic measures to prevent the destruction of the "Aryan" race, which he identified as a superior race of pure-blooded Germans. In 1935 Fischer met with several professors from KWI and the German Ministry of Interior to discuss sterilization of the 500–600 children in the Rhineland. Two years later Fischer's call to action was implemented when the children were brought into custody. Most were involuntarily sterilized, but some were sent for medical experimentation. Many died due to these surgical procedures and subsequent infections.

In June 1939 Fischer was invited to speak to Ruhr coal magnates in secret preparation for the forthcoming war. To promote the goals of Nazism, Fischer emphasized the danger of Jews and Africans, and called for support to protect the purity of the German race. One year later he decided to publish a book on his personal antisemitic philosophy. To supplement the text with images, he sent his assistant to the newly established Łódź ghetto to photograph the Jewish residents there.

As Germany commenced the mass murder of Jews during the invasion of the Soviet Union in the late summer and spring of 1941, Fischer was the guest of honor at the inaugural meeting of the Institute for Research on the Jewish Question. The agenda focused on the annihilation of European Jews. Soon thereafter, Fischer received an enormous grant to study twins and determine the importance of heredity over environment. To undertake this project, Fischer appointed his protégé, Baron Otmar von Verschuer, to lead the study.

In 1942 Fischer retired. Not wishing to leave his new post as director at KWI, Verschuer hired his former graduate student, Josef Mengele, to continue the twin research. Due to its unlimited supply of human subjects, Mengele was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau in May 1943. There, he conducted pseudoscientific experiments on Jewish and Roma twins and dwarves.

In June 1944, as the Allies invaded France and as the gas chambers operated relentlessly at Birkenau, Fischer chaired the Anti-Jewish Congress in Kraków, Poland. Shortly after the war ended, Fischer was "denazified" (declared free from Nazi beliefs); he returned to Freiberg University, and in 1952 he was appointed honorary president of the German Anthropological Society. He died in Freiburg on July 9, 1967.

See also: Aryan; Eugenics; Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; *Mein Kampf*; Mengele, Josef; “Racial Hygiene”

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Fleischmann, Gisi

Gisi Fleischmann was a leader of Slovak Jewry during the Holocaust and one of the heads of the Bratislava Working Group, an underground organization dedicated to helping Jews through (among other things) the payment of large bribes to German and Slovak officials. The eldest of three children, she was born in Pressburg (Bratislava), Slovakia, in 1897 (her year of birth is also variously given as 1892 and 1895), to Julius Fischer and Jetty Elinger. She only had eight years of schooling, but when she had the chance taught herself German literature, history, and art history.

Slovakia, which was a Hungarian possession, became one half of the new state of Czechoslovakia in 1918, and a Nazi-imposed “Protectorate” in March 1939. When World War II broke out in September of that year, Gisi was away in London. She returned home to her husband and two daughters, sent the girls to Palestine, and then decided to remain in Bratislava where she would be able to assist the Jewish community.

A Zionist possessed of considerable natural leadership abilities, she found herself heading HICEM, a Jewish immigrant aid organization formed in 1927 by the merger of three earlier Jewish migration associations, HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), ICA (Jewish Colonization Association), and Emigdirect. She was able to function in this capacity through Bratislava’s *Ústredňa Židov*, or Jewish Council.

In the summer of 1942 Gisi, working with ultra-Orthodox rabbi Chaim Michael Ber Weissmandl, started the so-called “Working Group” as a secret organization for rescuing Jews. The time was long past for emigration; now, sheer survival was the objective. Part of her activities involved liaising with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (known colloquially as the Joint), a task made difficult due to the fact that the United States had been involved in the war against Nazi Germany since December 1941, and that, as a result, financial transfers were next to impossible to arrange. Nonetheless, Gisi made arrangements to conduct a clandestine

correspondence, in code, with numerous other Jewish organizations, particularly with Hechalutz (an association of Jewish youth whose aim was to train its members to settle the land in Israel), and with representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine stationed in Istanbul. To these and other organizations she provided alarming reports on the Jewish situation in Central and Eastern Europe. In 1943 she also directed rescue operations for Polish ghetto survivors, working to ferry groups of orphans across the borders of Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary.

Arguably the most important initiative of the Working Group was an audacious attempt to save Jewish lives that became known as the Europa Plan—which, though it did not succeed, would have rescued large numbers of Jews from Nazism. In pursuit of the plan, in late 1942 Rabbi Weissmandl and Gisi negotiated an agreement with the Nazis that saw a ransom of up to 2 million dollars being demanded to stop many of the transports heading to “the East”—which signified, in the eyes of those with insider knowledge, certain death. The idea was that Dieter Wisliceny, one of the key Jewish experts working for Adolf Eichmann, would receive the bribe. The promise of an initial payment (with more to come) seemed to work, and the deportation of Slovak Jewry was held back for a considerable period. In the long term, however, the plan failed; the bribe was pitched to Slovak officials rather than the Nazis, and it was they who checked the deportation process—something they could not do indefinitely.

Another ingredient marking the unfeasibility of the Europa Plan was the reluctance of the Joint and Hechalutz to devote money that would, directly or indirectly, go to the Nazis. The representative of the Joint in Switzerland, Saly Mayer, was especially wary about such a scheme, to say nothing of the legalities—of which he was all too aware—of how currency transfers in a time of war transgressed the Trading with the Enemy Act.

There was one area in which the Working Group was, however, successful: its distribution of the “Auschwitz Report” detailing the workings of the Auschwitz killing machinery as revealed by two escapees, Rudolf Vrba and Alfréd Wetzler. Escaping on April 7, 1944, the two had made their way to the Slovak Jewish Council in Žilina and presented their report and evidence. It was then copied and given to Reszó (Rudolf) Kasztner, head of the Zionist Aid and Rescue Committee in Bratislava, who passed it on to Rabbi Weissmandl and Gisi.

Weissmandl forwarded his version to a member of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry; from there, it reached George

Mantello, a Jewish diplomat working for the Salvadoran consulate in Geneva. Through her own contacts, Gisi was able to see that the report made the press, and in the spring of 1944 she was therefore responsible for conveying the first eyewitness testimony on the death camps to the wider world.

On October 15, 1944, during the mass deportations of Jews taking place at that time, Gisi Fleischmann was arrested by the SS. At first she was taken to the concentration camp at Sered and offered her freedom if she gave up the names of all the Jews she then knew to be in hiding. When she declined to offer any names she was tortured, but she still refused to divulge any information. On October 17, 1944, she was sent on the last transport from Slovakia to Auschwitz. SS Hauptsturmführer Alois Brunner, assistant to Adolf Eichmann, ordered that the words “return undesirable” be placed on the deportation directive alongside her name. When the train arrived at Auschwitz on October 18, Gisi’s name was called and she was immediately taken away to the gas chambers by two SS officers. She was never seen again.

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See also: Auschwitz Protocols; Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Slovakia

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Flick Case

Criminal case involving five members of the Flick Concern, a group of German industrial enterprises that included coal mines and steel plants, who were charged with using slave labor and prisoners of war, deporting persons for forced labor in German-occupied territories, and plundering private property. The Flick Case, tried from April 19 to December 22, 1947, was the first trial of German industrialists after World War II.

On February 8, 1947, the Military Government, United States, tasked with administering the Allied sector of post-war Germany, indicted Friedrich Flick, the largest private German iron and steel manufacturer (and also Germany’s wealthiest man) and four associates, charging them with war

crimes and crimes against humanity. Indicted along with Flick were SS Brigadier General Otto Steinbrinck, Flick’s chief deputy until 1939 when he became head of a government-owned company; Konrad Kaletsch, Flick’s cousin and the financial director of the Flick Concern; Bernhard Weiss, Flick’s nephew and one of the three principal executives operating the concern, and Dr. Herman Terberger, a member of the board of directors.

According to the indictment, all five defendants took part in and profited from the slave labor program. They were held to be responsible for the death or suffering of more than 10,000 French, Poles, and Russians, as well as workers of other nationalities, who had been forced to work in terrible conditions where food and shelter were at a bare minimum. Four of the men were charged with taking part in the plunder of occupied territories and of planning such plunder in advance of military operations; Terberger was not charged on this count. Documents captured by the Allies showed that Flick and his associates, along with six other steel companies, tried to coerce the German government into confiscating mills from French owners after the Germans had invaded France in 1940. The company gained possession of the Rombach ore mines in France and a railroad car plant in Riga, Latvia, using this tactic.

Flick, Steinbrinck, and Kaletsch were also charged with profiting from the process of Aryanization of Jewish property, including the acquisition of coal mines belonging to Julius and Ignatz Petschek of Czechoslovakia. The prosecution included this charge as a crime against humanity because the Flick Concern would pressure Jewish owners to sell their property at less than fair-market value. In a maneuver to make the transactions appear more proper, the German government took possession of the property before passing it on to the Flick Concern. In a document obtained by the prosecution, Flick wrote in November 1939, “these transactions could later on become the subject of the inquiry of an international court.”

The fourth count of the indictment charged Flick and Steinbrinck with supporting the criminal activities of the SS by contributing large sums to and being members of Heinrich Himmler’s “Circle of Friends.” Flick and his associates were not charged with crimes against the peace because of the problems gathering evidence across the four zones of occupation in Germany. Steinbrinck was charged alone on the fifth count of being a member of the SS from 1933 until the end of the war.

Judge Charles B. Sears from the Court of Appeals of the State of New York presided over the trial held in Nuremberg,

Germany. On December 22, 1947, the tribunal announced its verdict. Flick was convicted of all charges except the charge involving Aryanization of Jewish property; the tribunal dismissed this charge against all defendants on the grounds that it was not a “crime against humanity.” Steinbrinck was pronounced guilty on two of the five counts; he was convicted for being a member of the SS and funding Himmler’s Circle of Friends. Weiss also was convicted on two counts. The other defendants were acquitted.

In delivering the verdicts, the judges made a number of statements about the legality of the trial as well as expressing some compassion for the defendants. Judge Sears stated that “the court was not a tribunal of the United States” or a court-martial or military commission, but instead an international tribunal established by the International Control Council under Control Council Law 10. The verdict also appeared to be critical of the prosecution. The judges noted that Flick knew about the July 1944 attempt on Adolf Hitler’s life and had sheltered one of the conspirators, and that Steinbrinck, as a U-boat commander, had risked his life and his crew to rescue survivors from a ship he had sunk. The tribunal pointed out that Flick and his associates had risked clashes with Nazi leaders to provide better food, shelter, and clothing to the concern’s laborers. The defendants’ most deplorable act, according to the verdict, was that some of the profits gained through the work of slave laborers went to fund Himmler’s SS.

At the reading of the verdict, Flick announced that he had committed no crimes. He explained his relationship with the German government: “After the [Nazi] seizure of power, every industrialist in the long run had to get into some sort of relationship with the new holders of power.” He argued that he had either to work with the Nazis or risk financial ruin or death. Sentenced to seven years in prison, dating from his original capture on June 13, 1945, Flick was released from Landsberg prison in 1950, his sentence reduced for good behavior. After his release, he worked to build another financial empire. At his death in 1972 Flick was again Germany’s richest man.

JOHN DAVID RAUSCH JR.

See also: Crimes against Humanity; I.G. Farben; Krupp Case; War Crimes

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Flossenbürg

Flossenbürg was a Nazi concentration and forced labor camp system first built in the spring of 1938. It was situated outside the village of Flossenbürg in northeastern Bavaria, not far from the Czech border. The area had large deposits of granite, which the Germans hoped they could quarry using forced labor from the camp. Flossenbürg’s main camp received its first prisoners—100 individuals from the Dachau concentration camp—on May 3, 1938. Administered by the SS, the camp was first designed to be a prison for German men who were considered “asocial” as well as for repeat criminal offenders. By the end of the year the prison population had grown to 1,500. Prior to 1944 few Jews were sent to Flossenbürg.

In early 1940 Czech and Polish prisoners began arriving at the camp, including resistance fighters. By the end of 1941 Flossenbürg had 3,150 detainees; an additional 1,750 Soviet prisoners of war were housed in a separate facility within the camp grounds. More political prisoners and resistance operatives arrived during 1942 and 1943, including those from France, Germany, the Soviet Union, and the Netherlands. Detainees worked in the nearby quarries, but as the war progressed, more were put to work in German aircraft factories and an SS-operated weaving shop. Nearly 100 subcamps were erected to accommodate these workers, all under the Flossenbürg umbrella.

Beginning in August 1944, when perhaps only 100 Jews had been imprisoned at Flossenbürg, there was a mass concentration of mainly Polish and Hungarian Jews at the camp, who would number at least 10,000 by January 1945. In the winter of 1945 another 13,000 Jews flooded Flossenbürg and its subcamps. Many had been forcibly moved from camps in the east as Soviet troops pushed German forces toward the west. The camp’s population had now swelled to nearly 40,000, including some 11,000 women, and peaked at 53,000 (with 14,500 in the main camp) in March 1945.

Conditions were horrific. Meager food rations, lack of proper sanitary facilities, and virtually no medical care doomed thousands to death from starvation, disease, or overwork. Beatings and harsh punishments killed hundreds



Flossenbürg was a German concentration camp located in Bavaria near the border with Czechoslovakia. It was built in May 1938 by the SS. More than 96,000 prisoners passed through the camp prior to its liberation in April 1945. At least 30,000 lost their lives at the camp during its existence. This image shows units of the U.S. First Infantry Division at the time of the liberation on May 8, 1945. (Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images)

of others, and the more senior inmates, most of them habitual criminals who had been locked up for years, preyed on newer detainees. Rape and sexual exploitation were commonplace, and the corrupt camp administration did nothing to stop such activities.

The mortality rate at Flossenbürg, while never reaching the levels seen at death camps, was nonetheless shocking. In 1941 more than 1,000 Soviet prisoners of war were executed there. That same year 500 Poles were shot dead, and in March 1945, 13 Allied prisoners of war were hanged, including one American. These deaths did not include the thousands who died in other ways; the total number who died at

Flossenbürg and its subcamps is estimated to be about 30,000 (of whom 3,515 were Jews), out of a total of 97,000 who had been in the camp at one time or another.

In April 1945, as U.S. troops closed in on Flossenbürg, the Nazis ordered an immediate evacuation. All able-bodied prisoners were sent on a forced march toward Dachau; those unable to undertake the journey were shot or left for dead. At least 7,000 detainees died in this process, principally by starvation and exhaustion. When Flossenbürg was finally liberated on April 23, U.S. troops found just 1,500 people—many of them wracked by hunger and disease.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Concentration Camps; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Weiss, Helga

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Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies

An archive housed at Yale University's Sterling Memorial Library, which has catalogued interviews with some 4,500 Holocaust witnesses and survivors since 1979. The Fortunoff Video Archive is officially part of the university's Department of Manuscripts and Archives. The program was among the first to use videotape to conduct interviews with witnesses to a significant historical event. It has also served as a model for other video archives which have documented more recent genocides, including those in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, among others.

The genesis of the archive was the videotaping of four Holocaust survivors in Connecticut in May 1979. Involved in those initial interviews were television journalist Laurel Vlock and Dori Laub, a psychiatrist and child Holocaust survivor. The next month, the Holocaust Survivors Film Project (HSFP) was formed at Yale and was overseen by Geoffrey Hartman, a Yale English professor. More interviews were conducted, and in 1980 HSFP received a New York Emmy Award for its documentary titled *Forever Yesterday*. By 1981, 183 separate interviews had been catalogued in the Yale library. In 1987 HSFP was renamed for Alan A. Fortunoff, who provided the program with a generous endowment.

In 1991 University of Illinois professor Lawrence Langer wrote a critically acclaimed book, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*, which was based on the author's analysis of the archive's interviews. In May 2000 the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) aired *Witnesses: Voices from the Holocaust*, based on videos from the Fortunoff collection. The Yale library began digitizing its video collection in February 2011, a process that will ensure its preservation in perpetuity.

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See also

Survivor Testimony; USC Shoah Foundation

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Fossoli di Carpi

During World War II the Italian fascist government of Benito Mussolini constructed a network of camps and prisons to house enemy soldiers captured during warfare in Europe and North Africa. An ally of Nazi Germany, Italian camps held many Allied prisoners of war sent from the North African campaign.

Six kilometers outside the small northern Italian city of Carpi, fascist authorities erected a camp on former farmland in May 1942 to house British soldiers captured in North Africa. From May 1942 to September 1943 Italian fascist forces interned some 5,000 enemy soldiers at Fossoli.

During Fossoli's use as a prisoner of war camp, Italy had operated as an autonomous ally to Germany. However, following the Allied invasion of southern Italy in September 1943 and Mussolini's subsequent overthrow, the Italian government abandoned its German partnership and on September 8, 1943, declared allegiance to the Allies. Germany responded by invading Italy and occupying all of northern Italy as far south as Rome. This included a German takeover of Fossoli. The German arrival heralded the mass deportation of some 5,000 prisoners of war to forced labor camps in Eastern Europe. After deporting all of the POWs, the Germans left Fossoli and instructed local government officials in Carpi to clean and prepare the camp for the arrival of Jewish prisoners.

The first Jews arrived at Fossoli on December 5, 1943. In addition to Jews, Italians arrested for their opposition to fascist and Nazi policies were also sent to Fossoli. The Jews and political prisoners were separated into different sections of the camp. Italian fascist authorities (those still loyal to Mussolini and Nazi causes) monitored and guarded prisoners from December 5, 1944, to March 15, 1945. During this period, four deportations of Jewish prisoners occurred. The first convoy of 83 prisoners departed Fossoli for Bergen-Belsen on January 26, 1944, and was followed by another transport of 69 Jews to Bergen-Belsen on February 19. The first deportation to Auschwitz of 517 Jews left the Carpi train station on February 22, 1944. The final deportation during

the Italian-run period of Fossoli departed on March 12 carrying 71 individuals to an unknown destination.

The Germans took over control of Fossoli from the Italians on March 15, 1944. Under German command, an additional 2,032 Jews were deported to the Nazi camps of Auschwitz (1,821), Bergen-Belsen (171), Buchenwald (21), and Ravensbrück (19). German and Italian forces also deported an unknown number of political and civilian prisoners prior to the camp's closure in August 1944. The camp functioned briefly thereafter, from August to November 1944, as a transit camp for forced labor to German occupied territories.

ALEXIS HERR

See also: Concentration Camps; Italy

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France

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, France was a liberal country, especially as an asylum for Jewish immigrants coming from Eastern Europe. Jewish immigrants who entered France after World War I brought a thriving cultural center to Paris. France, however, made the decision to close its doors when the leaders of the Third Republic (1870–1940) stated they could no longer support the refugees fleeing Nazi Germany and the Spanish Civil War. The French authorities set up internment camps for refugees by 1939 and imposed limitations on immigration.

The influx of Jewish immigrants and rising unemployment revived antisemitism in France. Charles Maurras, the leader of the right-wing political group Action Française, distributed an antisemitic newspaper bearing the same name. The newspaper called for the end of Jews as political opponents and demanded the assassination of Léon Blum, the Jewish leader of the Socialist Party. By the late 1930s *Action Française* was read by 650,000 people, thus illustrating the popularity of antisemitism in France at this time.

The government of Edouard Daladier, the president from April 1938 to March 1940, accelerated the laws of exclusion and discrimination, paving the way for the even harsher anti-Jewish laws put in place by the collaborationist regime

at Vichy following the German occupation. Under Daladier, French police were given the power to fine and imprison illegal immigrants. They were ordered to send illegal immigrant Jews back to Germany. Immigrants had restrictions placed on their voting rights; they were placed under surveillance and provided with a centralized identity card. Foreigners who were deemed unworthy of the title of French citizen were stripped of their French nationality. The internment camps set up for refugees and illegal immigrants by the Daladier government were later used by the Vichy regime as transit and deportation camps to send both French and foreign Jews to their deaths in Auschwitz.

The German invasion of France took place on May 10, 1940, and the Third Republic collapsed under the German attack. France's capital city, Paris, fell to the Nazis on June 14, 1940. Adolf Hitler had not expected to conquer France in six weeks, and he had no plans for a relocation of populations as he had in Poland. Thus, the problems of occupation were dealt with as they arrived.

On June 22, 1940, an armistice was signed between the Third Reich and the government of Marshal Philippe Pétain, France's leading military commander during World War I. France was divided into unoccupied and occupied zones, and the eastern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which shared borders with Germany, were annexed to the Third Reich. Northern and western France was occupied by the German army and the area was administered in conjunction with occupied Belgium under the leadership of a military commander (*Militärbefehlshaber*). General Otto von Stülpnagel held this position from October 1940 until March 1942. Later, the region was placed under the control of his cousin, General Karl-Heinrich Stülpnagel, until his arrest for attempting to assassinate Hitler during the infamous Bomb Plot of July 20, 1944.

A government collaborating with the Nazis was set up in southern France with its capital located in the resort town of Vichy, controlled by Marshal Pétain and his prime minister, Pierre Laval. Vichy remained in control of French North Africa, which included Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), under the leadership and direction of SS Lieutenant Colonel Adolf Eichmann, aimed to bring the Vichy government into line with the regulations as enforced in the Reich, including the "Jewish problem." It was not difficult for Vichy to implement anti-Jewish sentiments, as Pétain's government was able to make use of the Third Republic's existing administration and legal apparatus, utilizing already established antisemitic and

xenophobic views regarding Jewish immigrants and refugees that prevailed across many sectors of society.

During the interwar period France had a population of about 150,000 Jews. Due to the influx of Jewish refugees from Germany, the population in France increased, to the point where an estimated 300,000 Jews lived in France just prior to the German invasion—less than half of whom were French citizens. When war was declared on September 3, 1939, French Jews, along with men from the general population, were mobilized into the French military. Many foreign Jews enlisted as volunteers, as they did when France went to war in 1914. However, in 1939 Jewish refugees from Germany were interned as enemy aliens, and while most of them were confident that France would defend them against Nazi Germany, many foreign Jews fled to the unoccupied zone after July 1940.

Jews in the occupied zone were subject to antisemitic measures modeled from Nazi Germany. Beginning in August 1941, Jews were banned from owning a bicycle or a radio; from February 1942 they were subjected to a curfew, only allowed to travel on a designated carriage on the metro, and could shop only between the hours of 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. They were banned from all public places and forced by French police to wear the yellow star; this latter measure was mandatory in the occupied zone for all Jews over the age of six, in a process that was intended to aid with the registration and recording of Jews for future roundups and deportations.

The armistice agreement between Nazi Germany and the newly established Vichy government indicated that the Germans intended to apply their anti-Jewish racial laws to France and its North African territories. The Vichy regime quickly and enthusiastically implemented the first anti-Jewish measures in the fall of 1940, applying the new laws in France's occupied zone. However, the anti-Jewish policy created by the Vichy authorities went beyond what was demanded of them by the Germans, and they implemented their strict laws without German pressure to do so.

Between September 1940 and June 1942 a number of anti-Jewish measures were passed by Vichy, known as the *Statut des Juifs*. Raphael Alibert, Vichy's minister of justice and a former Action Française sympathizer, drafted the first statute. Alibert was backed by Pétain, who fully supported the exclusion of Jews from public posts.

The statutes included such instruments as expanding the category of who was considered to be a Jew, forbidding free negotiation of Jewish-owned capital, confiscating radios in Jewish possession, deporting or executing Jewish members of the resistance movement, establishment of a curfew for

Jews, forbidding Jews to change their place of residence, and prohibiting Jewish access to public areas. In the unoccupied zone, the wearing of the star was not employed due to a fear of a negative public reaction (though a person's Jewish identity was marked on their identification papers). In July 1941 Vichy ordered a census of all the Jews in the unoccupied zone, which provided a foundation for the Germans to keep track of Jews in the unoccupied zone after Germany took over the whole of France in 1943.

In April 1941 the Vichy government established a Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives (Commissariat-General for Jewish Affairs). This organization worked with the German authorities in order to "Aryanize" Jewish businesses in the occupied zone. They also managed the seizure of Jewish assets and organized anti-Jewish propaganda. At the same time, the Germans were collecting registers of Jews throughout the occupied zone. The anti-Jewish laws of 1941 systematized the registration of Jews across the country, including Vichy controlled North Africa.

Vichy's definition of Jewishness differed from that of the Nazis. A person was considered Jewish if he or she had three grandparents, or two Jewish grandparents and were married to a Jew. An individual's religion did not matter; Vichy continued to classify a person as Jewish even if he or she converted to Christianity. Vichy continued to extend its definition of Jewishness in 1941 and again in 1942.

The Jews in France were deported to the East at the height of a two-year process of persecution and aggressive legislation. Beginning in the winter of 1940 and lasting through 1941, French Jews began to be imprisoned in concentration camps. Thousands of Jews were incarcerated in camps in Paris and the surrounding areas and southwestern France. In March 1942 approximately 1,000 Jews were arrested and sent to the Compiègne detention camp, from where they were deported to Auschwitz.

In July 1942 Jews were arrested, imprisoned, and guarded by the French police, who also conducted roundups such as at the Vél' d'Hiv, where French authorities arrested more than 13,000 foreign Jews in Paris in a process that was organized by French authorities and carried out by French police. With the Vél' d'Hiv roundup, the French authorities went above and beyond German demands regarding the deportation of French Jews, especially by including babies and children. Overall, by the end of September 1942 almost 38,000 Jews had been deported to Auschwitz from France, and between 1942 and 1944 about 63,000 Jews were deported from the Drancy internment camp located in the northeast suburb of Paris—a camp that had been established for the

specific purpose of holding Jews prior to their deportation to the extermination camps in Poland.

In November 1942 German and Italian forces occupied the Vichy zone. In their area of occupation in southeastern France, the Italians refused to enforce antisemitic legislation or hand Jews over to German officials, and they sought to protect the Jews who fled there seeking refuge. However, in September 1943, after Italy capitulated to the Allies, the German authorities took over the Italian zone and began rounding up the Jews who had found refuge there.

The Germans reinstated transports of Jews from France in January 1943 and continued these deportations until the Allies had begun to liberate France. The last transport left Drancy on August 17, 1944, while the battle for Paris was being fought. During the war nearly 80,000 Jews were deported from France. Of these, 70,000 were sent to Auschwitz. The remainder were sent to Majdanek, Sobibór, and Buchenwald. By the end of the war, just 2,000 of those who were deported had survived.

The Allied landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944, initiated the liberation of France. The French Resistance aided tremendously in this effort. On August 25, 1944, German forces in Paris surrendered, and on the following day General Charles de Gaulle, the leader of the Free French Forces, triumphantly took the French capital.

Following the liberation, de Gaulle's Provisional Government began a series of trials against leading Vichy officials. Pierre Laval was convicted of treason and executed. Marshal Pétain was also condemned to death on treason charges; however, de Gaulle commuted his sentence to life in prison due to his age and service during World War I.

Throughout France there were individuals who refused defeat and collaboration with Nazi Germany. Free France and its Free French Forces (France Libre and Forces Françaises Libres) was organized in exile in the United Kingdom, while various resistance movements emerged in both the occupied and unoccupied zones.

General de Gaulle, who rejected the armistice Pétain had concluded with Nazi Germany in June 1940, escaped to Britain and established Free France in London, from where he established his military arm, the Free French Forces. By the end of the war these forces mustered over 1,300,000, making it the fourth largest military presence in Europe. Free French forces fought against the Axis powers from 1940 onward, as well as organizing and supporting the Resistance in occupied France.

By 1944 there were approximately 100,000 members of various resistance movements in France, including Jewish

resistance groups such as the *Organisation Juive de Combat* (OJC). The resistance organization *Armée Juive* hid Jews, especially Jewish children, while other members sought to enable their escape from France. The Jewish resistance in France established an organized response to the persecution of Jews in France, an issue that was not on the agenda of the broader French Resistance movement. The Jewish resistance played a very important role in rescuing French Jewry and left a lasting impact on the Jewish response to the Holocaust in France.

Free France led the way for de Gaulle's immense impact on the future of France, as leader of its provisional government and first president of the French Fifth Republic. The Free French Forces assisted with Operation Torch in North Africa in November 1942 and the liberation of France by the Allies in 1944.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Action Française; Armée Juive; Aryization; Barbie, Klaus; Bingham, Harry; Bloch, Marc; Bunel, Lucien-Louis; Channel Islands; Cohn, Marianne; Collaboration; Confiscation of Jewish Property; Delbo, Charlotte; De Sousa Mendes, Aristides; Drancy; Fry, Varian; Gunden, Lois; Laval, Pierre; Manstein, Erich von; Marie-Benoît, Père; Munich Agreement; Museums and Memorials; Natzweiler-Struthof; Pétain, Philippe; Vichy France; World War II, Outbreak of

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Frank, Anne

One of the millions of victims of the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews during World War II, Anne Frank kept a diary that has become the most well-known document of human strength in the face of unrestrained oppression, as well as one of the most controversial memoirs from the era.

Anneliese Marie Frank was born on June 12, 1929, in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Her parents, Otto and Edith



Anne Frank was a German-born diarist of the Holocaust who lived with her family in hiding in Amsterdam. Her diary, in which she related her life from 1942 to 1944, was published after her death in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. One of the best-known victims of the Holocaust, her diary has been studied by countless numbers of young people throughout the world. (Library of Congress)

Frank, already had one other daughter, three-year-old Margot, and soon the Great Depression forced the well-to-do family into tight economic conditions. For the first few years of Anne's life, her parents struggled to maintain themselves financially. In 1933, when the Nazi Party came to power in Germany and Jews began to feel the effects of discrimination under the regime, Otto decided to relocate his family to Amsterdam in the Netherlands, where he had business and personal contacts. By March 1934 the entire Frank family was living in the Dutch capital.

From 1934 until 1940 Anne enjoyed a comfortable life with her family. Her father was making a decent living as the promoter of a food concern, and she enjoyed attending Montessori School. However, in 1940 Germany invaded the Netherlands and quickly occupied the country. With this occupation came the implementation of anti-Jewish legislation and severe repression of the Jewish community. By the fall of 1941 Jewish schoolchildren were removed from their schools and segregated into Jewish-only schools, while Jewish adults were actively forced out of business ownership in Holland. For the Frank family, life became far more restrictive in the country they believed would be a safe haven from Nazi oppression.

The turning point for the Franks came on July 5, 1942, when Margot received a notice that she was to report to a "labor camp" for national service. Realizing that this meant deportation to a concentration camp, Otto decided to place his family into hiding. With the help of a few key friends and neighbors, the Franks hid in a small attic annex at 263 Prinsengracht Street on July 6, 1942. They were soon joined by another Jewish family, Auguste and Hermann van Pels and their son Peter, as well as another Jewish acquaintance, Fritz Pfeffer. Together, these eight people lived in hiding until they were discovered by the police on August 4, 1944.

During their two years underground, Anne kept an elaborate diary that detailed the families' secret life—lived mostly at night—as well as her own adolescent viewpoints of the situation in which she found herself. Tensions between the eight people crammed into two small rooms flared at times, but Anne's diary also relays a sense of urgency and understanding that their precarious situation could only be maintained with mutual cooperation and respect.

Although the diary expresses hope that the Allies would liberate Europe before the families were discovered, the betrayal of the Franks and the others to the police led to their deportations to a variety of concentration and death camps.

On August 8, 1944, the Frank and van Pels families, along with Pfeffer, were deported to Westerbork. One month later that camp was liquidated, and the prisoners were sent to Auschwitz in Poland. In October 1944 Anne and Margot were deported from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen in Germany, where they died sometime in February or March 1945. Their mother Edith died in Auschwitz, but their father Otto survived to be liberated from that camp in January 1945.

In June 1945 Otto returned to Amsterdam, where friends gave him his daughter's diary. Overwhelmed by its insight and compelling account of life in hiding, Otto became determined to present it to the world. In this, he was inspired by his daughter's own dreams. In an entry dated March 29, 1944, for example, Anne referred to a call from Radio Oranje that memoirs and diaries from the war be published at its end. Anticipating her own survival, she immediately began to rewrite her diary for public consumption. Otto thus spent the next two years preparing the manuscript for publication, and in the summer of 1947 *The Diary of Anne Frank* was published in Dutch. By 1952 English, German, and French editions were published. The diary was subsequently translated into more than 50 languages. *The Diary of Anne Frank* quickly became a sensation, selling out countless editions, and was adapted into a successful play and film as well.

However, controversy has also surrounded the diary. Literary rights were disputed between a variety of publishers, authors, and Otto. Moreover, many historians have been dismayed at the liberties taken by artists over the life of Anne, while others have argued that because she did not write about the most horrific aspects of the war, her diaries should not be the most utilized testament to the Holocaust. In 1986 the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation published all versions of the diaries in one complete edition, allowing scholars the chance to compare the initial diaries with the revised version that Frank began before her deportation. Since then, attention has turned toward reflections about the impact of Anne's word rather than solely toward reconstructing her life and intentions.

However controversial, the diary of Anneliese Frank is the most well-known document of the Holocaust and continues to inspire many throughout the world. The building where the Franks hid is now the home of the Anne Frank House, an international organization aimed at educating the world's youth to reject racism and discrimination. Although she died in 1945, Anne Frank's words continue to educate, inspire, and provoke millions to remember the tragedies of World War II.

NANCY STOCKDALE

See also: Anne Frank House; Children during the Holocaust; Denial of the Holocaust; Generalgouvernement; Gies, Miep; Harster, Wilhelm; Netherlands; Nuremberg Trials; Rescuers of Jews

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Frank, Hans

Hans Michael Frank, the “Butcher of Poland,” was born on May 23, 1900, in Karlsruhe, the son of a lawyer who encouraged his son to follow in his footsteps. In 1917 he joined the German Army and served briefly in World War I, though he barely experienced combat. Disillusioned by Germany's defeat, at first he joined the mystical Thule Society led by Walter Nauhaus, a wounded veteran and art student, and occultist Rudolf Freiherr von Sebottendorff (the alias of Adam Alfred Rudolf Glauer). He also joined the rightist nationalist Freikorps (“Free Corps”) led by veteran Franz Ritter von Epp, in which he battled communists and others perceived as “enemies of Germany.” By 1919 he was already a member of the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (“German Workers Party,” or DAP) which would soon mutate into the National Socialist German Workers Party—the Nazi Party—which he formally joined in 1923, becoming a member of the paramilitary Sturmabteilung (SA). In November of that year he participated in the ill-fated Beer Hall Putsch in Munich, only to flee to Austria and return a year later after the Bavarian government decided not to pursue further legal action after sentencing Adolf Hitler to Landsberg Prison. (Sentenced to five years, Hitler would serve less than one year, using the time to hone his political skills and write/dictate his political autobiography *Mein Kampf* to his secretary, Rudolf Hess.) Because of his legal knowledge and commitment, Frank very quickly rose to prominence in Hitler's inner circle, and later he became the Führer's personal legal adviser as well as the party's lawyer and defense attorney when circumstances warranted it.

In 1930 Frank was elected to the Reichstag (Parliament), and after Hitler's ascent to power on January 30, 1933, he was appointed minister of justice for Bavaria, becoming

also the president of the Academy of German Law. In 1928 he had already founded the National Association of German Jurists, with himself as president. His commitment to the power of law and its proper implementation found him initially at odds with Hitler and opposed not only to extrajudicial murders at Dachau but, more significantly, to Hitler's elimination of his rivals, including Ernst Röhm, during the "Night of the Long Knives" from June 30 to July 2, 1934.

Prior to Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Frank was appointed chief of administration to the German military led by Field Marshal Gerd von Runstedt. With military success came a new assignment: governor-general of the Occupied Polish Territories, approximately 56,000 square miles in an area that became known as the *Generalgouvernement*; with this came the new rank of SS Obergruppenführer (lieutenant general). Among his primary responsibilities were the segregation of Jews into ghetto and extermination camps (the latter of which he would claim ignorance of at his trial) and the forced labor of Poles; chief among the former was the notorious Warsaw Ghetto and the Belzec, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Sobibór extermination camps. Regarding the fate of the Jews, he would inform his senior staff in a speech on December 16, 1941: "We must annihilate the Jews wherever we find them and whenever it is possible."

Attempting to flee from the Allies at the end of the war, Frank was arrested by American troops on May 3, 1945, at Tegernsee, Bavaria. Initially beaten, he attempted to commit suicide not once but twice. He was then transferred to Nuremberg to await trial before the International Military Tribunal. As an aid to his defense, he willingly turned over the 43 volumes of his diaries and returned to his Roman Catholic roots under the guidance of the priest at Nuremberg, Franciscan father Sixtus O'Connor, OFM. The charges against him were numerous: he held a position of leadership in the Nazi Party and in the German government; he promoted the seizure of power by the Nazis through his maneuvering in the field of law; as governor-general of Poland he committed war crimes and crimes against humanity; he advocated and administered a program of exterminating Jews of Polish nationality; and he imposed upon the population of the Generalgouvernement a reign of terror, oppression, impoverishment, and starvation.

Found guilty of all charges on October 1, 1946, Frank was hanged on October 16. His last recorded words were: "I am thankful for the kind treatment during my captivity and I ask God to accept me with mercy."

The final judgment, however, was that written by the youngest of his five children, Niklas Frank, who would publish his stinging critique and rebuke of his father in Germany in 1987, in a book titled *Der Vater: Eine Abrechnung* ("The Father: A Settling of Accounts"). This was published in English in 1991 as *In the Shadow of the Reich*. In this work he described his father as "a slime-hole of a Hitler fanatic."

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Death Camps; Ghettos; Madagascar Plan; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nisko Plan; Nuremberg Trials; Poland; Schutzhaft; *Sturmabteilung*

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Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial

The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, held in Frankfurt, Germany, between December 1963 and August 1965, brought charges of murder against 20 lower-level Nazi officers and other camp functionaries at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Its result—as a legal decision and an educational opportunity—is controversial and generally considered to have been less than a success.

The term "Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial" can be subject to some confusion because there were trials held earlier that also focused on Auschwitz and are referred to as Auschwitz trials. In March 1947 a trial was held in Warsaw by the Polish Supreme National Tribunal. Among the defendants at that trial was Rudolf Höss, the first and longest serving commandant of Auschwitz. In another trial by the Polish Supreme National Tribunal, this one in Kraków, held during the last months of 1947, some 40 officers and other staff were charged with various offenses. This trial is often referred to as the First Auschwitz Trial. This explains why the trial in Frankfurt in the 1960s is sometimes referred to as the Second Auschwitz Trial.

The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial of 1963–1965 was the most important trial of Holocaust perpetrators held in West Germany. Twenty-four defendants were indicted, with 20

remaining at the end of the trial (the other four either died or their trials were separated for reasons of health). Although the 20 defendants were low-level functionaries (as compared to the two prior trials held in 1947 in Poland, and certainly as compared to the trial of major war criminals in Nuremberg), the trial generated widespread attention throughout Germany. Coming as it did shortly after the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel in 1961, the trial was to produce irrefutable evidence of the horrors of the Holocaust, and perhaps become a cause of self-examination by the millions of Germans who were directly or indirectly involved in the Final Solution.

The lead prosecutor was Fritz Bauer, the Hessian State attorney general. Some 360 witnesses—more than 200 of whom were Auschwitz survivors—testified over 183 days, resulting in seven convictions of murder—six of which resulted in sentences of life in prison (the death penalty was not allowed) and one of 10 years in juvenile detention—and 10 convictions of accessory to murder, with sentences ranging from three-and-a-quarter to 14 years in prison. Three of the defendants were acquitted.

Two controversies surrounding this trial have caused some to consider it a failure, except in the narrowest sense. The first issue dealt with the legal code under which the trial was held. Normally, postwar trials like this would be required to be conducted under Allied Control Council Law No. 10, issued on December 20, 1945, which would have allowed the court to consider charges of “crimes against humanity.” However, on May 5, 1955, German courts were granted autonomy, including the right to determine the legal code under which they would adjudicate cases. This led to the critical decision to conduct this trial under ordinary German criminal law based on the German penal code of 1871. This meant that the law that would apply to the actions of the defendants in the killing factory that was Auschwitz would be the same as would apply to a charge of murder of an individual on the streets of Berlin.

This, in turn, meant that the defendants would be charged with either murder or accessory to murder. Murder, which carried a potential sentence of life in prison, was very difficult to prove under the German penal code because it required that the act be committed on the basis of a limited number of motives. In the absence of proof of intent based on one of the stipulated motives, only the charge of accessory to murder could be considered. According to the German penal code in effect at the time of the trial, mitigating factors were allowed to be taken into account when sentencing a defendant who had been found guilty of accessory to

murder, whereas no mitigating factors could be taken into account when sentencing a defendant found guilty of murder. Being convicted of accessory to murder rather than murder resulted in significantly lighter sentences, as seen above.

As a result of these provisions of German criminal law, a common defense presented by defendants who had killed was to try to show that they did so for reasons other than those on the list of motives that attach to the charge of murder. So, defendants admitting to the act of killing but arguing that it was not motivated for any of the reasons necessary to prove murder were shielded, if the defense prevailed, from the possibility of life sentences.

One of the motives that could give rise to an act of murder was that the act was done for “base motives.” Absent an admission by the defendant, base motives could be inferred only if the defendant’s actions were cruel and excessive. As applied to Auschwitz, this meant that only those defendants who killed in an “excessive manner”—that is, with excessive force or cruelty—could be guilty of murder. Further, killing in an excessive manner was deemed to occur only when the killing was done without orders, that is, on the initiative of the defendant.

This gave rise to the bizarre result that a defendant who was not ordered to but nonetheless beat a single person to death could be found guilty of murder, but a defendant involved in the killing of millions of innocent victims—but who was acting in accordance with orders, meaning their behavior was not excessive and, therefore, base motives could not be inferred—could not be found guilty of murder, but only of being an accessory to murder, with its lighter sentences.

The second issue that made this trial so controversial was a conflict between those who saw the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial strictly as a legal process to determine the guilt or innocence of 20 individuals accused of particular crimes and those who saw an opportunity to educate the German public to the broader systemic nature of the killing apparatus—and the social responsibility that affixes to society as a whole.

In the former group, in addition to the defense attorneys generally, was, most importantly, Presiding Judge Hans Hofmeyer, who viewed this simply as a criminal trial in no need of an examination of the broader picture in which the charged crimes took place. The position of the latter group—that this trial should be used as a national teaching moment—was most clearly espoused by several on the prosecution side of the case. For example, Bauer envisioned a trial that would have a profound effect on the German people,

one that would bring an awareness of the full scope of the horror of Auschwitz and the related issues of individual and group responsibility. Given that the presiding judge rejected any expansion of the proceedings beyond the technical legal parameters of a “normal criminal trial,” it is not surprising that this conflict was resolved in accordance with that position.

The combination of applying the German penal code to a crime of the scope of genocide, and limiting the focus of the trial strictly to the charges brought against the defendants and not the larger picture of the Final Solution, resulted in the conclusion by the millions of “ordinary” Germans who were closely following the proceedings that what happened in Auschwitz was done by a handful of monsters—only those sadists who acted excessively—and not by ordinary Germans like themselves. This was a highly inaccurate presentation of the dynamics of the killing factory that was Auschwitz. Thus, the trial satisfied a legal code that was inadequate to the magnitude of the crime, and it relieved the German people of the task of examining their own culpability.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; Crimes against Humanity; War Crimes

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Franz, Kurt

Kurt Hubert Franz, born in Düsseldorf on January 17, 1914, became infamous for his cruelty in Nazi extermination camps, especially Treblinka, where he served as the camp’s third commandant. For a German citizen who never joined the National Socialist German Workers’ Party or any of its affiliated organizations, Franz rose quickly after joining the army in 1935, serving initially as a cook, and then volunteering for the Death’s Head Unit (the SS-Totenkopfverbände) in 1937. He served in several capacities during his career. He was a guard at Buchenwald; took part, beginning in 1939, in *Aktion T-4*, the so-called Nazi euthanasia program; and, in the spring of 1942, served at Belzec as commander of the Ukrainian guard unit. Later in 1942 he was sent to Treblinka.

At Treblinka, as he had at Belzec, he commanded the Ukrainian guard unit. He soon became deputy commandant of the camp, serving under Franz Stangl. On August 2, 1943, a revolt of prisoners at Treblinka proved to be unsuccessful, but it resulted in significant destruction to the camp. When Stangl was transferred after the revolt, Franz replaced him as camp commandant. By that time, his primary responsibility was to dismantle the camp and cover up any signs of the mass murders that were committed there.

Franz displayed a level of day-to-day cruelty that he clearly enjoyed, and he was able to exercise it in Treblinka at will. His methods were varied but they all terrified the prisoners. He beat and shot prisoners without hesitation, often on an arbitrary basis, as if for sport. One of the many ways he made himself the most feared man in the camp was to sic his 150-pound St. Bernard dog, Barry, on any prisoner—for any reason, or for no reason at all. The dog was trained to bite the buttocks and genitals of the selected prisoner. Its strength and viciousness were well known throughout the camp.

The pure evil of his actions was seen in acts like shooting prisoners who had not yet detrained from the cattle car that brought them to Treblinka. He often killed children and babies, sometimes by kicking them to death, and he perfected the use of a whip to maximize the suffering of the victim. His appearance, however, belied his actions. He was nicknamed *Lalke*, meaning “the doll” in Yiddish, because of his soft baby face.

After leaving Treblinka, Franz spent some time in northern Italy where he continued in his role as a sadistic murderer of Jews. After the war he hid in plain sight in Germany, first working on bridges, and then, for the next decade, working as a cook, the skill that he brought with him when he first joined the German army. In December 1959 Franz was arrested in his home town of Düsseldorf.

He was then brought to trial, along with 10 other camp officials, in what is known as the First Treblinka Trial, held in Düsseldorf between October 1964 and August 1965. He was sentenced to life in prison and served 28 years before being released in 1993 for health reasons. He died in 1998.

There is a coda to Franz’s life. In 1959, upon Franz’s arrest, his home was searched. Discovered there was a private photo album with pictures of Treblinka, despite the fact that cameras and photographs were forbidden in the camp. The original album is now housed at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The title Franz gave to the album is revelatory. The German “*Schöne Zeiten*” has been translated as “Good Times,” or “Beautiful Times.”

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Belzec; Buchenwald; Death Camps; Stangl, Franz; Treblinka

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Freisler, Roland

Roland Freisler was a preeminent lawyer and judge who served as president of the People's Court (*Volksgerichtshof*) in Nazi Germany from August 20, 1942, until his death on February 3, 1945, in Berlin. In this capacity, Freisler was in charge of the show trials used by the Nazis to deal with opponents of the National Socialist regime and political dissent, acting as judge, jury, and sometimes even as prosecutor, and handing down the death penalty or life imprisonment in 90% of all cases that came before him. While he presided over the First Senate of the People's Court, he was responsible for as many death sentences as all other sessions of the court put together for the entire time it existed.

Freisler contributed to the introduction into German law of racial categories and differential treatment based on race. In addition, he was responsible for the first laws allowing for the execution of juveniles in Germany. He was even more extreme in his adherence to principles of racial purity than Adolf Hitler, arguing for a ban on any sort of mixed-blood intercourse or relationships, no matter how little "foreign blood" might be involved. He represented the Reich Ministry of Justice at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 when the plans of the Final Solution, the destruction of European Jewry, were outlined.

Freisler was born on October 30, 1893, in Celle, Lower Saxony, and was baptized a Protestant on December 13, 1893. In 1914 he was at law school at the University of Jena when the outbreak of war interrupted his studies. He served as an officer cadet in 1914 and by 1915 was a lieutenant. He won the Iron Cross in both First and Second Class for heroism in action. Wounded on the Eastern Front, in October 1915 he was captured by Russian forces. As a prisoner of war he learned Russian and is reputed to have developed an interest in Marxism following the Russian Revolution. After the war he returned to Germany with the reputation of being a convinced communist, something he always later denied. His subsequent career as a political official in

Germany, however, was overshadowed by rumors about his possible communist past.

In 1919 he resumed his law studies and became a doctor of law in 1922. From 1924 he worked as a solicitor in Kassel. He was also elected a city councilor as a member of the Völkisch-Sozialer Block, an extreme nationalist splinter party.

Freisler joined the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NDSAP) in July 1925 as part of the movement's left wing, and he served as defense counsel for party members who were regularly facing prosecutions for acts of political violence. As the Nazis transitioned from a fringe political beer-hall and street-fighting movement into a more formal political entity, Freisler was elected for the party to the Prussian Landtag, and later became a member of the Reichstag.

In February 1933, after the takeover of Germany by Adolf Hitler, Freisler was appointed as the director of the Prussian Ministry of Justice. He served here in 1933–1934, and then in the Reich Ministry of Justice from 1934 to 1942. Known to be interested in the procedures of Andrei Vyshinsky, the chief prosecutor of the Soviet purge trials, Freisler watched Vyshinsky's performances when he had been engaged in Soviet show-trials in Moscow in 1938.

In October 1939 Freisler introduced the concept of "precocious juvenile criminal" in the "Juvenile Felons Decree." This provided the legal basis for imposing the death penalty and penitentiary terms on juveniles for the first time in German legal history. From the period 1933 to 1945 the Reich's courts sentenced at least 72 German juveniles to death.

Despite Freisler's mastery of legal texts, mental agility, dramatic courtroom verbal dexterity and verbal force, in combination with his zealous conversion to National Socialist ideology, Adolf Hitler never appointed him to a government post beyond the legal system. This might have been attributable to the fact of his being politically compromised through family association with his brother Oswald Freisler, who was also a lawyer. Oscar Freisler, who had a habit of wearing his Nazi Party membership badge in court, had appeared as the defense counsel in court against the regime's authority several times in its program of increasingly politically driven trials with which it sought to enforce its control of German society. Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels reproved Oswald Freisler and reported his actions to Adolf Hitler, who in response ordered the expulsion of Oswald Freisler from the party. Oswald Freisler committed suicide in 1939.

On January 20, 1942, Freisler, representing Reich Minister Franz Schlegelberger, attended the Wannsee Conference

of senior governmental officials in a villa on the outskirts of Berlin to provide expert legal advice for the planning of the destruction of European Jewry. Then, on August 20, 1942, Hitler named Freisler as president of the People's Court (*Volkgerichtshof*). The court had jurisdiction over a broad array of "political offenses," viewed by Freisler as destruction of the defensive capability of the Nazi state. Accused persons brought before him were accordingly punished severely, the death penalty being meted out in numerous cases.

Freisler became infamous for his aggressive manner of presiding over trials, aiming at total humiliation of the defendants. During this period he became notorious for insulting and abusing defendants in a highly personalized fashion from the bench, often shouting and occasionally yelling at the steady stream of defendants passing before him on their way to their deaths—particularly in cases of resistance to the authority of Nazi Germany. His speech would become shrill, though in his rages he ensured that he controlled his voice for dramatic purposes, using his mastery of the art of courtroom performance. This practice earned him the nickname "Raving Roland."

The People's Court almost always agreed with the prosecution. In 90% of all cases the court's verdict was the death penalty or a sentence of life in prison. The number of death sentences rose sharply under Freisler's tenure, and being brought before it was equivalent to a death sentence. Under Freisler's management the *Volkgerichtshof* sent more than 5,000 Germans to their death without a fair trial.

Some *Volkgerichtshof* hearings under Freisler moved at an astonishing pace. In February 1943 he presided over the trial of three Munich University students who belonged to the dissident White Rose group. On February 22, 1943, 21-year-old Sophie Scholl, her brother Hans Scholl (aged 22), together with Christof Probst (aged 24), were arrested for distributing antiwar leaflets at the university four days earlier. Brought before Freisler, they were tried and found guilty in less than an hour, without evidence being presented or arguments made by either side. The three were guillotined just six hours after their arrest.

Another of Freisler's victims was a Catholic priest, Joseph Müller, who told a political joke. The joke itself did not bring about Müller's conviction. His work with youth raised Nazi ire, as his teachings contradicted Nazi dogma. Throughout the trial, Freisler ranted and raved blasphemously, even helping witnesses find appropriate words of scorn. He screamed accusations of collusion, hostility, and

intentionally undermining the German people's will to carry on the war. Müller was sentenced to death and guillotined on September 11, 1944. His family received a bill for the cost of the execution.

Freisler's most notorious case came in the wake of the failed July 20, 1944, coup attempt against the Nazi regime. The trials began in the People's Court on August 7, 1944, with Freisler presiding. The first eight men accused were Erwin von Witzleben, Erich Hoepfner, Paul von Hase, Peter Yorck von Wartenburg, Helmuth Stieff, Robert Bernardis, Friedrich Klausning, and Albrecht von Hagen. All were condemned to death by hanging, and the sentences were carried out at Berlin's Plötzensee prison within two hours of the verdicts being passed.

The obscene manner in which Freisler humiliated the July 20 coup conspirators in his courtroom—bellowing at them nonstop and denying them the right to wear belts or suspenders so that their trousers fell down—prompted even members of Hitler's entourage to recommend that his authority be curtailed. The accused men were unable to consult their lawyers, who were not seated near them. None of them were allowed to address the court at length, and Freisler interrupted any attempts to do so.

On February 3, 1945, during a Saturday session of the People's Court, American Eighth Air Force bombers attacked Berlin. Government and Nazi Party buildings were hit, including the Reich Chancellery, the Gestapo headquarters, the Party Chancellery, and the People's Court.

According to one report, Freisler adjourned court and ordered that day's prisoners to be taken to a shelter, but he paused to gather that day's files. No one is quite sure how he died. Some witnesses claim that he was crushed to death by falling masonry, while others claim that he bled to death outside of the bombed courthouse. His body was found crushed beneath a fallen masonry column, clutching the files he had retrieved. Among those files was that of Fabian von Schlabrendorff, a July 20 Bomb Plot member who was on trial that day and was facing execution. Freisler's death saved Schlabrendorff, who after the war became a judge of the Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Freisler is interred in the plot of his wife's family at the Waldfriedhof Dahlem cemetery in Berlin. His name is not shown on the gravestone.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Gürtner, Franz; "Racial Hygiene"; Schlegelberger, Franz; *Volkgerichtshof*; Von Moltke, Helmuth James; Wannsee Conference; White Rose

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Frick, Wilhelm

Nazi bureaucrat and minister of the interior. Born on March 12, 1877, in Alsenz, Frick studied law from 1896 to 1901 at Göttingen, Munich, Beylin, and Heidelberg (where he received his doctorate). From 1904 to 1924 he worked in the Munich Police Department, heading the political police section after 1919. An early adherent of Adolf Hitler, Frick participated in the 1923 Munich Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler's abortive effort to seize power in Munich, and was arrested, tried, and sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. He was able to avoid a prison term when the newly renamed National Socialist Freedom Party picked him as one of its representatives to the Reichstag in 1924. He served in the Reichstag from that point forward.

On January 23, 1930, Frick became the first National Socialist minister in a provincial government, responsible for education and the Ministry of the Interior in Thuringia. Under his administration, the Thuringian police force was purged of officers who supported the Weimar Republic; Nazi candidates for office were illegally favored; the anti-war film *All Quiet on the Western Front* was banned, as was jazz music; and rabidly militaristic, antisemitic propaganda was allowed to flourish unchecked. On Frick's instruction, special German freedom prayers were instituted in Thuringian schools, glorifying the German *Volk* and German national honor and military power while denouncing "traitors." Frick used his influence as interior minister to grant Hitler German citizenship by implementing a provision of the law that extended citizenship to anyone named to an official post in Germany, and, as such, he managed to have Hitler named a councilor for the state of Braunschweig.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933, Frick was appointed German minister of the interior, a

key position that he held until August 1943. In this post he was directly responsible for many measures taken against Jews, communists, Social Democrats, dissident churchmen, and other opponents of the regime. He also had charge of drafting and then administering the laws that gradually eliminated the Jews from the German economy and public life, culminating in the Nuremberg Laws on Race that reduced Jews to second-class status in the Reich. It was Frick who framed the extraordinary law that declared all Hitler's actions during the Blood Purge of the SA in June 1934 to be legal and statesmanlike. Although nominally Heinrich Himmler's superior, Frick singularly failed to impose any legal limitations on the power of the Gestapo and the SS, nor seriously interfered with their encroachment on his area of jurisdiction.

On August 24, 1943, Frick was appointed Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia, a position he held until the end of the war, although real authority was concentrated in the hands of his subordinate Karl-Hermann Frank. At the Nuremberg Trials, Frick was charged with and found guilty of crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed in concentration camps in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Sentenced to death, the dedicated Nazi bureaucrat and loyal implementer of Hitler's ruthless aims was duly hanged at Nuremberg on October 16, 1946.

JOSEPH C. GREANEY

See also: Enabling Act, 1933; Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; Nuremberg Laws; Nuremberg Trials; Schutzhaft; Stuckart, Wilhelm

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Friedländer, Saul

Saul Friedländer was for many years a professor of Holocaust history at the University of California, Los Angeles, holding a joint position at Tel Aviv University. Born in Prague in 1932, he was raised in France. As a Jewish child during the Nazi occupation, he survived by having been hidden in a Catholic boarding school in Montluçon, near Vichy. In order not to be discovered, he was presented as a Christian child; his parents, meanwhile, attempted to flee to Switzerland. Arrested by Vichy French police, they were

deported to Auschwitz while their son, oblivious as to their fate, continued to live in the Catholic school. He only learned of their fate after the war.

In June 1948 Friedländer emigrated from France to Israel; after finishing high school, he served in the Israeli army. Between 1953 and 1955 he studied political science in Paris, and in 1963 he received his PhD from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, where he would teach until 1988.

Friedländer's first major studies related to the Catholic Church, in which he had an interest owing to his wartime experience. In *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation* (1966), he considered the highly controversial question of the pope's enigmatic posture regarding the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Working through a large number of documents from German Foreign Office sources, and placing this documentary material within its appropriate historical context, he composed a picture of Pius's pro-German bias and near-fanatical anticommunism. While drawing readers' attention to these two features of Pius's reign, he conceded that the creation of a direct link between these and the pope's silence during the Holocaust was not possible until the Vatican began to augment the available documents through opening its own archives.

What Friedländer could do, however, was focus on the efforts of one highly placed Catholic who tried to do something to stop the Holocaust. In *Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good* (1969), Friedländer examined the actions of Kurt Gerstein, an SS officer who witnessed Nazi actions against Jews at the extermination camps of Belzec and Treblinka. Shocked by what he saw, Gerstein tried to inform public opinion about what the Nazis were doing through contacts in the Swedish diplomatic service and through the Roman Catholic Church. Friedländer's book examined the motives that underlay Gerstein's behavior; a devout Catholic, he was also an officer in charge of disinfection techniques, and thus an important cog in the Nazi machinery of death. From the day he first learned of the Nazi gassings, however, he sought to find ways of informing the world of what was happening. At the same time, he was unable to tip his hand by exhibiting any lack of enthusiasm for the Nazi killing processes. Friedländer showed a tortured soul who was ultimately unable to effect any change in a system he detested.

Friedländer's main thinking on the Holocaust developed during the intensely rich period of controversy in the 1980s known in Germany as the *Historikerstreit*—a time when German historians, in particular, engaged in often heated

debates about the way the Holocaust should be interpreted historically.

In 1979 Friedländer wrote a memoir of his childhood years, *When Memory Comes*. This was a very different kind of history, in which he plumbed the depths of his recollections as a boy between the ages of 7 and 12, interspersed with his reflections on these same times as an adult in 1977. Friedländer's intensity as a historian became apparent in this volume, as he discussed the pain of family separation, being raised in an alien (Catholic) environment, eventually learning the fate of his family, and his emigration to Israel—another alien environment. A close reading of the book showed the extent to which Friedländer saw Nazism as a force dedicated to destruction, a horrific ideology for which normal language is unsuited. The struggle to come to grips with his own history motivated Friedländer to try to find a way to understand the nature of Germany in the Nazi era, and ultimately led him to become one of the most influential scholars on the history of the Holocaust.

By 1992 Friedländer had already established a name for himself as an important thinker and teacher of the Holocaust, but in that year he produced an edited volume that reflected deeply his interest in searching for meaning. In *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"* (1992), he included essays from a number of leading scholars of the Holocaust. He followed this up with another collection a year later. In *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*, he brought together a range of essays he had written between 1985 and 1992, during which time the collapse of communism had shed new light on the nature of totalitarianism and persecution. Here, he was mainly concerned about the relationship between memory and history; how the evolution of attitudes toward the Nazi period and the Holocaust had undergone change over time within German and Jewish memory, and why it was that individual memories and collective recollection of the past appeared to be divergent. These collections set the stage for two major works that would have a profound impact on the nature of Holocaust scholarship.

The first of these, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (1997), took the form of a definitive history of Nazi policies prior to the Holocaust. Friedländer employed newly available documents in order to draw an intimate picture of German Jewish society before the outbreak of World War II, a period in which some form of "normality" still prevailed—despite the increasingly antisemitic measures imposed by the Nazi regime. He methodically related how each anti-Jewish measure led to

the next, and the next, and so on, noting that all the while there was not the slightest hint that any sort of “final solution” was in the offing. He identified Hitler’s main goal in the late 1930s as forcible Jewish emigration rather than annihilation, and he found no evidence of any plan for extermination prior to Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in mid-1941. Friedländer also looked at the nature of the Jewish community, seeking to learn why it was that there was so little resistance to the measures adopted by the Nazis. He showed clearly that relatively few Jews saw any reason for panic, and that emigration was consequently very slow in developing a momentum. Moreover, there was little opposition voiced to the regime from any of the sources that might have been expected to raise objections; the Protestant and Catholic churches, universities, the press, and even the labor movement were either muzzled or voluntarily remained silent (when not enthusiastically supporting the regime).

Friedländer followed this with a second volume, which took the story through to the end of the war. The result—an 870-page volume titled *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Extermination, 1939–1945* (2007)—would ultimately win Friedländer the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction. His history was in many respects as much a history of everyday life under Nazi persecution as it was of Nazi actions and programs, and skillfully interwove individual testimony into the broader picture. The personal accounts Friedländer employed built a picture of how Jews in Europe viewed their impending fate only by increments—and, for those who were not direct targets of the Nazis, how the events swirling around them were greeted by an attitude of indifference, if not always active cooperation.

Saul Friedländer thereby became a survivor-scholar whose contribution to the field of Holocaust studies was both vast and multifaceted. He mastered the skill of synthesizing considerable amounts of original material, and consistently advocated that any history of the Holocaust must include the human voices of those who experienced it in their flesh—without which, he argued, the story will always be incomplete.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Catholic Church; Gerstein, Kurt; *Historikerstreit*; Pius XII

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Fry, Varian

Varian Mackey Fry was an American rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust. Born in New York on October 15, 1907, Fry attended Harvard University, where he studied classics. He began his working life as a photographer, but in 1940 he went to Marseille, France, as a representative of an American refugee organization called the Emergency Rescue Committee. While there, he worked hard to secure passports and visas enabling refugees to leave Vichy France and reach safety.



Varian Fry was a young American who ran a rescue network for intellectuals, artists, writers, and Jews in Vichy France. It has been estimated that thousands of refugees managed to escape the Nazis as a result of his efforts. He was the first American to be recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The photograph here shows him walking along a street in Marseille sometime in 1940 or 1941. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Annette Fry)

Fry's background fitted him well to be able to take on the role he assumed in later years. An exceptionally bright student at Harvard, he started a career in journalism while there, establishing a literary journal, *Hound & Horn*, with fellow student Lincoln Kirstein. On June 2, 1931, Fry married Eileen Avery Hughes, an editor at *Atlantic Monthly*.

Fry first visited Berlin in 1935. On this visit he saw SA men assaulting Jews in the city's streets, and from then on knew he could not remain indifferent. When he returned to the United States he decided to act. In 1935 he wrote in the *New York Times* about the Nazi treatment of the Jews and used other venues in order to raise awareness of the issue at a time when American isolationists would have preferred not to know.

After Germany invaded France in June 1940, the Emergency Rescue Committee, a private American relief organization, sent Fry to France to aid anti-Nazi refugees who were in danger of being arrested by the Gestapo. He landed in Marseille with a fighting fund of US \$3,000, hoping to use his American citizenship and neutral status as a way to evade French measures designed to refuse exit visas. He had no previous experience with the kind of underground activities he would have to undertake to obtain the necessary papers, but by the end of his mission he had saved upward of 4,000 people from the hands of the Nazis.

Fry and a group of accomplices composed a list and created clandestine escape routes for the refugees under imminent threat of arrest by the Gestapo and Vichy French police. His organization had a very specific focus: the rescue of intellectuals, artists, musicians, and the creative core of European culture. All those opposing the Nazis—whether Jewish or not—were legitimate targets for Fry's efforts. Among those rescued were Marc Chagall, Hannah Arendt, Pablo Casals, Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Franz Werfel, Konrad Heiden, Max Ernst, and many others.

Fry's strategy was to hide those he was saving at the Villa Air-Bel in Marseille until they could be smuggled across the border to Spain. From there, they would move to Portugal, and then the United States. He did not work alone: his companions at the villa included Miriam Davenport, Mary Jayne Gold, and Hiram Bingham IV, the U.S. vice-consul in Marseille who was sympathetic to the plight of the Jews and helped Fry obtain the necessary visas to enable those on his list to enter the United States.

Fry established contacts with the French underground, hired professional forgers, bribed border guards, and even

consorted with Corsican mobsters. His front organization, the American Relief Center, used all manner of illegal means such as black-market funds, forged documents, secret mountain passages, and sea routes in order to move endangered refugees from France.

When Fry's resources for procuring visas dried up, he smuggled the refugees into Spain. For this, and for acting without a valid passport of his own, he was arrested by Vichy police and deported to the United States in September 1941. He had been in France for 13 months, during which time he was under constant surveillance and was, more than once, detained and questioned.

Upon his return to the United States he was reprimanded by the State Department for his illegal activities. No recognition was made of his outstanding humanitarian rescues.

After the war Fry continued his work as a journalist and editor, but he became increasingly distressed by the memory of what he had seen and experienced during the war. He lived the remaining years of his life in obscurity, developed ulcers, and was diagnosed with manic depression. On September 13, 1967, while in the midst of revising his memoirs, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Shortly before his death, the French government recognized his contribution through the award of the Croix de Chevalier de Legion d'Honneur. In 1991 the United States Holocaust Memorial Council posthumously awarded Fry the Eisenhower Liberation Medal, and in 1994 he became the first U.S. citizen to be recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem. Varian Fry's remarkable efforts on behalf of Jews and the cultural elite of Europe was also related in *Varian's War* (dir. Lionel Chetwynd, 2001), an award-winning movie starring William Hurt in the title role and Julia Ormond as Miriam Davenport.

For his work in saving thousands, Varian Fry is frequently mentioned alongside other major rescuers such as Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg. Indeed, there are some in the United States who have referred to him as "the Oskar Schindler of America."

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: France; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Sharp, Waitstill and Martha

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Fugu Plan

Taking place prior to and during World War II, and corresponding with the Sino-Japanese War, the Fugu Plan refers to Jewish settlement in the Japanese Empire in order to escape Nazi persecution. Tens of thousands of Jewish refugees fled east, many of them resettling in Japanese-occupied China. In the 1930s, documents emerging from Imperial Japan suggested settling Jewish refugees on Japanese-controlled territory. This strategy was termed by the Japanese the “Fugu Plan,” which proposed that displaced Jewish populations resettle in Manchukuo (or Manchuria), located in northeast China, or Japan-occupied Shanghai on the coast of eastern China. Japan implemented the Fugu Plan in order to gain the economic superiority of the Jewish community so the United States, specifically American Jewry, would invest in Japan politically and economically.

The Fugu Plan included how the resettlement would be organized and carried out. In June and July 1939 the memorandum “Concrete Measures to be Employed to Turn Friendly to Japan the Public Opinion Far East Diplomatic Policy Close Circle of President of USA by Manipulating Influential Jews in China,” and “The Study and Analysis of Introducing Jewish Capital” were revised and permitted by Japanese officials, allowing for the settlement of Jewish refugees in Japanese-occupied territory.

In March 1938 General Hideki Tojo approved the admittance of Jews into the Japanese-occupied state of Manchukuo, despite German protests. The “Five Ministers’ Conference,” taking place on December 6, 1938, prohibited the expulsion of Jews from Japan, Manchuria, and China. At the conference, Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe, Foreign Minister Hachirō Arita, Army Minister Seishirō Itagaki, Naval Minister Mitsumasa Yonai, and Finance Minister Shigeaki Ikeda discussed Japan’s growing alliance with Germany and how Jewish asylum would affect their interwar relationship. Immediately following the Five Ministers’ Conference, 14,000–15,000 Eastern European Jews were given refuge in the Japanese quarter of Shanghai. However, the European quarter of Shanghai admitted almost no Jews. One thousand Polish refugees who had not been able to obtain visas for any country were also granted asylum in Shanghai. The implementation of the Fugu Plan was never made official by Japanese officials due to their relationship with Nazi Germany.

In 1939 the Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany made transporting Jews from Europe to Japan more difficult. This intensified when the USSR annexed the Baltic States, further isolating

European Jews from asylum. On September 27, 1940, the Japanese government signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, a defensive military alliance against the United States. This military strategy completely eliminated the possibility of any official aid for the Fugu Plan from Tokyo. However, thousands of European Jews were given visas from the Japanese consul, Chiune Sugihara, working in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania. Sugihara began to issue transit visas to fleeing European Jews against official orders from Tokyo. The transit visas allowed escaping Jews to leave Europe and stay briefly in Japan on their way to their final destination, the Dutch colony of Curaçao, which required no entry visa.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Shanghai Ghetto

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Führerprinzip

Führerprinzip, literally “leader principle,” was the name given to the primary method of governmental organization in Nazi Germany. Hermann von Keyserling, a German philosopher of the early 20th century, was the first to use the term to describe his fundamental belief that the principle of social Darwinism gave certain “gifted individuals” the right to rule over others.

As applied in Nazi Germany, the key doctrine of the *Führerprinzip* is simply stated: the word of Adolf Hitler is above the written law and supreme. It was in him that total authority rested, and from him that authority devolved to those below him, and from them to their subordinates. Just as Hitler had total authority over all, senior officers in the next level of command held total authority over those below them, so that within each level of organization the dominant position was one of total authority that was passed down to underlings, and to the holder of the dominant position in the next level.

Hermann Göring, Reichsmarschall, was asked about the operation of the *Führerprinzip* when he was testifying at the

International Criminal Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945. He responded by describing its structure as being the opposite of democratic governance. A democratic system places the authority in the people, and the responsibility to carry out the people’s wishes rests on the highest officials of the government. A government established according to the Führerprinzip places the authority in the highest levels, with the people being responsible for implementation. Göring went on to say that the job of the people was to acknowledge and agree unquestioningly with the leader.

For a government based on the Führerprinzip to succeed, the ultimate authority must be—or be perceived to be—charismatic. Ultimate authority can be vested only in a person who dominates all others, and in doing so takes on absolute power akin to that of a deity. The leader must be strong, able to withstand and offset the effect of the weak on society, and able to make clear to all strata of society that his decisions are to be followed because they derive from the leader’s absolute power.

The Führerprinzip requires a governmental organization in the form of a series of pyramids. In terms of the Third Reich, the first and most powerful pyramid—the leaders pyramid—had Hitler at the top, with the heads of the Party Chancellery next, then the various department heads (*Reichsleiter*), followed by the *Gauleiter* (leader of a region, or *Gau*), and finally the *Blockleiter* (block warden or block leader). The next pyramid below the one headed by Hitler was one comprised of the various ancillary organizations, such as the SS, SA, and the Hitler Youth. The final pyramid—subordinate to the pyramid structure of ancillary organizations immediately above, and through it indirectly subordinate to the leadership pyramid—included professional groups.

The organizational structure of the Führerprinzip was applied not only to the government. It also was adopted by corporations that would invest in the chairman, president, or owner an authority that was considered absolute, thereby making it easier to control the entity and to assign responsibility to leaders in various divisions and departments.

The Führerprinzip was claimed by Nazi war criminals as a defense against individual culpability. Its structure of orders being passed downward from sources of absolute authority was used by all levels of perpetrators to explain their actions, ultimately placing the sole responsibility on Hitler as the only one not subject to such orders, and therefore claiming that they had no choice—and should have no accountability—for their actions.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Enabling Act; Göring, Hermann; Hitler, Adolf; Kreyssig, Lothar

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“Functionalists”

“Functionalists” are scholars who argue that the Holocaust was not the result of a planned, carefully organized, and orchestrated agenda of Adolf Hitler because of his overwhelming antisemitism, but was, rather, an evolving and sometimes even chaotic program of death and destruction that really began to assert itself after the invasion of Soviet Russia in June 1941 (“Operation Barbarossa”), prior to which it was done by low-level bureaucrats in a somewhat haphazard and inefficient manner.

Given this, functionalists view the Nazi hierarchy as one of competing vested interests and power centers with Hitler not in supreme control. Further, they also hold that the initial premise behind Nazi plans was one that sought the removal of Jews from German society through forced Jewish emigration—an ideal that ultimately proved unsuccessful. Given this, the Nazi intention was to expel all the Jews from Europe; only after this proved to be a failure did they resort to genocide. It is on this basis that functionalists (sometimes also called “structuralists”) came to consider the road to Auschwitz as a “crooked” one, in contrast to their intellectual opponents, known as “intentionalists,” who see a direct route from Adolf Hitler’s vision to the death camps of World War II.

Those who became known as functionalists were led by the German historians Hans Mommsen and Martin Broszat, whose work accompanied that of an American historian, Karl A. Schleunes. In 1970 Schleunes wrote a book whose thesis is embedded in the title: *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933–39*. This work broke through what had been, until that point, the dominant mode of thinking about the Holocaust directed by intentionalist scholars. Schleunes’s interpretation of the Final Solution as a product of unplanned evolution rather than premeditated “grand design” led a younger generation of scholars, notably another American historian, Christopher Browning, to develop new ways of looking at the genesis of the Holocaust. As a result, the major driving force behind the Holocaust could be found in rivalries within the unstable

Nazi power structure, rather than through some long-term quest held by Adolf Hitler. (It was, in fact, Browning who first coined the term “intentionalists” as a way of distancing his position from those who disagreed with him.) One functionalist scholar, Robert Koehl, compared the essence of the Third Reich to a medieval struggle between feudal oligarchies, in which each competed with others for dominance, advantages, and resources. Other functionalists, such as German historian Götz Aly, go further, insisting that neither Hitler nor the rest of the Nazi hierarchy had anything to do with initiating the Holocaust, but that, instead, the initiative for the mass murder of the Jews came from lower ranks within the German bureaucracy.

One broad functionalist approach has been that the unfolding of events, both setbacks and opportunities, resulted in the decision to establish the death factories in Poland, while another has argued that there was no single decision for the Holocaust as such—rather, it is held, it was a policy evolution over time. Therefore, the Final Solution was a culmination of a multiplicity of historical, economic, social, religious, and military/security factors. Where they differ from the intentionalists, however—although they agree on the importance of Hitler’s public antisemitism and his desire to eliminate the Jews from German life—is in the fact that his own lack of specific and concrete ideas left such work to his underlings, and thus the annihilation of European Jewry was more the result of historical circumstance than directives from the top.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Bauer, Yehuda; Bureaucracy; German Army, Role in the Holocaust; Hilberg, Raul; *Historikerstreit*; “Intentionalists”; Mommsen, Hans

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Funktionshäftling

Funktionshäftling is the German word for “prisoner-functionary”; colloquially, a prison “trusty.” These were

concentration camp prisoners incarcerated within the German National Socialist state between 1933 and 1945 who were elevated to positions of authority by the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps to counter the lack of Nazi personnel available for administrative purposes. The system was devised in the prewar period. In return for serving as SS administrative agents within the camps, the “prisoner-functionaries” received more food, had better living conditions, and performed less work than other prisoners, this being mainly restricted to a supervisory role. These “administrative prisoners” were called *Ältester* (Elders, or Seniors), of whom the main figure was the *Lagerältester*—the most senior prisoner in the camp. In each barracks, there was a *Blockältester*; in each room, a *Stubenältester*. These latter were, in turn, assisted by a number of *Stubendienst* workers, who acted as room orderlies. In each block was a *Blockschreiber*, a prisoner who acted as a kind of registrar for the barracks and reported to an SS officer in the SS Administrative Department. There were, in addition, other positions of an administrative character, such as the prisoner-doctors (*Haftlingärzt*), camp barbers (*Lagerfriseur*), gatekeepers who operated the gates between compounds (*Torwächter*), and interpreters (*Dolmetscher*). Prisoner-functionaries were utterly dependent on the SS for everything. They, like any other prisoners, could be punished for the slightest infraction of the rules. They had to do exactly as they were told, nothing more or less. They were sandwiched in the middle of camp society; while enforcing SS structures and discipline on those below them, before the SS they must never forget that they too were prisoners. They could be (and often were) killed by the common prisoners as traitors; they could equally be killed by the SS on a whim. By creating a prisoner elite, the SS established a system that divided the prisoners in order to rule them. In doing so they reaped enormous benefits, as they were hereafter able to control the inmates with a minimum number of guards exercising a relatively high level of control.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Kapos

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G

Galen, Clemens August Graf von

A German-born Catholic prelate who became an outspoken opponent of the Nazi regime in Germany. Clemens August Graft von Galen was born into an old and distinguished family at Dinklage Castle in the southern portion of the Duchy of Oldenburg (now Lower Saxony) on March 16, 1878. Educated mainly by private tutors, he entered the Catholic University of Freiburg in 1896, where he became captivated by the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. The next year he spent three months in Rome, where he decided to become a priest. He subsequently took up studies at a seminary in Innsbruck before joining a seminary in Münster in 1903. In 1904 he was ordained and became a chaplain for Munster's auxiliary bishop.

In 1906 Galen was transferred to Berlin, where he served as a pastor in several parishes. During World War I, he exhorted his parishioners to support the war effort. He also became fearful that the revolutions that swept Germany in 1918 might lead to anarchy and a rebellion against the church. To stave off more social unrest, he spearheaded major aid programs for the poor and displaced. When the Weimar Republic came into being at the end of the war, he eyed it with considerable distrust, believing that it was unnecessarily liberal. Indeed, from 1919 until 1933 Galen tended to support the political Right in Germany.

In October 1933, the same year in which the Nazis came to power, Galen was consecrated bishop of Münster. He wasted little time in publicly criticizing Adolf Hitler's regime



Clemens August Graf von Galen was the bishop of Münster and a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church during the Nazi period. During World War II, Galen was forthright in leading Catholic protests against the Nazi “euthanasia” campaign. In 1934 he began to criticize Nazism, condemning Nazi racial ideology. His opposition continued throughout the war years, inspiring many Catholics and non-Catholics to action. (Borgas/Ullstein Vild via Getty Images)

and the ideology upon which it was based. He urged Catholics to eschew public education in favor of Catholic education, which was relatively free of Nazi doctrine. He also criticized Nazi racial policies and flatly rejected calls to ignore the Old Testament because it had been authored by Jews.

By the early 1940s Galen was preaching sermons lambasting the Nazi regime; he particularly denounced the government's euthanasia program as morally evil. In 1941 he was arrested by Nazi authorities and subjected to house arrest, and in 1944, after the failed July Bomb Plot against Hitler, he was accused of having been involved. As it turned out, he had no involvement in the affair, but it provided the government with a pretext to silence the bishop for good.

Bishop von Galen was freed by Allied forces in April 1945. In February 1946 he was elected a cardinal; a year later, however, on March 22, 1947, he died in Münster of a sudden infection. Pope John Paul II began the beatification process for Cardinal Galen in the 1990s, and on October 9, 2005, he was officially beatified by Pope Benedict XVI.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Catholic Church; Euthanasia Program; Upstander

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Gas Chambers

The use of gas chambers to kill large numbers of people in a short period of time was pioneered by the Germans during the Holocaust. It is estimated that at least 1 million Jews, Roma, and Sinti people were executed in gas chambers between roughly 1940 and 1945. The use of gas chambers in concentration and death camps essentially systematized mass killing, turning these facilities into factories of death. Almost all of the gas chambers were made to look like communal showers in order to fool detainees into thinking that they would be engaging in an innocuous activity such as showering or "delousing." Nearly all the victims of Nazi gas chambers were cremated in large, on-site crematoria.

Early on, and especially in camps like Chel̄mno, Bel̄zec, and Treblinka, the Nazis used carbon monoxide to kill prisoners. However, by 1941 the killing facilities at Auschwitz-Birkenau employed Zyklon-B (hydrogen cyanide) as the

preferred method of extermination. Gassing people with Zyklon-B was more efficient and required less gas than methods employing carbon monoxide. It also permitted camp personnel to have less contact with the internees as they were gassed, sparing them the ghastly sight of people choking and gasping for air as their bodies leaked fluids and waste.

By 1941 the gas chambers at Auschwitz were using Zyklon-B exclusively. These installations were built by the German firm of J.A. Topf and Sons. The company made a fortune building such horrific devices. By 1942–1943 Auschwitz had become the Nazis' largest death camp, and camp officials used Zyklon-B as the gas of choice while the Nazis engaged in wholesale extermination.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Bel̄zec; Birkenau; Denial of the Holocaust; Hoess, Rudolf; J.A. Topf and Sons; Majdanek; Mauthausen-Gusen; Sobibór; Sonderkommando; Treblinka; Zyklon-B

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Gas Vans

Gas vans were used by the Nazis to murder Jews and other prisoners through asphyxiation by carbon monoxide. As such, a gas van was a vehicle equipped as a mobile gas chamber.

The Nazis began experimenting with poison gas for the purpose of mass murder in late 1939 by killing those with physical or psychological handicaps in the T-4 or so-called "euthanasia" campaign. Initially, the murders were carried out in fixed, sealed chambers into which carbon monoxide gas was pumped. Other victims were killed by lethal injections or by shooting. Gas vans were first utilized for the purpose of wholesale murder in 1940, when mentally ill children from Kochanowka, Poland, were locked in a sealed van and killed by carbon monoxide gas, which was piped into the van from the truck's engine.

On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Following close on the heels of the combat troops were the so-called "special action groups," or *Einsatzgruppen*. The initial manner of their work was to round up their

captive Jewish populations, take them outside of village and town areas, and then shoot them to death. When the repetition of that activity proved to be psychologically taxing for the men involved (and was, moreover, far from secret), the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or RSHA) ordered that gas vans be employed for expediting mass murder. The vans were thus introduced both to remove the intimacy of contact and to sanitize the killing process.

The method of mass murder developed over time into a process that was repeated with minor variations throughout the area in which the gas vans operated. Victims were ordered to hand over all of their valuables prior to undressing and then climb into the vans. The two doors at the back of the wagons were closed, and a hose was connected to the exhaust. In certain instances a light was switched on in the van in order to settle the frightened victims; this was then turned off once the driver started the motor. While the timing of the next part of the process fluctuated, the engine usually ran from between ten and twenty minutes, during which time the quantity of exhaust gas pumped into the van was enough to poison the victims. After the agonized cries in the van died away, the driver started to drive to the cremation site, where Jewish *Sonderkommando* workers were forced to unload the corpses prior to their cremation or burial in pre-dug pits. The Jewish workers would then also be murdered.

The first gas vans in the Soviet Union were used in Poltava in November 1941 and in Kharkov that December. That same month, gas vans were also used in the Chelmno extermination camp until fixed gas chambers were developed as a more efficient method for killing large numbers of people. By June 1942 there were 20 gas vans in operation, and another 10 were being prepared; large trucks (the Saurerwagen model) could hold between 50 and 60 victims; the smaller variety (the Opel-Blitz) could only handle up to 30. By June 1942 the main producer of gas vans, Gaubschat Fahrzeugwerke GmbH, had delivered 20 gas vans, though none survived the war.

Fifteen vans operated in Einsatzgruppen Aktionen in the Soviet Union. Vans were also employed in Lublin, where they were used to kill Polish and Jewish prisoners. Once their murderous work was completed, the vans were driven to the death camp at Majdanek, where the corpses were burned in the crematorium.

A gas van operated at a concentration camp outside of Belgrade, Sajmište (Zemun; the Germans referred to it as *Judenlager Semlin*). In January 1942 German military authorities demanded the camp be cleared of Jews in order

to accommodate the growing number of captives taken in battles with the Partisans. In early March the commandant, Herbert Andorfer, was informed that a gas van was being dispatched from Berlin. Gassings thereafter became routine, and the gas van arrived every day except Sunday. Up to 8,000 Jews and Roma, most of them women and children, were murdered this way.

German units occupied the Russian city of Krasnodar between August 12, 1942, and February 12, 1943. During this time, Einsatzgruppen killed thousands of Jews and communists through shooting, hanging, burning, and gassing in vans. Upon recapturing the city in the summer of 1943, the Soviets began a series of trials of Nazis and Nazi collaborators for war crimes, the first of which took place at Krasnodar from July 14 to 17, 1943. It was here that the existence of gas vans first came to light. Evidence was presented of the gassing of 6,700 civilians in Krasnodar, though the total number of those murdered in gas vans could not be calculated with precision. The Krasnodar tribunal pronounced eight death sentences, which were summarily carried out in the city square in front of a crowd of about thirty thousand people.

However, there were several drawbacks to the use of gas vans. The process, for example, was slow, in that it often took victims a long period to die owing to different rates of asphyxiation. There were frequent equipment breakdowns; it was far from cost-effective in terms of the amount of precious gasoline expended in order to murder a relatively small number of victims; drivers could hear the victims' screams as they drove the vans, which they found distracting and disturbing; and those who unloaded the vans suffered mental stress due to their close contact with murder. All in all, for a variety of reasons the gas van method of mass death used by the Nazis ultimately proved unreliable.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Chelmno; Einsatzgruppen; Euthanasia Program; Serbia; Sonderkommando; Treblinka

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Gebhardt, Karl

A German physician who conducted cruel and unethical medical experiments during the Nazi era and who was convicted and executed for crimes against humanity, Karl Franz Gebhardt was born on November 23, 1897, in Haag (Oberbayern), and received a medical degree in 1922. Two years later, he secured a position as an intern at the University of Munich's surgical clinic. He completed his internship, residency, and postresidency work by 1932 and joined the Nazi Party in 1933. In 1935 he became an associate professor of medicine in Berlin and became a member of the SS. Also in 1935, Gebhardt was named superintendent of the Hohenlychen Sanatorium, which he soon converted from a tuberculosis clinic to an orthopedic medicine facility. There he established the first sports medicine clinic in Germany; the clinic also treated amputees and disabled patients.

Gebhardt became director of the Medical Department at the Academy for Exercise and Physical Training in 1936 and was the chief physician for the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Meanwhile, he published widely and made a significant contribution to the sports medicine field by way of articles and a textbook. Gebhardt was also interested in aspects of physical therapy. Highly regarded in Germany and beyond, he was named personal physician to Heinrich Himmler in 1938, which further cemented his reputation in Germany. He was also appointed president of the German Red Cross.

After World War II began in 1939, Gebhardt became chief surgeon of the Reich Staff. Beginning in 1942 he was involved in a series of bizarre and cruel medical experiments on concentration camp prisoners, chiefly at Ravensbrück and Auschwitz. There he supervised experiments that saw prisoners' legs or arms broken, usually with no anesthesia, to gauge the body's ability to heal itself. Amputations were also carried out, and infections were either introduced into the wounds or allowed to fester in order to test various drugs to ward off sepsis and gangrene. Nearly all of these internees died. One particularly bizarre experiment involved amputating prisoners' limbs and attempting to transplant them onto wounded German soldiers.

After the war Gebhardt was arrested by Allied authorities and placed on trial (the Doctors' Trial of 1946–1947) for crimes against humanity. Found guilty, he was given a death sentence on August 20, 1947, and was hanged on June 2, 1948.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Doctors' Trial; Himmler, Heinrich; Medical Experimentation; Oberheuser, Herta; Olympic Games, 1936; Ravensbrück

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Generalgouvernement

The *Generalgouvernement*, a French term absorbed into German, was the name given to that part of eastern Poland that had not been incorporated by the Nazis directly into Germany after the end of the war with Poland in September 1939 or occupied by the Soviet Union in the same month. The area was comprised of five districts: Kraków, Lublin, Radom, Galicia, and Warsaw. Into these districts were to be found most of Poland's Jews, and over time the Generalgouvernement was utilized as a collection point for Jews deported from all over Europe, often prior to transshipment to the death camps. Given its location and function, the Generalgouvernement was an integral part of the Nazis' "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*); it not only concentrated Jews in a specific locale, but it was also geographically close to the extermination apparatus—the death camps—set up by the Nazis. Several of the larger and more important ghettos were situated in the Generalgouvernement, notably Warsaw, Kraków, and Lublin; Łódź, Lwów, and Białystok were outside its borders, but nearby. The SS, in particular, anticipated that the Generalgouvernement would serve as a reservoir of Jews for forced labor and extermination, but that over time it (along with the rest of Europe) would be emptied of Jews in the final realization of the Nazis' genocidal ambitions.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Death Camps; Final Solution; Frank, Hans; Globocnik, Odilo; Madagascar Plan; Poland; Schindler, Oskar; Yellow Star

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Genocide

The term *genocide* was coined in 1944 by Polish Jewish lawyer and legal scholar Raphael Lemkin. He had earlier sought to introduce some sort of international legal regime against what he called "vandalism and barbarity," but due to the

exigencies imposed by World War II, such work would have to come later.

In 1944, however, Lemkin published a massive 674-page book titled *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, which was published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. In chapter 9, which addressed the issue of Nazi atrocities against Jews, Lemkin devoted the entire chapter to a discussion of what he called “genocide”—a “new term and new conception for destruction of nations.”

He coined the term by linking the Greek word *genos* (a tribe, or in modern usage, a nation) with the Latin suffix *-cide* (killing). As he saw it, the Nazi assault in Europe was cause for a great deal of serious reflection about the state of humanity in the modern world, and on its future. Accordingly, he wrote, “New conceptions require new terms. By ‘genocide’ we mean the destruction of a nation or ethnic group. . . . It is intended . . . to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.”

After the war, Lemkin became obsessed with the cause of seeking recognition for his term from the newly established United Nations, and achieving passage of a bill banning such destruction in international law. He faced considerable difficulties, not the least of which was that he was just one man with a theory, neither acting in an official capacity nor representing any agency or government.

After many bureaucratic and legal battles, on December 9, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations, with the support of both its Legal Committee and the Security Council, passed the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The vote was unanimous.

The initial model of the convention was in large part drafted by Lemkin himself, though considerable redrafting at committee stage saw it changed noticeably from what he had originally envisaged. Article 2 of the final document embodies the definition of genocide, which was contentious both then and now:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

A few key points can be made by way of a critique of the convention and this definitive article. In the first place, genocide is a criminal act, which the signatories promise to “prevent” and “punish”; second, for a successful charge of genocide to be brought, the notion of intent on the part of the perpetrators must be proven; third, destruction can be “in whole” or “in part,” though just how many individuals constitute “in part” is not spelled out; and fourth, four possible groups are listed as the only acceptable targets for genocide. Thus, if other groups of people are persecuted—for example, as a result of political affiliation, social origin, cultural background, or sexual preference—these are not included within the UN’s definition of genocide. Finally, killing is not the only means to commit genocide, as four other activities, in which lives are not necessarily taken, are also considered.

Genocide covers many actions—though the proven intent to destroy is what really matters. If the ultimate aim is the permanent and deliberate elimination of the targeted group, as such, from the wider population, then it is genocide.

The UN definition is, for many, inadequate. While it includes acts of destruction that are not lethal to a group, many scholars consider that several groups were omitted that certainly should be included. Others have, since 1948, proposed alternative definitions, such as including social and political groups; varying the types of actions that could be included as genocide; and amending or clarifying the meaning of “intent.” The fact is that owing to a series of compromises involving the major powers of the day, none of these proposed changes made their way into the final form the convention reached in 1948, and they are unlikely to be included in any revisions today. Because the convention resulted from compromise, in spite of changing circumstances over more than six decades since it appeared, changing the convention and its definition will probably be more difficult to achieve than it was to originally secure its passage.

The number of events throughout history that have been termed genocide since 1948 has resulted in a multiplicity of

theories of what genocide should be; indeed, a full scholarship of genocide has emerged. Invariably, a great deal of genocide theory proceeds from (and all too often, gets bogged down by) discussions relating to definitional matters. Where Lemkin's original conception began with the statement that genocide means "the destruction of a nation or ethnic group," many others have built their discussions around definitions that diverge from this. Other forms of destruction that do not fit comfortably into Article 2 have led scholars to devise even newer terms; in addition to genocide, ideas such as ethnocide, politicide, democide, omnicide, gendercide, and autogenocide, among many others, have been formulated. While these notions are often useful in creating models to help approach specific issues, however, it could be argued that the full scope of genocide has yet to be exhausted.

Genocide, first and foremost, is a crime—a crime of the greatest magnitude, and a major problem afflicting the very definition of modern civilization. Whether or not we would like to admit it, genocide—and the threat of genocide—has become one of the defining features of our time.

Historically, the causes of genocide are difficult to pin down. Only with hindsight is some kind of connection visible between an event and what transpired beforehand. Whether one can ultimately arrive at a common causal denominator for all genocides is doubtful, though some features do stand out. Frequently, genocides take place in times of war. Usually, some sort of ideology is present that demonizes a target group and demands its eradication. Elsewhere, times of extreme economic stress can lead to an outbreak of mass violence, while intercommunal violence can take place when there is a radical imbalance of power between those seeking destruction and their intended victims.

These factors, in themselves, do not automatically lead to genocide. Populations have to be conditioned to accept it, often over a lengthy period of time; otherwise a perpetrator regime is seen to be going too far and the population will reject its actions.

The flashpoint, or trigger, will always vary from case to case. Such incidents cannot always be predicted in advance, and, as with all historical events, there are so many variables that it is impossible to foresee how an event will resolve itself before it actually does.

It is in view of this that we need to consider the root cause behind the establishment of international legislation designed to confront genocide. In the enormous death toll of World War I, the vast majority of those killed were military deaths; our best estimates tell us that on average, 5,600

soldiers were killed per day, every day, for four-and-a-quarter years. Civilians numbered only 5% of all deaths in combat zones during that conflict.

After that, the rate of civilian deaths in wartime increased enormously. By World War II, civilians could be calculated at 66% of all war-related deaths; into the 1970s and 1980s, civilian deaths in war headed toward 80%. The vast majority of such deaths can be put down to an accumulation of massacres (some predetermined, some spontaneous) and genocide (by definition deliberate).

The concept of genocide is not an easy one to understand, though many people are of the view that "they know it when they see it." Because it is locked directly into a legal definition that defines the concept and forms the international legislation that makes it a crime, there is a dissenting view that any definition of genocide should be expanded in order to explain all the horrors and injustices the world has witnessed.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: A Crime without a Name; Armenians, Hitler Statement; Ethnic Cleansing; Holocaust; Kuper, Leo; Lemkin, Raphael; Manstein Trial; Total War and the Holocaust; UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

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Gens, Jacob

Jacob Gens, a Lithuanian Jew, was the leader of the ghetto in the city of Vilna (Vilnius), Lithuania, from July 1942 until his death at the hands of the Gestapo on September 14, 1943. His leadership of the ghetto remains highly controversial; some claim he did all he could to keep as many Jews alive as possible, while others claim he acquiesced too quickly and too often to Nazi orders.

Born in 1903, Gens served in the Lithuanian army during its fight for independence, for which he was promoted and decorated. After completing his studies in law and economics in 1935, he became an accountant. Fearful of arrest when

Lithuania became a Soviet republic in 1940, he moved to Vilna. At the time the Germans occupied Vilna in June 1941, he had been appointed the director of the Jewish hospital.

Within three months of the Nazi occupation, two ghettos had been established in Vilna, and Gens was appointed head of the police in Ghetto One. It was his actions as Jewish police head that began the controversy that would continue through the rest of his leadership. One of the first actions that touched off the controversy came after Gens had turned the ghetto police into a well-disciplined unit: he oversaw the unit's active role in a Nazi *Aktion* during the last four months of 1941, resulting in the murder of thousands of Jews at Ponary, a location of mass murder just outside of Vilna. "Active role," in this case, means organizing the victims to facilitate their extermination.

Gens expanded his role in the ghetto and in time began bypassing the *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) and having direct contact with the Germans. That led, in July 1942, to the dissolution of the *Judenrat* by the Nazis and the appointment of Gens as official head of the ghetto. It was then that he introduced the strategy that would become the key component of his approach to running the ghetto: "work for life," or "survival through labor." Like leaders in other ghettos, such as Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski in Łódź, Gens was convinced that the ghetto would remain intact—or, at least, its destruction would be delayed—as long as the Nazis saw it as providing a benefit to the war effort. He thus made every effort to have as many Jews as possible working throughout the ghetto in various factories.

Unlike the leaders of most other ghettos, Gens was not the chairman of a 12- or 24-member *Judenrat*, seeking to one degree or another to obtain a consensus, or at least get input from others before acting. Instead, he made decisions unilaterally. However, as was the case with all other ghetto leaders, he found himself in the very difficult (if not impossible) position of being responsible for carrying out the Nazis' orders—most painfully their demands that he produce a required number of Jews for the many deportations conducted during the life of the ghetto—while, at the same time, trying to preserve as many Jewish lives as possible. It was Gens's efforts to balance these basically incompatible objectives that fueled the disparate opinions of his leadership.

For example, Gens posted Jewish police at the gates of the ghetto to prevent smuggling of food into the compound, even to the point of having the police beat Jews who were caught when Nazis were present, all with the hope that this would reduce the opportunity for the Nazis to impose far worse punishment if they took over that role. He sought to

consign the old and the sick to deportations, in order to save as many young and healthy Jews as possible. Thus, in addition to saving some Jews, he was condemning others to their death.

The way by which he ran the ghetto resulted in his being seen as trying to help Jews, even though, at the same time, he was seen as being all too willing to carry out the orders of the Nazis. One survivor, after noting that there were some Jews in the ghetto who felt otherwise, ascribed to Gens a "fatal role" in the tragedy of the Vilna ghetto. Elsewhere the same survivor used words such as "an atmosphere of moral decay" and even "treachery" when describing Gens and his leadership. However, Gens was credited with improving life within the ghetto to the extent possible under the circumstances. His efforts resulted in improved health care, hygiene, and care for children, together with the establishment of schools, orphanages, a theater, and a library. His strict methods of meeting the demands of the Nazis were viewed by some in the ghetto as being the only way available to Gens to save at least a remnant of the Jews in the ghetto.

Another area where Gens's decisions have given rise to debate was his involvement with the ghetto underground. At times supportive of its actions, for the most part Gens was cautious, afraid that resistance activities could jeopardize the safety of hundreds or thousands of Jews upon whom revenge would be taken for the efforts of a handful of resisters. In this same way he did not support efforts by individuals to escape, again fearing that it would only give rise to Nazi revenge. Still, in keeping with the contradictory statements and feelings about Gens, some survivors thought of him as supporting the resistance movement.

As liquidation of the ghetto approached, Gens refused opportunities to escape and join his non-Jewish Lithuanian wife and daughter who were living outside the ghetto, insisting that his escape would result in the murder of many of the Jews still in the ghetto. Although he had been warned of plans to kill him, he nonetheless answered the Gestapo's summons to their headquarters where, on September 14, 1943, he was shot and killed. Nine days later, on September 23, the ghetto was liquidated.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: *Judenrat*; Ponary Forest; United Partisan Organization; Vilna Ghetto

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German Army, Role in the Holocaust

The precise role of the German Army (Wehrmacht) in the planning and execution of the Holocaust has proven to be a highly controversial topic in the post–World War II period. From 1945 until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the traditional interpretation, particularly in West Germany, held that the army played virtually no direct role in the Holocaust. Since the 1970s, but especially after the end of the Cold War and German reunification, that interpretation has changed considerably. New research and newly discovered documents suggest that the Wehrmacht was certainly complicit in various aspects of the Holocaust, chiefly in the East, including those areas seized from the Soviet Union. While most of the planning for the Final Solution was carried out by the Nazi regime, chiefly the SS and the mobile paramilitary death squads it controlled known as the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Holocaust could not likely have been carried out without the help and support of the German Army. There continue to be arguments about the extent of the army's involvement and whether it was fully aware of the mass killings, however. These differences tend to split along historiographical lines. Functionalists, who believe that the Holocaust was unleashed in a somewhat ad hoc fashion and was driven largely by bureaucratic imperatives and the changing fortunes of war, tend to argue that the army was not complicit in planning the Holocaust. Intentionalists, who believe that the Holocaust was set in motion according to carefully laid plans and was implemented systematically, typically assign more blame to the Wehrmacht for the unfolding of the Holocaust.

The myth of an unblemished Wehrmacht was carefully laid out in the immediate postwar period. Many former German army generals worked hard to promote the idea that the Holocaust had been unleashed and carried out exclusively by the SS and its agencies. These same officers also asserted that the Wehrmacht had little to no knowledge of the Holocaust. The fact that the postwar Nuremberg trials failed to indict or convict many German army officers seemed to lend credence to this interpretation, as did the Allies' failure to label the Wehrmacht a criminal enterprise. Postwar political circumstances also informed these ideas. The rearmament of West Germany in the early 1950s, a development brought on by the Cold War, necessitated a somewhat whitewashed view of the Wehrmacht. This eased the Germans' discomfort with rearmament and helped reassure Germany's nervous neighbors.

More recent interpretations have demonstrated that the *Einsatzgruppen* depended extensively on the German Army

to implement the mass killing of Jews on the Eastern Front. The traveling exhibit titled *War of Extermination: The Crimes of the Wehrmacht*, which circulated throughout Germany from 1995 until 1999, provided both documentary and photographic evidence of the army's duplicity in the Holocaust. This exhibit showed that the army's top leaders not only knew about the Holocaust but participated in it, either directly or indirectly. In Poland and western Russia, the Wehrmacht created dozens of regional and local headquarters where it forced Jews to register, provided them with "identification papers," and coordinated their deportation to ghettos. These same headquarters also confiscated Jewish property and money. Documents demonstrated that the *Einsatzgruppen* frequently praised the Wehrmacht for its cooperation in these matters. Some took exception to the exhibit, however, claiming that its findings were suspect because several items had been listed in the wrong chronological order. Others refused to believe that the Wehrmacht had been so deeply involved in the Holocaust.

During the Nazi offensive in North Africa (1941–1943), Field Marshal Erwin Rommel pledged to give the SS and *Einsatzgruppen* his complete cooperation in activities designed to round up and murder Jews in Egypt and Palestine. Generals Hermann Hoth, Walther von Riechenau, and Erich von Manstein strongly supported the work of the *Einsatzgruppen*. It is also a documented reality that elements of the Wehrmacht actively participated in the quelling of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April–May 1943. Conversely, some army officers who protested the activities of the SS were punished for their noncompliance. General Johannes Blaskowitz lost his field command after complaining to Berlin about the atrocities he had witnessed in Poland.

The idea that the rank and file of the Wehrmacht—the soldiers—did not know about aspects of the Holocaust has been similarly challenged. There were countless instances, some of which have been documented by photographs and documents, in which German soldiers participated in mass shootings of Jews and other civilians behind the front lines. A number of soldiers themselves took pictures of the grisly massacres perpetrated by the *Einsatzgruppen*, particularly in Poland and in the western portions of the Soviet Union. German troops also routinely destroyed entire villages and shot thousands of rural dwellers and partisans.

By spring of 1945 the Americans and the British alone had taken some 1 million German soldiers and Waffen-SS officers prisoner. In many cases, prison cells were under surveillance and conversations between and among

prisoners were recorded. Some of those recordings were later transcribed and showed clearly that many German soldiers and officers certainly knew about aspects of the Holocaust and sometimes participated in wartime atrocities. Several of these conversations were very detailed and spoke of mass shootings, the use of carbon monoxide to kill Jews and others in special mobile killing vans, and other means of mass murder. Other exchanges revealed that even rank-and-file soldiers had witnessed events that were almost certainly linked to the Holocaust. The fact that many German prisoners spoke freely of such things among themselves and did not attempt to cover up atrocities strongly suggests that they were part and parcel of many German soldiers' wartime experiences.

Although the number of such recorded conversations was by no means large, the recordings nevertheless revealed a level of knowledge about the Holocaust that flies in the face of those who suggest that the German Army was largely guiltless in the prosecution of the Holocaust. Even if recorded prisoners were merely repeating what they had heard about atrocities or had only witnessed evidence of the Holocaust, the fact that none of them expressed surprise or moral qualms about such things seems to suggest that the Wehrmacht was complicit in the mass murder of Jews and other minority groups during World War II.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Einsatzgruppen; "Functionalists"; "Intentionalists"; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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German Census, 1933

In June 1933 the new Nazi regime under Adolf Hitler announced the results of a national population census that had recently been conducted and tabulated. The census was designed in part to reflect the Nazi Party's ideology concerning race and ethnicity; in particular, it became a basis for antisemitic government policies that were put in place between 1933 and 1945. Indeed, the 1933 census explicitly compiled religious categories. Also identified were the specific areas of Germany in which racial and ethnic minorities,

including Jews, resided. The 1933 census would form the basis of the German government's Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and the National Registry of Jews, which was also informed by the 1939 census. Indirectly, it also became the basis for the Holocaust by identifying Jews and their places of residence.

The 1933 census indicated that there were 505,000 Jews living in Germany. That figure represented only Jews who actively practiced their religion. It did not include converted Jews, secular Jews, or Jews who were the product of mixed marriages. The latter would be counted in the 1939 census.

It was estimated that since January 1933, when Hitler assumed power, about 18,000 Jews had fled Germany in anticipation of increased persecution. Of the 505,000 counted, which represented approximately 0.75% of the total German population (67 million), about 70% lived in cities. Berlin had the largest Jewish population, followed by Frankfurt am Main, Breslau, Hamburg, Cologne, Hannover, and Leipzig. In Berlin, Jews made up just 4% of the population (160,000).

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Antisemitism; Nuremberg Laws

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Gerstein, Kurt

Kurt Gerstein, born in 1905, was simultaneously a senior SS officer intimately connected to the Nazi mass murder of the Jews at Auschwitz and other death camps, and, paradoxically, a man unremitting in his resistance to the Nazi extermination program, who sought ways both to stop it and publicize it to the outside world.

Recalled through at least two biographies, two plays, a novel, and an award-winning movie, Gerstein's life and efforts prompt key questions even now: How could this man be both a major actor in the murder machinery and a resister of it? Should he be awarded the status of Righteous among the Nations? Were his activities carried out because of his understanding of the plight of the Jews, or did he operate from other motives? And if so, does the difference matter? Did his efforts ultimately save anyone?

Gerstein was a deeply devoted Christian from Westphalia, a low-ranking officer in the SS, and a member of the



Kurt Gerstein was a German SS officer and member of the Institute for Hygiene of the Waffen-SS. In this capacity, he served as head of Technical Disinfection Services. Upon witnessing gassings at the Belzec and Treblinka extermination camps, he attempted to inform the international community of what he had seen, and he passed his observations on to the Swedish diplomat Göran von Otter and members of the Roman Catholic Church with contacts to Pope Pius XII. In 1945 he surrendered to French forces and wrote a lengthy report outlining his first-hand experience of the Holocaust. (AP Photo)

Waffen-SS Institute for Hygiene. In the 1930s he served two periods of detention for defying Nazi authority on the grounds of his Christian principles (one of them in Welzheim concentration camp, near Stuttgart) and was dismissed from membership in the Nazi Party before being reinstated.

In early 1941 he joined the SS, and because of his technical abilities in both chemistry and engineering he rose quickly to become head of Technical Disinfection Services. In this capacity, on August 17, 1942, he went to the Belzec death camp, where he witnessed the gassing of some 3,000 Jews; the next day he went to Treblinka and saw a repetition

of the killing process. He was then given responsibility for ordering vast quantities of Zyklon-B gas for use in the mass murder of Jews at Auschwitz.

On the night of August 20–21, 1942, on his way back to Germany, Gerstein traveled by train from Warsaw to Berlin. Deeply disturbed by what he had seen at Belzec and Treblinka, he was desperate to unburden himself; fate intervened in the person of the secretary to the Swedish legation in Berlin, Baron Göran von Otter, who was on the same train. Engaging him in conversation, Gerstein exclaimed: “Yesterday I saw something appalling.” “Is it to do with the Jews?” von Otter asked, and the conversation—more like a monologue—began. In a feverish conversation lasting ten hours, Gerstein poured out the whole story, crying and smoking incessantly. He related all he had just seen and begged von Otter to inform the Swedish government. Von Otter later recalled that Gerstein gave him details, names, and how he had come to be involved. He was determined to act as a witness to the Nazi atrocities, not anticipating that he would himself be drawn inextricably into the murder machinery himself, and he pleaded with von Otter to inform the Allies and the outside world, so that the Allied air forces, acting on Swedish information, would drop millions of leaflets over Germany. The German people, horrified, would then rebel against Hitler.

This was not the only occasion on which Gerstein sought to draw attention to what he had witnessed. He attended the papal nuncio in Berlin, Archbishop Cesare Orsenigo, but was turned away; he also saw numerous members of the Confessing and Lutheran churches, and opponents of the Nazi regime. In fact, he spoke to anyone who would listen and often to those he did not even know in his eagerness to get the message out.

Apart from the Swedish authorities, the Allies, and the Vatican, Gerstein also tried to convey his message via a friend, J. H. Ubbink, in the Netherlands. In February 1943 Ubbink received a message from Gerstein about the gas chambers, which he passed to the Dutch resistance. Skeptical, they decided not to forward the report or circulate it publicly. Another Gerstein attempt to let the world know thus failed.

While attempting to raise consciousness, he also took practical steps to see to it that the devastating effects of his office could be negated, or at least minimized. As the war progressed, a despairing Gerstein ordered that shipments of Zyklon-B gas canisters be buried on the pretext that they had been spoiled in transit and posed a risk to German soldiers and civilians. He tried, unsuccessfully, to have a chemical removed from the gas compound that caused severe irritation, so that death would be less painful for the

victims. In addition, he fought with his superior officers who demanded that ever larger consignments of Zyklon-B should be dispatched, arguing that storing large amounts was extremely hazardous; if the shipments were hit by Allied air raids, the result would be a catastrophic loss of life throughout the region where the gas was stored.

His efforts saw only small returns, despite an inner turmoil that aged him prematurely, brought on clinical depression, and saw him attempt suicide on one occasion and discuss it on many others. Finally, on April 22, 1945, he defected to the Allies, making his way to French lines in the occupied town of Reutlingen. He was well received and given the opportunity to write a full report (actually, three) of what he had done and seen. Later, he was transferred to the Cherche-Midi military prison in Paris, where he was treated as a war criminal. On July 25, 1945, while still in French custody, he was found hanged in his cell, an alleged suicide.

Many questions have been asked as to why Gerstein behaved as he did. Moved to join the SS in early 1941 in order “to see things from the inside,” he was shocked and outraged at the death of his sister-in-law as a victim of the so-called T-4 euthanasia campaign; accordingly, he sought both to change the direction of Nazi policies and publicize the crimes being committed. He saw himself as acting the way a committed Christian should. As a covert anti-Nazi, he had a very special mission—nothing less than infiltrating the SS in order to expose the atrocities they were perpetrating.

Gerstein’s actions posed a major dilemma, however. Increasingly drawn into the very system he was trying to overthrow, he realized at every stage what he was doing and found himself incapable of extricating himself from its grasp. In view of this, how can he be recognized for his efforts? Moreover, bearing in mind that he was an SS officer whose name appeared on receipts for orders of large consignments of gas canisters, is it even proper that he should be?

On one hand, Gerstein sought desperately to save Jewish lives, at enormous personal risk, through alerting people to the Nazi measures and also through the destruction of significant quantities of the very gas he found himself compelled to order as a result of his office. On the other hand, a critic must ask: What, ultimately, did he achieve, other than his own sad death, the destitution of his family, and a place in the annals of those who tried to combat the Nazi state from the inside?

On August 17, 1950, a denazification court in Tübingen concluded that Gerstein was a Nazi offender for his assistance in the production and delivery of Zyklon-B. His widow, Elfriede, was denied a pension, though in January 1965, after

a long battle, Baron von Otter and others managed to restore Gerstein’s reputation, and he received a posthumous pardon.

His report became perhaps the most horrifying eyewitness account of the Holocaust. After he had witnessed the gassing at Belzec he was told by the commandant, SS Major Christian Wirth: “There are not ten people alive who have seen or will see as much as you.” Gerstein worked to ensure that as many people as possible “saw” what he had seen. Although much of his report is unscientific and exaggerated, the basic facts he recounted were verified by many other Nazis after the war. In its essentials, it gets much right. SS Colonel Dr. Wilhelm Pfannenstiel, who was with Gerstein at Belzec on the fateful day he witnessed the gassing, testified in court on June 6, 1950, that the account given by Gerstein was basically correct.

Gerstein’s self-appointed mission was to expose the horrors of Nazism to the world and mitigate the suffering around him. His is the story of a remarkable and highly complex man who refused to surrender his conscience in the face of mass murder. He realized that he was continuing to commit the very acts he repudiated, albeit legally enforceable orders in accordance with the law of the land as it stood at that time. To disobey those orders would have put him totally beyond the pale and back in the concentration camp—and, thus, completely unable to achieve the results he sought. In the situation in which Kurt Gerstein found himself, therefore, the conflict between legality and morality was one that probably could not have been resolved, and that, perhaps, is the essence of his tragedy.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Belzec; Catholic Church; *The Deputy*; Euthanasia Program; Friedländer, Saul; Pius XII; Zyklon-B

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Gestapo

The *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo) was the Nazi regime’s secret state police that existed throughout the German Reich and German-held European territory during the period 1933–1945. The Gestapo was responsible for the elimination of all political opposition to the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (Nazi Party), which entailed the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Jews and other so-called

undesirables to concentration camps before and during World War II.

When the Nazis first rose to power in 1933, Hermann Göring (who was then serving as minister of the interior and was one of Adolf Hitler's top lieutenants), reorganized the Prussian police force. He separated the political spy unit from the regular police forces and placed the new grouping, the Gestapo, under his own direct command. In 1934 Heinrich Himmler, who headed the paramilitary units known as the SS, took command of the Gestapo.

Two years later Himmler was appointed chief of all police forces, and he eventually placed the Gestapo under Heinrich Müller. As the Nazis' bureaucratic network expanded, the Gestapo was shuffled under various security organizations, and it operated alongside many other police groupings, all of whose duties overlapped. Concentration camps were technically under the authority of the Gestapo, although in reality it was the SS that kept them running. Nonetheless, it was Adolf Eichmann, the head of Gestapo unit IV B4, who oversaw the transport of millions of European Jews to concentration and death camps.

There were no civil restraints that the Gestapo had to observe in carrying out its duties. Not only could police arrest suspects, but they also could make "preventive" arrests. Anyone who could possibly oppose or be perceived to oppose the Nazis could be arrested, tortured, killed, or released—all without any oversight by a judicial body. Untold thousands of Jews, political intellectuals, clergy, homosexuals, Catholics, Roma, and other "undesirables" simply disappeared. Gestapo units also formed part of the death squads that followed behind the German Army as it invaded Poland and Russia. Those mobile units were responsible for the on-site killing of Jews and other targeted groups.

When Germany surrendered and World War II came to an end, the Gestapo was officially designated a criminal agency and disbanded.

KELLIE SEARLE

See also: Barbie, Klaus; Best, Werner; Denunciation; Eichmann, Adolf; Göring, Hermann; Himmler, Heinrich; Müller, Heinrich; Nacht und Nebel; Nuremberg Trials; Priebke, Erich; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Schöngarth, Karl Eberhard; Sippenhaft; Slave Labor; Topography of Terror; Waffen-SS; Weidt, Otto; Wrobel, Eta; Zimetbaum, Mala

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Geulen-Herscovici, Andrée

Andrée Geulen-Herscovici is a Belgian upstander who helped hide and rescue Jewish children during the Nazi occupation of Belgium between 1942 and 1944.

She was born Andrée Geulen on September 6, 1921, and studied to become a school teacher. In May 1940 German forces invaded Belgium, occupied it, and began implementing anti-Jewish ordinances. At first, Geulen did not pay much attention to the plight of Belgium's Jews. By 1942 she had secured a teaching position at the Gaty de Gamont School in Brussels. That same year, she was first made fully aware of the anti-Jewish laws when several students arrived in her classroom one day with yellow Stars of David affixed to their clothing. The Germans had made this mandatory for all Belgian Jews who went out in public. Horrified, she counseled her Jewish students to wear outerwear that covered up the yellow stars. Not long after, Geulen met Ida Sterno, a Belgian Jew who was involved in hiding Jewish children. Sterno was a member of the clandestine Comité de Défense des Juifs (Jewish Defense Committee). When Sterno asked Geulen for help in hiding and rescuing Jewish children, Geulen readily agreed.

A number of Jewish children were hidden at the school in which Geulen worked, with the help of the school's headmistress, Odile Ovar. German occupation authorities raided the school in May 1943 in the middle of the night, finding the hidden Jewish children and immediately arresting them. The school's personnel, including Geulen, were interrogated, but Geulen refused to be intimidated. When asked if she was ashamed of teaching Jews, she replied: "Aren't you ashamed to make war on Jewish children?" Odile Ovar and her husband, meanwhile, were arrested and deported to a German concentration camp, where they later died.

After this sad turn of events, Geulen became even more involved in the underground Jewish movement. As soon as the Germans had left the school, she visited all the homes of Jewish children in her area, warning their parents not to return them to school because it was now unsafe. Geulen subsequently secured an apartment under an assumed name, sharing it with Sterno, who was now also in hiding. Geulen quickly became a chief liaison for the Jewish Defense Committee, taking dozens—perhaps hundreds—of Jewish children from their homes and placing them with gentile families and in monasteries and churches. She visited almost

all of them regularly, providing them with food, clothing, and other essentials.

As she went about her work, she was careful not to write anything down, lest she be arrested by the Germans. Instead, she committed to memory each of the children's names, original addresses, and other details so they could be returned to their families when the war ended. Unfortunately, a number of the children would never see their parents again, because they had been deported and murdered.

In May 1944 the Germans found Sterno, arrested her, and sent her to a detention camp in Malines, Belgium. Using false identification and an assumed name, Geulen visited her numerous times despite the danger to herself. The two women continued their rescue work until Belgium was liberated in September 1944.

Geulen's work was not finished, however, as she spent several more years thereafter rounding up the children in hiding and returning them to their families or relatives. However, some had no families to which they could return.

In the decades since, Geulen has maintained contact with many of the children she helped rescue. In 1989 Israel's Yad Vashem named Geulen-Hersovici as one of the Righteous among the Nations for her wartime work. In 2007, when she returned to Yad Vashem for a special conference on the hidden children of Belgium, she was granted honorary Israeli citizenship.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Belgium; Comité de Défense des Juifs; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Ghettos

The medieval practice of confining Jews to specific areas of towns ("ghettos") was revived by the Nazis as part of their

GHETTOS IN OCCUPIED EUROPE 1939–1944



strategy for dealing with the so-called “Jewish problem.” In September 1939 Reinhard Heydrich gave orders that the Jews of newly conquered Poland were to be forced into ghettos in the larger cities. This effective incarceration of Jews was the prelude to the mass murder of the Jews during the Holocaust and made that project easier, in that it was much simpler to deport to concentration camps whole populations of individuals already clearly identified as Jewish by their address.

The first such ghetto was established in Łódź, and subsequently others were set up in various areas of Eastern Europe. The largest and most famous was the Warsaw Ghetto, which was eventually home to 350,000 persons herded behind a brick wall. Once established, conditions in these areas deteriorated rapidly. The Warsaw Ghetto also became an enduring symbol of Jewish resistance in the first months of 1943, when the Jewish Fighting Organization formed by inmates offered armed resistance to deportation. They managed to hold out until May of that year, when the ghetto was finally destroyed. The ghetto phenomenon was not entirely restricted to the world of German Nazism; for example, in Croatia during World War II, officials of the ruling Ustashe Party similarly drove Serbs (whom they considered racially inferior) into ghettos.

CYPRIAN BLAMIRE

See also: Belarus; Białystok Ghetto; Confiscation of Jewish Property; *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*; Frank, Hans; Generalgouvernement; Greece; Italian Jews and Fascism; Jewish Ghetto Police; Judenrat; Lithuania; Łódź Ghetto; Müller, Heinrich; Netherlands; Odessa Massacre; Paulavicius, Jonas; Poland; Riga; Shanghai Ghetto; Theresienstadt; Trawniki Men; Vilna Ghetto; Warsaw Ghetto; Wiedergutmachung; Yellow Star

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Gibraltar Camp, Jamaica

With the outbreak of war in 1939, Lisbon became a haven for refugees. Prior to 1941 the Portugal of fascist dictator Antonio Salazar had not accepted many Jews for permanent sanctuary, and Portugal did not see itself as a country of long-term refuge. Most refugees arrived in Lisbon only on a two-week transit visa. Once in Lisbon, this could be extended

by the local police for another period of two weeks, on an indefinite basis.

Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, brought this to an end. In June and July 1941, as German and other Axis troops swept through Russia, Salazar began reading the situation as one that might force Portugal into the Nazi sphere of obligation. Careful not to antagonize the Axis, Salazar instituted a number of measures throughout Portugal designed to show Germany and Italy that their intervention would not be needed to ensure that his fascist ideals remained consistent with theirs.

One of these new measures saw a transformation of administrative jurisdiction over Jewish refugees from the police to the army, and an accompanying imposition of martial law regulations governing their freedom of movement. No longer would the system of renewable two-week transit visas apply, as new regulations were introduced that revised refugee status.

Then, early in November 1941, without warning, all Jewish refugees in Lisbon received a letter ordering them to leave the country within two weeks. Any refugees still in Portugal after that date would be sent for what the letter euphemistically referred to as “Compulsory Residence” (*résidence forcée*). To the refugee Jews from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere, the prospects were ominous. Faced with the imminence of sudden deportation, however, members of Lisbon’s Jewish refugee community decided to take positive action rather than await developments.

One such initiative came in the form of a suggestion by a prominent member of the refugee community that the Jewish community in Lisbon send British prime minister Winston Churchill a birthday telegram, at the same time begging him for refuge in any country in the world under the British flag. All the Jewish refugees in Lisbon contributed to the cost of the telegram to be sent, and it was duly received in London on December 1, 1941. Once sent, the small refugee community sat down to await a reply from the British government.

With one day remaining before “Compulsory Residence” was introduced, all the Jews in the refugee community received a letter from the Polish consul in Lisbon requesting that they present themselves at his office, with passports in hand, the next day. Some two hundred invaded the consul’s office at 10:00 a.m. the next morning, to learn that Britain had decided to give all Polish subjects then in Portugal (which effectively meant all of the refugee community) a permit for emigration to the Caribbean island of Jamaica. From that time onward the Jews were saved: with this guarantee,

the Jews would be safe until shipping could be arranged for crossing the Atlantic. This would be undertaken by the British government, presumably at British expense.

The reasons behind this grand gesture are difficult to find. In reality, this action was completely contrary to earlier practice. An explanation for sending the refugees to Jamaica is, perhaps, not as puzzling as it first appears, and centers on the fate of evacuees from another part of the British Empire, Gibraltar. In May 1940 the British government took the step of evacuating the civilian population of Gibraltar in order to transform that colony into a fully operational military base. Some two thousand were sent to Jamaica, where a large camp had been constructed to accommodate them. A second camp was built to house a future influx from Malta. When the anticipated Maltese evacuees failed to appear, Jamaica was left with two large camps, one filled with evacuees from Gibraltar, the other empty. The second camp would admirably fit the bill in housing the refugee Jews from Lisbon, who had finally been taken on board in January 1942. They arrived in Kingston in early February on board a converted Portuguese freighter, the *SS Serpa Pinto*.

Arriving at Gibraltar Camp II they learned that their internment need not be a negative experience. Books, newspapers, and radios were supplied. Food was plentiful, with abundant quantities of milk and dairy products, white bread and vegetables. For the Jews who kept kosher, fish was issued in lieu of meat. A refugee chef was permitted to do the cooking for the kosher Jews. As the refugees were not considered prisoners, there were in fact few legal impediments to their release from the camp; they were not enemy aliens, but citizens of Allied countries, and refugees from enemy persecution, at that. Consequently, they were allowed a sort of compromise liberty; the camp would remain their home, but they were otherwise free to come and go outside between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. without a pass. If the refugees wished to be away overnight or at weekends, a pass would have to be issued, but this rarely presented a problem. The refugees could thus for the most part come and go as they wished, subject only to this gentle surveillance.

While the arrangements concerning freedom of movement and daily activity were on the whole acceptable to all parties, everyone was aware that permanent settlement beyond Jamaica should be the ultimate objective. Over a lengthy period internees found their way to locations in South America, as well as Australia, Canada, and other territories of the British Empire, and toward the end of the war the refugee community thus dispersed to various parts of the

world. With the continual farewells of refugees who found more secure lands in which to settle, the camp became more and more of a wasteland for those remaining. Very few of the Jewish refugees remained in Jamaica after the war, and the majority moved to the United States or the United Kingdom.

There is one final aspect of the Lisbon-to-Jamaica episode that needs to be explored further. Of all the Jewish refugees or internees sent under British auspices to other parts of the world, only this single instance was not accompanied by maladministration, insensitivity, or cruelty. The refugees were not considered to be enemy aliens, nor were they locked away on the grounds of their nationality. They did not have to undergo the experience of justifying why they should be permitted to remain at liberty, nor were they treated as criminals and subjected to interrogation, fingerprinting, or punishment drills. Plucked from an uncertain fate, they were treated exactly as many said refugees from the racial war against the Jews *should* be treated—with compassion, sympathy, and kindness.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: British Response to the Holocaust

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Gies, Miep

Miep Gies was an Austrian-born Dutch citizen who hid Anne Frank and her family, along with several other Jews, in Amsterdam between 1942 and 1944. She was born Hermine Santruschitz on February 15, 1909, in Vienna. In 1920 she was sent to Leiden in the Netherlands to escape the unrest and food shortages of post-World War I Austria, and taken in as a foster child by the Nieuwenburg family. As a girl she was given the nickname "Miep."

In 1933 she went to work for Otto Frank, a German Jewish businessman who had fled Germany with his family to escape the Nazis. Soon thereafter, she met Jan Gies, a book-keeper. They grew fond of the Frank family, with whom they developed a close friendship.

In 1941 German occupation officials in the Netherlands insisted that Miep join a Nazi women's association. When



Miep Gies was a Dutch citizen who helped to hide from the Nazis, Anne Frank, her family, and four other Jews in an annex above the business premises of Anne's father Otto, who was her employer. She became a close friend of the family during the two years they spent in hiding. She retrieved Anne Frank's diary after the family was arrested and kept the papers safe until Otto Frank returned from Auschwitz in 1945. In 1995 she was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. In this picture, taken in 1987, she holds a copy of her own book, *Anne Frank Remembered*. (Bettmann/Contributor/Getty)

she refused, her passport was canceled and she was ordered to be deported to her native Austria within 90 days. By way of response and in haste, Jan Gies married her on July 16, 1941, so she could obtain Dutch citizenship and thereby avoid deportation. Then, as German occupation officials and Dutch collaborators began to persecute Jews and deport them to unknown destinations in "the East," Jan and Miep decided to keep the Frank family safe. In July 1942, after some consideration as to method, they hid the Franks, along with several other Jews, in a small second-story apartment above Opekta, Otto Frank's spice company located at Amsterdam's Prinsengracht 263.

At considerable risk to her own safety, Miep supplied the Franks with food and medicine. The hiding place was only a short distance from Miep and Jan's home, and Miep continued to work in the office below the apartment so as to

prevent unwanted intrusion from anyone seeking access to the second floor. Throughout the period in which the Franks were in hiding, Opekta had to continue operating in order to protect the family, as any change in routine could have led the Gestapo to investigate. Therefore, Miep and those around her kept things running smoothly to maintain the charade that there was nothing untoward.

On August 4, 1944, as Miep worked at her desk, a police official walked into the office, pointed a gun at her, and demanded that she show him the secret room. Somebody had tipped the police off about the Franks. Within minutes, the Franks and other people hiding in the second-floor apartment were arrested and taken away. Miep escaped only because the police officer had been a native of Vienna and understood her situation. The Franks were eventually sent to death camps.

Miep saved and hid Anne Frank's diary, the whereabouts of which she kept secret until the end of the war. In 1945 Otto Frank, who had survived Auschwitz, returned to Amsterdam and was reunited with Miep and Jan Gies. It was then that he learned of Anne's death at Bergen-Belsen. Determined to let the world know about his family's ordeal, in 1947 he permitted the diary's publication.

Miep hid the Frank family for more than two years. Although devastated by their arrest, she had sufficient presence of mind to ensure that she too was not picked up at the same time, enabling her to continue her work as a resister.

After the war, Miep developed into something of a celebrity, a status she eschewed. She always held that she did not do anything remarkable, and preferred to consider that she did what anyone in the same position should have done. In her view, although risking arrest every day for two years, what she did was simply her human duty. She developed her ideas around this theme in her memoir, *Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family*. In 1947, when she and Jan moved to a new home at Jekerstraat 65, they allowed Otto Frank to move in with them.

Miep Gies received many honors recognizing her efforts to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust. In 1994 she was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and in 1995 she was recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem. In 1997 she was knighted in the Order of Orange-Nassau by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands; on July 30, 2009, she received the Grand Decoration of Honor for Services to the Republic of Austria. On January 11, 2010, just short of her 101st birthday, Miep Gies died after a fall in a nursing home in Hoorn, a town outside of Amsterdam.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Anne Frank House; Denunciation; Frank, Anne; Netherlands; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Strobos, Tina

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Gleichschaltung

Gleichschaltung was both a concept and a strategy that played a critical role in the Nazis' establishment and maintenance of

a centralized and all-controlling government. Its goal was nothing short of the complete domination of every aspect of German society through the mechanism of "nazification."

Gleichschaltung is a compound noun comprised of *gleich*, variously translated as "same," "equal," "synchronizing," "alike," or "standardization," but most often as "coordination"; and *Schaltung*, literally meaning "switch." The concept of the "same switch" might be better thought of as "being on the same page," a phrase, however, that renders *Gleichschaltung* far more benign than it actually was: its intent was to eliminate any source of influence in Germany other than that of the Nazi Party.

As a concept, *Gleichschaltung* reflected the Nazi ideology that an "Aryan" society can achieve its ultimate glory only by the subjugation of the individual to the greater good of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the "people's community." Anything less than a totally unified populace, committed to the same goals and with absolute fidelity to the leader, would result in a biologically superior race being vulnerable to the insidious but intractable efforts of racially inferior cohorts to degrade society.

As a strategy, *Gleichschaltung* meant establishing a strong central government and eliminating all that was not in keeping with the Nazi Party, its ideology, and its *Weltanschauung* (world view). The strategy was first implemented soon after Hitler's ascension to power, with the Enabling Act of March 1933 that vested in Hitler the unilateral power to make laws. By early April 1933 much of the authority of local governments was shifted to the federal government through the placement of a *Reichsstatthalter* (Reich governor) in states throughout Germany who reported directly to the interior minister (Prussia, however, was placed under the control of Hermann Göring). The Nazi vision of a central government, led by an *Übermensch* (superman) with absolute control, began to take shape.

The strategy of coordination with the Nazi regime included the enactment of exclusionary legislation and decrees that eliminated Jews from organizations, associations, and institutions of all kinds. Existing organizations and institutions, freed from the threat of "others," became "Nazified" with all decisions and activities sanctioned by the Nazi Party, and all members indoctrinated in Nazi ideology. Some organizations were eliminated altogether, or folded into a like organization that had already been fully coordinated. In addition, new organizations or bureaucracies were established to take the place of those eliminated.

The scope of *Gleichschaltung* was total. Everything, such as the civil service, the professions, the courts, clubs of all

kinds (sporting clubs, bowling clubs, singing clubs, dance clubs, shooting clubs, and the like), political parties, religion, literature, art, movies and theater, the press, school curricula, teachers, trade unions, youth organizations, and so forth, was to be coordinated with the Nazi Party.

The *Gleichschaltung* of the government included the elimination of all political parties other than the Nazi Party (July 1933), and the removal of all government officials deemed to be less than fully committed to the Nazi Party. The removal of “non-Aryans” (that is, Jews) from the civil service (April 1933) was made pursuant to the “Aryan Paragraph,” under which membership, participation, or work in an institution, organization, or association was dependent on proof of an Aryan background. Ultimately, the power of the local governmental institutions of the *Länder* (federal states) was eliminated as part of the broader transition to centralization of all governmental power (April 1933).

Coordination of the government with the Nazi Party also resulted in the assassination of Ernst Röhm and other leaders of the SA (Sturmabteilung), also known as the Brownshirts, in what was called “The Night of the Long Knives” in June 1934. This eliminated a potential threat to Hitler and further solidified his hold on power. Later that summer (August 1934) it was determined that upon the death of the president, the office of the president was to be merged with that of the chancellor to centralize all power in the Führer.

The *Gleichschaltung* of labor meant the elimination in the spring and summer of 1933 of the traditional trade unions—the Free Trade Unions and the Christian Trade Unions—and the establishment in their place of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Workers’ Front), which made membership mandatory and was controlled entirely by the Nazi Party. Industry and agriculture were similarly “coordinated.”

The *Gleichschaltung* of the professions eliminated Jews from practicing law (and forced non-Jewish lawyers into the Association of National Socialist German Jurists, the Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen), and from working as university professors (April 1933). Jewish editors and other members of the press were also prevented from practicing their profession (October 1933). In the summer of 1938 Jewish doctors were first prohibited from treating non-Jews, and then their licenses were revoked altogether.

The *Gleichschaltung* of culture resulted in the establishment of a Reich Chamber of Culture, divided into various subunits for literature, press, radio, theater, film, music, and

fine arts, and requiring membership by all who were considered to contribute to German creativity.

Other aspects of the *Gleichschaltung* effort included complete government control of the nation’s train system, banking system, and, with the establishment of the Hitler Youth and related organizations, its youth, all reflective of the encompassing nature of the efforts made to coordinate all aspects of society with the Nazi Party.

A further example of the comprehensive nature of the *Gleichschaltung* “nazification” was the creation of what would become the largest organization developed by the Nazi Party, Kraft durch Freude (“Strength through Joy”), or KdF, a leisure organization intended to bring under Nazi control even the ways by which German citizens spent their after-work time.

The efforts at *Gleichschaltung* of the churches resulted in one of the few instances of resistance. The Catholic Church, refusing to give up its independence regarding worship and its social works, entered into an agreement with the Nazi government in July 1933 in an effort to prevent the “nazification” of the church. The Protestant churches split into two camps: the German Christians, who fully embraced the coordination of Christianity and Nazi ideology; and the Confessing Church, which insisted on retaining the basic elements of Christian theology.

The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 represented the apogee of coordinating the status of Germany’s Jews with the ideology of the Nazi Party. By stripping Jews of their German citizenship and making marriage and sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews illegal, the full impact of the concept and strategy of *Gleichschaltung* was realized. The Nuremberg Laws represented a significant step toward the recognition of the Nazi vision of a society entirely devoid of all elements that were not—and could never be—a part of the *Volk*, and it was done by legislation that in an instant set adrift hundreds of thousands of German Jews, some with roots in the country going back untold generations.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Aryan Paragraph; Barmen Declaration; Denazification; Enabling Act, 1933; Nuremberg Laws; Protestant Churches, German; Universities, Complicity in the Holocaust

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Globke Trial

The trial (in absentia) of Dr. Hans Globke for World War II-era war crimes that was held in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in 1963. Globke was a Nazi jurist who had co-authored a highly influential commentary on the 1935 Nuremberg Laws with Dr. Wilhelm Stuckart. He also drafted the Reich Citizenship Law (1935) and the Law for the Protection of German Blood. After a major propaganda battle during the height of the Cold War, he was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and murder by an East German court in July 1963.

Two high-profile cases of suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Nazi period evolved into long battles between East Germany and the Federal Republic of Germany during the Cold War period. They involved cases against Dr. Theodor Oberländer and Globke. Both were important figures within the West German government, and the debate about their culpability was as much about personal guilt as about the reintegration of former Nazi officials into the West German government. Whereas the case against Oberländer ended with his resignation from his ministerial post, Globke was officially defended and kept in office by West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer until he himself resigned in 1963. In both matters, a trial with a strong case but many legal deficiencies and in the absence of the defendants took place in communist East Germany. The final judgments were not accepted by West German authorities. At the same time, separate investigations into the cases were conducted in West Germany, but no trials ever took place there.

Globke, born on September 10, 1898, was brought up, like Adenauer, in the Catholic milieu of the Rhineland. After studying law he entered the Prussian civil service during the Weimar Republic and quickly rose through the ranks. During this period he was a member of the conservative Catholic Zentrum Party. He stayed in the civil service after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. In 1936 he co-authored the commentary on the Nuremberg Laws, the basic race laws of Nazi Germany, which provided for the persecution of Jews. Although he participated at a high level in the administration of Nazi Germany, his request to join the Nazi Party was turned down because of his former Zentrum links. His actions during the Nazi period became a major issue in the debate about his guilt. Whereas his friends claimed that he had strong links to the anti-Hitler plot of July 20, 1944, and that his legal explanations of the race laws could be seen as a softened approach to Nazi racial legislation, his enemies

accused him of being a leading figure in the persecution of Jews. Allegedly, after the beginning of World War II in 1939, Globke no longer had anything to do with the interpretation of racial legislation, but he was charged with general administrative affairs and the creation of an administration in the newly annexed Alsace-Lorraine.

When the war ended in 1945, American authorities arrested Globke because of his former position. Later he was a witness during the Nuremberg Trials. Nevertheless, he held several administrative posts in West Germany beginning in 1946, and none of the Western Allies protested his nominations. In September 1949 Globke joined the newly created chancellery of the Federal Republic, becoming state secretary there in 1953. He was probably the single most important adviser to Chancellor Adenauer and had a strong influence on staff recruitment. He also played a major role in establishing the security services of West Germany. Globke's activities during the Nazi period were criticized by the Social Democratic opposition in parliament in 1951, 1953, and again in 1955–1956. For that reason, he tried to keep a low profile. It was Adenauer, in fact, who had him promoted and even decorated with a high West German order. In 1960 the East German government, which had access to most of the relevant Nazi files, began a campaign to discredit Globke, even comparing him to Adolf Eichmann. This resulted in his trial in absentia in July 1963. Globke resigned his position in October 1963, when Adenauer also resigned, and because Globke had reached the mandatory age of retirement. Globke died on February 2, 1973.

OLIVER BENJAMIN HEMMERLE

See also: Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; Oberlaender, Theodor; War Crimes

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Globocnik, Odilo

Odilo Globocnik was a prominent Austrian Nazi official and the primary architect of the Holocaust in German-occupied Poland.

He was born on April 21, 1904, in Trieste, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to a Slovene family. As a young man in 1922 he became involved in a proto-Nazi paramilitary group. He joined the Austrian Nazi Party in 1931, and was admitted to the Austrian SS three years later. Between 1933 and 1935 he was arrested four times and spent some

11 months in jail for his ties to the Nazi Party, which was then illegal in Austria.

Nevertheless, he steadily advanced through the ranks of the Austrian Nazi Party after 1935, playing a pivotal role in ousting the Austrian government and paving the way for the Anschluss (political annexation) of Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938. German dictator Adolf Hitler rewarded Globocnik for his efforts by appointing him the local party leader in Vienna in May 1938. Globocnik soon ran afoul of party leaders, including Hermann Göring, however, because of his unscrupulous ways and domineering manner. In January 1939 he was removed as party leader of Vienna, and his career seemed all but ended. He then joined the Waffen-SS as an enlisted man and saw action during the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, where he distinguished himself in combat.

On November 9, 1939, SS head Heinrich Himmler, who had always admired Globocnik's loyalty, rescued him from obscurity by appointing him SS chief of the Lublin District of the General Government of Poland. In this role, Globocnik was well placed to implement the Final Solution—the mass extermination of Jews—between 1941 and 1945. He supervised the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto as well as the Białystok ghetto and oversaw the construction of some of the most notorious concentration camps erected during the Nazi era—Belzec (1941), Sobibór (1942), and Treblinka (1942). In these camps, Jews from all over Europe were murdered in the hundreds of thousands.

Globocnik also created a small army of Jewish slave laborers, who were forced to perform all sorts of manual labor under the most horrific conditions. Overall, it is estimated that Globocnik was responsible for the deaths of as many as 1.5 million Jews.

In September 1943, in the immediate aftermath of Benito Mussolini's exile from Rome, Globocnik was named local SS leader and police commissioner at Trieste, in the portion of Italy still controlled by German forces. Although his primary task was to fight Italian partisans, he also found the time to harass and persecute Italian Jews in northern Italy and along the northern Adriatic coast. At the end of the war he fled into the Alpine highlands, but he was apprehended by British forces on May 31, 1945, near Paternion, Austria. After a brief interrogation, Globocnik committed suicide, allegedly by biting into a hidden cyanide capsule.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Anschluss; Austria; Białystok Ghetto; Generalgouvernement; Italy; Nisko Plan; Trawniki Men; Warsaw Ghetto

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Glücks, Richard

Richard Glücks was a senior Nazi police leader and second-in-command to Theodor Eicke as inspector of concentration camps, an office he himself took up in November 1939 upon Eicke's transfer to combat command. Born in Düsseldorf, Glücks joined the Nazi Party after its ascent to office and rose in a relatively quick period to become Eicke's aide. Under Glücks, the Nazi concentration camp network expanded considerably, an expansion necessitated by German conquests during World War II. In February 1940 Glücks reported to the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, that a site had been found for a new camp close by the Polish town of Oświęcim, which in German translated as Auschwitz. By May 1940, upon his orders, the first *Kommandant* of the Auschwitz concentration camp, Rudolf Franz Hoess, commenced building what would become the largest of all the concentration camps and a byword for the Holocaust. Glücks introduced a number of new measures to the concentration camps under his direction, including the use of forced foreign labor and facilities for medical experiments on camp inmates. The full details of his ultimate fate are unclear, though it is believed he committed suicide in Italy in May 1945 to avoid trial at the hands of the Allies.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Eicke, Theodor; Medical Experimentation

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Goebbels, Joseph

Paul Joseph Goebbels was the Nazi Party's first and only Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, serving from 1933 until 1945. He was the architect of Adolf Hitler's propaganda efforts and was a key official within the Nazi Party. He remained a dedicated supporter of the party, even after the tide of war turned against Germany.

Goebbels was born in the city of Rheydt, in the Rhineland region of Germany, on October 29, 1897. His father was a bookkeeper in a lampwick factory. His parents were strict Catholics and hoped that their son would study for the priesthood. When World War I began in 1914, Goebbels was kept out of the German Army because he had a deformed foot. After the war, he disappointed his parents' hopes that he would become a member of the clergy. Instead, he decided to study German literature and attended several universities, including Bonn, Freiburg, Wurzburg, and Munich, before finally earning a doctoral degree from the University of Heidelberg in 1921.

After graduation, Goebbels embarked on a literary career and wrote his first novel, *Michael: Ein Deutsches Schicksal* (*Michael: a German Destiny*), shortly after leaving school. The novel was based on his experiences at university and remained unpublished until the Nazi Party's publisher accepted it in 1929. After college, Goebbels tried to find work in journalism but was unable to secure a steady position. He was a rabid antisemite, and in 1922 he joined the fledgling National Socialist Party. His initial assignment was to organize the party's youth.

In 1924 Goebbels abandoned his efforts to find work in journalism and entered politics. Franz von Wieggershaus, a nationalist politician and member of the Prussian Parliament, hired Goebbels as his private secretary, and over the next several years Goebbels remained active in the Nazi Party. He first met Hitler after Hitler's release from prison in 1925. While imprisoned Hitler decided to reorganize the party, and in 1925 he appointed Goebbels to manage the party's affairs in the Rheinland-Nord district. Goebbels was also asked to act as secretary to Gregor Strasser, a prominent Nazi. The following year, Goebbels was promoted to *Gauleiter*, or district commissioner, for the German capital of Berlin and it was here that he began to distinguish himself. He reorganized the Berlin Nazi Party and built the party's weekly newspaper, *Der Angriff* (*The Attack*), into a powerful tool for denouncing the ruling Weimar government and the party's enemies throughout Germany.

In 1928 Goebbels became the party's head of propaganda. Over the next several years, he masterminded its electoral strategy. Once in power, Hitler selected Goebbels to run a new Ministry for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment. It was here that Goebbels exhibited his true genius. Under his control, the ministry employed a variety of modern media—including motion pictures, radio, and the press—to build a cult around Hitler and disseminate the Nazi message abroad.

Among his most striking accomplishments was the organization of several Nazi rallies throughout Germany, including the infamous Nuremberg Party Rallies that began in 1929. He was also the driving force behind the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 1938, during which thousands of Jews were sent to concentration camps while their businesses and synagogues were destroyed. Goebbels provided an account of his role in the Nazi rise to power in two books, *Der Kampf um Berlin* (*The Struggle for Berlin*), published in 1932, and *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei* (*From Kaiserhof to the Reich Chancellery*), which appeared in 1934.

Goebbels led a scandalous private life, which jeopardized his position within the party. He married a divorcée, Magda Quandt, in 1934. After the marriage, however, he had several affairs, a practice that irritated Hitler and ultimately undermined Goebbels's relationship with the Nazi leader. After the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Goebbels tried to influence Hitler's war plans. Although Hitler appreciated Goebbels's efforts as propaganda minister, he ignored his military advice and denied him a larger role in the war effort. Despite this snub, Goebbels remained a stalwart supporter of the party, even after the tide of war turned against Germany. During the final years of the regime, he remained the party's main propaganda voice.

In 1945 his loyalty was finally rewarded when Hitler appointed him the Third Reich's trustee for total war. By this stage, however, the Nazi war machine had been destroyed on the Eastern Front, and the Reich was doomed. In the final days of the war, Goebbels moved his wife Magda and their six children into Hitler's bunker in Berlin. Hitler's final act as the German leader, before he killed himself, was to appoint Goebbels to the office of Reich Chancellor. On May 1, 1945, with the soldiers of the Russian Army surrounding Berlin, Goebbels helped his wife to poison their children and then shot her before finally committing suicide. His unpublished diary covering the years 1942–1943 was discovered among his papers after his death and published in 1948.

DANIEL SIEGEL

See also: Grynspan, Herschel; Hippler, Fritz; Kristallnacht; Nazi Book Burning; Propaganda in the Holocaust; Rosenstrasse Protest

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Good

Good is a British film from 2008 based on the stage play of the same name by C. P. Taylor. Directed by Vicente Amorim, it is the story of literature professor John Halder, played by American actor Viggo Mortensen. A solid citizen living in Nazi Germany, he is beset by family problems—children, a concert pianist wife who relies on John for domestic peace and quiet so she can practice, and an aged mother with Alzheimer’s. John takes solace from a number of sources: his writing, his teaching, his Jewish best friend Maurice Glückstein (Jason Isaacs), and, increasingly, a student *femme fatale* named Anne (Jodie Whitaker). Thinking little of the Nazi Party to begin with, John becomes seduced by promises of payment, privileges, and career advancement after his novel—dealing with compassionate euthanasia— attracts attention from the Reich Chancellery. Before he realizes it, he is offered work as a consultant with the SS and granted an honorary position with officer rank. At no time does he ever consider that he is being compromised, even as he is drawn deeper and deeper into moral collaboration with the Nazi movement.

The major arena in which this is played out is through his changing relationship with Maurice, his comrade in arms in the trenches during World War I. John is aware that Nazi rule is increasingly strangling the Jewish community but does not really contemplate what this signifies for Maurice—even though we see the many ways in which the situation leads to the physical and emotional deterioration of his friend. John finds himself torn between an increasing sense of duty (as a “good” man obeying the law) and his relationship with his Jewish friend.

Toward the culmination of the movie, John, now in an SS uniform and with the Final Solution in full swing, is working in the office of Adolf Eichmann. A plot line enables him to visit a concentration camp, improbably seeking the now-incarcerated Maurice. In a moment of illumination, he imagines that he sees his former friend, gaunt and tortured, now just another Jewish concentration camp inmate. Only at the very end of the movie, as John contemplates the Jewish prisoners around him, is he able to question the meaning of what he is seeing. Incredulous, he stands with his arms outstretched, wondering how it all got this far—and why he had not seen it before now.

Here, we see how a stereotypical “good” man does nothing while evil is all around him, oblivious to the fact that through inaction he has not only allowed his best friend to be sent to death, but that everything in which he believes has been sacrificed due to his apathy and sense of self-

preservation. The film, certainly a morality play, therefore shows how easily one could fall into the Nazi web. The core thesis of the film is that there is nothing wrong—until it is too late. John is an ordinary, intelligent person; yet all it takes is a bit of ignorance, or, perhaps, of willful denial, and we see a decent German citizen (symbolic, perhaps, of all such citizens) drawn into the madness that overtook his country. The film, just like the play that preceded it, gives an insight into what life was like during the Nazi period.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Concentration Camps; Euthanasia Program

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Göring, Albert

Albert Göring was the younger brother of Hermann Göring, head of the German Luftwaffe (air force), who was, for a lengthy period, the second most powerful man in Germany after Adolf Hitler. Unlike his brother, however, Albert Göring was bitterly opposed to National Socialism and worked to save Jews and anti-Nazi dissidents.

Göring was born in Berlin on March 9, 1895, the fifth child of Heinrich Göring, former governor of German South-West Africa, and his wife Franziska “Fanny” Tiefenbrunn. The Görings were an elite household with many extended family connections in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria; they could count among their relatives such names as Zeppelin, Grimm, Burckhardt, and Merck, among others. Because Heinrich Göring was absent from his family for long periods on state duties, the children spent a lot of time with their godfather, Baron Hermann von Epenstein, who took on much of the responsibility for raising them. Ironically, as it would turn out, von Epenstein was of part-Jewish background, and rumors abounded for many years that it was he who actually fathered both Hermann and Albert during a long-term affair with their mother.

Unlike his brother, Albert Göring evinced no interest in politics, preferring to live the high life as a spoiled child of the near-aristocracy. With the ascent to office of his brother’s party in 1933, however, he proved to be a committed

opponent of deep moral conviction. Moving to Vienna, he worked in a film studio, lived for a time on an allowance from von Epenstein, and often spoke out against Adolf Hitler. Once Austria was absorbed into Germany in March 1938, this opposition marked him out for harassment from the Gestapo, but he was protected by his brother Hermann, who ensured that Gestapo attention would always be deflected.

An early example of the kind of assistance Göring could provide related to his former employer, the Austrian film producer Oskar Pilzer. A well-known member of the Jewish community in Vienna, Pilzer was arrested by the Gestapo immediately after the *Anschluss* of Austria and Germany. Göring not only used his influence to arrange for Pilzer to be freed but also helped him and his family escape Germany; they went first to Rome, and then Paris.

Testimonies from those who survived the Holocaust provide ample evidence that Göring saved many Jewish lives and provided support in other ways. One example among many relates to his intervention when he saw a group of Jewish women who had been forced to scrub the street. Göring joined them, and the SS officer on the scene, upon realizing who this man was, ordered that the scrubbing cease.

As the anti-Jewish measures intensified, Göring decided to act. Seeing the danger facing the Jews, he often forged his brother's signature on transit documents, or helped Jews escape Vienna by obtaining legitimate hard-to-obtain travel documents. On one occasion, in the fall of 1943, he took the completely unauthorized step of signing passports with his own hand for a Jewish family he had befriended. Using his influence, at another time he persuaded SS chief Reinhard Heydrich to release Czech resistance fighters who had been captured by the Gestapo.

Göring's doctor since 1939, Laszlo Kovacs, later stated that Göring provided him with money to establish a bank account in Switzerland, which Jewish refugees could access in order to fund travel to Lisbon. Later, after the German occupation of Italy in the fall of 1943, Göring wrote out a special pass to enable Kovacs to reach safety.

It was clear that, despite their diametrically opposed ideological differences, the two brothers were very fond of each other. Hermann, in particular, seemed to be always on the lookout to ensure that Albert did not get into trouble, and that he could get him out of it if he did. Albert was arrested by the Gestapo several times, but on every occasion he was released due to his brother's intervention. Perhaps, however, this family loyalty only went so far. Richard Sonnenfeldt,

chief interpreter of the American prosecution team at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, later recalled how Hermann Göring enjoyed displaying his power to Albert by freeing Jews from the concentration camps when asked to do so. While Albert continually brought newer and newer cases to his brother—and there were more than one hundred verifiable names of those saved at Albert's insistence—Hermann permitted this in order to demonstrate to his sibling how important he was.

Albert, however, possessed some degree of influence on his own. He often helped people in need financially and on the strength of his name alone.

Göring intensified his anti-Nazi activity when he was made export director at the Czech Škoda Works. In this capacity he saved many employees, among them the director, Jan Morávek, and his family. Morávek, as it turned out, was an important member of the Czech resistance movement—and he was not the only Czech resister looked after through Göring's efforts. At Škoda, Göring also encouraged minor acts of sabotage, and it was said that he even refused to return the Nazi salute when officers visited Škoda. When he learned of the imminence of an action involving Jews or captured resisters, he sent trucks to nearby concentration camps with requests for slave labor, only to have them stopped before arriving at the factory so that those on board could escape.

After the war, Albert Göring was questioned during the Nuremberg Trials, but, on the strength of the many people who came forward to speak on his behalf, he was not prosecuted. He was also arrested by the Czechs but was again saved through the intercession of many of the Jewish families he had saved.

The postwar years were anything but kind, however. His name alone dogged him for the rest of his life, leading to many years without employment. He worked for a time as a designer in a construction firm in Munich, and also found occasional work as a writer and translator, but lived out his remaining years on a government pension. Although a devout Catholic, he married four times, and when he died on December 20, 1966, he was survived by his fourth wife, Brunhilde Seiwaldstätter.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Göring, Hermann; Rescuers of Jews; Speer, Albert

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Göring, Hermann

German air force marshal and head of the Luftwaffe. Born on January 12, 1893, in Rosenheim, Bavaria, Hermann Göring was educated in military school in Karlsruhe. He then entered officers' training school at Gross Lichterfelde, and on graduation in 1912 was commissioned in the infantry. He served in the German Army and fought in World War I until 1915, when he joined the air service. Göring succeeded Baron Manfred von Richthofen, on the latter's death in combat, as commander of the Richthofen Squadron in July 1918. Credited with 22 aerial victories in World War I, Göring was awarded the coveted *Pour le Mérite* medal.

After the war he moved to Scandinavia, where he took up show flying and married a Swedish baroness. He returned to Germany in 1921 and became a close associate of Adolf Hitler, and in 1922 Hitler gave Göring charge of the SA,



Hermann Göring was a German politician, military leader, and leading member of the Nazi Party. After helping Adolf Hitler take power in 1933, he became the second-most powerful man in Germany. He founded the Gestapo in 1933, and in 1935 was appointed commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe. Hitler promoted him to the rank of Reichsmarschall, and in 1941 Hitler designated him as his successor and deputy. (Library of Congress)

which grew dramatically in strength. Seriously wounded in the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch, Göring fled Germany but returned in 1927. In 1928 he was elected to the Reichstag and was its president in 1932. He had easy access to influential individuals in industry, banking, and the military, and acted as liaison between them and Hitler, playing a key role in the Nazi ascent to power.

After Hitler became German chancellor in January 1933, Göring secured even more power and influence. Among his many offices were Minister without Portfolio, Minister of the Interior for the state of Prussia, and Minister of the Air Force (Luftwaffe). He soon began rebuilding the Luftwaffe, and was instrumental in all major policy decisions affecting its composition and training. In April 1933 he established the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo, or political police) from out of the Prussian state police; it was a force designed to crush all resistance to Nazism. In 1936 he was appointed to oversee the Four Year Plan, giving him virtual control over the German economy. As far as the Luftwaffe was concerned, Göring supported the notion of a tactical air force at the expense of strategic bombing, arguably the correct decision given the heavy military demands on Germany's industrial base.

In 1939 Hitler appointed Göring Reichsmarschall (Reich Marshal) and designated him as his heir. Göring was also instrumental in the development of concentration camps, and he worked with Reinhard Heydrich, chief of Reich security, in formulating a "Final Solution to the Jewish question" (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). Göring also amassed a large personal fortune and, especially during World War II, indulged his passion for collecting fine art.

Göring's Luftwaffe was influential in the early Nazi victories in Poland in 1939 and France in 1940. His interventions in the Battle of Britain in 1940, however, negatively affected the German war effort and led to a loss in his influence with Hitler. Göring opposed Operation Barbarossa, Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, favoring a Mediterranean strategy instead. He was blamed, probably falsely, for having suggested that the Luftwaffe, with only a limited transport capacity, could supply the Sixth Army at Stalingrad. Popular opinion also turned against him as Allied air raids on the Reich became increasingly effective. Progressively marginalized, Göring spent more time at his estate of Karinhall, where he indulged his interests in hunting and art collecting. Although Hitler had designated Göring as his successor, the latter's impatience at the end of the war—painted by head of the Party Chancery Martin Bormann and others as an attempt by Göring to wrest power from Hitler—led the

Führer to order that Göring be stripped of his posts and arrested.

On May 9, 1945, with the end of the war, Göring surrendered to elements of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division and was tried at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. Unrepentant, he was found guilty and sentenced to death, but he committed suicide by swallowing poison on October 15, 1946, only hours before his planned execution.

WENDY A. MAIER

See also: Final Solution; Führerprinzip; Gestapo; Göring, Albert; Heydrich, Reinhard; Kristallnacht; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nuremberg Trials; Sauckel, Fritz; Streicher, Julius; Sturmabteilung

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Graziani, Rodolfo

Rodolfo Graziani was a leading general during the fascist *ventenniò* (twenty years' regime) in Italy, who reached the height of his career consolidating Italy's colonies in Africa under the government of Benito Mussolini. He was born on August 11, 1882, in Filettino, a small hill town near Rome. His father was a doctor who moved around for work, so Rodolfo spent his childhood in the nearby town of Affile. From his early teens he planned upon a career in the military, but due to a lack of economic support he was unable to join a military academy. He therefore waited until he was twenty-one years of age to join the infantry of the 94th regiment in Rome.

In 1908 Graziano was sent to Africa for the first time to keep order in Italy's original colony, Eritrea. This first experience in Africa inspired him to request a deployment to Libya, which was granted in 1914 following the Italo-Turkish War. He was, however, quickly recalled to fight in World War I. He emerged unscathed in 1918, becoming the youngest colonel in the Italian army. In 1922 he was sent to assist in the pacification of Libya and was soon noticed by his superiors for his military strategy. He was praised for his quick thinking, organizational skills, ability to motivate his troops and prepare them for battle, and capacity to comprehend the enemy in terms of its leaders and warfare.

Graziani ended up spending twelve years in Libya, leading the conquest of the regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and

Fezzan alongside his superior, Pietro Badoglio. After successfully capturing the leader of the Libyan resistance, Omar el-Mukhtar, he was promoted to vice governor of Cyrenaica in 1931. Part of his success in Libya was also the result of a combination of cruel and repressive initiatives against locals in order to weed out any rebel fighters opposing the Italian invasion. These tactics included the forced deportation of 100,000 Cyrenaicans from their homeland into concentration camps, mass hangings of resistance fighters without trial, and the erection of barbed wire fences that split up tribal groups and separated villagers from their livestock.

Testimonies state that in addition to Graziani's general reign of terror, he implemented antisemitic measures against the Libyan Jewish population, which was around 35,000 at the time. He allegedly prohibited them from frequenting certain public spaces in the city of Benghazi, such as beaches and first-class train carriages, and dismissed some Jews from their jobs without notice. A number of Libyan Jews were also sent to concentration camps in Libya and endured severe living conditions. It is not clear why they were sent to these camps, so it cannot be assumed that it was due to a specific act of antisemitism or mere general discrimination against the local population.

The Italian occupation of Libya did not initially mean worsening conditions for the Jewish population, but as the pacification became more successful and the fascistization of the new colony intensified, cultural and religious clashes became more apparent. The fascistization of Libyan schools, for example, led to a rise in tension as the syllabus in religious schools was forcibly altered. Additionally, in 1932 Italian authorities made Saturday school compulsory for all students, signifying that Jews would no longer be exempt from attendance due to the weekly observance of the Sabbath, under penalty of expulsion. This increasing discrimination was undoubtedly the result of Graziani's control together with that of Badoglio, as evident from various testimonies in which both military leaders alluded to their lack of respect and personal dislike for the Jews of Libya. After Graziani and Badoglio's departure from Libya in 1934, the situation for Libyan Jews did not improve, nor did it largely deteriorate, despite the implementation of the Racial Laws in Italy in 1938, which included various harsh antisemitic initiatives for Jews in both Italy and its colonies.

Graziani and Badoglio spent little time back in Italy, as they were soon sent to lead the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. Operating under a "carte blanche" granted by Mussolini, Graziani's repressive measures against the Abyssinian

population ranged from carpet-bombing, to the use of various poison gases (rendered illegal under the Geneva Convention), and the massacre of hundreds of civilians in Addis Ababa and surrounding villages following an attempted assassination of Graziani in February 1937. Due to bad press against Italians in Africa following the massacre, Mussolini ordered Graziani back to Rome that same year, where he stayed until 1941. Here, he became one of the leading fascists to sign the Manifesto of Racial Scientists in 1938, a document published in Italy's principal newspapers asserting the existence of a racial hierarchy, with Jews at the bottom along with Africans.

Following Italy's entrance on the side of the Axis Powers in World War II in 1940, Graziani was sent back to Africa to lead the invasion of Egypt alongside German forces against the British. A lack of armaments, supplies, and organization—all under difficult environmental conditions—led to a swift failure of the initiative. Graziani therefore returned to Italy and spent the next two years back in his home town tending to his family's farm.

September 9, 1943, marked the dawn of an even darker turn in the history of Italy, as King Victor Emmanuel III and Marshal Badoglio signed the armistice with the Allies. Mussolini, on the other hand, regrouped in the north of Italy with his most loyal followers and set up the Republic of Salò, in collaboration with the Nazi forces that had come to occupy the country. Graziani was thus called back into service by Mussolini and became head of the army of Salò, hunting down fellow countrymen who had changed sides. Through this, he became responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Italian partisans.

When Mussolini was finally caught and shot by the partisans, Graziani was captured by the invading Allies and awaited his fate in a prisoner of war camp, first in Rome and then in Algeria, until 1946. British forces then handed him over to Italian authorities as the Allies abandoned any plans to conduct an Italian equivalent to the Nuremberg trials in Germany. Graziani was first put on trial in October 1948 at the Supreme Court in Rome for collaboration with Nazi forces on Italian soil. Consequently he was not tried for any of his colonial crimes in Africa, despite the endless list of alleged atrocities. The court was eventually suspended due to a lack of significant evidence, and a military tribunal condemned him to 19 years of incarceration in 1950; he was, however, acquitted a mere four months later on the ground that he was “following orders.”

Graziani spent the rest of his life out of the public eye, back in Affile, where he tended to his crops. In 1952 he was

named honorary president of the Movimento Sociale Italiano, the Italian neo-fascist party and was appropriated as a heroic symbol of the extreme right. He died three years later on January 11, 1955, from a gastric ulcer at the age of 72. His funeral featured many ex-fascist squad members and neo-fascists, men who had fought with him in Italian Africa, and personal followers. This odd ensemble provided a prelude to the manner in which the memory of Graziani lived on after his death through various postcolonial and postfascist instruments, such as the mausoleum erected in his honor in his home town in 2012. This recent commemoration caused controversy only abroad; the persistence of colonial nostalgia and amnesia of the darker parts of Italy's recent past allowed for a measure of hero-worship. The fact that the monument itself was funded by the Regional Government of Lazio was testimony to this, as was the lack of domestic outcry over its erection. In mainstream society, Rodolfo Graziani is largely remembered as he himself wished to be remembered, as the founder of Italian Africa.

VICTORIA WITKOWSKI

See also: Fascism; Italy

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The Great Dictator

One of the classics of cinema history, *The Great Dictator* is a 1940 motion picture produced, directed, written by and starring Charlie (later Sir Charles) Chaplin. A satire on German Nazism and Italian Fascism, the movie was the first comedy to poke fun at Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, and by so doing to draw attention to the brutal antisemitism being experienced by Germany's Jews under the Third Reich. Told through thinly veiled code-language—Adolf Hitler as “Adenoid Hynkel,” Benito Mussolini as “Benzino Napaloni,” *Der Führer* as “The Phooey,” Hermann Göring as “Marshal Herring,” and so forth—the movie was an enormous gamble for Chaplin, who not only bankrolled its

production using his own money but also departed from his career-defining silent movie technique in order to make this, his first “talkie.” Not only that, it was the first time his signature character, the Tramp—in this case known simply as “a Jewish Barber”—spoke dialogue from a prepared script. The film was well received by U.S. audiences and was undoubtedly Chaplin’s most successful film commercially. Critics were more qualified in their acclaim, some pointing out that Hollywood should refrain from foreign political comment at a time of American isolationism. Others saw Chaplin’s comedic portrayal of anti-Jewish persecution as unacceptably bad taste; Chaplin himself was later to write that if in 1940 he had known the full extent of Nazi antisemitic measures (something that could not even be guessed at in 1940) he would never have made the film. However, Chaplin, who was not Jewish, was determined to make Hitler an object of ridicule, and he did so in the most effective way he could—through his comic art. *The Great Dictator* was nominated for a number of Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor (Chaplin), and Best Supporting Actor (Jack Oakie, in his role of Benzino Napaloni). The movie has been selected for permanent inclusion in the U.S. National Film Registry.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Fascism; Hitler, Adolf; *Life Is Beautiful*; *The Mortal Storm*

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Greece

Greece is a state located in southeastern Europe, on the tip of the Balkans. In 1939 it had a population of 7.2 million, with a Jewish population of 72,000, comprising approximately 1% of the total population. The majority of Greek Jews—some 42,000—resided in Salonika. There have been Jews in Greece for well over 2,000 years, and modern anthropologists have unearthed the remains of an ancient synagogue that they believe dates to the second century BCE. In general, antisemitism in prewar Greece was much muted, and only a slim minority harbored negative attitudes toward Jews. Compared to Jews in northern and eastern European states,

Jews in Greece were largely unaffected by antisemitism and persecution. However, that would change dramatically after the Axis powers invaded and occupied Greece beginning in the fall of 1940.

In October 1940 Italian forces invaded Greece, but the Greeks waged a surprisingly spirited defense and pushed them back into Albania, resulting in a military stalemate. In April 1941 German troops, working with the Italians, Bulgarians, and units from the Hungarian army, launched a major offensive into Yugoslavia and Greece; by the early summer, all of Greece, including its many islands, had been pacified and occupied.

Greece was subsequently divided into three occupation zones, administered by the Italians, Germans, and Bulgarians. In the Italian zone, officials essentially ignored Germany’s demands that Jews be rounded up and deported. Some occupation officials even hid Jews to avoid their capture. Meanwhile, several thousand Jews residing in the German zone fled for safety to the Italian zone. Jews were relatively safe there until fascist Italy was forced to exit the war in September 1943, at which time the Germans took control of the former Italian zone of occupation.

The Germans planned to round up, deport, and murder all Jews in their occupation zone, which included Salonika. Greeks in general suffered grievously during the occupation, with as many as 100,000 people dying during the winter of 1941–1942 alone because of famine and disease. German authorities drafted some 2,000 Jewish men into forced labor in July 1942, and in February 1943 all the Jews in Salonika were herded into ghettos and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau; nearly all were killed shortly after their arrival. By the summer of 1943 virtually no Jews remained in Greece’s largest Jewish enclave.

In the spring of 1943, under German orders, the Bulgarians rounded up some 4,200 Jews in their zone, mostly from Thrace, and placed them in German custody. The Germans in turn sent them to the Treblinka death camp, where almost all were murdered. After Italy exited the war in September 1943, German occupation officials concentrated some 4,800 Jews in the former Italian occupation zone and sent them to Birkenau, where they were promptly massacred. By the late summer of 1944, after the Germans were retreating militarily and the Bulgarians had switched sides, the Germans retreated from Greece; for more three years, they had wrought havoc on the country. By then, as many as 60,000 Greek Jews had been killed, and fewer than 10,000 remained alive. Large portions of Greece lay in ruins, and the political and economic situation remained perilous. As a result, a

punishing civil war settled over the land between 1946 and 1949, bringing even more devastation.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Alice, Princess Andrew of Greece; Birkenau; Bulgaria; Damaskinos of Athens, Archbishop; Ghettos; Italy; Salonika; Treblinka

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Grese, Irma

Irma Grese, born Irma Ida Ilse on October 7, 1923, was a female SS guard who served in the concentration camps of Ravensbrück and Auschwitz during World War II. She later worked as a guard over women at Bergen-Belsen.

Grese was born to Berta and Alfred Grese, the third of five children. In 1936 her mother committed suicide by



Irma Grese was a female SS guard at the Nazi concentration camps of Ravensbrück, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen. Noted for her cruelty toward her prisoners, at the Belsen Trial after the war, she was convicted for crimes against humanity committed at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. Sentenced to death, she was executed by hanging on December 13, 1945. When she was executed, she was just 22 years of age. (Corbis via Getty Images)

drinking hydrochloric acid, after learning that Alfred Grese had engaged in an extramarital affair. Alfred Grese joined the Nazi Party in the late 1930s and remarried in 1939.

In 1938, when aged fourteen, Grese left school due to her obsessive dedication to the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, or “League of German Girls,” a Nazi youth organization dedicated to shaping young female minds with Nazi ideology. Upon leaving school she was employed in a number of casual jobs, including working for two years in an SS sanatorium. She was later unsuccessful in finding an internship as a nurse.

In 1942, in her early twenties, Grese volunteered to work as a concentration camp guard. Beginning in the summer of that year, she served as an *Aufseherin* (female guard) at Ravensbrück, and in March 1943 she was transferred to Auschwitz-Birkenau. By the end of 1944 Grese was promoted to *Rapportführerin* (overseer), the second-highest rank open to female guards. By accepting her promotion, Grese was an active participant in prisoner selections for the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau. On April 17, 1945, while transporting prisoners from Ravensbrück to Bergen-Belsen, she was captured by British troops together with several other SS personnel.

Irma Grese was one of the 45 defendants accused of war crimes at the Belsen trials, spanning the period from September 17 to November 17, 1945. The Belsen trials were conducted by the British military in Lüneburg, Germany. The charges of war crimes were derived from the Geneva Convention of 1929, concerning the management of prisoners. The accusations against Grese addressed her abuse and murder of those imprisoned at the camps. Women who had lived through her regime in the concentration camps were brought forward to testify. Survivors gave detailed testaments of murder, torture, and other atrocities, particularly toward imprisoned women, which Grese willfully undertook throughout her years at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen.

These testimonies described acts of cruelty and bloodshed, beatings and indiscriminate shootings of inmates, Grese’s use of trained and allegedly half-starved dogs to attack prisoners, and her selection of prisoners for the gas chambers. Survivors reported that Grese wore heavy boots and carried a whip and a pistol, and testified that she enjoyed using both physical and psychological methods to torture inmates. It was also reported that she enjoyed shooting prisoners in cold blood, while other accounts claimed that she

beat some women inmates to death and whipped others using a plaited whip.

One surviving prisoner, Olga Lengyel, a Hungarian prisoner at Auschwitz-Birkenau, wrote in her memoir *Five Chimneys* that selections in the women's camp were made by both SS *Aufseherin* Elisabeth Hasse and Irma Grese. Grese was perceptibly satisfied by the dread her presence inspired in the imprisoned women at roll call. Lengyel wrote that Grese had a fondness for selecting not just the sick and the weak but any female who had any remnants of beauty. Lengyel also said that Grese had numerous lovers among the SS in the camp, including Josef Mengele. Lengyel felt that Grese's scrupulous personal grooming, tailored clothing, and overuse of perfume were all part of a deliberate act of hostility against the ragged women prisoners.

In her own testimony about her background, Grese stated, "In July, 1942, I tried again to become a nurse, but the Labor Exchange sent me to Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, although I protested against it. I stayed there until March, 1943, when I went to Birkenau Camp in Auschwitz. I remained in Auschwitz until January, 1945." During the Belsen trials, the press branded Grese as "the Beautiful Beast," alongside Josef Kramer, "the Beast of Belsen." Even though a total of 16 women guards were charged with similar ghastly accusations, Grese was one of only three female guards sentenced to death, on day 53 of the trial, by hanging.

Grese and ten others, eight men and two other female guards, Johanna Bormann and Elisabeth Volkenrath, were sentenced to death for crimes committed at the Auschwitz and Belsen concentration camps. On Thursday, December 13, 1945, at Hamelin jail in Lower Saxony, Germany, Grese and the other women were executed singly and then the men in pairs. According to the British executioner, Albert Pierrepoint, "She stood on this mark very firmly, and as I placed the white cap over her head she said in her languid voice, 'Schnell!'"

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Auschwitz; Bergen-Belsen; Ravensbrück; War Crimes

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The Grey Zone

The Grey Zone is a 2001 film directed by Tim Blake Nelson and starring David Arquette, Steve Buscemi, Harvey Keitel, Mira Sorvino, and Daniel Benzali. It is based on the book *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account* written by Dr. Miklós Nyiszli, as well as the historical events leading up to and during the revolt of the XII Auschwitz *Sonderkommando* in October 1944.

The film takes its title from Holocaust survivor Primo Levi, who, in his book *The Drowned and the Saved*, introduced the term "The Grey Zone." That zone, as he described it, is the space between absolute good and absolute evil, where moral choices are made for the purpose of survival rather than death, and where the desire to live surmounts that to be honorable. Levi recognized that we should hold back from any condemnation of those who collaborated with the Nazis—the *Sonderkommando* men in the death camps was the example he used—for their work in abetting the killing process of their fellow Jews. As he wrote, "one is never in another's place."

The movie builds on the theme of the XII *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz, folding into its story the related account of a prisoner-doctor, Miklós Nyiszli, assigned to work in the crematoria complex alongside the infamous Nazi doctor Josef Mengele on his "experiments" with Jewish children. Immediately, we are confronted by a "grey" dilemma: How could Nyiszli, a Jew, bring himself to work collaboratively in such an inhuman environment, in the interests of perverted science, and alongside the SS fanatic Mengele?

The grey zone metaphor is extended to the prisoners driven as slave labor in the crematoria, whose task it was to assist the camp's guards in marshaling their victims to the gas chambers, keeping them calm before their unanticipated death, and then disposing of their bodies in the ovens. Here, we see the essence of Levi's dilemma: To what lengths are people willing to go to save their own lives, when confronted with an extreme situation in which there is no precedent for what might be considered "right" and "wrong" behavior? In exchange for a few months' reprieve from death (at most, no *Sonderkommando* was allowed to live beyond four months), those working in the gas chamber complex agree to work for the Nazis as exterminators of their own people. For this work, they receive privileges denied all other prisoners at Auschwitz, such as extra food, tobacco, alcohol of every variety, and medicine. All these things were looted from the very people in whose death they have a hand. As one of the main characters, a prisoner named Hoffman, says at one point:

“I used to think so much of myself. . . . What I’d make of my life. We can’t know what we’re capable of, any of us. How can you know what you’d do to stay alive, until you’re really asked?” Reflecting further, he answers his own question: “For most of us, the answer . . . is anything. It’s so easy to forget who we were before . . . who we’ll never be again.”

If this expression of the grey zone is relatively straightforward (if morally empty), what in turn, would people sacrifice to save the lives of others? In this regard, Tim Blake Nelson, who both wrote and directed the film, brings in an episode from Nyiszli’s account. One day, when removing dead bodies from the gas chamber in which he is working, Hoffman discovers the inert body of a young girl, no more than 14 years of age, who is still breathing. This has never happened before, and, amidst the horror of mass Jewish death, he determines to find a way to keep her alive. Desperate, he hides her and finds Dr. Nyiszli; he revives her, though she is unable to speak. A senior prisoner, Simon Schlermer (Daniel Benzali), immediately sees a new dilemma. The girl cannot be hidden in the crematoria, nor can she be smuggled into the camp proper. Nor, by this stage, could they contemplate revealing her existence to the guards—who would kill her immediately. The ultimate dilemma is then presented: Hand over the girl to the Nazis, or jeopardize the planned revolt of the *Sonderkommando*? To sacrifice this one life in the midst of a factory dedicated to the production of death, or protect her at the expense of a revolt that could destroy that very machinery and save countless other lives? How this moral “grey zone” predicament is resolved forms a vital backdrop to the depiction of the revolt that follows.

The revolt’s only aim is to destroy the crematoria; no one anticipates escape, or even the prospect of taking on the German army. In its core aim, it is successful; one of the crematoria is destroyed, and another put out of commission. But all those taking part are captured after the revolt and are murdered, execution-style, by the Nazis. The girl, who has survived the revolt, watches this, and then, zombie-like, simply walks away until she too is shot dead.

The movie then ends with a narration in which we hear the girl’s voice from the next world: “After the revolt half the ovens remain, and we are carried to them together. I catch fire quickly. The first part of me rises in dense smoke that mingles with the smoke of others. Then there are the bones, which settle in ash. And these are swept up to be carried to the river. And last, bits of our dust that simply float there, in air, around the working of the new group. These bits of dust are gray. We

settle on their shoes and on their faces and in their lungs. And they become so used to us that soon they don’t cough and they brush us away. At this point they’re just moving, breathing and moving like anyone else still alive in that place. And this is how the work continues.” These are the last lines of the film, and become the final expression of “the grey zone”: the fine, invisible gray dust settles everywhere, and thus do the living and the dead intermingle. Little wonder, as Simon Schlermer utters at one point in the movie, during a time when all are compromising everything in order to stay alive for one more day, “I do not wish to be alive when all of this is over.”

Rare among films about the Holocaust, *The Grey Zone* is a movie that does not finish with a positive ending. There is no happy ending, no drawing together of upbeat themes, and no reconciling of dilemmas. Everyone but the Nazis dies, an important statement from Tim Blake Nelson underscoring the fact that for millions and millions of victims of the Holocaust there was no way out of the awful darkness, in which morality was constantly compromised and problems were only rarely resolved constructively.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Levi, Primo; Mengele, Josef; Sonderkommando

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Gross-Rosen

Gross-Rosen was a Nazi-administered concentration and forced labor camp located near the village of Gross-Rosen (now Rogoznica, Poland), about 40 miles southwest of Wrocław in modern-day western Poland. The facility was built in 1940 as a subcamp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp; the following year, it became autonomous, in an arrangement which would eventually encompass some 97 subcamps. Upon its inception, most prisoners were put to work in a nearby granite quarry, where many died from accidents and overwork. At that time, most detainees were political prisoners, resistance fighters, or those deemed “socially unacceptable” (gay men and Roma, for example). Not until late 1943 and early 1944 did Jews begin arriving at Gross-Rosen and its subcamps in large numbers. The

facility was administered by the SS, which also owned the adjacent quarry.

Conditions at Gross-Rosen were similar to other concentration camps. Food was meager and poor, sanitation was primitive, and medical care was virtually nonexistent. Thousands fell victim to starvation and diseases of various kinds, and large numbers of others were killed arbitrarily by guards during beatings and cruel punishments or from overwork.

As the war progressed and the Germans began relying more and more on forced labor, Gross-Rosen (with its subcamps) became one of the largest concentration camp complexes in all of Europe. Eventually, prisoners worked throughout eastern Germany and western Poland for companies like I.G. Farben, Daimler-Benz, and Krupp. Brünnlitz, a subcamp, later became famous when German industrialist Oskar Schindler relocated his factory there, shielding some 1,100 Polish Jews from Nazi depredations and likely death.

It is estimated that at least 125,000 prisoners were detained at or passed through Gross-Rosen between 1941 and 1945. By January 1945 Gross-Rosen and its subcamps held 76,728 prisoners, the majority of whom, by that time, were Jewish. The camp's January 1945 census indicated that almost 26,000 women were interned there, one of the largest groupings of female prisoners in all of the vast German concentration camp system. Most of the Jews at Gross-Rosen had been relocated there from camps in Poland and Hungary.

When Soviet troops began approaching the complex in January 1945, camp officials ordered a mass evacuation. Some 40,000 prisoners endured a brutal forced march to the west in bitterly cold weather, during which several thousand died. The survivors were eventually sent to other concentration camps within Germany. Soviet forces liberated Gross-Rosen in February 1945. By then a total of about 40,000 prisoners had died in camp or during the forced evacuation march.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Concentration Camps; I.G. Farben; Krupp Case; Nacht und Nebel; Zyklon-B Case, 1946

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Grüninger, Paul

Paul Grüninger was a Swiss police commander whose actions on the Swiss-German border before World War II saved several thousand Jews who otherwise would have been refused sanctuary. Born on October 27, 1891, in St. Gallen, the son of a cigar shop owner, Grüninger lived a fairly simple lifestyle not especially involved in matters outside of his home town. During World War I, when Switzerland was neutral, he served in the Swiss army as a lieutenant. After the war he joined Switzerland's border police, rising to the rank of colonel; by 1919 he had become commander of the border police for St. Gallen Canton.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933 many Jews fled to neighboring Austria, but with the Austrian *Anschluss* on March 12, 1938, Jewish persecution began there immediately. As a result, Jews from Austria sought sanctuary in Switzerland, which, in response, closed its borders in August 1938 to those without proper entry papers. In October the same year, the Swiss government asked Germany to stamp the letter "J" on all Jewish passports so Swiss officials might more easily identify Jews. In 1939 Switzerland decided not to admit religious or racial refugees, thereby denying Jews access.

It was in this context that Paul Grüninger was approached every day by German and Austrian Jews seeking asylum, and, as he heard their stories, he could scarcely believe the things they told him. When faced with choosing between following state laws or staying true to his moral code, his sense of compassion made it nearly impossible for him to turn the Jews away. Many border commanders, similarly torn between these two conflicting approaches to right and wrong, had their subordinates deal with the refugees. Grüninger realized he could easily follow the commands of his superiors, or he could put himself at risk by doing what was humane and right. Ultimately, he believed that saving lives was far more important than preserving his job, and, as a result, he admitted more than 3,600 Jews—by falsifying their passports and entry papers or turning a blind eye when required. He even used his own money to buy winter clothes for refugees who had been forced to leave all their belongings behind.

In addition, he would record the Jews' date of entry into Switzerland as prior to March 1939, when Switzerland further tightened its borders, enabling the arrivals to be treated as legal refugees. They would be taken to a camp established at Diepoldsau on the Austrian frontier, where, aided by Jewish organizations, they could await permits for a temporary stay in Switzerland or their departure to a final destination.

On April 3, 1939, however, Grüninger arrived at work to find a young cadet, Corporal Antón Schneider, standing in front of his office blocking his way. Schneider had not been informed of the reason for the order to deny Grüninger entry to the building, which came directly from the office of the commander-in-chief. Grüninger, however, knew why he was being stopped.

A friend working at a border post in Bregenz, Austria, had informed him that he was on the Gestapo's blacklist due to his having helped a Jewish woman, whom he had already assisted in escaping Austria, recover her jewels. She had left them at a hotel in Bregenz, and Grüninger contacted Ernest Prodolliet of the Swiss consulate in Bregenz to collect the jewels for her. Prodolliet and Grüninger had worked together on missions similar to this before. The woman was so grateful for Grüninger's help that she wrote about his kindness in a letter to some friends. The Gestapo intercepted the letter, imprisoned the hotel owner, confiscated the jewels, and began to keep an eye on Grüninger. This news did not, however, dissuade him from continuing to falsify Jewish passports in order to save Jews.

Soon after this, the Swiss authorities learned of Grüninger's illegal activities and dismissed him. He was placed on trial in January 1939 in proceedings that would last two years. In March 1941 the court found him guilty of a breach of duty; he was imprisoned, had his pension revoked, was forced to pay trial costs, and fined. Although the court accepted that his actions were honorable, they declared that as a state official he should have followed his orders, refused entrance to Jews, and not falsified official documents.

Grüninger was publicly humiliated and lived the rest of his life with a prison record, making it practically impossible to find steady work. He did not seek redress or recognition for his actions, instead focusing on surviving and supporting his family. In 1954 he claimed: "My personal well-being, measured against the cruel fate of these thousands, was so insignificant and unimportant" that he never even took the consequences of his actions into consideration. When Paul Grüninger died at the age of 81 on February 22, 1972, his family was still living in near poverty.

In December 1970 the Swiss government sent Grüninger a letter of apology, but at the same time still refused him his pension. Then, a year before his death, Israel's Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Any other recognition that Grüninger received came posthumously. In 1994 the Swiss government published a Declaration of Honor for him, before finally annulling his conviction one year later. In 1998 the Parliament of St. Gallen Canton

agreed to compensate Grüninger's descendants, and his family put the money into the Paul Grüninger Foundation, an organization that works to reward outstanding acts of humanity and courage that align with Grüninger's actions. Although most recognition came after Grüninger's death, his decision to save those in need has served as a model of moral behavior for the world today.

Between 1937 and April 1938 Paul Grüninger is estimated to have saved approximately 3,600 German and Austrian Jews from death or deportation to concentration camps. He did so risking his career and safety to help others, even though he had no apparent Jewish connection in Austria or Germany. He was an upstander to Nazi persecution who used his position as a Swiss civil servant to save as many Jews as he could, against direct orders.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Switzerland

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Grynszpan, Herschel

By assassinating an official in the German Embassy in Paris, Herschel Feibel Grynszpan, a Polish Jew, unknowingly set off the pogrom called Kristallnacht that represented the turning point in the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis, from one of legal exclusion to that of systematic government-driven violence. At the time, he was 17 years old.

Although Grynszpan was born in Hanover, Germany, on March 28, 1921, he was not considered a German citizen for technical reasons. His parents, Polish citizens, had emigrated from Poland in 1911. They were part of a wave of *Ostjuden* (Eastern Jews) who settled in Germany. To Christians and the many assimilated Jews of Germany they looked strange: they dressed differently, spoke a different language (Yiddish), took their practice of Orthodox Judaism with all of its rituals very seriously, and combined large families with little money.

A product of his environment, Grynszpan was a religiously observant teenager whose sensitivity to the suffering of the Jewish people was matched only by his love for his family. He was slight of build, not a particularly good



Herschel Grynszpan was a Polish-Jewish refugee born in Germany. On November 7, 1938, he assassinated a German diplomat in Paris, Ernst vom Rath, an act leading directly to the antisemitic pogrom known as the Kristallnacht on November 9–10, 1938. (Keystone/Getty Images)

student, and was more likely to settle a disagreement by fighting than by his intellect or personality. Like many young men, he had a hard time finding his place. He studied at a *yeshiva* (a school of intense Jewish study) but dropped out after a year; he sought permission to move to Palestine, but this, too, did not come through.

In September 1936 Grynszpan entered France, albeit illegally, and made his way to Paris where he lived with his aunt and uncle. He was unable to find work, in part because of his illegal status. He still had a valid reentry permit for Germany and a Polish passport, but both of them expired—the former in April 1937 and the latter in January 1938—leaving Grynszpan stateless and on the run from the French police as an illegal immigrant.

As Grynszpan was struggling with his statelessness, thousands of Polish Jews living in Germany were soon to find themselves in a similar position. On October 16, 1938, Poland passed a law that would prevent Polish Jews living in

Germany from returning to Poland. Germany responded by passing a law demanding that Polish Jews immediately leave Germany. Thus, some twelve to seventeen thousand Polish Jews—including Grynszpan's family—found themselves caught in a no-man's-land on the German-Polish border, with Germany pushing them out and Poland refusing to take them in.

The conditions under which these Jews were forced to live were horrible. Grynszpan learned of his family's plight via a postcard he received in Paris from his sister on November 3, 1938. Greatly distressed by the suffering of the Jews, and of his family in particular, Grynszpan determined to strike back. He purchased a pistol and went to the German embassy in Paris on November 7. Claiming to have very important documents, he demanded to see someone in the embassy so he could hand them over personally. Ernst vom Rath, a relatively low-level third secretary in the embassy, was on duty that day and invited Grynszpan into his office. It was then that Grynszpan fired five shots from his revolver, one striking vom Rath in the shoulder, and another—which would prove fatal—in his abdomen. Grynszpan made no attempt to flee and explained to the French police who immediately arrested him that his action was on behalf of the thousands of Jews who were being held at the border between Germany and Poland. By making this declaration, Grynszpan was clearly characterizing the shooting as a political act.

Vom Rath died of his wounds on November 9. That date was a very special one on the Nazi Party calendar: it was the date on which in 1923 the Beer Hall Putsch was launched by Hitler to overthrow the Weimar Republic and establish a new government under the National Socialist German Workers' Party. It was a failure, but nonetheless stood as a symbol of the Nazi Party's commitment to return Germany to its past glory. On this same day fifteen years later Hitler and the top leaders of the Nazi Party were in Munich, commemorating the putsch, when vom Rath died. Joseph Goebbels, Nazi propaganda minister, saw his death as the perfect excuse to launch a "spontaneous" pogrom by German citizens supposedly incensed by the murder of a German embassy official by a Jew. What would be called Kristallnacht was organized by the Nazi leaders in Munich, with instructions sent throughout the extended Reich of Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland portion of Czechoslovakia to destroy Jewish businesses, synagogues, and homes.

It is at this point that the story of Herschel Grynszpan often recedes into the background, the importance of his actions quickly overwhelmed by the violence they

occasioned. But what happened to him after his arrest is an important part of the story of this seventeen-year-old teenager who brought the Final Solution one step closer.

Grynspan's arrest brought him intense media attention, not just in Germany where he was reviled as a Jewish killer acting on behalf of an international Jewish conspiracy, but also in Europe and the United States, where some saw him as a hero, a Jew who stood up against the Nazi juggernaut. For example, the American journalist Dorothy Thompson spoke of Grynspan's role as a symbol and created a defense fund on his behalf. However, many Jews throughout the world saw him as a reckless teenager who acted without regard for the consequences of his act. The official position of organizations and governments, of course, was to condemn the assassination.

Grynspan was represented in France by an outstanding team of lawyers who quickly saw a problem with his earlier declaration that the murder of vom Rath was political; an act of political assassination was severely dealt with under French law. Therefore, they advised him to explain his actions as a crime of passion, one based, for example, on a homosexual relationship between Grynspan and vom Rath. There was absolutely no basis in fact that such a relationship existed, that either of the two men was gay, or even that they knew each other. In fact, when Grynspan entered the German embassy in Paris, he did not ask for vom Rath or anyone by name. However, his lawyers told him that a crime of passion would be considered in a much more lenient light by the French courts. Grynspan refused to change his explanation for the motive behind his actions.

Grynspan was imprisoned in various locations in France. Although Germany insisted on his extradition, France saw a number of legal obstacles standing in the way, perhaps the most important of which was that Grynspan was not a citizen of Germany. He remained in French prisons (without a trial) until Germany conquered France, at which time he was returned to Berlin, and thereafter to various concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen and Flossenbürg.

Goebbels saw Grynspan's incarceration in a German prison as an opportunity for a "show trial" that would prove that Grynspan's actions were at the direction of an international Jewish conspiracy. A trial was never held, however, when it was learned that Grynspan would, after all, claim that he had homosexual relations with vom Rath, surely to be seen as a black mark against vom Rath—who had been elevated by Nazi propaganda to the level of a hero and martyr—that the Nazis could not allow. He was never brought to trial.

The time and place of Grynspan's death is uncertain. It is likely that he lived at least until 1943 or 1944, which was when Adolf Eichmann claimed to have interrogated him, according to Eichmann's trial in 1961. There have been rumors and articles suggesting that he survived the war, but there is no evidence that confirms that theory. It is most likely that he died while in Nazi hands before the end of the war. At the urging of the Grynspan family, a death certificate for Grynspan was issued by a German court on June 1, 1960.

A final issue remains regarding Grynspan. A debate continues to this day about the way he was denounced by many Jews for a rash act that took no account of the Jews it might condemn to death. Was that denunciation justified, or was a young man, distraught by what was happening to his family, abandoned without the support he deserved?

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Goebbels, Joseph; Kristallnacht; Krütfeld, Wilhelm

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Gunden, Lois

Lois Mary Gunden was an American Mennonite and French professor who helped rescue and shelter war orphans—including a number of Jewish children—in France during World War II. In 2013 Israel's Yad Vashem posthumously honored Gunden as one of the Righteous among the Nations for her work and sacrifice. She is only the fourth American to have been so recognized.

She was born on February 25, 1915, in Flanagan, Illinois, into a Mennonite family. She graduated from Goshen College in 1936 and received a master's degree in French from Peabody College in 1939. That same year, she secured a position teaching French at Goshen College. In 1941 Gunden joined the Mennonite Central Committee, which was dedicated to saving Jewish children and child refugees in France. When she arrived in Lyons, she became affiliated with *Secours Mennonite aux Enfants* (Mennonite Children's Rescue) and was

tasked with establishing a rescue mission and orphanage along France's southern coast.

After the Mennonite Church secured a large house in Canet Plage, on the shores of the Mediterranean, Gunden began her rescue work. She took in a number of young Spanish refugees as well as Jewish children who had been imprisoned with their families at Rivesaltes, a nearby internment camp administered by the collaborationist Vichy French government.

Despite great personal peril, she smuggled several dozen Jewish children out of the camp, often only after pleading with their parents to release their children to her care. The children in her charge later remarked that Gunden was kind, compassionate, and fiercely determined to save as many children as she could. Gunden was also sometimes ingenious in her attempts to shield her young refugees. She wrote in her diary of one close encounter with the local police. When a police officer arrived at the safe house to arrest three Jewish children, she repeatedly stalled for time, praying that the police would eventually give up and move on. In the end, the police officer never returned, and the three children were saved.

After the Germans occupied southern France in late 1942, Gunden continued to run the home and rescue children. In early 1943, however, German occupation officials detained her and held her until she was released in a prisoner exchange in 1944. At that time, she returned to Indiana and her teaching post as Goshen College. She subsequently began graduate work at Indiana University, receiving a PhD in French literature in 1958. That same year she married Ernest Clemens and the couple moved to Pennsylvania. She taught at Temple University (1965–1975) and North Penn High School in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

Lois Gunden Clemens remained actively engaged in church activities, edited a national Mennonite publication covering women's missionary services, authored a book titled *Women Liberated*, and sat on the Board of Overseers for Goshen College. She died in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, on August 27, 2005. Her niece accepted her Yad Vashem honor in July 2013.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Children during the Holocaust; France; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Gürtner, Franz

Franz Gürtner was a German jurist and leading member of the conservative German National People's Party (DNVP). An old-school bureaucrat, Gürtner was sympathetic to right-wing radicals such as Hitler. On June 2, 1932, he was appointed German minister of justice, and he continued in that role in Adolf Hitler's cabinet, with responsibility for coordinating jurisprudence in the Third Reich, until his death on January 29, 1941. Gürtner provided official sanction and legal grounds for a series of criminal actions under the Hitler administration.

He was born in Regensburg, southeast Germany, on August 26, 1881. The son of a locomotive engineer, he studied law at the University of Munich and then served as an officer in World War I France and in Palestine. He was awarded an Iron Cross for bravery.

After the war, Gürtner resumed a successful legal career and was appointed Bavarian minister of justice on November 8, 1922, a position he held until 1932. A member of the conservative German Nationalist Party, Gürtner also developed strong nationalist beliefs and, like many in Weimar Germany, was infuriated by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and the 1923 Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr. He was sympathetic toward right-wing radicals such as Hitler, and it was understood that Gürtner used his influence to help Hitler when he was put on trial after the failed Beer Hall Putsch in 1923. Tried for treason, Hitler received a five-year jail term that was spent in some comfort at Landsberg Prison. He had only served nine months before Gürtner used his judicial authority to get an early release for Hitler. Gürtner also persuaded the Bavarian government to legalize the banned Nazi Party and allow Hitler to speak again in public.

In June 1932 Gürtner was appointed minister of justice in the cabinet of Franz von Papen. He was retained by Hitler as minister of justice and given responsibility for coordinating jurisprudence in the Third Reich.

Though a non-Nazi conservative, Gürtner was authoritarian by inclination. He fully supported the Reichstag Fire Decree, which effectively wiped out civil liberties in Germany. Indeed, on the day before the Reichstag fire, he proposed a bill that was almost as heavy-handed and would have instituted severe restrictions on civil liberties under the pretense of keeping the communists from launching a general strike. In office, Gürtner merged the association of the German judges with the new National Socialist Lawyers' Association and provided a veil of constitutional legality for the Nazi state.

In 1933 Gürtner came into conflict with one of his subordinates, Roland Freisler, over the issues of *Rassenschande* (“racial shame”), or a sexual relationship between an “Aryan” and a “non-Aryan,” which Freisler wanted immediately criminalized. Gürtner, in a meeting, pointed out many practical difficulties with Freisler’s proposal. This did not, however, stop the passing of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, criminalizing such relationships.

In the weeks following the Nazi Party purge known as the Night of the Long Knives (June 30–July 2, 1934), Gürtner demonstrated his loyalty to the Nazi regime by writing a law that added a legal veneer to it. Signed into law by both Hitler and Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick, the Law Regarding Measures of State Self-Defense retrospectively legalized the murders committed during the purge. Gürtner even quashed some initial efforts by local prosecutors to take legal action against those who carried out the murders.

As Reich minister of justice with extensive powers, Franz Gürtner opened the First Session of the People’s Court on July 14, 1934. After nominating all the judges and public prosecutors, Hitler invariably rubber-stamped Gürtner’s nominations and swore the judges in personally. In return, Gürtner signed Nazi laws and mediated between the Nazi regime and conservative jurists to gain their cooperation.

Yet Gürtner also tried to protect the independence of the judiciary and at least a facade of legal norms. The ill-treatment of prisoners in concentration camps under the jurisdiction of local SA leaders provoked a sharp protest from the Ministry of Justice. Gürtner observed that prisoners were being beaten to the point of unconsciousness with whips and blunt instruments, commenting that such treatment revealed a level of brutality and cruelty that was totally alien to German sentiment and feeling. Gürtner also complained about confessions obtained by the Gestapo under torture. In both of these protests, he found himself at odds with Hitler. By the end of 1935 it was already apparent that neither Gürtner nor Frick would be able to impose limitations on the power of the Gestapo or control the SS camps where thousands of detainees were being held without judicial review.

In 1936 Gürtner, acting upon Hitler’s direction, ordered that the *fallbeil*, a variation on the guillotine, replace the hand axe as the official method for all civil executions throughout Germany. He then joined the Nazi Party in 1937 and found himself providing official sanction and legal grounds for a series of criminal actions, beginning with the

institution of *Ständegerichte* (drumhead courts-martial) (during the war, this court tried Poles and Jews in the occupied eastern territories), and later for decrees that opened the way for implementing the Final Solution.

Upon the outbreak of war, the Ministry of Justice found that its power was swiftly eroded by internal security forces that did not adhere to formal judicial processes. The Gestapo and SD became judge, jury, and executioner, and few in the ministry were brave enough to query their work. In 1939 the SS won the right to order the summary execution of any person deemed subversive or disloyal; all compromise with the state judicial system was abandoned.

A district judge and member of the Confessing Church, Lothar Kreyssig, wrote in 1940 to Gürtner protesting that the T-4 euthanasia program was illegal, since no law or formal decree from Hitler had authorized it. Gürtner promptly dismissed Kreyssig from his post, telling him, “If you cannot recognise the will of the Führer as a source of law, then you cannot remain a judge.”

Gürtner then provided legal backing and support to any act carried out on behalf of Hitler—with the normal explanation being that such action was required to defend the Fatherland. On this basis, Hitler expected Gürtner to legally justify any actions taken by Nazi organizations as well. The usual legal explanation invariably oriented around a “defense of the Fatherland” argument.

Franz Gürtner was still minister of justice when he died in Berlin on January 29, 1941. His death completed Heinrich Himmler’s supremacy of the legal and justice system, as Gürtner’s replacement at the Justice Ministry, State Secretary Franz Schlegelberger, never had Gürtner’s authority or was in any position to challenge the might of the SS.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Freisler, Roland; Kreyssig, Lothar; Names under the Nazis, Legislation; Weimar Republic

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Gutman, Yisrael

Yisrael Gutman was an Israeli Holocaust survivor, historian, and writer, born on May 20, 1923, in Warsaw, Poland. In 1940, some 10 months after the September 1, 1939, German invasion of Poland, the Nazis had completed construction of an 840-acre ghetto in which they interned Jews first from Warsaw but then from other parts of Poland. Eventually, Gutman joined the Jewish Fighting Organization, an underground movement within the ghetto designed to fight the Nazi oppressors. He played an active role in the April–May 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, in which the ghetto fighters fought bravely against SS and Germany army troops. Gutman was wounded in the fighting and lost sight in one of his eyes. Meanwhile, his siblings and parents were all killed in the ghetto and its liquidation. Gutman was deported first to the Lublin-Majdanek concentration camp before being transferred to the death camp at Auschwitz. From there, he was force-marched to another Nazi camp at Mauthausen-Gusen. Gutman was liberated by U.S. forces on May 5, 1945.

After his liberation, Gutman went to Italy, where he joined the Jewish Brigade and then helped found Kibbutz Aviv. In 1946 he emigrated to the British Mandate of Palestine and joined Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan, where he remained for more than 25 years. In the early 1970s he pursued graduate work in history at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, receiving a PhD in 1975 for his work on the Warsaw Ghetto and Jewish resistance.

For many years Gutman held the Max and Rita Haber Chair in Modern Jewish History at Hebrew University. He also published extensively, producing some 30 journal articles and books. Gutman was deputy chairman of the International Auschwitz Council (Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation), edited an acclaimed encyclopedia of the Holocaust, and was head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research between 1993 and 1996. From 1996 until 2000 Gutman served as Yad Vashem's chief historian.

Most of Gutman's historical works dealt with varying aspects of the Holocaust and the experiences of Jews in Poland after 1919. Gutman stressed that he tried not to let his own experiences during the Holocaust color his work or interpretations; instead, he went about the writing process by employing careful and thorough historical research.

Yisrael Gutman died on October 1, 2013, in Jerusalem.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Jewish Fighting Organization; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Yad Vashem

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H

Haas, Leo

Leo Haas was a Czech Jewish painter, printmaker, draftsman, and caricaturist whose work as an inmate of the Theresienstadt concentration camp during World War II came to symbolize the nature of artistic resistance. A Slovak, he was born in 1901 in Opava, the eldest of four children. A prodigy in artistic endeavors, at school he was encouraged to pursue his skill, which he did by moving to an art academy in Karlsruhe, Germany. In 1921 he relocated to Berlin to further his studies. In 1923 he traveled to France for further education and inspiration, before moving in 1926 to Vienna. He then returned home to Opava, married Sophie Hermann in 1929, and became a well-known portrait painter.

After the Munich Agreement of September 1938, Opava, located in the Sudetenland, was taken over by Germany. Haas, who was known to the Nazis as a painter of so-called “degenerate art,” was imprisoned during the Nazi takeover. Then, after the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, during which time Opava’s synagogue was destroyed, he and his wife moved out of their home and went to live with her parents in Ostrava.

In October 1939, after the outbreak of war, thousands of Jews from the region, including Haas, were sent to a Nazi-imposed Jewish “reservation” in Nisko near Lublin, where they were put to hard labor. Haas’s work, among other tasks, was as a wagon driver bringing food and construction materials from Lublin. In whatever free time he had, he painted portraits of SS men, and in return received privileges such as

better food and fewer restrictions over movement. This gave him the opportunity to draw the building sites, portraits of other prisoners, transports arriving and leaving, and the general life of the camp.

After the Nisko initiative came to an end, Haas returned to Ostrava. Deciding to stay there, his marriage collapsed as Sophie could not accept the idea that by remaining in Ostrava she and Haas would see an end to persecution. Haas, remaining in Ostrava, soon met Erna Davidovitz, whose family was involved in smuggling Jews to Poland. Haas became involved in this activity in 1941, and Erna became his second wife.

In August 1942 he was arrested by the Gestapo but released after a short period. He had, however, been noticed, and was rearrested when the next transport to Theresienstadt was organized a month later. Haas and his extended family arrived at Theresienstadt on October 1, 1942, and were immediately separated. In no time at all, Haas was put to hard labor.

His skills as an artist recognized, he was transferred to a technical drawing unit—the object of which was to develop plans for Theresienstadt’s future development. Several other well-known artists worked here, including Otto Ungar, Ferdinand (Felix) Bloch, and Bedřich Fritta, who became a friend and leader of the team.

Working in the graphics department gave its inmates certain privileges, such as being able to visit other parts of the camp. Using this opportunity, they all made secret drawings documenting ghetto life. Haas used the chance to draw

anything and everything: inmates searching for food, waiting to be transported, the nature of the buildings, and sketches of the elderly, the sick, the dying, and the dead. He made portraits of his colleagues and portraits of other inmates. Haas and his comrades risked their lives by making such drawings. Together, and in complete secrecy, Haas, Fritta, and Ungar created a large body of work illustrating all aspects of life in Theresienstadt.

The secrecy was an obvious form of resistance, and the Nazis, keen to ensure that the truth about Theresienstadt did not get out, launched a number of searches of the graphics department. All the artists had to find hiding places for their works: Fritta buried his pictures in the ground inside a metal box; Ungar hid his paintings in a depression in a wall; and Haas hid his in an attic. The necessity of doing so took on urgency when a delegation of the Red Cross visited Theresienstadt on June 23, 1944, to inspect living conditions in the ghetto.

Several days before the visit, the group was detained and interrogated by none other than Adolf Eichmann. They maintained their silence and were imprisoned with their families in what was known as the “Small Fortress.” Haas was confined for three and a half months, and the artists were again employed at hard labor. On October 25, 1944, Haas and Fritta were condemned for distributing “atrocious propaganda” and deported to Auschwitz. They arrived on October 28; Haas, although Jewish, was branded a political prisoner with the number 199885. Fritta died of blood poisoning eight days after arrival.

At Auschwitz, Haas resumed his artistic work in part. He produced sketches, for example, for Dr. Josef Mengele, the “Angel of Death.” In November 1944, however, he was transferred with other artists to Sachsenhausen and given another new number, 118029. Here, the artists were again segregated and joined a team of prisoners who had already been working for the past two years on Operation Bernhard, a secret plan by Nazi Germany to destabilize the British economy by flooding it with forged currency. Haas’s group was given the job of counterfeiting American dollars.

At the end of February 1945, with the war coming to an end, the members of the group were transferred to Mauthausen. Then, on May 5, 1945, they were moved again, this time to the camp at Ebensee, where they were liberated the next day by American troops.

After his liberation Haas returned to Theresienstadt and was reunited with his entire art collection of more than four hundred drawings; in addition, he located many of Fritta’s works. It was then that he learned that most of his friends and family had perished, though his wife Erna had survived.

Fritta’s son Tomáš also survived, and they adopted him. Erna died in 1955 from the effects of medical experiments conducted on her in Auschwitz. After her death, Haas moved to East Berlin, where he worked as an illustrator for a number of magazines and newspapers.

Leo Hass’s resistance work was of a very special kind. Employing his artistic skills, he did what he could to chronicle what he saw and those whom he met. In this way he worked under the most trying of circumstances to bear witness to the Nazi atrocities and reveal these images to people outside the wire. The record he and his comrades created was a vital contribution to the knowledge later generations would possess about this dimension of the Holocaust.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Art and the Holocaust; Nisko Plan; Sachsenhausen; Theresienstadt

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Haavara Agreement

On March 24, 1933, in response to German antisemitic initiatives introduced after Hitler took power, Jewish groups worldwide, but particularly in the United States, France, Britain, and Poland, boycotted German goods in support of German Jewry. They hoped that the boycott would pressure the Nazis to restore Jewish rights. In Germany, this demonstrated the “world Jewish conspiracy” of which Nazi ideology had been warning for years. That the boycott was a response to German anti-Jewish measures rather than an independent Jewish initiative was overlooked.

In the summer of 1933 the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the German Zionist Federation, and the German Economics Ministry drafted a plan intended to allow German Jews migrating to Palestine to retain some of the value of their property in Germany by purchasing German goods for the Yishuv (the Jewish area of Palestine), which would be redeemed in local Palestine currency. Under this *Haavara* (“Transfer”) Agreement, Jewish emigrants had to hand over their possessions before they left Germany, and the proceeds were used by a company specifically set up for this purpose in Tel Aviv to purchase German goods for sale in Palestine. The proceeds of these sales were then paid in Palestinian currency to the emigrants in Palestine. Agreement was

reached on August 7, 1933, and signed on August 25, 1933. The signatories were the Reich Ministry of Economics, the Zionist Federation of Germany (*Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*), and the Anglo-Palestine Bank (then under the directive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine). The agreement was notified by Circular 54/1933 of the Reich Ministry of Finance and dated August 28, 1933.

For the Zionist Federation, it was a way to save Jews from the claws of an increasingly hostile regime and by so doing attract them to Palestine. The head of the Jewish Agency's political department, Haim Arlosoroff, said the agreement facilitated a way for Jews to get their property out before it was forcefully taken and sold at reduced prices, and the proceeds stolen from them. For the Nazis, signing an international agreement was further proof of its legitimacy; it also broke the Jewish boycott of German goods and helped the recovery of German exports at a time when the German economy was still in the depth of depression. At this time, both sides saw potential benefits in such an agreement.

Many Jews were critical of the agreement from the outset. Despite encouraging Jews to emigrate from Germany, one of the objects of the agreement was to fragment the Jewish boycott on German goods. No one doubted the moral weight that breaking the boycott would have for world Jewry. For this reason, until 1935 the Jewish Agency masked its role, and the Transfer Agreement was presented as an agreement with private parties. The Zionist Federation was accused of collaboration with the Nazis, because those involved in the boycott intended it to cause Germany to change its policies—but most Zionists considered that the Jewish position in Germany was irrevocably lost, and that emigration to Palestine was their only option.

The Nazi authorities were criticized by fellow Nazis for helping Jews when their official policy was to “solve” the “Jewish question.” Though the Haavara allowed Jews to transfer people and money to Palestine, National Socialism did not support the creation of a Jewish state, whether in Palestine or anywhere else. Opposition to such a creation was based on the view that a Jewish state would aggravate the danger of global domination by the international Jewish conspiracy, aiming to destroy Aryan lands and Germany. This conspiracy concern came to overshadow the idea of Palestine as a place to which Germany's Jews could be deported.

As a result of the Haavara Agreement, German exports to Palestine increased so rapidly that by 1937 Germany had moved into first position among countries exporting to Palestine, exceeding even Britain, the Mandatory Power. The

exported goods included agricultural machinery, cement, steel girders, iron plates, aluminum, brass products, watches, and photographic equipment. During the era of anti-Jewish persecution in 1933–1939, the Nazi regime, through the Transfer Agreement, encouraged and allowed the movement of sixty thousand people and about a hundred million marks from Germany to Palestine.

Until the Peel Partition Plan of 1937 forced Germany to reexamine its policy on Palestine, the Haavara Agreement did, for a while, meet the goals of both the Nazi regime and the Zionists.

The Haavara Agreement was the first example of a Nazi program of organized Jewish relocation, and acted as the only formal contract signed between Nazi Germany and a Zionist organization. The agreement solved the problems of an affluent class of Germans but did not improve the living conditions of the German Jews left behind, and the number of Jews who actually migrated to Palestine is unclear. The Haavara Agreement continued in effect until the German government ceased to support it at the outbreak of war in 1939.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Confiscation of Jewish Property

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Hadamar

The name of a location in Germany where thousands of people with physical or psychological disabilities, or with incurable diseases, were murdered according to the Nazi “euthanasia program” between 1941 and 1945. It is estimated that approximately 11,000 victims were killed at Hadamar. Part hospital, part sanatorium, the center had originally been established in 1901 and was extended and refurbished in 1933 as the State Psychiatric Center. Hadamar can be likened to the Austrian Hartheim Castle, the center of the Nazi euthanasia program, in which 30,000 people were killed. Hadamar was also utilized for the murder of others; between 1944 and 1945 it was used in order to kill slave laborers who were unable to keep working because of illness or debility, and at other times it was used for

the purpose of murdering Allied nationals. Hadamar has become a byword for bureaucratic murder masked as medical “improvement” in the name of perverted science. Many of the doctors involved in the killing at Hadamar were transferred to the Nazi death camps during World War II, the better to practice their lethal skills; these included Drs. Ernst Baumhardt, Guenther Hennecke, Friedrich Berner, and Hans-Bobo Gorgass.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Euthanasia Program; Hadamar Insane Asylum Case

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Hadamar Insane Asylum Case

The first Western trial involving allegations of mass murder to be held after the end of World War II in 1945. The Hadamar Insane Asylum Case established the precedent that civilians, not just the military, were bound by the international laws and customs of warfare.

The United States Army liberated the city of Hadamar, in Hesse, Germany, in April 1945. It soon became clear to the Americans that the Nazis had carried out a series of atrocities at the Hadamar Insane Asylum. Reportedly, the staff had been injecting patients with scopolamine or morphine in lethal doses. U.S. War Crimes Team 5822 investigated the staff, and the U.S. Military Commission, Chief of Prosecution, Subsection War Crimes branch handed down an indictment on September 15, 1945, charging seven with the murder of more than 400 Polish and Soviet slave laborers and with violations of international law. The court eventually heard how at least 400 prisoners were transported from various concentration camps in groups of 70 from July 1, 1944, to April 1, 1945. Only one woman survived by escaping from the asylum. Overwhelming evidence proved that the seven defendants murdered all the other transportees in the “three-story death house” at Hadamar. The court found all the defendants guilty and sentenced three of them to the death penalty.

The seven defendants were Alfons Klein, administrator of the clinic; Adolf Wahlmann, physician in charge; Henrick Ruoff, chief male nurse; Karl Willig, male nurse; Irmgard Huber, chief female nurse; Adolf Merkle, record keeper for

the clinic; and Philipp Blum, a grave digger. The indictment alleged that the accused “did, from on or about July 1, 1944 to on or about April 1, 1945 at Hadamar, Germany, willfully, deliberately, and wrongfully, aid, abet, and participate in the killing of human beings of Polish and Russian nationality, aggregating in excess of 400.” Although the clinic had been in operation since 1941, those killed before the indictment dates were German citizens and therefore outside the court’s purview.

The trial began on October 8, 1945, in the city of Wiesbaden, Germany. The best evidence came from the clinic records themselves, although Merkle issued death certificates on different dates. Furthermore, all the certificates stated that the victims died of tuberculosis, yet the asylum had no facilities for the treatment of tuberculosis. In fact, Wahlmann admitted he had never examined the patients’ charts, let alone the patients, to see if they were even sick. All the defendants admitted in both pretrial statements and on the stand to taking part in the killings but claimed that they were acting on the orders of their superiors. They also claimed fear of retaliation if they did not participate and/or tried to leave the clinic. However, the defendants mentioned their fear of retaliation for the first time at the trial; pretrial statements made no mention of these concerns.

The defense attempted to challenge the legality of the military court, claiming that the U.S. military had no right to try civilians. Failing that, they challenged the indictment itself, claiming that the Nazis were not bound to treat with the Soviets under the rules of war as the communist government had denounced all “czarist” treaties; and as regards to the Poles killed, that Poland at the time was legally part of Germany and therefore bound by German law, which made the killing of those unfit for work legal. The court rejected both these arguments. Faced with no viable defense, the attorneys had no choice but to resort to a plea for mercy. This action, however, incensed the American prosecutor, Leon Jaworski. Jaworski instead requested the death penalty for all seven accused.

On October 22, 1945, the Military Commission Court deliberated for two hours before returning a verdict of guilty against all defendants. The court sentenced Klein, Willig, and Ruoff to death by hanging; Wahlmann received life at hard labor; Merkle received 35 years at hard labor; Huber 24 years; and Blum 30. The military governor confirmed all the sentences.

ELIZABETH PUGLIESE

See also: Euthanasia Program; Hadamar

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Harster, Wilhelm

Wilhelm Harster was a Nazi German SS and SD officer who served as chief of security and police forces in the German-occupied Netherlands (1940–1944) and Italy (1944–1945).

He was born on July 21, 1904, in Kelheim, Bavaria, and earned a law degree from the University of Munich in 1927. Having joined the Reichswehr (Germany's army under the Weimar Republic), Harster served with the 1st Battalion of



Wilhelm Harster was a member of the SS, responsible for perpetrating Holocaust crimes that led to the death of up to 104,000 Jews during the German occupation of the Netherlands. Between July 1940 and August 1943 he commanded the security police and SD in the Netherlands; after this he was transferred to Italy as SD commander there. At the end of the war he was captured by the British Army and transferred to the Netherlands for trial. (AP Photo)

the Bund Oberland and was a reservist after his training. In May 1933, only months after Adolf Hitler's ascension to power, he joined the Nazi Party. That November he became a member of the SS, and in October 1935 he joined the SD, eventually rising to the rank of *Gruppenfuhrer* (group leader).

In the early summer of 1940 Harster was called to active duty in the German Army, being assigned temporarily to a machine gun company. On July 19, 1940, only weeks after the German invasion of The Netherlands, Harster was posted to that country as commander of the SD (police). He would remain in that post until August 1944. As head of the SD, he was partly responsible for the rounding up and deportation of thousands of Dutch Jews, including Anne Frank and her family, who had been kept in hiding in Amsterdam with the Gies family beginning in July 1942. The Franks were discovered on August 4, 1944, arrested, and deported to concentration camps to the east. Harster was then detailed to Italy, where he commanded the SD in German-occupied portions of that country.

British forces captured Harster in 1945. At the insistence of the Dutch, he was extradited to the Netherlands to stand trial for war crimes committed while he headed the SD there. He was convicted in 1949 and given a 12-year prison term for his role in the persecution, deportation, and murder of Dutch Jews. He was released in 1953, having spent a total of eight years in prison, and returned to West Germany, taking a civil service position in Bavaria. By 1963, however, he was compelled to leave that job when his past deeds in the Netherlands came under more scrutiny, although he was permitted to keep his pension. Four years later, he was again placed on trial, this time in West Germany, for having sent thousands of Dutch Jews to their deaths at the Sobibór and Auschwitz death camps. Convicted, he was given a 15-year jail sentence, which was commuted in 1969 for time already served. His early release caused an uproar in some circles, and the Dutch Auschwitz Committee formally petitioned the West German chancellor not to pardon Harster, which he did anyway in 1969. Harster died in Bavaria on December 25, 1991.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Frank, Anne; Italy; Netherlands

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Hautval, Adelaide

Adelaide Hautval was a French psychiatrist who was imprisoned by German occupation forces and who defended and aided Jews in several concentration camps.

She was born on January 1, 1906, in Le Hohwald, France, the daughter of a Protestant minister. Extremely intelligent and precocious, she studied medicine at the University of Strasbourg at a time in which very few women became professionals. Upon receiving her medical degree, she became interested in psychiatry and worked in French psychiatric facilities. After Germany invaded France in 1940 the country was divided by the victors, with the Germans directly controlling most of northern and western France; the southern part of France, where Hautval lived, was controlled by the collaborationist French Vichy government.

In April 1942, on receiving news that her mother had died in Paris, Hautval asked for permission to go the city, which was controlled by the Germans, so she could attend the funeral. Her request was denied, and so Hautval decided to cross into the German zone illegally. She was promptly arrested and sent to a jail in Bourges. Several weeks later Jews began arriving at the jail, with yellow identification patches emblazoned with the Star of David. When Hautval loudly protested to jail guards about the way in which Jews were being treated, she was told that she would share their fate. Hautval then pinned a yellow piece of paper to her clothing, which read: "Friend of the Jews." The Germans were outraged by this act of defiance and sent Hautval to several different prisons before shipping her off to the death camp at Birkenau in early 1943.

She was placed in a barracks with some 500 Jewish women, where she attended to many fellow detainees who were suffering from various diseases and illnesses. Before long, her Jewish friends were referring to her as "the saint." When prison officials found out that Hautval was a physician, they forced her to work in the makeshift prison infirmary, though she kept quiet about the women she was treating privately, fearing that if prison authorities found out that they were ill, they would be immediately killed.

Hautval was later transferred to the adjoining Auschwitz I camp, where brutal and inhumane medical experiments were being performed on prisoners. When the SS doctors there asked her to help in these experiments, she flatly refused; she also refused to participate in the involuntary sterilization of female detainees. When a prison doctor asked her, "Don't you see that these people are different from you?" she answered, "Many people are different from me. You, for

example." Hautval was eventually sent back to Birkenau when it was clear that she would not participate in Nazi medical experimentation.

Adelaide Hautval was later sent to the Ravensbrück camp in Germany, where she remained until liberated by Allied forces in 1945. As a result of her long incarceration, her health had been permanently damaged. Had she chosen to collaborate with the Germans, she probably would have avoided such a fate, but her moral and professional compasses would not allow for that. In 1962 she testified at the libel trial of Leon Uris in London. Uris had been sued for libel by the Polish physician Władislas Dering, after Uris had detailed the macabre medical experiments that Dering had performed at Auschwitz during World War II. The trial took place in London. Dering was ultimately awarded exactly one-half of a penny for damages. After the trial the judge praised Hautval, proclaiming her as one of the most courageous women ever to appear in an English court.

On May 18, 1965, Israel's Yad Vashem named Hautval as one of the Righteous among the Nations. On October 12, 1988, Adelaide Hautval died in France.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Birkenau; Ravensbrück; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Heim, Aribert

Austrian-born Nazi physician whose bizarre and cruel medical experiments on concentration camp internees earned him the sobriquet "Dr. Death." Aribert Heim was born on June 28, 1914, in Radkersburg, Austria. In 1935 he joined the Austrian Nazi Party, and three years later, after the German annexation of Austria, he became a member of the SS. In 1940 he became a member of the Waffen-SS and in October 1941 was appointed chief doctor at the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he began to engage in outrageous and highly unethical experiments on internees.

Heim's experiments included injecting various substances—including gasoline, phenol, various poisons, and water—directly into prisoners' hearts to see which substance resulted in the quickest death. Others included chemical and surgical

castration, performing surgical procedures without anesthesia, removing organs from healthy individuals and leaving them to die in the operating room, and crude attempts at amputation and the reattachment of limbs. Soon camp prisoners began referring to Heim as “Dr. Death.”

In February 1942 Heim was transferred to Finland, where he worked for a time in local hospitals. Exactly what he did after that, until the end of the war, is not entirely clear, although he might have been a camp doctor at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. On March 15, 1945, he was taken captive by U.S. troops and sent to a prisoner of war camp. Unaware at the time of his past activities, occupation authorities released him later that year, and he resumed a medical practice in Baden-Baden, Germany. In 1962 Heim disappeared after being tipped off that he was about to be arrested for war crimes. He eventually settled in Cairo, Egypt, where he allegedly converted to Islam and assumed the name Tarek Hussein Farid. Meanwhile, he became the Simon Weisenthal Center's most-wanted Nazi-at-large. Over the years, there were reports of him being in South America and Europe, but for much of the time he was actually in Egypt.

Heim remained in written communication with family and friends and regularly received money from a sister in Austria. Finally, in 2009, it was determined by several different sources that Heim had died of cancer on August 10, 1992, in Egypt. This information was corroborated by Heim's son, Rudiger, who agreed to be interviewed about his father's whereabouts. Heim's son had been with his father at the time of his death.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Mauthausen-Gusen; Medical Experimentation

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Helga's Diary

Helga Weiss is a well-known Czech artist and Holocaust survivor. She was born Helga Hoskova-Weissova in Prague in 1929 to a Jewish family. Weiss began keeping a diary in 1938, as World War II neared and the Germans occupied her country. Among her first entries was a description of her family's terrifying ordeal in a Prague bomb shelter, as

German planes flew above the city. In December 1941 Weiss and her family were forced to leave their apartment—and virtually all of their belongings—when the Germans forced them into the ghetto at Theresienstadt, located to the northwest of central Prague. She and her family would remain there until 1944, at which time they were deported to Auschwitz.

Weiss's diary, published in 2013 as *Helga's Diary: A Young Girl's Account of Life in a Concentration Camp*, mainly details her experiences during 1944 and 1945, after deportation; however, the book also describes events at Theresienstadt. In it, she chronicles the physical and mental strain of living in an enclosed ghetto and then the horrors of the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Mauthausen. Despite the deprivations and hardships of her young life, Weiss nevertheless acknowledges that the years in the Theresienstadt ghetto were not universally bad. There she became a young adult, experienced her first crush, and spent quality time with her family. The diary has not been heavily edited, so readers will experience it through the lens and words of a child and teenager, rather than an adult reflecting back, which Weiss hopes will make it more accessible.

Weiss's most riveting—and harrowing—experiences occurred after her deportation in 1944. She and her mother arrived at Auschwitz in October 1944 (her father was also sent there, but the family was separated by gender; Weiss's father was killed sometime later). Upon arrival, Weiss lied about her and her mother's age to avoid being sent to the gas chambers. Instead, she and her mother became laborers. Later on, after the Germans began to liquidate Auschwitz as Allied troops closed in on Germany, Weiss and her mother were sent by rail to the camp at Flossenburg. When Allied troops approached that facility, the Germans sent detainees on a 16-day death march to the Mauthausen camp. Weiss and her mother barely survived the ordeal. When Mauthausen was liberated in the spring of 1945, Weiss writes that she was numb and took no pleasure in the event because she was so sick and had seen so many horrific things.

After the war, Weiss returned to Prague and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts there. She also apprenticed under the well-known Czech artist Emil Filla and went on to become one of the foremost artists in postwar Czechoslovakia. After the collapse of communism in 1989, she displayed her work in Germany, Italy, and Austria. She has since been recognized many times for her courage and artistic talent, receiving the prestigious Medal of Merit in 2009.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also

Auschwitz; Czechoslovakia; Mauthausen-Gusen; Theresienstadt

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Helmy, Mohammed

Mohamed Helmy was a Berlin-based medical doctor who helped save Jews during World War II. Born in 1901 in Khartoum, Sudan, to an Egyptian father and a German mother, he moved to Berlin in 1922 to study medicine. He worked in the field of urology at the Robert Koch Hospital until 1938, where he rose to be head of the department. Due to Nazi racial laws, however, he was dismissed from his position because he was not an Aryan. In 1939 he was arrested for having spoken out against Nazism, along with many other Egyptian nationals living in Germany. He was detained for over a year but was discharged on health grounds.

After his release, a young Jewish patient of his, Anna Boros (later Gutman), sought his help. By way of response, and notwithstanding the great danger, from March 10, 1940, until the end of the war he hid her in a cabin on the outskirts of Berlin. There were times he would have to shuttle her around the homes of various friends in order to escape detection, but the cabin remained her core hiding place throughout most of the war years. With the help of Frieda Szturmann, a German woman he knew, he also arranged for three members of her family—Anna's mother Julie, her stepfather Georg Wehr, and her grandmother Cecilie Rudnik—to be hidden. He also provided the family with medical care. All survived the war and later migrated to the United States.

Helmy did all he could to assist Anna during her long period in hiding. Documents in German and Arabic were later found revealing just how far he was prepared to go. These included a certificate from the Central Islamic Institute in Berlin (headed by the antisemitic Haj Amin al-Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem) attesting to her having converted to Islam, and a certificate saying that she had married an Egyptian in a ceremony that was held in Helmy's home.

After the war, Helmy remained in Germany and married his prewar fiancée, Emmi. It was later said that they decided not to have any children because they were concerned about the type of world they would be brought into. Frieda

Szturmann, who had provided such assistance in saving the lives of Anna and her family, died in 1962. Mohamed Helmy died in 1982, aged 81.

Several years later, Jerusalem's Yad Vashem learned of Helmy through letters written by several Jewish survivors he had helped. An investigation took place, in which researchers from the Department of the Righteous searched for as much information as could be found and spoke to a number of people including Anna Boros-Gutman. With no known next of kin, Yad Vashem asked the Egyptian embassy in Israel for help in tracking down any relatives. It was known, for example, that Helmy had been visited from time to time in Germany by nephews from Egypt in the decades after the war.

The result saw a decision, on March 18, 2013, to recognize Mohamed Helmy and Frieda Szturmann as Righteous among the Nations. It was a momentous decision, as Helmy now became the first Arab rescuer to be so recognized.

Yad Vashem made contact with Helmy's great-nephew in Egypt in order to present the award, but he rejected it on the ground that it was an honor bestowed by the state of Israel. Mervat Hassan, speaking on behalf of her husband, was quoted as saying: "If any other country offered to honor Helmy, we would have been happy with it. . . . But not from Israel." The rejection was met with some measure of consternation at Yad Vashem, where a spokesman said that in Nazi Germany, which was in a state of "total moral collapse, there was a small minority who mustered extraordinary courage to uphold human values. Bystanders were the rule; rescuers were the exception. Helmy was one of them." The level of disappointment was intense, particularly in view of the fact that this recognition of a Muslim Arab who rescued Jews had come in honor of his individual goodness, not his national background.

It was indeed an ironic situation. The man whom some news outlets dubbed the "Arab Schindler" received due acknowledgment for saving Jewish lives during the Holocaust, at risk of his own life and in the face of Nazi persecution, but he did not have the honor recognized by his own family in his home country for political—not moral or humanitarian—reasons.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Herz-Sommer, Alice

Alice Herz-Sommer was a noted classical pianist and music teacher and, at the time of her death in February 2014, the oldest known living survivor of the Holocaust.

Alice Herz-Sommer was born Alice Herz in Prague (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) on November 26, 1903. Her father was a well-to-do businessman and her mother a well-educated member of Prague's intelligentsia. The Herzes sponsored a cultural salon in their home, where the young Alice Herz was exposed to philosophers, writers, artists, and musicians. The most famous of these visitors were the composer Gustav Mahler and the famed existentialist philosopher and writer Franz Kafka. The family became quite close with Kafka, whom Herz described as quiet, congenial, but "slightly strange."

As a very young girl, Herz began learning piano under the tutelage of her older sister, and it soon became apparent that she had a musical gift. While still in her teens, Herz was determined to become a classical pianist, and she went on to study at the Prague German Conservatory of Music, where she was the youngest student. She also studied under the watch of Vaclav Stepan. In 1931 Herz married Leopold Sommer, an amateur musician and businessman. Now going by the name Herz-Sommer, she began touring Europe giving concerts. She gave birth to a son, Stephan (later known as Raphael), in 1937.

The following year, when Nazi Germany annexed the German-speaking portion of Czechoslovakia known as the Sudetenland, life for Herz-Sommer and her family became perilous. In 1939 Germany annexed the remainder of Czechoslovakia, including Prague. The Nazis immediately began to segregate and repress the Jews in Prague, and Herz-Sommer was forbidden from giving public recitals or teaching non-Jewish pupils.

During 1939 most of Herz-Sommer's friends and family fled to Palestine, but Herz-Sommer and her immediate family chose to stay in Prague so she could care for her ailing, elderly mother. Eventually her mother was arrested and killed, and in July 1943 the Nazis deported Herz-Sommer and her son to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt. Leopold Sommer, meanwhile, had been deported to the Dachau concentration camp in Germany. He died there of typhus in 1944.

Fortunately for Herz-Sommer and her young son, the two were allowed to remain together at Theresienstadt, and he was among only a few children who survived the ordeal. As a prisoner, Herz-Sommer participated in more than 100 concerts, sometimes appearing with other musicians. These

concerts were put on for other prisoners as well as guards. Years later, she explained that the Nazis permitted these performances so that they could prove to the Red Cross (and thus the rest of the world) that the Jews were not being mistreated, even though they were being held against their wills in concentration camps. Herz-Sommer would later state that "music saved my life and music saves me still. I am Jewish, but Beethoven is my religion."

After Theresienstadt was liberated in early 1945, Herz and her son Raphael went back to Prague. In March 1949, less than a year after the creation of the State of Israel, they took up residence there, joining other family members who had emigrated to the region years earlier. For decades Herz-Sommer taught music at the Jerusalem Academy of Music, until moving to London in 1986 to be near Raphael, who was a noted cellist and conductor. Raphael died in 2001, at the age of 64. Alice Herz-Sommer remained passionate about music until she died on February 23, 2014, at the age of 110, in London. In 2013 a short documentary film of her experiences, *The Lady in Number 6*, was released to critical acclaim. On March 2, 2014, the film won an Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Czechoslovakia; Theresienstadt

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Hess, Rudolf

Rudolf Hess will be remembered for more than being second in line of succession—behind only Hermann Göring—to Adolf Hitler. He also will be remembered for one of the most bizarre events in the history of the Nazi government. (Note that Rudolf Hess should not be confused with Rudolf Höss, sometimes spelled Hoess, who served as commander of Auschwitz.)

Hess was born Rudolf Walter Richard Hess on April 26, 1894, into a financially successful family of German ethnicity in Alexandria, Egypt. He was educated in a German-speaking school in Alexandria and came to live in Germany in his early teens when he was sent there to boarding school. He served valiantly in World War I, where he was wounded three times and earned several medals and promotions along the way.

He trained as a pilot, but the war ended too soon for him to see action in that capacity.

Hess met Hitler in 1920 and soon devoted himself entirely to the Nazi Party then being developed. He joined the party on July 1, 1920, and, sharing many of Hitler's antisemitic beliefs, brawled in the streets on behalf of the party following Hitler's rallies and studied at the University of Munich under Karl Haushofer, whose theories included the concept of *Lebensraum* ("living space"). He was arrested with Hitler following the failed Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923, and while both were in prison Hitler dictated to Hess his book, *Mein Kampf*. They were released within ten days of each other in December 1920, and together saw membership of the Nazi Party grow into the hundreds of thousands.

With Hitler's rise to power, Hess was appointed to several positions within the party and the government, including, ultimately, that of deputy führer, but his power was less than his titles suggested. What he brought to his position more than anything—certainly far more than any deep technical or military skill—was his blind devotion to Hitler and a fanaticism that was notable even by Nazi standards. It was this unquestioning allegiance that Hitler rewarded when he named Hess second in line after him.

As Hitler became more involved in war-related decisions, however, Hess found himself further and further removed from Hitler's inner circle, even as Martin Bormann eclipsed him in power and access. This seemed to have been the trigger for a decision that Hess made with the hope that it would bring him back into Hitler's group of most valued advisers: he would fly from Germany to Britain to negotiate a peaceful resolution to hostilities between the two countries. More specifically, he would offer that Germany would withdraw from Western Europe if Britain made no move to interfere with Germany's plans to invade Russia.

Thus it was that on May 10, 1941—just six weeks before Hitler was to launch Operation Barbarossa, Germany's invasion of Russia—Hess parachuted into Scotland after a harrowing solo flight. His goal was to speak directly with Douglas Douglas-Hamilton, the 14th Duke of Hamilton, whom Hess respected as a fellow airman, and who, he believed, opposed Britain's engagement in the war. Hess was immediately arrested and, to his surprise, his "peace offer" was dismissed out of hand by Hamilton and, of far greater importance, by Churchill. Hess was despondent.

Although some have suggested that Hitler had approved of Hess's trip—this, most recently on the basis of a document purportedly written by Hess's adjutant—the overwhelming consensus is that Hitler was shocked and outraged, fearful

that his allies—Italy and Japan—would think that Hess's proposal was part of a plan by Hitler to negotiate without their knowledge or approval. The decision was therefore made that Hitler must distance himself and the Nazi government from Hess's trip, and that the most effective way to do that was to strip him of all his titles and to declare Hess mentally ill. Even if effective, however, this response to Hess's extraordinary self-proclaimed "peace mission" would not fully solve Hitler's problems, since convincing the Germans of Hess's mental instability would raise the question of Hitler's judgment in having appointed him deputy führer.

During the remainder of the war, Hess remained under arrest and in the control of the British. His behavior often gave credence to Hitler's characterization of him as mentally unstable. In addition to a number of failed suicide attempts, Hess was convinced that someone was trying to poison his food, and he feigned (although at times he might actually have had) memory loss.

After the war, Hess was transferred to Nuremberg to stand trial as one of the 24 high-level Nazi defendants at the International Military Tribunal from November 1945 to October 1946. Again, Hess complained of amnesia, but he did not deny signing many of the orders coming from Hitler, as well as anti-Jewish legislation—including the infamous Nuremberg Laws—in his capacity as deputy führer. He argued that his activities were not related to the extermination of the Jews, and, further, that he could not be held accountable for any of the German government's actions after he left Germany for Scotland in the spring of 1941.

On September 30, 1946, Hess was convicted of crimes against peace and conspiracy to commit crimes—although not specifically war crimes or crimes against humanity—and sentenced on October 1 to life in prison at the Spandau military prison in Berlin. There Hess stayed for the next forty-one years, during the last twenty of which he was the only prisoner in the facility, until his death by suicide on August 17, 1987, at the age of 93.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; *Mein Kampf*; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nuremberg Trials

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Hesselblad, Maria Elisabetta

Maria Elisabetta (Mary Elizabeth) Hesselblad was a Swedish nurse and Roman Catholic nun who saved the lives of 60 Jews by hiding them in a convent in Rome during the Holocaust for over half a year. Born the fifth of 13 children on June 4, 1870, in Fåglavik, near Gothenburg, Sweden, she was raised as a Lutheran. With a deteriorating economic situation in Sweden she went to work when aged 16, but two years later, in 1888, she left for the United States. Here, she studied nursing in New York; at the same time she became interested in the tenets of Roman Catholicism, and converted several years later, in 1902. Two years later she went to Rome, where she joined the Carmelite religious community before establishing the Bridgettine order on September 8, 1911. The Bridgettines had been founded in the 14th century by Saint Bridget, who was canonized in 1391, but the order had declined after the Reformation. Hesselblad took the Bridgettine Sisters back to Sweden in the early 1920s, before returning to Rome in 1931, when she received the Holy See's permission to house her order there. She now became Mother Superior of the Monastery of the Order of Salvatore di Santa Brigida in Rome's Piazza Farnese.

During World War II, from December 1943 until June 4, 1944, she used her position and the monastery to offer refuge to twelve members of two Jewish families, the Pipernos and the Seds. These families had been desperately searching for a refuge in northern Italy after the surrender of Italy on September 8, 1943, and its subsequent occupation by the Germans. Returning to Rome, they found their way to the Monastery of Salvatore di Santa Brigida. At this time it was not known that they were Jewish, but in January 1944 Mother Maria Elisabetta learned of their identity and, rather than turning them in, went out of her way to ensure that they would be looked after and that their safety would be secured. She also ensured that others in a similar situation would also be taken care of. Some were Jewish; some were not. For Mother Maria Elisabetta, their status did not matter, only that they were in danger.

While they were in her care, Mother Maria Elisabetta made sure that the children of the Piperno-Sed families fulfilled their religious obligations as Jews, and that they recited their Hebrew prayers. It was symptomatic of her broader approach: she was known to have great respect for the religious freedom of both non-Christians and non-Catholics, while at the same time welcoming any who wanted to convert to Catholicism—though she did not make her assistance conditional upon them doing so. She promoted a movement for peace that involved all faith groups, living her

religious belief to the extent of devoting herself to charitable works on behalf of the poor as well as Jews in Italy who suffered due to Benito Mussolini's racial laws after 1938.

Early in the morning of April 24, 1957, Mother Maria Elisabetta died in Rome, aged 86. Almost immediately, moves were made in Rome to consider the case for her beatification. The process investigating her sainthood commenced in Rome in 1987 and concluded its work in 1990. On March 26, 1999, Pope John Paul II proclaimed her to be Venerable, following which he beatified her on April 9, 2000. Pope Francis approved her canonization in late 2015; the canonization date was determined on March 15, 2016, and was celebrated on June 5, 2016, in St. Peter's Square, Rome. In declaring her sainthood, Pope Francis created Sweden's first saint in six centuries. Mother (now Saint) Mary Elisabetta Hesselblad became only the second Swede to receive sainthood, following St. Bridget in 1391.

After the Holocaust, the Jews she had rescued held very fond memories of their wartime protector, and her actions were remembered with fondness and gratitude. On August 9, 2004, Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust remembrance authority, recognized the actions of Mother Maria Elisabetta Hesselblad for her work in saving the lives of Jews during World War II, when it honored her as one of the Righteous among the Nations.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Catholic Church; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Heydrich, Reinhard

Chief of the German security police and Sicherheitsdienst (SD). Born in Halle, Germany, on March 7, 1904, Reinhard Heydrich believed in the stab-in-the-back legend (*Dolchstoßlegende*), the myth that the German Army had not been defeated militarily in World War I but had been undone by the collapse of the German home front. He also believed in the myth of Aryan supremacy. He joined the Freikorps at age 16 and the German Navy in 1922. Planning to make the navy his career, Heydrich was forced to resign in 1931 following an indiscretion with another officer's daughter. That



Reinhard Heydrich was one of the highest-ranking Nazi officials in the SS during World War II. As head of the Reich Main Security Office, he was directly responsible for organizing and carrying out the Holocaust. In January 1942 he chaired the Wannsee Conference in Berlin, which formalized plans for the “Final Solution,” the deportation and annihilation of all Jews under German control. As “Reich Protektor” of Bohemia and Moravia, he was gunned down by Czech partisans in May 1942. (AP Photo)

same year, Heydrich joined the National Socialist Party and became active in the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) in Hamburg. Heydrich’s managerial abilities and Germanic appearance led SS chief Heinrich Himmler to appoint him as head of the SD. Heydrich soon built the SD into a powerful organization, and by 1933 he was an SS-Brigadeführer.

After directing the opening of Dachau, the first of the Nazi concentration camps, Heydrich helped to organize the 1934 purge of the SA (the “Night of the Long Knives”), in which the SA leadership was liquidated. Feared even within party ranks for his ruthlessness and known as the “Blond Beast,” Heydrich helped create the Nazi police state. He also played a leading role in the November 9, 1938, Kristallnacht pogrom, an orgy of SA violence against the German Jewish community.

Following the invasion of Poland, Heydrich assumed command of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA, Reich Main Security Office), which was responsible for carrying out Hitler’s extermination of the Jews. He established the Einsatzgruppen killing squads charged with executing Jews and members of opposition groups in German-controlled Poland and later in the Soviet Union. Heydrich was also a leading participant at the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942, when top Nazis planned the extermination of European Jewry.

Although he still retained his other duties, Heydrich in late 1941 became the Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. On May 27, 1942, British-trained Czech commandos ambushed his car, seriously wounding him, and he died a few days later on June 4, 1942. In retaliation for his death, the Germans destroyed the village of Lidice and murdered many of its inhabitants.

CULLEN MONK

See also: Aktion Reinhard; *Conspiracy*; Dachau; Einsatzgruppen; Final Solution; Göring, Hermann; Himmler, Heinrich; Kristallnacht; Madagascar Plan; Müller, Heinrich; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Sicherheitsdienst; Vel’ d’Hiv Roundup; Wannsee Conference; Yellow Star

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Hilberg, Raul

Raul Hilberg, one of the earliest major scholars of the Holocaust, was an Austrian-born American political scientist. His examination of the evolution and execution of the Nazi program of Jewish annihilation, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961), detailed for the first time the manner in which mass murder under the Nazis became possible. The work was a groundbreaking piece of research that effectively set in train the academic study of the Holocaust throughout the English-speaking world.

Hilberg was born in Vienna in 1926; in April 1939 his family fled Nazi persecution for the United States. Settling in New York, the young Raul Hilberg attended Brooklyn

College, and when the United States entered World War II he was drafted into the U.S. Army. As a native speaker of German, he was seconded to the War Documentation Department, charged with examining Nazi (and other) archives. It was this that prompted his initial research into the Nazi destruction of the Jews.

After the war Hilberg returned to academic study, completing an MA and a PhD at Columbia University. He obtained an academic position at the University of Vermont in 1955, where he spent the rest of his academic life until he retired in 1991.

The Destruction of the European Jews became Hilberg's best-known scholarly work, though initially he found it difficult to find a publisher. There were still many in the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s who were reluctant to confront precisely what had happened in the Third Reich. He offered the manuscript to a number of mainstream academic publishers, most of whom rejected it on the grounds that at over 1,200 pages long it was too unwieldy, or that as a work of scholarship it was based too exclusively on German documents. Eventually he was successful in attracting the attention of Quadrangle Books, then a small Chicago publisher. It began with a tiny print run, but the book's sheer size and authority meant that it could not remain hidden for long. Added to the fact that it appeared at precisely the same time as the capture and subsequent trial of Adolf Eichmann, the book began to capture the interest of specialists within the academy, as well as among a broader readership. The appearance of *The Destruction of the European Jews* marked an important passage in the historiography of what, later in the decade, came to be called the Holocaust.

Hilberg's main thrust was that the Holocaust was the result of a huge bureaucratic machine with thousands of participants, and not the fulfilment of a preconceived plan by Hitler. Responsibility was diffused out to a wide variety of agencies, as innumerable instructions from a multitude of government offices were forwarded, formally and informally, to a range of actors. These included not only Nazis enforcing policy directives but also train timetablers, procurement agents, and concentration camp designers, among others. Hilberg established a model, supported by a painstaking devotion to tens of thousands of Nazi documents, of how the bureaucratic machinery of the Nazi state had made the murder of millions of Jews possible. Instead of focusing on leaders, he showed how the Nazi program was the product of a system that evolved over time. Each step in this process was more extreme; in a classic taxonomy of genocide,

Hilberg identified that the Jews were first defined as enemies of the state, then discriminated against and disenfranchised, then had their property expropriated, were moved into ghettos, and, finally, transported to their deaths.

While publication of *The Destruction of the European Jews* in the United States was difficult, it took Hilberg even longer to find someone to translate the book into German, prior to the search for a publisher there. Moreover, Hilberg's methodology was not seen to be sufficiently sympathetic to Hitler's targets, the Jews. Not only did he place his emphasis on the perpetrators rather than the victims but he also showed that Nazi-imposed institutions such as the *Judenräte* (Jewish councils) led some Jews to be complicit in their own demise, an approach that generated criticism in both the United States and Israel.

Overall, however, Hilberg's omission of examining the suffering of the Jews was deliberate; his preference was to examine the means whereby the Nazis could achieve their objective of wiping out a complete group of people numbering millions. When critics attacked his book, therefore, they were in fact often condemning him for a book he did not write, rather than the one before them.

As the field of Holocaust Studies developed over the next fifteen to twenty years, Hilberg's pioneering contribution came to be recognized more widely. Over time, the work was regarded as a seminal study of the process of the Nazi Final Solution. His fidelity to the documents escorted him through all his work, acting as the ultimate guidance for the conclusions he drew, and his influence grew steadily among succeeding generations of Holocaust scholars. Not only Hilberg's model, but in many instances also his very terminology—such as, for example, his reference to the principal actors in the Holocaust as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders—has since been employed widely.

The Destruction of the European Jews, which was produced as a single volume on double-columned pages, was reissued twice more in expanded editions of three volumes (in 1985 and 2003), further reinforcing Hilberg's place as one of the most pioneering and original thinkers regarding the process of Nazi destruction of Jews during the Holocaust.

So committed was Hilberg to the necessity of using documents in historical writing that in a much later work he evaluated the varied types of source material scholars have available from which to rescue the history of the Holocaust. In *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (2001), he attempted to develop an accessible means whereby scholars could amalgamate data and draw conclusions about the

nature of the Third Reich. Survivor testimony, contemporary government memoranda, diary entries, letters of all kinds, newspaper accounts: these and many other sources of Holocaust history were analyzed, with the intention both of alerting readers to their diversity and of showing some of the ways in which the material could be employed. As he showed, engaging in such work is not always an easy task. Moreover, he insisted documents could be as significant for what they do not say as for what they explicitly describe. Overall, he demonstrated that different types of documents can be utilized as accurate sources for the writing of history, showing that *all* material, even the most fragmentary, can be employed to recreate a reliable record of what happened during the Holocaust.

The Destruction of the European Jews was the definitive statement of Hilberg's authority, but he nonetheless saw a need to supplement it with an investigation of the people behind the process he had so thoroughly delineated. The result was *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945*, which appeared in 1992. Here, he put forth his views on the “who,” rather than the “how” of the Holocaust, and, as with his treatment of the multifarious nature of documents, he showed that those involved in the Holocaust were many and varied. While this might seem like a given, it had not yet been treated thoroughly until Hilberg painstakingly articulated the notion. It was to investigate the multifarious responses of everyday people that Hilberg devoted his attention. The project had taken him several years of research and writing.

In 1996 Hilberg produced his memoir, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian*. This was a sometimes passionate account of the testing ordeals that befell him as he strove to advance his career, establish himself in the area of Holocaust Studies, and fend off those who did not agree with his conclusions. Less a vindication of his work than an explanation of how it came to take the shape it did, this book gave an insight into the man behind the writing, and showed just how difficult it was for him to find acceptance in a field that was still original even as he wrote.

When Raul Hilberg died in 2007, he was mourned by generations of students and colleagues who acknowledged his immense contribution to the establishment of a field of study that had not existed prior to his pioneering endeavors.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Bureaucracy; Confiscation of Jewish Property; Final Solution; Functionalists; *Shoah*

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Himmler, Heinrich

Heinrich Himmler was one of the most famous and notorious members of Adolf Hitler's inner circle in Germany's Nazi Party. As head of the SS, Himmler oversaw the mass murder of Jews and other peoples during the Holocaust of World War II.

Born in Munich, Germany, on October 7, 1900, to devout Catholic, middle-class parents, Himmler was a sickly and awkward boy during his early years. He was intelligent, though, and an avid reader, especially of racist pan-German writers who condemned what they perceived as the inordinate Jewish influence in Germany. As World War I progressed during Himmler's teenage years, he became more and more eager to serve in the German Army. He took an emergency high school diploma and volunteered for military service, but the war ended before he reached the front.

From 1919 to 1922 Himmler studied agricultural science at the Technical University in Munich, later taking a job as an agricultural assistant. He became involved with a conservative nationalist paramilitary group known as the Reich Flag but soon moved into the ranks of Hitler's National Socialist Party. Himmler felt he had found his calling within the Nazi Party, and he took part in Hitler's failed Beer Hall Putsch in 1923. With his background in agriculture, Himmler was well placed in a movement that emphasized the mythology of “blood and soil,” and he translated his education into an obsession with selective breeding and racial perfection. These ideas became especially important in the SS, of which Himmler became Deputy Reichsführer in 1927. Part of the paramilitary SA (Sturmabteilung, also known as Brown Shirts) that made up the backbone of Nazi support, the SS was Hitler's personal security service. Under Himmler, the SS rapidly gained a separate and racially elite identity, especially after he became Reichsführer of the organization in 1929.

Through a genius for bureaucratic organization, hard work, and ideological zeal, as well as a fastidious personal life and unquestioning loyalty to Hitler, Himmler had risen to great prominence within the Nazi Party by the time Hitler seized power in Germany in 1933. In 1934 the SS was made independent from the SA. Himmler and his closest adviser, Reinhard Heydrich, were instrumental in convincing Hitler to purge the leadership of the SA. This purge, accomplished through multiple executions during the Night of the Long Knives, and Himmler's appointment to chief of all the German police, rendered him one of the most powerful men in Germany next to Hitler himself.

When World War II broke out in 1939, the SS seized responsibility for the liquidation of "enemies" of the German Reich in the occupied territories. The Einsatzgruppen, special killing squads under the direct command of Heydrich, began the systematic mass murder of Jews, Roma, partisans, communists, Slavic peoples, and others considered to be "subhuman" all over Eastern Europe and the German-occupied territories of the Soviet Union. Those Jews who were not summarily shot were herded into ghettos and then later into extermination camps, where they were gassed to death and burned in crematoria. Himmler was intimately involved in these actions, often personally visiting execution sites and the camps, and it was he who was most active in translating Hitler's murderous hatred of Jews and other peoples into an actual program of extermination.

Meanwhile, Himmler continued to increase his power and accumulate more offices. He became Minister of the Interior in 1943, commander of the replacement army (Ersatzheer) in 1944, and finally commander of Army Group Vistula in 1944. After the July 20, 1944, attempt on Hitler's life by a group of army officers, Himmler personally oversaw the arrest, prosecution, and execution of those responsible.

His loyalty to Hitler was beginning to waver by the spring of 1945, however, as Germany was clearly losing the war to the Allies. Having made desperate attempts to conceal and destroy evidence of his monstrous crimes, Himmler sought to arrange a German surrender to the Western Allies. He hoped to avoid capture by the Red Army and counted on the anticommunist sentiment of the West to negotiate an anti-Soviet alliance that would include Germany. When Hitler found out about these unauthorized peace overtures, he was furious. In the political testament he wrote before his suicide in April 1945, Hitler stripped Himmler of his offices and party membership. The notorious former SS leader was now unwelcome in the new German government that was

negotiating its surrender to the Allies, and he attempted to escape the ruined country through British lines. Himmler was captured, and on May 23, 1945, in Lüneburg, committed suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule.

RICHARD FOGARTY

See also: Al-Husseini, Haj Amin; Blood and Soil; Einsatzgruppen; Gebhardt, Karl; Gestapo; Heydrich, Reinhard; Mauthausen Trial; Nacht und Nebel; Nisko Plan; Operation Harvest Festival; Pohl, Oswald; Reich Flight Tax; Röhm, Ernst; Rosenstrasse Protest; Schutzstaffel; Sicherheitsdienst; Sippenhaft; Speer, Albert; SS-Totenkopfverbände; Sturmabteilung; Waffen-SS; Wannsee Conference; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Warsaw Rising; Wolff, Karl

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Hinzert

A Nazi German concentration camp established in 1938 in the Rhineland-Palatinate region of Germany, not far from the Luxembourg border. The Hinzert facility served several functions. It served as a transit camp for individuals being sent to concentration camps further east (where most were killed); it provided forced labor for the surrounding area; and it held a large number of political prisoners. When it was initially constructed in late 1938, Hinzert housed petty criminals and individuals who were deemed "antisocial" (gay men, communists, and other so-called "asocials"). The original facility burned to the ground in August 1939. A newer, larger facility was erected beginning in October 1939.

In July 1940 Hinzert was taken over by the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps. At about the same time, there was a large influx of political prisoners from France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, a consequence of the German invasion of those nations that began in late May 1940. In February 1942 the SS took over command of the camp. Under the SS, conditions for prisoners, which were never good, deteriorated. SS guards and administrative personnel were notoriously strict, and beatings and other extreme punishments became routine. Rations were also

meager, illness and diseases were widespread, and medical services were virtually nonexistent.

Most of the Jews who went to Hinzert were there only for a short time, as they were sent from there to concentration and death camps further east. The camp never contained a large number of Jews; most of the more permanent detainees were forced laborers or political prisoners. Although Hinzert was not a designated death camp and did not become involved in mass killings, there were nevertheless a number of murders there. In 1941 some 70 Soviet prisoners of war were taken to Hinzert for “interrogation.” Instead, shortly after their arrival during a bogus medical inspection, they were injected with cyanide and died. A makeshift cemetery outside the camp attests to the prisoners who died or were killed there. Some guards also tortured prisoners in an attempt to extract information from them concerning resistance efforts in occupied areas.

Between 1939 and 1945 some 13,600 prisoners were kept—at one time or another—at Hinzert. In late November 1944 the administration of Hinzert was taken over by that of the Buchenwald concentration camp. On February 22, 1945, an Allied bombing raid badly damaged the camp, although the number of casualties remains unknown. The facility remained operational until early March, when surviving prisoners were sent to Buchenwald or were sent on a forced march to Upper Hessen, during which many died.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Buchenwald; Concentration Camps

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Hippler, Fritz

Fritz Hippler was a German filmmaker who ran the film department in the Propaganda Ministry of the Third Reich, under Joseph Goebbels. He was born on August 17, 1909, and brought up in Berlin. The son of a minor official who died in France during World War I, he was only ten years of age when the Treaty of Versailles was signed—but during his teenage years he developed an intense hatred toward the Weimar Republic; in 1927 he joined the Nazi Party and became a member of the SA. When he was old enough, he became a law

student at universities in Heidelberg and Berlin. By 1934 he had earned his PhD at the University of Heidelberg.

In 1932 he became a Nazi Party district speaker and was promptly expelled from the University of Berlin for inciting violence. On April 19, 1933, however, the newly installed National Socialist education minister, Bernhard Rust, overthrew all existing disciplinary actions against students associated with the Nazi Party, enabling Hippler’s return. Hippler then became the district and high school group leader for Berlin-Brandenburg in the National Socialist German Students’ League. On May 22, 1933, following the lead of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels on May 10, Hippler gave a speech to his fellow students, which precipitated a march from the student house to Opera Square with a collection of banned books that were then publicly burned.

In 1936 Hippler became an assistant to the artist, photographer, and film director Hans Weidemann. In this capacity he worked on the production of newsreels and learned the techniques behind documentary filmmaking. His work was undertaken through the Reich Propaganda Ministry, and with it came a promotion, in 1938, to the rank of SS-Hauptsturmführer (captain). In January 1939 he took over Weidemann’s position, meaning that he now worked directly for the minister, Joseph Goebbels. By August 1939 Hippler had been promoted to head the film department at the ministry. Among his tasks he determined which foreign films would be allowed on German screens and what parts of them would be cut.

He also produced and directed movies. In 1940 Hippler directed *Der Feldzug in Poland* (*The Campaign in Poland*), a propaganda film demonstrating the superiority of German arms in the first phase of World War II from September 1939 onward.

His most famous—indeed, infamous—creative work was undoubtedly another feature-length film from 1940, *Der Ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew*), arguably one of the most offensive antisemitic propaganda movies ever made. The film consists of documentary footage combined with materials filmed shortly after the Nazi occupation of Poland. Hippler shot footage in the Jewish ghettos of Łódź, Warsaw, Kraków, and Lublin, the only footage, as it turned out, shot specifically for the purpose of the film. The rest of the film consisted of stills and archival footage from other feature films—footage that the film presented as if it were additional documentary film. The film itself covered four essential tropes: “degenerate” Jewish life as seen in the Polish ghettos; the nature of Jewish political, cultural, and social values; Jewish religious ceremonies, instruction, worship, and ritual

slaughter; and Adolf Hitler as the savior of Germany from the Jewish images that had already been shown.

While the intention of the film was to prepare the German population for the coming Holocaust (even though the Nazis had not themselves yet decided on mass annihilation as the means to destroy Europe's Jews), the movie did not have the desired impact on the German public owing to the fact that a major motion picture, *Jud Süß* (Veit Harlan, 1940), had already appeared to rapturous acclaim, employing top box-office stars and building on a captivating period drama. By contrast, *Der Ewige Jude* was a documentary based on limited original footage, still images, and archive film clips. Unlike *Jud Süß*, therefore, which was a great commercial success, *Der Ewige Jude* was a failure at the box-office. As a propaganda film, it was shown more for training purposes to troops on the Eastern Front and SS members than it was in cinemas—though a number of foreign-language voiceovers were made and the film was exported to countries occupied by Germany.

Hippler, for his part, was honored by Adolf Hitler, and his career was made. In October 1942 he was appointed director in charge of Reich filmmaking, with responsibility for all control, supervision, and direction of German movies. He now became second only to Goebbels, and by 1943 he was promoted to SS-Obersturmbannführer (lieutenant colonel).

Such a career trajectory, though impressive, generated resentment in some quarters—no less than in Goebbels, his chief. The Reichsminister had long kept a watching brief on Hippler, whom he saw as sometimes impertinent, often immature, disorganized, and too fond of alcohol. In this latter area Goebbels had a point; Hippler indeed suffered from an alcohol addiction, and it was for this that Goebbels finally dismissed him in June 1943. Hippler was stripped of his SS rank, and a trumped-up accusation was brought against him of having denied that he had a Jewish great-grandmother. Hippler was sent to an infantry replacement battalion and underwent mountain infantry training. Released from active duty, he was then given the task of shooting newsreel footage as a cameraman until February 1945. At the end of the war he was arrested by the British as a prisoner of war.

In 1946 he was tried for directing *Der Ewige Jude* and was sentenced to two years in prison. Staging a comeback after his release, he collaborated on documentary movies under another name. In a 1981 memoir he claimed that Goebbels was the real creator of *Der Ewige Jude*, having directed large parts of it himself and giving Hippler the credit. Later, he stated that he regretted being listed as the director of the movie because it unfairly resulted in his later treatment after

the war. In his opinion he had nothing to do with the killing of Jews and only shot some footage for a film that Goebbels himself then put together. Moreover, he claimed that at the time he had little knowledge of the Nazis' murderous policies toward the Jews and was not aware of the Holocaust as it was taking place. If he was able, he said, he would "annul" everything about the film, which had caused him such personal difficulties in his subsequent life.

Fritz Hippler lived in Berchtesgaden, Bavaria, until his death on May 22, 2002, aged 92.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Goebbels, Joseph; *Jud Süß*; Propaganda in the Holocaust

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Historikerstreit

The *Historikerstreit*, or "historians' quarrel," was an intellectual and political controversy that took place in Germany in the 1980s, centering on the way in which the Holocaust should be interpreted. The "quarrel" ostensibly began on June 6, 1986, when the historian Ernst Nolte published an address in the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Titled "*Die Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will*" ("The Past That Won't Go Away"), it argued that Hitler's mass murder policies in the death camps, based on Nazi conceptions of race, were a response to Stalinist visions of class warfare and mass murder of specific social groups in the Soviet Union. As Nolte saw it, the German people embraced Nazism as a force that would protect them given the threat they faced through Soviet Bolshevism.

Responding in the newspaper *Die Zeit*, philosopher Jürgen Habermas was scornful of Nolte's argument, asserting that it was a form of whitewashing of Germany's Nazi past and of the Holocaust. This set off a flurry of activity in the German newspapers, particularly in the Letters to the Editor columns, where venomous and often hurtful comments were often expressed by those on both sides of the debate.

In many respects, the debate was an outgrowth of a more extensive, international division that split historians into two

factions: the “Functionalists” (sometimes, though less rarely, “Structuralists”), who argued that the Holocaust evolved, somewhat chaotically, as a result of the nature of a Nazi administrative system that was both ideologically determined and placed under pressure as a result of the exigencies of war; and the “Intentionalists,” who held that the Holocaust was preordained by Hitler, who had a plan for the Final Solution that long predated the outbreak of war in 1939.

As a historiographical debate about the origins of the Holocaust, the main issues revolved around two fundamental questions: first, did Hitler possess a master plan for the annihilation of the Jews that could be traced to an earlier time; and second, was the Final Solution ordered directly by Hitler, or did the decision “evolve” over time through the actions of the German bureaucracy and military? A number of historians from around the world participated in the debate on both sides, with prominent Functionalists including Hans Mommsen, his brother Wolfgang, Raul Hilberg, Christopher Browning, Götz Aly, Karl Schleunes, Martin Broszat, and Zygmunt Bauman. Among the leading Intentionalists were Andreas Hillgruber, Karl Dietrich Bracher, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, Klaus Hildebrand, Eberhard Jäckel, Richard Breitman, and Lucy S. Dawidowicz. Moreover, not all Functionalists or Intentionalists advocated their points equally, with moderates and radicals on both sides.

Generally speaking, the *Historikerstreit* in Germany spanned the years 1986 to 1989. It centered on four main questions: were the Holocaust and other Nazi-era crimes uniquely evil in history; did German history follow a “special path” (*Sonderweg*) leading inevitably to Nazism; were other genocides comparable to the Holocaust; and were the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis a reaction to Soviet crimes under Stalin, as Nolte argued in his original article in 1986?

Historians involved with the debate, on both sides of the divide, included such historians (besides Nolte) as Michael Stürmer, Andreas Hillgruber, Hans Mommsen, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Joachim Fest, Wolfgang Mommsen, Götz Aly, Gerhard Ritter, Martin Broszat, Karl Dietrich Bracher, Klaus Hildebrand, and Eberhard Jäckel. Moreover, the *Historikerstreit* had decidedly political overtones, to a large degree setting historians of the political right and left against each other in the quest to provide an explanation for Hitler, the Nazis, and the Holocaust.

In an interview in 1997 Hans Mommsen stated that the years following the *Historikerstreit* had seen something of a convergence between the two positions, though there seemed to have emerged “a divergence between the

younger generation and the generation to which I belong, which makes itself felt in the realm of Holocaust research, while the conflict between the Functionalists and the Intentionalists is vanishing.” Given this, Mommsen held that the main issue in the debate was still related to the question as to when the Holocaust was set in motion, but that now it was being asked with more science and less passion.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Browning, Christopher; Friedländer, Saul; “Functionalists”; “Intentionalists”; Mommsen, Hans

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Hitler, Adolf

Adolf Hitler was the charismatic leader of Germany who led his nation to bloody ruin. In a failed bid for racial domination, the wars in which his Third Reich engaged led to the deaths of 35 million people. For many people, he remains the personification of evil.

Hitler was born at Braunau-am-Inn, Austria, on April 20, 1889, the son of a German customs clerk and an Austrian peasant woman. An indifferent, sullen student, he dropped out of school to work as an aspiring artist, but twice failed to gain entrance into the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. The onset of World War I finally gave him an outlet to vent his anger, and he left Austria to enlist in the 16th Bavarian Infantry Regiment. For four years Hitler functioned in the dangerous role as a messenger, along the way receiving four decorations for bravery, including the prestigious Iron Cross, First Class. At one point, he sustained serious injuries in a gas attack and spent several months recuperating. Hitler finally mustered out of the German Army in 1919 with the rank of corporal.



Adolf Hitler was the leader of Germany's Nazi Party and Chancellor, then Führer (Leader) of the Third Reich between 1933 and 1945. In his capacity as German dictator he launched the invasion of Poland in September 1939, precipitating World War II—the deadliest conflict in human history. Arguably the greatest antisemite in history, Hitler was directly responsible for the Holocaust of the European Jews through his racial conception of world affairs and how they were to be ordered into the future. (Photos.com)

The German surrender that ended World War I in November 1918 led to the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which imposed severe economic penalties as restitution. These penalties occasioned much hardship on the German people and increased their resentment toward the democratic Weimar government for signing such an agreement. Like many disenchanted veterans, Hitler joined the German Workers' Party, which he later helped expand into the National Socialist German Workers' Party, better known as the Nazis. Hitler proved to be a master of oratory and political intrigue, and became intent upon seizing the national political agenda. However, when an attempted coup against the Bavarian government (later known as the Beer Hall Putsch) was crushed by police and military units during November 8–9, 1923,

Hitler was sentenced to five years in Landsberg Prison. He only served nine months before a general amnesty was proclaimed, and he used the interval to outline his political philosophy in a book, *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*). In it, he openly flaunted his antisemitism, as well as Germany's dire necessity for territorial expansion in the east. However, the book was never taken seriously by critics, and its warning signs went unheeded.

The experience of imprisonment garnered Hitler political respectability, and he resolved to overthrow the established Weimar Republic by working within the system. His great eloquence and nationalist fervor, as well as the country's general economic unrest, led to increasing Nazi representation at all levels of government through elections held during the 1920s. Hitler's goals received a tremendous boost during the global depression of 1929, as more and more Germans turned to him for leadership in this national economic crisis. By 1932 the Nazis had become the largest party in the Reichstag, though they never achieved a majority of votes or seats. Hitler's promises of jobs, security, and a resurrected Germany continued to resonate with the electorate, however, and in 1933 he came to power by being appointed chancellor by President Paul von Hindenburg. When Hindenburg died the following year, Hitler combined the offices of chancellor and president to become the "uncontested leader" (*Der Führer*) of the German nation.

Once in power, Hitler ruthlessly suppressed civil rights, murdered his political opponents within the Nazi Party during the infamous Night of the Long Knives on June 30, 1934, and began to reinvigorate the emaciated German economy. He accomplished an economic revival for the country by expanding the military industrial sector in clear violation of the Versailles Treaty. As a military leader, Hitler some knowledge of military tactics and had a working grasp of military technology. He took a special interest in encouraging fast tanks and airplanes that would eventually form the basis for the extremely mobile "blitzkrieg" warfare of World War II.

As Germany grew stronger militarily, Hitler grew bolder on the international stage. He also routinely disregarded sound military advice from his senior generals, whose perceived timidity he regarded with open contempt. In 1936 he marched troops into the Rhineland, restoring it to Germany, and also formed an alliance with Benito Mussolini's fascist Italy. Two years later, Hitler annexed Austria to Germany. At the Munich Conference of September 1938, Hitler convinced Britain and France to allow him to annex the Sudetenland (an area of western Czechoslovakia containing mostly ethnic Germans). Within six months of the conference, however, he decided to

annex the rest of Czechoslovakia, embarrassing Britain and France and making all of Europe increasingly wary of his expansionist ambitions. In August 1939 he then stunned the world by signing a nonaggression pact with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, which ensured the stability of Germany's vulnerable eastern border. The lack of decisive leadership and resistance to his plans evidenced by the Western democracies did little to discourage Hitler, who by the end of the 1930s was finally ready to gain new territories by force.

In September 1939 German forces attacked Poland. That act precipitated World War II, as Britain and France quickly declared war on Germany in defense of their Polish ally. The newly developed blitzkrieg tactics worked brilliantly, and Poland was crushed in a matter of weeks. Despite the declaration of war, however, France and Britain took no offensive action. Hitler used the hiatus to shift his forces westward, and by June 1940, France had been conquered and British troops chased off the continent at Dunkirk in northern France. Owing to the ineptitude of Luftwaffe commander Hermann Göring, however, Germany lost the Battle of Britain (the German Luftwaffe's attack to weaken Britain before a land invasion by the German Army), and an invasion of Britain had to be postponed—as it turned out, indefinitely.

Hitler instead turned his attention to other parts of Europe. Greece and Yugoslavia were subdued, along with most of North Africa, before Hitler committed his single biggest mistake of the war.

In June 1941, in Operation Barbarossa, German forces launched an all-out offensive against the Soviet Union, in open disregard of the nonaggression pact. Initial Russian casualties were colossal, and the Red Army was driven back deep into Russia's interior. When Hitler refused to allow his men to retreat from Russia for the winter, the Soviets counter-attacked at Moscow, inflicting the first real German defeat on land.

Hitler was so enraged that he sacked most of his leading generals, remained contemptuous of the rest, and appointed himself as commander in chief of the armed forces. For the next four years, Germany waged a losing war in the east against superior numbers of Soviet forces, and in late 1941 Hitler compounded his mistakes by declaring war on the United States after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. As a sign of his growing degeneration, he began relying more on astrology than the opinions of his senior generals when making major decisions.

In addition to waging a war of aggression, Hitler embarked on what was arguably the greatest crime against humanity ever committed. Having espoused the notion of a

racially pure (or Aryan) nation, he turned his hatred of Jews into a national policy of mass extermination through creation of numerous death camps. Jews were deported from occupied countries, used as slave labor, and then dispatched in gas chambers when unable to work further. Thus an estimated 6 million Jews perished in Hitler's "Final Solution," also known as the Holocaust.

By 1944 several attempts had been made on Hitler's life, including one by Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, who exploded a bomb at Hitler's East Prussian headquarters. By now the Third Reich's days were clearly numbered, but Hitler embarked on several desperate gambits to stave off defeat. He directed construction of numerous "super weapons," including jet fighters, pilotless bombs, and guided missiles, in a spectacular but futile attempt to turn the tide of the war back to Germany's favor. After surviving the July 1944 assassination attempt, he squandered Germany's final military reserves in the ill-fated Battle of the Bulge in December of that year but failed to defeat the Western Allies. By April 1945 the vengeful Soviet Army had all but surrounded Berlin, and Hitler was a virtual captive in his command bunker. He had always declared that Germany would fight "until five past midnight," but on April 30, 1945, he and his wife of a few hours, his longtime mistress Eva Braun, committed suicide rather than face capture. Thus, the vaunted Third Reich, which the Nazis boasted would last 1,000 years, collapsed in utter ruin after only 12 years.

JOHN C. FREDRIKSEN

See also: Austria; Death Camps; Fascism; Final Solution; Führerprinzip; *The Great Dictator*; Keitel, Wilhelm; *Mein Kampf*; National Socialism; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nazism and Germany; Operation Barbarossa; "Racial Hygiene"; Third Reich; World War II

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Hitler Youth

The Hitler Youth was an organization established by Adolf Hitler to indoctrinate German children into the ideology of the Nazi Party. Young people were a dynamic yet malleable force that Hitler believed could be a powerful influence in propelling forward the Nazi ideology of total German unity.



The Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*) was the Nazi Party's youth organization. Comprised of boys aged from 14 to 18, between 1933 and 1945 it was the only youth organization permitted in Germany. It was intended that the Hitler Youth would condition boys into a life of sacrifice for the Fatherland, preparing them for military service and blind obedience to the Führer. Its female equivalent was the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*). This picture is of a Hitler Youth parade from 1936. (Universal History Archive/Getty Images)

Hitler founded his *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) in 1926. After the Nazis took over the government in 1933 and the public schools eventually all taught the principles of Nazism, the Hitler Youth took care of children's spare time. The organization was later run by Baldur von Schirach, who managed all the country's youth programs. By 1935 about 60% of all German boys were members of the Hitler Youth. Membership became compulsory for all "Aryan" German boys on July 1, 1936, when the organization became an official agency of the state.

When a boy turned the age of 10, he registered with the authorities, who investigated his background to determine that he was racially "pure." If he qualified for inclusion, he entered the *Deutsches Jungvolk* (German Young People). After the boy's 13th birthday, he joined the Hitler Youth with much ceremony that marked a new stage in life. At that age, boys were also asked to make a statement of faith. When a boy reached the age of 18, he became eligible to join the Nazi Party and was henceforth obliged to serve as a public servant or in the military until the age of 21.

Boys in the Hitler Youth were taught all the principles of the Nazi Party, including Aryan superiority and antisemitism. The qualities of dedication, comradeship, and obedience also were encouraged and awarded. A similar group for girls, called the League of German Girls, promoted more feminine Nazi qualities, such as homemaking and motherhood.

The Hitler Youth dissolved after World War II, although there are several neo-Nazi groups that declare themselves the descendants of the organization.

KELLIE SEARLE

See also: League of German Girls; Nazi Book Burning; "Racial Hygiene"; Scholl, Hans and Sophie

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Hitler's Willing Executioners

Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust is a controversial book written by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen concerning the genesis and causes of the Holocaust in Germany. Published in 1996, the book is largely a rebuttal of Christopher Browning's 1992 book *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. It stemmed from Goldhagen's doctoral dissertation at Harvard University. Goldhagen had savagely criticized Browning's work since it first appeared in print, claiming that every major premise of it was faulty and declaring it as unhistorical because it downplayed or ignored larger trends and traits in German culture that had given birth to the Holocaust. It is worth noting that Goldhagen is not a historian but rather a political scientist. He is also 15 years younger than Browning, who by 1996 had already published an impressive body of work on Germany and the Holocaust.

Goldhagen asserts that nearly all Germans were, as his title suggests, "willing executioners" and were not accidental killers caught up in the pressure of the moment, as Browning suggests. Germans behaved as they did, Goldhagen argues, because of their unique culture and history, which included what he terms "eliminationist antisemitism." Further, he states that this particularly virulent form of antisemitism

was entirely unique to Germany, and that "ordinary" Germans were willing and perhaps even content to kill Jews because it was ingrained in their cultural DNA. The problem with this line of thinking, of course, is that there was virulent antisemitism in other nations before and during World War II, which would seem to argue against it being a uniquely German phenomenon. There were certainly other Europeans who willingly and even happily contributed to the Holocaust. And since World War II, genocides committed by other groups far removed from Germany or Europe have behaved in a similarly abhorrent fashion.

Not surprisingly, Goldhagen's book generated a wide array of reactions, many of them negative. Most historians dismissed the book as being badly flawed, unresponsive to the larger body of work on the subject, too emotional and pedantic, and overly focused on refuting Browning's thesis. Other critics charged that Goldhagen simply ignored decades of past research in order to bolster his own interpretation. One Holocaust scholar wrote that "there simply was no general, murderous, racist antisemitic norm in Germany in the 19th century."

Despite its many critics, Goldhagen's book became quite popular and sparked a lively and important scholarly debate that went on for several years after its publication. There are certainly important and cogent points to be found in Goldhagen's work which, when added to other interpretations and approaches, can help foster a broader and deeper understanding of the Holocaust.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Antisemitism; Browning, Christopher; Einsatzgruppen; Final Solution; "Intentionalists"; "Ordinary Men"; Reserve Police Battalion 101

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Hlinka Guard

The Hlinka Guard was a Slovakian militia operating between 1938 and 1945, created by Catholic priest and Slovakian nationalist Andrej Hlinka. It was modeled after the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's Black Shirts and was controlled by the Hlinka Slovak People's Party (*Hlinkova slovenská*

Ľudová strana), or HSSP. The Hlinka Guard was also responsible for rampant antisemitism in Slovakia, with many of its followers believing that Jews were responsible for the ceding of southern Slovakia to Hungary after World War I.

The Hlinka Guard was officially recognized on October 8, 1938, but the roots of a Slovakian nationalist force can actually be traced as far back as the 1920s with the emergence of the *Domobrona* (colloquially, People's Defense), which lasted from 1923 to 1927 until it was forced to disband by the Czechoslovakian government. While the Hlinkas were officially created in October 1938, groups wearing the black uniforms could be seen in Slovakia as early as July of that year, when Hitler demanded that Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland regions become incorporated into Nazi Germany's empire as a result of the Munich Agreement.

Given that it was founded by a Catholic priest, the Hlinka Guard saw most of its adherents coming from Slovakian Catholics, particularly at the start. Andrej Hlinka created the guard as a bulwark for Slovakian independence within Czechoslovakia. However, a more radical wing of the HSSP was led by Vojtech Tuka, who had formed the *Domobrona* back in 1923. His ties to the German National Socialist Party led to its dissolution by the Czechoslovakian government.

Karol Sidor became the Hlinka Guard's first commander following its consolidation at the beginning of October 1938. On October 29, 1938, the Hlinka Guard became the only political group to undergo military training. Many members of the guard trained with SS troops in Germany. While the Hlinka Guard was originally intended as a military police force inside Slovakia, it was also responsible for the constant harassment of the Jewish community. Intended to protect its citizens, the Hlinka Guard was also responsible for balancing against the Czechoslovakian police forces.

Both the Nazis and the Slovaks, particularly the nationalists, wanted to break apart Czechoslovakia; Germany for military alliance purposes, Slovakia for the purpose of achieving independence. When Nazi Germany invaded Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939, the Slovakian government claimed independence, and on March 15, 1938, Alexander Mach became both prime minister of Slovakia and leader of the Hlinka Guard. As a result, the Hlinka Guard became a key collaborator and ally with Germany's Nazi regime all the way through to 1945.

With a new pro-Nazi government in place, the Hlinka Guard was responsible for the looting and confiscation of Jewish properties and the desecration of synagogues and cemeteries. Accounts of the Hlinka Guard describe them as being as violent as the German SS or the Romanian Iron

Guard. During the war years, the Hlinka Guard was responsible for helping the Nazis in the deportation of Slovak Jews to Nazi concentration camps such as Auschwitz.

By October 1942 the Hlinka Guard had overseen the deportations of more than 60,000 Slovak Jews to their deaths. A total of 19,000 Jews remained in Slovakia, but only because they had exemption papers. Some 3,500 Jews were removed to labor camps, and only 10,000 avoided deportation because they fled to Hungary.

In August 1944 the Slovak National Uprising, an armed insurrection organized by the Slovak communist partisan resistance movement, sought to overpower the SS and overthrow the collaborationist government of Father Jozef Tiso. The rebels were largely defeated by German forces, and in the aftermath of the uprising the SS took over the Hlinka Guard and began training it for an internal policing function and to range against partisans and Jews. With the end of the war in 1945, the Hlinka Guard was disbanded and many of its members were arrested and tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Collaboration; Czechoslovakia; Slovakia; Tiso, Jozef

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HMT *Dunera*

The Hired Military Transport (HMT) *Dunera* was a ship sent from Britain to Australia in 1940 for the purpose of removing enemy alien internees (Germans and Italians) from British areas vulnerable to Nazi attack, thereby helping to secure Britain from possible fifth columnist penetration.

A ship displacing 12,615 tons, the *Dunera* carried a total of 2,732 internees, together with 141 guards and crew. The majority of those on board, though technically enemy aliens by virtue of their nationality as Germans, Austrians, or Czechs, were, in actuality, refugee Jews who had found sanctuary in

Britain prior to the outbreak of war on September 3, 1939. The Australian government had agreed to house them and guard them in internment camps (at British expense) but not to permit them to be released in Australia. When the British government realized its mistake, it dispatched an officer, Major Julian David Layton, to Australia to arrange their compensation and repatriation to Britain. Those who did not wish to brave the perils of possible Nazi attack on the high seas could remain in Australia, but they had to stay interned. All the internees were male; many were in their 20s, and some were as young as 16—hence their nickname: the “Dunera Boys,” which remained for the next seven decades, even as they aged.

The Dunera Boys were joined in internment by a second, smaller contingent of internees, Germans and Austrian Jewish refugee families evacuated from Singapore on the *Queen Mary* in September 1940, in the face of the Japanese threat. Their Australian experience was, in many respects, identical to that of the Dunera Boys, save that they included women and small children. Ultimately, all those opting to stay in Australia were released. Most of the “Boys” joined the Australian Army, in a specially raised unit called the 8th Employment Company. It was this military service that qualified them for permanent residency, then citizenship, at the war’s end.

Although the journey of the *Dunera* was itself quite shocking—the guards, who had seen some of the hardest fighting around Dunkirk, believed the internees to be Nazi saboteurs and spies, and treated them with such brutality that the *Dunera* became known as a “floating concentration camp”—once the Dunera Boys arrived in Australia they were able to make new lives for themselves in the new country. Saved from the Nazis twice (first by leaving Germany, then by leaving blitz-ravaged Britain), the Dunera Boys of 1940 became the harbingers of the multicultural Australia that was to receive its kick-start after the war. Many went on to become professors, company founders and directors, judges, senior public servants, and leading members of their professions.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: British Response to the Holocaust

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Ho Feng-Shan

Ho Feng-Shan was one of the first diplomats to save Jews by issuing them visas to escape the Holocaust. Between 1938 and 1940 he was responsible for saving thousands of Jews in Nazi-occupied Austria.

He was born into a poor family in rural Yiyang, Hunan province, on September 10, 1901. His father died when he was seven, and his family was assisted by the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, which enrolled him at its mission school. An excellent student, the foundation he received here enabled him to go on to further study—first, at the College of Yale-in-China, after which he was accepted into the University of Munich in 1928. By 1932 he had earned a PhD in political economy, graduating *magna cum laude*.

In 1935 Ho began his career as a diplomat representing the Republic of China, with an initial posting to Ankara, Turkey. In the spring of 1937 he was placed as first secretary to the Chinese legation in Vienna, but when Nazi Germany invaded Austria in March 1938 and the country became absorbed into the German Reich, the legation was transformed into a consulate. In May 1938 Ho Feng-Shan was appointed to the post of consul-general. The staff comprised Ho and one other officer, who had the title of vice-consul.

Ho found the Vienna posting an ideal location. Fluent in both English and German, he was an active participant in the social scene, often called upon to speak in public about Chinese culture and customs. He developed a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, many of whom, given the groups among whom he was associating, were Jewish.

After the Anschluss, however, Austria’s Jews became subjected in the space of six weeks to all the same antisemitic measures that had befallen German Jewry across the previous five years. Desperate to leave the country, Austria’s Jews began looking for any country that would accept them, at a time when few were prepared to.

The situation then intensified to major crisis proportions after the November pogrom, known as the Kristallnacht, of November 9–10, 1938. Ho was shocked by the nature of Nazi violence and experienced something of the Nazis’ racism himself when he was at one stage held at gunpoint by Nazi thugs searching for Jews. He identified that the Jews of Austria were in extreme danger, and that he could help them to get out.

The government of China was far from convinced that this was a matter requiring Chinese involvement; in fact, China’s leader, Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi), flirted with Germany’s Nazi government throughout the 1930s. He employed German military advisers in his struggle against

both the Japanese invaders and the Chinese communists, and purchased large quantities of weapons from Germany.

Against this background, it was perhaps not surprising that he wanted to maintain good relations with Germany and did not oppose Hitler's racial policies. Accordingly, the Chinese ambassador to Berlin, Chen Jie, instructed Ho Feng-Shan in Vienna that he was not to issue visas to Jews.

Ho, however, acting against Chen Jie's explicit orders, began issuing visas for Shanghai. Although he was convinced that most would not actually go there, he knew that possession of such a document was considered sufficient to enable Jews to purchase a ship ticket and leave Austria.

His efforts were assisted by contributions made by American relief organizations, which at that stage were trying desperately to assist Jews to get out. Ho was forced to maintain contact with these organizations covertly, as he had been forbidden from helping Jews.

For continuing to issue visas despite a direct order for him not to do so, a black mark, or "demerit," was entered into Ho's personnel file in 1939. He continued issuing visas, however, until recalled to China in May 1940. It is not known how many visas he actually authorized prior to then. He issued his 200th visa in June 1938 and signed number 1,906 on October 27, 1938. There is solid room for speculation, therefore, that in the ensuing months until his departure from Vienna, many, many more, probably numbering in the thousands, would have been issued.

Ho went on to represent China in a number of diplomatic posts in Egypt, Mexico, Bolivia, and Colombia. In 1949 he chose to remain loyal to the Republic of China rather than recognize the newly victorious People's Republic of China. He retired in 1973 and moved to the United States, settling in San Francisco. Here he became a founding member of the Chinese Lutheran Church and wrote his memoirs, *Forty Years of My Diplomatic Life*, published in 1990. Explaining his actions in helping the Jews of Austria against the instructions of his own government, he expressed the view that "I thought it only natural to feel compassion and to want to help. From the standpoint of humanity, that is the way it should be."

On August 7, 2000, he was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his courage in issuing Chinese visas to Vienna's Jews. Ho Feng-Shan died at his home in San Francisco, California, on September 28, 1997, aged 96.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Austria; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Hoess, Rudolf

Rudolf Hoess was the commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp from 1940 to 1943. Born on November 25, 1900, in Baden-Baden, Germany, he grew up in a strict Roman Catholic household, and his family wanted him to train for the priesthood. During World War I he was eager to join the army but instead joined the Red Cross in 1916 since he was too young to volunteer to fight. He quickly tired of this and lied about his age so he could join the army. He was posted to the Middle Eastern Front and served in Turkey and Palestine. Hoess was wounded twice and was awarded the Iron Cross and other decorations. After the war, he visited the Holy Land, where his faith was shaken by the traffic in holy relics.

Hoess returned to Germany and, as with many of his contemporaries, had no idea of what to do with his life. Like many young veterans, he joined a Freikorps group and found himself fighting Poles and Lithuanians in the Baltic lands. Hoess was completely at home in the right-wing militaristic milieu in which the Freikorps operated. He was rabidly conservative, racist, and extremely nationalistic. He joined the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the Nazis, in 1922 and plunged into street fighting against communists and "traitors." In June 1923 he was arrested for beating a man to death for turning a "patriot" over to the French for crimes committed during the Ruhr occupation. He was sentenced to prison for 10 years and remained in prison until July 1928.

Hoess married Hedwig Hensel in 1929 and ultimately had five children (they later lived at Auschwitz with him). He emerged from prison a hero to right-wing nationalists but retired to private life and turned away from active politics until Heinrich Himmler asked him to join the SS in 1934. Hoess's life changed forever when he agreed.

Hoess's first job in the SS was as a noncommissioned officer among the guards at Dachau concentration camp. He was a model guard and worked his way up the ranks. In August 1938 he was transferred to the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen and was made commandant in December 1939. Hoess paid such close attention to detail and was



Rudolf Hoess (also spelled Höss) was commandant of Auschwitz extermination camp in World War II. In this capacity, he was most directly responsible for carrying out Hitler's plan for the "Final Solution" of the Jews, that is, the systematic extermination of the Jewish population of Nazi-occupied Europe. It was Hoess who introduced Zyklon-B into the killing process, in so doing making Auschwitz the largest murder site in the history of the world. After the war he was captured, tried in Warsaw, and sentenced to hang for crimes against humanity. This image shows him at Fürth Airport in Germany, on his way to Warsaw for trial. (AP Photo)

capable of such concentrated work that when Himmler decided to create a new camp at Auschwitz, Poland, in April 1940, he appointed Hoess as its first commandant.

There were already a few shabby buildings at the site when he arrived, but Hoess built Auschwitz into a large, efficient killing machine. In October 1941 he cleared a huge area around Auschwitz and built a second camp, Auschwitz II, called Birkenau, which became Auschwitz's killing center. Hoess built a third camp, Auschwitz III, or Monowitz, in May 1942 to provide slave labor for German chemical firm I.G. Farben's synthetic rubber works. By 1943 Auschwitz was an enormous complex that at its height housed about 100,000 prisoners. It is estimated that 2.5 million people died in Auschwitz—mostly Jews, but also Roma, Russian prisoners of war, and many other nationalities and ethnic groups.

Hoess was intimately involved in selecting the best methods for killing large numbers of people. He participated in experiments in which a truck's exhaust fumes were piped back into a sealed cabin to asphyxiate those trapped inside. When it was decided that trucks took too long to kill large numbers of people, Hoess helped with the implementation of the gas chambers. Ultimately, he found a fumigation poison, Zyklon-B, which could kill faster and more thoroughly than exhaust fumes. Hoess was efficient at administrative details and keeping to a strict schedule. This clerk-like adherence to routinely horrific matters ingratiated him with Himmler, who also had the mentality of a clerk.

In December 1943 Hoess was rewarded for his work at Auschwitz with a promotion to chief inspector of all

concentration camps. He traveled all over Germany inspecting and improving the function of the Nazi camps, whether death or slave labor camps. As the German armies retreated across Europe he then began to arrange for the dismantling of some of the camps.

When Germany surrendered in May 1945, Hoess knew he was a wanted man and went into hiding. The Allies actively looked for him, and in March 1946 he was discovered and arrested. He was a witness at the trial of the major war criminals at Nuremberg and then was turned over to the Polish government, who demanded his extradition. He was tried for murder and various war crimes and was found guilty. Hoess never denied what he did, but—like most Nazis on trial—claimed simply to have been following orders and was therefore blameless. He was taken to Auschwitz, the scene of so many of his crimes, and hanged on April 15, 1947.

LEE BAKER

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; Gas Chambers; Mann, Francis; Monowitz; Sachsenhausen

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Hollerith Machine

An electric machine that employed punch cards to tabulate and compile statistics and other information. Pioneered by the U.S.-based International Business Machines (IBM) Company, the Hollerith machine was named for the German Hollerith Machine Company, which manufactured the machines in Germany during the period 1922–1945. The punch cards that were fed into the machines were made of stiff paper that had hundreds of small holes in each one; the number and position of the holes were read by the machine and represented specific digital information. The cards themselves were made by IBM and were sold to the Hollerith Company. It is estimated that IBM supplied as many as 1 billion punch cards per year to the Germans. The machines, which were precursors to modern computers, were used to tabulate German census figures and a wide variety of other government statistics. Some were used to track Jews and

others. The Hollerith machine thus played an important role in Nazi racial policies and the Holocaust.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: “Racial Hygiene”

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Holocaust

The Holocaust is the term in English most closely identified with the attempt by Germany’s National Socialist regime, together with its European allies, to exterminate the Jews of Europe during World War II—particularly during its most destructive phase between 1941 and 1944. While an exact number of those murdered is impossible to determine, the best estimates settle on a figure of around 6 million Jews, 1 million of whom were children under the age of 12 and half a million of whom were aged between 12 and 18.

While the term “Holocaust” has entered common parlance to describe the event, two other terms are also employed, particularly within the Jewish world. The Hebrew word *Churban*, or “catastrophe,” which historically has been employed to describe the destruction of the two temples in Jerusalem, is one of these; the other, utilized increasingly by Jews, is the Hebrew term *Shoah* (“calamity,” or, sometimes, “destruction”).

The first step on the road to the Holocaust can be said to have taken place on the night of February 27, 1933, when the Reichstag building in Berlin, the home of the German parliament, was burned in a fire. The day after the fire, on the pretext that it had been set by communists and that a left-wing revolution was imminent, newly appointed chancellor Adolf Hitler persuaded President Paul von Hindenburg to sign a Decree for the Protection of the People and the State, suspending all the basic civil and individual liberties guaranteed under the constitution. It empowered the government to take such steps as were necessary to ensure that the current threat to German society was removed. In a mass crackdown, hundreds were detained in the first few days, and tens of thousands in succeeding weeks.

Then, on March 20, 1933, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler announced the establishment of the first compound for political prisoners, about 15 kilometers northwest of Munich, on the outskirts of the town of Dachau. Other

camps soon followed, among them Oranienburg, Papenburg, Esterwegen, Kemna, Lichtenburg, and Borgermoor. These camps were originally places of political imprisonment. In their most basic sense they removed political opposition from the midst of the community and intimidated the population into accepting the Nazi regime.

Previously, Jews had often been arrested for transgressing within the framework of the existing political classifications, but from 1935 onward they were frequently victimized for their Jewishness alone. This was due largely to the effects of the so-called Nuremberg Laws on Citizenship and Race. According to these laws, the formal status of Jews in the Nazi state was defined and put into practice. Jewish businesses were boycotted, Jewish doctors excluded from public hospitals and only permitted to practice on other Jews, Jewish judicial figures were dismissed and disbarred, and Jewish students were expelled from universities. Jews were increasingly excluded from participation in all forms of German life. The Nuremberg Laws also withdrew from Jews the privilege of German citizenship. It became illegal for a Jew and a non-Jew to marry or engage in sexual relationships. Life was to be made so intolerable for Jews that they would seek to emigrate; those who did not often found themselves arbitrarily arrested and sent to concentration camps. These arrests did not become widespread until 1938, and in most cases the victims were only held for a short time. The emphasis was to terrorize them into leaving the country.

The first large-scale arrests of Jews were made after November 9, 1938, as “reprisals” for the assassination of consular official Ernst vom Rath by Jewish student Herschel Grynszpan in Paris. The event precipitating these arrests has gone down in history as *Kristallnacht*, the “Night of Broken Glass.” The resultant pogrom was thus portrayed as a righteous and spontaneous outpouring of anger by ordinary German people against all Jews, even though for the most part it was Nazis in plainclothes who whipped up most of the action in the streets. The pogrom resulted in greater concentrated destruction than any previous anti-Jewish measure under the Nazis and spelled out to those Jews who had up to now thought the regime was a passing phenomenon that this was not the case.

Henceforth, Jews were targeted for the sole reason of their Jewishness. Prior to the *Kristallnacht*, Nazi persecution of Jews was not premised on acts of wanton destruction or murder; the November pogrom, however, had the effect of transforming earlier legislative measures against Jews into physical harassment on a broader and more indiscriminate

scale. From now on, physical acts of an antisemitic nature became state policy. At the same time that Germany’s Jews began frantically seeking havens to which they could emigrate in order to save their lives, however, the Western world began to close its doors to Jewish immigration. And, with Hitler’s foreign policy appetite growing and new areas becoming annexed to the Third Reich, the number of Jews coming under Nazi control increased to less manageable proportions.

The outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, saw the establishment of a system of ghettos in occupied Poland from October 1939 onward, in order to confine Poland’s Jewish population. Here, they were persecuted and terrorized, starved and deprived of all medical care. From the summer of 1942 onward, the ghettos began to be liquidated, with the Jews sent to one of six death camps located throughout Poland.

Prior to this, mobile killing squads known as *Einsatzgruppen* (“Special Action Groups”), accompanying the German military during the Nazi assault on the Soviet Union beginning in June 1941, had been at work murdering all Jews found within their areas of domination and control. The initial means by which they operated was to round up their captive Jewish populations—men, women, and children—take them outside of village and town areas, forcing the victims themselves to dig their own mass graves, and then shooting them to death. When the repetition of that activity proved psychologically troublesome, mobile gas vans using carbon monoxide poisoning were brought in both to remove the intimacy of contact and to sanitize the process. While technologically at times quite inefficient, from an economic perspective it was cost-effective regarding the use of both men and material.

It is estimated that between 1941 and 1943 the *Einsatzgruppen* were responsible for the deaths of more than 1 million Jews. It is not known precisely when the decision to exterminate the Jews of Europe was made, though best estimates settle on sometime in the early fall of 1941. At a conference held at Wannsee, Berlin, on January 20, 1942, the process was systematized and coordinated among Nazi Germany’s relevant government departments, and in the months following a number of camps were established in Poland by the Nazis for the express purpose of killing large numbers of Jews. These six camps—Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chełmno, Majdanek, Sobibór, and Treblinka—were a departure from anything previously visualized, in both their design and character. With the exception only of Auschwitz, these camps were different from all others in

that they did not perform any of the functions—political, industrial, agricultural, or penal—attributed to those farther west or north. These were the *Vernichtungslager*, the death (or extermination) camps.

The death camps were institutions designed to methodically and efficiently murder millions of people, specifically Jews. These mass murders took place in specially designed gas chambers, employing either carbon monoxide from diesel engines (either in fixed installations or from mobile vans), or crystallized hydrogen cyanide (known as Zyklon-B), which on contact with air oxidized to become hydrocyanic (or prussic) acid gas.

As the Nazi armies on the Eastern Front began to retreat before the advancing Soviet forces (and later from American and British troops in the west), renewed efforts were made at annihilating Jews while there was still time. Then, in March 1944, a shock of cataclysmic proportions fell upon the Jews of Hungary, the last great center of Jewish population still untouched by the Holocaust. Some 400,000 Jews were murdered in the space of four months, with the killing facilities working nonstop, day and night. This was the fastest killing operation of any of the Nazi campaigns against Jewish populations in occupied Europe.

When viewing this campaign and the means employed to attain it, one reservation must be made: Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibór, and Chelmno had by this time already been evacuated. Only Auschwitz remained to carry out the massive undertaking during the spring of 1944, as April had already seen the start of the evacuation of Majdanek. With the Soviet armies continuing their advance toward Germany throughout the latter half of 1944, the position of Auschwitz itself seemed uncertain, and the complete evacuation of the complex was ordered for January 17, 1945. The earliest date of free contact with Soviet forces was January 22, 1945; when the site was formally occupied two days later, there were only 2,819 survivors left.

Any prisoners still alive in the eastern camps at the end of the war were evacuated by the Nazis so as not to fall into the hands of the advancing Russians. These evacuations have properly been called death marches, as vast numbers of prisoners died or were killed while en route. Evidence that the Nazis tried to keep their prisoners alive is scant; any prisoners who did not make it to their final destination were treated with the same contempt as they would have been had they remained in the camp. Evacuated in the winter and early spring of 1944–1945, they had to contend with bitter cold, fatigue, hunger, and the SS guards, as well as their own debilitated condition, and for those who had already reached the

limit of their endurance the death marches could have only one result. For others, the experience represented yet another challenge that had to be overcome. Often, the Russians were so close while the prisoners were marching away that the sounds of battle could be clearly distinguished, further adding to their distress. When they arrived at their new destination their trials were hardly eased, as they faced massive overcrowding in the camps to which they had been evacuated.

The prisoners, dropped into places like Bergen-Belsen to await liberation through death or an Allied victory, had little time to wait in real terms, though each day dragged by unendingly. Painfully slowly, as German units both west and east surrendered, the camps were liberated. On April 12, 1945, Westerbork was set free. The day before, Buchenwald's inmates rebelled against their SS guards and took over the camp, handing it to the Americans on April 13. Belsen was liberated by the British Army on April 15, and on April 23 the SS transferred Mauthausen to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The next day Dachau was overrun by the U.S. Army. Five days later, on April 29, Ravensbrück was liberated. Theresienstadt was handed over to the Red Cross by the Nazis on May 2, and on May 8 American troops occupied Mauthausen—the last major camp to be liberated in the west.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: *Churban*; Final Solution; Genocide; *Holocaust*; Shoah; Third Reich; Total War and the Holocaust

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Holocaust

Holocaust was a television miniseries written by author Gerald Green that first aired on the NBC network during April 16–19, 1978. Later that same year, Green published a novel with the same title, which was a longer and more detailed story of the one told in the television program. The

miniseries and novel examined the Holocaust by employing fictional stories about the German-Jewish Weiss family, which is forced to endure the horrors of the Holocaust, and the Dorf family, led by Erik Dorf, a Berlin attorney whose wife encourages him to join the German SS to advance his flagging career. Dorf soon finds himself in charge of extermination operations at a concentration camp. Initially, he is tormented by his role in mass killings, but as the story progresses, he gradually loses his moral compass and becomes a willing accessory to the Holocaust.

The head of the Weiss family, Josef, a respected physician, is deported to Poland because he is alleged to be a foreign citizen. He soon becomes a leader in the Warsaw Ghetto, but is sent to the Auschwitz death camp, along with his wife and several other family members, where they are eventually killed in the gas chambers. Other family members endure similar fates, although some manage to escape the death camps. In the end, only a few family members survive. Dorf, meanwhile, is captured by U.S. troops at the end of the war in 1945 and is slated for trial as a war criminal. He ultimately commits suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule.

The *Holocaust* miniseries was critically acclaimed and won an Emmy Award in 1978. Its cast included Meryl Streep, Michael Moriarty, James Woods, and Sam Wannamaker. A few critics, however, claimed that the show trivialized the Holocaust. The novel *Holocaust* was also well received, and Green was awarded the Dag Hammarskjöld International Peace Prize in 1979 for his effort.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz; Holocaust; Warsaw Ghetto

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Holocaust and Genocide Studies

A leading academic journal, published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, that focuses on genocide and the Holocaust. The current editor of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* is Richard D. Breitman, a professor of modern German history at the American University in Washington, D.C. The editorial and

advisory boards include distinguished scholars from both the United States and internationally. The journal is peer-reviewed and began publication in 1986. Over the years, its publication schedule has varied, but currently it is published three times per year (spring, summer, and winter).

Each issue features several in-depth scholarly articles on the Holocaust or other genocides, as well as interpretative essays and book reviews covering recent publications in the humanities and social sciences. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* has traditionally served as the principal journal in which scholars have used the Holocaust as a basis upon which to examine other genocides in human history. The publication instructs readers to examine multiple facets of human behavior, to probe moral issues and dilemmas, to study the interplay of technology and human behavior, and to reexamine the role social and political factors have played in the Holocaust and other genocides.

Holocaust and Genocide Studies is indexed and abstracted by a number of services, including America: History and Life; Arts and Humanities Citation Index; Historical Abstracts; Index to Jewish Periodicals; Sociological Abstracts; and Violence and Abuse Abstracts, among several others.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Bauer, Yehuda; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

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Holocaust by Bullets

The phrase “Holocaust by bullets” describes a phase of the Final Solution that preceded the industrialized mass murder of the extermination camps. It is also the title of a book that has explored and brought to the world’s attention this deadly aspect of the Nazi effort to make Europe *Judenfrei* (free of Jews).

The murder of millions of innocents—primarily Jews—through the phenomenon of the Nazi extermination camps is correctly seen as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Holocaust. The extent of the industrialization of the killing process, such that the sole product of these factories was corpses, is well documented. That Auschwitz is often regarded as the symbol of all that was evil in the Nazi regime

is an indication of how closely the Final Solution is associated with the gas chambers and crematoria of the extermination camps.

This, however, was not the method of mass killing first used against the Jews of Europe, which came, rather, in the form of mass murder by shooting. The use of mobile killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*), though less efficient than the gassing of thousands of victims at a time, was nonetheless sufficiently deadly that it claimed the lives of perhaps 1.5 million Jews, primarily during the years of 1941 and 1942. The killing units followed behind the German army as it successfully pushed east through Poland and into western Russia, areas that held as many as 5 million Jews. The sole purpose of these killing units was to kill communists and Jews, groups that were conflated in the Nazi *Weltanschauung* (worldview) as “Judeo-Bolsheviks.”

Unlike the distance—physical and psychological—that the industrial method of killing of the extermination camp allowed between the killer and the victim, the method of shooting the victim was extraordinarily intimate. The victims—Jewish men, women and children—were brought by carts or trucks to a location where a very long and deep trench had been dug (often by an earlier group of victims). The trench was kept out of sight of the victims when they were ordered to strip off all of their clothes. Then, in groups as small as five or six, or as large as twenty-five or more, they were brought naked to the pit. Sometimes they were forced to lie face down on top of the victims who preceded them, and were shot by their killers who stood on the bank of the pit. More often, the victims were lined up on the bank of the trench and were shot by the killers, standing behind them, in the nape of the back of the neck immediately below the skull.

The victims fell into the pit, on top of the previous victims, presumably killed by the shot. That was not always the case, however, as some were not yet dead. A few were not shot at all, but somehow fell into the pit an instant before the shot was fired. One reason for these errant shots was the unlimited amounts of alcohol provided to the shooters. These victims almost always died of their wounds or by suffocation as other bodies piled up on top of them, and when dirt was piled on top of the pit to bury the bodies. A few of the victims—a very few—managed to survive long enough to wait until the day’s killing was finished and the shooters left the shooting site. Of those, still fewer were able to crawl their way out of the pit and escape.

This was the phase of the Final Solution that has been called the “Holocaust by bullets.” The phrase has become well entrenched in Holocaust terminology primarily because

of a book, written by Father Patrick Desbois and published in 2008, titled *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*. Desbois, born in Chalon-sur-Saône, France, in 1955, is a Roman Catholic priest who undertook an extensive on-site study of World War II’s killing fields where the “Holocaust by bullets” took place in Ukraine. His contributions to the scholarship of the mass shootings in this part of occupied Europe include not only locating the thousands of murder trenches scattered throughout the countryside but also talking with and recording the eyewitness accounts of the non-Jews, most of them Ukrainian peasants, who witnessed these mass shootings because they lived in or near the villages and surrounding forests in which the shootings occurred.

One of the most significant insights of Desbois’s research was the extent to which thousands of people, many of them children, simply because they lived in the immediate proximity of the shooting, were “requisitioned”—at threat to their own lives—to play one of many roles that were critical for the efficient completion of the killing event. According to Desbois, the “requisitioned” were forced to dig the pits; give food to the shooters; extract gold teeth from the Jewish victims, sometimes before they were killed, and sometimes after they were shot and lying in the pits; provide material—lime, sand—to cover the bodies; transport the victims to the killing site; and help to dig up the bodies from the pits once it was decided that they were to be burned in order to eliminate the evidence of what had taken place there. These were only some of the tasks required of those who were “requisitioned” that contributed to the killing process. Desbois was astonished by the large number of people who were forced to perform these tasks—thousands in all—and by their presence at every mass shooting that took place, which spoke to the critical nature of the tasks they performed.

Further, in describing and documenting their role, Desbois created a new category of person who experienced the Holocaust, one who was not fully a perpetrator, a victim, or a bystander. The category of “requisitioned” blurs the line between bystander and perpetrator, because they were bystanders who also performed tasks necessary for the perpetrators to do their work. In addition, the category of “requisitioned” blurs the line between perpetrator and victim, because they participated in the killing process but they also were victimized. Their recorded accounts include many of the elements of victims’ memoirs: the terror, the total lack of power over what was happening to them, the suffering they experienced at the hands of the killers, and the often deeply conflicted sense of guilt and morality that they felt as

survivors. Desbois's account of a young girl whose job it was to tamp down the layer of dirt thrown over each layer of victims, and to do this in bare feet, reveals someone who committed acts that assisted the perpetrators and who was also a victim of the perpetrators.

One other thing that Desbois's research confirmed is that for three days after a mass shooting that was a part of the "Holocaust by bullets," the earth over the trench moved. This observation was almost universal in the accounts of the requisitioned.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Babi Yar Massacre; Collaboration; Einsatzgruppen; Trawniki Men

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Homosexuals

Homosexuals have been persecuted in many countries and time periods over the course of history. It is perhaps not surprising then that in the hate-filled environment of Nazi Germany, homosexuals, particularly gay men, were targeted for arrest, incarceration, and sometimes murder. The Nazis were neither first nor last to persecute homosexuals, though the severity of persecution during the Nazi era was particularly severe within the context of modern European history.

When Germany united in 1871, the German Constitution criminalized male homosexuality in Paragraph 175. In terms of the behavior it proscribed, this part of the German Constitution was very much like laws in other European countries and the penalties assigned to men caught engaging in homosexual acts were limited primarily to incarceration for a short period of time. In Germany during the interwar period, the law prohibiting homosexuality was rarely enforced. In fact, a thriving gay and lesbian culture flourished in a number of German cities, particularly Berlin. Most Germans, however, especially those who lived in rural areas, viewed homosexuality and urban culture in general as objectionable and "un-German."

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, they immediately began to enforce homosexuality laws, despite the fact that

some Nazis were gay. Lesbian and gay culture in the cities ceased quickly as bars and social clubs were raided, gay men arrested and thrown in concentration camps, and homosexuals of all socioeconomic classes harassed and followed. In addition, the Nazis rewrote Paragraph 175. It became a stricter and more punishing law; more behaviors were criminalized and the severity of punishment increased. Gay men could be incarcerated for years.

Thousands of gay men were arrested and sent to jails or concentration camps. Others were put in mental institutions. Still others were forcibly sterilized. The goal of these punishments was either to prevent men from having sex or to educate them to have the "right" kind of sex—heterosexual sex. Nazi racism sought to achieve two goals: increase the number of "Aryans" (whom they believed to be the master race) and decrease the number of people of other races. This meant that all German men and women whom the Nazis perceived as "Aryan" were encouraged to have large numbers of children. The Nazis targeted gay men in part because they were not fathering children. By incarcerating them, they argued, they could reeducate gay men to be heterosexual, to marry, and to reproduce.

Gay men's experiences in jails and camps, however, did not cause them to become heterosexual. In fact, the idea of reeducation quickly became a practice of punishment, and gay men suffered terribly. Sadly, they were targeted for violence not only by Nazi camp guards but also by fellow prisoners, many of whom viewed homosexuality as immoral or simply wrong. Gay men, marked with a pink triangle in concentration camps, were beaten, abused, and murdered. Nevertheless, the Nazis did not aim to kill every gay man they incarcerated—that goal was reserved for Jews.

The Nazis actively targeted gay men for persecution. They less actively pursued lesbians, whose sexuality they considered only a minor threat to Aryan racial proliferation. Nevertheless, the lesbian community as a whole and individual lesbians experienced tremendous repression under the Nazi regime. Gay culture, including lesbian culture, went completely underground. Many lesbians hid their identity by marrying men or pretending they were not lesbian. Some lesbians were arrested and put in jails or concentration camps, where they were marked with a black triangle (anti-social) or forced to work in brothels. This was, however, a rare occurrence.

Gay men in particular and gay culture generally suffered under the Nazi regime and persecution continued until the end of the war in May 1945. Gay men who had been victims

of the Nazis found themselves in a unique position after the war. In many European countries, homosexuality remained criminal and widely stigmatized until the 1980s. Any effort to receive compensation or reparation from Germany could result in loss of a job, family, or even incarceration. It took a number of years for gay men to receive attention as victims of Nazi persecution.

SARAH CUSHMAN

See also: Beck, Gad; Concentration Camps; “Racial Hygiene”; Sachsenhausen; Sterilization; Wiedergutmachung

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Höppner, Rolf-Heinz

Rolf-Heinz Höppner was a German lawyer and *Obersturmbannführer* in the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), responsible for the deportation of Jews and Poles and the settlement of ethnic Germans in the German-occupied area of Poland known as the Wartheland. As a result of a series of memoranda from Höppner to his superior officer, Adolf Eichmann, commencing on July 16, 1941, the Nazi murder program moved to a new level, which brought about indiscriminate mass death by gassing.

Höppner was born on February 24, 1910, in Siegmarschönau, Saxony. He studied law at the University of Leipzig, passing both state examinations. As early as 1931 Höppner was a member of the National Socialist Party and the SS. Initially he undertook voluntary press work with the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) and in early 1934 was hired by the SD as a speaker. He was then involved in personnel and organizational issues, rising to become head of the Central Resettlement Office in Poznan (West Prussia), a position he held until June 1944.

As head of Resettlement, Höppner was responsible for the “resettlement of foreign Nationals,” namely the deportation of Jews and Poles to the *Generalgouvernement* and the settlement of ethnic Germans in Wartheland. In that capacity, on July 16, 1941, Höppner, now one of the leading officers on the General Staff of the police and the SS in the Warthegau, wrote a now notorious memorandum to Adolf Eichmann. In this he summarized a number of meetings that had been held in the local governor’s office in Poznan to solve the Jewish

question in the Reich. Höppner noted that some of the solutions that were suggested might sometimes sound bizarre but that nonetheless they would, in his view, perform well.

One proposal suggested that in place of ghettos such as Łódź, all 300,000 Jews should be concentrated into a massive camp, built in barrack form, where the inmates would perform slave labor. This establishment could be supervised by a much smaller police presence, and able-bodied Jews could be pulled out as required and used for work. Höppner suggested that all Jewish women of childbearing age should be sterilized, so that “the Jewish problem is completely liquidated with this generation.”

Apparently Höppner was aware that such a huge prison system could not be built within a few months. He therefore added a further point, which extended the application of Nazi policy: “The Jews are at risk this winter of starving. It should seriously be considered whether the most humane solution would be to liquidate the Jews unfit for work by any quick acting means. In any case, it would be more pleasant than letting them starve.” It is noted that this liquidation was directed to Jews who were “not fit to work” rather than in relation to “all Jews.”

Five weeks after Höppner’s memorandum, other Nazi policies intruded. The so-called “euthanasia campaign,” known as *Aktion T-4*, had to be interrupted following the emergence of rumors and criticism from the Catholic Church in Germany regarding the murder of those with physical and psychological handicaps. Although a coincidence, it made Höppner’s ideas appear feasible.

On September 3, 1941, Höppner sent a long memorandum to Eichmann expressing his concern that with the expansion of the German Reich a number of racially undesirable groups would have to be deported on a large scale. He proposed that vast areas of the Soviet Union could be used for this purpose after the war. There were 11 million Jews in Europe, but the overall population of “non-Germanizable” Europeans was many times larger than that. Höppner raised the question of whether such “undesirable people” from the conquered parts should be assured of a “certain continuous life,” or whether they should be completely eradicated. In this regard, he returned to the “fact-acting agent” to which he referred in his memorandum of July 16, 1941.

As it turned out, such a “fast-acting agent” already existed—namely, murder by carbon monoxide gas from steel cylinders. This had already begun under Herbert Lange in 1939 in the Wartheland as part of *Aktion T-4*, and it was expanded considerably from the summer of 1941 onward. On December 8, 1941, members of the SS-Sonderkommando

Kulmhof began the systematic gassing of tens of thousands of Jews in Chelmno. Just before this, on November 1, 1941, construction work began at the Belzec extermination camp, followed by two more camps at Sobibór and Treblinka. The “fast-acting agent” suggested by Höppner now took on a life of its own, and saw the ultimate realization of the Holocaust.

On June 21, 1944, Höppner was promoted to Obersturmbannführer and was called to the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin in July 1944 to head up the legal system in Office Group III A.

Höppner was arrested in July 1945 near Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein. He appeared as a defense witness in the Nuremberg Trial of the Major War Criminals, which examined the responsibility of the Reich Security Main Office for the murders of the Einsatzgruppen.

In 1947 Höppner was delivered to Poland for trial and was sentenced on March 15, 1949, to life imprisonment. He was released on December 12, 1956, as part of a Polish major amnesty and went to live in the Federal Republic of Germany, where he worked as a senior civil servant in the Housing Ministry. Unmolested, he died on October 23, 1998, in a nursing home in Bad Godesberg.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Euthanasia Program; Final Solution; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Sicherheitsdienst

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Horthy, Miklós

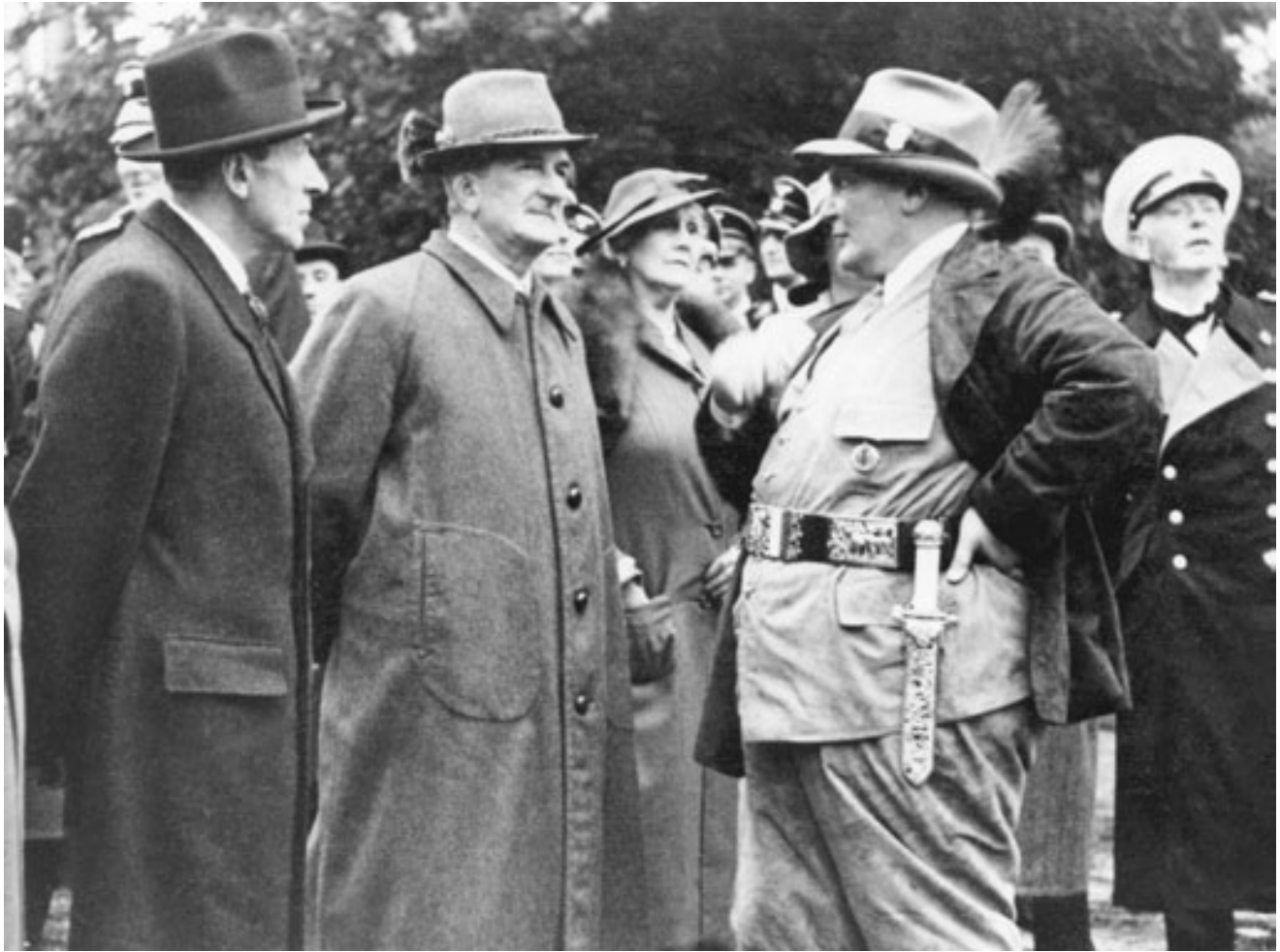
Miklós Horthy was Hungarian regent from 1920 until his abdication in 1944. He rose from midshipman in the Adriatic fleet to become the most important leader in World War I Hungary through the nationalism, antisemitism, and anticommunism that made him a controversial figure in Hungarian history. Yet during World War II, he acted as a balance to more radical elements in Hungarian politics. His policies of pragmatic neutrality saved Hungarian lives and Hungary itself from much of the destruction of World War II.

Horthy was born on June 18, 1868, in the small village of Kenderes, about 70 miles east of Budapest. His family came

from the middle ranks of the landowning nobility, and his Calvinist father and Roman Catholic mother raised him as a Protestant. He spent his early years at boarding schools in Debrecen and Sopron, where he learned French and German. When his brother Béla was killed in a freak accident at the naval academy, Horthy was allowed to take his place. There, the 14-year-old learned Croatian and Italian, required for all naval officers. He showed excellent physical agility and mechanical aptitude. He was commissioned in 1886 and in 1904, while at port in the Adriatic, was tutored in English by the then unknown writer James Joyce. He served as aide-de-camp to Emperor Franz Joseph from 1909 to 1914, and his language abilities came in handy as he greeted and socialized with visiting dignitaries.

Horthy was deeply suspicious of social experimentation and democracy and demonstrated conservative approval of religion and authoritarian government. He was thus an excellent aide for the imperial court but faced trying times as the Austro-Hungarian Empire faced defeat and dismemberment in World War I. Horthy himself received commendation for his service in the Adriatic Sea during World War I, where he was wounded during the Battle of Otranto. He returned to active duty in February 1918 and received a promotion to rear admiral to reward him for the stern measures he used to restore discipline among his war-weary men. In late October, when Emperor Karl announced that an armistice would be declared, Horthy was ordered to hand the Adriatic fleet over to the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later to become the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Horthy viewed this event as a “crushing blow. . . . It was calamitous to relinquish our glorious undefeated fleet without a fight. No enemy lurked outside the harbour, the Adriatic was empty.”

Horthy saw the outbreak of civil war in Hungary in November 1918 as a “Jewish conspiracy,” ignoring the many issues that separated the conservative leaders who hoped to maintain the prewar social structure of Hungary and the leftist groups who believed the time had come for substantial reform in their country. Horthy was horrified as Hungary slipped under the revolutionary influence of the new Soviet Union when Belá Kun organized the Hungarian Soviet Republic in March 1919. Horthy traveled to the provincial town of Szeged, where he was asked to become the minister of defense of a provisional government being formed. He became head of a counter-revolutionary army whose young officers were extremely nationalistic, antisemitic, and anti-communist. This was the army of the “White Terror”—a name it received due to its terrorist methods of combat and



Admiral Miklós Horthy was a Hungarian statesman who served as regent of the Kingdom of Hungary between March 1920 and October 1944. Horthy's foreign policy allied him with Hitler's Germany in the Axis alliance of World War II, leading to Hungarians playing an active role in Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of Yugoslavia, and the Holocaust. This latter role ended when Horthy refused to continue participating in antisemitic acts after the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944. The image here shows Horthy as the guest of Nazi leader Hermann Göring at Carinhall, Göring's country estate. (Library of Congress)

the sadistic punishments it inflicted on villagers who were accused of sympathizing with the communists. Many talented Hungarians fled the country during this period to enrich the culture of other European nations.

Horthy's forces prevailed in Hungary, but the World War I victors, Britain and France, had a hand in designing the new Hungarian government since the Treaty of Versailles (1919) could not be concluded until the situation in Hungary was settled. The separate Treaty of Trianon reduced Hungary's territory by 70%, leaving important natural resources under the control of neighboring countries and stranding 28% of ethnic Magyars in other countries. The treaty also stipulated that no member of the Habsburg family (the dynasty that had long ruled Austria and Hungary) could ascend the Hungarian throne.

Under these circumstances, no king was chosen immediately, and Horthy was named regent, an inevitable choice since his army was the only force that could maintain order in the sharply divided country. He accepted after being given expanded powers and continued to prevent the restoration of King Karl. Horthy's belief in Magyar nationalism guided his policy-making. He enacted legislation that limited the numbers of students at educational institutions to their proportional representation in society. This 1920 law was specifically aimed at Jews, who were traditionally well educated and prominent in government. Moderate land reform was attempted in favor of those Magyars and Christians who had fought in World War I and the anticommunist campaigns. Horthy reinstated corporal punishment and public floggings and reintroduced the duel as a method of resolving disputes.

As the 1920s wore on, Horthy became an increasingly ceremonial head of state but was more active in the 1930s as the hardships of the Great Depression sparked social unrest in Hungary and inspired the extremes of right and left to action. As the German government of Adolf Hitler began to extend its influence throughout Central Europe, Horthy sided with those Hungarian politicians who hoped to maintain their connections with the West. Horthy saw Hitler as a threat to Hungarian sovereignty. Nevertheless, cooperation with the Germans offered the possibility of recovering territory once ruled by Hungary. In return for signing the Anti-Comintern pact of 1936, Hungary was awarded old imperial territories in Slovakia. After the Munich Conference of 1938, it became obvious that Britain would not fight Hitler in order to protect the interests of smaller European nations, and Horthy and other Hungarian politicians had to devise a pragmatic strategy to deal with Hitler.

Once World War II began with Hitler's Polish invasion in 1939, Horthy tried to maintain Hungarian neutrality and a centrist position with respect to the Axis and the Allies. He was ambivalent about the Polish invasion but allowed Polish refugees to enter Hungary through Slovakia. Hungary supplied foodstuffs, oil, and raw materials to the German war machine in return for territory in Transylvania. In April 1941, Horthy decided to join Hitler in invading Yugoslavia as a way of restoring historical Hungarian frontiers. This action was not taken, however, without first consulting the British minister in Budapest. Hungary provided only a minimum of troops for the Eastern Front, and by December 1941, only a bicycle corps was active.

In 1942, Horthy appointed a new prime minister, Miklos Kállay, who shared his anticommunism and also his hope that the Allies might win the war. They continued the pragmatic policy of neutrality, known as the "see-saw policy," in case Germany could not be defeated. Horthy had also made a secret deal with the Allies, promising to protect Hungarian Jews in exchange for the Allies not bombing Budapest. Because of Hungarian unwillingness to cooperate in the genocide of Jews and the government's contact with Allied forces, Germany invaded Hungary on March 19, 1944, and the next day began to organize the concentration and deportation of Hungary's Jews.

After Romania fell to the Allies in August 1944, Horthy looked for a way to withdraw from the war "with honor." Still an anticommunist, he secretly hoped that Budapest would be occupied by the British and Americans, not the Soviets, though he attempted to make a pact with the latter in order to stop the German ravages of Hungary.

Horthy was arrested on October 16, 1944, and abdicated the next day. He said later that this was to avoid a bloodbath in Budapest. He was put on a train and sent to Austria. He was held in custody in Bavaria until war's end in April 1945. In an ironic twist of fate, it was Joseph Stalin who saved him from being tried as a war criminal in Hungary after his release in 1946. Horthy then moved to Portugal with his family and died in Lisbon on February 9, 1957.

MICHAEL D. JOHNSON

See also: Arrow Cross; Hungarian War Crimes Prosecutions; Hungary; Rotta, Angelo; Slachta, Margit; Szálasi, Ferenc; Yugoslavia

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Hudal, Alois

Alois Hudal was a bishop in the Roman Catholic Church whose pro-Nazi sentiments were evidenced not only by his 1937 book that praised National Socialism but also by the extensive efforts he made after World War II to help Nazi war criminals escape Europe to countries beyond the reach of Allied justice.

Born in Graz, Austria, on May 31, 1885, Hudal was ordained as a priest in 1908. After receiving a doctorate in sacred theology, he joined the faculty of the University of Graz in 1914. After serving as a military chaplain in World War I, he continued his rise in the ecclesiastical world and established connections with the Vatican, meeting Pope Pius XI in 1922. With the pope's help, Hudal became the rector of the primary theological seminary in Rome for German-speaking seminarians, the Collegio Teutonico di Santa Maria dell' Anima.

The Vatican's view of Hudal as the primary representative of the Austrian Church allowed him expanding influence in the higher levels of Rome's hierarchy. This was threatened when Hitler and the Nazis came to power, not by any actions by the Nazi regime against him, but by the concerns of his fellow prelates about Hudal's own views. As a rabid anticommunist, Hudal saw the Nazis as the best and last hope to prevent the spread of communism and its existential threat to

the continuation of the church. This strong position of anticommunism, along with a related antisemitism that conflated Jews and communists, served to explain Hudal's support for the Nazi government.

A book written by Hudal and published in 1937, *The Foundations of National Socialism*, embraced the Nazi Party and reflected his conviction that a working relationship should and could be established between Catholicism and Nazism. Its publication put an abrupt end to Hudal's role and power in the ranks of the clergy and resulted in his being ostracized from the Vatican's inner circle, including from Eugenio Pacelli, then the Cardinal Secretary of State and soon to be Pope Pius XII.

If his Vatican-centered cohort pulled back from Hudal, his National Socialist-centered one did not. This was especially the case as the war wound down and Nazi perpetrators recognized the consequences they would face when an Allied victory was final. Hudal and several others helped develop and run what were called "ratlines," referring to locations from which Nazi war criminals could escape Europe—with forged papers, visas, passports, and letters of recommendation, many of which were written by Hudal—and escape the threat of being held accountable for their actions, in many cases resettling in South America, especially Argentina. The infamous Nazi war criminals who benefited from Hudal's help included the commander of the Treblinka extermination camp, Franz Stangl, the "Angel of Death," Josef Mengele, and Adolf Eichmann, who was so central to the facilitation of the Final Solution throughout Europe.

The beneficiaries of Hudal's efforts also included leaders of the notorious Ustashe, the government that was installed by the Nazis in Croatia. It was the Ustashe that, among its many atrocities, committed genocide against the Serbs during World War II. In matters of cruelty, the Ustashe "out-nazied" the Nazis, something that obviously was of no concern to Hudal.

The controversy that surrounds Hudal and his ratlines activities is not whether he supported the Nazi government or facilitated the escape from justice of thousands of Nazi war criminals. Those actions are beyond dispute, given that Hudal made no efforts to conceal his actions, claiming that he was acting out of Christian mercy for the men of the Nazi regime. The controversy, rather, revolves around the role, if any, Pope Pius XII and the Vatican may have played in those actions. As with so many of the issues that have been debated about Pius's response to the Nazi regime generally and his response to the extermination of the Jews in particular, there are two well-defined sides to the argument.

One side takes the position that Pius and the Vatican were not only aware of Hudal's efforts to provide for the escape from justice of Nazi perpetrators, but that they actually sanctioned and funded his activities and the activities of others like him who were dedicated to the welfare of Nazi fugitives. It is asserted that this was done through the Vatican Relief Commission, which, so the argument goes, was enthusiastically supported by the very highest levels of the Vatican, including by Pius XII, and which used the Vatican bank to provide for its financial needs.

The other side of the argument rejects that position as nonsense. Perhaps the strongest point made in this regard is that Hudal himself, in his memoir published posthumously, states that the pope had no knowledge of his postwar activities. This side of the argument acknowledges that Hudal was helping Nazi war criminals escape justice (as were other Catholic prelates and priests), and further acknowledges that fleeing Nazis no doubt managed to sneak into the church's programs to help refugees find a new start outside of Europe, but it categorically rejects the accusation that Pius or the Vatican supported or authorized, let alone financed, Hudal's ratlines efforts.

However the argument may be resolved—and it will probably not be resolved until the Vatican releases all of its relevant archives for examination by scholars—it is clear that Hudal, sometimes referred to as the "Brown Bishop," remained convinced right up to his death on May 13, 1963, that his efforts to protect some of the most barbaric Nazi war criminals was nothing more than what any good Christian should do.

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See also: Catholic Church; Pius XII; Ratlines; Stangl, Franz; Ustashe

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Hungarian War Crimes Prosecutions

On January 25, 1945, as World War II was drawing to a close, Hungary's Provisional National Government enacted an important piece of legislation. Act VII (Decree No. 81/1945), set into effect on September 16 of the same year, committed the Hungarian government to prosecuting those accused of

war crimes during World War II. The act specified that criminals could be indicted even if laws forbidding the alleged crime(s) were not in effect at the time of commission. Consequently, from the time of enactment until March 1, 1948, the Hungarian People's Courts convicted more than 27,000 persons; of 322 death sentences, 146 were carried out. These judgments, alongside other punitive measures such as police internment, expulsion, and denazification commissions, indicate that 3% of Hungary's population and one in ten adult males received some form of postwar retribution. Meanwhile, self-styled People's Courts had already been in operation for several months.

These developments reflected the political conflicts of the years following the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the close of World War I. In quick succession, abortive attempts had been made to establish first a democratic and then a communist regime in Hungary. In 1920 the counter-revolutionary government of Regent Miklós Horthy gained power, the same year that the Treaty of Trianon confirmed the loss of two-thirds of the country's territory. Horthy's conservative, antisemitic government allied itself with Axis forces during World War II, thereby regaining sizable portions of pre-Trianon territory. Hungary officially entered the war in June 1941, sending an army to the Russian Front. Meanwhile, from 1920 onward, the Hungarian government had imposed legislation depriving the country's Jews of their civil rights and, after 1939, drafting them into labor service. Apart from some 21,000 Jews deported or massacred in 1941 and 1942 and some 42,000 drafted by labor brigades, the full-scale extermination of Jews did not begin until after the government of Prime Minister Miklós Kállay tried to negotiate a separate peace with the Western Allies. In response to Kállay's overture, the German army occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944, forcing Horthy to appoint a pro-German puppet government that proceeded to collect and deport more than 618,000 Hungarian Jews. A second attempt to negotiate a separate truce with the Western Allies and the Soviet Union led to the regent's deposition and the appointment of Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the fascist Nyilas (Arrow Cross Party), as head of state on October 15, 1944. It was not long thereafter that surviving German forces and a large number of fascist collaborators fled westward when the Red Army overran Hungary. In the meantime, 564,507 Jews had died either by deportation to concentration camps or by extermination at the hands of Arrow Cross death squads.

Consequently, with the victory of Soviet forces and the flight of fascist occupiers, the demand for retribution was rife, not only because of Hungary's participation in the

Holocaust but also for its collaboration, albeit often hesitant, with Adolf Hitler's Germany. As the people's judge Ákos Major stated, it was the task of the People's Courts to make amends to all Hungarians of honest intent. Nevertheless, retribution, not justice, was the order of the day as postwar Justice Minister István Ries soon confirmed. The People's Courts were consequently little more than show trials wherein only a few major perpetrators were punished but a large number of opportunists and turncoats escaped judgment.

Under Act VII, two types of courts were set up: county-level people's tribunals, which were, in principle, headed by a professional judge alongside five lay "people's assessors"; and an appeal body, the National Council of People's Tribunals (NOT), with a professional judge appointed by the justice minister. The composition of the courts was, however, partisan. Ideally, each non-fascist party was to delegate a member, later supplemented by nominees of the National Trade Union Council. In effect, the unwillingness of politically uncompromised professional judges to serve often led to politically expedient appointments dominated by left-wing groups. Appeals to NOT from the People's Courts were possible only when the majority of judges agreed the appellant deserved mercy and when prison terms exceeded five years unless the prosecutor decided a new hearing was in order.

Legal irregularities characterized the trials. Files and documents were missing, and defendants were often expected to provide evidence against other defendants. Judgments were erratic. For instance, László Radocsi, justice minister from November 1939 to March 1944, was not tried; László Ferenczy, a major figure in the Jewish deportations, received a death sentence; while Gábor Faragho (inspector general of the Gendarmerie, who appointed personnel for the deportations spearheaded by Adolf Eichmann), served as a witness but was sentenced to only light custody on his estate. Generally, defense witnesses were not heard.

Primary war criminals shot or hanged in 1945–1946 belonged to four groups: Horthy ministers, Arrow Cross officials, former guards or officers in Jewish forced labor contingents, and the ethnic German Volksbund. Principles of collective accountability were frequently applied and individual actions seldom investigated. Once the interest of the general public and press had waned in the second half of 1946, however, sentences became progressively lighter and reprieves by the appeal court were more frequent. Other matters, such as inflation, food shortages, and the suppression of the Smallholders Party in favor of communists

increasingly absorbed the populace's attention. Consequently, the People's Courts of postwar Hungary served as little more than a replacement for Horthy's right-wing elite and Szálasi's Hungarian (i.e., pro-fascist) Party with a new pro-Soviet dictatorship. Hungary underwent little soul-searching for its role in the Holocaust and its collaboration with the Third Reich. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that Hungarian courts handed over citizens accused of war crimes abroad to face charges in Romania and Yugoslavia for alleged crimes committed after Hungary repossessed Northern Transylvania, previously part of the successor state of Romania, in 1940, and areas of Yugoslavia in 1941. Nevertheless, in the European context of postwar trials, postwar retribution in Hungary was not atypical of similar developments in other European countries but did distinguish itself by a relative absence of mob violence that overtook countries going through similar transitional experiences.

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See also: Arrow Cross; Horthy, Miklós; Hungary; Szálasi, Ferenc; War Crimes

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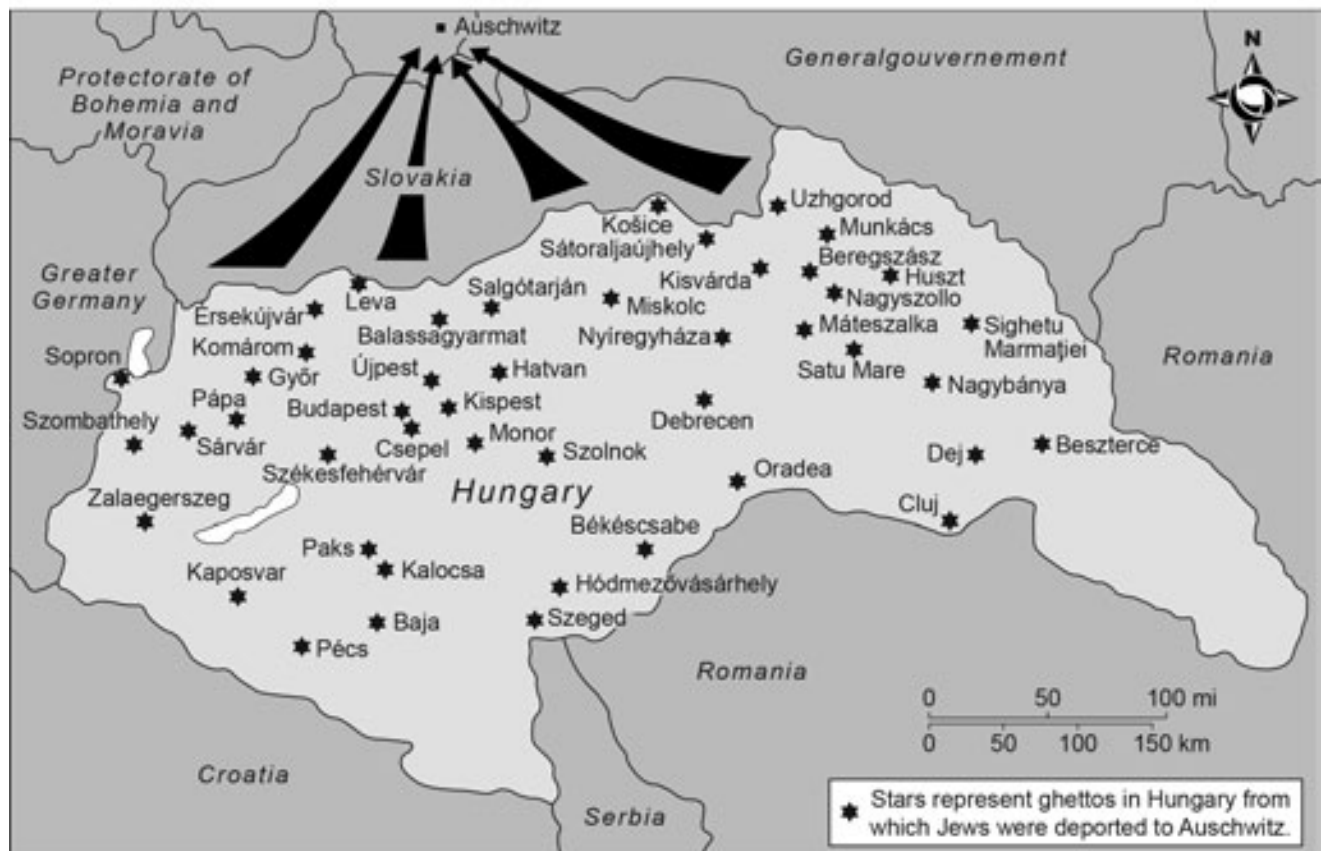
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Hungary

A land-locked country located in central Europe. From 1920 until 1944 Hungary was governed by Regent Miklós Horthy, whose principal goal was to regain some or all of the land that Hungary had lost as a result of World War I. This led him to ally his country with the Axis powers of Italy and

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Germany, which resulted in sizable territorial gains for Hungary between 1938 and 1941. In following its goals of territorial reclamation, the Hungarian government formally signed on as an associated Axis power in December 1940. Thereafter, Hungarian armed forces fought with Germany in Yugoslavia, beginning in April 1941, and in the massive German offensive against the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa) beginning in June 1941. Even before Hungary allied itself with Germany, its government, which contained strong rightist and antisemitic elements, sought to persecute and marginalize Hungarian Jews, who in 1941 numbered about 825,000, including Jews who lived in lands that had been annexed by Hungary between 1938 and 1941.

By the late 1930s the Hungarian government had already implemented so-called race laws that mimicked the Nuremberg Laws in Germany. These revoked equal citizenship for Jews, restricted them from working in certain professions, barred them from civil and military service, and prevented them from marrying non-Jews. Because Jews were barred from the military, in 1938 the Hungarian government established a forced labor program for Jewish males of draft age; before long, this program included all able-bodied Jewish males. Many of these men were forced to labor under impossible conditions, without adequate medical care, food, water, and shelter. Between 1940 and 1944 it is estimated that at least 27,000 Jews died under the supervision of the Hungarian army, which had put them to work on a variety of defense and infrastructure projects.

Just as Hungarian troops were being deployed eastward to take part in the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Horthy regime forcibly deported 20,000 Jews to Ukraine, where virtually all were murdered by the German Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads). These Jews were not Hungarian citizens and came from territories recently annexed by Hungary. In early 1942 Hungarian troops killed nearly 3,000 Jews in the portion of Yugoslavia they then controlled, but the government was reluctant to move en masse against Hungarian Jews. Indeed, Horthy's prime minister, Miklós Kallay, refused to deport Hungarian Jews, even under pressure from Berlin to do so.

The brutal battle for Stalingrad, which ended in an Axis defeat on February 2, 1943, and resulted in catastrophic losses for the Hungarian army, convinced Horthy that the war was lost. Prime Minister Kallay, with encouragement from Horthy, now sought to negotiate an armistice with the Allied powers and exit the war. To prevent this, the Germans invaded and occupied most of Hungary in March 1944, and

although Horthy was allowed to stay on as regent, Kallay was ousted. He was replaced by Dome Sztójay, who was pro-German and was willing to implement fully Berlin's liquidation of the Jews.

The next month, Sztójay ordered that all Jews living outside Budapest (some 500,000 people) be rounded up and concentrated in hastily established ghettos in several urban centers. There the living conditions were appalling, and Jews were frequently subjected to rape, violence, and extortion by troops and militias guarding the ghetto areas. In May the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews began, and in less than two months some 440,000 Jews had been sent east. Most were murdered at Auschwitz or were worked to death at forced labor.

In July 1944 Horthy ordered the deportations stopped, mainly because he knew the Germans' military position had deteriorated. The following month, he deposed Sztójay and sounded out Allied authorities with regard to the possibility of an armistice, which he very nearly accomplished before the Germans deposed him. Horthy was replaced by Ferenc Szálasi, a fascist and leader of the right-wing Arrow Cross Party. Szálasi immediately moved against the remaining Jews in Budapest. In late 1944 several thousand Jews were force-marched toward Austria; many died en route.

After a brutal and lengthy siege devastated Budapest, Hungary signed a truce with the Soviets, who had already occupied part of the country, in January 1945. By the early spring of 1945 German troops had been expelled from Hungary, replaced by Soviet occupation forces. In the end, only about 250,000 Jews—out of the 825,000 who had existed in 1941—lived to see the end of the war. The vast majority of those who died were killed after the German occupation beginning in March 1944.

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See also: Arrow Cross; Auschwitz Protocols; Brand, Joel; Csatory, Lazlo; Horthy, Miklós; Hungarian War Crimes Prosecutions; Joint Distribution Committee; Kasztner, Reszó; Lantos, Tom; Lutz, Carl; *Night*; Operation Barbarossa; Perlasca, Giorgio; Rosenbaum, Pinchas; Rotta, Angelo; Salkaházi, Sara; Slachta, Margit; Soos, Géza; Szálasi, Ferenc; Szenes, Hannah; Vrba, Rudolf; Wallenberg, Raoul; Yugoslavia

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Iceland

Iceland is an island country situated between the North Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean. From 1262 to 1814 the country was ruled by Norway, until, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, it became a possession of the Kingdom of Denmark. This situation remained until 1918, when Iceland became a separate kingdom in a personal union with Denmark. The population in 1939 was about 120,000 people, of whom only a tiny number were highly assimilated Jews.

During the 19th century nationalism began to develop in Iceland, accompanied by a rejection of foreigners. This continued into the early decades of the 20th century, and impacted the country's attitude toward Nazism and the possibility of Jewish refugees seeking a haven in Iceland. Jews attempting to enter the country found a more hostile reception during the 1930s than non-Jewish immigrants from Germany or Scandinavia. Moreover, many Icelanders saw the rise of Hitler in Germany as a potential force for good that could lead to full independence from Denmark.

Remarkably, in 1939 a member of German royalty, Prince Friedrich Christian of Schaumburg-Lippe—a member of the Nazi Party since 1929—was even invited by a group of Icelandic right-wing nationalists (including the Icelandic composer laureate, Jón Leifs) to become king of an independent Iceland. The proposal was considered briefly and had the support of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, but it was eventually rejected due to the opposition of German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

In 1933 a small Nazi-leaning party was founded in Iceland. The Nationalists, a party dedicated to maintaining the alleged “purity” of the “Icelandic race,” soon developed close links to the National Socialists in Germany. With so few Jews in Iceland they were unable to generate a political form of antisemitism, but in their literature and speeches they blamed Jews for all of Iceland's problems. While their perspectives did not translate to success at the ballot box—and by 1938 the party had attracted insufficient support to be able to continue—elements of its agenda penetrated into the political mainstream, such that Prime Minister Hermann Jónasson, in 1938, could refer to the need to keep Iceland “racially pure.”

This translated to Jewish refugees often being expelled from Iceland to Denmark, or placed under restrictive conditions should they be allowed to remain in the country at all. Indeed, in the late 1930s the Icelandic authorities offered to pay the Danish government for the further expulsion of Jews to Germany, if Denmark would not take care of them after they had been expelled from Iceland. Hardly any Jewish refugees managed to get into the country, and fewer were able to remain. Quite simply, Jews were not welcome in Iceland during the 1930s.

Moreover, while their case was maintained by only a small number of Icelanders in the professions, this did not penetrate very deeply. Religious leaders, academics, and authors, for example, often motivated by a xenophobic form of nationalism, did not extend support to the refugees.

With the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, Iceland, as a dependency of Denmark, was declared neutral. During World War II a few Icelanders made their way to Germany and joined the Waffen-SS, while some were known to serve as guards in Nazi concentration camps such as Dora-Mittelbau in 1943–1944. Other Icelanders caught in Nazi Europe, and informed upon for their political views, were murdered in these same concentration camps. While Icelanders who served in the forces of the Third Reich were treated with contempt after the war, those who had belonged to Iceland's Nazi Party were quickly forgiven after the war, and many rose to positions of prominence in the postwar years.

On April 9, 1940, Denmark was invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany, severing communications between Iceland and Denmark. Soon thereafter, Norway was similarly occupied by the Nazis, leaving Iceland highly exposed. Due to Iceland's geographic position the government of Britain decided it could not risk a German takeover of the island, and on May 10, 1940, forestalled the prospect by preemptively invading. In July 1941 the occupation of Iceland passed to the United States under a U.S.-Icelandic agreement. After a nationwide referendum in which 97% of the population voted in favor of independence from Denmark, Iceland became an independent republic on June 17, 1944.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Denmark

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I.G. Farben

On December 25, 1925, six German chemical companies, all with an interest in cornering the world market in the chemical manufacture of dye-making—BASF, Bayer, Hoechst, Agfa, Chemische Fabrik Friesheim-Elektron, and Chemische Fabrik vorm. Weiler Ter Meer—merged (with American Wall Street support) to create the cartel Interessen-Gemeinschaft Farbenindustrie AktienGesellschaft (I.G. Farben). At its high point, it was the largest such cartel in the world and the world's fourth largest industrial enterprise overall. Three of its chemists received Nobel Prizes for their work prior to the outbreak of World War II: Frederich Bergius and Carl

Bosch in 1931; Gerhard Domagk in 1939; and one, Karl Alder, along with Otto Diels, after the war in 1950.

Even prior to Hitler's ascent to power, the leaders of I.G. Farben, under the direction of Carl Krauch, saw "the hand-writing on the wall" and supported his efforts to rearm, remilitarize, and reindustrialize Germany in the aftermath of its defeat in World War I and the devastation caused by the Versailles Treaty of June 28, 1919. On February 20, 1933, he contributed 400,000 Reichmarks (RM) to Hitler's election campaign, representing the single largest sum in the 3,000,000 RM raised overall. He did so at a meeting in which banker Hjalmar Schacht, party leader and World War I flying ace Hermann Göring, and soon-to-be police Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler were all present. Once in power, Hitler continued to reward I.G. Farben for its support and commitment. For example, in all areas conquered and occupied by the Nazis, I.G. Farben took over both the ownership and the administration of chemical factories.

The most notorious of I.G. Farben's industrial involvement with Nazism was its construction of the Buna Werke plant for the production of buna (synthetic rubber) and gasoline, located in extremely close proximity to the Auschwitz extermination camp. Heading this "Auschwitz Project" were two of I.G. Farben's board members, Otto Ambros and Heinrich Bütetisch. The company "employed" upwards of 300,000 slave laborers, most of whom would lose their lives; in turn, I.G. Farben paid the SS, who oversaw the camp, a pittance for each worker. Somewhat ironically, the now-infamous Zyklon-B gas used in the gas chambers (originally invented by German Jewish chemist and 1918 Nobel Prize winner Fritz Haber) was purchased from the wholly-owned I.G. Farben subsidiary Degesch, which had already bought the patent as far back as 1920.

It is thus not surprising that, with such a ready supply of victims, one of the I.G. Farben companies, Bayer, was involved in the so-called "medical experiments" conducted at Auschwitz and elsewhere, supplying its medical staff with experimental drugs (and placebos) to test on hapless prisoners, many of whom died as well. Not only Dr. Josef Mengele—the so-called "Angel of Death"—but others, such as Dr. Carl Clauberg, also used medications supplied by I. G. Farben/Bayer. One example of such practices, discovered in the Auschwitz correspondence after the war, was the use of 150 women prisoners, all of whom died, for which Bayer paid the SS 170 RM per person (negotiating the price down from the original 200 RM requested). The now-acknowledged scientific value of these horrendous efforts has been assessed as nil, given the physical status of the victims and the



I.G. Farben was one of the major German chemical and pharmaceutical companies before and during World War II. A conglomerate of eight leading German chemical manufacturers, including Bayer, Hoechst and BASF, it controlled the patent for the pesticide Zyklon-B, which it licensed to various companies around the world including the German firm Degesch. Degesch, in turn, employed Zyklon-B in the gas chambers during the Holocaust. I.G. Farben owned 42.2% of the shares of Degesch and was represented in its supervisory board. In addition, I.G. Farben exploited Jewish slave labor in its factories at Auschwitz, as shown here. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

unsanitary conditions of the camp laboratories wherein they were carried out.

At war's end, under the jurisdiction of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) held at Nuremberg, Germany, twenty-four directors of I.G. Farben were brought to trial. The indictment against them was filed on May 3, 1947, and the trial lasted from August 27, 1947, until July 30, 1948. It was one of three trials against the industrial giants of Germany; the others were against the steel magnate Friedrich Flick and his company (April 19–December 22, 1947) and the arms manufacturer Alfred Krupp and his company (December 8, 1947–July 31, 1948). The five-count indictment against I.G. Farben involved the planning, preparation, initiation, and waging of wars of aggression and invasions of other countries; war crimes and crimes against humanity

through the plundering and spoliation of occupied territories, and the seizure of plants in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, France, and Russia; war crimes and crimes against humanity through participation in the enslavement and deportation to slave labor “on a gigantic scale” of concentration camp inmates and civilians in occupied countries, and of prisoners of war, and the mistreatment, terrorization, torture, and murder of enslaved persons; membership in a criminal organization, the SS; and acting as leaders in a conspiracy to commit the crimes mentioned under counts (1), (2), and (3).

Thirteen of the 24 directors were found guilty of one or more charges and sentenced to prison terms of one-and-a-half to eight years (including time already served). Ten of the defendants were acquitted, and one was removed for

medical or health reasons. None of those sent to prison served their full term; most were released in three to four years and returned to prominence in German industry as the need for the restabilization of the postwar German economy, especially under the American Marshall Plan, was paired with the need to create a West German buffer to the advance of Soviet Russia and the beginnings of the Cold War.

Collectively, however, the Western Allies made a momentous decision: because of the thorough corruption of I.G. Farben, the cartel was to be broken up and its original constituent companies were to be separated; four of them—Agfa, BASF, Bayer, and Hoechst—became, again, independent entities by 1951, though Hoechst in 1997 and 1999 divested itself of its chemical businesses. Today, these same companies remain enormously successful but their profits continue to dwarf those achieved during wartime.

The former prisoners who rose to prominence included Hermann Schmitz, Georg von Schnitzler, Fritz ter Meer, Otto Ambros (of Auschwitz infamy), Heinrich Bütefisch (also of Auschwitz infamy), Max Ilgner, and Heinrich Oster. Among the acquitted, those who also found themselves again in positions of importance and distinction included Fritz Gajewski, Christian Schneider, Hans Kühne, Carl Lautenschläger, Wilhelm Rudolf Mann, Carl Wurster, and Heinrich Gattineau.

In 2001 what remained of I.G. Farben reached an agreement to cease to exist by 2003, partially as a result of its ongoing failure to compensate its victims and their descendants, though it did agree, after much prolonged negotiations with the Jewish Material Claims Conference founded in 1951, to pay 27,000,000 deutsche marks (DM) to a compensation fund. Part of the agreement was no admission of guilt and a restriction to Jewish prisoners only. Still technically a “corporation in liquidation,” it exists even as something of a shadow of its former self.

Finally, the collusion of American corporations, their leaderships, and wealthy industrialists, not only before the war but also during it, has been largely neglected by historians and politicians given the primacy of *realpolitik*. For example, between 1927 and 1939 the American National City Bank of Cleveland, Ohio, at the time one of the ten largest banks in the United States, floated a bond issue of \$30,000,000 USD. In 1941 it was discovered that the Standard Oil Company under the leadership of John D. Rockefeller had an agreement with I.G. Farben that resulted in a slow-down of other investigations into the production and manufacture of synthetic rubber. It has also been estimated that more than 2,000 cartel agreements were legalized with

American firms such as Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, and others. By 1930 American I.G. Farben’s board of directors included Edsel B. Ford of the Ford Motor Company; Herman A. Metz of the Bank of Manhattan; Charles E. Mitchell of the Federal Reserve Bank; Walter Teagle and Paul M. Warburg, also of the Federal Reserve Bank; William E. Weiss of Sterling Drugs; German American research chemist and industrialist Walter Duisberg; and German American philanthropist Adolf Kuttroff. Many of these same financial leaders also served on one another’s boards as well.

Many, if not most, scholars are of the opinion today that, without the strong support and loyalty of I.G. Farben to the Nazi war effort and its initial successes, World War II could never have taken place, or at least, not in the manner in which it played out.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Auschwitz; Degussa; Flick Case; Gross-Rosen; I.G. Farben Case; Medical Experimentation; Monowitz; Zyklon-B; Zyklon-B Case, 1946

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I.G. Farben Case

In the *United States of America v. Carl Krauch, et al.* (May 3, 1947, to July 30, 1948), Military Tribunal VI tried 24 directors and managers of the chemical cartel I.G. Farben (*Interessengemeinschaft Farbenindustrie Aktiengesellschaft* or Community of Interests, Dye Industry, Public Corporation). Accused were Krauch, Hermann Schmitz, Georg von Schnitzler, Fritz Gajewski, Heinrich Horlein, August von Knierem, Fritz ter Meer, Christian Schneider, Otto Ambros, Max Bruggemann, Ernst Burgin, Heinrich Butefisch, Paul Hafliger, Max Ilgner, Friedrich Jahne, Hans Kuhne, Carl Lautenschläger, Wilhelm Mann, Heinrich Oster, Karl Wurster, Walter Durrfeld,

Heinrich Gattineau, Erich von der Heyde, and Hans Kugler. The indictment listed five counts: (I) crimes against peace; (II) war crimes and crimes against humanity (plunder and spoliation); (III) war crimes and crimes against humanity (complicity in mass murder, illicit medical experiments, and slave labor); (IV) membership in a criminal organization; and (V) conspiracy. All defendants were charged with counts I, II, III, and V, but count IV applied only to Schneider, Butefisch, and von der Heyde. The case against Bruggemann was later suspended for health reasons.

Some I.G. Farben prosecutors, like deputy counsel Josiah E. DuBois, worked in the U.S. Treasury and Justice Departments of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, which predisposed them to view I.G. Farben as a trust to be busted or integral to German imperialism. Arguing that directors supplied Adolf Hitler the means necessary for war-making, DuBois contended that they harmonized their foreign business in league with Nazi espionage and propaganda. The defendants represented a menace to future peace, as had their predecessors at Fried[rich] Bayer AG and BASF (*Badische Anilin und Sodafabrik*), two of eight companies that formed I.G. Farbenindustrie in 1925.

Similarly to the Krupp Case, Tribunal VI acquitted all defendants on counts I and V. The court argued that Krauch was too far removed from Adolf Hitler's inner circle to be privy to his aggressive plans. Among all defendants, he had the closest connections to the Nazi leadership, serving from 1937 to 1945 as Plenipotentiary for Special Chemical Questions in Hermann Göring's Four-Year Plan Office, as well as top executive positions in IG. These facts rendered all the more problematic the peace charges against the other accused.

The prosecution presented a stronger case regarding spoliation. After German conquest, I.G. Farben took over chemical firms in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, and France, and examined properties in occupied Soviet territory. Attempting to rationalize the French dye industry, it exerted undue pressure upon French manufacturers, by proposing the revision of previous cartel arrangements before the German-dominated Armistice Commission at Wiesbaden. In November 1941 it obtained a 51% interest in the new Francolor cartel, transferring in exchange to three French companies (Kuhlmann, Saint-Denis, Saint-Clair) 1% of IG's total stock, or about 13 million Reichmarks in 1941 terms, inalienable except among participants. The tribunal excluded allegations concerning properties in Austria and the Sudetenland, since these takeovers had occurred before the war. Deeming voluntary certain transactions with

companies in occupied territories, it agreed with a ruling in the Flick Case that the Aryanization of Jewish property did not comprise a crime against humanity. On count II, it convicted Schmitz, von Schnitzer, ter Meer, Burgin, Hafliger, Ilgner, Jahne, Oster, and Kugler.

The prosecution combined several charges under count III. These involved IG's knowledgeable participation in the sale of poison gas for the purpose of mass murder, involuntary pharmaceutical experimentation on concentration camp inmates, and the deployment and maltreatment of forced and slave labor. Unlike the Zyklon-B case, Tribunal VI found little evidence to prove that the directors responsible for overseeing IG's interest in Degesch (German Society for Pest Control), Mann, Wurster, and Horlein, knew how the SS were using Zyklon-B, despite receiving Degesch's sales reports. While the prosecution established that the SS physicians had forcibly injected camp detainees with anti-typhus and other IG drugs, the court determined that its executives summarily ended the tests upon suspicion of malfeasance.

Against Krauch, Ambros, Butefisch, ter Meer, and Dürfeld, the synthetic rubber and oil project called IG Auschwitz furnished damning evidence. While the prosecution contended that the nearby concentration camp determined the site's location, the tribunal lukewarmly endorsed the defense claim that technical criteria (proximity of natural resources and layout) informed the decision, it but concluded that availability of slave labor played a secondary role. Scholars still debate IG's degree of culpability in the initiation of slave labor deployment. Founded in 1941 at government urging, IG Auschwitz fostered a lethal working environment for slave laborers, especially during the first two years. Conditions were still awful when British prisoners of war arrived in late 1943 (some of these POWs, like Charles Coward, subsequently gave moving testimony at Nuremberg). Determining that IG initiated the project, and that approximately 25,000 prisoners lost their lives in consequence, the tribunal found the defense's claim of necessity unconvincing in this case.

The prosecution alleged that Butefisch, Schneider, and von der Heyde were active members in the SS after September 1, 1939. In this connection Tribunal VI deemed insufficient the evidence against the first two, and ruled that von der Heyde ought to have been charged as a member of the illegal Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service), not the SS. The court acquitted ten defendants on all charges, including Gajewski, Horlein, von Knierem, Schneider, Kuhne, Lautenschlager, Mann, and Wurster. It imposed terms of confinement ranging from

one-and-a-half to eight years upon the remainder and reserved the lengthiest sentences for those connected with IG Auschwitz.

JOSEPH ROBERT WHITE

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Degussa; I.G. Farben; Krupp Case; Monowitz; War Crimes

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“Intentionalists”

“Intentionalists” are a group of scholars who argue that the Holocaust was primarily centered in the person of Adolf Hitler, his antisemitism, and his commitment to bringing to realization a world free of Jews (in German, *Judenrein*). They hold that Hitler “intended” to kill the Jews from an early date, while differing as to how early that might have been. The perspective is, moreover, that the road to Auschwitz was premeditated and carefully planned.

The classic intentionalist perspective is the opposite of that held by their intellectual opponents, the “functionalists” (sometimes also called “structuralists”), who contend that the road to the Holocaust was anything but straight, but was, rather, a “twisted” road that emerged gradually in a spate of fits and starts before finally commencing sometime in the second half of 1941.

Historian Lucy S. Dawidowicz was one who saw the germ cell of Hitler’s ideas regarding the extermination of the Jews as early as 1919. To support her interpretation, she pointed to Hitler’s many public speeches containing numerous extreme antisemitic statements, vilifying the Jews and promising them harm.

Other intentionalists hold that the Nazi program of total annihilation of the Jews, as envisaged by Hitler, could be traced to at least 1924 and the appearance of his masterwork *Mein Kampf*—and particularly his assertion that if 12,000 to 15,000 Jews had been gassed, “the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain.”

Such speeches are critical to the intentionalist understanding. Perhaps the most famous of these was his speech to the German Reichstag on January 30, 1939, when he publicly

affirmed that if “international Jewry” would be the cause of yet another world war, “then the result would not be the Bolshevikization of the earth and with it the victory of Jewry, it will be the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.” One historian, Gerald Fleming, makes reference to documents and speeches about Adolf Hitler in order to trace what he calls an “unbroken continuity of specific utterances,” demonstrating a straight path—“a single, unbroken, and fatal continuum” pointing directly toward what became the Holocaust.

Another scholar, Harvard University political scientist Daniel Goldhagen, takes arguments such as these even further, building on Dawidowicz’s and asserting that ordinary Germans permitted themselves to be transformed by the Nazis into genocidal killers of Jews because of cultural characteristics within German society that allowed for a specific type of what Goldhagen termed “eliminationist antisemitism.” In his book published in 1996 titled *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, he argued that an innate German antisemitic culture caused the Holocaust, enabling the Germans to welcome the persecution of Jews by the Nazi regime with some degree of enthusiasm.

One of the many intentionalist arguments in support of the general contention regarding the direct and long-held route to Auschwitz takes things a little further down the track, contending that the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 (Operation Barbarossa), and the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, proved that Hitler’s plans for the Jews could now be realized, as he mobilized the Nazi effort to carry out his long-sought agenda.

Many intentionalist historians focus their work on the role of Adolf Hitler in fomenting the Holocaust, maintaining that without him the drives of the Nazi state would not have been achieved. Indeed, in a famous essay published in *Commentary* magazine in 1984, essayist Milton Himmelfarb asserted “No Hitler, No Holocaust,” a trenchant argument that confronted historians who attributed the Holocaust to larger socioeconomic forces or ignored the possibility that there existed in the world individuals such as Hitler who actually do harbor demonic impulses. His position was clear: “Hitler willed and ordered the Holocaust, and was obeyed.” None of the other causes attributed to the Holocaust by dissenting historians, such as “traditions, tendencies, ideas, [or] myths” made Hitler murder the Jews. It was his will alone that was the Holocaust’s cause and saw its realization. (For all that, it must be noted that no actual document signed directly by Hitler ordering the physical destruction of the Jews has ever been discovered, and was, most probably, never written.)

To this day, despite a softening of the intentionalist position generally, there are still some historians who remain entrenched on the subject. Moreover, in the media and the popular consciousness the intentionalist position is still sometimes quite strong, both in former Allied countries and within Germany itself.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Bauer, Yehuda; Dawidowicz, Lucy S.; “Functionalists”; German Army, Role in the Holocaust; *Historikerstreit*; *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*; *Mein Kampf*; Mommsen, Hans

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International Committee of the Red Cross

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is the oldest and, arguably, perhaps the world’s most influential international humanitarian organization. It was established in 1863 in Geneva, Switzerland, by Henri Dunant, a Swiss businessman, who had witnessed firsthand the terrible carnage caused to soldiers of both sides in the Franco-Austrian Battle of Solferino in 1859. In 1864, at Dunant’s urging, the Swiss government convened a 16-nation international committee in Geneva for the purpose of establishing a set of universal norms that would allow for humane treatment of both those wounded in battle and prisoners of war. This was the first of several Geneva Conventions.

ICRC delegates are usually permitted access to all sides of a dispute because of respect for a guiding principle that has characterized the organization’s operations from its inception—the principle of absolute neutrality and confidentiality. For most of its history, the ICRC has acted as a silent witness to some of the worst excesses of state and nonstate behavior, hardly ever deviating from these core principles. The position it advocates by way of justification for this silence is a straightforward one: if the ICRC were to speak out publicly about the things it sees after having been allowed access to prisons, detention centers,

concentration camps, and the like, violators of human rights norms could simply refuse ICRC delegates continued access—in which case, prisoners and other populations at risk would be denied the succor that the ICRC can bring to such situations.

The ICRC’s ability to see to its core tasks—monitoring of prisoner conditions, carrying messages between prisoners and their families, advocating more humane conditions, providing food and other “comforts” for prisoners, delivering emergency aid to victims of armed conflicts, among other things—has enabled it to achieve admiration unsurpassed among humanitarian aid agencies. Yet its policy of confidentiality has come under increasing criticism in the face of genocide, and many around the world are of the opinion that perpetrators of genocide must not be greeted with silence.

During the Holocaust, there is little doubt that the ICRC knew about the Nazi atrocities as they were taking place; indeed, one argument has it that as early as August 1942 the ICRC had as complete a contemporary knowledge of the Holocaust as did the Allied governments. It was, moreover, the principal humanitarian institution maintaining communications with both the Allied and Axis powers. But while the ICRC provided assistance and protection to prisoners of war held by Nazi Germany, it did not do the same for Jews. As civilians, they did not fall immediately within the ICRC’s remit as it stood at that time; further, the Nazi government in Berlin refused all humanitarian requests to help Jewish victims. By way of rationalization, the ICRC has since explained, on numerous occasions, that during the war its leaders felt powerless to speak out, defending itself with the argument that if it had disclosed what it knew, it would have lost its ability to inspect prisoner of war camps on both sides of the front, and that speaking out would have compromised its supposed neutrality.

That said, there were various ways in which individual delegates of the ICRC sought to assist Jews, particularly in Hungary after the Nazi invasion of March 1944 and the introduction of the Final Solution to that country. But here, of course, lies the gravamen of the allegations made against the ICRC’s role during the Holocaust; its assistance came late in the war, and those who benefited from its efforts were comparatively few when compared with the millions who died without even an acknowledgment from the committee.

A good example of the ICRC’s failure to assist—indeed, of its blindness to the reality before it—came when inspections were made of certain camps, in particular that at

Terezín, also known as Theresienstadt, in Czechoslovakia. In actuality, Terezín was a way station for Jews and other prisoners headed to the death camp at Auschwitz, but the camp's reputation as a "humane" institution remained unblemished to the outside world. The ICRC sent delegates to the camp a number of times to investigate conditions, the most well-known being in June 1944. The delegates reported favorably on what they had seen: clean streets, well-stocked provisions in shopfront establishments, and smartly dressed inmates who appeared to be gainfully employed. By the time the report was issued, however, the Jews on whom it was based had already been sent to their deaths in Auschwitz. There was little doubt that the committee allowed itself to be used by the Nazis and was routinely manipulated by the Nazis as a result.

That said, at the same time, the ICRC, even when it was informed of what was happening, refused to make any public announcement or appeal to the outside world, or to denounce the deportation of Jews to concentration camps.

On April 27, 2015, at a commemorative event in Geneva marking the 70th anniversary of the Allied liberation of the Nazi death camps, the president of the ICRC, Peter Maurer, admitted the committee had failed to protect Jews during the Holocaust because it "lost its moral compass," stating at the same time that "the ICRC failed to protect civilians and, most notably, the Jews persecuted and murdered by the Nazi regime."

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See also: Displaced Persons; Theresienstadt; War Refugee Board

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International Holocaust Remembrance Day

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is a global day of remembrance observed on January 27 in honor of those killed during the Nazi Holocaust. Also known as International Holocaust

Remembrance Day, the day of observance was officially established by the United Nations General Assembly on November 1, 2005. It was first observed on January 27, 2006, and has been observed on that day ever since. The resolution creating the day of remembrance also coincided with the 60th anniversary of the Allied liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

The resolution creating International Holocaust Remembrance Day also condemned any and all denials of the Holocaust and all demonstrations of religious intolerance. It also declared unacceptable any harassment or violence against individuals or groups based on religion or ethnicity. The UN resolved to hold educational and memorial programs commemorating the Holocaust at its New York headquarters, and directed that its information centers around the world do the same. Outreach programs on the Holocaust were to be held on or around January 27 with an eye toward memorializing the Holocaust victims and preventing future genocides and mass killings.

The UN sponsors or organizes Holocaust-related art exhibits, historical displays, educational programs, and speakers' seminars. It also issues special commemorative stamps, sponsors Holocaust-related film screenings, holds book signings for new volumes dealing with the Holocaust, and even organizes concerts given by musicians who are Holocaust survivors or their descendants. Individual nations commemorate the day with a wide array of events and ceremonies, including academic seminars on the Holocaust, special curricula in schools, religious observances, and specific programming on television, radio, and other media outlets.

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See also: Denial of the Holocaust; Yom Hashoah

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Iron Guard

The Iron Guard was a fascist group in Romania. Founded in 1927 and known originally as the League of the Archangel Michael, it merged with other nationalist movements to form the militant section of the movement as the Iron Guard in 1930. Its leader, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, promoted Orthodox Christian belief systems and led the movement until his death in 1938. Those who were followers of "The

Legion,” as it was often called, were widely known as “legionnaires.” Iron Guard members were known as “greenshirts,” because of the uniforms they wore. After a while, the movement overall became better known as the Iron Guard, especially by those outside. In 1940, after integrating with the Romanian government, the Iron Guard was responsible for implementing a series of antisemitic pogroms and political assassinations throughout the country.

While the Iron Guard’s own ideology was inspired by the nationalistic movements of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, it was not inherently the same. Many characteristics remained comparable, such as anti-Jewish and anticommunist philosophies, but the Iron Guard was also rooted in Christian aestheticism, particularly Romanian Orthodox traditions. Nae Ionescu, a Romanian scholar and philosopher, claimed that the League of 1927, or its more modern interpretation, the Iron Guard of 1930, was a political manifestation of Romanian Orthodoxy.

In 1930 the Iron Guard became a political party. It would often hold conferences and sessions with Romanian students; these meetings would often end in anti-Jewish riots and the vandalism and destruction of synagogues and Jewish businesses. Some of the most well-known riots took place in 1927 in Oradea Mare in Transylvania and in Cluj, where eight synagogues were raided and burgled.

The Iron Guard would become the third-largest political party in Romania after the elections of 1937, with just over 15% of the overall vote. In February 1938 King Carol II, Romania’s monarch, made himself royal dictator of the country to combat both fascist and communist influences in Romania. In March 1938 the Romanian interior minister, Armand Călinescu, who despised the Iron Guard and antisemitism, demanded that the Iron Guard be put down for a final time, and by April, King Carol had Codreanu imprisoned and convicted for slandering Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga. He was later convicted of treason in a second trial in May and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

However, in October of the same year, the Iron Guard unleashed a campaign of assassinating police officers and government officials, while staging the bombings of several government buildings. As the murderous campaign against the Romanian government began, King Carol agreed to have all of the Iron Guard leaders currently in custody, including Codreanu, murdered. On November 29–30, 1938, Codreanu and other leaders of the Iron Guard were shot as a means of wiping out Iron Guard leadership, remembered in Romania as the “night of the vampires.”

After Codreanu’s death, many members of the Iron Guard fled Romania and went to Germany, where they received aid, but the Iron Guard did not dissipate completely within Romania. After a year of royal dictatorship, the Romanian government was reformed in March 1939, and Călinescu was made prime minister. However, as early as September he was assassinated by members of the Iron Guard in retaliation for Codreanu’s murder.

At the start of World War II, Romania, under King Carol, was determined to remain neutral. The country had close ties and an alliance with France; however, it became very clear to Carol after the surrender of France in 1940 that an arrangement with the Axis Powers would prove to be necessary if Romania were to survive the war. Carol was forced to cede regions of Bessarabia (an area of eastern Romania) and Bukovina to the Soviet Union, parts of northern Transylvania to Hungary, and southern territories of Dobrudja to Bulgaria, as mandated by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Nazi Germany and the USSR. Antisemitic measures and crimes became unprecedented during that summer.

In September 1940 Horia Sima was appointed leader of the Iron Guard, and General Ion Antonescu became prime minister of Romania—with the blessing of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. Antonescu and Sima then formed an alliance that forced King Carol II to abdicate. He was then forced into exile; two months later, the Iron Guard detained and murdered more than 60 of the king’s supporters, including Nicolae Iorga, who had aided Carol’s escape. Once in power, Sima and Antonescu’s reign over Romania was characterized by blatant and murderous antisemitic pogroms and political assassinations.

A Legionnaire rebellion against Antonescu in January 1941 led to the deaths of 120 Jews within Bucharest, and 30 more outside the city. Sima and other Iron Guard leaders fled Romania after Antonescu ended the rebellion. In 1944 an anti-Nazi coup ended the Iron Guard’s presence, and the Germans sent Sima and other Iron Guard members to Vienna.

The earliest massacres of Romanian Jews took place in the annexed areas of Bessarabia and Bukovina, given to the USSR in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. On June 26, 1941, Romanian Iron Guard members and the German army rounded up Jews in the streets and began shooting them. Thousands were killed on the spot, while thousands more were packed into freight cars and sent east. More than 1,400 Jews suffocated or died from malnutrition and thirst on one train, while another train carried another 1,200 Jews. Overall,

118,847 Jews were deported from the regions of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and the Dorohoi, all of which had been taken from greater Romania back in 1939 and were now reconquered in the war with the Soviet Union.

In 1946, with the war over, Antonescu was tried on charges of war crimes, crimes against the peace, and treason. Found guilty, he was executed by a military firing squad on June 1, 1946.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Antonescu, Ion; Jagendorf, Siegfried; Romania

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Italian Jews and Fascism

The settlement of Jews in Italy dates back to the Republic of Rome in the first-century BCE, when the first Jews came as merchants or slaves and developed a strong community that exists to this very day. Their persecution dates back to this beginning, when the ancient Romans failed to accept their religious customs—a prejudice that only worsened during the promotion of Christianity.

Oppressive laws and expulsions were sporadic throughout the early Christian period and Middle Ages, but became more apparent in early modern Italy with the appointments of various popes. Pope Paul II created the first Jewish ghetto in Italy in 1555, where Roman Jews were forced to live and put under curfew in pessimal living conditions until the unification of Italy in 1870, and consequently the end of the powerful papal states. This made the Roman ghetto the last remaining Jewish ghetto in Western Europe until the rise of the Nazis.

By 1900, out of the 45,000 Jews living in Italy, one in three had a spouse from a different religion and all spoke a variety of Judeo-Italian dialects. This suggests that although many were Jewish in sentiment, Jewish practice and orthodoxy was neglected as they felt more Italian. The majority were also Italian nationalists and had been active participators in the process of Italian unification. In 1905 Italy got its first Jewish prime minister, Alessandro Fortis, followed shortly after by

Luigi Luzzati in 1910. Even the mayor of Rome between 1907 and 1913, Ernesto Nathan, was Jewish. When Benito Mussolini came to power, the Italian fascist Party had a significant Jewish membership quota and many Italian Jews were active promoters of the new government, such as Giuseppe Volpi, Italy's finance minister and Margherita Sarfatti, Mussolini's mistress, journalist, and propaganda adviser.

Tensions began to rise, however, in 1929 when the Lateran treaties were signed in the Duce's attempt to appease the Catholic Church, declaring it the sole religion of the state, despite Mussolini's condemnation of the introduction of the Nazis' racist policies in the early 1930s. A growth in ideological antisemitism by the Italian state became evident in 1936, with Hitler and Mussolini's first military alliance in the Spanish Civil War and their signing of the Rome-Berlin Axis in the same year. Furthermore, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in May 1936 urged the justification of a more concrete institutional racism over Italy's new colonial subjects, as a law banning mixed-race marriages was passed. Italo-German relations became even more concrete with Italy's signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1937 along with Japan, and the military Pact of Steel in 1939.

Despite this timeline, which suggests heavily that closer ties with Germany helped conceal the fate of Italian Jews, some historians, such as Michele Sarfatti, argue that the fascist government was antisemitic from its inception. Another historian, Meir Michaelis, agrees, holding that Hitler never encouraged Mussolini to accept his racial theories. Alexander Stille, however, highlights the complexity of the Italian Jewish experience under fascism, following the story of five Italian Jewish families, and argues that the fascist government sought a close bond with them at least in the beginning. What most scholars agree on, however, is that the implementation of discriminatory policies in the late 1930s was not received warmly by the majority of the Italian public and marked the beginning of the end of mass consensus for the regime.

These events all precluded the passing of the Italian Racial Laws in October 1938, which stretched any previous racist legislation to all Jews under Mussolini's rule. These laws stripped all Jews of their Italian citizenship and prohibited them from marrying non-Jewish Italians, taking professional posts in the civil service, or entering higher education or the entertainment business. The legislation was accompanied by an avid propaganda campaign, which included a bimonthly magazine promoting racism, *Difesa della Raza*, and the Manifesto of Racial Scientists, which was published in the

newspaper *Il Giornale d'Italia* on July 14, 1938. The manifesto was an academic publication of 10 racist assertions signed by 10 scholars at leading Italian universities, together with a number of top fascists. It insisted that human races biologically existed and were separated into “large” and “small” races according to hierarchy, with the “pure Aryan Italian race” at the top and all those of “non-European” origin, that is, Jews, Arabs, and Africans, at the bottom. The manifesto explicitly encouraged Italians to “proclaim themselves frankly racist,” and wrote that the “Jews do not belong to our Italian race.”

Despite this new legal persecution, counts of physical violence against Jews remained isolated and were largely the preserve of fascist squad members until the occupation of Italy by German forces in September 1943. Meanwhile, Mussolini set up the Republic of Salò in the north of Italy along with his most loyal followers, which operated as a puppet government. Under the republic, antisemitic measures were intensified as all Jews became liable for arrest and internment and legally lost all of their property. More than 8,564 Jews from Italy and other Italian-occupied zones, like Libya, Slovenia, France, and the Greek islands, were deported to concentration camps from 1943 until the end of the war; many went to one of the 25 camps in Italy, but most went to those outside the country such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, and Ravensbrück. It must be noted, however, that overwhelming evidence suggests there was an exception in Italian-occupied southeastern France between 1940 and 1943. Once Nazi persecution of Jews began in Vichy France, 80% of French Jews, around 300,000 people, took refuge in the Italian-occupied zone. Many survived the war due to the refuge and protection provided by Italian forces there, who refused to cooperate with the Nazis in handing them over.

In Rome alone, 1,000 out of 10,000 Jews were rounded up by Nazi officers and deported to Auschwitz on trains, first on October 16, 1943, and then by the head of the republic’s police force, Guido Buffarini Guidi, on November 30, 1943. Only 16 people out of this number survived. Similarly, in Venice, only 8 out of 250 who were sent to camps returned home after war.

Many Jews joined the fight with other Italian partisans against both Nazis and fascists, while others were hidden by partisan neighbors and villagers living in rural areas. Furthermore, on March 22, 1944, as a reprisal for a partisan attack by dynamite that killed 28 German SS men, 335 Italians were taken into the Ardeatine caves outside Rome and shot at point-blank range. Out of 335 victims, 75 were

Jewish, as the criteria for capture was vague, ranging from being passersby merely taken from the streets, or those arrested in their homes from fascist tips of resistance activity, or, in the case of the Jews, chosen due to the Nazis’ fervent antisemitism.

It is estimated that around 75% of Italian Jews survived the Holocaust, while around 7,500 fell victim to it. Many left Italy after the war, despite an influx of Libyan Jews in the 1970s when Muammar Gaddafi came to power in Libya. Italian authorities have only recently conducted a handful of trials against Nazi perpetrators against Italian Jews. For example, in 1998 an Italian court convicted Karl Hass and Erich Priebke for their participation in the Ardeatine cave massacre, as a result of which they were put under house arrest for life.

VICTORIA WITKOWSKI

See also: Concentration Camps; Fascism; Ghettos; Italy; *Life Is Beautiful*

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Italy

Italy is a nation situated in south-central Europe. Italy’s population in 1939 was 44.4 million, of whom some 52,000 were Jewish. Jews have lived in Italy for well over 2,000 years, and over time became completely vested in Italian society and culture. Italians in general did not exhibit open antisemitism, and unlike National Socialism in Germany, Italian fascism was not predicated on theories of ethnic and racial hierarchies or antisemitism. Indeed, until the Italian national assembly passed a series of antisemitic laws in 1938, Jews were permitted membership in Italy’s fascist Party.

As Italy’s dictator Benito Mussolini tied his nation closer to Germany, he came under increased pressure to crack down on Italian Jews. Thus, in 1938, the Italian government promulgated a series of anti-Jewish laws, which were

watered-down versions of Germany's Nuremberg Laws. This legislation barred Jews in the military and from certain professions, especially teaching. They were also not permitted to hold government positions or to work in radio and journalism. Marriage between Jews and non-Jews was prohibited, and resident alien Jews were placed into internment camps. In practice, however, the Italian government only half-heartedly enforced these measures, and in some instances simply ignored them altogether. Even in the alien internment facilities Jews were treated relatively humanely and were not subjected to violence by Italian authorities. This does not mean that Italian Jews in general did not suffer after these laws were passed, however, and a number left Italy, choosing to live in the Americas or elsewhere.

Italy did not enter World War II until June 1940, but it was by then firmly allied with Nazi Germany. Italy would eventually establish military occupations in southern France, Albania, Greece, and Yugoslavia. German officials expected the Italians to round up and deport Jews in those areas, but most Italian officials wanted nothing to do with the mass killing of Jews. As a result, during 1941–1943, thousands of Jews left German-occupied areas for the relative safety of Italian-occupied territory. In an effort to shield some of them, Italian naval officials covertly evacuated some 4,000 Jews from France, Greece, and Yugoslavia to southern Italy, where they were interned. Virtually all lived to see the end of the war.

These dynamics changed dramatically in 1943, however. By then, the war was going badly for Italy, and Italians were frustrated and angry with Mussolini's military escapades. In July, when Allied forces invaded Sicily, Mussolini's days became numbered. He was ousted from power by the end of the month, and in September the new Italian government under Pietro Badoglio negotiated a surrender with the Allies, just as Allied troops had begun assaulting the Italian mainland at Salerno. Mussolini, meanwhile, was rescued by German commandos and installed as head of the puppet Italian Socialist Republic in northern Italy. The Germans now imposed a grinding occupation on the Italians, and Italian Jews suffered accordingly.

During October and November 1943 German occupation officials commenced a roundup of Jews in all of Italy's large cities in the north, including Rome. They planned to concentrate them in several points and then transport them to the death camps in Poland. Italian civilians and government officials, however, stymied the German effort by warning Jews of the operation and hiding Jews. Police in the affected cities also refused to take part in the operation. So successful was this resistance in Rome that only 1,100 Jews were seized; the city's Jewish population was at least 10,000. During this operation, 4,733 Italian Jews were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, of whom just 314 survived the war.

Small numbers of Jews from other parts of German-controlled Italy were also deported, and in one concentration camp near Trieste, as many as 5,000 were tortured and killed. Most were avowed or suspected socialists, communists, partisans, and other political "undesirables." From approximately September 1943 until April 1945 the Germans deported 8,564 Italian Jews, as well as Jews from Italian-controlled areas in France and the Greek isles. Of that number, only 1,009 survived the war and returned to Italy. As well, nearly 200 Jews were shot and killed in and around Rome in early 1944. It is estimated that some 40,000 Italian Jews were still alive at war's end.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Borromeo, Giovanni; Fossoli di Carpi; Globocnik, Odilo; Graziani, Rodolfo; Greece; Harster, Wilhelm; Italian Jews and Fascism; Kappler, Herbert; Levi, Primo; *Life Is Beautiful*; Marie-Benoît, Père; Microstates during the Holocaust; Munich Agreement; Resistance Movements; World War II; Yugoslavia

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J

J.A. Topf and Sons

A German engineering and manufacturing company that supplied crematoria equipment in the form of incineration furnaces employed at Nazi extermination and concentration camps beginning in 1939. J.A. Topf and Sons was established in 1878 in Erfurt, Germany, not far from the future site of the Buchenwald concentration camp. Leadership of the firm passed to Ludwig and Ernst-Wolfgang Topf, the sons of the founder, in 1935. During the 1920s the company's fortunes rose considerably as more Germans chose cremation for the disposal of their loved ones' remains. J.A. Topf and Sons also produced brewery and malting equipment, although by the early 1930s their principal product lines were dedicated to cremation and funeral services. Indeed, the company pioneered the design and production of crematoria that were virtually smoke- and odor-free.

In 1939 a major outbreak of typhus at the Buchenwald camp necessitated the disposal of large numbers of corpses. Nazi officials contacted Topf, which provided a portable incineration oven for Buchenwald. Officials were so impressed by the equipment that they placed an order for more crematoria and exhaust systems, which were capable of handling far larger quantities of bodies. By the early 1940s, with the mass killing of the Holocaust reaching its zenith, Nazi officials had contracted with Topf for large quantities of crematoria equipment, which was employed at concentration and death camps at Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Dachau, Belzec, and Gusen.

Company officials certainly knew that their equipment was being used for nefarious purposes, but they extended their contracts nevertheless. Indeed, Kurt Prufer, the company's chief engineer, paid at least five visits to Auschwitz. He later told Soviet officials after the war that he knew about the mass killing as early as the spring of 1943.

When World War II ended in May 1945, Prufer was arrested by Soviet occupation authorities and sent to a gulag, where he died in captivity sometime in 1952. Ludwig Topf was also arrested by the Soviets, but he committed suicide on May 31, 1945, leaving a note that attempted to absolve him from participation in the Holocaust. His brother, Ernst-Wolfgang, was put on trial for war crimes but was found not guilty. He later took up residence in West Germany and established another incinerator company in 1951; the firm entered bankruptcy in 1963.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Belzec; Birkenau; Buchenwald; Dachau; Death Camps; Gas Chambers; Mauthausen-Gusen

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Jackson, Robert H.

Robert H. Jackson was an attorney, U.S. attorney general (1940–1941), associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1941–1954), and chief U.S. prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials (1945–1946). Jackson’s well-argued decisions during the 1940s and 1950s made him one of the court’s most articulate jurists.

Jackson was born on February 13, 1892, in Spring Creek, Pennsylvania. After graduating from high school, he read law under a local attorney (the last U.S. Supreme Court justice to do so), attended Albany Law School for one year, and was subsequently admitted to the bar and practiced in Jamestown, New York. He later established a successful practice in Buffalo. Participation in local Democratic politics



Justice Robert H. Jackson was an American attorney and judge who served as the U.S. chief of counsel for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals at the Nuremberg Trials after World War II. Appointed by President Harry Truman in 1945, Jackson took a leave of absence from the Supreme Court in order to accept this position. He helped draft the London Charter of the International Military Tribunal, which created the legal basis for the Nuremberg Trials. He remained an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1941 until his death in 1954. (Library of Congress)

acquainted Jackson with Franklin D. Roosevelt and Charles Evans Hughes.

After he became president, Roosevelt appointed Jackson as general counsel to the Treasury Department’s Bureau of Internal Revenue in 1933. In 1938 he appointed him as solicitor general of the United States, and in 1940 Jackson was made attorney general. Although Roosevelt initially promised to appoint Jackson as chief justice when Hughes retired in 1941, he instead promoted Harlan Fiske Stone to the post and named Jackson as an associate justice, a position he held until his death in 1954.

In 1945 President Harry S. Truman appointed Jackson to serve as the lead American prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials, where 24 high-ranking Nazi officials were to be tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The trials began in October 1945 and lasted until November 1946. Jackson also helped write the London Charter of the International Military Tribunal, which established the legal basis for the subsequent trials. He prosecuted his cases with great energy and eloquence, and his opening and closing statements before the tribunal are now considered among the best speeches of the century. He refused to give credence to the idea that “following superior orders” trumped morality and conscience. Although his summations and speeches were known for their compelling persuasiveness, Jackson was sometimes less effective as a cross-examiner. He lost his patience several times during his questioning of senior Nazi leader Hermann Göring and was in fact chided by the trial judges for his outbursts. Jackson wrote two books about his Nuremberg experiences—*The Case against the Nazi War Criminals* (1946) and *The Nuremberg Case* (1947). In general, Jackson’s performance at Nuremberg was deemed a success, and he helped set the tone for the proceedings.

Jackson’s leave of absence from the Supreme Court did not sit well with other justices, and it deepened his feud with Justice Hugo Black. That made the selection of either man to the position of chief justice difficult. Jackson remained on the court after President Truman appointed Fred Vinson to replace Stone, and he joined the Warren Court’s desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

Despite relatively little formal higher education, Jackson was among the Supreme Court’s most articulate justices. He is known for his opinion reversing an earlier precedent and overturning a compulsory flag salute law in *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943). He authored a forceful dissent in the Japanese exclusion case, *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), and wrote a much-quoted concurring opinion in *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (1952), in which

he attempted to categorize occasions where presidential power was at its greatest and its weakest.

Justice Robert H. Jackson died in office on October 9, 1954, in Washington, D.C.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Lemkin, Raphael; London Charter Agreement; Nuremberg Defense; Nuremberg Trials; Taylor, Telford

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Jagendorf, Siegfried

Siegfried (Schmiel, or Sami) Jagendorf managed a factory in Mogilev, Romania, through which he saved thousands of Jewish lives during the Holocaust. Born on August 1, 1885, in the northern Bukovina village of Zviniace, he was the youngest of four children and the only son of Abraham Jagendorf and Hannah Bassie Offenberger. The Jagendorfs were Orthodox Jews; Abraham owned and operated a flour mill and kept a small herd of livestock.

After completing school, Jagendorf enrolled in a three-year mechanical engineering course at the Technical Trade-Museum in Vienna. Here he joined a student Zionist organization. He completed his engineering qualification on May 31, 1907, at the Technikum Mittweida, near Dresden, specializing in tool making, around this time adopting the German name “Siegfried.” On May 9, 1909, he married 21-year-old Hinde (“Hilda”) Feller in Radantz, Bukovina.

Jagendorf’s service as an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I earned him the Order of Franz Joseph, the empire’s highest military decoration. After the war he was employed at the Siemens-Schukert Werke in Vienna and was transferred to Cernauti, Bukovina.

In 1923, after just one year in Bukovina, Jagendorf resigned from Siemens-Schukert Werke and for the next four years served as general director of Foresta, the society of Bukovina’s lumber industry. In March 1938, when German forces entered Austria, Jagendorf found himself trapped in Vienna. He managed to escape by bribing his way back into Romania.

Shortly after arriving back in Cernauti, Jagendorf was drafted into the Romanian army. He served until September 2, 1940, when he was demobilized owing to an antisemitic purge in the military.

In August 1939 Hitler and Stalin signed a pact containing a secret provision returning Bessarabia to Soviet rule. Ten months later the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, demanded the evacuation within 48 hours of all Romanian forces from Bessarabia; at the same time, the Soviet Union took over northern Bukovina and the Jews were blamed by local Romanians for this humiliation.

On July 4, 1940, King Carol II of Romania appointed a pro-Nazi, Ion Gîrgurtu, to head the government and declared an amnesty for the fascist Iron Guard. Gîrgurtu enacted harsh antisemitic legislation, dismissing Jews from the army and civil service, from editorial posts and corporate board-rooms, and restricted Jews from practice in the legal and other professions. The definition of “Jews” was based on the Nazi Nuremberg Laws categorizing Jews as a race rather than a religion.

After Gîrgurtu resigned in August 1940 he was replaced by Marshal Ion Antonescu. On September 14, 1940, Antonescu appointed the leader of the fascist Iron Guard, Horia Sima, as vice president. The Iron Guard conducted murderous rampages, and on January 2, 1941, Sima attempted to overthrow Antonescu in an unsuccessful coup. This degenerated into a pogrom in Bucharest. Two hundred of Bucharest’s most distinguished men and women were taken to the abattoir on the edge of the city, stripped, forced to kneel on all fours, and put through all stages of animal slaughter until the beheaded bodies, spurting blood, were hung on iron hooks on the wall. Antonescu finally crushed the rebellion, after which the Germans took Sima and 300 of his Iron Guard to Buchenwald, where they were kept in a special section of the camp.

When the Romanian and German armies invaded the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, a rumor circulated that the Jews had sheltered Soviet spies and shot at Romanian soldiers. Antonescu used this as a pretext to order the execution of 50 Jews for every Romanian killed. In the pogrom that followed, more than 10,000 Jews were murdered. The Nazis, ironically, disparaged this pogrom as barbaric.

Antonescu called for the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina to be deported to Russia. The entire state apparatus—army, gendarmerie, police, civil authorities, prefectures, city councils, and tribunals—joined together to implement this ethnic cleansing. Some 140,000 to 150,000 Jews from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Dorohoi were deported to Transnistria in western Ukraine.

On October 12, 1941, Siegfried and Hilda Jagendorf were deported across Romania's eastern frontier, and the leaders of the Jewish community asked Jagendorf for assistance in organizing the exodus. He was assured that no more than 40 people would occupy the cattle cars evacuating the Jews, but more than 100 families were instead crammed into them. After a two-day journey they were offloaded at Atachi, Bessarabia—the last station in Romania, where Ukrainian gangs competed with Romanians in pillaging the deportees. A group of Jews, including the Jagendorfs, reached the eastern bank of the Dniester River, avoided the gendarmes, and entered the city of Moghilev-Podolski unmolested. Jagendorf found shelter and set out to find the local German commandant.

He dressed himself in his Romanian officer's uniform before the meeting. With the aid of a letter identifying him as a former director of Siemens-Schukert Werke, he was eventually ushered into the commandant's office. Once inside, he asked immediately what the Germans planned for the evacuees, and where he could find food and shelter. In reply he was told that the area was now under Romanian control, and that the Germans had no official role to play. Moghilev was out of bounds to Jews; the city was devastated, and had no electricity or other vital services.

Jagendorf realized that the group's fate was in Romanian hands. The Jews would have to become indispensable. As the city was without electricity, he decided that the Jews could provide the technical expertise and manpower necessary to repair the power station, and perhaps even rebuild Moghilev's shops and factories. This idea, he realized, he had to sell to the local town prefect, Colonel Ion Baleanu.

He found an empty movie theater, applied at police headquarters for permission to use the building, and persuaded the police chief that confining several thousand Jews in one place would ease his task when the evacuation orders arrived. The chief thereupon instructed his officers to allow anyone Jagendorf designated to occupy the theater. When the theater reached capacity, the police put several damaged houses at Jagendorf's disposal. At that point Jagendorf took responsibility for the fate of Romania's banished Jews.

To meet Baleanu, Jagendorf was clean shaven and wore a white shirt, a clean suit, and gloves. Baleanu told Jagendorf that he had granted the interview because he needed his services. With the power station incapacitated, he asked Jagendorf to select four or five electricians and mechanics, and set up a machine shop.

He then sent scouts into Moghilev to find an abandoned machine shop, and on November 3, 1941, they found a large

disused foundry. Jagendorf told Baleanu that he could not do the job with the limited workers at his disposal but instead needed at least 100 men; there was no other way to restore the foundry and get electricity to Moghilev. This became the Turnatoria foundry.

Baleanu ordered that the requisite authorizations be issued. Jagendorf then presented a list of 116 names and asked that the men's families be allowed to remain with them. Each man claimed ten or more dependents; nearly 1,200 authorizations were issued. Jagendorf billeted the workers and their families in a school building, repaired with materials taken from bombed houses. The electrical engineers and mechanics worked on the municipal power station and restored the power to Moghilev within two weeks. Baleanu then ordered Jagendorf to repair the city's damaged government buildings; to do so, Jagendorf requested hundreds of additional authorizations, which Baleanu routinely signed, and Jagendorf repaired the lumber mill, flour mills, and wineries.

Over time, the Germans saw that restoration of food production in the district would alleviate food shortages on the battlefield. By this time more than 10,000 Jews were engaged in unpaid productive labor. Jagendorf asked for authorizations for doctors, dentists, barbers, tailors, cooks, and shoemakers. With official approval the Jewish specialists could work in essential manufacturing enterprises.

Baleanu was eventually dismissed because he was seen as too soft on the Jews. The new, harsher arrangements imposed on Jagendorf required him to impose tougher discipline on those in the foundry. He demanded complete obedience and tolerated no dissent. This attitude was needed: at least two serious typhus epidemics threatened the community, while Jagendorf still could not prevent Jews from being taken into forced labor battalions outside.

Jagendorf left Transnistria for Romania just days before Soviet troops arrived in Moghilev in March 1944. Of the approximately 150,000 Jews deported to Transnistria, some 50,000 were still alive. At least 15,000 of those who survived could put their fate down directly to Jagendorf's efforts.

When the war ended, Siegfried Jagendorf became one of the chief witnesses for the Romanian government in local war crimes trials, though he did not stay long. He and his wife Hilda soon emigrated, arriving in the United States on December 23, 1946, where they were met by their daughters. He died of cancer in California on September 8, 1970.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Antonescu, Ion; Iron Guard; Rescuers of Jews; Romania

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Jasenovac

Site of five concentration camps established between August 1941 and February 1942 on the banks of the Sava River, some 60 miles south of Zagreb in central Croatia. The five facilities were Krapje, Brocica, Ciglana, Kozara, and Stara Gradiska. The first two were in existence for only four months. Established by the neo-fascist, right-wing Croatian nationalist group known as Ustashe, the Jasenovac complex was created and administered entirely by the Ustashe Party, although both the Italian and German governments had encouraged its establishment as a way to neutralize dissidents and enemies of the Independent State of Croatia. Most of the prisoners were Serbs, Jews, and Roma. Political and religious dissidents were also incarcerated at Jasenovac, most of them Muslims or Croats.

Jasenovac was one of numerous concentration camp facilities constructed by the Ustashe during World War II; it was also the largest. Conditions in the camps were absolutely appalling. Barracks were hopelessly overcrowded, food rations meager, and sanitation facilities crude. In the cold winter months, the flimsily constructed buildings offered little in the way of warmth or shelter. Disease and sickness were rampant, and prisoners—men, women, and children—were routinely subjected to savage beatings and even torture by camp guards. Inmates were often murdered over the slightest infraction, or when guards were in a bad mood. Many of the Jews imprisoned at Jasenovac were shot and killed at nearby sites such as Gradina or Granik. In August 1942 and again in May 1943 German authorities transferred most of the surviving Jews from Jasenovac to Auschwitz-Birkenau in southern Poland.

The few Jews at Jasenovac who were spared death or deportation were those individuals with useful backgrounds, including carpenters, tailors, physicians, and electricians. Between 1941 and 1945, it is estimated that at least 100,000 people may have died at Jasenovac, though estimates vary considerably. The range includes 45,000–50,000 Serbs; 12,000–20,000 Jews; 15,000–20,000 Roma; and 5,000–12,000 political and religious dissidents.

Toward the end of the war, in April 1945, a group of prisoners at Jasenovac sensed an opportunity to rebel and staged

a major uprising. Guards, however, brutally suppressed it, and several hundred prisoners died. Most of the remaining survivors were killed before Ustashe guards hastily dismantled the facilities. By early May, Yugoslav partisan troops under Josip Tito had taken control of the area and made known the wartime activities there.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Concentration Camps; Croatia; Serbia; Ustashe; Yugoslavia

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Jedwabne Massacre

The Jedwabne massacre was the murder of an uncertain number of between 400 and 1,600 Polish Jews on July 10, 1941. This killing, carried out in large part by the town's non-Jewish Poles, is an important event in the history of the Holocaust not least because of the public and scholarly debate it raised over the behavior of non-Jewish Poles under German occupation.

Jedwabne is located in eastern Poland, about 120 miles northeast of Warsaw. It was occupied in 1939 by the Soviet Union as part of its pact with Nazi Germany. However, after the German invasion in 1941, it came under German control. While the historical documents are often complex and conflicting, the basic events of the massacre were as follows. Though there was a German police detachment in the town and some evidence that a Gestapo unit was present during the massacre, the evidence suggests that the town's mayor, Marian Karolak, and a large group of collaborators received permission from the German authorities to carry out a pogrom against the town's Jewish population. Jedwabne's inhabitants, together with others from the surrounding area, carried out the murder of the Jews in a particularly brutal manner which culminated in the burning of a barn full of Jewish residents. The systematic plunder of Jewish property accompanied the massacre. The perpetrators acted out of a variety of motivations, such as antisemitism, greed, revenge against imagined collaboration with Soviet authorities, and personal animosities.

After the war, several of the participants in the Jedwabne massacre were tried by communist Polish courts. The trials

were marked by a desire to minimize Polish participation for political reasons, and many of the confessions were tainted by accusations of the use of torture and coercion.

The Jedwabne massacre first received mass public attention with the 2001 book *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* by Polish-born historian Jan T. Gross. Its appearance caused controversy and heated debate, as it described in detail the voluntary participation of non-Jewish Poles in the murder of their Jewish neighbors. Some accused Gross of overemphasizing the role of Polish citizens and of not recognizing the victim status of Poles during the war, while others charged him with uncritically using perpetrator testimony produced by a communist regime. Though the number of victims and precise extent of German instigation or involvement remain contentious, the basic historical outline sketched by Gross is widely accepted. The Jedwabne massacre highlights, among other things, the complex position of Poles under Nazi occupation as victims and bystanders, but also as collaborators and perpetrators.

Jedwabne remains a highly contentious and politicized topic, especially for Poles. Conservative and nationalist groups, for example, often accuse Gross and his supporters of attempting to hold Poles collectively guilty. In 2002 the Polish Institute for National Memory conducted an investigation which upheld many of Gross's conclusions, while dismissing the larger figure of 1,600 victims based on a cursory exhumation of the mass grave in Jedwabne. Lastly, for historians, Jedwabne raised important questions of the use and value of various kinds of evidence and of local histories in explaining the Holocaust.

WAITMAN W. BEORN

See also: Collaboration; *Neighbors*; Poland

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Jehovah's Witnesses

The Jehovah's Witness Movement, founded in the United States in the last quarter of the 19th century, came into conflict with the Third Reich when Witness beliefs on the nature of the world and its meaning came sharply into conflict with the tenets of National Socialism. Members of the movement

believe that the world is in its last days and under the rule of Satan. They are witnesses to their God, Jehovah, on the stage of history while awaiting the end of the current order, and they are dedicated to spreading knowledge of Jehovah and His plans. Members of the organization see their allegiance as being to their God rather than to the political regimes of Satan's world, although they are law-abiding and good citizens where their faith allows. They will not swear an oath, vote, bear arms for a civil state, or belong to a political party. In Nazi Germany, this stance led members of the group most dramatically to refuse to enlist or to give the "Heil Hitler" salute. A bitter conflict with the authorities swiftly followed.

The Nazis banned Jehovah's Witnesses' meetings and missionary work, and some lost their jobs as civil servants. Others had their children taken away to be brought up in Nazi homes. Of the 20,000 or so members active in Germany under Adolf Hitler's regime, many found themselves or saw their families and cobelievers in prison or concentration camps. Jehovah's Witnesses were among the first Germans to be placed in the camps, where they were often tortured and murdered.

CHRISTINE KING

See also: Concentration Camps; Sachsenhausen

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Jewish Fighting Organization

The underground Jewish military group established in the Warsaw Ghetto to resist deportations of Jews to extermination camps, the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, or ŻOB), was established on July 28, 1942. It is sometimes also known as the Jewish Combat Organization.

During a two-and-a-half month wave of deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka from July 22, 1942, to September 12, 1942—a period known to the Germans as "*Gross-Aktion Warschau*" (General Action Warsaw)—it was intended that this would bring about an end to those living there. During this period, more than 5,000 Jews were deported each day—altogether, some 265,000 Jews were deported, reducing the ghetto population to just over 55,000 residents.

While those in the ghetto did not know the precise destination or fate of those who had been deported, vague reports of mass murder at Treblinka did manage to leak back. During the period of the deportations a member of the Jewish youth movement Hashomer Hatzair, 23-year-old Mordecai Anielewicz, had escaped to southwest Poland on an underground mission to organize other branches of his movement, but upon returning to Warsaw he found the ghetto devastated. He and others now decided to resist any further deportations.

In the meantime, other members of Jewish youth groups had formed the Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa (Jewish Fighting Organization) on July 28, 1942. With Anielewicz back, they issued a proclamation calling on the ghetto residents not to go to the rail cars when called upon to do so. When the deportations ended, members of the ŻOB elected Anielewicz as their leader in November 1942, and preparations started for a defense of the ghetto whenever the next wave of deportations should begin.

Most of the Jewish elders disapproved of armed resistance out of fear of provoking a devastating German retaliation. However, Anielewicz and another Zionist leader, Yitzhak Zuckerman, began looking for support outside the ghetto and were able to contact the Polish government in London in order to procure weapons. While this was difficult, they managed to obtain a few rifles and pistols. The ŻOB officially became part of the High Command of the Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, or AK), and the AK began providing weapons and training. An initial consignment of weapons was provided in December 1942. In the meantime, the ŻOB prepared for the next onslaught by the Germans and executed those Jews in the ghetto who had helped the Nazis carry out the deportations.

In early January 1943 Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler visited the Warsaw Ghetto and ordered a further—perhaps final—deportation. This began, unannounced, on January 18. In response, the ŻOB and several other small fighting groups began uncoordinated guerrilla warfare against the Nazis. Anielewicz developed a plan in which his fighters obeyed the deportation orders until they reached a certain part of town, where they received a signal to attack. Despite the death of all of the Hashomer Hatzair fighters except Anielewicz, many Jews escaped. The Nazis stopped the deportation four days later, after the ŻOB's action had cost the lives of several German troops.

With the deception of peace, the Nazis then tried to coax the remaining Jews to board boxcars to Treblinka. Anielewicz continued to command underground operations, as the

groups planned and prepared for further combat by procuring arms and building bunkers. The final deportation began on the eve of Passover, April 19, 1943, when Himmler ordered the Warsaw Ghetto cleared of all Jews before Adolf Hitler's birthday the next day. Under the command of SS General Jürgen Stroop, more than 2,000 Nazi soldiers and Polish police moved into the ghetto to begin this final deportation. Approximately 1,500 Jews armed with two machine guns, 15 rifles, 500 handguns, hand grenades, and Molotov cocktails began to attack the Nazi invaders of the ghetto. The ŻOB knew that it was not a professional army and that it could not hope to defeat the might of the German army. Therefore, the fighters used the only strategy they could, employing guerrilla warfare tactics and the advantage of surprise. The resisters achieved a remarkable victory on the first day, forcing the Nazis to retreat after the ŻOB attacked their tanks and artillery. The Nazis suffered heavy losses and left behind weapons.

The second day, the Nazis returned to drive the Jewish fighters from their hideouts by using gas, smoke bombs, and flame throwers. On the third day of battle, the Nazis used small patrols for street-to-street fighting. The Jewish resistance was outnumbered and outgunned, but the fighters refused to surrender and often hid in sewers. The Nazis then began to burn every house in the ghetto and flood the sewers in order to force them out. After the first few days of battle, Anielewicz moved from the streets to the headquarters of the Jewish Fighting Organization.

After a four-week battle in which the Nazis shelled and bombed the ghetto and killed 60,000 Jews, the Nazis captured and gassed the Jewish Fighting Organization's headquarters at Miła 18 on May 8. There, they found Anielewicz and most of the remaining ghetto fighters dead. Many had committed suicide to avoid capture. On May 16, 1943, General Stroop reported to his superiors in Berlin that "the former Jewish quarter of Warsaw [is] no longer in existence," and to mark the occasion he razed Warsaw's Great Synagogue. Throughout and after the revolt, the Nazis still worked on deporting the ghetto's remaining Jews. Of the more than 56,000 Jews captured, some 7,000 were shot, with the remainder sent to their deaths at camps such as Treblinka and Majdanek, or to forced labor camps.

Mordecai Anielewicz lost his life, together with many others, during the Nazis' final assault on the ŻOB command bunker at Miła 18 on May 8, 1943, and altogether only about a hundred of the ghetto fighters of the ŻOB survived. They included leaders such as Simcha Rotem, Zivia Lubetkin, Yitzhak Zuckerman, and Marek Edelman. Many of these

went on to fight alongside Polish resisters belonging to the Armia Krajowa during the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944. Some of the other resistance fighters succeeded in escaping the ghetto altogether and joining partisan groups in the forests around Warsaw.

Once news got out about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Jews in other ghettos also rallied to resist Nazi occupation. The actions of the Jewish Fighting Organization in leading the largest ghetto uprising during World War II were therefore inspirational not only to those experiencing the Holocaust but have since been to subsequent generations of young Jews throughout the world.

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See also: Altman, Tova (Tosia); Anielewicz, Mordecai; Gutman, Yisrael; Jewish Military Union; Jewish Partisans; Jewish Resistance; Lubetkin, Zivia; Meed, Vladka; Resistance Movements; Stroop, Jürgen; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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Jewish Ghetto Police

The Jewish ghetto police (*Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*) were Jewish police units established by the Nazis in the ghettos of German-occupied Eastern Europe during the Holocaust. With the German conquest of Poland in 1939, the Nazis set up nominally self-governing Jewish Councils (*Judenräte*) and ordered them to establish policing units for the purpose of maintaining order in the ghettos. The occupiers set strict guidelines—which were not always followed—regarding *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* recruitment, involving a certain level of physical fitness, military experience, and secondary or higher education. When first established these units did not have official uniforms; often, all they possessed to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population was an armband, a police hat, and a badge. They carried batons to maintain order; they were not permitted firearms.

At first, the Jewish ghetto police had a prescribed set of duties to perform, and for the most part these were less

about law and order, and more about maintaining a viable form of existence in the ghetto. Thus, their roles included such activities as traffic control, sanitation and garbage collection, organizing for snow to be cleared off the streets, and generally ensuring that life continued in as nondisruptive a manner as possible under the circumstances. In addition, the hope was that the ghetto police would be able to serve as a force to prevent crime—a desperate need in view of the poverty and overcrowding that characterized ghetto life.

As the Holocaust proceeded from 1941 onward, the Jewish ghetto police were used by the Nazis as an agency to assist in the process of rounding up and deporting Jews to the death camps. Unfortunately, this often resulted in an excessive use of violence and even cruelty, as the ghetto police attempted to ensure that they would themselves be spared through the demonstration of their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out the dictates of the Judenrat (which is to say, the Nazis from whose orders they proceeded).

All too often, however, members of the Jewish ghetto police and their families were murdered along with other ghetto Jews (particularly during the Holocaust's most murderous phase in 1942 and 1943) once it was deemed by the Nazis that their effectiveness had come to an end. For many, this was directly opposite to their initial reasons for joining the police in the first place, as membership in what was recognized as a protected part of the ghetto administration was seen to provide some measure of immunity from persecution. Such immunity also extended to the obtaining of additional benefits such as more food, money, clothing, and shelter; these were often obtained as a result of a notorious level of corruption and intimidation practiced by the more unscrupulous members of the ghetto police. In the long run, in most cases it did not matter whether a police officer compromised his values in order to keep his family safe; indeed, some remained at their posts right up to the last moment, when they were themselves deported. Others left the police service long before, unable to look their neighbors in the eye—even though they had joined initially with the belief that by joining they would have an opportunity to serve their community.

One of the characteristics of ghetto life in many places was the existence of a resistance movement—sometimes vigorous, other times weak, and yet others relatively unformed. Given that the role of a police force should be the maintenance of law and order, the attitude of the Jewish police toward such movements was mixed. Frequently, the relationship between the resistance and the police was strained; while the former saw the ghetto police as traitors to their



The Jewish Ghetto Police were auxiliary police units organized within the Jewish ghettos of German-occupied Eastern Europe by local Judenrat councils under the ultimate authority of the Nazi occupiers. Unarmed other than with batons, and without any official uniforms, their many tasks included the maintenance of all forms of public order in the ghetto, but they were also employed by the Nazis for securing the deportation of other Jews to concentration and death camps. This photo shows officers of the Jewish Ghetto Police in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941. (P. K. Knobloch/Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images)

people who did the Nazis' work for them, the latter saw it as their role to eliminate the threats to the smooth running of the ghetto and not bring down the wrath of the occupiers. Sometimes, the police refused to intervene in resistance activities, or gave assistance to those who would become ghetto fighters; indeed, in certain places some were simultaneously members of both groups.

The Jewish ghetto police forces varied in strength, but, depending on the ghetto, could be relatively large. Probably the biggest was that in the Warsaw Ghetto, numbering up to 2,500 officers and men at its maximum. The ghetto at Łódź had about 1,200, while that in Lvov (Lviv) numbered some 500 Jewish policemen and those in Kovno and Kraków had

200 and 150 respectively. The size of the Jewish ghetto police force depended on the size of the Jewish community.

It is sometimes difficult to pass judgment on the Jewish ghetto police. To a large degree they fall into a similar "gray zone" as the leaders and members of the *Judenräte* for whom they worked. Each policeman had his own motives for joining the force, behaving in certain ways while in it, and remaining there for as long—or as short—as he did. There are no simple answers to the complex questions posed by the existence of the ghetto police.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Ghettos; Jewish Honor Courts; Jewish Resistance

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Jewish Honor Courts

Jewish honor courts were formed as a direct response to the end of World War II and the Holocaust by those who had survived atrocities committed by the Nazis. Known in many languages, by many names, and in many different countries, these were nongovernmental trials conducted by several Jewish social, cultural, and professional organizations against other Jews who had been seen to collaborate with the Nazis in various ways.

The offenses with which they were charged often had to do with questions of honor and integrity, and abuse of power during the war. The honor courts did not hold much in the way of judicial power, though they found other ways in which to punish those found guilty for their alleged crimes. These courts were meant to establish the independence of the European Jewish community following the war, creating a sense of autonomy for those who had survived the Holocaust.

Jews on trial were accused of collaboration with the Nazis. Those charged included, but were not limited to, Jewish community council (*Judenrat*) members, Jewish ghetto policemen, concentration camp kapos, and Nazi informers. Those who had survived the Holocaust established these courts in order to question the motives of these Jews and bring them to some form of justice.

Honor courts, though taking place throughout Europe, were exceptionally well accepted in postwar Poland. The Central Committee of the Jews in Poland, established officially in 1946, had worked during World War II to provide food, shelter, and basic necessities to suffering Jewish communities throughout the country, particularly after 1944. The Central Committee of the Jews of Poland grew, by 1946, to be the most important Jewish organization in Poland. This organization was able to establish a Jewish honor court in Warsaw following the war. In Poland alone, 175 cases were opened to question a collaborator's honor, and 25 of those brought to trial were prosecuted.

Honor courts were officially disbanded in 1950. The number of those accused was not large, but the courts themselves held a serious meaning to the Jewish community following World War II. The courts allowed the Jewish community to represent themselves in solidarity and finally to bring at least a modicum of closure to those communities most affected by the destruction wrought by the Holocaust.

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See also: Collaboration; Jewish Ghetto Police; *Judenrat*

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Jewish Military Union

The *Żydowski Związek Wojskowy*, or ŻZW, was an underground military organization active in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust. At its maximum strength, it numbered approximately 250 fighters. Comprising young Jews from the Betar Zionist Youth Movement, it was supported politically by right-wing Revisionist Zionists and was formed in November 1939 from among Jewish former officers who had served in the defeated Polish Army. At the end of December 1939 an initial form of resistance organization was established under the title *Żydowski Związek Walki*, or Jewish Combat Union. It was then formally sanctioned on January 30, 1940, by General Władysław Sikorski, commander in chief of the Polish forces and prime minister of the Polish Government in Exile, then in France (and soon to be relocated to Britain).

At first, ŻZW operations focused on acquiring arms in advance of a possible extensive scheme that would see the fighters fight their way through Poland to neutral Hungary, from where they could join the Polish army in exile. Given the fortunes of war, however, the decision was made to remain in Poland and help to organize resistance there. The ŻZW, which had developed a solid working relationship with a larger resistance organization, the Union of Armed Struggle (*Związek Walki Zbrojnej*, or ZWZ), was able to receive

forms of weaponry and military training for its otherwise civilian members.

Over time, its activities translated into an active preparation for armed struggle for Jews in the ghettos, which were being formed throughout Poland in 1940. The ZWZ, which existed from November 13, 1939, was renamed the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, or AK) in February 14, 1942, at which point it became Poland's leading underground organization and military force, closely linked to the Polish Government in Exile.

Though starting in Warsaw, the ŻZW spread to other towns and cities in Poland over the next two years. Given that it had a strong Jewish youth movement component from the start, it attracted interest from members of several Jewish political parties from before the war; these embraced Betar, the Revisionist movement HaTzohar, and Revisionists within the Polish Zionist Party.

The actual number of ŻZW fighters able to take part when the Uprising began in April 1943 is unclear, but it was at least 240 to 250. This grew to about 400 well-armed fighters, grouped into 11 units, by the time the Uprising took hold. The military leader of the ŻZW was Paweł Frenkiel; its political chair was David Wdowiński, who, unlike most of the other operatives of the organization, was not a military commander (though his role served an important ideological function).

Political tensions between the ŻZW and the left-leaning Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, or ŻOB), led by Mordecai Anielewicz, Yitzhak Zuckerman, and Marek Edelman, threatened to derail prospects of unified anti-Nazi action. But with the onset of large-scale deportation offensives by the Nazis against the Jews of Warsaw in the summer of 1942, both groups saw little alternative but to work together and mount a united opposition.

Given that many of the members of the ŻZW came from the Revisionist movement's Betar youth wing, were connected with the Polish Home Army, and had a more nationalistic and right-wing perspective than the ŻOB, it could have been anticipated that there would have been tension. However, as it was the latter body that had greater numbers, more resources, and a more extensive youth basis, it became the ranking resistance organization in the ghetto and dominated with regard to strategy and time.

While the fighting in the uprising was united when the Warsaw Ghetto rose in revolt on April 19, 1943—and the sacrifices were shared, with massive casualties from both groups—the rancor characterizing the relationship

intensified even as the fight was taking place. Wdowiński and others claimed that the ŻOB refused to incorporate them into the overall command structure; the ŻOB, in turn, held that the more nationalistic ŻZW wanted to take over. That they managed to fight alongside each other was a development brought about through sheer necessity and the desperation of the situation.

ŻZW actions during the uprising took place on Muranowska Street, where ŻZW headquarters was located (four units under Frenkiel and another under Roman Winsztok) and Miła Street (units under Dawid M. Apfelbaum and Jan Pika); in actions near Zamenhof Street (Heniek Federbusz's unit); and in the district around Nalewki Street (Leizer Staniewicz and Dawid Berliński's units), among other locations. When the ghetto resistance was finally broken, surviving ŻZW members fled through the sewers to the Aryan side of Warsaw and continued the fight alongside nationalist Poles from there. There was little doubt that the ŻZW fought heroically and played a major role in the revolt, but with many of the military leaders of the ŻZW dead, David Wdowiński was one of the last authority figures remaining by the end of the war.

After the war a struggle broke out over how the Warsaw Ghetto resistance should be remembered. Surviving commanders of the left-leaning ŻOB rarely, if ever, mentioned the ŻZW's role in the uprising, preferring to emphasize its proletarian nature. This fit in well with the changed political realities of Poland after the country's takeover by the Soviet Union, as well as with the political orientation of the socialist-Zionist youth movements from which the ŻOB was originally formed.

It left only Dawid Wdowiński to mount any sort of defense on behalf of his fellow-fighters from the ŻZW. In 1963, in New York, he published his memoirs, *And We Are Not Saved*. In this he gave his interpretation of the ŻZW's involvement in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, writing the truth as he saw it in contrast to what had by now become conventional wisdom from the perspective of the ŻOB. Among other things, he noted the leftist political orientation of those who were not from the ŻZW or the Polish Home Army. The book was never translated into Polish, nor released there. The contested memory concerning the relationship between the ŻZW and the ŻOB during the Uprising became internalized in many recollections of the event, so often that it became something of a historical truth.

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See also: Jewish Fighting Organization; Jewish Partisans; Jewish Resistance; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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Jewish Partisans

Jewish partisans were individuals who conducted a variety of guerrilla and paramilitary operations in enemy-held territory during World War II. Jewish partisans operated in numerous countries between 1939 and 1945 and numbered between 20,000 and 30,000. Most were men, but there were also Jewish women who engaged in partisan activities. Partisans engaged in sabotage (e.g., blowing up bridges, derailing trains, ripping up rail tracks, damaging or destroying factories), sniping at German soldiers, bombing police or military headquarters, fomenting ghetto uprisings, facilitating ghetto and prison escapes, assassinating collaborators, and general guerrilla warfare.

Being a partisan was not for the faint of heart. It required extraordinary bravery and cunning as well as the ability to withstand challenging living conditions. Finding adequate shelter, especially in winter, was always a challenge, as was keeping warm. All too often partisans dared not light fires for warmth out of fear that the smoke would reveal their location. Finding food was also a significant challenge, and sometimes the partisans had to resort to force to extract food from farmers and villagers. Malnutrition and a complete lack of medical care were always daunting challenges. Many partisans were either unarmed or very lightly armed and lived in constant fear of enemy patrols. On top of these problems, most partisans had to deal with overt antisemitism from the noncombatant or neutral communities among whom they operated. And the threat of brutal German reprisals was never far off. In some cases, after partisans killed German soldiers or personnel, the Germans would order wholesale reprisals, demanding that 20 Jews be killed for every German death. Many Jews killed in this manner were not even partisans themselves.

Partisans operated against the Germans and their collaborators in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and France, among other countries. Some lived brazenly in the open in France and Italy, using

stolen or forged documents and identity cards while conducting sabotage and other anti-German activities clandestinely. Others purposely hid themselves in remote, densely forested areas and rugged territory, where the enemy would be less apt to find them.

There are many examples of individual and group partisan action during the war. In July 1941 the Nazis established a huge ghetto for Jews in Minsk, Belarus. After the Germans killed several thousand Jews there, a group of internees established an underground resistance movement in August 1941. That group contacted partisans outside the ghetto, helped certain ghetto dwellers to escape, and organized a larger escape effort that ultimately succeeded. Those who left the ghetto took up residence in nearby forests and engaged in guerrilla activity against the Germans. It is estimated that as many as 10,000 Jews escaped the Minsk ghetto by 1944.

In early 1942 Jewish partisans in Toulouse, France, founded the Jewish Army, which became a potent resistance and partisan group, especially in southern France. The army trained partisans in guerrilla warfare, raised money to help Jews escape to neutral Spain, and helped Jews in France survive the German occupation. In early 1944 near Vilna (Vilnius), Lithuania, Jewish partisans formed the United Partisan Organization, which fomented an uprising in the Vilna ghetto in the fall of 1943. Many Jews escaped into the woods and surrounding countryside and subsequently engaged in guerrilla warfare and sabotage operations against the Germans. In 1944, as the Allies systematically liberated France, the Jewish Army incited rebellions in Lyon, Paris, and Toulouse in order to distract the Germans and force them to divert their military forces from the fighting front.

In late May 1944 a Hungarian-born Jewish paratrooper trained in Palestine to rescue Jews, Hannah Szenes, was among 32 paratroopers who were dropped behind German lines in Central Europe. Szenes was supposed to make her way to Hungary to warn Jews there about Nazi extermination camps and the Germans' plans to relocate them there. On June 7, 1944, she crossed the border into Hungary but was captured the next day. She was later tortured and executed as a Hungarian traitor.

Other Jewish partisans included the Bielski Partisans in Belarus, who managed to rescue more than 1,200 Jews and committed acts of sabotage while hidden deep in a dense forest; the Parczew Partisans, who operated in southeastern Poland; and the Jewish Fighting Organization and the Jewish Military Union, which were two partisan groups that engineered the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April and May 1943.

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See also: Armée Juive; Bielski Partisans; Jewish Fighting Organization; Jewish Military Union; Jewish Resistance; Kempner, Vitka; Korczak, Rozka; Kovner, Abba; Rufeisen, Oswald; Szenes, Hannah; United Partisan Organization; Wrobel, Eta; Yoran, Shalom

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Jewish Question

The so-called “Jewish Question” (German, *die Judenfrage*)—that is, the integrative role of the Jews in Western culture and nation-states—precedes the rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazism in Germany. Prior to France granting the Jews the right to vote as citizens in 1789, what to do with this minority was already being discussed in England, resulting in the “Jew Bill” of 1753 (officially passed by Parliament as the “Jewish Nationalization Act”) and its near-immediate repeal in 1754. Almost one hundred years before the rise of Nazis, German historian and theologian Bruno Bauer wrote a book titled *The Jewish Question*, arguing strenuously that in order for the Jews to achieve full emancipation in society and equality within the nation state, they would have to abandon their religious parochialism in favor of a more secular (that is, nonreligious) position. Perhaps somewhat ironically, the father of socialism-communism, Karl Marx, himself of Jewish parentage but baptized in infancy by his father and already living in England, responded with his own tract *On the Jewish Question* (German, *Zur Judenfrage*), critiquing Bauer and arguing that religion—any religion—is part and parcel of society, but that individuals tied to it, Jews included, are participants in an oppressive socioeconomic-political system, and that true liberation for the individual must result in a rejection of all manner of

religious identification. Scholars remain divided, however, as to whether Marx furthered the arguments of antisemitism or rejected them. Not so as regards Bauer, against whom the consensus is decidedly that his “solution” was, indeed, antisemitic.

The year of Hitler’s birth, 1889, saw the rise of the Antisemitic German Social Party, a merger of a number of already acknowledged antisemitic groups committed to displacing the Jews in German social, cultural, and political life, and included such public persons as Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg; Otto Böekel, already a member of the Reichstag; and Adolf Stoecker, chaplain to Kaiser Wilhelm II, Lutheran pastor, and the founder of the Christian Social Party.

Other leading writers and intellectuals in Germany addressing this “Jewish Question” included Wilhelm Marr (*The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*, 1879); Karl Eugen Düring (*The Parties and the Jewish Question*, 1881); Theodor Fritzsche (*The Handbook of the Jewish Question*, also known as *The Anti-Semitism Catechism*, 1893); Houston Stewart Chamberlain (*The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, 1899); and Paul de Lagarde (*German Writings*, 1878–1881).

Hitler himself addressed the “Jewish Question” in a now-infamous letter to one Adolf Gemlich, a response to a need for clarification initially addressed to Captain Karl Mayr, the head of the Intelligence Section of the *Reichswehr* (Imperial Defense Force), who turned it over to him. Dated September 16, 1919, and now believed to be Hitler’s first antisemitic writing and revealing himself to be politically motivated while still in uniform after Germany’s defeat, he replied that “The danger posed by Jewry for our people today finds itself expression in the undeniable aversion of wide sections of our people. . . . Antisemitism as a political movement may not and cannot be defined by emotional impulses, but by recognition of the facts. The facts are these: First, Jewry is absolutely a race and not a religious association. . . . In his effects and consequences he is like a racial tuberculosis of the nations.” Hitler deduced from this that “an antisemitism based on purely emotional grounds will find its ultimate expression in the form of a pogrom.” On the other hand, a form of antisemitism based on reason “must lead to systematic legal combating and elimination of the privileges of Jews”—in other words, some form of Aliens Law that will distinguish the Jews from “other aliens who live among us.” The ultimate objective, however, “must . . . be the removal of the Jews in general.”

Hitler would continue to speak out against the Jews, refining his thinking, writing, and understanding of the “Jewish

Question.” Thus, with the Nazi takeover of Germany and Hitler’s ascent to the chancellorship, the “Jewish Question” became linked to its resolution; eventually, by 1941 and 1942, this became the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*), the evolving plan for the extermination and annihilation of the Jews of Europe in what would later be termed the Holocaust.

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See also: Final Solution; Nisko Plan

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Jewish Resistance

The Nazis exterminated 6 million Jews during World War II. Those who claim that Jews went meekly, as “sheep to the slaughter,” ignore the many instances of remarkable courage in the face of this staggering crime against humanity. In reality, Jewish resistance took many forms. That it often proved futile reflects the poignant vulnerability of Jews rather than any lack of bravery or courage.

Resistance can be divided into the two general categories of passive and active. Passive resistance took the form of cultural and spiritual endurance and assertiveness. Jews confined to ghettos such as Warsaw continued to practice their culture and religion despite prohibitions. They organized symphonies, drama clubs, schools, and other voluntary and educational associations. They also risked their lives by trading across ghetto walls, despite threats of torture and execution.

Passive resistance drew on a long and esteemed Jewish tradition of outlasting the persecutor. Initially believing that

JEWISH PARTISAN ACTIVITY IN EASTERN EUROPE 1942–1944



the Nazis and their various European sympathizers wanted to put Jews in their place, not in their graves, Jewish leaders sought to endure discriminatory laws, pogroms, and deportations, hoping for an eventual relaxation of antisemitic policies or perhaps even a defeat on the battlefield.

Thus, Jewish resistance remained largely nonviolent until 1943, in part because the Germans succeeded in deceiving the Jews. They were helped in this by the fact that the German soldiers of World War I had generally behaved decently, treating Jewish noncombatants humanely. Jews in Poland and the east initially expected similar behavior from the Nazi invaders. Even after it became apparent that Nazi soldiers and especially police were intent on human butchery on a scale previously unimaginable, Jewish cultures that embraced the sanctity and sheer joy of life found it difficult to comprehend a culture built on hate and murderous brutality, especially one that continued to worship civilized icons such as Goethe and Beethoven. Many Jews put their faith in God—hoping for the best, preparing for the worst, yet not daring at first to think the unthinkable.

When Jewish communities and individuals recognized that unthinkable—that the Nazis and their various European allies wanted to exterminate systematically all Jews in Europe—active and armed resistance increased. Active resistance included acts of industrial sabotage in munitions factories and isolated bombings of known Nazi gathering spots. One must recognize, however, the near utter futility of such efforts, given the impossibility of Jews “winning” pitched battles against their killers. The Nazis had machine guns, dogs, and usually superior numbers, and they could call on tanks, artillery, and similar weapons of industrialized modern warfare. The Jewish resisters were often unarmed; at best, some might have pistols or rifles with limited ammunition, perhaps supplemented by a few hand grenades. Such unequal odds often made the final result tragically predictable, yet many Jews decided it was better to die fighting than to face extermination in a death camp.

For example, when it became apparent that they were being deported to Treblinka to be gassed, the Jews of Warsaw at first refused to assemble and then led a ghetto uprising in April 1943, the ferocity of which surprised the Germans. More than 2,000 German soldiers, supported by armored cars, machine guns, flame throwers, and unlimited ammunition, faced approximately 750 Jews with little or no military training. The SS general in command, Jürgen Stroop, estimated he would need two days to suppress the uprising. In fact, he needed a full month, as Jews, armed mainly with pistols, homemade grenades, and Molotov cocktails, fought

frantically and ferociously from street to street and bunker to bunker. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was only the most famous example of nearly 60 other armed uprisings in Jewish ghettos.

Resistance was less common in death camps such as Chełmno and Bełżec, mainly because there was not sufficient time for resistance networks to form. Resistance requires leaders, organization, and weapons. These elements cannot be improvised and employed in a few hours or even days: months of planning and training are required. Despite nearly insurmountable difficulties, however, Jews did revolt in two of the death camps, as well as at Auschwitz-Birkenau and 18 forced labor camps.

One of the most extraordinary acts of Jewish resistance took place at Treblinka. On August 2, 1943, one year after the camp's inauguration, a group of Jewish prisoners rose up, killed their guards, burned the camp, and escaped. Of 600 prisoners who got away, only about 40 survived the war. At Sobibór, on October 14, 1943, a successful revolt by Jewish prisoners took place, in which 11 SS and a number of Ukrainian guards were killed. Three hundred prisoners escaped, though only 50 survived the Second World War. After the revolt, SS chief Heinrich Himmler ordered the camp dismantled and had it converted into a farm.

Jews also participated actively in resistance networks in Poland, the Soviet Union, France, and other countries. Their plight was difficult in the extreme, since antisemitism within these networks often required Jews to hide their ethnicity. In some cells of the Polish resistance, Jews were killed outright. Many Soviet partisans distrusted and exploited Jews; nevertheless, between 20,000 and 30,000 Jews fought as partisans in the Soviet Union against Nazi invaders. In France, Jews made up less than 1% of the population yet 15 to 20% of the French underground. In 1944 nearly 2,000 Jewish resisters in France united to form the *Organisation Juive de Combat* (Jewish Fighting Organization), which supported Allied military operations by attacking railway lines as well as German military installations and factories.

Impressive as it was, Jewish resistance was always hamstrung for several reasons. In general, Jews lacked combat experience, since many countries forbade Jewish citizens from serving in the military. As with Soviet prisoners of war taken by the Germans, many Jews, especially those confined in ghettos, were weakened by disease and deliberate starvation. Under these conditions, trained Soviet soldiers died with hardly a murmur of protest, so it is not surprising that Jewish families who had never been exposed to the hardships of war would likewise succumb.

The Nazis succeeded in creating a Hobbesian state of nature in which people were so focused on surviving from hour to hour that their struggles consumed virtually all their energy and attention. Dissension within Jewish communities also inhibited resistance, with older Jews and members of the *Judenräte*, or Jewish councils, tending to support a policy of limited cooperation with the Nazis, hoping that by contributing to the German war effort they might thereby preserve the so-called productive elements of Jewish communities.

More controversially, Jewish resistance was hampered by weak and irresolute international support. Although Western leaders often condemned Nazi actions, they took little action. Official Catholic and Protestant statements were equally tentative. Irresolute and sporadic support unintentionally played into the hands of the Nazis as they planned for Jewish extermination.

Observant Jews put their faith in God, with Jewish culture in general tending to disavow militant actions. Confronted by murderous killing squads possessing all the tools of industrialized mass warfare, some Jews nevertheless resisted courageously, both passively and actively. That their resistance often ended tragically does not mean that it failed.

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See also: Algeria; Armée Juive; Auschwitz; Bauer, Yehuda; Baum, Herbert; Beck, Gad; Bialystok Ghetto; Bloch, Marc; Bretholz, Leo; Cohn, Marianne; Comité de Défense des Juifs; Jewish Fighting Organization; Jewish Ghetto Police; Jewish Military Union; Jewish Partisans; Kaplan, Chaim A.; Katzenelson, Itzhak; Latvia; Lubetkin, Zivia; Meed, Vladka; Milchberg, Irving; Pechersky, Alexander; Resistance Movements; Robotka, Roza; Rosenbaum, Pinchas; Rufeisen, Oswald; Sobibór; Treblinka; United Partisan Organization; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Weltsch, Robert; Zygielbojm, Shmuel

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When Adolf Hitler and the Nazis came to power in January 1933, they began to implement laws that would push Jews out of German society and culture. Over the course of five years, between 1933 and 1938, these laws forced Jews out of their jobs, prevented them from using public spaces, and limited their contact with gentiles. Germany became a segregated society, and Jews second-class citizens (and, eventually, not citizens at all). These laws affected Jewish men and women in different ways. As in most countries at the time, men were the primary breadwinners. Nazi anti-Jewish laws forced most Jewish men out of the workforce. But families still needed money. Many Jewish women found work within the Jewish community to try to make ends meet.

Relationships between men and women changed because of Nazi anti-Jewish policy. In addition to losing jobs, men also found it more difficult to be in public spaces; they were targeted for violence and found their loss of work embarrassing. Jewish men stayed home while Jewish women took on outside responsibilities including filling out paperwork to emigrate, acquiring food, and interacting with their gentile neighbors. Traditionally female skills—stretching food and budgets, sewing and cleaning—became important as both means of survival and sources of income. This sometimes caused tension. Disagreement arose about emigration—to leave Germany or to stay. Men typically favored staying; women, leaving. Many factors figured into this discussion, but ultimately more men left.

Nazi anti-Jewish policy escalated at the end of 1938 as a result of individual and international refusal to oppose Hitler's domestic and foreign policies. The Evian Conference in July 1938 indicated that few countries would help to facilitate Jewish migration from Germany. Two other events in 1938, the German annexation of Austria (March) and the crisis surrounding the Sudetenland (October) showed that no country would stand up to the Nazis militarily. Jews had nowhere to go and no one to help them. Hitler's response was the November pogrom known as Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass. On November 9–10, the Nazis staged their first nationwide, coordinated attack on the Jewish community. Members of the SA and the SS burned down synagogues, looted stores, and broke into homes. They killed hundreds of Jewish men and sent tens of thousands to concentration camps. Women were left to clean up the mess. They spent their time and energy helping men get out of the camps and then out of the country. The Jewish community was forced to pay damages.

With the start of World War II and the rapid conquest and occupation of Poland and Western Europe by mid-1940,

Jewish Women and the Holocaust

During the Nazi era, Jewish women were subjected to the same laws as Jewish men, but how the Nazis applied these laws to women and how women responded mark a difference in experience from that of Jewish men.

all Jews in Europe came under Nazi attack. They rapidly became impoverished and isolated; they had limited options of where to live and virtually no opportunity to leave Europe. In the West until 1942, most Jews remained in their own homes. In Poland, they were forced into ghettos, where they resided until deportations began. In either case, women responded much as women in Germany had when the Nazis came to power. They tried to help their families get by. They found work and they stretched food, other supplies, and budgets.

With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1942, violence against Jews escalated once again. German policy evolved into genocide that began as mass shootings of Jewish people throughout Eastern Europe by mobile killing squads (Einsatzgruppen). There was little time to respond, and most Jewish communities in Eastern Europe were destroyed in their entirety. The killing squads killed every Jewish man, woman, and child they could reach (approximately 1.8 million people). In some cases, women suffered the additional attack of rape before being shot.

Shortly after the mobile killing squads went into action, the Nazis developed death camps, where Jews were shipped to be killed. These six camps (Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Auschwitz) were created in whole or in part to gas to death the Jews of Poland and Western Europe. They were distinct from other camps in the Nazi concentration camp system. As with killing squads, most people were killed immediately upon arrival. However, the journey to the camps and the experiences of the small number of people who were not killed immediately can be distinguished along gender lines.

Women at that time were the primary caretakers of children. Therefore, if they had children or young relatives, they were often near them during transit and took responsibility for their care and protection. This included breastfeeding and pregnancy—experiences that men did not have. In addition, menstruation may have added to their discomfort in transit during which personal hygiene became impossible to maintain. Upon arrival in the camps, the small number of people not sent to the gas chambers was selected based primarily on their perceived ability to perform slave labor for the Germans. Women, whether because they were viewed as physically weaker or because they had accompanying children, were typically sent immediately to the gas chambers along with the very young and the elderly.

Some, however, were admitted to the camps as laborers. The conditions they experienced tended to be as bad as and

sometimes worse than those for men. They received little food and were forced to perform various types of hard labor. They suffered from disease, starvation, filth, overcrowding, sleep deprivation, and violence. Under such circumstances, a majority of women died within months of arrival in Auschwitz. They often lived longer in other labor camps. In these conditions, it was extremely difficult to maintain relationships and feelings of dignity and humanity. Most women tried to connect with other women and create bonds of mutual responsibility: they shared food, stories, learning, religion, and political ideas. Men created similar kinds of relationships, but their groups tended to be smaller. In camps, women faced sexual violence from guards and other prisoners. Sometimes women became pregnant, and if discovered, they would be killed. Camp doctors (other prisoners themselves) performed abortions either with or without the knowledge of the pregnant woman, so that at least she might survive.

The effort to connect with others was the major form of resistance in camps and ghettos for both men and women; however, other forms of resistance also occurred. Women tried to escape from ghettos and camps, but less frequently and in smaller numbers than men. If they did escape, they may have had an easier time hiding because they were less easy to identify as Jewish. They had more difficulty than men in engaging in armed resistance, except in ghettos. Most partisan groups did not welcome women. When they were permitted, they often were forced into one sexual relationship so that other men would not attack them. Occasionally, women became fighters, but more often they were assigned supportive roles like cooking and washing. Women were involved in uprisings in ghettos and camps including the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the October 1944 *Sonderkommando* uprising in Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the latter, women smuggled gunpowder from a munitions factory to the *Sonderkommando*. Four women were hanged in January 1945 as a result of this activity.

Jewish women's experiences and responses during the Holocaust illustrate that although the Nazis targeted all Jews for murder, individuals experienced persecution in different ways. Each person responded as best he or she could with the limited resources at their disposal.

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See also: Death Camps; Ravensbrück

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Joint Distribution Committee

The history of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (known throughout the Jewish world as “The Joint,” or JDC) may be subsumed under four headings: (1) founding to World War II; (2) World War II and the Holocaust; (3) the aftermath of the Holocaust; and (4) the present day.

At the start of World War I, approximately 60,000 Jews were living in Ottoman-controlled Palestine, the majority of whom were originally from Europe and dependent upon monies sent by their brethren at home for their very sustenance and survival. Significantly, the war began to destroy the pipeline, and, in their desperation the Jews appealed to the American ambassador to Turkey, Henry Morgenthau Sr., who would, at the same time, also champion the genocidal plight of Armenian Christians. Morgenthau, on August 31, 1914, sent a telegram to two of his friends, American-Jewish banker and philanthropist Jacob Schiff, and lawyer and American-Jewish communal leader Louis Marshall, asking for US \$50,000 to ease the plight of these unfortunate Jews. By October 25 they had formed the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering through the War, composed largely of German American Reform Jews and including among their leadership banker Felix M. Warburg. Earlier that same month, on October 4, Orthodox Jews had formed their own committee under the leadership of Leon Kamaiky, while the socialist People's Relief Committee under the leadership of Meyer London had their own organization. The ongoing crisis in the Middle East, however, and the necessity of getting the required monies to those most in need mandated their coming together, and on November 27 “the Joint” was formed.

World War I itself also mandated an expansion of their activities as the fate of Jews in the countries that were to become Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary—literally and physically caught in the crossfire of opposing militaries—necessitated their relief efforts. By the end of 1917, more than \$2,000,000 went to Russian Jewish relief efforts, \$3,000,000 to Polish and Lithuanian efforts, and more than \$1,000,000 to Galician efforts, with smaller amounts directed

to other localities. Between 1921 and 1922 the JDC expended more than \$22,000,000 in relief.

With the war at an end, the JDC refocused its efforts on rehabilitating and reconstructing those same now-devastated communities and included Soviet Jews as well. Efforts were directed toward medicine, sanitation, childcare, and education. In 1924 the JDC set up the American Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation (Agro-Joint) with the Soviets, and resettled more than 600,000 Jews in the Crimea and Ukraine, only to be expelled in 1938.

With the takeover of the Nazis in Germany in 1933, and prior to America's entry into the war in 1941, the JDC began directing its efforts toward German and Austrian Jews whose lives were increasingly restricted and threatened; more than \$5,000,000 was expended vis-à-vis medical care, schools, vocational education, and welfare-related programs. Between 1933 and 1939 almost 200,000 Jews, aided by the JDC, were able to leave Germany, almost 100,000 of whom left Europe altogether. Jews in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, often surreptitiously, were also recipients of JDC aid. As of 1941, JDC representatives were still able to operate, and continued to do so underground in such as places as Warsaw, Kraków, and other places.

The Joint, with only limited resources, made valuable efforts to provide relief and rescue to the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust. Over time, it emerged as the only Jewish organization involved in immigration, refugee aid, and rescue operations throughout the world. Arguably, it could be suggested that hundreds of thousands of Jews who managed to escape from Nazi Europe did so as a result of JDC efforts.

Post-World War II efforts were initially directed toward enabling Europe's surviving Jews to emigrate to pre-state Israel (Palestine), and more than 115,000 successfully made the journey. Additionally, support for those living in displaced persons camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy, numbering more than 600,000 Jews, was also a primary concern of the JDC. With the birth of the State of Israel in May 1948, the JDC helped more than 440,000 Jews from Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa migrate to Israel in such actions as Operation Magic Carpet (1948) for the Jews of Yemen, Operation Ezra (1951–1952) for the Jews of Iraq and Kurdistan, and later Operation Solomon (1991) for the Jews of Ethiopia.

Since 1948 Israel has remained a primary focus of the JDC's activities, especially the care of aged immigrants and those with handicaps. Two programs stand out in this regard: Malben, the Organization for the Care of Handicapped Immigrants; and Eshel, the Association for the Planning and

Development of Services for the Aged. In each case, the Joint works in concert with both the Jewish Agency and the Israeli government. It also continues its work in Central and Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union, addressing poverty among Jews living there, as well as in Africa, Asia, and South America. Overall, the Joint operates in more than 70 countries and has joined with other relief organizations to aid in mega-tragedies such as earthquakes (for example, in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake) and economic chaos (the ongoing financial problems in Argentina).

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See also: Austria; Czechoslovakia; Displaced Persons; Hungary; Poland

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Jonas, Regina

Regina Jonas was a unique woman; during the 1930s she was the first (and, to that point, only) female rabbi, anywhere. She was born in Berlin on August 3, 1902, the daughter of Wolf and Sara Jonas, and grew up in the Scheunenviertel, a poor, mostly Jewish neighborhood. Her father was a merchant; when Regina was 11, he died of tuberculosis, leaving her mother to take care of herself, her son Abraham, and Regina.

At high school, Regina's passions for Jewish history, the Bible, and Hebrew led her to develop an interest in what at the time was unthinkable for a girl: she wanted to become a rabbi. She spoke about it often with her fellow students and studied hard in order to be able to teach. She enrolled in Berlin's *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Higher Institute for Jewish Studies) and took courses designed for liberal student rabbis.



In 1935 Regina Jonas became the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi. The Nazi intensification of anti-Jewish measures made it impossible for her to conduct regular synagogue services, so she worked consistently as a teacher of religion while clandestinely ministering to Jewish communities. In November 1942 she was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt. Working there as a teacher and rabbi, she was deported to Auschwitz in mid-October 1944, where she was murdered. (ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo)

Several people supported her along the way, leading Orthodox rabbis among them. She was even tutored in a weekly *shiur* (study session) by Rabbi Max Weyl, until his deportation to Theresienstadt during World War II. In 1924 she graduated as an "Academic Teacher of Religion," along with her fellow female students. She then became the only woman who hoped to go one step further and be ordained a rabbi.

The thesis that followed would, in the normal run of events, have been required as one of the important steps leading to ordination. Supervised by Professor Eduard Baneth, who was responsible for rabbinic ordination, her thesis was titled, "Can a Woman Be a Rabbi According to Halachic Sources?" Submitted in June 1930, this was the first known attempt to find a basis in Jewish religious law that would allow for female ordination. Her conclusion was that there was no prohibition *in law* holding women back from being ordained.

Her work received a grade of “good,” which should have paved the way for ordination. Shortly after the thesis had been passed, however, Professor Baneth died and his conservative successor, Rabbi Hanoch Albeck, refused to ordain her because she was a woman. The result saw Regina graduate as a teacher of religion—but only that.

After the Nazis came to power in early 1933, there was an increased demand for Jewish religious teachers. Jewish children were forced out of public schools and into Jewish establishments, and “Miss Jonas” worked hard to impart both Jewish knowledge and *Ahavat Yisroel* (a love of the Jewish people) to her pupils.

Throughout the years following, she continued to pursue ordination, until finally, in 1935, Rabbi Max Dienemann agreed. On December 27, 1935, she became Rabbinerin Regina Jonas. She began working as a chaplain in various Jewish organizations, though as a woman she was denied a pulpit by congregations across Germany. The spiritual head of German Jewry, Rabbi Leo Baeck, endorsed her ordination after the fact, though he refused to assist in the process leading her to the rabbinate on the ground that a female rabbi, at that time in German Jewish history, would have caused massive and unnecessary complications within the Jewish community.

In the years that followed, Regina threw herself into pastoral work. Although she did not have her own pulpit, she spent long hours visiting the sick in Berlin’s Jewish Hospital, and she cared especially for elderly Jews whom circumstances—whether through age or finances—had left in a precarious position. With the onset of war she became a roving rabbi, ministering to Jewish communities in towns that no longer had one.

In 1941 she led special services in lieu of regular worship, such activity no longer being viable in smaller communities from where large-scale emigration had taken place. Her messages were always positive, emphasizing the need to remain true to Judaism and a Jewish identity despite the horrors taking place outside.

On November 6, 1942, Regina and her mother were deported to Theresienstadt. Two days beforehand she was forced to fill out a declaration listing all her property; this was then confiscated by the state.

At Theresienstadt she continued working. Here, as well as counseling older Jews, she also spent a lot of her time and energy preaching to children about the glory of being Jewish and the privilege of doing God’s work. She helped the renowned Austrian Jewish psychoanalyst Viktor Frankl in establishing a department of mental hygiene as a means to prevent suicide attempts.

Working without a break for two years, she lectured, preached, counseled, and gave hope constantly to those around her. Being a “woman rabbi” was never a concern to her—being a rabbi was. She was aware of her unique status, but considered that to be only a temporary uniqueness; her hope was that she would be the harbinger of more to follow.

On October 12, 1944, time ran out. Rabbi Regina and her mother were deported to Auschwitz and probably killed that day or the next. There is no certainty, however; it could even have been as late as December of that year.

Among her papers, found in 1991 by Dr. Katharina von Kellenbach from St. Mary’s College of Maryland, was a sermon that could have been her epitaph: “May all our work be a blessing for Israel’s future (and the future of humanity). . . . Upright ‘Jewish men’ and ‘brave, noble women’ were always the sustainers of our people. May we be found worthy by God to be numbered in the circle of these women and men. . . . The reward of a mitzvah is the recognition of the great deed by God.”

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See also: Auschwitz; Confiscation of Jewish Property; Theresienstadt

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Jud Süß

A novel written in Germany in 1925 by Jewish author Lion Feuchtwanger and translated into English as *Power*. Feuchtwanger’s writings had been suppressed during World War I because of what was held to be their revolutionary content, and he became one of the earliest critics of Hitler and the Nazis. He was forced into exile in London by the Nazis in 1934. In *Jud Süß (Jew Suss)*, he chronicled the story of a powerful ghetto businessman, Oppenheimer, who believes himself to be a Jew. His ruthless business practices result in the betrayal of an innocent girl; for this he is arrested and sentenced to death, the victim of anti-Jewish laws. Rather than turn against the Jews of the ghetto by declaring his non-Jewish identity, which he discovers through a set of letters given to him by his mother revealing that his father was in fact a Christian nobleman, he dies on the gallows with dignity and honor.

Feuchtwanger intended the book to be an attack against antisemitism, an allegory on German society for his own day. It was picked up by the Nazis, however, and transformed into a viciously antisemitic movie in 1940. It was directed by Veit Harlan and starred Werner Krauss in the title role. The plot was twisted to show Oppenheimer as a real Jew, portrayed according to Nazi stereotypes: greasy hair, hooked nose, unscrupulous, bearded, cowardly, and a rapist. At his arrest and execution, he is seen as screaming and unmanly; by contrast his executioners appear to be upright, solid citizens. After Oppenheimer's execution, the rest of the Jews of the city are driven into exile. As a piece of propaganda cinema, the movie had a powerful effect on its audiences, helping to prepare the German public for further atrocities against Jews. Many viewed it as though it were a documentary and were driven to acts of violence against Jews in the street after having seen it. Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, ordered all members of the various official bodies under his command to see the movie; this extended to local police and concentration camp guards. Its effectiveness as a propaganda tool was thus not limited to the general public, as it was used in order to achieve specific dehumanizing goals regarding the perceived racial enemy, and to whip up violence against that enemy. Veit Harlan was later tried for crimes against humanity by the Allies at Nuremberg, but his case was dismissed due to a lack of direct evidence implicating him in the destruction of the Jews.

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See also: Antisemitism; Marian, Ferdinand; Propaganda in the Holocaust

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Judenrat

The Judenräte (singular, Judenrat) were Jewish community councils set up by the Nazis during their occupation of Poland and Eastern Europe during World War II. They were established to maintain order in the Jewish ghettos.

On September 21, 1939, shortly after the Polish invasion, Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann, leaders of the Gestapo, established the Judenräte during their relocation of Jews to ghettos in Poland. A Judenrat was a group of 24

Jewish community leaders, often but not always rabbis, who were responsible for community services and governance like education, sanitation, and policing. The Judenrat also helped provide food for the impoverished ghettos. The ghettos often differed greatly from one another, as did the methods of governing. Some Judenräte also controlled commerce within the community, including tax collections.

The relationships between the Judenräte and the Nazis were often troubled, and ghetto inhabitants targeted their anger at the Nazis against members of the Judenrat because they were often seen as collaborators for enforcing Nazi laws. The Nazis used the ghettos to consolidate and demoralize the Jews in order to make extermination easier. The Nazis allowed the ghettos very few supplies, and residents blamed the Judenrat. Thousands of Jews died in the ghettos from starvation and diseases like typhus.

By late 1941 Nazi control of the ghettos had grown stricter. The Judenräte were soon put in charge of supplying the Nazis with lists of capable workers in their communities. The chosen workers were issued a limited number of work permits and allowed to stay, while those who did not receive permits were sent to concentration camps. The chairman of the Warsaw Judenrat, Adam Czerniakow, killed himself rather than choose who would die and who would live. Other leaders who refused to participate were often killed, while yet others became the nucleus for covert resistance activities.

As the Nazis' intentions became clearer, some Jews began leading such armed insurrections as the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. These insurrectionists often killed Judenrat leaders because they opposed insurrection as a challenge to law and order in the ghetto. Almost all of the Judenrat leaders were killed before the end of the war. Although the leaders were faced with incomprehensible duties, many Holocaust survivors and historians have blamed their maintenance of law and order for making it easier for the Nazis to implement the Final Solution.

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See also

Arendt, Hannah; Bauer, Yehuda; Czerniakow, Adam; Gens, Jacob; Ghettos; Jewish Honor Courts; Łódź Ghetto; Nisko Plan; Zygielbojm, Shmuel

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Judges' Trial

Held under the authority of Control Council Law Number 10, the case against members of the German Ministry of Justice opened on March 5, 1947, before an American tribunal. Fourteen men were tried for abuse of the justice system. For crimes against humanity and war crimes, 10 of the men received guilty verdicts and were given various prison terms; the rest were found not guilty. The basis of the charges arose from the infamous *Nach und Nebel* ("Night and Fog") decrees ordered by Adolf Hitler to terrify the population of occupied territories into submission and to prevent resistance. The ministers and judges were tried because they had actively participated in this system in contravention of the accepted practices of justice.

Prior to the 1933 Nazi takeover of Germany, lawyers and judges were respected worldwide for their high standards based on knowledge of the law and justice applied equally. The Nazis replaced these politically neutral standards with ones emphasizing ideology. A man need not know the law if he knew National Socialism as espoused by Hitler and was physically fit. These standards made it easier to put men in charge who did not know or care for the law but only cared about protecting the Third Reich. When decrees such as the Night and Fog decree and those creating the People's Courts, with their mandatory harsh sentences, were established, there was no one to stop them. Trials were conducted in name only; often the court did not allow the defendant to defend himself appropriately. The People's Courts ordered death sentences for comparatively minor crimes. After the sentences were carried out, the bodies were not returned to the families, nor were death certificates filed.

After World War II, the perpetrators of these injustices were themselves called to account before a court of law. Prosecutors filed the indictment with Tribunal II of the International Tribunal on January 4, 1947. It contained several counts: conspiracy to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity; war crimes; crimes against humanity; and membership in the SS, SD, or Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party. The tribunal later dismissed the conspiracy count in accordance with a common ruling that the court had no jurisdiction on a charge of conspiracy as a separate charge. The court also excluded the defense of "acts of state," claiming that the Nazi government was not the legitimate government of Germany and therefore no order issued by it had the force of law. Seventeen men of the justice ministry and the German courts were indicted, although only 15 stood trial; two men committed suicide in jail, including the head of the

ministry from 1942 to 1945. The court dismissed charges against one defendant in mid-trial for health reasons.

Although the case touched on the singling out of Jews for extermination, the trial also encompassed the lynching of Allied airmen, castration and sterilization of all "undesirables," and the Nazi euthanasia program. The prosecutor's case centered primarily on Night and Fog decrees and the abuses of the so-called People's Courts. Hitler had promulgated these decrees as a way to suppress resistance movements, and established the People's Courts as a way to move the cases out of the military courts and into civilian courts, as he claimed that the military's adherence to its code of justice was sabotaging his war efforts. The tribunal made no ruling on the legitimacy of the courts or the charges against those brought before them; they ruled only on the excessive sentences and other abuses perpetrated by these courts.

Opening arguments began on March 5, 1947. Telford Taylor was the chief U.S. prosecutor. The defendants were allowed counsel of their choice and allowed to present evidence and witnesses in their defense. As was common in almost all the war crimes trials of this period, the defendants attempted to shift blame to others (including those not charged or dead) and all claimed that they hated the rules under which they were forced to operate. Every defendant claimed he did not truly believe in Nazi ideology but only went along with the prevailing beliefs in order to maintain his position and protect his family. A few even claimed that they stayed on in order to mitigate the worst abuses and save whom they could. The prosecution pointed out the various contradictions in testimony and evidence of active involvement in the abuses. Any such discrepancies the prosecution overlooked, the judges did not.

Verbal testimony ended on September 27, 1947. The last day to introduce documentary evidence was October 13, 1947. Closing arguments were held the week of October 3, 1947. The court then recessed to consider its judgment. The verdict was delivered over two days, from December 3 to December 4, 1947. Four of the remaining defendants, mostly judges of the People's Court, were acquitted. Three received life sentences, the rest received varying prison terms with credit for time served. The judges of the tribunal were scathing in their criticism of the alleged judicial process carried out in the Nazi regime.

ELIZABETH PUGLIESE

See also: Crimes against Humanity; *Judgment at Nuremberg*; Rothaug, Oswald; Schlegelberger, Franz; Taylor, Telford; War Crimes

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Judgment at Nuremberg

A 1961 American movie directed by Stanley Kramer and written by Abby Mann, this film focuses on a post–World War II Nazi war crimes trial held three years after the war—and three years since the most important Nazi leaders had already been tried. The trial centers around four Nazi judges who used their office to conduct Nazi sterilization and cleansing policies. A retired American judge, Dan Haywood (Spencer Tracy), is brought to Nuremberg in order to serve as chief judge on a three-man bench that is trying four other judges, who were following the law of the land while they were in office.

The plot of *Judgment at Nuremberg* proceeds from the actual “Judges’ (or Justice) Trial” held against members of the German Ministry of Justice from March 5, 1947, before an American tribunal. For crimes against humanity and war crimes, 10 of the 14 men accused received guilty verdicts and were given various prison terms. The ministers and judges were tried because they had actively participated in the Nazi legal system, in contravention of what were considered to be accepted practices of justice.

Of the four judges on trial in the film, the largest question mark surrounds Dr. Ernst Janning (Burt Lancaster), an internationally renowned judge of very high standing within the legal profession. Haywood begins his examination by trying to learn how Janning could have sentenced so many people to death, and the prosecuting attorney, Colonel Tad Lawson (Richard Widmark), presents his case against Janning and the others passionately, even obsessively. For the defense, counsel Hans Rolfe (Maximilian Schell) invokes a number of issues that introduce a degree of moral equivalence between Nazi and Allied war crimes. Overall, in this way, the film deals with the whole issue of war crimes against civilian populations during the Holocaust, along the way examining the post–World War II geopolitical complexity of international tribunals of this kind.

One of the film’s important plot lines relates to a real case within the Third Reich and is based on the notorious

Katzenberger Trial. Lehmann (Leo) Israel Katzenberger, a Jewish businessman and head of the Nuremberg Jewish community, aged 68 years, was accused of the crime of “racial pollution” because of his alleged sexual intercourse with a younger Aryan woman named Irene Seiler. She was found guilty of perjury for denying the charge and imprisoned for two years at hard labor; on March 14, 1942, Katzenberger was sentenced to death and was executed by beheading.

In the film, the so-called “race defilement” trial was referred to as the Feldenstein case, in which Feldenstein, an elderly Jewish man, had been tried for having a relationship involving sexual acts with a 16-year-old “Aryan” girl, Irene Hoffman Wallner (Judy Garland), in direct contravention of the Nuremberg Laws on Race. Feldenstein was found guilty and executed in 1935. During a brutal interrogation of Irene Hoffman Wallner from defense attorney Rolfe, Dr. Janning decides to speak up. He recognizes that he is guilty of the crime of condemning to death a Jewish man on the charge of “blood defilement,” while he knew all the time that there was no evidence to support such a verdict. It is a key moment in the film. Eventually, after some riveting courtroom drama and the showing of authentic documentary footage filmed by American and British cameramen after the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps at Buchenwald, Dachau, and Bergen-Belsen, all four defendants are found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

Judgment at Nuremberg was graced by an all-star cast comprising some of the biggest box-office drawcards of the day. In addition to Tracy, Lancaster, and Widmark, major roles were taken by such acting greats as Werner Klemperer, Marlene Dietrich, Montgomery Clift, and a young William Shatner.

The film became a highly celebrated essay on the morals of international justice and morality. It was nominated for 11 Academy Awards, and saw one of the very few occasions on which two actors from the same movie were nominated for Best Actor (Schell and Tracy; Schell won the award). Abby Mann won the award for Best Adapted Screenplay. Apart from Tracy’s nomination, others included Best Picture, Best Director (Stanley Kramer), Montgomery Clift (Best Supporting Actor), and Judy Garland (Best Supporting Actress). In 2013 *Judgment at Nuremberg* was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress, in the category of films that are “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant.”

One final point needs to be made about the movie’s dialogue. As the screenwriter, Abby Mann was determined to

emphasize that there can be no place for moral neutrality when faced with a situation as horrendous as the Holocaust. Therefore, in one of the film's final scenes, Judge Haywood, at Dr. Ernst Janning's request, visits Janning in prison. He states that the reason he asked Haywood to come was to try to explain his position to one he thought would understand. In relation to the Holocaust, he says: "I never knew it would come to that. You *must* believe it, you must believe it!" Haywood replies, in what are the last spoken lines of the film, "Herr Janning, it 'came to that' the first time you sentenced a man to death you knew to be innocent." As Haywood leaves, a final message appears on the screen to the effect that of 99 defendants sentenced to prison terms in the

various post-International Military Tribunal trials at Nuremberg, none were still serving their sentences at the time of the film's release.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Judges' Trial; Katzenberger Trial; Nuremberg Laws; "Racial Hygiene"

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K

Kaiser Wilhelm Institute

The Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the Advancement of Science (*Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften*, or KWG) was a German scientific institution established in 1911. It created some of the most prestigious and influential scientific and academic institutes in the world, encompassing scientific and academic disciplines such as physics, chemistry, biology, cell biology, psychiatry, neuropathology, genetics, anthropology, metallurgy, and law. The Rockefeller Foundation supported both the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) of Psychiatry and the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics; it partially funded the actual building of the institute and helped keep the institute afloat during the Depression.

During the Third Reich the KWG was involved in Nazi scientific operations. The participation of scientists associated with the KWG enhanced the credibility of the Nazi state's program of scientific terror and murder. The 1933 Sterilization Law, to which the KWG Institute of Psychiatry contributed, established the basis for the Nazi programs of selection and eugenic and racial purification, including the killing of handicapped children and the T-4 *Aktion* for the murder of adults in psychiatric institutions. The KWG was an umbrella organization for many institutes, testing stations, and research units spawned under its authority. After World War II, its functions were taken over by the Max Planck Society.

The KWG was established in 1911 to promote the natural sciences in Germany, by founding and maintaining research

institutions formally independent from the state. The institutions were to be under the guidance of prominent directors, which included luminaries such as Walther Bothe, Peter Debye, Albert Einstein, Fritz Haber, and Otto Hahn. A board of trustees also provided guidance.

Between its establishment in 1911 and 1948 the Kaiser Wilhelm organization supported 35 institutes in Germany and other countries. Many Nobel laureates of the 20th century were associated with Kaiser Wilhelm institutes, and the international esteem of the KWG is reflected in the support it received from the Rockefeller Foundation, which made major contributions to the construction of the Kaiser Wilhelm institutes of brain research and psychiatry. The Rockefeller Foundation also supported research at the Munich psychiatric institute and twin research at the KWI of Anthropology, Human Genetics and Eugenics at Berlin-Dahlem.

Remarkably, the three Kaiser Wilhelm institutes that were major beneficiaries of Rockefeller endowments ultimately played important roles in the development, application, and operation of the racial programs of the Third Reich. KWG scientists joined with the Nazi state in its goal of improving German society's health, with emphasis on eugenics and racial purification. The resulting collaboration between science and the Nazi state not only legitimized the policies and programs of the Hitler regime; it resulted in the exploitation, mutilation, and murder of untold thousands of innocent victims by physicians and scientists associated with some of the world's leading universities and research institutes.

In 1917 the eminent psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin established the German Institute for Psychiatric Research, with major financial support from James Loeb, an American-born Jewish philanthropist and a one-time patient of Kraepelin. This became the foremost psychiatric research institute in the world and in 1924 joined with the Kaiser-Wilhelm research organization.

Kraepelin assembled a stellar group of clinicians and researchers at the new KWI of Psychiatry, including the psychiatrist/neurologist Alois Alzheimer and the neurohistologist Franz Nissl. These were then joined by the Swiss-born psychiatrist/geneticist Ernst Rüdin, and all three joined Kraepelin when he moved from Heidelberg to Munich. The focus of Rüdin's research was on the inheritance of psychiatric disorders, and in 1928 he became director of a "greatly expanded" genealogical department. In 1931 he was elected to head the Institute. Building on Kraepelin's earlier relationships, his research was well endowed with funding from Rockefeller and the Loeb estate. Loeb, who died in 1933, bequeathed \$1,000,000 to the Munich institute.

Rüdin became an active supporter of the eugenic and racial hygiene policies of Hitler's regime, and was in the forefront of the Nazi program of enforced eugenic sterilization entrenched under the 1933 Sterilization Law. Under Rüdin the KWI of Psychiatry became a major center of eugenics research during the Hitler period, and he was honored twice by Hitler for his contribution to German eugenics. The 1933 Sterilization Law established diagnostic categories for enforced sterilization; two of these, schizophrenia and manic-depressive disorder, were psychiatric conditions first characterized by Kraepelin and investigated by Rüdin. Under the law, an estimated 400,000 German citizens would be sterilized, with both doctors and the courts turning to the KWG Institute of Psychiatry for an "expert" opinion on eugenic matters.

In 1935 the Rockefeller Foundation withheld funding for genealogical and demographic research, and in 1940 the executors of the Loeb estate did the same. Desperate for support, Rüdin turned to the SS for salvation, and as a result in 1939 the world's foremost psychiatric research institute came under the influence, if not the control, of the SS and its research organization, the notorious Ahnenerbe.

The 1933 Sterilization Law to which Rüdin contributed, and in which the KWI of Psychiatry participated, established the basis for the Nazi programs of selection and eugenic and racial purification. These programs included the killing of handicapped children and the T-4 *Aktion* for the murder of adults in psychiatric institutions.

The T-4 killing program was exploited by Professor Julius Hallervorden of the KWI of Brain Research to augment the neuropathological collection of brain material for research. The founding director of the institute, Oskar Vogt, a socialist opposed to the Nazi Party, had been dismissed and replaced by Hugo Spatz, who then appointed Hallervorden, with whom he had worked on identifying a congenital neurological condition then known as "Hallervorden-Spatz Disease."

Hallervorden's main collection point for specimens was the euthanasia killing center in Brandenburg. Victims were assembled in a large room disguised as a shower where they were asphyxiated with gas. Hallervorden was present for some of the killings and removed the victims' brains shortly after their murder. Many victims came from the nearby Görden psychiatric hospital. Hallervorden's neuropathology facility at Görden prepared specimens that were sent to the KWI in Buch. In 1944 the KWI for Brain Research and its neuropathological collection were moved from Berlin to a permanent facility near the University of Frankfurt, where the specimens procured by Hallervorden remained until 1990.

The third Kaiser Wilhelm institute implicated in the crimes of the Third Reich was the KWI of Anthropology, Human Genetics and Eugenics in Dahlem, Berlin. This institute opened in September 1927 in conjunction with the 8th International Congress on Heredity, the first international scientific conference to be held in Germany after the end of World War I. Three main departments were created: Anthropology, Genetics, and Eugenics and Racial Hygiene. Research was carried out in disciplines such as experimental genetics, evolutionary biology, embryology, medicine, and anthropology, through methods such as twin research, blood group research, and animal models.

The founding director was the noted anatomist/anthropologist Eugen Fischer, whose interest was in the anthropology of natives from Germany's African colonies. Upon Hitler taking power, Fischer declared that the institute was prepared to undertake research for the regime. Under Fischer, the sterilization of so-called "Rhineland Bastards" (children born of German mothers and African fathers during the occupation of the Rhineland after World War I) was undertaken. The research activities of institute scientists for the regime aligned with their own views regarding the attainment of racial hygiene. Fischer, a radical antisemite, became involved in the Final Solution when he attended the Frankfurt Institute for the Investigation of the Jewish Question on March 27–28, 1941.

Baron Dr. Otmar von Verschuer, an institute scientist from Tübingen and noted expert on the genetics of twins,

was a champion of the racist goals of the Hitler state. In 1936 Verschuer left to head the new Institute of Genetics and Racial Hygiene at the University of Frankfurt, where institute staff provided expert opinions to Nazi courts on decisions under the 1933 sterilization law and the Nuremberg racial laws. Verschuer's first assistant in Frankfurt was a medical student, Josef Mengele, who had recently received his PhD from the University of Munich.

Verschuer exploited his position as a noted geneticist to expound his antisemitic views, which included a new total solution of the Jewish problem. In a 1942 editorial published in a journal he edited (*Der Erbarzt*), Verschuer called for "a final solution to the Jewish question." In the second edition of his textbook on race hygiene (1942) he repeated his provocative statement that the political demand of the time was the new total solution of the Jewish problem.

In 1942 Verschuer succeeded Fischer as director of the Dahlem institute, where, as KWI director, he exploited helpless human beings in Auschwitz to use in studies intended to prove Nazi racial theories, including the study of twins. His former Frankfurt assistant, Josef Mengele, was at Auschwitz and served as Verschuer's agent and research assistant. Jews and Roma were studied, murdered, dissected, and their body parts sent by Mengele to Verschuer in Berlin. Where victims happened to have eyes of a different color (known as heterochromia of the iris), these were sent to Dr. Karin Magnussen at the Dahlem institute.

Anthropobiology was used to support stereotyped views of Roma, Jews, blacks, the mentally ill, and those with physical handicaps. Anthropobiology utilized anthropometry: the measurement and recording of "metrics" (different physical or mental factors), which could then be used to classify people by race or value. Thus, for example, Jews had a particular type of nose; blacks had kinky hair; Roma were always criminals; and so on. The work done at KWI of Anthropology used a variety of criteria to identify races, such as hair color and shape, skin color, eye color, freckles, blood group, skull shape and capacity, facial characteristics, and body type. These stereotypes were primarily used to create propaganda support for a number of Nazi programs: Lebensborn, sterilization, euthanasia, mass murder in concentration camps, deportations, and medical experimentation done by other programs such as the Waffen-SS. The purpose of the propaganda was to dehumanize those who were considered to be enemies of the Third Reich.

Studies carried out on Auschwitz victims included an examination of their blood for certain elements that were

believed to be formed in response to infection. Verschuer's institute lacked the capacity to do the required blood testing, so the blood of Auschwitz victims was sent to the neighboring KWI for Biochemistry headed by Adolf Butenandt. The tests themselves were performed at the biochemistry institute by Günther Hillmann. Butenandt, a pioneering biochemist whose discovery of the male and female hormones in humans had earned him the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1939, led the way to many modern therapies including the birth control pill.

Verschuer, like Fischer, participated in the Final Solution when he attended the Frankfurt Institute on the Jewish Question on March 27–28, 1941. After the war he fled Berlin and hid or destroyed the records of KWI of Anthropology activities at his family home. Soon after, accusations were made against him concerning Auschwitz research. A committee of KWG scientists was formed to review the case against him, and its report, which was not made public, made it impossible for him to be reappointed to a university position.

Butenandt, in addition to directly or indirectly assisting Verschuer with his studies on the blood of Auschwitz victims, helped restore Verschuer's postwar standing in the scientific community. Despite the evidence, a new committee concluded that Verschuer was not a Nazi, was not a race fanatic, was tolerant with his collaborators, and did not know what went on at Auschwitz. The committee stated that von Verschuer had all the qualities that destined him to be a researcher and teacher of academic youth. Having been exonerated, Verschuer went on to assume the position of professor of genetics at the University of Münster and the director of that university's genetics institute, becoming the most prominent geneticist in West Germany. He died in 1969.

After the German capitulation in May 1945, the institute was dissolved entirely, and most of its thousands of files and lab material were moved to an unknown location or destroyed. It was never obtained by the Allies to use as evidence in war crimes trials, and most members of the institute staff were able to escape trial.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Eugenics; Euthanasia Program; Fischer, Eugen; Medical Experimentation; Medical Experimentation; "Racial Hygiene"; Rhineland Bastards; Sterilization

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Kalina, Antonin

Antonin Kalina was a Czech communist internee at the Buchenwald concentration camp during World War II who helped shield some 900 Jewish (and some 300 non-Jewish) boys from Nazi depredations.

He was born in the small Czech village of Trebic in 1902, but little is known about his life either before or after World War II. He apparently became a communist, and in 1939, after the Germans had occupied Czechoslovakia, he was arrested and eventually interned at Buchenwald.

Beginning in the autumn of 1944, as German armies were being pushed west by Soviet forces, German authorities began to liquidate various concentration and death camps in the east. In doing so, they forced thousands of mostly Jewish prisoners to embark on ruinous death marches. The survivors were then reincarcerated in German camps, including Buchenwald. In the early winter of 1945, a group of about 1,200 Jewish and non-Jewish boys, aged between 12 and 16, arrived at Buchenwald from liquidated concentration camps elsewhere. They had already endured unspeakable horrors, including the loss of their families, and had been emotionally and physically brutalized.

The boys' fate appeared grim, but Kalina made certain that they would not suffer unduly in their new environment. By now, he was a high-ranking member of the camp's underground, which, with Nazi acquiescence, basically ran the camp's operations. Kalina and his deputies placed the boys in a special barracks, numbered 66, which was away from the camp's main housing. This would ensure that the boys would not be subjected to German scrutiny or beatings. As the elder of Block 66, Kalina did everything in his power to shield the boys from abuse.

The boys were not required to go outside for roll call twice a day, were not required to work, and, supplies permitting, were provided with blankets and larger food rations. Kalina did all of this knowing that if the Germans found out about the boys' special treatment, he could be shot. In April 1945, as the Germans were on the verge of

complete defeat, they decided to deport and kill all of Buchenwald's remaining Jews. To prevent this, Kalina told the boys not to report for assembly; he also falsified their records and changed the religion on their badges to make it appear as if all were Christians. These heroic acts saved the boys from almost certain death. When Allied troops liberated Buchenwald on April 11, 1945, a group of the boys carried Kalina out of the squalid prison on their shoulders.

After Kalina returned to Czechoslovakia, he lived in virtual obscurity. He never spoke of his actions in public, nor did he seek any credit for them. He died in Prague in 1990. Nearly 20 years after his death, some of the survivors whom Kalina had saved participated in a documentary project titled *Kinderblock 66: Return to Buchenwald*, in which a filmmaker detailed their return to Buchenwald 65 years after it was liberated. That triggered a process that ultimately brought official recognition of Kalina's heroic acts. In July 2012 Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust remembrance authority, bestowed its highest recognition on Kalina when it posthumously awarded him the status of Righteous among the Nations. Sadly, however, no members of Kalina's family had survived to accept the honor.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Buchenwald; Czechoslovakia; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Kaltenbrunner, Ernst

Leader of the Austrian SS and chief of the Reich Main Security Office in 1943. Born in Ried/Innkreis, Austria, on October 4, 1903, Ernst Kaltenbrunner earned a doctorate in law at the University of Graz in 1926 and entered legal practice in Linz. Joining the Austrian Nazi Party in 1930, he worked to destabilize the Austrian Republic. He became head of the Austrian SS at Linz in 1934 but was arrested and accused of being involved in the assassination of the Austrian chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, on July 25, 1934. Following the Anschluss (the union between Germany and Austria) in March 1938, Kaltenbrunner became minister for state security as well as police chief in Vienna. During the next three years, he served as commander of the SS in what was now the former Austria.



Ernst Kaltenbrunner was head of the Reich Main Security Office of the SS following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in 1942. Born in Austria, he rose to the rank of SS general (Obergruppenführer), and, after the defeat of Germany in 1945, he became the highest-ranking SS officer to face trial at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. He was executed in 1946. The image here shows him as he testifies on the witness stand during his trial. (Corbis via Getty Images)

Kaltenbrunner impressed the German SS chief, Heinrich Himmler, who, on January 30, 1943, appointed him to succeed Reinhard Heydrich as head of the Reich Main Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or RSHA) and SS intelligence. Kaltenbrunner not only controlled the Gestapo (the secret police) but was also responsible for carrying out the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). Kaltenbrunner held his position until the end of the war and was promoted to SS Obergruppenführer and general of police on June 21, 1943. He took personal interest in the different methods used to kill the inmates in the extermination camps. Besides supervising the hunting down of Jews, he was also responsible for the murder of Allied prisoners of war.

Kaltenbrunner’s power increased greatly after the July 20, 1944, attempt on Hitler’s life. He directed the Gestapo’s investigation into the plot and was in charge of administering Hitler’s policy of retribution against the conspirators. When the Allies were closing in on Germany in early 1945, Kaltenbrunner gave orders for all prisoners to be killed. Then, he fled south. He was captured in the Austrian mountains on May 15, 1945. Charged with conspiracy to commit crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, Kaltenbrunner was found guilty and was hanged on October 16, 1946, in Nuremberg.

MARTIN MOLL

See also: Austria; Final Solution; Nuremberg Trials; Reichs-sicherheitshauptamt; Sicherheitsdienst

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Kaplan, Chaim A.

Chaim Aron Kaplan was an educator and diarist of the Holocaust who resisted the Nazis by chronicling the day-to-day events of the Warsaw Ghetto, making a record of life there under German occupation. Kaplan was born in 1880 in Gorodishche (Horodyszczce), a village in Belorussia in the Russian Empire. He was educated at the famous Mir yeshiva and later studied at the Vilna teachers' college. In 1902 he moved to Warsaw, where he established an elementary Hebrew school; he would remain there as principal for the next 40 years. In 1921 he visited the United States and in 1936 Palestine, with the idea of joining his two children. As he saw little economic future for himself there, however, he returned to Warsaw.

Kaplan devoted his efforts to education and writing. He began keeping a diary around 1933, and in September 1939, at the start of World War II, decided to detail Jewish life in Warsaw and thus preserve a record for posterity. This was to become Kaplan's *Scroll of Agony*. His very first entry, on September 1, 1939, was prescient: "This war will indeed bring destruction upon human civilization. . . . I doubt that we will live through this carnage. The bombs filled with lethal gas will poison every living being, or we will starve because there will be no means of livelihood."

After Warsaw's surrender to German forces on September 27, 1939, Kaplan wrote: "the Nazis' objective was to eliminate the Jews physically through a slow choking process." By the time the ghetto was established formally on October 12, 1940, roughly 375,000 Jews (nearly a third of Warsaw's population), along with many refugees, were squeezed into a ghetto that took up 2.4% of Warsaw's surface area. To make matters worse, Jews in the ghetto were only allotted one-tenth of the required caloric intake and were subjected to forced labor, disease, and slaughter. Kaplan commented on the frequent murder of Jews and the constant treatment they experienced, explaining that: "The Aryans are put to death after a short period of arrest; the Jews are killed without even a pretense

of arrest." He further detailed how the Nazis carried out many of their violent acts: "The murderers burst into a home in the middle of the night and put an end to a life."

Scroll of Agony would become one of the most powerful and inspiring testimonies from the Holocaust period. Kaplan recorded his diary in small notebooks and focused primarily on daily experiences. He attempted to remain objective despite the dire conditions and saw his mission as preserving a record for posterity, focusing strictly on facts and situations as they appeared.

The diary recorded the events and experiences Kaplan witnessed himself, or were told to him by members of the ghetto community. He set down his thoughts as well as conversations with friends and with those he met in the streets, and sought out firsthand information to provide immediacy and authenticity.

Keeping a diary or any sort of written testimony during the Holocaust created many risks; however, Kaplan did not fear being caught. He felt that recording his experiences was a responsibility. He continually expressed the hope that the diary would be saved, realizing its significance for future generations. As he moved from place to place, and the Nazis seemed to be intensifying their murderous activities, he worked faster, often writing several times a day in order to include every detail of the horror surrounding him.

This sense of duty was emphasized in the January 16, 1940, entry, when Kaplan wrote: "Anyone who keeps such a record endangers his life, but this does not frighten me. I sense within me the magnitude of this hour, and my responsibility toward it, and I have an inner obligation that I am not free to relinquish. . . . My record will serve as a source material for the future generation." In essence, he wrote his diary so that others would someday be able to understand the Holocaust and never forget the Jews' experiences during it. In 1942 conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto worsened, as Kaplan wrote in his diary: "The Jewish section of Warsaw had become a city of slaughter."

Kaplan was not as concerned about his own future as he was about the future of his diary. He knew he had to get it out of the ghetto if there was any chance that his observations, so carefully chronicled, would survive. Thus, in late 1942 he gave his diary to a Jewish friend to whom he refers only as Rubinsztejn, who did forced labor each day outside the ghetto. Rubinsztejn smuggled the notebooks out and delivered them to a Pole, Władysław Wojcek, who lived in the small village of Liw, near Warsaw. In the early 1960s, Wojcek moved to the United States, where he sold the notebooks.

Eventually, they were edited, translated, and published, and the diary has since appeared in English, German, French, Danish, and Japanese.

Kaplan's final entry was made on August 4, 1942: "If the hunters do not stop, and if I am caught, I am afraid my work will be in vain. I am constantly bothered by the thought: If my life ends, what will become of my diary?" The diary did survive, but Kaplan and his wife did not. They were deported to Treblinka, and it appears they were murdered in December 1942.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Resistance; Warsaw Ghetto

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Kapos

"Kapo" was a term used to describe prisoners in German concentration camps who worked with the Nazi administration to enforce discipline and perform various other functions. Kapos, derived from the Latin/Italian word for "head" (as in, "head of"), were utilized widely in German camps and prisons to free men for service in the armed services. They were utilized in regular prisons, forced labor camps, and concentration camps. Oftentimes, Kapos were Jews overseeing other Jews in concentration and death camps. They assumed these roles sometimes by coercion, but sometimes willingly. These prison functionaries were usually granted special privileges by prison administrators, including more and better food, better quarters, and sometimes even parole or early release. The use of Jewish Kapos in German concentration and death camps was particularly troubling, and made postwar prosecution of them highly problematic, as some were forced to undertake such duties under the ever-present threat of death or harm to their families.

Most Kapos were appointed to their positions by SS officers who usually administered the Nazis' extensive prison and internment system. They often enticed these prisoner-functionaries (*Funktionshäftlinge*) with rewards that sometimes included private quarters, access to clean linen and bathing facilities, and little or no manual labor. Most Kapos did not want to see these privileges revoked, so they carried out SS orders to the letter.

Many Kapos were cruel and unforgiving toward their fellow prisoners, and so it is no surprise that they were intensely disliked by other inmates. Indeed, there were ample examples of prisoners murdering Kapos. There were several different levels—or ranks—of Kapos, depending upon their roles and seniority. There was often a single Kapo over the entire camp or prison; under him were block (or barracks leaders), room (or cell) leaders, and block/barracks clerks who did mainly clerical work. Kapos who oversaw forced labor gangs often did no work at all while prisoners under them worked until exhaustion in appalling conditions. These Kapos often met untimely ends at the hands of disgruntled prisoners.

SS chief Heinrich Himmler decreed in February 1944 that Jews would no longer serve as Kapos because Nazi dogma stipulated that no Jew could be put into a superior position over non-Jews. After World War II ended, a number of Kapos, some of them Jews, were tried and convicted under the Israeli Nazi and Nazi Collaborators Punishment Law of 1950; most of the trials took place between 1951 and 1964, and there were at least 15 convictions of Jews during that period. Without the extensive network of Kapos, the Germans could never have administered such a large and far-flung prison camp system.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Collaboration; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Funktionshäftling

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Kappler, Herbert

Herbert Kappler was a German SS officer and the architect of the March 1944 Ardeatine Massacre in Rome.

Kappler was born on September 23, 1907, in Stuttgart, Germany. He worked as an electrician for a time before becoming involved in Nazi Party organizations. When he joined the party in 1931, he also became a stormtrooper in the SA. In 1932 he left the SA and gained provisional membership in the SS, becoming a full member in May 1933.

Thereafter he held various assignments throughout Germany. In 1935, as Germany began to mobilize for war, he was drafted into the German army but was released in 1936 after a period of military training. He then returned to the SS, where he would be involved in security and police work.

Kappler rose steadily through the ranks and joined the Gestapo in November 1938. With the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 he was deployed to engage in Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads) work, rounding up Polish Jews for deportation. He was then sent to Belgium to help staunch resistance activity; later he helped orchestrate mass deportations of Jews and other “undesirables” to death camps in Eastern Europe. By the end of 1941 Kappler had been assigned as a liaison officer to the Italian government of Benito Mussolini. He also served as an adviser to Mussolini’s secret fascist police organization. After Mussolini was ousted from power in the late summer of 1943, Kappler was named chief of police and security for occupied Rome. As such, he helped SS special forces locate Mussolini, who was spirited to safety in northern Italy. At the same time, he instituted a campaign to round up several thousand Italian Jews living in and around Rome, the vast majority of whom died in Nazi death camps.

Kappler became widely known for his role in the March 24, 1944, Ardeatine Massacre, in which 335 Italians (including 75 Jewish Italians) were shot to death after being forced into a series of caves on the Via Ardeatine in Rome. The killings, ordered by Kappler, were in retaliation for a bomb attack on German police in Rome by Italian partisans in which 42 Germans were killed. That had occurred the day before, on March 23. None of those killed in the caves, however, were linked to the bombing.

As Rome fell to the Allies toward the end of the war, Kappler sought refuge in the Vatican, but British officials arrested him in mid-1945 before he could make his way to the Holy See. He was detained in Rome and turned over to Italian authorities in 1947; they, in turn, placed him on trial, convicted him, and sentenced him to life in prison. In 1975 Kappler fell ill with inoperable cancer and the following year was relocated to a military hospital in Rome. In 1977, with the help of his wife, Kappler escaped the hospital and fled to West Germany. The West Germans refused to extradite him back to Italy, and Kappler died on February 9, 1978, in Soltau.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Einsatzgruppen; Italy; Priebke, Erich

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Karski, Jan

Jan Karski was a member of the Polish underground. He documented and publicized the plight of Polish Jews during World War II, having infiltrated the Warsaw Ghetto and other places in order to be able to report firsthand on what he had seen.

He was born Jan Kozielski on April 24, 1914, in Łódź, Poland. A Christian, he was raised in an integrated and tolerant neighborhood where there were many Jews. He received part of his education in a military college, graduating with



Jan Karski was a Polish resistance fighter who served as an intelligence agent by smuggling himself into the Warsaw Ghetto and Nazi extermination camps, following which he reported back to the Polish government in exile in London as well as the British and U.S. governments. The portrait here is of Jan Karski during his mission to the United States, dated July 1, 1943. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Jan Karski)

high marks in the class of 1936. At the same time he also studied at the University of Lvov, from where he obtained a degree in law in 1935. Joining the Foreign Service as a trainee diplomat, he served in Germany, Romania, Switzerland, and Britain. He gained a First in Grand Diplomatic Practice, and on January 1, 1939, started work with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Karski served as an officer in eastern Poland after World War II began in September 1939, seeing action against Soviet troops following the invasion of September 17, 1939. Taken prisoner, he pretended to be a private soldier rather than an officer, and the Soviets handed him across to the Germans because his birthplace was Łódź, in the German zone. In November 1939 he escaped and joined what was later to become known as the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, or AK). Beginning in January 1940 he undertook a series of daring missions acting as a courier and spy for the Polish government-in-exile, crossing enemy lines and national borders between France, Britain, and Poland on numerous occasions. In July 1940 he was arrested by the Gestapo in Slovakia and was severely tortured during interrogation. Smuggled out by the resistance, he returned to active service after a short period of recuperation.

In 1942 the London-based Polish government-in-exile selected Karski for a new mission; he was to ascertain the extent of German atrocities in occupied Poland and report back. On at least two occasions he was smuggled incognito by Jewish underground leaders into the Warsaw Ghetto, witnessing firsthand the brutality of the Nazis' policies there.

In addition, Karski visited what he thought was the death camp at Belzec, though indications are that he confused his visit with a particularly brutal ghetto at Izbica, from where Jews were deported to Belzec. The first mass deportation to Belzec took place in mid-March 1942, and it is possible Karski witnessed this and conflated the horror of the two themes in his understanding of what was happening.

In the fall of 1942 Karski visited London and personally briefed leaders of the Polish government-in-exile, together with Allied officials such as British foreign secretary Anthony Eden, about the horrors of the Warsaw Ghetto and the Nazi death camps. He also produced hard evidence of anti-Jewish atrocities, contained in microfilm he had carried with him from Poland. On the basis of this information, Polish foreign minister Edward Raczynski could provide the Allies with some of the first information available about the Holocaust. Karski implored Western leaders to stop the killing, but

Allied leaders gave greater priority to other issues related to the war effort.

In the early summer of 1943 Karski traveled to the United States, where he engaged in a whirlwind campaign publicizing the plight of the European Jews. He met with American politicians, conferred with senior religious leaders from several religious denominations, and gave lectures around the country. On July 28, 1943, he met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the Oval Office. There he presented a detailed account of his experiences, though it was later reported that Roosevelt did not ask a single question about the Jews. Of all the influential political leaders to whom he spoke, Karski was unable to convince any to make the Holocaust a priority.

In 1944, with the war still raging, he published a book titled *Courier from Poland: The Story of a Secret State*, which told of his exploits with the Polish underground. As an indictment of the Nazi occupation of Poland it was a revelation to many Americans and became a runaway bestseller. Within a year, it had sold more than 400,000 copies. The book was re-released in 2013, educating an entirely new generation.

After the war, Karski settled in the United States. He earned a doctorate in international relations from Georgetown University in 1952, became an American citizen in 1954, and spent the next four decades at Georgetown teaching political science and international relations.

On June 2, 1982, Karski was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his work in bringing the Holocaust to the world's attention. In 1994 he was made an honorary citizen of the State of Israel. Among the many other awards he received were Poland's Order of the White Eagle and the *Virtuti Militari*, Poland's highest military decoration for bravery in combat. In addition, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. On July 13, 2000, Jan Karski died of heart and kidney disease in Washington, DC.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Poland; Resistance Movements; Righteous among the Nations; Upstander; Warsaw Ghetto; Zygielbojm, Shmuel

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Kasztner, Reszó

Reszó (Rudolf) Kasztner was a controversial Jewish rescuer of Jews in Nazi-occupied Hungary. Born in 1906 to Yitzhak and Helen Kasztner, he was raised with his two brothers in Cluj (Kolozsvár, Klozenberg), Transylvania. He was well educated, with a qualification in law. A linguist, he was fluent in Hungarian, Romanian, French, German, Latin, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Aramaic.

Early in his career, he worked as a journalist for the Zionist newspaper *Uj Kelet*. A committed Zionist, he edited the youth periodical *Noar (Youth)* from 1926 to 1928 and then worked in Budapest between 1929 and 1931. In 1934 he married Elizabeth Fischer, the daughter of Dr. József Fischer, a member of Parliament, president of the Jewish community of Kolozsvár, and member of the National Jewish Party. By 1942 he was fully ensconced in that city and opened the local office of *Keren Hayesod*, the United Palestine Appeal. From 1943 until 1945 he was the deputy chairman of the city's small Zionist Organization.

After the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944, he and Jewish rescue worker Joel Brand found themselves interacting with SS Lieutenant-Colonel Adolf Eichmann, who had come to Budapest specifically to establish the Reich Security Main Office to implement the Final Solution in Hungary. However, the very idea of their negotiating with the Germans was controversial, both during the war and afterward.

While the Nazis were imposing the “Final Solution,” they were clearly bent on the destruction of Hungary’s Jews; but at the same time, they were also the only authority with whom Jews could negotiate if rescue was to be achieved. As Kasztner was trying to work within this genocidal regime, the fundamental topic of conversation settled on an initiative that became known as the “Blood for Goods” (“*Blut für Ware*”) proposal. According to this, Nazi Germany would receive certain quantities of supplies for the German war effort from neutral countries (with the help of international Jewish bodies), in exchange for the survival of the Jewish population and their transfer from German-occupied territories to safety abroad, particularly Palestine.

This meant Kasztner had to deal face-to-face with Eichmann and other Nazis in his capacity as head of the *Vaada Etzel Vehatzalah* (Jewish Relief and Rescue Committee). The negotiation ultimately led to the Nazis releasing a trainload of 1,368 Jews, which included such luminaries as Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, founder of the Satmar Hasidic dynasty, as well as members of Kasztner’s own family. The train left Budapest on June 30, 1944, but instead of heading directly to

Switzerland it was diverted to Bergen-Belsen on July 9. Then followed months of delay, during which Kasztner worked to negotiate the Jews’ release. They were segregated from the other inmates and given a subsistence diet. Prior to their release in two batches—some in August and others in December—several died. By this stage, no war matériel had yet been transferred to the Nazis; the release was an initial gesture of good faith in the expectation that the relationship would hold and that these goods would be forthcoming at some stage soon thereafter.

Kasztner and his committee arranged for a diverse group of Jews to be assembled for the rescue. People of all ages and of all social classes were included: Zionists and non-Zionists, Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox, 972 females and 712 males. Baron Fülöp von Freudiger, director of the Orthodox congregation in Budapest, selected 80 rabbis and other prominent figures and paid for their inclusion in the passenger list.

It was, however, because of the 150 seats that were auctioned off to wealthy Jews that Kasztner’s name was vilified—and it was to cost him his life several years later. He was criticized not only for charging wealthy Jews but also for rescuing some of his family members at the expense of other members of the Jewish community.

His success in arranging for the transfer of these Jews to Switzerland would later come to be viewed as both self-serving and evidence of collaboration with the Nazis. Later, at his trial in Israel, Eichmann said that Kasztner had “agreed to help keep the Jews from resisting deportation—and even keep order in the collection camps—if I would close my eyes and let a few hundred or a few thousand young Jews emigrate to Palestine. It was a good bargain.”

The story of the Kasztner Train quickly became a controversial episode in the history of Jewish rescue during the Holocaust. As things turned out, the train was unique; it was a “life train,” as distinct from the death trains that had been conveying Jews to their fate in the extermination camps up to that point.

Overall, some 1,670 Jews survived as a result of Kasztner’s negotiations with Adolf Eichmann, which is about four hundred more than Oskar Schindler saved through his famous list. The difference between Kasztner and Schindler, however, is that some viewed Kasztner, a Jew, as having sold out vast numbers of other Jews in order to save his own life and that of his family and favorites, whereas Schindler, a gentile, has been recognized for his unconditional goodwill toward Jews.

After the war, Kasztner and his family remained in Europe prior to immigrating to Israel. Upon his arrival, he was welcomed into the ranks of the Mapai (Labor) Party which led pre-state Palestine and later governed Israel. He twice stood unsuccessfully for election to Israel's Knesset.

Kasztner's role in working with the SS made headlines in 1953 when he was accused, in a pamphlet produced by Malchiel Gruenwald, of collaborating with the Nazis. It said that this enabled the mass murder of Hungarian Jewry, and that Kasztner also partnered with Nazi officer Kurt Becher in the theft of Jewish property—and then saved Becher from punishment after the war. Kasztner sued Gruenwald for libel in a trial that was turned around and became an action exposing Kasztner's behavior during the war. In his ruling, Judge Benjamin Halevi acquitted Gruenwald of libel on the first, second, and fourth counts. The Israeli government appealed on Kasztner's behalf, and the Supreme Court of Israel overturned most of the original judgment against him in 1958.

This was not the end of Kasztner's ordeal, as, soon after midnight on March 4, 1957, he was shot in Tel Aviv by Ze'ev Eckstein, a veteran from the pre-state right-wing militia Lehi (known also as the Stern Gang), who, with his accomplices Yosef Menkes and Dan Shermer, accused him of selling out the Jewish people for his own convenience. Kasztner died on March 12 and was buried on March 17, 1957. Together, his assassins were found guilty of murder and given life sentences, but seven years later they were released.

To this day, despite the rescue of more than 1,600 Jews and the subsequent birth of the many thousands of descendants they produced, Rudolf Kasztner remains a divisive figure among survivors. He is, in short, seen as a hero in some circles and a hated collaborator in others, with a legacy that is still highly disputed and controversial.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Blood for Goods; Brand, Joel; Collaboration; Eichmann, Adolf; Hungary; Rescuers of Jews; Soos, Géza; Vrba, Rudolf

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Katzenberger Trial

The Katzenberger trial was a notorious Nazi show trial. A Jewish businessman and head of the Nuremberg Jewish community, Lehmann (Leo) Israel Katzenberger, aged 68 years, was accused of the crime of “racial pollution” because of his alleged sexual intercourse with a younger, Aryan woman named Irene Seiler. She was found guilty of perjury for denying the charge and imprisoned for two years hard labor; on March 14, 1942, Katzenberger was sentenced to death and was executed. The Katzenberger trial exemplified how antisemitism in Nazi Germany distorted the justice system. The presiding judge at the trial, Oswald Rothaug, was later tried at the Nuremberg Trials and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Katzenberger trial later formed the basis of a subplot in the award-winning motion picture *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer, 1961).

Together with his two brothers, Leo Katzenberger (born November 28, 1873, in Massbach) owned a large shoe wholesale shop as well as some thirty other footwear stores throughout southern Germany. He was a leading member of the Nuremberg Jewish community, and from 1939 he was chairman of the Nuremberg Jewish Cultural Organization. He had a long-standing friendship with a young photographer, Irene Seiler (née Scheffler), the daughter of a non-Jewish friend, who from 1932 rented an apartment and a small storefront in the building at 19 Spittlertorgraben which the Katzenbergers owned, and which was situated next to the firm's offices. Although his business was “Aryanized” in 1938, he was still considered well-off and continued to own his building and rent space to Seiler. Local gossips had for years claimed that Seiler and Katzenberger were having an affair.

Someone denounced Katzenberger to the authorities and he was arrested on March 18, 1941, under the so-called Racial Protection Law (*Rassenschutzgesetz*), one of the Nuremberg Laws, which made “racial defilement” (*Rassenschande*)—in reality, sexual relations between “Aryans” and Jews—a criminal offense. Katzenberger consistently denied the charges, as did Irene Seiler, who claimed the relationship between them was that of a father and daughter. The original police report indicated that there was no evidence of a sexual relationship.

Under interrogation Katzenberger and Seiler denied that there was any sexual element to their relationship. The judge who initially investigated the case was unable to find sufficient evidence that sexual intercourse had occurred between them and concluded that there was too little evidence to proceed with the case.

The investigation had, however, attracted the attention of Oswald Rothaug, a judge known for his severity and fervent support for Nazism. Rothaug recognized the publicity such a trial would generate and saw it as a way to display his Nazi credentials and further his career. Rothaug had Katzenberger's case transferred from a more traditional criminal court to the Nuremberg Special Court (*Sondergericht*) established by the Nazi regime to try racial and political enemies of the state. He sent out tickets for the trial to all the prominent Nazis in Nuremberg.

The indictment before the Special Court was prepared according to the orders of Rothaug, and Katzenberger was not charged only with race defilement in this new indictment but also an additional charge under the Decree against Public Enemies, which made the death sentence permissible. The new indictment also joined Seiler on a charge of perjury. The effect of joining Seiler in the charge against Katzenberger was to preclude her from being a witness for the defendant—a combination contrary to established practice.

Prior to the trial, Rothaug called on Dr. Armin Bauer, medical counselor for the Nuremberg Court, as the medical expert for the Katzenberger case. He stated to Bauer that he wanted to pronounce a death sentence and that it was, therefore, necessary for the defendant to be examined. This examination, Rothaug stated, was a mere formality since Katzenberger “would be beheaded anyhow.” To the doctor's reproach that Katzenberger was old and it seemed questionable whether he could be charged with race defilement, Rothaug stated: “It is sufficient for me that the swine said that a German girl had sat upon his lap.”

There was great public interest in the proceedings and the court was crowded both days. Both Katzenberger and Seiler continued to deny that there was any sexual aspect to their relationship. Nevertheless, witnesses at the trial pointed out that Katzenberger had given Seiler a bouquet of flowers and that both had attended a café together. Rothaug, in what was a deliberately orchestrated show trial, repeatedly referred to Katzenberger as a “syphilitic Jew” and “an agent of world Jewry.”

No conclusive evidence was presented during the trial that Katzenberger and Seiler had ever had an affair, let alone that it had continued up to and during the war. The law at the time did not call for the death sentence for breaking the race laws. The normal sentence would have been a term of imprisonment of several years.

There was no question of the outcome. Rothaug convicted Katzenberger of race defilement and imposed the death penalty by applying not just the Law for the Protection of German

Blood and German Honor but also the Ordinance against Public Enemies (also called the Folk Pest Law) of 1939. The latter law permitted the death penalty if the accused exploited wartime conditions to further his or her crime, such as making use of the wartime blackout regulations to commit a crime. This law was used against Katzenberger on the grounds that he secretly visited Seiler “after dark.”

Leo Katzenberger was guillotined at Stadelheim Prison in Munich on June 2, 1942. Irene Seiler was found guilty of perjury for denying that an affair had taken place and sentenced to two years' imprisonment—in accordance with Hitler's wishes, women were not charged under the racial protection law but could be charged with perjury or obstruction of justice.

The written findings of the case reveal a series of inconsistencies and perversions allowed under the Nazi justice system. The accused were arrested on the basis of rumors and innuendo; their sworn statements were twisted and used against them to further the aims of the prosecution; and the verdict was written to meet a predetermined outcome of guilt. It was a public demonstration designed to inflame anti-semitic feeling and justify the extraordinary measures put in place to persecute Jews and other so-called enemies of the regime.

This case was an act in furtherance of the Nazi program to persecute and exterminate Jews. The fact is that nobody but a Jew would have been tried for racial pollution. Katzenberg was tried and executed only because he was a Jew.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: *Judgment at Nuremberg*; “Racial Hygiene”; Rothaug, Oswald

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Katzenelson, Itzhak

Itzhak Katzenelson was a Hebrew and Yiddish poet and dramatist in Poland who was active in cultural resistance to the Holocaust. Born to Hinda and Jacob Benjamin Katzenelson on July 21, 1886, in Karelchich (Korelichy), a small town near Minsk, he received his early education from his father. He

was a descendant of a long line of rabbinical and Talmudic sages and scholars dating back to the great Talmudic commentator Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller.

Katzenelson was raised in Łódź, where the family had moved soon after he was born. He was considered a literary prodigy and by the age of 12 had already written his first play, *Dreyfus un Esterhazy*. As a young adult before World War I he opened a secular Hebrew school and undertook the creation of a network of such schools in Łódź from kindergarten to high school, which functioned until 1939. He also became known for his Hebrew textbooks and books for children, which were the first of their kind.

In addition, Katzenelson wrote Yiddish comedies (translated into Hebrew) and in 1912 founded the theater Habima Halvrit (“The Hebrew Stage”), which toured Poland and Lithuania. Several of his Yiddish plays were performed in Łódź before World War I. His first volume of poetry, *Dimdumim* (*Twilight*), appeared in 1910.

Beginning in 1930 Katzenelson belonged to the *Dror* Zionist movement in Łódź and also to Hechalutz, which, with emigration to Palestine its goal, operated a training commune, Kibbutz Hakhsharah. During the period between the wars, Katzenelson was conditioned by his belief that Jewish life in Poland was without hope due to the ingrained antisemitism of the Polish masses.

Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, and eight days later Łódź was occupied. Katzenelson’s school was immediately closed down, later serving as the city’s Gestapo headquarters.

Urged on by his family, in late November 1939 Katzenelson fled to Warsaw. Once he was settled, his wife, Hanna, and their three children followed. Hanna and his two younger sons, Benjamin and Ben Zion, would be deported to their deaths in Treblinka on August 14, 1942.

In the ghetto, Katzenelson entered his most creative period, writing poems and articles in the underground Zionist press, as well as approximately fifty plays. He wrote poems reflecting the contemporary suffering of the ghetto, masked through biblical or historical themes. His descriptions were his responses to the wretched conditions in which the Jews of Warsaw found themselves, and through his plays he hoped to improve ghetto morale. His Yiddish play *Iyov* (*Job*) was published on June 22, 1941, possibly the only Jewish book published in the ghetto during the German occupation.

On July 20, 1942, just before the Nazis began their mass deportations of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, Mordechai Tenenbaum, one of the leading members of *Dror* and a

founder of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB), concealed some of Katzenelson’s writings in an underground hiding place. Some of these survived the war.

In April 1943 the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto began a revolt that would last for the next 27 days. The day after the start of the revolt, to save his life, friends smuggled Katzenelson and his surviving son Zvi out of a bunker at Leszno 50 and into the Aryan part of the city.

They went to the Polski Hotel, from where they obtained documents from Katzenelson’s friend David Guzik of the Joint Distribution Committee, certifying that they were citizens of Honduras. In possession of his new passport, they were transferred to the French internment camp at Vittel in May, 1943, where the Nazis held Allied citizens and nationals of neutral countries for possible later prisoner exchange.

It was here, on October 3, 1943, that he wrote possibly his greatest Yiddish work, *Dos Lid funem Oysgehangen Yidishn Folk* (“The Song of the Murdered Jewish People”). He completed this epic, a poem in 15 chapters describing the horrors of the Holocaust, on January 18, 1944. Among its lines were included:

And it continued. Ten a day, ten thousand Jews a day.

That did not last very long. Soon they took fifteen thousand.

Warsaw, The City of Jews—the fenced-in, walled-in city,

Dwindled, expired, melted like snow before my eyes.

*Warsaw, packed with Jews like a synagogue on Yom Kippur,
like a busy market place*

Jews trading and worshipping, both happy and sad

Seeking their bread, praying to their God.

They crowded the walled-in, locked-in city.

You are deserted now, Warsaw, like a gloomy wasteland.

You are a cemetery now, more desolate than a graveyard.

Your streets are empty—not even a corpse can be found there.

The poem ended with the words “Woe to me, everything is over . . . there once existed a nation but she is no more.”

Katzenelson made two copies of the poem, one of which was given to Ruth Adler, a German Jew from Dresden who had a British Palestinian passport. In the spring of 1944 she received permission to leave the country in a prisoner exchange, smuggling out one of the copies and taking it to Palestine. Katzenelson buried the manuscript of the other copy in bottles under a tree at Vittel with the help of a fellow prisoner, Miriam Novitch, who retrieved it after liberation. The poem was first published in May 1945. Extracts have

since been published in numerous languages, and a stand-alone volume has also appeared.

In the early spring of 1944 the Jews interned at Vittel were declared stateless, and on April 18, 1944, those of Polish origin were transported in three railroad cars to the Drancy transit camp near Paris. In late April 1944, Itzhak and Zvi Katzenelson were sent on a transport to Auschwitz, where they were murdered on May 1, 1944.

In Israel, the Ghetto Fighters' House (*Beit Lohamei Hage'taot*) has been named in Katzenelson's honor as the Itzhak Katzenelson Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Heritage Museum. This was founded in 1949 by Holocaust survivors, former ghetto fighters, and veterans of partisan units. Its aim is to serve as a place of testimony relating the story of the Jewish people in the 20th century, and in particular during World War II. As a further lasting monument, the museum has made extensive efforts to collect as many of Katzenelson's manuscripts as can be located and to translate his works into English and other languages.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Resistance; Warsaw Ghetto

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Keitel, Wilhelm

Wilhelm Keitel was Germany's highest-ranking officer of World War II. His shameless subservience to Adolf Hitler proved disastrous to German strategy and garnered him the nickname of "*lakeitel*" (lackey).

Keitel was born at Helmscherode, Hanover, on August 22, 1882, into a family of successful farmers. The Keitel family was of a decidedly unmilitary persuasion, and reputedly, Keitel's father, when drafted, was not allowed to wear his army uniform in the house. In 1900 Keitel broke with this tradition by joining the military as an artillery officer. He fought in World War I and was wounded but remained more of a staff than combat officer.

After the war, Keitel circulated among the many paramilitary organizations that terrorized the streets of Germany during the rule of the Weimar Republic before joining the

dramatically scaled-down German Army. A competent if dull administrator, he rose steadily through the ranks and, in 1929, was named to head the Army Organization Department. In 1933 he gained appointment to the secret German General Staff, which had been outlawed by the Treaty of Versailles. Again, Keitel performed smoothly, and in 1937 he was promoted to general of artillery. That same year, he married army chief of staff Werner von Blomberg's daughter. When Hitler sacked Blomberg in 1938, he inquired as to Keitel's identity. Blomberg informed him that Keitel was nothing more than his military secretary, and Hitler responded, "That is exactly the kind of man I am looking for." Thus the dull and previously undistinguished Keitel became the head of the army's General Staff and part of Hitler's inner circle.

Thereafter, Keitel's relationship with Hitler was one of subservience. Despite his rank as head of the armed forces, he never seriously challenged any of Hitler's directives or instructions, and his willingness to obey his superior's every wish garnered him the contempt of fellow generals. This relationship exerted the most disastrous consequences on Germany's military fortunes, as Keitel's deliberate suppression of generals who questioned Hitler's decisions undermined the effectiveness of the General Staff. Through his willing compliance, strategic direction of the impending war passed directly into Hitler's hands.

When World War II began in September 1939, Keitel functioned as Hitler's chief strategic adviser, a position he held for the next six years. Hitler valued his advice, promoting him to field marshal after the fall of France in the spring of 1940 and authorizing him to conclude an armistice with the conquered country. Keitel and his subordinate, General Alfred Jodl, basically agreed to any operational dictate that Hitler cared to impose on the military, regardless of the consequences. On several occasions, he pronounced Hitler "the greatest commander of all time." Only once, when he threatened to resign over the projected invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, did Keitel display any independence. Furthermore, his servile demeanor also led to complicity in major war crimes. Foremost among these was the famous "Night and Fog" directive, which declared that any German citizen deemed a threat to the state was liable to disappear without explanation to next of kin. Keitel also authorized brutal SS units to execute men, women, and children in occupied territories at their convenience. True to form, Keitel was standing at Hitler's side during the failed bomb plot of July 1944 and was first to congratulate him upon

surviving. He consequently played a prominent role in the Army Court of Honor that sentenced to death hundreds of innocent army officers suspected of complicity in the bombing. Following Hitler's suicide in April 1945, Keitel worked briefly for the new government under Admiral Karl Doenitz, and on May 9 he formally signed Germany's surrender to the Allies in Berlin.

Within days, Keitel was arrested by Allied authorities and charged with war crimes. During the Nuremberg Trials, he matter-of-factly explained that he was only carrying out orders issued by his superior. Not surprisingly, the court found him guilty on several counts and sentenced him to hang. Keitel apparently experienced a change of heart, admitted to his guilt, and requested to be shot like a soldier. When this request was denied, he was hanged on October 16, 1946.

JOHN C. FREDRIKSEN

See also: Hitler, Adolf; Krajevac Massacre; Operation Barbarossa; Nacht und Nebel; Nazi Criminal Orders, 1941; Nuremberg Defense; Nuremberg Trials

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Kempner, Vitka

Vitka Kempner was a Jewish partisan who fought the Nazis during World War II.

Born in the Polish town of Kalisch in 1920, she fled Poland following the German conquest in the fall of 1939. Arriving in Vilna, Lithuania, after an arduous journey on foot, Kempner linked up with fellow members of Hashomer Hatzair (the Young Guard), a Zionist youth organization. They helped her find work and a roommate, Rozka Korczak, another refugee from Poland. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union and conquest of Lithuania, both Kempner and Korczak joined an underground resistance movement organized by Abba Kovner, a Hashomer Hatzair leader. Kovner built his organization, the Fareynigte Partizaner Organizatsie (United Partisan Organization, FPO), into one of the largest and most effective Jewish partisan units of the war.

Kempner, who bleached her hair blond and could pass as non-Jewish, became one of the FPO's most important scouts and spies. She frequently traveled from the Vilna Ghetto,

where the Germans had ordered all Jews confined, past German patrols to nearby forests to meet with various partisan units. She helped smuggle weapons into the ghetto and led an FPO team on one of its first missions, the successful demolition of a German train as it crossed a bridge. As the Germans slowly deported Jews from the ghetto to labor and death camps, Kempner helped Kovner smuggle more and more partisans out of Vilna and into the nearby forests. She led the last group out of Vilna on the night of September 23–24, 1943, shortly before the Germans massacred the ghetto's remaining inhabitants. Operating from bases in the forests, Kempner and the FPO continued to conduct sabotage operations against the Germans for the next year, blowing up trains and bridges, cutting telephone lines, and supplying the Soviet Army with important intelligence. The FPO also rescued several hundred Jews from labor camps.

After the war, Kovner and 50 other partisans, including 8 women, formed a new organization, Nakam (Hebrew for revenge), to avenge the Holocaust. The Jewish leadership in Palestine opposed extrajudicial revenge and blocked Nakam's attempts to smuggle large quantities of poison into Europe to use against Allied-held Nazi prisoners. Kovner persevered, and Nakam operatives sought targets in Europe and manufactured poison on their own. Kempner coordinated part of this operation from Paris and decided to focus on the Nuremberg camp, where the Allies held 30,000 Nazi and SS prisoners. Nakam operatives poisoned the camp's bread shipment with arsenic in April 1946. Several thousand prisoners became seriously ill and more than 100 died over the next few months as a direct result of arsenic poisoning. Afterward, Kempner smuggled the plot's participants into Palestine, where she married Kovner. Along with several other former partisans, they settled in Kibbutz Ein Hahoresh.

Vitka Kempner died on February 15, 2012.

STEPHEN K. STEIN

See also: Jewish Partisans; Kovner, Abba; Vilna Ghetto

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Kerkhofs, Louis-Joseph

Louis-Joseph Kerkhofs was a Roman Catholic priest and bishop of Liège, Belgium, from 1925 until 1961, playing a significant role in harboring Belgian Jews during World War II.

He was born on February 15, 1878, in Val-Meer, Belgium. After undertaking seminary studies, including a period in Rome, he was ordained a priest in 1900. The following year, he was appointed to the philosophy faculty at a seminary in Saint-Trond. In 1917 he was named professor of dogmatic theology at Belgium's preeminent seminary in Liège. In 1924 Kerkhofs was made auxiliary bishop of Liège, and the following year he became bishop.

Kerkhofs was an outgoing and extremely magnanimous man who worked hard to mitigate suffering among his flock. He was also an outspoken opponent of ethnic and racial discrimination and worked closely with Belgium's Jewish population, particularly in Liège. In the spring of 1940 German troops invaded Belgium and imposed a rigid occupation on its people. Part of the Germans' occupation policies included the rounding up and deportation of Belgian Jews, including a number of alien Jews who had fled to Belgium for safety prior to the invasion.

Kerkhofs immediately instructed his priests and other religious people to do whatever they could to hide Jews and prevent them from being deported to concentration camps. By late 1941 there were several hundred Jews in hiding at monasteries and convents throughout Belgium. Kerkhofs provided refuge for several dozen Jews in his official residence, including Cantor Joseph Lepkifer, who was a leader of Liège's Jewish community, and his family. In 1943, when fears surfaced that the Lepkifers might be discovered by occupation authorities, Bishop Kerkhofs personally drove Mrs. Lepkifer to a small convent on the outskirts of Liege, where she remained until Belgium was liberated the following year. Kerkhof is credited with having helped save several hundred Jews from possible deportation and death.

Kerkhofs retired as bishop in December 1961 and died in Liège on December 31, 1962. In July 1981 Israel's Yad Vashem proclaimed the late bishop as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his efforts to aid Jews during World War II.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Belgium; Catholic Church; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Kharkov Trial

Arguably the first anti-Nazi war crimes trial took place not at the end of World War II, but rather in December 1943, and not when victory against the Nazis had been achieved, but when it was far from guaranteed. Moreover, the trial took place in the Soviet Union.

The background to this can be found in a declaration several weeks earlier in Moscow. Formally titled the Declaration of the Four Nations on Security, the Moscow Declaration was an Allied statement signed on October 30, 1943, by the governments of Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and the United States. It was a warning to the Nazi government that those responsible for or participating in atrocities, massacres, or executions, upon being apprehended, would be returned for trial to the countries in which they had committed their crimes. In clear language, it stated that those who participated in perpetrating atrocities would be held accountable for their actions. It was not made specifically in order to punish those responsible for the Holocaust and did not address directly the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

The declaration was, however, highly influential in the development of international war crimes law, as it placed the punishment of crimes committed in wartime as a war aim. Accordingly, it was the "birth certificate" of what became the International Military Tribunal established to try alleged war criminals at Nuremberg.

It also set the stage for the first war crimes trials in December 1943, as the Soviet leaders saw in this declaration the possibility of putting on trial Nazis they managed to capture during the war. This did not bode well for the Nazis captured in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkov (Kharkiv).

This city had suffered significantly during World War II. It was first captured by Nazi forces on October 24, 1941, but was retaken by the Soviets on February 16, 1943. The Nazis then recaptured the city on March 15, 1943, before the Soviets finally liberated it on August 23, 1943. Seventy percent of the city had been destroyed, and tens of thousands of citizens had been killed.

In view of this, the Soviet authorities were not well disposed to any forms of leniency for captured Nazis. Following the Moscow Declaration, and in a spirit of retribution and

overtly expressed justice, the Military Tribunal of the 4th Ukrainian Front conducted the first war crimes trial against Nazi defendants on December 15–18, 1943. Three Nazis and a native Ukrainian collaborator were charged with war crimes perpetrated during the German occupation of the area.

Considerable publicity was given to the proceedings, which took place in a large theater with an audience of six thousand Kharkov residents. While the accused were defended by eminent Soviet lawyers, the fact that the forms of Soviet law were followed was not necessarily the best indication that justice would be done or be seen to be done. It was, therefore, inevitable that the accused would confess to a series of what were labeled as appalling atrocities that they committed in accordance with orders issued from the highest quarters.

Stating that they were the instruments of brutal crimes deliberately planned from above, they blamed their political leaders—Hitler, Himmler, and Alfred Rosenberg—as the “real” war criminals. The tribunal was not convinced, particularly given the all-too-recent Moscow Declaration. While the tribunal had all the hallmarks of a Soviet-style show trial, it also provided a precedent that was later to be invoked at Nuremberg: the principle that where a moral choice was possible, the defense of “following superior orders” was unacceptable.

Accordingly, after a trial that began on Wednesday, December 15, 1943, the sentence of death by hanging was handed down on Saturday, December 18. The next day, the sentences were carried out against three members of the Kharkov Gestapo: Hans Rietz, Wilhelm Langfeld, and Reinhard Retzlaff; and a Ukrainian collaborator who acted as a driver for the Gestapo, Mikhail Bulanov. All of them were hanged in Kharkov’s public square.

The story of the now-forgotten Kharkov Trials, which sought justice for the thousands killed in Ukraine two years prior to Nuremberg, was recently been brought to light by a journalist from Orlando, Florida, Greg Dawson. In a book titled *Judgment before Nuremberg* (2012), he chronicled the full story of the trial at Kharkov, following a trail that took him to the city itself and to some fascinating conclusions about this first attempt at anti-Nazi justice—18 months before the end of World War II, and two full years before the opening statement by the prosecution at Nuremberg.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Moscow Declaration; Nuremberg Defense; Soviet Union

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Kielce Pogrom

In the aftermath of the Holocaust and the liberation of the Jews from Nazi captivity, many of those who had survived returned to their home towns searching for loved ones and in the quest to reestablish their lives. About 200 of these returned to the city of Kielce, in southern Poland. They arrived at a time that was not favorable for Jews. Many Poles were opposed to a Jewish return, and a deep-seated antisemitic tradition, dating from well before World War II, did not create welcoming conditions for them. Some, if not many, Poles also feared they would have to surrender their illegal possession of Jewish property and homes they had acquired upon the deportation and arrest of the Jews. Furthermore, Jews were increasingly seen as agents for the occupying Soviet troops and the Polish communists who had been installed in Warsaw on orders from Moscow. An extremist right-wing group, *Narodowe Sily Zbrojne* (National Defense Force), was even known to have pulled returning Jews off trains and murdered them. Across Poland, it was estimated that up to 400 Jews were murdered between February and September 1946.

On July 4, 1946, a nine-year-old Polish boy, Henryk Blaszczyk, was reported missing in Kielce. His father accused returning Jews of kidnapping his son, and the townsfolk, emulating anti-Jewish pogroms from earlier times, began to clamor for the destruction of the entire Jewish community. A blood libel was invoked that the Jews had wanted the boy’s blood for ritual purposes. Marching into the Jewish quarter—which was already largely depopulated because of the losses of the Holocaust—the mob, which comprised townsfolk of all ages, went on a violent rampage. Synagogues and homes were burned, and the Jewish Community Center was besieged. Police assisted in luring Jews out of their hiding places, only to hand them over to the mob. Ransacking the Jewish district lasted throughout the day and well into the night. At the Jewish Community Center, the panic-stricken pleas of the community leaders over the phone to the local bishop and other nearby figures of authority fell on deaf ears. By the time the mob’s frenzy had abated, 42 Jews, most of them survivors of Nazi concentration camps and death camps, had been murdered. About 50 others were

injured, some seriously. As for Henryk Blaszczyk, the boy whose disappearance had initiated the pogrom, it was later discovered that his father had earlier sent the boy away to the next town in order to support the prearranged kidnapping story. The Kielce Pogrom was a tragic addendum to the Nazi Holocaust and a signal to Jews throughout Europe that Poland was no longer a country in which they could feel safe.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Blood Libel; Poland

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Kindertransport

Kindertransport, literally meaning “the transport of children” in German, was the informal term used to describe the British government’s program that transported and temporarily resettled mainly Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland between December 1938 and September 1939. The official name of the effort was the Refugee Children Movement (RCM), which rescued some 10,000 children in roughly nine months; the children ranged in age from infants to 17 years old. The rescued children were resettled in hostels, foster homes, and sometimes on farms.

On November 15, 1938, in the immediate aftermath of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in Germany and Austria, when Jewish businesses and interests came under attack, Jewish leaders in Britain appealed directly to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain for help in rescuing Jewish children from these two



The Kindertransport, or “children’s transport,” was organized by the London-based Central British Fund for German Jewry. In the year 1939 it arranged for the rescue of nearly 10,000 predominantly Jewish children from Germany and Austria. A private Kindertransport initiative for Jewish children from Czechoslovakia was also organized by Nicholas Winton. Under the scheme, children were placed in British foster homes, hostels, and farms. In this image, a youth leader is ringing the dinner bell at a camp for Kindertransport children in January 1939. (Reg Speller/Fox Photos/Getty Images)

countries. Specifically, they asked that immigration requirements be altered so that unaccompanied Jewish children might be allowed into the country on a temporary basis. In short order, Parliament took up the issue and agreed to the request, although it did not set a limit on the number of children to be admitted. Various Jewish relief agencies swung into action, as did the World Jewish Relief Fund, which worked with British officials in identifying children to be moved and making arrangements for their transport and resettlement.

Within days of the public announcement of the Kindertransport program, some 500 British households offered to take in a child or multiple children. Children were sent by train and boat to Harwich, in the southeast of England, where they were oriented and then resettled. They left their homes without valuables, a maximum of ten marks, and were permitted only one small suitcase. The first Kindertransport, numbering some 200 children, left Berlin on December 1, 1938, and arrived in Harwich the following day. Later, after the Germans invaded Czechoslovakia, the program was expanded to include Czech children, in an initiative that lay directly at the feet of a private individual, Nicholas Winton. Several groups also came from Poland, especially during the summer of 1939.

A number of the hostels in which some of the children were settled, particularly in the southwest of England, were administered by a Jewish youth organization known as Habonim, which was a socialist movement dedicated to Zionism. Many other children spent time with English families in cities or on farms in the countryside. The program ended in September 1939, when Germany attacked Poland, sparking World War II. In all, about 10,000 children were resettled in Britain; had the program commenced earlier, that number might have been much larger.

After the war was over in 1945, many Kindertransport children attempted to reunite with their loved ones. Although some were successful, it was a sad fact that many were unable to do so, as their families had perished in the Holocaust or had been killed in combat or other wartime tragedies.

In 1989 Eddy Behrendt, who had been sent to England in 1939 at the age of nine, established the Kindertransport Association, which is dedicated to helping unite Kindertransport survivors with family members and sponsoring reunions of survivors so that they might share memories of and insights into their common ordeal. After the war, Behrendt had made his way to the United States and became an American citizen. The organization he founded worked

closely with the Simon Wiesenthal Center to identify Kindertransport survivors living in the United States.

The organization has since sponsored a yearly reunion of survivors and has provided new insights into a neglected part of the narrative of the Holocaust. Today, the association raises money for children in need, is involved in numerous educational endeavors, and publishes a quarterly journal. It has active chapters in four states as well as the District of Columbia and Toronto, Canada.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Children during the Holocaust; Winton, Nicholas

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Koch Trial

The so-called “Koch Trial” was a war crimes trial of Ilse Koch conducted by the U.S. General Military Court for the Trial of War Criminals in Dachau, Germany, from April 11 to August 12, 1947. Ilse Koch was the wife of Karl Koch, the former commandant of the Buchenwald concentration camp. She was accused of killing inmates who had tattoos in order to collect their skin. After Allied troops entered Buchenwald in April 1945, many of the 21,000 survivors were interviewed. Some of them talked about a “Kommandeuse,” a fierce red-haired woman who was perverse and brutally cruel. The prisoners called her the “Witch of Buchenwald,” which the press transformed into the “Bitch of Buchenwald.”

In June 1945 Ilse Koch was identified by an ex-inmate and arrested. Subsequent inquiries into activities in Buchenwald produced a huge amount of evidence against her. Among the physical evidence was a lampshade made of human tattooed skin, a discovery that greatly inflamed international public opinion. The trial began nearly two years later on April 11, 1947. It would be one of the most complex events in Nazi war crimes judicial history but had no connection to the Nuremberg Tribunal.

The court was made up of nine military judges; the prosecution consisted of three civilian lawyers. The task of defending Ilse Koch fell to a mixed staff of both military and civilian lawyers. Ilse Koch was charged with war crimes and violation of the Geneva and Hague conventions. She was

indicted for having concurred with the National Socialists' common design by killing and mistreating thousands of people. The 16 prosecution witnesses helped to portray her nefarious nature. She had brutally abused prisoners in the camp, using the power that her husband had arbitrarily granted her to perpetrate sadistic and perverse acts on Buchenwald's inmates. The heart of the trial in Dachau became the famous articles made of human skin.

During the investigation, several items of tattooed human skin were discovered at the camp. Most of the evidence was handed over to military staff, which had taken them to Nuremberg. The prosecution thus had only a receipt for the evidence; nevertheless, the Allies already knew of the existence of articles made of human skin.

The trial ended on August 12, 1947. The prosecution asked for the death penalty, but Koch was at that time seven months pregnant, which made an immediate death sentence impossible. On August 14, 1947, she was condemned to life imprisonment. The unanimous verdict declared her guilty of having broken the laws of warfare and of having concurred with the National Socialists' common design. The defense asked for a rehearing, challenging the credibility of the witnesses and attacking the procedural weakness concerning the lack of hard evidence against Koch. The trial was indeed reheard. A central commission of the U.S. occupation force in Europe acknowledged the problem of the witnesses' integrity and the deficiency of tangible evidence against Koch. On June 8, 1948, General Lucius D. Clay, commander of the American occupation troops in Europe, reduced her sentence to four years' imprisonment.

Clay's decision was kept confidential until a journalist discovered and divulged it, causing a backlash among the American public. The press coverage of Clay's decision quickly turned it into a political problem, and a U.S. congressional committee investigated the case, drawing it to the attention of President Harry S. Truman. Meanwhile, the Bavarian government gave notice that if Koch were released, new proceedings would be brought against her. Nevertheless, she was set free in October 1949 and, after bureaucratic wrangling between the U.S. government and the government of East Germany, she was handed over to West German authorities, who again arrested her.

A seven-page indictment enumerated the West German accusations against Koch, among them the charge of having ordered inmates in Buchenwald murdered in order to obtain their tattooed skin. On November 26, 1950, the new trial began; this was the first independent German trial of a Nazi war criminal. The 15 members of the jury heard from almost

200 witnesses, but the prosecution failed to produce any new evidence against Koch. Koch was nevertheless found guilty of abuse of prisoners and of incitement to homicide, but again, the tattooed skin could not be directly connected to her.

Koch was sentenced to life imprisonment. Her defense attorney put forward several petitions for pardon, arguing that because of the great clamor surrounding her case, she had never received a fair trial. On September 2, 1967, Ilse Koch committed suicide in her cell.

MASSIMILIANO LIVI

See also: Buchenwald; War Crimes

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Kolbe, Raymond

Raymond Kolbe was a Polish Roman Catholic priest and martyr who perished at Auschwitz, volunteering to die in lieu of another prisoner.

Kolbe was born on January 8, 1894, in Zdunskawola, Poland. Under the influence of the Franciscan mission in the parish of Pabianice, the first of the three Kolbe children entered the seminary of the Conventual Franciscans in Lviv in the early 1900s. Raymond entered the seminary in 1907 along with his brother Francis. Raymond took the name Maximilian on September 4, 1910, as he became a Franciscan novice. The other brother, Joseph, entered the seminary that same year. In 1911 Maximilian professed his first vows. He was soon sent to Rome to study philosophy at the Gregorian University from 1912 to 1915 and then theology at the Collegio Serafico, obtaining doctorates in both. In the meantime, as Maximilian Maria, he professed his solemn vows in 1914; he was ordained a priest on April 28, 1918.

While still a deacon, Maximilian had founded a Marian movement called *Militia Immacolatae* (Militia of the Immaculate One)—a spiritual and educational movement dedicated to apostolic work. In Poland, the *Militia* opened its own printing press, which circulated periodicals, newspapers, and numerous catechetical and devotional writings to more than 1 million people. In the fall of 1927 Father Kolbe

obtained land just west of Warsaw and there established an evangelization center and soon the largest Catholic religious house of the time (762 members in 1939), which he called Niepokalanow, the “City of the Immaculata.” Mindful of his apostolic mission, he envisioned Marian centers in every country and set out to Asia, where he founded friaries, seminaries, and printing houses in Japan and India. The movement, however, was thwarted by lack of funds.

After Father Maximilian was recalled to Poland in June 1936 to supervise the original Niepokalanow, the center intensified its didactic and apostolic activity within Poland. With the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, the friary was dissolved, and its members heeded the call of the Polish authorities to serve the Polish Red Cross. In the same month, the Nazis arrested Father Kolbe along with 37 other brothers who remained in Niepokalanow. After the friars were released in December 1939, they resumed their charitable work. The friary sheltered more than 3,000 displaced Poles, some 2,000 of whom were Jewish, until it was closed down in February 1941. Father Kolbe was himself arrested that same month.

Together with four companions, Maximilian was taken to the Gestapo prison in Warsaw and then transported to the death camp at Auschwitz, where he was tattooed with the number 16670. While working in the camp, he ministered to other prisoners, Jews and Christians alike, secretly heard confessions, held mass, and delivered communion, using smuggled bread and wine. At the end of July, in retribution for an escape from the camp, Commandant Karl Fritsch sentenced 10 prisoners to death by starvation. Father Kolbe volunteered to die for one of the condemned and was placed together with the other prisoners in starvation chamber number 18. After two weeks, four men were still alive, among them Maximilian. The men were killed with injections of carbolic acid on August 14, 1941, their bodies cremated the following day. On October 17, 1971, Maximilian was beatified by Pope Paul VI, and on October 10, 1982, he was canonized by Pope John Paul II, who proclaimed him a “martyr of charity.”

EWA SLOJKA

See also: Birkenau; Catholic Church; Rescuers of Jews

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Kommissarbefehl

The *Kommissarbefehl*, or “Commissar Order,” was an order issued by the Armed Forces High Command on June 6, 1941. It was a clear manifestation of the deeply ideological nature of the Nazis’ view of how the forthcoming struggle with the Soviet Union was to be fought. The full and formal name of the order was Guidelines for the Treatment of Political Commissars (*Richtlinien für die Behandlung politischer Kommissare*).

Within the Soviet state, political commissars were Communist Party officials who supervised the political education and administration of military units. They were not subject to military discipline and reported directly to party leaders. Their primary task was to transmit political propaganda from the party and prevent dissent among the troops. When the Nazi High Command issued the *Kommissarbefehl*, therefore, the core demand was that German soldiers shoot any Soviet political commissars taken prisoner in the forthcoming conflict following Operation Barbarossa. The belief was that Soviet political commissars were the carriers of Judeo-Bolshevik ideas, which were antithetical to everything for which Nazism stood. By extension, within the Nazi conception of communism, this included all Jews, as they were viewed as the chief disseminators of Bolshevik ideology. Accordingly, special mobile killing squads, the *Einsatzgruppen*, were established to accompany the combat troops of the German army in the weeks following the invasion of June 22, 1941.

The order was signed by General Walter Warlimont and approved by General Wilhelm Keitel—a clear indication that this was approved at the highest levels. Among other things, the order included the following paragraphs:

In the battle against Bolshevism, the adherence of the enemy to the principles of humanity or international law is not to be counted upon. In particular it can be expected that those of us who are taken prisoner will be treated with hatred, cruelty and inhumanity by political commissars of every kind.

The troops must be aware that:

1. *In this battle mercy or considerations of international law is false. They are a danger to our own safety and to the rapid pacification of the conquered territories.*

2. *The originators of barbaric, Asiatic methods of warfare are the political commissars. So immediate and unhesitatingly severe measures must be undertaken against them. They are therefore, when captured in battle, as a matter of routine to be dispatched by firearms.*

The following provisions also apply:

3. *Political commissars as agents of the enemy troops are recognizable from their special badge—a red star with a golden woven hammer and sickle on the sleeves. . . . These commissars are not to be recognized as soldiers; the protection due to prisoners of war under international law does not apply to them. When they have been separated, they are to be finished off.*

As this order called for the mass murder of noncombatants by German combat troops, it was clear to the German commanders that the order was a contravention of international law; but having been underwritten by Adolf Hitler, whose word was above written law and overrode existing foreign obligations, the *Kommissarbefehl* was accepted by the High Command.

Enforcement of the Commissar Order led to thousands of executions; not only of political commissars but also of Jews (regardless of whether or not they had anything to do with communism) and of huge numbers of Soviet prisoners of war, seen as racial enemies just as much as bearers of Bolshevik ideology. Moreover, every German general involved in Operation Barbarossa throughout the summer and autumn of 1941 enforced the order.

Though effective in murdering tens of thousands of those who might otherwise have raised and maintained the morale of Soviet troops, the *Kommissarbefehl* rebounded against the Nazis. With the realization that the Nazis were slaughtering Soviet citizens and soldiers regardless of their belligerent status, Red Army troops mounted intensified levels of resistance against the Germans. In response, several German army commanders sought to have the order rescinded or modified, but on September 23, 1941, Hitler declined “any modification of the existing orders regarding the treatment of political commissars.” On May 6, 1942, however, less than a year after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, the *Kommissarbefehl* was finally overturned after continued appeals to Hitler from German field commanders.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Communists in the Holocaust; Einsatzgruppen; Lubny Massacre; Nazi Criminal Orders, 1941; Operation Barbarossa; Soviet Union; Total War and the Holocaust; Waffen-SS

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Korczak, Janusz

Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit) was a Polish Jewish pediatrician, children’s author and educator, journalist, and social activist. Born to a nonobservant Jewish family in Warsaw in 1878 or 1879 (sources vary) as Hersz (Henryk) Goldszmit, he was the son of Józef and Cecylia Goldszmit. His father was a lawyer; the family prospered, but when Henryk was 11 his father became mentally ill and died in a mental hospital six years later. The family faced suffering and deprivation, and while attending school in Warsaw, Henryk started working as a tutor for other pupils. In 1896 he debuted on the literary scene with a satirical text on raising children.

A mediocre student, he committed all his free time to his interest in literature. In 1898 he adopted the pen name Janusz Korczak as part of a literary contest and began associating with liberal educators and writers. He wrote for several Polish-language newspapers, while his first books, *Children of the Streets* (1901) and *A Child of the Salon* (1906), gained him literary recognition. In 1898 he began studying medicine at the University of Warsaw and upon graduation he was drafted into the Russian army during the Russo-Japanese War as a military doctor.

As a pediatrician Korczak was fascinated by children, and between 1905 and 1912 he worked at a Jewish Children’s Hospital in Warsaw. In 1912 he became a director of Dom Sierot, a new and spacious orphanage for Jewish children, which opened a summer camp in 1921 that remained open until the summer of 1940.

In 1914 Korczak was again called up as a military doctor in the Russian army. At this time he wrote his first important work, *How to Love a Child*. He also wrote essays based on

observing parents and children in the war-torn countryside. With the end of the war, Korczak established an orphanage for Polish Christian orphans (Nasz Dom) in 1919 in Warsaw. During summer holidays the children of Dom Sierot and Nasz Dom played together.

During the 1920s Korczak began collaborating with institutions educating teachers, especially the National Institute of Special Pedagogy. Besides serving as principal of Dom Sierot and Nasz Dom, he hosted a hugely popular radio show that promoted and popularized the rights of children; he was a principal of an experimental school, a docent at a Polish university, and wrote a great deal. Korczak also served as an expert witness in a district court for minors, became well known in Polish society, and received many awards.

By the mid-1930s Korczak's public career underwent a change. Following the death of the Polish dictator, Jozef Pilsudski, political power in the country came into the hands of radical right-wing and openly antisemitic circles. Korczak was removed from many of the positions in which he had been active. His radio program was terminated in 1937, as the station was reluctant to keep a Jew on the air. The right-wing press castigated him, saying that as a Jew he could never be a real Pole and should not be allowed to educate Polish children. In 1934 and 1936 Korczak visited Palestine and, influenced by the kibbutz movement, he concluded that all Jews should move there.

In 1939, with the outbreak of World War II, Korczak volunteered for duty in the Polish army but was refused due to his age. With the Nazi imposition of antisemitic measures, Korczak was at first jailed by the Nazis, and when the Warsaw Ghetto was created in 1940 his orphanage was forced to move into the ghetto. Korczak moved in with them.

The ghetto population numbered some 400,000 Jews, who soon suffered from starvation, cold, and disease. Now an elderly and tired man, Korczak was unable to keep track of the many changes taking place around him, but he continued to preserve and protect his orphanage. This, in turn, was kept clean and orderly, the staff and the children remained close, an internal honor court had jurisdiction over both children and teachers, every Sunday a general assembly was held, there were literary evenings, and the children gave performances. During this time Korczak had many offers of rescue but he rejected them all, saying, "You do not leave a sick child in the night, and you do not leave children at a time like this."

On August 5 or 6, 1942, German soldiers came to round up the 200 or so orphans and staff members to transport

them to the Treblinka extermination camp. Korczak again refused offers of sanctuary, insisting that he would go with the children. The children were dressed in their best clothes, and Korczak led them marching in organized rows with attendants through the ghetto to the Umschlagplatz (deportation point to the death camps) and from there to the train. Nothing is known of their last journey to Treblinka, where all were murdered by the Nazis.

During the occupation and his time in the ghetto, Korczak kept a diary; this has survived and been published. Many of his other written works were destroyed when the ghetto was destroyed by the Nazis in 1943. His overall literary output covers the period 1896 to August 8, 1942. It comprises works for both children and adults, and includes literary pieces, social journalism, articles, and pedagogical essays (as well as unpublished works)—in all, more than 20 books, some 1,400 texts, and around 300 texts in manuscript or typescript form.

Korczak introduced progressive orphanages designed as just communities into Poland, founded the first national children's newspaper, trained teachers in moral education, and worked in juvenile courts defending children's rights. His books gave parents and teachers new insights into child psychology. Generations of young people grew up on his books, especially the classic *King Matt the First*, which tells of the adventures and tribulations of a boy king who aspires to bring reforms to his subjects.

Janusz Korczak's name and image have appeared on stamps in Poland, Israel, and Germany. In 1991 Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda made an eponymous film about Korczak; there are four statues of him in Warsaw, and a school named after him for street children in Thailand.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Children during the Holocaust; Warsaw Ghetto

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Korczak, Rozka

Rozka Korczak was a Jewish partisan who fought the Nazis during World War II. Born in Bielsko, Poland, in 1921, she

moved with her family to the small village of Plosk, where she attended the public school and experienced fierce anti-Jewish bigotry. As a teenager, she joined Hashomer Hatzair (the Young Guard), a Zionist youth organization. She fled Poland following the German conquest in 1939 and made her way on foot to Vilna, Lithuania. There, she joined other members of Hashomer Hatzair, who helped her find work and a roommate, Vitka Kempner, another refugee from Poland. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union and the conquest of Lithuania, both Korczak and Kempner joined an underground resistance movement organized by Abba Kovner, a Hashomer Hatzair leader. Kovner built his organization, the Fareynigte Partizaner Organizatsie (United Partisan Organization, FPO), into one of the largest and most effective Jewish partisan units of the war.

Operating from the Vilna Ghetto, where the Germans had ordered Jews confined, Korczak and fellow members of the FPO smuggled food and other supplies into the area. As the Germans slowly deported Jews from the ghetto to work and to death camps, Korczak and other FPO members tried to convince residents to fight back against the Nazis. Some ghetto residents took up arms and joined the FPO, but most refused and insisted that resistance would simply provoke even harsher Nazi reprisals. In small groups, Kovner smuggled his partisans out of the ghetto and into the nearby Rudnikai Forest, where they set up camp and operated as saboteurs against the German Army. Korczak was among the first to leave the ghetto. She distinguished herself in sabotage operations and emerged as one of the FPO's most important leaders. She led several raids against the Germans, and Kovner, with whom she had formed a close relationship, placed her in charge of the partisans' camp.

The FPO fought alongside the Soviet Army to liberate Vilna in July 1944, but afterward the Soviets ordered the Jewish partisan units to disperse. Korczak and other FPO members turned their efforts toward helping Jewish refugees left starving and homeless by the war. Korczak helped smuggle some of the refugees past the British blockade and into Palestine, arriving there herself on December 12, 1944. She was among the first eyewitnesses to report to Jewish leaders on the severity of the Holocaust, and from Palestine she continued to help smuggle Jewish refugees into the country. Along with Kovner, Kempner, and other former partisans, she settled in Kibbutz Ein Hahoreh in 1946. She remained active in the kibbutz movement and Holocaust education until her death in 1988.

STEPHEN K. STEIN

See also: Jewish Partisans; Kovner, Abba; Vilna Ghetto

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Kovner, Abba

Abba Kovner, renowned in postwar Israel as a poet and cultural hero, was a leading partisan in Vilna (Vilnius) during the Holocaust. Born on March 14, 1918, in Sevastopol,



Abba Kovner was a Jewish resistance leader in the Vilna ghetto during the Holocaust. Kovner was one of the founders of Vilna's United Partisan Organization, one of the first armed underground ghetto organizations formed while the Holocaust was being carried out. In July 1943 Kovner became its leader. An accomplished poet, Kovner later moved to Israel at the time of the state's founding. The photo here was taken of him on a visit to Palestine in December 1945. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Vitka Kempner Kovner)

Crimea, his parents were Rachel (Rosa) Taubman and Israel Kovner. When he was a child the family moved to Vilna, where he was educated at the Hebrew high school and the school of arts. Like many young Polish Jews of his generation, he became a Zionist and joined the youth movement *Hashomer Hatzair*.

Living in Vilna, his life during World War II was initially dominated by the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland, but on June 24, 1941, two days after Germany launched its surprise attack against the Soviet Union, this changed forever. The Nazis occupied Vilna; Kovner, together with other members of Hashomer Hatzair, escaped and hid for a time in a Dominican convent outside the city. The convent, under the direction of Anna Borkowska (known as Mother Bertranda), gave shelter to Kovner and 16 other young Jews, for which, in 1984, she would be recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations.

Kovner did not stay in hiding for long. Returning to the ghetto, it took him no time at all to see the dire circumstances facing the Jews, with oppression—and liquidation—beginning almost immediately. In July, less than a month after the Germans occupied Vilna, 6,000 Jewish men were rounded up by the SS and taken to the forest at Ponary, just outside the city, and shot. At the end of August, supposedly in retaliation for an attack against the Germans, a four-day killing spree took place in which another 8,000 men and women were shot at Ponary. After this, tens of thousands of Jews from surrounding areas were crowded into Vilna, and the ghetto became filled to bursting point.

Kovner realized that a revolt would be necessary, if not to stop the killing, then at least to hinder the Germans. He started building a ghetto defense force, and in December 1941 a number of meetings were held in which a resistance movement was established. It was decided to remain in the ghetto and fight rather than trying to escape. On New Year's Eve, before a gathering of 150 Jews at Straszuna 2, in a public soup kitchen, Kovner proclaimed:

Jewish youth!

Do not trust those who are trying to deceive you. Out of the eighty thousand Jews in the "Jerusalem of Lithuania" only twenty thousand are left. . . . Ponar is not a concentration camp. They have all been shot there. Hitler plans to destroy all the Jews of Europe, and the Jews of Lithuania have been chosen as the first in line.

We will not be led like sheep to the slaughter!

True, we are weak and defenseless, but the only reply to the murderer is revolt!

Brothers! Better to fall as free fighters than to live by the mercy of the murderers.
Arise! Arise with your last breath!

Three weeks later, on January 21, 1942, a meeting was held at the home of Josef Glazman. Representatives from the major youth groups met: Kovner, from Hashomer Hatzair; Glazman, from *Betar*; Yitzhak Wittenberg and Chyena Borowska, representing the communists; and Nissan Reznik of *Hanoar Hazoni*. Other groups came into the movement soon after.

Kovner's assertion that Hitler wanted to kill all the Jews of Europe was the first time such a conclusion had been reached by Jews in occupied Europe, and it sounded a tocsin for Jewish communities throughout Poland. That the groups had agreed to unite, given the fractious nature of Jewish communal politics before the war, was an indication of just how serious the matter was, and Kovner played an important role in the unification process. The group formed themselves into the *Fareynigte Partizaner Organizatsie* (United Partisan Organization, or FPO), with multiple aims: to prepare for mass armed resistance; perform acts of sabotage; join the partisans where possible; and convey the message to other ghettos that they, too, should revolt. Wittenberg was appointed commander, with Glazman and Kovner his staff officers. The FPO was one of the first ghetto resistance organizations to be established.

As a poet—something for which he would later receive the prestigious Israel Prize—Kovner was inspirational at this time. His poems were published by Hashomer Hatzair in Vilna, and in 1943 one was smuggled out of Poland and made its way to Palestine, where it was published in the newspaper *Haaretz*.

In July 1943 Kovner became the leader of the FPO after Wittenberg was arrested at a meeting with the head of Vilna's Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), Jacob Gens. Six weeks later, the Nazis decided to liquidate the ghetto. The FPO issued a call for the Jews not to participate in the deportations, proclaiming that the time had come for the ghetto residents to "Defend yourselves with arms!" and not to go "like sheep for the slaughter!" Sadly, most did not pay attention, and they were sent to labor camps in Estonia where they were eventually killed by the SS.

On September 1, 1943, the FPO rose in revolt but had little support, and in short order its members saw that they were fighting alone. Escaping to the forests through the sewers, some created a partisan group of their own and others joined those already under Soviet command. Kovner, with Vitka

Kempner and Rozka Korczak, commanded a partisan group called the Avengers (*Nokmim*) in the forests near Vilna. Here, they engaged in sabotage and guerrilla attacks against the Germans and their local collaborators, operating from September 1943 until the arrival of the Soviet army in July 1944.

On May 8, 1945, Kovner was one of the founders of a secret postwar organization, also called the Avengers (*Nakam*), building on the Nokmim partisan group of the same name. The 50 or so members of the group, including Rozka Korczak and Vitka Kempner, decided to dedicate their lives to avenging the 6 million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis. To do so, they planned to undertake an extensive program of revenge against the people of Germany, one plan of which called for the extermination of 6 million Germans through poisoning the water supplies of Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, and Nuremberg. Another was to kill SS prisoners held in Allied POW camps, and in April 1946 Nakam operatives actually broke into a bakery where bread was being prepared for the Langwasser internment camp near Nuremberg. The bread was poisoned, and more than 2,200 of the German prisoners fell sick, but no deaths ensued.

With the end of the war, Kovner looked to a future that would be built on the ruins of the Holocaust. He was one of the prime movers behind the movement known as *Bricha* (“flight”), an underground operation conducted between 1944 and 1949 to move Jews from Europe to Palestine/Israel. In July 1945 he traveled to Palestine via Italy, and in 1946 married Vitka Kempner, his partner in the FPO. They settled, with other former partisans, at Kibbutz Ein Hahoresht. Kovner joined the *Haganah* in December 1947, serving as an officer in the Givati Brigade of the Israel Defense Force during the War of Independence in 1948. At the end of the war he returned to his kibbutz and devoted most of his time to poetry, publishing two prose volumes and collections of poems. In 1961 he gave important testimony about his experiences in the Vilna ghetto at the trial of Adolf Eichmann. Abba Kovner died at Kibbutz Ein Hahoresht on September 25, 1987, at the age of 69, survived by his wife, Vitka Kempner.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Borkowska, Anna; Jewish Partisans; Kempner, Vitka; Korczak, Rozka; Ponary Forest; United Partisan Organization; Vilna Ghetto

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Krajugevac Massacre

The premeditated mass murder of some 2,700 Serb men from the Serbian city of Krajugevac by German forces on October 20–21, 1941. The Nazi-inspired massacre was in fact rather gratuitous, as the Germans perpetrated the killings in retaliation for the deaths of Nazi soldiers during an operation against resistance partisans in another part of Serbia. There was no evidence, in fact, that any of those killed had anything to do with the earlier operation, and no violent acts had been committed against the German troops in Krajugevac.

In September 1941, German field marshal Wilhelm Keitel promulgated a standing order covering all of Europe occupied by German forces. He decreed that 50 communists were to be executed for each German soldier wounded in operations against them. He further ordered that 100 communists were to be executed for each German soldier killed. Only some three weeks later, a group of Chetniks and communist guerrillas attacked a German position near Gornji Milanovac, resulting in multiple German casualties, including a number of deaths. Because there were not enough people to be sacrificed near the scene of the attacks, local German commanders set their sights on Krajugevac, which was a sizable city.

The terror in Krajugevac began on October 18, when all the city’s Jewish males were rounded up and arrested. A small number of communists were also detained. Still far short of the number of people required to fulfill Keitel’s order, on October 19 German troops stormed the city and arrested virtually all of the male population, aged 16–60. In all, about 10,000 men were detained. Also involved in the operation were the Serbian State Guard and a detachment of the Serbian Volunteer Command. Males 16 and older, who were attending high school classes at the time, were literally pulled from their classrooms and marched to the outskirts of town.

The actual massacre commenced on October 20, when soldiers began shooting the civilians in large groups, some with as many as 400 people. The mass executions continued into October 21. When the requisite number had been killed, those remaining alive were imprisoned as hostages, to be sacrificed in the future if more Nazis died at the hands of

communists. It should be noted that the vast majority of those killed at Krajevac were in fact not communists. The dead were buried in unmarked mass graves in the countryside on the outskirts of the city. Although the estimated number of those killed has varied greatly over the years, modern scholars suggest that about 2,800 died during October 20–21, 1941.

Today, there is a series of memorials to the event, located in a memorial park that was erected on the approximate site of the killings.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Keitel, Wilhelm; Serbia

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Kraków-Plaszow

Kraków-Plaszow was a Nazi forced labor and concentration camp located in Poland, near the Kraków suburb of Plaszow. Established in 1942, it was initially begun as a forced labor facility mainly for Polish Jews. It had a separate camp for men and women, and a special section for non-Polish Jews who were detained there because they had violated German occupation policies. As labor needs increased and more manufacturing facilities were built in or near Plaszow, the Germans continued to expand the facility to meet demand. At the height of its operations, in 1944, the camp held about 20,000 prisoners simultaneously.

Run by the SS, Kraków-Plaszow was notorious for its wretched living conditions and the overworking of its detainees. Food was scant and often inedible, medical care was essentially nonexistent, housing quarters overcrowded and squalid, and camp personnel were cruel. Harsh punishments, some of which resulted in deaths, were commonplace. Starvation and disease alone killed several thousand prisoners, while hundreds more died of exhaustion and overwork. Precise casualty figures are almost impossible to determine because the Germans went out of their way to cover up their activities, including the mass cremation of bodies.

German industrialist Oskar Schindler, who operated an enamelware factory in the vicinity of Kraków, exploited labor from the Plaszow camp. He shielded his mostly Jewish workforce, however, and when he was forced to relocate his factory

in 1944, he managed to take some 1,100 Jewish workers with him, saving them from deportation and likely death.

In early 1944 the focus of the camp shifted from forced labor to concentration. During that year, Plaszow became a temporary home to Jews in transit to death camps in the east. As well, more and more of the camp's permanent detainees were being deported to camps farther east. In the summer of 1944, however, as Soviet troops began approaching from the east, the Germans attempted to liquidate completely the Plaszow facility. They shipped many prisoners to Auschwitz, where most were killed. Soon, the Germans engaged themselves in a major effort to erase any evidence of wrongdoing. Barracks and buildings were demolished, and mass graves were opened. The bodies contained in them were then exhumed and burned. The last prisoners left Plaszow in January 1945; many died during a forced march to Auschwitz, while many more were killed after their arrival. It is not possible to determine exactly how many people died at Plaszow, but deaths most certainly numbered in the several thousands, of all causes.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Concentration Camps; Schindler, Oskar; Schindler's Jews

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Kramer, Josef

Known as the “Beast of Belsen,” Josef Kramer was born on November 10, 1906, in Munich. Trained as a bookkeeper, he joined the Nazi Party in 1931 and volunteered for the SS in 1932. Originally assigned to the Dachau concentration camp in 1934 as a guard, Kramer's slavish devotion to orders earned him promotions and transfers to camps at Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen.

In 1940 Kramer was assigned to assist Rudolf Hoess, commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp. Ostensibly tasked with choosing a site for the development of a synthetic fuel plant, their true mission was to select a suitable site for the implementation of the Final Solution, the mass killing of Jews. Kramer's attention to strict discipline and sadistic demeanor earned him the praise of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler.

From May 1941 to August 1943 Kramer served as commandant of the Natzweiler concentration camp in France. At Natzweiler, one of Kramer's duties was to provide suitable human remains to August Hirt, an anatomist at the Strasbourg Medical University. Eighty inmates were transported from Auschwitz to Natzweiler, where Kramer participated in their execution. In November 1943 Kramer was again stationed at Auschwitz, where Hoess assigned him to oversee the gas chambers at Birkenau.

In December 1944 Kramer was promoted to the rank of Hauptsturmführer-SS (captain) and appointed commandant of the Bergen-Belsen camp. Kramer brought to Belsen the strict discipline and sadism he had already demonstrated. Lengthy roll calls, harsh labor, and insufficient food became common at Belsen. As Nazi Germany began to disintegrate in early 1945, more and more transports continued to bring prisoners to the already overcrowded Belsen. With a population of 15,257 inmates at the end of 1944, the number soared to 44,000 by March 1945.

By April 1945 order within the camp had vanished, and Allied bombings had disrupted the camp's water and food supplies. As a typhus epidemic raged, the camp's crematorium could no longer handle the increasing number of dead bodies. Kramer reported that up to 300 inmates per day were dying. Corpses were simply left where they had died. As Allied armies pushed farther into Germany, prisoners from threatened camps were transported to Belsen. During the week of April 13, more than 20,000 additional prisoners were transported to Belsen.

On April 15, 1945, British troops liberated Belsen. They found some 40,000 starving survivors along with some 35,000 unburied corpses that littered the camp. To his surprise, Kramer was arrested. On September 17, 1945, Kramer and 44 others stood trial before a British military tribunal. The prosecution detailed the horrific conditions of Bergen-Belsen and also presented evidence of Kramer's time spent at Auschwitz. His defense argued that he was merely following orders in a time of war and had been following German laws, but this defense was not permitted or accepted by the court. Kramer was found guilty and hanged on December 13, 1945, in Hamelin, Germany.

ROBERT W. MALICK

See also: Bergen-Belsen; Natzweiler-Struthof

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Kraus, Gilbert and Eleanor

Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus were an American-born Jewish couple from Philadelphia who helped rescue 50 Jewish children from Austria and Germany just prior to the commencement of the Holocaust.

Gilbert was born in 1898 and became a successful lawyer. He eventually married Eleanor, who was born in 1905, and the couple had two of their own children. As war clouds gathered over Europe in the late 1930s, and the Nazis began to implement policies designed to segregate, repress, and eventually murder European Jews en masse, the Krauses decided that they had to do something to save European Jews. This would not be an easy task. At the time, the U.S. government had strict immigration quotas that prevented most Jews from escaping to America. On top of that, there was rampant antisemitism in the United States, which made it difficult to rally support for their cause.

Nevertheless, in the early winter of 1939 Gilbert Kraus, along with Lewis Levine, who was president of Brith Sholom, a Jewish fraternal organization, hatched a plan to spirit 50 Jewish children out of Nazi-occupied Europe and settle them with American families in the Philadelphia area. Many Jewish leaders refused to support the plan, however, believing that it was bound to fail and stoke localized antisemitism. The plan was to convince American families to sign affidavits sponsoring the children. The Krauses would then secure visas for the children under the guise that they would be attending a summer camp in the United States. Once the children were safely in America, the odds were good that the U.S. government would permit them to stay after their visas had expired.

A few months later, Gilbert and Eleanor, along with Levine and several others, traveled to Vienna, Austria. There they painstakingly worked with Jewish leaders and selected 25 boys and 25 girls who would return with them to the United States. The Krauses personally interviewed each child and his or her family before deciding which ones would make the best candidates. All of this was done in strict secrecy, and had the Krauses' mission been uncovered the Nazis could have arrested or jailed them.

The 50 children safely made the voyage to America with the Krauses and were placed in sponsor homes. The Krauses themselves took in two of the children. Most of the children would never see their parents or siblings again, as many were killed in the Holocaust. It is believed that the Kraus mission brought the largest single group of unaccompanied children to the United States during all of World War II. Indeed, fewer than 1,200 unaccompanied children were

permitted to enter the United States between 1939 and 1945. The Krauses had planned on another rescue mission, but the formal outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 prevented that.

The Krauses rarely spoke of their heroic deed, even to family members. Gilbert died in 1975 and Eleanor in 1989. It was not until after Eleanor's death that the full story about their rescue mission became known to their children and grandchildren. As it turned out, Eleanor had kept a detailed diary and journal in which she had kept many details—including documents and photographs—relating to the rescue mission.

Still, this miraculous story was not brought to the public's attention until 2013, when Steven Pressman, who married one of the Krauses' granddaughters, decided to do a short documentary film about the Krauses. It was produced by HBO and released under the title *50 Children*. In 2014 Pressman published a book under the same title, which goes into far more detail about the Krauses' exploits. Like the film, it uses many passages from Eleanor's journal, as well as photos, documents, and interviews with more than a dozen of the surviving children, to tell the story of the Krauses and their rescue mission.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Children during the Holocaust; Rescuers of Jews

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Kreyssig, Lothar

Lothar Kreyssig was a German judge during the Weimar and Nazi era. He was the only German judge who attempted to stop the *Aktion T-4* euthanasia program, an intervention that cost him his job. Almost alone among the judges of the Third Reich, he upheld the notion that justice mattered more than career advancement, and after World War II he came to be appreciated as a resistance fighter against Nazism.

Lothar Ernst Paul Kreyssig was born on October 30, 1898, in Flöha, Saxony, the son of a businessman and grain merchant. After elementary school, he attended a gymnasium in Chemnitz. He deferred his education and enlisted in the army in 1916, during the First World War. During his two years in World War I, he served in France, the Baltic lands, and Serbia.

Between 1919 and 1922 he studied law at the University of Leipzig, receiving his doctorate in 1923. In 1926 he went to work at the district court in Chemnitz and in 1928 became a judge there. In 1933 Kreyssig was pressured to join the Nazi Party, but he refused, citing his need for judicial independence.

Kreyssig's superiors in Chemnitz considered him to be a good judge, until he began a series of minor insubordinations such as slipping out of a ceremony in his court when a bust of Hitler was unveiled and, after the Nazi accession to office in 1933, publicly protesting the suspension of three judges who failed to follow the interpretation of "Aryan laws" favored by Nazi authorities.

An early supporter of the Confessional Church, Kreyssig became one of its foremost representatives and led the first Confessional Synod in Saxony in October 1935. His active involvement in church policy brought him into continual conflict with the Nazi regime, and he, in turn, referred to Nazi church policies as "injustice masquerading in the form of law." Kreyssig was, however, still able to work within the legal profession. In 1937 he was reassigned to the lower district court at Brandenburg an der Havel, where he became a mental health guardianship judge, making him responsible for several hundred mentally retarded children and adults.

During the summer of 1940 the *Aktion T-4* euthanasia program saw death certificates relating to those in his care accumulating on Kreyssig's desk, and reams of odd paperwork, often nearly identical except for the names, came to him for approval. Dozens, then hundreds, of people were dying on his watch. He concluded that this was in fact a forced euthanasia program on a huge scale, and he was placing his own imprimatur on the horrible act. He refused to do so.

Reporting his suspicions to Minister of Justice Franz Gürtner in a letter dated July 8, 1940, Kreyssig condemned the *Aktion T-4* program. In the same letter he also addressed the disenfranchisement of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, making all his arguments on firm legal grounds. He referred to the situation in which entire segments of society were being excluded from their rights under the law, not only in the concentration camps but now also in hospitals and sanatoriums.

Trusting in German justice, Kreyssig then filed criminal charges against the program administrator, Philipp Bouhler, head of the Reich Chancellery, for murder. He also filed injunctions against several institutions in which he had housed his wards, prohibiting them from transferring those in his care without his consent.

On November 13, 1940, Kreyssig was summoned to a meeting by Justice Minister Franz Gürtner, who laid before Kreyssig a letter from Hitler that had authorized *Aktion T-4*, which constituted the sole legal basis for it. Kreyssig replied, “The Führer’s word does not create a right,” clearly signifying that he did not recognize this as a legal right. Gürtner then informed Kreyssig that if he could not recognize Hitler’s will as a source of law, he could no longer remain a judge. Gürtner then demanded that Kreyssig withdraw his injunctions against the hospitals; Kreyssig refused.

Marginalized over the next two years, Kreyssig was eventually forced to retire from the bench. After the war, living in Leipzig in communist East Germany, Kreyssig lost part of his estate as an alleged Prussian Junker. When he was offered a position as a judge, however, given that the rule of law in the Soviet occupation zone was considered insufficient, Kreyssig decided against resuming his legal career. He preferred, instead, to serve as the consistorial president of the Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony in Magdeburg. In this capacity he spent his later years working vigorously to atone for the wrong his countrymen had wrought, believing that even those who resisted should have, and could have, done far more to stop the evil in their midst.

In 1958 he founded the organization Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP) with a commitment to send young Germans to former enemy countries (as well as Israel) to ask for forgiveness and, by volunteering to do good deeds, to atone for the bombing and crimes of the war years. The first projects were in Norway, the Netherlands, Britain, France, and Greece. To date, many thousands of German youth have participated in these programs.

In 1971 Kreyssig and his wife Hanna moved to West Berlin. He lived in a nursing home from 1977 in Bergisch Gladbach, near Cologne, until his death on July 6, 1988, after living a life of honor and principle. To this day, Kreyssig is known as the only judge who tried to stop the systematic murders conducted under the T-4 program, and in his lifetime he was nominated for several awards for fighting against the Nazi regime.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Euthanasia Program; Führerprinzip; Gürtner, Franz; Protestant Churches, German; Upstander

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Kristallnacht

Known as the “Night of Broken Glass,” Kristallnacht was a sudden and widespread assault on Jews and their property in Germany prior to World War II. It was the first widespread use of massive force against Jews by the Nazi regime. The attack legitimized violence against Jews by the Nazi state and foreshadowed Adolf Hitler’s later attempts to exterminate European Jews through the so-called Final Solution.

The violence of Kristallnacht took place on November 9–10, 1938. The impetus for the attack stemmed from the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a German government official in the French Embassy. Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old German Jewish refugee then living in Paris, had recently learned that his parents had been deported. Angered by the treatment of his parents by the Nazis, Grynszpan decided to strike back at Germany. He entered the French Embassy and attempted to shoot the German ambassador to France; however, he missed the ambassador and instead killed vom Rath.

After learning of the news, the German government whipped up public antisemitism. Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, organized a widespread pogrom against German Jews. A special unit of the Nazi political machine, known as the SA, led groups of civilians across urban centers of Germany, where they sacked more than 500 Jewish homes, synagogues, and storefronts.

When the violence ended, 90 Jews lay dead (according to Nazi figures) and over 30,000 Jewish men were taken into “protective custody” in concentration camps and prisons. During the attack, German men also raped Jewish women, despite severe penalties regarding sexual relations between Jews and German citizens.

The term Kristallnacht itself reveals the rampant antisemitism that fueled the violence. So many Jewish synagogues and storefronts had been smashed that Hermann Göring described the shattered glass as so many Jewish “crystals” or “diamonds.” Two days after the attacks, Göring ordered the enactment of statutes to further punish the Jewish community. Jews were disallowed from owning stores; working as independent skilled workers; or attending concerts, movies, or other forms of public entertainment—they were even prohibited from driving cars.

Perhaps the most harmful aspect of Göring’s new laws for Jews was the freeing of German insurance companies from paying for claims resulting from the destruction of Jewish property. As a further insult, Göring ordered that the Jewish community be fined \$400 million for the attack. Not



Kristallnacht was the euphemistic name given by the Nazis to a major anti-Jewish pogrom that took place on the night of November 9-10, 1938. Also known as the “Night of Broken Glass,” the name is derived from the shards of broken glass from thousands of smashed windows that shone in the November moonlight. The night has been dubbed by some historians as “the day the Holocaust began.” In this image, a pedestrian inspects the wreckage of a Jewish shop in Berlin the day after the Kristallnacht. (AP Photo)

surprisingly, over 150,000 Jews left the country in the wake of Kristallnacht.

One of the most far-reaching changes wrought by Kristallnacht was a general shift in Nazi policy toward the Jews. Prior to Kristallnacht, the German government had dealt with its Jewish “problem” by compelling Jews to emigrate voluntarily to other nations. The essential purpose behind the Kristallnacht, on the other hand, was to force Jews to realize that there was no longer a future for them in Germany and that they were henceforth to redouble their efforts to leave—or face similar (or worse) measures.

JASON NEWMAN

See also: Aryanization; Baum, Herbert; Confiscation of Jewish Property; Goebbels, Joseph; Göring, Hermann; Grynspan, Herschel; Heydrich, Reinhard; Krütfeld, Wilhelm; Lichtenberg, Bernhard; Salomon, Charlotte; Schmeling, Max; Segerstedt, Torgny; SS *St. Louis*; St. Hedwig’s Cathedral; Sturmabteilung

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Krupp Case

In *United States of America v. Alfred Krupp, et al.*, Military Tribunal No. III tried 12 executives of the German Friedrich Krupp firm under the authority of Allied Control Council

Law No. 10, between August 16, 1947, and July 31, 1948. The indictment charged the defendants with crimes against peace; war crimes and crimes against humanity (plunder and spoliation); war crimes and crimes against humanity (forced and slave labor); and conspiracy. The accused were Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, Ewald Loeser, Eduard Houdremont, Erich Muller, Friedrich Janssen, Karl Pfirsch, Max Ihn, Karl Eberhardt, Heinrich Korsch, Friedrich von Bulow, Werner Lehmann, and Hans Kupke. The prosecution later dropped the first and fourth counts against von Bulow, Lehmann, and Kupke.

In October 1945 the Allies indicted Alfried Krupp's father, Gustav Krupp, as a major war criminal before the International Military Tribunal (IMT). After serving the indictment, the IMT determined that the elder Krupp was unfit to stand trial and considered four possibilities for adjudicating his case, as proposed by the prosecution and defense: trial *in absentia*, dismissal, indefinite postponement, or indictment of Alfried Krupp. In the interest of fairness, the IMT adopted the third course but rejected the proposal of charging the son for allegations against the father. The U.S. Office of the Chief of Counsel for War Crimes thereupon tried the firm's executives as Case IX of the Nuremberg Subsequent Proceedings.

Despite the insistence of prosecutor Telford Taylor that the accused sit in the dock to answer for their misdeeds, the postponed case against Gustav Krupp cast a shadow over the proceedings. According to the prosecution, the firm conspired in 1919 to prepare for future German aggression that matched Adolf Hitler's imperialistic ambitions. After a unanimous defense motion, the tribunal dismissed the charges of crimes against peace and conspiracy against all defendants on grounds that private citizens could not wage war, and that the IMT Charter fixed strict temporal limits on the court's jurisdiction.

After marrying Bertha Krupp, Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach presided over Fried, Krupp AG from 1906 to 1943. His eagerness to please Hitler resulted from a determination to preserve family control over the business, not ideological affinity. His persistent lobbying led to Hitler's issuance of Lex Krupp in November 1943; by decree, the public corporation (*Aktiengesellschaft*) was transformed into a perpetual proprietorship, whose owner had to bear the Krupp name. The von Bohlens attached "Krupp" to their name and Alfried took possession of the newly minted Fried, Krupp Essen.

The prosecution recounted Krupp's participation in the spoliation of steel plants and collieries in Austria, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union.

During the German retreat in 1944, the firm looted machinery and other goods from French and Dutch companies. The defense described such behavior as excusable under emergency conditions, but the tribunal convicted defendants Krupp, Loeser, Houdremont, Muller, Janssen, and Eberhardt for spoliation. On two occasions, Krupp participated in the "Aryanization" of Jewish-owned steel plants in Liancourt and Paris. In contrast to the Flick trial, Tribunal III accepted the argument that offenses against industrial property may constitute crimes against humanity. A majority acquitted the defendants of spoliation in Austria, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union.

The most damaging evidence against Krupp concerned the deployment of forced and slave labor. In western and eastern Germany, the firm utilized some 100,000 conscripted foreign civilians, prisoners of war, and concentration camp prisoners. Noted for generous if paternalistic care of the *Kruppianer* (the main German workforce), Krupp brutalized its captives. From fall 1942 to spring 1944 it attempted to establish an automatic gun factory, then a fuse factory, at the Auschwitz concentration camp. Accepting the Reich's proposal of location, it abandoned the project because of logistical bottlenecks and its inability to meet contractual obligations, not humanitarian considerations.

Withdrawal from Auschwitz did not spell the end of Krupp's involvement with slave labor, however. Gross-Rosen's inmates erected the Bertha-Werke at Markstädt, in Upper Silesia. Five hundred female Jewish internees from Buchenwald also toiled at the main Krupp-Essen plant in late 1944 and early 1945. According to the defense, the Nazi regime caught Krupp between the Scylla of inflexible production quotas and the Charybdis of labor allocation imposed from above. The defendants thus had no choice but to accept whatever labor the state supplied. While the judges in the Flick and I.G. Farben cases endorsed a similar defense of necessity, Tribunal III found that such pleadings ought to apply strictly to life-and-death circumstances, not cases concerning the potential loss of property. The court also determined that Krupp had aggressively procured and exploited coercive labor, and thereby demonstrated initiative, an exception to the Flick ruling. Eleven defendants were convicted on the slave labor count.

The court sentenced all but one defendant to terms of imprisonment that ranged from 2 years and 10 months to 12 years. It also ordered the confiscation of Alfried Krupp's industrial property, as provided by Allied Control Council directives. Pfirsch was acquitted. Two of three judges, President H. C. Anderson and William Wilkins (the third was

Edward Daly), issued concurring and dissenting opinions. Anderson found the sentences against all defendants except Krupp too severe, and expressed reservations about the seizure of the latter's property. By contrast, Wilkins opined that the tribunal had erred in acquitting the defendants on certain spoliation charges. In January 1951 U.S. High Commissioner for Germany John J. McCloy restored the firm to Krupp's ownership and commuted his 12-year sentence.

JOSEPH ROBERT WHITE

See also: Aryanization; Crimes against Humanity; Flick Case; Gross-Rosen; I.G Farben Case; Nuremberg Trials; War Crimes

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Krützfeld, Wilhelm

Wilhelm Krützfeld was the chief of police precinct number 16, Hackescher Markt, in the center of Berlin, and in that capacity was instrumental in stopping the attack on the New Synagogue (*Neues Synagoge*) during the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938.

Born on September 12, 1880, in Horndorf, a small village in the district of Segeberg, Schleswig-Holstein, Krützfeld was a career officer who joined the police force in 1907 after a period in the army. After serving in the National Police Office, he became the senior officer at police station 65 in the Prenzlauer Berg, followed in April 1937 by assignment to station 16 at Hackescher Markt.

The infamous Nazi pogrom on the night of November 9–10, 1938, was called, euphemistically, the “Night of Broken Glass” or Kristallnacht. It was supposedly a spontaneous protest against Germany's Jews in retaliation for the assassination of the third secretary of the German embassy in Paris, Ernst vom Rath, by Herschel Grynszpan, a Polish Jewish teenager. In reality, it was a carefully orchestrated assault on Jewish life in Germany carried out by the SA, the SS, and civilians who were Nazi sympathizers. According to Nazi figures, more than 30,000 Jews were arrested, 815 shops and 29 department stores owned by Jews destroyed, hundreds of synagogues and cemeteries vandalized and burned, and 91

Jews killed outright (with many others in the concentration camps later). These figures are all certainly underestimates.

The New Synagogue was situated on Oranienburger Strasse 29–30, Berlin-Mitte—right within Krützfeld's precinct. It was the largest synagogue in Germany and arguably the most beautiful. It had been built between 1859 and 1866, the year of its consecration. Designed in the Moorish style and resembling the Alhambra in Spain, it was intended to serve the growing Jewish population of Berlin, in particular immigrants from the East. It was built to seat 3,200 worshippers and was dedicated in the presence of Otto von Bismarck and many other imperial and Prussian dignitaries. Ornate and imposing on the Berlin skyline, the New Synagogue had been granted legal protection by Kaiser Wilhelm I. It was this document of protection that was to be the key to Krützfeld's defense of the building on the night of November 9–10.

When the SA storm troopers arrived, they invaded the synagogue and desecrated whatever they could find. Furniture was destroyed, Torah scrolls were torn up, and anything that could be set on fire was ignited. Police station 16, located on the corner of Rosenthaler Strasse and the Spandau Bridge, was very close to the scene, and one of Krützfeld's officers, Lieutenant Otto Bellgardt, was quick to arrive. Stopping the assault before the fire got out of hand, Bellgardt pulled out his gun and, facing down the Nazis, ordered them to leave. Acting on the strength of local knowledge, he knew the building was a protected historical landmark and said as much to the assailants, affirming that he would uphold the law that underwrote its protection.

With this, he called in the fire department and permitted them access to extinguish the fire before it could spread—despite the ban on fighting fires taking place on Jewish properties. From this time on, it was under round-the-clock police protection. As Bellgardt's superior, Senior Lieutenant Wilhelm Krützfeld was directly responsible for his actions, but rather than rebuke his subordinate he supported his action and covered up the full extent of what he had done to save the synagogue. Moreover, the next day, Berlin's police president, Wolf-Heinrich Graf von Helldorf—who was not only a member of the SA and ardent antisemite, but also the man who orchestrated the Kristallnacht events in Berlin—summoned Krützfeld to his office for an explanation. Krützfeld took full responsibility for his department's actions and did not betray Bellgardt. Von Helldorf reprimanded Krützfeld, but, surprisingly, took no further action on the matter. Krützfeld was neither arrested nor dismissed; in 1940 he was transferred to another police station, and in 1943 he took early retirement.

Krützfeld and Bellgardt—and, so far as can be ascertained, other members of the precinct—already had a history of anti-Nazi activity before the November pogrom. Indeed, Bellgardt reputedly stamped forged identity cards, while both of them warned Jews in the neighborhood when orders came in regarding new antisemitic measures. It is also clear that they provided Otto Weidt with appropriate time to organize himself in advance of Gestapo raids on his brush-making factory, also within the precinct's boundaries, where he employed and shielded a number of deaf and blind Jews.

The New Synagogue, for its part, remained intact—one of two synagogues, along with the Rykestrasse Synagogue in Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg district—not to be destroyed during the Kristallnacht. The damage was repaired by the congregation and it remained a place of worship until the beginning of April 1940, when the Nazis prohibited any further services. The synagogue was formally declared closed to Jews on April 8, and the German army subsequently took the building over as a place for the storage of military uniforms.

Little is recorded regarding the life or fate of Otto Bellgardt, though it is believed he died at the end of the war in 1945. Wilhelm Krützfeld survived the war and died peacefully in Berlin on October 31, 1953.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Grynspan, Herschel; Kristallnacht; Upstander; Weidt, Otto

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Kuper, Leo

Leo Kuper was a professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, who wrote extensively on race relations and genocide. Born into a religiously observant Lithuanian Jewish family in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1908, he studied at the University of the Witwatersrand and practiced law in Johannesburg until 1940. Soon after the

outbreak of World War II he joined the South African Army, serving in Kenya, Egypt, and Italy. After the war he organized the National War Memorial Health Foundation, which helped to provide social and medical services for those who were disadvantaged—at first Africans, Coloureds, and Indians, and, later, whites. He was appointed as a lecturer in sociology at Britain's University of Birmingham, undertaking a PhD degree in sociology. At the same time he directed a research project intended to assist the city of Coventry to recover from the destructive bombing of the Second World War, resulting in the publication of his first book, *Living in Towns* (1953). In 1953 Kuper returned to South Africa as professor of Sociology at the University of Natal, where he remained until 1961.

That year he moved to the University of California, Los Angeles, as a professor of sociology, where he remained until his retirement in 1976. He served for four years as the director of the African Studies Center and was a member of the board of directors of the African Studies Association. The murder of his brother (a judge in South Africa) in 1963 strengthened Kuper's commitment to finding ways to achieve peaceful social change, and his published works began more and more to demonstrate what he saw as an obligation to the future. A work he wrote in 1977, *The Pity of It All*, was to stamp Kuper as a scholar determined to look into the forces leading to social and political violence, and how these could be met.

Kuper was a founding member of the Council of Jerusalem's Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, established in 1979 by Israel Charny, Shamaï Davidson, and Elie Wiesel. In 1985 he and Michael Young, Baron Young of Dartington, established International Alert, a forum relating to ethnic conflict, genocide, and human rights. Its main concern related to anticipating, predicting, and preventing genocide and other mass killings. Its twin aims were, first, with conflict resolution and conflict avoidance in accordance with international standards, and, second, as its name implies, to work to "alert" international opinion to situations of ethnic violence that were assuming genocidal proportions.

When writing on the massacres of Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi in the 1960s and 1970s, Kuper came to the conclusion that poor (and no) intervention from international agencies and governments had done more harm than good in the past, and that this could be addressed through the greater provision of information and consciousness-raising among the broader population.

Kuper's scholarly work on genocide became more sustained and focused during the early 1980s. His most

important book, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the 20th Century* (1981), was the first in a run of three key works that placed him in the forefront of major influences over the direction that genocide studies would take. Its authority began with a discussion on the very definition of the word genocide. Whereas many subsequent arguments would turn on definitions of genocide—more often than not because commentators did not like that of the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide that made genocide a crime—Kuper's book followed precisely that description. What followed was a thorough dissection of the various intricacies of genocide, in which he actually did extend the definition of genocide to include political groups, through an analysis that showed how politics was at the base of so much of the persecution of the four groups mentioned in the UN Convention. He provided a broad historical background in order to undertake a theoretical examination of the question of genocide, providing case studies of the Armenians in Turkey, the Jews in Europe, and the Hutu in Burundi, among others. He considered atrocities committed by Asians and Africans as well as by Nazis and Soviets, and assessed the record of the UN to that time.

Among many path-breaking innovations within the book, one that came to be axiomatic of Kuper's approach related to localized massacres that, while not necessarily appearing as part of a state-wide policy of group destruction, might nonetheless destroy a given population within a region or defined territory. Noting that the annihilation of a section of a group in a contained situation (for example, in the wiping out of a whole village of men, women, and children) contains some of the elements of a genocide, Kuper sought to find a way to give such massacres their proper place within a model of genocide while recognizing that such events did not, *by themselves*, constitute genocide. He introduced the notion of "genocidal massacre" to deal with such situations, finding the concept especially useful in describing colonial situations. The large number of massacres accompanying colonial acquisition, he concluded, pointed clearly to an affinity between colonialism and genocide. While even an aggregation of genocidal massacres did not necessarily connote a policy of genocide, nonetheless the motives that underlay such massacres were, in their time-and-place circumstances, motivated by a genocidal intent. For Kuper, therefore, the genocidal massacre, while not equating with genocide, was a device for explaining the many examples of destruction that took place during territorial acquisition, maintenance, and decolonization. All in all, *Genocide* was a book that arguably articulated the issues and the history of genocide more completely than any previous work (save the

pioneering unpublished study by Raphael Lemkin) had so far done.

Kuper's second key piece on genocide in the early 1980s was a short work titled *International Action against Genocide* (1982). This essentially distilled many of the main points about nonintervention that had been made in *Genocide*, but here he also succinctly summarized the history of the major genocidal outbreaks of the twentieth century to that time and offered some suggestions that could create an international movement to eradicate "this most horrifying crime against humanity." It was an excellent introductory essay on its topic, and it prepared the groundwork for Kuper's third discourse on genocide from this period, *The Prevention of Genocide* (1985).

In this book he divided the crime of genocide into two categories: domestic genocides, which he referred to as those arising out of internal divisions within a society; and genocides arising out of international warfare. Kuper analyzed critically the major obstacles holding back effective UN action to staunch genocide, while assessing realistically the prospects of such action in the future. He considered past failures regarding punishment, lamenting the impunity that had for so long allowed perpetrators to engage in their murderous acts. The book combined discussions of philosophy and morality (covering such issues as the right to life, ideology, and self-determination) with discussions of politics and the law (looking at the past record of individual states against a context of domestic and international regulations). This work in part took him back to his legal roots and extended his expertise into the realm of international relations, as he pondered the subtleties of *realpolitik* against state expressions of altruism. Ultimately, Kuper concluded that the refusal of the international community to live up to the promises of the UN Convention on Genocide was a major contributor to the high incidence of genocidal outbreaks in recent times.

As a sociologist, Leo Kuper's work on race relations and intergroup dynamics showed where the breakdown of social stability could lead. His work was characterized by a thoughtful examination of his topics based on meticulous research. His pioneering work in genocide theory, and the lead he gave to younger scholars searching for ways into the subject, made him one of the foremost thinkers in the field—perhaps, it could be said, the successor *par excellence* to the founder of the field of genocide studies, Raphael Lemkin. His major concern was always that a means could be found to bring effective international action to bear in order to stop what he referred to as "the odious scourge," but that

genocide should also be understood more fully by informed, educated people in the broader sphere as well—and it was to achieving these twin objectives that he dedicated his work and his thinking.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Lemkin, Raphael; UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

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THE HOLOCAUST

THE HOLOCAUST

An Encyclopedia and Document Collection

VOLUME 2: L - Z

Paul R. Bartrop and
Michael Dickerman,
Editors



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To Our Grandchildren
The next generation to carry a sacred tradition,
and the memory that accompanies it

Paul R. Bartrop
Jacob, Madeline, Mila, Asher, Max, Xavier

Michael Dickerman
Ethan, Holden

Grandchildren are the crown of the aged (Proverbs 17:6)

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Landmesser, August

August Landmesser worked during the 1930s at the Blohm & Voss shipbuilding and engineering works located in Hamburg. He is best remembered for an act that has become renowned as one of the starkest of all acts of resistance in Nazi Germany; among thousands of others with their hands raised in the Hitler salute on June 13, 1936, he was pictured with his arms folded in direct protest of the Nazi regime.

Landmesser was born on May 24, 1910, the only son of August Franz Landmesser and Wilhelmine Magdalene, *née* Schmidtpott. In 1930 he joined the Nazi Party, thinking it might improve his job prospects at a time when the Great Depression was destroying the German economy. There is no evidence that he was committed to Nazi ideology; in fact, in 1934 he did what no committed Nazi would ever do when he met and fell in love with Irma Eckler, a young Jewish woman.

Within a year they were engaged; immediately, he was expelled from the party, and their application to be married was rejected in accordance with the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, one of which, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, prohibited Jews from marriage with other Germans. Sexual relations were also prohibited, referred to as *Rassenschande*, or “race shame”—in effect, “defiling the Aryan race.” Once the laws began to be applied systematically across Germany, the crime became a capital offense. Nazi ideology held that “race mixing” would weaken the “purity” of the Aryan race, especially if children resulted

from the union. It was hardly a surprise, therefore, that the birth of the couple’s baby girl, Ingrid, on October 29, 1935, alerted the Gestapo to their existence, after which they were watched closely.

It was perhaps with this in mind that Landmesser, who by now must have harbored no little dissatisfaction with the regime, took his famous action at the shipyard on June 13, 1936. The occasion was the launch of a new naval vessel, the training ship *Horst Wessel*, a ceremony filled with significance. In the presence of Adolf Hitler, his deputy, Rudolf Hess, gave a speech, and the mother of Horst Wessel christened the ship with a bottle of champagne. Wessel, of course, was an SA man who was killed in the early Nazi struggle for power, and who had written the song that became the Nazi anthem played or sung on every official occasion after the Nazis assumed office.

Refusing to give the Nazi salute was Landmesser’s ultimate protest against the Nazis. He was probably unaware that his action was photographed, or that he stood out to the extent that he did. Now, more than ever, he was being watched by the authorities. For this single act of resistance he could well have been arrested; that he was not said much about his luck in snubbing the regime at this time.

In 1937 Irma was again pregnant, and the little family attempted to flee to Denmark. Their flight, however, was unsuccessful, and they were arrested near the border. Landmesser was charged with “dishonoring the race,” and in July 1937 he was imprisoned in accordance with the Nuremberg

Laws. In the trial that followed, both he and Irma argued that neither of them knew she was Jewish, as she had been baptized in a Protestant church after her mother remarried. Accordingly, on May 27, 1938, Landmesser was acquitted for lack of evidence. He was warned that he would be subjected to very harsh punishment if he was ever again arrested for the same offense.

Almost as if to dare the Gestapo to follow through on their threat, the couple continued their relationship in the open. On July 15, 1938, Landmesser was arrested again, and this time he was sentenced to hard labor for two-and-a-half years in a concentration camp. It was to be the last time he saw his family.

Irma was also detained by the Gestapo on the basis of a law that allowed for the arrest of Jewish wives where an Aryan man had “dishonored the race.” She was held for a time at the local prison in Hamburg, Fuhlsbüttel, where she gave birth to a second daughter, Irene. From there she was sent to the concentration camp at Lichtenburg and then transferred to Ravensbrück. She was compulsorily (and permanently) separated from her two daughters. It is known that she was still alive in January 1942, as letters from her exist up to then, but in February 1942 she was relocated to a Nazi “euthanasia center” at Bernburg, Saxony, where she was gassed to death. She was one of 1,400 women from Ravensbrück murdered in Bernburg by the spring of 1942. In 1949 she was pronounced legally dead.

Landmesser was probably unaware of this. He had been discharged from prison on January 19, 1941, and sent to work as a foreman for a transport company stationed in the seaside resort town of Warnemünde. In February 1944 he was drafted into a penal unit, the 999th Fort Infantry Battalion, which saw service in Greece and other parts of the Balkans. He was killed during fighting in Croatia on October 17, 1944; at the time he was declared missing in action, but in 1949 he, like Irma, was pronounced legally dead.

After their mother’s arrest, Ingrid and Irene were first taken to Hamburg’s city orphanage. Ingrid was later permitted to live with her maternal grandmother, but the infant Irene was removed from the orphanage and about to be sent to a concentration camp when, at the last moment, she was picked up by someone known to the family and sent to temporary safety in Austria. Upon her return to Germany she was hidden in a hospital where her Jewish identity was suppressed, and she was able to escape detection until the end of the war. Both children lived with foster parents after 1945.

In 1951 the marriage of August Landmesser and Irma Eckler was recognized retroactively by the Hamburg Senate.

In the fall of that year Ingrid took her father’s surname, Landmesser, though her sister Irene continued to use the surname Eckler.

The story of August Landmesser’s defiant action in the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg achieved widespread coverage after March 22, 1991, when the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* published the photograph taken on June 13, 1936, and Landmesser was identified by one of his daughters. Then, in 1996, Irene Eckler published a book, *Die Vormundschaftsakte 1935–1958: Verfolgung einer Familie wegen “Rassenschande”* (*The Guardianship Documents 1935–1958: Persecution of a Family for “Dishonoring the Race”*), in which she chronicled, with documents, how her family had been destroyed in the aftermath of her father’s solitary act of resistance and her parents’ love for each other that transcended racial ideology and a brutal totalitarian regime.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Ravensbrück; Upstander

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Lange, Herbert

Herbert Lange was one of the main perpetrators of the Nazi murder of patients in Germany and occupied Poland during the *Aktion T-4* euthanasia program. At the end of 1939 he became the head of the so-called *Sonderkommando Lange*, and by the following summer this unit had murdered more than 6,000 Polish and Jewish patients from the hospitals and nursing homes in the area known to the Nazis as the Warthegau, in East and West Prussia and other annexed areas. As of December 1941, *Sonderkommando Lange* was using gas vans to kill tens of thousands of Jews and Roma classed as “unfit to work” in the extermination camp of Chelmno, of which Lange was the first commandant until April 1942. Later, he commanded *Sonderkommando Lange* in carrying out the extermination of Jews from the Łódź ghetto.

Herbert Lange was born in Menzlin, Western Pomerania, on September 29, 1909. He enrolled to study law at university but failed to graduate. He subsequently joined the Nazi Party on May 1, 1932. Three months later he enlisted in the SA, led by Ernst Röhm, and in 1934 he joined the SS. By 1935 he had become a deputy police commissioner.

In 1939 Lange joined *Einsatzgruppe Naumann* (EG VI), which consisted of about 150 men. In the wake of the German army's invasion of Poland, he entered Poland with EG VI during the September campaign. On November 9, 1939, he was promoted to the rank of SS-Untersturmführer.

As part of his duties, Lange was ordered on September 12, 1939, to build a concentration camp at Poznań (Posen). This became known as KZ Fort VII and was part of the huge Prussian fortifications encircling the city. For a very short time, from October 10 to 16, Lange was the camp commandant. Once he had established the camp, however, he moved on.

From mid-October 1939, at the head of his own "special unit" (Sonderkommando Lange), he carried out inspections of the mental establishments in Owinska, Koscian, and Gniezno. Early in 1940 Sonderkommando Lange was tasked with the extermination of mentally ill people in the Nazi administrative area known as the Wartheland. By mid-1940 he and his men had been responsible for the murder of about 1,100 patients in Owinska, 2,750 patients at Koscian, 1,558 patients and 300 Poles at Działdowo, and hundreds of Poles at Fort VII, where the mobile gas chamber (*Einsatzwagen*) was invented. The unit, equipped with a gas van, shuttled between hospitals, picking up patients and killing them with carbon monoxide, thereby becoming a mobile killing unit.

Lange's effectiveness in organizing these murders in the "Euthanasia Aktion" in Poland was highly regarded by the SS hierarchy. He was promoted to SS-Obersturmführer on April 20, 1940, and in December 1941 he was appointed the first commandant of the Chełmno extermination camp. From April 1940 his unit was permanently stationed at the Soldau concentration camp. Later, Lange was responsible for mass killing activity in the Konin region, but officially from the end of November 1940 to late 1941 he was head of the Economic Crimes department of the criminal police.

SS and police authorities established the Chełmno killing center in order to annihilate the Jewish population of the Wartheland, including the inhabitants of the Łódź ghetto. It was the first stationary facility where poison gas was used for the mass murder of Jews, and Lange was tasked with the liquidation of 100,000 Jews from the region. In April 1942 Lange's unit was renamed SS Sonderkommando Kulmhof (Chełmno), and he introduced improvements to the extermination process. Lange constructed cremation pits to replace mass graves. He was succeeded by Hans Bothmann, who formed Sonderkommando Bothmann later in 1942. At a very minimum, 152,000 people were killed at the camp, with later estimates charging up to 180,000 victims.

Lange held the position of commander of the Chełmno extermination camp from December 7, 1941, until February 21, 1942. He was then transferred to the Reich Main Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or RSHA). Here he served under Arthur Nebe as a criminal investigator and went to the Balkans on an antipartisan mission.

In March 1944 Lange returned to the already inactive death camp at Chełmno as part of SS Sonderkommando Bothmann. He resumed the gassing operations in the forest camp for the final 10 transports of ghettoized Jews.

In 1944 Lange aided in catching the conspirators of the assassination attempt on Hitler's life by army officers led by Klaus von Stauffenberg (the July Bomb Plot). His work in this endeavor was so highly regarded that he was promoted to SS-Sturmbannführer.

The circumstances of Lange's death are unclear. It is believed that he was killed in action during the Battle of Berlin, probably around April 20, 1945.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Chełmno; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Einsatzgruppen; Euthanasia Program; Łódź Ghetto; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Sonderkommando

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Lange, Rudolf

Rudolf Lange was a prominent Nazi police official and a key Einsatzkommando officer who was present at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942. Lange commanded the Nazi Party Intelligence Organization (*Sicherheitsdienst*, or SD) and the Nazi Security Police (SiPO) in Riga, Latvia. He was a mass killer who was largely accountable for the extermination of the Jewish population of Latvia. Einsatzgruppen A, which operated within his area of command, killed more than 250,000 people in a little less than six months.

Lange was born on November 18, 1910, in Weisswasser, Saxony, the son of a railway construction supervisor. He finished high school in 1928 and studied law at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena.

He received a doctorate in law in 1933 and joined the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) in November of that year, having been recruited by the Gestapo. Feeling that this had been a bad career move, in 1936 Lange joined the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS.

Within a year he had absorbed the values of SS morality and ideology, leading him to resign his church membership by 1937. In May 1938, soon after the Anschluss of Austria with Germany, Lange was transferred to the Gestapo in Vienna to supervise and coordinate the fusion of the Austrian police system with that of Germany. He was then transferred to Stuttgart in June 1939, where he became a Gestapo administrator. By 1940 he was Berlin's deputy head of police.

In 1941 Lange was promoted to the rank of SS major, and on June 5, 1941, he reported to Pretzsch, Saxony, and the command staff of Einsatzgruppe A, headed by SS-Brigadeführer Franz Walter Stahlecker. Lange was placed in charge of Einsatzkommando 2, or EK2. He was one of the few people aware of the "Führer Order" (*Führerbefehl*) dealing with the so-called "Jewish problem" in Latvia. He was sent to Riga and became chief of the Riga Gestapo and Criminal Police in July 1941.

From the beginning of his involvement in Latvia, Lange gave orders to squads of Latvians, such as the Arajs Kommando, to carry out massacres in the smaller cities. Another local group receiving orders from Lange was the Vagulāns Kommando, responsible for the Jelgava massacres in July and August 1941. Lange personally supervised some of the executions, and ordered that all the SD officers should personally participate in the killings.

Between November 25 and November 29, 1941, Jews from the Reich itself were also sent to Riga. As construction of the Riga concentration camp had not been begun, Jews coming off trains from Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Vienna, and Breslau were summarily shot without evaluating whether or not they were suitable for work. In addition, Lange planned and executed the murder of 24,000 Latvian Jews at the Rumbula Forest near Riga from November 30 to December 8, 1941.

By December 1941 Lange's EK2 had killed about 60,000 Jews from Latvia, as well as those from Germany and Austria. That month he was named commander of the Security Police and Security Service in Latvia. As his department served as the focus of all SD operations in Latvia, Lange is widely recognized as one of the primary perpetrators of the Holocaust in Latvia.

On January 20, 1942, representing SS Lieutenant General Friedrich Jeckeln, Lange participated in the Wannsee Conference in Berlin to discuss the "Final Solution." By now he was the deputy head of all SS task forces in Latvia. Although he was the lowest ranking SS officer present at Wannsee, his on-site experience in conducting the mass murder of deported Jews was considered valuable for the conference as

his command was largely responsible for implementing the extermination of Latvia's Jewish population. He had been in charge of the mass killings on the outskirts of Riga that murdered 35,000 people in two days. He also carried out further killing operations against Jews, political opponents, and partisans in Latvia through the use of gas vans. Later in 1942 he was promoted to SS-Obersturmbannführer in Riga, where he remained until 1945. He assumed command of the SD and SIPO for the Reichsgau Wartheland, situated in Posen (Poznań), Poland.

In January 1945 Lange was promoted to SS-Standartenführer, and Posen, which lay on the main route between Warsaw and Berlin, had to be cleared by the Red Army before the final assaults designed to capture Berlin and end the war could begin. Bitter fighting saw the outlying forts reduced and city blocks seized, as the Soviets succeeded in pushing the German defenders toward the city center. Lange was killed in action in the fighting in February 1945 while trying to recapture his headquarters. The manner of his death is unclear. One report states that Lange committed suicide on February 16, 1945; another stated that he was killed in battle on February 23, 1945. He was posthumously awarded the German Cross in Gold for his actions in the Battle of Posen.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Austria; Einsatzgruppen; Latvia; Riga; Salaspils; Schöngarth, Karl Eberhard; Sicherheitsdienst; Wannsee Conference

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Lantos, Tom

A member of the United States Democratic Party, Tom Lantos represented California's 12th District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1981 until his death in 2008. The only Holocaust survivor ever to serve in the U.S. Congress, Lantos was known as a strong advocate for human rights.

One of the few U.S. Congress members not born in the United States, Tamás Péter Lantos was born in Budapest, Hungary, on February 1, 1928. In 1944, when he was 16, the German Army invaded and occupied Hungary. The only

child of Jewish upper-middle-class parents, Lantos found himself in a dangerous world.

Lantos was forced into a work camp with other young male Jews. His work crew was responsible for maintaining an important railroad bridge in Szob. An unsuccessful escape attempt resulted in an intense beating at the hands of his Nazi captors, although Lantos later succeeded in breaking free. He headed back to Budapest, taking refuge with, and eventually gaining diplomatic protection from, Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, whose actions were responsible for saving more than 100,000 Hungarian Jews through an underground network that sent them to safety. Instead of leaving Budapest, Lantos joined the anti-Nazi underground. Disguised as a military cadet, he moved around the city bringing supplies to Jews in hiding.

By the time Russian forces liberated Hungary from Germany in 1945, Budapest had fallen apart. And Lantos's search for his parents revealed that they had been killed. However, he was able to reestablish contact with an old childhood friend, Annette Tillemann, who had survived the Nazi occupation by going into hiding in Switzerland with her mother. Tillemann returned to Budapest, where she and Lantos were reunited. They were married in 1950. Lantos's story is one of several told in the Academy Award-winning documentary *The Last Days*.

A Hillel Foundation academic scholarship to the University of Washington, Seattle, won on the merits of an essay on President Theodore Roosevelt, brought Lantos to the United States. Working at dozens of odd jobs while attending school, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1949 and a master's degree in 1950. He enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, for his postgraduate studies in international economics, and earned his doctorate in 1953.

A varied 30-year career in economics followed. Lantos became a professor of economics at San Francisco State University, worked as a television news analyst, and served as a business consultant. In the late 1970s he served as economic and foreign policy adviser to the U.S. Senate, which inspired him to run for Congress.

Lantos was elected by a slim margin to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1980, a rare Democratic win in the year of Ronald Reagan's Republican landslide. In the House, Lantos served on the Government Reform Committee and chaired the Foreign Affairs Committee, and his career in Congress was marked by his fight against government waste and his support of Israel. Lantos also worked for human rights as the founder and co-chair of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and often supported sending U.S. military forces

abroad to intervene in conflicts involving human rights violations. Lantos helped round up Democratic support for the 2002 resolution authorizing President George W. Bush to take military action in Iraq. However, as the Iraq War progressed, Lantos became increasingly critical of Bush's handling of it and eventually called for a significant withdrawal of U.S. troops. Lantos also focused his legislative efforts upon improving the quality of life in the San Francisco Bay Area and protecting the environment.

In January 2008, during his 14th term in the House, Lantos announced that he had been diagnosed with esophageal cancer. He also announced that he would not run for reelection but that he intended to finish his term, which was up in January 2009. However, on February 11, 2008, Tom Lantos died at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, at the age of 80.

KELLIE SEARLE

See also: Hungary; Wallenberg, Raoul

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Latvia

Latvia is a Baltic state situated in northeastern Europe. It had a 1939 population of approximately 1.99 million people, of whom some 94,000 were Jewish. Latvia became an independent constitutional republic in 1918, but in 1934 Karlis Ulmanis seized power and promptly established a right-wing quasi-fascist government. That government remained in power until June 1940, at which time Soviet troops moved in and occupied the country; two months later, Latvia was annexed outright and became a Soviet republic. This event had been presaged by the 1939 German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, in which Germany and the Soviet Union had agreed to divide and occupy certain areas of eastern and central Europe. Jews living in Latvia had been fully integrated into the social and political fabric of Latvia during the interwar years, and despite Ulmanis's fascist tendencies, Latvian Jews were generally spared the persecution faced by Jews in other European nations during the 1930s. At least half of Latvia's Jews resided in the capital city of Riga in 1939.

The Soviet occupation proved short-lived, because after Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, German troops quickly seized control of the Baltic States, including Latvia. The Germans proceeded to impose a harsh occupation on the Latvians, and Jews were singled out for deportation and death. The Germans seized the property of Jews and non-Jews alike, drove civilians into forced labor or military service, and imposed Nazi ideology in educational curricula. The Latvian economy virtually collapsed, and its currency was devalued to the point of uselessness. As time went on, the German occupation became ever more repressive.

After the Germans moved in during the summer of 1941, Nazi mobile killing squads (Einsatzgruppen) murdered thousands of Latvian Jews. Occupation authorities also established ghettos in Riga, Liepaja, and Dvinsk, in which most of the Jews died or were killed. A Jewish resistance movement in Riga gained some traction before the Germans brutally suppressed it. Between the autumn of 1941 and the winter of 1942, the Germans moved several thousand Jews into the Riga ghetto, most of whom came from Austria or Germany. The majority of these deportees were killed in Latvia or deported to death camps. By early 1943 the Jewish population in all of Latvia had plummeted to just 5,000, and all lived in the urban ghettos. Nazi officials also established several forced labor camps for Jews as well as establishing a concentration camp, Kaiserwald.

In the fall of 1944, as the Germans slowly retreated west, the Soviets reoccupied the Baltic States, including Latvia. By then, there were fewer than 500 Latvian Jews remaining in the war-torn country. At war's end in 1945, about 1,000 Latvian Jews who had survived deportation and the concentration camps returned to Latvia; several thousand more who had fled to the Soviet Union prior to the German conquest also survived, although many did not return, opting to remain in the Soviet Union. Latvia remained under Soviet domination until the end of the Cold War in 1991.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Einsatzgruppen; Jewish Resistance; Lange, Rudolf; Lipke, Janis and Johanna; Riga; Rumbula Massacre; Salaspils

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Laval, Pierre

While Germany occupied France during World War II, Pierre Laval was a leading member of the French government. Laval led France down a road of collaboration with the Nazi victors, yielding vast resources for the German war effort and facilitating the deportation of tens of thousands of Jews to German concentration camps, most of whom perished in the Holocaust.

Pierre Jean-Marie Laval was born on June 28, 1883, in Châteldon, a village in France's Auvergne region. His parents, Baptiste and Claudine, ran a small inn. His father also managed the mail coach that served local mountain communities. Laval's first job, for which he left school at the age of 12, was that of driver for his father. His education continued sporadically after that, but he was a dogged learner. For a time, he made his living as a tutor, eventually working his way through university. His efforts culminated in degrees in



Pierre Laval, twice prime minister of France prior to Nazi Germany's occupation, had a long-standing history of favoring Franco-German reconciliation. It was not inconsistent, then, that he played a significant role in the collaboration of the Pétain government established in Vichy, resulting in the deportation of tens of thousands of French Jews to concentration camps and, with few exceptions, to their deaths. (AP Photo)

geology and, a number of years later, law. Drafted into the military, his term of service was cut short for medical reasons.

In 1909 Laval married a woman from his village, Eugenie Claussat. By that time he was already practicing law in Paris. He made a name for himself by successfully defending an avowed anarchist who had been charged with severing telegraph wires. This case led to Laval being appointed an attorney for France's trade union federation, the Confederation General du Travail. He also took up a daily column in the federation's newspaper. By 1914 Laval had become sufficiently well known to win a seat as a socialist in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the French parliament.

Laval spent much of World War I as one of the relatively small number of socialists who favored conciliation with Germany. By the end of the conflict, he had softened his opposition to the war, but he nonetheless voted against the Treaty of Versailles. In his view, it imposed too harsh a penalty on Germany and provided no sure mechanism of enforcement. That same year, the political Right made a comeback in elections, and Laval lost his seat in the chamber.

This break from politics gave Laval the opportunity to attend to his personal finances. He invested shrewdly and made a good deal of money in banking and radio, among other endeavors, thus setting the stage for his return to politics. In 1924 he regained his seat in the Chamber of Deputies, this time as an independent but still socialist candidate, in coalition with the parties of the Left. Over the next two years, Laval held various cabinet posts, until his left-wing coalition fell from power in 1926. He abruptly broke with the Left, joining forces with the right-wing National Republican Union. The following year he won a seat in the Senate and was appointed minister of labor and social security by Prime Minister André Tardieu. Laval served in this capacity until January 1931, when he himself became prime minister.

Laval spent his first term in office dealing mainly with foreign affairs, traveling extensively and, by his comments, revealing that he still favored Franco-German reconciliation. For example, he strenuously denounced the Polish Corridor, which separated the predominantly German city of Danzig from the rest of Germany. After only a year in power, however, parliamentary maneuvering dislodged him from the premiership. He did not exercise substantial influence again until 1934, when he was appointed foreign minister in Gaston Doumergue's cabinet. In that position, he made his mark by negotiating with Italian leader Benito Mussolini a swap of certain French colonial territories in Africa in exchange for Italian recognition of French supremacy in Tunisia.

In 1935, when German leader Adolf Hitler announced that (contrary to the Versailles Treaty) Germany had begun to rearm itself, Laval secured a mildly worded joint French, British, and Italian condemnation. Laval envisioned the four powers eventually coming to an understanding, but parliamentary pressure forced him to court a fifth power, the Soviet Union. In May 1935 he negotiated a Franco-Soviet agreement for mutual assistance, but he delayed its implementation indefinitely.

That June, a financial crisis brought him the premiership once again. Having opted to retain the foreign affairs portfolio, in December Laval entered secret negotiations with Britain and Italy over Ethiopia, which Mussolini had invaded. Laval's plan was to allow Italy to annex all but a third of the African empire. When the press learned of these terms, Britain quickly backed out, confirming Laval's antipathy for what Anglophobes in France called "perfidious Albion." A month or so later he fell from power once again, returning to his seat in the Senate.

As Hitler made more and more aggressive demands to expand German influence, Laval made a few statements condemning German actions and advocated solidarity between the "Latin bloc" of nations (France, Italy, and Spain) as the key to preventing hostilities. In September 1939 France and Britain declared war on Germany for the latter's invasion of Poland. After several months of a "phony war" (in which very little fighting actually occurred), Germany attacked France, rapidly breaking through French lines.

The French government fled Paris, establishing itself in Vichy. As France faced defeat, aging World War I hero Philippe Pétain assumed the premiership. On June 22, 1940, France signed an armistice with the invaders, agreeing to German occupation of three-fifths of the country, and the next day Laval took a high position in Pétain's government. Laval then played a leading role in convincing parliament to give dictatorial powers to Pétain.

The new Vichy regime, with Pétain as head of state and Laval as his designated successor, set about trying to revive France with an eclectic mix of reforms, some of which were traditional and some of which were quasi-fascist. Pleased to no longer be in alliance with Britain, Laval encouraged close cooperation with Germany. In October 1940 he and Pétain met with Hitler at the small French town of Montoire, making the policy of collaboration official. A few months later, Pétain dismissed Laval in order to placate other members of his government, but a little more than a year later, in April 1942, Pétain reinstated him. (In the interim, Laval had survived a bullet wound in the chest, one of a number of assassination attempts against him during the war.)

Laval's actions as a Vichy leader have brought him much condemnation. After the war, his supporters argued that he had played "a double game," yielding token concessions to the Germans while secretly advancing the cause of the Allies. The historical record does not support such a view. Laval was convinced that France was best served by finding a place at Germany's side in a new European order. To that end, he took every opportunity to demonstrate French goodwill to the Germans. He and Pétain had a specific, some might say peculiar, notion of French honor. Precisely because France had been defeated, they believed it was of paramount importance to prove that France retained its sovereignty. This view led them to do much of the Germans' dirty work for them. If Jews had to be rounded up, better that it be the French police who seized them rather than German troops. (The Vichy government's efforts in this area targeted Jewish immigrants and refugees more than native-born Jews.) If French hostages had to be executed, better that the French government designate who was to die rather than the occupying forces.

Laval encouraged French collaboration on an economic level as well. He negotiated the transfer of French skilled laborers to work in German war factories, eventually compelling compliance by drafting French workers. (This measure drove many such men into the countryside to join the French Resistance.) In addition, he organized the export of French material resources to Germany, so that by 1943 more than 40% of French agricultural and industrial output was devoted to the Nazi war effort.

Laval's policies, morally disastrous for France, proved to be personally disastrous for him. Spirited away to Germany on Hitler's orders after France's liberation in 1944, he was eventually captured in Spain and sent back to France. There, he was condemned to death for the role he played during the war. Hours after an unsuccessful suicide attempt, he was shot by a firing squad on October 15, 1945.

DANIEL SIEGEL

See also: Collaboration; France; Operation Spring Wind; Pétain, Philippe; Vichy France

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Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor

The so-called "Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor," also known as the "Blood Protection Law," released at the Nuremberg Party Rally of September 15, 1935, was the first of the two so-called Nuremberg Laws released on that date. It aimed to isolate the Jews racially and socially by prohibiting them, under pain of severe punishment, from marrying or having extramarital sexual relations with non-Jews. In addition, Jews were prohibited from employing Aryan housemaids younger than 45. The preamble to this law stated that the Nazi state was entirely convinced that the purity of German blood was essential to the further existence of the German people, and, further, that the law was "inspired by the uncompromising determination to safeguard the future of the German nation."

The first provision of the Blood Protection Law forbade marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood, and it voided marriages concluded in defiance of this law, even where the marriage was concluded abroad. The second provision of the law banned sexual relations outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood.

The third provision prevented Jews from being able to employ German female citizens under 45 years as domestic servants. The presupposition behind this was that women under this age were still able to bear children and therefore were at risk of seduction by Jewish males in the household. The fourth provision was that Jews were prohibited from flying the national flag. Breaching the marriage provision was punishable by hard labor; having extramarital sexual relationships in breach of the second stipulation was punishable with imprisonment or hard labor; and employing a domestic servant or flying a flag in breach of the third and fourth provision was punishable with imprisonment up to a year and a fine, or both.

The announcement of the Nuremberg Laws had the unexpected result of creating much uncertainty and argument as to how to define who was a Jew, given that there had been extensive intermarriage up to that time. Consequently, it was necessary for a supplementary Nazi declaration to define a Jew for the operation of the law. This was undertaken by the First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law, issued on November 14, 1935. This decreed that a "full Jew" was a person who practiced Judaism or a person with at least three Jewish grandparents, regardless of religious practice. Those with fewer than three Jewish grandparents were designated *Mischlinge* (mixed breeds or half-breeds), of which there were two degrees: a First Degree *Mischling*, who was a person with two Jewish

grandparents, did not practice Judaism, and did not have a Jewish spouse; and a Second Degree *Mischling*, who was a person with one Jewish grandparent and did not practice Judaism. Unlike earlier forms of antisemitism, the new regulation defined Jewishness by “race” rather than by religion.

A number of rather complicated instructional diagrams were issued to help Nazi bureaucrats decide the diverse degrees of Jewishness. As a rule, the more “full-blooded” a Jew was, the bigger the level of bigotry. But much uncertainty remained. In many cases, the required hereditary evidence about Jewish genealogy was simply not available.

The efforts to prove one’s non-Jewish ancestry generated a new activity, with many groups of “licensed family researchers” offering their assistance to fearful Germans afraid of finding Jewish ancestors of whom they were, at that time, unaware. These initiatives also occupied the time of the Health Ministry and church officials, which had to provide certificates of birth and baptism.

These searches resulted in about 350,000 Germans who could be classified as *Mischlinge*. Of these, some 50,000 had families that had converted to Christianity from Judaism, a further 210,000 were classified as half-Jews, and approximately 80,000 were considered as quarter-Jews. Many of these had been brought up with no knowledge whatever of their links to any Jewish ancestry and had functioned as full members of Christian congregations.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Aryan Paragraph; Frick, Wilhelm; Globke Trial; *Mischling*; Nuremberg Laws; “Racial Hygiene”; Stuckart, Wilhelm

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Lawrence, Geoffrey

British soldier, attorney, and jurist who presided over the 1945–1946 Nuremberg war crimes trial of 24 top leaders of Nazi Germany, including Hermann Göring, Rudolf Hess, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Albert Speer. Lord Geoffrey Lawrence was born on December 2, 1880; his father was the first Baron Trevithin and had served as lord chief justice. After attending New College at Oxford University, Lawrence was

called to the bar at the Inner Temple in 1906. He soon developed expertise in tax, property, appeals, and international arbitration law. During World War I, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Hertford Royal Field Artillery, serving in France, Palestine, and Gallipoli. During the war, he was wounded, twice recognized for his command of a brigade, and won the Distinguished Service Order. Between the wars, he served as commander of the 86th Royal Artillery Brigade in the Territorial Army, retiring as a colonel in 1926.

Returning to legal practice in 1924, Lawrence was made a King’s Counsel and in 1928 was named attorney general to the Prince of Wales. He was appointed a judge of the King’s Bench Division of High Court in 1932 and was subsequently knighted. As a judge, he became known for his diligence, objectivity, and precedent-setting decisions. During World War II, Lawrence served as a private in the Parliamentary Home Guard and was twice wounded during the 1940 blitz while stationed at the House of Commons in London. In 1944 he was made a Lord Justice of Appeals and thus placed on the Privy Council.

Lawrence’s placement on the tribunal at Nuremberg and his later designation as presiding judge resulted more from chance than design. Sir Norman Birkett, a leading British barrister of the time, was originally asked by the Lord Chancellor to fill Britain’s seat on the four-judge panel (representing Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union); Birkett, however, was assigned an alternate post when the British Foreign Office urged that a Law Lord be chosen. The Lord Chancellor then turned to Lawrence. The American judge, former attorney general Francis Biddle, appeared to have an early lock on the presiding judge position but was asked by chief American prosecutor Robert H. Jackson to step aside so as to give the court a less American and more international component. Accordingly, Lawrence was unanimously elected president of the tribunal on October 14, 1945, at the judges’ preliminary meeting in Berlin.

On arrival in war-ravaged Nuremberg, the prim and balding Law Lord looked every inch the upright British judge. Indeed, Lawrence’s Victorian demeanor, precise speech, and commanding presence immediately gave the tribunal an air of dignity and legitimacy when it convened on November 20, 1945. More importantly, with constant attention to detail and calm strength, he kept complete control of the courtroom during heated moments and while dealing with such powerful personalities as Göring and Jackson; a disapproving glance over his spectacles or the tap of his pencil on the bench was usually sufficient rebuke. Only once during the proceedings did Lawrence seem to show emotion. After viewing horrifying

films of the victims of the concentration camps, he hurried from the courtroom without adjourning the session.

Lawrence was devoted to maintaining fairness in the proceedings. Some defendants themselves conceded that they were fairly tried and noted the contrast with Nazi courts. Prosecutors, press, defense lawyers, and many of the accused greatly admired the courteous and unflappable presiding judge. To the disapproval of some observers, however, he permitted defendants to use counsel with Nazi backgrounds. Although Lawrence eventually limited oratorical digressions, Jackson was particularly unhappy with the leeway allowed Göring in responding during cross examination and the fact that each defendant was granted a day of closing arguments.

During deliberations, the chief judge was deft at forging compromises and maintaining unity. Lawrence firmly supported the conspiracy charges, even though they were not recognized in continental jurisprudence, and voted for the death sentences rendered. He also barred cameras from the sentencing to keep the occasion from becoming undignified.

After the trial, Lawrence returned to the law courts and his beloved Hill Farm in Wiltshire. He was created first Baron Oaksey and a Lord of Appeal, serving from 1947 to 1957. He inherited the title of third Baron Trevithin from his brother in 1959 and died on August 28, 1971.

RUSSELL FOWLER

See also: Nuremberg Trials

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Le Chambon-sur-Lignon

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon is a small village located in rural south-central France, in the Haute-Loire Department. After France fell to Nazi Germany in June 1940, the armistice dictated German control of the northern and western industrial zones of the country. The French government, located now in the town of Vichy, embarked on collaboration with Germany. Until November 1942, when Germany occupied the rest of the country, Vichy administered the largely rural southern unoccupied zone, where Le Chambon is located.

During the Holocaust, thousands of Jewish refugees were rescued in Le Chambon and surrounding villages and farms, collectively known as the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. Local

residents, their spiritual and community leaders, as well as representatives from French, religious, and international organizations worked together to create a safe haven for individuals pursued by the German and Vichy French governments. Many Jews who reached the safe haven participated in rescue and resistance efforts.

The Plateau had a long history of serving as a refuge to the oppressed. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Huguenots (French Protestants) took shelter in the region during persecution by the Catholic majority, and priests were harbored there during the French Revolution. The tradition continued into the 20th century, when political refugees from Spain, Germany, and elsewhere found a haven there. Much like their ancestors, the people of the Plateau understood that the intensifying persecution of the Jews was fundamentally wrong. Inspired by their leaders and supported by a growing network of resistance and rescue networks, they opened their homes to Jews and other refugees.

One of the leaders of the rescue efforts was Pastor André Trocmé. A staunch pacifist, he along with his wife Magda, Pastor Edouard Theis, teacher Roger Darcissac, the local doctor Roger LeForestier, and numerous other pastors and leaders throughout the region encouraged residents to defy the dictates of the German and Vichy regimes. Pastor Trocmé is credited with leading much of the rescue effort in Le Chambon. His presbytery, like those of many other pastors on the Plateau, served as a way station for Jewish refugees who reached the region and who sought a safe place to stay. He and Magda helped connect them to families who were willing to take them in.

Jewish refugees of all ages were hidden in small homes, boarding schools, hotels, and guesthouses throughout the region. Jewish refugees managed to reach the Plateau through various channels, including personal contacts and word-of-mouth. Some were hired as educators for the École Nouvelle Cévenole, a school created by Pastors Theis and Trocmé in 1938, even after Vichy regulations stripped Jews of their right to teach. Others had known about the region from holidays spent there or came to know it through their forays into rural areas in search of food and supplies. Some Jews, including many children, came to the Plateau with the assistance of organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), the YMCA, and the Jewish Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE, or Children's Relief Organization). These organizations helped release Jews from French internment camps and supported the creation of boarding schools and group homes on the Plateau.

The influx of Jews and other refugees to the area did not go unnoticed by the Vichy regime or German occupation authorities. In summer 1942, during the intensification of the

deportation of Jews from France, French police descended on Le Chambon to round up Jews rumored to be in hiding there. In response to increased police and other official presence, many Jews were spirited out of the towns and dispersed to surrounding farms. Some were provided false papers, which enabled them to make the harrowing trek over the Swiss border.

Several villagers were arrested and some even executed for their participation in rescue efforts. However, this did not deter the people of the Plateau or those who helped them. By the time France was liberated in September 1944, the villagers of Le Chambon and the surrounding villages had provided shelter to several thousand people, including thousands of Jews.

CHRISTINE E. SCHMIDT

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Righteous among the Nations; Trocmé, André and Magda; Upstander; Vichy France

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League of German Girls

The League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*) was the female division of the German youth movement during the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945. This complemented the male Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*), and, although an important socializing agency among young females, it nonetheless



Much like the Hitler Youth movement that educated and trained young German males for their future role in the Reich, so the League of German Girls did the same for German females. The role envisioned for its members was to bear and raise the next generation of Aryan children. (AP Photo)

did not rank on an equal footing in the Nazi state with its male counterpart.

The organization was formed in 1930 (prior to the Nazi accession to power) and was structured on parallel lines to the *Hitlerjugend*. Girls aged 10 to 14 years were enrolled in the *Jungmädel* and graduated at 15 to the higher levels of the Bund Deutscher Mädel. At age 17, the girls became eligible for entry to the *Glaube und Schönheit* (Faith and Beauty) organization, where they were taught domestic science and received advanced training in preparation for marriage.

The organization taught constantly that women in the Third Reich had but a singular function—to bear and raise children. In advance of marriage, they were required to serve a year of national labor service to the state. In line with the militaristic regimentation undertaken by the male organization, girls were continually instructed in the areas of service to the state, physical fitness, comradeship, and the raising of families. As with the *Hitlerjugend*, the leader of the league was the high-ranking Nazi Baldur von Schirach.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Hitler Youth; Lebensborn; Oberheuser, Herta; Scholl, Hans and Sophie

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Lebensborn

The Nazi program of selective breeding of its population to produce a superior or “master” race, named *Lebensborn*, or the “fountain of life,” was established in 1935 with the aim of increasing the birth rate of “Aryan” children. This was to be achieved through the close breeding of German women who met stringent physical standards with SS men who met the same standards of height, weight, blond hair, blue eyes, and athleticism. The focus of the program was one of pure racial reproduction, in which Nazi concepts of racial hygiene would be to the fore.

An initiative of the SS, the Lebensborn program was state-supported and an integral element of the Nazi racial system. Without benefit of marriage, Lebensborn encouraged anonymous births by unmarried women, who would become impregnated on SS-run “stud farms.” In reality,

these were often luxury hotels and spas, where young women and men would meet prior to retiring discreetly to bedrooms, after which they would separate never to meet again. Upon conception, the women were sent to special maternity homes where they were cared for until the birth of their children, following which the children would be adopted by parents who would be equally “racially pure” and thoroughly imbued with Nazi ideals—particularly SS members and their families.

The Lebensborn program, in the long term, did not prove successful. By 1942 the term had become a code word for the kidnapping of Polish and other children who met the idealized Nazi racial characteristics; once identified, they were then placed in German families. After the war, many of the actual records of such births and kidnappings were lost; thus, no actual numbers in either category can be accurately assessed.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryan; League of German Girls; “Racial Hygiene”; Scholtz-Klink, Gertrud

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Lebensraum

Lebensraum, meaning “living space,” was a pan-Germanic slogan during Germany’s unification process in the mid-19th century. During the late 1930s, this ideology helped justify German chancellor Adolf Hitler’s aggressive policies toward neighboring Czechoslovakia, Poland, and ultimately the Soviet Union, and was a prime cause of the start of World War II.

Developed by the German geographer Frederick Ratzel in the 1800s, Lebensraum applied Charles Darwin’s theories to geographical spaces. Critics charged this concept as “anti-modern, anti-industrialist, and ideologized agrarianism.” According to historian Gerhard Weinberg, it was “a vulgarized version of Social Darwinism.” Lebensraum was closely related to the American ideal of Manifest Destiny, which, for many Americans, justified westward expansion in the 1800s.

Lebensraum resembled other German ideologies such as *Grossraumwirtschaft*—economies of large spaces—and *Weltpolitik*—politics of large areas.

Early in the 20th century, German scholars such as Karl Haushofer and Friedrich von Bernhardi expanded upon Ratzel's work. A key beginning of the implementation of the idea was the German experience in South-West Africa where, mixed with colonialism and racism, the Germans practised genocide on the Herero and Nama peoples. Their experience there, as well as the justifications before the Reichstag, would foreshadow future Nazi lebensraum policies. Friedrich von Bernhardi in *Germany and the Next War*, published in 1912, identified potential areas for German imperial expansion in competition with Britain, France, and Russia as World War I loomed on the horizon.

Germany's defeat and territorial loss as a result of World War I, a worldwide depression, and hyperinflation at home retarded German economic development. However, the rise of Hitler to power, and a wave of new German nationalism, gave Nazi ideologues the ammunition to revive Lebensraum as a powerful political tool and violate the Treaty of Versailles. Germany desperately needed war materials for its army, food to sustain a population boom, and steel to build a powerful new navy—three tools that Hitler needed to create and maintain his empire.

In 1938 Hitler used the ideology of Lebensraum to justify an aggressive turn against Czechoslovakia and demand the return of the Sudetenland—home to 3 million ethnic Germans. Moreover, Hitler's Lebensraum called for an invasion of Poland and the Soviet Union, which would reestablish the Holy Roman Empire under the mantle of the Third Reich, thus giving Germany complete control in Eastern and South-eastern Europe.

Germany was divided after its defeat in 1945. The United States, Britain, and France controlled West Germany. The former Soviet Union controlled East Germany. Lebensraum as an official instrument of foreign policy died out during the occupation. The increasing Cold War tensions between two nuclear-armed superpowers in the United States and the Soviet Union prevented neither of the two Germanys from creating an independent foreign policy. However, during the late 1980s the Soviet Union collapsed, allowing East and West Germany to take a more active role in European politics. Under the guise of *revisionspolitik* (foreign policy revision) and *sicherheitspolitik* (national security), Lebensraum played an important role in the push for the reunification of the two Germanys.

JEFFREY OTHELE MAHAN

See also: Anschluss; Armenians, Hitler Statement; Austria; Blood and Soil; Czechoslovakia; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nazi Criminal Orders, 1941; Operation Barbarossa; Poland; Soviet Union; Volksgemeinschaft; Waffen-SS; World War II

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Leitz, Ernst, II

Ernst Leitz II was the owner of the German Leica Camera Company. Through the company he and his daughter, Elsie Kuhn-Leitz, mounted a remarkable rescue effort known as the Leica Freedom Train, in which hundreds of Jews were smuggled out of Nazi Germany before the Holocaust.

Born in 1871, he was the second son of Ernst Leitz I, who founded an optics company in the Hessian town of Wetzlar in 1869 and turned it into a company of world renown. The family was Protestant, with a social conscience ahead of its time. Ernst I, for example, instituted an eight-hour work day long before it became mandatory in Germany, accompanied by pensions, sick leave, and health insurance. When Ernst I died in 1920 his son, Ernst II, became head of the E. Leitz optical company and remained in charge until his own death in 1956.

The Leitz family supported democratic causes in the interwar years and had no time for Nazism. Certainly, as it became clear that Nazi antisemitism was an integral part of the party's *raison d'être*, Leitz distanced himself as far as possible after the Nazis took power in January 1933. His political sense told him, however, that he should join the party, and as a result he became a member soon after Hitler came into office.

Within days, Leitz began retraining a group of young Jewish apprentices from Wetzlar in preparation for transferring them to New York. Here they would work in the Leica showroom on Fifth Avenue, or with distributors across the United States. In this way, he felt, he could rescue them from what he anticipated would be a horrible fate at the hands of the Nazis. In other instances, he learned that certain of his employees were related to Jews by marriage; to these he also

held out the hand of affiliation with the company and worked to ensure that they, too, would be taken care of.

One of the Leica refugees was a camera mechanic, Kurt Rosenberg. Leitz not only paid for his journey to New York in 1938 but also helped him obtain a U.S. landing visa, aided by the fact that there was a job waiting for him at the Leica showroom on Fifth Avenue. This was but a start.

Leitz established what became known over time as the Leica Freedom Train, a secret means of allowing his Jewish workers and colleagues to leave Germany in the guise of Leitz employees being assigned overseas. The train was most active during 1938 and early 1939, with groups of Jewish refugees disguised as Leica workers sailing to New York every few weeks. In addition, Leitz moved others to places elsewhere in Europe—for example, to France or Britain. He was even known to arrange for his Leica “employees” to be sent to Hong Kong as salespeople or camera technicians. Everyone in Leitz’s care would be supplied with a Leica camera, as it could be exchanged for cash if needed. They were also paid a small allowance until they could find regular work.

Not everyone in this scheme was an employee, nor was everyone involved in the camera industry. Still, many were—whether as designers, repair technicians, salespeople, marketers, or writers for the photographic press. Leitz worked to ensure that everyone would be looked after, but this care extended beyond employees to retailers, family members, and even friends of family members. As a way to get them out of Germany Leitz “employed” them and then watched carefully as they were dispersed to various sales offices around the world.

With the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Germany closed its borders and the transports were stopped. By then, hundreds of German and Austrian Jews had escaped to havens outside. The number is not known accurately, but if both the workers and their families are counted it would certainly have run to 300 in the United States alone, with hundreds more elsewhere.

In order to engage in his life-saving work Leitz ran considerable risks—not only for himself but also for his family. He was openly defying the Nazis by trying to save Jewish lives, and taking matters into his own hands rather than waiting to be told what to do. From time to time, this defiance backfired. A senior executive, Alfred Turk, was jailed when caught trying to help Jews, and freed only after Leitz had paid a large bribe. On another occasion, Leitz’s daughter, Elsie Kuhn-Leitz, was imprisoned by the Gestapo after she was caught at the Swiss border helping Jewish women cross

to safety. Interrogated, she was eventually freed—but not until after the Gestapo had given her the obligatory beating in custody.

A question occurs as to how such a public figure as Ernst Leitz II and the Leica Camera Company was able to pull off such a remarkable and sustained rescue operation. The answer is straightforward: the Nazis were dependent on the military optics produced at Leitz’s factory. The importance of having the Leitz Company maintain production often outweighed the potential value of arresting and removing him from the workplace. Moreover, the Leitz name carried cachet overseas and was an important face in the international marketplace. Executives were convinced that this was enough in itself for the Nazis to leave the company alone, as it brought in hard currency from overseas at a time when it was desperately needed. They knew, too, that Leitz’s single biggest market for optical goods was the United States.

Both before and after the war, the Leitz family did not seek any publicity to recognize or celebrate their heroic efforts under the Nazis. Ernst Leitz himself never spoke about what he had done, considering that he was only doing what any decent person would have done in his position. Those he had saved, however, knew and did not forget. On February 9, 2007, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) recognized Leitz posthumously with its Courage to Care Award, presented in honor of those who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. The award was accepted by his granddaughter, Cornelia Kuhn-Leitz, at the league’s National Executive Committee Meeting in Palm Beach, Florida. As of this writing, an investigation is taking place at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem over whether Ernst Leitz II should be accorded the status of Righteous among the Nations.

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See also: Rescuers of Jews

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Lemkin, Raphael

Raphael Lemkin was a Polish Jewish refugee, lawyer, and legal scholar, and the man who coined the word “genocide.” He was born on June 24, 1900, in the rural village of Bezvodene in eastern Poland (then part of the Russian Empire), in an area of restricted Jewish residence commonly known as



Best known for his unceasing (and ultimately successful) efforts to create a word to capture mass killings of the most awful kind, to define it, and then to shepherd its way into international vernacular, Raphael Lemkin is considered the father of the term and concept of genocide. His early writings on the crime of genocide still serve as the bedrock for research and interpretation of the term that today is recognized throughout the world. (Bettmann/Getty Images)

the “Pale of Settlement.” He was one of three children, all boys: his brothers were named Elias and Samuel. Elias survived the Holocaust, while Samuel and his parents did not. His father, Joseph, and his uncle co-owned a farm called Ozerisko, 14 miles from the city of Wolkowysk, despite the general thrust of Russian antisemitic laws. His mother, Bella, whose own love of languages, painting, literature, history, and philosophy inspired her son, prompted him to master several languages during his early years, including French, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, and Yiddish. According to Lemkin’s own accounts, those early years were happy ones.

Sometime during his teenage years, Lemkin came across a copy of the book *Quo Vadis* by the Polish 1905 Nobel laureate for Literature, Henryk Sienkiewicz. This novel described the nearly successful attempt by the Roman emperor Nero to exterminate all the Christians in his realm. The effect upon Lemkin of this graphic account of those horrors, even though fictionalized, was electric. He was simply unable to conceive

how it was that people could engage in such massively destructive behavior toward other human beings, and it was this initial confrontation with horror that led Lemkin, already a voracious reader, to search for other equally devastating accounts of what he would later term “genocide” and impel him toward his chosen profession of law. Ultimately, from this base, he would work for the passage of an international legal agreement against genocide itself.

Next to nothing is known of Lemkin’s life during the years of World War I, other than his own admission of following closely the increasing revelations of the Ottoman Turkish genocide of the Armenians (1915–1923) and the release of more than 150 British-interned Turks from the island of Malta (where they had been held on charges of “war criminality”). In 1926 he obtained his doctorate in law from Lvov University (having also studied in Germany at the University of Heidelberg), just as another incident claimed his attention.

On May 25 of that year, in Paris, Sholom Schwartzbard assassinated Symon Petlyura, a Ukrainian socialist politician, statesman, and leader of the Ukrainian fight for independence from the Soviet Union. Brought to trial for his crime, Schwartzbard’s defense was that of avenging the deaths of 15 members of his family, including his parents, murdered in a series of pogroms in Ukraine, for which he felt Petlyura had not done enough either to prevent them from happening or to punish those responsible during his brief term as president of the Ukraine Republic. The French jury found him not guilty. Lemkin’s response was to publish an article applauding both the act and the acquittal, but noting that no such law and process existed for addressing such tragedies on a larger scale of national, racial, or religious groups.

By 1929 Lemkin was appointed deputy public prosecutor in Warsaw and secretary of the penal section of the Polish Committee on Codification of Laws. In addition, he represented Poland at the annual meeting of the International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law and served as secretary-general of the Polish Group for the Association of Penal Law.

In 1933 an international conference on penal and criminal law met in Madrid, Spain. Lemkin felt that the time was ripe for him to present his idea of an international law addressing two crimes: “barbarity” and “vandalism.” The former he defined as destroying a national or religious collectivity, the latter as destroying works of culture representative of the genius of such groups. Although he had sent his paper ahead, Lemkin was ultimately prevented from attending by the Polish minister of justice, who evidently agreed with the antisemitic *Gazeta Warszawska*, which, in a series of articles, saw

Lemkin's work as being a Jewish issue only. Between 1933 and 1939 (and the start of World War II), Lemkin continued to sharpen his thinking about the legal implications and ramifications of such violence against groups.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland; two days later, World War II began. Lemkin joined the Polish Army and was deployed to help defend Warsaw in the last days of the German siege. He was wounded by a bullet to the hip and narrowly evaded capture by the Nazis. As Warsaw experienced destruction at firsthand, Lemkin's initial thoughts were to flee to safety to either Lithuania or Sweden and then move on to the United States, places where he had already established good contacts. Despite travel difficulties brought on by the war, he managed to return home from Warsaw to see his family in eastern Poland. They urged him to flee; with the exception of his brother, he never saw them again. In total, Lemkin lost 49 family members during the Nazi Holocaust that was to follow.

Arriving safely in Lithuania, he was already making plans to proceed to Sweden. During his sojourn there, he went also to the city of Riga, Latvia, where he met with the renowned Jewish historian Simon Dubnow, the author of the definitive 10-volume *World History of the Jewish People* (1929). Dubnow further encouraged Lemkin to continue his legal work in safety.

The day after this meeting, Lemkin flew to Stockholm. From there, he flew to Moscow, traveled the Trans-Siberian Railway to Vladivostok, took a small boat to the Japanese port of Tsuruga, and then boarded a larger vessel, the *Heian Maru*, bound for the United States. The ship docked first in Vancouver, British Columbia, before reaching its final destination of Seattle, Washington, in early 1941. Lemkin then went to Chicago, on his way to Duke University in North Carolina, where friends had secured an academic appointment for him at the Duke Law School.

One year later, in June 1942, Lemkin received a letter from the Board of Economic Warfare in Washington, D.C., inviting him to serve as its chief consultant. He accepted the offer immediately. The chairperson of that board was Henry A. Wallace, at the time vice president of the United States. Through this and other contacts, Lemkin was able to submit to President Franklin D. Roosevelt a one-page brief vis-à-vis his proposal for an international treaty banning "vandalism and barbarity." Roosevelt responded affirmatively, but, due to the exigencies of the war itself, such work would have to come later.

At the same time, Lemkin was also working hard on his massive 674-page book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, published in 1944 by the Carnegie Endowment for

International Peace in Washington, D.C. During this same period, rumors were rife through the nation's capital regarding Nazi atrocities against Jews that accompanied Germany's military successes. In chapter 9 of *Axis Rule*, Lemkin devoted the entire chapter to a discussion of "genocide"—a "new term and new conception for destruction of nations."

Immediately after the war, Lemkin served as adviser to Supreme Court justice Robert H. Jackson, in Jackson's capacity as chief U.S. prosecutor at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg during 1945–1946. Lemkin managed to have the word "genocide" inserted into the overall indictment against the leading Nazis in the dock. It would, however, ultimately be removed by the jurists themselves; they concurred that they were bound by the statute of the International Military Tribunal, which did not contain a charge of genocide.

Before the conclusion of the trials on October 1, 1946, Lemkin was already hard at work writing and publishing a number of articles in a wide variety of journals in the United States, Belgium, and Norway (among others), advocating an international law banning genocide. Upon his return to the United States, and with the Nuremberg Trials over, Lemkin refocused his energies toward achieving recognition from the newly established United Nations.

In July 1948, while teaching at Yale Law School, Lemkin received a cable informing him that the Economic and Social Council of the UN would take up the idea of a convention against genocide at its meeting in Geneva, where the issue had been directed prior to being forwarded to the Security Council. He flew to Switzerland, where he again proceeded to involve himself actively not only in the writing and rewriting of the document but also in seeking the necessary reaffirmations of the delegates there assembled to secure its passage. Returning from a much-needed break in August 1948, he learned that the convention proposal had passed and was to be forwarded to the Security Council after review by its Legal Committee, then scheduled to meet in Paris. It was there that a serious stumbling block developed.

The British representative, Attorney-General Sir Hartley Shawcross, opposed the convention, citing protocols already established and reaffirmed at Nuremberg. Others cited the inclusion of "political groups" together with those to be protected from genocide, while yet others desired to protect only national, racial, religious, and ethnic groups. Originally included, political groups were omitted after a second vote for reconsideration was taken; this omission remains, even today, one of the most serious critiques of the convention.

Finally, all of the difficulties were overcome, and on December 9, 1948, the General Assembly of the UN, now

with the support of both its Legal Committee and the Security Council, began its deliberations. The convention passed unanimously, and two days later, on December 11, 1948, 22 member states signed the declaration to proceed to ratification by their own home governments. Lemkin was jubilant. The following day found him in the hospital in Paris, suffering from complete and total exhaustion, or, in his own words, “genociditis, exhaustion from working on the Genocide Convention.” He would never regain his full vigor, and after his return to the United States spent more time in the hospital.

Several weeks later, Lemkin resumed his teaching duties at Yale University. He was determined to work on U.S. ratification, which he was to do, frustratingly, and in concert with others, until his death in 1959. With every other signatory state successfully ratifying the Genocide Convention, Lemkin redoubled his efforts, seemingly to no avail. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide went into effect by the UN on January 21, 1951; it was only ratified by the United States on October 14, 1988, and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on November 4, 1988.

Twice nominated for—though not awarded—the Nobel Peace Prize (in 1950 and 1952), Lemkin’s vision was truly pioneering. He brought to the world’s stage the concept of genocide, having himself no official status whatsoever. On August 28, 1959, he died of a heart attack in New York City. In an ironic final twist of cruel fate for a man whose life was dedicated to the remembrance of millions of victims of genocide, only seven people—not even enough for a *minyán*, or quorum of 10 Jewish men required for ritual services such as burial—attended his funeral.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: A Crime without a Name; Genocide; Jackson, Robert H.; Kuper, Leo; UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

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A chemist by training, he was born in Turin, Italy, in 1919 to nonobservant Jewish parents. As a child he developed a voracious appetite for reading and was encouraged in his educational interests by his parents. In October 1937 he enrolled at the University of Turin to study chemistry, and, despite the difficulties placed upon Jewish students by Mussolini’s racial legislation from 1938 onward, he managed to graduate in the summer of 1941. In October 1943 he joined the liberal *Giustizia e Libertà* partisan movement, but was captured by the fascist militia and told he would be shot as a partisan. To save his life, he confessed to being Jewish in order for his “crime” to be reassessed and was sent to an internment camp for Jews at Fossoli, near Modena, in central Italy.

When Fossoli fell into the hands of the Germans, however, they began deporting the camp’s Jews to Auschwitz. On February 21, 1944, he arrived at that camp and had the number 174517 tattooed on his left forearm. He then spent nearly a year at Auschwitz, until liberated by the Russians in January 1945. His survival was in large part due to a last-moment reprieve caused through a bout of scarlet fever, which prevented him from becoming part of the infamous and deadly Auschwitz death marches. He returned to Turin ten months after the liberation, his long journey home having taken a circuitous route from Poland, through Belorussia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Austria, and Germany. This trip he later chronicled in his book *La Tregua* (*The Truce*, or, in its American version, *The Reawakening*).

In 1947 he published his first important work, *If This Is a Man* (U.S. title, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*). This was Levi’s account of his time in Auschwitz, and it became his best known work. In 1958 the book was translated into English and was published in Britain in 1959. Also in 1959 it was translated into German, followed by several other languages. Eventually, it was accepted as a classic of Holocaust literature, as it remains today.

Levi set out systematically to remember his experiences, thinking through what had happened and how he was able to survive it, and rendering that experience comprehensible in a prose style that would be understandable to all. He was impelled to write the book in order to bear witness to the horrors of the Nazis; without sentimentality, he recounted his experience with powerful words that described the fear, the endless hunger, and the pain of life in the concentration camp. At the same time, he was also able to show examples of affection, generosity, and even, from time to time, humor. The book was a masterpiece about the survival of the human spirit in a place designed to destroy it. Its strength

Levi, Primo

Primo Levi was an Italian Jewish Holocaust survivor and author, best known for his insightful memoirs, short stories, poems, essays, and novels.

lay in how Levi was able to show the ways in which prisoners dealt with ongoing moral dilemmas and challenges to their physical endurance, and provided insight into how they viewed their hopes for the future.

In 1948 Levi began working as an industrial chemist, as he would remain for the next thirty years. At the same time, he continued to write, and most of his works were translated into English and other languages. The best known of these were *The Truce* (1963), *The Periodic Table* (1975), *The Monkey's Wrench* (1978), *If Not Now When?* (1981), and *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986). Having experienced the pain of writing his Auschwitz and post-Auschwitz memoirs (which have often since been republished together in a single-volume format), Levi preferred to be known also as a writer about other subjects. He became a regular contributor of newspaper commentaries and articles, wrote science fiction and poetry, and even wrote a novel.

Levi retired from his position as an industrial chemist in 1977 to devote himself full-time to writing, but on April 11, 1987, he fell to his death from his third-story apartment in Turin to the ground floor below. It was, to add to the tragedy, the same multistory apartment where he had been born in 1919. The question of whether his death was in fact suicide (he had been under a doctor's care for depression, having already suffered from this both after the war and in the early 1960s) or not (a loss of balance as the result of the medications) remains unresolved.

In his quest to understand what the Holocaust experience meant for humankind, in his book *The Drowned and the Saved* Levi introduced and addressed what he called "The Grey Zone." That zone, as he described it, is the space between absolute good and absolute evil, where moral choices are made for the purpose of survival rather than death, where the desire to live surmounts that to be honorable. Levi recognized that we should hold back from any condemnation of those who collaborated with the Nazis—the *Sonderkommando* men in the death camps was the example he used—for their work in abetting the killing process of their fellow Jews. As he wrote, "one is never in another's place. Each individual is so complex an object that there is no point in trying to foresee his behavior, all the more so in extreme situations; and neither is it possible to foresee one's own behavior."

Building on this further, while he reserved his condemnations for the perpetrators of the crimes, he could not exonerate the cowardice of the German people as a whole, and in particular their failure to confront themselves and their past. Not afraid to address the controversial, he also addressed the

contentious issue of the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust, writing that "the Nazi concentration camp system remains a *unicum* [that is, a *sui generis* example or specimen], both in its extent and its quality. At no other place or time has one seen a phenomenon so unexpected and so complex: never have so many human lives been extinguished in so short a time, and with so lucid a combination of technological ingenuity, fanaticism, and cruelty."

As a thinker, Levi brought to bear on the Shoah the rational objective insights of the scientist together with the literary skills of the writer and forced his readers to look at the events not through colored lenses but as they truly were: ugly, ignoble, neither the work of demi-gods nor demisatans, but ordinary human beings capable of extraordinary evil. His writing was the direct result of his own experiences during his time at Auschwitz, and might, ultimately, have been a contributory factor to his death years later. He argued for the necessity of a new approach to philosophy, and of understanding the world, after the Holocaust.

In the work of Primo Levi can be found the unrelenting eye of the objectivist who focused his own lens unremittingly on the Holocaust—the result of his own personal and tragic experiences—and that, combined with his skilled literary talents as a writer, has left us a legacy not only of descriptive accuracy recording what actually transpired, but of memory that will simply not allow us to forget the event itself. By raising the most uncomfortable questions, and allowing the questions themselves to lead to the answers, he ensured that the debate regarding such answers will continue for many years to come.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Auschwitz; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; *The Grey Zone*; Italy; *The Truce*

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Liberation, Concentration Camps

In 1933 Adolf Hitler rose to power. A year later he had complete control of Germany. In 1939 Hitler's Germany started World War II in Europe with the invasion of Poland. Hitler's

“Thousand Year Reich” would only last 12 years, though Nazism left European society shredded in every possible way, leaving nations destroyed and millions of people dead, maimed, and displaced.

Nazism was founded on the ideal of racial superiority. Hitler marked certain groups of people as inferior or subhuman. These enemies—for example, Jews, communists, socialists, Roma, and homosexuals—were political, social, and cultural threats to the Nazi way of life. At first they were ostracized and oppressed through legal means. Later they were arrested and sent to labor and concentration camps. The greatest perceived threat to the Nazis were European Jews. Hitler and his henchmen had a special plan to rid Germany of its “Jewish problem”—the Final Solution, which called for the identification, concentration, and extermination of all Jewish people in Europe.

To accomplish this task the Germans built a series of concentration and death camps, such as Auschwitz, Treblinka, Buchenwald, and Dachau, to house prisoners marked for labor or death. These camps were spread throughout the occupied countries, but especially in Eastern Europe. There were thousands of subcamps. Prisoners in these camps were subjected to horrific conditions and barbaric treatment. Prisoners died from overwork, starvation, torture, and disease. Millions were killed in gas chambers, and their remains were cremated to hide the evidence of mass murder. Most of the prisoners in these camps died or were killed before the Allies arrived to liberate them from the grip of Nazi depravity.

On June 6, 1944, the Allies launched Operation Overlord when American, British, and Canadian forces invaded Europe on the coast of Normandy. D-Day began the drive to crush Nazi Germany between the converging Western Allies and the Red Army of the Soviet Union, which, since 1941, had fought the bulk of the German army. After three years of bitter fighting, costing millions of deaths, the Soviets began to push the Nazis west toward Germany. As the Soviet army advanced, they captured the first Nazi death camp, Majdanek, in Poland. It was there that Soviet soldiers discovered the horrific machinery of the Final Solution—extermination sites outfitted with large-scale gas chambers and crematories. Later in 1944 the Red Army liberated or overran the death camps (or the sites where they had been located) at Sobibór, Belzec, and Treblinka. In January 1945 the Red Army liberated Auschwitz, the largest death camp.

In Western Europe, Allied forces drove east, liberating Paris in August 1944 with the help of Free French forces. The

same month, the Allies invaded southern France with Operation Dragoon. Now the Allies operated on a broad front in the west, forcing the German army to retreat. After crossing the Rhine River in late March 1945, Allied forces moved into Germany. Throughout April and May 1945 the American, British, Canadian, and French military liberated camps through the western half of Germany. On April 11, the U.S. Third Army’s 6th Armored Division rolled into Buchenwald, freeing 20,000 prisoners. Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, and George S. Patton inspected many of the ghastly facilities in the surrounding towns. Later American forces liberated camps such as Dachau and Flossenbürg. British and Canadian armies liberated Bergen-Belsen and other camps north of the American positions.

By mid-May the war was over in Europe. Once liberated, the survivors of the concentration camps faced a multitude of problems—disease, malnutrition, and the by-products of abuse from the hands of their captors. Thousands died after liberation. Ultimately, tens of thousands of people were now refugees, left with nothing and relying on the occupying Allied armies to help them reconstruct a new life. The relief and relocation process took years to complete.

The United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., recognizes the 35 United States Army divisions that liberated concentration camps from Nazi tyranny with the presentation of their divisional flags. When the museum opened in 1993, 20 flags (all 35 flags rotate throughout the year) were displayed near its 14th Street entrance. These flags symbolize the sacrifice made by thousands of Americans and Allied soldiers to liberate Europeans from the most notorious aspect of Hitler’s Third Reich.

ERIK D. CARLSON

See also: Belzec; Bergen-Belsen; Buchenwald; Concentration Camps; Dachau; Death Camps; Displaced Persons; Flossenbürg; Majdanek; Schacter, Herschel; Sobibór; Treblinka; *The Truce*; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

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Lichtenberg, Bernhard

Bernhard Lichtenberg was a German Catholic priest who resisted Nazi antisemitic and racial doctrines by preaching against them from the pulpit, before being arrested and dying while being transported to the Dachau concentration camp. The second oldest of five siblings, he was born on December 3, 1875, at Ohlau (Oława), some 30 kilometers southeast of Breslau (Wrocław) in what was then the Prussian province of Lower Silesia. The merchant family from which he came was part of a Catholic minority in what was, at the time, a predominantly Protestant city.

Lichtenberg obtained his *Abiturium* (school-leaving exam) at the local high school and decided to become a priest. He studied theology in Breslau and Innsbruck and was ordained in 1899. In 1900 he began his ministry in Berlin as pastor of the Heart of Jesus community, Charlottenburg, where he remained for more than a decade. The remainder



Bernhard Lichtenberg was a German Catholic priest who at great personal risk prayed openly and unceasingly for the Jews who were being persecuted and killed by the Nazi machine. When he did not accede to warnings to stop, Lichtenberg was arrested, jailed, and died in transit to Dachau. He was beatified in 1996. (AP Photo/KNA-Archive)

of his career would be focused on Catholic activities in and around Berlin.

With an interest in Catholic politics, Lichtenberg served from 1913 until 1920 as a representative of the Center Party in the District Assembly in Charlottenburg, and between 1920 and 1930 he was a member of the regional assembly of the Berlin district of Wedding. During World War I he served as a military chaplain, after which he became a member of the Peace Association of German Catholics (*Friedensbund Deutscher Katholiken*). In 1929 he was elected to the board of the Inter-Denominational Working Group for Peace (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Konfessionen für den Frieden*).

In 1931 he was appointed rector of St. Hedwig's Cathedral, Berlin, a position he took up in 1932. Even by this stage, before the National Socialist Party had attained power, he had shown himself to be opposed to their ways of thinking. In 1931 he underwrote an invitation to Catholics to watch a performance of the film version of the American antiwar film *All Quiet on the Western Front* (dir. Lewis Milestone, 1930), which led to a personal attack on him by the Nazi newspaper *Der Angriff*.

Then, on March 31, 1933, two months after the Nazi takeover, Lichtenberg arranged for the Jewish banker Oskar Wassermann to meet with Adolf Cardinal Bertram, archbishop of Breslau and president of the German Episcopal Conference, in a vain attempt to convince him to intervene in the antisemitic boycott of Jewish businesses planned by the government for the next day. Cardinal Bertram, however, held that the matter lay outside the church's sphere of activity, and no action was taken. Still, with this Lichtenberg marked himself out as an opponent of Nazism who needed to be watched in the future.

In 1937 Lichtenberg was elected cathedral provost, a role that saw him thrust deeper into helping Berlin's Jewish community. This was followed, in August 1938, with his being put in charge of the Relief Office of the Berlin episcopate, assisting Catholics of Jewish descent who wished to emigrate from Nazi Germany. When the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, took place, Lichtenberg spoke out against Nazi brutality and prayed publicly for the Jews during services—one of only a few who did so. After the outbreak of war in September 1939, Lichtenberg continued his protests in another area, this time writing to the air raid authorities remonstrating against an order dated December 14, 1939, decreeing racial segregation in Berlin's air raid shelters.

While the Nazi authorities initially dismissed Lichtenberg as a nuisance, he was nonetheless warned that he should be careful lest he be arrested. However, he continued with his protests, condemning the Nazi euthanasia program and even organizing demonstrations outside concentration camps. He was finally denounced by two female students who had heard him pray publicly for Jews and concentration camp inmates and was arrested on October 23, 1941, by the Gestapo. In their search of his home and possessions they found incriminating evidence: a pulpit proclamation in favor of Jews to be read in the cathedral that Sunday, in direct defiance of a police order.

He refused to retract his words during his interrogation, even going so far as to condemn Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as antithetical to Christianity. In May 1942 he was duly sentenced to two years' imprisonment; when asked if he had anything to say upon sentencing, he asked that no harm should come to citizens who pray for the Jews.

Toward the end of his prison term he was given the opportunity to remain free provided he undertook to refrain from preaching for the duration of the war. The offer was conveyed to him by Berlin's Bishop Konrad von Preysing on behalf of the Gestapo. In response, Lichtenberg requested instead that he be allowed to accompany the deported Jews and Jewish Christians to the Łódź ghetto, where he would serve as a priest.

With little other alternative, the Nazi authorities ordered that he be sent to Dachau, where all anti-Nazi priests were imprisoned. On November 5, 1943, while in transit and awaiting his final transport to the camp, he collapsed and died.

Father Bernhard Lichtenberg was beatified as a Blessed Martyr by Pope John Paul II on June 23, 1996. The beatification ceremony took place in Berlin during a Mass celebrated at the city's Olympic Stadium. Lichtenberg's tomb is situated in the crypt of St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin. On July 7, 2004, Jerusalem's Yad Vashem recognized Bernhard Lichtenberg as one of the Righteous among the Nations.

Father Lichtenberg was one who "lived" his faith and the teachings it espoused. He listened and responded to the voice of his conscience as he witnessed the growing power of Nazism and its anti-Jewish ideology. Driven by his faith, he was a courageous resister who lost his life in the cause of stopping an evil he identified as detrimental to all humanity.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: April Boycott; Catholic Church; Euthanasia Program; Kristallnacht; Priest Block, Dachau; Righteous among the Nations; St. Hedwig's Cathedral; Upstander

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Life Is Beautiful

An Italian-made movie about the Holocaust, *Life Is Beautiful* (in Italian, *La Vita è Bella*) was the brainchild of actor-director Roberto Benigni. The film was produced in 1997 and focuses on an Italian Jew in the 1930s, Guido Orefice, who falls in love with and marries a non-Jewish woman, Dora (played in the film by Benigni's real-life wife, Nicoletta Braschi). After the Nazis have occupied Italy and imposed the full weight of German antisemitic legislation, Guido and his infant son, as "racial" Jews, are sent to a concentration camp. At her request, Dora is permitted to join them. In order to maintain his child's morale—in effect, to give him the will to live—Guido convinces his son that everything that is happening to them is actually part of a big game, in which the winner of the first prize wins an army tank. In a tribute to the other great comedy about the Nazi persecution of the Jews from 1940, Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, Benigni gave his character Guido the same concentration camp prisoner number as that on the uniform of Chaplin's character, the Jewish Barber.

The popular and critical acclaim for *Life Is Beautiful* was little short of phenomenal. It won the Grand Jury Prize at Cannes and Oscars for Best Foreign Film, Best Actor (Benigni), and Best Original Dramatic Score for the music of Nicola Piovani. Although it is not a "Holocaust movie" in the strict sense of historical fiction or documentary, *Life Is Beautiful* is nonetheless an important movie that extends the boundaries of cinema about the Holocaust into areas of fantasy and fable.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Children during the Holocaust; *The Great Dictator*; Italian Jews and Fascism; Italy

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“Life Unworthy of Life”

First used in a 1920 book by German jurist Karl Binding and German psychiatrist Alfred Hoche, *The Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life*, the term “life unworthy of life” was employed by the Nazis for those afflicted with hereditary illnesses, including the mentally ill, who were perceived as a political and economic burden to German society and thus deserving only of being killed. The resultant policy, in which the phrase *Lebensunwertes Leben* was employed, was based on the July 1933 Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases. Passed by the Reichstag, it established so-called euthanasia centers in order to put to death by medical means anyone labeled with a disability that would, in the view of the Nazis, weaken the “Aryan” race.

Prior to this, mass compulsory sterilizations of those targeted by the Nazis took place, in which between 300,000 and 400,000 Germans became victims. In October 1939 Adolf Hitler authorized the chief medical officers of the Reich to institute measures that would put to death those considered to be “life unworthy of life.” The order was retrospective to September 1, 1939, to make it appear as though required by the exigencies of war. Six killing centers were established for the purpose of carrying out Hitler’s order, all of which were located in the pre-war Old Reich: Hartheim Castle, Sonnenstein, Grafenek, Bernberg, Hademar, and Brandenburg. Hiding behind a facade of medical respectability, those carrying out the killings were members of the SS. The murders were a graduated combination of starvation, lethal injections, and gassing; some of the doctors supervising or performing these extrajudicial killings later became experts in the technology of mass murder and were employed as specialists in the Nazi death camps. As the result of a public outcry once the program became known, the Nazis agreed—overtly—to cease the killing, but they continued to do so covertly throughout the war.

Owing to the enthusiastic contributions of the SS doctors involved in the program, anywhere between 200,000 and 275,000 people with disabilities were massacred by the campaign to “improve” the German gene pool, as the Nazis aimed to “purify” Germany through what was code-named the “T-4” program owing to its headquarters being located at Berlin’s Tiergartenstrasse 4. Compulsory euthanasia—in

reality, state-sanctioned murder—was employed to rid Germany of those who were incurably ill, those with psychological disorders, or those with physical handicaps. Such people, who were referred to as “*lebenundwertes lebens*,” were also classed as “useless eaters.” Their death was necessary, in this thinking, in order to “purify” the physical German body.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryan; Euthanasia Program; “Racial Hygiene”; Sterilization

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Lipke, Janis and Johanna

Janis and Johanna Lipke were Latvian upstanders who saved many Jewish lives during World War II. Janis Lipke was born in Jelvaga, Latvia, in 1900 to a family of modest means. After attending elementary school and some high school, he served in the military from 1919 to 1920. In 1920 he married Johanna, who was born in 1903. The couple eventually had children—Aina, Alfreds, and Zigfrids. By 1940 the Lipkes had moved to the port city of Riga, on the Baltic Sea, where Janis was a dockworker.

In 1940 Latvia was overrun by the Soviet Union, meaning that in June 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union from the west, Latvia was subjected to a second conquest. This prompted one of the Lipke family’s sons to join the Red Army. On July 1, 1941, German forces occupied Riga and began persecuting Jews; eventually, they would place them in ghettos and deport many of them to concentration or death camps. Once the German occupation commenced, Janis Lipke secured a job in a warehouse operated by the German Luftwaffe (Air Force). From November 30 until December 8, 1941, Lipke and his wife witnessed the shockingly brutal roundup of Riga’s Jews. Some were savagely beaten, and many ended up in Riga’s Jewish ghetto or in concentration camps outside the city and in other parts of Latvia. The Lipkes, who had counted several Jews among their

friends, were horrified by what they had witnessed, and Janis Lipke decided that he must do something to save Riga's Jews.

Using his warehouse position, Lipke managed to convince German authorities to hire young Jewish men from the ghetto to work in the warehouse. When the ghetto was liquidated, Lipke and his wife decided that they must do more to help the city's Jews. They first took in Chaim Smolianski, an old friend of Janis Lipke, and hid him in a cellar at their home. Before long, the family had taken in 8 or 10 more Jews after having dug a hidden underground bunker beneath a shed on their property. Johanna Lipke was primarily responsible for their well-being, providing them with meals, drink, clothing, conversation, and even radios. Soon, however, the bunker became full. Janis Lipke now determined that he would have to expand his rescue effort beyond his own property.

In early 1943 he secured hiding places on farms in the nearby town of Dobele, even spending his own money to rent a house so that occupation authorities would not be tipped off as to the clandestine activities there. Before long, he had assembled a major rescue operation, working with some 25 "assistants" who helped him secure hiding spots, weapons, food, and clothing, rescue Jews from concentration camps, and even bribe German officials. It is believed that Lipke and his wife directly rescued and hid as many as 50 Jews, within a broader rescue mission that may have aided several hundred others. In the fall of 1943 Janis Lipke personally took part in securing the escape of a Jewish physician from the Balasta Dambis concentration camp. He then teamed up with him to steal a German truck full of weapons, ammunition, and explosives. He also helped secure blank travel papers, which he and others used to transport Jews within Latvia under assumed names.

The Soviets liberated Riga in the early autumn of 1944, and the family's rescue efforts ended. In the decades after the war, Janis Lipke worked in several low-level jobs in Riga, and he and his wife thereafter survived on a meager Soviet pension. On June 28, 1966, however, Israel's Yad Vashem recognized both Janis and Johanna Lipke as Righteous among the Nations in honor of their life-saving work during the Holocaust.

By the 1980s the couple was living in near-poverty in a small hut on the outskirts of Latvia. Janis died in 1987; Johanna died in 1990. In 2013 a monument that recognized their contributions was dedicated in Riga, Latvia.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Latvia; Riga; Righteous among the Nations; Soviet Union; Upstander

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Literature and the Holocaust

Literature encompasses written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit. What is Holocaust literature? This is the term given to the substantial body of written works, in many languages, which respond to the catastrophe that was the destruction (by the German Nazi state and its collaborators) of the Jews of Europe, as the primary target, between 1933 and 1945. Such written works include diaries, creative writing, literary texts, compositions, informal literature, texts, reports, studies, poems, plays, leaflets, brochures, pamphlets, circulars, flyers, handouts, handbills, bulletins, fact sheets, publicity, propaganda, and notices. Because the writers were drawn from all European states, it is an international literature. Most frequently, literary works on the Holocaust have been written in Hebrew, English, Yiddish, Polish, German, or French, but most have been translated into English.

At the highest level, this literature provides readers with deep insights into the experiences of the Holocaust period through stories, poems, and plays that scrutinize the events as they unfolded and the debasement, cruelty and suffering of the lives lived. Such writing engages the heart and mind and provokes empathetic inquiry into what it means to be human, and to deliberate upon the human and inhuman condition.

There are the writings created during the Holocaust itself. Testimonies left behind attest to the fact that the demand for literature intensified as conditions deteriorated. For some people, writing was a sort of revenge; for others, there was a need to bear witness; for yet others, the desire to commemorate the dead, or to warn humanity of its capacity for genocide.

Among those confined in ghettos and concentration camps, literature served as an important channel of defiance and escape. Covert efforts resulted in many manuscripts that were distributed by clandestine methods; these writings served as a great spiritual source for inmates in the ghettos and camps. In some instances, where paper was scarce, writing was created on logs of wood, and these messages would then be transferred from camp to camp.

Great attention has been paid to the poems written by children in Terezín (Theresienstadt), which the Nazis created as a “showpiece” concentration camp. Of the 15,000 children under the age of 14 who passed through Terezín, it is estimated that only some 80 to 100 survived. Poetry from these children is uneven in quality, but some poems show not only wisdom born of suffering but also a mastery of form.

These are the voices of the victims, for whom writing on the Holocaust represented the experience of total anomie and the defilement of integrity and dignity, in addition to physicality, of the individual.

In the years immediately following World War II, writers began to confront the task of describing in fiction the seemingly indescribable and multifaceted world of the Holocaust. Even though some survivors immediately started to write of their Holocaust experiences, many were unable even to speak about what they experienced. However, facing the inevitable reality of their own mortality, a number have since written testimonies detailing what they remember experiencing, so that these may serve as an historical record. The literature of many of the survivors shares unique qualities of cultural dislocation and of cross-cultural perspectives because it is a literature of uprooted persons mostly writing in acquired languages. The writing is that of displaced persons, replacing their native tongue, but not the way they describe experience, for the language of their new country.

For writers struggling to leave a literature of testimony, issues of how to portray incidents without distorting them took on nearly debilitating significance. Notwithstanding, most writers resolved that silence was no alternative.

Some accounts of victims and survivors have been written by other people—children and friends of survivors, Jewish communal record keepers, and historians. Sometimes the perpetrators have written their own accounts of the Holocaust period and in doing so have often generated accounts that are clearly exculpatory.

Much of the body of Holocaust writing created by people other than victims or survivors has been created by Jewish writers attempting to understand what occurred during the Holocaust, and why and how it happened. For these authors there is an urgent need to try to understand this earth-shattering event that fixed the fate of each Jew, regardless of merit, in circumstances where there was scarcely any mercy or dignity, and where the victim’s very survival was an aberration.

Accordingly, many writers have fixed themselves on cases of unrecognized heroes of the Holocaust, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who resisted the Nazis in ways big and small.

These remarkable stories of defiance counter the myth that Nazi victims passively submitted to their fate. Many stories have been recorded of those whom Yad Vashem in Israel has referred to as the Righteous among the Nations, those relatively few non-Jewish individuals who took definite steps and frequently risked their lives to save fellow human beings. Many of these people did not consider that they were being heroic, but often used a faith-based moral compass to do “what was only right.”

A genre of literature was created to teach the moral lessons stemming from the Holocaust to children at a level they could understand and which would not cause them stress. And where the goal has been to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy, there have been a number of written works detailing a careful examination of the circumstances that permitted the rise of Nazism and the conduct of leaders and participants during the rise and rule of the Nazi state.

Post-Holocaust writing has also set down the moral lessons that the world had to learn from this tragedy, and those who have attempted to respond to this question have produced critical analyses, as well as fiction, drama, and poetry that honor the victims and survivors.

Tens of thousands of authors around the world have made the Holocaust the primary focus of their writing. Many are Jewish, such as Aharon Appelfeld, Elie Weisel, Tadeusz Borowski, Viktor Frankl, and Primo Levi. Others, whether Jewish or not, have utilized the Holocaust within their writing, even though not necessarily classifying themselves as writers on the Holocaust. These include Yehudah Amichai, Cynthia Ozick, Jean-Paul Sartre, and William Styron, while scholars from academe, such as Lawrence Langer, Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Sara Horowitz, Sue Vice, and James E. Young, have made very important inroads in trying to understand the literature generated on the Holocaust.

While any list of key texts on the Holocaust will always be contentious, at a minimum it might be argued that the following would likely be included in most collections if compiled in the early 21st century: Elie Wiesel, *Night*; Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*; Art Spiegelman, *Maus*; Primo Levi, *If This Is a Man*; William Styron, *Sophie’s Choice*; Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader*; Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything Is Illuminated*; John Boyne, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*; Sara Nomberg-Przytyk, *Auschwitz: True Tales from a Grotesque Land*; Anatoli Kuznetsov, *Babi Yar*; John Hersey, *The Wall*; and Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*.

An intrinsic worth of literature is its capacity to transport readers to other times, faraway locations, and unique situations. Through the genre of Holocaust literature, readers can

not only learn about the Nazi state and World War II but they can also connect as human beings with those persons who lived and died during the Holocaust.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Children's Literature of the Holocaust; Delbo, Charlotte; *The Deputy*, *The Diary of a Young Girl*; *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*; Dinur, Yehiel; *Helga's Diary*; Levi, Primo; *Maus* and *Maus II*; *Night*; *Schindler's List*; Survivor Testimony; Wiesel, Elie

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Lithuania

Lithuania is a Baltic state that had a 1939 population numbering about 3 million people, of whom some 160,000 were Jewish. The country gained its independence as World War I drew to a close in 1918 and remained independent until 1940. Unlike the other Baltic countries, Lithuania maintained relatively cordial relations with the Soviet Union during the interwar period. Between 1926 and 1940 Antanas Smetona imposed a virtual dictatorship over Lithuania, as his regime attempted to curry favor with the Soviet Union. These attempts did not, however, keep the Soviets from clandestinely agreeing with the Germans in 1939 that Lithuania would become a Soviet territory upon the outbreak of war. Prior to World War II, Lithuania had a vibrant Jewish community, with Lithuanian Jews even employing a distinct dialect of Yiddish. As well, the Jews of Lithuania were at the forefront of the international Zionist and Jewish labor movements.

In March 1939, despite their earlier agreement with the Soviets, the Germans annexed Memel-Klaipeda, an area of Lithuania that had a large German-speaking population. In June 1940, after World War II began, Soviet troops marched into the rest of Lithuania, and in August the Soviet Union formally annexed the country. Soviet officials proceeded to impose a rigorous occupation regime in Lithuania, which would include the complete transformation of the nation to Soviet-style communism. By June 1941 some 40,000 Lithuanians who opposed this were sent into exile deep inside the

Soviet Union. Meanwhile, nearly 100,000 Jews, mostly from German-occupied Poland, had sought refuge in Lithuania between September 1939 and June 1941.

On June 22, 1941, the Germans invaded the Soviet Union and quickly overran the Baltic States, including Lithuania. Because of the huge influx of foreign Jews prior to this, and the Soviet Union's occupation policies, rioting among Lithuanians targeted Jews, resulting in numerous deaths. German mobile killing squads (Einsatzgruppen), working with Lithuanian militias, began massacring Jews during the summer of 1941, and by September nearly all Jews living in rural regions had been killed. At year's end, many of the Jews residing in urban ghettos had also been murdered. By early 1942 only some 40,000 Jews remained alive in Lithuania; they lived in ghettos or were interned in several forced labor camps, where they lived in hellish conditions. The following year, two of the four remaining ghettos were liquidated, with most Jews (about 15,000) being transported to concentration camps in Estonia and Latvia. Some 5,000 others were sent to camps in Poland, where they were promptly killed.

In April 1944 Soviet troops began moving back into Lithuania, and before the Germans departed, they transported many Jews from the remaining two ghettos to concentration camps in Germany. Most died after their arrival. Meanwhile, the Soviets reimposed their earlier occupation policies on the Lithuanians, and the country would remain in the Soviet orbit until 1991.

Between 1941 and 1944 the Germans killed 90% of Lithuania's Jews, rendering the country's death rate as one of the highest for Jews of any nation occupied by Germany during World War II.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Collaboration; Death Camps; Einsatzgruppen; Ghettos; Paulavicius, Jonas; Soviet Union; Vilna Ghetto

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Łódź Ghetto

The Łódź Ghetto, located in Poland, was established in February 1940 and was the longest lasting of the Polish ghettos. It operated, overall, for more than four years.



The Łódź Ghetto, established in Poland in early 1940, was second in size only to the Warsaw Ghetto, and the longest surviving Polish ghetto. For more than four years the ghetto effectively turned itself into a city of factories and was successful at making itself indispensable by the goods the ghetto manufactured for the Nazis. In this picture a man is helpless to fend off the abuses of ghetto guards. (Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images)

Łódź is located in central Poland, about 75 miles southwest of Warsaw. During the Holocaust, it was second only to Warsaw in the size of the city and the size of its Jewish population, with some 230,000 Jews. It has a history of being a vibrant industrial city, especially in textiles. It was occupied by the Nazis one week after Germany's invasion of Poland that began on September 1, 1939. It was renamed Litzmannstadt (named for a German general in World War I) and incorporated into Germany as part of the Warthegau, that section of conquered Poland that was made a part of Germany, run by Gauleiter Arthur Greiser.

The initial months of the German occupation of Łódź were difficult for the Jewish community. A combination of hard labor, arrests, random beatings, terror and humiliation, and widespread plunder made for a frightening environment. It was exacerbated by the passage of laws restricting and marginalizing the Jews, including the application of the Nuremberg Laws and the requirement that Jews wear, at

first, an armband, and later, in December 1939, a yellow Star of David. In mid-November 1939 the four major synagogues of Łódź were burned to the ground.

The ghetto was established in February 1940 in the northern section of the city. The number of Jews forced into its very small area (1.5 square miles) ranged from 160,000 to 164,000. It was sealed on May 1, 1940, surrounded by a wooden fence, barbed wire, and armed guards.

Bridges were built over city streets that ran through the ghetto, thereby allowing the Jews to move to and from various sections of the ghetto without leaving it. A tram ran through the ghetto, but for non-Jews only, and no stops were made inside.

Conditions for the Jews imprisoned in the ghetto were terrible. Overcrowding, disease (tuberculosis, typhus, and dysentery, among others), atrocious sanitation, and the absence of electricity and running water were only some of the things that threatened survival. Hunger, leading to death by

starvation, as well as contributing to the outbreak of some of the diseases already noted, was perhaps the greatest burden within the ghetto. Unlike at some other ghettos, there was virtually no successful smuggling of food into Łódź.

As in other ghettos, the Nazis required that a *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) be established to administer the ghetto and to implement Nazi orders. Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski was appointed as chair. In that capacity almost all of the important decisions made within the ghetto were made by him.

Born on February 27, 1877, in a small village in Russia, Rumkowski, with little formal education, found some success—though he could not hold onto it for long—as a merchant. He became an insurance agent in the interwar years. He was childless despite two marriages, each of which ended in the death of his spouse. He seemed to find his place as the director of an orphanage, perhaps because of his unfulfilled desire to be a father.

Rumkowski organized administrative services within the ghetto that were essential for the survival of the Jews. He established departments for health (with up to as many as seven hospitals), education, supplies, housing, registration, a Jewish police force, and so forth. Without running water or sewerage systems, the need for a sanitation department—which he established—was critical. Despite these efforts, the terrible conditions of life in the ghetto were the direct cause of the death of one out of every five people.

Schools—elementary and high school—were established for the thousands of children in the ghetto. Orphanages, prayer services, and cultural activities helped to make the ghetto as livable as possible in such a terrible situation.

With food the most needed—and the least available—of all essentials, Rumkowski's first concern was to somehow convince the Germans to provide more sustenance for the ghetto. His solution, such as it was (the problem of hunger and starvation was never solved no matter the efforts), dovetailed perfectly with his broader plan for the survival of the ghetto and its inhabitants. He was convinced that the only thing that would forestall the murder of the Jews was to make them of critical importance to the German military machine. Accordingly, he sought to make the Łódź ghetto as industrious as the city of Łódź itself. He established factories and workshops throughout the ghetto, making textiles, German uniforms, munitions, and whatever else the Nazis looked upon as necessary. His goal was to have a job for everyone who wanted one; his hope was that this would protect as many Jews as possible from being killed or deported.

The Nazis accepted the industrialization of the ghetto and agreed to a proposal by Rumkowski to pay those working in

the more than 100 ghetto factories in the form of food. His plan was simple: work was a form of protection and a means of getting critically needed food into the ghetto.

Although the amount and quality of the food given to the ghetto by the Germans was still inadequate to provide anything but a near-starvation diet, it appears that Rumkowski's trust in the value of work was sound. The ghetto was the longest surviving ghetto in Poland, and the number of individuals who survived the ghetto—as small and heartbreaking a number as it was—was the largest number of survivors of any ghetto in Poland.

Despite what would seem to be a well-deserved place in Holocaust history as one of the best of the *Judenrat* leaders, Rumkowski was—and remains today—perhaps the most controversial of all *Judenrat* chairmen. His governance style was dictatorial, his attitude imperious. He rode through the ghetto in an opulent carriage pulled by white horses. He and his inner circle of family and officials seemed to be well fed, and always among those not listed on the deportation lists.

Apart from his domineering personality, his responsibility to assure the Nazis that the number of Jews to be deported on a given date would be at the designated gathering place, at the appointed hour, invariably left him vulnerable to criticism by desperate Jews who saw him as seeming to help the Nazis at their task of extermination. Others, however, saw him as a tireless leader trying to administer Nazi orders in a way that would cause the least pain and keep alive as many Jews as possible.

The almost impossible position that Rumkowski was in, as the chairman of the *Judenrat*, can best be seen in the infamous or heartbreaking speech (depending on one's point of view) he made on September 4, 1942, known generally as the "Give me your children" speech. In it he had to explain why it was necessary to deliver up for deportation all children under age 11, and the elderly. He explained that he had no choice, and that the Germans were asking for the "best we possess." He said: "I must stretch out my hands and beg: Brothers and sisters! Hand them over to me! Fathers and mothers: Give me your children!"

As crowded as the ghetto was, the Nazis added another 20,000 Jews, and 5,000 Roma (housed in their own section) to the ghetto in October and November 1941, with another 17,000 to 20,000 Jews added later. The conditions these new residents found were shocking. For example, in the winter of 1941–1942, the Jews had to burn virtually every piece of wood they could find for warmth, lest they freeze to death.

In January 1942 the Nazis ordered Rumkowski to draw up a list of 10,000 Jews for deportation to Polish farms, or so

they were told. In fact, they were to be deported to Chełmno, the newly opened extermination camp northwest of Łódź. Deportations continued, with more than 70,000 Jews deported to Chełmno in 1942. The manner of execution at Chełmno was asphyxiation due to carbon monoxide rerouted from a van's exhaust so it entered the rear of the van and caused all to die (the driver was separated from the passenger section of the van by a hermetically sealed divider).

Deportations were halted from September 1942 through May 1944 due to the German army's need for the munitions that were being produced in the ghetto factories. In February 1944 Himmler ordered the liquidation of the ghetto, with a group of 7,000 Jews deported to Chełmno during one month in the summer of 1943. By August 1944 the 75,000 Jews still alive in the ghetto were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. When the Soviets liberated the ghetto on January 19, 1945, fewer than 10,000 of the 230,000 Jews of Łódź had survived.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Biebow, Hans; Birkenau; Chełmno; *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*; Ghettos; Judenrat; Lange, Herbert; Music and the Holocaust; Reserve Police Battalion 101; Slave Labor; Warsaw Ghetto

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London Charter Agreement

On August 8, 1945, the United States, France, Britain, and the Soviet Union signed the London Agreement that established the Charter of the International Military Tribunal (IMT), also known as the London Accord or London Charter Conference. This was the agreement that set down the procedures by which the subsequent Nuremberg trials were to be conducted. It was drafted over two months during the summer of 1945 by Chief Justice Robert H. Jackson of the United States Supreme Court, together with a team that included his son William E. Jackson. One of the key issues was to work out a consensus among the Allies as to how to proceed with the trial of major Nazi war criminals. During the most important drafting periods, French judge Robert

Falco and General Iona Nikitchenko, a judge of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union, were brought in to assist and also to give credibility to the notion of international justice having been properly constituted.

The Allied signatories agreed to establish not only the Charter of the International Military Tribunal to try the Nazi leadership but also what the charges would be that were going to be brought against them. Once settled, these were crimes against peace (that is, the waging of aggressive war); war crimes (violations of universally accepted standards of military conduct); and crimes against humanity (violations of standards regarding civilians).

The Charter called for “the just and prompt trial and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis,” and its jurisdiction was outlined in article 6 of the Charter. The tribunal would consist of four members (and four alternates), one from each of the signatories; all members of the tribunal must be present to constitute a quorum, with one to be elected president; attributing one's acts to the head of state, a government official, or “following superior orders” would not be considered as lessening one's responsibility (thus, obedience to orders could only be considered at the tribunal's discretion, and in the interests of justice); procedures for the tribunal would follow standard legal and courtroom methods as commonly understood; the tribunal itself, as well as both prosecutors and defense counsels were also required to follow accepted legal and courtroom procedures; and judgment and sentencing were the sole responsibility of the tribunal.

The form of procedure to be employed by the tribunal was essentially based on civil rather than common law. Trials would be before a bench of judges rather than before a jury. Defendants would be permitted to present evidence in their defense and to cross-examine witnesses, and there was an appeal mechanism (in such cases, the Allied Control Council would serve as an appeals court).

Once signed by the four signatory states, the Agreement and Charter were subsequently ratified by 19 other Allied states. Pursuant to the stipulations laid down in the Charter, the International Military Tribunal, sitting at Nuremberg, opened formally on November 20, 1945.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Jackson, Robert H.; Moscow Declaration; Nuremberg Defense; Nuremberg Trials; War Crimes

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Lubetkin, Zivia

Zivia Lubetkin was a leader of the Jewish underground in Poland and one of the founders of the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, or ŻOB) in Warsaw. She was born in Beten (Byteń), Poland, on November 9, 1914, to Ya'akov-Yizhak and Hayyah Lubetkin, *née* Zilberman. An affluent family, the Lubetkins had six daughters and a son. Both parents and four of Zivia's sisters perished in the Holocaust, while her brother Shelomo and sister Ahuvah, who had both managed to migrate to Palestine, survived.



A stalwart leader of Jewish resistance to the Nazis, whose first name was used as the code word for “Poland,” Zivia Lubetkin was one of the founders of the Jewish Fighting Organization and a veteran of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. She continued her insistence to stand up to power after the war when she testified at the trial of Adolf Eichmann, as seen here. (Library of Congress)

Zivia studied at a Polish government school. From early childhood she was a member of the Zionist-Socialist youth movement *Freiheit* (Freedom), which gave her a solid grounding in Jewish communal life and a sense of duty. She also joined and worked with the *Hechalutz* youth movement in Warsaw as a coordinator. In 1938 *Freiheit* joined *Hechalutz* to form one movement, *Dror*, and Zivia became a member of its executive council. In 1939 she traveled to Geneva for the 21st Zionist Congress, returning to Poland just before the outbreak of war.

After Nazi Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, the movement decided to send its leadership cohort east, away from the fighting. Then, when the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland on September 17, Zivia went to Lvov to help organize *Dror* underground activities. During the winter of 1939 she and other members left the Soviet zone and returned to German-occupied territory to continue their resistance work. In January 1940 they reached Warsaw. As the ghetto was forming, Zivia's tasks included organizing the movement and facilitating communications with those outside the ghetto. During this period she also met and fell in love with another underground leader, Yitzhak Zuckerman.

By the fall of 1941 there could be little doubt that the Jews were being exterminated, though the precise means by which this was happening was still unknown. Zivia, realizing that there was little hope left for the Jews if they simply sat by passively, decided to resist. On July 28, 1942, during the first mass deportation from Warsaw, she was among the founders of the ŻOB as well as a member of the ŻOB's political arm, the Jewish National Committee (*Żydowski Komitet Narodowy*, or ŻKN).

Zivia Lubetkin became the only woman on the ŻOB's high command, and her name in Polish, “Cywia,” became the code word for “Poland” among resistance groups on both sides of the ghetto wall during World War II.

In January 1943 the Germans launched a new wave of deportations, and the ŻOB's resistance network decided to act. Fighting a limited action against the Nazis, the ŻOB turned the Germans on the defensive and the deportations were brought to a temporary halt. Zivia was among the fighters in this initial resistance operation.

In April 1943, when the final liquidation of the ghetto began, Zivia was instantly involved in the combat that followed. While the first few days of fighting seemed to offer some measure of success, it was inevitable that the overwhelming firepower the Nazis could bring against the fighters would prevail in the long term. As the resistance began to falter, Zivia, while keeping her combat command role, also

acted in a liaison capacity with the various groups of fighters and maintained contact between them. On May 8 the ŻOB command in the bunker at Miła 18 sent Zivia to try to find a way out through the sewers leading to the Aryan side. She was successful, and on May 10 navigated the sewer system with the last of the fighters. The remaining fighters in the bunker—Mordecai Anielewicz, Mira Fuchrer, Rachel Zilberberg, and nearly fifty others—were either killed or took their own lives in order to avoid capture.

Until the end of the war, Zivia remained on the Aryan side, continuing to serve in the underground. She fought with the remaining ŻOB units during the Warsaw Uprising from August to October 1944 until, together with the last of the fighters, she surfaced during November 1944. She was one of only 34 Jewish fighters from the Warsaw Ghetto to survive the war. After the liberation of the city by Soviet troops on January 17, 1945, she once more met with her beloved, Yitzhak Zuckerman.

After the war Zivia was active in organizing *Bricha* (“Flight”), an organization helping Jewish survivors migrate to Palestine. She herself wished to go as quickly as possible, and on March 1, 1945—even before the war was over—she attempted to do so by going to Romania with another resistance fighter, the partisan Abba Kovner, and members of his group. Unable to proceed beyond Bucharest, however, she returned to Warsaw.

While there, she was hardly inactive. Together with Zuckerman and a survivor of the Białystok ghetto, Chaika Grossman, she created an infrastructure to enable survivors from the Soviet Union to migrate to Israel. She and Zuckerman finally left for Palestine in May 1946 and were married in 1947. The same year they met with other ghetto fighters and partisans to start the process that would lead, by April 19, 1949, to the establishment of Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot. A museum focusing on Jewish resistance, Ghetto Fighters’ House, was created on its grounds. The Zuckermans built their home and raised their two children at the kibbutz, where Zivia preferred to live as an ordinary member without fanfare. In 1961, however, she was among the principal witnesses at the trial of Adolf Eichmann and provided important evidence relating to the destruction of Polish Jewry.

On July 11, 1978, at the age of 64, Zivia Lubetkin died and was buried at the kibbutz the next day. The year of her death saw the birth of a granddaughter, Roni. In 2001 Roni Zuckerman became the first female fighter pilot in the Israeli Air Force.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Anielewicz, Mordecai; Eichmann Trial; Jewish Fighting Organization; Jewish Resistance; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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Lubny Massacre

The city of Lubny is located in the Poltava Oblast of central Ukraine. It is reputed to be one of the oldest cities in Ukraine, allegedly founded in 988 by Prince Vladimir the Great of Kiev. The first written record concerning Lubny dates from 1107. Jews settled in Lubny in the first half of the 17th century. On the eve of World War II, in 1939, the Jewish population numbered 2,833, about 10.5% of the total.

After the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa) on June 22, 1941, the residents of Lubny became immediately vulnerable to German attacks, but the city was not occupied until September 13, 1941. Lubny and its surrounds became a major resistance center, and partisans fought the Nazis outside of the city. With the German takeover, however, all Jews were immediately registered under the so-called Kommissar Order (*Kommissarbefehl*). The Nazis counted around 1,500 Jewish residents of the city, though this did not take into account those from outlying villages who had come in looking for refuge.

On October 10, 1941, the occupying authorities sent an order out to the Jews of Lubny that they were to gather in the nearby village, Zasule, for resettlement, making sure to take with them warm clothes and valuables. The “resettlement” was to take place a few days later, on October 16, 1941.

On the appointed day, the Jews of Lubny gathered at the Kirov Square. Unknown to them was the fact that Sonderkommando 4a, one of the units of Einsatzgruppen C and under the command of Colonel Paul Blobel, had also received orders: to effectuate the liquidation of the entire Jewish population of Lubny. Blobel was one of the SS officers who had organized the huge massacre of Jews at Babi Yar, Kiev, in late September 1941, where 33,771 Jews were murdered in the space of two days. Later, in November 1941, Blobel received and put into operation the first gas vans in Ukraine, as well.

As perpetrated by Blobel’s unit, all the Jews were then herded just outside of Lubny—they never made it to the vil-

lage of Zasule, which was just a ruse to assemble the population—and murdered in small batches at the Zasylskiy ravine. As many members of the population as could be located were shot into the ravine: men, women, children, babies, and the elderly. On that day, 1,865 Jews were murdered; not just the Jews of Lubny but also those from Shtalag-328, a makeshift concentration camp that had been established earlier in Lvov (Lviv) and the areas around Babi Yar. The Nazis did not stop the killing there. In the second half of November 1941 they found and killed another 73 Jews missed in the first sweep. Those who, despite all this, still managed to survive as skilled laborers in demand for the German military were killed during April and May 1942.

Overall, therefore, across the period from October 1941 to May 1942, approximately 2,000 Jews were murdered in Lubny. Their fate would have been largely forgotten were it not for the fact that a number of photographs were taken by the SS themselves during the killing process. The originals of these are filed in the archives of Hamburg's *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) and were used by Danish documentary filmmaker Ove Nyholm in his celebrated 2004 film *The Anatomy of Evil (Ondskabens Anatomi)*.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Einsatzgruppen; Kommissarbefehl; Operation Barbarossa; Ukraine

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Lutz, Carl

Carl Lutz was the Swiss vice-consul in Budapest between 1942 and 1945. Through his actions, tens of thousands of Jews were saved from deportation and death at the hands of the Nazis following the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944.

He was born in Walzenhausen, Switzerland, on March 30, 1895 and migrated to the United States as an 18-year-old, working in a number of places before attending college at Central Wesleyan College, Missouri. In 1920 he joined the Swiss legation in Washington, D.C., and while there

completed his education at George Washington University. In 1926 he worked at the Swiss consulate in Philadelphia, before moving on to the consulate in St. Louis, where he worked until 1934. That year, he was appointed as vice-consul in Jaffa, Palestine, serving there for the next eight years.

His next appointment was as Swiss vice-consul to Budapest, where he arrived in January 1942. As chief of the Department of Foreign Interests he represented some 14 countries then currently at war with Hungary. Additionally, given his experience of the past few years, it was not long before he began cooperating with the Jewish Agency for Palestine to help in facilitating Jewish immigration through issuing Swiss safe conduct documents, enabling almost 10,000 Hungarian Jewish children to emigrate.

Germany invaded and occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944. Almost immediately, the Holocaust arrived in the form of SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, who brought with him a team of experts to oversee the ghettoization and eventual deportation of Hungary's Jews. Lutz began to help the Jews by trying to persuade the Hungarian government to stop the deportations. He then negotiated a special deal involving both the Hungarian government and the Nazis, obtaining permission to issue protective letters to 8,000 Hungarian Jews for emigration to Palestine. By the time he had finished, almost 50,000 Jews had been put under Swiss protection as potential immigrants to Palestine, each one having received a letter of protection (*Schutzbrief*) guaranteeing their safety from persecution until they left for Palestine.

As a way of hiding this vastly overinflated number, Lutz repeated numbers 1 through 8,000 with each new batch of visas, and grouped each batch of 1,000 names together into one Swiss collective passport.

In like manner as his Spanish contemporary, Ángel Sanz Briz, he also established safe houses around the capital—some 76, in fact, all bearing the Swiss consular seal declaring them to be extensions of Swiss diplomatic territory. One of these was the property known as “the Glass House,” where, at one time, around 3,000 Jews found refuge. As an engaged Christian, Carl Lutz felt he had to find every means possible to protect the people he considered to be in his care. In the houses, Lutz's wife Gertrud played an important role in providing food and assisting with finding medical treatment. Lutz possessed only paltry financial resources, but his attitude was that if assistance was needed, a way could always be found to provide it.

He worked closely with others in the diplomatic community. These included men such as Raoul Wallenberg of

Sweden, Carlos de Liz-Teixeira Branquinho and Sampaio Garrido of Portugal, Angelo Rotta from the Vatican, Ángel Sanz Briz and Giorgio Perlasca representing Spain, and Friedrich Born, the Swiss delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Lutz, with his longer experience in refugee relief, instructed Wallenberg and the others on the best use of the protective letters, and provided his colleagues with information as to whom they should approach in Hungarian official circles.

During the death marches of November 10–22, 1944, Carl and Gertrud Lutz followed the Jews. Whenever possible, they would pull prisoners out of the line by producing documents declaring them under Swiss protection and demanding that the guards allow them to return to Budapest.

The Swiss Minister in Budapest, Maximilian Jaeger, supported Lutz thoroughly until the government in Bern ordered him home as the Soviet army approached in late 1944. Help and support for Lutz then continued at the hands of Harald Feller, who took over after Jaeger's recall. As the Soviet siege of Budapest intensified during December 1944, when all diplomatic and consular missions except Sweden's had left the Hungarian capital, Lutz remained at his post. He risked his life to continue saving Jews, and for a period of nearly a month he and Gertrud remained in a bunker under the residence of the former British embassy with a group of Jews they had rescued. Finally, when the Soviets took over in January 1945, Carl and Gertrud Lutz returned to Switzerland.

After the liberation a Swiss inquiry into Lutz's wartime activities took place. He was criticized for having exceeded his authority and endangering Swiss neutrality, despite the fact that he had saved the lives of tens of thousands of people. As a result, his career suffered and he was denied opportunities to advance. His reputation was only restored in 1958, when Switzerland reconsidered its role during World War II. At this, Lutz became something of a national hero in the eyes of the public, the more so when it was realized that he was responsible for helping 62,000 Jews to survive. He finally retired in 1961.

On March 24, 1964, Yad Vashem recognized Carl Lutz as one of the Righteous among the Nations, the first Swiss national to be so named. Fourteen years later, on February 13, 1978, Gertrud Lutz was similarly recognized. Carl Lutz died in Bern, Switzerland, on February 12, 1975, a few weeks short of his 80th birthday.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Hungary; Perlasca, Giorgio; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Rotta, Angelo; Sweden; Wallenberg, Raoul; Warsaw Ghetto

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Luxembourg

Luxembourg is a small, land-locked constitutional monarchy located in west-central Europe. The country had a 1939 population of 293,000 people, of whom some 3,500 were Jewish. A sizable number of these Jews had moved to Luxembourg from Eastern Europe during the 1930s to escape persecution. In spite of Luxembourg's declaration of neutrality at the time of the outbreak of war in 1939, it was invaded by German forces in May 1940 and temporarily governed by military officials; in late July, civilian occupation officials took over. In August the Germans formally annexed Luxembourg. The Nazis attempted to "Germanize" the country, which met with much resistance among a majority of the population. In September 1940 occupation officials instituted anti-Jewish laws and restrictions that were modeled after Germany's Nuremberg Laws. At the same time, Jews were encouraged to leave Luxembourg, which a good number did (perhaps as many as 2,500), between the fall of 1940 and the fall of 1941. Most resettled as refugees in the unoccupied areas in neighboring France.

As Luxembourg's resistance movement took hold, German authorities began deporting Luxembourgers to Germany in April 1941; almost 12% of the population would ultimately be moved. Meanwhile, in October 1941, German officials banned further Jewish emigration. Thereafter, 800 Jews were interned at a transit camp in the northern part of the country. Between October 1941 and April 1943, 674 of those Jews were transported to concentration camps further east. Of that number, only 36 were thought to have survived until the end of the war. In France, most of the Jews who had migrated there from Luxembourg in the early stages of the conflict were also deported to the east and murdered.

In the early autumn of 1944 Allied troops moved into Luxembourg, pushing the Germans to the east. During

the December 16, 1944–January 16, 1945, Battle of the Bulge, however, the tiny nation was physically devastated; it would not be entirely liberated until February 1945. More than 5,150 civilians died in Luxembourg during the war, and estimates of Jews killed range from 1,000 to as high as 2,500.

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See also: Nuremberg Laws

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Madagascar Plan

The Madagascar Plan was a preposterous plan that nevertheless was taken very seriously for a period of time by the Nazi regime as a possible way to rid Europe of its Jews. The plan was to expel Europe's Jews to the French colonial island of Madagascar. It represents the Nazi policy with regard to Jews that immediately preceded the "Final Solution," the extermination of Europe's Jews.

Expelling the Jews from Europe to Madagascar was not a new idea. It was proposed as early as 1885 and continued to be discussed during the early 20th century.

Madagascar is an island in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Mozambique in the southeastern part of Africa. It is more than 225,000 square miles in size, subject to a six-month rainy season, oppressive heat, and cyclones. It became a French colony in 1897, which was its status at the time of the Holocaust.

Although previously considered by the Nazi leadership—Reinhard Heydrich ordered and received a report from Adolf Eichmann in December 1938—the idea of using Madagascar as the repository for Europe's Jews became a serious policy proposal when Franz Rademacher, the head of the Jewish Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Judenreferat*, or Referat D III) wrote a memorandum on June 3, 1940, suggesting this as a solution to the Jewish Question. The idea spread so quickly within the Nazi leadership that it was not long before Hitler mentioned it, and Reinhard Heydrich successfully argued that it fell within his remit. Even

the possibility of such a plan gave hope to Hans Frank, the governor of the *Generalgouvernement*—the section of Poland not annexed to Germany—who desperately sought a way to deal with the millions of Jews in his territory.

The Madagascar Plan envisioned the island transferred from France to Germany under a mandate. It would become the site of a colony of Jews under the administration of a German Police Governor (Rademacher referred to it as a huge ghetto). Although it would be a police state, the Jews would create their own administration, including mayors, police, and so on. The Jews would be liable for the value of the island (that is, they would have to pay for the value of the land), and payment was to be made through the establishment of an intra-European bank that would be funded by the sale of the property of the exported Jews and by contributions from American Jews.

Two other provisions of the plan were telling: the Jews would lose the citizenship of whatever country they came from and would not be German citizens; and they would be held there in order to assure "good behavior" by American Jews.

Adolf Eichmann drafted a plan for Madagascar on August 15, 1940, titled *Reichssicherheitshauptamt: Madagascar Projekt* (Reich Main Security Office: Madagascar Project), in which he proposed that 1 million Jews would be deported to Madagascar each year for four years.

The feasibility of the entire plan rested on the outcome of two military events. The first was the surrender of France to

Germany following the German invasion on May 10, 1940. When that happened on June 22, the needed land mass—Madagascar—was now, potentially at least, able to be transferred to German control. The second event was the Battle of Britain, the intensive effort by Germany to dominate the Royal Air Force (RAF), which was waged for more than three months between July and October 1940. It was assumed by the Germans that victory over the British in the air would be the first step toward the invasion and complete surrender of Britain. The outcome of the battle was relevant to the Madagascar Plan: Germany's victory would remove Britain's Royal Navy as a source of military intervention of ships taking Jews to Madagascar; and it would provide Germany with the ships needed to carry out such a massive operation.

Germany's loss in the Battle of Britain brought an abrupt end to the Madagascar Plan. That it had been considered very seriously by Nazi leaders, including Hitler, Heydrich, and Eichmann, provides an insight into Germany's thinking in 1940 regarding Europe's Jews. Although it was clear to all that the Madagascar Plan—had it gone forward—would have resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Jews trying to survive in a police state in a difficult climate, it was also clear that the decision to exterminate every Jewish man, woman, and child in Europe had not yet been made.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Ethnic Cleansing; Frank, Hans; Generalgouvernement; Heydrich, Reinhard; Rademacher, Franz

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Majdanek

A Nazi forced labor and death camp established by the Nazis in Poland on October 1, 1941, which remained operational until July 22, 1944, when it was liberated by Soviet troops. Majdanek was located just outside the Polish city of Lublin; unlike other Nazi camps in Poland, it was the only one not to be situated in a rural, isolated locale. Throughout its existence, the capacity of the camp continued to be expanded as more and more prisoners were transported there. Majdanek also served as a transit camp, where prisoners were

temporarily housed while en route to other camps. Initially, SS leader Heinrich Himmler ordered the construction of Lublin-Majdanek as a forced labor camp that was to house Soviet war prisoners. The camp was to have a prisoner population of 50,000. By the end of 1941 that capacity had been raised to 250,000. Much of the early construction was done by Soviet prisoners of war and Jews deported from nearby Lublin.

Like most of the Nazi death camps, Lublin-Majdanek was staffed with SS officials along with locally recruited police forces. Prisoners also helped run the camp. Kapos helped maintain order and discipline in the barracks, while slave labor working in the crematoria (*Sonderkommandos*) readied prisoners for the gas chambers and later moved their bodies to crematoria or mass graves.

During 1942 and 1943 the camp's population continued to expand as Jews from other parts of Poland were deported there. By 1943 Lublin-Majdanek had 145 barracks; that same year, the subcamps of Budzyn, Trawniki, Krasnik, Pulawy, Luopwa, and Poniatowa were subsumed by Majdanek's administration. Perhaps the largest single influx of Jews to arrive at Majdanek occurred in 1942, when some 25,000 were transferred from Belzec, another death camp. The following year, 18,000–22,000 more Jews were sent to the camp; most had been residents of the Warsaw Ghetto, which had been liquidated as a result of the April 13, 1943, uprising there.

Beginning on a massive scale in the fall of 1943, camp officials began exterminating prisoners using carbon monoxide and Zyklon-B gas. Most of the bodies were incinerated in the facility's crematoria. Beginning on November 3, Nazi officials forced prisoners and Jews detained in nearby subcamps to begin digging mass graves. SS officials then shot and killed 18,000 Jews outside Lublin-Majdanek (8,000 from the camp alone) and buried them in the graves that the victims themselves had dug.

On July 22, 1944, Soviet troops rushed toward the camp. Because of their hasty arrival, camp officials were unable to disguise or hide their activities as they did at other mass murder sites. What the Soviets found was deeply disturbing—detainees who were near starvation and rail-thin, gas chambers with bodies still in them, and crematoria with human remains and mounds of ashes. In August the Soviets cordoned off the entire camp and convened a Soviet-Polish commission designed to investigate the Nazis' activities at Lublin-Majdanek. This was one of the first efforts to document German war crimes in Eastern Europe, and it occurred almost a year before the end of World War II. Because the

Soviets secured the camp before the Nazis could properly dismantle it, it is considered the best-preserved death camp site from the Holocaust era.

Estimates as to the death toll at Lublin-Majdanek vary considerably, from as low as 78,000 to as high as 1.5 million. Holocaust scholars have since determined that the death toll may have been around 360,000, although an exact number is impossible to determine. Some 75,000–90,000 Jews (60,000 of them Polish Jews) were deported to the camp between 1941 and 1944. While many were gassed to death, many also died from the brutal conditions in the camp as well as from forced labor.

Numerous camp personnel were prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The first trial occurred in late 1944, when four SS soldiers and two kapos were tried; five of the men were executed on December 4, 1944, while the sixth man committed suicide. Of the approximately 1,037 SS personnel who worked at Lublin-Majdanek, only 170 were prosecuted for war crimes; the last trial occurred in West Germany in 1981. After World War II ended in 1945, three of the camp's commandants were also tried, convicted, and executed.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Belzec; Concentration Camps; Crimes against Humanity; Death Camps; Final Solution; Gas Chambers; Liberation, Concentration Camps; *Night and Fog*; Operation Harvest Festival; Roma Genocide in the Holocaust; Slovakia; Sonderkommando; War Crimes; Wrobel, Eta; Zyklon-B

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Mann, Franczeska

Franczeska Mann was a Jewish dancer from Poland who expressed her resistance to the Nazis in a particularly dramatic way immediately prior to her murder at Auschwitz in October 1943. Born on February 4, 1917, she was based in Warsaw, where she studied dance at the Irena Prusicka dance school, one of the city's three largest dance academies.

When the war broke out she was renowned as a beautiful performer at the Melody Palace nightclub, seen as one of the most promising dancers of her generation. It was not long before she moved into the Warsaw Ghetto, but she managed to leave again holding a foreign passport, probably

obtained from the Hotel Polski on the Aryan side. In July 1943 the Germans arrested the 600 Jewish inhabitants of the hotel. Some were sent to Bergen-Belsen, while others were sent to Vittel in France to await transfer to South America. Franczeska Mann was one of those on the Bergen-Belsen transport.

On October 23, 1943, a train with some 1,700 Polish Jews carrying foreign passports was transported out of Bergen-Belsen and sent to Auschwitz. They had been led to believe that they were being taken to a transfer camp called Bergau, near Dresden, from where they would continue on to Switzerland to be exchanged for German POWs; but this was a ruse to get them to cooperate. They were told that they had to have showers and to be “disinfected” prior to moving on to Switzerland and were taken into a room next to the gas chamber where they were ordered to undress.

At this, in a famous and often-quoted episode of camp lore, Franczeska attacked two SS men: the roll call officer, SS Sergeant Major Josef Schillinger and an SS sergeant named Emmerich. Having come from Warsaw, where stories of the mass killing of Jews had already been circulating for some time, it did not take long for those in the transport to realize what their fate would be. They soon became, in the words of Filip Müller, a *Sonderkommando* worker who was there, “restless,” knowing, it would seem, “what was up.” As the Jews began to disrobe, the two SS men were attracted by Franczeska's beauty. Schillinger ordered her to undress completely, and with this, as soon as she noticed they were staring at her, Franczeska launched into what appeared to be a seductive strip-tease act. The SS men became fascinated by her performance and paid little attention to anything else. On seeing that they had momentarily relaxed, she acted, it was recalled later, “with lightning speed.” As she was taking off one of her shoes she sprang at Emmerich and slammed the heel into his forehead, at the same time grabbing his pistol and firing two shots, point-blank, into Schillinger's stomach. Then she fired a third shot, which wounded Emmerich.

A panic broke out among everyone present, the SS retreated to safer ground, and the *Sonderkommando* managed, with difficulty, to lock the doors of the gas chamber before a riot took place. Reports as to what happened next vary. According to one, the shots served as a signal for the other women to attack the SS guards; to another, an SS man had his nose torn off and one was scalped. Elsewhere, the only victims referred to were Schillinger and Emmerich.

Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Hoess rushed to the scene with reinforcements carrying machine guns and grenades. A report stated later that the women were removed from the

scene one by one, taken outside, and shot. Another view, from Filip Müller, is that all women not yet inside the gas chamber were mown down by machine guns; yet another states that they were pushed into the chamber and then gassed.

Given the various conflicting accounts, it is unclear what happened after the incident, but some things can be confirmed. Josef Schillinger died and Sergeant Emmerich was wounded at the hands of Franczeska Mann, who refused to be a passive victim; all the Jewish women were subsequently murdered; and the incident prompted a panicked response from the SS command. In view of this, it could be said that Franceska's subsequent death was bought for the Nazis at a high price, emphasizing that not all Jewish victims were prepared to walk to their death without resistance.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Bergen-Belsen; Hoess, Rudolf; Warsaw Ghetto

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Manstein, Erich von

Germany's Erich von Manstein was one of World War II's leading exponents of panzer tactics. He originated the plan to defeat France in 1940, and his mobile defensive tactics on the Eastern Front are classics of the art of war.

Friedrich Erich von Lewinsky Manstein was born in Baden, Germany, on November 24, 1887, into a family steeped in military service. Orphaned at an early age, he was adopted by his uncle, a general in the German Imperial Army. Manstein attended the Prussian Cadet Corps and graduated an officer-cadet in 1906. After several years of military service, he was selected to attend the prestigious War College in 1913. The school closed after World War I broke out in August 1914, however, and Manstein transferred to the Eastern Front as a staff officer. He acquitted himself well, was severely wounded in action, and in 1919 was one of only a few junior officers retained in the peacetime German Army.

Until 1927 Manstein held a variety of troop and staff assignments before being transferred to the Ministry of War as a major. Two years later, he was promoted to colonel and gained appointment to the General Staff. In this capacity, he served under General Ludwig Beck until the latter was

dismissed by Adolf Hitler in August 1938. Manstein, viewed with some suspicion, was then transferred out of the General Staff and assigned to command an infantry division. On the eve of World War II, his men formed part of General Gerd von Rundstedt's Southern Army Corps.

In September 1939 Manstein distinguished himself in combat during the invasion of Poland. That fall, the General Staff was ordered by Hitler to draw up plans for an invasion of France. The strategy fielded by Chief of Staff Franz Halder called for a simple repetition of the traditional Schlieffen Plan. However, Manstein, who possessed a flair for operational planning, audaciously countered with a plan of his own. He called for concentrating armored forces in the center of the Allied line at the Ardennes, where thick forests would mask such movement, and charging headlong into Sedan. The General Staff initially rejected the plan as too risky, but it eventually came to the attention of Hitler himself, who approved it.

Manstein aspired to lead the tank forces in his own operations, but the General Staff, smarting from his interference, saw to it that he commanded an infantry corps instead. Nonetheless, the attack, spearheaded in May 1940 by General Heinz Guderian's panzers, worked brilliantly and broke through French lines. Manstein himself led the first infantry force across the Rhine River and played a major role in the ensuing German victory. The following July he was personally rewarded by Hitler with promotion to lieutenant general and command of his own panzer corps. He was scheduled to direct landing operations during the anticipated invasion of England, but when this scheme was abandoned following the Battle of Britain, he transferred back to Poland to command a panzer corps there.

Beginning on June 22, 1941, Manstein bore a conspicuous role in Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union. On the first day, Manstein's armored column drove 50 miles through enemy lines on a direct course for Leningrad. However, he had so outstripped supporting units that his tanks were required to stop and allow them to catch up. In July Manstein resumed the drive on Leningrad until Hitler ordered him south to fend off a Soviet counterattack at Lake Ilmen. This done, Hitler then ordered several panzer divisions away from the drive on Moscow to support operations in the Ukraine. The Germans captured nearly 1 million prisoners but also lost much valuable time in mopping up operations. Consequently, when Manstein was finally able to approach Leningrad that fall, the city was heavily fortified and ready for him. Before he could probe its defenses, Manstein gained appointment as commander of the 11th

Army on the Southern Front, with orders to take Rostov and the Crimea. Lacking the strength to do both, he initiated a modest but technically brilliant drive upon the latter, and after much heavy fighting, he captured Sebastopol in September 1942. This victory culminated in his promotion to field marshal and acknowledgment as one of Germany's finest tank commanders.

Despite tactical victories over the Soviet army, the German strategic position deteriorated in the fall of 1943 when General Friedrich von Paulus's forces became trapped during the Battle of Stalingrad. In January 1943 Manstein initiated Operation Winter Storm to relieve Paulus. He came within 25 miles of the beleaguered defenders, but Hitler had forbidden Paulus's troops to abandon the city. Paulus, promoted to field marshal in order to promote German morale, was captured along with his army on February 2, 1943, but Manstein managed to extricate German forces further east in the Caucasus Mountains. The strategic initiative then passed to the Soviets, and the Germans were forced to fend off larger and larger offensives against their thinning ranks.

Manstein, however, came up with a novel tactical solution that he dubbed the "mobile defense." Whenever Soviet forces penetrated German lines, his panzers would hammer away at their flanks and rear, destroying them. In this manner, he recaptured Kharkov in February 1943, inflicting 40,000 casualties. Later that spring, he enthusiastically supported Operation Citadel, the proposed reduction of the Kursk salient, provided it could be attacked in April before Soviet defenses had consolidated. Hitler managed to delay the offensive until July, when the Soviets were thoroughly dug in, and German forces suffered a bloody drawn battle. Manstein's panzers penetrated farthest into the southern Soviet defensive belt, but even they could not overcome such horrendous losses.

By 1944 the Germans were continually losing ground to Soviet forces. These problems were compounded by Hitler, who insisted that not a single foot of soil be yielded in retreat, regardless of the consequences. Manstein, for his part, maintained his mobile defense scheme for as long as possible, punishing several Soviet columns over the next few months. Hitler came to view his successful tactics as defeatist, however, and relieved him of command on March 25, 1944.

Manstein retired to his estate until the end of the war and was arrested there by the British as a war criminal. Although charges of executing Jews in Russia were eventually dropped, he was found guilty of failing to protect civilians in wartime and sentenced to 18 years in prison. This sentence was eventually commuted to 10 years, but he was discharged on

a medical release in August 1952. Manstein spent the next few years helping organize the army of the Federal Republic of Germany. Manstein died in Irschenhausen on June 11, 1973.

JOHN C. FREDRIKSEN

See also: France; Manstein Trial; Operation Barbarossa

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Manstein Trial

The war crimes trial of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein was held from August 23 to December 18, 1949. Manstein was the only German of that rank tried for war crimes after World War II. His trial, the last of the Allied trials of German war criminals in Germany, was controversial in light of the political realities of postwar Europe. After being found guilty on the charge of neglecting his supervisory duties and therefore participating in the crime of genocide, in addition to other war crimes, Manstein was released after serving less than half of his sentence.

In mid-1947 American war crimes prosecutor Telford Taylor stumbled across incriminating material against the German field marshals in British custody, namely Walther von Brauchitsch, Gerd von Rundstedt, and Fritz Erich von Lewinski (called Manstein), as well as against the senior general, Adolf Strauss. Taylor then informed British public prosecutor Sir Hartley Shawcross of his findings. Pointing out that political protests were likely to ensue, a commission called together by Lord Chancellor William Allen Jowitt in October 1947 supported the recommendation of the British minister of war, Frederick Bellenger, to have charges brought against the generals at the High Command (OKW) Trial. The American military governor, Lucius D. Clay, however, rejected this proposal, as the German experts of the Foreign Office and the representatives of the British military government in Germany did not wish to damage British-German relations by launching their own trial against members of the former Wehrmacht elite. On the other hand, others, including Shawcross; parliamentary secretary of state Elwyn Jones; foreign minister Ernest Bevin; and the new minister of war, Emanuel Shinwell, argued for criminal proceedings to begin.

In March 1948 the government of the Soviet Union issued extradition papers for Rundstedt and Manstein; Poland followed suit. The British government then announced that the

generals would be brought before a British military court, and on July 5, 1948, the cabinet decided that a trial would be held. Major resistance to the effort emerged among prominent representatives of the British military, the peace movement, and the Conservative Party under the leadership of Sir Basil Liddell Hart. After Brauchitsch died in October 1948 and the government dropped charges against Strauss and Rundstedt for reasons of health, the British government had to defend itself particularly against accusations by Poland and the Soviet Union of having gone soft on the prosecution of war criminals. On May 5, therefore, the cabinet decided, despite the resistance, to press charges against Manstein alone.

Sir Arthur Comyns-Carr, who had already represented the British government at the war crimes tribunal in Tokyo, served as the prosecutor, with Elwyn Jones designated as his deputy. The indictment against Manstein listed 17 charges and several hundred crimes committed by military units including the SS, military police, secret police, and SS-operational forces under Manstein's command during the war against Poland and the Soviet Union. Manstein was accused of having broken military laws and practices by having agreed to criminal orders and/or by having given such orders himself, therefore rendering him responsible for their consequences. The charges included all aspects of the German war of annihilation in the East: abuse, deportation, forced labor, murder of war combatants and populace, and the shooting of Soviet commissars. A central charge claimed that Manstein had incited army units to acts of murder against Jews. The legal grounds for the trial were established among other sources by the Royal Warrant of August 1945, British military law, the HLKO of 1907, as well as the administration of justice at the Nuremberg trials.

Pretrial support for Manstein continued to build. In addition to the criticism aimed at the legal grounds of the trial, the support for Manstein was primarily motivated by the goal of keeping West Germany as a Cold War ally; with this in mind, the bishop of Chichester urged a general amnesty. Members of the British House of Lords, supported by former prime minister Winston Churchill, began a successful money-raising effort to help pay defense attorneys. Thanks to these funds, Manstein was represented by a total of five attorneys. In addition to Germans Paul Leverkuehn and Hans Laternser, the defense counselors included Reginald T. Paget, a Labor Party representative; Samuel C. Silkin, a Jewish Labor Party representative; and Bill Croome, a British defense specialist. Manstein also contributed strongly to his own defense.

The trial began on August 23, 1949, one week after the election of the first postwar West German parliament. Held in Hamburg in a British military court under the direction of Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Simpson, it was the last war crimes trial held by the Allies in Germany. The defense particularly used the trial as an anticommunist platform. Nevertheless, on December 18, 1949, the court sentenced Manstein to 18 years' imprisonment. He was exonerated on eight points but convicted of having neglected his duties of supervision and of thereby having shared responsibility for genocide as well as, among other things, having allowed the deportation, abuse, and shooting of Soviet prisoners and commissars of the Red Army and civilians.

In light of the circumstances, the sentence was surprisingly harsh and prompted a wave of support for Manstein in Germany and in many other Western countries; in February 1950, the commander-in-chief of the British Rhine Army, Sir Charles Keightley, reduced the sentence from 18 to 12 years. Manstein became one of the most prominent German prisoners in Allied custody and soon stood at the center of debates surrounding the treatment of the German soldiers convicted of war crimes in West Germany and Great Britain. His release was accelerated by public interest in the fate of Manstein, who was granted early release in May 1953. Manstein later served as a military consultant to the West German government.

OLIVER VON WROCHEM

See also: Genocide; Manstein, Erich von; Nuremberg Trials; Taylor, Telford; War Crimes

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Marian, Ferdinand

Ferdinand Marian was an Austrian theater and film actor, best known for playing the leading character of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer in the Nazi propaganda film from 1940, *Jud Süß*, directed by Veit Harlan. Born in Vienna as Ferdinand Haschkowitz on August 14, 1902, he came from a musical family; his father was a bass player and his mother an opera singer. He gravitated to the theater from an early age, working through his father as an extra at the majestic Stadttheater Graz, before developing a career in acting. Seeking to make

his own way, he moved to Germany and by 1938 began performing as part of the company with the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. Here, his most celebrated performance was as Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello*, a characterization that received a positive review from Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels.

Turning to movies, he attracted attention for his portrayals of attractive leading men in such films as *Der Tunnel* (Curtis Bernhardt, 1933), *Madame Bovary* (Gerhard Lamprecht, 1937), and *La Habanera* (Detlef Sierck, 1937). In many of his roles he played the part of a villain or devious ladykiller, typecasting him in a particularly negative way that would haunt him later.

From 1940 onward he was engaged repeatedly for Nazi propaganda films, certainly because of his drawing power, but not least because of his ability to play unsavory characters of the kind useful for the purposes of wartime and anti-semitic indoctrination. The most important of these was his portrayal of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer in the title role of *Jud Süß*. Goebbels took a special interest in seeing to it that Marian was cast by Harlan in this role, from what he had seen of Marian as Iago years earlier.

Initially Marian was reluctant to take the assignment, but Goebbels wrote in his diary: "Talked with Marian about the *Jud Süß* material. He hesitates to play the Jew. But I will make him play the part," Goebbels added, "emphatically." Goebbels is reported to have been a frequent visitor to the set and to have even written or rewritten parts of the script.

Based on a novel of the same name by Lion Feuchtwanger, the film told the story of Joseph Oppenheimer, known as "Jud Süß," a financial advisor to the Duke of Württemberg in the 18th century. Whereas the book drew a sympathetic picture of a tragic figure, Harlan and Goebbels created an image of Süß and the Jews around him as materialistic, immoral, cunning, and untrustworthy. Indeed, Süß, who shaved off his beard, wore court clothes, and worked on his accent to ensure that he would be able to insinuate himself into gentile society, was considered even more detestable owing to this duplicity. The other "Jewish" actors "looked" alien; Süß, appearing to be German, conformed completely to the Nazi image of the treacherous Jew worming his way into "Aryan" society in order to destroy it from within. The Nazis were thus able to utilize the Süß story as a parable about the alleged Jewish threat to Germany, and why it was good and legitimate to draw out the Jews and destroy their influence wherever possible.

The film became a runaway success not only in Germany but across Europe. Seen by tens of millions of moviegoers, it

was a huge hit at its premiere at the 1940 Venice Film Festival. During the war years it was a favorite among Nazi and fascist youth groups throughout Europe, and it was even shown to concentration camp guards and German soldiers on the front. Marian's performance as the evil Jew Süß led to the film becoming arguably one of the most successful anti-semitic propaganda movies ever made.

He continued appearing in such movies, notably the 1941 propaganda movie *Ohm Krüger*, a 1941 biographical film directed by Hans Steinhoff depicting the life of the Afrikaner leader Paul Kruger and his eventual defeat by the British during the Boer War. The film attacked the brutal and imperialistic British in their takeover of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, showing Britain to be a nation seeking gold (of course, at the behest of the Jews), while attempting to destroy the Boers' honorable agrarian lifestyle. Marian, made to look like a gangster, took the role of British South African imperialist Cecil Rhodes.

After a number of wartime propaganda movies, Marian returned to acting in popular nonpolitical films in the latter half of the war, but his earlier successes dogged the rest of his career. *Jud Süß* was classified by the Allies as sheer anti-semitic Nazi propaganda, and after the war Marian's past caught up with him as he was banned from any future acting roles.

Part of the tragedy of Ferdinand Marian's life is that he was not a Nazi and, in fact, had a daughter from his first marriage to Jewish pianist Irene Saager. Moreover, his second wife's former husband, Julius Gellner, was also Jewish, and was hidden by Marian and his wife in the family home during the war.

On August 7, 1946, he was killed in a car crash near the village of Dürneck, Bavaria, aged 46. It was rumored at the time that Ferdinand Marian committed suicide, unable to come to terms with the roles he had taken during the war and suffering from previously unresolved feelings of guilt. Another argument is that he was intoxicated, having celebrated the news that he had been granted denazification papers from the American occupying authorities that would have enabled him to resume acting.

In 2010 a motion picture appeared focusing on Marian's performance in *Jud Süß*, focusing on the personal torment he suffered while making the film. *Jew Süss: Rise and Fall*, directed by Oskar Roehler, starred Austrian actor Tobias Moretti as Marian in the title role. When the movie had its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival on February 18, 2010, it was received with more boos than applause, and with scathing reviews critical of the filmmakers

for revising historical accuracy in order to portray an overly sympathetic image of Marian.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Goebbels, Josef; *Jud Süß*; Propaganda in the Holocaust

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Marie-Benoît, Père

Père Marie-Benoît was a French Catholic priest credited for having saved several thousand Jews from near-certain deportation and death during World War II. Born Pierre Péteul on February 5, 1895, in Bourg d'Iré, western France, Père Marie-Benoît saw action during World War I as a medic's assistant and was wounded at Verdun. After the war he became a friar with the Capuchin Franciscan order. Ordained a priest, he undertook advanced studies in Rome, where he earned a doctorate in theology. Until 1940 he lived in the Capuchin monastery in Rome, but when war between France and Italy seemed inevitable, he returned to France and moved into the Capuchin monastery at Marseille.

Aware that there were thousands of Jewish refugees in the region hoping to flee to the relative safety of Spain or Switzerland, Père Marie-Benoît began a major operation to provide for the transportation of these people out of France. In the basement of his monastery he set up an elaborate assembly line producing bogus baptismal certificates, identification cards, passports, and other documents for Jewish refugees. He received aid from members of the French Resistance, as well as members of other religious organizations (Protestant, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish), and built solid (though illicit) relationships with local border guides, or *passeurs*. Through them, and utilizing the false documents he had engineered, he managed to smuggle thousands of refugees into the neutral countries. As his reputation grew, it was said that the waiting room in his monastery was always full and that the printing press in the basement worked overtime.

In November 1942 the Germans moved into what had, until then, been Unoccupied France. This included Marseille, which jeopardized Père Marie-Benoît's rescue activities. In order to be able to continue rescuing Jews, therefore, he

moved to Nice, which was at that time still under Italian occupation. Here, he met with Guido Lospinoso, the Italian commissioner of Jewish affairs, whom Mussolini had hand-picked for the purpose of ensuring that there would be no special deals for Jews. Instead, Père Marie-Benoît negotiated a deal with Lospinoso to permit the passage of Jews through the city so they could seek refuge in Switzerland. He also successfully lobbied the Italians not to deport or harm the many French Jews living in Nice.

In July 1943 Père Marie-Benoît went to Rome in the hope of soliciting the Vatican's help in transporting Jews from France in northern Italy. While he was in Nice, Père Marie-Benoît met Angelo Donati, a leading Italian-Jewish banker. Donati had a plan that would see the relocation of the Italian Jewish population to North Africa. Such a huge operation, however, would require the support of the Italian government, which meant the cooperation of the Vatican. In April 1943 arrangements were made for Père Marie-Benoît to meet with Pope Pius XII to discuss the plan. According to one report, Marie-Benoît received a cold reception from the pope, who declined to assist. Besides, when the Germans occupied northern Italy and the Italian-occupied zone of France, the idea had to be shelved.

Vatican officials did, however, provide an alternative source of help. Père Marie-Benoît returned from Rome to France in order to facilitate the transportation of French Jews to safety in neighboring Spain, proceeding from an arrangement made with the Spanish government that allowed at least 2,600 French Jews to enter by offering "proof"—using Marie-Benoît's falsified documents—that they were of Spanish extraction.

In addition to helping Jewish refugees materially, he also attended to their spiritual needs, often comforting children as they awaited transport out of France. He worked hard to find safe houses to protect Jews from deportation.

When his supporters became concerned toward the end of the war that the Nazis and their French collaborationist allies were about to uncover his activities, Père Marie-Benoît fled France and took up residence in northern Italy under the alias "Father Benedetti." In Rome he was elected to the board of Delasem (*Delegazione Assistenza Emigranti Ebrei*, or Delegation for the Assistance of Jewish Emigrants), the main Jewish welfare organization in Italy. When the Jewish president of Delasem was arrested, Père Marie-Benoît was named acting president.

He immediately transferred the organization's headquarters to the International College of the Capuchins, where he recommenced the forging of documents for Jews. He contacted

the Swiss, Romanian, Hungarian, and Spanish embassies, and obtained from them documents enabling Jews to circulate freely under false names. He also obtained ration cards from the police, asserting—deceptively—that they were meant for non-Jewish refugees. None of this escaped the attention of the Gestapo, and in early 1945 his office was raided several times. Most of the Delasem leadership were arrested, tortured, and executed.

Soon after this, Père Marie-Benoît went into hiding. Until the end of the war, however, he persisted in his efforts to save Jews.

When Rome was liberated in June 1944, the Jewish community held an official synagogue ceremony in honor of Père Marie-Benoît. Then, on December 1, 1966, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations, and he was presented with the award in person at a ceremony at the Israeli embassy in Paris in November 1967.

Père Marie-Benoît died in France on February 5, 1990, recognized by many in the Jewish community, fittingly, as *Père des juifs*—the Father of the Jews.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Catholic Church; France; Italy; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Maus and Maus II

Two graphic novels (written and drawn in comic-book format) by acclaimed cartoonist Art Spiegelman. These books intertwine his parents' experiences as Holocaust survivors with his own troubled relationship with his parents. The *Maus* chronicles were first serialized in *Raw*, an avant-garde comics magazine published by Spiegelman and his wife, Françoise Mouly, from 1980 until 1991. In 1986, after an exhaustive search for a publisher, Spiegelman published the first six chapters of his serialization with Pantheon Books. They appeared as *Maus: A Survivor's Tale, My Father Bleeds History*. The last five chapters were published in 1991, also by Pantheon. That book was titled *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale, And Here My Troubles Began*. Since then, the two depictions

have been republished separately and also together in one volume. In 1992 Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize for Literature, with *Maus* becoming the first comic book to be awarded this coveted honor.

Spiegelman's *Maus* serialization presented aspects of the Holocaust in an entirely new style and genre. Although some critics were critical of his decision to present such a grave subject in such an unconventional genre, others lauded his efforts to transcend the usual memoir-like depictions of the Holocaust and to open the subject to individuals who might not normally read about it. Indeed, *Maus* was perhaps the first comic medium to attract the serious attention of academics, intellectuals, and teachers. The style of the drawings can best be described as minimalist, although the author does a masterful job in terms of structure and layout. The story is driven largely by the text, however, with only a few panels lacking words. In all, there are some 1,500 black-and-white drawings in both volumes. Notably, the characters portrayed in the comic novel are represented by various animals. Germans are portrayed as cats, Jews as mice, and Poles as pigs. This is meant, in part, to deride the Nazis' strict and bogus classifications of humans, which drove their racial policies and the ensuing Holocaust.

Spiegelman's story arc moves back and forth in time, alternating between "present" time (1978–late 1980s), which is set in his father's hometown of Rego Park, New York, and "past" time (mid-1930s–1945), which takes place in Europe and chronicles his father's experiences before and during the Holocaust. A large part of the story deals with Spiegelman's contentious relationship with his father, Vladek, whom he portrays as being paranoid, stubborn, overly judgmental, and racist. Indeed, Spiegelman's retelling of his father's Holocaust testimony is in part colored by that relationship. The story also deals with Spiegelman's anger and grief over the 1968 suicide of his mother, also a Holocaust survivor, when he was just 20 years old. Other main characters include his stepmother, Mala, who is also a Holocaust survivor, and his wife, who converted to Judaism to please Vladek, although she never quite measured up in his father's eyes.

Maus and *Maus II* are ingenious not only because they are in a comic-book format but also because they are considered to be postmodern in their outlook. That is, they deal essentially with the memory of someone else's memory—in this case that of Spiegelman's father. Notably, he does not chronicle his mother's Holocaust ordeal because after her suicide Vladek destroyed her diaries in a fit of anguish. Spiegelman's work was among the first to chronicle the relationship of

the children of Holocaust survivors with the survivors themselves.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Art and the Holocaust; Second Generation; Survivor Testimony

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Mauthausen Trial

The Mauthausen Trial was a war crimes trial of 61 German perpetrators associated with the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp that was held from March 29, 1946, to May 13, 1946, conducted by a U.S. military government tribunal in Dachau, Germany. All 61 of the defendants were found guilty of having committed war crimes; 48 were hanged. This represented the single largest mass execution carried out among all of the U.S. war crimes tribunals. Mauthausen-Gusen was a large Nazi concentration camp located outside Linz, Austria. It was established in August 1938 and was the largest of its type in Austria. It featured a large main facility and 59 smaller camps, all administered by the same personnel. It was designed chiefly as a slave-labor center and may have held as many as 150,000 prisoners. Many, though not all, were Jews. Mauthausen was an important manufacturing center for the German war effort but was a brutal location for those interned there. Many inmates were literally worked to death, while thousands of others died from malnutrition, disease, beatings, and medical experimentation. U.S. troops liberated the camp on May 5, 1945.

After the 1945 liberation, U.S. military officials quickly determined that an investigation into the activities at Mauthausen should be carried out and, further, that prison personnel would be tried in a mass tribunal rather than through individual trial procedures. They chose to hold just one trial because individual ones would be too costly, time-consuming, and difficult to orchestrate. After a period of investigation and interviews, Lieutenant Colonel William D. Denson, a judge advocate for the U.S. Army, chose 61 individuals to prosecute. They had worked in the regional

administration, main camp, and subcamps and included personnel from many ranks and strata—from the regional Nazi Party officer, August Eigruber, to rank-and-file guards. The group indictment was simple and straightforward; it charged each person with participation in a “common design” to commit war crimes. The wording of the indictment was purposefully broad and eliminated the need for the prosecution to prove wrongdoing on the part of each defendant. Because the defendants had all worked together, were aware of the activities in the camp, and had agreed to carry out the orders of the commandant and his superiors, it was held that all were equally culpable in the commission of war crimes.

The tribunal convened for just five weeks. In the end, all the defendants were convicted, and 48 were handed death sentences. The remainder received prison terms of varying lengths. During May 27–28, 1947, those given the death penalty were hanged in Landsberg Prison, Germany. Among those executed was Eigruber. Another eight individuals who had worked at the camp were tried during August 6–21, 1947; all were found guilty and executed on August 10, 1948. The second trial received little notice at the time. In the decades since the Mauthausen Trial, some critics have argued that the tribunal was deficient in both fairness and due process, but others have asserted that the proceedings were judicially sound based on the legal prescriptions and precedents of the time.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Mauthausen-Gusen; War Crimes

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Mauthausen-Gusen

Located approximately 12 miles east of the city of Linz in Upper Austria, this concentration camp was actually two sites—Mauthausen and Gusen (Gusen I, II, and III)—and further establishments numbering more than 100 subcamps throughout Austria. Its specific locale was between the small villages of Mauthausen and Sankt Georgen an der Gusen (or, simply, Gusen). This was located in what was formerly a heavily forested area away from the larger population centers and close to the stone quarry of Wienergraben. In terms

of its horrific conditions and brutality, as well as the numbers of murdered victims (Jews, interestingly enough, being a decided minority), it rivaled Auschwitz-Birkenau in south-eastern Poland. In fact, it was the *only* camp(s) given Category III status and thus identified by the twin understandings *Rückkehr unerwünscht* (“return not desired”) and *Vernichtung durch arbeit* (“extermination by work”). In the offices of the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) in Berlin, it was also known, somewhat colloquially, as the *Knochenmühle* (“bone mill”).

Its primary victims were political and social dissidents and intellectuals, initially from Austria, but later from Spain (more than 7,000 anti-Franco Republicans and communists, members of the so-called International Brigade who also fought against the fascist takeover), Czechoslovakia, Soviet Russia, and Poland. Prior to liberation, in 1944 these groups began organizing serious resistance efforts, which culminated in an unsuccessful insurrection on February 1, 1945. It was organized primarily by Soviet prisoners, almost all of whom were either killed or captured. This “action” was labeled *Mühlviertler Hasenjagd* (“rabbit chase”) by the SS and those who assisted them. Jews, however, played a relatively minor role in both the organizing of such efforts and their implementation, due primarily to their smaller numbers and late arrival.

Mauthausen-Gusen was established under the direct imprimatur of *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler on August 8, 1938, after an initial visit to select the location, almost five months to the day after the German *Anschluss* with Austria on March 12, 1938. It would ultimately become one of the largest—if not the largest—slave labor complex in the whole of Nazi-occupied Europe. Although under the direct control of the Nazi state, Mauthausen-Gusen was initially founded by a private company as an economic enterprise. Its first commandant was SS Captain Albert Sauer (August 1, 1938–April 1 1939), until he was replaced by SS Colonel Franz Ziereis. He remained at the helm until the camp’s liberation on May 5, 1945. From March 1940 onward, SS Captain Georg Bachmayer was tasked with internal control of all prisoners inside the camps. Though estimates of victims vary, due largely to the destruction of vital records, overall numbers approached 200,000 between August 1, 1938, and May 5, 1945, with almost 100,000 murdered, including approximately 14,000 Jews. Of the more than 300,000 imprisoned in the various subcamps, no more than 80,000, representing 26%, survived. The liberation of Mauthausen-Gusen was achieved by members of the 41st Reconnaissance Squad, 11th Armored Division, 3rd U.S. Army, and it was the last

such camp to be liberated by Allied forces. Among the more famous of those liberated was Simon Wiesenthal, acclaimed Austrian Nazi hunter and writer, and Hungarian Tibor Rubin, who would later go on to win the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor for his military service in the Korean War.

As a slave-labor enterprise, Mauthausen-Gusen was the most successful operation under Nazi control in terms of both production outputs and profits, generating more than 11,000,000 *Reichsmark* by 1944. Among the major German corporations that benefitted from these slave laborers were Accumulatoren-Fabrik AFa (military batteries); Bayer Pharmaceuticals (medicines and medications); DEST cartel (bricks and quarry stone); Flugmotorenwerke Ostmark (airplane engines); Heinkel und Messerschmidt (airplane and rock production); and Otto Eberhard Patronenfabrik (munitions).

As regards the prisoners themselves, gas chambers for their deaths were originally in operation by 1940 and permanently by 1941, and, by war’s end, 10 functioning gas chambers were constructed and in use. The standard litany of abuse—beatings, torture, starvation, random shootings, and disease—was equally fully in evidence. Perhaps the most notoriously brutal method was that of requiring the stone quarry prisoners to race up the 186 “Stairs of Death” carrying their stones, often close to their own body-weights and averaging 110 pounds, falling to their deaths, being trampled by other prisoners, and, then, finally, making it to the top only to stand in line and be shot from behind—to the amusement and delight of their captors. Then, too, on many occasions prisoners were assembled in the various collection sites, sprayed with water and left to freeze to death in sub-zero temperatures or forced to take cold showers at the end of their work day, with the same effect. Camp diseases, such as dysentery, also took an enormous toll.

In the spring of 1946, 61 defendants were tried by the U.S. Military Tribunal stationed at Dachau. Fifty-eight were sentenced to death (49 executions were carried out), and three to life imprisonment. Later, nine of the initial death sentences were commuted to life sentences; and, between 1950 and 1951, the remaining 12 prisoners were released. However, more than 90% of the additional 224 Mauthausen-Gusen perpetrators (202) were found guilty and sentenced to varied prison terms.

The Mauthausen-Gusen site was declared an important historical site by Austria in 1949. Its museum officially opened in 1974. Mauthausen has remained largely intact, but Gusen I, II, and III have been transformed into residential dwellings.

See also: Austria; Concentration Camps; Gas Chambers; Heim, Aribert; Himmler, Heinrich; J.A. Topf and Sons; Mauthausen Trial; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Weiss, Helga; Wiesenthal, Simon

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Mechelen

Mechelen (in French, Malines), a Belgian city of about 60,000 residents located halfway between Antwerp and Brussels, was the location of a transit camp from which the Nazis deported Jews to their death at the Auschwitz concentration and death camp in Poland.

Around 90% of Belgium's Jews lived either in Antwerp or Brussels, and Mechelen was ideally located about halfway between the two on a conveniently placed railroad line. In the summer of 1942 the Germans began to make preparations to deport Belgium's Jews and found that the Dossin de St. Georges military barracks in Mechelen, once modified, would make an excellent site for their needs. Once it was established, it was staffed by German SS with the assistance of Belgian SS collaborators belonging to the *Algemeene-SS Vlaanderen*.

Initially, Belgian prisoners had been taken to Breendonck, which had been a military fort before being turned into a holding camp by the Germans for Jews and political prisoners prior to their transfer to Germany. The first such prisoners arrived on December 20, 1940, and as the war intensified the camp became notorious as a place of horror. The precise number of victims across its duration is unknown, but estimates show that there were at least 3,000 deaths at Breendonck.

With the extension of the Holocaust to Belgium, the first group of Belgian Jews was arrested in Antwerp on July 22, 1942, and taken to Breendonck prior to being forwarded on to Mechelen on July 27. On August 4 this first transport was then sent to Auschwitz, where it arrived on August 6. This began a surge in deportations, such that between August and December 1942, two transports with about 1,000 Jews each left for Auschwitz each week. Overall, the period from August

4, 1942, to July 31, 1944, saw a total of 28 trains leave Mechelen for Poland. An aggregate of 24,916 Jews and 351 Roma were sent on these trains, most of whom were subsequently murdered at Auschwitz. It has been estimated that only 1,240 survived the Holocaust.

While in Mechelen, every Jewish inmate was required to wear an identification badge. These differed in accordance with what the immediate fate of each person would be: those marked with a "T" were *Transport-Juden*, that is, Jews who would be sent to the east. The letter "Z" was for citizens of the Allied countries or neutral countries, while "E" stood for *Entscheidungsfalle* (cases with a decision pending subject to further investigation). Finally, Jews marked with the letter "G" were known as *Gefährliche Juden*, or "dangerous Jews," who would be sent to a so-called *straflager*, or punishment camp. Jews who were married to non-Jews were sent to Drancy in German-occupied France; eventually, many of these, too, were deported to their deaths at Auschwitz.

While Mechelen was a place of transit for Jews on their way to their deaths, some people did manage to succeed in escaping from the trains on which they were traveling. All in all, perhaps up to 500 such escapes took place from the 28 transport trains leading out of the camp.

During the period 1942–1943, the *Comité de Défense des Juifs* (CDJ), the Belgian Jewish resistance movement, managed to derail several deportation trains coming out of Mechelen, but most of the Jews on those trains were subsequently picked up and deported to Auschwitz in later transports.

On the evening of April 19–20, 1943, however, the CDJ derailed one more train—the 20th—leaving Mechelen for Auschwitz. The CDJ was able to learn the exact date and time of the deportation from Mechelen, and they smuggled tools from the camp's workshop onto the train cars in order to pry open doors and floorboards to aid escape. Three members of the CDJ unit Group G, under the direction of Georges Livchitz, forced the train to a halt by signaling it with a red lantern. While Livchitz held the engineer at gunpoint with his revolver, the other two members, Robert Maistriau and Jean Franklemon, aided in the escape of several prisoners within the cars. The three members were able to escape under gunfire with some prisoners. This action saw the CDJ save 231 Jews out of 1,631 heading for Auschwitz, in what is the only instance of a known armed assault anywhere in Europe in order to halt a train transporting Jews en route to their deaths. The escape did not come without cost, however, as guards escorting the train shot 23 Jews during the battle and in their ensuing attempt at flight.

The last transport from Mechelen to reach Auschwitz left on July 31, 1944. Throughout the duration of the camp's

existence, members of the CDJ kept in contact with those in the camp, sufficiently to enable warnings to be conveyed—though this was often to little avail in view of the transient nature of the camp population.

The camp was finally liberated by the Allies on September 4, 1944. The Germans had fled before the Allied advance the previous night, and some of the prisoners managed to escape at that time. The next morning, the 527 remaining Jewish prisoners welcomed their liberators. Despite the many hardships to which they had been subjected, these prisoners had managed to survive. The camp was soon utilized for housing suspected Belgian collaborators.

Known as the “Antechamber of Death,” Mechelen was then left alone, a silent witness to Belgium’s experience of the Holocaust. From 1948 onward the site reverted to a military barracks until it was abandoned in 1975. After then, certain buildings were employed for public housing. In 1996 a museum to the Holocaust was established; this was named the Museum of Deportation and Resistance, and serves as Belgium’s premier location for Holocaust remembrance to this day.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Auschwitz; Belgium; Comité de Défense des Juifs; Concentration Camps

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Medical Experimentation

During the Holocaust, German doctors and scientists performed a wide variety of medical experiments on individuals imprisoned in concentration camps. These experiments were usually based on faulty or pseudoscientific premises and were conducted with virtually no regard for the victims’ well-being or survival. Indeed, many experiments ended in the permanent disfigurement or death of the people involved. The Nazi experiments may be divided into three broad categories: exercises that involved the testing of new drugs and the treatment of various illnesses or injuries, tests designed to ascertain certain physical effects on soldiers and pilots, and experiments that sought to “prove” Nazi racial theories or purge the German bloodline of so-called “inferior” peoples.

The development of new drugs and the treatment of injuries—especially those sustained in battle—were of particular

importance to doctors at the Buchenwald, Dachau, Natzweiler, Sachsenhausen, and Neuegamme concentration camps. There doctors administered untested pharmaceutical compounds, inoculations, and serums to various individuals to gauge their effectiveness against such maladies as typhoid fever, malaria, tuberculosis, infectious hepatitis, and yellow fever. While it may have been commendable to seek treatments or cures for such illnesses, the experiments were forced upon internees and many died during or after the experiments. At Ravensbrück, prisoners’ legs and arms were broken to test bone-grafting and amputation techniques. Many of these tests were done using little or no anesthetic. At other camps, internees were exposed to mustard and phosgene gas as doctors experimented with various antidotes; many of the victims died. There were even attempts to transplant limbs, although the results were disappointing and many of the victims died of massive infections.

At Dachau particularly, prisoners were employed to test various conditions that pilots and soldiers might have to endure. These included placing people in low-pressure chambers to gauge the effects of high altitude on air force personnel. Physicians here were joined by German civilian physicians from the Institute of Aviation. Other prisoners were studied to gauge the effects of hypothermia on the human body. Victims were either forced to lie in the snow in winter with no clothes on or were immersed into tanks of ice-cold water for an hour or more at a time. Many of the victims died or suffered greatly. Still others were compelled to drink seawater until they passed out or died.

The last category of experiments, which aimed to prove or sustain Nazi racial and social policies, was perhaps the most cruel and bizarre of all. Many tests involved young children. At Auschwitz and Ravensbrück, mass sterilization experiments were conducted on men and women, who had their sex organs irradiated. Many were badly burned in the process. Doctors also engaged in wide-scale surgical castration to ensure that prisoners did not engage in sexual intercourse. At Auschwitz and Sachsenhausen, doctors conducted serological tests on Roma, which included children, to study how different “races” contracted or responded to communicable diseases.

No other German physician became as widely known for his bizarre and cruel experimentation as did Josef Mengele, who became chief medical officer at Auschwitz in 1943. Mengele took a special interest in child twins and those who exhibited some sort of physical abnormality. He would often ingratiate himself to children by offering them sweets and then perform inhumane experiments on them. One experiment witnessed the injection of different chemicals into



Medical experiments involving large numbers of concentration camp prisoners took place during the Holocaust. The victims ranged widely, involving Roma, Soviet prisoners of war, Germans with disabilities, and Poles, among others. Foremost among the victims, however, were Jews. Among the most notorious of these experiments were those involving children at Auschwitz, under the brutal regime of Dr. Josef Mengele. In this photograph, an experiment is taking place involving compression and decompression in which a prisoner is subjected to extreme trauma in a pressure chamber. (Bettmann/Getty Images)

children's eyes to see if their eye color could be altered. Other children underwent bizarre amputations and other experimental surgeries, often without proper anesthesia. One particularly grotesque experiment involved sewing together two Roma twins to create conjoined twins. They eventually died of gangrene and massive infections. Young girls were routinely sterilized and given shock treatments to gauge their reactions to such stimuli. One night saw the rounding up of 14 pairs of Roma twins; they were taken to a lab, killed by the injection of chloroform into their hearts, and meticulously dissected by Mengele himself.

It is estimated that the Germans conducted at least 70 different "medical research" programs, supervised by nearly 200 physicians and scientists. At least 7,000 prisoners were involved, many of whom were killed or permanently injured. A number of these programs were connected to civilian laboratories, hospitals, and universities, which was an indictment of the entire German medical establishment. After the war, more than 20 Nazi physicians were tried for crimes against humanity at Nuremberg, beginning in October 1946. Seven were given the death penalty, nine were handed long prison terms, and seven were found not guilty. Unfortunately, Mengele fled Germany, finally taking up residence incognito in South America. He was never brought to justice for his many crimes. There was but one silver lining in the darkness of the Nazi experiments; after 1946, the international medical community put in place specific guidelines for medical experimentation so that the grotesque excesses of World War II would not be repeated.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Becker-Freyseng, Hermann; Blome, Kurt; Buchenwald; Dachau; Doctors' Trial; Gebhardt, Karl; Glücks, Richard; Heim, Aribert; I.G. Farben; Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; Mengele, Josef; Münch, Hans; Natzweiler-Struthof; Neuengamme; Nuremberg Code; Oberheuser, Herta; Project Paperclip; Ravensbrück; Sachsenhausen

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Meed, Vladka

Vladka Meed was a member of the Jewish underground in the Warsaw Ghetto from its inception. Born Feigele Peltel in

Warsaw on December 29, 1921, to Shlomo and Hanna Peltel, she was educated in Yiddish but picked up Polish readily and became fluent while still young. At the age of 14 she became active in *Zukunft*, a youth movement connected to the Jewish Labor Bund.

Feigele and her family were forced into the Warsaw Ghetto once it was established in 1940. Over time, her father died of pneumonia and her mother, sister, and younger brother Chaim were sent to their deaths at Treblinka. With few other alternatives, Feigele decided to become part of the resistance movement in the ghetto, and she joined the *Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa* (Jewish Fighting Organization, or ŻOB) soon after it was formed in 1942. She was inspired to join after hearing a Bund leader, Abrasha Blum, speak about the need for armed resistance. Blum was a member of the Jewish coordinating committee, a body that sought to unite the diverse political factions of the ghetto. It was at this time she assumed the resistance code name of Vladka, which she kept for the rest of her life.

Owing to her flowing red locks and typically "Aryan" appearance, and fluency in Polish, she passed as a non-Jew outside the ghetto. Her major assignments involved working as a courier—essentially of money, arms, and intelligence information. One of her most important missions was to smuggle a map of Treblinka out of the ghetto and into the hands of resisters outside, who would, it was hoped, forward it on to the Allies. This information was also vitally important in the ghetto itself, as news spread more widely about where the deportations ended up. The upshot was a determination on the part of the ŻOB to resist further deportations by force, leading, in April 1943, to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Vladka also helped children escape the ghetto and arranged for them to be sheltered in Christian homes. In addition, she acted as an information conduit for Jews searching for news about their relatives in labor and concentration camps or fighting with the partisans in the forest, and assisted other Jews hiding on the Aryan side; and, having survived the uprising, she continued supplying money and papers to help them stay alive.

During her time in the Warsaw underground she met another courier living under false papers, Czesław (Benjamin) Miedzyrzecka (Meed). Accounts differ as to when they were married; dates are given variously as 1943, 1944, and 1945. What is definite is that they were among the first survivors to reach the United States after the end of World War II, arriving in New York on May 24, 1946.

Soon after her arrival, Vladka was approached by American Jewish organizations with a request that she provide lectures to

the American public about her experiences; these would form the basis of a book published in Yiddish in 1948. An early first-hand account published on the subject of what later became known as the Holocaust, it would be published in English as *On Both Sides of the Wall* in 1972, with translations into other languages (including German and Polish) later. It was highly condemnatory of Warsaw's non-Jewish population, who, Vladka asserted, did little to help the Jews in the ghetto.

In 1962 Vladka and Benjamin, with a group of several other survivors, established the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization for the purpose of raising awareness about what they had experienced among the next generation. Vladka traveled and spoke widely about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the Holocaust generally. Immediately after the World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Israel in June 1981, an American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors was established to prepare for a second gathering, to be held in Washington, D.C., in April 1983. On this occasion Benjamin Meed was in the forefront of the organizing process, though Vladka also played a key role.

In recognition for her work in Holocaust education, Vladka received an award in 1973 from the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, and in 1989 the Morim Award from the Jewish Teachers' Association. These were followed by the 1993 Hadassah Henrietta Szold Award and the 1995 Elie Wiesel Remembrance Award. She also received honorary degrees from Hebrew Union College and Bar Ilan University.

Benjamin Meed died of pneumonia in Manhattan on October 24, 2006. Vladka Meed died a little over six years later from Alzheimer's disease at her daughter's home in Paradise Valley, Arizona, on November 21, 2012.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Fighting Organization; Jewish Resistance; Treblinka; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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sold about 23,000 copies and the second about 13,000. In 1930 the publisher, Max Amann (a sergeant major in Hitler's regiment during World War I), brought out the work in a single volume that sold 62,000 copies in one year. By the end of 1933 more than 1.5 million copies had been sold. From 1934 the book was figuring in school primers, and in 1936 the Ministry of the Interior recommended that registrars present a copy to every bridal couple. Total sales in Hitler's lifetime were probably around 8 to 9 million. The first English translation was an abridgement, and the complete text did not become available until 1938. Versions appeared in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s in at least 10 European languages, as well as in Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese.

The title was actually Amann's idea—the author's projected title was *Four and a Half Years of Struggle against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice*. The book consists of autobiographical recollections intermingled with reflections on political and social principles. Hitler begins by noting the significance of his birthplace, Braunau-am-Inn, on the boundary between Bavaria and Austria. The importance of this becomes clear when he gives an account of his student years in Vienna. It was in Vienna that he discovered the reality of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, an empire in decay, an empire crippled by centrifugal forces of its constituent parts, an empire in which, he asserts, the German peoples were downtrodden and victimized. It was this experience that first developed his German nationalistic feelings. It was also Vienna that converted him to antisemitism, since he witnessed what seemed to him Jewish control of Social Democratic agitation, of the world of the press, and of prostitution in the city. His experience of the Social Democrats showed him the power of fanatical determination allied to a readiness to use violence, and he grew cynical about the purposes of the leaders. He found that although he could have rational arguments with almost anybody from whatever class, his attempts to debate with Jews were always a waste of time and got him nowhere. He realized that part of the success of the Social Democrats had to do with their mastery of oratory and their readiness to address the masses. He noted that liberal leaders tended to be middle class and to rely on the printed word, which was read only by other bourgeois.

Then came the crucial wartime experience. Hitler noted that his generation, who set out for the front in 1914, soon turned from youngsters to old soldiers. He observed the power of Allied propaganda and grew enraged by the feebleness of what was produced by his own side. He sensed that the Allies understood the importance of exaggerating one negative fact about the enemy to the utmost—in this case,

Mein Kampf

Mein Kampf (*My Struggle*) is a work in which Adolf Hitler set out his philosophy and his vision for Germany. It was published in two volumes, the first on July 19, 1925, and the second on December 11, 1926. By 1929 the first volume had

the atrocities of “the beastly Hun.” This gave steel to the Allied troops and also prepared them to fight a vicious enemy. While on the German side the preferred device was the weapon of mockery, the troops in the field discovered that their opponents were extremely tough and consequently felt let down by what they had been told. As the war progressed, Hitler also saw the effectiveness of the Allied thrust to drive a wedge between Prussia and the rest—putting all the blame on the one side in order to embitter the other. He received news of the German capitulation when in the hospital at Pasewalk after a gas attack, and he was shocked to the core. He accepted the popular explanation of betrayal by Jewish propagandists and intellectuals who sapped the will of the government and the middle classes to continue the war, but he also acknowledged the underlying decay that allowed all this to happen. Germany was being undermined by the Jews, and the governing classes were cowardly and irresolute.

After the war, Hitler became increasingly drawn to politics and more and more convinced of the centrality of the racial question. Following a well-established type of racial ideology that went back at least to the French 19th-century thinker Gobineau, he argued that a superior race that allowed itself to interbreed would decay, and that the preservation of the purity of the German race was the prime responsibility of the German people and state. This truth was not widely admitted, and the failure to face it was one of the main reasons for the defeat. Racial theory must be the foundation of a new political order. Young Germans must be indoctrinated in their role in the preservation of racial purity. There should be no truck with compassion for cripples or the mentally disabled.

Western-style democracy, with its electoral and parliamentary obsessions, was a sham. Hitler had been inoculated against parliamentarism by his experiences of observing political debates in Vienna, which had induced in him nothing but contempt for the parliamentary system. He believed that great things come from great individual personalities, not from assemblies. The aristocratic mode was the only one appropriate for Germanic peoples, and that involved individual rulers surrounded by advisers. Trade unions were certainly allowable, but only to prevent abuses in the workplace. Germany’s future rulers needed to realize that the masses must be won over, and on two occasions in the book Hitler writes of them as being like women who respond to a strong man better than to a weak one. Marxism was the big enemy of the day, but it could not be put down simply by force. A philosophy can be defeated only by another force that also

has a philosophy. Hitler joyfully describes the way in which he defeated Marxist provocateurs who attempted to break up his meetings by good preparation and the disciplined use of force. This method was often able to get the better of a much larger number of opponents. One of the things he stresses in the book is the role of conviction, will, and resolve, which can enable a well-organized and well-motivated minority to topple a majority. He has a poor opinion of his German contemporaries but sees them as victims of Jewish manipulators. He does not elaborate a systematic antisemitic theory but dismisses the Jews as aliens who can simply never become Germans. The old religious anti-Judaism is feeble; what is needed is a frank recognition that the Jews are a racial enemy that cannot be accommodated or allowed into a Germanic society. They are unstable, dishonest, greedy, and manipulative. Their aim is world domination, and the Jewish religion is simply a tool to enable them to achieve this.

Hitler shows a grudging respect for the Catholic Church, whose inner strength he respects. He notes that celibacy rules require the church to replenish itself in every generation, which it does from the ranks of the poor, and that creates a certain degree of sympathy between the poor and the church that is one of the foundations of its influence. He is, however, very clear about the need to keep politics and religion entirely separate and disclaims any intention to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs. Hitler is very aware of the crucial role of the masses in politics, but not simply as fodder for exploitation. His time in Vienna showed him the horror of the daily life of the laboring poor in a big city and sensitized him to the big social issues. He saw that any serious political party must plan to address these if it was to have any success.

A study of *Mein Kampf* is very helpful for an understanding of how Hitler came to power. It shows an astonishing combination of ruthless logic, awareness of political realities, and powers of organization. It leaves a distinct impression that the war experience of Hitler and his contemporaries was of the utmost importance for what came after the war. Battle-hardened veterans felt that parliamentarism had betrayed them and could not bring themselves to support the republic. They looked for something in which to believe after the shock of the defeat, and Hitler offered them pride in their nation, a set of simple principles they could understand, and organizations to join that offered some semblance of the camaraderie of the trenches.

MARKUS HATTSTEIN

See also: Antisemitism; Aryan; Austria; Eckart, Johann Dietrich; Fischer, Eugen; Hess, Rudolf; Hitler, Adolf; “Intentionalists”; National Socialist Program; “Racial Hygiene”

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Mengele, Josef

Josef Mengele was a German medical doctor who performed quasi-scientific experiments on prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. He was born on March 16, 1911, in Gunzburg, Bavaria, and died on February 7, 1979, in Bertiooga, Brazil.



Josef Mengele was a German SS officer and medical doctor stationed at Auschwitz during World War II. He was infamous for the deadly human experiments he carried out on prisoners, in addition to selecting victims to be killed in the gas chambers. At Auschwitz he conducted genetic research on human subjects, particularly children, focusing primarily on twins. After the war he escaped to South America, where he managed to avoid capture for the rest of his life. This photo is believed to be the last taken of Mengele, while in exile and on the run in Argentina in 1956. (AP Photo)

Mengele began studying medicine in 1930, and had a special interest in anthropology and genetics. From 1935 he worked at a medical clinic. He also joined Germany's National Socialist Party. Mengele became a research assistant at an institute for heredity and "racial purity" at Frankfurt University. By 1938 he joined the SS and the following year married Irene Schoenbein. He volunteered for the German Army in 1940 and took part in the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 before an injury rendered him unfit for further military service.

In May 1943 Mengele volunteered to become the senior physician in the women's section of the Auschwitz concentration camp. One of his duties was to examine arriving prisoners and decide whether they were to be sent to the gas chambers or to forced labor. A number of the prisoners also became the subjects of Mengele's medical experiments. Auschwitz provided him an unending supply of research subjects, especially Roma, people with physical deformities, and twins. Mengele's particular interest was twin research, because he believed that if the Nazis could duplicate multizygotic births, the population could attain Aryan perfection. He observed each twin-couple under the same life conditions and killed them in the best of health—an ideal assumption for postmortem research. Mengele's crude surgery included amputations and deliberate infections with diseases in order to observe reactions. He also used methods involving electricity and radiation. Observers noted that he never expressed regret over the suffering of his human subjects. Over time, he became known to the prisoners as the "Angel of Death."

Mengele continued his experiments until the advance of the Red Army forced him to leave Auschwitz on January 17, 1945. U.S. forces captured him, but he managed to escape despite being listed as a war criminal. He returned to Gunzburg and, in 1948, with financial assistance provided by his family, was able to travel to and settle in Argentina under an assumed name. In 1956 Mengele returned to Germany and married for a second time, and in 1961 fled once more, this time to Paraguay. Fearing capture, he moved on to Brazil in 1978. On February 7, 1979, Mengele went for a swim, suffered a stroke, and drowned. After investigations ordered by the U.S. Justice Department, his gravesite at Bertiooga was revealed and experts were able to prove that the skeleton was that of Mengele. The discovery of his death ended a worldwide manhunt.

MARTIN MOLL

See also: Auschwitz; Children during the Holocaust; *The Deputy*; Fischer, Eugen; *The Grey Zone*; Medical Experimentation; Münch, Hans; "Racial Hygiene"; Roma Genocide in the Holocaust

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Microstates during the Holocaust

Europe possesses five microstates: Vatican City, Malta, Liechtenstein, Andorra, San Marino, and Monaco. The smallest of these, Vatican City, was so inextricably intertwined with the policies of the Roman Catholic Church during World War II that it possesses a special status among all the microstates and thus does not fit comfortably alongside the others in discussions relating to the Holocaust and World War II.

A microstate is a very small independent nation, recognized as sovereign by other states. In both geographical size and population, microstates are tiny by contrast with their bigger neighbors. During World War II and the Holocaust, the microstates of Europe played varying roles—from the completely minimal to active participation.

The British island possession of Malta, for instance, saw many Jews who were fleeing Nazism arrive prior to the outbreak of the war, owing to it being the only European country that did not require visas of refugee Jews. Although for a time it was the most bombed place on earth, nonetheless Malta rescued thousands of Jews from persecution. A number of these, together with local Maltese Jews, joined the British army in order to fight both Germans and Italians during the war.

The principality of Liechtenstein was neutral during World War II and sought to have this status guaranteed by forging ever closer relations with Switzerland. It has been estimated that the country accepted about 240 Jewish refugees during the Nazi period. That said, it has also been recorded that Liechtenstein's immigration laws were tightened during 1938, with at least 132 known requests for entry visas refused. Of those Jews who turned up at the border between Liechtenstein and Austria, an unknown number were turned back.

Despite this, the principality chose carefully when it came to accepting wealthy Jews who could introduce a significant amount of capital. Up to 144 such Jews were permitted to

become citizens; armed with life-saving visas, however, most elected to migrate to other countries.

The Republic of San Marino, geographically surrounded on all sides by Italy, provided a haven of sorts for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution, as well as for German refugees from Nazism and Italian opponents of the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini. At the start of the war, San Marino possessed a fascist government with ties to that of Mussolini, but in aggregate terms it gave refuge to up to 100,000 Italians and Jews across the period of the 1930s and World War II. The little country suffered a major loss in 1938, however, when its consul general stationed in Vienna, Friedrich Smetana—an Austrian Jew appointed to the position in 1926—was murdered, with his family, by the Nazis.

Andorra, sandwiched between Spain and France and governed jointly by the president of France and Spain's Bishop of Urgell, was quick to declare its neutrality in September 1939. It found it difficult not to get involved with the fate of the persecuted Jews of Europe, however, as it served as a conduit for Jewish refugees fleeing through France to Spain. Some—a very few—remained and settled permanently in Andorra, but most continued on to Spain and Portugal in the hope of obtaining passage to the United States or other destinations beyond war-torn Europe.

The principality of Monaco, located on France's Riviera, had a Jewish population of around 300 before World War II. Both before and during the conflict, the government sought to protect its Jewish residents, even though politically it followed a policy of pro-Axis neutrality. The ruler, Prince Louis II, was pro-Vichy and pro-Mussolini, but that did not stop his government issuing false identity papers to its Jews, or refusing to dismiss Jewish civil servants.

On the night of August 27, 1942, however, Monaco's authorities rounded up Jewish residents and delivered them to the Nazis. At least 42 of these were Central European Jewish refugees; they included women, men, and a child who had taken refuge to escape persecution in France at the hands of the Nazis. Another 24 were Monegasques living in the principality or in France itself. Altogether, around 90 Jews were arrested, handed over to the Nazis by the Monaco police, and deported. Only nine of these survived the war. On the 73rd anniversary of the deportation, August 27, 2015, Prince Albert II of Monaco offered a public apology for Monaco's deportation of Jews during World War II.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Catholic Church; Italy; Spain; Switzerland; Vichy France

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Milchberg, Irving

Irving Milchberg was a Holocaust survivor who smuggled arms to resistance fighters, together with food and other supplies, in the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. He was born Ignac Milchberg in Warsaw, Poland, the son of a prosperous merchant, on September 15, 1927. His world changed forever when Nazi forces invaded Poland in September 1939 and created a ghetto in central Warsaw early the next year. He and his family were forced out of their home, had most of their personal belongings confiscated, and were compelled to live a dingy, cramped apartment over an abandoned grocery store.

Before long, Milchberg and his father were sent out to labor on a work detail, at which time both father and son began smuggling food into the ghetto when they returned from work. His father was shot and killed by a Gestapo agent in 1942 after he had been found pilfering bread; at the time, Milchberg was only 15 years old. Determined to provide his mother and three sisters with additional food, he smuggled bread into the ghetto on the same day that his father was murdered.

Not long after his father's death, Milchberg was seized by Gestapo agents and taken to a transport camp, where Jews were being shipped off to the Treblinka death camp. During the night, he managed to climb a fence and flee back into the ghetto. When he returned, he discovered that his mother and sisters had already been deported to Treblinka. He managed to escape deportation a second time soon thereafter, when he broke a railcar's window and fled on foot after the train had stopped.

Milchberg now decided to conceal his identity. He adopted the gentile Polish name of Henrik Rozowski and began selling cigarettes and other sundries in central Warsaw, joining other Jewish youths who were also trying to hide their identity. Nicknamed "Bull" by his compatriots, he managed to disguise himself effectively thanks in part to his fair hair and blue eyes, which made him look more Polish than Jewish. Milchberg spent many nights sleeping in the streets or in cemeteries. Often hawking cigarettes and other items to Gestapo agents within yards of Gestapo headquarters, he also worked as a smuggler, providing resistance fighters with weapons and bringing food into the ghetto.

Before the April–May 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Milchberg smuggled numerous small-arms weapons into the ghetto in hollowed-out loaves of bread. Sometimes, when he could not get past the guards, he made his way into the ghetto by navigating the city's sewers. Immediately after the Nazis had brutally suppressed the uprising, Milchberg was taken prisoner and shipped off to a death camp. He engineered a third escape, this time by mingling with a group of Polish youths as he was switched from one train to another. Although he managed to make his way back to Warsaw, he injured his leg badly while fleeing. Sometime in 1944, after another cigarette seller was arrested, Milchberg and the others scattered, fearing that they too would be arrested. Until the Soviets liberated Warsaw in January 1945, Milchberg hid from Nazi authorities and was constantly on the move, relying on his own ingenuity and the generosity of strangers to survive.

After the war, Milchberg first went to Czechoslovakia, then Austria, and finally to a refugee camp in Germany. Having learned the craft of watchmaking, he migrated to Canada in 1947, eventually settling in Niagara Falls. There he established a jewelry store and married his wife. In his later years, Milchberg lived in Toronto, and in 1993 he visited Poland to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. He died on January 26, 2014.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Jewish Resistance; Warsaw Ghetto; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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Mischling

German, literally "hybrid" but understood in the Nazi context to mean something like "mongrel," "half-breed," or "mixed breed."

After the Nazis attained power in January 1933, their racial agenda ultimately evolved toward the extermination of the Jews, but at the outset of the Third Reich this was not entirely clear. An initial step leading to the exclusion of the Jews from Germany's daily life, however, was to define who would be considered a member of the Jewish "racial enemy." The infamous Nuremberg Laws of 1935 saw this process codified, in which a legal attempt was made to clarify who

was, in fact, a Jew; who was not; and who fell in between, in line with the Nazi obsession with “racial purity.” Thus, those with four Jewish grandparents were “full Jews”; those with three Jewish grandparents were “three-quarter Jews”; those with two Jewish grandparents were considered Mischlinge of the First Degree, provided they were not identified with the Jewish religion and not married to Jewish spouses; and persons with only one Jewish grandparent were Mischlinge of the Second Degree. In 1935 such persons in the latter two categories were said to number anywhere between 100,000 and 350,000. Mischlinge were not permitted to join the SS, nor were they permitted to advance in the officer ranks of the Wehrmacht, or German army. For the most part, Mischlinge of the First Degree were classified as Jews; those of the Second Degree were absorbed into German society, albeit with restrictions and discriminations.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Beck, Gad; Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; Nuremberg Laws; “Racial Hygiene”; Reich Citizenship Law; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Wannsee Conference

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Mommsen, Hans

Hans Mommsen was one of Germany’s preeminent historians and a leading expert on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. He was born into an academic family in Marburg in 1930: his twin brother, Wolfgang Mommsen, was a leading historian of late 19th-century German foreign policy; his father, Wilhelm Mommsen, was a historian of 19th-century Germany; and his great-grandfather, Theodor Mommsen, was a Nobel Prize-winning historian of ancient Rome.

Mommsen taught at the Universities of Tübingen (1960–1961) and Heidelberg (1963–1968), before arriving (as it was to turn out, for the rest of his career) at Ruhr University, Bochum, in 1968. Most of Mommsen’s writing looked at the Weimar and Nazi periods in German history. His books in English focused particularly on the transition between Weimar democracy and the onset of Nazism, as well as on the Nazi period itself. Three of these, in particular, will be discussed here.

First, *From Weimar to Auschwitz: Essays in German History* (1991) took a broad view of the crisis of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism, tracing the role of the bourgeoisie in late 19th-century Germany and building a perspective on how it was that the expectations of victory during the First World War, having been dashed through Germany’s defeat and descent into revolution, led to resentment and disillusionment with the Weimar Republic. The book considered why it was that middle-class disenchantment with the imperial regime led to the November 1918 revolution, and then, when the republic was established, it was again the middle class that sought its destruction. Mommsen was thereby also forced to deal with more open-ended questions relating to the nature of democracy and totalitarianism (and in particular, Nazi totalitarianism).

In *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy* (1998), Mommsen examined the Weimar period in Germany between 1919 and 1933—a time of great political, social, economic, and artistic upheaval in Germany. Considering the period from a political and economic perspective, he explored the complexities of the time but resisted the temptation to project what this would mean for the future; in other words, he looked at the period in its own terms, rather than forecasting the “inevitable” onset of Nazism that lay within that history. As a result, he was able to trace Germany’s path through the aftermath of revolution, through parliamentary democracy and its attendant political and economic crises, and show how its internal structural weaknesses were no match for the two parties (communism and Nazism) that were dedicated to its destruction.

Finally, in *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance under the Third Reich* (2003), Mommsen traced the complex history of German resistance to Hitler and the Nazis from their ascent to power in January 1933 through the attempted assassination of Hitler and aborted assumption of power in the Bomb Plot of July 1944. Mommsen considered the full range of acts opposing Hitler, from small acts of political disobedience and statements of resentment or antipathy, to wholesale attempts to overthrow the government. Mommsen did not hold back from passing what he saw to be appropriate judgments; thus, in examining the resisters’ motives, he found that not all were inspired by the highest humanitarian impulses. While there were certainly those who operated out of a sense of principled commitment, some were not convinced that democracy should follow Hitler and were interested only in exchanging the Nazi form of totalitarian state for another version; others operated from pragmatic self-interest; while yet others were thoroughly

indifferent or ambivalent toward the Nazi “Final Solution.” Recognizing that resistance to Nazism was itself commendable and virtuous, Mommsen’s consideration of the varied motives of those opposed to Nazism showed that there was little to be achieved in painting a purely black-and-white picture of such behavior.

Mommsen is perhaps best known, overall, for his position in the debate during the 1980s over the Nazi Holocaust, known in Germany as the *Historikerstreit* (“historians’ quarrel”). This was an intellectual and political controversy about the way the Holocaust should be interpreted, which split historians into two factions: the “functionalists,” who argued that the Holocaust evolved, somewhat chaotically, as a result of the nature of a Nazi administrative system that was both ideologically determined and placed under pressure as a result of the exigencies of war; and the “intentionalists,” who held that the Holocaust was preordained by Hitler, who had a plan for the Final Solution that long predated the outbreak of war in 1939.

Mommsen was a classic “functionalist” who viewed the onset of the Final Solution as part of a process of increasing escalation within a bureaucracy beset with internal rivalries. These rivalries saw the various departments competing with one another in escalating rounds of mounting antisemitic regulations between 1933 and 1941, culminating in the latter year. Hitler himself played a relatively minor role in all this, notwithstanding that he was an extreme antisemite who wanted to do *something* (though he was unclear as to what that might be) with the Jews. It was essentially the political conditions created by Hitler that led to the destruction of a normal orderly governmental process and prevented the political system from reestablishing some internal balance in the aftermath of the chaotic later Weimar years. Instead, what Mommsen described as a “cumulative radicalization process” formed, which made itself felt primarily in the field of racial (that is, antisemitic) politics.

The role of Hitler, in Mommsen’s view, was far from crucial. While Hitler was important on an ideological level—given that his insatiable hatred against the Jews formed the basis upon which the continuous escalation of anti-Jewish measures took place—his public utterances with respect to the so-called “Jewish Question” avoided any direct allusion to the ongoing annihilation process and were restricted to metaphors.

With regard to the root cause of the Holocaust—antisemitism—Mommsen posited that the Nazi version did not differ significantly from its forerunners in the late 19th century, meaning that something was needed in order to

give it the push needed to transform it into a genocidal ideology. What changed, in Mommsen’s view, were the intensity and the circumstances under which it became virulent. The Holocaust, therefore, was not the result of any ideological decision on the part of the Nazi hierarchy, and least of all on the part of Hitler. It was, rather, a political process, one that eventually led to the conclusion that there was no way out but to exterminate the Jews—and even this did not come into being before the second half of 1941.

Mommsen also argued that there were many respects in which the Holocaust was a unique event. As he saw it, however, this uniqueness did not create some form of exclusivity ranking the Holocaust higher than other atrocities. A comparative view is both possible and necessary, with the Holocaust as an extreme example of the decline of Western civilization and its descent into barbarity. He held, further, that future generations had to learn from the complexity of the experience of Nazi Germany in order to prevent the appearance of similar circumstances under which phenomena like the Holocaust might reappear. Comparative analysis and interdisciplinary historical research, in this sense, is the responsible thing to do.

In short, Mommsen’s overall perspective was that political and bureaucratic systems literally *create* genocides, while leaders establish the climate conducive to their realization and direct the activity while it is taking place.

By showing how the agencies of the state can become perverted, unstructured, mistrustful, and inefficient, Hans Mommsen highlighted an important matter for concern in a contemporary environment that has become more bureaucratic than ever before. Far from the Third Reich being a one-off phenomenon, Mommsen demonstrated how it was that Germany’s experience has a real relevance for the world today, and why constant attention to that time must be maintained as a warning for future generations. Hans Mommsen died on November 5, 2015.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: “Functionalists”; *Historikerstreit*; “Intentionalists”; Resistance Movements; Weimar Republic

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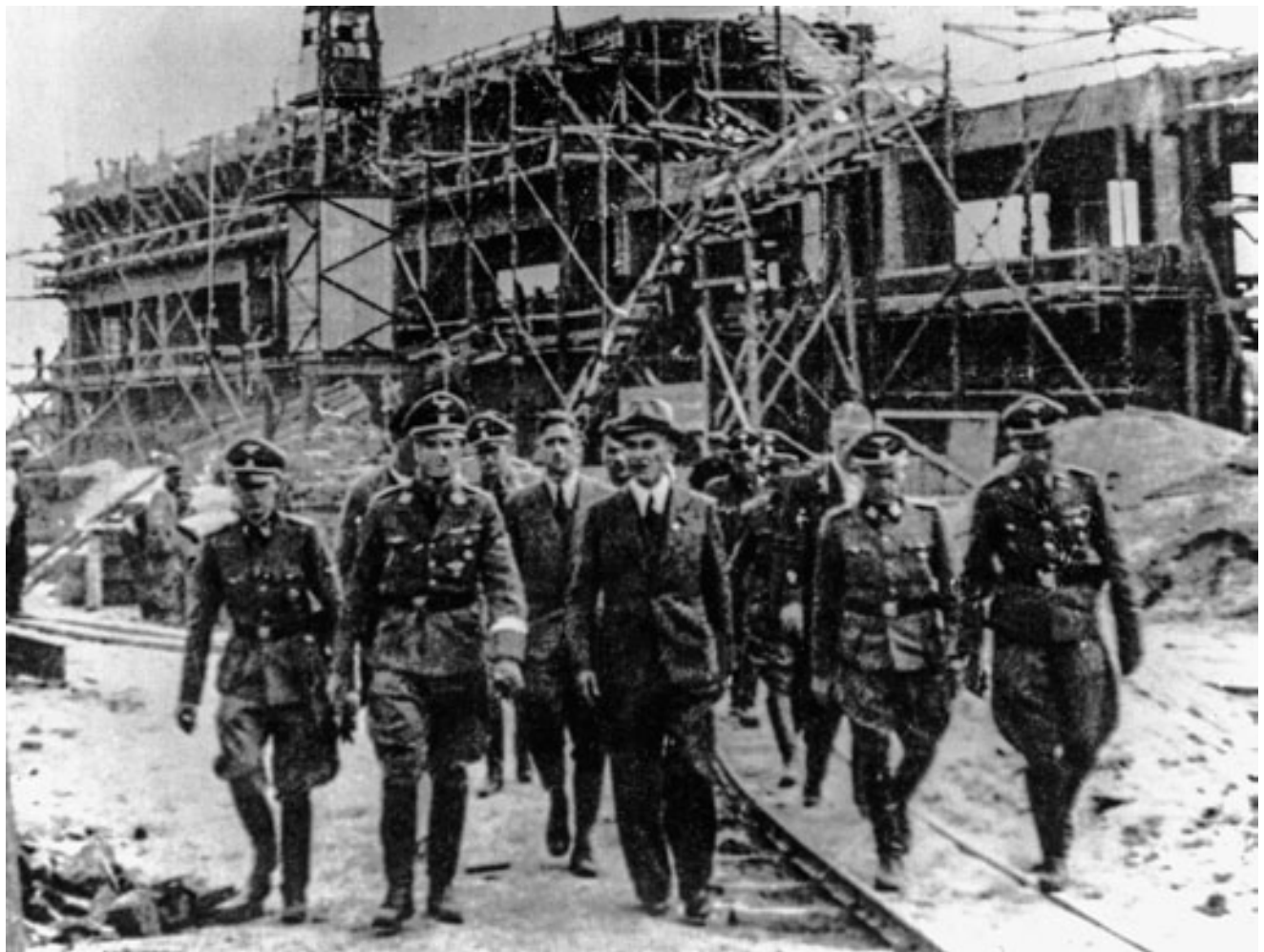
Monowitz

Monowitz was the name given to one of the three primary camps that, along with numerous subcamps, made up the Auschwitz complex. It was distinguished from the other camps by its focus on the provision of slave labor to a new chemical plant built by I.G. Farben in the same area as the other two primary Auschwitz camps. It was in operation

from October 1942 to January 1945, when it was liberated by the Soviet army.

The initiative for the camp came from I.G. Farben, Germany's largest corporation—actually, a cartel—and chemical manufacturer. It had decided to build a chemical plant not far from Auschwitz. More specifically, the plant was to be located on the site of the village of Monowice, in the southern part of the section of Poland that was annexed by Germany. This site offered all of the basics required for a major plant, including flat ground and access to water and rail lines.

I.G. Farben saw another reason—this one compelling—to build its plant where it did. It was located so that it could avail itself of the seemingly unlimited source of slave labor that could be provided by the nearby Auschwitz main camp. Building a concentration camp on site to house the slave



Monowitz, also known as Auschwitz III, was a component of the Auschwitz main camp embracing a complex of 45 subcamps in the surrounding area. The SS established the camp in October 1942 in order to accommodate a slave labor reserve for I.G. Farben's Buna industries, producing synthetic rubber for the German war effort. This was later expanded to a much larger range of production activities and industrial enterprises. In this image, SS leader Heinrich Himmler and other Nazi dignitaries are carrying out an inspection at Monowitz in 1942. (Galerie Bilderwelt/Getty Images)

labor that would be made available to construct and work in the chemical facility represented a significant financial incentive to I.G. Farben. The SS “leased” these prisoners to I.G. Farben for an extraordinarily low daily rate. As a result, a concentration camp was built by slave labor so that a corporate entity could profit from the ongoing Final Solution of the Jews. This explains why Monowitz has been referred to as I.G. Farben’s “corporate concentration camp.”

The camp was given several names over its years of operation. The primary product to be manufactured at the camp was “Buna,” a type of synthetic rubber named for two of its components: butadiene and sodium, which has the chemical symbol of NA. Thus, the camp was called Buna/Monowitz (and the plant built there, Buna Werk). Its name was later changed to reflect an administrative restructuring of the Auschwitz complex made in late 1943 to provide for three autonomous primary camps. Monowitz became Auschwitz III, with the main camp called Auschwitz I, and Birkenau, the extermination center, called Auschwitz II.

Although its initial group of prisoners came from other concentration camps, the main source of manpower for Monowitz came from Jews who had been sent to Auschwitz. The vast majority of Jews deported to Auschwitz went immediately to their death in the extermination center, Birkenau, but others were assigned to the main camp for slave labor, and still others were sent to Monowitz.

The proposal for a camp for the housing of “employees” and the building of industrial facilities was submitted by I.G. Farben to Rudolf Hoess, the Auschwitz commandant, in October 1941. The proposal was also submitted to the management and board of directors of I.G. Farben in early 1942, resulting in an agreement in June of that year to go forward with the construction of a concentration camp—more accurately, a labor camp—that would be the Monowitz concentration camp (*Konzentrationslager Monowitz*).

With the help of a major German engineering company—the Organisation Todt, named for the Nazi leader Fritz Todt—Monowitz was ready to receive its first group of prisoners at the end of October 1942. In December 1942 some 3,500 prisoners were housed in the Monowitz concentration camp, but that number grew to more than 11,000 by July 1944.

Monowitz was not headed by a commandant until the administrative restructuring in November 1943 that resulted in it being an autonomous camp. At that time, SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Schwarz was named commandant and served as such until January 1945. Prior to then, the camp was led by a *Lagerführer* (Camp Leader), SS-Obersturmführer Vinzens Schöttl.

Conditions in the Monowitz camp were in some ways better than in the Auschwitz main camp, with the possibility of working indoors, out of the elements, and even windows and heat in some of the barracks, but the overcrowded conditions, with poor sanitation, the constant risk of disease, and inadequate food took a heavy toll on the population. Prisoners were also subject to harsh production demands from factory supervisors, with failure to meet them resulting in beatings and sometimes death, either on the spot in Monowitz or by transfer to Birkenau.

With the Soviet army closing in, the entire Auschwitz complex, including Monowitz, was evacuated. This resulted in a death march that began on January 18, 1945, with thousands of Monowitz prisoners walking away from I.G. Farben’s corporate concentration camp. Few would survive.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; Hoess, Rudolf; I.G. Farben; I.G. Farben Case

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The Mortal Storm

A major Hollywood motion picture made in 1940, *The Mortal Storm*, based on a novel of the same name by British author Phyllis Bottome, was directed by Frank Borzage. It starred Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, and Robert Young. The focus of the film rests on the character of Martin Breitner (played by Stewart), a German who refuses to support Nazism. He falls in love with a Jewish woman named Freya Roth (played by Sullavan), to the condemnation of those around him in the small university town in the Bavarian Alps where the movie is set. *The Mortal Storm* shows how the Nazi ascent to power overturns the peace of the town, and its depiction of its subject is a commanding indictment of Nazism—indeed, one of the few effective anti-Nazi statements made by Hollywood prior to the entry of the United States into World War II in December 1941. The other film to stand out in this regard was Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator* (1940), though it was a satirical comedy, far removed from the drama of *The Mortal Storm*. Yet even here, the filmmakers stopped short of realistic condemnation; Germany is

not mentioned by name in the movie (other than a single reference at the very beginning), nor is the word Nazi. The designation “Jew,” to describe the very people being persecuted, is not heard at any point in *The Mortal Storm*. It is implied that Freya Roth is Jewish, but only the term “non-Aryan” is employed. The movie was a success critically and commercially but was proscribed in Germany. The Nazi government, having threatened MGM studios not to proceed with making the film, banned all MGM movies after the release of *The Mortal Storm*; this ban was not lifted until after World War II.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: *The Great Dictator*; Universities, Complicity in the Holocaust; Upstander

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Moscow Declaration

The Moscow Declaration was issued by U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt, British prime minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in Moscow, on November 1, 1943. It called for the punishment of all German officers, soldiers, and members of the Nazi Party who were responsible for or had taken part in atrocities, massacres, and mass executions. War criminals were to be sent back to the countries where they had committed their crimes, while other criminals, whose offenses had no particular geographical location, would be punished by a joint decision of the Allies. No distinction was made in the Moscow Declaration between war crimes proper and crimes that would later be referred to as crimes against humanity.

Although it had become apparent from the very beginning of World War II that German troops were waging a ruthless war and ignoring the established rules of warfare, the issue of the punishment of these perpetrators had not been an important point on the agenda of the Allied governments. The first denunciations of war crimes came from the governments in exile of Czechoslovakia and Poland and finally led to the Declaration of St. James in January 1942. The governments of Great Britain and the United States, however, were reluctant to be too specific in their condemnations of German war crimes as long as the Germans retained

the power to retaliate against Allied prisoners of war in their possession. After the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 and mounting atrocities on the Eastern Front and in German-occupied areas, public pressure on the two governments to be more specific as to the punishment of war criminals at the end of the war grew stronger. That finally led to the establishment of the United Nations War Crimes Commission and to the Moscow Declaration.

In spite of the repeated emphasis on concerted action to be taken by the Allies, the Soviet government decided, in December 1943, to hold the first war crimes trials of German war criminals on the Eastern Front, the famous Kharkov trials. After that, however, no further trials against war criminals took place until the end of the war, largely because the Soviets were worried that the Germans would retaliate against prisoners or civilians in occupied areas. As to the fate of the major Nazi leaders, the three governments were still unsure about what was to be done, except that their fate would be subsequently determined by a joint decision. This was not a subtle propaganda ploy intended to create suspicion or facilitate capitulation; rather, neither the British nor American governments had reached a final decision on what was to be done with major war criminals until the early months of 1945.

The formula chosen in the Moscow Declaration therefore left the fate of the major war criminals open. Churchill, U.S. diplomat Henry Morgenthau, and for some time Stalin, favored summary executions, while U.S. secretary of state Henry Stimson and many legal specialists clearly favored punishment of war criminals through the channels of organized justice, some favoring the creation of an international criminal court, others national, mixed, or military tribunals. The Moscow Declaration furthermore addressed only the traditional range of war crimes and the accompanying phenomena later categorized as “crimes against humanity.”

Aggressive war was at that time not considered a separate crime, though Stalin declared a few days after the announcement of the Moscow Declaration that the Allies must adopt measures to ensure that all fascist criminals responsible for the unleashing of war be punished. Stalin’s plea was taken up by the Commission on the Punishment of War Criminals of the London International Assembly and supported by some legal specialists such as Hans Kelsen and Vaclav Benes, but neither the UN War Crimes Commission nor the governments of the Western Allies were ready to accept such an idea up to the London Conference of 1945.

DANIEL MARC SEGESSER

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Kharkov Trial; London Charter Agreement; Nuremberg Trials; War Crimes

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Müller, Heinrich

Heinrich Müller was head of the Gestapo and one of the principal architects of the “Final Solution.” As chief of the Gestapo, he and his subordinate, Adolf Eichmann, directed the investigation, collection, and deportation of Jews and various other groups deemed socially, racially, and politically undesirable to ghettos, concentration camps, and later death camps.

Müller was born on April 28, 1900, in Munich, Germany. During World War I he served as a spotter pilot and was awarded numerous decorations for his military service. In 1919 he joined the Munich police force and was active in quashing communist uprisings in the aftermath of World War I. He later became head of the political branch of the Munich police and became acquainted with several high-ranking Nazi Party members, including Reinhard Heydrich and Heinrich Himmler. Müller despised communism and was a hard taskmaster to those who worked under him—qualities that endeared him to the Nazis, even if Müller himself had been reluctant to join the movement. Unimpressed with political philosophies of any sort, Müller was the archetypal mid-level bureaucrat who did what he was instructed to do. He finally joined the Nazi Party in 1939, but only because he realized that doing so would enhance his chances of promotion to higher office. That same year he became chief of the Gestapo.

Müller was a key participant at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, at which Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) and Müller’s superior, announced a directive passed down from Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, tapping him to oversee the development and implementation of the Final Solution. For his part, the Gestapo deported, conservatively, 3.8 million Jews to their deaths throughout the course of the Holocaust between 1939 and

1945. Moreover, Gestapo functionaries served as vital intelligence links, reporting Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads) actions on the Eastern Front to Adolf Hitler.

In addition to Müller’s integral role in orchestrating the mass logistics of the Final Solution, he was also involved in a variety of other criminal and counterespionage affairs within the Third Reich. He was, for example, instrumental in fabricating cases against Werner von Blomberg, war minister, and Werner von Fritsch, commander in chief of the Wehrmacht, in 1938. Both men were forced from office. A year later, Müller assisted in staging a “Polish” assault on the Sender Gleiwitz radio station (one facet of Operation Himmler) that provided Hitler with the pretense to invade Poland on September 1, 1939, thereby initiating World War II. Müller also headed the criminal investigation of Heydrich’s assassination (Operation Anthropoid, May 1942), successfully tracking down his killers. In addition, he received the Knight’s Cross and the War Service Cross with Swords for his quick and brutal interrogation of the members of the July 1944 Bomb Plot to kill Hitler. Müller was also heavily involved in counterintelligence operations that funneled misinformation to the Soviet Union throughout the war.

Müller was highly regarded for his blind obedience, remorselessness, fanatical dedication to the task at hand, and the ruthless efficiency with which he carried out his duties. Because of his late entrance into the Nazi Party, some high-ranking party members questioned his ideological commitment, viewing him merely as an opportunist. Nevertheless, he remained among the last to depart the Führerbunker as Allied troops converged on it in 1945; witnesses testified that they saw him last on April 28, 1945. His fate remains a mystery. Müller’s disappearance has been the subject of much speculation and investigation by West German police, the Central Intelligence Agency, and British intelligence agencies. The 1960 discovery of his subordinate, Adolf Eichmann, in Argentina, revived conjecture over Müller’s fate, suggesting that perhaps he also had fled to South America. Burial documents from a Berlin cemetery indicated that his body had been reinterred there; however, the exhumed remains could not be definitively identified as his. As of this writing, the ongoing appearance of newly discovered Russian archival records may yet shed light on Müller’s fate.

JASON C. ENGLE

See also: Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Eichmann, Adolf; Einsatzgruppen; Final Solution; Gestapo; Ghettos; Göring, Hermann; Heydrich, Reinhard; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Wannsee Conference

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Münch, Hans

Hans Münch was an SS doctor stationed at Auschwitz between 1943 and 1945. His is a classic case of a conflicted Nazi who was committed to doing his duty but who at the same time drew an ethical line when it came to the mass murder of Jews. His resistance to the dictates of Nazi ideology was selective, but for the Jews he saved it was vitally necessary.

He was born in 1911. Having studied at the universities of Tübingen and Munich, Münch became associated with the Nazi Party as a student, conscious that alignment would be necessary for his employment prospects. Accordingly, he joined the National Socialist German Students' League in 1934. Three years later, in May 1937, he joined the Nazi Party, and in 1939 he qualified as a medical doctor.

At the start of World War II he sought to enlist in the German army, but this was denied on the ground that the civilian need for medical practitioners had to be met. As a result, he worked as a doctor in rural areas in Bavaria, covering for other doctors already serving. Denied the opportunity of serving in a combat unit, he was persuaded by a friend, Dr. Bruno Weber, that if he really wanted to serve he could do so by joining the SS. Upon his successful application in June 1943, he was ordered to report to a Waffen-SS unit stationed at Kraków. He was not expecting, nor was he aware of, the existence of Auschwitz nearby.

Münch was assigned to the SS Hygiene Institute in Raisko, outside the Auschwitz main camp. Here, he was assigned to undertake bacteriological research under the direction of his friend Dr. Bruno Weber.

Münch's work involved bacteriological research, especially involving typhus. As a medical doctor, he was also responsible for general health in the barracks, meaning that from time to time he was obliged to visit the camp itself. When visiting the camp, he was called upon to make "selections" of prisoners when trainloads arrived. This involved a cursory medical inspection to see who was fit enough to work and who would be consigned immediately to death in the gas chambers. The chief of the medical staff at Auschwitz, Dr. Josef Mengele, told him that his cooperation in this task was mandatory. Shocked, Münch went to Berlin immediately

and spoke to the head of the SS Hygiene Institute there, saying that this was an assignment he would not undertake, "regardless of the consequences." The result was that his superiors in Berlin interceded and he was absolved from making selections.

This placed Münch in the category of an unusual Nazi within the SS structure at Auschwitz. Moreover, he showed himself to be friendly toward the prisoners, with a personal interest in those around him. Despite his rare attitudes and demeanor, in mid-1944 he received promotion to SS-Untersturmführer (second lieutenant).

Although he refused to conduct selections at Auschwitz, Münch did continue with his human experimentation. He soon realized that within the camp female prisoners were the most vulnerable; once experimentation on them was completed, they were very quickly expendable. Münch could not accept that human beings should be disposed of this way. His approach was to expand the scope and duration of the experiments, such that the women involved could be kept alive for longer periods of time, and thus, perhaps, escape a sudden and horrible death.

He also tried to make prisoners' lives more bearable. He would sometimes visit those who were sick and in the infirmary and, on other occasions, find ways to add to their stocks of food.

In January 1945, with the war coming to an end, Auschwitz was evacuated. Münch was reassigned to Dachau in his home state of Bavaria. The surviving prisoners who had known him were also taken to Dachau, where Weber and Münch compiled a list of former Raisko Institute workers who had accompanied them. Within days they were moved to a less crowded barrack, and a laboratory was established where they resumed their former duties. Upon learning that there might be a further transfer to yet another camp, Münch spoke with the prisoners about a possible escape. One of his ideas was that he would take them through the main gate and then provide them with SS uniforms. Another idea, from the prisoners themselves, was that they would accept going on the new transport train and later escape into the mountains near Switzerland. Münch, remarkably, gave the prisoners a revolver and ammunition for protection in the event of a shootout. He then shook hands with each of the prisoners and wished them good luck and an early freedom. Survivors from that attempt later vouched for his efforts on their behalf.

With the end of the war, Münch went home. He surrendered to the occupation authorities in 1946 and spent nearly a year in prison while awaiting and undergoing a trial in

Kraków. Many former prisoners testified in his support, with letters confirming that he set up false experiments and prolonged them in order to save prisoners' lives, and that he did not make selections. The court duly acquitted him on December 22, 1947. Of the 40 Auschwitz staff on trial in Kraków, he was the only person acquitted of war crimes.

On January 27, 1995, on the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Münch returned to Auschwitz at the behest of Eva Mozes Kor, a survivor of Mengele's experiments on twins. Münch took the opportunity to prepare and sign a document verifying that the gas chambers had existed:

I . . . hereby attest that as an SS physician on duty in

Auschwitz in 1944, I witnessed the selection process of those who were to live and those who were to die. Other SS physicians on duty in the camps made selections at the barracks. I was exempt from performing selections because I had refused to do so.

I further attest that I saw thousands of people gassed here at Auschwitz. . . .

I am signing this paper of my own free will to help document the cruel intolerance of my fellow SS.

I, a former SS Physician, witnessed the dropping of Zyklon B into simulated exhaust vents from outside the gas chambers. Zyklon B began to work as soon as it was released from the canisters. The effects of the gas were observed through a peephole by an assigned doctor of the SS officer on duty. After three to five minutes, death could be certified, and the doors were opened as a sign that the corpses were cleared to be burned.

This is the nightmare I continue to live with fifty years later.

I am so sorry that in some way I was part of it. Under the prevailing circumstances I did the best I could to save as many lives as possible. Joining the SS was a mistake. I was young. I was an opportunist. And once I joined, there was no way out.

Dr. Hans Münch was a Nazi who resisted the Holocaust. Known to those around him as "the Good Man of Auschwitz," he was celebrated in *The Nazi Doctors*, a book by author Robert Jay Lifton, as "a human being in an SS uniform." It could be concluded that, in Auschwitz, Münch was placed in a thoroughly dishonorable position—and he did what he could to remain honorable. His actions demonstrate, moreover, that at times there were ways in which one could defy Nazism without suffering severe consequences.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Dachau; Medical Experimentation; Mengele, Josef; Upstander

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Munich Agreement

In September 1938 one of the greatest examples of surrendering to bullying on the international stage took place when Britain and France sacrificed the democratic state of Czechoslovakia on the altar of the policy that became known as appeasement, in the hope that they could buy off Adolf Hitler and thus avoid having to confront him in a war they were not physically prepared to fight. By not standing up to him, however, all they did was to encourage him to continue with his campaign of intimidation and threats. Every time the Western powers surrendered to some new demand, Hitler was inspired to reach even higher, firm in his belief that he could get what he wanted at no cost to himself.

The Munich Agreement was signed on September 30, 1938, by Germany, Great Britain, France, and Italy. It permitted Nazi Germany's annexation of the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia, an area populated by about 3 million German-speaking people who had never belonged to Germany. As early as May 1938 it was known that Hitler and his generals had their eyes set on Czechoslovakia, while the Czechs, in turn, relied on alliances with France and the Soviet Union to counter German threats. As the year progressed, however, it became clear that France (and its ally, Britain) was unprepared to defend Czechoslovakia. There was a desperate desire to avoid a military confrontation with Germany—at any price.

In order to keep the peace, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain made three trips during the month of September to see Hitler: on September 15 he went to see Hitler at the Führer's mountain retreat at Berchtesgaden; on September 22 he went to a second meeting at Bad Godesberg, not far from Cologne; and finally, he went to Munich on September 29. In each case, he discussed the situation personally with Hitler, offering whatever concessions it would take to stop Germany from going to war.



The Munich Agreement, signed on September 30, 1938, saw Nazi Germany annex the Sudetenland regions of Czechoslovakia as a result of negotiations conducted in Munich between Germany, Britain, France, and Italy. This agreement, which condemned Czechoslovakia as a viable state, is considered the high point of appeasement, after which Europe would be set on a course for war given Hitler's encouragement that the Western Allies would not intervene in his plans. The image here shows Hitler shaking hands at the meeting with the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain. (AP Photo)

By the time of the third trip, Chamberlain proposed that a four-power conference be convened to settle the issue, and on that final occasion Hitler, Chamberlain, the French premier Edouard Daladier, and the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini met right in the heart of the Führer's lair in the Bavarian capital. They agreed that Germany would annex Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, with an international commission to decide the future of other disputed areas.

The Czech government of Edvard Beneš played no role in these discussions and was simply informed of developments. Two Czech delegates were denied access to the Munich meeting and were kept under virtual house arrest in their hotel until the agreement had been signed. Britain and France simply informed the Czechs that there were two options: they could either resist Germany alone or submit to the German

invasion of their sovereign territory. So that Britain and France would not have to confront the Nazis, this small democratic nation would have to pay the price they demanded, and Czechs were left to suffer the ultimate punishment for merely existing, as their country was dismembered in tears and sorrow.

Before returning to London, Chamberlain paid Hitler a personal visit in his Munich apartment. He took with him a short note declaring that the two nations agreed henceforth to always resolve their differences through consultation rather than war. Offering this to Hitler, Chamberlain then signed it. Hitler signed too, reputedly telling one of those in his circle later that the British prime minister seemed like such a nice old gentleman he was pleased to offer him his autograph.

Upon his return to London, Chamberlain was met at Heston Airport by jubilant crowds, relieved that the threat of war had passed. The prime minister informed the British public that he had achieved “peace with honor,” saying that he believed the settlement would bring “peace for our time.” A few months later, on March 15, 1939, the hollowness of this promise was revealed when Hitler marched his troops into what was left of Czechoslovakia and snuffed out the little country without a hand being raised to defend it.

It was little wonder that Winston Churchill, then a backbencher seemingly at the end of his political career, could state that the impact of Munich would not mean peace with honor, but war with dishonor. Six months after the invasion of “rump Czechoslovakia,” on September 1, 1939, Hitler tried his bullying tactics one time too many, invading Poland in the firm belief that the democracies would again back down. This time, of course, they did not—and World War II was set in motion.

For the Jews of Czechoslovakia, none of this passed without chilling fear and apprehension. Seemingly within minutes of the Nazi invasion, the full weight of Nazi antisemitic laws was imposed on Czechoslovakia’s Jews, leading to a desperate search for some sort of haven. By this time, however, with the Evian Conference of earlier in the year a bad memory, the doors of entry for Jews were being closed all over the world—a situation that would only get worse in the year after Munich.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Czechoslovakia; France; Italy; Segerstedt, Torgny; Shirer, William L.; Slovakia

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Museum of Tolerance

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is an international human rights organization founded in 1977 and named for Simon Wiesenthal, an Austrian Jewish Holocaust survivor and, later, a famed Nazi hunter. The center, which is headquartered in Los Angeles, California, operates the Museum of

Tolerance; this is also located in Los Angeles, with two smaller museums in New York and Jerusalem. The center’s core mission is to foster tolerance and fight bigotry and racism, with its major focus on the Holocaust. The Los Angeles museum opened in 1993 at a cost of \$50 million. The center sponsors educational programs and research covering bigotry, intolerance, antisemitism, and terrorism, and is also committed to defending Jewish interests internationally and advancing knowledge of the Holocaust. The center maintains offices in New York, Miami, Toronto, Buenos Aires, Paris, and Jerusalem.

The main office in Los Angeles features archives and a library with some 50,000 volumes and other materials. The Wiesenthal Center also sponsors various permanent and periodical publications, including a comprehensive, seven-volume work on the Holocaust, published between 1984 and 1990. In keeping with its namesake, the organization has also been involved in identifying and tracking down former Nazis who were involved in crimes against the Jewish people. In addition, the center is involved in local, national, and international politics that affect or are affected by Jews and the center’s mission.

The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles attracts as many as 350,000 visitors per year, about a third of whom are school-age children. The facility has many exhibits and interactive displays featuring the latest technologies. Much of the museum is dedicated to multimedia presentations and exhibits; traditional historical artefacts are not a mainstay of the facility. Some critics have asserted that there is an overreliance on technology, which blunts the effects of the Holocaust and draws attention away from exhibits. Others, however, argue that the modern generation of school-age children is used to multimedia technology and therefore expects it. The two smaller museums located in New York and Jerusalem are modeled after the Los Angeles facility. The New York museum also sponsors programs for law enforcement personnel, educators, and other public figures that help instruct them to recognize bigotry and intolerance and stop them before they become a problem. More than 10,000 people have gone through the New York program.

ABRAHAM COOPER

See also: Museums and Memorials; Wiesenthal, Simon

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Museums and Memorials

There are currently more than 130 significant Holocaust museums and memorial sites located throughout the world, located in 23 different countries. France has the most, with more than 50; the United States ranks second, with 33 such facilities. Museum facilities invariably include a building or buildings designed to preserve the history of the Holocaust, house artifacts, and narrate particular aspects of the Holocaust. Memorials, on the other hand, which are more numerous, typically include monuments, plaques, fountains, sculptures, statuary, parks, and other public spaces designed to memorialize the Holocaust or some specific aspect of it or people associated with it. Memorials can also include financial endowments, organizations, scholarships, and the like. There are many hundreds of these types of memorials, usually established by individuals with some connection to or interest in the Holocaust.

Among the most notable museums are the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which opened in 1993 and is located in Washington, D.C. The museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau is perhaps the most moving and influential because it is located on the site of the notorious Nazi death camp and incorporates some of its buildings and facilities. These include the rail line that led Jews and others to the camp during World War II, the infamous gas chamber, clothing and personal articles from the hundreds of thousands who were killed there, a 98-foot-long display of human hair collected from the dead by the Nazis, and the gallows where Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz, was hanged in 1947. In 2009 the shameful sign that hung above the camp's entrance, *Arbeit Macht Frei* ("Work Makes You Free"), was stolen but recovered several days later. It had been cut into several pieces but was otherwise unharmed. It has been replaced by a replica while the original sign is located in a secure display case inside the facility.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was designed to be the largest and principal Holocaust museum in the United States. It was funded with federal tax dollars and private contributions. Sitting adjacent to the National Mall, the facility is also dedicated to the prevention of genocide, the eradication of racism and intolerance, and the promotion of democratic ideals. It employs 400 full-time employees and over 650 volunteers. The museum is home to nearly 13,000 artifacts, 80,000 photographs, some 1,000

hours of archival film and footage, 9,000 oral histories, 49 million pages of archival documents, and 85,000 library items. It is intended to be used by scholars and researchers as well as the general public. Between 1993 and 2010 more than 30 million people had visited the facility, and the museum's extensive website averages nearly 30 million visits per year. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is the most-visited Holocaust museum in the world.

Another notable Holocaust memorial and museum is Yad Vashem, the Israeli government's official memorial to Holocaust victims and survivors, located on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. It contains both memorial sites, including the Hall of Remembrance and Children's Memorial, as well as various plaques, statuary, and museums, including one for Holocaust art, an educational center, research archives, library, and other facilities. It is visited by more than one million people per year. In 2005 a new—and much larger—museum was dedicated on the same site, which serves not only as a Holocaust memorial but also as a place in which hatred, racism, intolerance, and all genocides may be better understood and prevented.

Other notable Holocaust museums include the Museo della Shoah (Rome), the Anne Frank House (Amsterdam), the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre (Nottinghamshire, England), the Montreal Memorial Holocaust Centre (Montreal), the Museum of Resistance and Deportation (Besaçon, France), and the Museum of Jewish Heritage (New York City).

Memorials to the Holocaust are many and range from objects as small as a plaque or small stone to huge outdoor venues and even entire parks. One of the largest—and perhaps most moving—of these memorials is the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, located in Berlin, Germany. The huge memorial covers 4.7 acres of land and consists of 2,711 large concrete slabs situated on a gently sloping field in a grid fashion. Dedicated in 2005 and designed by Peter Eisenman, the memorial is intended to overwhelm the senses with its size and scope, emulating the overwhelming enormity of the Holocaust itself.

In Budapest, the famous Shoes on the Danube Promenade, which consists of dozens of bronze shoes on the bank of the Danube River, is meant to memorialize the many Jews who were murdered in the city during World War II. Before they were shot and their bodies dumped into the river, authorities ordered victims to remove their shoes. Another notable memorial, located at the Klooga Concentration Camp (Estonia), serves as a reminder of the thousands who lost their lives there during World War II. The Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial in Vienna, Austria, an austere steel and concrete structure

that resembles a windowless tomb covered by seemingly endless rows of books with no titles, memorializes the 65,000 Austrian Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Anne Frank House; *Arbeit Macht Frei*; Auschwitz; France; Museum of Tolerance; Topography of Terror; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Vittel; Yad Vashem

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Music and the Holocaust

In the field of Holocaust studies, much attention (and rightly so) is paid to the horror and unfathomable circumstances of the Nazi era. Yet even in an atmosphere of despair, death, and brutality, hope and beauty could still be found. Against all odds, music flourished in this troubled environment. The Nazi regime used music for propaganda, military purposes, to promote “Aryan” supremacy, and in support of the mass murder of the Jews. The discussion here focuses on the music used as a way to rise above Nazi tyranny and that spiritually and emotionally bolstered the victims of the regime.

Music was very much a part of life in the camps and ghettos of Nazi-era Europe. While pieces popular before the war remained popular, new works were also written. New songs ranged in topic from reminiscences of home and family, to hope for better days, and reflections of places and events from the past. Loss and longing for freedom and better times also played a part in newly composed songs. Humorous pieces were also a large part of this new output; examples of these more light-hearted pieces come from the Westerbork concentration camp in the Netherlands, where cabaret performances frequently took place.

In addition to folk-style songs and cabaret pieces, classical music also had a significant role in the camps and ghettos. Beyond pieces from the standard classical repertoire from prior to the war (including chamber works, orchestral works, solo instrument works, opera arias, and art songs), newly composed instrumental and vocal works also became an integral part of musical performances. Prisoners from the concentration camp at Terezín (Theresienstadt), located outside Prague, were especially noted for their contributions to the world of classical music.

In 2005 University of Michigan history professor Shirli Gilbert produced a book titled *Music in the Holocaust*, which was the first major study in English of the role of music among communities in the Nazi regime. She discussed a broad range of musical activities, including orchestras and chamber groups, choirs, theaters, cabarets, and informal music gatherings in some of the most important internment centers in Nazi-occupied Europe. She included not only places such as Auschwitz but also examined the important role of music in ghettos such as Warsaw and Vilna. The study of music, she concluded, opens a unique window on the internal world of the communities that were destroyed by the Nazis and provides insights into how the people of the time interpreted and responded to their experiences.

Musical performances took place in various settings after Nazi decrees and the Nuremberg Laws took effect. In Berlin, the *Kulturbund* allowed Jews to perform concerts to Jewish audiences and kept musical culture alive until 1941. In the ghettos, music making took place everywhere, including street corners, where songs were sung about life in the ghetto. Many of these lyrics were set to preexisting folk or traditional melodies.

Organized performances fell under the censorship of the Nazi officials. The music of certain composers was forbidden from the public sphere; all Jewish composers (like Felix Mendelssohn, Benny Goodman, George Gershwin, and Arnold Schoenberg, to name a few) were completely off limits. Non-Jewish composers like Claude Debussy and Alban Berg were also banned, the former having married a Jew, the latter considered a political dissident. Music considered too provocative or explicit, like that of Paul Hindemith and Igor Stravinsky, was also banned. Banned music fell under the term “degenerate.” However, in the camps themselves, pieces written by Jewish composers were allowed to be performed. In Terezín, pieces by Mendelssohn as well as pieces on Jewish subjects were common.

An abundance of music exists from these camps and ghettos. In the Warsaw Ghetto, a virtuoso brass player, Adam Furmanski, organized small orchestras in cafés and soup kitchens. A symphonic orchestra played in the ghetto until April 1942, when the Nazi authorities closed it down for—in this instance—performing works by German composers, which Jews were not permitted to do. In Łódź, the head of the Jewish Council, Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, oversaw musical activities and arranged for the adaptation of the community center to enable musical and theatrical performances, a symphony orchestra, and the famous Zamir choral society (which itself dated back to 1899). In the Kraków ghetto, chamber and liturgical music selections were

performed. The Vilna ghetto had an extensive program of musical activities, with a symphony orchestra, several choirs, and a conservatory with 100 students. A revue theater presented many popular songs about ghetto life.

Among the best-known songs composed and performed during the Shoah came from the Vilna ghetto. The best-known of these is “*Zog nit keyn-mol*” (“Never Say,” also known as the “*Partisaner lied*,” or “Song of the Partisans”). This song, written by Hirsh Glik, expresses the courage of the Jewish partisans during World War II. Inspired by the story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, the song remains a powerful tribute to the commitment of the Jewish people to fighting for their survival. This particular song has become popular in Holocaust commemorations performed around the world.

Music in the camps served various purposes. Many of the death camps included orchestras of prisoners, whom the Nazis forced to play music for arriving Jews, for those marching to work, and for those marching to their deaths in the gas chambers. These orchestras were also forced to act as entertainment for Nazi officers at the end of the day or week. Auschwitz became known for their camp orchestras; at one point the camp had six orchestras with the largest, located at Auschwitz I, containing approximately 50 members. In Birkenau, the women’s orchestra included about 36 musicians and eight music transcribers. This orchestra, under the direction of Alma Rosé (the niece of Gustav Mahler and daughter of famed violinist Arnold Rosé), became known for their performances. Another Auschwitz prisoner, the French singer Fania Fénelon, was also closely involved with this orchestra. The death camps at Treblinka, Majdanek, Bełżec, and Sobibór were all known to have orchestras made up of Jewish prisoners, who also played—under direction, of course—for the pleasure of Nazi camp personnel.

The concentration camp of Terezín became famous for its plethora of musical and artistic life. Czech, German, and Dutch musicians were all interred in this former fortress town in the northwest Czech Republic. A jazz band called the Ghetto Swingers performed in the camp’s main square; cabarets and operas were also prevalent. Original classical music compositions also became prominent here. Viktor Ullmann headed a Studio for New Music and composed piano sonatas, string quartets, and an opera titled *The Emperor of Atlantis*. Composer Hans Krása created one of the most performed pieces in the camp, the children’s opera *Brundibár*. This opera, along with a performance of Verdi’s Requiem under conductor Rafael Schächter, was performed when the International Red Cross visited Terezín in June 1944.

In Westerbork, classical music concerts also took place; however, Westerbork became especially known for its cabarets. Six cabaret productions took place between July 1943 and June 1944 and used cabaret songs from Berlin and Vienna. Two Jewish cabaret artists, Willy Rosen and Max Ehrlich, produced many of these performances. One of the most famous songs to come out of Westerbork was the “Westerbork Serenade” by Max Kannewasser and Arnold van Wesel. The duo, more popularly known as Johnny and Jones, recorded “Westerbork Serenade” under the order of the Nazi officials at the camp.

In addition to music from the camps and ghettos, music and Holocaust studies also include those Jewish musicians who went into hiding or were not in the camps for various reasons. Władysław Szpilman, whose autobiography *The Pianist* would become the inspiration behind the film of the same name, remained in hiding during the war with the help of various colleagues and eventually a Nazi officer by the name of Wilm Hosenfeld. Szpilman played Chopin’s Nocturne in C-sharp minor for Hosenfeld after the latter found him in an abandoned building; Hosenfeld assisted Szpilman until he was liberated. The motion picture *The Pianist* (Roman Polanski, 2002) was one of the first major commercial successes to shed light on the subject of music and the Holocaust.

Since the Holocaust, those who remained have picked up the musical legacy left by those who did not survive. A post-Holocaust musical tradition has been generated in the name of the victims by such composers as Krzysztof Penderecki, composer of *Dies Irae* (1967), a memorial to the victims of Auschwitz; Dmitri Shostakovich, whose symphony *Babi Yar* (1962) commemorates the victims of the massacre near the city of Kiev; Arnold Schönberg, who wrote *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947); and Charles Davidson, whose *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (1968) is based on the collection of poetry written by the children of Terezín. Even during World War II itself, British composer Michael Tippett wrote *A Child of Our Time*, an oratorio featuring the life of Herschel Grynszpan, the Jewish teenager whose actions in late 1938 precipitated the Kristallnacht—arguably, as some have said, “the day the Holocaust began.”

More recent musical events have also continued the legacy and memory of those whose lives were brutally ended during the Holocaust. Composer Peter Nocella’s 2002 *Missa Brevis* commemorates the Martyrs of Nowogródek, 11 nuns from the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth who were killed by the Nazis in the woods of modern-day Belarus. Two concert dramas created by conductor Murry Sidlin, *Defiant Requiem* (premiered 2002) and *Hours of Freedom* (premiered 2015), tell the story of the musicians from Terezín.

Defiant Requiem honors the 16 performances of Verdi's Requiem conducted by Rafael Schächter, and *Hours of Freedom* introduces audiences to the stories and music of many lesser known classical music composers from the camp. In 2008 Kalin and Sharon Tchonev created the Songs of Life Festival to commemorate the rescue of Bulgarian Jews during the war. These are just a few examples of musical commemorations of the Holocaust in the 21st century.

The stories of Jewish musicians during the time period and the examples of music from the camps and ghettos are numerous. In 2013 the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum released findings of a study that found there were 42,500 camps and ghettos throughout Europe; this after an extensive study to document the names of these places. For music and the Holocaust, this means there is so much we have yet to discover. What is clear is that music allowed those under tyranny to keep hope alive, keep faith alive, and have a connection to their homelands and cultures. Viktor Ullmann, in addition to his many musical compositions, also wrote 26 music critiques and three essays detailing performances in Terezín. In a 1944 essay titled *Goethe und Ghetto*, he said: "To emphasize that I have been in my musical work sponsored by Theresienstadt and not inhibited, that we did not merely sit lamenting by the waters of Babylon and that our culture was equal to our will to live—I am convinced that those who have sought to wrest a reluctant substance from form in life and art will prove me right." Despite being surrounded by the worst of humanity, these musicians and artists found a way to showcase the best of humanity through their artistic and musical talent.

KAREN L. USLIN

See also: Art and the Holocaust; Death Camps; Łódź Ghetto; *The Pianist*; Propaganda in the Holocaust; Rosé, Alma; Theresienstadt; Vilna Ghetto; Wagner, Richard; Warsaw Ghetto

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Mussert, Anton Adriaan

Anton Adriaan Mussert, a Dutch engineer, was the best-known fascist in the Netherlands before and during World War II. Mussert founded the National Socialist Movement in

the Netherlands (*Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland*, or NSB) in 1931, which became a major political party in the 1930s. As the leading member of the party, Mussert was partially responsible for contributions to the Nederlandsche SS, the Dutch version of the German SS, which was responsible for the deportation of 100,000 Dutch Jews to concentration and extermination camps in Germany and Poland, and the murder of Dutch citizens during Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

Born on May 11, 1894, in Werkendam, a small village in north Netherlands, Mussert was the fourth child of a primary school headmaster, Joannes Leonardus Mussert. In 1914, following the beginning of World War I, 20-year-old Mussert volunteered for the Dutch army but was overruled due to health issues a year later. By 1918 he had become a civil engineer at the Department of Waterways and Public Works and was then promoted to the Provincial Waterworks Utrecht in 1920. Interested in politics from an early age, Mussert joined several far-right nationalist political organizations, including the *Dietsche Bond*.

On December 14, 1931, Mussert, Cornelis van Geelkerken, a fellow Dutch nationalist, and 10 others founded the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging*, or National Socialist movement, the Dutch equivalent to Germany's Nazis. As appointed leader, Mussert took great inspiration from Italy's fascist leader Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler in Germany. At a rally in Utrecht in 1933, the National Socialist Movement attracted a crowd of only 600; a year later, the Dutch National Socialists were rallying at an event in Amsterdam with nearly 25,000 supporters.

The Dutch National Socialists, with Mussert at the helm, received 300,000 votes in the 1935 Parliamentary election. However, at the following election in 1937 they received less than half that number. Without much influence remaining, Mussert dedicated his time as a spurned politician to encourage a German invasion.

On May 10, 1940, the Germans invaded the Netherlands. Within days, 800 NSB members were released from prison, and Mussert was given permission by the Nazis to suppress all Dutch political parties other than his own. With increasing German influence, the NSB became progressively more antisemitic. NSB numbers grew, and Mussert, as the leader of the only acceptable political party in the Netherlands, did his best to pull himself up into the highest ranks of political influence, hoping to be appointed to prime minister by the Nazis.

Much to his dismay, Mussert was rejected for the post of prime minister, and his pleas for a Netherlands independent

of Germany went unheeded. The Nazis were not leaving the Netherlands to its own devices. Instead, they appointed Austrian Nazi Arthur Seyss-Inquart as leader during the continued German occupation, surpassing Mussert entirely and snatching away his power privileges. Mussert agreed to have NSB members train with the Dutch SS troops, which led to the incarceration of thousands of Dutch citizens. His own influence began to die out as more pro-German politicians, such as Rost van Tonningen, made their way onto the political scene.

Mussert's Dutch nationalist ideals ultimately led to his political demise. He was eventually given the task of controlling the resisting Dutch masses. After the Allies took Antwerp in 1944, many of the NSB's members, including

Mussert, fled to Germany. He was arrested on May 7, 1945, after Germany surrendered, and tried for treason. Two days into his trial in November 1945 he was found guilty and was executed by firing squad on May 7, 1946, at The Hague.

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See also: Collaboration; Fascism; Netherlands; Netherlands Tribunals; Seyss-Inquart, Arthur

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N

Nacht und Nebel

On December 7, 1941, at the insistence of Adolf Hitler, a decree titled *Nacht und Nebel Erlass* (“Night and Fog Decree”), signed by the chief of the German Armed Forces High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, or OKW), Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, was instituted. This effectively circumvented both the military and judicial systems with regard to enemy, specifically nonmilitary, combatants.

The phrase itself was coined by the German poet and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and referred to the result of clandestine activities whereby a person disappeared into the mists of the night and fog. In the Nazi case, such persons, upon capture, were to be speedily brought to Germany to be tried in special courts and, more often than not, found guilty, after which they immediately disappeared and were presumed murdered or transported to either concentration camps or extermination camps for immediate “disposal” (death). Those who were not murdered immediately but became slave laborers found their garments branded with a double “N” and were separated from the rest of the prisoner population, both male and female. The purpose of the decree was to strike mortal fear into the hearts of the conquered peoples. The total number of such persons who were caught and murdered, however, is still not known.

The same day as the decree went into effect, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler informed the Gestapo that “it is the will of the Führer” that for those engaging in acts detrimental to the Reich “or against the occupation forces in occupied areas”

prison, even at hard labor, was no longer sufficient. As an effective and lasting deterrent, only the death penalty or “measures which will leave the family and population uncertain as to the fate of the offender” would henceforth be satisfactory. The conclusion was that “deportation to Germany serves this purpose.” Five days later, on December 12, 1941, Keitel further clarified his understanding of the decree with the comment, “efficient and enduring intimidation can only be achieved either by capital punishment or by measures by which the relatives of the criminals do not know the fate of the criminal.” Ironically, at his trial at Nuremberg at the International Military Tribunal, before being found guilty and hanged on October 16, 1946, he attempted to argue that its purpose was directed solely against Wehrmacht troops found guilty of military misconduct and that its application against civilian populations was a “full and monstrous tragedy.”

The decree itself was relatively short, consisting, after a brief preamble warning of the increasing danger of “communist and other circles hostile to Germany,” of only five directives obligating the military “to take severe measures as a deterrent”: (1) the “adequate punishment” for such offenses is death; (2) unless the death penalty can be carried out quickly, the offenders are to be transported to Germany; (3) information regarding such transported prisoners is not to be given out; (4) military commanders and court authorities in the occupied areas are “personally responsible” for the implementation of this decree; and (5) both Field Marshal Keitel and Reich Minister of Justice Franz Schlegelberger

were empowered to issue orders within their spheres of responsibility.

Those who found themselves as prisoners under this decree were primarily from Western Europe: Belgium, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Norway, and the Netherlands, where many if not most suffered the brutalizations common to all concentration camp prisoners to the point of death. Two camps were the primary recipients of these prisoners: Gross-Rosen in western Poland and Natzweiler-Struthof in the Vosges Mountains in France. Female Nacht und Nebel prisoners were also sent to Ravensbrück in northern Germany, Mauthausen in upper Austria, and Auschwitz in southeastern Poland.

It is not known how many prisoners lost their lives as a result of the Nacht und Nebel decree, so complete was the secrecy surrounding their arrest and subsequent murder. They literally disappeared, with no trace remaining of their capture or subsequent destiny. Ten years after the war, in 1955, French film director Alain Resnais made a documentary film titled *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*), filmed on location at both Majdanek and Auschwitz, and describing the lives of the camp prisoners in those two sites.

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See also: Gross-Rosen; Himmler, Heinrich; Keitel, Wilhelm; Natzweiler-Struthof; *Night and Fog*

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Names under the Nazis, Legislation

On August 17, 1938, the Nazi government of Germany (and recently acquired Austria) passed the Second Decree Supplementing the Law Regarding the Change of Family Names and First Names. As the next in what was becoming a long line of Nazi decrees forcibly imposing “Aryanization” on German society, the Nazis hit on the idea that in order to enforce the many antisemitic policies that had been introduced since the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, it was necessary

for officials everywhere to be able to identify Jews in a formal sense. Consequently, the “Change of Family Names and First Names” decree required that all male Jews would be required to adopt the compulsory middle name of “Israel” to their own, and all female Jews to add the name “Sarah.”

The law became operational as from January 1, 1939. From then on, all Jews were required to add the name to their passports and other official documents, and to all identity cards. All newly born children were required to have these names registered alongside the names given by their parents.

Looking at the wording of the decree, we see not only the explicit statement regarding the middle names (for which the decree has become best known), it also states that after the law came into effect Jews would have to choose names for their children from an official list of approved (and highly conspicuous) “Jewish” first names. This reference was to the Guidelines on the Use of Given Names issued by the Reich minister of the interior, who in 1938 was Dr. Wilhelm Stuckart, a lawyer who was one of the co-authors of the Nuremberg Laws, later convicted for war crimes by the Allies. The new naming legislation was underwritten by the Reich minister of justice, Dr. Franz Gürtner.

The law was the latest in a long list of measures that sought progressively to push the Jews out of German society. Because of the earlier Nuremberg Laws, Jews could only marry other Jews and attend Jewish schools. Sleeping and dining cars on railroads, barbershops, hospitals, restrooms, and waiting rooms all became segregated. The Nazis set curfews and shopping hours for the Jews and denied them the use of public telephones. They also removed private phones from Jewish homes.

In October 1938 the letter “J” was stamped on all German passports, ration cards, and other official documents of German Jews. An initiative of the Swiss government in negotiations with the Nazis, the stamping of the letter “J” was introduced as an administrative measure to assist restrictive immigration policies and regulate the entry of Jewish refugees into countries bordering Germany. Later laws required “non-Aryans” six years old and older to wear a Star of David on the left breast of their clothing. All these measures depriving Jews of their identity as Germans led inexorably to their estrangement and the legislative removal of Jews from German life in subsequent years.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryanization; Nuremberg Laws; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Yellow Star

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National Socialism

A political movement founded in Germany and intimately connected to Adolf Hitler, who attained office in January 1933. To a large degree it began as a movement inspired by the growth of European fascism (particularly its Italian variant under Benito Mussolini, who was seen for some time as Hitler's political mentor), but National Socialist ideology outstripped fascism when it incorporated a powerful and uncompromising strain of antisemitism into its philosophy, together with a racial conception of how the world operated. Like fascism, its essential beliefs were grounded in a vigorous opposition to alternative ideologies, particularly Marxism, socialism, liberalism, and individualism. Hitler's philosophy called for an unyielding obedience of the people to the state, which was the transmitted will of the *Volk* (people), or national essence. Hitler, as leader (Führer) of the National Socialist party, was the embodiment of the state and bearer of the will of the *Volk*. The major goals of the National Socialist state were physical expansion in accordance with the principle of racial unification and contiguity, eradication of the nation's racial and political enemies (as defined by the Führer), and a militaristic regimentation of society in every respect. Although possessed of radical ideas regarding society, the economy, and the nature of politics, German National Socialism was effectively a destructive force; through harnessing the power of the advanced industrial state to an ideology predicated on military power, expansion, and social engineering, National Socialism rapidly showed itself to be harmful, bellicose, and a paradigm for all genocidal political movements.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Fascism; National Socialist German Workers' Party; National Socialist Program; Volk

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National Socialist German Workers' Party

The National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*), also called the Nazi Party or Nazis, was the political party of the mass German movement known as National Socialism. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the party came to power in Germany in 1933 and governed by totalitarian methods until 1945.

After World War I, Germany was in chaos due to high inflation, massive unemployment, ineffective government policies, and the financial burden of reparations mandated after World War I by the Treaty of Versailles (1919). This situation gave rise to wandering bands of nationalists, communist revolutionaries, and a significant leftist movement in Germany. Among these groups was the obscure German Workers' Party.

Hitler joined the party in 1919, hoping to find in it a means to achieve the revolution he sought. He quickly became a major player, then leader. He modified the party, took it over, and incorporated paramilitary elements. He renamed it the National Socialist German Workers' Party.

He then had setbacks, including the failure of the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 and a resultant period of six months' imprisonment, where he wrote the party's manifesto, *Mein Kampf*. But the party grew, and its representation in the Reichstag, Germany's parliament, grew also. Hitler now preferred legal takeover to a revolution, having been in one failed putsch already. Nevertheless, he was not averse to violence. The leaders of the Nazi Party's Sturmabteilung (SA), originally formed to protect the Nazi Party from its rivals, were becoming a rival center of power. In 1934 Hitler ordered the arrest and execution of Ernst Röhm and other of the SA's top leaders in what is known as the Night of the Long Knives.

In 1928 the party had only 810,000 votes and 12 deputies elected to the Reichstag, versus 3.2 million votes for the communists and 9.1 million for the Social Democrats. In 1930 its total vote was 6.4 million and 107 deputies, and the party had 180,000 members. In 1932 the party gained 39% of the Reichstag before slipping by 34 seats, and in a presidential election Hitler polled 13.5 million votes to incumbent President Paul von Hindenburg's 19.25 million. By 1934 Hitler was chancellor under Hindenburg, and Hermann Göring was president. Soon after his ascent to office in January 1933, Hitler used the pretext of a fire in the Reichstag to suspend civil liberties, suppress the communists and Social Democrats (20,000 were arrested), and suspend the constitution.

Hitler and the Nazi Party now had absolute control of Germany, in what had become a one-party state. Nazism was fascist, antisemitic, rabidly nationalist, and dedicated to pan-Germanism, Lebensraum (physical expansion to the east), and the overturn of the Versailles Treaty. The party led Germany into World War II, the Holocaust, and other crimes.

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See also: Fascism; Hitler, Adolf; National Socialism; National Socialist Program; Sturmabteilung

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National Socialist Program

The 25 points comprising the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) Program were composed by Adolf Hitler and Anton Drexler. They were formally unveiled February 24, 1920, the same day that the party was renamed from the German Workers' Party.

In the second volume of his book *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler explained the purpose of the principles in the program as having been devised to give “a rough picture of the movement's aims,” which formed “a political creed” intended to recruit new members and reinforce membership of those already in the party. There had been earlier examples of a similar nature, but here Hitler made it clear that his thoughts would be translated into a plan of action. Although declaring that the program was designed to be “of limited duration,” and that party leaders had no intention of establishing any new principles, subsequent events would demonstrate that the 25-point program was set in place to stay.

The first principle was to set the tone for all the others, a nationalistic statement that left no room for doubt as to the Nazis' desire to expand Germany's current borders into the future: “We demand the unification of all Germans in the Greater Germany on the basis of the people's right to self-determination.” Given that, point two demanded an overthrow of the post-World War I peace treaties of Versailles (Germany) and St. Germain (Austria), something from which Hitler never retreated and which was to characterize his entire foreign policy down to 1939.

This opened the way for the points relating to race, numbers 4 and 5, respectively. In point 4, the program stated that

“Only a member of the [German] race can be a citizen. A member of the race can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently no Jew can be a member of the race.” As no Jew could be a member of the German race, it figured that, according to point 5, “Whoever has no citizenship is to be able to live in Germany only as a guest, and must be under the authority of legislation for foreigners.” That legislation, as spelled out in point 8, was that “further immigration of non-citizens is to be prevented,” and that “all non-Germans, who have immigrated to Germany since August 2, 1914, be forced immediately to leave the Reich.”

And so it went on. All areas of public discourse that could revert to Germany were demanded, from the “right to determine matters concerning administration and law,” in which “every public office be filled only by citizens” (point 6); to compulsory nationalization of all trusts (point 13); to “struggle without consideration” against those “whose activity is injurious to the general interest,” such as “Common national criminals, usurers, profiteers and so forth,” who would suffer the death penalty for their actions (point 18); and to a complete overhaul of the “whole national education program” (point 20).

Points 24 and 25 summed up where National Socialism was heading, overall: “We demand freedom of religion for all religious denominations within the state so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the Germanic race,” as a way to combat “the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us”; with this, the party demanded a state in which citizens would put “The good of the state before the good of the individual” (point 24); and, in order to achieve all that the Nazis had set out in their program, “we demand the formation of a strong central power” that would claim “Unlimited authority of the central parliament over the whole Reich and its organizations in general” (point 25).

Overall, the 25-point program of the NSDAP showed Hitler's determination to establish a national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) of mutual interest that desired racial purity for the German people, which was governed by a strong central authority unhampered by parliamentary procedures, rather than one that was divided over differing values or as a result of diverse national backgrounds or religious beliefs.

In subsequent years some members of the party sought to amend the National Socialist program, but Hitler blocked every suggestion of changing the program. For him, it was sacrosanct, absolute, and permanent. Moreover, it contained much that was a departure from all previous notions of

parliamentary democracy, at a time when Weimar Germany was desperately trying to protect the fragile hold on democratic values it was committed to directing.

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See also: Lebensraum; National Socialism; Nationalist Socialist German Workers' Party; Volksgemeinschaft

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Natzweiler-Struthof

The Natzweiler-Struthof Nazi concentration camp was located some 30 miles southwest of Strasbourg (Alsace) in northeastern France. It opened in May 1941 and was initially designed as a forced labor facility. It was not a site of systematic mass murder, as were other German camps, although several thousand people did die there between 1941 and 1944, when it was largely liquidated. The camp was designed to hold about 1,500 prisoners, but as many as 52,000 were interned there in the three years of its operation. Internees included Polish, Russian, French, Dutch, German, and Norwegian prisoners.

Prisoners worked in nearby quarries, on various construction projects, and, beginning in early 1944, in German munitions factories. To curb accelerated activities on the part of the anti-German resistance movement in Western Europe, in the summer of 1943 the Germans began imprisoning many resistance fighters at Natzweiler-Struthof; the largest percentage of these prisoners was from the French Resistance.

In August 1943 the Germans erected a makeshift gas chamber at Natzweiler-Struthof, where medical experimentation was carried out on a number of prisoners, especially the Roma in captivity there. Shortly thereafter, 80 Jewish internees were killed in the gas chamber; their bodies were transferred to Strasbourg University, where German scientists hoped to prove their bogus theories of racial hierarchy by studying the skeletons of the murdered prisoners.

Although the prison was not an extermination camp, there were at least 4,431 documented deaths at Natzweiler-Struthof. Some prisoners died from overwork, while others

died from disease, malnutrition, and beatings. In total, as many as 10,000–12,000 people probably died at the main camp and its numerous subsidiary camps. In September 1944, after Allied troops had landed in France, the Germans liquidated most of the camp, sending prisoners to Dachau, where many more perished. On November 23, 1944, Allied troops entered Natzweiler; it was the first such camp discovered in Western Europe. It was later determined that this was the only permanent concentration camp established within France, even though there were many others, such as Drancy, that were not permanent and had different functions.

After the war, several members of the camp's administration were tried and convicted of war crimes, including the commandant. Two were sentenced to death, and one was given a 10-year prison term.

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See also: Concentration Camps; Gas Chambers; Medical Experimentation

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Nazi Book Burning

On May 10, 1933, a phenomenon unseen since the Middle Ages took place in the heart of Berlin, when students from the National Socialist German Students' League, the SA, the SS, and the Hitler Youth, in the presence of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, burned around 25,000 books that they considered to be "un-German."

The location of the book burnings was a square in the heart of Berlin, first known as Opera House Square (Platz am Opernhaus, or, colloquially, Opernplatz). On August 12, 1910, it was named Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Platz in honor of Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria. After the war, on August 31, 1947, the square was given the name it has to this day, Bebelplatz, in honor of August Bebel, one of the founders of Germany's Social Democratic Party.

Situated on the south side of the majestic Unter den Linden, it is bounded to the east by the State Opera building, to the west by Humboldt University, and to the southeast by St. Hedwig's Cathedral. The large square is dominated on one side by the library of Humboldt's Law School.



Soon after the Nazis came to power in 1933, a campaign was conducted by the German Student Union to ceremonially burn books written by authors considered to be subversive or ideologically unacceptable to the Third Reich. Banned genres of literature included the works of traitors, emigrants, and authors from foreign countries; Marxist, socialist, and communist writers; pacifist literature; works advocating “degenerate art”; all literature by Jewish authors; any literature supporting liberal democracy or supporting the Weimar Republic; and many other writings. In this photo, Hitler Youth members from Austria participate in burning books in April 1938. (AP Photo)

Some 40,000 people had gathered on the square prior to the burning, as Goebbels made an inflammatory speech to the youth of Germany in which he declared: “The era of extreme Jewish intellectualism is now at an end. . . . The future German man will not just be a man of books, but a man of character. It is to this end that we want to educate you. . . . And thus you do well in this midnight hour to commit to the flames the evil spirit of the past. . . . Here the intellectual foundation of the [Weimar] Republic is sinking to the ground, but from this wreckage the phoenix of a new spirit will triumphantly rise.”

He continued: “No to decadence and moral corruption! Yes to decency and morality in family and state! I consign to the flames the writings of Heinrich Mann, Ernst Gläser, Erich Kästner.” The latter writer, Erich Kästner, was present among the crowd.

The speech, and the book burnings that followed, were accompanied by the singing of Nazi songs and anthems as well as an abundant use of the Nazi salute. Berlin radio broadcast the occasion triumphantly to listeners throughout Germany live as it happened.

On that awful night, books of all kinds were publicly and symbolically burned. German-language authors, regardless of whether they were from Germany or not, whose books were burned included Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, Friedrich Engels, Lion Feuchtwanger, Sigmund Freud, George Grosz, Jaroslav Hašek, Franz Kafka, Erich Kästner, Egon Kisch, Karl Kraus, Theodor Lessing, Karl Liebknecht, Georg Lukács, Rosa Luxemburg, Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann, Karl Marx, Carl von Ossietzky, Erwin Piscator, Erich Maria Remarque, Joseph Roth, Nelly Sachs, Anna Seghers, Arthur Schnitzler, Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky,

Jakob Wassermann, Franz Werfel, Arnold Zweig, and Stefan Zweig.

Foreign writers' books were not exempt: these included Victor Hugo, André Gide, Romain Rolland, and Henri Barbusse (France); Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, and Aldous Huxley (Britain); James Joyce (Ireland); Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, Jack London, and Helen Keller (United States); and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Maxim Gorki, Isaac Babel, Vladimir Lenin, Vladimir Nabokov, Leo Tolstoy, and Leon Trotsky (Russia).

The works consigned to the flames included those of pacifists, liberals, socialists, communists, and anarchists; those whose writings were viewed as subversive or somehow opposed to Nazism; those considered to be traitors; all historical writing deemed as disparaging to the spirit and culture of the German *Volk*, or antithetical to Aryan racial ideals; writings that praised so-called "degenerate art"; works relating to sexuality and sexual education opposite to the principles of Nazi racial ideas; literature by Jewish authors, regardless of the field; and many other areas to which the Nazis were opposed.

The book burnings were the culmination of a series of events that had begun a few days earlier on May 6, when students began gathering books and dragging them into the square for a purpose yet to be established. Even then, however, it was clear that the intention was to purge local places of learning of works deemed to be unacceptable to the new Nazi regime, installed only a little over three months earlier.

The events on Bebelplatz on May 10, 1933, were just the beginning of a spate of book burnings that took place in many German university cities over succeeding weeks. In 34 towns across Germany the movement to purge those whose writings opposed "the German Spirit" took place with the seeming consent (or at least, acquiescence) of those observing. Nationalistic and Nazi-inspired students marched in torch-lit parades throughout Germany, enjoining their professors and student leaders to address the crowds. Some professors, from what were the finest universities in the world, were incapable of joining in. Many were dismissed; some took their own lives in despair at what Germany had become.

The works of those whose books had been burned were from this point on no longer permitted in university curricula or on the shelves of libraries.

In the Bebelplatz, where the events of May 10, 1933, took place, a memorial has since been set consisting of a glass plate set into the cobblestones, which opens onto a hollow in the ground showing row after row of empty bookshelves. At the site is an engraving of words from Heinrich Heine's 1821

play *Almansor*. Here, he wrote a much-quoted line: "*Das war ein Vorspiel nur, dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen*" ("That was but a prelude; where they burn books, they will ultimately burn people as well"). On the night of the book burnings, Heine's works were also among those burned by the Nazis.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Art and the Holocaust; Gleichschaltung; Goebbels, Joseph

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Nazi Criminal Orders, 1941

The Commissar Order, or *Kommissarbefehl*, was an order issued by the German High Command on June 6, 1941, prior to the June 22, 1941, invasion of the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa). The formal name of the order was Guidelines for the Treatment of Political Commissars (*Richtlinien für die Behandlung politischer Kommissare*).

This was one of the three important directives referred to in some circles as the Nazi Criminal Orders, which, collectively, contributed to mass atrocities against Soviet prisoners of war and the civilian population throughout the German-occupied East. In the spring of 1941 Adolf Hitler outlined his plans for the coming war against the Soviet Union. This was not to be a conventional conflict that followed the usual customs and laws of warfare. Instead, it was to be a "War of Annihilation," a clash between the German and Slavic races and between Nazi and Communist ideology from which there would be only one victor. The nature of the war in the East was to reflect the Nazi policy of *Lebensraum* ("Living Room"), in which the region would become an area colonized by the so-called "superior" Aryan Germans and where local populations were expendable. After various revisions, the German High Command, particularly Wilhelm Keitel and Walter von Brauchitsch, then wrote and distributed to all German soldiers a group of orders prior to the invasion that codified this vision.

Together, these orders included the "Barbarossa Decree," "Guidelines for the Behavior of the Troops," and the "Commissar Order."

The Barbarossa Decree informed soldiers of the racist component of the war, and that Bolshevism and its “carriers” (meaning Jews) were the “mortal enemy of the German people.” The military was told that “this war demands ruthless and aggressive action against Bolshevik agitators, snipers, saboteurs, and Jews and tireless elimination of any active or passive resistance.” The orders authorized reprisal killings of civilians and further encouraged soldiers to treat all civilian populations “ruthlessly.”

The Commissar Order explicitly ordered the immediate execution upon capture of any political officers serving in the Red Army. These commissars had been tasked with the political instruction of Soviet soldiers. The decree was a direct contravention of the accepted laws of war, particularly those requiring the proper treatment of prisoners of war.

The Guidelines for the Behavior of the Troops mandated that all legal protections for local civilian populations were to be rescinded, and soldiers were informed that actions which would have been considered crimes in the rest of Europe would not be pursued in the Soviet Union. Such guidance, issued directly to the troops, condoned and led to the abuse of civilian populations.

These directives had devastating implications for the conduct of the war in the Soviet Union and for the survival of those living there. The outright refusal to adhere to the accepted laws of war created a climate in which criminality and excess was accepted, indeed, encouraged. The Barbarossa Decree also provided justification for military support of the Nazi genocidal project in the East. By simultaneously instilling suspicion and fear of the local population in the German army and advocating harsh (and illegal) reprisals against them, the “Criminal Orders” also led to systematic mass killing of Soviet citizens.

Finally, these initial orders resonated with and reinforced other instructions to further radicalize the war in the Soviet Union. The Barbarossa Decree, for example, supported other orders that tasked the military with supporting the *Einsatzgruppen*, or Death Squads. It also augmented the German policy of neglecting or abusing Soviet POWs, which led to millions of deaths and supported the “Hunger Plan,” which condoned the deaths of tens of millions of Soviet citizens as the German military expropriated food. The Barbarossa Decree figured heavily at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials as evidence of aggressive war, war crimes, and all manner of atrocities against civilians.

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See also: *Einsatzgruppen*; Keitel, Wilhelm; *Kommissarbefehl*; *Lebensraum*; Operation Barbarossa

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Nazism and Germany

Although fascism originated in Italy, it was in Germany under Adolf Hitler that the most notorious, powerful, and destructive fascist regime arose in the 1930s, a regime known to history as Nazism. Its origins can be traced back to the previous century. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, Europe saw the rise of various forms of Romantic movements, starting as a mainly cultural reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Such movements exalted the idealism, the myths, and the hopes of a tragic and suffering individual. As the 19th century drew to a close, these tended to meld gradually with early liberal values. In the German states, however, these Romantic ideas took a slightly different path. Whereas the sense of pessimism and mystical longing for cathartic rehabilitation remained basically unaltered, the individual was instead being replaced by “*das Volk*” (the people) and the nation was assigned holistic and organic qualities. This shift from an idealization of the single individual to an idealization of the nation, one and undivided, meant that “foreign” values were associated with distinctly negative qualities. These “un-German” values were seen as “progressive” and “liberal” in a negative sense, in that they threatened a traditionalist and protectionist economic system. They were styled by *völkisch* thinkers as “mechanistic, materialistic, and superficial”—consequently violating a “spiritual” and “authentic” Germanic culture. Furthermore, “foreign” ideas proposed abstract thinking, intellectualism, and rationalism, in contrast to the blessings of “common sense” and of things concrete and tangible, such as the family and the community. Universalistic and egalitarian, such ideas were used in defense of “the rights of man”—in other words, in opposition to “natural hierarchies” that were soon to form the basis for a creed of antisemitism and outright racism. Finally, these “foreign” ideas came to be represented as “feeble” and “worn out,” seeking to obstruct the young and vigorous ideas of the rising Germanic nation.

These psychological and cultural factors were reinforced by the fact that Germany's bourgeois revolution, as opposed to the "healthy" evolution of Britain and France, remained haphazard and incomplete. The nation exhibited a flawed development—"ein Sonderweg" (a special path). Middle-class constituencies remained embedded in a "preindustrial" and "premodern" worldview. Artisans, white-collar employees, and civil servants clung to antique notions of caste and estate, and, anxious to guard their corporatist privileges and mercantilist traditions, mobilized against the advance of modern capitalism. As the bells of 1900 tolled, the philosophical underpinnings for the coming cataclysm had already therefore sunk deep into the foundation of German society.

Other contributory causes of the rise of Nazism were of a more political and practical nature. As a Romantic reaction against a superficial bourgeois existence, movements like the *Wandervogel*, which were interested in reviving old Teutonic values as a protest against industrialization, attracted mainly middle-class teenagers. Although the *Wandervogel* were prohibited after 1933, their associations with youth and invigorating country life, marches, and song were systematically exploited by the Hitler regime. The *Stahlhelm*, or "Steel Helmets," was a movement founded after 1919 by World War I veterans. German-nationalistic and a stern opponent of "bourgeois decadence" and the Weimar Republic, the organization often joined forces with the Nazis, especially in the period after 1929. Germany's war reparations imposed by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles amounted to no less than 132 billion gold marks, even today a sum of immense proportions. This "deliberate act of aggression against the Germanic Volk" was to become an important ingredient in Hitler's speeches. Another World War I myth on which Hitler drew heavily was that of the legend of the "stab in the back" ("*die Dolchstoßlegende*"), implying that the war on the battlefields was virtually won and that the military had been betrayed by ignorant civilians and feeble-minded bureaucrats, with the sinister figure of "the Jew" lurking behind them.

The major financial crash on Wall Street in 1929 contributed to a momentum for the forces of the Right that was possibly decisive. Unemployment skyrocketed, and the Weimar democrats were subjected to increasing criticism. Correspondingly, calls for forceful leadership grew in proportion, demands from which the charismatic Hitler was soon to profit. Who then supported Hitler? And for what reason? The National Socialists appealed to those social strata that had suffered considerably during the Great Depression. Especially in the early 1930s, they won acclaim for beating the Great Depression and for curing the massive unemployment.

In contrast, Marxist historians point toward the link between the Nazi regime and the ruling classes. Some argue that Hitler's main thrust came from a radicalized, *völkisch* notion of a community, whereby "non-Aryans," and Jews in particular, were seen as inferior races. Those of a more republican leaning hold, in contrast, that the rise of Nazism should be sought in the cynical fragmentation of society, in the disintegration of a moderate, civic-minded community. Scholars who stress the *völkisch*, cultural origin of Nazism as opposed to more practical, economic causes often suggest that Hitler had a stronger position among academics than among the working classes. Others, such as Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, argue that the antisemitic issue was the prime reason for Hitler's support; still others play down its real significance. Hitler biographer Alan Bullock, for example, maintains that Austrians might have supported Anschluss in 1938 not because of Hitler's antisemitism but in spite of it. The issue of free choice versus compulsion keeps attracting attention. At times, it is claimed that Hitler simply managed to force the entire German population to support the regime. To others, the system rested mainly on open support and outright enthusiasm by "willing" soldiers and an eager electorate.

Why, then, did the Germans not consciously choose not to support the Nazi regime? Was the German population in general really aware of the unfathomable scale of human suffering caused by Hitler and his party? Information was disseminated in Europe fairly slowly during the 1940s. Many Germans throughout the country insisted that they simply did not know what was going on until the end of the war; and besides, the camps were for the most part situated far from major German cities, many of them being in Poland. Documents regarding the early euthanasia program (that is, the killing of those deemed to be biologically or mentally "inferior") indicate that the Nazis realized that the German public was far from convinced about the "humanitarian" nature of these measures. On the other hand, it has been argued that the Germans gradually adjusted their own values to those of the Nazis. Some even deny the whole idea that Nazi propaganda was crudely forced onto more than 60 million Germans. On the contrary, it was meant to appeal to them and to match up with everyday German thinking. The idea that the average German was simply ignorant about the whole drama has been subject to considerable critique. After all, the trains to the concentration camps passed through virtually all parts of Germany. Major German industries, such as I.G. Farben and Siemens, supplied material to the concentration camps. Hitler himself never shied away from his objectives. Neighbors disappeared, never to return. A vast array of

material on the police and the camps and various discriminatory campaigns was regularly published in the press of the day. In brief, the idea of a general unawareness among Germans does not seem convincing.

In the immediate aftermath of 1945, democratic opinion in Germany and abroad felt great distress at the fact that radical rightist values still had an undisputed audience. The German Conservative Party–German Right Party (DKP-DRP) had been formed as early as 1946 by former Nazis. That same year, in one opinion poll, a surprising 48% of Germans thought that some races were more fit to rule than others. After the 1949 Bundestag elections, the Allied system of licensing parties ended. Domestically, the new German government decided to dismantle the denazification program, which was already losing impetus as the Cold War led to changing Allied priorities. This new climate provided the opportunity to create a more truly neo-Nazi party. A remarkable variety of conservative and nationalist groups contested the elections, gaining a total of 10.5% of the vote. The Socialist Reich Party (SPR) was founded in October 1949 as a result of a rightist breakaway from the DKP-DRP. That same year, 6 out of 10 Germans thought, on opinion poll evidence, that Nazism was a good idea badly carried out.

Still, in contrast to certain dark forecasts, the 1950s did not witness a further radicalization of the German political landscape, and by the beginning of the 1960s radical nationalist groups seemed to be slipping into oblivion. One major reason for this was the German economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*). In 1964 the Ministry of the Interior's official report on neo-Nazism and radical nationalism put forward further reasons for the electoral collapse of the rightist fringes: the growing awareness of the evils of the past, weak radical leadership, personal differences between the leaders, and a strong tendency toward factionalism that made it difficult for one major organization to emerge.

In 1971 Thies Christophersen set up a publishing house where various neo-Nazi views, such as Holocaust denial, were published. Times were now changing. After a period of shared beliefs and tacit agreement, there were new tendencies toward a political polarization, whereby more pronounced rightist and leftist positions each saw their stock rise. German would-be fascist movements were again enjoying a slightly widening electorate. In 1977 the National Socialist Action Front (ANS) was formed. Its leader, 22-year-old Michael Kühnen, offered a strange mixture of charm and brutality, Marxism and Nietzsche. Kühnen's low esteem of homosexuality was surprising, given his own homosexuality and the fact that he himself was to die of an AIDS-related illness in 1991. In 1989

the Republican Party (*Die Republikaner*) and Franz Schönhuber attracted a spectacular rise in support, not wholly different from that of Jörg Haider's Austrian Freedom Party. The Republican Party, initially set up in 1983, did not openly defend Nazism. Rather, it seemed to advocate a more authoritarian government that would restore order and national pride. Other rightist parties of moderate fame are the *Deutsche Volksumion* (DVU), led by Gerhard Frey, and the older *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD).

There were also a number of rightist attacks against civilians. In 1981 a former member of NPD blew himself up while placing a bomb at the 1980 Munich Beer Festival, killing another 12 people and injuring 211. The euphoria after the reunification of BRD and DDR quickly came to a standstill as the early 1990s saw a major wave of neo-Nazi violence sweeping the country, particularly in the so-called "new" *Länder*, or districts. In the face of a passive or even encouraging local population and a powerless police, foreign workers and asylum seekers were burned out of their homes by gangs of skinheads in the former DDR city of Hoyerswerda. At Mölln in former West Germany, a fire bomb attack killed a Turkish woman with her young granddaughter and niece. Worse still, in Rostock in the late summer of 1992, some 1,000 Nazis attacked immigrants and asylum seekers. The year 1992 alone had witnessed more than 2,500 rightist attacks on foreigners across Germany, 697 cases of arson, and 17 people killed. Statistics at the time showed that these attacks reflected rightist trends among the entire electorate. In 1989, 38% of West Germans thought that, but for the persecution of the Jews, Hitler could be counted among the country's top statesmen. Other polls revealed that some 10 to 15% of Germans could be classed as antisemitic and that negative stereotypes, such as the belief that Jews are cunning, were increasing.

A rightist trend was also at hand on the German official scene. It was a sign of the times when in 1982 the conservative poet Ernst Jünger was awarded the prestigious Goethe Prize. Even his 1920s writings, hitherto seen as highly problematic because of their indisputable links to fascist aesthetics, were accorded an accolade for their literary and intellectual content. Furthermore, the desire to "normalize" the past was probably the motivation behind Helmut Kohl's controversial decision to invite U.S. president Ronald Reagan to attend a ceremony at the Bitburg Military Cemetery to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II: among the graves were those of 45 members of the Waffen-SS. A few years later, in June 1993, the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats jointly decided to remodel Germany's immigration law from the most liberal in Europe into one of the most restrictive.

Coming in the immediate aftermath of one of the most severe outbursts of German fascist violence since 1945, the new laws could be seen as an *ex post facto* endorsement of those attacks. However, to some these measures evidently seemed insufficient, as an arson attack in Solingen later on that same year left five Turkish immigrants dead.

As a final indication of a more rightist tendency, the “historians’ debate” (*Historikerstreit*) had wide repercussions regarding what may, and what may not, fall within the borders of fair and legitimate historical analysis. On the surface, the debate dealt with three major issues. First, those involved discussed the concept of the singularity of the Holocaust, primarily as opposed to Stalinist atrocities. Second, they argued about the need for today’s historians to identify with the German troops during the Nazi period. The liberal critics held that, if an approach of “identification” was to be chosen at all, historians should rather empathize with the prisoners in the concentration camps. Third, the liberal critics assumed that the conservative camp—comprising, among others, Ernst Nolte and Andreas Hillgruber—was part of an overall effort to normalize the representation of the Nazi past and to remove the major conceptual and emotional obstacles to the revival of a politically dubious right-wing German identity.

These recent rightist trends constitute only one aspect of a general polarization of the German political scene. The times since the 1970s have also been characterized by an expanding leftist discussion about the nation’s distressing 20th-century history. Among other things, this “coming to terms with the past” (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) has meant a growing awareness of Nazi atrocities and increasing efforts to capture those criminals still on the run. The gradual rise in number of (would-be) fascist organizations in Germany has also resulted in a proliferation of a corresponding leftist, antifascist movement within the nation. In addition, cultural depictions of postwar Germany in which the wartime period played a vital role—such as the ambitious television project *Heimat*; critical assessments from a distinctly political perspective of the allegedly apolitical philosopher Martin Heidegger; and, finally, Jewish communities seeking economic compensation for their suffering—all indicated that an era of consensus was coming to an end.

GÖRAN ADAMSON

See also: Antisemitism; Fascism; Hitler, Adolf; I.G. Farben; Volk

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Neighbors

Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland is a book written by Princeton University historian Jan T. Gross about the massacre of scores of Jews in Jedwabne, Poland, in July 1941. The book was published in 2002 and generated much interest and scholarly debate. Gross’s account represents an attempt to illuminate the nature of the Holocaust in Poland; it also demonstrates the role that non-Jewish Poles played in the Final Solution. The history of the Holocaust had traditionally been problematic in Poland, as it was often times impossible to separate the actions of Germans and Polish collaborators from rank-and-file Poles. The fact that all Poles suffered grievously during the German occupation made it even more difficult to determine who did what to whom. The incident in question—the Jedwabne massacre—occurred just as German troops began storming into areas that had been previously occupied by the Soviets, as part of Operation Barbarossa, the June 22, 1941, German invasion of the Soviet Union. For several years after, many Poles believed that the mass killings at Jedwabne had been committed by the Germans.

Gross explains that the massacre was committed mainly by non-Jewish Polish civilians, rather than Germans or Polish collaborators. In the wake of the catastrophe, at least 350 Jewish Poles—men, women, and children—lay dead. Only seven Jews in Jedwabne survived. Gross employs both interviews and eyewitness accounts with physical and forensic evidence to reconstruct the horrific chain of events. The Jews of Jedwabne, he concludes, died at the hands of neighbors (hence the book’s title) who knew them well, rather than at the hands of faceless German occupiers.

The book generated substantial debate and some criticism. One Holocaust scholar asserted that while the book sparked much-needed debate on Poland’s role in the Holocaust, Gross’s failure to look at German sources rendered the author’s conclusions “fundamentally flawed.” Some Poles welcomed Gross’s interpretation, saying that it provided a powerful boost to Poland’s collective memory of World War II and the Holocaust. Others in Poland, however, were

skeptical of Gross's findings, claiming that he had overlooked important evidentiary material and that some of the eyewitness testimony upon which he relied was questionable or may have been attained through coercion or torture. One Catholic priest in Poland, however, lauded Gross's book, asserting that it had demolished the persistent myth that Poles during the war were uniformly victims who had never committed wrongdoing themselves.

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See also: Jedwabne Massacre; Operation Barbarossa

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Netherlands

The Netherlands is a nation in Western Europe with a 1939 population of approximately 9 million people. The country's prewar Jewish population was about 160,000, of whom some 19,500 were children of mixed marriages. These figures include an influx of nearly 25,000 Jews who fled to the Netherlands between 1935 and 1939 to escape Nazi persecution in Germany. The Dutch had long remained neutral in European wars, and when World War II commenced in September 1939, Queen Wilhelmina reiterated that position. German dictator Adolf Hitler personally promised the queen that Germany would honor Dutch neutrality. As he did many times before, however, he reneged on his promise, and German troops invaded the Netherlands in May 1940. Despite vigorous resistance, the Germans had secured most of the country within a week, and Wilhelmina established a government-in-exile in London. German occupation officials, who considered non-Jewish Dutch as fellow "Aryans," hoped to incorporate the Netherlands into the Third Reich, and set about instituting German-inspired legal systems and establishing a one-party political system. Soon, virtually every aspect of Dutch life, including education, was suffused with Nazi ideology.

Resistance to the German occupation among the Dutch remained limited and subdued between mid-1940 and late 1942; however, beginning in 1943, resistance became far more pronounced and widespread. The Germans' blundering policies were certainly the cause for this, but so too was the deteriorating economic situation, which the Germans made far worse by shamelessly exploiting Dutch industry, agriculture, raw materials, and laborers. Perhaps nobody in the Netherlands, however, suffered more than the Jews. In the fall of 1940, German officials promulgated a repressive set of anti-Jewish ordinances that essentially deprived many Jews of their livelihoods and that relegated them to third-class citizenship at best. After Dutch workers called a general strike in February 1941 to protest Nazi actions against Jews, including the deportation of several hundred Jewish men to concentration camps, German occupation authorities decided to tighten restrictions on Dutch Jews.

By early 1942 most Jews had been forced into ghettos, and as many as 15,000 were rounded up and sent to forced labor camps in the Netherlands and Germany. Soon thereafter, most of the remaining Jews in the country were concentrated in one large ghetto in Amsterdam. Jews who had been refugees from other countries were deported to a transit camp in the north of the country.

German authorities, working with a number of Dutch collaborators, began deporting Jews from the Amsterdam ghetto in the summer of 1942; in all, about 110,000 were sent to concentration camps in the east, where most perished. Of that 110,000, just 5,000 survived the war and returned to the Netherlands. Meanwhile, some 25,000–30,000 Jews remained hidden in the Netherlands, often aided by the Dutch resistance and Dutch civilians. The majority of these people managed to survive the war. In the end, perhaps 75% of Dutch Jews (including refugees) were murdered between 1940 and 1945. Jewish losses, on a percentage basis, were higher in the Netherlands than any other state in Western Europe. It has been suggested that this development came about, in large part, because of strong collaborationist elements in the country.

The Netherlands, which suffered grievously during the last months of the war, was not liberated until the spring of 1945. In the meantime, at least 20,000 Dutch civilians died of starvation and disease during the brutal "Hunger Winter" of 1944–1945, when German authorities sealed off the nation from the outside world in a desperate attempt to retain their hold. After the war ended, the shattered Dutch temporarily reinstated the death penalty, tried a number of collaborators, and executed them. Arthur Seyss-Inquart, the German

occupation chief in the Netherlands, was tried at the Nuremberg Trials; he too was found guilty and executed.

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See also: Ghettos; Netherlands Tribunals; Resistance Movements; Seyss-Inquart, Arthur

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Netherlands Tribunals

The Netherlands was invaded by the Germans on May 10, 1940. While the country's antiquated armed forces resisted fiercely, the collapse and surrender on May 14 engendered great disillusionment; indeed, a political and moral crisis enveloped the Netherlands, and the departure of the royal family generated a defeatist attitude among the Dutch people. The German occupation was initially tame, but as it progressed the Dutch came under increasing pressures. Nazification, theft, destruction of property, and virulent antisemitism transformed the country into a shell of its former self.

During the occupation, many people collaborated with the Nazis, directly and indirectly. The pro-Nazi *Nederlandse Unie* (Netherlands Union) enjoyed tremendous popularity. It disagreed with the Germans over the planned invasion of the Soviet Union, however, and was disbanded in December 1941. Such collaboration was also illustrated when Dutch Nazis replaced many teachers, mayors, university boards of governors, government and municipal servants, and police chiefs. The Netherlands administrative system, highly complex, fully intended to keep the social structure intact. The conformist authoritarian nature of the Dutch populace further contributed to collaboration. Economic collaboration resulted in major exports of Dutch products to Germany. Direct Nazi collaboration proved most serious, and as early as 1943, the government-in-exile in London planned criminal proceedings against major Dutch collaborators.

Following liberation, women who had consorted with the Nazis or who had children by them (*moffenkind*, a pejorative

term), had their hair shorn publicly. The Canadians who liberated the Netherlands imprisoned some 90,000 suspected collaborators in a holding camp. In the immediate aftermath of liberation, the *Binnenlandse Strijdkrachten*, Forces of the Interior, the main resistance group, was given the task of arresting and indicting collaborators.

The more serious offenses of aiding and abetting or collaboration with the Germans were tried at Paleis Kneuterdijk, a former royal residence. Some 425,000 files were opened by the *Bijzondere Rechtspleging*, or War Crimes Tribunal, for those deemed collaborators or suspected of war crimes. It was deemed that 250,000 were indictable. Courts were established in Amsterdam, The Hague, Leeuwarden, Arnhem, and Hertogenbosch to deal with serious offenses such as crimes against humanity. In 1949–1950, its role was taken over by the *Bijzondere Strafkamers*, or Special Trials. The most blatant collaborators were held in the Cellen Barracks at the Scheveningen Jail.

Nineteen trials were held between 1945 until 1948. The major cases were held in the cities where the courts had been established; some others were tried regionally. The Netherlands War Crimes Trials sentenced some 120,000 collaborators to prison terms, although some 1,500 of them appeared to have been unjustly sentenced. The most serious cases were against the leaders of the *Nationale Socialistische Beweging der Nederland* (NSB), the Dutch Nazi Party, which had been established on December 14, 1931. By 1940 the group had more than 250,000 members (out of a total population of 9 million).

NSB leader Anton Adriaan Mussert agreed to Hitler's invasion and his demands, and declared his personal loyalty to him in 1941. In 1942 he received the title of *Leider van het Nederlandse Volk* (Leader of the Dutch People). At war's end, Mussert was charged with placing the state under foreign occupation, altering the constitution, and aiding and abetting the enemy. Found guilty on all charges, he was sentenced to death on December 12, 1945, and executed on May 7, 1946.

Cornelis van Geelkerken, informally second-in-command of the NSB, remained completely loyal to Mussert. He established the *Nationale Jeugdstorm*, a Nazi youth group that allowed him to create lists of students for forced labor and reprisal purposes. Van Geelkerken was arrested on May 5, 1945, and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1950. He was released in 1959 and died in 1979.

Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen was Mussert's power-hungry rival and a member of the NSB since 1936. Charged with collaboration and crimes against the state the

week before the invasion, he was released in Calais by the German army. The Nazis then appointed him president of the Netherlands National Bank and president of the Netherlands East India Company. He became an SS officer on June 22, 1944. Canadian troops captured him on May 8, 1945. He jumped off a balustrade at the Scheveningen Jail on June 6, 1945, plunging to his death.

Max Blokzijl, a Nazi propagandist, began providing 15-minute Nazi-oriented radio broadcasts beginning in February 1941. He also wrote a pamphlet wherein he held the Allies and communists to be traitors. He was tried as a collaborator and executed on March 15, 1946.

Robert van Genechten, a temperamental, mentally unstable intellectual, and one of the NSB's first members, served as chief procurement officer and provincial commissioner of South Holland. His instability, however, had made him ineffectual. Nevertheless, he was indicted in The Hague on October 17, 1945, but committed suicide on December 13, 1945.

Hans Albin Rauter was responsible for the deportation of scores of thousands of Dutch Jews, the Putten deportations, and the resistance against Operation Market Garden (September 17–26, 1944). Severely wounded by a resistance member on March 6, 1945, he was arrested on May 11, 1945, sentenced to death, and executed on March 25, 1949.

In total, 154 NSB members received death sentences, but 110 were commuted to life imprisonment. The first executions were carried out on May 27, 1945; the last occurred on March 21, 1952. Those convicted of lesser offenses were generally ordered to provide labor for the rebuilding of the Netherlands.

ANNETTE RICHARDSON

See also: Collaboration; Mussert, Anton Adriaan; Netherlands

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Neuengamme

Neuengamme concentration camp was established by Nazi Germany in December 1938 and was originally intended to be a subcamp of the older and larger camp at Sachsenhausen. It was located on the banks of the Dove Elbe River, a tributary of

the Elbe, and close to the city of Hamburg. It was chosen because of an abandoned brickworks factory that the SS hoped to renovate and restore to full production to assist in constructing new public buildings in the city under contract with its own *Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke* (German Earth and Stoneworks Corporation). In so doing, it could turn a significant profit. Its first 100 prisoners were transferees from Sachsenhausen, who were sent to begin the construction of the camp itself. In the meantime, they were housed in the abandoned factory.

Six months later, in June 1940, Neuengamme became an independent camp, with 96 subcamps under its jurisdiction. It has been estimated that between 1940 and its liberation by British forces on May 4, 1945, between 95,000 and 106,000 prisoners were incarcerated at Neuengamme, both men and women (13,500 in the main camp, and the rest at the various subcamps). It has been estimated that the following groups, arranged by nationality, constituted its prisoner population: Soviets, 34,500; Poles, 16,900; French, 11,500; Germans, 9,200; Dutch, 4,800; Belgians, 4,800; and Jews, 13,000 (Polish and Hungarian Jews transferred from Auschwitz in 1944).

Neuengamme's first commandant, appointed by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, was SS Major Walter Eisele, who was replaced in April 1940 by SS Captain Martin Weiss, and finally SS Lieutenant Colonel Max Pauly, who would later be hanged for his crimes.

As was the case through the entire camp system, conditions for the prisoners were atrocious, to say the least, made all the more so by their intensive labor activities and lack of caloric intake. Inadequate and poor quality food supplies, even poorer shelters, lack of medicines and sanitary facilities, beatings, tortures, starvation, random killings; all of these and more resulted in the spread of various diseases such as dysentery, pneumonia, typhus, and tuberculosis. In December 1941, for example, more than 1,000 prisoners died from a typhus outbreak.

In 1942, as the prison population increased and the number of workers unable to continue working also increased, Neuengamme became one of the sites for the implementation of *Aktion 14f13* (which remained in effect until 1944) whereby those who were sick, elderly, or unfit were murdered after having been "examined" by SS and other physicians. That same year, the SS increased its energies at Neuengamme by becoming the primary slave labor provider for the German armaments industry.

Neuengamme was also the site of medical experiments upon the prisoners, the most horrific of which took place at the Dullenhuser Damm School on April 20, 1945. Twenty Jewish children, 10 boys and 10 girls, selected by SS physician



Neuengamme was a German concentration camp established in 1938 by the SS near Hamburg. Operating from 1938 until its liberation by the British in 1945, an estimated 106,000 prisoners were held at Neuengamme and at its subcamps. The verified death toll relating to Neuengamme and its subcamps is 42,900 across the duration of its existence. This image shows survivors of Neuengamme at the end of the war. (Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)

Josef Mengele at Auschwitz, accompanied by four Jewish caretakers and Soviet POWs, were transported to Neuengamme and injected with active tuberculosis bacilli under the watchful eye of Dr. Kurt Heissmayer, enabling their bodies to produce their own antibodies and vaccines. All the children became infected but did not produce the required antigens, and they were subsequently murdered along with the adults who accompanied them. SS-Obersturmführer Arnold Stripfel oversaw the murders; he would later be convicted and given a life sentence. Later freed, he died in Frankfurt in a condominium he purchased with restitution funds from the German government. Heissmayer, too, would later be given a life sentence and would die in prison.

In the early spring of 1945, prior to liberation and the end of the war, the Swedish Red Cross and the Danish government successfully attempted a rescue mission to free,

initially, Scandinavian prisoners in the camps, but ultimately others as well, including Jews, and bring them to Sweden in their “White Buses” (painted all white with red crosses on their sides so as to avoid Allied bombs). The mission was led by Swedish diplomat Count Folke Bernadotte, who, ironically, would later be murdered by Jewish radicals in Jerusalem on September 17, 1948, four months after Israel was officially recognized as a sovereign nation-state. On March 29, 1945, the buses arrived at Neuengamme and remained there until April 2 as other Scandinavians were brought there. Though estimates vary, upwards of 15,000 prisoners were rescued from various locations; half Scandinavian, half not, including more than 400 Jews rescued from Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia.

Of the maximum of 106,000 prisoners who passed through Neuengamme, it is now estimated that between

55,000 and 56,000 perished at the hands of the Nazis between 1940 and 1945 by hangings, gassings, shootings, lethal injections, and/or being transported to their deaths in Auschwitz.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Concentration Camps; Medical Experimentation; White Buses; Zyklon-B Case, 1946

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Night

Night (1960) is a book written by Holocaust witness and survivor Elie Wiesel, and the first in a trilogy—the other two works being *Dawn* and *Day*. These titles denote the author's mood and reaction to the Holocaust during and after the events, moving purposely from somber darkness to the hopefulness of light. This reflects the Jewish belief that a new day begins with nightfall. Wiesel has stated that he wanted to depict night as a time in which “everything came to an end—man, history, literature, religion, God. There was nothing left. And yet we begin again with Night.” *Night* was first published in Argentina as a much longer work in Yiddish in 1954, titled *And the World Remained Silent*. Four years later, it was republished in abbreviated form in France under the title *La Nuit (Night)*. In 1960 an even shorter version (116 pages) was published in English. Since then, the book has been published in at least 30 other languages and is now considered one of the seminal works dealing with the Holocaust.

Night is based upon Wiesel's own experiences during the Holocaust, yet it is not written in a style typical of memoirs or autobiographies. The book is narrated by a Jewish teenager named Eliezer, who is clearly a stand-in for Wiesel himself. The stories he narrates are those that the author himself

had experienced or witnessed. Some critics have questioned the complete authenticity of the work, claiming that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. Wiesel, on the other hand, has vehemently rejected such attacks, calling the book a deposition about his experiences of and reactions to the Holocaust. The heavy editing and condensation of the work from Yiddish to French to English rendered a final product that some literary critics have argued is a work of art unto itself. Indeed, the style, which is at once stark, dark, and spare of any excess words, reflects the author's mindset during the events he chronicles.

The story begins with Eliezer studying the Torah and the Kabbala (Jewish mystic writings) in Sighet, located in Hungarian Transylvania. His teacher is deported by the authorities but later returns. The teacher relays to an incredulous Eliezer and his family the scenes he had witnessed, including the mass murder of Jews. Eliezer's teacher is portrayed as mentally unstable, and for a short time life remains normal for the narrator and his family. In 1944, however, his teacher's admonitions become reality as Eliezer and his family are forced into a ghetto and then deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Eliezer and his father are separated from his sisters and mother, who are later murdered. After witnessing firsthand the true horrors of the death camp, the teenager and his father are put to work in the forced labor camp at Buna. There they endure unspeakable deprivations, but nevertheless attempt to keep each other going, mentally and physically. Eventually, Eliezer's father becomes ill from dysentery and regular beatings from prison guards. The teenager then descends into a period of deep despair, in which he denounces humanity's indifference, declares the death of God, and decries the seemingly random nothingness and loneliness of life. Eliezer is freed from captivity in 1945, having lost his entire family in the Holocaust.

Wiesel himself vowed at that time not to speak or write of his experiences for 10 years, so he could evaluate them more clearly. His 1954 Yiddish manuscript made good on that promise, and eventually *Night* would appear in print.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz; Buchenwald; Children during the Holocaust; Hungary; Wiesel, Elie

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Night and Fog

One of the most vivid depictions of the horrors of Nazi concentration camps, the French documentary *Night and Fog* (*Nuit et brouillard*) was directed by Alain Resnais and released in 1955. Filmed at several concentration camps in Poland, the film describes the lives of prisoners in camps such as Auschwitz and Majdanek in order to portray the horror of the brutal inhumanity of the Nazis.

Night and Fog combines color and black and white footage with black and white newsreels, footage shot by the victorious Allies, and stills, alternating between past and present. The narrator, Michel Bouquet, recounts the rise of Nazism and shows how the lives of the prisoners compared with that of their guards. As the film unfolds, it shows the nature of Nazi brutality in the camps, the methods of mass extermination, and, finally, how liberation took place and the horrors that then greeted the world.

Resnais and his crew visited Auschwitz-Birkenau between September 29 and October 4, filming constantly while they were there. After this, from October 7 to 10, they went to Lublin to obtain footage of Majdanek. This was one of the first occasions on which film footage was taken of these camps, other than when the camps were initially liberated in 1944 and 1945.

Earlier, the producer, Anatole Dauman, together with his partners Samy Halfon and Philippe Lifchitz, had arranged for the film to be underwritten by Films Polski and produced through Argos Films. It was Dauman who had approached Resnais to be the director, but he agreed only on condition that the script would be written by Jean Cayrol, a French poet and publisher. Cayrol had been a member of the French Resistance but was captured by the Nazis and imprisoned at the Gusen concentration camp in 1943. For Resnais, if the project was to have any authority the narration needed to be written by one who had been a victim of the Holocaust, and the quality of Cayrol's writing was well known. With this guarantee, Resnais signed his contract for the film on May 24, 1955, and began immediately to plan his project.

In December 1955, immediately prior to its release, there was an attempt by French censors to have certain scenes showing bodies being bulldozed into mass graves cut from the film, as they were deemed to be too shocking for public viewing. After initial screenings to selected audiences, pressure was brought to bear by some former concentration camp prisoners that *Night and Fog* be premiered at the Cannes film festival. A compromise was reached with the announcement on April 26, 1956, that it would be screened, though not as part of the competition. The film

then opened to very high acclaim in Paris theaters during May 1956.

Night and Fog was shown on French television as early as April 26, 1959. It was shown—controversially, in some quarters—on French television in 1990, and since then it has become a staple for teachers of history and World War II throughout France.

Night and Fog is only about 30 minutes in length, but in showing the tragedy of the Holocaust it is devastating in its impact. Certainly, for its time, it revealed the horror to a civilian population that had not yet seen the Jewish tragedy in any detail. Renowned French film director François Truffaut would refer to *Night and Fog* as “the greatest film of all time,” and many would have agreed with him. Made just 10 years after the end of World War II and the liberation of the camps, its purpose was to create a record of the Holocaust—or at least, the most representative element of it—for future generations.

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See also: Auschwitz; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Majdanek

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Nisko Plan

The “Nisko and Lublin Plan” (also known separately as the “Nisko Plan” and/or the “Lublin Plan”) was intended to be a relocation plan for the Jews who found themselves in areas under Nazi occupation as a result of military conquest. Devised initially by Adolf Hitler, it was the result of a conversation between him and ideologue-philosopher Alfred Rosenberg, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, SS *Obersturmbannführer* Adolf Eichmann, Governor-General Hans Frank of the *Generalgouvernement* of Poland, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, Frank’s administrative chief, and Odilo Globocnik, SS Police leader in Lublin. Put in place between October 1939 and April 1940, when it was shut down for “technical

reasons,” it was understood to be a solution to the *Judenfrage*, the so-called “Jewish Question,” and was named for the two cities that bordered both the reservation and the forced labor camps that surrounded it. This so-called “reservation” was approximately 300 to 400 square miles, between the San and Vistula Rivers, southeast of Lublin proper.

The first transport of 901 Jews from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia arrived on October 18, and a few days later, 1,800 Jews from Katowice in Poland and Vienna, Austria. In the few brief months of its operation, approximately 95,000 Jews in total were relocated.

The centerpiece of the plan was the Belzec camp, which, while initially used for forced labor, in 1942 became the first extermination camp under “Operation Reinhard” with the installation of permanent gas chambers disguised as showers under the direction of SS officer Christian Wirth, sometimes known as “Christian the Terrible” (*Christian der Grausame*). The other two camps under this operation—Sobibór and Majdanek—were also located in the Lublin region. Early on, the deportees were under the imposed authority of the Lublin *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) which took its orders directly from the Nazi leadership, but it has been estimated that, by 1943, almost all of the Jews of the region were dead, the result of gassings, forced labor, or by the *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing squads).

The shutdown of the plan may well have been the result of Himmler’s underestimation and pragmatic realization of the number of Jews to be relocated—upward of several million (and Frank’s ongoing reluctance to accept ever more Jews), the men, women, and materiél required to enforce the plan, and the land size need to accomplish the goal. Additionally, Himmler was likewise tasked with finding jobs for Germans themselves relocated to Poland, and this, too, proved too difficult. The forced relocation of Jews would, however, ultimately take a back seat as the Nazi plan for the fate of the Jews was sealed with the commitment to annihilate *all* the Jews found in Nazi-controlled and Nazi-occupied lands. The establishment of upwards of 1,000 camps and their satellites would result in Nazi successes in death and murder unconceived at the start of World War II.

Though the Nazis tried hard to keep their plans secret, word leaked out of their intentions regarding the Jews, not only to the Poles in the region but beyond. On December 30, 1939, Oswald Garrison Villard, American journalist and civil rights crusader, published a piece in *The Nation* magazine titled “The Latest Anti-Jewish Horror.” Reporting from The Hague, Netherlands, the month before (November 20, 1939), he wrote of Hitler’s determination to jam all the Jews

“into a small piece of Polish territory which is to be called a ‘Jewish State,’ but which is to be nothing more than a huge concentration camp and charnel house.” Referring to the situation, he noted that 1,950,000 people “were to be jammed, without working capital, without tools or habitations, unable to do business even with the contiguous territories,” into “a space of eighty by one hundred kilometers.” He concluded that “the Jews are treated literally as no German would be allowed under the law to treat a dumb animal.”

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Belzec; Eichmann, Adolf; Einsatzgruppen; Globocnik, Odilo; Frank, Hans; Haas, Leo; Himmler, Heinrich; Jewish Question; Judenrat; Rosenberg, Alfred; Seyss-Inquart, Arthur; Wirth, Christian

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Norrman, Sven

Sven Norrman was the head of the Warsaw office of the Swedish engineering company ASEA during the German invasion in 1939. Born in 1891, before the war Norrman enjoyed the life of a business executive in a foreign mission. A fluent speaker of Polish, he collected Polish art, was well liked by his staff, and loved hunting. With the German invasion in September 1939 he was based in Stockholm, though he visited Poland every two to three months. The Nazi occupation saw Norrman and other Swedes in a similar position living relatively comfortable lives. It was in Germany’s interest to ensure good relations with Sweden, which provided such goods and services as matches, ball bearings, and technical equipment to which Germany did not have ready access. At first, as the bombs rained down on Warsaw, the so-called “Warsaw Swedes” lived much of their time in a bunker at the Swedish embassy, but over time life resumed to as normal a condition as was possible under the circumstances. Norrman even fell in love with his secretary, a young Polish Jew named Gizela “Iza” Zbyszynska.

From their elevated standing, the Warsaw Swedes were able to witness the unraveling Holocaust before their very eyes. It began with antisemitic violence, in which Jews, singled out through the compulsory wearing of a Star of David, were beaten in the streets and humiliated in various ways. Norrman photographed such examples of oppression in October 1939 in Włocławek, in northern Poland, which became the first town in Europe in which Jews were required to wear the star. He was also witness to Jews being banned from using the sidewalks. In Warsaw, Norrman entered the ghetto itself, where he secretly took thousands of photographs.

All this, however, was but a prelude to other, more vital acts of opposition. Norrman noticed that Jewish acquaintances were disappearing in increasing numbers—whether through death in the ghetto, deportation, or (less likely) imprisonment—and became more and more anxious as to where developments were heading. Swedes such as Norrman could move around Warsaw as well as to and from Sweden, and he saw that an opportunity existed for him to make the horrors of Poland known more widely. Eventually, he and other Warsaw Swedes began smuggling documents and photographs back into Sweden; not only that, but he brought money back into Warsaw, with which the resistance movement could buy arms.

Both the Polish government-in-exile in London and the *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) in Warsaw saw the use that could be made of the Swedes' willingness to help. On May 16, 1942, the Home Army's commander in chief, General Stefan Rowecki, observed that the Swedes were a valuable resource that needed to be protected; a few days later, on May 21, Norrman took one of the most important consignments of documents to Stockholm thus far, with full particulars of the annihilation of 700,000 Polish Jews. His secret package included thousands of negatives of Nazi crimes in Poland.

Within a few weeks, all this information had been passed on to London, and on June 9, 1942, Poland's exiled premier, Władysław Sikorski, made a broadcast over the BBC revealing all the details Norrman had smuggled out. This was the first time in which the world heard news of the Nazi crimes against the Jews in any detail. Some news had previously been revealed, but never before on such a scale.

In response, the Gestapo began rounding up the Warsaw Swedes, instinctively aware that the only way the information could have been smuggled out would have been through them. On the direct order of SS chief Heinrich Himmler, seven Swedes were arrested by the Gestapo: Nils Berglind, Carl Herslow, Sigfrid Häggberg, Tore Widén, Einar Gerge, Stig Lagerberg, and Reinhold Grönberg. By a quirk of fate, Sven

Norrman was in Stockholm at the time of the arrests. His mistress, Iza Zbyszynska, managed to get a message to him just before he was due to return. Four of the men, Berglind, Herslow, Häggberg, and Widén, were sentenced to death in July 1943, though all seven were eventually released in the fall of 1944 and returned safely to Sweden. It is likely that intercession by Sweden's King Gustav V led to the releases after he had written to Adolf Hitler seeking an amnesty.

For her part, Iza was taken into custody. Although she had lived as a Christian on the Aryan side in Warsaw, the Gestapo became aware of her Jewish identity once she had been captured, and she was sent to the Moabit prison in Berlin, where she survived until the end of the war. Upon her liberation, she and Norrman were reunited in Warsaw; Norrman then divorced his wife in Sweden and married Iza. In 1974 the Polish government awarded him the *Armia Krajowa* Cross in recognition of his services for the Polish people during the war.

Sven Norrman explained his motivation in an interview several years later, in words that left little room for doubt as to why he acted as he did: "During my entire life I was a businessman. I liked my job and I was good in my field. I joined the struggle because I wanted to do something that was not for profit for once in my life."

Sven Norrman died on February 8, 1979, in Stockholm. His actions led to the world possessing the first detailed knowledge of the Holocaust while it was taking place, and for this action, undertaken at the risk of his life, he should be remembered with honor.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Sweden; Upstander; Warsaw Ghetto

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Norway

Norway is a Scandinavian country with a 1939 population of approximately 2.9 million, of whom just 1,700 were Jewish. In April 1940 German troops invaded Norway, despite that

nation's declared neutrality. The Germans hoped to establish naval bases there to counter the British in the North Sea and to secure important raw materials for their war effort. The Norwegians put up a surprisingly spirited defense, although the Germans virtually secured the country by late May. On June 7, King Haakon VII, along with much of the Norwegian government, fled and established a government-in-exile in London. The Germans then recruited Vidkun Quisling, a self-proclaimed Norwegian fascist, to act as head of state. This did not sit well with most Norwegians, however, who disliked Quisling and abhorred Nazi ideology. Quisling remained as the nominal head of state throughout the occupation, although he had little impact on policymaking. A resistance movement began as soon as Germans had imposed their will over Norway. The resistance included both armed and unarmed factions, although much of the movement involved nonviolent civil disobedience. When Quisling tried to introduce Nazi ideology into the school curriculum, teachers refused to go along, even after a number of them were arrested and detained.

Between June 1940 and June 1941, when the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, there were few restrictions placed on Norway's Jews. However, that attack prompted German occupation officials to arrest and detain a number of Jews in northern Norway during the summer of 1941. Beginning in October, German officials, working with Norwegian collaborators, began making more arrests, including 260 male Jews living in Oslo. During November 25–26, occupation officials arrested Oslo's remaining Jewish population, including children and women. They were sent first to Germany by sea and from there by rail to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, where most perished.

Many Norwegians objected to the arrests and deportations, either hiding Jews or tipping them off about planned arrests. Some 900 Norwegian Jews fled to neutral Sweden, where they took refuge until the end of the war. Perhaps as many as 500 Norwegian Jews died in Nazi concentration camps, but some 1,200 survived the war.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Quisling, Vidkun; Resistance Movements; White Buses

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Nuremberg Code

The Nuremberg Code is an internationally applied convention of medical ethics that controls medical experimentation. The code was developed as a result of the Doctors' Trial, which occurred in Nuremberg, Germany, between December 9, 1946, and August 20, 1947. Known officially as *United States of America v. Karl Brandt et al.*, the trial is not to be confused with trials held by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. The Doctors' Trial was conducted strictly by a U.S. military court in Nuremberg. The proceedings tried 23 Nazi German defendants, all of whom were charged with Nazi human experimentation, euthanasia, and mass murder. Most of the defendants were medical doctors, although some were scientists or lower-level functionaries who aided in the commission of the crimes. Much of the Nazi experimentation occurred at concentration and death camps and involved involuntary subjects, many of whom died.

In May 1947 Dr. Leo Alexander, an American physician who was acting as a medical adviser to prosecutors at the trial, submitted to the court six principles which he believed should govern all future medical research. On the day the Doctors' Trial ended, the judges, in their verdict, added four more principles to Alexander's six. The resulting Nuremberg Code became one of the first postwar human rights documents to be adopted on a large scale and was the first such document that prescribed the norms of medical research involving human subjects.

The 10 principles of the Nuremberg Code include the following: that all experimentation must involve voluntarily consenting participants; those conducting the research must take all precautions to minimize or mitigate pain or injury to participants; researchers must be willing to stop or interrupt experiments when participants appear in danger or pain; participants themselves must be able to opt out of an experiment if they believe it necessary; experiments must be structured to yield tangible results with wide applications; experiments must not be random or unnecessary; experiments must be conducted only by qualified scientists and physicians; and all experiments must be structured so that no permanent harm is inflicted on participants.

Many states subsequently adopted the Nuremberg Code to guide their own medical experiments, and the June 1964 Helsinki Declaration, which was based on the code, systemized the code's principles for the international medical community. The Helsinki Declaration was written by the World Medical Association. That declaration has been continually fine-tuned and revised over the years to keep pace with technological and ethical changes.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Brandt, Karl; Doctors' Trial; Medical Experimentation

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Nuremberg Defense

The Nuremberg Defense is a legal concept that holds that an individual is not responsible for crimes committed if that person was following the orders of a superior officer or one in authority, assuming he or she had a moral choice while committing such acts. It is also sometimes referred to as the "superior orders plea." The Nuremberg Defense is conversely related to the *respondiat superior* legal doctrine, which holds that those in authority—or superior positions—are legally responsible for the actions carried out by subordinates. The superior orders plea is often referred to as the Nuremberg Defense because the issue came up repeatedly during the 1945–1946 trials of Nazi war criminals held in Nuremberg, Germany.

The superior orders plea was famously employed in post-World War I trials of suspected war criminals. Most of those trials occurred in Germany, and many suspects were acquitted by invoking the superior orders plea, even though it had been proven that some of them had indeed committed war crimes. A German submarine commander, for example, who admitted to the purposeful sinking of an unarmed British hospital ship in 1917, claimed that he had done so because of orders handed down by his superiors. The court acquitted him because of the plea.

As World War II neared its end and the Allies began to prepare for postwar war crimes trials, they were determined to prevent defendants from employing the superior orders defense. In fact, the August 1945 London Charter of the

International Military Tribunal specifically forbade its use in Nuremberg proceedings. This was codified in Article IV of the Nuremberg Principles, which in turn influenced future criminal proceedings as they related to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Numerous defendants at Nuremberg attempted to invoke the superior orders plea, including German generals Wilhelm Keitel and Alfred Jodl. The court rejected both men's pleas, determining that following orders was not an excuse for their actions. Both men were found guilty and executed. Other defendants used the Nuremberg Defense not to escape punishment but rather to lighten their sentences, which in some instances worked.

The trials at Nuremberg did not, however, put an end to attempts at employing the superior orders plea. The issue surfaced again at the 1961 war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel. The court there rejected the plea and Eichmann was convicted and executed. But in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the issue was seemingly revived. That document claims that an individual may not be convicted of a war crime if he was legally obliged to follow a superior's orders, did not know the order was unlawful, or if the order was not manifestly unlawful. A careful reading of this, however, suggests that most war crimes would still be exempt from the Nuremberg Defense plea.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Eichmann Trial; Jackson, Robert H.; Keitel, Wilhelm; Kharkov Trial; London Charter Agreement; Nuremberg Principles; Nuremberg Trials

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Nuremberg Laws

The collective term "Nuremberg Laws" was the name given to two antisemitic laws presented on September 15, 1935, at a special meeting convened at the annual Nuremberg Rally of the Nazi Party held between September 9 and September 15, 1935. The first of these was the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, forbidding intermarriage and extramarital sexual relations between Jews and "citizens of German blood." It also prohibited the employment of German females under age 45 in Jewish households. The second law was the Reich Citizenship Law, which announced that

only those people of “German or kindred blood” and exhibiting appropriate conduct were eligible to be Reich citizens. The remainder were identified as state subjects, without citizenship rights but with obligations toward the Reich. A later decree was necessary to clarify or define who was Jewish for the purpose of these laws. This supplemental Nazi decree was passed on November 14, 1935, and the Reich Citizenship Law came into force on that date. The laws were expanded on November 26, 1935, to include Roma and Afro-Germans. Because of foreign policy concerns, prosecutions under the two laws did not commence until after the 1936 Summer Olympics, held in Berlin.

After seizing power in 1933 the Nazis began to implement policies that included the formation of a German “Volk” or people’s community, based on race. On April 1, 1933, Adolf Hitler declared a national boycott of Jewish businesses, and a week later, on April 7, 1933, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was passed; this expelled or excluded most Jews from the legal profession and from government service. On May 10, 1933, books that were considered “un-German,” including those by Jewish authors, were destroyed in a nationwide campaign of public book burning. Jews were harassed and subjected to violent attacks. The Nuremberg Laws were a further step in the removal of Jews from their participation in German community life.

As a result, the laws had serious economic and social impacts on the Jewish community. Those convicted of violating the marriage laws were imprisoned, and (subsequent to March 8, 1938) upon completing their sentences could be rearrested by the Gestapo and sent to concentration camps.

Many non-Jews became uncomfortable with their Jewish neighbors and gradually stopped socializing with Jews or shopping in Jewish-owned stores, many of which were forced to close due to a lack of customers. As Jews were no longer permitted to work in government service or government-regulated professions such as medicine and teaching, many middle-class business owners and professionals were required to take unskilled and basic employment. Wholesalers who continued to serve Jewish merchants were marched through the streets with placards around their necks proclaiming them to be “race traitors.” Overall, many Germans accepted the Nuremberg Laws, partly because Nazi propaganda had successfully persuaded public opinion to accept the belief that Jews were a separate race, but also because to oppose the regime meant leaving oneself and one’s family open to harassment or arrest by the Nazi secret police. Ordinary Germans were thankful that much of the antisemitic violence stopped once the Nuremberg Laws were passed,

although some supporters of the banned Communist Party and some elements of the Catholic Church were (and remained) critical of the laws.

Many German Jews reacted to the Nuremberg Laws with a sense of relief, thinking the worst was now over—at least they finally knew where they stood and could get on with their lives even if they had diminished rights. And to some degree they were correct. Over the next few years, the Nazis moved slowly in regard to the Jews. This was the quiet time for Jews in the Third Reich, as Hitler began to focus his attention entirely on diplomatic affairs and military rearmament. Further, concerned that international opinion would be adversely swayed by the new laws, the Interior Ministry did not actively enforce them until after the 1936 Summer Olympics, held in Berlin that August. After this, Jews were actively suppressed, stripped of their citizenship and civil rights, and eventually completely removed from German society.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Denunciation; Eugenics; Frick, Wilhelm; German Census, 1933; Gleichschaltung; *Judgment at Nuremberg*; Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; Luxembourg; Medical Experimentation; Mischling; “Racial Hygiene”; Reich Citizenship Law; Roma Genocide in the Holocaust; Shirer, William L.; Streicher, Julius; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Volk; Wannsee Conference

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Nuremberg Principles

The Nuremberg Principles are international guidelines promulgated in 1946 that determine what constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity. The principles emerged from the International Military Tribunal, convened at Nuremberg, Germany, in October 1945. That court was responsible for prosecuting individuals suspected of having committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Europe during the late 1930s and 1940s. The United Nations created the International Law Commission in 1946, which formally drafted the Nuremberg Principles and made them part of international law in December 1946.

The Nuremberg Principles are composed of seven principles. The first maintains that anyone who commits a war crime or a crime against humanity is subject to punishment. The second states that if internal or national laws do not penalize an individual who has committed a crime, that person is still subject to prosecution under international law. The third holds that heads of state or other governmental officials are not exempt from prosecution for war crimes or crimes against humanity. The fourth maintains that a person accused of such crimes may not claim innocence simply because he or she was “following orders,” as long as the person had a moral choice in those actions. The fifth states that anyone accused of committing an international war crime is entitled to a fair trial.

The sixth principle is perhaps the most important of the seven principles, because it specifically defines international war crimes. Crimes against peace are defined as those involving the planning, preparing for, initiation of, or waging of a war of aggression or a war that violates international treaties or agreements. War crimes are defined as violations of the laws or customs of war that involve—but are not limited to—murder, deportation, and ill treatment of civilians, the use of slave labor, the murder or ill treatment of prisoners of war, the murder of hostages, or the plunder or destruction of public and private property that is not militarily justified. Crimes against humanity are defined as murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhuman acts perpetrated against civilians, or the persecution of said civilians based on political, racial, or religious grounds when such acts are committed in connection with any war crime or crime against humanity. The seventh principle holds that complicity in the commission of any of the above crimes is by definition a crime under international law.

Since 1946 the Nuremberg Principles have been made part of a host of international and multilateral treaties and conventions. They have also formed the legal basis of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. When the International Criminal Court at The Hague was created on July 1, 2002, the Nuremberg Principles became the foundation of the court’s jurisdictional and legal proceedings.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Nuremberg Defense; Nuremberg Trials; War Crimes

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Nuremberg Trials

The Allies were determined to hold German civilian and military leaders accountable for World War II and the mass killings that had taken place in German-occupied Europe. British prime minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin agreed as early as 1941 to try those apprehended and found guilty of war crimes, and the logistics and framework needed to carry out this policy were discussed throughout the war. At Moscow in October 1943, a declaration signed by British, Soviet, and U.S. representatives stated that war criminals would be brought to trial. Such a procedure was further discussed at important meetings at Tehran (November–December 1943), at Yalta (February 1945), and at Potsdam (July 1945). Finally, the London Agreement of August 8, 1945, set forth the method—a court trial—and identified jurisdiction. Although the Soviets proposed that the trials be held in Berlin, within their zone of occupation, the Western Allies insisted on Nuremberg.

The city of Nuremberg was selected because the palace of justice there had received only minimal damage during the war. The large stone structure had 80 courtrooms and over 500 offices and thus offered sufficient space for a major international legal proceeding. Furthermore, an undestroyed prison was part of the justice building complex, so all prospective defendants could be housed on site. Moreover, the proclamation of the Third Reich’s racial laws against the Jews had been made at Nuremberg. U.S. Army personnel prepared the palace of justice for the trial, repairing damage and laying thousands of feet of electrical wire.

Broadly speaking, the Nuremberg proceedings fell into two categories. The first set took place between November 1945 and October 1946 and involved the trial of 22 defendants before an International Military Tribunal (IMT) established by Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Subsequently, a series of other trials was held at Nuremberg until the spring of 1949 before U.S. tribunals in the American zone of occupation, involving nearly 200 other defendants.

The Nuremberg IMT opened on October 8, 1945. Judges from France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States presided. The Western judges dressed in traditional robes, whereas the Soviet judge wore a military uniform. Soviet justice Iola T. Nikitschenko presided during the first session.



The Nuremberg Trials were a series of military tribunals conducted by the Allied forces in the city of Nuremberg after World War II. The first and best known of these trials was the trial of the major war criminals before the International Military Tribunal, held between November 20, 1945, and October 1, 1946. A second set of trials of lesser war criminals was conducted subsequently by the United States military. These included important tribunals such as the Doctors' Trial and the Judges' (or Justice) Trial. The decisions handed down at Nuremberg marked a new departure for the conduct of international law. (AP Photo)

The prosecution presented indictments against 24 major criminals and 6 organizations. The individuals were Martin Bormann, deputy Führer after 1941 (tried in absentia); Karl Doenitz, admiral and commander of the navy from 1943 to 1945; Hans Frank, governor-general of Poland; Wilhelm Frick, minister for internal affairs; Hans Fritzsche, head of the Radio Division of the Ministry of Propaganda; Walther Funk, minister of Economic Affairs; Hermann Göring, Reichsmarschall (Reich Marshal) and commander of the Luftwaffe; Rudolf Hess, deputy Führer until May 1941; Alfred Jodl, army general and head of Operations, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW); Ernst Kaltenbrunner, head of the Sicherheitsdienst (SD, Security Service); Wilhelm Keitel,

army field marshal and chief of OKW; Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, industrialist and head of Krupp armaments; Robert Ley, head of the Labor Front (he committed suicide on October 16, 1945); Konstantin Neurath, protector of Bohemia and Moravia from 1939 to 1943; Franz von Papen, former vice chancellor and ambassador to Turkey; Erich Raeder, grand admiral and commander of the navy until 1943; Joachim von Ribbentrop, foreign minister; Alfred Rosenberg, minister for the Occupied Territories in the East until 1941; Fritz Saukel, plenipotentiary for the mobilization of labor; Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank, from 1933 to 1939 and minister of economics from 1934 to 1937; Baldur von Shirach, leader of the Hitler Youth and Gauleiter

(area commander) of Vienna; Arthur Seyss-Inquart, commissioner for the Netherlands from 1940 to 1945; Albert Speer, minister of armaments from 1942 to 1945; and Julius Streicher, publisher of the newspaper *Der Stürmer*. The indicted organizations were the Nazi Party (NSDAP), the SS, the SD, the Gestapo, the General Staff, and Hitler's cabinet.

The charter governing the proceedings declared that the IMT's decisions would be made by majority vote. British Lord Justice Geoffrey Lawrence, president of the court, would cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie among the four sitting judges. The charter identified four categories of crimes: (1) crimes against peace: planning and/or preparing a war of aggression and violating international agreements; (2) crimes against peace: participating in a conspiracy to plan a war of aggression; (3) war crimes: a violation of custom and laws of war, use of slave labor, killing of hostages; and (4) crimes against humanity.

The trial itself lasted 218 days, and some 360 witnesses gave either written or verbal testimony. A new simultaneous translation system allowed the trial to proceed efficiently and swiftly in four languages. Although the defense was given the right to call its own witnesses, it was not allowed to bring forth any evidence against the Allies.

The proceedings at Nuremberg laid bare before the world the horrific crimes committed by the Third Reich. Most revealing were testimonies regarding the brutalities of the death camps. When shown German films of concentration camps, some of the defendants wept or became otherwise noticeably upset.

One aspect of the trial that caused debate at the time was the legality of trying military officers. Some suggested it was the role of military officers to carry out orders, but this defense was disallowed at Nuremberg. The prevailing view held that German military leaders had knowingly approved and planned aggressive war and had sanctioned war crimes.

On October 1, 1946, U.S. Army Colonel Burton Andrus led 21 defendants into the somber courtroom. (Martin Bormann was tried in absentia, Robert Ley had committed suicide, and Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach was too weak to be present.) Sir Geoffrey Lawrence announced that the verdicts would be delivered first, followed by the sentencing. Twelve defendants were sentenced to death by hanging (the counts

on which they were found guilty are in parentheses): Hans Frank (3 and 4), Wilhelm Frick (2, 3, and 4), Hermann Göring (all four), Alfred Jodl (all four), Ernst Kaltenbrunner (3 and 4), Wilhelm Keitel (all four), Robert Ley (all four), Joachim von Ribbentrop (all four), Alfred Rosenberg (all four), Fritz Saukel (3 and 4), Arthur Seyss-Inquart (2, 3, and 4), and Julius Streicher (1 and 4).

Göring escaped the hangman's noose by committing suicide with poison smuggled into the prison. Franz von Papen, Hans Fritzsche, and Hjalmar Schacht were the only defendants to be acquitted. Charges against Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach were dropped on the grounds that he was physically unable to stand trial. The remaining defendants received various terms, ranging up to life in prison: Karl Doenitz, 10 years (2 and 3); Walter Funk, life imprisonment (2, 3, and 4); Rudolf Hess, life imprisonment (1 and 2); Konstantin von Neurath, 15 years (all 4); Erich Raeder, life imprisonment (1, 2 and 3); Baldur von Schirach, 4 to 20 years (1 and 4); and Albert Speer, 4 to 20 years (3 and 4). Of those imprisoned, Hess lived the longest. He died in Spandau Prison in 1987 at age 93.

Even before the trial ended in 1946, debate began on the validity of the tribunal. Although some have argued that the IMT was merely a case of the victor trying the vanquished, it nonetheless exposed the horrors of the Third Reich, most especially the Holocaust, the use of slave labor, and the heinous war crimes.

GENE MUELLER

See also: Bormann, Martin; Crimes against Humanity; Eichmann, Adolf; Frank, Hans; Frick, Wilhelm; Gestapo; Göring, Hermann; Hess, Rudolf; Jackson, Robert H.; Kaltenbrunner, Ernst; Keitel, Wilhelm; Krupp Case; Lawrence, Geoffrey; London Charter Agreement; Manstein Trial; Moscow Declaration; Nacht und Nebel; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nazi Criminal Orders; Netherlands; Nuremberg Defense; Ohlendorf, Otto; Rosenberg, Alfred; Saukel, Fritz; Schutzstaffel; Seyss-Inquart, Arthur; Sicherheitsdienst; Speer, Albert; Streicher, Julius; Taylor, Telford; War Crimes

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O

Oberheuser, Herta

A German medical doctor who conducted cruel and sadistic medical experimentation on concentration camp inmates, Herta Oberheuser was born on May 11, 1911, in Cologne and received her medical degree in Bonn in 1937, with specialty training in dermatology. Following the completion of her medical training, the 26-year-old Oberheuser joined the Nazi Party as an intern and later as a physician for the League of German Girls. By 1940 she had been assigned as assistant physician to Dr. Karl Gebhardt, chief surgeon of the SS and personal physician to Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler.

The May 27, 1942, assassination of German security police chief Reinhardt Heydrich, who died primarily due to infection, led to the establishment of a branch of the Hohenlychen Sanatorium within the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Hoping to expand their knowledge of infections and how to fight them, Gebhardt and Oberheuser arrived at the facility intent on using the camp's inmates as subjects for their medical experiments.

On July 27, 1942, 75 women at Ravensbrück were ordered to the commandant's headquarters. Once there, Oberheuser physically examined the women and evaluated their suitability for the experiments. Those chosen had their legs cut and bacteria strains placed in the wounds. The subsequent infections were then treated with new sulfanilamide drugs. All of the experiments were conducted without the subjects' consent.

The results of the initial experiments were disappointing because they failed to replicate actual combat injuries. Later experiments sought to correct this. Inmates were subjected

to gunshot wounds infected with dirt and foreign material; they also endured severed muscles and broken bones. Wounds were then injected with streptococcus, gas gangrene, and tetanus. Prisoners who survived these experiments were often crippled for life.

Experiments involving bone and muscle transplantation were also conducted by Oberheuser. Oberheuser also oversaw the transfer of inmates to the Hohenlychen Sanatorium, where unnecessary amputations and transplants were conducted. The goal of these experiments was to provide "spare parts" for wounded German soldiers. Once a subject's usefulness had passed, Oberheuser hastened death with injections of gasoline.

Following the end of the war, Oberheuser was the only woman to stand trial at the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial. On August 20, 1947, she was found guilty for her part in conducting human experimentation at Ravensbrück and at Hohenlychen. Originally sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment, her sentence was later reduced to 10 years, and she was released in 1952 after serving only 5 years. She returned to practice as a doctor, establishing a family medical practice in Stocksee, Germany. In 1958 her medical license was revoked after she was recognized by a former Ravensbrück inmate. Oberheuser died on January 24, 1978, in Linz am Rhein, West Germany.

ROBERT W. MALICK

See also: Doctors' Trial; Gebhardt, Karl; League of German Girls; Medical Experimentation; Ravensbrück

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Oberländer, Theodor

Theodor Oberländer was a German scientist, Nazi Party member, and one of the chief architects of Nazi racial and occupation policies in the east. He later served as a politician and government official in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Theodor Oberländer was born on May 1, 1905, in Meiningen, Germany, and became an early adherent of Nazism; in 1923, at the age of 18, he was a participant in the abortive Beer Hall Putsch. He later attended university, ultimately earning a doctorate in agricultural science. In 1933 Oberländer became a member of the Nazi Party and was given a position as a regional deputy party official; soon thereafter, he secured a faculty position at a German university.

During this time, Oberländer began formulating theories about the non-German population in East Prussia. He also took a keen interest in Germany's mounting tensions with Poland, and urged that Germans and Polish immigrants be forbidden from socializing and intermarriage. Part of his ideas embraced the growing antisemitism of the Nazi Party. Indeed, Oberländer readily embraced his party's ill-conceived notions that Jews were carriers of communism and treason; he also suggested that non-Jewish peasants in the east be encouraged to adopt virulent antisemitism. By 1937 Oberländer had established a racially based formula designed to prepare Poland for direct German rule that sought to pit various ethnic groups against each other. Poles were also encouraged to turn against both the Jews and the Russians. In this regard, some have viewed Oberländer as an early proponent of the Final Solution.

When the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, sparking World War II, Oberländer was sent to Poland to work with anti-sabotage forces attached to the German Army. The next year, he fully endorsed ethnic cleansing in Poland and took a post at the University of Prague, where the Nazis employed him as an ethnic psychologist. In 1941, after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, Oberländer became an adviser to a Ukrainian-manned German army unit, which precipitated a massacre of civilians in Lvov (Lviv) that same year. He also urged that resistance groups be exterminated en masse. In 1943 he became embroiled in a dispute with his

superiors and was sent back to Prague. The following year he joined the staff of the Russian Liberation Army but was taken prisoner by U.S. forces in 1945.

Because of his knowledge of the region and its people, Oberländer was not tried as a war criminal. At the same time, he denied having perpetrated deleterious racial and ethnic policies. He served in the Bundestag (West German Parliament) during the two periods of 1953–1961 and 1963–1965, and was West Germany's minister for displaced persons, refugees, and victims of war from 1953 to 1960. He was forced to leave that position when his Nazi past came under scrutiny. The German Democratic Republic, meanwhile, sentenced him to life imprisonment in absentia in 1960 for his alleged involvement in the Lvov Massacre.

Returning to life as a scholar, Oberländer later denounced any rapprochement between East and West as a scheme concocted by communists and an ill-informed intelligentsia. In 1993, after German reunification, Oberländer's 1960 conviction was rescinded. In his last years, Oberländer became active in Germany's anti-immigration movement. He died in Bonn on May 12, 1998.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Antisemitism; Ethnic Cleansing; Globke Trial; "Racial Hygiene"

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Ochota Massacre

German Nazi atrocity consisting of mass murder, rape, robbery, destruction, and arson committed in the Warsaw district of Ochota from August 4 to August 25, 1944. These atrocities were aimed at destroying Warsaw and exterminating its population. The gravest crimes were committed in hospitals, at the Radium Institute, and in the so-called "Kolonja Staszica" and the "Zieleniak" concentration camps. It is estimated that some 10,000 residents of Ochota were murdered. Their property was subsequently looted and the district itself was systematically incinerated by German forces.

On August 1, 1944, an uprising in Warsaw was initiated by the underground Home Army, which sought to defeat the German occupying forces and welcome approaching Soviet troops. The Germans' Warsaw garrison numbered

some 16,000 soldiers, and as the unrest increased, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler ordered the strengthening of German forces in the city; he also ordered the destruction of Warsaw and the annihilation of its population.

Within the first four days of quashing the uprising, German troops managed to isolate selected districts of Warsaw, among them Ochota. A special collaborationist SS Sturmbrigade unit, the Russian National Liberation Army (*Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Narodnaya Armiya*, or RONA), consisting of war criminals and renegades, was called on to pacify the isolated districts. Its members were given a free hand to loot, murder, rape, and destroy. The brigade was under the command of Bronislav Kaminski, later executed for war crimes. The soldiers of this regiment were remembered as exceptionally cruel and merciless.

At the beginning of the destruction of the Ochota district, on August 5, the Germans erected a special transitional concentration camp (“Zieleniak”), where citizens were detained before being sent to other camps. During the “pacification” of Ochota, at least 1,000 citizens were murdered at Zieleniak alone by the time of its closure on August 19.

On August 5–6, some 170 patients and staff were raped and murdered at the Radium Institute, an oncology hospital, which was later looted and burned. Also in early August, RONA systematically plundered the neighboring “Kolonja Staszica” (Staszic Housing Estate), and raped and murdered its inhabitants.

In all, it is estimated (no complete documentation is available) that at least 10,000 citizens of Ochota were murdered. The massacre occurred throughout the Ochota district, although not all the deaths were documented, and many remain unremembered today. Looting and pillage continued after the district was vacated of its citizens.

JAKUB BASISTA

See also: Collaboration; Warsaw Rising

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Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, German and allied Romanian troops besieged the Ukrainian city of Odessa on the Black Sea. At the time, Odessa was a major city of some 600,000 people, including 180,000 Jews. About half the Jewish population managed to flee Odessa between June and October, but some 80,000–90,000 remained when the city was captured on October 16, 1941. The Romanian occupiers intended to use Odessa as a major administrative center.

On October 22, a huge time-delayed bomb, probably planted by the Soviets, detonated in front of Romania's military headquarters, killing 67 people. Included among them were numerous German and Romanian officers and the chief of the regional Romanian military. Outraged by the carnage, Romanian occupation forces began rounding up Odessa's Jews, forcing them into a public square on October 23. At least 5,000 were summarily shot. Others were soaked with gasoline and burned alive. About 20,000 more Jews were herded toward Dalnik, a small village in the countryside. Once there, they were locked in several large warehouses, which were then set ablaze. Anyone trying to flee was shot to death. Many of the dead were women and young children. The following day, another building housing Jewish men was set on fire, burning the victims alive.

The surviving Jews, numbering perhaps 35,000–40,000, were forced into a ghetto in the suburb of Slobodka, where many died from exposure and starvation over the succeeding weeks. On October 28, reports suggest that 4,000–5,000 Jews from the ghetto were shot to death in a stable area. Beginning in January 1942, Romanian and German officials deported about 19,300 Jews to concentration camps and ghettos in the Berezovka region. Although the precise number of dead remains difficult to determine, the best guess is that as many as 70,000 Jews may have died between October 1941 and January 1942.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Ghettos; Romania; Ukraine

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Odessa Massacre

A ruthless series of mass killings aimed at the Jewish population of Odessa in late 1941 and early 1942. Although the main massacre occurred during October 23–24, 1941, mass killings and deaths continued into January 1942. After

Ogilvie, Albert

Albert George Ogilvie was the premier of the Australian state of Tasmania between 1934 and 1939, and a rescuer of Jews

from Nazi Germany prior to World War II. Born in the Tasmanian capital city of Hobart on March 16, 1890, he was educated at one of Australia's prestigious Catholic colleges, St. Patrick's, Ballarat (Victoria), and the University of Tasmania, where he graduated in law. Admitted to the bar in 1914, he soon developed a reputation as a successful barrister defending criminal cases.

Ogilvie was elected to the Tasmanian Parliament in 1919 as the Labor member for the seat of Franklin (and was the youngest member of the House), and in 1928 he became leader of the Labor Party. He led the party into government at an election in 1934, and, as premier, moved quickly into action to implement the many plans he had for the future of his state. A highly energetic and domineering leader, Ogilvie was determined to modernize Tasmania, expand the population, and improve the state's infrastructure.

In 1935, together with his minister for health, John Francis ("Stymie") Gaha, Ogilvie took a trip to Europe to see firsthand how other countries were dealing with the effects of the Depression. This trip took in Britain, Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union. As a Labor politician his impressions of the latter country were highly favorable, but he evinced horror at what he saw in Italy and Germany. In the Nazi state he met with officials from the German foreign office and also with the president of the Reichsbank, Hjalmar Schacht. In discussions with foreign office representatives mention was made of the Jewish issue, with which Ogilvie had been apprised through the British and Australian press. He was disgusted by what he learned from the Nazi officials with whom he spoke.

Upon his return to Australia he was driven to help Jews who applied to his state for refuge—even though, as a state premier, he had no say over immigration policy, at a time when the federal government in Canberra was applying policies that sought to restrict Jewish refugee admissions. Ogilvie pleaded with his federal colleagues to allow Jews to enter Tasmania, working from the premise that as an island state it would be easy to restrict Jewish entry to the mainland, if that was the federal preference.

The volume of mail his office received from German and Austrian Jews seeking refuge was huge, with large numbers believing that Tasmania was a country separate from Australia, like New Zealand. Numerous applications for entry came straight to Hobart, the refugees believing that the state controlled its own immigration policy. The frustration Ogilvie experienced caused him considerable distress; all his government was able to do, in the usual run of events,

was forward these on to the Department of the Interior in Canberra, which dealt with migration matters. More often than not, applications for entry were denied.

Given this, there were times when Ogilvie found himself affronted by the federal government's dismissive attitude. On more than one occasion he interceded with regard to the progress of refugee applications, contacting the responsible minister in Canberra, the United Australia Party's Hattil Spencer Foll, and requesting, as a personal favor, that Jewish refugees be allowed entry to his island home. As Ogilvie came from the opposite side of politics to Foll, and was a state premier rather than a federal politician, Foll rarely gave Ogilvie's appeals a second thought (though there were occasions when the premier's efforts did manage to soften the heart of the otherwise tough minister for the interior).

As a result, there were frequent instances of Jewish rejection before the full facts of a specific case were known. An example of this can be seen in the case of a Warsaw Jew, Mordka Nejman. His brother-in-law, Norman Seidel, had migrated to Australia several years earlier and had settled in Hobart where he soon became established in soft goods manufacture. In 1938, owing to the situation prevailing for Jews in Poland, Nejman decided to sell his flourishing electrical business and move to Australia. Seidel arranged employment that would not displace an Australian, and with an assured landing capital to the value of £500, together with Seidel's maintenance guarantee, Nejman made his application to come to Australia.

The application was refused without the Department of the Interior providing any reasons. Ogilvie took up the case personally, and in a letter to Prime Minister Joseph Lyons—a fellow Tasmanian—on March 14, 1939, he asked whether the department could favorably reconsider Nejman's application. On May 26 the premier received news that upon further reflection the application for the admission of Nejman, his wife, and his children had now been approved. In view of the ease with which reconsideration was given to the case, it is possible to speculate that with a little more care the application would have been approved in the first place.

For Ogilvie, this was only the tip of the iceberg. Overall, he pursued some 15 separate cases of Jewish entry to his island state and was successful in 10. Most of these related to Jews seeking refuge from Nazi Germany and Austria.

He also put forth proposals for block Jewish settlement on Tasmania's offshore King Island, and went to great lengths to oversee the progress of individual applications from refugee applicants. For the most part, sadly, his entreaties rarely

softened the position of the federal immigration authorities in Canberra.

On June 10, 1939, Ogilvie collapsed and died of a heart attack in Melbourne while attending a federal loan council meeting. It has been suggested that the pressure under which he had been working on behalf of Jewish refugees was a contributing factor in his death. Of course, he had many other matters to attend to than those of Jewish refugee admission, but it could be suggested that the tragedy of the refugees did little to ease his tension. His untimely death left unfinished a matter on which he would have sought completion ahead of many others.

Albert Ogilvie was arguably the only executive office-bearer in Australia in the 1930s to advocate refugee entry in spite of existing regulations or policy considerations. He was not only prepared to oppose the federal government's restrictive immigration policies; he did so on numerous occasions. That no more than a handful of Jewish refugees made it into Tasmania is not his failure; the lives he saved through his intervention, rather, demonstrate his success.

The main principles for which Ogilvie fought throughout his life sprang from the premise that no one can remain an innocent bystander in the face of suffering. This was abundantly demonstrated in his activities on behalf of Jewish refugees from Nazism.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rescuers of Jews

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Ohlendorf, Otto

Otto Ohlendorf was a Nazi Party member, SS official, and head of one of the mobile killing squads (Einsatzgruppen) that was responsible for the deaths of some 90,000 innocent civilians, most of them Jews, between 1941 and 1942.

He was born on February 4, 1907, in Hohenegelesen, Germany. He studied economics and law at universities in Leipzig and Göttingen before pursuing doctoral work at the University of Pavia. In 1925 he joined the Nazi Party; in 1926 he became a member of the SS. He held several well-regarded

positions, and in 1933 became involved with the Institute of World Economy at the University of Kiel, where he focused on the study of Italian fascism and German National Socialism. In 1936 Ohlendorf became an official with the intelligence agency of the SS, where he provided information and reported on German public opinion for Nazi Party leaders.

In June 1941, upon the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Ohlendorf was named commander of Einsatzgruppe D, a mobile killing squad unit that was operational in the Crimea and southern Ukraine. The squad was attached to the Eleventh German Army. Among other atrocities, Ohlendorf's men were responsible for the mass killing of Jews in Kher-son, Nikolaiev, and Podilia. At Simferopol on December 13, 1941, Ohlendorf's unit massacred some 14,300 civilians, mainly Jews. Ohlendorf later testified he had ordered numerous men to fire on victims simultaneously, so that it would be impossible to establish personal responsibility for any single killing. In June 1942 Ohlendorf left the war front and returned to his SS work in Germany. During his roughly one-year tenure as head of the mobile killing squad, as many as 90,000 civilians were murdered.

Ohlendorf was now tasked with laying plans for the reconstruction of the postwar German economy. By the end of 1943, he had already resigned himself to a German defeat in World War II. At the end of the war in 1945 he was taken prisoner by Allied authorities and placed on trial for war crimes. At the Nuremberg Trial of several Einsatzgruppen officials, Ohlendorf was the lead defendant. He testified calmly and accurately at the proceedings, asserting at one point that his unit had committed crimes no less odious than the "push-button" killers who had unleashed the atomic bombs over Japan in 1945. Although he never indicated regret for his actions, his testimony was useful in convicting several others besides himself.

Ohlendorf's trial ended in the early spring of 1948, and in April of that year he was sentenced to death. After spending some three years as a prisoner at the Landsberg Prison, he was hanged there on June 8, 1951.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Einsatzgruppen; Operation Barbarossa; Ukraine; Nuremberg Trials

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Olympic Games, 1936

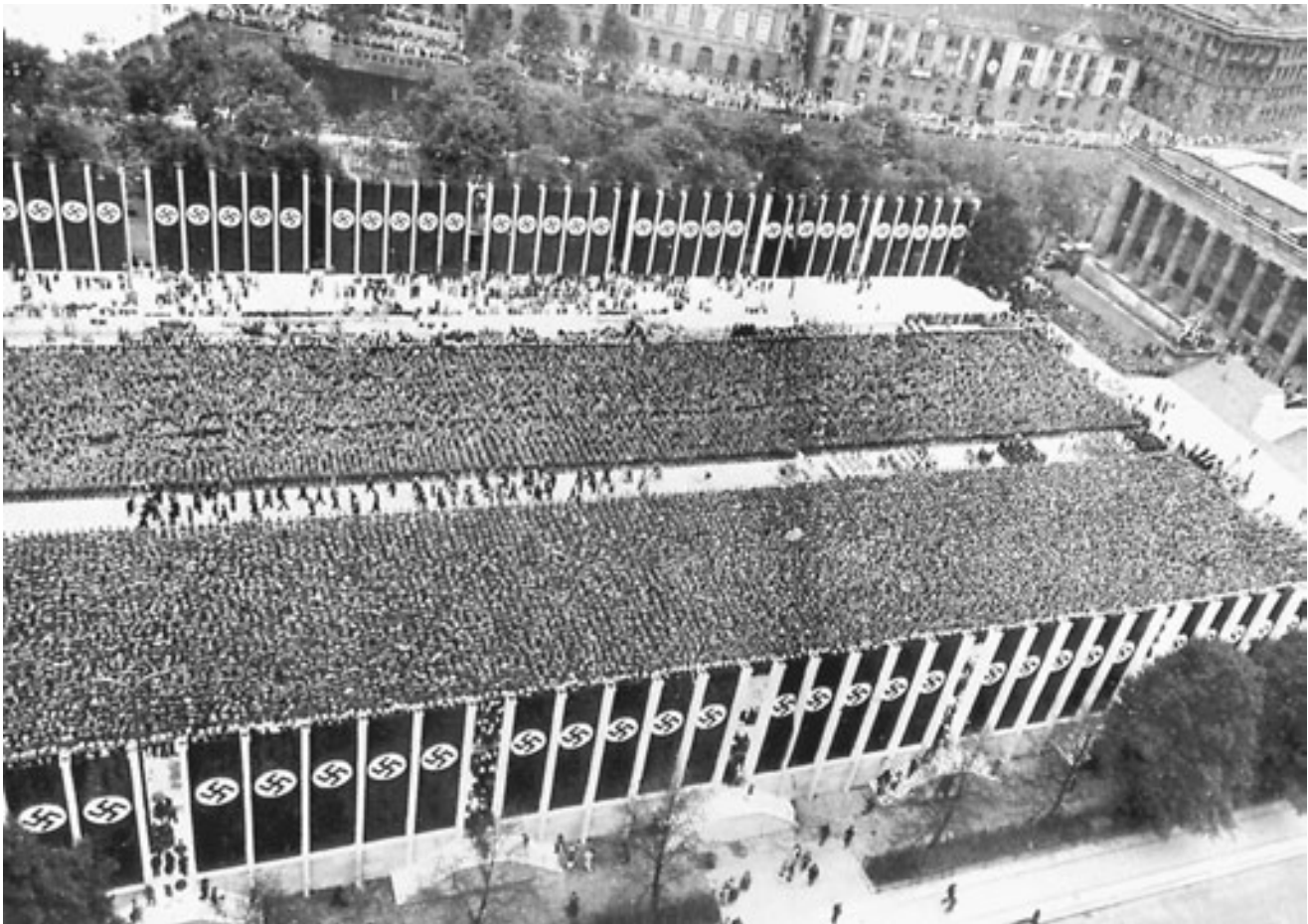
On August 1, 1936, the Summer Olympics began in Berlin. German dictator Adolf Hitler used the Games to showcase the Third Reich and conceal his regime's antisemitic and militaristic intentions, attempting instead to portray a peaceful and tolerant Germany to the international community.

The city of Berlin had been awarded the Games in 1931, prior to Hitler's ascent to power, but the 16-day meet quickly and inextricably became associated with the Nazi regime. By the time the Games of the XI Olympiad got underway, 3,963 athletes from 49 nations (the largest number of countries to that point) competed in 129 events, across 19 different sports.

Of course, as we well know, the Games were controversial. But what many people do not realize is the extent to which

they also attracted controversy at the time. From the very start they were marked by racism, with the official Nazi Party paper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, writing in the strongest terms that Jews and blacks, regardless of their country of origin, should not be allowed to participate.

Following Nazi demands, the German Olympic Committee denied Jews all opportunity of representing Germany. When the possibility of an international boycott was threatened—robbing Germany not only of the Games but also of both the showcase the Nazis were looking for and of much-desired foreign currency—there was a token relaxing of the rules: now, one athlete with a Jewish background was allowed to compete for Germany. Helene Mayer, who had a Jewish father, was a world champion fencer who had already won a gold medal at the 1928 Amsterdam Games. With an eye to the prospect of her winning another gold medal for



The Opening Ceremony of the Summer Olympics of 1936 in Berlin, August 8, 1936. The Games were a showpiece for Adolf Hitler's new Germany, in which the Third Reich could promote the Nazi ideals of racial supremacy to a watching world. German Jewish athletes were prevented from representing Germany, and Jewish athletes from other countries were discouraged from attending. When threatened with a boycott of the Games, however, Hitler realized that stopping Jewish athletes from outside was not something he could prevent. To Hitler's chagrin, an African American sprinter, Jesse Owens, won four gold medals and became the most successful athlete to compete in Berlin. (The Illustrated London News Picture Library)

Germany, she became the token Jew permitted to compete. As it turned out, she won silver in the individual foil event.

The prospect of other Jewish athletes competing for Germany was denied, however. The four-time world record holder and 10-time German national champion in shot put and discus throw, Lilli Henoch, was excluded; she was later deported and murdered in the Riga ghetto in 1942. Gretel Bergmann, an internationally recognized champion high jumper, was replaced on the German team by Dora Ratjen, who was later revealed to be a male who had been raised as a girl.

In order to reassure foreign opinion, Berlin was purged of all traces of Nazi antisemitism. Local party authorities removed street signs bearing such slogans as “Jews not wanted” from Berlin’s main tourist areas, while all vagrants and Roma (known as “Gypsies”) were physically moved on to a specially constructed “holding camp” outside the city at Marzahn.

In view of such developments, there was considerable debate outside Germany prior to the Games over whether or not a boycott should go ahead. In some countries, notably Britain, France, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and the Netherlands, discussion took place over whether the Games should perhaps be relocated, while throughout Europe exiled political opponents of the Nazis kept up the pressure for a boycott. These initiatives did not amount to anything definite, the excuse always being given that the Games had been awarded to Berlin in 1931 and that it would be wrong to punish the city simply because of a change of government.

Individual Jewish athletes from a number of countries, on the other hand, elected to take matters into their own hands and refused to attend. In this regard, brave athletes such as the South African Sid Kiel and Americans Milton Green and Norman Cahners should be mentioned.

As one of the world’s leading sporting nations the position of the United States was crucial, and in September 1934 the United States Olympic Committee accepted a German invitation to visit on a fact-finding mission. After interviewing German Jews who had been carefully selected by the Nazi regime, U.S. Olympic Committee president Avery Brundage concluded that he had not found any discrimination against the Jewish population of Germany. He then became a major supporter of the Games being held in Berlin, famously arguing that “politics has no place in sport.” By 1935 he had convinced the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States that an American team should be sent to Berlin. The American Jewish Congress and the Jewish Labor Committee supported

a boycott, but they had no say in what was effectively an institutional project by the American Olympic Committee.

Most African American newspapers, on the other hand, supported participation, arguing that this was an opportunity for Nazi racial theories to be challenged and, hopefully, defeated. And to some degree, they were right; the iconic Jesse Owens won four gold medals in the sprint and long jump events, and became the most successful athlete to compete in Berlin.

On the day of the men’s 4 × 100 relay, the Jewish American sprinters Sam Stoller and Marty Glickman were omitted from the team. While this gave Owens the opportunity to win his fourth and final gold medal, the speculation has ever since been that in the aftermath of Owens’s earlier victories Avery Brundage did not want to add to Hitler’s embarrassment by having two Jews win gold medals. Suggestions have been consistent that the omission of Stoller and Glickman was deliberately antisemitic, and a direct appeasing of Hitler. This does not, however, take into account the prospect of environmental circumstances on the day of the race itself, always a consideration in a team sporting event.

What must be considered an act of appeasement, however, was the tortured debate that took place within the hierarchy of Britain’s BBC over whether or not to accredit its foremost sporting commentator, the former Olympic gold medalist from the 1924 Paris Games, Harold Abrahams. It was felt that the presence of Abrahams, who was Jewish, could have been embarrassing to the British government if the Nazis took it as a provocative act. The BBC’s controller of programs, Cecil Graves, wrote to his colleagues: “We all regard the German action against the Jews as quite irrational and intolerable . . . but would it be discourteous to send a Jew commentator to a country where Jews are taboo?” After much deliberation and many internal memos, Abrahams was sent to Berlin, with Graves concluding that the BBC should inform the Germans of the BBC decision and “leave them to raise any objections.”

Ultimately, Germany was the most successful country at the Games, winning 33 gold medals and 89 medals overall. The United States came second in the medal tally, with 24 gold and 56 overall.

The Berlin Olympics torch relay from Mount Olympus in Greece was the first of its kind, and the Games were the first to have live television coverage. Despite these advances, they were also to be the final Olympic Games for 12 years owing to World War II.

Hitler’s anti-human ideologies and his quest for supreme domination and racial supremacy were the biggest challenge

to the Olympic ideal until 1972—when Palestinian terrorism and the murder of Jewish athletes at the Munich Games threatened the Olympic ideal once more. The president of the International Olympic Committee then was the same Avery Brundage who so dominated the American team in 1936.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Antisemitism; Gebhardt, Karl; “Racial Hygiene”; Riefenstahl, Leni; Segerstedt, Torgny; Shirer, William L.; *Triumph of the Spirit*

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Oneg Shabbat

During the period the Warsaw Ghetto was under Nazi domination in Poland, Jewish historian and educator Emanuel Ringelblum trained a group of colleagues and others to secretly record the daily events of life in the Warsaw Ghetto for posterity under the name *Oneg Shabbat* (Hebrew, “Joy of the Sabbath”). Begun in November 1939, this massive collection of historical data, hidden primarily in tin boxes and metal milk cans, continued until Ringelblum’s murder in March 1944.

Efforts were made continuously to transmit information obtained by Ringelblum and his colleagues to the Allies—for example, knowledge of the Chelmno death camp. After the war, between 1946 and 1950, much but not all of this material was retrieved and continues to be a major resource for scholars and others regarding the reality of life and death in the Warsaw ghetto, which has most closely been identified with resistance to the Nazis, where the Jewish inhabitants held off their enemies for six weeks following the Nazis’ attack at Passover in April 1943. The material itself consists of more than 6,000 documents, maps, pictures, memorabilia, testimonials, analyses, reports, and research on a wide array of issues (for example, smuggling, relationships with the Poles, starvation, the underground economy). Today, much of this material is housed in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Poland.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Resistance Movements; Ringelblum, Emanuel; Ringelblum Archive; Warsaw Ghetto; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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Opdyke, Irene Gut

Irene Gut Opdyke was a Polish upstander who aided and saved Jews during the Holocaust. She was born Irena Gut on May 5, 1918, in Koziencice, Poland, one of five daughters in a devoutly Catholic family. She later moved with her family to Radom, where she eventually became a nursing student. In 1939, after Germany attacked Poland and the country became partitioned into German and Soviet zones, Gut escaped to Ukraine to join the Polish resistance army. There she was captured by Soviet soldiers, brutalized and raped, and left for dead in the snow. She was found by Polish and Ukrainian partisans and recovered, but was later arrested by the Germans and made a prisoner in Poland.

By 1942 she was working as a forced laborer in a German munitions plant in Glinice, Poland. In April of that year, she witnessed a scene so shocking that she became determined to resist the Germans at all costs and help the Jews who were being systematically repressed and murdered. While on a break from work, she watched in horror as a Nazi officer tossed a baby into the air and shot him dead, as if he had been honing his target-practice skills. This scene convinced her that she had to do her part to shield and rescue Jews. Her resolution to do so became even stronger when the local Gestapo forced her and other Poles to witness the hanging of a Jewish couple and their would-be Polish rescuer.

While still in Glinice, a 70-year-old German officer, Major Edward Rugemer, noticed Gut and took pity on her. He quickly arranged for her to be transferred to an officers’ mess located in a local hotel. There she began to actively assist Jews in the nearby ghetto. She routinely sent in food and leftovers, and before long she had become involved in smuggling Jews out of the ghetto and into the surrounding forests, where they could escape. She engaged in these activities knowing that if she were to be caught, she would be executed.

When Rugemer was transferred to Ternopol (Ternopil), in modern-day Ukraine, he requested that Gut accompany him and serve as his official housekeeper and cook. The move brought Gut to an abandoned villa that included a large

but well-hidden cellar located under a gazebo. Gut arranged for 12 Jews to take refuge in the cellar, feeding them from Rugemer's kitchen. During the day, when Rugemer was away from the house, Gut's hidden guests helped her with the household chores.

When Rugemer discovered the presence of the hidden Jews, he threatened to alert the SS and have Gut and her "guests" arrested. Rugemer now demanded that Gut become his mistress; if she did not, he would report her to the authorities. Gut agreed, and the arrangement remained undisturbed until the winter of 1944, when Gut and her Jewish friends fled into a nearby forest, remaining hidden until Soviet forces had retaken Poland. At that point, they were all placed in a camp for displaced persons. Many of the Jews she had rescued eventually made their way to Palestine; Gut, meanwhile, with the help of some Jewish friends, made her way to western Germany and then later migrated to the United States.

In the late 1940s William Opdyke, an American working for the United Nations, interviewed Gut to determine if she was eligible for permanent residency in the United States. For the first time, Gut recounted her amazing tale. Gut later married Opdyke. The couple raised a family and eventually moved to California; Irene Opdyke, meanwhile, kept quiet about her World War II-era exploits. In 1974 she was asked to fill in for her husband as a speaker at a local Rotary Club meeting, and it was there that she first shared her tale with an audience. After that, she spoke often, and to many audiences, about her experiences. In 1999 she published her memoir, *In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer*, which has sold well over a million copies.

Meanwhile, in 1982 Israel's Yad Vashem recognized Opdyke as one of the Righteous among the Nations. In 1995 Polish-born Pope John Paul II bestowed upon Opdyke a personal papal blessing during the pontiff's visit to California. This was bittersweet for Opdyke, for she had earlier abandoned the Catholic Church because a priest had refused to absolve her when she asked for forgiveness for having had the affair with Major Rugemer, even though that affair had saved her life and the lives of 12 others. Opdyke went on a speaking tour after her book was published. Opdyke died in Orange County, California, on May 17, 2003.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Poland; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Ukraine; Upstander

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Operation Barbarossa

Code name for the German invasion of the Soviet Union, June 22, 1941, along a 2,900-kilometer front from the Baltic to the Black Sea. It was the greatest frontal advance in military history. The German forces numbered 3,200,000 men in 151 divisions, with 3,350 tanks, 7,184 guns, and 1,945 planes. Accompanying the German forces were those of their allies: there were 40,000 Italian troops, and 18 Finnish, 14 Roumanian, and 2 Hungarian divisions. With the attack on the USSR, Hitler overturned the policy he had initiated a year and 10 months before when he signed a pact of nonaggression with the Soviet Union (August 29, 1939). Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a proclamation in which he reinforced his often proclaimed role of Savior of Europe against Bolshevism. Operation Barbarossa itself began on June 22 and lasted for several weeks, after which most of its major military objectives had been achieved. Where they had not, new campaigns had to be devised, whilst simultaneously confronting Soviet counter-offensives. Prior to Barbarossa, on June 6, 1941, Hitler issued his *Kommissarbefehl* ("Commissar Order"), in which he directed that any Soviet cadres and political leaders captured would be summarily executed. By extension, within the Nazi conception of communism, this included all Jews, as they were viewed as the chief disseminators of Bolshevik ideology. Accordingly, special mobile killing squads, the *Einsatzgruppen*, were established to accompany the combat troops of the German army close behind in the weeks following Barbarossa.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Beitz, Berthold; Communists in the Holocaust; Einsatzgruppen; Finland; Hitler, Adolf; Hungary; Keitel, Wilhelm; Kommissarbefehl; Lebensraum; Lubny Massacre; Manstein, Erich von; Nazi Criminal Orders, 1941; Ohlendorf, Otto; Romania; Soviet Union; World War II

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Operation Barbarossa was the code name for the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany and its allies, launched on June 22, 1941. It was a massive invasion, comprising three great army groups with over 3 million German soldiers, 150 divisions, and 3,000 tanks, across a front line that stretched over 2,000 miles. Barbarossa was the most important turning point in World War II; its eventual failure, later in the year, forced Nazi Germany into a two-front war against a coalition possessing immensely superior resources. The photo here is of German tanks advancing toward a Soviet village on October 29, 1941. (Fotosearch/Getty Images)

Operation Harvest Festival

Taking place on November 3, 1943, Operation Harvest Festival (*Aktion Erntefest*) was the largest single mass murder operation of Jews to take place over the entirety of World War II. As direct retaliation for a sequence of resistance operations within concentration camps and ghettos, Operation Harvest Festival, ordered by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler and carried out by SS officers Christian Wirth and Jakob Sporrenberg, killed approximately 43,000 Polish Jews from the Lublin-Majdanek death camp and the Trawniki and Poniatowa labor camps, ultimately destroying the Jewish population of the Lublin district of German-occupied Poland.

Heinrich Himmler ordered the liquidation of these camps following multiple expressions of resistance throughout the areas controlled by Germany, including the revolts at the Sobibór and Treblinka death camps, as well as the Jewish resistance in the Warsaw, Białystok, and Vilna ghettos. Fearing further Jewish resistance, Operation Harvest Festival was planned and carried out with the intention of crushing any possibility of further resistance.

Operation Harvest Festival began at dawn on November 3, when Majdanek, Trawniki, and Poniatowa were surrounded by SS officers and German police. Inmates at Trawniki and Poniatowa were taken out of the camps and shot, their bodies falling into massive ditches; at Majdanek,

under the watchful eye of Erich Muhsfeldt, the Jews were separated from the rest of the prisoners and then taken to be killed. Muhsfeldt, a senior SS noncommissioned officer, had been transferred from Auschwitz to Majdanek on November 15, 1941, and was closely involved in the mass shooting of the camp's Jewish inmates during Operation Harvest Festival. After Majdanek had been liquidated, he was transferred back to Auschwitz, where he supervised Jewish prisoners in the *Sonderkommando* in Crematoria II and III.

During *Aktion Erntefest* the victims had originally been ordered to dig massive trenches designed to combat oncoming Soviet tanks but instead of this the trenches were used as mass graves. During the mass shootings at both Majdanek and Trawniki, music was played over loudspeakers to drown out the sounds of continuous gunshots. The process was completed in a single day at Majdanek and Trawniki; *Erntefest* took place over two days at Poniatowa, however, owing to prisoner resistance within the camp.

Operation Harvest Festival was responsible for the largest single number of casualties during a mass shooting conducted by the SS. It was part of the much larger Operation Reinhard (*Aktion Reinhard*), an organized mass murder of all the Polish Jews in German-occupied Poland.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Aktion; Aktion Reinhard; Białystok Ghetto; Dannecker, Theodor; Himmler, Heinrich; Majdanek; Sobibór; Treblinka; Vichy France; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Wirth, Christian

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Operation Spring Wind

“Operation Spring Wind” also known as “Operation Spring Breeze” (“*Opération Vent Printanier*”) was the code name for the arrests made by more than 4,500 French police, under the control of French officials, during the nights of July 16–17, 1942. The incident is now called “*La Rafle du Vel’ d’Hiv*” (The round-up of the Vel’ d’Hiv). The Vichy government, sensing pressure from Berlin regarding France’s Jewish population, conducted the raid and roundup of more than 13,000 Jews in advance of their deportation out of France. Code named Operation Spring Wind, the action was

a French police campaign that had been organized after several discussions between the government of Vichy France, including Marshal Philippe Pétain, Prime Minister Pierre Laval, and the Nazi occupation administration. Operation Spring Wind and the roundup operations of July 1942 were the culmination of Vichy’s antisemitic policies up to that point.

The collaboration of French police and the Gestapo saw the arrest of 13,152 Jews, 31% of them children, over the course of two days. Roughly 7,000 of them were held under the harshest of conditions at the Vélodrome d’Hiver, a stadium for bicycle races and other sporting events in the center of Paris. Others were held at or taken to nearby internment camps such as Drancy, Pithiviers, or Beaune-la-Rolande before being deported to Auschwitz for extermination.

The collaborationist government of Pierre Laval had been called upon to work with the Nazis through the arrest and transportation of the Jews of Paris to places from where they would be deported. Laval, who held antisemitic beliefs and was a supporter of the Statut des Juifs, Vichy’s domestic anti-Jewish law, was also obsessed with the maintenance and recognition of French sovereignty. He willingly collaborated with the Nazis and took the opportunity to offer French services, which he felt would be rewarded appropriately by a more lenient form of cooperative occupation from the Germans.

René Bousquet, the secretary general of police; Theodor Dannecker, the Nazi leader of the *Judenreferat* at the SD post in Paris; Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, the commissioner for Jewish affairs in Vichy; and Helmut Knochen, the senior commander of the Security Police and SD in Paris, all joined Laval on July 4, 1942, for the organizational meeting regarding the operation planning. Senior officials of the Paris and French police were also present. The agreement for Operation Spring Wind was decided on June 16, 1942. On July 7 the collaborators agreed to postpone the raid from the original date of July 13 to July 16–17 in order to avoid an overlap with France’s national holiday, Bastille Day.

The original schedule for the July 13 raid and roundup mobilized 6,000 French police officers. However, prior to the roundup, the French Resistance and some Jewish organizations learned about Operation Spring Wind and were able to help nearly 9,000 Jews escape the arrest—which, when it took place, included entire families, including for the first time women and children, who were ordered from their homes in dawn raids by the French police. The French police worked with a level of enthusiasm that surprised the German occupiers who had commanded them. Many non-Jewish French citizens also openly welcomed the persecution. A

number of individuals clapped as the raids took place, even going so far as to loot the newly empty homes.

The original Operation Spring Wind plan called for Jews over the age of 16 to be arrested; however, Laval amended this such that all children, irrespective of age, were arrested. This went beyond the orders given to him by the Germans, as he had originally been given specific instructions to spare children under the age of 16. Laval justified his position by arguing that his preference was to keep children and their parents together. However, when the American Friends Service Committee arranged visas for the United States for the Jewish children, he also attempted to prevent the children from leaving. In wanting to expel the Jewish children from France, his objective was that they be sent to Nazi camps—not a foreign refuge. Thus, between July 17 and September 30, 1942, more than 6,000 Jewish children from all over France were arrested and transported to their deaths.

The planning and operation of Spring Wind was carried out in the German-controlled zone of France, in Paris and its surroundings. There was very little direct involvement on the part of the German authorities. The planning and execution of Operation Spring Wind was a French concern. The Vichy authorities held the ultimate responsibility for the decisions taken and the outcomes that followed.

After the war, Pierre Laval fled to Germany, then to Spain, then to Austria, where he was arrested and sent back to France. He was tried, along with Philippe Pétain, on charges of treason and found guilty of high treason. After attempting to poison himself, Laval was executed by firing squad on October 15, 1945.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Bousquet, René; Collaboration; Laval, Pierre; Pétain, Philippe; Vel' d' Hiv Roundup; Vichy France

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“Ordinary Men”

The phrase “ordinary men” is taken from the title of Christopher Browning’s 1992 book *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. It refers

specifically to the very ordinariness of the 500 middle-aged, lower- and lower-middle class family men from Hamburg, Germany, drafted into Reserve Police Battalion 101 (the so-called Order Police), who were active in murdering the 1,800 Jews of Josefow, Poland, and the surrounding area in July 1942 and beyond. Estimates of their overall involvement in such death-related activities run as high as 38,000, with commensurate transportation responsibilities in the hundreds of thousands.

Why the majority of these nonmilitary combatants engaged in this genocidal behavior when others in their unit, perhaps 10% to 20%, did not (and did not suffer punishments because of their refusal) remains, even today, deeply troubling and deeply disturbing. Although Browning presents a variety of hypotheses regarding the motivation behind their behavior—wartime brutalization, racism, segmentation and routinization of task, special selection of perpetrators, careerism, obedience to authority and orders, deference to that same authority, ideological indoctrination, conformity, quasi-military status, and a sense of elitism (perhaps for many for the first time)—he also asserts, reasonably, that no one explanation provides either the answer or the key insight. That the men themselves, after being interviewed (more than 400 interviews were conducted), could not themselves explain their own behavior remains equally troubling and reveals quite starkly how little we continue to understand about the psychological totality and capacity of the human person to engage in horrific behaviors and to rationalize such activity.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Banality of Evil; Browning, Christopher; *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*

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Osako, Tatsuo

Tatsuo Osako was a civilian Japanese official stationed with the Japan Tourist Bureau during World War II who helped as many as 2,000 Jews escape Europe via the Soviet Union.

Born in Japan in 1917, Osako worked closely with Chiune Sugihara, who was the Japanese vice consul in Kovno, Lithuania. Both Osako and Sugihara have been compared to the German upstander Oskar Schindler, who saved more than 1,000 Jews during the war.

By 1941, months after the start of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union and the Germans institution of the Holocaust there, Sugihara began arranging transit and residence visas for Jews wishing to flee Europe. They would eventually be taken to Japan, where they would be resettled. To assist Sugihara in this endeavor, Osako agreed to accompany the refugees by ship from Vladivostok to the Japanese port city of Tsuruga. Most Jews were transported to Vladivostok via the Trans-Siberian Railroad. From Vladivostok, Osako would accompany the Jews on the final leg of their journey, making sure that they were reasonably comfortable and had all of the necessary immigration papers. Between September 1940 and June 1941 Osako crossed the stormy Sea of Japan roughly every two weeks, bringing some 2,000 Jews to safety. Osako and Sugihara's mission was curtailed, however, when the United States entered the war later that year and became an ally of the Soviet Union.

Like many upstanders, Osako never mentioned his heroic deeds. His involvement in the rescue missions did not come to light until many years later, when a scrapbook he had kept

was found. It contained records of the transports and many photographs of the passengers Osako had helped.

Tatsuo Osako died in 2003. Akira Kitade, a retired Japanese tourism executive who had worked for Osako for many years, says that Osako had never mentioned his World War II activities.

The Jews who resettled in Japan during 1940–1941 have stated that they were treated well by the Japanese. They were taught Japanese, given free medical care, and were fed by local farmers. The role Japan played in the Holocaust is not widely known, and only recently have the stories of Osako and Sugihara become widely distributed to the general public.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Upstander

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Paper Clips

An 82-minute documentary released by Miramax Films in 2004 that tells the simple but moving (and true) story of middle school students in a small, impoverished Tennessee town who set out to collect 6 million paper clips in order to illustrate the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust. The project began in 1998, when Whitwell Middle School sponsored a voluntary, after-school class on the Holocaust for eighth graders. The ultimate goal was to teach students about tolerance. When students learned that the Norwegians had worn paper clips on their lapels during World War II to protest the Nazi occupation of their country, the students decided to begin collecting 6 million paper clips, which would represent the number of people murdered in the Holocaust.

Whitwell, Tennessee, is a former coal-mining town with a population of just 1,600 people; it is nearly 98% white, and none of the students who began the project were Jewish. Nevertheless, they earnestly began their improbable quest, which was carried over into subsequent school years. Their project soon attracted the attention of journalists, and in 2001 the *Washington Post* ran a feature story about it. Before long, the Paper Clip project had come to involve virtually all of the town's residents and had attracted attention from around the world. Many politicians and celebrities sent in paper clips, including presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks, and Tom Bosley. By

2004, the school had collected 24 million clips; by 2010, it had amassed some 30 million.

The movie features interviews with Whitwell teachers, students, parents, Holocaust survivors, and people who donated paper clips, including Bosley. Simple yet compelling, the documentary illustrates how a small, isolated community can come together to fight the ravages of bigotry and intolerance and make a difference on the world stage.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Facing History and Ourselves

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Papon, Maurice

French politician and the only Frenchman convicted of complicity in crimes against humanity committed in France during World War II. Born on September 3, 1910, in Gretz-Armainvilliers in the Seine-et-Marne Department, Maurice Papon was educated at the Lycée Montaigne in Paris and the Lycée Louis-le-Grand. In 1929 he entered the

Faculté de Droit et de Lettres in Paris. While a student, he joined the radical socialist youth movement. In February 1931 Papon entered government service, working on the staff of Jacques-Louis Daumesnil, Prime Minister Pierre Laval's minister of air. He joined the staff of the undersecretary of state in June 1936 and worked on Moroccan and Tunisian affairs. Papon, also an officer in the French army at the outbreak of World War II, was discharged in October 1940, after the start of the German occupation.

Faced with the choice of joining the Free French under Charles de Gaulle or staying with the pro-Nazi, collaborationist Vichy government, Papon opted to work for the Vichy regime and began service in the Ministry of the Interior. In 1942 he was appointed general-secretary of the Gironde prefecture, of which Bordeaux is the capital; among other duties, he was placed in charge of Jewish affairs in the region. Despite his apparent collaboration, by late 1943 the Germans considered Papon pro-American, and in mid-1944 he began to provide information on German movements to the French Resistance. When Allied forces liberated Bordeaux in August 1944, Papon was given a position in the new government. For his work with the Resistance, Papon was awarded the Carte d'Ancien Combattant de la Résistance. After the war, he and his family moved to Paris.

In January 1947 Papon was named the prefect of Corsica, a position he held until 1949. He was then appointed prefect of the Constantine region in Algeria, and in 1954 was named secretary-general of the Protectorate of Morocco. He returned to Paris in March 1956, when he was appointed to a post in the Ministry of the Interior. In March 1956 Papon became the prefect of Paris police, a position he held until June 1966. In 1961, police under his command allegedly killed anywhere between 50 and 300 Algerians protesting a curfew in Paris.

Papon entered politics in 1968, when he was elected as a Gaullist to the National Assembly representing the Cher region; he was reelected in 1973 and 1978. In April 1978 President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing appointed him as budget minister. On May 6, 1981, however, details about his past activities under the Vichy regime emerged when a French newspaper published documents signed by Papon that demonstrated his responsibility in the deportation of 1,690 Bordeaux Jews to the Drancy internment camp between 1942 and 1944.

Papon was charged with crimes against humanity in 1983, but the charges were dropped in 1988. Seven years later, however, he was accused of the unusual charge of "complicity in crimes against humanity." Papon's trial began in October 1997, and in April 1998 he was found guilty and sentenced to ten years in prison. After fleeing to Switzerland

during his appeal, Papon was arrested, returned to France, and jailed at the Fresnes prison in Paris. A French court freed him in September 2002 because of ill health. Papon died on February 17, 2007, in Pontault-Combault, France.

JOHN DAVID RAUSCH JR.

See also: Collaboration; Crimes against Humanity; Vichy France

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Paulavicius, Jonas

Jonas Paulavicius was a Lithuanian who rescued and hid 12 Jews and up to 4 Russian prisoners of war on his property outside Kovno (Kaunas) during World War II. In 1983, 33 years after his death, Israel's Yad Vashem honored him as one of the Righteous among the Nations.

Paulavicius was born in Lithuania on June 7, 1897, into humble circumstances. After receiving a grade-school education, he married Antonina and worked principally as a carpenter. The couple eventually had two children, a son and a daughter. By 1940, when World War II came to Lithuania, he lived on the outskirts of Kovno on a small farm. In June 1940 the Soviets invaded and occupied Lithuania, which until that time has been a sovereign nation since the end of World War I. The Soviet invasion resulted in widespread persecution of Lithuania's Jewish population, as many Lithuanians wrongly blamed them for the invasion and occupation. Many Jews had their property confiscated, and a sizable number of them were exiled to Siberia. Others were beaten and even murdered. Paulavicius witnessed the growing persecution of Lithuanian Jews with mounting unease.

Upon the German invasion of Lithuania in June 1941, the situation for the Jews became far worse. On June 24, 1941, the Germans occupied Kovno, at that time Lithuania's largest city. About 25% of the city's population was Jewish. Almost immediately, the Nazis set in motion the systematic segregation of Lithuanian Jews; many were forced to live in a ghetto that had been established in Kovno's Jewish district, while others were murdered outright or deported to concentration and death camps. Before long, the Germans had turned the ghetto into a makeshift concentration camp, but in June and July 1944, as Soviet troops battled their way west into Lithuania, Nazi officials decided to liquidate what was left of the ghetto. Although most of the ghetto's Jews had already been

deported or murdered, those who remained were sent to concentration camps in Estonia, Latvia, and Poland, where virtually all perished.

Determined to shelter as many Jews as he could, Paulavicius in the late summer of 1941 took a four-year-old Jewish boy into his home. Before long, he had agreed to take in the boy's parents as well. To keep them well hidden, Paulavicius and his son expanded an already-existing cellar into an underground shelter; meanwhile, several other Jews were hidden, as were several Russian soldiers.

Paulavicius designed the shelter to resemble a train's sleeping compartments, with bunk beds lining the walls to permit as much room as possible. He supplied his guests with food, water, and a radio. Every few days, he spirited them into his house at night to allow them to bathe. Paulavicius was fully aware that if he was caught, either by neighbors or the Germans, he would most certainly be arrested and probably executed. Realizing this danger, he sent his daughter to live in a room he rented some distance from his house.

Paulavicius conducted rescue missions as late as 1944, when he took in Miriam Krakinowsky, who was about to be deported from Kovno to certain death in a concentration camp. The Soviets finally liberated Kovno and the area surrounding it on August 1, 1944, and Paulavicius's rescue efforts came to an end. However, he suffered enormously in the immediate aftermath of the war. He lost his home to a devastating flood, and just two months later his only daughter died of tuberculosis. Antisemitism in Lithuania survived the war, and some of Paulavicius's neighbors disliked him because of his wartime activities. In 1950 an antisemitic Lithuanian murdered Jonas Paulavicius, and in 1983 his widow, Antonina, traveled to Israel to accept the Righteous among the Nations award in honor of her husband.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Ghettos; Lithuania; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Pavelić, Ante

Nationalist leader of the puppet Croatian state created under the Nazis between 1941 and 1945. Born in Bradina, Bosnia-Herzegovina on July 14, 1889, Ante Pavelić was trained in law at the University of Zagreb. Elected to the Skupstina, the

Yugoslav parliament, in 1920, he believed that violence and terrorism were legitimate means with which to achieve political ends. In the parliament, he represented the small nationalist Croatian Party of the Right. Following King Alexander's suspension of the constitution and a government crackdown on nationalist activities in 1929, Pavelić fled to Italy, where the following year he formed the Croatian Liberation Movement, known as the Ustashe.

With covert Italian support, Pavelić launched a terror campaign against the Yugoslavian state. In October 1934 Ustasha gunmen assassinated King Alexander and French foreign minister Louis Barthou at Marseille, for which a Yugoslav court sentenced Pavelić to death in absentia.

With the German invasion and defeat of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Pavelić and his supporters established the Independent State of Croatia with the backing of Italy, which occupied the country. Following the Italian surrender in 1943, Pavelić's Ustasha regime transferred its allegiance to Germany and remained a German client until the end of the war.

Pavelić, who proclaimed himself *Poglavnik* (leader), subjected Croatia to four years of abject terror. Bands of Ustasha militia roamed the countryside, expelling or executing scores of Jews, Serbs, Muslims, Roma, and other minorities in an attempt to create a purely Croatian state. Aping the Nazis, the Ustashe also established concentration camps in which tens of thousands of victims were exterminated. Ultimately, the lawlessness and violence of Pavelić's regime alienated it from the majority of Croats and swelled the ranks of the partisans. By early 1945 it is estimated that Pavelić's murderous policies had resulted in the deaths of some 30,000 Jews, 29,000 Roma, and between 300,000 and 600,000 Serbs. Moreover, such excesses also aroused grotesquely ironic protests from Pavelić's German overlords, who complained that Ustashe abuses were hindering the establishment of order necessary for the exploitation of Croatia's economic resources.

After the defeat of Germany in May 1945, Pavelić escaped to Rome, where he was shielded in the Vatican until 1948. He then went to Argentina, where he served as an adviser to Argentinean president Juan Perón. Pavelić was badly wounded in a 1957 assassination attempt by Yugoslavia's secret police, which compelled him to flee to fascist Spain. He died in Madrid, Spain, on December 28, 1959.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Croatia; Ustashe; Yugoslavia

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Pechersky, Alexander

Alexander “Sasha” Pechersky was a Jewish soldier in the army of the Soviet Union and the leader of the Sobibór revolt on October 14, 1943. It was the most successful uprising and mass escape of Jews from a Nazi death camp during the Holocaust.

The son of a lawyer, Pechersky was born on February 22, 1909, in Kremenchuk, Ukraine. In 1915 his family moved to Rostov-on-Don; after graduating from university with a diploma in music and literature, he managed a small school for amateur musicians.

On June 22, 1941, the day of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Pechersky enlisted in the Red Army with the rank of lieutenant. In October 1941, during the Battle of Moscow, he was captured by the Nazis and became a prisoner of war. After a period of sickness, escape, recapture, transfer to different camps (during which the Nazis learned that he was Jewish), and incarceration in the Minsk ghetto, he was eventually sent to Sobibór on September 22, 1943, together with other Jewish soldiers and approximately 2,000 Minsk Jews. Almost everyone in the convoy was gassed on arrival; Pechersky and about 80 others were selected to live and work as slave labor.

The arrival of the Soviet soldiers at Sobibór was a huge morale boost for the prisoners already there. They had already devised a number of plans for escape or revolt but did not have the strategic expertise to be able to put any of them into practice. A military presence, it was hoped by many, could possibly change things for the better.

The prisoners at Sobibór realized that time was of the essence if they were not all to be wiped out and the camp liquidated. The biggest question was whether to engage the guards in battle or force a mass escape in the hope that at least some people would be able to survive and bear witness. Within five days of Pechersky and his men arriving at Sobibór, the Polish Jews, led by Leon Feldhendler, approached Pechersky about his ideas for an escape plan. Pechersky saw that the choice was clear; a mass escape should be mounted, with as many prisoners as possible getting away while SS officers and Ukrainian auxiliaries were

killed. As a soldier, he also had a goal of his own—to join the partisans and continue fighting the Nazis.

He began by studying the camp carefully, learning its layout and routine. Once he saw how the place operated, his plan was to surreptitiously kill a maximum number of SS officers—rendering the auxiliaries leaderless—and then start the escape by rushing the fence and the main gate. The prisoners would have obtained weapons prior to eliminating the auxiliaries. The plan was timed to begin at 4:00 p.m. on October 14, 1943, but the revolt began a little ahead of time owing to one of the SS officers learning of the plan and starting to shoot Jews. Prior to this a number of other SS had already been dispatched individually in different locations around the camp.

With no time to lose, a general uprising now started on Pechersky’s command. There was a wild rush to the main gate and fences all around the perimeter, with prisoners breaking out and running through the surrounding minefields in a mad scramble to reach the woods outside. In the chaos, huge numbers of prisoner-escapees were shot down.

The uprising was to see a grisly accounting of death. Eleven SS officers and an unknown number of Ukrainian auxiliaries were killed; from an approximate number of 550 Jewish prisoners, 130 did not participate in the uprising; about 80 prisoners were killed during the escape; and another 170 were hunted down by the Nazis and killed in a bloody aftermath. Best estimates are that only about 53 of those who escaped from Sobibór survived the war.

It had only taken Pechersky 22 days from the time of his arrival at Sobibór to leading, with Feldhendler, what would be the biggest death camp revolt of World War II.

Having survived the breakout, Pechersky was joined in the forest by a group of about 50 prisoners, most of them soldiers who had arrived in camp with him. Over several days they split into smaller groups, with Pechersky and his men continually heading east in the hope of meeting with Soviet partisans. On the night of October 19, 1943, they crossed the Bug River, and after encountering other partisan units they eventually met a detachment from the famous Voroshilov regiment. From this point on, they became part of the formal resistance movement.

Alexander Pechersky’s tribulations were far from over, however. The Soviet attitude was that prisoners of war were cowards and traitors who deserved to be punished. Although fighting with the partisans, Pechersky was denounced and sent to a Soviet prison for several months, prior to being drafted into a punishment battalion and sent in the first wave of a series of near-suicidal attacks toward the end of the

war. Not only did he survive but he was also promoted to captain and received a medal for bravery.

After the war, Pechersky returned to his hometown of Rostov-on-Don, but in 1948 he was arrested by the Soviet authorities during Stalin's campaign against Jews suspected of pro-Western leanings. He was only released after Stalin's death in 1953.

Regardless of his status as a free citizen or as a prisoner, however, he was forbidden by Stalin's government to testify at any of the postwar international trials related to the Holocaust, such as at Nuremberg, where the prosecution had hoped he would have appeared as a witness. In like manner, he was sought after as a witness to appear at the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961, but he was forbidden to travel to Israel. He did, however, appear as a witness during the Soviet trial in 1963 of 11 former Ukrainian guards at Sobibór. All were convicted, and 10 were executed.

In 1987 a movie was made about the Sobibór revolt featuring Dutch actor Rutger Hauer in the role of Alexander Pechersky and Alan Arkin as Leon Feldhendler. *Escape from Sobibor* (dir. Jack Gold) won or was nominated for several awards, with Hauer receiving the Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor. Pechersky, however, was forbidden to leave the Soviet Union in order to attend the movie's premiere. Alexander Pechersky died just short of his 81st birthday on January 19, 1990, and was buried in Rostov-on-Don.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Resistance; Resistance Movements; Sobibór

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Perlasca, Giorgio

Giorgio Perlasca was an Italian rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust in Hungary, posing as the Spanish consul-general during the winter of 1944–1945 and saving 5,218 Jews from deportation and certain death. Perlasca was born in Como, Lombardy, in 1910 and raised in Maserà, Padua. Swayed by the ideals espoused by Italian poet and nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio, Perlasca supported the fascist regime of Benito

Mussolini. He fought in the Italian army during the invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 and was a volunteer during the Spanish Civil War in 1936 on the side of Francisco Franco. After his return to Italy he deserted fascism, replacing his former belief with a more general patriotism and loyalty to his king, Victor Emmanuel III.

After World War II broke out Perlasca became a procurement officer and was sent as an emissary to Eastern Europe with the task of purchasing meat for the Italian army. In the fall of 1943 he was appointed an official of the Italian trade commission in Budapest, Hungary. Wider developments in the war then took over. On September 8, 1943, Italy surrendered to the Allies, and on October 13, 1944, he was interned by the Hungarian government—an Axis ally—as a diplomatic detainee. Eventually, on medical grounds, he was granted parole, and sought asylum in the Spanish embassy. He changed his name from Giorgio to the Spanish Jorge, and owing to his earlier service during the Spanish Civil War was granted the rights of a Spanish citizen.

Seeking work through the embassy, he spoke with the Spanish chargé d'affaires, Ángel Sanz Briz, who had been issuing protective passes to Budapest Jews since the spring of 1944. Sanz Briz gave Perlasca responsibility for safe houses sheltering Jews under Spanish protection.

Toward the end of 1944 Sanz Briz was ordered to leave Hungary because of Spain's refusal to recognize the new pro-Nazi government of Ferenc Szálasi. On November 30, 1944, Perlasca learned that Sanz Briz had gone to Switzerland and that he had been invited to accompany him on a diplomatic passport. Perlasca chose to remain in Hungary, however, and informed the Hungarian authorities that the embassy had not closed and he had been appointed charge d'affaires. He did not possess any official documentation to that effect but managed to convince the Hungarian minister of the interior that Sanz Briz would return shortly from a period of leave and had appointed him his temporary successor. Haste was needed; the Hungarians, believing that official Spain had left, saw this as an opportunity to take over the Spanish embassy and the safe houses where Jews were hiding under Spanish protection.

Over the next few months, Perlasca worked actively to hide, feed, and transport thousands of Budapest Jews. He obtained medicine and food on the black market and developed a system of safe conduct passes using a Spanish law dating from 1924 allowing Spanish-born Jews full citizenship and protection. This was then extended to all Jews of Sephardic origin, including those who were the descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 and 1497.



Giorgio Perlasca saved more than 5,200 Hungarian Jews from certain death. An Italian posing as charge d'affaires of the Spanish embassy, Perlasca, working with Raoul Wallenberg of Sweden, managed to hide, feed, and transport thousands of Budapest Jews to safety. He was recognized in 1988 by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations, and here he is seen as the first recipient of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council's Medal of Remembrance in 1990. (Cynthia Johnson/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty Images)

Across the winter of 1944–1945, Perlasca worked to save the lives of Hungarian Jews alongside Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg, apostolic nuncio Angelo Rotta, and the Swiss Red Cross delegate Friedrich Born. It has been calculated that Perlasca had been responsible for saving the lives of more than 5,200 Jews by the time the Soviet army accepted the surrender of Budapest in February 1945.

After the war, Perlasca returned to his family in Padua and lived a quiet life. For 30 years he did not speak about his actions while in Hungary; not even his family knew of his exploits. In 1987, however, a group of Hungarian Jewish survivors who had been trying to trace his whereabouts for several years finally found him and began telling the world of his heroic deeds during the dark years.

Following this, Perlasca became well known around the world. In 1991 an Italian journalist, Enrico Deaglio, wrote a

bestselling biography, *La banalità del bene: Storia di Giorgio Perlasca* (1991), which was later published in English as *The Banality of Goodness*. This, in turn, was used as the basis of a movie, *Perlasca—Un eroe Italiano* (2005, dir. Alberto Negrin), starring Luca Zingaretti in the title role.

Giorgio Perlasca received many honors for his heroic acts of resistance during World War II. Among his decorations were Israel's Medal of the Knesset (1989), Hungary's Star of Merit (1989), the Town Seal of Padova (1989), the United States Medal of the Holocaust Museum (1990), Italy's *Grande Ufficiale della Repubblica* (1990), Spain's Orden de Isabel la Católica (1991), and Italy's Gold Medal for Civil Bravery (1992). In 2011 a 10,000-tree forest was planted in his honor in Israel's Galilee, following his recognition as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem on September 6, 1988.

Giorgio Perlasca was a man who continually risked his life to save others. He had the option to leave the danger zone in exchange for his personal safety, yet he chose to remain in order to provide aid to the Jews for whose lives he had assumed responsibility. He died at home of a heart attack on August 15, 1992, and was buried in his hometown of Maserà, outside Padua. He expressed the wish that the words “Righteous among the Nations” be written in Hebrew on his tombstone.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Hungary; Lutz, Carl; Rescuer of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Rotta; Angelo; Spain; Wallenberg, Raoul

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Peshev, Dimitar

Dimitar Peshev was a leading Bulgarian politician in the 1930s and 1940s, and a major actor in resisting the pro-Nazi government of Premier Bogdan Filov. Through this opposition he prevented the deportation of Bulgaria’s 48,000 Jews to the death camps of Nazi Germany.

Born in 1894 to an affluent family in Kjustendil, a town in far western Bulgaria, he studied languages in Salonika and law in Sofia and became a magistrate after having fought in World War I and completing his law degree. In 1935 he was appointed minister for justice and was elected deputy speaker of the Sobranie (Parliament) in 1938.

Like many other Bulgarian political figures, Peshev favored Bulgaria’s alliance with Nazi Germany, signed by Czar Boris III and Adolf Hitler in 1940. This worked well for Bulgaria; after the German conquest of Yugoslavia in April 1941 and the country’s partition, Bulgaria expanded at Yugoslavia’s expense. Given that he thought the alliance would bring prosperity to Bulgaria and its people, Peshev was blind to the real goals of the Nazi government.

One of the costs of the alliance was that Bulgaria would develop antisemitic laws in line with those of the Nazis. On

January 23, 1941, Peshev’s party enacted the Law for the Protection of the Nation, restricting Jewish participation in the country’s economic and social life. The law ordered controls such as Jews being compelled to change their names, new rules regarding Jewish places of residence, confiscation of Jewish possessions, exclusion from the public service, and a prohibition on economic and professional activity. Other measures included a prohibition on marriages between Jews and Bulgarians, special taxes, requirements that all Jews wear a star, and that male Jews be drafted for forced labor. Peshev supported this new law, seeing it as only a temporary expedient that would soon pass and could be controlled. Of interest was that most Bulgarians actually opposed the law, though in view of the authoritarian nature of the government this did not alter the new realities.

In the spring of 1943 the Bulgarian government signed a new law whereby all of Bulgaria’s 48,000 Jews would be deported through Kyustendil on March 10, 1943, and sent to Nazi death camps in Poland. Jews in the Bulgarian-occupied territories of Thrace and Macedonia would also be rounded up and deported. When the Jews of Kyustendil learned of their imminent deportation, they attempted to have the order overturned through the intercession of one they knew as a friend: Dimitar Peshev.

On March 8, 1943, a local delegation, including a personal friend of Peshev’s, Jakob Baruch, spoke with him about the government’s deportation plan. Peshev had not previously known of this, but upon confirmation decided that the deportations had to be stopped. He traveled to Kyustendil and met with the assistant chief of police, who described to him how the deportations were to take place. Peshev felt that acquiescence to the Nazi demands was no longer an option. He saw all too clearly the consequences of the alliance with Hitler and decided that it was his responsibility to act.

Next, he and his close friend and colleague (also from Kyustendil), Petar Mihalev, went to Parliament and burst into the office of Interior Minister Petar Gabrovski, insisting that he cancel the deportations and explaining the gravity of the situation. After a fierce argument, Gabrovski called the governor of Kyustendil and instructed him to stop preparations for the Jewish deportations. By 5:30 p.m. on March 9—just one day after Peshev had learned about the planned action against the Jews—the deportation had been cancelled.

Despite the minister’s assurance, however, Peshev needed further guarantees, especially after he learned that the Jews in the occupied territories of Thrace and Macedonia were already being deported. Most of the Jews of Thrace were deported to Treblinka (with some going to Auschwitz), while

almost all the Jews of Macedonia were deported to Auschwitz, the last transport leaving on March 29, 1943.

Peshev decided to bring the matter to the Sobranie. On March 17, 1943, he wrote a letter of protest and had 42 parliamentarians sign it. Disregarding Prime Minister Filov's instruction not to subject the letter to a vote in the House, it was discussed in caucus on March 23, 1943. So as not to have his authority undermined, Filov demanded that each of the signatories stand and announce their support of Peshev's letter. Under this pressure, only 30 of the original 42 confirmed their support, and when a final vote was taken the party decided to censure Peshev. The next day he was forced to step down as deputy speaker.

After Bulgaria was knocked out of the war by the Soviet invasion of September 1944, Peshev was arrested as a member of the former Bulgarian collaborationist government, charged with antisemitism and collaboration. He was facing the death penalty, but members of the Jewish community from Kyustendil, led by Joseph Nissim Yasharoff, testified on his behalf. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison at forced labor, with all his property turned over to the state. After a year and a half, however, he was released once the court reviewed his case and confirmed his key role in saving Bulgaria's Jews. Upon his release, he was forced to live in isolation, without a job or a means for sustenance. His deeds during the war went unrecognized.

In January 1973, however, Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations for his role in saving the Jews of Bulgaria. A few weeks later, on February 20, 1973, he died—a Holocaust resister recognized by his home country only after his death.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Bulgaria; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Treblinka

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Pétain, Philippe

Between 1940 and 1944, Henri-Philippe Pétain headed the Vichy regime, a government established in France in the wake of a crushing military defeat by Nazi Germany. As

France suffered under German occupation, Pétain and his government promoted collaboration with the nation's former enemies. As a result, France contributed enormously to the German war machine and deported nearly 80,000 Jews to the Nazi death camps.

Pétain was born on April 24, 1856, in Cauchy à la Tour, near Bruay-en-Artois, to a family of well-to-do peasants. Educated by Jesuits at Saint-Omer and by Dominicans at Arcueil, as a young man he entered the prestigious military academy at Saint Cyr. In 1878 he graduated as a junior officer, ranked 229th out of the 336 in his class. Ten years later, he underwent two more years of officer training at the elite *École de Guerre*, and after some additional military postings he returned to this institution as an instructor in 1901, teaching infantry tactics. It was there that he first gained a reputation for championing defensive strategy over offensive. His views were frowned upon by the military establishment, which denied him the promotion to brigadier general that he felt he deserved.

Once World War I broke out in August 1914, Pétain rose swiftly to that rank and beyond, as his expertise in defensive



As the head of the French Vichy government, Philippe Pétain's name is virtually synonymous with French collaboration with the German government during World War II. Pétain's efforts and those of his government resulted in the death of nearly 80,000 Jews who were deported to Nazi extermination camps. (Library of Congress)

tactics proved useful in the age of trench warfare and the machine gun. In June 1915 he was given command of the Second Army. The following year, as the German offensive at the Battle of Verdun gained momentum, the French high command called on Pétain to take control of French forces in the region. His leadership at Verdun won him the enduring affection of the French people, in that he seemed to care more about the welfare and survival of the rank and file soldier than other French generals. (For the rest of his life, Pétain bore the nickname “the Victor of Verdun.”) His efforts were rewarded on May 15, 1917, when he was made the chief general of all of France’s armies. In that position, he reinforced his compassionate, fatherly reputation through his handling of a mutiny and his careful attention to the provisioning of French troops. On November 19, 1918, a week after the armistice that ended World War I, Pétain was appointed marshal, a title bestowed upon only two other World War I French generals.

Just over a year later, in January 1920, Pétain was made vice president of France’s War Council, which meant that he would be supreme commander in the event of another war. The following year, he was also named the army’s inspector general. By virtue of these positions, Pétain exercised enormous influence on French military planning. In 1927, at his urging, France began construction of the Maginot Line, a series of fortresses along much of the eastern border, which committed France to a defensive posture vis-à-vis Germany. Pétain retired from the War Council in 1931 at the age of 75. By that time, the other two marshals of France had died, rendering Pétain the most prominent living symbol of French valor.

In 1934, in the wake of rioting by right wingers, Pétain served briefly as minister of war in a government of national unity, his first foray into politics. In this position, Pétain spoke often of the need for moral reform. Although his tenure in office was brief, he emerged as a favorite of the radical Right. His heroic and moralistic image made him seem the ideal man to restore order to French society, which many across the political spectrum had come to see as decadent. For most of the remainder of the 1930s, Pétain was content to receive the accolades of the Right without taking part in the politics of the French Third Republic. Then, in 1939, he accepted the post of ambassador to Francisco Franco’s government in Spain, which had recently consolidated its civil war victory over Spanish republicans.

Although World War II broke out in September 1939, it was not until May 1940 that Adolf Hitler began his onslaught against France. Bypassing the fortresses of the Maginot Line, the German forces employed a highly mobile strategy

combining tanks and air power, dubbed by the Germans *Blitzkrieg*, or “Lightning War.” French defenses proved wholly inadequate and disaster loomed. French prime minister Paul Reynaud made the 81-year-old Pétain vice premier, hoping to bolster French confidence by capitalizing on the marshal’s heroic image. After the fall of Paris, Pétain replaced Reynaud as the head of the French government on June 16 and immediately began to negotiate with the Germans for peace. An armistice was signed on June 22. By its terms, German forces would occupy the northern three-fifths of the country. The remainder of France, known as the “Free Zone,” was left unoccupied until 1942, when Allied landings in North Africa prompted the Germans to renege on this clause of the agreement and occupy the entire country.

The French government, having fled from Paris, reassembled in Vichy, a spa town in the Free Zone. There, on July 9 and 10, the French Parliament voted overwhelmingly to settle all authority on Pétain, who quickly abolished the Third Republic. In its place, he created an authoritarian regime, rewriting the French slogan of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” as “Family, Fatherland, Work.” Declaring itself the champion of traditional French values, Vichy launched what it called the National Revolution. The regime purged Jews from French public life, brought labor to heel, reorganized the French economy in ways favorable to big business, and created various organizations devoted to indoctrination. In addition, it propagated a cult of hero worship centered on Pétain. For the first two years or so of the occupation, Pétain’s fatherly persona served as a refuge from the shame of defeat for the vast majority of French men and women.

Pétain’s announced policy of collaboration with Germany (symbolized by a meeting between himself and Hitler at Montoire in October 1940) held out the promise of more favorable treatment by the occupiers and a place at Germany’s side in the new European order Germany hoped to create. A few individuals recognized the moral and material cost of such a policy early on and began to resist in various ways in a scattered movement that became known as the French Resistance. However, most people were content to trust in Pétain and wait to see what happened.

After the war, Pétain and his defenders would claim that Vichy had acted as a shield against the Germans, protecting the French people from the worst of which the Nazis were capable. In fact, France suffered more than most other occupied countries in Western Europe, despite its government’s eager collaboration. For example, the French endured the lowest per capita calorie intake of all West European peoples, largely because the Vichy regime was so efficient at

confiscating French agricultural production for shipment to Germany. Likewise, Pétain's assertions of having played a double game against the Germans—by supposedly secretly aiding the Allied cause while only appearing to cooperate with Germany—falls flat when one considers the vast amount of French industrial output that went to the German war effort. Finally, Pétain's claim to have preserved French sovereignty also falls short, for it often amounted to Vichy officials doing the Nazis' dirty work for them. For example, even before the Free Zone was occupied in 1942, Vichy police rounded up Jews who had fled there and handed them over to the Germans, all in the name of preserving French sovereignty.

By the time the Allies landed at Normandy in the D-Day operation of June 1944, Pétain was 88 years old and at the head of a regime that had lost all claims to independence of action. As the liberating armies advanced, the Germans seized Pétain on August 20, eventually bringing him to the stronghold of Sigmaringen in Germany. Hitler did not allow him to leave until April 1945, when Pétain returned to France via Switzerland. Placed under arrest as soon as he was detected, Pétain was tried by France's High Court of Justice in July and August 1945. The court convicted the marshal of treason and condemned him to death, but the government commuted this sentence to life imprisonment in view of his age. Pétain died six years later, on July 23, 1951, at the Île d'Yeu Prison.

DANIEL SIEGEL

See also: Abetz, Otto; Collaboration; Vichy France

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The Pianist

The Pianist is a major motion picture from 2002, starring Adrien Brody and directed by Polish/French filmmaker Roman Polanski. It is the true story of a Polish Jewish pianist of renown, Wladyslaw Szpilman, and his quest for survival during the Holocaust. The film, in turn, was based on Szpilman's memoir of the same name, published in English in 1999, and was adapted for the screen by Ronald Harwood.

Much of the film concern's Szpilman's life in the Warsaw Ghetto and afterward, and in this it is reminiscent of other

"ghetto" movies such as *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1994), about the Kraków Ghetto, and *Uprising* (Jon Avnet, 2001) for Warsaw. What makes *The Pianist* unique within the genre, however, is the degree to which Polanski has sought to recreate the physical environment of the Warsaw Ghetto as accurately as possible. In order to achieve this, filming took place at a number of sites in central and Eastern Europe, with many scenes filmed in and around Warsaw itself. *The Pianist* was a remarkable success both critically and commercially. It won three Academy Awards, for Best Actor (Brody), Best Director (Polanski), and Best Screenplay Adaptation (Harwood); two BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television) Awards (UK), for Best Film and Best Director; the *Palm d'Or* at Cannes; and a raft of other awards and nominations around the world. Produced with an estimated budget of US\$35 million, *The Pianist* brought the Holocaust to the screen for a new generation of moviegoers in the twenty-first century.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Music and the Holocaust; Warsaw Ghetto

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Pilecki, Witold

Witold Pilecki was a Polish cavalry officer who infiltrated Auschwitz as a volunteer in order to start a military underground movement there. He was born on May 31, 1901, in the Karelian town of Olonets, close to the border with Finland. A subject people under the Russian Empire, the Poles rebelled in 1863–1864, with the result that after the uprising's suppression Pilecki's grandfather, Józef Pilecki, was exiled to Siberia. The family was then subject to internal exile and forcible resettlement, resulting in their making their home in Olonets. In 1910 they moved to Vilna (Vilnius), and in 1916 the teenage Witold Pilecki relocated to Orel, southwest of Moscow. After Poland's independence from Russia in 1919, Pilecki joined the Polish army and fought in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1920. He remained in the army, becoming a junior cavalry officer in 1926. On

April 7, 1931, he married Maria Pilecka, *née* Ostrowska, with whom he had two children, Andrzej and Zofia.

With the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany on September 1, 1939, Pilecki's unit was heavily engaged until being forced to withdraw to the south. It disbanded after the Soviet Union invaded on September 17, and Poland surrendered.

On November 9, 1939, Pilecki, together with Jan Henryk Włodarkiewicz and Władysław Surmacki, founded one of the first Polish underground movements, the *Tajna Armia Polska* (Secret Polish Army, or TAP), which, by 1940, comprised some 8,000 men. In 1942 it was incorporated into the *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army, or AK).

In mid-1940 Pilecki sought operational permission to infiltrate the newly constructed concentration camp at Auschwitz after it had been established for Polish political prisoners. In a report written after the war, Pilecki stated the aims of the movement he intended to create: keeping up fellow prisoners' spirits by supplying and spreading news from outside; organizing extra food and dividing clothing among TAP members; sending reports outside; and, above all, preparing for a takeover in the event of an assault on the camp from outside. Receiving permission to proceed, he was given forged papers and a new identity as "Tomasz Serafiński," let himself be taken prisoner in a Warsaw roundup, and arrived in Auschwitz on September 22, 1940.

To create his organization, Pilecki reasoned that only a system based on the strictest secrecy could have any hope of success. He decided to base the movement in two main areas, the *revier* (infirmary) and the *Arbeitseinsatz* (office responsible for labor distribution), as he saw these as the most likely places to start a program of camp welfare. He named his secret network the *Związek Organizacji Wojskowej* (Union of Military Organization, or ZOW).

At the same time Pilecki was establishing his resistance movement, another was being formed by Stanisław Dubois under the direction of the Polish Socialist Party. Within a short time, a third group was formed by right-wing Polish nationalist elements. It was not until December 1941 that the three groups came together as some sort of federated movement, but by that stage it was no longer representative of all sections of the camp. Until the middle of 1941 the camp had only housed Poles; by the end of the year, however, other national groups had appeared and these, too, had organized their own resistance movements. After considerable difficulties, Pilecki's organization managed to unify with the most important of these, the Czechs, Russians, and later the Austrians under the leadership of a communist, Hermann Langbein.

The ZOW soon became the major resistance movement at Auschwitz. Some smaller national groups still persisted, and inmates occasionally held dual membership within their own group as well as the ZOW. This enabled a small group of communists and socialists led by the Austrian Langbein and a Pole, Józef Cyrankiewicz, to break with the ZOW and form a new movement, *Kampfgruppe Auschwitz* (Auschwitz Combat Section), on May 1, 1943. One element of the internal politics this generated was to play out several years later and contribute to Pilecki's death.

ZOW provided the Polish underground with invaluable information about the camp, and from October 1940 it smuggled reports to Warsaw. As early as March 1941, via the Polish authorities in London, Pilecki's reports were informing the British government of the atrocities taking place in Auschwitz, and these reports intensified as gassings of Jews increased. In 1942 the ZOW was broadcasting from a secret radio station and providing up-to-the-minute details as to the number of transports, arrivals, and deaths in the camp. These reports were, for a time, the main source of Allied intelligence about Auschwitz, and Pilecki hoped that action would be taken to attack the camp and bring its operations to an end.

In 1943, after nearly two-and-a-half years at Auschwitz, he made the decision to escape so he could testify in person on the situation and force the AK to mount an assault on the camp. On the night of April 26–27, 1943, he and two comrades overpowered a guard and broke out.

Making his way to Warsaw, he reached AK headquarters but was unable to convince anyone to mount the hoped-for attack. He did, however, compose a detailed report more than 100 pages long, which was transmitted to London; it was the first sustained intelligence report on the Auschwitz concentration camp. Through this, Pilecki confirmed for the Allies the Holocaust that was then taking place. "Witold's Report," as it came to be known, was the first insider documentation confirming the Holocaust.

After this, Pilecki resumed his role as an officer with the AK, staying loyal to the London-based Polish government-in-exile. On August 1, 1944, the Warsaw Uprising broke out, and he fought as a private until assuming a command role later in the revolt. When it was defeated he went into captivity as a prisoner of war. He returned to Poland in October 1945 to engage in undercover work for the Polish government-in-exile, but on May 8, 1947, was arrested as part of a prosecution of Home Army members who still gave their allegiance to the government-in-exile. Among those presenting evidence for the state was Józef Cyrankiewicz, who was in

Auschwitz at the same time as Pilecki as a member of the leftist *Kampfgruppe Auschwitz*. On March 3, 1948, a show trial took place, and Pilecki was convicted of a variety of crimes against the newly installed communist government. On May 15, 1948, he was sentenced to death, with the sentence carried out on May 25.

After the end of communism in Poland, Witold Pilecki was rehabilitated on October 1, 1990. In 1995 he was posthumously decorated by the Polish government with the Order of Polonia Restituta and in 2006 received the highest Polish decoration, the Order of the White Eagle.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Resistance Movements

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Pius XI

The Roman Catholic pope, reigning between 1922 and 1939, Pope Pius XI was born Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti on May 31, 1857, in Desio, Italy. He was ordained a priest in 1879, thereafter earning three separate doctorates from the Gregorian University of Rome. He then became a professor in a seminary. He began his Vatican career in 1911, when he became its vice prefect. In 1918 Ratti began his diplomatic career when he was posted to the newly independent Poland. There he helped establish a working relationship with the Polish government and also sought an accommodation with the Bolsheviks in Russia. After Pope Benedict XV died, Ratti was elected to the papacy on the 14th ballot on February 6, 1922, and took the name Pius XI.

Scholarly and bookish by nature, Pius XI was an activist pope who in many ways embraced modernity and did not shy away from using new media like the radio to broadcast the church's message and teachings to a wide audience. He also greatly accelerated evangelism by sponsoring more missionaries throughout the world and by ordaining more priests and other religious personnel.

It was in the diplomatic realm, however, that Pius's reign had the most far-reaching effect. Although he deeply distrusted Italian fascism and eyed Benito Mussolini warily, in 1929 he signed the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini's government. This saw an understanding created between

the church and state in which both parties pledged not to interfere in the affairs of the other; Mussolini also agreed to recognize Vatican City as a sovereign state within Italy, something that had not existed since the days before Italian unification.

Pius soon ran afoul of Mussolini's regime. By the early 1930s he had denounced fascist youth groups in Italy. In 1931 he authored a papal letter in which he stated that one could not be a fascist and a Catholic at the same time. Not surprisingly, the Vatican's relations with Mussolini's regime went into a tailspin. This did not stop Pius from negotiating a second concordat, this time with Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany in 1933. Pius was later criticized for this, but to his way of thinking, communism was a worse scourge than fascism or Nazism. Thus, he sought to protect Catholics and Catholic clergy in Germany while hoping that Hitler would continue to be a bulwark against Soviet-exported communism. In any event, Hitler largely ignored the concordat, and by the late 1930s Pius had begun to denounce Nazi ideology—especially its rabid antisemitism. He also lambasted Mussolini for copying the Nazis' antisemitism with new racial legislation beginning in 1938.

Pius XI continued to be outspoken in his dislike of fascism, communism, and Nazism. He was also the first pope to address seriously the subject of Christian ecumenism and issued a stinging indictment of racism of all kinds, which was clearly aimed at Germany and the Soviet Union. Pius died in the Vatican on February 10, 1939, only months before World War II began.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Action Française; Catholic Church; Communists in the Holocaust; St. Hedwig's Cathedral

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Pius XII

Pius XII was pope from 1939 to 1958. Long considered a strong pope because of his anticommunist preachings and devotion to piety, he has in recent years come under criticism for not speaking out against Adolf Hitler, Nazism, and the Holocaust.

Pius was born Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli on March 2, 1876, in Rome, Italy. His father was a lawyer in

the service of the Catholic Church. Pius emulated his father's career, studying at the Gregorian University, Capranica College, and Saint Apollinaire Institute. He was ordained a priest in 1899 and began his career with the papacy in 1901. From 1904 to 1916 he served as the assistant to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, who was delegated by the pope to codify canon law. Pius also taught international law at the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics.

In April 1917 Pope Benedict XV appointed Pius as nuncio to the Bavarian capital, Munich. Benedict sent Pius as his envoy with a proposed peace plan to end World War I, but even though Pius had a meeting with Kaiser Wilhelm II, no agreement was reached. In 1920 Pius was appointed papal nuncio to the Weimar Republic. During his sojourn in Germany, he reached concordats with Bavaria in 1924 and Prussia in 1929.

Pius returned to Rome in 1930 and was appointed a cardinal by Pope Pius XI. In February 1930 he became the Vatican's secretary of state, and it was he who negotiated concordats with Austria and Nazi Germany in 1933. As secretary of state Pius traveled widely, visiting Argentina, France, Hungary, and the United States. After Pope Pius XI died on February 10, 1939, he was elected pope on March 2 after a one-day conclave. He was crowned on March 12, 1933, as Pius XII.

The world was then drifting faster and faster toward another world war, and Pius tried hard to prevent the outbreak of fighting. He appealed for diplomacy to avert war and urged that an international convention be called to discuss a peaceful end to differences between nations. He also tried to stop Benito Mussolini from involving Italy in the conflict but failed to do so. When war came, Pius indicated that he would take an impartial stand, not a neutral one. He worked hard to ensure that Rome remained an open city to avert the danger of Allied air raids. Although soft in his open criticism of Hitler and Mussolini, Pius also opposed the Allied demand for an unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers, espoused at the 1943 Casablanca Conference.

Recent historians have severely criticized Pius for his alleged failure to speak out against Hitler and the Nazi Party's genocidal policy against Jews. They cite Pius's general statements opposing Hitler's policies but fault the pope for not being more explicit in his words. Some have painted Pius as anti-Jewish in outlook to explain his official silence when the Nazis deported most of Rome's Jewish citizens to concentration camps. Those sympathetic to Pius have defended his actions by pointing out that the Vatican could have been occupied by German troops at any time, and he thus had to tread a fine line to avoid tragedy.

Pius's postwar years were very productive. He believed that communism was a distinct threat to the world and that social reform must seek to preserve individual dignity, freedom, and value. He emphasized the importance of the family and said the state must subordinate its interests to those of the individual. In order to help fight communism, Pius declared 1950 to be a holy year, which meant Catholics were encouraged to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Indeed, millions ventured to the city that year.

Pius also laid the groundwork for what became Vatican II. He instructed Catholic biblical scholars to take full advantage of all modern tools of critical, scientific scholarship and called for greater participation by the laity in worship services. He reformed the liturgy, relaxed the Eucharistic fast, and introduced evening masses (which had begun during World War II). But Pius also condemned the "new theology," stating that once he had spoken on a church matter, it was no longer open for discussion. He was the first pope to use radio to make addresses and was perhaps the world's best-known pope by the time of his death.

Pius condemned the notion of collective guilt in 1944 and 1946 that many were then applying to Germany. After the war, he reached concordats with Portugal in 1950 and Spain in 1955. He canonized 33 people, including Pope Pius X. Pius's other actions included the creation of more cardinals, a large number of new dioceses, and the supervision of excavations under St. Peter's Basilica in an attempt to locate St. Peter's actual burial place.

Pius died on October 9, 1958, and was buried in St. Peter's.

RICHARD A. SAUERS

See also: Catholic Church; *The Deputy*; Friedländer, Saul; Gerstein, Kurt; Hudal, Alois

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Pivnik, Sam

Sam Pivnik was a Holocaust survivor whose harrowing experiences were published in a well-received book in 2012.

He was born Szmuel Piwnik in Będzin, Poland, on September 1, 1926. In early 1943 he and his family were forced

into the Jewish ghetto at Będzin, and on October 6 they were deported to the Auschwitz death camp, where his mother, father, three brothers, and two sisters were murdered soon after their arrival.

Pivnik, probably owing to his age and good health, was spared the gas chambers and put to work processing newly arriving Jewish prisoners. This work meant that he had ready access to valuables and food they brought with them. He used these goods to help feed himself and to bribe Kapos, prisoners who worked in an administrative capacity, as well as prison guards.

In late December 1943, Pivnik fell ill with typhus and was eventually admitted to the camp hospital. At any time, the Germans could have simply condemned him to the gas chambers, and yet he survived and was sent to Fürstengrube, a subcamp of Auschwitz. There he was put to work in a coal mine and used his position as an overseer to help fellow Jews and to bribe camp guards.

Pivnik remained on this detail until January 19, 1945, when the Nazis evacuated the facility as the Soviet army approached from the west. He survived a brutal forced march in frigid weather and was then herded onto a train with other prisoners. Many prisoners had died prior to reaching the railhead. Pivnik spent nine days in an unheated boxcar on starvation rations before reaching Dora-Mittelbau, a forced labor camp in central Germany. He was on a work detail there for approximately three months before he and his fellow prisoners were evacuated by barge on the Elbe River to Holstein, located in northern Germany. There, Pivnik was put to work on a farm.

In late April or early May of 1945 Pivnik was once again relocated. Force marched to the post at Neustadt, he and his fellow prisoners were herded onto an old German cruiser that was doubling as a prison ship. On May 3, 1945, planes from the British Royal Air Force bombed the ship, setting it ablaze. Pivnik, who had been fortunate enough to still be on the top deck, dove into the water and swam to safety. Of the several thousand prisoners on the ship, only a few hundred survived. The following day, British ground forces found Pivnik and he was liberated; after the war he went to London to live, where he became an art dealer.

Pivnik published *Survivor: Auschwitz, the Death March, and My Fight for Freedom* in 2012. In it, he tells the gripping tale of survival amid unspeakable horror, depravation, and sadness at the loss of his family. The book is uplifting in that it demonstrates how the human spirit can overcome high odds and survive, somehow still intact. Pivnik also continues to give lectures on his Holocaust experiences.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Birkenau; Death Marches; Survivor Testimony

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Ploetz, Alfred

German physician who pioneered the concept of eugenics and racial hygiene; his work had a significant impact on Nazi ideology and policies. Alfred Ploetz was born on August 22, 1860, in Swinemünde, Germany (now Świnoujście, Poland), and was raised in Breslau. His university studies commenced in political economy, and he soon became part of a small clique of like-minded students who advocated socialist policies. However, laws aimed at punishing socialists eventually led him to pursue his studies in Zurich, Switzerland. After a brief visit to the United States, Ploetz returned to Zurich, where he began to study medicine. After receiving a medical degree in 1890, he lived for several years in the United States, returning to Germany where he began to lay out his theories on eugenics and racial hygiene.

He first coined the term “racial hygiene” in 1895, and in 1905 he cofounded the German Association of Eugenics. His 1895 book, *The Efficiency of Our Race and the Protection of the Weak*, detailed specific policies that would result in a eugenically ideal society. They included strict restrictions on intermarriage and, depending on the group of people, prohibitions on reproduction, including forced sterilization. Disabled infants as well as the sick and weak were to be aborted or euthanized. Although Ploetz clearly believed that the “Nordic” race (to which racially pure Germans allegedly belonged) was superior to all others, early on he did not demonstrate antisemitism; in fact, he believed that Jews were the second-ranked “cultural race” of Europeans, right below the Nordic peoples. He claimed that their innate intelligence and important contributions to the arts, letters, and music made them an important addition to the European racial hierarchy.

In his later work, however, Ploetz reversed his view of Jews, arguing that they would soil the Nordic race because they were too individualistic in outlook and not sufficiently geared toward the martial arts or patriotism. This later view played right into the hands of nascent Nazi leaders. Ploetz enthusiastically embraced Adolf Hitler and the advent of Nazism in Germany during the 1930s, becoming a member of the Nazi Party in 1937. In 1933 he was appointed to a government advisory board on population and racial

policies that greatly influenced Nazi race laws and policies toward minorities and non-Germans. To show his appreciation, Hitler named Ploetz to a prestigious professorship in 1936.

Alfred Ploetz died on March 20, 1940, in Hersching, Bavaria, Germany.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Eugenics; Euthanasia Program; "Racial Hygiene"; Sterilization

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Pohl, Oswald

Born in Duisburg-Ruhrort, Germany, on June 30, 1892, Oswald Pohl became one of the most powerful men in the Nazi SS and supervised its economic component as well as the administration of the Nazi concentration camp system. In 1912 Pohl enlisted in the German Imperial Navy and served throughout World War I, rising to the position of paymaster. Following the end of the war, he became active with the *Friekorps* movement, drawing on his naval training as paymaster. In 1925 he joined the SA and a year later the Nazi Party.

By 1934 Pohl had come to the attention of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. Himmler tasked Pohl with overseeing the administration of the Allgemeine-SS, the largest branch of the SS overall. Pohl quickly expanded his influence to include the administrative and financial control of the *Totenkopfverbände* (SS Death Head's units), the *Verfügungstruppe* (later renamed the Waffen-SS), and the Budget and Building Department of the Reichsführer-SS, which oversaw the construction of concentration camps. By 1939 Pohl's authority had expanded to the administration of the concentration camp system. In 1942 his power was consolidated into the *Wirtschafts-und Verwaltungshauptamt* (SS Economic and Administrative Department, or WVHA).

As leader of the WVHA, Pohl had emerged as the third most powerful man in the SS, superseded only by Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich. The WVHA oversaw the administration and supplying of the entire Waffen-SS, exercised control over 20 concentration and labor camps, controlled all SS and police building projects, and managed all SS business concerns.

Overseeing the concentration and labor camps provided Pohl with some 600,000 slave laborers. Originally organizing the camps to punish and exterminate the enemies of the Nazi regime, he now reorganized them to exploit their victims' labor. Not exclusive to the SS, Pohl rented out his slave workforce to meet the labor needs of private industries. By 1944, 250,000 laborers were working in the private armament industries, and many industries were allowed to open factories within or adjacent to the camps. As labor needs grew, Pohl and the WVHA also appropriated the labor of surviving Jews in the ghettos and eastern camps.

Pohl and the WVHA also controlled all SS-owned industries, such as the German Excavating and Quarrying Company, the German Equipment Company, the German Experimental Establishment for Foodstuff and Nutrition, and the Society for Exploitation of Textiles and Leatherworks. Industries not owned by the SS were indirectly controlled by the WVHA, including mineral water production and the furniture industry. Jewish-owned and foreign industries were also seized by the WVHA.

Captured by the British at the end of the war, Oswald Pohl was sentenced to death by an American military court on May 27, 1946. Imprisoned rather than immediately executed, he rejoined the Catholic Church and in 1950 published *Credo: My Way to God*. Pohl was hanged on June 7, 1951, at Landsberg Prison.

ROBERT W. MALICK

See also: Concentration Camps; Himmler, Heinrich; Schutzstaffel; SS-Totenkopfverbände

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Poland

Poland is a country located in east-central Europe with a 1939 population of 34.7 million, of whom an estimated 3.5 million were Jewish. Attacked on September 1, 1939, by 1.8 million German troops moving into the country from three directions, Poland was the first nation to fight the Germans in World War II. In response, Britain and France declared war on Germany on September 3. Under the security guarantees

that had been given to Poland that country was supposed to fight a defensive campaign for only two weeks, at which time the Allies would counterattack from the west. The Allied offensive, however, never occurred. By September 14, the Germans had surrounded Warsaw, and three days later, following the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact of August 27, 1939, Soviet forces invaded Poland from the east. The last Polish forces surrendered on October 5. After the German invasion, some 300,000 Polish Jews fled to the Soviet occupation zone in the east, where many died.

The Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact also called for a partition of Poland, and under its terms the Soviets absorbed the eastern part of the country, including the great cultural centers of Lwów (Lviv) and Vilna (Vilnius). In the Soviet zone, 1.5 million Poles, many of them Jewish, were deported to labor camps in Russian Siberia. In a deliberate effort to exterminate the Polish intelligentsia and leadership classes, Soviets authorities transported thousands of captured Polish officers, including many reservists, from universities and industry, to the Katyn Forest of eastern Poland and other locations, where they were executed in April and May 1940 and buried in anonymous mass graves.

A number of Poles, including many in the armed forces, managed to escape from the country before the Germans and Soviets tightened their viselike grip on it. Those who escaped established a government-in-exile in London, with Władysław Raczkiewicz as president and General Władysław Sikorski as prime minister. In Poland, meanwhile, the Polish Resistance established the *Armia Krajowa* (AK, or Home Army), which became the largest underground movement in Europe with 400,000 fighters.

Of the territory they occupied, the Germans annexed Pomerania, Posnania, and Silesia in the west. What was left became an area known as the *Generalgouvernement*, under the harsh rule of Hans Frank. The Germans then began a campaign to liquidate the Jews of Poland and grind down the rest of the Poles. The Polish Jews were first herded into ghettos while the Germans built more than 2,000 concentration camps in Poland, including the industrial-scale death centers at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Chełmno, Bełżec, Sobibór, Mauthausen, and Treblinka.

Poland was at the epicenter of the Holocaust because Jews from all across Nazi-occupied Europe were deported and murdered there. After the Polish Jews had been placed in large ghettos—the biggest one located in Warsaw—they were usually deported to one of the death or forced labor camps within Poland. Conditions in the ghettos were appalling, and many died of starvation, illnesses and

communicable diseases, or freezing cold in the winter. The mass killing of Polish Jews, code-named Operation Reinhard by the Germans, began in earnest in the autumn of 1941, when the first of the major death camps were constructed.

There were certainly attempts to resist the German occupation in many of the Polish ghettos, but most attempts to protest or escape were met with almost certain death. Yet Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto staged a fierce resistance demonstration between mid-April and mid-May 1943 in a desperate attempt to prevent their imminent deportation to the death camps. When the uprising ended, some 50,000 of the remaining Jews in the ghetto had been killed or would be immediately deported and later murdered. The fighting resulted in the deaths of 16 German soldiers; another 85 were wounded.

At the sprawling Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, which underwent several expansions, a total of at least 950,000 Jews—Polish and non-Polish alike—were murdered. At the Treblinka death camp, which saw nearly 250,000 Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto transported there during the summer of 1942, up to 900,000 Jews are thought to have been killed. Some 600,000 Jews were murdered at Bełżec, while as many as 250,000 Jews were killed at Sobibór.

Although there had been a long-standing history of anti-semitism in Poland, many Poles helped hide, feed, or transport to safety scores of Jews between 1939 and 1945. Many did so despite the fact that German occupation officials had made helping Jews in any way a crime punishable by death.

Beginning in early 1942, as the Red Army slowly pushed the Germans from the Soviet Union and back to the west, the USSR's postwar intentions for Eastern Europe began to unfold. At the November–December 1943 Tehran Conference, British and U.S. leaders agreed to Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's demands that the Soviet Union be allowed to keep the Polish territory taken in September 1939—in effect, the old Curzon Line established by the Allied governments in the peace settlement following World War I. After the war, Poland was partially compensated for its territorial losses in the east with a strip of German land in the west to the line of the Oder and Neisse Rivers. In July 1944, after the city of Lublin was liberated, the Soviets established their own Polish government, a direct rival to the one in London, which was now led by Stanisław Mikołajczyk.

By August 1, 1944, the Red Army reached the right bank of the Vistula River opposite Warsaw. *Armia Krajowa* (AK) units in the city rose up against the Germans, anticipating Soviet support against the common enemy. The Soviets did

nothing. Not only did they not help the AK, they refused landing rights on Soviet-controlled airfields for any Allied aircraft that might attempt aerial supply missions. The Poles fought on alone, street by street and house by house, for 63 days, and in the end the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS destroyed virtually the entire city. When the Germans finally withdrew from what was left of Warsaw, the Soviets moved across the river.

The destruction of Warsaw eliminated the remaining political and military institutions in Poland still loyal to the London government-in-exile and paved the way for a complete Soviet takeover. The final blows to a free Poland were delivered by the victorious Allies at the 1945 Yalta Conference. World War II ended, but Poland remained under the Soviet yoke until the very end of the Cold War more than 40 years later.

Poland suffered as heavily as any nation in the war, losing an estimated 38% of its national assets. The country lost 22% of its population—some 500,000 military personnel and 6 million civilians. Roughly half the Poles who died between 1939 and 1945 were Jews, meaning that about 90% of the prewar Jewish population had perished by 1945. The survival rate for Jews in Poland was the lowest of any European nation involved in the war.

DAVID T. ZABECKI

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Frank, Hans; Generalgouvernement; Ghettos; Jedwabne Massacre; Joint Distribution Committee; Karski, Jan; Kielce Pogrom; Lebensraum; *Neighbors*; Opdyke, Irene Gut; Slavs; Soviet Union; World War II, Outbreak of; Zegota

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Ponary Forest

The Ponary (Lithuanian: Paneriai) Forest was a wooded area about six miles south of Vilna (Vilnius), Lithuania, on the road to Grodno. Before war came to the area in the summer of 1941, it was the choice of the residents of Vilna for holidays and recreation, and they would often go there on weekends to

gather berries and mushrooms, as well as for their summer holidays.

The pre–World War II Jewish population of Vilna was nearly 100,000, comprising around 45% of the city's total. The Jewish community was large and vibrant, known around the world as “the Jerusalem of Lithuania.”

Between July 1941 and July 1944 the Germans used Ponary as the principal site for the mass murder of up to 100,000 people, mostly Jews, as well as Polish intelligentsia and Russian POWs. The murders took place near the Ponary train station and were carried out by German SD, SS Einsatzgruppen, as well as Lithuanian collaborators. During the killing spree, at least 70,000 Jews were murdered in Ponary, together with an estimated 20,000 Poles and 8,000 Russians.

Vilna had been part of the reconstituted state of Poland after the Great War, but following the start of World War II and the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland in September 1939, the city was transferred by the Soviets to Lithuania; the whole country was then annexed to the Soviet Union in June 1940. In the summer of 1941 Lithuania was invaded by Germany during Operation Barbarossa, and the killing of Jews began almost immediately. Einsatzkommando 9, part of the notorious Einsatzgruppe A, descended on Vilna, rounded up 5,000 Jewish men from the city, took them to Ponary, and shot them there.

The first executions took place on July 8, 1941. One hundred Jews at a time were brought from the city to Ponary, where they were ordered to undress and hand over whatever money or valuables they had with them. They were then marched naked, in single file, in groups of 10 or 20 at a time, holding hands, to the edge of pits that had been dug by the Soviet Army to store fuel. They were then shot into the pit by rifle fire. A thin layer of sand was placed over them, and the next group was led to the edge of the pit, where they, too, were shot. The killing went on for hours, as in a production line. The killings then continued throughout the summer and fall of 1941. By the end of the year, more than 20,000 Jews had been murdered, but this was only the beginning.

With the creation of the Vilna ghetto in September 1941, the Nazis had a ready pool of slave labor at their disposal, so the pace of the killing slowed during the early part of 1942. But with the changing fortunes of war, the murders intensified toward the end of the year.

During 1943 information about the massacres at Ponary began to spread beyond the local area, and with the advance of the Soviets westward Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler ordered the establishment of a special unit, Kommando

1005, whose task it was to burn the bodies of mass murder victims and hide any traces of the killings. In Vilna this translated to a unit made up of Jewish prisoners to perform this grisly task. In August 1943 the Germans returned to Ponary with this group and began to dig up and burn the corpses. The group, numbering 80 Jewish prisoners, was sent to Ponary at the end of September 1943. After working to exhume the bodies and burn the remains for seven months, on the night of April 15, 1944, they managed to escape after having dug a tunnel under Ponary, but they were almost all captured and they, too, were murdered. Fifteen of them succeeded in escaping and managed to reach the partisans in the Rudniki forests. The work of burning the bodies continued, however, and by the end of their assignment in 1944 they had burned upward of 60,000 corpses in Ponary.

So far as can be ascertained, the total number of victims by the end of 1944, Jews and non-Jews, was anywhere between 70,000 and 100,000, with the latter figure taken as the most likely possibility. With the end of the war, only 24,000 of Lithuania's Jews, in total, survived. Ninety percent of the prewar total had been murdered. The Ponary massacre site is commemorated today by a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, a memorial to the Polish victims, and a small museum, which contains the remains discovered, at the scene, of some of the victims.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Antonescu, Ion; Collaboration; Einsatzgruppen; Gens, Jacob; Kovner, Abba; Schmid, Anton; United Partisan Organization; Vilna Ghetto

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Popovici, Traian

Traian Popovici was a Romanian lawyer and administrator responsible for saving some 20,000 Romanian Jews from deportation and likely death during World War II. In 1969 Israel's Yad Vashem declared him one of the Righteous among the Nations.

Popovici was born on October 17, 1892, in Rusi Manastiora (Udești), Romania, the son of an Orthodox priest. He studied at the Faculty of Law in Cernăuți (modern-day

Chernovtsy, Ukraine, and the former capital of Bukovina) from 1913 until 1914, served in the Romanian army for a time during World War I, and then completed his education in 1919, receiving a doctor of law degree. After World War II began in 1939, the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression agreement allowed the Soviet Union to annex Bukovina, where Popovici then lived and practiced law. This prompted him to move to Bucharest, the Romanian capital, where he came into contact with Romanian fascist dictator Ion Antonescu. Popovici, at the time, did not support Antonescu or his government.

In the summer of 1941 Germany broke its nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union and invaded the USSR with the help of Antonescu's government and Romanian troops. Within a period of weeks, the Germans had returned Romanian areas annexed by the Soviets to the Antonescu regime, including Bukovina. Antonescu's government now began a full-scale assault against Romanian Jews, confiscating their property and preparing to gather them into ghettos for final deportation to concentration or death camps. That same summer, after Bukovina had been secured, Antonescu asked Popovici to serve as mayor of Cernăuți.

Popovici initially refused the offer as he did not wish to serve a fascist regime and did not agree with its policies toward Romanian Jews. However, he quickly realized that he would be in a position to safeguard Jews if he took the position and agreed to serve as mayor. On October 10, 1941, the Antonescu regime ordered that all of Cernăuți's Jews were to be rounded up and placed into a ghetto for eventual deportation. By mid-November, as many as 28,000 Jews had been deported (and up to one-half of them died soon thereafter). Thousands of others, meanwhile, had been herded into a ghetto, where the living conditions were deplorable.

Popovici was now determined to save as many Jews as possible from deportation and certain death. Before the end of 1941 he had managed to convince the Antonescu government to permit him to exempt a number of Jews because, as he explained, they were essential to the Romanian economy and war effort. In the end, he secured exemptions for about 20,000 Jews, who were then permitted to return to their homes. As it turned out, Popovici's exemptions went far beyond what the government had mandated, however, and by the spring of 1942 he had been replaced as mayor of Cernăuți and sent to Bucharest.

Although some 5,000 Jews in Cernăuți were deported to concentration camps, where most died, after Popovici left office the Jews who remained in the city managed to survive until war's end. There is little doubt that they too would have been deported had it not been for Popovici's efforts. After the war, Popovici

published a book, *Confession of Conscience*, in which he explained that his classical education and religious background instilled in him the sanctity of all humanity, which in turn prompted him to shield Romanian Jews from extermination.

Traian Popovici died in Romania on June 4, 1946.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Romania

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Priebke, Erich

A member of the Nazi Gestapo in Italy, “Hauptstrmführer Erich Priebke participated in the massacre of 335 Italians in the Ardeatine Caves in Rome on March 24, 1944.

He was born in Hennigsdorf, Brandenburg, Germany on July 29, 1913, and enlisted in the Waffen-SS and later the Gestapo. Priebke’s rise to infamy was tied to that of SS Major



Some 50 years after the end of World War II, Erich Priebke, former Nazi SS officer, was extradited from Argentina to stand trial in Italy for his role in the massacre of 335 Italians, both Jews and non-Jews, as revenge for the killing of 42 German soldiers by Italian partisans. He was ultimately sentenced to 15 years of house arrest for his crimes. The photograph here shows Priebke entering the military court in Rome on December 7, 1995. (AP Photo/Domenico Stinellis)

Herbert Kappler. With the German occupation of Italy in September 1943, Kappler was promoted to command all SS police and security units in Rome, and Priebke served as Kappler's second-in-command.

On March 23, 1944, Italian partisans detonated a bomb along the Via Rasella in Rome. The blast killed as many as 42 German policemen and 10 civilians. Enraged by the attack, Adolf Hitler ordered that for every German killed, 10 Italians were to be executed immediately. The task of procuring and executing the Italians fell to Kappler and Priebke. Prisoners who had already been condemned to death were initially chosen, but this failed to meet the required number. As the Gestapo extended its net in search of victims, those arrested for minor offenses against Germans, in addition to 75 Italian Jews, were also chosen to be executed.

On March 24, 1944, the SS led 335 bound victims into the Ardeatine Caves beneath Rome. Priebke checked each name off from a master list as the victims entered in groups of five. They were then shot in the back of the head. Priebke evidently also participated in the shooting of a number of individuals.

With the defeat of German forces in Italy, Priebke was arrested by U.S. forces on May 13, 1945. During interrogations he admitted his role in the Ardeatine Massacre. In January 1946, however, he escaped from a prisoner-of-war camp in Rimini. With the help of the Catholic Church, he remained hidden in Italy until 1947 when, along with his family, he fled to Argentina, where he would live freely for decades.

In 1994 NBC television reporter Sam Donaldson cornered the 81-year-old Priebke on a street in Bariloche, Argentina. As a result, Priebke was soon arrested and later extradited to Italy. Standing trial for his role in the Ardeatine Massacre, Priebke claimed that he was simply following orders. In August 1996 an Italian military tribunal found Priebke guilty but not punishable, and he was released. International outrage, however, resulted in the verdict being overturned. Priebke was ordered to stand trial again. On July 22, 1997, Priebke was found guilty and sentenced to 15 years under house arrest. He died in Italy on October 11, 2013, at the age of 100.

ROBERT W. MALICK

See also: Gestapo; Kappler, Herbert

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Priest Block, Dachau

Roman Catholic priests and other clergy imprisoned in Dachau were arrested as part of the Nazi attempt to destroy the power of the church in the territories it occupied, and during the 1930s priests who spoke out against the Nazis were routinely harassed, persecuted, and often imprisoned. From December 1940 priests from all of the Third Reich's concentration camps and prisons were imprisoned solely in Dachau, in three barracks almost completely isolated from most of the other inmates. After March 1941 they were separated from the rest of the camp by an internal barbed wire perimeter. The area, comprising blocks 26, 28, and 30, became known by the collective name of "The Priest Block." By the end of the war, 2,579 Catholic, 109 Protestant, 30 Orthodox, and two Muslim clergymen from 24 nations were imprisoned there; overall, across the duration of the war, up to 1,000 would meet their death in Dachau.

The main urgency dominating the imprisoned clergy for much of the early period was for a chapel to be built in which they could conduct services. Although the SS opposed the granting of any special privileges of this nature, nonetheless work on such a place was begun in January 1941. The first services took place later that month, though these were made as difficult as possible by the Nazis. The SS imposed certain conditions under which services could be held; the windows had to be made opaque, and access for the other prisoners was severely restricted. It was said that the priests' efforts were met by sarcasm and vulgarity from the SS, who would burst into the chapel smoking cigars and interrupting the service, or spit and trample on rosaries and medallions.

The isolation of the priests from the rest of the camp was to be as tight as possible. There was only one door for access, and no other prisoners were allowed through it. At night the doors were locked, and during the daytime priests unable to work had the task of seeing that the access door was closely monitored. Despite this, occasional contacts between the inmates were established, particularly at work.

The men of the Priest Block were housed in overcrowded, nightmarishly unsanitary facilities intended for less than a third of their number. Vehemently anti-Catholic SS guards and criminal kapos appeared to take pleasure in tormenting the priests. They would be beaten and tortured, subjected to

brutal work details, and denied food and medical care on virtually any pretext. Corpses of those who died overnight or at hard labor were expected to be dragged to morning and evening roll call and counted alongside the living. Other priests were beaten to death or hung from crosses where they slowly perished. On Good Friday in 1941, 60 priests were crucified; their wrists were tied together behind their backs, their palms facing outwards. The hands were then turned into the body, a chain tied round the wrists and they were hung up so that their body weight dislocated their shoulders, elbows, and wrists. If the intense pain did not trigger a heart attack, the positions in which the victims found themselves could cause death by slow asphyxiation, with the added ordeal, if outside, of exposure.

Soon after this, and coinciding with the segregation of the priests from the rest of the camp, orders came from Berlin that conditions should improve. There is little doubt that the reason for this was political, as the Nazis sought to convince the world's Catholics—and the Vatican in particular—that the priests were being looked after satisfactorily. Excluded from performing acts of hard labor, they were supplied with adequate bedding, and Russian and Polish prisoners from outside the Priest Block were assigned to look after their quarters. The priests were given an extra hour's rest in the morning and could rest on their beds for two hours in the morning and afternoon. Free from work, they could give themselves to study and to meditation. They were given newspapers and allowed to use the library. Their food was adequate; they sometimes received up to a third of a loaf of bread a day; there was even a period when they were given half a litre of cocoa in the morning and a third of a bottle of wine daily.

Unfortunately, the provision of such “privileges” often proved to be illusory. Where the wine was concerned, for example, this was sometimes transformed into a sadistic ritual. The priests were ordered under threat of beating to uncork and pour out the wine and then drink their third of a bottle in one gulp.

Nonetheless, any concessions meant a great deal—though their major effect was to alienate the priests from the majority of the other prisoners who, until then, had been with them at least in spirit as fellow prisoners. Resentment became widespread and was hardly eased when some of the priests began to receive large food parcels from their parishes outside the camp. Many tried to smuggle their food to the prisoners in the camp proper, but further resentment developed when it was found that some stored their food—and even risked its going bad rather than sharing it.

Little knowledge of the power politics being played outside the wire penetrated the closed world of the concentration camp.

The result forced the imprisoned clergy back on themselves. Through the common medium of Latin, they could communicate with one another despite their varied ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and because of their isolation from the rest of the prisoners they were effectively compelled to unite as a group for their own self-defense. They had no one else on whom to rely. This enforced fellowship had some measure of success. The priests were able to ease their conditions within the barracks whenever the SS or kapos were not present. Their plight became slightly less desperate; they created a community in which they could act largely according to the precepts of their faith; and, for some, even their chances of survival increased.

Among the many clergy imprisoned in the Priest Block at Dachau were the following: Father Jean Bernard, Pastor Martin Niemöller, Father Josef Beran, Blessed Father Stefan Wincenty Frelichowski, Blessed Father Titus Brandsma, Bishop Ignacy Jeż, and Pastor Max Lackmann. Blessed Father Bernhard Lichtenberg, a resister of the Nazis and rescuer of Jews, was in the process of being transferred to Dachau, but died on his way there in 1943. The Priest Block remained in operation through the end of World War II and the liberation of Dachau by American troops on April 29, 1945.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Bunel, Lucien-Louis; Catholic Church; Dachau; Lichtenberg, Bernhard

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Project Paperclip

The code name given to a joint British-American operation toward the end of World War II, in which groups of special agents were parachuted behind German lines with the objective of seizing Germany's top scientists, engineers, and technicians, and transporting them back to Allied countries. The roundup was intended to fulfill what some had referred to as “intellectual reparations,” whereby German scientific figures would be required to work for the Allies as a way of

expunging the German academic world's contribution to the Third Reich's criminal activities.

Allied agents dropped behind enemy lines would track down specific scientists, and as an inducement for the scientists' cooperation their families were sometimes also taken into Allied custody. The success of Project Paperclip can be measured in two ways. First, a total of 642 German scientists and technologists were able to provide the Allies, upon detailed interrogation, with considerable intelligence regarding the latest developments in armaments, gases, biological and chemical warfare, and missile technology. Second, the scientists were in various ways persuaded to help advance the defense programs being generated by the Allies (particularly the Americans) in order to fight the Cold War. Their employment by the United States, moreover, ensured that their expertise was denied to the Soviet Union, which was itself trying to skim the cream of German technical expertise at the end of the war.

From the perspective of the Holocaust, the acquisition of these scientists and technicians was a critical issue. It meant that these people, many of whom were in the forefront of medical experiments on human subjects in the Nazi concentration camps or had, in some cases, assisted in the design and functioning of the death machinery at places such as Auschwitz, were "laundered" of war crimes charges or had their sentences reduced substantially. The need of the Allies for advanced technical expertise during the Cold War superseded any qualms about wartime accountability for war crimes or crimes against humanity—in this case, an instance of justice being sacrificed for what was deemed to be a higher cause in the confrontation with the Soviet Union. Understandably, some, if not many, saw that as a dubious proposition.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Death Camps; Medical Experimentation

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Propaganda in the Holocaust

Propaganda is information purposely spread to manipulate people's opinions, often by half-truths or by "spinning" facts. Thinking leads to action; thinking of humans as less than human leads to atrocity.



One of the Nazi government's most effective steps toward genocide was its extensive use of propaganda, dehumanizing the Jews so consistently that Germans, many of whom had never met a Jew, did not see their death as the murder of a human being. One of the most ubiquitous of caricatures, shown here on a poster, was of the "Eternal Jew" with gold coins and the hammer and sickle to associate Jews with Russia and communism. (Michael Nicholson/Corbis via Getty Images)

From the beginning of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler and his followers were convinced that the Jewish people posed a deadly threat to all that was noble in humanity. The Nazis considered all of their enemies as part of "international Jewry," and they were convinced that Jews controlled the national governments of Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In the Nazi vision, Jews, the enemies of civilization, were represented as parasitic organisms—as leeches, lice, bacteria, or vectors of contagion. Hitler dehumanized the Jews by naming them an "inferior race" (*Untermenschen*, or subhuman). As such, Jews were excluded from the system of moral rights and obligations that bind humankind together. In this conception, it is wrong to kill a human being but permissible to exterminate a rat.

In 1926 Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* that “Propaganda works on the general public . . . and makes them ripe for the victory of this idea.” He advocated using propaganda to spread the ideals of National Socialism—among them racism, antisemitism, and anti-Bolshevism.

Following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Hitler established a Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, headed by Joseph Goebbels. The ministry’s aim was to ensure that the Nazi message was successfully communicated through art, music, theater, films, books, radio, educational materials, and the press. Goebbels was a propaganda genius, and he created various forms of propaganda that showed different messages to advertise the Nazis and turn the people against the Jews. Films, radio programs, and music were huge elements of such propaganda. Flags, also, were important symbols to the Nazis. Art was used most famously as propaganda in the form of posters.

Goebbels created a negative image of the Jewish people, blaming them for the economic and social problems of Germany and the world. To the Nazis, all the Jews, Roma, and others were dangerous, disease-carrying rats. The Nazis decided that Jews must be excluded from society as a whole, eventually requiring Jews to wear a yellow star on their clothes to mark them as Jewish and, therefore, as different.

The Nazis utilized schools, the media, and popular art forms such as posters to teach and project a distorted image of the Jews. This propaganda, combined with antisemitic feelings already prevailing in many parts of Europe, resulted in violence, humiliation, and anti-Jewish persecution.

Hitler began shaping the beliefs of schoolchildren through the reading of assigned texts in which Jews were portrayed in a series of increasingly negative scenarios. The use of stereotyped conceptions of Jews as lecherous old men seducing young Aryan women and girls, of dirty Jewish butchers, unscrupulous Jewish lawyers, hard-hearted Jewish landlords, rich Jewish businessmen and their wives ignoring the poverty around them, all combined to create a hate-filled image of Jews. In one of these comic books, after providing such “evidence” of the despicable nature of Jews, three suggestions were provided: dismissing Jewish children from German schools, prohibiting Jews from using public facilities like parks, and then expelling them from the country. The originator of this idea was Julius Streicher, editor of a weekly newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, which spread antisemitic propaganda to the general public in Germany. The “facts” presented in the newspaper (for adults, parents, and soon-to-be recruited Nazi SS perpetrators of destruction) were carried over into these schoolbooks. Streicher sought to create a

perception of Jews as a subhuman race that was a threat to the national state of Germany. The idea was for this total indoctrination of these beliefs in the minds of the young and the old to such an extent that they came to have a conviction about the inferiority of Jews and the need to eliminate the threat they posed to the purity and superiority of the Aryan race.

Another aspect of the process of creating dehumanized images of Jews in the minds of the German populace, later in the process of their destruction, was to show pictures of their naked bodies, gaunt from starvation, sickness, and overwork in such ways that it was easy to dissociate them from the rest of humanity, to make them look subhuman in ways that no other peoples have been.

Since not every German could travel to see Hitler speak, Goebbels bought every citizen a cheap radio. These were called People’s Receivers. Citizens (but not Jews) were expected to use these receivers to take advantage of Hitler’s regular broadcasts to the German people.

Flags bearing the Hitler-adopted swastika became a propaganda tool. They were cheap to make, and Germans were encouraged to fly these in support of the Reich. Jews were prohibited from flying these flags.

Propagandists offered more subtle antisemitic language and viewpoints for educated, middle-class Germans offended by crude caricatures. University professors and religious leaders gave antisemitic themes respectability by incorporating them into their lectures and church sermons.

Books became the subject of propaganda. Hitler’s own *Mein Kampf* became “the Nazi bible”: it was distributed free to newlywed couples and soldiers. In addition, the Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda identified “degenerate literature,” which was taken out of university and public libraries. These volumes included books that were anti-Nazi or communist works, written by Jews, or those sympathetic to Jews. These were subject to book burnings commissioned by the ministry. One book burning destroyed 25,000 volumes; it was a huge event at which Goebbels and other high Nazis spoke.

Posters were the most famous form of propaganda. They were placed everywhere. They represented everything Hitler wanted the Germans to see, and nothing they did not. Many were used to dehumanize Jews.

The cinema played an important role in disseminating racial antisemitism, the superiority of German military power, and the intrinsic evil of the enemies as defined by Nazi ideology. Nazi films portrayed Jews as “subhuman” creatures infiltrating Aryan society. For example, in 1940 *Die*

Ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew), directed by Fritz Hippler, portrayed Jews as wandering cultural parasites, consumed by sex and money. *Die Ewige Jude* prepared the German people for the removal of Jews from their midst, so that when the deportations began, neighbors would associate Jews with rats or vermin rather than see them as humans.

Cartoons in German newspapers, above all *Der Stürmer*, used antisemitic caricatures to depict Jews. After the Germans began World War II with the invasion of Poland in September 1939, the Nazi regime employed propaganda to impress upon German civilians and soldiers that the Jews were not only subhuman but also dangerous enemies of the German Reich.

During the wartime period of the Final Solution, SS officials at killing centers compelled their victims to maintain the deception needed to smoothly deport Jews from Germany and occupied Europe. These prisoners, many of whom would soon die in the gas chambers, were forced to send postcards home saying they were well and living in good conditions. The authorities used this deception as propaganda to cover up atrocities and mass murder.

In June 1944 the German Security Police allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross team to inspect the Theresienstadt ghetto. The SS and police had set up Theresienstadt in November 1941 as an instrument of propaganda, to explain to Germans the destination of deported German and Austrian Jews who were elderly, disabled war veterans, or locally known artists and musicians who had gone “to the East” for “labor.” In preparation for the Red Cross visit, the ghetto underwent a “beautification” program, and after the inspection, the SS officials made a film using ghetto dwellers to show the kind treatment the Jewish “residents” of Theresienstadt supposedly enjoyed. Once the film was completed, SS officials deported the “cast” to the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center.

The Nazi regime used propaganda effectively to mobilize the German population to support its wars of conquest until the very end of the regime. Nazi propaganda was likewise essential in motivating those who implemented the mass murder of the European Jews and of other victims of the Nazi regime. It also served to secure the acquiescence of millions of others—as bystanders—to racially targeted persecution and mass murder. Eliminating their rights and freedoms, and driving Jews into poverty and despair, Nazi propaganda created hatred against the Jews and set the stage for the cruel mass genocide.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Antisemitism; Antwerp Pogrom; Art and the Holocaust; *Der Stürmer*; Goebbels, Joseph; Hippler, Fritz; *Jud Süß*; Marian, Ferdinand; *Mein Kampf*; Music and the Holocaust; Nazi Book Burning; Riefenstahl, Leni; Schmeling, Max; Streicher, Julius; Theresienstadt; Wagner, Richard

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Protestant Churches, German

As early as 1933 Protestants in Germany were describing their church-political conflicts as a *Kirchenkampf*—a “church struggle.” Ever since, the term has been used to describe clashes within German Protestantism and between the churches and Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist regime.

Even before the Nazi seizure of power, the two-thirds of Germans who belonged to Lutheran, Reformed, or Union churches were confronted with the anti-Western, anti-Bolshevik, and antisemitic Nazi ideology, expressed through verbal abuse and physical violence. Hitler’s Darwinian worldview idolized the mystical blood-bound community of Germans, scorning traditional Christian teachings about sin, salvation, compassion, and humility. Nonetheless, conservative Protestants who feared the secularization of Weimar Germany and the threat of atheistic communism flocked to Nazism. In Thuringia, Protestant clergy formed the Faith Movement of the German Christians, a church party aiming to renew ecclesiastical life through a masculine, militant fusion of Nazi ideology and Christian religiosity.

Some leading Nazis understood their movement as an expression of Christianity, and even a completion of the Protestant Reformation. They celebrated Martin Luther as a German national hero and called for a moral and national renewal of Germany. Other Nazis rejected Christianity, cultivating Nazism as a political religion or neo-pagan cult. Publicly, however, the Nazi Party platform advocated “positive Christianity,” and Hitler declared that Protestantism and Catholicism would be pillars in his Third Reich. Theologians like Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus, and Emanuel Hirsch

supported Nazi antisemitism and praised Hitler's seizure of power, as did Protestant church leaders. In many regions, Protestant church attendance, membership, marriages, and baptisms all surged. Uniformed SA units attended church services in formation. Many church buildings were constructed or renovated in consciously Nazi styles. Such was the religious atmosphere of 1933.

That July, Hitler publicly endorsed the German Christian Movement, which captured more than 70% of the votes in national church elections and seized control of most of the 28 Protestant regional church governments. A new church constitution followed, along with the formation of a centralized Reich Church headed by Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller, a German Christian military chaplain. Governing according to the authoritarian Nazi "leadership principle," Müller and his German Christian followers agitated in both Prussian and national church synods for the speedy unification of German Protestantism. When regional churches in Württemberg and Bavaria resisted, Müller suspended their leaders and seized control of their church governments. In November 1933 radical German Christians in Berlin called for the abolition of the Old Testament and the writings of the "Rabbi Paul," reinterpreting Jesus as an Aryan fighter.

By this time, however, Berlin pastor Martin Niemöller was spearheading an opposition movement, the Pastors' Emergency League. It was devoted to defending "non-Aryan" clergy from dismissal under the terms of the government's Aryan Paragraph, and to basing church ministry on the Bible and Reformation confessions of faith. Soon more than one-third of Protestant pastors (roughly 7,000) had signed on as members. Many read illegal pulpit declarations criticizing the Müller church government and were fined, suspended, or arrested. In April 1934 representatives from newly emerging confessing synods sympathetic to the Emergency League founded the Confessing Church. Their Barmen Declaration—written largely by Swiss theologian Karl Barth—affirmed the Bible as the unique source of divine revelation, proclaimed Jesus Christ Lord of all, opposed the coordination of Protestantism with Nazism, and rejected the state's claim to ultimate authority. At a subsequent synod in Dahlem that November, the radical wing of the Confessing Church cut off all ties to the official church government, establishing its own Provisional Church Leadership. In March 1935 Prussian members of the Confessing Church denounced Nazi racial ideology and heathenism, for which roughly 700 clergy were temporarily incarcerated. In June 1936 Confessing Church members reiterated their criticism

of the Nazi glorification of "blood, race, nationality, and honor" in a private memorandum to Hitler. Within weeks, the memorandum was leaked and published abroad.

In mid-1935 the Nazi government abandoned Reich Bishop Müller because he was unable to achieve the coordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of the churches under Nazi rule. A new Ministry of Church Affairs was created under Hanns Kerrl, who established national and regional church committees to bring together members of the German Christian Movement and the Confessing Church. While this brought temporary peace to many church communities, increasing Nazi antagonism toward Christianity and the churches prevented any lasting settlement. Gestapo police, Special Court judges, Nazi officials, and German Christian church administrators all harassed, suspended, and imprisoned clergy, disseminated anticlerical propaganda, secularized public education, restricted church meetings, closed theological seminaries, and suppressed the church press. In response, Confessing Church clergy—supported by large numbers of parishioners—withheld church offerings, ignored official church correspondence, conducted illegal church services and confirmation classes, and trained new pastors—not least at theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer's illegal seminary in Finkenwalde.

By 1937 Hitler had given up on Kerrl's system of church committees, called and then cancelled new church elections, and stepped up government persecution of dissident clergy. Confessing Church leader Martin Niemöller was arrested and placed in concentration camps for the duration of Nazi rule. Pastor Paul Schneider was murdered in Buchenwald, while Friedrich Weissler, a Christian of Jewish descent, was blamed for the leak of the 1936 Confessing Church memo and murdered in Sachsenhausen. In 1938 Friedrich Werner, president of the Old Prussian Union Church, replaced Kerrl at the head of German Protestantism and promptly issued a decree demanding that all Protestant clergy swear a personal oath of allegiance to Hitler. While most acceded, a minority refused, adding yet another layer of bitter conflict to the church struggle. It is from this period (1937–1945) that the most virulent anti-Christian statements were issued by Hitler and his associates.

Even as leading Nazis became more convinced of the fundamental opposition of Christianity, which regular SS reports on the mood of the German populace confirmed, most Protestants actually supported Nazi racial policy, foreign policy, and the war of annihilation in the East. While a few Protestants such as the teacher Elisabeth Schmitz or the

pastor Heinrich Grüber defended and aided Jews and while some members of the German Resistance drew on Christian convictions, most Protestants remained silent in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws, the Kristallnacht pogrom, the euthanasia program, and the deportation of German Jews to the ghettos and death camps of Eastern Europe. Indeed, parish clergy supplied many thousands of baptismal records in support of the Proof of Aryan Ancestry certificates required by civil servants. Many clergy volunteered as front-line soldiers or military chaplains, roles in which they actively supported both war and genocide. In the Warthegau, a German province created in occupied Poland, officials implemented a policy of dechristianization, illustrating the radical anti-Christianity of wartime Nazism. On the home front, the German Christian theologian Walter Grundmann founded the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life, mobilizing academics and clergy for the task of dejudaising Jesus, the New Testament, confessions of faith, and church music.

The defeat of Nazism did little to rectify the many injustices and errors of the church struggle. Few German Christians were suspended from church positions or held accountable in the denazification process. Members of the Confessing Church assumed the important positions of Protestant church leadership, belatedly taking on the identity of anti-Nazis. Only later, after much historical research, has a full picture of the vast complicity of Protestants in Nazi Germany come to light. Even so, exceptions like the martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose life story and theological writings became widely popular in the postwar era, have often been mistaken as normative.

KYLE JANTZEN

See also: Aryan Paragraph; Barmen Declaration; Barth, Karl; Bonhoeffer, Dietrich; Büro Grüber; Dahlem Declaration; Gleichschaltung; Teudt, Wilhelm; Universities, Complicity in the Holocaust

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Protocols of the Elders of Zion

The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is an antisemitic Russian literary invention dating from the end of the 19th century, describing an international Jewish elite plotting to subvert and control Western (and, thereby, world) society. This myth of a Jewish world conspiracy with demonological and millenarian motifs was an early element of Nazi ideology in the 1920s. Addressing perennial concerns about Jewish separation and success, such a conspiracy theory invariably projects believers' fears, hopes, and intentions onto a demonized "other," who, as a result, might then be legitimately persecuted or even exterminated. Described as a "warrant for genocide," the *Protocols* encouraged pogroms in czarist Russia and contributed to the atmosphere of opinion in which the Holocaust became possible. The tract sets out the Elders' secret plans for a Jewish world government. The first 9 protocols criticize liberalism and outline methods for achieving global power, while the remaining 15 outline the nature of the final world state. The first protocol indicates that a plot has been in operation over many centuries to place political power firmly in the hands of the Elders of Zion (that is, the Jewish elite). All traditional order and authority are supposedly being dissolved by liberalism and democracy, thus identified as the best means to destabilize the traditional gentile world and render it more amenable to Jewish despotism. The Elders have destroyed religion, especially the Christian faith, through the intellectual fashions of Darwinism and Marxism. The Elders' final goal is the Messianic Age, when the world will be ruled by a Jewish sovereign of the House of David. Such dominion will be divinely ordained, since the Jews are God's chosen people.

The origins of the *Protocols* lie in medieval anti-Judaism in the Christian world. Jews were then supposed to worship the Devil, and a corresponding political myth described a secret Jewish government in Muslim Spain, directing a war against Christendom with the aid of sorcery. The myth of a Jewish world conspiracy represents a modern adaptation of this old demonology. During the French Revolution, conspiracy theories involving philosophes, liberals, and Freemasons circulated among those disturbed by the profound revolutionary challenges to traditional authority of the church and monarchy. By the early 19th century, Jews had become fellow suspects in this political mythology of subversive and secret elites. By the mid-19th century, democracy, liberalism, secularism, and socialism had become significant political factors abhorrent to many conservatives. Their fears and anxieties about the future of the old order led to a rear-guard action against the proponents of the new, mobile society. As this political transformation offered manifold new

opportunities to Europe's Jews, they in turn became the target of this powerful reaction.

Norman Cohn has traced the origin, motivation, and development of the *Protocols* through French, German, and Russian antisemitic texts of the 19th century up to their actual composition sometime around 1897 by the Russian secret police or other reactionaries wishing to defend the autocratic czarist regime. At the same time, these conspiracy texts were used by agitators to incite pogroms against ordinary Jews living in the Pale of Settlement. Mythical accounts of the *Protocols'* origins vary. The earlier editions, published by Russian antisemitic agitators between 1903 and 1906, claimed that the translation was made from a document taken from the "Central Chancellery of Zion, in France." White Russian emigrés believed that they originated among late 19th-century French occultists and Theosophists. A mystical-apocalyptic edition of the *Protocols* was first included in the second edition of *The Great in the Small* (1905) by Sergei Nilus. A fanatical defender of the czarist autocracy, Nilus hated secular modernity, seeing in democracy and technological progress the omens of Antichrist. A later edition of 1917, *He Is Near, Hard by the Door*, was read by Alfred Rosenberg in Russia. Nilus described the *Protocols* as a strategic plan for the conquest of the world, supposedly worked out by Jewish leaders during the many centuries of dispersion and finally presented to a presumed Council of Elders by Theodor Herzl at the first Zionist Congress, held at Basle in August 1897.

Following the Russian Revolution and civil war (1917–1921), many White Russian refugees brought the *Protocols* to Germany, and a German edition appeared in 1919. The myth of a secret Jewish plot in Russia was then transformed by Nazi ideology into powerful political propaganda, implicating all Jews in the subversion of nations, cultural Bolshevism, and international finance, and thereby legitimizing the Holocaust. The *Protocols* appealed to international readerships dislocated by war, defeat, and economic loss in the 1920s, and the *Protocols* were translated into English, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Romanian, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish, Bulgarian, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Japanese, and Chinese. Arabic and South American editions have continued to be published since the defeat of Nazi Germany, while reprints of older European editions circulate among small neo-Nazi parties and splinter groups in Europe, Russia, and the United States up to the present.

NICHOLAS GOODRICK-CLARKE

See also: Antisemitism; Coughlin, Charles

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Q

Quisling, Vidkun

Norwegian collaborationist leader with Nazi Germany. Born in Fyresdal, Norway, on July 18, 1887, Vidkun Quisling entered the army in 1911. By 1918 he was Norwegian military attaché in Petrograd, Russia, and after holding several administrative posts he became minister of defense in 1931. Known as a capable army officer and government official, Quisling became controversial through his support of Germany's Nazi Party, and in 1933 he helped found the Nasjonal Samling Party, a Norwegian fascist organization. In 1939, with the failure of his party to achieve any electoral success, Quisling met German dictator Adolf Hitler and argued for a German occupation of Norway with the object of placing the Nasjonal Samling in power. During the German invasion of Norway in April 1940, Quisling founded a government in which he was named as minister-president.

Quisling's government lasted only one week. The Germans crafted a new ruling body, in which Josef Terboven was Reich commissioner. On February 1, 1942, Quisling managed to attain greater political power as Norway's minister-president in a Nasjonal Samling government. He subsequently embarked on a program of Nazification for his country. His policies, which included efforts to convert churches and schools to the principles of National Socialism, met with opposition from most of the Norwegian population. Quisling's government was also responsible for transporting more than 1,000 Jews to German concentration



Pictured here making a speech in November 1941, Vidkun Quisling was a Norwegian politician who collaborated with Nazi Germany during World War II and led Norway's government after the country was occupied by Germany. Between 1942 and 1945 he served as minister-president, collaborating with the German-imposed administrator Josef Terboven. Quisling's government assisted in Germany's anti-Jewish campaign during the Holocaust. After the war he was tried for murder and high treason against Norway and was executed on October 24, 1945. (AP Photo)

camps. The effectiveness of Quisling's government to carve out an autonomous Norwegian fascist identity was impeded both by interference from Berlin and by Norwegian partisan resistance.

Following the liberation of Norway in May 1945, Quisling was imprisoned in Norway to await trial for war crimes. During the subsequent court proceedings he claimed that he had acted for the greater good of Norway but was found guilty of high treason. He was executed at Akershus Castle in Oslo on

October 24, 1945. His name has subsequently become synonymous with that of traitor.

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See also: Collaboration; Norway

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R

Rabe, John

John Rabe was a German businessman in China who helped shield as many as 250,000 Chinese civilians from harm during the December 13, 1937–January 22, 1938, Nanking (Nanjing) Massacre. The Nanking Massacre (sometimes referred to as the “Rape of Nanking”) occurred when Japanese forces attacked and then occupied the city of Nanking during the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945).

John Heinrich Detlev Rabe was born in Hamburg, Germany, on November 23, 1882. As an executive of the Siemens AG Corporation, he was sent to China in 1908, where he became involved in the company’s Chinese operations in several cities before being assigned to Nanking. By the mid-1930s he had also joined the Nazi Party, which was a virtual prerequisite for any German seeking continued career advancement. There is, however, no clear indication that Rabe subscribed to all—or even part of—Nazi Party ideology.

After the Sino-Japanese War began in 1937, a number of foreign nationals still residing in Nanking decided to establish a demilitarized area, known as the Nanking Safety Zone, where Chinese civilians could seek refuge from the Japanese onslaught. Rabe was selected to lead this effort, a task he took with great seriousness. The Japanese, who were already allied with Germany via the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact, were more likely to cooperate with a German citizen, particularly one who was a member of the Nazi Party.

By November 1937, when Rabe and his foreign compatriots were establishing the safety zone, the Japanese had vowed not to attack civilian areas in which Chinese military forces were absent. Rabe thus persuaded Chinese military authorities to vacate the western quarter of Nanking, where many residents were now relocated. Civilians were at this time housed at Nanking University as well as foreign embassies and other government buildings. In addition, Rabe housed several hundred civilians in his personal residence and at Siemens AG properties in and around Nanking. Of the hundreds of thousands of deaths that occurred during the Rape of Nanking, virtually none were recorded in the safety zone, and estimates indicate that Rabe’s efforts shielded 200,000–250,000 Chinese from Japanese depredations.

In late February 1938 Rabe was asked to leave Nanking. He soon made his way back to Germany, taking with him film, photos, and other evidence of the massacre. He immediately began giving public lectures about the events he had witnessed in China and even wrote a letter to German dictator Adolf Hitler in which he asked the leader to stop Japanese aggression in China. Running afoul of Nazi authorities, Rabe was arrested and questioned by the Gestapo. Only a plea by Siemens AG officials won Rabe’s release. He was ordered never again to write or talk about the Nanking Massacre and spent the World War II years in relative obscurity.

In 1945, after Germany had been defeated, Rabe was arrested because of his previous affiliation with the Nazi

Party. He was forced to undergo “denazification” and spent virtually all of his money defending himself from potential prosecution. Rabe soon became destitute and was unable to find steady work. When the story of his reversal of fortunes reached Nanking, the city’s residents raised thousands of dollars that were to be sent to Germany. Nanking’s mayor personally traveled there to present Rabe with the money and with food supplies.

Rabe died on January 5, 1950. For decades his heroic exploits remained largely forgotten, except perhaps in Nanking. However, in the late 1990s, Rabe’s wartime diaries were published, finally bringing his deeds into the international spotlight. In 1997 the city of Nanking erected a marker giving tribute to Rabe, and in 2006 the city turned Rabe’s former Nanking residence into a memorial museum. To further mark his heroic exploits, a motion picture, *John Rabe* (Florian Gallenberger, 2009) was co-produced by Chinese, German, and French filmmakers, starring German actor Ulrich Tukur in the title role.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Upstander

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“Racial Hygiene”

A designation introduced and developed in 1894 by German medical doctor Alfred Ploetz and picked up by many others in the early part of the twentieth century, “racial hygiene” (*Rassenhygiene*) was a concept that had at its base the notion of eugenics, the branch of knowledge dealing with the production of genetically superior human beings through improvements in their inherited qualities.

In accordance with the Nazi view regarding the racial state, the world was inhabited by three different types of people: culture-founders (typified by the Nazi ideal, the Aryan, who was the most supreme form of humanity according to every index of qualitative measurement); culture-bearers (such as Latin Europeans and Japanese—peoples who could not create civilizations but could ape those established by the culture-founders); and culture-destroyers (most clearly Slavs, Africans, most Asians—but primarily the Jews, who were such inferior examples of humanity as to be barely recognizable as humans at all). In the racial state

that was to be established under Nazi rule, inferior races would have to be destroyed utterly in order to safeguard the purity of the Aryan, with no possibility of blood admixture through intermarriage or cross-breeding.

As the Nazis developed their thoughts in such matters as these, this translated into proposals calling for the compulsory sterilization of physically and psychologically “inferior” humans; for others, added to this could be measures designed to control the breeding of those with criminal tendencies, with incurable diseases (or even those that were curable, such as venereal disease), or with social abnormalities such as chronic alcoholism. The fear of a degeneration in “quality” of the German “race” should such things go unchecked became a crucial element of Nazi ideology and was attractive to the racial thinking that dominated the National Socialist worldview—to such a degree that sterilization and, later, compulsory euthanasia became state policy for the purpose of ensuring the health and virility of the German people in the future.

In order to achieve their desired racial state, the Nazis built a powerful bureaucracy to oversee special laws promulgated at Nuremberg in 1935, the purpose of which was to dismantle Jewish communal life throughout Germany. Upon this legislative foundation it was intended that the racial state would be constructed.

What it required was, in the most fundamental of ways, known as a *rassenkampf*, or “racial struggle.” According to this, the Nazi conception was that all human life constituted an ongoing confrontation for supremacy between competing races of people. This struggle was both typified by and expressed at its most extreme through an abiding conflict between the Aryan race and the Jewish race—a conflict forced by the Jews for the purpose of subverting the perfect world order in which the Aryans should, by virtue of their superiority, rightly predominate. The *rassenkampf* was relentless and had to be fought until the death of one of the two parties would see either an ideal future for the world under the unchallenged rule of the Aryans or a hopeless future dominated by the forces of darkness unleashed by the satanic Jew. The race struggle, of necessity, had to be genocidal in scope; neither compromise nor mercy would ever be possible if the required victory was to be achieved.

Given this, the concept of “racial treason” (*rasseverrat*) was perhaps the most heinous of crimes that could be committed by an Aryan against his or her fellow Aryans. An illicit sexual relationship between an Aryan and a Jew would invariably lead to the destruction of the Aryan race and had to be forestalled with all the means available to the state.

Thus, “race shame” or “racial defilement” (*rassenschande*) had to be proscribed at every turn, and accordingly, under the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935, various relationships between Jews and non-Jews were proscribed, and any acts of a sexual nature between a Jew and a non-Jew—even those who were intermarried—were completely banned. By 1944 any such sexual relationship became a capital offense, though the death penalty had already been carried out in an infamous case in 1942, when Leo Katzenberger, an elderly Jewish businessman, was beheaded on a trumped-up case of *rassenschande* with a non-Jewish woman, Irene Seiler. Later, the law regarding *rassenschande* was also applied to sexual contact between German Aryans and Slavs.

Given the nature of Nazi race thinking with regard to racial hygiene, it comes as no surprise to conclude that it was the Nazis’ understanding that proscribed sexual relationships would pollute, and thereby weaken, the “purity” of the Aryan race, especially if children resulted from the sexual liaison. The totality of Nazi rule thus extended even to this most intimate of human impulses, which was severely regulated on grounds of race.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryan; Aryanism; Eugenics; Euthanasia Program; Fischer, Eugen; Freisler, Roland; Hitler, Adolf; Hollerith Machine; Homosexuals; *Judgment at Nuremberg*; Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; Katzenberger Trial; Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; Lebensborn; “Life Unworthy of Life”; *Mein Kampf*; Mengele, Josef; Mischling; National Socialism; Nuremberg Laws; Oberländer, Theodor; Olympic Games, 1936; Ploetz, Alfred; Ritter, Robert; Roma and Sinti; Rosenberg, Alfred; Schönerer, Georg Ritter von; Slave Labor; Slavs; Social Darwinism; Sterilization; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Third Reich; Volksgemeinschaft

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of Foreign Affairs between May 1940 and April 1943. Born on February 20, 1906, in the town of Neustrelitz, Mecklenburg, he studied law in Rostock and Munich, receiving his license to practice in April 1932 and entering the civil service. In 1932 he joined the SA (*Sturmabteilung*), and the following year, in March 1933, he became a member of the Nazi Party. He joined the Foreign Office in 1937 and served several years overseas as a diplomat before being appointed head of D III in 1940. An avowed antisemite, he was recognized by those around him as a “Jewish expert”; given this, he sought to elevate the role of the Foreign Office in Jewish affairs, particularly in finding a way to remove the Jews from German life. With this in mind, he suggested that all Jews falling into the German sphere—which, given the conquest of Poland, had increased considerably—be expelled and deported to the French island of Madagascar, off the coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. Throughout the spring and summer of 1940 he worked hard on developing his plan, along the way alienating himself from the Jewish expert at the SS, Adolf Eichmann, who was attempting to take control of the project himself. The question over who was ultimately to have ownership of the scheme became moot, however, when Germany failed to defeat Britain in 1940 and thereby had to abandon the plan owing to the latter’s continued dominance of the sea lanes.

In October 1941 Rademacher became directly involved for the first time in the mass murder of Jews. At the request of the local Foreign Ministry representative in Belgrade who had asked for the city’s Jews to be deported, he was sent to Serbia to help occupation authorities there find a “local solution” to the Jewish question. Rademacher, who normally operated from Berlin, traveled to Belgrade to see firsthand whether the problem could be resolved in person. An agreement was reached without any further ado to shoot 1,300 Jews *in situ*. Upon his return to Berlin, Rademacher then filed a travel expense claim describing the reason for his trip as the “liquidation of Jews in Belgrade.”

From this beginning, Rademacher became involved more deeply in the developing Holocaust of the Jews. He helped to organize the deportation of Jews from France, Belgium, and the Netherlands to the extermination camps, employing the Foreign Office as the vehicle for demanding that governments allied to Germany surrender their Jewish citizens. In this way, Rademacher’s office was able to reduce any minimizing external complications that could otherwise have held the deportations back. Within Germany, he liaised with various state instrumentalities such as the SS, the better to smooth the path leading to the deportations. As a leading

Rademacher, Franz

Franz Rademacher was a German diplomat in charge of the so-called “Jewish desk” (*Judenreferat D III*) in the Ministry

bureaucrat in foreign affairs, Rademacher exercised great skill in carrying out the requirements of his office, and he brought external policy and race policy together in a relationship that was literally murderous.

In the spring of 1943 Rademacher became caught up in internal departmental politics. His immediate superior, Martin Luther, involved Rademacher in a plot to supplant Joachim von Ribbentrop as foreign minister. Luther, for his pains, was arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp; Rademacher was dismissed from the Foreign Office and forced to join the navy as an officer for the remainder of the war, ending the war in an intelligence unit. The Foreign Office was reorganized, with Rademacher's department closed down and all foreign matters relating to Jews transferred to the responsibility of Eberhard von Thadden, a lawyer who was head of the office's Inland II unit.

With the end of the war, Rademacher was arrested by British military police in November 1945. Although released, he subsequently became one of the few Nazi diplomats to be investigated. He was brought to trial in Germany in February 1952 for the murders he had overseen in Serbia and convicted by a German state court in Nuremberg-Furth. Appealing the case in 1953, he jumped bail while proceedings were taking place and fled to Syria with the aid of Nazi sympathizers in September of that year. The court convicted him *in absentia* and sentenced him to three years and five months' imprisonment.

While in the Middle East, his whereabouts were known, and in 1962 he became the subject of a failed assassination attempt at the hands of Israeli spy Eli Cohen. To some degree, this was the beginning of the end for Rademacher. In 1963 he was arrested on charges of spying; released in 1965 owing to ill health, he returned voluntarily to Germany, penniless, in 1966. He was arrested at Nuremberg airport on November 30, 1966, faced a new trial, and was again convicted of war crimes. On this occasion he was sentenced to five and half years' imprisonment, with the court ruling that he could be released owing to what it considered to be time served. A German high court overruled this judgment in 1971 and ordered another new trial. Rademacher appealed this action, but before proceedings could begin he died on March 17, 1973.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Eichmann, Adolf; Madagascar Plan; Serbia

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Ratlines

The term “ratlines” refers to a system of escape routes set up for Nazis and members of other fascist groups toward the end of World War II. The main escape routes led toward refuges in South America, particularly in the countries of Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia. Other destinations included the United States, Canada, and the Middle East. There were two primary ratlines in the aftermath of World War II. The first route went from Germany to Spain, then Argentina; the second stretched from Germany to Rome, then to Genoa, and then South America. These routes originally developed independently but would eventually conjoin in order to collaborate.

The first ratlines are associated with numerous advances in Vatican-Argentine relations before and during the Second World War. In 1942 Italian cardinal Luigi Maglione contacted Ambassador Llobet of Argentina, questioning whether the Argentinian government was willing to expand its immigration laws in order to accommodate European Catholic immigrants. Following this, a German priest, Anton Weber, the leader of the Rome-based Society of Saint Raphael, traveled to Portugal and then to Argentina in order to lay the foundation for impending Catholic immigration. This route, meant for European Catholics, became a route that fascist outcasts would exploit, without the knowledge of the Catholic Church.

Spain, not Rome, was the original epicenter of ratline activity enabling the escape of Nazi fascists. However, the migration of Nazis and fascists was actually planned within the Vatican. Charles Lescat, a French associate of Action Française (a far right political movement, suppressed by Pope Pius XI and rehabilitated by Pius XII), and Pierre Daye, a Belgian with friends in the Spanish government, were some of the main planners of the fascist evacuation. Lescat and Daye were able to flee Europe first using the ratlines, with the help of Argentine cardinal Antonio Caggiano.

By 1946 there were hundreds of war criminals in Spain, as well as thousands of former Nazis and fascists. Unlike the Vatican emigration of European Catholics in Italy, focused in Vatican City, the ratlines of Spain, although promoted and created by the Vatican, were still autonomous from the Vatican Emigration Bureau.

After World War II came to an end in Italy, Bishop Alois Hudal, designated as the “Spiritual Director of the German People resident in Italy,” became active in ministering to German-speaking prisoners of war and detainees held in prisoner camps throughout Italy. In December 1944 the Vatican secretariat of state received permission to appoint a representative to visit the German-speaking prisoners in Italy, an occupation allocated to Hudal. He then used his position to assist in the escape of wanted Nazi war criminals. Some of his escapees included Franz Stangl, former commandant of the Sobibór and Treblinka death camps; Gustav Wagner, one-time commandant of Sobibór; Alois Brünner, director of the Drancy internment camp near Paris, and in charge of deportations in Slovakia to German concentration camps; and the overall head of the “Final Solution,” the notorious Adolf Eichmann. Some of these men were being detained in internment sites, usually without identity papers, and they would be registered in camp records under false names. Other Nazis had already escaped to Italy, and they sought out Hudal as his part in supporting escapes became known informally in Nazi circles.

Hudal stated in his memoirs, “I thank God that He [allowed me] to visit and comfort many victims in their prisons and concentration camps and to help them escape with false identity papers. . . . The Allies’ War against Germany was not a crusade, but the rivalry of economic complexes for whose victory they had been fighting. This so-called business . . . used catchwords like democracy, race, religious liberty and Christianity as a bait for the masses. All these experiences were the reason why I felt duty bound after 1945 to devote my whole charitable work mainly to former National Socialists and Fascists, especially to so-called ‘war criminals.’” Hudal was the first Catholic priest to commit himself to forming Nazi escape routes. Declassified U.S. intelligence reports have shown that Hudal was not the only priest assisting Nazi escapees at this time. Overall, Hudal’s ratline was relatively small-scale compared to larger operations.

The major Roman ratline was operated by a small but significant network of Croatian priests, members of the Franciscan order, and led by Father Krunoslav Draganović, who prepared a highly refined correspondence with headquarters at the San Girolamo degli Illirici Seminary College in Rome, but with associations from Austria to the final embarkation point in the port of Genoa.

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See also: Brunner, Alois; Catholic Church; Hudal, Alois; Spain; Stangl, Franz

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Ravensbrück

Ravensbrück was a Nazi concentration camp for women, located 56 miles north of Berlin on swampy land near the Havel River. On May 15, 1939, the first prisoners arrived when 867 women were transferred from Lichtenburg. The camp was staffed by 150 female SS supervisors (*Aufseherinnen*), male guards, and male administrators. In 1942 and 1943 Ravensbrück served as a training base for female guards, and 3,500 women were trained there for work in Ravensbrück and other camps.

In late 1939 the camp held 2,000 prisoners. By late 1942 there were 10,800. In 1944 the main camp contained 26,700 female prisoners and several thousand female minors grouped in a detention camp for children. Most of the camp was evacuated in March 1945 as the Russians approached, and 24,500 prisoners were marched into Mecklenburg. When the camp was liberated by Soviet troops during April 29–30, they found only 3,500 ill and famished women left.

During its existence, at least 107,753 (123,000 according to Germaine Tillion) women were interned in Ravensbrück and its satellite camps, most of which were industrial slave labor sites. There was a concentration camp for men near Ravensbrück, but it was connected with the Sachsenhausen camp rather than being allocated to the Ravensbrück administration. It has been estimated that approximately 50,000 inmates died at Ravensbrück across the camp’s duration. In addition to general overwork, exposure, malnutrition, disease, and abuse, individual women were subjected to excruciating medical experimentation while in the camp, including bone transplants, induced gas gangrene, and deliberately infected incisions. Early in 1945 a gas chamber was constructed at the camp, where, it is asserted, between 2,200 and 2,400 women were gassed. Max Koegel, who had been commandant from the opening of the camp until the summer of 1942, committed suicide in 1946. His successor, Fritz Suhren, was tried and executed in 1950.

BERNARD A. COOK



Ravensbrück was a concentration camp for women located north of Berlin. It is estimated that anywhere from 107,000 to 123,000 women passed through the camp and its satellite camps, with perhaps as many as 50,000 deaths. This photograph shows survivors in Ravensbrück being liberated in March 1945. (Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)

See also: Gebhardt, Karl; Grese, Irma; Jewish Women and the Holocaust; Landmesser, August; Natzweiler-Struthof; Oberheuser, Herta

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Refoulement

Refoulement is a French term, from the word “*refouler*” (to repress), meaning sending a person back to a country where he or she faces a threat to life or freedom. This was a policy introduced in Switzerland in 1938 as a way of ensuring that

Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany without satisfactory means or documentation were either forbidden from entering at the border, or returned to Germany upon arrival.

The stimulus for the change in what had previously been a more liberal acceptance policy was the German *Anschluss*, or union, with Austria in March 1938. Over the next few months, thousands of desperate Austrian Jews sought sanctuary in Switzerland. The country's motives behind the *refoulement* policy were several: a fear of being swamped with refugees; antisemitism within certain sections of the government and the bureaucracy; and concerns about German countermeasures, even aggression, should Switzerland be seen to be adopting a pro-Jewish policy. *Refoulement* saw the Swiss government develop a highly restrictive position, such that only families with children under 16 or adults over 60 were to be allowed entry. By October 1938 the policy received an enormous boost in the form of a new regulation to the passport laws of Germany and Switzerland; at the Swiss suggestion, the Nazi government agreed to stamp all

Jewish passports with the letter “J” in red, as an indication of the bearer’s Jewish status. This greatly simplified the job of Swiss border guards assigned the task of identifying Jews and turning them back. In February 1939 Swiss authorities imposed even more stringent regulations, reducing further the number of Jews allowed into Switzerland.

All in all, Switzerland accepted about 200,000 refugees during World War II, a little over 10% of whom were Jews. Many thousands more passed through the country in transit to somewhere else, and among these, too, were Jews. Of those saved, though, the Swiss policy of *refoulement* ensured that only a minority got through. Recognizing the discriminatory injustice of the policy, in 1995 the president of Switzerland, Kaspar Villiger, officially apologized to the Jewish people for the actions of his predecessors over half a century earlier.

Since the Holocaust, a new concept, non-*refoulement*, has entered international refugee law as a direct response to the Swiss position during World War II, as many states in the postwar world were anxious to ensure that incidents like sending Jewish refugees back into the hands of the Nazis would not happen again. Non-*refoulement* prohibits states from sending refugees back to the countries or territories from which they have fled due to a threat to their lives and/or a deprivation of their basic freedoms. As part of customary international law, the principle of non-*refoulement* means that it is binding on all states, whether or not they are parties to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951).

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See also: Anschluss; Switzerland

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Reich Citizenship Law

The Reich Citizenship Law was the second of the so-called Nuremberg Laws introduced, after the tabling of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, at the NSDAP rally held in Nuremberg from September 9 to 15, 1935. It introduced a new distinction between “Reich citizens” and “nationals.” Reich citizens had to meet two tests:

they were to be Germans of “German or kindred blood,” and they had to comport themselves appropriately (“willing and able to faithfully serve the German people and Reich”). The law provided that only citizens of the Reich could enjoy full political rights, which stripped Jews of any such rights; they henceforth became state nationals with the status of second-class subjects, though with particular obligations that they still owed to the Reich. In the following months the regime used this reduced status to push Jews out of a number of careers, professions, and programs of study for which Reich citizenship was required.

The right to citizenship under this law was now to be acquired by the granting of Reich citizenship papers. However, certificates of Reich citizenship were in fact never introduced, and all Germans other than Jews were provisionally classed as Reich citizens until 1945.

The question of who exactly was a Jew needed to be clarified with precision in order to effectively enforce either of the two Nuremberg Laws. An official definition was provided by the First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law, introduced in November 14, 1935 (also called the Implementing Decree), which defined in some detail who was a “full Jew” or a *Mischling* (“mixed-breed”) in the National Socialist sense.

This decreed that a “full Jew” was a person who practiced Judaism or a person with at least three Jewish grandparents, regardless of religious practice. Those with fewer than three Jewish grandparents were designated as *Mischlinge*, of which there were two degrees: *Mischling* of the First Degree (a person with two Jewish grandparents, who did not practice Judaism and did not have a Jewish spouse); and *Mischling* of the Second Degree (a person with one Jewish grandparent and who did not practice Judaism). Unlike earlier forms of antisemitism, the new regulation defined Jewishness by “race” rather than by religion.

Clause § 4 of the First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law stated that a Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich, with no right to vote in political affairs or occupy a public office. Further, Jewish civil servants would “retire” as of December 31, 1935. This included the so-called Hindenburg provision, which was that if these civil servants served at the front in World War I, either for Germany or its allies, they would receive in full, until they reached the age limit, the full pension to which they were entitled according to the last salary they received; they would, however, not advance in seniority. After reaching the age limit, their pensions would be calculated anew, according to the last salary they received, on the basis of which their pension was calculated. The regulation also provided that the Reich Chancellor could grant

exemptions from the regulations laid down in the law. The Nuremberg Laws were expanded on November 26, 1935, to include Roma and Afro-Germans.

The Nazi regime made a number of regulations under the Reich Citizenship Law. On June 14, 1938, the third regulation to the Law, passed in Nuremberg, defined a Jewish business or enterprise. As a consequence, if an owner or partner in a business was defined as a Jew, the company was considered Jewish and had to be registered as such. This regulation paved the way for compulsory “Aryanization” of Jewish businesses. With this, earlier discrimination against Jews in the German economy progressed to the removal of Jews from economic life.

On September 27, 1938, Regulation No. 5 to the Citizenship Law disbarred Jewish lawyers from the legal profession. From then on, a small proportion of these lawyers was allowed to work, providing legal counsel for Jewish clients only. Also in 1938 the government issued a regulation that revoked the medical licenses that had been issued to Jewish doctors and restricted them to the treatment of Jews.

Later, in 1939, another law forced Jewish landlords to house only Jewish tenants. The population got the message and began to post signs on stores and in towns denying goods and services to Jews or banning them outright. In 1941 the government stepped up its campaign by commencing the expropriation of real property and other property belonging to Jews, again by statute.

On September 19, 1942, also under the terms of the Reich Citizenship Law, all Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David, and if found without it prominently displayed on their clothing, they were subject to severe punishments at the discretion of local law enforcement.

One of the last statutory measures in Hitler’s Germany in accordance with modern definitions of a “law” or “statute” was a regulation issued pursuant to the Reich Citizenship Law on July 1, 1943. This transferred the enforcement and punishment of Jews for alleged breaches of the law to the SS. It was the end of even a semblance of judicial process for Germany’s so-called “non-Aryans.” As early as 1942, however, the government had effectively shown that there was no longer any need to play out the charade of legislation or statute.

From the moment the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Jews of Germany were subjected to a never-ending series of discriminatory laws. The Reich Citizenship Law was the bedrock on which many of these rested, as, during the 12 years of Hitler’s regime, more than 400 separate regulations were issued against Jews, ranging from ownership of a radio, to attending a movie, to purchasing sugar from a grocer.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Aryanization; Globke Trial; Mischling; Nuremberg Laws; Roma; Volk

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Reich Flight Tax

By the time the Nazis assumed office in January 1933, the notion that citizens saving tax by residing abroad was an “unpatriotic desertion” punishable with a tax levy was not new. As far back as 1918 the German government had issued a “law against tax evasion”; this was, however, abolished in 1925.

On December 8, 1931, the Weimar government introduced “the Fourth Decree of the Reich President for the Assurance of Economy and Finance and the Protection of Inner Peace” as part of reparations. The flight tax was just one of many other measures to be regulated by law; it was also about price and interest rate cuts, housing, social security, labor provisions, household security, wage cuts, and a blanket ban involving measures against misuse of weapons.

The flight tax (*Reichsfluchsteuer*) was seen as a tax on wealthy emigrants. It was presented as a temporary measure to halt capital flight and tax evasion by persons who were, on March 31, 1929, citizens of Germany and had moved their residence abroad, or would relocate from that date until December 31, 1932. A flight tax was payable provided the citizen possessed chargeable assets of more than 200,000 Reichsmarks (RM) or an annual income of about 20,000 RM. The tax rate was set at 25% of the total assets or the income and levied retroactively.

Taxable persons who tried to evade this levy were liable to be punished with not less than three months’ imprisonment and an unlimited fine. The names of those abroad who were found to have evaded this penalty were to be listed in a “Tax Wanted” poster published in the *German Gazette* (*Reichsanzeiger*), and they were subject to arrest in the event they visited Germany. Any assets remaining in Germany belonging to tax evaders who had moved overseas were liable to be seized. The law was due to expire at the end of 1932, but that year it was extended until December 31, 1934.

After the Nazis came to power in 1933, the existing flight tax law was extended six times, the last time on December 9, 1942. The first amendment was issued on May 18, 1934, named the “Law Concerning Revision of the Specifications of the Reich Flight Tax” (*Gesetz über Änderung der Vorschriften über die Reichsfluchtsteuer*). This measure lowered the asset threshold, previously 200,000 Reichsmarks, to 50,000 Reichsmarks. A much larger group of people was affected by this compulsory levy. The flight tax now mostly caught Jews forced to leave owing to fear of violence and imprisonment in concentration camps, and destruction of their right to work.

Before 1933 the tax revenue from the flight tax was of little significance; it was only just under one million Reichsmarks for the second financial year. After May 18, 1934, however, the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* formed a significant part of the Reich budget. The tax received rose to 17 million Reichsmarks in 1938, reaching a later annual peak of 342 million. Overall, the Nazi state received 941 million Reichsmarks from the flight taxes collected, with an estimated 90% coming from racially oppressed migrants.

The transfer of remaining funds out of Germany after emigration was further depleted due to manipulated exchange rates. Even the export of small sums was an extremely complicated process. The exemption limit for foreign exchange in 1934 was fixed at 10 marks. Banking and securities balances left behind had to be paid into a “blocked emigrant’s account” and were released only in certain cases.

For the impounded funds to be converted into foreign currency it was necessary to pay a fee or “commission” on transfer. In January 1934 the “commission” on capital transfer from the émigrés’ blocked accounts, that is, the fees deducted, was approximately 20% of the total amount transferred. By June 1935 it had jumped to 68%. In October 1936 it increased to 81%, and in June 1938 it rose to 90% of the total. From September 1939 the fee was uniformly 96%.

Even after all taxes and levies had been paid and all formalities settled, wealthy émigrés were subjected to further extortion before leaving the country. A tight surveillance net was created to discover persons planning to flee the country: the post office tracked change of address orders by Jews; freight companies were required to report moves; notaries reported sales of real estate; life insurance companies were required to report cancellations of life insurance. The Gestapo tracked the letter and telephone correspondence of suspected individuals.

The obligations that had to be met by a Jew emigrating from Germany at the end of 1938 were (1) the 20% fine levied upon his or her entire fortune as punishment for the

assassination of Ernst vom Rath, the German legation secretary in Paris in November, 1938; (2) the 25% Reich flight tax, payable by all persons with assets of 50,000 marks or more; (3) the 100% tax on all personal belongings purchased after 1933; and (4) sale of any remaining marks to the Gold Discount Bank at the prevailing rate of 6.5%, provided that the bank was willing to purchase.

On October 23, 1941, all further Jewish emigration was prohibited by an order of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. With the end of the war, the imposition of Allied military rule, and then the reversion to democracy, the law relating to flight tax was repealed by the “Law for the Repeal of Obsolete Tax Regulations” of July 23, 1953.

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See also: Aryanization; Himmler, Heinrich; Weimar Republic

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Reichssicherheitshauptamt

The Reich Security Main Office, or RSHA, was the central office through which the Nazis dealt with their political and ideological enemies. It was established on September 27, 1939, as a combination of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service, or SD) and the *Sicherheitspolizei* (Security Police, or SiPo), which included the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Secret State Police, or Gestapo) and the *Kriminalpolizei* (Criminal Police, or Kripo).

Reinhard Heydrich was the first commander of the RSHA until he was assassinated on June 2, 1942. His place was taken by Ernst Kaltenbrunner in January 1943. Under Heydrich’s leadership, the RSHA grew into the terror organization used most extensively by the Nazi state. Once organized, it comprised seven departments: I, “Administration and Legal”; II, “Ideological Investigation”; III, “Spheres of German Life”; IV, “Suppression of Opposition”; V, “Suppression of Crime”; VI, “Foreign Intelligence Service”; and VII, “Ideological Research and Evaluation.” The entire organization was answerable to Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler.

Department IV, under the control of Heinrich Müller, was the Gestapo. It, in turn, was divided into 14 divisions, each dealing with matters such as political enemies, treason, and

counterintelligence. Section IV B-4, also called the Jewish Affairs Department, was headed by SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann. From late 1941 on, section IV B-4 was responsible for the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*), and, as such, coordinated the deportation of European Jews to ghettos, forced labor and concentration camps, and extermination camps. Much of the “heavy lifting” in this process was undertaken by the *Sicherheitspolizei* (the SiPo), comprising the Gestapo and Kripo.

While the RSHA regulated all the security services of Nazi Germany, it was also heavily involved in the racial issues that so consumed the Third Reich. Through the SiPo, the RSHA recruited and maintained the men who staffed the *Einsatzgruppen* units that carried out the mass extermination of Jews, Roma, and others in the Soviet Union and the occupied eastern territories. The RSHA also acted to extend its remit with regard to the Final Solution into countries allied to Germany, such as Slovakia, Croatia, Romania, and especially Hungary, where a special unit of SS administrators, headed by Eichmann himself, was sent in March 1944 to assist the Hungarians in facilitating the identification, concentration, and deportation of that country’s Jewish community.

Overall, therefore, it can be concluded that the RSHA formed the administrative core of the Holocaust. Not only was it the formal and intelligence agency for the security police, it was also the coordinating agency for the Holocaust. During the years of its existence it expanded enormously, both in terms of personnel and also in respect of its functions—either delegated to it or which it arrogated unto itself.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Eichmann, Adolf; Einsatzgruppen; Final Solution; Gestapo; Heydrich, Reinhard; Höppner, Rolf-Heinz; Kaltenbrunner, Ernst; Lange, Herbert; Mauthausen-Gusen; Sicherheitsdienst; Topography of Terror; Waffen-SS

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dehumanize, and ultimately destroy the Jewish people of Europe. They said no in a wide variety of ways and for a plethora of reasons.

A few individuals, such as Oskar Schindler, Raoul Wallenberg, and André Trocmé, have received widespread public attention. But most remain unknown to the wider public, even though their efforts on behalf of Jews are remarkable and deserving of broader recognition. A few examples will suffice here.

Tina Strobos was a Dutch medical student who, with her mother, helped save more than 100 Jews from the Nazis during World War II by giving them refuge on the upper floor of her Amsterdam home—just a few blocks away from another safe house in the same neighborhood, where Anne Frank and her family were being shielded by Miep Gies and others.

Ho Feng-Shan was the Chinese consul to Vienna, and one of the first diplomats to save Jews by issuing them visas to escape Nazi Germany. Between 1938 and 1940 he was responsible for saving thousands of Jews in Nazi-occupied Austria. For continuing to issue visas despite a direct order for him not to do so, a black mark, or “demerit,” was entered into Ho’s personnel file in 1939. He continued issuing visas, however, until recalled to China in May 1940. It is not known how many visas he actually authorized prior to then, but there is solid room for speculation that many, probably numbering in the thousands, were issued.

María Errázuriz was a Chilean woman who worked with the French Resistance during the Nazi occupation of France in World War II, saving Jewish children at considerable risk to her own life. Captured and tortured, she never broke when demands were made to reveal where she had hidden the children in her care.

William L. Shirer was an American journalist, war correspondent, and historian, perhaps best known for his book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. Wherever possible, he took a stand against the Nazis through his reportage, but there was only so much on which he could report—his outgoing dispatches were watched carefully by the Nazis as a condition of his credentials being respected, or he would have been expelled. Despite this, he and his wife Tess sheltered Jews in their home as a refuge for those who had gone into hiding. Occasionally the Shirers would find themselves harboring a Jewish man who had just been released from a jail or concentration camp. In such circumstances, their guest would often have been badly beaten or mistreated, and they would care for him until he had recovered sufficiently to be able to return to his family in something resembling a passable condition.

Rescuers of Jews

Rescuers were people who said no to the attempt by National Socialist Germany, between 1933 and 1945, to disenfranchise,

Well over 26,000 rescuers have been recognized by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial Authority situated in Jerusalem. It honors non-Jews who risked their own lives, and often those of their families, to save Jews during the Holocaust. Such people are given the title Righteous among the Nations (in Hebrew, *Hasidei umot Haolam*). After an exhaustive investigation process, if a person's actions are deemed to be sufficiently worthy of recognition as Righteous, the honoree (or their heirs) are invited to Jerusalem to receive a plaque and to plant a carob tree in the Garden of the Righteous, in permanent commemoration of the act for which they are being recognized. This is generally acknowledged as the highest form of recognition that can be bestowed upon non-Jews who saved Jews.

None of this, of course, speaks to the large number of Jews who worked to rescue other Jews during the Holocaust. There were many who managed to find ways to save their fellow Jews; among many thousands can be included names such as Wilhelm Bachner, Moussa Abadi, Marianne Cohn, Mila Racine, Aron Grünhut, Rabbi Regina Jonas, and Walter Süsskind.

Saving lives during the Holocaust was sometimes next to impossible. It was a time when living space, food, sanitation facilities, and medicine were at a premium, and those who helped Jews risked their own lives as well as those of their families. Given the enormous risks involved in undertaking rescue efforts, it is remarkable that any of these initiatives took place at all. When we ask, therefore, why there were so few examples of upstanding during the Holocaust, the question could more readily be, in view of everything people faced, why were there so many?

Rescuers existed in all countries under Nazi occupation. They came from all walks of life, belonged to every nationality, confessed to every religious belief, and belonged to all age groups and social classes. They comprised both men and women; some were educated, others were not.

During the Holocaust rescuing Jews was very far from being a soft option, and all too frequently choosing to become a rescuer was fraught with emotional, moral, and physical dilemmas. To stand out from the crowd, to refuse to acquiesce, to not compromise one's own values in order to guarantee personal safety at the expense of that of others—these were grueling issues for people to confront during this most extreme period in history. Human behavior during the Holocaust, it might be said, was the paradigmatic example of all the best—and the worst—that human civilization carries within it, and those who rescued Jews were among the finest examples of human beings acting under conditions of extreme stress on behalf of others.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: André, Joseph; Anne Frank House; Bartali, Gino; Battel, Albert; Beitz, Berthold; Bergson Group; Bielecki, Jerzy; Bilecki, Julian; Bingham, Harry; Bogaard, Johannes; Borkowska, Anna; Borromeo, Giovanni; Bunel, Lucien-Louis; Büro Grüber; Calmeyer, Hans; Channel Islands; Damaskinos of Athens, Archbishop; Denmark; De Sousa Mendes, Aristides; *The Diary of a Young Girl*; Duckwitz, Georg; Edmonds, Roddie; Fleischmann, Gisi; Frank, Anne; Fry, Varian; Fugu Plan; Geulen-Herscovici, André; Gies, Miep; Göring, Albert; Grüninger, Paul; Gunden, Lois; Hautval, Adelaide; Helmy, Mohammed; Hesselblad, Maria Elizabeth; Ho Feng-Shan; Jagendorf, Siegfried; Kalina, Antonin; Kasztner, Reszö; Kerkhofs, Louis-Joseph; Kolbe, Raymond; Kraus, Gilbert and Eleanor; Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; Leitz, Ernst, II; Lutz, Carl; Marie-Benoît, Père; Norrman, Sven; Ogilvie, Albert; Opdyke, Irene Gut; Osako, Tatsuo; Paulavicius, Jonas; Perlasca, Giorgio; Peshev, Dimitar; Popovici, Traian; Righteous among the Nations; Rotta, Angelo; Salkaházi, Sara; Schindler, Oskar; Schmeling, Max; Schmid, Anton; Sharp, Waitstill and Martha; Sheptytsky, Andrey; Slachta, Margit; Strobos, Tina; Sugihara, Chiune; Sweden; Ten Boom, Corrie; Trocmé, André and Magda; Turkey; Wallenberg, Raoul; Weidt, Otto; White Buses; Winton, Nicholas; Żabiński, Jan; Zegota

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Reserve Police Battalion 101

German Nazi mobile killing squad comprised chiefly of middle-aged German reservists from Hamburg, who operated in occupied Poland and the Soviet Union during World War II and played a key role in the implementation of the Holocaust. The unit was first activated and dispatched to Poland in September 1939. Once there, it took Polish soldiers as prisoners, staffed a prisoner of war camp, and confiscated Polish military supplies. On December 13, 1939, the battalion returned to Hamburg and was partly reconstituted.

The battalion returned to Poland in May 1940, where it was engaged in rounding up and deporting Jews, Roma, Poles, and others in the western sector of the country. In just five months, the unit rounded up some 37,000 people. By the late summer of 1940 the battalion was tasked with pursuing Poles who had defied earlier deportation orders. In late November 1940 the unit was sent to patrol the Łódź ghetto,

with orders to shoot to kill any Jews who strayed too close to the fence surrounding them.

In May 1941 the battalion was again sent back to Hamburg where it was reorganized, this time with a number of men from Luxembourg along with those from Hamburg. It trained there for the better part of a year and was also involved in the deportation of Jews from Hamburg. Many of these were sent by train to Minsk, Riga, or Łódź. By June 1942 the battalion had returned to Poland, this time assigned to the Lublin District. There it was tasked with gathering Jews from smaller towns and outlying areas for deportation to concentration camps or ghettos. In July 1942 the unit participated in mass shootings of Jews and others deemed “undesirable” in a number of smaller Polish communities.

From this time on, the battalion perpetrated one of the largest civilian massacres of World War II; at least 32,000 people were killed in three separate concentration camps in the Lublin District. Indeed, between July 1942 and November 1943, it is estimated that the unit murdered in excess of 39,000 people and deported 45,000 others. Between January 1944 and the end of the war in April 1945 the battalion was engaged mainly against local partisans, resisters, and enemy forces. The unit returned to Hamburg in the spring of 1945.

Despite the atrocities committed by Reserve Police Battalion 101, just four members were brought to justice in the immediate postwar period. In 1947 the men were sent to Poland where they were tried and convicted; two received prison sentences and the other two were condemned to death. However, the battalion’s activities came under more scrutiny by the mid-1960s, resulting in the trial of 14 more members. Nearly all were convicted, but just five were sentenced to prison. Later, the sentences were reduced on appeal.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Browning, Christopher; *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*; Łódź Ghetto

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countless individual acts of resistance to large, well-organized resistance movements. In every nation occupied by German or Axis forces, there was some level of resistance, both by Jews and non-Jews, and not just against military occupations. Many also resisted Nazi and fascist ideology. Resistance was most keenly felt in Eastern Europe and was largely (though far from exclusively) carried out by Jews. The number of resisters and resistance groups will likely never be known for certain, because many postwar governments tended to inflate the number of resisters for political reasons. In many places, resistance was not monolithic or centrally organized; in fact, some resistance movements were badly split by ideological, political, and religious differences as well as by age-old ethnic feuds and the egos of the various resistance leaders.

Resistance itself encompassed a wide array of active and passive measures. Active resistance included sabotage, murder, assassinations, intelligence gathering, bombings, and the like. Passive resistance also took many forms. It included noncooperation with authorities, civil disobedience, organizing underground newspapers, smuggling Jews and other targets of Nazi persecution out of the country, and hiding Jews and other Nazi targets. Resistance, of course, occurred via large-scale resistance groups, like the Jewish Fighting Organization, the Jewish Army, the National Council of the Resistance in France, the Cetniks in Yugoslavia, and the secret Home Army in Poland, among a number of others.

A somewhat popular but completely false impression of resistance developed in the postwar period. That interpretation seemed to suggest that most Jews did not offer any resistance toward their Nazi persecutors and went to their deaths without much of a fight—as it was said, “like sheep to the slaughter.” This is simply not true. Jews resisted their oppressors and captors in every ghetto, on every deportation train, and in every concentration camp. Their resistance was sometimes solitary, but could also be a part of an organized group effort. It took many forms—from smuggling, to sabotage, to assassinations, to spying, to running underground newspapers, to devising anti-German propaganda. Passive resistance had its own end—to simply survive the ordeal while maintaining one’s dignity, and this, of course, was far more daunting than it appears on the surface. Jewish spiritual resistance took on a multitude of forms. It ranged from creating Jewish institutions in ghettos and concentration camps to providing clandestine education for children. It also encompassed the observation of Jewish holidays and religious and cultural rituals, preserving the history of communal existence, maintaining journals and memoirs, and

Resistance Movements

Resistance during the Nazi era and World War II took on many different forms and occurred on a scale ranging from



Resistance to the Nazi onslaught took many forms throughout Europe. Whether by Jew or non-Jew, an organized group or individuals, by means of the circulation of anti-Nazi pamphlets, hit-and-run raids, ghetto or camp uprisings, or, as in this picture, saboteurs placing explosives, the efforts to be free of the Nazi yoke spanned the entirety of the 12 years of the Third Reich. (AP Photo)

collecting and hiding documentation of Jewish experiences during World War II.

Within Germany itself, there was a considerable Jewish resistance movement, mainly composed of sabotage, assassinations, and intelligence gathering for the Allies. Most of this activity was carried out by leftist Zionist groups. Jews in the Netherlands worked closely with the communists and other non-Jewish resisters, and at least 1,000 Dutch Jews actively resisted the German occupation; of that number, only half survived the war. In Belgium, Jewish resistance ramped up as soon as the German occupation began in the late spring of 1940. It grew to include sabotage, urban guerilla-style warfare, and hiding Belgian Jews. At least 3,000 Jewish-Belgian children were successfully hidden from Germans between 1941 and 1945. In France, Jews made up nearly 20% of the French Resistance movement, even though they comprised only about 1% of the French population. The *Armée Juive*, or Jewish Army (numbering some 2,000 at its

peak), which was formed in Toulouse, conducted attacks and sabotage against German personnel and interests, smuggled hundreds of Jews into neutral Spain, Portugal, and Switzerland, and incited uprisings in major French cities in the summer of 1944 to help divert German attention and troops from the Allied landings at Normandy beginning in June 1944.

There were, of course, a number of Jewish revolts in ghettos as well as concentration and death camps. There were at least 14 separate major uprisings in ghettos between 1941 and 1945. The April–May 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was the largest and most noteworthy. When those imprisoned in the ghetto learned that they were to be deported to Treblinka, the Jewish Fighting Organization and the Jewish Military Union instigated a major rebellion that lasted for several weeks, killing some 16–18 Germans and wounding 85 more. A revolt at the Treblinka death camp in August 1943 witnessed attacks against German guards and

widespread sabotage, ultimately forcing the camp's closure. In October of that year, Polish Jews at the Sobibór death camp killed their German and Ukrainian guards before staging a mass breakout in which some 300 prisoners managed to escape. Only about 60 of these survived the war. At Auschwitz in October 1944, prisoners in the XII *Sonderkommando* blew up one of the crematoria with explosives smuggled into the camp by female prisoners.

General resistance in France to the Nazi occupation, which began in June 1940, was among the most well-organized and most well-known resistance movements during the war. This included the Maquis, who were dogged guerrilla-style fighters, as well as the National Council of Resistance. In Norway, resisters launched a strike against a hydroelectric plant in February 1943 and sank a ferry that helped delay Nazi production of an atomic bomb. There were also many active resisters in the Soviet Union; they fought against the German occupation, mainly in the western portions of the country, and included Jews and non-Jews alike.

The extent to which these various resistance groups helped to defeat the Germans and their allies is hard to gauge. Nevertheless, resistance movements certainly forced the Nazis to divert considerable manpower and resources to staunch rebellious activity and track down resisters. In this the resisters were quite successful.

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See also: Armée Juive; Belgium; Bonhoeffer, Dietrich; Christian X, King of Denmark; Delbo, Charlotte; Denmark; Edelman, Marek; February Strike; Fleischmann, Gisi; Italy; Jewish Fighting Organization; Jewish Resistance; Karski, Jan; Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; Mommsen, Hans; Norway; Oneg Shabbat; Pechersky, Alexander; Pilecki, Witold; Rosenstrasse Protest; Salkaházi, Sara; Scholl, Hans and Sophie; Shirer, William L.; Sobibór; Soos, Géza; Strobos, Tina; Ten Boom, Corrie; Treblinka; Sweden; Trocmé, André and Magda; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Warsaw Rising; White Rose; White Buses; Żabiński, Jan

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Rhineland Bastards

The term “Rhineland Bastards,” or, in German, *Rheinland-bastarde*, was a designation given in the Third Reich during the 1930s to the children of mixed liaisons (rarely marriages) between German women and soldiers from French Africa who were stationed in the Rhineland as occupation forces between 1920 and 1930. It was estimated that there were some 500 of these mixed-descent offspring. As they were German citizens, there was at first no legal basis for launching discriminatory measures against these children; the 1933 Sterilization Law, for example, did not consider race as a reason for compulsory sterilization. However, in 1937 the so-called “Rhineland Bastards” were secretly sterilized by the Gestapo. It has been suggested that the order to proceed with this action came from Hitler himself, as he was just as concerned about interracial crossbreeding between Aryans and Africans as he was between Aryans and Jews.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; Sterilization

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Riefenstahl, Leni

Leni Riefenstahl was an accomplished dancer, actress, photographer, innovator in the art of cinematography, and more, but the powerful and technically cutting-edge Nazi propaganda films that she directed were at once her greatest achievements in life and her lifelong albatross.

Helene Bertha Amalie “Leni” Riefenstahl was born in Berlin on August 22, 1902, to a financially comfortable family. Her first love was dance, and she might have continued in that field but for a knee injury that sidelined her for about



Leni Riefenstahl, shown here editing film in 1935, was an effective and innovative German cinematographer who used her technical and directorial talents to create what are generally regarded as some of the most powerful propaganda films of World War II. Her close relationship with Adolf Hitler, together with the content of her films, worked against her when she attempted to find a place for herself in Hollywood after the war. (Ullstein Bild via Getty Images)

three months in 1924. It was then that she saw a film—*Der Berg des Schicksals* (*The Mountain of Destiny*), directed by Arnold Fanck—that so impressed her that she turned her talents toward acting and, eventually, directing.

The first time Riefenstahl saw Adolf Hitler speaking at a rally she was spellbound. Similarly, when Hitler saw her first film in 1932—*Das Blaue Licht* (*The Blue Light*)—he was so impressed with her ability to capture his own sense of Germanic greatness that in 1933 he asked her to direct a short film. This paved the way for his commissioning her to direct the film for which she is best known, *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*), released in 1935. It chronicled the grandiose Nazi Party Congress of 1934, held in Nuremberg, focusing on Germany's seemingly invincible military strength, the almost reverential devotion of the German people to their Führer, and what was shown as the compelling nature of

Hitler's charismatic leadership. Her unique use of cameras, including aerial photography, and her overall directing skills gave the film such power that it is considered today to be one of the most effective propaganda films ever made.

This led to Riefenstahl directing another propaganda film that is also regarded as one of the very best. Released in 1938, *Olympia* is a documentary of the 1936 Olympics in Germany. The cinematographic innovations in it—including, for example, slow motion—may today be taken for granted, but at the time they were groundbreaking. Like *Triumph of the Will*, it was greeted with acclaim.

However, as Riefenstahl was soon to discover, the films that brought her fame in Germany only brought her infamy elsewhere. On a 1938 trip to Hollywood, during which she sought to promote *Olympia* and find a distributor for it, she was shunned by most studio executives (although Walt Disney did meet with her) and was unable to find a distributor for the film. The negative reaction she faced on that trip was exacerbated by the violence of Kristallnacht that had erupted in Germany, but it was her association with the Nazis—and Hitler in particular—that would come to dog her wherever she went, not just at that time but during the 57 years of her life after the war.

Riefenstahl's relationship with Hitler was always a subject for speculation. It is clear that her work was highly regarded by him, but it was never clear if their relationship had a more personal side to it. A similar uncertainty surrounds the question of the level of her support for the Nazi Party, which she never joined. Those who would characterize her belief in Nazi ideology as minimal point to her distress when she saw German troops killing Polish civilians. She found it so upsetting that she appealed to Hitler to order a halt to such actions.

After the war, Riefenstahl was subject to intense scrutiny, first by the Americans and later the French, to assess her role in the Nazis' actions. She claimed she knew nothing of the extermination of the Jews and others, and argued that she made her films through her own independent film company and not through the Nazi government. After several "denazification" programs, it was decided that despite her role in the creation of Nazi propaganda films and her relationship with Hitler, she was no more than a "follower" or a "fellow traveler" (*Mitläufer*), a term of classification that was a step below "exonerated" (*Entlastete*), but above "less incriminated" (*Minderbelastete*). The Americans reached that conclusion and released her in June 1945, and the French in July 1949.

Despite these official decisions and her obvious talent as a film director, Riefenstahl found herself a pariah in the

film industry. Even after she moved from film to still photography—where, again, she showed both skill and creativity—she could not shake the public’s perception of her as a Nazi propagandist. Riefenstahl brought many civil suits against those who she said had maligned her by suggesting a greater involvement with the Nazi Party, and she was herself the subject of a suit that was not settled until she apologized in 2002 for having incorrectly claimed that all of the Roma concentration camp prisoners that she used as extras in one of her films had survived the war.

Riefenstahl published her autobiography in 1987 and wrote several books on the Nuba people in Sudan, but she remained the subject of controversy for her entire life. In 1997, when she was 95, a showing of her photographs was the subject of protests. Riefenstahl died on September 8, 2003, at the age of 101.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Olympic Games, 1936; Propaganda in the Holocaust

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Riegner Telegram

The Riegner Telegram was sent in 1942 by Gerhart Riegner, the representative of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, to contacts in the governments of the United States and Great Britain with information regarding the planned imminent extermination of the Jews under Nazi control. It is as important for the way the telegram was handled as for what it said.

Gerhart Moritz Riegner, a Jew, was born on September 11, 1911, in Berlin. Having fled to Switzerland to escape anti-semitism in the early years of the Nazi regime, Riegner became the director of the Geneva office of the World Jewish Congress. It was in this capacity that he found himself in receipt of information regarding the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe. The information came from a successful German industrialist, Eduard Schulte, and was considered by Riegner to be reliable.

On August 8, 1942, Riegner went to both the U.S. embassy and the British consulate in Geneva. In the former he asked a vice-consul to send a telegram containing his information

to the State Department in Washington and also to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, president of the World Jewish Congress; in the latter, he asked that the information be sent to Samuel Sidney Silverman, a member of Parliament and chairman of the British section of the World Jewish Congress. The telegram stated:

Received alarming report stating that, in the Fuehrer’s Headquarters, a plan has been discussed, and is under consideration, according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3½ to 4 millions [*sic*] should, after deportation and concentration in the East, be at one blow exterminated, in order to resolve, once and for all the Jewish question in Europe. Action is reported to be planned for the autumn. Ways of execution are still being discussed including the use of prussic acid. We transmit this information with all the necessary reservation, as exactitude cannot be confirmed by us. Our informant is reported to have close connexions [*sic*] with the highest German authorities, and his reports are generally reliable.

Although it later proved to be inaccurate in parts, at the time Riegner brought the telegram to the attention of the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office it was believed that the killing of millions of Jews was to start within a month, and the extermination was to be done “at one blow.” This made a response to the information urgent.

The British Foreign Office delayed for several weeks but did send the information to Silverman. He, in turn, forwarded the telegram to Wise, who received it on August 28, 1942. The State Department, however, did not send the telegram to Wise, despite Riegner’s request. Wise learned of Riegner’s telegram only because Silverman sent it to him. Upon receipt of the information from Silverman, Wise contacted Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, who asked Wise not to make the information public until it could be confirmed by additional sources. That did not happen until November 24, 1942, by which time the State Department had received numerous corroborating reports of what was happening in Germany and the extended Reich. At that time Wise was free to make the Riegner Telegram public.

On December 17, 1942, the Allied governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union simultaneously issued a statement acknowledging and condemning the exterminatory actions against the Jews being taken by the Nazi government. That announcement

was issued less than a month from the date on which the existence and information of the Riegner telegram was made public. However, from the time Riegner first informed the U.S. and British governments of the information he had received from Schulte, to the date that it was allowed to be publicized—a full three and a half months—and the fact that the State Department did not forward the information to Rabbi Wise as requested, represented a delay during which tens or hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed, and during which 3.5 to 4 million Jews were expected to be killed.

The Riegner telegram was not the first report the Allies had received of mass murder of the Jews by the Nazis, but it was of great significance nonetheless because the information came from a German source. The treatment of the information has been cited as one of many pieces of evidence that the U.S. State Department was unconscionably slow in its response to the crisis of the extermination of the Jews of Europe.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Final Solution; Soviet Union; Switzerland; United States Response to the Holocaust; Wise, Stephen

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Riga

Riga, the capital of Latvia, saw its prewar population of 40,000 Jews totally devastated at the hands of the Nazi occupiers, with significant hands-on cooperation by Latvian auxiliaries who volunteered to be part of the extermination process.

After World War I, Riga was the capital of an independent Latvia, but that was to change in August 1940 when Russia annexed the country—and imposed restrictions on the Jewish community—making it the capital of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. That status, too, was short lived. In less than a year, Germany occupied the country, making Riga the capital of a country now under the administration of the

Reichskommissariat Ostland. This was established specifically to provide civilian administration of the Baltic countries, with interlinked objectives: to exterminate the Jews and resettle Germans in their stead.

Germany made its presence known to the Jewish community of Riga—which only a few years earlier had been a vibrant, prosperous, and culturally robust community—immediately. Jews were assaulted, beaten, tortured, killed, and forced to watch as synagogues in the city were destroyed by fire. During the whole time of Germany's occupation, Latvian police units volunteered to help the Nazis in these actions. As was the case in Nazi Germany, Latvia adopted antisemitic laws that forced Jews from their professions, required the wearing of the Star of David, and restricted the stores in which food could be purchased, among many such laws.

The next step occurred in August 1941, when the Jews of Riga—now reduced to some 30,000 in number—were forced into a ghetto established in one of the city's suburbs. It was sealed in October. Like all of the ghettos established by the Nazi regime, the space, housing, sanitation, food, and water supplies were wholly inadequate to support a population of that size.

Also as was the case with other ghettos, a *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) was established to organize the ghetto and interact with Nazi command. The *Judenrat*, chaired by Michael Elyashov, was able to bring some order to an otherwise deadly and chaotic environment. A Jewish police unit was established, as was a hospital, pharmacy, schools, and so forth.

The Riga ghetto had two sections, each initially run as a separate entity. The “small” ghetto originally housed only Jews who were capable of working, with the majority of the Jewish population in the “large” ghetto. All of this changed when the plan to totally exterminate the Jews became operative.

During the ten days from November 30, 1941, to December 9, 1941, some 26,000 Jews were shot by German units and Latvian police auxiliaries, eliminating the entire population of the large ghetto. Although much of the killing in the earlier days of the German occupation took place in the Rumbula Forest, more of the killing occurred in the Bikernek Forest.

The remaining 4,000 to 5,000 Jews were held in the small ghetto. With the large ghetto now empty, approximately 20,000 Jews were shipped there from various parts of the Reich. By November 1942 the small ghetto had been absorbed so there was now one ghetto, but it was separated into two sections, one for German Jews and the other for Latvian Jews.

The Riga ghetto had an active resistance group that wanted to escape and join partisans in the surrounding woods. In October 1942 a small group was able to get out of the ghetto but was captured in short order, resulting in reprisal killings by the Nazis, especially the killing of the Jewish police unit.

In the summer of 1943 some of the surviving Jews were sent to the Kaiserwald concentration camp or to its subcamps. In November of that year a major killing operation took place in the ghetto, and it was liquidated in December 1943.

One last task remained: the destruction of evidence of the mass killings that took place in Riga. To that end, in 1944 the final surviving Jews were ordered to open the mass graves and remove and burn the bodies. By the time the Soviets liberated Riga in October 1944, the Jewish community of Riga had effectively ceased to exist.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Collaboration; Ghettos; Lange, Rudolf; Latvia; Lipke, Janis and Johanna; Rumbula Massacre; Soviet Union

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Righteous among the Nations

By an act of Israel's Knesset (parliament) in 1953, non-Jews who risked their own lives, and often those of their own families, sometimes resulting in their deaths, to aid and/or rescue Jews, have been recognized as "Righteous among the Nations" (Hebrew, *Hasidei umot haolam*). The term is taken from the Talmud ("the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come," Talmud Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin 105a). Although the term had been used by rabbis in a religious sense as early as the tenth century CE to designate those Christians who, by their merit, are as eligible as any member of the House of Israel to enter the Hereafter, it has come to mean non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust.

Acts of rescue during the Holocaust included sheltering Jews seeking to avoid capture by the Nazis; supplying false documents; providing food, clothing, and shelter; and guiding Jews to places of safety, among many other rescue efforts. Since the early 1960s those who are recognized as

"Righteous" have been honored at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial authority in Jerusalem, though public recognition. After an exhaustive investigation process, if a person's actions during the Holocaust are deemed to be sufficiently worthy of elevation to the status of "Righteous among the Nations," either the honoree or his or her heirs are invited to Jerusalem to receive the award of a plaque from Yad Vashem and to have their name added to those on the Wall of Honor in the Garden of the Righteous in permanent commemoration of the act for which they are being acknowledged. In earlier times the honoree was entitled to plant a carob tree in the garden, but this had to be discontinued owing to a lack of space. Under Israeli law, recognition of Righteous status enables Yad Vashem "to confer honorary citizenship upon the Righteous among the Nations, and if they have died, the commemorative citizenship of the State of Israel, in recognition of their actions."

When Yad Vashem was established in 1953, one of its earliest goals was to recognize non-Jews who chose to save Jews during the Holocaust. Since 1963 the identification and recognition of such people has been the responsibility of a commission headed by a justice of Israel's Supreme Court, whose duty is to investigate cases brought before it and then, when appropriate, make the award. A very tight set of criteria have been established in order to enable the commission to do its work. These include the following: only a Jewish party can put a nomination forward; helping a family member, or assisting a Jew to convert to Christianity, is not a criterion for recognition; assistance has to be sustained and/or substantial; and assistance has to be given without any financial gain expected in return (although covering normal expenses such as rent or food is acceptable).

Nehama Tec, a Holocaust survivor and professor emerita of sociology from the University of Connecticut, Stamford, has suggested six common characteristics of righteous rescuers: individuality or separateness from their social environment, independence or self-reliance, a commitment to helping the needy, a modest self-appraisal of their extraordinary actions, unplanned initial engagement in Jewish rescue, and universalistic perceptions of Jews as human beings in dire need of assistance. That said, it must be emphasized that non-Jewish rescuers during the Holocaust acted from a wide variety of motives, while sharing in common the distinction that they all saved Jews from the mortal fate intended by the Nazis.

Some names of those recognized as "Righteous among the Nations" stand out in public memory, even today. These include the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, whose efforts saved up to 100,000 Jews in Hungary; the German

businessman Oskar Schindler, whose factory served as a refuge for more than 1,200 Jews while still producing goods for the German war effort; the Swiss vice-consul to Budapest, Carl Lutz, who, like Wallenberg, used his influence to guarantee the lives of more than 62,000 Jews in Hungary; and an Italian citizen, Giorgio Perlasca, who posed as a Spanish diplomat in order to save more than 5,000 Jews in Budapest. Others include the Japanese representative Chuine “Sempo” Sugihara; Miep Gies, who aided the family of Anne Frank; and the inhabitants of the French village of Le Chambon under its Huguenot pastor, André Trocmé.

Since 1962 Yad Vashem has recognized those deemed to be Righteous from 44 different countries and nationalities. There are Christians from all denominations and churches, Muslims and agnostics, and men and women of all ages. The number of Righteous is updated at the beginning of each year: as of February 2016, the award of Righteous status has been made to some 25,685 people, literally from all over the world. Some 6,620 came from Poland, 5,516 from the Netherlands, 3,925 from France, 2,544 from Ukraine, and 1,707 from Belgium. Others range from several hundred to (in the case of a number of countries) one.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: André, Joseph; Bartali, Gino; Battel, Albert; Beitz, Berthold; Bielecki, Jerzy; Bilecki, Julian; Bogaard, Johannes; Borkowska, Anna; Borromeo, Giovanni; Bunel, Lucien-Louis; Calmeyer, Hans; Channel Islands; Damaskinos of Athens, Archbishop; De Sousa Mendes, Aristides; Duckwitz, Georg; Edmonds, Roddie; February Strike; Fry, Varian; Geulen-Herscovici, André; Gies, Miep; Grüber, Heinrich; Grüninger, Paul; Gunden, Lois; Hautval, Adelaide; Helmy, Mohammed; Hesselblad, Maria Elizabeth; Ho Feng-Shan; Kalina, Antonin; Karski, Jan; Kerkhofs, Louis-Joseph; Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; Lichtenberg, Bernhard; Lipke, Janis and Johanna; Lutz, Carl; Marie-Benoît, Père; Opdyke, Irene Gut; Paulavicius, Jonas; Perlasca, Giorgio; Peshev, Dimitar; Popovici, Traian; Rescuers of Jews; Rotta, Angelo; Schindler, Oskar; Schmid, Anton; Sharp, Waitstill and Martha; Slachta, Margit; Strobos, Tina; Sugihara, Chiune; Szeptycki, Andreas Alexander; Ten Boom, Corrie; Trocmé, André and Magda; Upstander; Wallenberg, Raoul; Wegner, Armin T.; Weidt, Otto; Yad Vashem; Żabiński, Jan

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Ringelblum, Emanuel

Emanuel Ringelblum was a Polish Jewish historian best remembered for creating the Oneg Shabbat archive (also called the Ringelblum Archive) in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was born in Buchach (then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire) on November 21, 1900. He moved to Nowy Sącz in 1914, and under the influence of two friends, Raphael Mahler and Artur Eisenbach—both of whom would also become noted historians—Ringelblum joined *Poale Zion* (“Workers of Zion”), a Marxist-Zionist Jewish workers’ movement established across Russia at the start of the twentieth century. After the party split in 1920 he moved further to the left and played a major role in the organization’s Yiddish cultural work.

In 1927 he earned a doctorate in history from the University of Warsaw, focusing on the history of the Jews of Warsaw during the Middle Ages, and developed a reputation as an expert on Polish Jewish history from late medieval times to the eighteenth century. After completing his thesis he taught history at Yehudiya, a private secondary school for girls, before working for the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

In November 1938 he was sent by the JDC to the Polish border town of Zbaszyna, where six thousand Jewish refugees from Germany were huddled with nowhere else to go. They had been expelled from Germany but forbidden from entering Poland. Ringelblum’s task was to try to coordinate relief efforts helping these people—a duty leaving him with much on which to reflect concerning the nature of good, evil, and helping those in need. He later wrote a book, *Notes on the Refugees in Zbaszyn*, giving a detailed perspective on the situation there.

After Poland was invaded by the Nazis in 1939, Ringelblum and his family were forced into the Warsaw Ghetto. It took him little time to realize what he needed to do; he would collect information in secret regarding every facet of life in the ghetto, to serve as a comprehensive and permanent record of what the Nazis were doing to the Jews of Warsaw and, by extension, to Poland. He recruited a number of Jewish writers, scientists, and other citizens to work with him in collecting diaries and documents. He organized studies to be undertaken, and sent younger people out onto the streets to gather posters and announcements pasted around the ghetto.

This all came together under the aegis of what Ringelblum called the Oneg Shabbat (or “Sabbath Pleasure”) Archive, which he founded in November 1940. He would coordinate and collect materials by day and spend his evenings writing. Overall, his archive would eventually comprise nearly 30,000 individual sheets of data relating to towns, villages, the ghetto, and the resistance movement, as well as whatever was known about other ghettos, the Chełmno and Treblinka death camps, and the effects of starvation and disease on artificially confined civilian populations.

While engaged in these activities, Ringelblum remained active in the day-to-day life of the ghetto, working for the *Żydowska Samopomoc Społeczna* (Jewish Social Aid), which had been established to assist those suffering from starvation. He organized welfare programs and soup kitchens, and tried to find other ways in which to help combat deprivation. At the same time, he also co-founded, with Menahem Linder, the *Yidishe Kultur Organizatsye*, a society to maintain and advance Yiddish culture in the ghetto.

The gathering of materials for Oneg Shabbat continued at least until late February 1943, but after this other events overtook the project. The resistance movement had already begun to fight back against the Nazis the month before, and the liquidation of the ghetto seemed imminent. Ringelblum saw that he should attempt to escape if he was to continue his work. Before he did so, however, he made sure that the archive would be protected. It was placed into three large milk cans and several metal boxes. They were buried and placed in various parts of the ghetto.

In March 1943 Ringelblum took his family into the Aryan section of Warsaw. After the uprising began on April 19 he returned to the ghetto; when captured, he was deported to the Trawniki labor camp but in August 1943 managed to escape helped by a Polish man and Jewish woman. He hid in an underground bunker with his wife Yehudis, son Uri, and 34 others at Grójecka 81. While in hiding, Ringelblum worked around the clock writing a history of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II, together with essays on key members of the Jewish intelligentsia. These writings, now known as *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, survived and were published after the war.

On March 7, 1944, the Germans discovered the hideout and apprehended all those inside. A few days later Ringelblum, his family, and the other Jews with whom he had been hiding were taken into the ruined ghetto and murdered. Overall, only three members of the Oneg Shabbat survived the war: Hersh Wasser and his wife Bluma, and Rachel Auerbach.

After the war, people searched for Ringelblum’s Archive in the ruins of the ghetto, with mixed results. In September 1946 ten metal boxes were found, and in December 1950 two of the milk cans were located. Despite repeated searches, the rest of the archive, including the third milk can, was never found.

The Jewish Historical Institute (*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* or ŻIH) is a research establishment in Warsaw dealing primarily with the history of the Jews in Poland. Created in 1947, it was renamed in 2009 in honor of Emanuel Ringelblum. The centerpiece of the collection, the Warsaw Ghetto Archive, is the legacy of Ringelblum’s work with Oneg Shabbat, containing about 6,000 documents comprised of nearly 30,000 individual sheets. The archive, as well as Ringelblum’s own writing, constitutes the most comprehensive repository in existence dealing with the daily experience of the Jews in Warsaw during the Holocaust.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Oneg Shabbat; Ringelblum Archive; Warsaw Ghetto; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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Ringelblum Archive

A large collection of archival material collected by historian Emanuel Ringelblum, a Polish Jew, between 1939 and 1944. Ringelblum sought to chronicle virtually all aspects of life in the Warsaw Ghetto, where he and his family were forced to live after the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. As a historian, he was keenly aware of the importance to future generations of an archive on the Warsaw Ghetto. He was also concerned that people be informed of Nazi policies and activities pertaining to Polish Jewry. Ringelblum appointed a number of assistants to help him gather material, document it, and write reports on all aspects of life in the ghetto. He and his assistants worked clandestinely, hiding their growing collection in various places within the Warsaw Ghetto. Ringelblum gave the project the code name *Oneg Shabat* (“Enjoyment of the Sabbath,” “Sabbath Joy,” or “Sabbath Pleasure”) to further conceal its existence. Many of the documents were placed in metal boxes and milk cans in the hope that they would be preserved.



The Ringelblum Archive is a vast collection of documents of all types chronicling life in the Warsaw Ghetto. The secret documentation was organized by Emanuel Ringelblum, a Polish Jew, and other members of *Oneg Shabbat*, the code name given to the project. Documents were buried throughout the ghetto in canisters such as those shown here. (Photo12/UIG via Getty Images)

More specifically, Ringelblum's archive contained various documents, reports, interviews, and testimonials—all evidence of German abuse and atrocities—together with diaries, memoirs, letters, underground newspapers in various languages (Polish, German, Yiddish, Hebrew), a detailed narrative of deportations, orders and meeting minutes of the Nazi-imposed Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), concert announcements and tickets, food coupons, paintings, sketches, posters, and photographs. It was Ringelblum's intention to archive every aspect of living in the ghetto—day-to-day affairs as well as economic, scientific, cultural, artistic, literary, social welfare, and even health and medical issues. Given the severe constraints under which he labored, he did a remarkable job in doing so. Indeed, the archive is perhaps the single most important resource for Holocaust studies in Poland.

By early 1942 so much material had been collected and documented that Ringelblum and his associates began work on a 2,000-page master report divided into four sections: General; Economic; Cultural, Scientific, Literary, and Artistic; and Social Welfare. The archive also offered insights into women and their roles during the war, youth in the ghetto,

relations between gentile Poles and Jewish Poles, educational endeavors, politics, theater, food smuggling, and the operation of the black market. The Warsaw Ghetto was liquidated in the spring of 1943, and Ringelblum was murdered by the Nazis in March 1944.

In September 1946 part of Ringelblum's archive was found. It included 1,505 files, containing up to a dozen documents each (of greatly varied length). In all, it contained 20,740 pages. Another part of the archive was unearthed in December 1950; it contained 585 files, for a total of 7,906 pages. Also included in both finds were paintings, diaries, photographs, and many other vestiges of life under the Nazis. There is a third part of the archive, which contains information on the organization and activities of the ghetto underground, but it has never been found. Rumors persist, however, that it lies buried beneath the Chinese embassy in Warsaw. There are likely other canisters and boxes that lie undiscovered. The extant archive is now housed at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: *Oneg Shabbat*; Ringelblum, Emanuel; Warsaw Ghetto

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Ritter, Robert

Robert Ritter was a psychologist and physician whose work concerning the Roma, Lalleri, and Sinti people (often referred to, sometimes disparagingly, as “Gypsies”), informed Nazi anti-Roma racial policies. His interest in the relationship between heredity and criminality led him to do major research during the Nazi regime, and this served as a justification for the Nazis to isolate and then annihilate the Roma and Sinti, first in Germany and then throughout occupied Europe.

Ritter was born on May 14, 1901, in Aachen, Germany, and earned a PhD in psychology in 1927 from the University of Munich. He continued his education at the University of Heidelberg, where he received a medical degree in 1930. He then secured a position at the University of Tübingen, where he began to conduct research into the ethnic makeup of

Germany's Roma and Sinti population. He also sought to "prove" that "mixed-race" peoples were more inclined to engage in criminal activity.

In 1936 Ritter was named head of the newly established Eugenic and Population Biological Research Station. In this capacity, he was well placed to carry on his research, now with the full backing of the Nazi regime. The next year, he and his associates engaged in a major effort to interview all Roma and Sinti people living in Germany. In the end, he concluded that at least 90% of this population was of mixed ethnic and racial origin, which made them undesirable to Germany. (The fate of the remaining 10% was to cause administrative difficulties for the Nazis.) Further, he created an index of descent, not unlike that applied to Jews in Nazi Germany when constituting Gypsy genealogy in order to determine "*mischlinge*" (that is, mixed-descent) status. This would be used to marginalize—and then exterminate—thousands of Roma and Sinti. Convinced that a "criminal" admixture constituting Gypsy genealogy was innate, his arguments to the Nazi authorities provided a strong racial justification for, at first, sterilization, then outright extermination. As a result of his work, which hardly could be considered scientific, forced sterilization was used against the Roma. By the late 1930s and early 1940s forced sterilization had mutated into a policy of placing the Roma and Sinti population in concentration camps, where thousands were murdered.

Ritter retained his academic position at the University of Tübingen (where he taught criminal biology) through the end of the Nazi period and into 1946, and in 1947 he joined the Frankfurt Health Office as a pediatrician. Meanwhile, his disreputable prewar research was barely mentioned. The following year, however, a group of Roma pressed Frankfurt's chief criminal prosecutor to open an investigation into Ritter's prewar research and his wartime activities. It was later determined that there was not enough evidence to charge Ritter with a specific crime, however. On April 15, 1951, Ritter died suddenly in Oberursel, Germany. His death certificate listed a natural cause of death; nevertheless, many believed that he committed suicide.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Eugenics; Roma and Sinti; Sterilization

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Robota, Roza

Roza Robota was one of a group of four women hanged at Auschwitz for their role in the revolt of the XII *Sonderkommando* on October 7, 1944. She was born in 1921 in Ciechanów, Poland. As a youth she was a member of the Zionist youth movement *Hashomer Hatzair* and was engaged in underground activities undertaken by the movement during the Nazi occupation. When the liquidation of the Ciechanów ghetto was carried out in 1942, she was deported with her family to Auschwitz. She was the only member of the family to survive the selection process, the others being sent directly to their deaths upon arrival. At first she was allocated to the women's camp at Auschwitz I, but she was transferred to Birkenau later in 1942.

She was assigned to the clothing shed in the *Kanadakommando*, right next to Birkenau's Crematorium III. Here, the belongings of Jews transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau were sorted before being transported back to Germany for use by German citizens for the war effort. The name "Kanada" was given by the prisoners to this area rich in all manner of items such as clothing, jewelry, and foodstuffs—as Canada, the country, symbolized wealth and abundance.

In view of her past membership in *Hashomer Hatzair*, and given that through this she was known to some of those working in the Auschwitz underground, she was recruited to smuggle a form of gunpowder—*schwartzpulver*—to the men working in the *Sonderkommando* in Crematorium III. She was one of a number of such women brought into the resistance movement. Others, such as Estusia Wajcblum, Ala Gertner, and Regina Safirsztajn, had already been smuggling small amounts of gunpowder, at enormous personal risk, from their workplace at the Weichsel-Union-Metallwerke, a munitions factory in the Auschwitz complex, to those in the camp proper.

Roza established contact with about 20 women in the Union plant who were willing to cooperate, and over a period of several months they smuggled in the *schwartzpulver*. There were risks: prisoners were often searched when returning from work on *aussenarbeit* (outside labor beyond the wire), though each day they were able to pass on tiny amounts to the men of the underground in matchbox-size quantities.

It took a year and a half of careful preparations before the revolt took place, but there was, unfortunately, never a large enough quantity of powder to enable the prisoners to stage a fully successful revolt of sufficient strength. When the men of the *Sonderkommando* rose in rebellion on October 7, 1944, however, enough had been accumulated to enable the resisters to blow up Crematorium IV.

The *Sonderkommando* uprising was unexpected, breaking out before a hoped-for general camp revolt. In the chaos, around

600 of the Sonderkommando workers broke through the fences separating the crematorium from the rest of the camp, though ultimately all those who escaped were caught and shot.

The Gestapo was brought in after the revolt had been crushed, with the express purpose of tracing the source of the explosives used in the revolt. They were tracked back to the Union plant, and several suspects were arrested. In subsequent days, Roza, Ala, Estusia, and Regina were arrested and placed in the notorious Block 11, where the kapo Yakov Kozalchik managed to sneak in the occasional visitor. Under brutal torture, they were subjected to weeks of interrogation. They refused to reveal the names of others who had participated in the smuggling operation and were duly hanged on January 5, 1945—Estusia and Regina at the morning roll-call assembly, and Roza and Ala in the evening. The executions, only two weeks before the camp was liberated, were in public, as a warning to the entire camp.

According to some eyewitness accounts, Roza Robota and her comrades shouted “*Nekamah!*” (“Revenge!”) to the assembled inmates before they died. Roza’s last message was a note in Hebrew, scratched on a piece of paper she managed to smuggle from her cell: “*Chazak V’amatz*”—“Be strong and have courage.” When Roza Robota was executed, she was just 23 years old.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; Jewish Resistance; Sonderkommando

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Röhm, Ernst

Ernst Röhm was one of the first members of the nascent Nazi Party, perhaps Adolf Hitler’s oldest and closest friend, the leader of the Nazi Stormtroopers—some 4 million strong—and ultimately was killed on Hitler’s order in a party purge nicknamed the “Night of the Long Knives.”

Born Ernst Julius Günter Röhm on November 28, 1887, in Munich, Röhm—the son of a railway official—was commissioned in the military in 1908. He was wounded three times during his service in World War I—including a serious wound to his face that left him permanently disfigured—and was

awarded the Iron Cross First Class in 1916. By the end of the war he had been promoted to the rank of captain (*Hauptmann*).

After the war he remained in the military but soon evinced an interest in politics. Among other things he helped to put down the *Räterepublik*, a short-lived effort in April and May of 1919 to replace the newly installed Weimar Republic with a communist government in Munich.

Of greater importance, it was shortly after the war that Röhm first met Hitler. In 1919 Röhm had joined the German Workers’ Party (*Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*), a tiny right-wing fringe party that would soon change its name to the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*), soon to become known as the Nazi Party. He recognized Hitler’s oratorical and leadership skills, and they became fast friends. Even after Hitler rose to power in Germany, Röhm still addressed him using the informal form of German, and he was one of the very few people who called him by his first name.

It was Röhm who safeguarded Hitler in his Beer Hall Putsch in November 1923. Hitler hoped to lead a rebellion against the Weimar Republic. It was a stunning failure, with Hitler and Röhm, among other Nazis, arrested and convicted of treason. Although Röhm did not actually serve time (instead, he resigned from the military), he nonetheless had earned his place in Hitler’s inner circle as an “Old Fighter” (*Alte Kämpfer*) and had shown his unquestioning loyalty to the future Führer.

During the 1920s and 1930s it was very common for there to be street brawls between competing German political parties, often after their rallies. This made it necessary for most political parties to have groups of men who could not only engage in these brawls but also protect the party speakers and officials and strong-arm the opposition. For the Nazis, this task fell to a group—a militia or paramilitary unit—founded by Hitler in 1921, called the *Sturmabteilung* (SA, also known as the Stormtroopers or Brownshirts).

Röhm, at Hitler’s request, became the leader of the SA in early 1930. By late 1933, due in part to Röhm’s popularity, the organization exceeded 3 million members and had become a formidable force, dwarfing the *Reichswehr*, the professional German military that was restricted under the Treaty of Versailles to 100,000 men.

The growth of the SA eventually became a problem for Hitler, the Nazi Party, and the *Reichswehr*. Röhm, who saw himself as gaining in both power and importance, had high expectations for the SA, and made corresponding demands of Hitler that ultimately caused an irreparable rift between the two old friends. Röhm and many of the SA members had

an expectation that Hitler would lead a political revolution that would lean more heavily on a socialist philosophy—one, for example, that would support working men on strike—than on a capitalist one. This socialist tendency of the SA was of great concern to the business leaders in Germany, including—much to Hitler’s disquiet—the major financial contributors to the Nazi Party.

Even as Hitler was shifting some of the Stormtroopers’ former responsibilities—such as protecting party leaders—to Heinrich Himmler and his *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, Röhm continued to insist that he and the SA should play a larger role in the party. Perhaps of greater concern was Röhm’s demand, made in early 1934, that the SA would be the core of Germany’s military, a concept that was anathema to the professional officer corps that viewed the SA as a group of undisciplined thugs. Hitler, recognizing his need for the army’s support, was loath to agree to Röhm’s demands.

In addition to rejecting his play for power, the *Reichswehr* officer corps also spurned some of the personal habits of Röhm and others in SA leadership, finding them to be an offense to the standards of the professional military. Specifically, Röhm was homosexual and made no efforts to hide that fact. When combined with the image of Röhm and the SA generally as recalcitrant thugs and drunks, the opposition of the military to Röhm and the SA was complete.

Hitler increasingly saw Röhm and the SA as a threat to his position of primacy, and he became concerned about the possibility of a coup attempt Röhm might make against him. He thus asked some of his top aides, including Hermann Göring and Himmler, to draw up a list of SA leaders who should be killed in order to dismantle the group and integrate it into the German military. Once the list was completed Hitler contacted Röhm, where he was vacationing in Bad Wiesse, and ordered him to call all SA leadership to a conference at the hotel, to be held on June 30, 1934. Hitler flew to Bad Wiesse and supervised the arrest and imprisonment of Röhm and other top leaders, with many others killed outright. Reluctant to kill his old friend, Hitler nonetheless bowed to pressure from Göring and Himmler, and on July 1, 1934, had Röhm shot.

The purge of the SA—called the Night of the Long Knives—solidified the army’s support of Hitler and greatly increased Himmler’s power and role in the Nazi regime. Hitler had his actions retroactively legalized with the passage of the Law Regarding Measures of State Self-Defense, and he explained in a speech that they were done to protect the state against treason. After Röhm’s death, Hitler made efforts to remove his name from German memory.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Himmler, Heinrich; National Socialist German Workers’ Party; Schutzstaffel; Sturmabteilung

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Roma and Sinti

The Roma and Sinti are people of mixed ethnic lineage who entered European history as nomads. During the late Middle Ages, they began to arrive and settle on lands that would eventually comprise Germany, Austria, and Central and Eastern Europe, particularly Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Serbia, Poland, and Croatia. Ethnographers theorize that the Roma and Sinti had their origins on the Indian subcontinent, from where they originated. They speak their own language, which has varying dialects and has been heavily influenced by various Germanic vernaculars. Together, they have often been referred to as “Gypsies,” a term that is viewed by many as highly pejorative.

The Roma and Sinti who were located in Germany (which had one of the highest concentrations of Roma population prior to World War II) endured much discrimination and ill treatment well before Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. Their unique culture, language, dress, and customs made them easy targets for many non-Roma Germans. The emergence of Nazi racial ideology during the 1920s subjected them to much harsher treatment. Amid the Nazis’ bogus racial and ethnic “types,” the Roma and Sinti were considered to be pariahs, and their mixed heritage was deemed a threat to the supposed racial purity of the German (“Aryan”) race. They were also frequently seen as criminals, even though there is no evidence to suggest that they were any more inclined toward crime than other Germans.

In June 1933 Hitler’s recently installed government enacted the Law for the Protection of Offspring and Hereditary Defects, which resulted in the forced sterilization of thousands of German Roma. The Law against Dangerous and Habitual Criminals, promulgated in November 1933, brought the arrests of several thousand Roma, who were deemed “antisocial.” Most were incarcerated in concentration camps. As the 1930s progressed, more anti-Roma legislation was passed, further marginalizing them.

After the German Anschluss (“union” with Austria) in 1938, the Lalleri, a subgroup of the Roma and Sinti who lived

in Austria, were similarly oppressed, arrested, and incarcerated. In September 1939 Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler became determined to eradicate the Roma because of the belief that they posed a serious security risk.

Nearly all of the Roma remaining in Germany were deported to Poland and housed in bleak and brutal concentration camps. After Germany took control of the western two-thirds of Poland, large numbers of Roma were relocated to death camps at Chełmno, Treblinka, and Majdanek. Some Roma were also placed in ghettos, moved in as Jews were themselves deported to their deaths. Toward the end of 1942, Himmler decreed that all surviving Roma in Poland and Eastern Europe would be sent to a segregated camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where most died by gassing, rampant disease and sickness, or exhaustion from hard labor. In May 1944, with the advance of Soviet troops from the east, the Germans decided to vacate the camp. Rather than moving the Roma, Sinti, and Lalleri, they simply killed them in vast numbers and cremated their bodies.

The Nazi effort to exterminate these people resulted in a catastrophe. Although precise numbers of those killed are not available, researchers have estimated that anywhere between 500,000 and 1.5 million Roma, Sinti, and Lalleri died between the early 1930s and the mid-1940s. Perhaps as much as 50% of the Roma, Sinti, and Lalleri population throughout all of Europe was wiped out during that period. The *Porrajamos*, which means “The Devouring” in Romani and refers to the period of the 1930s and 1940s, has been largely overshadowed by the much larger Shoah (Holocaust) of the Jewish people. These two horrific developments unfolded at the same time, however, and for much the same reasons. Indeed, many Roma and Sinti prisoners were incarcerated in the same concentration camps that held Jews and other people deemed “undesirable” by the Nazis. Much more recognition of and research into the *Porrajamos* is needed.

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See also: Eugenics; Mengele, Josef; Natzweiler-Struthof; “Racial Hygiene”; Reich Citizenship Law; Ritter, Robert; Sterilization; Wiedergutmachung

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Romania

Romania is a nation situated in south-central Europe. When Romania entered World War II on the Axis side in 1940, it had a population of 15.91 million, of whom 550,000–625,000 were Jews. The Holocaust in Romania was an absolute calamity for Jews and Roma, who were deported and/or murdered mercilessly between 1941 and 1944. During 1940 Romania was forced to cede large portions of its territory to the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Bulgaria. On September 6, 1940, partly as a result of these territorial losses, King Carol II was forced from his throne; he was replaced by Michael, his 19-year-old son, who would remain a figurehead leader until 1944. At the same time, the Romanian government began to rule through a coalition of right-wing army officers led by General Ion Antonescu, who wasted little time aligning Romania with Germany and Italy; Romania formally joined the Axis alliance on November 23, 1940.

Although there had been much persecution of Jews in Romania prior to the autumn of 1940, actions and violence against Jews increased dramatically once Antonescu and the Iron Guard took control of the country. Army and police personnel, along with right-wing paramilitary groups, began assaulting and killing Jews in urban areas; they also vandalized, robbed, or seized Jewish-owned businesses. Much of this violence was orchestrated by the fascist Iron Guard, who caused so much disruption in Romanian cities that Antonescu attempted to rein it in. That resulted in an armed struggle between the Iron Guard and army elements loyal to Antonescu for several days in January 1941. Antonescu ultimately prevailed. Aided by German soldiers, the Iron Guard instigated a huge pogrom in Bucharest during the uprising, which killed thousands of Jews. After their deaths, some victims were hung on meat hooks in a nearby slaughterhouse, their bodies mutilated in a macabre imitation of kosher slaughtering techniques.

Antonescu was anxious to take part in Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, hopeful that Romania would win back areas lost to the Soviets just a year prior. Thousands of Romanian soldiers joined the fight, and by early July, Romanian military officials had already begun perpetrating violence against Jews in the east. In Iasi, Moldavia, some 4,000 Jews died in a horrific pogrom and orgy of violence; several thousand others were deported by train, with many dying from starvation and overcrowding.

Romanian army and special police forces, sometimes working alongside German SS units, also killed thousands of Jews in Transnistria, Bukovina, and Bessarabia, areas that

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the Romanians controlled after the invasion of the Soviet Union. At least 11,000 Bessarabian Jews were placed in a ghetto in the summer of 1941 and forced to work in a labor camp, where many died. That fall the survivors were deported to concentration camps or to ghettos in Transnistria, joining Jews from northern Bukovina. The conditions in the camps and ghettos were appalling, and the death rates were high.

During December 1941 nearly all the Jews living in the ghetto in Bogdanovka, Transnistria, were massacred. More deaths occurred in two concentration camps, also in Transnistria. The killings in the region continued, sporadically, until the spring of 1944, when Soviet troops seized control of Transnistria. That summer, Bessarabia fell to Soviet forces. The Soviet army continued moving west, and Antonescu refused to admit defeat or request an armistice with the Allies. As a result, on August 23, 1944, King Michael ordered

Antonescu's arrest. A new government was quickly formed, and Michael announced that Romania was leaving the Axis alliance. Romanian troops then fought alongside the Red Army until Germany was defeated in 1945. Romania, however, would fall into the Soviet orbit after the conflict and would remain behind the Iron Curtain until the end of the Cold War.

The war proved disastrous for Romania, which lost thousands while fighting the Soviets and then the Germans. For the Jews and Roma, the war was a cataclysm. Between 185,000 and 250,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews died in Transnistria. Another 270,000 Jews died within Romania.

For his part, Ion Antonescu did not escape justice for his part in the violence. He was tried and convicted at a show trial in Bucharest, where he was executed on June 1, 1946.

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See also: Antonescu, Ion; Iron Guard; Jagendorf, Siegfried; Odessa Massacre; Operation Barbarossa; Popovici, Traian

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Rosé, Alma

Alma Rosé, the niece of composer Gustav Mahler, was a renowned virtuoso violinist who resisted the Nazis though actually being seen to collaborate with them as the driving force and conductor of the women's orchestra at Auschwitz. Through her commitment to excellence and precision, she created an aura of indispensability around the women's orchestra, thereby ensuring the survival of its members—even though this was to be at the cost of her own life.

She was born in Austria in 1906. Her father, Arnold Rosé, led the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna State Opera orchestra, and a career in violin was mapped out for her from an early age. In 1932 she founded the woman's orchestra *Die Wiener Walzermädeln* ("The Waltz-Girls of Vienna") and in 1930 married a Czech violin virtuoso, Váša Příhoda, from whom she was subsequently divorced in 1935.

The annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in March 1938 caught the completely assimilated Rosé family by surprise. Alma went to London with her father, but she returned to the continent and continued performing in the Netherlands. In 1940 she fled to France and went into hiding. She attempted to get to Switzerland but was betrayed and arrested in late 1942. In July 1943 she was deported, via Drancy, to Auschwitz.

In August 1943, in view of her former public profile, she was given the task of leading the *Mädchenorchester von Auschwitz* (Girl Orchestra of Auschwitz), which had earlier been formed under the leadership of a Pole, Zofia Czajkowska. The orchestra was the initiative of an SS officer, *Oberaufseherin* Maria Mandel. In recognition of her new role and Mandel's fondness for her pet project, Alma requested special living and working quarters for the orchestra and demanded an end to playing in all weathers. She also managed to have additional sheet music provided. After her appointment, she began to work on the orchestra's performance. Weaker musicians were removed, though not fired;

in order to ensure they would not be sent back to the barracks, she sought to retain them in auxiliary roles as helpers. The musicians themselves were subject to a strict practice schedule, with entire days given over to rehearsal when they were not performing.

Although the orchestra included two professional musicians—cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch and vocalist/pianist Fania Fénelon—it was comprised essentially of amateur musicians playing a variety of instruments. The orchestra played classical pieces at the main gate each morning when the work gangs went out, and in the evening when they returned. It also gave weekend concerts for the prisoners and the SS and entertained at SS functions. It is inconclusive whether or not the orchestra was required to play during gasings, though it is possible the Nazis would have employed it in order to ease tensions among newly arrived prisoners, making the task easier for the SS killers.

As conductor, Alma had a higher status than the other prisoners and was given privileges and comforts such as extra food and a room of her own. She was under no illusions that by playing for the Nazis the members of the orchestra were providing a service enabling them to extend their lives; she thus worked hard to ensure the highest possible musical standards, the better to retain SS patronage.

A perfectionist, her creative temperament was sometimes taken for egotism and personal ambition. One account, written by Fania Fénelon, controversially portrayed Alma as a cold-hearted disciplinarian who abused those around her and bowed before the Nazis. Others, however, have strongly disputed this image, claiming that Alma's ultimate interest was to protect the well-being of the women in her orchestra. This demanded not only that she establish and maintain high musical standards but also that she satisfy the Nazis. Her sponsors among the SS included such camp luminaries as Maria Mandel, camp commandant Josef Kramer, and the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele.

Under this leadership, the orchestra underwent rapid improvement. Alma varied the program according to the sheet music she had available and wrote orchestrations for the various instruments from memory. Classical works from the great German and Austrian composers were introduced, as she recognized the attraction the music could have for the camp personnel. This, in turn, could help to guarantee lives; the longer the orchestra was viable and wanted, the greater was the possibility that the musicians could stay alive. While the Nazis saw the prisoners as less than human, the prisoners, seeking to retain their humanity in spite of everything to which they were exposed, showed that they were not

prepared to succumb to the Nazis' designs. Alma Rosé knew this, and acted accordingly.

It is understood that all those in the orchestra escaped death at the hands of the SS so long as Alma remained its director. Among those who survived to be able to recall their experiences, Alma was generally remembered as a heroine who forced her musicians to work hard in order to save their very lives. Through her actions in this, the only female musical ensemble in the Nazi camps, she was able to save the lives of nearly 50 women.

On April 4, 1944, Alma Rosé died, having fallen ill at a concert given for the SS two days earlier. Speculation surrounds her death; while the most frequently given explanation is food poisoning, typhus has also been offered. Fania Fénelon alleged later that Rosé was deliberately poisoned. In her honor, the SS allowed a service of remembrance to be held on her behalf.

In 1980 a movie was made about the women's orchestra of Auschwitz, *Playing for Time* (dir. Daniel Mann and Joseph Sargent). Based on the memoir of the same name by Fania Fénelon, it starred Jane Alexander as Alma Rosé, Vanessa Redgrave as Fania Fénelon, and Shirley Knight as Maria Mandel.

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See also: Auschwitz; Music and the Holocaust

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Rosenbaum, Pinchas

Pinchas Tibor Rosenbaum was a Jewish Hungarian rabbi and humanitarian who helped saved dozens of Jewish families from deportation and likely death at the hands of the Germans and their Hungarian collaborators during World War II.

Rosenbaum was born on November 2, 1923, in Kleinwardein, Hungary, the son and grandson of respected rabbis. While still in his late teens, he too was ordained a rabbi. He also became a leader in one of Hungary's many Jewish youth organizations, Bnei Akiva. As the Hungarian government allied itself with the Nazis and aided in the carrying out of the Holocaust, Rosenbaum was determined to resist this effort

and aid as many Hungarian Jews as possible. His desire to do so increased significantly after his own family was deported to Auschwitz, where they eventually perished.

Having repeatedly escaped the clutches of occupation officials and government collaborators, Rosenbaum was soon engaged in engineering daring and creative rescues of Jewish families, principally in the Hungarian capital, Budapest. Using many aliases and falsified identification papers, he frequently disguised himself as a Hungarian security officer and sometimes even as a German Gestapo agent. He was successful in this in part because he did not possess stereotypical Jewish "looks" and so usually did not attract the attention of the authorities. When he knew that a Jewish family was about to be rounded up and deported, Rosenbaum would often burst into their home, disguised as a Hungarian agent, and escort them—many times at gunpoint—to a safe haven known as the "Glass House." Only then would he reveal his true identity. Rosenbaum would subsequently work to spirit the families out of Hungary to safety.

One of Rosenbaum's most daring missions witnessed him attending a party for the Hungarian secret police, during which he spent most of the night pretending to drink with them. Once he managed to ascertain from them the next Jewish family to be deported, he hurried to their home early the next morning and helped all of them escape. In 1944, when German authorities apprehended Zvi (Zeidi) Zeidenfeld, a leader of the Jewish underground in Hungary, Rosenbaum and several accomplices disguised themselves as SS and Gestapo officers and spirited him out of a hospital (Zvi had been badly beaten and tortured).

After the war, Rosenbaum married, settled in Geneva, Switzerland, and raised three children with his wife Stephanie. A committed Zionist, he worked as a banker and aided in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. He also reportedly undertook several clandestine missions for the Mossad (Israel's intelligence service). Rosenbaum died on October 23, 1980. In April 2014 Liberty Studios premiered a feature film, *Walking with the Enemy*, which examines Rosenbaum's miraculous work. The movie stars Ben Kingsley as Miklós Horthy, Hungary's collaborationist leader, and Jonas Armstrong as Rosenbaum.

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See also: Hungary; Jewish Resistance

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Rosenberg, Alfred

Alfred Rosenberg was a German National Socialist Party publicist and a leading Nazi racial theorist and "philosopher" of National Socialism. Born in Reval, Russia (today's Tallinn, Estonia), on January 12, 1893, he came from a family that spoke German but may have been of Estonian extraction. He studied architecture at Riga Technical University, which moved to Moscow with the approach of German forces in World War I. He graduated in Moscow in 1918 and witnessed the early days of the Bolshevik Revolution. He soon emigrated to Paris, and at the end of the year settled in Munich. There he joined the German Workers' Party, which later became the National Socialist Party. Rosenberg became a German citizen in 1920 and gradually assumed the position of the party's chief ideologue. In 1923 he was the sole editor of the party daily, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. He participated in the unsuccessful November 1923 Beer Hall Putsch and was Adolf Hitler's personal choice to serve as interim party leader while Hitler was in prison.

Rosenberg headed the new National Socialist Society for Culture and Learning from 1929, and he was elected to the Reichstag as a Nazi Party deputy from Hesse-Darmstadt in 1930. In that year, he also published his major work, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, which became the most popular party work after Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. A turgid, racially obsessed, pseudoscientific study, it claimed that the Germans represented a pure Nordic race destined to rule Europe. It attacked Jews, Freemasons, the Catholic Church, and many others.

Rosenberg held numerous party posts. After Hitler rose to power in 1933, Rosenberg headed the foreign policy office and was made Hitler's deputy for supervising the spiritual and ideological training of the Nazi Party. In January 1940 he was tasked with founding the so-called High School, which was to evolve into the postwar Central National Socialist University. One of the institutes within the High School was the Institute for Research of the Jewish Question, the libraries of which were filled with looted Jewish art. The *Einsatzstab Rosenberg* (Special Staff Rosenberg) and Rosenberg's special "furniture action" confiscated art, furniture, rugs, and even appliances from the homes of Jews.

The peak of Rosenberg's career came in 1941 when he was designated Reichsminister for the Occupied Eastern

Territories. In this position, he opposed the expulsion of populations, believing it made more sense to utilize their support against the Soviet Union. Despite his party positions, Rosenberg never achieved the influence or recognition he believed he merited. He was disappointed when Joachim von Ribbentrop became foreign minister in 1938 and was upset with the August 1939 Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, which he believed sacrificed ideology to political motives. Rosenberg was an inept administrator, and Joseph Goebbels referred to him as "a monarch with neither country nor subjects" and spoke of his "ministry of chaos."

Frustrated by his lack of influence, Rosenberg attempted to resign in October 1944, but Hitler never answered his letter. Arrested at the end of the war, he at last achieved the notoriety to which he believed he was entitled when he was tried among the principal Nazi leaders at the Nuremberg proceedings. Rosenberg remained unrepentant in his support of Hitler and a true believer in National Socialism, but he argued that some of Hitler's intentions had been subverted by more devious and bloodthirsty officials. Convicted on all four counts of war crimes, he was hanged at Nuremberg on October 16, 1946. His body was cremated and his ashes scattered in the Isar River.

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See also: Eckart, Dietrich; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nisko Plan; Nuremberg Trials; "Racial Hygiene"

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Rosenstrasse Protest

February 27, 1943, is notorious in Germany because of the mass arrests of Jews that occurred that day across the Reich. "Actions to Eliminate Jews from Reich Territory," is what SS and Police Chief Heinrich Himmler's men called these arrests. On that day the Berlin Gestapo initiated what it called the "Final Roundup" of Berlin Jews (which became known after the war as the *Fabrikaktion*, or "Factory Action"). The SS and Gestapo arrested close to 10,000 Berlin Jews, including about 2,000 who were married to non-Jews.

In November 1941 Hitler told Goebbels that Jews were to be deported aggressively as long as this did not cause



In March 1943 approximately 2,000 Jewish men in intermarriage relationships were rounded up in Berlin for deportation, despite an exemption granted to this classification of Jews. In protest, hundreds of wives of these men stood outside the building on Rosenstrasse in which the men were housed until they were released. Gisela Miessner, shown here in front of a memorial on Berlin's Rosenstrasse, was an eyewitness to the protest. (AP Photo/Jan Bauer)

unnecessary difficulties. In this context, intermarried Jews with gentile relatives were to be pursued with special watchfulness. This would require lifting a ban that “temporarily” exempted intermarried Jews from deportations. By early 1943 such bans had already been lifted in hundreds of cases in order to draw intermarried Jews into the Holocaust. As the party leader (*Gauleiter*) of greater Berlin, Joseph Goebbels had resolved to declare Berlin free of Jews once and for all. Anyone identified by the Jewish star, including intermarried Jews, must be eliminated from public view, Goebbels wrote. Berlin Jews would be pushed out by the middle or end of March at the latest, he wrote on February 18, 1943, in batches of 2,000 at a time.

On March 1, 1943, as nearly 2,000 arrested intermarried Jews awaited deportation in a building at Rosenstrasse 2–4 in central Berlin, SS officials were expecting the arrival of 15,000 skilled Jewish laborers from Berlin for work at I.G. Farben's Auschwitz factories. This number could not be reached without deporting intermarried Jews. A Gestapo

order from Frankfurt on the Oder dated February 24 underscored the regime's desire to arrest intermarried Jews, so long as this did not draw attention to the intermarried problem. Even in that backwater city of Frankfurt, where Goebbels was not the Nazi leader and intermarried Jews were rare, the Gestapo had authority to include them during the “Elimination of Jews” arrests that began on February 27.

That day in Berlin, as they discovered that their Jewish husbands were imprisoned at Rosenstrasse, hundreds of their wives hurried to that street, located within a few city blocks of the most feared centers of Nazi power. A feeling of solidarity and desperation arose among these intermarried gentiles, who began to call out together for the release of their husbands. The Gestapo repeatedly threatened to shoot the protesters in the street, which caused them to scatter briefly before resuming their collective demonstration to have their husbands back. The Rosenstrasse protest demanding the release of intermarried Jews continued over several days and nights until March 6, when Goebbels ordered the Jews to be

released, because this was the most effective way of quelling the protest.

During these same days, about 7,000 of the last Jews in Berlin were sent to Auschwitz. However, the protest thwarted Goebbels's plan to make Berlin free of Jews as he wished. Even some intermarried Jews, who had already been sent to Auschwitz from Rosenstrasse and put to work there for I.G. Farben, were returned to Berlin. This street protest by gentile women willing to put their own lives at risk posed a challenge to a regime determined to avoid signs of dissent and a recurrence of war-weariness on the home front like the one the Nazis blamed for Germany's defeat in World War I.

The Rosenstrasse Protest was not the only collective street protest in Nazi Germany. For example, the secret police (SD) reported that 300 women protested in Adolf Hitler Square in the western German Ruhr valley city of Witten on October 11, 1943, against an official decision to withhold their food ration cards. The women had been evacuated and had returned to Witten without permission. The regional Nazi Party leader had decided to withhold their ration cards to punish them and to force them back to rural areas, even though many of their husbands worked in war industries in the city.

According to the SD report of November 18, the protesting women aimed to force the regime to issue their food rations in Witten. Like the women on the Rosenstrasse, Witten's women had taken to the street to protest an official measure that threatened their families. The city authorities called in the police to disband the protest. In a further example of unpunished disobedience, Witten police refused to obey, even though public gatherings had been banned since Hitler had taken power. Following the protest, Goebbels worried that the will of the state was bending to the will of the people. On November 11, he wrote that giving in to the street would become increasingly dangerous, because each time the state did so, it lost authority, and in the end it would lose its authority altogether.

Despite Goebbels's concerns, the regime did bend to the will of the people in an effort to consolidate German popular support. In January 1944 Hitler himself ordered all Nazi Party regional leaders not to withhold the ration cards of evacuees who returned home without permission. In July 1944 Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler and Hitler's private secretary, Martin Bormann, jointly ruled that such coercive measures were not suitable means for bringing the "people's community" into line with the regime's will. In October 1944 Bormann reiterated this point.

Like very few others, the Rosenstrasse protesters were willing to express their commitment to Jews publicly. Few

supported them then, and for decades thereafter, their stories were absent in histories and commemorations of Nazi Germany. Instead, since the war and still today, the belief prevails that the Nazi regime brutally repressed all opposition. Yet protests by non-Jews, motivated by traditional customs and in certain circumstances, caused Hitler himself to compromise, choosing, like Goebbels, to assuage rather than draw further attention to open protests, as the best way to protect the popular German belief in Hitler's authority. As German women in particular demonstrated, opposition to Hitler was mortally dangerous but not always futile.

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See also: Bormann, Martin; Fabrikaktion; Goebbels, Joseph; Himmler, Heinrich; Resistance Movements

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Rothaug, Oswald

Oswald Rothaug was a Nazi jurist. In June 1933 he was named a prosecutor in Nuremberg and in April 1937 he became the regional court director in Schweinfurt and the director of Nuremberg's Special Court (*Sondergericht*). In 1938 he became a member of the Nazi Party and worked closely with the SD (*Sicherheitdienst*). In 1942 he sentenced a 25-year-old Polish slave laborer to death, explaining that the inferiority of the defendant was obvious given that he was part of Polish subhumanity. Rothaug sought after, and presided over, the trial of Leo Katzenberger in March 1942, ordering his execution in May 1943 for so-called racial defilement. Following the trial Rothaug was brought to Berlin as a member of the People's Court (*Volksgeschichtshof*).

Oswald Rothaug was born on May 17, 1897, in Mittelsinn, Bavaria. The son of a primary school teacher, Rothaug's education was interrupted from 1916 to 1918 while he was in the German Army. He passed the final law examination in 1922 and the state examination for the higher administration of justice in 1925.

In December 1925 he began his career as a jurist, first as an assistant to an attorney in Ansbach and later as assistant

judge at various courts. In 1927 he became a public prosecutor in charge of criminal cases, rising to senior public prosecutor in Nuremberg in June 1933. Between April 1937 and May 1943 he was director of the Nazi Special Courts in Nuremberg, except for a period in August and September of 1939 when he was in the Wehrmacht.

In 1938 Rothaug became a member of the NSDAP, the start of his membership being backdated to May 1937, the date of his application for party membership. Although he alleged he was not a member, he worked closed with the SD as an “honorary collaborator” on legal matters.

He was an up-and-coming judge of Nazi Germany when, in 1942, the case of 68-year-old Lehman Israel “Leo” Katzenberger came before him. Katzenberger was a shoe wholesaler and head of the Jewish community in Nuremberg. He was accused of the crime of “racial pollution” because of his alleged sexual intercourse with a young “Aryan” woman named Irene Seiler, the daughter of a close non-Jewish friend. In fact, the investigation showed that the two had a relationship but it was one of debtor and creditor: Katzenberger had loaned Seiler some money, and she was renting an apartment and shop front from him.

Both Katzenberger and Seiler denied the charge, and the original police report indicated that there was no evidence of a sexual relationship. In response, Rothaug had Katzenberger’s case transferred from a more traditional criminal court to a *Sondergericht* established by the Nazi regime to try racial and political enemies of the state. Rothaug, a proud member of the Nazi Lawyers’ League, was excited about drawing this assignment. So clear was he in his bias that he sent tickets to the Nazi hierarchy to attend the trial.

Katzenberger never had a chance. During the proceedings, Rothaug tried with all his power to encourage the witnesses to make incriminating statements against the two defendants, who were hardly heard by the court; their statements were passed over or disregarded. During the course of the trial, Rothaug took the opportunity to give the audience a National Socialist lecture on the subject of the Jewish question. The witnesses found great difficulty in giving testimony because of the way in which the trial was conducted, since Rothaug constantly anticipated the evaluation of the facts and gave expression to his own opinions.

The punishment for racial pollution was not death, but an eyewitness appeared who gave evidence that Katzenberger had been seen leaving Seiler’s house after dark. This opened the door to a different wartime law offense involving the death penalty, which was when a crime had been committed during blackout hours.

In the course of his findings, Rothaug stated that the visits by Katzenberger to Seiler under the protection of the blackout served at least the purpose of keeping relations going, arguing that it did not matter whether sexual relations took place during these visits or whether the two only conversed; in his view, the very nature of the two interrelating on any level was sufficient to prove Katzenberger’s race treason. He sentenced Katzenberger to the guillotine, and the sentence was carried out on June 2, 1942. Irene Seiler, who gave evidence that there had been no sexual relationship between herself and Katzenberger, was convicted of perjury and sentenced to two years in jail with hard labor.

From May 1943 to April 1945 Rothaug was public prosecutor at the People’s Court in Berlin. Here he handled for a time national cases of high treason and, from January 1944, cases concerning the undermining of public morale in the Third Reich.

At the end of the war Rothaug was arrested by the Allies and taken before the International Military Tribunal (IMT) sitting at Nuremberg in the Nazi Judges’ trial in 1947. The tribunal view was that it was not concerned with the legal incontestability under German law of these cases discussed above. It found that the evidence established beyond a reasonable doubt that Katzenberger was condemned and executed because he was a Jew; and that others before Rothaug met the same fate because they were Poles. Their execution was in conformity with the policy of the Nazi State of persecution, torture, and extermination. Rothaug, in this context, was the knowing and willing instrument in the Nazi program of persecution and extermination.

In the course of their findings, the tribunal also stated that by Rothaug’s manner and methods he made his court an instrument of terror and won the fear and hatred of the population. The tribunal stated that, from the evidence of his closest associates as well as his victims, Oswald Rothaug represented in Germany the personification of both secret Nazi intrigue and cruelty. Calling him a sadistic and evil man, the court held that under any civilized judicial system Rothaug could have been impeached and removed from office or convicted of malfeasance in office on account of the scheming malevolence with which he administered injustice.

Oswald Rothaug was found guilty of crimes against humanity but not guilty of war crimes through the abuse of the judicial and penal process and membership in a criminal organization. He was sentenced on December 14, 1947, to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity. His sentence was later reduced to 20 years, and he was released on

parole on December 22, 1956. He died in Cologne a free man in 1967.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Judges' Trial; Katzenberger Trial; Sicherheitsdienst; Sondergericht

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Rotta, Angelo

Angelo Rotta was the apostolic nuncio in Budapest when the Holocaust came to Hungary in 1944. An Italian originally from Milan, he was born on August 9, 1872. After attending high school he studied philosophy and theology in Rome and was ordained in 1895. He then held a number of positions in the church until 1922, when Pope Pius XI appointed him an archbishop. In 1925 Rotta was part of a papal delegation to Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and El Salvador, and, later the same year, he was apostolic delegate to Istanbul.

With the onset of World War II in September 1939, Rotta began rescue activities immediately. Polish soldiers and Jewish civilians escaping the Nazi onslaught began flooding into Hungary, where they were frequently arrested and imprisoned prior to repatriation back to Nazi-occupied Poland. He began a diplomatic campaign to prevent this, visiting the camps where they were being held in order to demonstrate his support publicly.

Over time, increasing numbers of refugees from the war inundated Hungary, coming from countries all over Eastern Europe. In 1942 Rotta learned of a group of Jewish children who were about to be deported to Poland. Rushing to the camp where the children were being held, he established an orphanage on the spot to protect and hide them. He nominated this as a place "for the children of Catholic Polish officers," knowing that, because they were now under his protection as "Catholic" children, they would be safe—even though they were, in fact, Jewish. Everyone, it seemed, knew

of the deception, but when he demanded that the Hungarian authorities provide them new, non-Jewish names, they did so without demur. Later, as Vatican representative for church interests in Bulgaria, he issued false baptismal certificates and visas for Jews to travel to Palestine.

Before 1944 Rotta's reports to the Vatican provided very detailed intelligence regarding Hungarian antisemitic measures, as well as the level of German interference in the affairs of its Hungarian ally. In 1944 he became nuncio representing Pope Pius XII in Budapest and devoted his attention to protecting the Jews. As dean of the diplomatic corps, he actively protested Hungary's mistreatment of the Jews, and after the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944, he worked with the pope to lobby the Hungarian regent, Miklós Horthy, to stop their deportation.

When it became known that Rotta was sympathetic to the Jews, people began besieging the Vatican embassy in the hope that he and his staff might be able to give them assistance. While this was happening, he organized a covert network of priests and nuns prepared to help—knowing that by doing so they were placing themselves at risk by hiding Jews.

Among the activities Rotta undertook was a leading role in a combined Swiss, Swedish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vatican initiative, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to establish an "International Ghetto" comprising dozens of apartment buildings into which large numbers of Jews were brought. These became safe houses once the various embassies placed their respective countries' coats of arms on them, and eventually some 25,000 people were saved. The enterprise was the brainchild of the Swiss vice-consul, Carl Lutz, and involved such figures as Giorgio Perlasca, Friedrich Born, Raoul Wallenberg, and Ángel Sanz Briz.

When Friedrich Born from the ICRC asked Rotta if he could find a way to organize some pre-signed blank identity papers bearing the Vatican stamp, these were not only forthcoming but came with Rotta's full backing. Eventually, he was responsible for issuing more than 15,000 safe conduct certificates to Jews and Jewish converts to Christianity. He issued hundreds of baptism certificates to Jews in labor camps and elsewhere, set up and personally protected numerous safe houses throughout Budapest, and even hid two Jews in his own house.

Moreover, he was unceasing in his protests against the deportation and murder of the Hungarian Jews. On November 19, 1944, the Vatican, through Rotta, joined the four other neutral powers in a further collective protest to the Hungarian government, on this occasion calling for the suspension

of deportations. Perhaps surprisingly, the call was successful, even though the Hungarian fascists, the Arrow Cross, ignored the government's commitment. They raided the International Ghetto and murdered Jews, even as Soviet forces approached Budapest. Rotta went directly to the Arrow Cross leadership and demanded that the party take control over its members and desist from attacks, deportations, and atrocities against the Jews.

Angelo Rotta utilized his diplomatic position to protest actively against the Holocaust. He was simultaneously an upstander and a resister, on many occasions going directly against the preference of his own cardinal primate, Jusztinián György Serédi, in making public statements condemning the deportations and antisemitic violence. This also ran counter to the preferred position of Pius XII, who, it was said, shunned Rotta upon his return to the Vatican in 1945.

With the arrival of Soviet troops, Rotta was expelled from Hungary. He returned to Italy and lived in retirement in the Vatican while serving as a member of the Secretariat of Christian Unity. When Angelo Roncalli, an old friend and colleague, became Pope John XXIII, Rotta was offered a position as a cardinal, but he declined on the ground that by now, in his mid-80s, he was too old. He died at the Vatican on February 1, 1965, aged 92.

In 1997, more than three decades after his death, he was honored by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Only then did his many acts on behalf of Jews during the Holocaust become public and well known.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Arrow Cross; Catholic Church; Horthy, Miklós; Hungary; Lutz, Carl; Perlasca, Giorgio; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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question of God in light of the Holocaust. Born in New York City in 1924, he began his academic education in 1942 at Hebrew Union College, Ohio, but became disillusioned with the nature of the curriculum. He moved to the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, from where he obtained his rabbinic ordination in 1952. He then studied at Harvard Divinity School, where he was awarded a master of sacred theology and earned his PhD. In 1970 Rubenstein moved to Florida State University, where he remained until 1995, when he took up the position of president of the University of Bridgeport.

In 1966 Rubenstein published a work that was simultaneously to change the nature of Holocaust thought and to alter the future direction of his own life. *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* explored a number of theological frontiers in Jewish thought and was a significant discussion on the meaning and impact of the Holocaust for Judaism. For Rubenstein, the Holocaust exploded the traditional Judaic concept of God, especially the God of the Covenant with Abraham. As he viewed it, not many of those around him had thus far realized that the Holocaust—which he encapsulated within the paradigmatic image of Auschwitz—had altered, even destroyed, the basis upon which Jewish faith had hitherto always rested. In the simplest of terms he asked how Jews could still believe in an omnipotent, beneficent God after Auschwitz. The classical Jewish explanations for the conundrum of undeserved suffering in light of an omnipotent, omnipresent, and covenantal God had, until the Shoah, always been able to address this through reference to forms of interpretation that put the onus back on the Jewish people themselves, usually through divine retribution for sin. But here was an experience that was so immense, and caused the death and suffering of so many people, that punishment for sin could not possibly have explained it all. Further, its very magnitude had elevated it into a category of evil that was *sui generis* when compared to all other catastrophes that had befallen the Jewish people. The thought that a benevolent and compassionate God could send Hitler was for Rubenstein completely unacceptable. As he saw it, the evil of the German death camps seemed so purposeless that to see God's hand in it defies credulity. To portray what happened as an expression of God's will, therefore, would be to maintain that God wanted Auschwitz, a notion that for Rubenstein was utterly repugnant.

Rubenstein argued that the Holocaust overturned traditional Jewish teaching regarding the God of history, and a void now existed where once the Jewish people experienced God's presence. In the original Covenant between God and

Rubenstein, Richard L.

Richard Lowell Rubenstein, who has in large part helped to define the agenda of post-Holocaust theology, is a theologian and one of the doyens of philosophical reflection on the

Israel, an omnipotent deity would look to the interests of the Jewish people in exchange for their fidelity to his laws. The God of Israel was the God of history, but Rubenstein argued that as a result of the Shoah Jews could no longer advocate the notion of an omnipotent God at work. Further, the Covenant was now irretrievably broken, and the Jews should no longer see themselves as the Chosen People. In the wake of the Holocaust, life had to be lived on its own terms; there was no ultimate meaning, no hidden truth waiting to be revealed at the end of days.

This “death of God” notion did not, however, mean that Rubenstein abandoned the idea of divinity. The God of history might no longer exist, and the Covenant might be broken forever, but Rubenstein did not replace God with atheism. His revolutionary book attacked belief in the God of history, the notions of Covenant and divine election, and the idea embedded in theodicy that God’s goodness and justice, in the face of the existence of evil, could be defended. It was as much controversial as it was fascinating; no theologian, Jewish or Christian, had ever before attacked these beliefs with such passion or vehemence. *After Auschwitz* was an innovative, controversial work. It suggested that the basis upon which all previous belief had rested for the past three millennia were in fact fatally flawed. While the book caused outrage in many circles, there was little doubt that Rubenstein’s thinking was appropriate for its time, coming a generation after the Holocaust itself and in a decade (the 1960s) when questions were being asked about all manner of existential realities thus far unchallenged.

The book’s influence was considerable, and it generated intense debate within theological and philosophical circles. It is generally agreed today that *After Auschwitz* initiated most future discussion on the implications of the Holocaust for Jewish religious thought, and for many this led to a reevaluation of the meaning of belief. *After Auschwitz* took the Jewish community by storm and established Rubenstein’s name as a major thinker, but it also outraged many among the Jewish religious establishment and shunted Rubenstein into something of a theological wilderness for the rest of his career.

His next important book, *The Cunning of History: Mass Death and the American Future* (1975), drew him back to his earlier arguments about the Holocaust, this time looking at the nature of the society created by humans rather than by God. In what was a profound argument, Rubenstein concluded that the Shoah was a supreme expression of modernity, and of how Enlightenment reason and industrial knowledge could lead to mass murder—the ultimate

articulation of secularization, modern planning, bureaucracy, and technical development in the service of national and racial unity. In short, the onset of modernity laid the foundation, and the realization of the modern bureaucratic state provided the means. As he explained, accompanying these developments was a trend in the unfolding European story toward viewing certain segments of a given population as expendable. Unwanted people could henceforth be “processed” in the same manner as any other unwelcome commodity, and it was here that Rubenstein’s title—the *cunning* of history—became most clearly apparent. History, he asserted, is cunning because it deceives us; offered the best the world had to offer, that “best” proved to be a chimera when corrupted in unscrupulous hands.

Rubenstein developed some of these ideas in *The Age of Triage: Fear and Hope in an Overcrowded World* (1983), which was an examination of the history of the destruction of unwanted populations. It looked at events as diverse as the Holocaust, the Irish famine of the 1840s, the enclosure movement in Tudor England in the 16th century, and the Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s. The study proceeded from an examination of so-called “surplus humans,” those people in any modern society who can find no viable role in the society in which they live. Once more, the idea was that modernity was responsible, and that the march of so-called progress was not always linear and upward. This was a theme he first established in *The Cunning of History*, but in *The Age of Triage* he developed the theme and illustrated it in much more detail. The book was a highly original way to articulate the preconditions of genocide, and it offered Rubenstein to a broader audience as a thinker regarding secular ideas, as distinct from the theological dimension for which he was already well known.

In 1987, together with a Christian scholar from California, John K. Roth, he produced *Approaches to Auschwitz*, a study exploring the continuing significance of the Holocaust and the various ways in which it has been studied. It sought to clarify the political, historical, and economic roots of the Shoah without losing sight of the complexities of its history, and in so doing it analyzed the Holocaust without losing sight of its definitive impact on human civilization and its unparalleled importance in determining the fate of the world. Intended as a text for students, the book was a thought-provoking study of the Holocaust from a number of different disciplinary perspectives.

The book’s penultimate chapter, “God and History: Philosophical and Religious Responses to the Holocaust,” took Rubenstein back to his original thinking in *After Auschwitz*,

through a quick survey of some other authors who had considered the same issues as he had back in 1966. Rubenstein described the personal and academic experiences he had undergone as a young scholar and rabbi, which led him to conclude that the God of history must be denied as a result of the Holocaust. Here, he again argued that notions of Covenant and divine election are destructive theologies and reaffirmed the statements about the death of the covenantal God he had made more than two decades before.

Richard L. Rubenstein has been an innovative thinker whose approach to Judaism and religion in light of the most destructive period of human history—and arguably the most murderous sustained assault any people has faced—shook the religious tradition he addressed and from which he came. His books and articles have been at once vilified and praised, dismissed and embraced. His notions about “surplus people,” moreover, have shown him to be a multidimensional thinker who is as much at ease in discussing history and sociology as he is with theology. As one of the tiny number of those who were at the cutting edge of serious philosophical and theological reflection on the Holocaust at its inception, Rubenstein’s overall contribution to the field has been creative, powerful, controversial, and highly profound.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Fackenheim, Emil; Theological Responses to the Holocaust

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Rufeisen, Oswald

Oswald Rufeisen was a resister in the Mir ghetto in eastern Poland whose actions led to the escape and survival of more than 200 Jews. He was born Shmuel Rufajzen in 1922 to a Jewish family living in Zadziele, a small village in Upper Silesia near Oświęcim (Auschwitz), not far from Kraków. As a teenager he belonged to *B’nei Akiva*, a nonsocialist religious Zionist youth movement.

When Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany in September 1939, Rufeisen fled with his brother and some friends to

eastern Poland, where there was a large Jewish population in Vilna (Vilnius). The country was about to be invaded by the Soviet Union, but before this large numbers of Zionist youth arrived from Poland in the hope that they could somehow use the country as a staging post for later migration to Palestine.

After the Soviet takeover, Rufeisen decided to stay. At that point, some visas were made available to nonresidents to leave the country; with a choice to make, Rufeisen gave his place to his younger brother, and remained.

In June 1941 Germany launched Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union, invading through Soviet-occupied Poland and the Baltic States. Rufeisen was drafted for forced labor, chopping wood in the frozen Ponary Forest just outside the city. Seeking escape, he slipped away quietly with the help of a Polish peasant farmer and began to walk. Finding himself in the small town of Mir in November 1941, and carrying false identity papers, he told the German military police occupying the town that he was a *Volksdeutscher*, that is, an ethnic German. He then talked his way into a job.

At the same time, he also made contact with whoever had not fled from the local Jewish community. They had been concentrated in an improvised and sealed ghetto, and Rufeisen informed them of forthcoming Nazi measures. Before this, they had had no idea of what was happening outside. He also made contact with the tiny ghetto underground and smuggled in a few weapons from police headquarters.

When he overheard the planned date for the ghetto liquidation, Rufeisen warned his friends inside and falsified his translations in order to get the police out of town; while this was happening he arranged a mass escape for those in the ghetto to flee to the forest, where many joined the partisans. About 200 of the 850 still alive on the night of August 10, 1942, made it into the woods. The rest were slaughtered.

Having been exposed as a Jew and not an ethnic German working for the Nazis, Rufeisen was arrested. Finding a way to escape, he fled the police station and received sanctuary at a nearby convent run by the Sisters of the Resurrection. He hid here until December 1943, on occasion even dressing as a nun when the convent was forced to relocate to another building or he had to go out in public. While in the convent he decided to convert to Catholicism.

During the winter of 1943–1944 he left the convent and joined a partisan unit in the Naliboki Forest, a large area that was a hotbed of anti-Nazi partisan activity and the center of operations for, among others, Tuvia Bielski. He provided a valuable service by translating between the fighters and their German prisoners. At first he was suspected by Soviet

partisans, knowing that he had not only cooperated with the Nazis but had actually worn a German uniform, but was saved through the intervention of those he had helped escape from Mir who identified him and helped clear his name. He then returned to the area just as the Red Army drove out the Nazis and was instrumental in identifying collaborators. This, in turn, led to his becoming involved in prosecutions against these same collaborators. He also testified against Nazi war criminals. Later, he was decorated by the Soviet Union for his partisan activities.

With the war over, in 1945 he returned to his native Poland and began to study for the priesthood. He became a Discalced Carmelite friar, taking the name Brother Daniel, and eventually became a priest.

Anti-Jewish measures during and after the Stalinist period of the early 1950s saw Rufeisen (who still saw himself as a Jew culturally) deciding to leave Poland. In 1958 he made his way to Israel and applied for citizenship under the Law of Return, which gives Jews the right to immigrate and gain automatic Israeli citizenship. Here he reunited with his brother and survivors from the Mir ghetto.

The Israeli government denied Rufeisen's request for citizenship under the Law of Return on the ground that he was now a Christian and had denied his status as a Jew. Rufeisen appealed the case to Israel's Supreme Court in what became a celebrated test case regarding Jewish identity. This brought the rabbinate into the equation, as it was the body that adjudicated issues relating to Jewish religious law such as identity. It ruled that Rufeisen/Brother Daniel should be given citizenship as a Jew because, having been born to a Jewish mother, his identity remained Jewish irrespective of any faith decisions he had made. The Supreme Court disagreed, ruling in 1962 that a person could not be both a Catholic priest and a Jew. Rufeisen lost his case, and the government's original decision stood.

Nevertheless, he was given permission to enter Israel as a regular immigrant. He later became a naturalized Israeli citizen and in 1965 founded the Stella Maris Carmelite Monastery in Haifa; here, he would spend the rest of his life. It was said that from the moment he arrived in Israel he was accepted by those who originally came from Mir as one of their own. Oswald Rufeisen died in Haifa in August 1998.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Bielski Partisans; Jewish Partisans; Jewish Resistance

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Rumbula Massacre

The mass murder of some 25,000 Jews—mainly from Latvia—by German authorities and Latvian collaborators at Rumbula, a small village and rail station located about seven miles south of Latvia's capital city of Riga. After Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, Nazi troops also invaded and occupied the Baltic States, including Latvia, which had been occupied by the Soviets since the summer of 1940. After the German conquest, Nazi officials began implementing the Holocaust there, forcing thousands of Jews into a ghetto in Riga. By the autumn of 1941 the Germans sought to liquidate the Jews of the Riga ghetto in order to make room for an influx of Jews from Germany and Austria, who would take their place. In charge of the process was Friedrich Jeckeln, an SS officer and leader of a mobile killing squad in Riga. Jeckeln was careful to involve Latvian collaborationists in the operation, in order to give the appearance that they—and not the Germans—had devised and carried out the plan.

With thousands of Jews already on trains bound for Riga, the Germans had little time to empty the Riga ghetto and exterminate its inhabitants. Jeckeln, who had been involved in other similar massacres, had planned the Riga operation to the last detail. Nazi-controlled police would gather people together and march them in groups of 1,000 into the countryside, where they would be shot en masse and buried in mass graves. The weather was bitterly cold, and a number of people died of exposure. Meanwhile, three huge pits had already been dug. The victims were stripped of their clothing and personal possessions, pushed or thrown into a pit face down, and shot once in the back of the head. When the next group arrived, they were ordered to lie face down on top of the bodies of those already shot; they in turn were shot in the head. When the pit was full, it was covered over with dirt by bulldozers; a number of people were buried alive. On the first day alone, November 30, 1941, about 13,000 Latvian Jews (and a few hundred German Jews transported from the west) were murdered in this way.

Organizational difficulties and unexpected resistance from some Jews in the ghetto delayed the second day of the massacre until December 8, when some 12,000 more were murdered in similar fashion. Only three people managed to survive the second day of killing; they later gave testimony about their experiences. Two of the survivors had managed

to flee while being marched to Rumbula; the third feigned death and later escaped. A number of those responsible for the Rumbula Massacre were later tried and convicted for their crimes. Jeckeln was captured at the end of the war and hanged by Soviet officials on February 3, 1946, in Riga.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Collaboration; Latvia; Riga; Salaspils

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S

Sachsenhausen

Sachsenhausen was a Nazi concentration camp established in July 1936. It was located north of Berlin, near Oranienburg. Administered by the SS, Sachsenhausen initially housed political prisoners and others deemed “dangerous” to the German government. Beginning in 1937 and continuing into 1945, the camp expanded dramatically and soon became home to a wide array of detainees, including Jews, Jehovah’s Witnesses, male homosexuals, individuals deemed “asocial,” and Roma. Between 1936 and 1945 some 200,000 detainees were either incarcerated at Sachsenhausen or transited through it. A few Soviet civilians were held there, and the camp became a major staging area for Soviet prisoners of war. By 1945 the number of Jewish prisoners at Sachsenhausen totaled about 11,000. In the period immediate following Kristallnacht in 1938, at least 6,000 German Jews were rounded up and imprisoned at Sachsenhausen. Most Jews were released, however, and by early 1939 only 1,345 remained.

After World War II began in September 1939, however, Sachsenhausen once again became home to many Jews, mainly resident aliens who had been residing in Germany, or Polish Jews. Many of those people were transferred to death camps in the east, where most perished. In 1944 Hungarian and Polish Jews who had been residing in various ghettos began arriving in large numbers, while Soviet POWs began arriving in the late summer of 1941; as many as 18,000 of these men were shot and killed there between 1941 and 1945. Their bodies were cremated in an on-site crematorium. In

the autumn of 1944 German officials arrested thousands of Polish civilians, of whom approximately 6,000 were sent to Sachsenhausen. Most were non-Jews.

As in all concentration camps, conditions at Sachsenhausen were appalling. Food was scant and of poor quality, living quarters were overcrowded, sanitation facilities were crude at best, and medical care was essentially nonexistent. Many prisoners were ordered to perform forced labor in area factories, where some were worked to the point of exhaustion and death. Malnutrition and disease were perhaps the biggest killers. Including the Russian POWs who died at Sachsenhausen, a total of some 30,000 people died at the camp between 1936 and 1945. Others were beaten to death or executed, and some became the victims of Nazi medical experimentation.

In early April 1945, as Allied troops closed in on Berlin, the SS decided to liquidate the facility. Prisoners were force marched toward the north and east, a brutal process that resulted in many more deaths. When the Soviet Army liberated Sachsenhausen on April 22, 1945, there were still some 3,000 prisoners there, including 1,400 women.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Asocials; Concentration Camps; Fackenheim, Emil; Haas, Leo; Hoess, Rudolf; Homosexuals; Jehovah’s Witnesses; Medical Experimentation; Roma and Sinti; Salomon, Charlotte; Zyklon-B Case, 1946

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Sachsenhausen was a Nazi concentration camp near Berlin that housed political prisoners from its establishment in 1936 until its liberation in May 1945. During its existence some 30,000 prisoners lost their lives there from a wide variety of causes. Toward the end of the war, with the advance of the Soviets, Sachsenhausen was evacuated. A death march took place in April 1945, during which thousands did not survive. On April 22, 1945, the camp's remaining 3,000 inmates, including 1,400 women, were liberated by the Soviet and Polish troops. (AP Photo)

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Salaspils

Salaspils is a small city in Latvia, situated on the Daugava River. It is located about 11 miles (18 kilometers) to the southeast of Latvia's capital, Riga.

Toward the end of 1941 a concentration camp, a little over one mile out of town, was established at Salaspils. Originally it was intended for former Soviet prisoners of war and political prisoners, but by the time it was at its peak the camp became the largest civilian concentration camp in any of the Baltic republics. Officially, Salaspils (known in German as Kurtenhof) was designated as a Police Prison and Work Education

Camp (*Polizeigefängnis und Arbeitserziehungslager*), spread over an area measuring about 650 by 450 yards.

In October 1941 a senior Einsatzgruppen officer, SS-Sturmbannführer Rudolf Lange, began planning a detention camp to be built at Salaspils. He then oversaw the planning and implementation of the Rumbula massacre, a program that saw the murder of 24,000 Latvian Jews from the Riga ghetto, which occurred between November 30 and December 8, 1941. Later in December he began working as commander of both the security police (*Sicherheitspolizei*) in Latvia and also of the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*). His idea for the Salaspils camp was to create a place in which to confine not only those arrested in Latvia for political reasons or as resisters but also as an end point for Jews deported from Germany. Eventually, this would also extend to other occupied countries.

There was a precedent for this dating to before the establishment of Salaspils. On November 29, 1941, a trainload of

approximately one thousand Jews from Germany arrived in Riga, where they were murdered. This served as a precedent for others, starting on December 3, 1941. Salaspils now became a convenient location for the Nazis' grisly task, situated on the main rail line between Riga and the next largest city in Latvia, Daugavpils.

Development of the camp took place during January 1942, when around one thousand Jews from the Riga ghetto were conscripted to work on the site. By the fall of 1942 Salaspils was comprised of 15 barracks. In addition, there were two additional camps for Soviet prisoners of war nearby, which also fell under the overall jurisdiction of the camp administration. The death rate here, as in other compounds holding Soviet POWs, was high; while the exact number is unclear and subject to varying estimates, perhaps up to a thousand Soviet prisoners died, the victims of inferior accommodation and sanitary conditions and poor nutrition.

There was a juvenile barrack block at Salaspils, where children aged from 7 to 10 years old, upon being separated from their parents, were held. It has been recorded that these children were often victims of medical experimentation, which, together with typhoid fever, measles, and other diseases, saw a death rate that numbered at least half of the children incarcerated. Indeed, in one of the burial places discovered after the war, 632 corpses of children of ages 5 to 9 were found. While imprisoned, moreover, children were given special badges with their names and family information on them, but should the badges be lost—which happened particularly with younger children, who would often play with their badges or swap them around—their identities would also be lost.

On January 20, 1942, in recognition of his anti-Jewish measures in Riga, Rudolf Lange was invited to attend the Wannsee Conference in Berlin. This only served to encourage him (as well as those around him) to push for higher results in the mass killing of Jews. Plans for the camp at Salaspils were then revised, with a projected population of 15,000 Jews deported from Germany anticipated. While this did not eventuate, nonetheless between 12,000 and 15,000 people did transit through the camp in one way or another during its existence.

Figures concerning the overall mortality rate at Salaspils have fluctuated considerably over time. A reasonable estimate for the total number of deaths has landed at anywhere between 2,000 and 3,000. Not all were Jews, though it is certain that hundreds of German Jews were deliberately murdered or died as a result of sickness, overwork as slave labor, or callous treatment on the part of the guards. During the

Cold War, Soviet estimates placed the number of deaths at anywhere between 50,000 and 100,000, but these figures are clearly way too high on account of the camp never taking in that many prisoners to begin with.

On October 13, 1944, the Soviet army liberated Riga—now completely emptied of all of its Jewish population—and on the same day the camp at Salaspils was also overrun. On October 31, 1967, a memorial complex was opened at the site of the Salaspils concentration camp, embracing a small museum and various forms of commemorative artwork.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Concentration Camps; Lange, Rudolf; Latvia; Riga; Rumbula Massacre

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Salkaházi, Sára

Sára Salkaházi was a Hungarian Catholic nun who saved the lives of approximately one hundred Jews during the Holocaust. She was born Sára Schalkház in Kassa (Košice) in the Slovak-speaking area of the Habsburg Empire on May 11, 1899. The second of three children, her father died when she was still an infant. A thoughtful and religiously devout child, as a teenager she began to write plays and short stories. As a young adult she earned an elementary school teacher's degree, which was the highest available qualification for women in education at the time. She taught school only for one year, leaving to move to another profession, that of book-binding. Later still, she learned millinery. After this, she turned to journalism.

Politically, she joined the Christian Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia and worked as editor of the party newspaper with a specific focus on social problems as they pertained especially to women. Over time, however, she realized that something was missing, until she found solace in religion.

Only after a long personal journey did she decide that her life should be spent in the service of others. In 1929 she entered the Society of the Sisters of Social Service in Budapest, a religious order founded in 1923 by Margit Slachta devoted to charitable, social, and women's causes. At Pentecost 1930 she took her first vows, choosing as her personal motto the words "Here am I! Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8). She took her final vows in 1940.

In 1941 Sister Sára, as she was now known, was sent to Budapest to serve as the national director of the Hungarian Catholic Working Women's Movement. She became editor of the movement's publications and through these cautioned members against the growing influence of Nazism. She also established a network of Working Girls' Homes in order to create a safe environment for working single women.

With the onset of war, political conditions in Budapest became less clear-cut than they were in earlier times. The Arrow Cross Party, the Nazi-inspired antisemitic movement in Hungary, began persecuting Jews, and the Sisters of Social Service, in response, commenced a program of providing safe havens for Jews fleeing from harassment. Sister Sára opened up the order's Working Girls' Homes as places of refuge under increasingly dangerous circumstances with other efforts extended to the provision of food and other vital goods.

As conditions worsened, by 1943 she saw there was only one possible option for her to consider; in order to truly live up to the example set by Jesus, she offered her life for the Society of the Sisters of Social Service and its mission. She pledged herself to God as a willing sacrifice to ensure that the other sisters and the order were not harmed.

With the intensification of anti-Jewish persecution during 1944, Sister Sára redoubled her efforts to save as many people as she could. Ultimately, the Society sheltered up to a thousand Jews, with Sister Sára personally responsible for approximately one hundred.

On the morning of December 27, 1944, armed Arrow Cross troops came to one of the Girls' Homes under Sister Sára's care, looking for Jews. They took four Jewish women and children and a religion teacher, Vilma Bernovits, into custody. Sister Sára was not present at that time, but when she arrived she was immediately detained. Later that night the little group was driven to the Danube Embankment, stripped naked, and shot into the river. It was said that as they were lined up Sister Sára knelt and made the sign of the cross. Her body was never recovered.

In 1969, after having been nominated by the daughter of one of the Jewish women who was killed alongside her, Sister Sára was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Further recognizing her martyrdom, on September 17, 2006, Sister Sára was beatified in a proclamation by Pope Benedict XVI, in what was the first beatification to take place in Hungary since that of King Stephen in 1083.

In an ongoing tribute to her martyrdom, the Sisters of Social Service now hold an annual candlelight memorial service on the Danube Embankment every December 27, the anniversary of Sister Sára's death. It is generally

acknowledged that offering herself as a martyr for the society saved not only many Jews suffering persecution but also the order itself.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Arrow Cross; Catholic Church; Hungary; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Slachta, Margit

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Salomon, Charlotte

Charlotte Salomon was a German Jewish artist whose autobiographical work, *Life? or Theatre?*, combines paintings, text, and musical cues in a unique chronicle of her life. Salomon's autobiography deals with her childhood in Weimar-era Germany, her coming of age during the Nazi years, and her exile in France as a refugee from the Nazi regime. It reveals her battle to define her existence and identity in the face of constant personal and political conflict.

Born into a prosperous family in Berlin in 1917, the young Charlotte Salomon struggled to find her own place and voice amid the turbulence of interwar Germany and the antisemitic policies of the Nazi regime. She quit school in 1933 but later applied and was admitted to the esteemed Berlin Art Academy. (Her openly avowed Jewish heritage would eventually lead to her dismissal from that institution.) There she learned classical, Nazi-sanctioned methods and techniques of realism, from which she broke almost completely in her own artistic work.

Increasing persecution at the hands of Adolf Hitler's government ultimately convinced the Salomon family to leave their homeland. In the immediate aftermath of the anti-Jewish pogrom known as Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass) on November 9, 1938, Salomon's father, Albert, along with thousands of other Jews, was sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp outside Berlin. His family managed to secure his release, and from that point forward the family prepared to leave Germany. Charlotte Salomon left in January 1939 to join her grandparents, who had fled Nazi rule in 1933, on the French Riviera. A plan to reunite with her father and stepmother in exile never materialized; her parents ended up in Amsterdam, where they survived World War II and the Holocaust.

After the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, Salomon's grandmother, distressed by the expansion of Hitler's empire, tried to commit suicide (she made another, successful attempt the following year). It was only then that Salomon learned a family secret hidden from her since childhood: six people in her family, including Salomon's mother, had taken their own lives. (Salomon had been told that her mother, who died when Salomon was eight years old, had succumbed to influenza.) Her grandmother's death, the dislocations of war, and her increasing clashes with her grandfather—including an exchange in which he angrily suggested that Salomon kill herself—provided her with the determination to paint the story of her life to avoid falling victim to this fate and as a means of grappling with her family's history. Salomon spent more than a year crafting her autobiography in 1941 and 1942, composing over 1,300 notebook-sized gouache paintings on which text was written directly or on attached overlays. From these, she selected more than 700 for inclusion in *Life? or Theatre?*

In June 1943 Salomon married Alexander Nagler, an Austrian Jewish refugee also living in southern France. Just three months after their marriage, they were arrested during intensified Nazi roundups of Jews along the Riviera. Before her apprehension, Salomon had given *Life? or Theatre?* to a friend, with whom it safely remained until the end of the war. After her arrest, Salomon was transported to Auschwitz, where she apparently was gassed soon after her arrival on October 10, 1943.

ADAM C. STANLEY

See also: Art and the Holocaust; Kristallnacht; Sachsenhausen

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may go as far back as the Babylonian Exile of the Jews from Judea (ca. 586 BCE). Equally significant, with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, many fled to this city in such large numbers that the Jews already living there (*Romaniote*—Jewish communities with distinctive features who have lived in Greece and neighboring areas for more than 2,000 years) were absorbed, albeit, at times, somewhat reluctantly, into a new cultural ethos and set of specifically Sephardic (Spanish) religious practices.

Be that as it may, in April 1941 the Germans both conquered and occupied Greece and divided the spoils into three zones of occupation: German, Bulgarian, and Italian. (Jews in the latter two zones would fare quite differently from each other: the Bulgarians were quick to implement the Nazi policies of death and destruction, while the Italians tended to ignore or evade the more heinous Nazi antisemitic decrees and activities.) At war's end, however, more than 95% of the 50,000 Jews initially found in Salonika under German control had been murdered, either directly in the city itself or transported to the death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau and gassed immediately upon arrival. Others—males—would become part of the internal camp labor force, especially *Sonderkommando*—“special handlers”—tasked with emptying out the gas chambers of bodies, examining them for hidden valuables, transporting them to the crematoria, and, finally, removing the increasingly large quantities of ashes. Many of these same Jewish Greeks (the preferred more accurate term) would also play a part in the unsuccessful Auschwitz uprising, which would destroy one of the crematoria. Several members of the Salonikan leadership, including Rabbi Koretz and his family, were transported to Bergen-Belsen.

From the initial Nazi takeover until February 1943, the Jewish community of Salonika would experience increasing pressure on its leadership with the arrests and removal of those in charge, especially Chief Rabbi Tzvi Koretz, a divisive figure who would be transported to and imprisoned in Vienna, Austria, only to later return and resume his position and that of president of the Jewish community. (Even today, Koretz remains something of a controversial figure among both survivors and historians, questioning not only his possible collaborationist activities but also his imperial high-handed leadership, his accommodationist subservience, and the like.)

With the arrival of Adolf Eichmann's henchmen SS Hauptsturmführer Dieter Wisliceny and SS Hauptsturmführer Alois Brunner—the latter would go on to become the commandant of Drancy, France's primary deportation camp, later dying in Damascus, Syria, where he fled after the

Salonika

Due to the vibrancy of its Jewish culture the city of Salonika (Thessaloniki) was known for more than five hundred years as the “Jerusalem of the Balkans.” St. Paul makes an important, though negative, reference to the community in 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 (ca. 50–52 CE) as thwarting his agenda of promoting his new religious understanding. There are even scholars who have contended that the origins of settlement

war—and the active complicity of German SS Captain Max Merten; the German plenipotentiary Günther Altenburg; and the governor-general of Macedonia, Vasilis Simonides, the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) would begin to take an ominous turn.

On July 11, 1942, 9,000 Jewish men between the ages of 18 and 45 were told to assemble in the Plateia Eleftheria (Liberty Square) for forced labor registration. Without shade, water, or food, the Germans instituted a vigorous calisthenics regimen replete with beatings and verbal harassments from which many died in the sweltering heat of that month. Two thousand of the survivors would be transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and elsewhere to work for the German army. The remaining men were ransomed after a negotiation between the Nazis and the organized Jewish community of Greece to the tune of \$3.5 billion drachmas (more than \$1,000,000 USD). Four thousand would be put to work building a road linking Salonika with Katerini and Larissa through lice-infested territory. In addition, with the further collaboration of the Greek authorities, the huge Jewish cemetery of Salonika, housing more than 500,000 graves, was plundered of its tombstones to be used for construction projects. (Today, Aristotle University is built upon this site.)

By the end of February 1943 the remaining Jews of Salonika were rounded up and forced into three ghettos, the ultimate goal of which was to make their deportation to death that much easier. The ghettos were Kalamaria, Singrou, and Vardar/Agia Paraskevi. Ironically, the deportation camp location was in the Baron (Maurice/Moritz) de Hirsch section of the city, funded by the German philanthropist to care for the less fortunate, often refugees, and make their transition into city life that much easier, because of its proximity to the train station.

The deportations to Auschwitz-Birkenau began on February 8, 1943, with the first of what would be 19 transports of more than 45,000 Jews from Salonika. The last transport left on August 8, 1943. By the end of the war, only two thousand Jews were left alive in Salonika.

Ironically, the tragic fate of the Jewish Greeks of Salonika was not unknown to the Allies, due to reports appearing in *The Times*, London (May, 1943) and the *New York Times* (February 1944, May 1944, and November 1944). Nothing, however, was done to increase their chances of survival.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; Brunner, Alois; Collaboration; Greece; Sonderkommando; Venezia, Shlomo

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Sauckel, Fritz

Ernst Friedrich Christoph “Fritz” Sauckel was a member of the German Nazi Party and the general plenipotentiary for labor deployment from 1942 to the end of World War II. He was one of 24 Nazis to be accused, tried, and convicted of war crimes during the Nuremberg Trials of 1945–1946. As general plenipotentiary for labor deployment, Sauckel was responsible for providing the forced labor to accommodate wartime productivity in Nazi Germany. Due to his efforts, approximately 5 million people were deported from their homes throughout the Third Reich and forced to work for the German war machine.

Sauckel was born on October 27, 1894, in Bavaria. The only son of a postman and a seamstress, he spent his pre-World War I years working with the merchant marine in Norway and Sweden. As a sailor, he rose to the rank of *Vollmatrose*, or able-bodied seaman. At the start of World War I he was working on a German vessel headed for Australia when it was captured by the British and its crew interned. He spent four years as a captive in France, from August 1914 to November 1919.

Sauckel returned to Germany after the war, joining the German Nazi Party in 1921. Six years later, in 1927, he was appointed Gauleiter (a Nazi district political governor) of Thuringia, a central-eastern region of Germany. Sauckel served as a member of Thuringian government into the 1930s, and following Hitler’s appointment as chancellor in 1933 he was promoted to Reich regent of Thuringia and Reichstag member and an Obergruppenführer in the SS and SA.

In 1942 Sauckel was again promoted, to general plenipotentiary for labor deployment, after a recommendation from Martin Bormann, Adolf Hitler's private secretary. In this capacity, Sauckel was directly subordinate to Hermann Göring, president of the Reichstag. The war effort resulted in increasing demands for labor in Germany. Unfortunately, voluntary labor within the Reich was severely lacking, and Sauckel turned to Germany's newly occupied territories, particularly Poland and the Soviet Union. According to Sauckel's testimony at Nuremberg, of the 5 million people who were placed in forced labor, approximately 200,000 came voluntarily. Sauckel's view was that all workers were to be exploited in the most efficient way possible: "All the men must be fed, sheltered and treated in such a way as to exploit them to the highest possible extent at the lowest conceivable degree of expenditure." Such management led to the death of thousands of Jews in the work camps in Poland and other eastern territories.

In 1945, following the end of World War II, Sauckel and 23 other Nazi officials were tried for various counts of war crimes. The Nuremberg Trials, which took place from November 20, 1945, to October 1, 1946, were a series of Allied military tribunals to bring the biggest Nazi criminals to justice. Sauckel swore in his testimony that he was innocent of all war crimes and that he had been unaware of the concentration camps. He defended his position as Reich plenipotentiary for labor, stating his job had "nothing to do with exploitation. It is an economic process for supplying labor." He was found not guilty on Nuremberg Trials' indictments one and two, namely "The Common Plan or Conspiracy" and "Crimes against Peace." However, he was found guilty on indictments three and four, "War Crimes" and "Crimes against Humanity" for his work as general plenipotentiary for labor deployment. He was sentenced to death by hanging and was executed on October 16, 1946. His last words on the scaffold were recorded as, "*Ich sterbe unschuldig, mein Urteil ist ungerecht. Gott beschütze Deutschland!*" or, "I die an innocent man, my sentence is unjust. God protect Germany!"

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Bormann, Martin; Crimes against Humanity; Göring, Hermann; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nuremberg Trials; Vel' d'Hiv Roundup; War Crimes

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Schacter, Herschel

Herschel Schacter was an influential Orthodox rabbi who was the first Jewish chaplain in the U.S. Army to enter the Buchenwald concentration camp upon its liberation in April 1945.

Schacter was born on October 10, 1917, in Brooklyn, New York, the son of immigrants from Poland. After receiving a BA degree from New York's Yeshiva University in 1938, he was ordained a rabbi in 1941, having studied under the highly esteemed Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. During 1941 and part of 1942, Schacter served as a rabbi in Stamford, Connecticut, before enlisting in the U.S. Army as a chaplain in 1942. He held the rank of lieutenant. Throughout World War II, he served in a variety of locations and settings in the European theater.

On April 11, 1945, advance units of the U.S. Third Army (VIII Corps) made their way to Buchenwald. Having learned that the concentration camp was about to be liberated, Schacter commandeered a jeep and raced to the camp. What he saw when he arrived was horrifying and heartbreaking. Emaciated, ill prisoners lay in squalid barracks, while piles of corpses were strewn about like firewood. He then proceeded to go from barracks to barracks, shouting in Yiddish, "Peace be upon you Jews, you are Free!"

Schacter later described a deeply moving scene. As he moved around the camp, he spotted a seven-year-old boy cowering in a dark corner. He picked the boy up and, asking him his name, the child meekly replied, "Lulek." Schacter then asked him how old he was. The boy replied, "What difference does it make? I'm older than you anyway." Puzzled, the chaplain asked him what he meant. The boy proceeded to tell him "because you cry and laugh like a child. . . . I haven't laughed in a long time, and I don't cry anymore. So who's older?" The young boy would later migrate to Palestine and become a rabbi. Now known as Yisrael Meir Lau, he serves as Tel Aviv's chief rabbi.

After Buchenwald's liberation, Schacter remained there for many months. He ministered to the survivors, held religious ceremonies, and later helped to resettle them. There

had been almost 1,000 orphans at Buchenwald, nearly all of whom Schacter helped resettle. Many went to France, including a young Elie Wiesel, who later became a renowned writer, while others went to Switzerland. Schacter himself accompanied a group of orphans to Palestine. He was discharged from the army in early 1946.

In 1947 Rabbi Schacter became the chief rabbi for the Mosholu Jewish Center in the Bronx, New York, where he remained until 1999, when the facility was closed. Schacter died in the Bronx on March 21, 2013. In 2011 Rabbi Lau published a memoir, *Out of the Depths*, which details his encounter with Schacter in 1945 and how it affected the remainder of his life.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Buchenwald; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Wiesel, Elie

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Schindler, Oskar

Oskar Schindler is perhaps the best known rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust by virtue of a multi-award-winning movie, *Schindler's List*, made by filmmaker Steven Spielberg in 1993. At his enamelware and munitions factories in Poland and later Bohemia-Moravia, Schindler saved more than 1,200 Jews from extermination at the hands of the Nazis.

Born to Johann and Franziska Schindler, *née* Luser, on April 28, 1908, in Zwittau (Svitavy), Austria-Hungary, Oskar Schindler had an unsettled education that carried over to his early adult years. On March 6, 1928, he married Emilie Pelzl. An opportunist and womanizer always interested in get-rich-quick schemes that inevitably failed, with little else going for him he joined the *Abwehr*, the German military intelligence network, in 1936. He applied for membership in the Nazi Party on November 1, 1938, and in February 1939, five months after the German annexation of the Sudetenland, this was accepted.

Following the German invasion and occupation of Poland, Schindler moved to Kraków in October 1939. Taking advantage of the German occupation program to “Aryanize” businesses in the so-called *Generalgouvernement* (General Government), in November 1939 he purchased an enamelware factory from its Jewish owner, Nathan Wurzel, and



Oskar Schindler was a German industrialist and rescuer of Jews credited with saving the lives of 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust. His first enamelware factory was located in Krakow, Poland, where he manufactured goods for the German military. This enabled his workers to be protected from deportation to the Nazi concentration camps. In 1963 he was recognized as one of the Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem. The photo shows Schindler with the original list of the 1,200 Jewish concentration camp prisoners whom he employed in his factory. (AP Photo/Michael Latz)

reopened it as *Deutsche Emalwarenfabrik* (German Enamelware Factory), or, by its shortened version, Emalia. He employed Jewish slave labor, at extremely exploitative rates payable to the SS, which he brought in from the Kraków ghetto. After the ghetto's liquidation in March 1943 the Jewish workforce was relocated to the concentration camp at Plaszów under the command of Amon Goeth.

Schindler went to great lengths to ensure the survival of “his” Jews, or *Schindlerjuden*, as they came to be called. Though they were still subject to the draconian and deadly rules and regulations of the concentration camp (and the whims of Goeth's erratic regime), Schindler made constant intercessions on the Jews' behalf, seeing to it that they were neither deported nor killed. He repeatedly demanded that they not be harmed on the ground that they were essential to

the war effort, and, with the assistance of his Jewish accountant Itzhak Stern, he managed to keep the prisoners in one place while making it appear as though the factory was performing valuable war work.

It was no surprise at first that Schindler was only interested in making money from his enterprise, but as he witnessed the brutal treatment Jews were experiencing, he became more and more disillusioned with Nazi ideology and what he saw it as representing. Over time he became transformed from the money-grubbing opportunist he had always been to a humanitarian with a desperate desire to save Jewish lives. The underlying reason for this change of heart has eluded historians, but it can be said with certainty that Schindler was never part of any organized resistance movement or rescue organization, and acted from motives that were his alone.

Protecting his workers came at a huge financial cost, but the money Schindler had made as a war profiteer he spent in bribes and expensive presents to Nazi officials. Eventually, he lost count of how much he had spent in protecting “his” Jews. Certainly, it was many millions of Reichsmarks. In trying to ensure that his workers would survive the war, he was prepared to spend all his money. Servicing huge costs in order to protect his workers, Schindler had to engage in illegal business dealings on the black market, which saw him arrested on three separate occasions. He was also twice arrested for *Rassenschande*, or “race shame,” after kissing Jewish girls—one of them on the cheek as a gesture of affection and gratitude.

With the advance of the Eastern Front during 1944, many of the concentration camps located in eastern Poland began to be closed down. Seeing the prospect of this happening to Plaszów, a Jew working as Goeth’s personal secretary, Mietek Pemper, informed Schindler that all factories not directly involved in the war effort, including his factory camp, were at risk. He then proposed that Schindler would be more secure if he were seen to be producing armaments instead of pots and pans. Accordingly, in October 1944, Schindler sought permission to relocate his factory to Brünnlitz (Brněnec) in Moravia, taking as many of his “highly skilled workers” as possible with him, and to resurrect it as an arms factory. Permission was granted, and the factory became reestablished as a subcamp of Gross-Rosen.

Pemper then compiled a list of people who, it was argued, had to go to Brünnlitz. The names were provided by a corrupt member of the Kraków Jewish police, Marcel Goldberg, who identified a thousand of Schindler’s workers and two hundred from the textile factory of a Viennese businessman in Kraków, Julius Madritsch. The lists were typed up by

Goldberg; unlike popular wisdom, Schindler was not present when this took place. Nonetheless, all were sent to Brünnlitz: 800 men deported by the SS from Plaszów via Gross-Rosen and just over 300 women who went from Plaszów via Auschwitz, rescued at the last moment from gassing by the timely arrival of Schindler’s secretary, Hilde Albrecht, who came armed with bribes of black market goods, food, and diamonds.

Because they were relatively safe at Brünnlitz when compared to the possible fate that would have greeted the Jews if they had remained at Plaszów, Schindler worked at ensuring his charges would remain secure by continuing to bribe the SS and other Nazis, some of whom had an eye for profit, others with an ideological commitment that said the Jews had to keep working unto death.

By the time Brünnlitz was liberated by the Russians on May 9, 1945, Schindler was bankrupt and, as a member of the Nazi Party and a perceived war profiteer and exploiter of slave labor, he was on the run. He smuggled himself and his wife, Emilie, back into Germany, where they settled in Regensburg and kept a low profile.

They stayed there until 1949, when they migrated to Argentina. Just as before the war, he again failed in his business ventures. His marriage to Emilie broke down, and in 1957 they separated. In 1958 he returned to Germany alone.

On July 18, 1967, for his efforts in rescuing over 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust, Schindler was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Emilie was similarly recognized on June 24, 1993. Oskar Schindler died, penniless, on October 9, 1974, in Hildesheim, Germany. Later, he was buried in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. He was the only member of the Nazi Party ever to be so honored.

In 1980 Australian novelist Thomas Keneally learned about Schindler from Leopold (Poldek) Pfefferberg, a “Schindler Jew.” The result was a fictionalized account of the story, *Schindler’s Ark*, which appeared in 1982. In the United States the book was published as *Schindler’s List*. The book was later adapted for the screen by Steven Spielberg, using the American title, to immense critical and popular acclaim. The film won seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and Liam Neeson was nominated as Best Actor for his portrayal of Schindler. Because of the high profile accorded Schindler as a result of the movie, and a vast array of books and documentaries that followed, his name has become a byword for rescue during the Holocaust—such that one of the highest accolades many can today give a rescuer is that he or she is “the Oskar Schindler of . . .” a given situation.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryanization; Generalgouvernement; Kraków-Plaszów; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Schindler's Jews; *Schindler's List*

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Schindler's Jews

"Schindler's Jews," or *Schindlerjuden* in German, is a term that refers to a group of some 1,100 mostly Polish Jews who were saved from almost certain death during the Holocaust by German businessman Oskar Schindler. After the German invasion of Poland began on September 1, 1939, Schindler purchased an enamelware factory near Kraków, Poland. His accountant, a German-speaking Jew by the name of Itzhak Stern, helped Schindler secure the services of some 1,100 Polish Jews, who would work in his factory.

Schindler witnessed more and more brutality toward Jews in Kraków, which troubled him greatly. After Nazi soldiers rounded up scores of Jews in 1943 for deportation to concentration camps, Schindler stepped up his efforts to shield his Jewish workers from Nazi atrocities. Increasingly, Schindler defended his workforce and claimed exemptions for them because his business was considered essential to the war effort. Schindler treated his workers fairly and civilly, even permitting them to pray.

Late in the war, as Soviet troops advanced to the west, Schindler learned that Nazi officials planned to close all factories in Poland, including his own. He then convinced SS officials to allow him to operate a factory in Brännlitz (now in the Czech Republic), where he would manufacture military items. He also received approval to relocate his mostly Jewish labor force to the new facility, under the premise that the workers were already trained and hence indispensable to his operations. Before the move, which took place in October 1944, a list of 1,200 workers—mostly Jews—was drawn up and presented to the authorities.

In reality, few military items were made in the new factory, and those that were had been purposely sabotaged. By mid-1945 Schindler and his family had closed the facility and fled to Austria, but almost all of his workers survived the war.

There are now more than 7,000 descendants of Schindler's Jews living throughout the world, chiefly in Europe, Israel, and the United States. Nearly all of the original survivors

have now died, and in January 2013, Leon Leyson, the youngest of the Schindler survivors, died at the age of 83 in Los Angeles, his adopted city. Leyson was reunited with Schindler almost 30 years after the war when Schindler visited the United States. Although there has been no formal mass reunion of Schindler's Jews, a number of them did meet with other survivors after the war, often in conjunction with meetings with Schindler, who died in 1974.

Schindler's deeds were later brought to light in a book written by Australian writer Thomas Keneally; titled *Schindler's Ark* (1982), it was published as *Schindler's List* in the United States. In 1993 Steven Spielberg produced a masterful and popular film rendition of the book, again titled *Schindler's List*.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Kraków-Plaszów; Schindler, Oskar; *Schindler's List*

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Schindler's List

Considered perhaps the most famous Holocaust film ever to be made, *Schindler's List* is a motion picture directed by multi-award-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg in 1993. The film was nominated for 12 Academy Awards and won seven: best picture, best director (Spielberg), best adapted screenplay (Steven Zaillian), best cinematography (Janusz Kaminski), best original score (John Williams), best editing (Michael Kahn), and best art direction (Ewa Tarnowska and Allan Starski).

The film was produced almost entirely in black and white, at times taking on the manner of a quasi-documentary, though color was introduced briefly on three occasions: in its opening and closing sequences, and showing a little girl in a red coat (the coat makes a brief appearance on one other occasion).

The movie starred Liam Neeson in the title role as Oskar Schindler, Ben Kingsley (Itzhak Stern), and Ralph Fiennes (Amon Goeth), and was based on *Schindler's Ark*, a book from 1982 written by Australian writer Thomas Keneally. It tells the dramatic story of real-life Sudeten-German businessman and Nazi Oskar Schindler, a morally corrupt adulterer, opportunist, and profiteer, who operated a slave labor

factory producing enamelware intended for military use in Kraków, Poland, during World War II.

The movie is a dramatized account of the life of Schindler during the Holocaust, as he makes a dramatic turnaround from exploiting Jewish slave labor to seeing the need to save the lives of his workers. Once he realizes a way to do so, he composes a list of those he wishes to save; a list that he strove to make as long as possible (eventually comprising nearly 1,200 names), right under the gaze of the SS.

Spielberg was said to have been interested in the story of Oskar Schindler from the time of the book's first appearance but needed time to carefully consider how it could be made. He was, however, seemingly always determined to make the film, not only from an artistic perspective but also from the perspective of his own personal commitment; upon finishing, he later spoke of how the process of making of the movie had a deep emotional impact on him.

The three-hour-long epic has been hailed as among the most accurate portrayals of the reality of the Holocaust for the events it describes. In certain circles it stimulated controversy, however, particularly for its ending. After the audience has accompanied Schindler and those around him through their various ordeals and journeys, the film moves to a cemetery in Jerusalem, where surviving "Schindler Jews" (*Schindlerjuden*), accompanied by the actors who portrayed them in the movie, line up in order to place stones on Oskar Schindler's grave—a traditional Jewish custom to signify that a visit has been made by one who remembers the departed. The last person at the grave is Liam Neeson (Oskar Schindler). He places a rose on the tombstone. A postscript informs viewers that the Jews saved by Schindler have now embraced life, with more than 6,000 descendants.

The reason for the controversy, among some critics, was because this was seen as both a maudlin and an inferior ending to what had otherwise been a brilliant evocation of the Holocaust experience—for some, it was even unnecessary. Despite this, the film generated additional historical research (particularly among younger viewers and schoolteachers), inspired new Jewish-Christian dialogue, and served to relocate the Holocaust at the forefront of American consciousness.

The movie's tagline, coming from the Talmud (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5; Yerushalmi Talmud 4:9, Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 37a), is celebrated as an inscription inside a ring presented by the survivors to Schindler at the end of the movie: "Whoever saves one life saves the world entire." As a coda for the whole movie, it was clear that Spielberg was attempting to send a moral message to his viewing audience through this device; indeed, through the whole movie.

Building on this, in 1994 Spielberg founded and financed the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, whose aim was to record testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust. In January 2006 it partnered with the University of California to establish the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education. The fundamental goal of the Shoah Foundation is to provide an oral history archive for the filmed testimony of as many survivors of the Holocaust as possible, so that future generations will be able to hear the actual voices of those who experienced the Holocaust in their very flesh.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Schindler, Oskar; Schindler's Jews

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Schlegelberger, Franz

Louis Rudolph Franz Schlegelberger was state secretary in the German Reich Ministry of Justice and served as German justice minister during the Third Reich. He was the highest-ranking defendant at the Judges' Trial in Nuremberg.

Schlegelberger was born on October 23, 1876, into a pious Protestant family from Königsberg, where he attended gymnasium and sat for his school-leaving examination in 1894. He began studying law in Königsberg in 1894, continuing his legal studies in Berlin from 1895 to 1896. In 1897 he passed the state legal examination. At the University of Königsberg (by some accounts, the University of Leipzig) he graduated as a doctor of law on December 1, 1899.

On December 9, 1901, Schlegelberger passed his state law examination. Two weeks later he became an assessor at the Königsberg local court, and on March 17, 1902, assistant judge at the Königsberg State Court. On September 16, 1904, he became a judge at the State Court in Lyck (now Elk, Poland). In early May 1908 he went to the Berlin State Court and in the same year was appointed assistant judge at the Berlin Court of Appeals (*Kammergericht*). In 1914 he was appointed to the Kammergericht Council (*Kammergerichtsrat*) in Berlin, where he stayed until 1918.

On April 1, 1918, Schlegelberger became an associate at the Reich Justice Office, receiving appointment later in the year to the Secret Government Court and Executive Council. In 1927 he took on the post of ministerial director in the German Reich Ministry of Justice. Schlegelberger had been teaching in the Faculty of Law at the University of Berlin as an honorary professor since 1922 and was a well-known jurist who, in September 1929, even traveled to Latin America. On October 10, 1931, Schlegelberger was appointed state secretary at the Ministry of Justice under Franz Gürtner and kept this job until Gürtner's death in 1941.

After the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, in an attempt to restrain executive power, Schlegelberger objected to a decree retroactively imposing the death penalty on those blamed for the Reichstag Fire on the basis that the decree was a violation of the ancient legal maxim *nulla poena sine lege* ("no punishment without law"). By January 30, 1938, following Adolf Hitler's orders regarding judges in the Third Reich, Schlegelberger joined the Nazi Party.

In March 1940 Schlegelberger proposed that lawyers be expelled from their profession if they did not fully and without reservation support the National Socialist state. As minister of justice, he reiterated that call in a conference of German jurists and lawyers in April 1941. The first item on the conference agenda was the Nazi regime's T-4 euthanasia initiative, in which Schlegelberger announced the Führer's policies so that judges and public prosecutors understood that they might not use legal means to oppose the *Aktion T-4* measures against the will of the Führer.

After Franz Gürtner's death in 1941, Schlegelberger became provisional Reich minister of justice for the years 1941 and 1942 while still holding his post as state secretary. Otto Thierack was appointed after Schlegelberger's acting position expired. During Schlegelberger's period in office the number of judicial death sentences rose sharply. He drafted the Poland Penal Law Provision (*Polenstrafrechtsverordnung*), under which Poles were executed for tearing down German wall posters and proclamations.

Schlegelberger's work assisted the institutionalization of torture in the Third Reich. After defendants accused of "political" crimes started to show signs of torture, Schlegelberger's Justice Ministry "legalized" such acts, to such an extent that the Reich Ministry of Justice even established a "standard club" to be used in beatings, so that torture would at least be regularized.

In 1941 a police captain named Klinzmann was convicted of torture for beating an arson confession out of a Jewish farm laborer. When the German Supreme Court refused to

hear Klinzmann's appeal, Schlegelberger created a new procedure called "cancellation" that gave the Reich a means to end every trial independently of judicial decisions. Klinzmann was set free and so had no criminal record against his name.

On October 24, 1941, Schlegelberger wrote to the chief of the Reich Chancellery, Minister Hans Lammers, informing him that acting under the Führer Order of October 24, 1941, Schlegelberger had handed over to the Gestapo for execution a Jew named Markus Luftglass, sentenced by the Special Court (*Sondergericht*) in Katowice to two-and-a-half years in prison (for the crime of hoarding eggs). That was clearly a violation of the legal maxim "no punishment without law."

In November 1941 Schlegelberger was among those whom Reinhard Heydrich invited to attend the Wannsee Conference. As things turned out, his subordinate, Roland Freisler, attended as Schlegelberger's deputy. After the conference, Schlegelberger supported efforts to apply a more restrictive definition of the persons subjected to the "Final Solution." In a letter on April 5, 1942, to Lammers, he suggested that "mixed people" should be given a choice between "evacuation to the East" or sterilization, writing that "The measures for the final solution of the Jewish question should extend only to full Jews and descendants of mixed marriages of the first degree, but should not apply to descendants of mixed marriages of the second degree. . . . There is no national interest in dissolving the marriage between such half-Jews and a full-blooded German."

Schlegelberger wrote several books on the law and at the time of his retirement was called "the last of the German jurists." Some of those law texts commenting upon German law were still in use and available for purchase in 2017. Upon Schlegelberger's retirement as justice minister on August 24, 1942, Hitler thanked him with a huge financial endowment and permitted him to purchase an estate with the money, something outside the rules then in force; clearly Hitler held Schlegelberger in high esteem.

After the war Schlegelberger was one of the main accused indicted in the Nuremberg Judges' Trial in 1947. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiracy to perpetrate war crimes and crimes against humanity. The judgment stated, in part, "that Schlegelberger supported the pretension of Hitler in his assumption of power to deal with life and death in disregard of even the pretense of judicial process. By his exhortations and directives, Schlegelberger contributed to the destruction of judicial independence. It was his signature on the decree of 7 February 1942 which imposed upon the Ministry of Justice and the courts the burden of the

prosecution, trial, and disposal of the victims of Hitler's Night and Fog. For this he must be charged with primary responsibility."

In 1950 the 74-year-old Schlegelberger was released from prison on "health grounds" by the American High Commissioner for Germany. He then lived in Flensburg until his death at the old age of 93 on December 14, 1970.

Schlegelberger was perceived as a reluctant supporter of Hitler's rule and given a lenient sentence. From the available records it appears that Schlegelberger's most acute regrets dealt with what he experienced, rather than what he helped inflict on others. Given his record, he was the model for the character of Ernst Janning, the penitent German jurist portrayed by Burt Lancaster in the multi-award-winning motion picture *Judgment at Nuremberg*, a depiction of the Judges' Trial at Nuremberg.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Euthanasia Program; Final Solution; Freisler, Roland; Judges' Trial; Nacht und Nebel

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Schmeling, Max

Max Schmeling was a German heavyweight boxer who risked his life to save two young Jewish brothers by hiding them in his hotel room and then helping them escape Germany during the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 1938.

Of modest background, Maximilian Schmeling was born in Klein-Luckow, Germany, near Hamburg, on September 28, 1905. The son of a sailor, from a young age his life was to be that of a boxer. He turned professional in 1924 at age of 19 and won the German light heavyweight title two years later. On June 19, 1927, he won the European light heavyweight title, and then the German heavyweight crown. He soon went to the United States, where he had his first American fight at Madison Square Garden against Joe Monte on November 23, 1928. He won by knockout. The following year, also in New York, Schmeling signaled his intentions by

defeating a pair of top heavyweights, Johnny Risko and Paulino Uzcudun.

With these victories, he moved to the number-two ranking and a shot at the heavyweight title. At that time the crown was vacant, and Schmeling met Jack Sharkey to settle the title. They met on June 12, 1930, and Schmeling won when Sharkey was disqualified in the fourth round after delivering a low blow. This became the only occasion in boxing history when the heavyweight championship was won by disqualification.

In April 1933, not long after Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany, he summoned Schmeling—by now his favorite athlete—for a private dinner meeting with himself, Hermann Göring, Josef Goebbels, and other Nazi officials. In discussion, he told Schmeling that when he was in the United States he should inform the American public that reports about Jewish persecution in Germany were untrue. When Schmeling arrived in New York he complied, saying that there was no antisemitism in Germany and emphasizing the point that his manager, Joe Jacobs, was Jewish. Few were convinced, particularly as Hitler had banned Jews from boxing soon after he and Schmeling had met.

In July 1933 Schmeling married a blond, beautiful Czech movie star, Anny Ondra, and the two became Germany's most glamorous couple. The same year, Schmeling lost the title in a rematch with Sharkey after a controversial 15-round split decision, followed by defeat at the hands of Max Baer before a crowd of 60,000 at Yankee Stadium in June 1933. With this, the loss was deemed a "racial and cultural disgrace" by the Nazi propaganda newspaper *Der Stürmer*, which considered it outrageous that Schmeling would even have deigned to fight a "non-Aryan." Baer's father was Jewish, and Baer himself fought wearing shorts emblazoned with a Star of David.

By this stage Schmeling was viewed as a something of a Nazi puppet, when not being accused of sympathizing with Nazism. On March 10, 1935, he fought and knocked out American boxer Steve Hamas in Hamburg. At this, the 25,000 spectators spontaneously stood and sang the *Horst Wessel* (the Nazi anthem), with arms raised in the Hitler salute. This caused outrage in the United States, with Schmeling now being publicized in Germany as the very model of Aryan supremacy and Nazi racial superiority, something he would detest all his life.

During the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Schmeling requested from Hitler a promise that all American athletes would be protected, which Hitler respected. Around this time, the German dictator also began pressuring Schmeling to join the Nazi Party, which would have made a wonderful propaganda

coup for the regime. Not only did Schmeling refuse, he also turned down every inducement to stop associating with German Jews or fire Joe Jacobs as his manager.

Nonetheless, the German propaganda machine still found enough traction in Schmeling to retain him as a propaganda model of Aryan supremacy. The U.S. public also wanted Schmeling, but for the opposite reason. Rather than celebrating him, many in the United States hoped he would come back for another fight and lose—this time against the young American hero, the “Brown Bomber,” Joe Louis. As Schmeling’s record of late had not been strong, he went into the fight a 10–1 underdog, and many people thought that at 30 years of age he was past his prime.

On June 19, 1936, the fight took place at Yankee Stadium. Schmeling had studied his opponent’s technique closely and found a weakness in his defense. In the 12th round, he scored what some consider the upset of the century, when he sensationally knocked Louis out. In Germany, the Nazi press—to Schmeling’s dismay—boasted of the victory as representing white Aryan supremacy. When he returned to Berlin, he was invited by Hitler to join him for lunch.

A rematch at Yankee Stadium on June 22, 1938, was arguably the most famous boxing bout in history. The fight had huge implications, plain for all to see. It became a cultural and political event, billed as a battle of the Aryan versus the Negro, a struggle of evil against good. Held before a crowd of more than 70,000, the match saw a determined and highly motivated Joe Louis knock Schmeling out within two minutes and four seconds of the first round.

Schmeling later said that although he was knocked out in the first round and shipped home on a stretcher with a severely damaged spine, he was relieved that the defeat took Nazi expectations off him. It made it easier for him to refuse to act as a Nazi, and he was shunned by Hitler and the Nazi hierarchy for having “shamed” the Aryan Superman ideal.

On the night of November 9, 1938, as antisemitic mobs were sacking Jewish property throughout the Reich, Schmeling’s opposition to Nazism was tested as never before. One of his friends, a Jew named David Lewin, was a tailor at Prince of Wales, the shop where Schmeling bought his suits. As the Kristallnacht intensified throughout the night, Lewin asked Schmeling to shelter his two sons, Heinz and Werner, aged 14 and 15 respectively. Without hesitation, Schmeling took them to his room in the downtown Excelsior Hotel and kept them there for three days. He told the desk clerk that he was ill and must not be disturbed. After things settled down, he drove them to his house for further hiding; waiting another two days, he then delivered them to their father.

In 1939 Schmeling helped the family to flee the country altogether. They went to the United States where one of them, Henri Lewin, became a prominent hotel owner in Las Vegas.

For his part, Hitler never forgave Schmeling for losing to Louis, especially given the circumstances, or for refusing to join the Nazi Party. During World War II he saw to it that at the age of 35 Schmeling would be drafted into the Luftwaffe as an elite paratrooper, where he served during the Battle of Crete in May 1941. It was said that the Führer took a personal interest in seeing to it that the former champion would be sent on suicide missions.

After the war, Schmeling tried to reinvigorate his boxing career. He fought five times, but in May 1948 was beaten by Walter Neusel, whom he had defeated in a classic match several years earlier. This was his last fight. Across his career, Schmeling’s record read as 70 fights for 56 wins (40 by KO) and four draws.

In retirement, Schmeling became one of Germany’s most revered and respected sports figures. He remained popular not only in Germany but also in America. He was awarded the Golden Ribbon of the German Sports Press Society and became an honorary citizen of the City of Los Angeles. In 1967 he published his autobiography, *Ich Boxte mich durchs Leben*, later published in English as *Max Schmeling: An Autobiography*.

He bought a Coca-Cola dealership in 1957, from which he derived much financial success. This enabled him to become one of Germany’s most beloved philanthropists, a popular and much respected figure not only in Germany but also in America. He became friends with many of his former boxing opponents, in particular Joe Louis. He would often help out Louis financially, and their friendship lasted until the American’s death in 1981, when Schmeling, in a final tribute, paid for the funeral.

On February 28, 1987, Schmeling’s wife of 54 years, Anny Ondra, died. In 1992 he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, though sadly he was never honored by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile for his actions during the Kristallnacht of November 1938. No one, it seems, ever nominated him.

Max Schmeling was a man in conflict with both the Hitler regime and the racial policies of Nazism. The degree of resistance he showed was built around a sense of what it was to be a decent human being. On February 2, 2005, he died aged 99, at his home in Hollenstedt, near Hamburg.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: *Der Stürmer*; Kristallnacht; Propaganda; Rescuers of Jews

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Schmid, Anton

Anton Schmid, an Austrian soldier serving in the Wehrmacht during World War II, resisted the Holocaust through the saving of Jews—and was executed as a result. He was born in Vienna in 1900, married his wife Stefi, and had a daughter. An electrician by trade, by the time he reached early middle age he owned a radio shop and lived a comfortable life in Vienna.

Having been drafted into the German army after the *Anschluss* with Austria, he was mobilized upon the outbreak of war in September 1939. He was sent first to Poland, and then, after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, transferred to Nazi-occupied Lithuania. By the autumn of 1941 the now Sergeant Schmid was stationed near Vilna (Vilnius).

Witnessing the creation of the Vilna ghetto in September 1941, Schmid soon learned what the fate of the Jews was to be. Mass killings had already been taking place since July 1941, and they continued throughout the summer and fall. By the end of the year, some 21,700 Jews had been murdered by Einsatzgruppen units and their Lithuanian allies in the Ponary Forest near Vilna. Schmid was appalled, particularly as he saw children being beaten in front of him. From his perspective, it was unthinkable not to try to find a way to go to the Jews' aid.

Schmid's assignment in Vilna saw him commanding a unit responsible for reassigning soldiers who had been separated from their detachments. He was based at the Vilna train station; from here, he saw a great deal of the treatment meted out to Jews, and he lost no opportunity in using his position to ease their situation. He would take them off the trains and employ them as workers, arranged for some to be released from prison, organized new papers for others, and even—at immense personal risk—sheltered Jews in his office and personal quarters.

Among those he hid were Herman Adler and his wife Anita, both members of Vilna's prewar Zionist movement. Through them, Schmid met with one of the leaders of the nascent Jewish resistance movement in the ghetto, Mordechai Tenenbaum. The result saw him smuggling Jews out of Vilna to other Jewish cities such as Białystok—places where it was thought the Jews could have a better chance of survival. Schmid also acted as a conduit enabling various resistance groups to establish contact with one another.

Ultimately, Schmid's actions in hiding Jews, supplying them with false papers, and arranging their escape managed to save the lives of up to 250 men, women, and children. Within resistance circles, news of his activities on behalf of Jews spread; inevitably, he began to be watched more closely by Nazi authorities. The knowledge that he could be found out only emboldened him to work on behalf of Jews with greater determination and audacity.

Inevitably Schmid was found out. In the second half of January 1942 he was arrested, and on February 25 he was summarily court-martialed for high treason. The death penalty was the only possible outcome of such a trial, and on April 13, 1942, he was duly executed by firing squad.

Anton Schmid was an extremely brave human being. He clearly knew that he was placing himself in danger through his actions, and that, if caught, his fate would be sealed. For all that, however, he did not see anything particularly special in what he did. In his last letter to his wife Stefi, written from his prison cell prior to execution, he wrote, "I only acted as a human being and did not want to hurt anyone." His actions had an unfortunate outcome for Stefi, besides the obvious one of depriving her of her husband, his income, pension, and a war hero's death. When word got back to Vienna, her neighbors shunned her, referring to her husband as a traitor and socially ostracizing her. At one point, her windows were smashed.

The life-saving deeds of Anton Schmid had another outcome, however, when, on May 16, 1967, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Stefi Schmid received the award personally, having been flown to Jerusalem for the occasion.

Then, on May 8, 2000, the German government named a military barracks in Schmid's honor in Rendsburg, northern Germany, as the Feldwebel-Schmid-Kaserne. At the naming ceremony Germany's defense minister, Rudolf Scharping, said: "We are not free to choose our history, but we can choose the examples we take from that history. Too many bowed to the threats and temptations of the dictator, and too few found the strength to resist. But Sergeant Anton Schmid did resist."

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Einsatzgruppen; Ponary Forest; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Vilna Ghetto

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Scholl, Hans and Sophie

Hans Scholl and his sister Sophie were a brother and sister who were at the forefront of organizing a resistance movement within Germany against the Nazi regime during World War II. The movement, known as the *Weisse Rose* (“The

White Rose”), was largely centered on the University of Munich, where the Scholls were students.

Hans was born on September 22, 1918, in Ingersheim, the second of six children. Sophie was born on May 9, 1921, in Forchtenberg. Hans joined the Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*), and Sophie the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*) soon after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, and at first they were enthusiastic supporters of the Nazi regime. Their parents, however, were far less enamored with the Nazis and expressed their dissatisfaction to others.

The younger Scholls became increasingly disenchanted with the Nazi Party during their years at the University of Munich. Hans became a medical student, and Sophie studied biology and philosophy. By the early 1940s they had developed a belief that Hitler and the Nazis were ruining the German nation and engaged in atrocities against Jews and



Hans and Sophie Scholl, a brother and sister who, with others, organized the White Rose, an anti-Nazi movement centered among students at the University of Munich. They produced and distributed a series of leaflets condemning Nazism and calling on the German people to rise up against it. Hans and Sophie, together with Christoph Probst, were executed on February 22, 1943; others were later caught and also executed. (Authenticated News/Archive Photos/Getty Images)

others. They had also come to realize that all Germans had a duty to object to their government's policies and activities, and their attitudes were reinforced at home; in 1942 their father, Robert Scholl, was arrested for publicly doubting Germany's ability to win World War II.

In 1942, with a group of fellow students including Christoph Probst, Willi Graf, and Alexander Schmorell, and their professor, Dr. Kurt Huber, the Scholls helped to spearhead the White Rose. The group began posting and mailing various antigovernment posters and literature publicizing the atrocities perpetrated by Hitler's government, and urging Germans to resist the government and its policies. One of those who met with them and assisted briefly in these early days was a Swedish Red Cross delegate, Sture Linnér.

The focus of these statements was a series of numbered pamphlets campaigning for the overthrow of Nazism and the revival of a new Germany dedicated to the pursuit of goodness and founded on the purest of Christian values. The group's opposition to Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party was essentially based on religious morality and humanitarianism, with little, if any, overt political motivation.

The name of their movement came from a novel that had inspired the Scholls when they were young. Their initial pamphlet, of what would eventually be six, was secretly published in June 1942. The pamphlets attracted public attention, and copies were made and distributed widely. Problems arose regarding state-regulated supplies of paper and ink, which could only be overcome illegally, but eventually White Rose pamphlets were dispersed throughout Germany and Austria, denouncing the activities of the Nazi Party and decrying the murder of innocent German citizens, including Jews.

The activities of the group quickly drew the attention and ire of the Gestapo. Hans, Christoph Probst, and others were sent to fight on the Russian front from the summer of 1942 onward, exposing them to the horrors of the Holocaust and other wartime atrocities. This only encouraged their efforts to resist Nazi authority when they returned to Germany.

The range of the White Rose group expanded beyond the University of Munich. Students at the University of Hamburg also joined, and at its peak membership it had about 80 adherents.

In mid-February 1943 the White Rose arranged a small anti-Nazi demonstration in Munich. Their ideals inspired them to an ever-increasing number of daring acts, such as a run through the buildings of the university during which leaflets condemning the Nazis were scattered liberally in the hallways. On February 18, 1943, a janitor who was a Nazi Party member, Jakob Schmid, spotted Hans and Sophie

scattering copies of the sixth pamphlet from a balustrade in the atrium of the university. He raised the alarm, called the Gestapo, and had the Scholls and Probst arrested.

They were sent for a summary trial in the *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court) on February 22, 1943, and stood before Judge Roland Freisler, who berated them for their activities. They were quickly indicted for treason, and, defiantly, they admitted their crimes. Inevitably found guilty, Hans and Sophie Scholl, together with Christoph Probst, were executed by beheading the same day. It was noted by witnesses that all three faced their deaths bravely, with Hans claiming as his last words, "Long live freedom!" Hans was 24, Sophie was 21, and Christoph was 22. From arrest to execution took only four days.

Shortly afterward, numerous others associated with the White Rose were denounced, identified, and arrested by the Gestapo. Later that same year, other executions took place. Alexander Schmorell (age 25) and Dr. Kurt Huber (age 49) were both executed on July 13, 1943, and Willi Graf (age 25) on October 12, 1943. Another member, Hans Conrad Leipelt, who helped distribute the sixth leaflet in Hamburg, was executed on January 29, 1945, aged 23. Most of the other students convicted for their part in the group's activities received prison sentences; many were consigned to concentration camps.

The text of the sixth White Rose leaflet saw their efforts crowned in part, however. It was picked up by Helmuth James von Moltke and smuggled out of Germany, through Scandinavia, to the United Kingdom. In July 1943 tens of thousands of copies of the leaflet were air-dropped over Germany as "The Manifesto of the Students of Munich."

The White Rose movement and the story of the Scholls have become the subject of numerous depictions in literature and film, most notably two movies: *Die Weiße Rose* (dir. Michael Verhoeven, 1982) and *Sophie Scholl, Die letzten Tage* (dir. Marc Rothemund, 2005).

In death, the members of the White Rose became a spur to other anti-Nazi groups as well as the political left throughout Germany. After World War II the movement began to be seen by Germans as an admirable example of resistance to evil. The Scholls have become revered as among Germany's greatest heroes (particularly among younger Germans), with the White Rose Foundation and White Rose International serving as contemporary organizations that seek to preserve the memory of the White Rose and continue its tradition of "principled resistance." The bravery of the Scholls and their friends has come to represent individual sacrifice in the midst of unspeakable oppression and evil.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Freisler, Roland; Hitler Youth; League of German Girls; Resistance Movements; Upstander; White Rose

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Scholtz-Klink, Gertrud

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, born Gertrud Treusch and also known as Maria Stuckebrock, was born on February 9, 1902, in Adelsheim, Baden, Germany and died on March 24, 1999, in Tübingen-Bebenhausen. A Nazi Party member, Scholtz-Klink was leader of the National Socialist Women's League (*NS-Frauenschaft*) during the period of the Nazi regime. In 1920 Scholtz-Klink married Eugen Klink and had six children with him before he died in 1930. Scholtz-Klink joined the Nazi Party during its rise in the early 1920s, and she became leader of the women's section in Berlin in 1929. In 1932 she married Guenther Scholtz, but they divorced in 1938.

When the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, Adolf Hitler appointed Scholtz-Klink as the Reich Women's *Führerin*, or "Women's Leader," and head of the Nazi Women's League. The National Socialist Women's League (*Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft*, or NS-Frauenschaft) was the women's wing of the Nazi Party. The Frauenschaft was subject to Nazi Party leadership, the *Reichsleitung*. From February 1934 to 1945 Scholtz-Klink led the NS-Frauenschaft. A talented speaker, she was tasked with promoting male preeminence, the delights of housework, and the importance of child-bearing. In one of her speeches, "To Be German Is to Be Strong," she expressed to her followers that "the mission of woman is to minister in the home and in her profession to the needs of life from the first to last moment of man's existence."

In spite of her own elevated position in politics, Scholtz-Klink spoke against the participation of women in government. She stated, "Anyone who has seen the Communist and Social Democratic women scream on the street and in the parliament, will realize that such an activity is not something which is done by a true woman."

In July of 1936 Scholtz-Klink was promoted to head of the Women's Bureau in the German Labor Front, responsible for persuading women to work to the advantage of the Nazi government. In 1938 she argued that "the German

woman must work and work, physically and mentally she must renounce luxury and pleasure." Scholtz-Klink had the same impact over German women in the Nazi Party that Hitler had over Germany as a whole. In 1940 she married her third husband, SS-Obergruppenführer August Heissmeyer, and made recurrent trips to visit women in concentration camps.

Following World War II, Scholtz-Klink fled from the Battle of Berlin with Heissmeyer. In the summer of 1945 she was imprisoned in a Soviet prisoner of war camp near Magdeburg but escaped soon after. With the aid of Princess Pauline of Württemberg, she went into hiding in Bebenhausen, Germany. She spent the next three years under the alias of Maria Stuckebrock.

On February 28, 1948, Scholtz-Klink was identified and arrested. A French military court sentenced her to 18 months in prison on the charge of forging documents. In May 1950 an evaluation of her sentence categorized her as a "main culprit" and penalized her with an additional 30 months. After her release from prison in 1953, Scholtz-Klink settled back in Bebenhausen. In her 1978 book *Die Frau im Dritten Reich (The Woman in the Third Reich)*, Scholtz-Klink confirmed her ongoing support for the National Socialist ideology, beliefs she held to her death on March 24, 1999.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Lebensborn; National Socialist German Workers' Party

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Schönerer, Georg Ritter von

Georg Ritter von Schönerer was an early advocate of Pan-Germanism, Germanic religion, and antisemitism, and an important influence on the young Adolf Hitler. He was born on July 17, 1842, in Vienna. In 1869 and again from 1873 to 1888 and from 1897 to 1907, he was a member of the Austrian House of Delegates; in 1888, as a result of his involvement in an act of violence against political opponents, he was condemned to four months' imprisonment and loss of his parliamentary mandate. After 1907 he became politically very isolated in

Catholic Austria on account of his Los-von-Rom movement, in which he called for people to leave the Catholic Church (on the grounds of its alleged “friendliness to Slavs”) and to become Protestants. In 1879 Schönerer was involved in the foundation of the Pan-German Nationalist Party. In the Linzer Programme of 1882, he demanded the annexation of Austria to Germany under the leadership of the Hohenzollerns as a “fulfillment” of the German Reich and the abandonment of the “Slavic territories.” As leader of the *Alldeutsche Bewegung*, he established a hero cult of Richard Wagner—whom he saw as liberator of German art from “Judaization”—and Otto von Bismarck, who remained reserved toward him. Schönerer pursued an aggressively antisemitic campaign in his newspapers (*Unverfälschte Worte* and *Alldeutsches Tagblatt*). He claimed that a “Greater German Reich” was the desire of all Germans and pointed to the Jews as “an unproductive and alien element,” undermining the “moral and material foundations” of the German people (*Volk*).

Schönerer regarded antisemitism as “the central pillar of the national idea,” called for a battle to be waged for the “purity of German blood,” and attacked “the Jewish press.” Many of his demands anticipated later Nazi measures, such as his demand for special laws even for baptized Jews to establish a limitation of freedom of domicile, exclusion of Jews from the civil service, from the teaching profession and the press, and the creation of special “Jewish registers.” From February 1884 his gatherings took place under a banner that read: “Entry forbidden to Jews!” In his newspapers, Schönerer introduced the greeting “Heil to the Führer!” (addressed to himself). His German nationalism took on more and more strongly religious overtones; in 1883 he had described “German *Volkstum*” (national character) as “the perfect replacement for religion.” With his cult for old Germanic symbols like runes and Midsummer, Midwinter, and Yuletide festivals, and his introduction of old Germanic names of the months and ways of living among his followers, he influenced the later Germanic cult of Heinrich Himmler and the SS. Schönerer also argued that his followers should marry only “Aryan partners” and must be investigated for the “healthiness of their line.” Hitler referred to Schönerer admiringly many times in *Mein Kampf* but criticized him for his failure to win mass support and his faith in the parliamentary system.

Schönerer died on August 14, 1921.

MARKUS HATTSTEIN (TRANSLATED BY CYPRIAN BLAMIRE)

See also: Antisemitism; Catholic Church; National Socialist Program; “Racial Hygiene”; Volksgemeinschaft; Wagner, Richard

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Schöngarth, Karl Eberhard

Karl Georg Eberhard Schöngarth was born on April 22, 1903 in Leipzig, Saxony. His father was a builder. After graduating from high school in 1920, he served in the Freikorps. In 1922 he joined the Nazi Party, and earned his living as a bank employee. He served in the army during 1924, and then began studying law and statecraft. His doctor of laws was awarded in June 1929, and he worked as a university professor at Leibniz University in Hannover. From June 1932 Schöngarth was a legal assessor in Magdeburg, Erfurt, and Torgau.

On March 1, 1933 he joined the SS, and in May of that year rejoined the NSDAP, before joining the Prussian Gestapo in 1935. From November 1935 to 1936 he was assigned to the press section in the Berlin Gestapo, and during the first half of that year also acted as a political lawyer. From May 1936 to 1937 Schöngarth was in charge of the Gestapo office in Arnsberg, and during 1937–1938 was in charge of the Gestapo office in Bielefeld, Westphalia, then Dortmund, and then Munster.

In 1939 he became the chief government counsel to the SS, then, from October 1939 to March 1941, an inspector for SiPo and the SD in Dresden. From January 30, 1941 (the day he was also promoted to the rank of SS-Oberführer, or senior colonel) to January 14, 1943 he commanded the SiPo and SD in the *Generalgouvernement* in Poland. A fanatical enemy of the Jews, Schöngarth believed their “extermination” was necessary and wanted to harden his SiPo-SD commanders with the necessary “steel hardness” to be able to carry out their murderous actions. During the execution of Jews in Lvov, for example, he informed officers under his command that any SS officer failing to carry out an order of execution would himself be shot, and that he would support any officer who shot his comrade for this failure.

Schöngarth was characterized by an outstandingly fast intellectual grasp, strong willpower, and an impressive appearance, which commanded respect and obedience. His experience and high position within the security services of the Generalgouvernement, together with his ideologically safe political approach, led to his chief of the RSHA, Reinhard Heydrich, inviting Schöngarth to attend the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942, where he participated in the

discussion of the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*).

Schöngarth was promoted to SS-Brigadeführer (brigadier general) and police major general on January 30, 1943, and in July of the same year was transferred to the 4th SS Police Division in Greece, where he served until early July 1944.

From early July 1944 until the end of the war, Schöngarth was the senior commander of the SiPo and SD in The Hague, Holland. After his immediate chief HSSPF Hanns-Albin Rauter was wounded in 1945 in an ambush by Dutch resistance fighters, Schöngarth ordered the execution of 260 Dutch hostages in retribution. With the unsuccessful attempt on Rauter’s life, Schöngarth served in his place as higher SS and police leader in The Hague during March and April 1945.

After the war, Schöngarth was captured by the British, who investigated his background. After these inquiries, he was charged with the crime of murdering a downed Allied pilot (on November 21, 1944), and tried by a British Military Court in Burgsteinfurt. The murder of this airman came to light immediately after the war through two Dutch political prisoners who were employed at the SS/SD headquarters. On November 21, 1944 the crew of an Allied bomber bailed out near Enschede in Holland. One of the crew, a 26-year-old U.S. airman, fell into the grounds of a villa that was the headquarters of the German SS/SD. The American airman was unhurt, put into civilian clothes, and, with his hands cuffed behind him, taken by two SS men to a spot within the compound where a grave had already been prepared. He was shot in the back of the neck, buried, and the grave was then carefully camouflaged. In following a directive of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler concerning the treatment of captured Allied airmen, Schöngarth executed the downed pilot.

The two Dutch prisoners witnessed the airman falling to the ground, saw the airman in the cellar of the headquarters, and witnessed the airman’s transfer from the cellar to the grave where he was shot. The Dutch witnesses also confirmed the presence of Schöngarth and several other SD/SS who were present at the time. On his arrest Schöngarth denied complicity in the murder throughout. It was clear from the evidence of the co-accused that Schöngarth was implicated and had in fact given the order to execute the airman. He was found guilty of this war crime on February 11, 1946; he was sentenced to death by hanging. Schöngarth was executed by Albert Pierrepoint on May 15 or 16, 1946 at Hameln Prison.

It should be noted that Schöngarth was charged and executed for the one single act of murdering the airman in November 1944. He was not charged for the many crimes he

committed against thousands of murdered Jews in Galicia or in Lvov, or against the Dutch hostages in The Hague, or the many other crimes carried out by Einsatzgruppen units under his control.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Einsatzgruppen; Gestapo; Lange, Rudolf; Netherlands; Schutzstaffel; Wannsee Conference

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Schutzhaft

After the Reichstag Fire of February 27, 1933, the newly installed government of Adolf Hitler persuaded President Paul von Hindenberg to sign a Decree for the Protection of the People and the State. One of the measures introduced under this was a form of arbitrary arrest known as “protective custody,” or *Schutzhaft*.

As a policing concept, this had greater implications than would be found in the mere removal of a wrongdoer from society. Very few ordinary citizens were aware of what happened to a person taken into protective custody. Men who had been imprisoned and then released were cowed into such submission that they refused to discuss their experiences, and the Nazi authorities (the SS, SA, Gestapo, and SD) revealed nothing. Often a man simply disappeared from his home, his place of work, or even from the street, and his whereabouts were not disclosed.

Ignorance of the fate of *Schutzhaft* detainees served to provoke fear among the general population. As it appeared the authorities were indiscriminately arresting all manner of people on the flimsiest of charges (or often for no reason at all), it did not take long for the notion of protective custody to become synonymous with the word fear. Uncertainties abounded: the motives behind the arrest; what would happen in the future; treatment at the hands of the Nazis; and the means of avoiding such an arbitrary system of seizure and captivity. *Schutzhaft* was a necessary precursor to the concentration camps in its effect on the psychology of the masses; together, the two would combine to suppress all opposition to the Nazi regime.

The wave of early arrests understandably put enormous strains on the existing prison system, and it was soon clear that such a situation could not continue indefinitely. Moreover, the concept of protective custody, some believed, might become less terrifying if it became known that the detainee had “merely” gone to prison. An institution was thus needed that would concentrate all the *Schutzhaft* prisoners of a given region within a single, nonpenal, nonpublic detention center. There were decided practical and political advantages to the creation of such an institution: it would relieve the overcrowding in local prisons; it would assemble all the prisoners in one compound far removed from the prying eyes of civilian prison authorities; and it would serve to give concrete form to the sense of dread accompanying *Schutzhaft* arrests.

The earliest origins of a “concentrated” form of *Schutzhaft* imprisonment can be traced to a letter from Adolf Wagner, the leading Nazi official at the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, to Dr. Hans Frank, his counterpart at the Bavarian Ministry of Justice, dated March 13, 1933. Wagner suggested that if the existing prison system should prove unable to carry the strain of the great influx of new prisoners, “special protective custody quarters separate from the police prisons and those of the Ministry of Justice” be established. This was the genesis of what became the concentration camp system.

Once the singular function of gagging political opposition had been achieved, however, the Nazis saw the desirability of retaining the camps as a bolster to the regime. A regulation issued on April 12, 1934, by Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick acknowledged this, adding that the time was “not yet ripe for the complete abolition of protective custody.” The regulation produced a series of guidelines clarifying the whole issue, including such matters as how and to whom protective custody was to be applied, together with its intentions and its duration. One of its most important points stated that the use of protective custody would be permissible only (a) for the protection of the prisoner and (b) “if the prisoner by his behavior directly endangers law and order particularly by subversive activities.”

This made the likelihood of arbitrary arrests far greater than before, as it was now unnecessary to justify an “enemy” by seeking out an opponent belonging to a distinct group. By its vagueness the regulation left the choice of who was subject to *Schutzhaft* arrest open to the discretion of the senior Nazi officer on the scene, also noting that protective custody was not to be used as a punishment for criminal offenses.

In addition to standardizing the principles surrounding *Schutzhaft*, however, Frick’s regulation also expressed the

desire of the administration to restore “normal” conditions, and it followed that for the rest of 1934 and most of 1935 thousands of prisoners were actually released from protective custody. As a judicial concept, however, *Schutzhaft* was to stay in operation across the duration of the Third Reich, right down to the end of the regime in 1945.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Concentration Camps; Frank, Hans; Frick, Wilhelm; Sondergericht

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Schutzstaffel

The *Schutzstaffel* (SS), or Protective Squad, was created in 1923 as a specialized unit of fifty men as Adolf Hitler’s personal bodyguard, composed of men personally loyal to him. Heinrich Himmler took over its leadership in January 1929, when it had about 280 men. Himmler’s visions for his organization could have been inspired by his own Roman Catholic upbringing, and his admiration for the military strength and obedience of the Jesuit order. In its creation, Himmler conceived of this paramilitary group composed of persons of high moral caliber, honesty, decency, committed to the Nazi vision and agenda, and thoroughly antisemitic in orientation. The SS was technically part of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) until July 1934. Wearing distinctive black uniforms to distinguish them from the SA—uniforms created by fashion designer Hugo Boss—applicants for membership had to submit genealogies proving pure Aryan ancestry for at least four generations in order to qualify. The black uniforms and *Totenkopf* or “Death’s Head” insignias were introduced in 1932; its motto was “Loyalty is my honor.”

In 1930 Hitler made the SS the internal police of the Nazi Party and gave it responsibility for dealing with rebels within the party. The SS began to accumulate enormous power after Hitler became chancellor of Germany in January 1933. In April 1933 Himmler was appointed the chief of police for Bavaria, and by 1936 he had control of every police organization in Germany, including the Gestapo. The SS completed



The Schutzstaffel, abbreviated as SS, was the organization most responsible for the genocidal killing of the Jews during the Holocaust, as well as millions of other victims in war crimes and crimes against humanity during World War II. The SS was responsible for enforcing Nazi Germany's racial policy, as well as general policing, detective work, and security functions. The Waffen (armed) SS consisted of combat units of troops within Nazi Germany's military. (AP Photo)

its ascendancy within the Nazi Party in June 1934, when, on orders from Hitler, it murdered the leadership of the SA (and others) in the "Night of the Long Knives" and was made an independent party organization.

The SS consisted of two main groups: the Allgemeine-SS and the Waffen-SS. The Allgemeine-SS was composed of police units and organizations whose job was to monitor racial matters. Included within this division were the Gestapo, regular police, and the *Sicherheitsdienst* or SD, which was the Nazi espionage bureau. The Waffen-SS was created in September 1933, when Hitler's personal bodyguard was organized as a semi-independent battle formation. At its peak, the Waffen-SS fielded almost 40 full-strength divisions on both the Eastern and Western fronts. The Waffen-SS also administered the concentration camps through its Death's Head units.

The SS was branded a criminal organization at the Nuremberg Trials in 1946, which made membership an

offense punishable by prison, regardless of any other charges that might have been brought for individual actions. Himmler escaped capture for a few weeks after Germany's surrender, but he was caught at a British checkpoint and committed suicide in late May 1945.

The SS was an elite organization whose members felt a strong *esprit de corps* due to their rigorous physical training and supposed racial purity. By 1945, through Himmler's careful accumulation of various powers, it had become second in power to no other entity within Germany. It is certain that had Hitler died before the war ended, Himmler would have succeeded him or at least played a major role in selecting his successor.

LEE BAKER

See also: Himmler, Heinrich; Nazi Book Burning; Nuremberg Trials; Pohl, Oswald; Röhm, Ernst; Schöngarth, Karl Eberhard; Sicherheitsdienst; Stroop, Jürgen; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Sturmabteilung; Topography of Terror; Waffen-SS; Wirth, Christian; Wolff, Karl

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Second Generation

A term that refers to the children of Holocaust survivors and victims. As the Holocaust generation rapidly diminishes, the second generation is becoming more and more central to understanding the Holocaust and the memories and myriad issues it has produced. The second generation has had to deal with a host of issues that spring directly from their parents' experiences. Many feel obligated to preserve their parents' memories, which becomes a burden for some because they find themselves having to carry "transmitted trauma," particularly after their parents have died. This is not an easy task. Most members of the second generation have been affected by their parents' experiences in one way or another, and to varying degrees.

The children of non-Jewish survivors and victims have had a particularly difficult time coming to terms with the Holocaust because the larger culture has tended to view the Holocaust as purely a Jewish experience. And while Jews

certainly suffered more than any other group, hundreds of thousands of victims and survivors were not Jews. Yet, there is little popular recognition of that, which has made it more difficult for non-Jews to process their emotions and memories. Some children of first-generation non-Jewish survivors have had to deal with guilt in the mistaken assumption that their parents did not suffer as much as Jews.

In addition, non-Jewish children have not had the same sense of cohesiveness as that of Jewish children, and they have not had access to the large number of support organizations that Jews established soon after the Holocaust ended. There is a feeling among some non-Jewish children that their memories and voices have not been heard with the same intensity and variation as the many Jewish stories about the Holocaust.

The perspective by which most second-generation victims and survivors view the Holocaust is fundamentally different from that of their parents or society at large. The second generation has the ability to judge the Holocaust knowing the after-effects of it and how they have impacted those involved in it. This retrospective viewpoint can be very useful, but it also means that the second generation must rely increasingly on their memories or perceptions of their parents' memories, in effect second-generation memories, which can be problematic.

Those among the second generation have also experienced a far more complex and nuanced understanding of the Holocaust, particularly when compared to other individuals who have had no familial connections to it. They have learned that some survivors are not necessarily saints, or even "good" people. Others in the second generation came to learn from their parents that the Holocaust was not always black and white or good versus bad. Some survivors, for example, have told their children that some Jews during the Holocaust behaved abhorrently. Other have told stories of heroic Germans, Austrians, Poles, and others who are often grouped together with perpetrators in a monolithic way.

There can be no doubt that many in the second generation have borne—and continue to bear—the emotional and psychic scars of the Holocaust, which were (knowingly or not) passed on to them. Many Holocaust survivors suffered from lifelong emotional and mental afflictions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Until the 1970s, however, these problems went largely unrecognized and untreated, meaning that the children of those suffering from such illnesses were subjected to less-than-ideal family relationships and childhoods. As children, some in the second generation were ashamed of their parents, not because they

were Holocaust survivors, but because they exhibited strange behaviors that did not mesh with the norms of the larger society in which they lived. These issues significantly affected some in the second generation, but they also affected their relationships to their parents.

Several recent studies have shown that some in the second generation are also prone to emotional disturbances and even PTSD, despite the fact that they did not experience the Holocaust themselves. One study conducted in 2010 has even suggested that there are subtle differences in the genetic makeup of Holocaust survivors, which might be passed on to their children. It is not yet known how this might affect the children, however. Another recent study conducted at an Israeli university, however, has asserted that children of the Holocaust are no more likely to suffer emotional trauma than those who have no connection to it, unless their parents had suffered "extreme trauma" during the Holocaust.

The second generation has also begun producing a varied and rich body of work on the Holocaust, although many of its authors have experienced—to varying degrees—the same problems and limitations that the second generation in general has experienced. Some are like Art Spiegelman (author of *Maus* and *Maus II*), who has poignantly described how the Holocaust affected his parents, changing their lives as well as his in dramatic ways. Spiegelman had a contentious relationship with his father, which is one of the major themes in his graphic novels. Several other works also feature this theme.

More recently, studies have begun to be made of the grandchildren of the Holocaust, known in some circles as the Third Generation, or 3G. As the last generation of Jews who will have had firsthand relationships with survivors of the Holocaust, some see that they have a very special responsibility to ensure that the legacy of their grandparents lives on in the work they do, the lives they lead, and the memory they seek to transmit. In some Jewish communities, Third Generation activity is becoming a new vehicle for Jewish identity formation, and broad networks are being created.

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See also: *Maus* and *Maus II*; Survivor Testimony

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Segerstedt, Torgny

Torgny Segerstedt was a Swedish journalist who served as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Handelstidningen*, one of Sweden's leading liberal newspapers, between 1917 and 1945. The son of a teacher, he was born in Karlstad in 1876 and educated at Lund University, where he taught the history of religion from 1904 to 1912. In 1913 he moved to Stockholm University, where he taught until joining the newspaper in 1917.

Segerstedt's resistance to Nazism began as soon as Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933. Through the pages of his paper he launched an unceasing campaign against Hitler, starting with the comment that "To force the politics and press of the entire world to deal with that character, that is unforgivable. Mr. Hitler is an insult." He continued with other articles, prompting a response within days from senior Nazi Hermann Göring, who protested that the tenor of Segerstedt's articles, if continued, could threaten relations between Germany and Sweden.

Segerstedt's criticism saw him become one of the earliest European journalists to recognize where Nazism could lead, identifying that it could eventually lead to a new global conflict. In years to come, members of the Swedish government expressed concern at Segerstedt's condemnations, but he persisted nonetheless. As Nazi anti-Jewish measures intensified, he wrote in response to Sweden's silence on the passage of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, "We are responsible for what we say and for what we do not say."

Segerstedt opposed Sweden's participation at the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936 and was critical of the high point of British and French appeasement of Hitler, the Munich Agreement of September 1938. The excesses of Nazism, culminating with the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, saw his campaign continue with relentless vigor.

On November 30, 1939, the Soviet Union—at that time allied to Germany—attacked Sweden's immediate neighbor, Finland. Then, on April 9, 1940, Norway and Denmark were invaded by Germany. With war encroaching on Scandinavia, the Swedish government began to fight hard to maintain its neutrality, desperate not to antagonize the Nazis, and press censorship was introduced resulting in Segerstedt's editorials being cut. His response was to leave blank columns as an indication to his readers that press freedom had been assaulted.

Across Nazi-occupied Scandinavia, Segerstedt's articles and the *Handelstidningen* newspaper were banned, a measure that only served to give inspiration to resistance movements in Norway and Denmark. Indeed, in Norway the paper

was smuggled into both countries, the intention being to give hope to the fighters that they were not alone.

Throughout the war years Segerstedt continued to defy his government, which, in turn, held that he was too uncompromising in his sustained criticism of Nazi Germany. In 1940, at the request of the government, King Gustaf V called Segerstedt to Stockholm's Royal Palace for an audience in which he reproached Segerstedt for his irresponsibility. The king informed him that "If Sweden gets into the war, it will be your fault." When Segerstedt objected and tried to point out the morality of his stance, the king is reputed to have said: "We know why you are defending the Jews."

In this regard, Segerstedt's relationship with his Jewish mistress, Maja Forssman, was being thrown in his face. Soon after this *Handelstidningen* began to lose its advertising sponsors, while certain editions of the newspaper were actually seized by the government amid threats from Berlin. Despite such pressure, Segerstedt never gave in and maintained his condemnation of Hitler and Nazi Germany.

Segerstedt's story relates one man's moral courage in the face of intense pressure to back down for the sake of state interests. At the same time that Prime Minister Per-Albin Hansson, a longtime friend, pleaded with him not to drag Sweden into the war, he continued his writing—indeed, it has been estimated that Segerstedt wrote up to ten thousand articles across the span of his career. Of course, along the way he made many enemies. Several even played the antisemitic card in view of his relationship with Maja Forssman, sending him hate mail and calling him a "lackey" of the Jews.

On March 31, 1945, after a walk with his dogs (one of whom he had named "Winston" in honor of the British prime minister), Segerstedt fell ill and died in Gothenburg.

He was recalled in an award-winning movie made in 2012, *The Last Sentence* (dir. Jan Troell; Swedish title, *Dom över död man*, or *Judgement on the Dead*), which painted a particularly sensitive picture of Segerstedt as a man of intense convictions who struggled with what he saw as his moral duty in a world of increasing immorality. Starring Jesper Christensen, the film shows a Segerstedt who is zealous in his opposition to Hitler, conflicted in his interpersonal relations with those around him, and a major hero of the opposition to Nazism—against the advice of his friends, the preferences of his government, and the demands of his king.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Göring, Hermann; Kristallnacht; Munich Agreement; Olympic Games, 1936; Sweden; Upstander

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Serbia

Serbia was occupied by German forces in April 1941. By August 1942 it became the second country in Europe—second only to Estonia—to declare itself *Judenfrei* (free of Jews); such was the scope and lethality of the Holocaust in Serbia.

During the years that are relevant to the Holocaust, Serbia was an independent republic within the broader Federation of Yugoslavia. Its capital, Belgrade, was also the capital of Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia attempted to remain neutral during the initial years of World War II. When this was no longer possible, it joined Germany and the Axis powers on March 25, 1941. A coup was immediately staged by military officers who opposed the decision to ally with Germany. This, in turn, resulted in Hitler's decision to invade Yugoslavia, which Germany—along with Italy, Bulgaria, and Hungary—did on April 6, 1941. One week later, Germany occupied Belgrade, and 11 days after the invasion, on April 17, 1941, Yugoslavia officially surrendered. The four invading powers divided Yugoslavia among themselves. Serbia was occupied by Germany.

Before the month was out, the German occupiers were instituting anti-Jewish measures, similar to those that had been in place in Germany for years. These included registration with the police; restrictions against practicing certain professions; the need to wear an identifying Star of David on all outer clothing; restrictions on food; and a prohibition against the use of public transportation.

What occurred over the next 13 months—from April 1941 to May 1942—was the near-annihilation of the Jewish community in Serbia, which had numbered about 16,000 at the start of the war. Initially the Nazis intended to deport all the Jews from Serbia to the “East” (a euphemism for the extermination camps in Poland), but when that proved unworkable, and upon the advice of Adolf Eichmann, the decision was made for extermination.

The first wave of killing was focused on Jewish men. They were imprisoned in detention camps, including Topovske Šupe. During this time there was significant partisan resistance, leading to the issuance of an order by the Germans that proved disastrous for the Jews. It was an order for reprisal killing: for each German killed, a hundred Jews, communists, suspected communists, and others were to be killed; for each German wounded, fifty were to be killed. Since Jews and communists were conflated in the Nazi worldview, it was not surprising that nearly all Jewish men (approximately 8,000) were killed by November 1941. Once there were no more Jews to be killed, non-Jews became victims, including 1,000 male Roma. The death toll—both Jews and non-Jewish Serbs—is estimated to have reached 30,000.

In December 1941 the Nazis shifted their focus to Jewish women and children. By that time, the Semlin (Sajmište) concentration camp was built and began receiving this cohort of victims.

The Semlin camp was built in Belgrade on what were the Belgrade Exhibition Grounds. The now-empty pavilions on that site had been used in 1937 by Yugoslavia and other countries participating in the international exhibition. In October 1941 the decision was made by the Germans to convert these grounds and the pavilions into a concentration camp. It was named the Judenlager Semlin (the Semlin Jewish camp). Jews were forced to work on this conversion through November 1941, with Jewish women and children from Belgrade entering the camp in early December. More than 5,000 Jews were there by the end of the year, with that number set to expand to 7,000 in the early months of 1942. The combination of a particularly cold winter in 1941–1942, terrible conditions of overcrowding in the pavilions (now barracks), and a wholly inadequate diet, led to the death of more than 500 Jews by March 1942.

As was the case with Serbia's Jewish men, the Nazis had at one time entertained the possibility of deporting the women and children to the “East,” and made the same decision to kill them instead. However, unlike the men who had been shot, the women and children were killed in the spring of 1942 by the use of a gas van. This was a van that had a sealed divider that separated the victims from the driver. It was configured so the van's exhaust was redirected into the sealed section, thereby asphyxiating the women and children. More than 6,300 Jewish women and children were killed in this manner, meaning that virtually no Jews—men or women—were still alive in Serbia.

Romani victims were also brought to Semlin. They, however, fared better than the Jews. Although all were subject to

terrible conditions and an unknown number were killed throughout Serbia, most of them were released from Semlin during the first four months of 1942.

In May 1942, with the Serbian Jewish population almost completely eliminated, Semlin was converted to a detention camp and a distribution center for all of Yugoslavia. By August 1942 Serbia declared itself *Judenfrei*. While this was not completely true, the magnitude of the loss was staggering.

The impact of Nazi occupation was just as devastating in Vojvodina, an autonomous province in the north of Serbia. It was composed of four districts or regions: Baranja, in the northwest, and Bačka, in central Vojvodina, were controlled by Hungary; Syrmia, in the southwest, was controlled by the Nazi-puppet government of the Independent State of Croatia; and Banat (sometimes referred to as “the Banat”), the eastern third of Vojvodina, was, like Serbia, controlled by Germany, although in Banat the *Volksdeutsche* (people considered to be part of the German people or race, regardless of country of citizenship, living outside of Germany), a large minority, played a role in administering and enforcing the occupation.

Most of the Jews of Banat—about 2,500 in number—were deported to Serbia and killed, but not before they were tortured by the *Volksdeutsche*. Although Baranja had a very small Jewish community of perhaps 500, the Bačka Jewish community had some 20,000 Jews. These Jews were subject to beatings, torture, and killing by the occupying Hungarian forces. For example, over a two-day period in January 1942 the Hungarian army killed approximately 1,100 Jews in Bačka and an additional 900 Serbs. The vast number of Bačka Jews were ultimately deported to and killed in Auschwitz.

The statistics of all of this killing in Serbia and its autonomous province of Vojvodina show how severely the Jewish community was decimated during the Holocaust. Although, as noted, the Nazi occupiers of Serbia declared it to be *Judenfrei*, the fact is that there were Jewish survivors, albeit in very small numbers. Of the approximately 16,000 Jews living in Serbia when World War II broke out, only 1,500 survived. Of the approximately 20,000 Jews in Vojvodina (most in the Bačka region), only 3,000 survived. This represented a total loss of almost 90% of all the Jews in this area.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Croatia; Ethnic Cleansing; Gas Vans; Jasenovac; Krajcevac Massacre; Rademacher, Franz; Ustashe; Yugoslavia

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Seyss-Inquart, Arthur

Arthur Seyss-Inquart was a prominent Austrian Nazi and Reich commissioner in the Netherlands, largely responsible for the persecution of Dutch Jews.

Born in Stannern, Moravia, on July 22, 1892, Seyss-Inquart studied law at the University of Vienna before joining the Austro-Hungarian army. During World War I, he saw action and was badly wounded. After the war he became a lawyer in Vienna, where he developed right-wing views. A strong advocate of Anschluss (union with Germany) in the 1930s, Seyss-Inquart was regarded as the leader of the small Austrian Nazi organization. Publicly he sought to achieve reconciliation with the government headed by Kurt von Schuschnigg, but behind the scenes he eagerly undermined the Austrian state.

Seyss-Inquart became state councillor in May 1937, and in February 1938, following pressure by Adolf Hitler, Schuschnigg appointed Seyss-Inquart to the position of minister of the interior. When Schuschnigg announced a plebiscite on the Anschluss issue, the German government pressured him to resign on March 13, 1938, in favor of Seyss-Inquart as chancellor. The same day, German forces moved across the border, and Hitler announced the union of Austria with Germany.

Seyss-Inquart then became the Reich representative in the former Austria and minister without portfolio in Hitler’s cabinet. After Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, and then conquered the country within two weeks, Seyss-Inquart served as deputy governor there under Hans Frank. Displeased with the atrocities committed by SS forces and unable to exert any influence over policies, he asked for a new appointment.

In May 1940 Seyss-Inquart became Reich commissioner of the newly occupied Netherlands. He tried to come to terms with the Dutch and have them carry out a Nazification program, but instead of achieving collaboration, he found himself dealing with the Dutch Nazi movement. In Seyss-Inquart’s view, Dutch Nazi leader Anton Mussert’s followers were unsuited for German occupation policy. They were only a small minority with no real support from the Dutch population and no administrative experience.

Therefore, Seyss-Inquart preferred to work with, and through, the traditional elites. He sought to resign his post, but Hitler refused his request, believing that Seyss-Inquart’s

moderate approach would achieve the desired results. On the other hand, Seyss-Inquart instituted a reign of terror toward certain elements of the Dutch population. He was partly responsible for recruitment of Dutch workers to be relocated in the Reich, was wholly responsible for the deportation of scores of thousands of Dutch Jews to the extermination camps, and worked to ensure German exploitation of the Dutch economy.

After the war Seyss-Inquart was charged with war crimes and tried at Nuremberg. Specifically, the charges against him cited his heavy-handed repression of the Dutch resistance effort, the placement of thousands of Jews in the Amsterdam ghetto, and the deportation of some 110,000 Jews to death camps in the East, where all but 5,000 perished—leading to an overall loss of 75% of Dutch Jews (including foreign nationals) between 1940 and 1945. Seyss-Inquart was found guilty and hanged on October 16, 1946.

MARTIN MOLL

See also: Austria; Mussert, Anton Adriaan; Netherlands; Nisko Plan; Nuremberg Trials

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Shanghai Ghetto

The Shanghai Ghetto was an area in the Hongkew (Hongkou) section of Shanghai, China, in which thousands of refugee Jews from Germany, Austria, Russia, and Poland lived before and during World War II. The area, which covered about one square mile, saw a large influx of Jews fleeing persecution in Europe beginning in the 1930s; by 1939 the number of Jews residing there was about 17,000. There were small concentrations of Jews in other parts of the city, some of whom had been there since the early part of the 20th century. After the Sino-Japanese War began in 1937, Japanese forces occupied much of Shanghai, but they did not immediately impose restrictions on Jews residing there. Not until the December 1941 Pearl Harbor attack, which brought war between Japan and the United States, did the Japanese require virtually all Jews in Shanghai to live in the ghetto.

The Shanghai ghetto was part of the International Settlement, which dated to 1842, when the port at Shanghai was opened to international trade and commerce. It was

administered by a council of Western nations including France, the United States, Britain, Italy, and Portugal. The first Jews to arrive in the settlement were Sephardic Jews from Iraq, who quickly established commercial enterprises there. They numbered between 700 and 1,000 people. During and after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the settlement became home to several thousand Ashkenazi Jews who were fleeing persecution. Many became shopkeepers and small business owners who catered to the city's small Jewish population.

In 1933, after the Nazis came to power in Germany, German Jews began migrating to Shanghai in increasing numbers; many were professionals and businessmen and their families. In 1938, after Germany's annexation of Austria in March and the November Kristallnacht Pogrom, which saw widespread destruction of Jewish-owned businesses and property, the pace of Jewish immigration to Shanghai increased dramatically, with as many as 15,000 arriving there between 1938 and 1941. Between late 1940 and early 1941, some 2,100 Jews from Lithuania also found refuge in Shanghai. This brought the total number of Jews in Shanghai to about 24,000; virtually all lived in the International Settlement. After the Pearl Harbor attack, however, hardly any Jews were able to make their way to Shanghai.

Even though the Japanese were allied with Nazi Germany, they did not share the same hatred or antipathy toward Jews. Most Japanese occupation officials in Shanghai viewed them simply as stateless refugees. Indeed, as the war progressed and the Germans called for the Japanese to institute draconian measures against Shanghai's Jewish refugees, Japanese officials did not comply. In late 1942, however, the Japanese did hatch a plan that would require virtually all Jews in Shanghai to live in the "Designated Area for Stateless Refugees," which would informally be known as the Shanghai ghetto. The plan was implemented in February and called for all Jews who had arrived in Shanghai after 1937 to reside in the ghetto. This pushed the area's Jewish population to some 20,000. The Japanese did this to protect the refugees and to ensure that they did not become collaborators with Chinese forces.

Although conditions in the ghetto were not nearly as bad as those in Europe, Jewish refugees nevertheless found themselves chronically short of food and clothing and forced to reside in crowded and primitive living quarters. The Japanese did not erect a wall or fence around the area, but they did enforce a curfew and required that anyone leaving or entering the ghetto have a written pass. Native Chinese continued to live among the Jews in the ghetto, which lessened their isolation. The Shanghai Ghetto witnessed the thriving of Jewish

education, culture, and religious observances, unlike Nazi-run ghettos in Europe, where such things were strictly forbidden. The ghetto had its own newspapers, theaters, schools, sports teams, synagogues, and even cabarets. Indeed, each group (German, Austrian, Russian, and Polish) had their own such institutions, based on language and culture.

In 1944 U.S. bombers began operations against Shanghai in the final push to defeat Japan and drive its troops out of China. In July 1944, an air raid on Shanghai resulted in the deaths of 40 Jewish refugees in the ghetto; it is believed that as many as several hundred Chinese residents were also killed. This was the only time during the war that Jewish refugees in Shanghai were killed. American troops entered Shanghai and liberated it in September 1945. Thereafter, many Jews left, choosing to settle in the new State of Israel after 1948. After Mao Zedong's communist forces took control on mainland China in late 1949, most of the remaining Jews left. Today, it is believed that no Jews are left in Shanghai.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Fugu Plan; Ghettos

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Sharp, Waitstill and Martha

Waitstill Sharp was a Unitarian minister and humanitarian who helped hundreds of Jewish and non-Jewish refugees in Europe during the late 1930s and early 1940s. He was aided in these efforts by his wife, Martha, who was a prominent American social worker. In 2006 Israel's Yad Vashem posthumously honored the Sharps as Righteous among the Nations.

Waitstill Sharp was born in Boston in 1902 to an old and distinguished family. He attended Boston University, Harvard Law School (class of 1926), and earned a master's degree from Harvard University in 1931. He then became involved in the Unitarian Church, was ordained a minister, and first presided over a congregation in Pennsylvania in 1933. Martha Sharp was born Martha Ingham Dickie in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1905. She studied at Pembroke College (Brown University) and then undertook advanced

studies in social work at Northwestern University. She also earned a master's degree from Radcliffe College (Harvard University). Martha went on to become a noted social worker, having wed Waitstill in 1927. In 1936 the couple moved back to the Boston area when Waitstill became pastor of a Unitarian church in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

In 1939 the American Unitarian Association asked the Sharps to join the Unitarian Service Committee, which was tasked with aiding displaced persons and refugees in Europe as World War II approached. The couple immediately accepted the challenge and were sent to Prague, Czechoslovakia, where they administered aid and relief to hundreds of Jewish and non-Jewish refugees. They were also instrumental in securing visas for several hundred refugees and arranged transport to other nations, principally Great Britain, with Martha personally escorting 35 refugees there. In the late summer of 1939 the Sharps were warned that the Gestapo was aware of their activities and would likely arrest them.

In August 1940 the Sharps fled Prague and passed through Vichy-controlled France. They were bound for Lisbon, Portugal, where they hoped to continue their aid and rescue efforts. While in France, they were alerted that Lion Feuchtwanger, a prominent German-Jewish writer, had been imprisoned there. The Sharps set in motion an elaborate rescue scheme to free Feuchtwanger, which was facilitated by the U.S. consulate in Marseille, as well as by Varian Fry, an American journalist and emissary for the U.S. Emergency Rescue Mission. The plan was akin to a plot from a spy thriller, with Feuchtwanger spirited out of prison disguised as a woman. In September 1940, Martha, disguised as a local peasant woman, accompanied Feuchtwanger and his wife to a train at the French-Spanish border. Once they reached Spain, Waitstill and Martha secured passage for the couple on a ship to the United States later that same month.

After this heroic rescue, Martha returned to France to arrange for travel permits for a number of refugee children, including nine Jews. After having secured the permits and the required U.S. visas, in late November 1940, Martha sent the children to the United States; they arrived in New York the following month. The Sharps also worked with the World YMCA to help secure the release of Czech prisoners of war being held by Vichy. The Sharps aided a number of other Jewish and non-Jewish refugees in neutral Lisbon.

After the war ended, Waitstill and Martha separated and were later divorced; both believed that the stress of their rescue efforts had led to the split. Waitstill continued on with the Unitarian Church and was involved in a variety of

philanthropic and relief efforts. Martha became heavily involved in Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization, and also helped resettle Jews—many of them children—in Israel after its formal founding in 1948. Between 1950 and 1953 she also sat on the National Security Resources Board, an advisory panel designed to keep the U.S. president and secretary of defense informed on issues relating to defense and national security. Waitstill died in 1984; Martha died in 1999.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Fry, Varian; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Sheptytsky, Andrey

Andrey Sheptytsky was the Metropolitan archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Lvov (Lviv) between 1901 and 1944, harboring hundreds of Jews in his residence and in Greek Catholic monasteries during the Holocaust.

Born on July 29, 1865, in the village of Prylbychi, Galicia, he came from a family that had strong Polish, aristocratic, and Catholic roots, though with an Orthodox Ukrainian line stretching back many centuries. Sheptytsky received his education first at home and then in Kraków. He studied law in Kraków and Breslau (Wrocław), earning a doctorate in 1888, and then entered a Basilian monastery of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and took the name Andrey, after Ukraine's patron saint. He was ordained on August 22, 1892, following which he studied at the Jesuit Seminary in Kraków. Here, in 1894, he received a second doctorate, in theology. On September 17, 1899, he was consecrated a bishop by Metropolitan Julian Sas-Kuilovsky, and the following year, on December 12, 1900, appointed Metropolitan Archbishop of Lvov.

During World War I, Sheptytsky was arrested by the Russians due to his national origin in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In March 1918, as a result of the Russian Revolution, he was released and returned to Ukraine, at that time a quasi-independent republic under German suzerainty.

Before World War II Metropolitan Sheptytsky became the de facto head of all Ukrainian aspirations, and where

Jewish-Christian relations were concerned he had a long and sympathetic past from which he could draw. While a student he had learned Hebrew; in his pastoral visits to mixed Ukrainian-Jewish villages he would be met by local delegations led by the town or village priest, who would be followed by the local rabbi carrying the village Torah. Given the time and place, Sheptytsky's relationship with the Jews was strong.

That said, Sheptytsky's responses to the war were to be diverse. Following the Nazi invasion of Ukraine at the end of June 1941, the Organization of the Ukrainian Nationalists, led by Yaroslav Stetsko, declared an independent Ukrainian state. This was immediately crushed by the Germans, but Sheptytsky had already issued a pastoral letter welcoming the Nazis as liberators from the Soviet yoke and recognizing Stetsko as de facto head of the new Ukrainian government. This would throw a huge cloud over his subsequent actions, the more so as anti-Jewish pogroms broke out immediately after the declaration of independence was announced.

Sheptytsky knew of the pogroms; he had been informed of developments on either July 1 or 2 by Lvov's chief rabbi, Ezekiel Lewin. The extent to which he tried to check them, however, is highly disputed. It is likely, in fact, that he might have had little control over what was happening in any case, given the mob nature of the riots.

How Sheptytsky responded to Chief Rabbi Lewin is unknown to this day. It is clear, however, that he offered sanctuary to Lewin and his family, and that Lewin accepted the offer on behalf of his children but refused it for himself, saying that his duty was to stay with his community. Later, he was arrested by Ukrainian militia and murdered. Sheptytsky took charge of two of Lewin's three sons (the other died in a Nazi camp), providing forged certificates of baptism, new identities, and instructions to his priests to train the boys to pray in Ukrainian. Both were to survive.

From early 1942 onward Sheptytsky had been providing a refuge to Jews through his church, instructing monasteries and convents to follow his lead. From then until the liberation, no Jewish child was forcibly converted to Christianity, and all were to survive the Nazis. It has been calculated that Sheptytsky personally arranged for the hiding of 150 Jews—mostly children and about a dozen rabbis—in his official residence and throughout his monasteries.

He also protested the killing of Jews to high-ranking Nazis who made official visits to his residence, and sent a letter to Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler objecting to Nazi treatment of the Jews and the use of Ukrainians in anti-Jewish repressions. His letter included a request that Ukrainian police and militias be removed from duty in the camps. On

November 21, 1942, he issued a strong pastoral letter to all Ukrainians denouncing the killing. As a final indicator of his attitude toward Nazi antisemitic measures, he wrote a number of letters to Pope Pius XII advising him of the Nazis' "diabolical" nature.

While it seems clear that Sheptytsky sheltered Jews during the Holocaust, there is a great deal of ambiguity regarding his support for the Nazis. He did not sympathize with Nazi ideology but initially thought that German rule would be better than that of the Soviets, and he appeared to hold hopes of exploiting the German presence in order to buttress a possible Ukrainian state. The invasion of Ukraine in the summer of 1941 did not at first shake this belief; indeed, it took nearly a year before he realized that Nazi occupation policies were even more brutal than those of the Soviets. It was only after this that he really began to assist the Jews, leading some to ask whether his early support for the Nazis actually served to assist them in the first year of the Holocaust in Ukraine.

Adding to the complexity of Sheptytsky's response to the Nazis and, through that, to the Holocaust is the support he gave to the creation, in April 1943, of the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division ("Galician"), a German military formation initially made up of volunteers from Galicia with a Ukrainian ethnic background. Sheptytsky blessed the division and those who joined it—perhaps thinking that they could serve as the nucleus of a future Ukrainian army, perhaps in the hope that they could protect the country in the event of a German collapse and Soviet reconquest.

The gray area involving Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky during the Holocaust is thus highly complex. Many of those he saved have sought to have him recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations, including former Polish foreign minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld, Nobel Prize-winning chemist Roald Hoffmann, and Chief Rabbi David Kahane of the Israeli Air Force. In Israel, the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous has debated in considerable detail whether Sheptytsky's initial support for the Nazi occupation contributed to the murder of Jews in Ukraine and has, as a result, continued to deny him as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Ironically, Sheptytsky's brother, Klementiy, was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations in 1995, and on June 27, 2001, was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

On November 1, 1944, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky died at the age of 79 in Lvov. In 1958 an initial investigation into the cause for his possible beatification and canonization commenced, and on July 16, 2015, Pope Francis signed a

decree declaring him "venerable," an initial step in the sainthood process.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Children during the Holocaust; Pius XII; Rescuers of Jews; Ukraine; Waffen-SS

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Shirer, William L.

William Lawrence (Bill) Shirer was an American journalist, war correspondent, and historian. Born in Chicago in 1904, he attended Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and in 1925



William L. Shirer was a leading American journalist in prewar Europe. He and his wife Tess would often shelter Jews in their own home and provide them with foreign currency and the means to escape the country for other lands of refuge. Upon leaving Germany in December 1940, he smuggled out voluminous notes and diaries that were subsequently published and did much to alert American public opinion as to why the Nazis had to be resisted in the future. (Corbis via Getty Images)

moved to France to take up a position as European correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*. In 1931 he married Theresa (“Tess”) Stiberitz, an Austrian photographer. Between 1934 and 1940 Shirer lived and worked in Nazi Germany, working for the Berlin bureau of the Universal News Service until 1937 and then as European bureau chief of CBS radio based in Vienna, reporting to Edward R. Murrow.

Fluent in German, French, and Italian, Shirer thrived in his new environment. When the German annexation of Austria took place on March 12, 1938, Shirer, as the only American broadcaster in Vienna, was obliged to fly to London to report on what he had seen; he could not do so in Vienna itself, as CBS did not possess radio facilities there. With this as a precedent, he then reported on all the major developments in Europe that followed, including the Munich Agreement (September 30, 1938), the German annexation of what remained of Czechoslovakia (March 15, 1939), and the German invasion of Poland (September 1, 1939).

Throughout this time, Shirer was an acute observer of Nazi policies regarding the harassment of Jews, and almost as soon as he arrived in Germany he was conscious of the Nazi attempt to terminate the Jewish presence. In 1935 he reported on the Nuremberg Laws, which stripped Jews of their German citizenship and introduced other restrictions reducing them to second-class noncitizens. He continued his reports the following year when additional restrictions on Jews were made, and with each successive antisemitic measure he became more and more disgusted by what he witnessed.

Wherever possible, Shirer took a stand against the Nazis through his reportage, but he found himself in a difficult position. There was only so much on which he could report, as his outgoing dispatches were watched carefully by the Nazi state as a condition of his credentials being respected. While reporting the 1936 Olympics from Berlin, for example, he was publicly condemned by the Ministry of Propaganda for exposing the antisemitism he detested. He was threatened with expulsion and accused of being a “German hater,” in what would not be an isolated reference.

The threat of expulsion dogged Shirer. He was concerned that if he went too far he could suffer the same fate as Dorothy Thompson, who, in August 1934, became the first American journalist to be expelled from Nazi Germany for having written articles considered offensive to the regime. Shirer’s reporting, therefore, was fenced in by a form of self-censorship; this was to become much more formalized once war broke out, when state-imposed censorship was introduced.

As foreigners, Bill and Tess Shirer did what they could to help such Jews as they encountered, though the position of

Tess, as an Austrian-born U.S. citizen, placed her in a precarious position. They put themselves at risk by sheltering Jews whom they knew personally, using their home as a refuge for those who had gone into hiding. Shirer exploited his contacts located in the United States, as well as in the British, French, and Swiss embassies and consulates, to try to get visas for Jews trying desperately to leave Germany. Despite the ban on trading in foreign currency, he also worked to procure moneys to help tide Jews over once they managed to move to new countries.

Occasionally the Shirers would find themselves harboring a Jew who had just been released from a jail or concentration camp. In such circumstances, he related later, their guest would often have been badly beaten or mistreated, and they would care for him until he had recovered sufficiently to be able to return to his family in something resembling a passable condition. For all his efforts at saving people, however, Shirer knew that his contribution was only a minor one, as most Jews could not avail themselves of the help he and Tess were able to provide.

As a journalist from a neutral country, Shirer was permitted to remain in Germany and report back to the United States. He covered the invasion of Denmark and Norway in April 1940, followed by Germany’s further invasions of the Low Countries and France on and after May 10. He moved with the German armies as they progressed through France and was the only foreign correspondent to report in person to the American people on the French surrender at Compiègne on June 22, 1940.

Despite this, he found himself increasingly frustrated by the Nazi state from which he was reporting. With Germany victorious on all fronts, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels placed pressure on Shirer to broadcast official accounts of Germany’s war efforts, rather than independent reports. Shirer began pestering CBS management in New York to relieve him of this assignment, and the situation was not helped when he learned that the Gestapo was waiting for him to slip up in one of his reports so they could arrest him for espionage. Finally, he managed to leave Germany in December 1940. As he left, he smuggled with him his diaries and notes from his time in Germany. These were to be published in 1941 as *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934–1941*.

Much of what Shirer wrote did not refer specifically to Jews; he was too savvy to commit his thoughts to paper, and certainly not to broadcast them. Shirer’s resistance to Nazism, where Jews were concerned, must be measured by his actions—and in this regard, his behavior spoke loudly.

Underscoring his commitment to covering the crimes of Nazi Germany, he returned to Europe to report on the Nuremberg Trials in 1945.

Shirer's masterwork, although it appeared well after the end of the war, was to be his study of Nazi Germany, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, which appeared in 1960. One of the first major studies of its subject, it won the 1961 National Book Award for Non-Fiction. The author of many other important works, Shirer died in Boston in 1993, aged 89.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Anschluss; Czechoslovakia; Munich Agreement; Nuremberg Laws; Olympic Games, 1936; Rescuers of Jews

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Shoah

The word Shoah is a Hebrew term used to describe the mass murder of several million Jews by the Nazis and their allies during the 1930s and 1940s. Within a number of European languages, it has come to serve as a synonym for the English word Holocaust. Shoah may be translated as "Devastation," "Destruction," or "Catastrophe." In recent years, an increasing number of scholars, Holocaust researchers, and Jews have begun to eschew the use of the term Holocaust, and have been substituting it with the word Shoah.

One of the problems with the term Holocaust is that it was a label given to the genocide of the Jews largely by non-Jews. The other problem with the term is that it is derived from the Hebrew Bible concept of offering a complete and consumable burnt offering to God for the expiation of sins. The Holocaust was certainly not an offering to God, so scholars and others sought a more appropriate descriptor for the genocide of the Jews.

The word Shoah can be found in the Book of Isaiah (10:3) and in that context refers to the day of reckoning that will precede the final judgment of the Israelites. Although Shoah is perhaps closer than the word Holocaust in describing the Nazi-inspired genocide of European Jews, it too does not fully describe the events of the 1930s and 1940s, which were not set into motion by God but rather by evil-minded human

beings. The term Shoah was first used in print in 1940, and it was popularized in 1985, when French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann released a nine-and-a-half-hour documentary film by the same name that examined the events of the Holocaust and its aftereffects through a series of interviews with witnesses and survivors.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Churban; Final Solution; Holocaust

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Shoah

A nine-and-a-half-hour film documentary on the Holocaust, directed by French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* was released in 1985 and is available in several languages, with subtitles in French, English, Polish, German, Yiddish, and Hebrew. The documentary took nearly 11 years to make, as it features dozens of interviews with victims, perpetrators, and witnesses that were conducted in 14 different countries. It is unusual among documentaries in that it does not employ the use of any archival footage; rather, it lets the interviewees relay the arc of the story. There are also no narrative interpretations or conclusions. Some of the interviews go into minute detail of seemingly mundane and everyday occurrences, which taken as a whole divulge the "banality" of evil, to use Hannah Arendt's terminology.

Because of Lanzmann's approach to the subject, the film has a somewhat loose and fluid narrative. The documentary is, however, broken down by subject matter—it covers the Chełmno, Treblinka, and Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps and then the Warsaw Ghetto. These four general topics are treated using current-day footage and scores of interviews. Jan Karski was interviewed extensively concerning the Warsaw Ghetto. One interview with a former camp guard was filmed clandestinely; the interviewee had granted only an audio interview. Finally, historian Raul Hilberg answers questions relating to German propaganda and the Holocaust. During many of the interviews, survivors and witnesses are actually taken to the sites of massacres, where their reactions—most of them emotion-charged—add to the film's effectiveness.

After its release, *Shoah* was lauded by moviegoers and critics alike as a film that literally had no equal. The celebrated

reviewer Roger Ebert called it “an extraordinary film” but refused to name it best film of the year because he believed it was in a class by itself and should not be ranked against any other movies. *Shoah* won numerous awards and prizes in the United States and around the world.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz; Banality of Evil; Birkenau; Chelmno; Churban; Hilberg, Raul; Holocaust; Treblinka; Warsaw Ghetto

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Sicherheitsdienst

The *Sicherheitsdienst*—the Nazi state security and intelligence agency—was created in 1931 by Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS and one of the highest-ranking Nazi Party leaders. The *Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers*, usually abbreviated simply as SD, was founded almost two years before Adolf Hitler came to power in January 1933. Its primary purpose was to act as internal spy agency, but it soon became one of the prime movers of Germany’s mass deportation and extermination of European Jews. The SD detected and helped root out all actual or potential enemies of the Nazi state and worked closely with the Gestapo (secret police), which arrested, deported, or killed state enemies.

Reinhard Heydrich headed the SD until his assassination in June 1942, after which Himmler appointed Ernst Kaltenbrunner to succeed him in January 1943; he remained in the post until the end of World War II in 1945. From 1933 until 1939 the SD, which reported directly to Himmler, was run as an independent SS office. After 1939 it became part of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA).

The SD employed several hundred full-time intelligence agents but made use of thousands of informants, who worked inside Germany until 1939, and then both inside Germany and in occupied territories between 1939 and 1945. As German armies pushed into areas and occupied them, the SD sometimes lent its staff to the Einsatzgruppen, or mobile killing squads, which rounded up and killed Jews and other “undesirables” in places like Poland and the western part of the Soviet Union. SD personnel were also posted to concentration and death camps, and the SD was the principal security and police force tasked with keeping order in the various Jewish ghettos throughout Europe.

Within Germany, the SD enforced Nazi racial laws by intimidating, terrorizing, killing, or deporting Jews and other groups deemed “undesirable.” It also confiscated millions of dollars’ worth of private property that had belonged to German Jews and other oppressed groups. The SD played a major role in the Kristallnacht pogrom (November 9–10, 1938), during which at least 500 Jewish businesses, homes, and synagogues were destroyed. According to Nazi statistics, some 90 Jews died during the pogrom (though the figure is almost certainly much higher than this), and another 30,000 were arrested and detained. Many of those men were never seen again.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the International Military Tribunal (IMT), which conducted the Nuremberg Trials, ruled the SD to be a criminal organization. As part of the wider effort to bring about denazification in postwar Germany, the occupying Allies banned the SD and ordered its immediate dissolution. Unfortunately, many of the SD’s leaders were never brought to justice.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Barbie, Klaus; Einsatzgruppen; Heydrich, Reinhard; Himmler, Heinrich; Höppner, Rolf-Heinz; Kaltenbrunner, Ernst; Lange, Rudolf; Nuremberg Trials; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Rothaug, Oswald; Schutzstaffel; Topography of Terror; Wirth, Christian

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Sippenhaft

Sippenhaft, or *Sippenhaftung* (“kin liability”) was a legal practice in Nazi Germany whereby relatives of those accused of crimes against the state were held to be equally responsible, and arrested and sometimes executed. The concept was based on ideas of blood and purity. A relative of the perpetrator could be punished in place of or in addition to the perpetrator, depending on the circumstances. These threats, fears, and infliction of *Sippenhaft* formed part of the Nazi system of terror.

As a legal principle, *Sippenhaft* is derived from traditional Germanic law (the law of Germanic peoples before the widespread adoption of Roman canon law), which accepted that the clan of a criminal was liable for offenses committed by

one of its members. This law, which also prevailed among Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian peoples, distinguished between two forms of justice for severe crimes such as murder: blood revenge, the right to extrajudicially kill a Germanic freeman in the context of clan feuds; and blood money, the obligatory pecuniary restitution given to the kin of the victim in accordance with the nature of the crime and the social status of those affected. The kin of the offender was liable to pay in addition to or in substitution for the family member who committed the crime.

Another form of *Sippenhaft* distinct from traditional kin liability is the practice of kin punishment, often used in Nazi Germany toward the end of World War II. Examples of *Sippenhaft* being used as a threat exist within the Wehrmacht from around 1943. Soldiers accused of having “blood impurities,” or soldiers conscripted from areas outside of Germany, also began to have their families threatened and punished with *Sippenhaft*. In Nazi Germany, the term was given a new meaning: the punishment of relatives for the offense of a family member. In this form of *Sippenhaft* the relatives of persons accused of crimes against the state were held to share the responsibility for those crimes and were subject to arrest and sometimes execution.

An example is the case of a soldier, Panzergrenadier Leiss, who was accused of desertion on the Eastern Front in December 1942. After the Düsseldorf Gestapo discovered supposed “Polish” links in the Leiss family, in February 1943 his wife, child, two brothers, sister, and brother-in-law were arrested and executed at Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

By 1944 several general and individual directives were ordered within divisions and corps, threatening troops with consequences against their families.

After the failure of the July 20, 1944, Bomb Plot, SS chief Heinrich Himmler told a meeting of Nazi Party district chiefs in Posen that he would introduce absolute responsibility of kin. According to Himmler, the bomb plotters had committed treason. Their “blood” was “bad,” and that blood must therefore be “wiped out.” Accordingly, the members of the family of Claus von Stauffenberg, who had planted the bomb that failed to kill Hitler, were all under suspicion. His wife, Nina Schenk Gräfin von Stauffenberg, was arrested and sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp (she survived and lived until 2006). His brother Alexander, who knew nothing of the plot and was serving with the Wehrmacht in Greece, was also sent to a concentration camp. Similar punishments were meted out to the relatives of Carl Goerdeler, Henning von Tresckow, Adam von Trott zu Solz, and many other conspirators. Younger children of arrested plotters were sent to

orphanages under new names: Stauffenberg’s children, for example, were renamed “Meister.” The fact that most of these families belonged to well-established Prussian aristocracy added to the zeal with which they were persecuted.

The threats of kin liability were extended to include all German troops and, in particular, German commanders. A decree of February 1945 threatened death to the relatives of military commanders who showed what Hitler regarded as cowardice or defeatism in the face of the enemy.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Gestapo; Himmler, Heinrich

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Slachta, Margit

Margit Slachta was a Hungarian pioneer in social service and a leading political figure in interwar Hungary. During the Holocaust, members of the religious order she founded, the Sisters of Social Service, worked to protect their Jewish neighbors while at the same time continuing their commitment to social justice.

Born in Kassa, Hungary, on September 18, 1884, she lived with her parents in the United States when she was a child but returned to Hungary before the turn of the century. Upon her return, she taught French and German at a Catholic school in Budapest. In 1908 she joined a religious community, the Society of the Social Mission. She became an activist for social causes, establishing the Union of Catholic Women, an organization to promote the female franchise in Hungary. As early as 1919 she organized the Catholic Women’s Party, and in 1920 became the first woman to be elected to the Hungarian Parliament (for a term lasting two years), where she campaigned on behalf of women, children, families, and the safeguarding of workers’ rights.

On May 12, 1923, Margit Slachta founded a new order, the Sisters of Social Service, whose members were dedicated to carrying out their commitment to care for those in need and combat the suffering around them. Over time, the sisters became well known throughout Hungary for nursing, midwifery, and taking care of orphans.

As an outspoken woman, committed Christian, and promoter of socially advanced causes, she defied the spirit of the age. When Hungary began to introduce measures discriminating against Jews, it was inevitable that Mother Margit (as she now was) would rebel against such developments. With the first anti-Jewish laws appearing in Hungary in 1938, she began publishing articles opposing official antisemitism in her newspaper, *Voice of the Spirit*. In 1943 the paper was suppressed, but Mother Margit continued to publish it underground. Sisters were instructed to familiarize themselves on Jewish matters and prepare accordingly.

Mother Margit's political activities increased as World War II was unleashed, with the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 leading to waves of Jewish refugees seeking refuge. In 1940 Hungary joined the Axis Powers, and that fall, before the Nazis insisted on it, deportations of Jews began in certain regions of the country. Mother Margit responded immediately by agitating for these actions to be stopped at once, and in one region, at least, the deportations ceased as a result of her actions.

Beyond this, she also provided shelter and protested against forced labor and antisemitic laws. In 1943 she even went to Rome to try to persuade the Vatican to step in and intervene to stop the persecution of Jews in Slovakia.

Mother Margit instructed her sisters that they had a bound duty to protect the Jews, even at the risk of their own lives. She considered it a theological matter, in view of the fact that the Jews were God's people and the people among whom Jesus was born and raised.

Between July 15 and August 12, 1941, any Jews living in Hungary who could not prove legal residency since 1850 were deported to southern Poland, there to await their fate at the hands of the Germans. It is estimated that this numbered about 20,000 people. Upon learning this, Mother Margit demanded that the process be stopped, protesting directly to Magdolna Purgly, the wife of Hungary's regent, Miklós Horthy.

When the Nazis occupied Hungary in March 1944, bringing the full weight of the Holocaust with them, the Sisters of Social Service began to arrange baptisms of convenience in the hope that by doing so they would be able to spare Jews from deportation. As things got worse, the sisters focused completely on helping the Jews. Giving of themselves selflessly, they hid at least 1,000 Jews and provided food and safe houses whenever they could for fugitives.

Following Mother Margit's lead, one of the sisters, Sára Salkaházi, took the admonition to offer her life for the Jews literally. She personally saved the lives of about 100 Jews, and as the persecution intensified during 1944 she redoubled

her efforts to save as many as she could. Eventually, she was caught by Hungarian Arrow Cross soldiers and murdered on the banks of the Danube on December 27, 1944. Her body was never recovered.

In a singular act of defiance once the Nazis had invaded, Mother Margit began to live in the order's Mother House, located on Budapest's Thököly Street. This itself acted as a place of refuge for Jews, but its location was both ironic and a challenge, as it was situated right opposite the 14th District Arrow Cross Party headquarters. At one point, gangs invaded the house and carried out a brutal hunt for Jews, attacking Mother Margit as well as several of the sisters. On this occasion she only narrowly avoided execution.

With the end of the war, Mother Margit Slachta once more became a member of the Hungarian Parliament during the democratic period prior to the communist takeover. At the end of 1948 she fled Hungary for the West, arriving in the United States on June 22, 1949. On January 6, 1974, she died, at age 89, in Buffalo, New York. In recognition for her work in hiding Jews, supplying basic goods, and providing false evidence when in the process of saving Jewish lives during the Holocaust, she was recognized by Yad Vashem on February 18, 1969, as one of the Righteous among the Nations.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Arrow Cross; Catholic Church; Hungary; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Salkaházi, Sára

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Slave Labor

During World War II, prisoners in most of the Nazi concentration camps were exploited mercilessly as slave labor. Political prisoners included communists, political dissidents and other opponents of Germany (broadly defined), as well as captured partisans and even citizens of countries occupied by the Germans randomly picked up for conscripted work details. In addition, people who had volunteered for well-paid positions in German war factories ended up as slave prisoners of the Germans once Germany began losing the war. Most abundantly taken advantage of, however, were Jews in every country occupied by the Nazis.

The foreign workers came from Germany's satellite states or occupied territories to work for the German Reich. As early as March 1938, when Germany invaded Austria, some 100,000 Austrian civilians were taken to work in Germany, and by August 31, 1939, 70,000 workers from Bohemia and Moravia had been conscripted for work in the Reich. After Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939 and its invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, harsh methods were used to press workers into laboring on behalf of the German war effort, as replacements for the millions of Germans who were fighting in the army.

In opposition to international law, Germany also used prisoners of war to help support the German economy. As early as fall 1939, 340,000 Polish POWs were being compelled to work the land, and in August 1942 Germany enacted a decree that made forced labor possible in all occupied countries and POW camps. In Western Europe, local authorities cooperated with the Germans in recruitment in an effort to have their own POWs released or to have the status of their POWs changed to that of foreign workers in Germany.

Although Germany recruited millions of workers between 1942 and 1944, there were never enough for the country's needs, partly because word had spread about the terrible working conditions and the treatment of foreign workers, and partly because of Germany's impending military defeat. Nevertheless, by late 1944 there were 9 million foreign workers (including POWs) in Germany. One out of every five workers was a foreigner, and one out of every four tanks and every four aircraft manufactured in Germany was made by foreign workers.

In most instances, foreign workers were supervised by the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police, or SiPO) and the *Ausländische Arbeiter* (Foreign Worker) section of the Gestapo, and members of those groups were guided by racism, xenophobia, and arbitrary decisions. They regarded Poles and Russians as inferior and subhuman beings. Thus, the East European workers were subjected to hard physical labor, humiliated, and severely penalized for misdeeds. They received very low pay, they had to wear special signs on their clothes—"P" for Poles and "Ost" (East) for Russians—and they could not socialize or mix with German society in any way. Germans who had sexual intercourse with foreign workers could be sentenced to death. Even though Western European workers were treated better, they also complained that they were treated like slaves. Jews who became foreign workers or were taken as POWs tried to avoid being identified as Jewish.

The majority of the millions of Jews caught in the Nazi net and earmarked for death were gassed upon arriving by train at one of the six Nazi death camps in Poland. In these camps only a relatively small minority were selected for labor (with the exception of Auschwitz and Majdanek), but hundreds of thousands were sent to work as slave labor in other camps, as well as in the Nazi-imposed ghettos throughout Eastern Europe. When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, army units recruited Jews at random for forced labor, including removing roadblocks and paving roads. Not only were the Jews mistreated, but their work was specifically chosen to degrade them. At the same time, Jews were subject to constant beatings and harassment.

From October to December 1939 in Poland, the Nazis issued decrees drafting into compulsory labor Jewish men and women aged 14 to 60 and children aged 12 to 14. Jews had to register with the local Judenrat, the Nazi-enforced Jewish council, and they had to carry out temporary work assignments like removing snow, loading goods the Nazis had confiscated from other Jews, and building ghetto walls. Eventually, special labor camps were set up for the Jews; in the Lublin district in Poland alone, there were 29 such camps by July 1940. In August 1940, 20,000 Jews from the ages of 19 to 35 were ordered to report to the labor camps. Many defied the recruitment despite the danger involved in doing so.

Conditions in the labor camps were horrific. Often, the men had no sleeping quarters and had to sleep outside. Sometimes they were not fed even their meager rations and were humiliated and persecuted with dogs, Nazi threats, and beatings. Those working on land amelioration projects sometimes had to stand in water to work. Out of 6,000 men sent from the Warsaw Ghetto to labor camps, 1,000 were no longer fit for labor after only two weeks. In Poland's Łódź ghetto, the entire Jewish population had to partake in forced labor as the ghettos themselves became labor camps.

Large numbers of Jews worked in German factories in Poland and in workshops during the last years of the ghettos. At the end of 1940 more than 700,000 Jews were engaged in forced labor in Poland. The figure dropped to 500,000 in 1942 and to little more than 100,000 in mid-1943 owing to the high ghetto death rate and to deportations of the Jews from the ghettos to the death camps. Factories using Jewish labor had to pay sizable sums to the German secret police, and Jews had to pay bribes in order to obtain such employment, which they naïvely believed would exempt them from being deported to the concentration camps.

In mid-1942 and April–May 1943 some of the Jews in the ghettos were taken to the Trawniki and Poniatowa labor

camps in Poland, and in November 1943 the Germans murdered 40,000 Jews in those camps. In most work camps, the Jews had to work at least 10 to 12 hours a day. In those rare circumstances where they were paid, they were paid less than the meager wage that people of other nationalities received. Jewish wages did not enable them to purchase food on the black market, so most of the workers starved.

Jews arriving in Auschwitz who were selected for work and not death faced the horrors of forced labor. Eating only a small piece of bread and watery soup either before or after a long, tough workday, most Jewish prisoners succumbed to diseases like typhus. Health conditions in the camps were primitive and the water undrinkable, and epidemics spread quickly. The Germans kept the Jews in a constant state of terror. People could be shot any time and for any reason.

Jews had to do the dirty work in the Nazi-instigated death camps against their fellow Jews, often relatives or fellow Jewish community members. Unlucky men and women were selected for the most hideous medical experiments. Jewish prisoners had to clear rocks, fill trains full of dirt, dig trenches and tunnels, sort the possessions of new arrivals (which were confiscated by the Germans), and work in ammunition factories. Mostly, Jews were slave laborers in factories for the German military effort. Whether Jews were making or putting together airplane parts or ammunition, working in coal mines, or working in machine shops, they were thoroughly and completely abused and exploited. Jews were compelled to steal in order to survive, and some Jewish women were forced into prostitution.

Toward the end of World War II, Jewish prisoners were often shot in forests or on long marches by foot, or journeys by train, after camps were evacuated because of Allied bombings. Many Jewish prisoners ended up in Bergen-Belsen, where they were neglected and left to die of typhus. In the last days before liberation, the Germans poisoned potato storehouses so that many Jews died when eating that food, the only food to be found. After liberation by the Allies, many prisoners died from overeating. Most Jews selected for labor in the death camps did not survive until liberation.

JUNIUS RODRIGUEZ

See also: Auschwitz; Austria; Concentration Camps; Gestapo; Łódź Ghetto; “Racial Hygiene”; Speer, Albert; Stutthof; Thierack, Otto; Treblinka

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Slavs

The term Slavs denotes a variety of ethnicities and nations in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, whose tongues belong to the Slavic language group. The Slavs were seen by the Nazis as inferior peoples. In comparison to the Jews, however, they occupied an indeterminate position in the Nazi racial hierarchy. They were collectively or separately characterized as *fremdvölkische* (“nationally alien”), *Untermenschen*, or “Asiatic,” and constituted the majority of victims of Nazi annihilation, deportation, and exploitation policies from 1938 to 1945. Nevertheless, representatives of all three Slavic subgroups—Western, Southern, and Eastern—were, at one point or another, accepted as German allies. A number of Nazi publications considered parts (and in some cases all) of the Slavs as belonging to the original “Nordic” or “Indo-Germanic” peoples. The Third Reich’s attack on Eastern Europe may have been primarily determined by motives other than anti-Slavism, such as anti-Bolshevism and the quest for new “living space” (*Lebensraum*), yet implementation of these aims accounts only partly for the deaths of the millions of Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, and other Slavs who perished not only in combat against, but primarily under the occupation of, the Wehrmacht and the SS during World War II.

Nineteenth-century German public opinion and research on Eastern Europe and Russia showed, along with certain Russophile tendencies, strong currents of anti-Slavism that continued earlier negative stereotypes about Poles and Russians. Views of Slavs as “unhistorical,” “cultureless,” or “barbaric” were voiced by representatives of both Right and Left—including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In the *völkisch* discourse of late imperial Germany, Slavs were described as “racially mixed” or “mongolized.” A significant minority of nationalist and racist publicists with influence on the Nazi movement, including Houston Stuart Chamberlain, did, however, write positively about the Slavs. The Slavs played a relatively minor role in interwar German racist discourse in general and Nazi racial thinking in particular. Both official statements and unofficial procedures of the Third Reich regarding Slavic people continued to be marked by contradictions and shifts right down to 1945. Although the

Czechs were viewed by Hitler in the 1920s more negatively than the Poles, German occupation policies in the *Reichsprotektorat* of Czechoslovakia were more permissive and less violent than those in the *Generalgouvernement* and other annexed Polish territories. Whereas “only” 40,000 or so Czechs perished during the Nazi occupation, the overwhelming majority of the 1.8 to 1.9 million non-Jewish Polish civilian victims of World War II were killed by Germans. In spite of manifest SS anti-Polonism, Himmler’s *Generalplan Ost* of 1942 made a distinction between *eindeutschungsfähige* Poles (“those who can be Germanized”) and Poles who were to be deported to Siberia within the next decades. Earlier, the greater part of the Czech population had become regarded as assimilable by the Nazis, while the Slovaks had been allowed to form their own satellite state.

Whereas in the Balkans Orthodox Serbs were among the nations least respected by Hitler, Orthodox Bulgarians (seen as being of Turkic origin) occupied a relatively higher position in the Nazi racial hierarchy and were referred to by Joseph Goebbels as “friends.” Bulgaria was permitted to abstain from participation in the attack on the Soviet Union and to pursue an independent policy with regard to its Jews. The Soviet people were labeled “beasts,” “animals,” “half-monkeys,” “hordes,” and the like. Among the approximately 10 million Soviet civilians who perished under the Nazis, there were 3.3 million prisoners of war, most of them Eastern Slavs. Yet, as the German advance into the Soviet Union halted, the Waffen-SS recruited, among other soldiers from the Soviet Union, a specifically Ukrainian division (“Galicia”) and a Belorussian unit. Impressed by the phenotype of the Ukrainians, Hitler, in August 1942, proposed the assimilation of Ukrainian women. Toward the end of the war, German troops were assisted by General Andrei Vlasov’s Russian Popular Army of Liberation, consisting of tens of thousands of Russian POWs and emigrés. The Cossacks—though being Eastern Slavs—were even seen as “Germanic.” Shortly before his suicide, Hitler described the “Slavic race” as stronger than the Germanic one, whose destiny it was to succumb.

ANDREAS UMLAND

See also: Czechoslovakia; Poland; “Racial Hygiene”; Slovakia; Soviet Union; Ukraine

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Slovakia

In 1919 the new country of Czechoslovakia was formed out of the Czech-speaking regions of Austria and the Slovak-speaking regions of Hungary, the former Austro-Hungarian, or Hapsburg, Empire having been dissolved by the postwar peace treaties of Saint Germain and Trianon. While the state was a democratic republic, it nonetheless came under pressure from Nazi Germany during the 1930s owing to its large German-speaking minority in the region known as the Sudetenland. Consequently, by the Munich Agreement of September 1938, Nazi Germany began to dismember the country by occupying the Sudetenland and then, in March 1939, invading and annexing the Czech areas of Bohemia and Moravia. An independent Slovakia became a puppet regime under Nazi German domination.

Prior to World War II, 135,000 Jews lived in Slovakia, though many sought to leave during the later 1930s; at a census on December 15, 1940, there were 88,951 Jews still in the country. After Slovakia became independent, a series of antisemitic measures were introduced, the first of which excluded Jews from the military and all government positions. Slovakia’s president, Monsignor Jozef Tiso, was himself thoroughly pro-Nazi and entered into negotiations with the German government to work on having the country’s Jews deported. A “Jewish Code,” based in part on Germany’s Nuremberg Laws, was passed in September 1941. Among other things, it banned Jews from intermarriage with other Slovaks, excluded Jews from many professions, and demanded that Jews henceforth wear a yellow armband. By October 1941, 15,000 Jews were ejected from Bratislava; 10,000 were expelled outright, and 5,000 who held work permits, were government employees, or were business professionals were permitted to stay with their families nearby. On October 28, 1941, the first transport of 238 Jews left Bratislava.

Earlier, in November 1940, Slovakia had affiliated the Axis alliance and then joined in the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. It declared war on Britain and the United States in December 1941.

Where the Holocaust was concerned, Slovakia was the first of Germany’s allies, in March 1942, to consent to the deportation of its Jewish population in pursuit of the Nazis’ “Final Solution.” The Holocaust then became a distinctly Slovak national project, as the Slovak police and military, together with the antisemitic paramilitary Hlinka Guard, massed together more than 57,000 Slovak Jews between March and October 1942. These people were housed in locally built concentration camps at Sereď, Novaky, and Vyhne.

Deportations of Jews from Slovakia to “the East” started on March 25, 1942, when the first transport, comprising almost 1,000 women, was sent to Auschwitz. Beyond this, Jews were transported to the Generalgouvernement in Poland, or Germany itself; here, the Slovak authorities turned their Jewish captives over to the SS, who in turn deported them to Auschwitz, Majdanek, or Sobibór. By October 1942 some 58,000 Jews had been deported. More than 99% of the 58,000 Jews deported between March and October were murdered. About 6,000 Slovak Jews fled to Hungary during this time. The deportations were halted on October 20, 1942.

The deportations were stopped largely on account of intervention from President Tiso. He had learned of the fate of Slovakia’s Jews via the papal nuncio in Bratislava, who had, in turn, been alerted from the Vatican after news was received from two Slovak Jewish leaders, Gisi Fleischmann and Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl. After strenuous efforts at negotiation, they were successful in persuading the government to cease the deportations, and the remaining 24,000 Jews in Slovakia were not deported to their deaths.

The deportations resumed on September 30, 1944. Not only had the Soviet Red Army reached the Slovak border by this stage, but an uprising among Slovak nationalists had broken out on August 29. In response, German troops occupied all of Slovakia, and the country’s independent status came to an end. Nearly 14,000 Slovak Jews were now deported; 7,936 went to Auschwitz (where they were gassed on arrival) and 4,370 to nearby Theresienstadt (Terezín), with most of the rest murdered within Slovakia itself by German SS and Hlinka Guard units. This final round of deportations lasted until March 31, 1945, when the last group of Jewish prisoners was taken from Sered, where they were being concentrated and held, to Terezín.

When taken overall, it can be concluded that up to 70,000 Jews were deported from Slovakia across the duration of World War II. Of these, some 65,000 were murdered or died in concentration camps at the hands of German SS and Slovak police, troops, and Hlinka Guard militias. Throughout this period, thousands more Jews remained in hiding or did not identify themselves openly during the roundups or other actions. Although figures are difficult to fix, it has been estimated that up to 105,000 Slovak Jews, representing 77% of the prewar population, died during the war.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Csatory, Lazlo; Czechoslovakia; Fleischmann, Gisi; Hlinka Guard; Majdanek; Munich Agreement; Slavs; Sobibór; Theresienstadt; Tiso, Jozef; Vrba, Rudolf

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Sobibór

Sobibór was a death camp established by the Nazis in Poland in April 1942. It was located in modern-day eastern Poland, five miles south of Włodawa, and like most death camps it was situated in a sparsely populated, remote area. Measuring 1,969 feet long and 1,312 feet wide, Sobibór was erected along the Chełm-Włodawa rail line, which facilitated the shipment of condemned Jews into the camp. Surrounded by a high, wire fence, it was masked by trees planted along its perimeter, so outsiders would not be aware of its true purpose. Beyond the fence and trees was a 50-foot-wide minefield to thwart escape attempts.

Sobibór was administered by 20–30 SS and security officials; the guard force numbered between 90 and 120 men, some of whom were Polish or Ukrainian civilians or Soviet prisoners of war. SS First Lieutenant Franz Stangl ran the facility from April until August 1942; he was replaced by SS Captain Franz Reichleitner, who headed the camp until it was decommissioned in November 1943. Most of the Jews sent to Sobibór were from the eastern and northern parts of Poland’s Lublin District, although Jews from Austria, Germany, Bohemia, Slovakia, Moravia, France, and the Netherlands were also sent there.

In May 1942 Sobibór officials began systematically gassing arriving detainees. As trainloads of Jews pulled into the reception area, they were herded onto platforms, had their valuables taken, and then were forced to disrobe. They were then led into the “tube,” a leafy and wooded tunnel that connected the reception area to the gas chambers. The system could accommodate up to 20 freight cars at a time. Once the victims were in the gas chambers, which the Germans cruelly told them were “showers,” the doors were sealed and they would be gassed to death with carbon monoxide. *Sonderkommandos*, prisoners forced to work in the camps, then emptied the chambers and buried the dead in mass graves; before doing so, they extracted any jewelry or gold fillings from the corpses.

Sobibór was the site of a major prisoner uprising in October 1943, led by Alexander Pechersky and Leon Feldhendler. On October 14, after learning that they would likely be deported to other camps where they would meet certain death, about 600 prisoners killed some 12 German prison administrators and guards. Amid the chaos, at least 300 prisoners managed to exit the camp. About 100 were caught in the days immediately after the uprising, and up to 60 managed to survive the war.

The following month, SS officials decided to close Sobibór. The remaining prison guards shot any surviving internees still in camp and were ordered to dismantle the gas chambers and bulldoze the facility to the ground. By March 1944, when the last of the guard contingent had left the area, trees had been planted over the site of Sobibór to mask its existence. No prisoners were taken to the facility after November 1943. Sobibór was one of six dedicated death camps operated by the Nazis and situated in Poland during the Holocaust.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Collaboration; Death Camps; Final Solution; Gas Chambers; Jewish Resistance; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Operation Harvest Festival; Pechersky, Alexander; Resistance Movements; Slovakia; Sonderkommando; Stangl, Franz; Süskind, Walter; Westerbork; Wirth, Christian

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Social Darwinism

A social theory developed in the second half of the 19th century that applied the evolutionary ideas of Charles Darwin to human society, social Darwinism was a significant element in Nazi ideology. Natural selection became a central concept in social and political thought soon after the first popularization of Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory, both in Europe and in North America. Socialist thinkers emphasized the inevitability of social evolution, at the end of which the classless society would arise. Others used Darwin's thesis to justify the bourgeoisie's claim to power and social distinctions. Conflicts within societies were now interpreted as much on

the premise of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest as on the premise of conflicts between peoples and nations. The oppression of colonial peoples and imperialistic expansion projects now acquired a significant natural scientific justification. But within Europe, too, representatives of certain nations such as Britain, France, and Germany thought of themselves as superior to each other and, with the help of Darwinistic ideas, argued the necessity of conflict. War and soldierly virtues were glorified as necessary and beneficial for humanity and progress.

With the popularization of racist ideas in the second half of the 19th century through Gobineau and others, a synthesis of racism and social Darwinism was quickly made. In order to be able to survive the necessary struggle between the nations, one's own "race" must be strengthened. At the end of the 19th century many in Europe and North America thought that they could perceive massive signs of degeneration. The mass misery of the workers caused all kinds of rapid physical and mental decline, violent criminality, and alcoholism. Civilization was interpreted as a disturbance of natural selection, allowing a greater number of the allegedly biologically unfit to survive. Prophets of cultural pessimism prophesied unstoppable decline, unless and until the reproduction of "unworthy" life was blocked and the reproduction of the fittest furthered by massive state intervention.

Social Darwinism and racism were well entrenched both in North America and in Europe by the beginning of World War I. They entered even more into mainstream thinking, a store of ideas of which well-known politicians and scientists and many racist, *völkisch*, nationalistic, and fascist movements (but also reformist groups and splinter groups) could make use. From the beginning of the 20th century, population policy concepts developed both in Europe and in North America that were intended to assist natural selection through sterilization and control. Some of these concepts were implemented in a few of the U.S. states and in Sweden. Although the U.S. laws on sterilization of the seriously handicapped passed before World War I were applied only in a few cases, they were put forward as a model in Germany. In Sweden, a law was passed on January 1, 1935, that made possible the sterilization of persons with mental and physical illnesses, and it was applied as late as the 1970s.

Social Darwinism served National Socialist ideology as a justification for eugenics, euthanasia, the persecution of the Jews, and war. The radicalization of popular social Darwinism took place during World War I and during the economic crises of the 1920s and 1930s. With Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, a man and a party came to power that implemented

social Darwinistic ideas bound in with racism and antisemitism in a regime of terror. The Law on the Prevention of Reproduction by Those with Inherited Disorders, which came into force on January 1, 1934, belongs in this context, like the Nuremberg Race Laws of October 18, 1935, and the Marriage Health Law of October 18, 1935. After the beginning of World War II, all of the remaining barriers fell, and millions—including thousands of persons with mental and physical handicaps—were murdered in the “race war” in which the main targets were Jews and Slavs.

MICHAEL SCHÄBITZ (TRANSLATED BY CYPRIAN BLAMIRE)

See also: Eugenics; “Racial Hygiene”; Sterilization

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Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français

Since 2000, France’s national railroad, Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (National Society of French Railways, SNCF), has been the subject of several lawsuits by Holocaust survivors who claim that the railroad was complicit in carrying out the Holocaust during World War II.

In 1940, when the Germans occupied France and began to implement the Holocaust there, the French government owned 51% of SNCF, making it the majority shareholder. The railway is now completely owned by the French government. Since the end of the war in 1945, SNCF officials have acknowledged their company’s role in the Holocaust and have admitted transporting at least 76,000 Jews and other “undesirables” from Drancy, a transit camp outside Paris, to the death camp at Auschwitz. However, the company has resisted paying monetary reparations to non-French victims who were transported by SNCF. The company has claimed that it participated in the Holocaust only because it had been ordered to do so by German occupation officials and had no choice but to carry out those orders.

In September 2000, 12 U.S. Holocaust survivors brought suit against SNCF in a U.S. federal court. The suit (*Abrams v. SNCF*) claimed that the railway had committed crimes against humanity by knowingly sending civilians to German-run

death camps in the east. SNCF claimed sovereign immunity to the lawsuit because it was majority owned by the French government at the time. It bolstered this defense by citing a 1976 statute extending sovereign immunity from lawsuits to foreign governments. The court dismissed the suit in November 2001.

In June 2003 the court’s decision to dismiss was appealed, with the plaintiffs’ lawyers arguing that the cited 1976 statute was not retroactive, meaning that it did not apply to actions occurring prior to 1976. On June 13, 2003, an appeals court overturned the lower court’s decision and ordered that same court to determine whether or not the 1976 statute was indeed retroactive. SNCF appealed this ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2004; the high court, ruling on another case, determined that the 1976 statute was retroactive. Meanwhile, it referred the *Abrams* case back to the appeals court, which dismissed the suit in November 2004. In February 2005 the *Abrams* plaintiffs appealed to the Supreme Court, but that tribunal refused to hear the case.

With the *Abrams* suit seemingly at a dead end, in February 2005 U.S. Holocaust survivors filed a parallel suit (*Freund v. SNCF*). This time, the plaintiffs sought restitution from SNCF for personal property that had been confiscated on SNCF trains bound for death camps. The case was dismissed and appealed. In September 2010 an appeals court upheld the dismissal.

A number of Holocaust survivors provided eyewitness testimony to the events involving SNCF. Leo Bretholz, one of the star witnesses, asserted that SNCF was complicit in implementing the Holocaust because railway officials prevented deportees from escaping and subjected them to inhumane conditions.

Beginning in 2010, with the SNCF lawsuits in the United States all but dead and a similar case in France having been dismissed in December 2007, U.S. Holocaust survivors decided on another strategy. They began lobbying Congress to enact the Holocaust Rail Justice Act, which would permit U.S. Holocaust survivors to sue SNCF for damages and reparations in U.S. courts, thereby nullifying the 1976 statute, at least in this instance. Bretholz and others testified numerous times before congressional committees, and the act is still winding its way through Congress.

Meanwhile, the issue of SNCF reparations gained new traction when Keolis, a majority-owned subsidiary of SNCF, became involved in the potential building of new passenger rail lines in Florida, California, and Maryland. Holocaust survivors mounted a major effort to prevent Keolis from bidding on those projects unless SNCF agreed to pay reparations. By

2013 the French and U.S. governments were engaged in talks to include American Holocaust survivors in an already-existing program by which the French government pays reparations to Holocaust survivors. By early 2014 SNCF seemed more willing to consider reparations to Americans, largely because it feared it would be barred from bidding on a \$6 billion contract to build a light rail line in suburban Maryland. In December 2014 SNCF agreed to pay up to \$60 million worth of compensation to Holocaust survivors in the United States; this figure corresponds to approximately \$100,000 per survivor.

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See also: Auschwitz; Bretholz, Leo; Drancy; Survivor Testimony

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Sondergericht

Germany's police forces were significantly reorganized by the Nazis; most of the country's civil and criminal courts were not. Prior to 1933 the Nazis stated that German courts were too liberal, with conventions that favored criminals rather than their victims. The NSDAP's 25-point plan even talked of scrapping the entire court system and replacing it with a new system of National Socialist courts.

In response to the suspicious Reichstag fire on February 27, 1933, Adolf Hitler convinced President Paul von Hindenburg to issue the Reichstag Fire Decree in February 1933, which abolished the civil rights that had been granted to German citizens by the constitution of the Weimar Republic for the sake of "public safety." Internal opposition to the Nazi regime in Germany was quashed; the Communist Party was disbanded and its members imprisoned, eliminating the Nazis' strongest political competition. By the middle of 1933 the Nazi Party was the only legal political party operating in Germany.

The Nazis then reorganized the German judicial system according to their philosophy that the law should not be based on individual rights and equality but rather on the interests of the People's Community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Defined as ethnically bound characteristics of the German people, the supreme aims of the law should be the protection

of the German ("Aryan") race, national honor, defense capabilities, and public order. For political opponents and so-called "antisocials" as well as Jews and "foreigners," special, tougher laws were introduced successively, in order to secure their total obedience to the new regime or to eliminate them. Perhaps because they feared that their court system faced abolition, Germany's judges, lawyers, and legal experts caved in to many Nazi demands and expectations. The Nazis did not have to change the court system; the system simply changed for them.

Judges were at the heart of this transformation. They interpreted and enforced Nazi legislation, even their dubious racial and eugenics policies, for the most part without question. They did not question or criticize the Gestapo, which acted beyond the reach of the courts, and acquiesced to Nazi demands for tougher sentences for certain crimes.

After the passage of the Enabling Act on March 23, 1933, the Nazis gradually supplanted the normal justice system with political courts with wide ranging powers, creating *Sondergerichte* (Special Courts), which operated outside and free of the previous constitutional court system.

A Special Court had three judges, and the defense counsel was appointed by the court. Even as heavy-handed as justice was in Nazi Germany, defendants were afforded at least nominal protections under the regular courts' rules and procedures. These protections were swept away in the Special Courts, since they existed outside the ordinary judicial system. There was no possibility of appeal, and verdicts could be executed at once. The court decided the extent of evidence to consider, and defense attorneys were not permitted to question the proof of the charges.

Especially during the first years of their existence, Special Courts had a strong deterrent effect against opposition to the Nazis; the German public was intimidated, it was said, through arbitrary psychological terror. By 1942 the number of Special Courts had increased from 26 in 1933 to a high of 74.

The People's Court (*Volksgerichtshof*) was created as a Special Court in April 1934 for dealing with cases of treason or attacks on national or regional government members; it was created owing to government dissatisfaction with the fact that most of the communists charged with burning down the Reichstag were acquitted. The function of this court was just like that of the Special Courts, to suppress opposition to the regime.

The workload was thereafter divided between the People's Courts and the Special Courts in such a way that the People's Courts took the most important cases, while the Special Courts dealt with a wider array of "crimes" relating to

anti-Nazi opposition. Eventually, virtually any crime, major or minor (including the frequent charge of being an “antisocial parasite”), could be tried in either court; punishment was almost always harsh, ranging from time in a concentration camp to execution. The Nazis had earlier introduced the concept called *Schutzhaft* (“protective custody”), allowing them to arrest and detain people without charges.

With the onset of war, the number and toughness of the laws and decrees from which the *Sondergerichte* and *Volksgerichtshof* acted increased dramatically. The Wartime Special Penal Code of August 1938 had already introduced the death penalty for espionage, guerrilla activities, and “defeatism.” In late 1939 several additional decrees broadened the use of the death penalty to crimes of sabotage, damage of military assets, theft under extraordinary wartime conditions (for example, pillage during and after air bombardments), and all crimes of violence. These laws were aimed at Germans as well as other nationals.

Also, *Sondergerichte* were set up in countries under German military occupation once the war broke out. The Special Courts played a major role in carrying out summary executions via judicial murder in Nazi-occupied Poland. Owing to increasing resistance in the occupied territories, a special penal code for Jews and Poles in the eastern territories annexed to the Reich was issued on December 4, 1941. It introduced extraordinarily harsh sentences, including death, punishment camp, or transfer to the Gestapo, for any kind of disobedience against the German occupants. The courts could effectively sentence Poles and Jews to death for anything. Terminology in the courts was full of statements such as “Polish subhumans” and “Polish rabble,” with some judges even declaring that Poles were to have lengthier sentences than Germans since they were racially inferior. Overall, between 1933 and 1945, 12,000 Germans were executed on the orders of the *Sondergerichte* set up by the Nazi regime.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Asocials; Enabling Act, 1933; Rothaug, Oswald; *Schutzhaft*; *Volksgemeinschaft*

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Sonderkommando

Sonderkommando is a term that refers to prisoners in Nazi death camps who helped herd newly arriving prisoners into the gas chambers and then deposited their corpses into crematoria. The term, meaning “special commandos,” was also used on other occasions to describe special killing units of the SS, which targeted Jews and other “undesirables” as German armies advanced into newly conquered territory. However, its most common usage refers to death camp workers.

Sonderkommandos were invariably young, able-bodied Jewish males who were selected for slave labor soon after their arrival in the death camps. They helped process newly arrived prisoners and readied them for the gas chambers. This included the removal of their clothing and the shaving of women’s heads. After the victims were gassed to death, they also gathered the personal possessions of those who had been murdered, removed any gold that victims might have had in their teeth, and moved the corpses from the gas chambers into the crematoria. The work was grim and gruesome, and shifts lasted for 12 hours, seven days a week.

Because the *Sonderkommando* were intimately familiar with the Nazis’ factory-like extermination procedures, they were housed in separate barracks, so they could not interact with other internees or tip them off as to their fate. And because the Nazis wished to keep the particulars of their death camps a secret, *Sonderkommandos* were routinely killed and replaced by newly arriving recruits. The average lifespan of a *Sonderkommando* was three to four months. To entice the workers to do such horrific labor, and to prevent them from influencing other inmates, the camp’s administrators usually gave the *Sonderkommando* special privileges, including better and more abundant food and better housing.

Only a very few *Sonderkommando* workers survived their ordeal, and some rebelled against their captors. On August 2, 1943, a number of *Sonderkommando* men participated in an uprising at the Treblinka death camp, and nearly 100 prisoners managed to escape. At Auschwitz-Birkenau on October 7, 1944, a carefully planned revolt took place involving a number of men from the XII *Sonderkommando*, who managed to destroy one of the camp’s crematoria. For several months prior to the rebellion, prisoners had been hiding gunpowder, which was used to blow up one of the ovens.

Almost all those who participated in this revolt were caught and executed.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Birkenau; Death Camps; *The Grey Zone*: Lange, Herbert; Majdanek; Robota, Roza; Salonika; Sobibór; Treblinka; Venezia, Shlomo

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Soos, Géza

Géza Soos was a member of the Hungarian resistance during World War II. Born in 1912, he became a member of the Reformed Church in Hungary, where he was head of the Soli Deo Gloria youth movement. Soos was a member of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry during the regency of Miklós Horthy and a key resister in the secret Hungarian independence movement against the Nazi occupation of Hungary.

Between July 6 and July 15, at Evian-les-Bains, France, an international conference called by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt took place to discuss the problem of what to do about Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria. Géza Soos, then in France representing Soli Deo Gloria at a conference, went to Evian, entirely on his own initiative, on July 5, 1938. It was from his attendance at this meeting that he gained a measure of appreciation of the situation facing Jews under the Nazis, and from this point on he realized that he should be doing something to assist them. By 1942 he was working actively with the Good Shepherd Committee of the Reformed Church, and with their assistance hid many Jews, both families and individuals.

As a member of the Hungarian Foreign Service, Soos was part of a cohort dedicated to resisting the Nazis, including László (Leslie) Veress, Domokos Szent-Iványi, and Ferenc Vali. Perhaps his most important contact was the Swedish emissary Raoul Wallenberg, with whom he developed a close working relationship dedicated to saving Jews. Their personal connection is unclear; perhaps they became friends, but this is not certain. Their cooperation was, however, an efficient one. Soos was the first non-Swedish official Wallenberg encountered after his arrival in Budapest in July 1944; together the two experienced related dangers requiring

them to hide out in different places each night in various safe houses.

Soos, who was Szent-Iványi's deputy both formally and within the Hungarian independence movement, is considered by some to be the Hungarian official who did the most to save Jews from deportation in 1944. At one point he acquired a motor vehicle with diplomatic plates enabling him to move Jews around Budapest to safe houses, and on another occasion he appropriated a military aircraft and flew to Rome, where he engaged in discussions with the Allies in the hope of giving Budapest the status of an open city and negotiating a separate peace—and, by doing so, sparing the population from unnecessary suffering. Activities such as these placed his life at risk, but he did so in order to provide help to those in need.

Arguably, the most vital service undertaken by Soos took place in the aftermath of the escape from Auschwitz on April 10, 1944, of Rudolf Vrba and Alfréd Wetzler. It seems that Soos obtained the German-language testimony through a member of the Budapest Jewish community, Resző (Rudolf) Kasztner. Soos gave it to József Éliás, head of the Good Shepherd Mission. Éliás's secretary, Mária Székely, then translated it into Hungarian and prepared six copies. These were in turn forwarded to diplomats and Jewish leaders in Hungary and overseas. In an attempt to generate attention at the highest levels in Hungary, Soos also passed the report to Countess Ilona Edelsheim-Gyulai, Horthy's daughter-in-law. Taken overall, this was the first time that a complete and authentic report of the extermination operations at Auschwitz had been released to world leaders. Unfortunately, public acknowledgement of Vrba's testimony was delayed for political reasons, just as the full force of the Nazi killing process fell on the Jews of Hungary. Arguments still reverberate as to whether the lives of hundreds of thousands of people could have been saved if the news from Soos had been made public and acted upon.

Nevertheless, when the Auschwitz report reached Horthy, he immediately acted to stop the deportations of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. While it is difficult to speculate as to why he did this, one suggestion could be that the intervention of Soos, through Ilona Edelsheim-Gyulai, played a role in his calculations.

Research into Soos's activities during the Nazi invasion and occupation of Hungary is difficult, as most of what he did was illegal when measured against his formal duty as a government official. Documentation, therefore, is rare. As in many similar cases of helping activities, the only ones who know of Soos's activities with any authority are those whom he helped directly—the survivors who owe him their lives.

When peace came in 1945, Soos returned to Hungary. The Soviet takeover of the country, however, placed him in an unsafe position given that he had been a leading civil servant of the Horthy regime. Communists expected him to join the party, which he refused to do. In 1946, therefore, he left for Geneva, Switzerland, where he studied for his ordination as a pastor. At the same time, he edited Hungarian-language journals for distribution around Europe.

In 1951 Géza Soos and his wife, Ilona Tüdös, together with their five children, moved to the United States, where they settled in North Carolina. Two years later, at the age of just 41, Soos died in a road accident, in what some asserted were suspicious (though unconfirmed) circumstances.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz Protocols; Evian Conference; Hungary; Horthy, Miklós; Kasztner, Reszö; Resistance Movements; Wallenberg, Raoul

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Soviet Union

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union was a large Eurasian state with a 1940 population of some 193 million, of whom perhaps 7–8 million were of Jewish origin. The USSR was a polyglot entity of many different nationalities and religions, with at least 170 different languages and dialects spoken. The majority of the population—about 100 million people—lived in the largest Soviet republic of Russia. After the communists had taken control of Russia in the 1920s, Jews in general prospered under Soviet rule. While there was certainly antisemitism and discrimination, Jews did better than they had under czarist Russia. Between 1925 and 1940, nearly 40% of the Jews living in what had been the Pale of Settlement (roughly western Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, and Moldova) had left the grinding poverty of the countryside to relocate in Russia's large cities, like Leningrad and Moscow. This mass migration meant that there would be fewer Jews in areas overrun by the Germans during World War II, sparing hundreds of thousands from the Final

Solution. Jews in Russia concentrated on acquiring higher education, making them among the best-educated groups in interwar Europe.

Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, ever the scheming pragmatist, entered into a nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany in August 1939, after he was unable to secure a firm alliance with the Western European Allies. Among other things, the pact had clandestinely promised the Soviets free rein in eastern Poland and in parts of the Baltic countries once the war began between Germany and the West. When war did come in September, the Soviets wasted little time in securing what they believed to be their share of the spoils. In spite of numerous and increasingly disquieting signs that Germany was preparing to invade the USSR, Stalin refused to believe that Hitler would break the 1939 nonaggression pact so quickly. Thus, when the Germans struck in Operation Barbarossa on June 22, 1941, the Soviets were ill-prepared for the onslaught.

By early 1942, German forces had occupied all of the former Pale of Settlement as well as Russia west of a line that ran from Stalingrad to Moscow to Rostov. In total, these conquered lands contained a Jewish population of approximately 5 million. The Soviets tried to evacuate as many Jews to the east as possible, mainly from western Russia, but their primary goal was to stop the German offensive before it reached Leningrad and Moscow. Perhaps 1 million Jews were successfully evacuated, leaving some 4 million to stand alone against the Nazi menace. Almost immediately after the June 1941 attack, German mobile killing squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) began killing Jews, Roma, and communists in horrifying numbers. By the end of that year alone, the killing squads had murdered approximately 15% of the Jews in the newly occupied areas. Intent on exterminating all of the Jews, the Germans also deported them to concentration and death camps further west, where they were murdered en masse.

The Soviets finally stopped the German offensive at Stalingrad in February 1943, which was the turning point of the war in the east; from then on, the Germans would engage in a gradual fighting retreat that would not end until 1945, when Germany was defeated and Berlin lay in ruins. The USSR suffered grievously during the war, certainly more than any other belligerent in terms of human and material losses. Millions of civilians died from starvation, disease, or war violence and millions more were displaced. Much of the Soviet countryside in the western areas was decimated, first by retreating Soviet soldiers and then by retreating German forces. Estimates now place Soviet war deaths at 27–28 million, including 7–8 million military dead and 19–20 million civilian dead. The

Soviets claimed that 1,700 towns and some 70,000 villages were destroyed, while major cities like Stalingrad, Odessa, Kiev, and Leningrad also suffered catastrophic damage. An estimated 25 million Soviets were left homeless by the end of the war, and estimates indicate that at least 25% of the total national wealth of the country was wiped out between 1941 and 1945.

For Jews, the losses were even more staggering. Almost all of the Jews in the former Pale of Settlement areas were killed. On the other hand, as many as 600,000 Jews fought in the Soviet army between 1941 and 1945, of whom approximately 143,000 were killed in action. Clearly, the epicenter of the Holocaust unfolded in areas that had been controlled by the Soviets prior to 1941.

After the war, Jews enjoyed a brief period of relative calm under Stalin's watch. Although the dictator had taken an official anti-Zionist stance for years, he hoped that the creation of the State of Israel would usher in a socialist regime in the Middle East. Thus, he tacitly encouraged an Israeli state, which he believed would offset Western influence in the Middle East and which might be incorporated into the communist orbit. When that failed to materialize, he ordered an internal backlash aimed at Jews. In August 1952 Soviet authorities quietly arrested and executed 13 important Jewish actors, writers, poets, and other intellectuals. For years, the Soviets denied that these events took place.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Communists in the Holocaust; Einsatzgruppen; Estonia; Finland; Kharkov Trial; Kommissarbefehl; Lebensraum; Lipke, Janis and Johanna; Lithuania; Operation Barbarossa; Poland; Riegner Telegram; Riga; Slavs; World War II

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6,000. The civil war was fought between left-wing Spanish Republicans and far-right Nationalists, in many respects a fascist political movement led by General Francisco Franco. He, in turn, received considerable support from Germany's Adolf Hitler and Italy's Benito Mussolini; both sent naval, military, and air support (in the Italian case, in strength), and each used the war as a mask to test new military technology.

Where the Jewish community was concerned, the Spanish Civil War saw synagogues closed down, even though there were no overt or official expressions of antisemitism. Most of the Jews who had fled other parts of Europe also fled Spain during the war, while nearly all Jewish organizations remaining within Spain by the end of the war were shut down the moment Franco became dictator.

Franco was not interested in engaging in fighting when World War II broke out in 1939, even though both Germany and Italy had helped secure a victory for the Nationalists. Not technically neutral, but instead choosing a state of nonbelligerency, Franco did not provide military support, but, with a similar political ideology and his signature in 1936 on the Anti-Comintern Pact, chose instead to support the Axis Powers in other ways, such as through the provision of various raw materials. He did, however, supply a division of "volunteers" (the so-called "Blue Division") to aid Germany in its invasion of the Soviet Union after the summer of 1941.

In June 1940, after the surrender of France to the Germans, thousands of French refugees bolted for the Spanish boundary. Even though strict immigration regulations were still in place, thousands were able to move into Spain without a visa or proper documentation. For many of the European refugees, Spain was only a partial destination, since they had intentions to leave Europe entirely from a port in either Spain or Portugal. However, those who missed their boats or were found without proper visas or documentation were sent to Miranda de Ebro concentration camp, a detention center intended for political adversaries of the Franco regime, or were sent back to France.

In October 1940 Hitler and Franco met in Hendaye, a coastal town in southwest France, to discuss Spain's possible involvement in the war. Hitler wanted to use Spain as a point of transit for Germany to attack Great Britain. However, Spain was still devastated from the aftershocks of the Spanish Civil War, with many of its citizens starving. Franco demanded provisions and military equipment, along with Spanish control of Gibraltar and French North Africa. Still coming to terms with the new developments in France, Hitler could not concede to Franco's demands, and Spain continued its neutrality. Additionally, Franco refused to hand

Spain

A country in southwestern Europe, Spain had a long Jewish history stretching back many centuries. Within two years of Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, some 3,000 Jews had entered Spain as refugees, and by the time the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 this had increased to around

over foreign Jews living in Spain, a task other Axis countries and German-occupied territories were expected to do. Hitler spoke to Mussolini after his time in Hendaye, stating in relation to Franco, “I would rather have three or four teeth extracted than go through that again.”

Jewish refugees were able to pass from Germany to France and into Spain until 1941. The Nazis prohibited people in German territory from leaving, and Spain closed its borders in order to provide some sense of cohesion with Germany. By then, however, an estimated total of up to 25,600 Jews had made it through Spain, using the country as an escape route provided they could produce evidence that they were transiting to other places. Even after the Nazis banned emigration from German territories, Jewish refugees were still able to move into Spain, particularly when the Nazis began to deport Jews from the Low Countries. Those who were caught by the Spanish government were meant to be sent back to France, but the Allied Powers intervened, warning the Spanish government against sending these refugees to their deaths. As a result, in 1943, Spain began accepting European refugees once more. Near the end of the war, another 7,500 Jews were able to move into Spain as a temporary safe haven.

In addition to all this, when World War II broke out in 1939 some 4,000 Spanish Jews were in German or soon-to-be German-occupied territories. Due to Spain’s neutrality, these Jews were also under the protection of the Spanish government, which meant that many Jews living outside of Spain were forced to rely on the mercy of these Spanish representatives for help in the event that they had been mistreated. In 1943 the Germans demanded that Spain remove all Spanish Jews then living in German-occupied territory. However, instead of saving the 4,000 Jews who were still living in Europe, Spain only chose to become even more selective when it came to granting visas, and only allowed 800 Spanish Jews to reenter Spain.

Despite this, many of the representatives of the Spanish government, as well as civilians, were responsible for helping hundreds of Spanish Jews in several German-occupied territories, such as Hungary. The best known examples of such diplomatic effort on behalf of Jews caught in the Nazi net were Spanish diplomats such as Ángel Sanz Briz and Giorgio Perlasca, who together protected some 4,000 Jews in Budapest.

Although Spain seemingly played a more active role in helping Jews escape deportation to the concentration camps than other neutral countries, there has been debate about Spain’s wartime attitude toward Jewish refugees. While it is true that Franco’s regime did not evince the same degree of

radical antisemitism of the Nazis, it is also true that his government only permitted Jewish transit through Spain rather than long-term settlement. Moreover, Franco provided a safe haven, of a different sort, to Nazis, fascists, and collaborators fleeing the victorious Allies at the end of the war. It is interesting to note that after Germany’s defeat in 1945 the Spanish government attempted to destroy all evidence of cooperation with the Nazis, seeking rapid rehabilitation and reentry to the family of “respectable” nations.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Perlasca, Giorgio; Ratlines

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Speer, Albert

Albert Speer, an architect by profession, made his greatest contribution to the Nazi regime in the critical area of armament and munitions production. He used his exceptional organizational skills as well as the forced labor of millions of concentration camp prisoners and prisoners of war to keep the Nazi military machine armed and in the fight for much longer than would have otherwise been the case.

Born into a comfortable middle-class family in Mannheim on March 19, 1905, Berthold Konrad Hermann Albert Speer became an architect, as his father and grandfather before him. He joined the Nazi Party in March 1931, finding in Hitler not only an inspiring speaker but also the answer to his concerns about communism and Germany’s need to return to its past glory.

After successfully renovating the Berlin headquarters of the Nazi Party and providing plans for the Nuremberg rally of 1933 that met with Hitler’s approval, Speer quickly found himself with constant—often daily—contact with Hitler, who designated Speer the Nazi Party’s chief architect in early 1934. With successful projects, including the building of a huge stadium in Nuremberg designed to hold over 300,000

people and a pavilion for the 1937 International Exposition in Paris that conveyed the dominance of Germany, Speer was soon the inspector general of the Reich.

Although the start of World War II prevented many of his architectural plans—including the rebuilding of Berlin to achieve its rightful splendor—from moving forward to construction, Speer’s proven efficiency and business skills put him in position to replace Fritz Todt—who died in an airplane accident on February 8, 1942—as minister for armaments and war production. His first focus was to bring the German economy up to the level needed for wartime production. Since so much of the German economy was now based on military production, he effectively found himself in charge of the entire economy.

The results of Speer’s efforts were truly impressive. In 1943 he was able to greatly increase tank and airplane production, and dramatically reduce the time to bring a German submarine from the planning stage to its launching, all despite the fact that Germany was the subject of massive Allied bombing. Although detached from day-to-day operations due to a three-month-long illness, Speer was able to fight off the efforts of others—including Göring, Bormann, and Himmler—to take over some of his areas of responsibility. With Hitler’s support, this situation was quickly resolved in Speer’s favor.

After Hitler’s death, Speer worked in the government of Karl Dönitz—Hitler’s handpicked successor—until he was arrested by the British. It was not just Speer’s success in greatly increasing Germany’s weaponry that caused him to be indicted in the trial of major war criminals (the International Military Tribunal) held in Nuremberg following the war; it was the fact that Speer attained that success by the use of forced labor—including millions of Jewish concentration camp prisoners and prisoners of war—in factories around the Reich, in horrid conditions that resulted in death for many of the workers. Accordingly, he was charged with planning and/or participating in a war of aggression, conspiring to plan a war of aggression, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. He was convicted on the last two charges.

During the trial, Speer was the only defendant who acknowledged responsibility for the crimes of the Reich and for his role in them. He contended that he knew nothing of the extermination of the Jews and that he plotted to kill Hitler in 1945—contentions that were and continue to be seriously doubted—but his was a unique response to the charges of the tribunal. Speer was sentenced to and served 20 years in Spandau Prison, from which he was released on October 1, 1966. He then authored three books, including *Inside the*

Third Reich and *Spandau: The Secret Diaries*. He died in London on September 1, 1981.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Bormann, Martin; Crimes against Humanity; Göring, Hermann; Himmler, Heinrich; Nuremberg Trials; Slave Labor; War Crimes; World War II

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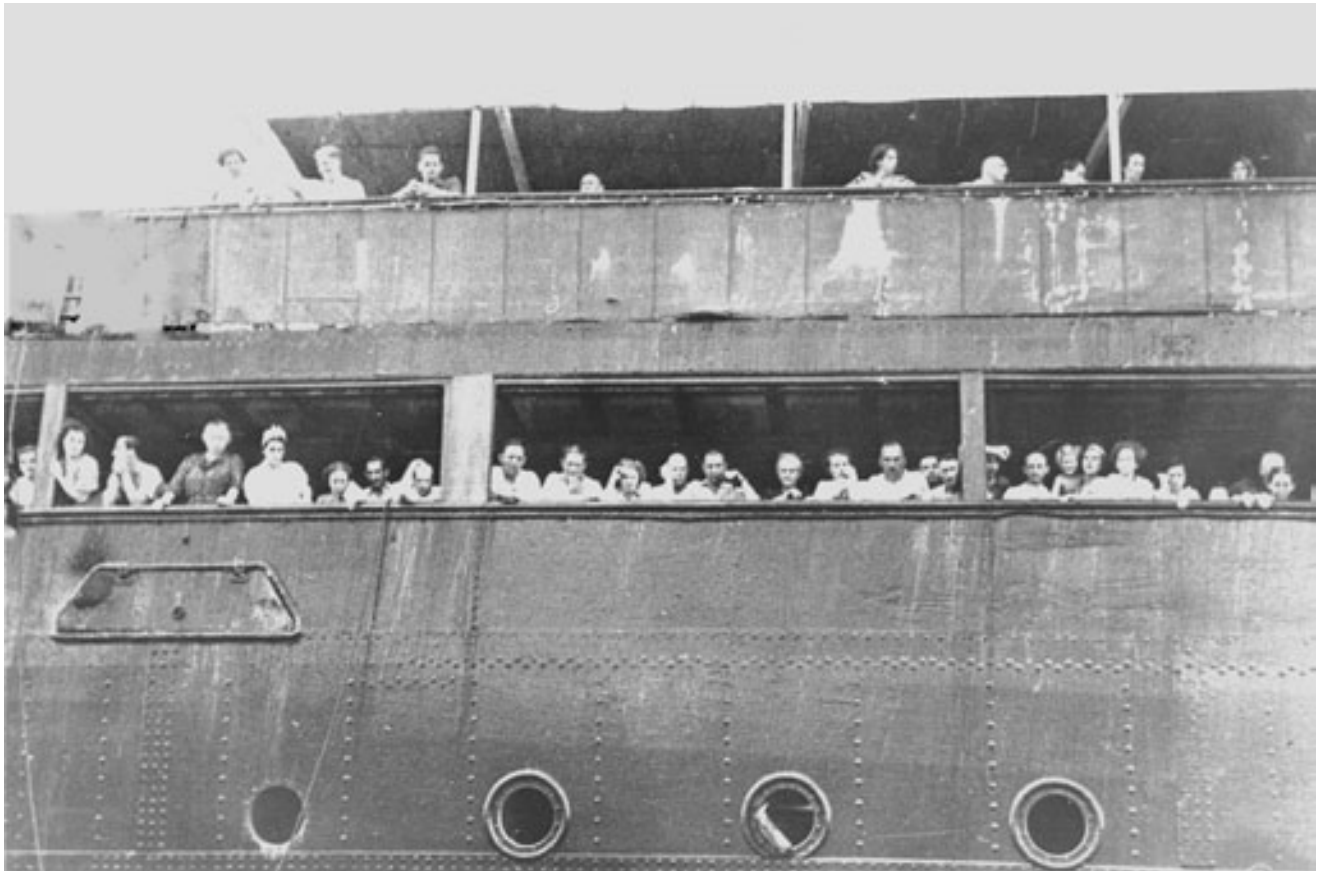
SS St. Louis

On May 13, 1939, a German luxury cruise ship, the *St. Louis*, set sail from Hamburg carrying 937 German Jews who were seeking refuge abroad. To contextualize this journey, it is important to look back a little and see what caused these people to make what proved to be, in the words of one study, a “voyage of the damned.”

The Kristallnacht of November 9–10, 1938, was, for many Jews, the final prod needed to realize that no accommodation could be reached with Nazism. If ever there was a time to leave, it was now. However, the inhibitions to successful emigration were many, not the least of which was a hardening of attitudes in countries around the world to the admission of Jews. Visas were often practically unachievable, and the speed with which they were needed—given that lives were on the line—only served to place further obstacles in the path of German and Austrian Jews seeking sanctuary.

For those who managed to obtain passage on the *St. Louis*, therefore, this seemed to be not only their best chance to leave Germany but also their opportunity to start a new life in a free country. Not only that, Gustav Schroeder, the captain of the German luxury liner, did everything in his power to make his passengers comfortable. He removed a picture of the Führer from the social hall of the boat and permitted Jewish religious services to take place, much to the consternation of some Nazi crew members.

When the ship left Hamburg, its destination was Havana, Cuba. Adding to the optimism of those on board, it had been arranged that most of the Jewish passengers would have visas enabling them to land temporarily while they obtained permanent residence elsewhere.



The *St. Louis* was a German ship which worked the Atlantic route between Hamburg and the Americas. On a voyage in 1939 the ship carried over 900 Jewish refugees from Germany, but upon their arrival in Cuba they were denied entry even though many were bearing legitimate landing visas. After repeated further denials in the United States and Canada, the ship turned back to Germany. Many managed to find sanctuary in Britain, while others were eventually accepted by various European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. Many were later murdered during the Holocaust. (Universal History Archive/Getty Images)

Upon their arrival, however, the president of Cuba, Federico Laredo Bru, refused the ship permission to dock; under such circumstances, the passengers would be unable to land. In an attempt at making profit from the refugees' plight, Bru demanded a payment of \$500,000 as an entry fee. After a great deal of hesitation, negotiation, and standoff, only 22 Jews were permitted to land.

What made the situation even more intolerable was the fact that some 700 of the refugees possessed U.S. immigration quota numbers that would have seen them eligible for entry to the United States at some point within the next three years.

Denied entry to Cuba, and with no other alternative but to leave, the ship turned toward the Florida coast, in the desperate hope that the refugees might perhaps negotiate with the American authorities for an earlier entry.

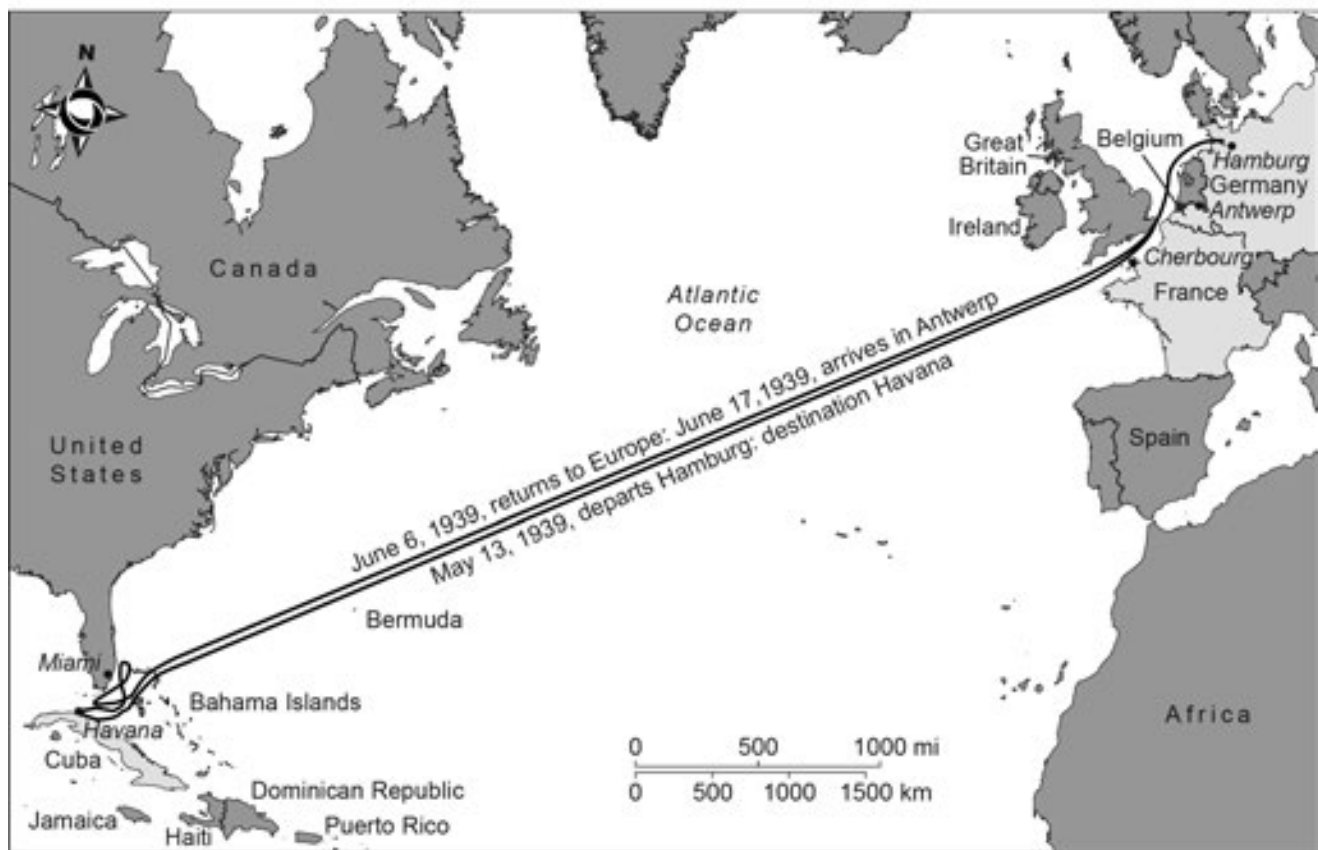
The government of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, however, was adamant: no early admissions, no landing of refugees, and no docking of the *St. Louis*. Some accounts refer to

vessels from the U.S. Coast Guard having been ordered to intercept the ship so as to ensure that it would not enter U.S. territorial waters. In reality, however, the Coast Guard had actually been sent following a request of Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. Far from seeking to deny the *St. Louis* entry, he was concerned for the passengers' welfare and wanted the ship followed in case a change in government policy would allow it to land. He was practically alone, however, as the government was not about to retreat from its stated position.

American Jewish organizations, such as the Joint Distribution Committee, then worked feverishly on the refugees' behalf. Knowing that the U.S. option was unlikely to be successful, pleas were made to secure admission to any Western Hemisphere country. Again, none of these amounted to anything.

With little other alternative available, and with both food stocks and patience dwindling, the ship turned around; first, it left American waters and returned to Cuba, and then, a few

VOYAGE OF THE SS *ST. LOUIS* MAY 13–JUNE 17, 1939



days later, the captain, following orders from the ship's German owners, made the decision to return to Europe. Captain Schroeder devised a plan to run the *St. Louis* close to the Sussex coast of England and set the ship on fire, allowing the passengers to escape ashore. While this scenario did not play out, in the meantime negotiators from the American Joint Distribution Committee worked around the clock to make arrangements for the passengers to enter Belgium, Holland, France, and Britain. On Tuesday, June 13, 1939, the world learned that the refugees would not be returning to Germany.

The *St. Louis* docked at Antwerp, Belgium, on June 17, 1939. After further negotiations involving the Joint Distribution Committee, most of the Jews on board were accepted for temporary refuge by a number of countries including Britain (228 refugees), Belgium (214), France (224), and the Netherlands (181).

Of those admitted into Britain, all but one survived World War II—a victim of a German air raid in 1940. After the

Nazis ran all over Western Europe, however, many of the others did not share the fate of those who went to the United Kingdom. Nearly 90 managed to reemigrate before the German invasion of Western Europe in May 1940, but some 532 *St. Louis* passengers were trapped when Germany conquered Western Europe. Among the 254 who were murdered subsequently, 84 had been granted refuge in Belgium, 84 in Holland, and 86 in France.

Their heartbreaking fate was to become victims of the Holocaust—a fate they could have escaped had their initial visas been accepted and the gates of the refuge they had sought not been barred.

The story of the *St. Louis* has become symbolic of the failure of the countries of the Americas to assist the Jews of Nazi Germany in their hour of need, a symbol brought into even starker relief by the legitimacy of the documentation the refugees possessed. The definitive study of their nightmare, written by Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan Witts in 1974, was titled *Voyage of the Damned*. In light of subsequent

events, it might be said that no truer statement, embedded within a book title, could have been made.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Kristallnacht; United States Response to the Holocaust

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SS-Totenkopfverbände

Specially trained SS personnel whose primary job was to provide administrative and guard duties for Nazi German concentration camps. The term *SS-Totenkopfverbände* (SS-TV) can be translated as “Death’s Head Squad.” By early 1934, the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, had gained control over Germany’s nascent system of concentration camps and created an Inspectorate of Concentration Camps under Theodor Eicke as chief inspector. Eicke already had charge over the camp at Dachau, which would serve as a model for all subsequent camps. In April 1934 he established the SS-TV. All SS-TV personnel were highly trained and were thus well placed to maintain day-to-day operations in the camps including discipline, which, as time progressed, became more and more brutal for those incarcerated. In 1937 there were just four concentration camps in Germany; that number increased dramatically as Germany established many other camps within its borders as well as in those areas occupied by German troops after the war began in 1939. In 1939 the SS-TV had some 24,000 personnel, a number that had nearly doubled to 40,000 by early 1945.

After 1938, concentration camps became important not only in terms of the Holocaust but also as a centerpiece of Germany’s forced labor system, particularly in occupied areas outside Germany. The SS-TV created a string of forced labor camps, which farmed out prisoners as slave labor to civilian contractors for a profit. In some instances, the SS-TV actually owned companies, using concentration camp prisoners as forced labor. Meanwhile, in 1939 a combat division of the SS-TV was formed, which later became part of the Nazi Party army, the Waffen-SS. The uniforms of the SS-TV, designed by Hugo Boss, were adorned with a menacing skull-and-crossbones patch, a grim reminder of its major role in the Holocaust.

Between 1939 and 1945 alone, it is estimated that the SS-TV was directly responsible for the murders of at least 2 million people. They included Jews, political dissidents, Roma, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, alleged career criminals, and others. After the war ended in 1945, a number of SS-TV officers were tried for various war crimes and crimes against humanity.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Boss, Hugo; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Eicke, Theodor; Himmler, Heinrich; Pohl, Oswald

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St. Hedwig’s Cathedral

St. Hedwig’s Cathedral is the seat of the Catholic archbishop of Berlin. Modeled after the Pantheon in Rome, it was built between 1747 and 1773 as Prussia’s first Catholic church since the Protestant Reformation. In allowing it to be built, King Frederick II offered Catholic immigrants, especially those from Upper Silesia, a place of worship. The church was dedicated to the patron saint of Silesia, St. Hedwig of Andechs.

There was nothing specific in the cathedral’s history that would mark it as a place to stand out against the Nazis during the Third Reich, but the elevation of a new bishop in 1935, Konrad Graf von Preysing, provided a portent of how things might go, for, even prior to his move to Berlin, he was known to be an opponent of Nazism. Immediately after the Nazis came to power in January 1933, he became one of the most consistent senior Catholics opposing the government.

Born into an aristocratic Bavarian family on August 30, 1880, von Preysing became a law student at the University of Munich in 1898 before moving to the University of Würzburg in 1901. Choosing to become a priest, he was ordained in Munich on July 29, 1912. In 1913 he earned a doctorate in theology from the University of Innsbruck. In 1932 he was appointed personal secretary of the archbishop of Munich, Cardinal Franziskus von Bettinger. On July 6, 1935, he was named bishop of Berlin, and he argued that strong opposition should be mounted by the church against the Nazis.

On March 14, 1937, Pope Pius XI issued *Mit Brennender Sorge*, an encyclical reinforcing the inviolability of human

rights and accusing the Nazi government of “systematic hostility” toward the church and what it stood for. Von Preysing was a member of the commission that prepared this strong anti-Nazi statement.

On August 24, 1938, he became one of the co-founders of the Welfare Office of the Berlin Diocese Office. Through this he made himself personally responsible for the care of Catholics of Jewish background as well as unbaptized Jews. In 1940 and 1941 he also protested the Nazi euthanasia program, in which those with mental and physical disabilities and incurable diseases were murdered by the state. He sent numerous letters to his priests urging them to protest similarly.

One of these was the rector of St. Hedwig's, Father Bernard Lichtenberg. In 1931 he had been appointed rector of St. Hedwig's, and even by this stage he had shown himself to be opposed to Nazism. In 1931 he underwrote an invitation to Catholics to watch a performance of the American antiwar film *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Lewis Milestone, 1930), which led to a personal attack on him by the Nazi newspaper *Der Angriff*.

Then, on March 31, 1933, Lichtenberg arranged for the Jewish banker Oskar Wassermann to meet with Adolf Cardinal Bertram, archbishop of Breslau and president of the German Episcopal Conference, in a vain attempt to convince Bertram to intervene in the antisemitic boycott of Jewish businesses planned by the government for the next day. Bertram, however, held that the matter lay outside the church's sphere of activity, and no action was taken. Lichtenberg had marked himself out as an opponent of Nazism who needed to be watched in the future.

In 1937, having already worked with Bishop von Preysing on Jewish matters, Lichtenberg was elected cathedral provost, a role that saw him thrust deeper into helping Berlin's Jewish community. In August 1938 he was put in charge of the Relief Office of the Berlin episcopate, assisting Catholics of Jewish descent desperate to emigrate from Nazi Germany. When the Kristallnacht pogrom took place on November 9–10, 1938, Lichtenberg prayed publicly for the Jews during services, proclaiming to his congregation: “The burning synagogue outside is also a house of God!” At the time of his protest, he was one of only a few Catholic prelates to do so. After the outbreak of war in September 1939, Lichtenberg continued his protests in another area, this time writing to the air raid authorities remonstrating against an order dated December 14, 1939, decreeing racial segregation in Berlin's air raid shelters.

Lichtenberg was warned repeatedly that he should be careful lest he be arrested, but he continued with his protests, even organizing demonstrations outside concentration

camp. He was finally denounced by two female students who had heard him pray publicly for Jews and concentration camp inmates, and he was arrested by the Gestapo on October 23, 1941. Under interrogation he refused to retract his words, even going so far as to condemn Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as antithetical to Christianity. Under cross-examination he stated that no matter what his fate, he would not desist from expressing his beliefs or stop praying for the Jews. In May 1942 he was duly sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and when asked if he had anything to say upon sentencing, he asked that no harm should come to citizens who pray for the Jews.

Toward the end of his prison term he was given the opportunity to remain free provided he undertook to refrain from preaching for the duration of the war. The offer was conveyed to him by Bishop von Preysing on orders from the Gestapo. In response, Lichtenberg requested instead that he be allowed to accompany the deported Jews and Jewish Christians to the Łódź ghetto.

With little other alternative, it was ordered that he be sent to Dachau, where all anti-Nazi priests were imprisoned. On November 5, 1943, while in transit, he collapsed and died. The circumstances of his death were never made public. No one among the Nazi hierarchy regretted his death. Joseph Goebbels, who considered him a nuisance, was joined by SS Chief of Police Reinhard Heydrich, who referred to him as the “gutter priest from Berlin.”

Shortly after Lichtenberg's arrest in 1941, Bishop von Preysing appointed another anti-Nazi opponent, Margarete Sommer, to take his place. A teacher, in 1934 she was forced to resign after she refused to teach her students the Nazi laws regarding compulsory sterilization. She then worked at the Episcopal Diocesan Authority in Berlin, counseling “non-Aryan” Christians through Caritas Emergency Relief. In this way she was able to assist those forced to leave the Third Reich. In 1939 she became increasingly involved in the work of the relief agency of the Berlin Episcopate, founded in August 1938 at Bishop von Preysing's initiative.

After Lichtenberg's arrest she took immediate charge of operations and began coordinating Catholic aid for victims of racial persecution, providing them with food, clothing, and occasionally financial assistance. She also began to gather information regarding Nazi antisemitic measures from Catholic workers across Germany. She began to employ this material in a series of reports, one of which, in August 1942, was conveyed to the Vatican under the title “Report on the Exodus of the Jews.” Bishop von Preysing gave her his full support and endorsement throughout this time.

In 1943 Sommer and von Preysing drafted a statement for consideration by the German bishops, rebuking Hitler for human rights abuses and mass murder. It began, “With deepest sorrow—yes even with holy indignation—have we German bishops learned of the deportation of non-Aryans in a manner that is scornful of all human rights. It is our holy duty to defend the unalienable rights of all men guaranteed by natural law.” It was a very clear statement, which, if accepted and read publicly, would have left the Nazi regime in no doubt as to the official attitude of the Catholic Church in Germany. The statement was not, however, published.

A further dimension of Margarete Sommer’s efforts on behalf of Jews involved her employing her legal skills to challenge the Third Reich’s laws on mixed marriages. Again, Bishop von Preysing gave her his support, even though it did not stop the Nazis.

Throughout all this, Bishop von Preysing also worked with leading members of the German resistance, particularly Carl Goerdeler and Helmuth James von Moltke. One of his pastoral letters was even broadcast in German by the BBC in London. Finally, in 1944, he met with resistance leader Claus von Stauffenberg prior to the failed July Bomb Plot that attempted to assassinate Hitler. Von Preysing blessed von Stauffenberg and wished him well in his endeavor, though expressing misgivings as to whether killing Hitler would be permitted under church law.

In 1946 von Preysing was elevated to the position of cardinal by Pope Pius XII, a position he held until his death, in Berlin, on December 21, 1950. His remains, and those of Father Lichtenberg, rest in the crypt of St. Hedwig’s Cathedral. Lichtenberg was beatified as a Blessed Martyr by Pope John Paul II on June 23, 1996. After the war Margarete Sommer continued to work at the Episcopal diocesan authority in Berlin, assisting survivors looking to pick up the threads of their destroyed lives. She died in Berlin on June 30, 1965, and on May 5, 2003, was posthumously recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. On July 7, 2004, Bernhard Lichtenberg was similarly recognized.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Catholic Church; Lichtenberg, Bernhard; Upstander

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Stangl, Franz

Franz Stangl was a Nazi extermination camp commandant. Born in Austria on March 26, 1908, his original profession was as a weaver. In 1931 he became a police officer and soon thereafter joined the then-illegal Austrian Nazi Party, but the German Anschluss with Austria provided him with opportunities denied him under domestic Austrian rule. By 1940 he had become the superintendent at Hartheim Castle, where he oversaw the mass murder of people with physical and psychological disabilities, under the auspices of the T-4, or “euthanasia,” program.

In 1942 Stangl was transferred to the new death camp at Sobibór as commandant. During his term there, between March and September 1942, Stangl’s approach to the mass annihilation of Jewish prisoners won him admiration in Berlin. As a consequence, he was moved on to another death camp, this time at Treblinka, where he served as its commandant from September 1942 through the camp’s closure in August 1943. While at Treblinka, Stangl was responsible for the system that would see the murder of most of Treblinka’s 870,000 Jewish victims.

After Germany’s defeat in 1945, Stangl went into hiding, was identified and interned in Austria, then escaped to Syria with the assistance of Nazi sympathizers in the Vatican such as Bishop Alois Hudal. In 1951 he was spirited into Brazil, where he lived until he was tracked down by Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal and extradited to Germany in 1967. In 1970, following a trial, Stangl was sentenced to life imprisonment. In prison, British journalist Gitta Sereny conducted some 70 hours of interviews with him, attempting to penetrate to the core of his consciousness vis-à-vis his role as a mass murderer. Her study of Stangl based on these (and other) interviews was published in 1974 as *Into That Darkness: An Examination of Conscience*. On June 28, 1971, the day after Sereny completed the last of her interviews with him, Stangl suffered a heart attack and died.

Throughout his trial, Stangl claimed that his conscience was clear; this he reaffirmed in his last interview with Sereny, adding that he “never intentionally hurt anyone. . . . But I was there [and] in reality I share the guilt.”

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Euthanasia Program; Franz, Kurt; Hudal, Alois; Ratlines; Sobibór; Treblinka; Wiesenthal, Simon

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Franz Stangl was an Austrian-born SS officer. He was appointed as the first commandant of Sobibór extermination camp, where he served during 1942. In August 1942 he became commandant at the newly opened death camp of Treblinka. In August 1943 Stangl was transferred to Trieste, where he helped organize the campaign against Yugoslav partisans and local Jews. After the war he escaped to Brazil, where he was arrested in 1967. He was extradited and tried in West Germany for the mass murder of 900,000 people, and in 1970 was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. This photo is of Stangl accompanied by police officers on his arrival at Dusseldorf Airport in Germany on June 23, 1967. (AP Photo)

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Stein, Edith

Germany's Edith Stein was a Jew whose study of philosophy and metaphysics led her on a religious odyssey from the Judaism of her family through atheism and eventually to an embrace of Catholicism. In 1933 she became a Catholic nun, but her association with the church did not spare her from persecution as a Jew in the Holocaust during World War II.

The Catholic Church has honored Stein not only for her religious struggles but also for her bravery in the face of death, canonizing her in October 1998.

Stein was born in Breslau, Germany (present-day Wrocław, Poland), on October 12, 1891. She was the youngest of seven children in a religiously observant Jewish family. Her father ran a lumberyard, and when he died suddenly in 1893, his wife, Auguste, was left to take over not only as head of the household but also head of the business. Auguste was a resourceful woman, however, and proved an extremely successful businessperson.

Stein herself proved equally resourceful, though more restless than her mother. At the age of six, she demanded to be admitted to school early. At 13, she made a permanent decision to reject Judaism and declared herself an atheist. In 1911 she entered the University of Breslau but quickly became disillusioned with the intellectual opportunities there.

Although Stein hated the idea of leaving her mother, her intellectual curiosity took her to Göttingen, where she studied with Edmund Husserl, a philosophy professor who was building a reputation for his innovative theories on human thought and experience. Stein struggled through her years as a student, often feeling overwhelmed and depressed. She interrupted her studies during World War I to work as a volunteer nurse. In 1916 she managed to finish her dissertation, graduated *summa cum laude*, and continued to work as an assistant to Husserl, who was now in Freiburg. He proved a difficult boss, giving her little credit for her work editing his manuscripts. Her own academic future remained highly uncertain since most universities remained adamantly opposed to hiring a female philosophy professor.

In 1921 an entirely different path opened for Stein. After reading the autobiography of St. Teresa of Ávila, she was so affected that she not only rejected atheism but converted to Catholicism. On January 1, 1922, she was baptized in her new faith. Her mother refused to accept her conversion, and many of her friends cut off contact with her altogether.

Stein gave up her position with Husserl and began teaching at a Dominican college in Speyer. During her tenure there, which lasted until 1932, she translated St. Thomas Aquinas's *De veritate (On Truth)*. After leaving Speyer, Stein took a position at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Münster. She was forced to resign the post a year later as a result of antisemitic laws passed by the new Nazi government. Alarmed by Nazi activity, Stein wrote to Pope Pius XI asking him to condemn Nazi antisemitism. Her letter went unanswered.

In October 1933 Stein entered the Carmelite convent at Cologne, where she was given the religious name of Teresa Blessed by the Cross. Although now a nun, she continued to pursue her scholarship. While in Cologne she completed a metaphysical work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, which was an effort to reconcile the philosophies of Aquinas and her former mentor, Husserl.

In 1938 Stein's life in Cologne was disrupted by the growing threat of Nazi persecution of all Jews. For her protection, Stein was transferred to the Carmelite convent at Echt, in the Netherlands. As she was forced to flee, she expressed concern for the plight of her family, but she looked to her

religious training, both old and new, for consolation. On October 31, 1938, she wrote of her religious exile: "I keep having to think of Queen Esther who was taken from among her people precisely so that she might represent them before the king. I am a very poor and powerless little Esther, but the King who chose me is infinitely great and merciful. That is such a great comfort." Stein hoped that her conversion to Catholicism might now serve her in aiding her fellow Jews.

Stein's move to the Dutch convent secured her safety for only a short period of time. On May 10, 1940, Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands. In 1942, to punish the Catholic community for criticism of the Nazi regime by the Dutch bishop, Catholics of Jewish background began being deported to Auschwitz. Stein and her sister Rosa, also a convert living in the Echt convent, were among those sent to the death camp. Both women were gassed at Auschwitz on August 9, 1942.

Edith Stein has proved as controversial to the religious community in death as she did to her friends and family in life. The Catholic Church chose to honor her as a martyr for her faith. On May 1, 1987, Pope John Paul II beatified her, but efforts to declare her a saint created dissent among Jewish leaders, who pointed out that she was sent to her death not for her Catholic faith but for her Jewish background (as the Nazis would have contended, for her Jewish "race"). The Catholic Church, however, has remained committed to its veneration of Stein, officially canonizing her in a ceremony held on October 11, 1998.

ILISA HOROWITZ

See also: Aryan Paragraph; Birkenau; Catholic Church

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Sterilization

Sterilization, in the context of the Holocaust, is defined as meaning the prevention of reproductive capacities of individuals by medical surgeries, and of groups by social segregation. Surgically, it renders a person physically incapable of producing offspring. Within the terminology of genocide,

sterilization is the surgical destruction of reproductive organs, as well as the segregation of intended victim groups into intentionally destructive living conditions.

As Richard Evans has stated, sterilization, in the forms of surgical interventions and ghettoized segregation, initiated the genocidal Nazi social order and murderous Holocaust policies. Legally, Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide permits compulsory sterilization of members of a group to be classified as genocide.

Initially during the Holocaust, surgeries prevented births. Later, victim groups suffered intentionally destructive living conditions in camps and ghettos.

Theories, and later practices, of rendering a society sterile of unwanted subsections originated with 19th-century social Darwinist segregation. In 1895 Alfred Ploetz began the German *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene) movement. Ploetz viewed modern medicine as counterselective to the observed natural order of stronger organisms dominating their physically weaker neighbors. For privileged Europeans struggling with the demands of emerging interdependent societies, the state had inadvertently developed policies of racial degeneration. Social Darwinists called for artificial selections within their communities. Ploetz suggested withdrawing medical care for people he termed “the weak.” This model became active during the Holocaust when segregated ghettoization included the removal of state support deliberately to hasten the destruction of groups collectively termed *Untermenschen* (“subhumans”). Targets included Jews, Slavs, and those with physical or psychological disabilities.

Several barriers to overt Nazi destructive social engineering were initially lowered in Britain and the United States. Efforts to control breeding, including surgical sterilization, grew in popularity prior to the Third Reich. In 1883 the eugenics ideology of Sir Frances Galton hoped to increase the reproduction rates of Britain’s educated classes. Galton united British and German social Darwinists in his honorary roles as president of both the Eugenics Education Society and the Society for Race Hygiene. Reacting to the increasing proportion of uneducated children and adults, eugenicists adapted their positive hopes to grow wealthier families into preventive attempts to limit further additions of poorer Britons and Americans.

Journalist Edwin Black has expertly traced the influential American eugenics movement. His work from 2003, *War against the Weak*, demonstrably highlights the links between Aryan and Nordic racism and genocide as committed by American and German forced surgical sterilization programs.

Unable to contrive legally sanctioned surgeries in the United Kingdom, informal segregation within inner-city slums attempted to maintain some limitations upon industrialized laborers. In 1907 the United States implemented surgical sterilization as a practice of preventative eugenics. It is important to recognize pre-Nazi events in the development of genocidal sterilization. Democracies, not dictatorships, eroded moral limitations by empowering eugenicists to experiment and enact social Darwinist theories. Failed positive and preventive breeding measures to regenerate imagined degenerate Western societies incited negative eugenics, the intentional destruction of perceived inferiors as occurred in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The application of sterilization during the Holocaust owed much to Ploetz’s generation. The theoretical development of *Lebensunwertes Leben* (“life unworthy of life”) directly influenced destructive Nazi practices. In April 1933, too elderly to maintain his ideological ambition toward a racially sterilized Germany, Ploetz wrote to Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler to endorse the new leader’s eugenic policies. In July 1933 the Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring ushered in the social Darwinist mission of the National Socialist regime. Nazis adapted American eugenic statutes that targeted people deemed by law to be feeble-minded, mentally and physically impaired, blind, deaf, and alcoholic. In Germany, compulsory reproductive destruction impacted as many as 400,000 surgical victims. In addition to surgically sterilizing perceived inferiors, Nazi segregation attempted to legally prevent births between Jews and “Aryan” Germans. The 1935 Nuremberg race laws redefined Jews as “subhumans,” a socially unacceptable group for procreating German citizens. Social sterilization, as legal segregation, set the precedent for deliberately destructive ghettoization of groups defined as subhumans during the Holocaust.

CHRISTOPHER L. HARRISON

See also: Brack, Viktor; Eugenics; Homosexuals; Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; “Life Unworthy of Life”; Medical Experimentation; Ploetz, Alfred; “Racial Hygiene”; Rhineland Bastards; Ritter, Robert; Roma and Sinti; Social Darwinism

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Streicher, Julius

Julius Streicher was a German politician and rabid antisemitic Nazi propagandist, born in Fleinhausen (Bavaria) on February 12, 1885. Choosing to become a schoolteacher, in 1909 he took an administrative post at a secondary school in Nuremberg. He saw military service during World War I, and in the immediate aftermath of that conflict he became involved in radical, right-wing politics. Shortly thereafter he founded the Nuremberg chapter of the German Socialist Party, an entity that was in fact not socialist at all but rather fiercely antisemitic, anti-Catholic, and intensely nationalistic. Streicher helped merge the party with the incipient National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) in 1922, making him one of Adolf Hitler's oldest political associates.



Julius Streicher was one of the most notorious antisemites in history, whose newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, became one of the core texts employed by the Nazis in their propaganda against Germany's Jews. It reached a peak circulation of 600,000 in 1935. Appointed as Gauleiter (Nazi local governor) of the Bavarian region of Franconia (embracing Nuremberg), Streicher became isolated when war came in 1939, largely owing to his excesses in office. One of his leading opponents was Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring. After the war, Streicher stood trial at the International Military Tribunal, was convicted of crimes against humanity, and executed. (AP Photo)

A year later, in 1923, Streicher began publishing *Der Stürmer* (*The Attacker*), a reactionary antisemitic newspaper that served as a useful tool for Nazi propaganda and which reinforced the party's bizarre racial policies. As the founder, editor, owner, writer, and publisher of this weekly Nazi Party newspaper, he excelled in producing graphically violent, obscene, and pornographic stories about "Jewish perfidy."

After participating in Adolf Hitler's abortive Beer Hall Putsch later that same year, Streicher was fired from his teaching position. Thereafter, he concentrated on his newspaper, which grew substantially in readership, and engaged in illicit right-wing political activities. From 1924 until 1932 he also held a seat in the Bavarian assembly. After Hitler was released from jail, he named Streicher head of the Nazi Party's Franconia District, which included Streicher's hometown of Nuremberg.

After Hitler and the Nazis came to power in 1933, Streicher organized the April 1 boycott of Jewish-owned businesses in Germany. In 1935 he helped formulate the infamous Nuremberg Laws, which formed the basis of German racial policies and, later, of the Holocaust. Meanwhile, Streicher's newspaper and other publishing ventures had reached the pinnacle of success, and he continued to enjoy Hitler's confidence. Nevertheless, Streicher was viewed by many Nazi leaders as a loose cannon; he was vain, mercurial, and greedy. His political downfall came in 1939, when he was foolish enough to publicly castigate Reich Marshal Herman Göring. This episode resulted in his effective internal banishment from the inner echelons of the Nazi Party. He was forbidden to issue any public statements and, by 1940, had been stripped of his rank and other offices. *Der Stürmer* continued on, however, until early 1945.

In May 1945, after Germany was defeated, Allied troops took Streicher into custody and charged him with crimes against humanity. He was convicted by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg and sentenced to death on October 1, 1946. Julius Streicher was hanged on October 16, 1946, in Nuremberg. His last words were reported as "Heil Hitler" and "Purimfest," an allusion to the Book of Esther in the Hebrew Bible in which the enemy of the Jews, the prime minister of Persia, Haman, was also hanged on the gallows.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Antisemitism; *Der Stürmer*; Göring, Hermann; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Nuremberg Laws; Nuremberg Trials; Propaganda in the Holocaust

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Strobos, Tina

Tina Strobos was a Dutch medical student in Amsterdam who, with her mother, helped save more than 100 Jews from the Nazis during World War II by giving them refuge on the upper floor of her Amsterdam home.

Born Tineke Buchter in Amsterdam on May 19, 1920, Tina was an only child. She came from an activist family: her mother, who raised Tina after her divorce, was a socialist (and atheist) who had housed refugees during World War I; her grandmother (whom Tina was later to describe as “the only person I know who scared the Gestapo”), had been involved with the Dutch labor movement in the latter part of the 19th century.

When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, Tina was almost 20, a university student working toward a degree in medicine. When she and her classmates refused to sign an oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler, the medical school was forced to close down; many students, including Tina, then joined the underground movement.

At first, this involved assisting those fighting in the resistance. Tina smuggled guns, explosives, and radios by hiding them in the basket of her bicycle as she rode around the countryside. Then, however, as the nature of resistance became transformed into acts of sabotage and targeted assassinations, Tina’s acts themselves changed. Instead of engaging in or assisting with acts of physical violence, she found another outlet for her opposition to the Nazis: helping Jews.

Fluent in German, she would ride her bicycle relatively unmolested while at the same time carrying ration stamps to Jews hiding on farms. She created false identity papers in a variety of ways: sometimes she would steal legitimate documents from guests at her mother’s boarding house; sometimes she would arrange for pickpockets at train stations to “lift” documents from travelers; on one occasion, when attending a family funeral, she even searched through mourners’ coats looking for documents.

Her early motivation might have been found in the need to save her Jewish fiancé, Abraham Pais, who later became a celebrated physicist serving as an assistant to Niels Bohr and working with Albert Einstein at Princeton University. Tina arranged hiding places for Pais and other Jews in Amsterdam. When the Germans began forcing the Dutch Jews into a ghetto, Tina found a place for his sister Annie and her husband Hermann to hide; sadly, they did not take up the

opportunity, and Annie was later murdered at Sobibór. Tina also found a refuge for Pais’s parents on a farm outside Amsterdam, from where they were able to survive the war.

Her relationship with Pais notwithstanding—and their marriage ultimately did not take place—Tina’s efforts did not stop there. In what became a conspiracy of goodness, she and her mother, Marie Schotte, helped shelter more than 100 Jewish refugees, in small groups, for short periods. The upper floors and attic of their three-story boarding house, located at 282 Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal (just behind the royal palace, in the center of Amsterdam), saw the creation of a secret compartment that could hold up to four people behind a hard-to-spot door in the attic. While the refugees were in this sanctuary, Tina, her mother, and her grandmother provided them with food and medical care. Through her contacts in the resistance, as well as through her own earlier experiences, Tina was able to provide false passports that would assist the Jews in the next step of their journey to safety.

The house was just a few blocks away from another safe house located at 263 Prinsengracht. This was where Miep Gies and others were hiding the family of Anne Frank, a young German-born diarist who hid with her family at the same time as Tina Strobos was rescuing other Jews.

The work Tina was doing was not without risks, of course. Her grandmother had a radio transmitter hidden in the house, which was used to pass messages from the underground to the Dutch military authorities in London, and discovery could have exposed the house at any moment. Indeed, the house was searched by the Gestapo, Dutch police, and Dutch Nazis on at least eight occasions, and Tina herself was arrested and questioned by the Gestapo nine times. On one of these, she was physically manhandled and left unconscious after she had been thrown against a wall.

When asked later why she engaged in these hazardous actions, she said that in her view what she did was “just the right thing to do.” Another time, she admitted that “I never believed in God,” but, rather, always “believed in the sacredness of life.”

In 1946, with the end of the war and the liberation of the Netherlands, Tina resumed her medical studies at the University of Amsterdam. Earning her degree, she went on to further study in London under the direction of Anna Freud, the celebrated psychoanalyst and daughter of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis.

In 1947 she married Robert Strobos, a neurologist, and together they had three children. They were later divorced, and Tina married Walter A. Chudson, an economist. In 1951 she migrated to the United States, where she became a U.S.

citizen and practiced psychiatry in New York until the age of 89. In 1989 Yad Vashem recognized Tina Strobos and her mother, Marie Schotte, as Righteous among the Nations, and in 2009, in further recognition of her efforts to save Jewish lives, Tina received a special award from the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center of New York. On February 27, 2012, Tina Strobos died of cancer in Rye, New York, aged 91.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Gies, Miep; Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Righteous among the Nations

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Stroop, Jürgen

Jürgen Stroop was an SS general during World War II. He was in command of Nazi troops during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and, in victory, wrote the Stroop Report, a book-length account of the operation.

He was born Josef Stroop on September 26, 1895, in Detmold, in the state of Lippe, Germany. His father, Konrad Stroop, was Lippe's chief of police; his mother, Katherine Stroop, was a devoutly religious woman, whom Jürgen alleged subjected him to childhood physical abuse. After an



Jürgen Stroop was an SS general during World War II, notorious for having commanded the German troops that suppressed the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 with such ferocity. Reducing the ghetto by fire, block by block, he was responsible for a massive loss of Jewish lives as a result. After this he commanded SS forces in Greece, with brutality on a similar scale. Prosecuted by the Americans after the war, he was extradited to Poland where he was tried for crimes against humanity, convicted, and hanged. The photo here shows Stroop in command during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. (Photo12/UIG via Getty Images)

elementary education, he was apprenticed with the land registry in Detmold. During World War I he served in several infantry regiments on the Western Front. Wounded in action in October 1914, he returned after eight months' sick leave and fought in Russian Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Austrian Galicia, and Romania. He was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class on December 2, 1915.

After demobilization, Stroop returned to the land registry. He joined the National Socialist Party and SS in 1932, and in 1933 he was appointed leader of the state auxiliary police; later he worked for the SS in Münster and Hamburg.

In September 1938 Stroop was promoted to the rank of an SS colonel, initially serving in the Sudetenland. After Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939, he commanded the SS section in Gnesen (Gniezno). He was then transferred to nearby Poznań (Posen) to head the so-called "self-defense" group of local ethnic Germans.

In May 1941 Stroop changed his name from Josef to Jürgen in honor of his dead infant son. From July 7 to September 15, 1941, Stroop served with the SS on the Eastern Front and received further military awards.

One day later, on September 16, 1942, he was promoted to SS general and posted as an inspector of the SiPo and SD of the Higher SS, and police leader for Russia. In this position he worked to help secure a key logistical route for German forces on the Eastern Front. From October 1942 Stroop commanded an SS garrison at Kherson, before becoming the SS and police leader (SSPF) for Lvov (Lviv) in February 1943.

Stroop is notorious for his role in the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. He was sent to Warsaw on April 17, 1943, by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler to suppress the Jewish revolt. Stroop was put in charge of two Waffen-SS battalions, 100 infantry, units of local police, and local Security Police. It was the function of the latter to accompany SS units in groups of six or eight, as guides and experts in ghetto matters.

Stroop ordered the entire ghetto to be systematically burned down and blown up, building by building. With the exception of a few who made it into the Aryan side of Warsaw via the sewers, nearly all of the survivors, including men, women, and children were either killed on the spot or deported to extermination camps.

Stroop expressed bewilderment that the ghetto's Jewish combatants, whom he viewed as "subhumans," had fought so tenaciously against his men. After the uprising was suppressed, he ordered that Warsaw's Great Synagogue be blown up and destroyed as a symbol of Nazi victory and the

total subjugation of the Jews. He then formally assumed the position of SS and police leader of Warsaw, and on June 18, 1943, was presented with the Iron Cross First Class for the Warsaw Ghetto "action."

Stroop created a detailed 75-page report with 69 pictures, along with communiques relevant to the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The report covered the period April 24, 1943, to May 24, 1943. Bound in black leather and titled *The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More!*, the report was intended as a souvenir album for Heinrich Himmler.

Stroop was subsequently placed in charge of the SS and police in Greece on September 8, 1943. The local civilian administration found his methods and behavior unacceptable and withdrew cooperation, forbidding the local Order Police from having anything to do with him, which made his position untenable. Consequently, Stroop was removed and on November 9, 1943, was appointed commander of SS in Wiesbaden, Germany, serving there until the end of the war.

Stroop was involved in the purge of anti-Nazi Germans that followed the failure of the July 20, 1944, Bomb Plot against the life of Adolf Hitler. For his involvement, Stroop claimed to have offered Field Marshal Günther von Kluge a choice between suicide and a show trial before the notorious judge of the People's Court, Roland Freisler. Kluge demanded his day in court, and Stroop personally shot Kluge in the head. Himmler announced that the field marshal had committed suicide.

Between October 1944 and March 1945 nine men of the U.S. Army Air Corps were summarily executed after being shot down and captured in Stroop's district.

On May 10, 1945, carrying forged discharge papers, Stroop surrendered to the American forces in the village of Rottau, Bavaria. It was two months before he admitted to his actual identity on July 2, 1945. He was then prosecuted during the Dachau Trials. He pretended no knowledge of the killings of the American servicemen, despite the fact that as senior commander of the SS and police he would have given the orders for their execution. After an eight-week trial, Stroop was convicted on March 21, 1947, for the shooting of the American POWs and was sentenced to death by hanging. In November 1947, however, before the sentence was carried out, Stroop was extradited to Poland.

Stroop's trial in Poland began on July 18, 1951, at the Warsaw Criminal District Court. It lasted for just three days. Duly tried, he was convicted on July 23, 1951, and on the evening of March 6, 1952, was hanged at Mokotów Prison for crimes against humanity.

See also: Anielewicz, Mordecai; Jewish Fighting Organization; Schutzstaffel; Waffen-SS; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; *Uprising*; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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Struma Disaster

The *Struma* disaster refers to the sinking of a ship, the MV *Struma*, on February 24, 1942. The *Struma* had been responsible for taking several hundred Jewish refugees from Axis-allied Romania to the British Mandate of Palestine. The *Struma* was a small vessel with a detailed history encompassing a series of fluctuations in its use and many changes of name. It was built in 1867 as a British nobleman's luxury steam yacht and ended 75 years later as a Greek and Bulgarian diesel ship for carrying cattle on the Danube River. The *Struma* was launched as SS *Struma*, but successively carried the names *Sölyst*, *Sea Maid*, *Kafireus*, *Esperos*, *Makedoniya*, and finally *Struma*. It was only 148.4 feet (45 meters) long, 19.3 feet (6 meters) wide, and had a draught of 9.9 feet (3 meters). In spite of the *Struma*'s small size, an estimated 781 Romanian refugees were packed into it.

On December 12, 1941, the *Struma* left Constanța, Romania, and ventured into the Black Sea. The waters off Constanța were mined for defense, so a Romanian vessel escorted the *Struma* clear of the minefield. The *Struma*'s diesel engine failed numerous times before it arrived in Istanbul, Turkey, on December 15. The little ship remained there at anchor while British diplomats and Turkish officials discussed the fate of the passengers on board. Due to Arab and Zionist turbulence in their territory of Palestine, Britain had resolved to apply the full measure of the conditions imposed by the White Paper of 1939 in order to lessen Jewish migration to Palestine. Adopted by British prime minister Neville Chamberlain in response to the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt, the White Paper provided details for the establishment of a Jewish national home in an independent Palestinian state within 10 years, but it also limited Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 for five years. While British officials implored the Turkish government to prevent the *Struma* from continuing its voyage, the Turkish government refused to allow its

passengers to come ashore, and as a consequence, while awaiting Turkish and British officials to come to an agreement in Istanbul, the *Struma* ran short of supplies.

After weeks of intense discussion, the British decided to accept the expired Palestinian visas held by a few of the *Struma*'s passengers, who were then permitted to continue their journey to Palestine by land. On February 12, British officials approved that children between the ages 11 to 16 on the ship would be given Palestinian visas, but an argument erupted with the Turks regarding their transportation to Palestine. Britain refused to send a ship for the released children, while Turkey denied them permission to travel by land.

On February 23, 1942, with the ship's engine still unworkable and the desperate refugee passengers still aboard, Turkish authorities attempted to board the ship. They were met with resistance by the passengers. A larger group of about 80 police came and surrounded *Struma* with motorboats. After about half an hour of confrontation, Turkish officials were able to come aboard, detached the *Struma*'s anchor, and hauled the ship from Istanbul through the Bosphorus waterway in northwestern Turkey, and out to the coast.

On the morning of February 24 there was an enormous explosion, and the *Struma* sank. Years later, it was discovered that it had been torpedoed by a Soviet submarine, which had also destroyed the Turkish vessel *Çankaya* the night before— notwithstanding the fact that the Soviet Union and Turkey were not at war, and that Turkey was actually a neutral in the wider conflict of World War II. The Soviet torpedo attack killed all 780 refugees and 10 crew members, making it the Black Sea's largest fully civilian naval disaster during World War II.

Some passengers aboard the *Struma* survived the sinking by hugging pieces of debris, but for hours no rescue came. All but one of the passengers died from drowning or hypothermia; only 19-year-old David Stoliar survived. He survived the blast and hung onto a floating piece of what remained of the ship's deck. Later, he was united with the ship's Bulgarian first officer. Stoliar later claimed that the first officer told him that he saw the torpedo before it sank the *Struma*. The officer eventually died overnight.

The *Struma* disaster, combined with the sinking of SS *Patria* 15 months earlier in 1940, carrying 1,800 Jewish refugees and killing 267 people, became a rallying point for Jewish underground movements in Palestine, particularly the Irgun and Lehi, and encouraged violent responses against the British presence in Palestine. It is generally recognized today that the neglect and abandonment of the *Struma*

passengers was a major catastrophe that could have been avoided if the will to do so had existed.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Turkey

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Stuckart, Wilhelm

Wilhelm Stuckart was a Nazi Party lawyer who co-wrote the Nuremberg race laws in 1935 and coauthored a follow-up commentary on them in 1936. His notoriety also emanated from his attendance at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, called to settle procedural, jurisdictional, and legal questions regarding the mass murder of Europe's Jews.

Stuckart was born on November 16, 1902, in Wiesbaden, Germany. The son of a railway employee, he had a Christian upbringing. In 1919 he joined the far right Freikorps to resist Allied occupation in the Rhineland, centering on the French in the Ruhr Valley. In 1922 he began his studies of law and political economy at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, and at the Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. He joined the Nazi Party in December 1922 and remained a member until the party was banned after the failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923. To support his parents, Stuckart had to defer his studies temporarily, only completing his degree in 1928.

Passing the bar examination in 1930, Stuckart served as a district court judge. There he renewed his association with the Nazi Party and provided party comrades with legal counseling. As judges were prohibited from being politically active, Stuckart's mother joined the party on his behalf.

From 1932 to 1933 Stuckart was a member of the SA, working as their lawyer and legal secretary in Stettin. With the recommendation of SS chief Heinrich Himmler he joined the SS on December 16, 1933; eventually, by 1944, he had reached the rank of SS-Obergruppenführer.

Stuckart's quick rise in the German state administration was unusual for a person of modest background, and it would have been impossible without his long dedication to the National Socialist cause. Having been a party member

since December 1922—that is, before the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923—he held the coveted Golden Party Badge.

On April 4, 1933, he became the mayor and state commissioner in Stettin, and he was also elected to the state parliament and the Prussian council of state. On May 15, 1933, he was appointed ministerial director of the Prussian Ministry of Education and the Arts, and on June 30, 1933, he was made a state secretary.

In 1934 Stuckart was intimately involved in the dubious acquisition, by the Prussian state under its prime minister, Hermann Göring, of the Guelph Treasure of Brunswick—a unique collection of early medieval religious precious metalwork, at that time in the hands of several German Jewish art dealers from Frankfurt, and one of the most important church treasuries to have survived from medieval Germany. Disagreements with his superior led Stuckart to leave the ministry and move to Darmstadt, where he worked for a few weeks as the president of the superior district court.

On March 7, 1935, he began serving in the Reich Ministry of Interior, with responsibility for constitutional law, citizenship, and racial laws. In this role, on September 13, 1935, he, together with Bernhard Lösener and Franz Albrecht Medicus, was given the task of co-writing the antisemitic Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor and the Reich Citizenship Law. Together these are better known as the Nuremberg Laws, which enacted the legal basis of Nazi racial policy, removing Jewish participation in “Aryan” society. The laws deprived Jews of citizenship, prohibited Jewish households from having German maids under the age of 45, prohibited any non-Jewish German from marrying a Jew, and outlawed sexual relations between Jews and Germans. Drafted in two days, the laws were imposed by the Nazi-controlled Reichstag on September 15, 1935.

In 1936 Stuckart, as the chairman of the Reich Committee for the Protection of German Blood, co-authored (with Hans Globke) the Nazi government's official Commentary on German Racial Legislation in elaboration of the Reich Citizenship and Blood Protection Laws. The commentary explains the basis of these laws on the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* (“People's Community”) to which every German was bound by common blood. The individual was not a member of society (a concept viewed by the Nazi legal theorists as a Marxist one), but a born member of the German Volk, through which he or she acquires rights. The interests of the Volk were to always override those of the individual. People born outside of the Volk were seen to possess no rights, and in fact to represent a danger to the purity of the people's community. As such, anti-miscegenation legislation was justified, even necessary.

On August 18, 1939, Stuckart signed a confidential decree regarding the “Reporting Obligations of Deformed Newborns,” which became the basis for the Nazi regime’s euthanasia of children.

In October 1939 Stuckart was given the task of investigating the comprehensive rationalization of the state administrative structure by decentralization and simplification. He proposed that the state and party should effectively be combined in an overarching concept of the Reich, and should cooperate at the highest levels of power so that ground-level friction between the institutions could be solved by referencing upward. The transformation of the state administration from a technical apparatus for the application of norms to a means of political leadership was the central idea in Stuckart’s model: the ideal Nazi civil servant was not to be a passive lawyer of the bygone “liberal constitutional state” but a “pioneer of culture, colonizer and political and economic creator.” The administrative structure of the *Reichsgaue* (district), where the party and state authorities were combined and the *Gauleiter*, or district head, fielded almost dictatorial powers over his domain, reflected Stuckart’s theorization.

In 1940, he participated in the preparatory measures designed to deprive Jews of their German citizenship, working out a proposal by 1941 for having Jews inside the German Reich wear distinguishing marks.

At the Wannsee conference on January 20, 1942, which discussed the imposition of the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*), Stuckart represented Wilhelm Frick, then interior minister. According to the edited conference minutes, Stuckart objected to the Nuremberg Laws being ignored by the SS in fulfilling the “Final Solution” and pointed out the bureaucratic problems of such a radical course of action, insisting that mandatory sterilization for persons of “mixed blood” (*Mischlinge*) instead of evacuation (extermination) would preserve the spirit of the Nuremberg laws.

However, Reinhard Heydrich, chairing the meeting, informed Stuckart that the decision to exterminate the Jews had been made by Adolf Hitler and that according to the *Führerprinzip* Hitler’s word was above all written law. Stuckart and several others at the conference recognized that Hitler did not give this order in writing.

Heydrich called a follow-up conference on March 6, 1942, which further discussed the problems of “mixed blood” individuals and mixed marriage couples. At this meeting, Stuckart argued that only first-degree *Mischlinge* (persons with two Jewish grandparents) should be sterilized by force, after which they should be allowed to remain in Germany and undergo a

“natural extinction.” He was also concerned about causing distress to German spouses and children of interracial couples.

In May 1945 Stuckart served briefly as interior minister in Karl Dönitz’s “Flensburg Government,” the short-lived government of Nazi Germany during a period of three weeks following the suicide of Adolf Hitler on April 30. With the end of the war he was arrested and tried by the Allies in the Ministries Trial for his role in formulating and carrying out anti-Jewish laws. The court characterized him as an ardent Jew-hater, who pursued his antisemitic campaign from the safety of his ministerial office. Former co-worker Bernhard Lösener testified that Stuckart had been aware of the murder of the Jews even before the Wannsee Conference. The defense argued that his support for the forced sterilization of *Mischlinge* was in order to prevent or delay even more drastic measures. The court, unable to resolve the question, sentenced him in April 1949 to three years and 10 months’ imprisonment, which, because of his preceding detention, was counted as having been served.

In 1951 he was tried in a denazification court, classified as a “fellow traveler” (*Mitläufer*) of the Nazis. For this, in 1952 he was fined 500 Marks.

Stuckart was killed on November 15, 1953, near Hanover, West Germany in a car accident a day before his 51st birthday. Ever since, there has been speculation that the accident was set up by persons hunting down Nazi war criminals still at liberty.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Euthanasia Program; Frick, Wilhelm; Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor; *Mischling*; Names under the Nazis, Legislation; Nuremberg Laws; “Racial Hygiene”; Schutzstaffel; Volk; Volksgemeinschaft; Wannsee Conference

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Sturmabteilung

The *Sturmabteilung* (storm troopers, or SA) was a German paramilitary organization operating as an integral part of the Nazi Party during the 1920s and 1930s. The Nazis used the SA



The Sturmabteilung, or SA, was the first paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party. Known colloquially as the Brownshirts, the SA was important in the rise to power of Adolf Hitler. As a private party army, the SA saw itself as an extra-military force and evolved military titles for its members. A private bodyguard unit for Hitler, wearing black shirts, was formed from the SA; this became the Schutzstaffel, or SS. In 1934 Hitler purged the SA in order to centralize power in his own hands, and its role as an enforcing body for the party was effectively toppled. The movement remained an extant organization, however, until the end of World War II. (AP Photo)

during their rise to power as a tool to intimidate opponents and protect their own meetings and rallies from attack. Later, after the Nazi takeover of power in 1933, the SA engaged in key episodes of violence to destroy such civic institutions as newspapers and unions that stood between the Nazis and the exercise of dictatorial power. It also played a crucial role in boycotting Jewish-owned businesses and intimidating and oppressing German Jews prior to World War II.

Nazi leader Adolf Hitler created the SA in 1921. The uniform he adopted for its members was a brown shirt and pants, and they were nicknamed the Brownshirts or Storm Troopers. The SA provided security at party meetings, protected Hitler, and went in force to the rallies of the communists and the German Social Democratic Party in order to heckle their speakers and break up their meetings.

Street fighting was one of the SA's most characteristic duties, and its members were a fierce and violent addition to the political landscape of Weimar Germany. Many of its members were veterans of World War I who had found it difficult to assimilate back into society. They found refuge in one of the hundreds of Freikorps, private paramilitary groups that proliferated in Germany to put down leftist revolts and uprisings during the period 1919–1920.

In January 1931 Ernst Roehm was appointed leader of the SA. A World War I veteran, Roehm was a prime example of a tough street fighter. He took the socialist aspects of the Nazi Party program more seriously than most Nazis, hoping to fashion the SA into a proletarian army and use it to overthrow the Weimar Republic. Roehm also wanted the SA to form the nucleus of the new German Army, which was

limited to 100,000 men under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. In 1932 the SA had perhaps 400,000 men; by the time Hitler was made chancellor of Germany in January 1933, it had about 2 million members.

Roehm's aspirations for the SA clashed with the political realities Hitler faced as the leader of Germany. The army generals feared Roehm as a rival and wanted Hitler to reduce both his influence and the size of the SA. Wealthy industrialists who had financed Hitler during the 1920s and 1930s also did not appreciate Roehm's emphasis on socialism and the need for a "second revolution." Roehm finally pushed Hitler too far, and in June 1934 Hitler reluctantly ordered the SS to arrest the leadership of the SA in what became known as the Night of the Long Knives. Roehm and his top officers were summarily executed.

Thereafter, the SA continued to exist, but it ceased to play a major political role in Nazi affairs. The organization was subsequently headed by Viktor Lutze, who now directed most of the SA's energy toward intimidating Germany's Jewish population. Indeed, the SA played a pivotal role in the nationwide pogrom against Jews on November 9–10, 1938, which is known as Kristallnacht, or Night of Broken Glass. That event witnessed the damaging or destruction of nearly 200 synagogues, more than 7,000 Jewish-owned stores, shops, and businesses, the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and private homes, and, according to Nazi figures, the deaths of at least 95 Jews (though the figure is almost certainly higher). As many as 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and sent to forced labor or concentrations camps. After 1939 the SA further diminished in membership and importance and was largely superseded by the SS. By then, many SA members were serving in the Wehrmacht (German Army).

After Lutze died in 1943, SA leadership fell to Wilhelm Schepmann, who presided over a rapidly shrinking organization. The SA's role was so diminished that it was not even declared a criminal organization by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg after the war.

LEE BAKER

See also: April Boycott; Enabling Act, 1933; Frank, Hans; Göring, Hermann; Himmler, Heinrich; Kristallnacht; National Socialist German Workers' Party; Röhm, Ernst; Schutzstaffel; Wirth, Christian

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Stutthof

Stutthof was a Nazi forced labor and concentration camp located in a sparsely populated area west of the town of Stutthof, some 22 miles east of Danzig (Gdansk), Poland.

The camp was established in September 1939, in the immediate aftermath of the German invasion of Poland on September 1. Initially, it served as a civilian prison camp and was administered by the Danzig police; in November 1941, it became a "labor education" camp, which was supervised by the *Sicherheitspolizei* (German Security Police, or SiPO). In January 1942 it became a fully fledged concentration camp. At that time, the SS provided guards for the facility, and these were joined by Ukrainian auxiliary personnel beginning in early 1943. The camp expanded exponentially between 1939 and 1944, eventually encompassing 105 subcamps throughout central and northern Poland. The two principal subcamps were Elbing and Thorn.

Nearly all the prisoners at Stutthof were compelled to work as forced laborers. Some worked in workshops on premises, while others worked in local agriculture, various privately owned industries, brickyards, or the German Equipment Works (DAW). Overwork and exhaustion were commonplace, and a sizable number of prisoners became sick or died as a result. The camp was greatly enlarged in 1943, as a new camp was built adjacent to the original facility. In 1944 a large aircraft manufacturing facility was built in nearby Stutthof, which caused the prisoner population to increase markedly.

At first, most of Stutthof's prisoners were non-Jewish civilian Poles. Later, as the Jewish population increased, many Jews from Białystok and Warsaw were housed there. Beginning in 1944, as Soviet troops pushed east, the Germans transferred a large number of Jews to Stutthof from concentration camps located in the Baltic States. It is estimated that Stutthof and its subcamps housed more than 100,000 prisoners in its six-year lifespan.

Conditions at Stutthof were grim. Food and adequate clothing were always in short supply, living conditions were squalid, and medical care was nonexistent. Typhus epidemics took a dreadful toll during the winters of 1942 and 1944. Guards routinely brutalized prisoners, and those who fell ill from disease or overwork were gassed in the on-site gas chamber. Others were given lethal injections.

As Allied forces began to press into the region, in January 1945 the Germans decided to evacuate Stutthof's prisoners. At least 50,000 prisoners, most of them Jews, were force marched out of the camp. Some 5,000 people were marched to the Baltic Sea, forced into the water, and mown down by

machine-gun fire. Most of the others were marched into eastern Germany amid brutal cold and snow. Many died of exposure or were killed by guards. In April 1945 the rest of the prisoners were forced toward the sea, where hundreds were murdered. About 4,000 were sent to Germany by boat, and a sizable number drowned during the perilous voyage. At least 25,000 prisoners died during the evacuations alone, or one out of every two detainees. A total of 60,000 prisoners died between 1939 and 1945. When Soviet troops liberated the camp in May 1945, they found only about 100 prisoners, who had survived the camp's final liquidation by hiding in order to escape the brutal evacuations.

In the aftermath of the war, four Stutthof trials were held in Gdańsk against former guards and kapos, who were charged by the Polish government with crimes of war and crimes against humanity. The first trial was held against 30 former camp personnel between April 25, 1946, and May 31, 1946. All were found guilty, and 11 were sentenced to death, while the others were sentenced to a range of terms of imprisonment. The second trial, held between October 8 and 31, 1947, saw charges brought against 24 former Stutthof officials and guards. Found guilty, 10 received the death penalty. The third trial was held across the period November 5–10, 1947. Twenty were brought before a Polish Special Criminal Court; 19 were found guilty, and one was acquitted. The final trial, a short time later, was held from November 19 to November 29, 1947. Twenty-seven were tried, of whom all but one were found guilty.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Concentration Camps; Death Marches; Slave Labor

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Sugihara, Chiune

Chiune “Sempo” Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat who issued travel visas in direct defiance of his government’s wishes, enabling more than 6,000 Jewish refugees to escape



Chiune “Sempo” Sugihara, Japanese vice-consul in Kovno (Kaunas) during 1939 and 1940. He issued thousands of travel visas to Jews, enabling them to transit through the Soviet Union to temporary refuge in Japan. From here, they could move safely to more permanent havens. He was forced to leave his diplomatic career after the war, possibly because of his disobedience in contravening Japanese immigration regulations back in 1940. (The Asahi Shimbun via Getty Images)

to safety from German-occupied Lithuania during World War II.

He was born on January 1, 1900, to Yoshimizu and Yatsu Sugihara in Yaotsu, Gifu Prefecture. He was one of six children, with a sister and four brothers. Yoshimizu raised his children under the strict code of ethics that characterized Japanese samurai tradition, but after finishing his secondary education with honors Chiune Sugihara defied his father’s wish that he enter the medical profession and instead enrolled at Waseda University in 1918 to study English literature. A year later he moved to a foreign language institute in Harbin, Manchuria, to study Russian, after first passing an overseas studies exam administered by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He graduated in 1924 and began a diplomatic career by accepting a clerical position at the Japanese consulate in Harbin. While there, he continued to study

the Russian language and also acquired proficiency in German.

In 1932 Sugihara was promoted to deputy consul in the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Manchuria. In that capacity, he successfully negotiated the purchase of the Northern Manchurian Railroad, a vital component of Manchuria's economic infrastructure, from the Soviet Union. He also converted to Orthodox Christianity during that time. In 1934 he resigned his consular post in protest at Japan's treatment of the Chinese in occupied Manchuria following the Manchurian invasion. He returned to Tokyo the following year, where he married Yukiko Kikuchi.

Sugihara received a new assignment in 1937, when he was sent to work in the Japanese embassy in Helsinki as interpreter and secretary. He remained there for two years, after which, in March 1939, he was sent to Kovno (Kaunas), then the capital of Lithuania, to open a new embassy there as vice-consul.

When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939 thousands of Jewish refugees fled to Lithuania to escape Nazi atrocities. On June 15, 1940, the Soviet Union invaded and occupied Lithuania, and Soviet authorities would not allow Jews to emigrate from Soviet-occupied territory without special travel documents. Although Germany and the Soviet Union were not yet at war, Soviet antisemitism was strong and Nazi troops were very close to the border, prompting substantial numbers of Jews in Kovno to line up outside the Japanese embassy in hopes of securing transit visas to East Asia.

Soviet authorities then issued an order requiring that all foreign embassies vacate Lithuania by July 1940. Sugihara was able to negotiate a three-week extension, during which time he risked his career, and possibly his life, to issue more than 2,000 travel visas covering entire families, facilitating the escape of more than 6,000 Jewish refugees to Japanese territory. To make the situation of the refugees easier, the Dutch consul in Kovno, Jan Zwartendijk, was at the same time working to provide Jewish refugees with visas issued on his own initiative to the Dutch colony of Curaçao, which, he argued, did not possess any restrictive entry requirements. The advantage of this lay in the fact that the Japanese government demanded that anyone granted a visa for Japan should also have a visa to a third destination, which meant, in reality, that Japan was only allowing Jews short-term transit privileges.

Aware that the Jews were in grave danger of their lives if they remained, Sugihara started granting visas without further consultation. He knew that his actions contravened official Japanese policy but proceeded regardless. Throughout July and August 1940, with help from his wife Yukiko, he wrote out and signed thousands of visas by hand, barely pausing to eat

or sleep. He handed out the last of these from the window of his train as it left Kovno station on September 1, 1940.

Many of the refugees he saved ended up in Shanghai, China, resulting in the growth of an already flourishing Jewish refugee community there. Despite the insistence of their German allies, the Japanese government proved to be unwilling to round up and murder Jews; in like manner, they did not follow through on their preliminary plans for mass deportation.

After the Kovno mission was closed, Sugihara was reassigned to Berlin and then Prague, where he served between March 1941 and late 1942. He then went to Königsberg and Bucharest, and remained in Romania through the end of World War II. His family's return to Japan was delayed, however, by a period of imprisonment in a Soviet internment camp, as Japan and the Soviet Union had been at war since August 9, 1945. Released in 1946, they traveled across the Soviet Union and returned to Japan. Sugihara was asked by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to resign in 1947—some, including Yukiko Sugihara, asserting later that it was because of his disobedience in Kovno back in 1940.

In 1978 the government of Israel honored Sugihara for saving the lives of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust, and in 1985 he was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. By this time he was too ill to travel to Israel, so Yukiko Sugihara and her son went to Jerusalem to accept the honor on his behalf. Chiune Sugihara and his descendants were then awarded honorary Israeli citizenship.

On July 31, 1986, he died at his residence in Fujisawa at the age of 86, recognized around the world and in his home country as one of Japan's foremost humanitarians.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Survivor Testimony

Survivor testimonies play the most crucial role in forming our understanding of what life was like during the Holocaust. As first-hand narratives written by people who lived

through the barbarities of the Nazi system, testimonial accounts are among our primary links to the SS state. As such, it can be argued that all accounts, regardless of their artistic quality or historical accuracy, must be considered and respected. There is merit in every survivor account, even those that at first glance would seem to be of little use to the historian.

The authors of survivor accounts come from all walks of life and from all corners of Europe. Their accounts were produced contemporaneously: from the perspective of a few months or after the reflection of many years. They offer a representative sample of the Holocaust experience and what the survivors wish to be understood about that experience.

There are a number of issues relating to the distinctive quality of survivor testimony that need to be considered, however. For a start, we must ask whether (and to what degree) we can utilize survivor accounts as accurate pieces of history. For many, this is far from a clear-cut issue; some scholars actually situate their discussions of survivor testimony in the category of literature rather than memoir or autobiography, oblivious to the fact that literature is precisely what testimonial accounts are *not*.

Testimonies therefore need to be questioned if they are assessed as a reliable source. After all, most accounts were written after the fact, when the survivors were safely away from the Nazis and their experience was but a nightmarish memory. Moreover, such accounts were for the most part not recounted by accomplished writers. Further, more often than not they were written for publication, suggesting that a sifting process could have taken place in an author's mind or by an editor's hand, in which some elements of memory had to be sacrificed for the sake of publication while others were retained—and possibly even enhanced for the same reason.

Such considerations alert us to a type of memoir that needs to be read differently from other forms of historical documentation. Published survivor accounts are quite clearly subjectively true, in that they chronicle events either directly witnessed by their authors or told to them by others at the time of their ordeal. It is this truth, and these events, that survivors attempt to impart to their readers. Survivors aim to tell their stories in as clear a manner as possible, the better to be able to convey to their audience the essence of what they went through.

In a court of law, such evidence serves a different purpose from that of the historian. To those who would argue that the only standard of proof to be adopted by a scholar should be that found in a courtroom, it must be pointed out that the

evidence a judge is looking for is altogether different from that of the historian. In a courtroom, the prosecution, defense, judge, and jury all look for specific evidence of a precise type—the kind of evidence that will either acquit or convict a person against whom a certain charge has been brought. The questions asked, therefore, are of a very special nature; generally speaking, they do not look for the textures, smells, sights, and contours of a person's experience, nor do they explore the wider contextual backdrop against which things occurred.

Given the event-laden historical richness within which the Holocaust took place, in which there was an enormous amount of activity occurring in many areas, it is perhaps surprising that all too often there are major gaps in the historical record, but it is through testimonies that we can appreciate the fears, miseries, and other features of life characterizing the Holocaust. Even one survivor account can place us in a better position to try to understand what people went through, and we therefore find ourselves relying on whatever we can find to begin the long process of comprehending what happened.

It is thus necessary to consider every piece of survivor testimony individually and to assess each on its merits. What historians make of these accounts must be up to them, and any scholar contemplating the study of the Holocaust is counseled to treat the subject with a combination of both rigor and respect. If all we have to go on as we attempt to reach an understanding of the Holocaust experience are the written accounts of survivors, it is important that we treat these accounts seriously.

Above all, we must be aware of just what it is the survivors are trying to convey. Generally speaking, they seek to convey a sense of what happened to *them*, as *they* remember it. Overall, however, the reflections and reminiscences of Holocaust survivors are intimate accounts of individual experiences that the survivors wish to share with others.

How representative are survivor accounts? When assessing a given situation, can the memoir of any single survivor be held up as exemplary of life and conditions in, say, Auschwitz, and as therefore representative of all other survivor accounts? Do their accounts tell the full—or only—story? Given that every survivor's experience was unique and intimate to themselves, we must look at the totality of their experience alongside those of as many of their fellows as we can find and ask broad questions that might be capable of being narrowed down later. Certain survivors might provide aspects of the picture that are neater, sharper, or more elegantly defined, but none can tell the whole story alone.

For most survivors, the experiences they depict have become embedded in their souls, and the descriptions they provide almost always recount an atmosphere that is true if not necessarily believable. Not all accounts were written by educated people; many lack self-control and grammatical discipline, but they are no less true for that. Some accounts provide dates, for example, which we know are incorrect, and in other cases even a full chronological sequence of events is dubious. But we need to bear in mind that the Holocaust was a time that was not always dictated by a calendar in the sense that we understand it. What is true of dates, moreover, is equally true of numbers, of Nazi institutions and ranks, and even of activities undertaken by Jews in different parts of the same country. It must be borne in mind that trying to make sense of the whole from ground level was invariably impossible. And all this, of course, was compounded by language differences. Usually, all a survivor could “know” was the reality of which he or she formed a part. The rest inevitably had to be filled in later.

Thus, survivor accounts do not ask us to try to “imagine” the Holocaust; for the most part, that is not what they are attempting to achieve. For many survivors—possibly most—it is sufficient simply to tell their story, to record, to bear witness, to show that the world through which they lived was in fact all too real. The challenge is one of conveying to the world an understanding of what the survivor went through, of explaining the essence of the evil that one group of people inflicted upon another group of people, as seen from the perspective of one who was there as a participant-observer-victim. Survivor testimonies do not attempt to make magic, nor do they attempt to imagine the unimaginable. They simply try to tell the story from their own individual perspectives.

Ultimately, a survivor’s testimony should be regarded as much as a historical document as a contemporary government memorandum, a diary entry, a letter, or a newspaper account. As with all documents, its applicability to a particular type of historical writing should be weighed prior to its use, and employed or rejected on that basis rather than according to some more subjective standard. All survivor testimony has its place. It is just a matter of finding where and how to use it.

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See also: Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies; *Maus* and *Maus II*; Pivnik, Sam; Second Generation; USC Shoah Foundation; Weiss, Helga; Wiesel, Elie; *Yad Vashem*; Yoran, Shalom

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Süskind, Walter

Walter Süskind was a German-born Jewish businessman of Dutch background. Born on October 29, 1906, in Ludenscheid, Germany, he became a manager for the German company Bolak in 1929. In 1935 he married Johanna (known as Hannah) Natt, and in March 1938 they, together with Johanna’s mother Fran Natt and Walter’s mother Frieda Süskind, moved to Amsterdam. With other family members already in the United States, the intention was to find a way to migrate there later.

After the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, however, the family became trapped. In July 1942 the Nazi-imposed Amsterdam Jewish Council (*Joodse Raad*) appointed Süskind, as one with management experience, to manage the Hollandsche Schouwburg (Dutch Theater), which was renamed the Jüdische Schouwburg and utilized for the purpose of holding Dutch Jews who were apprehended prior to being sent to the transit camp at Westerbork. From there—though it was not widely known—they were deported regularly to their deaths at Sobibór and Auschwitz.

Right opposite the Dutch Theater was a nursery, where the Nazis preferred to place young Jewish children. Süskind, together with another member of the theater administration, Felix Halverstad, and the director of the nursery, Henriette Henriques Pimentel, established a means whereby Jewish children could be rescued. Children were brought secretly to the Hervormde Kweekschool (Reformed Teacher Training College), two houses from the theater, and, with the assistance of the college director, Johan van Hulst, passed through the garden and into the theater.

From within the Dutch Theater registry, Süskind and Halverstad then manipulated the records to show that these children were not registered; in this way, their names did not appear in any official capacity. They would sneak the children

out from under the Nazis' gaze using a variety of ruses, whisking them off to safer locations out of the city. During the 18 months that Süskind was in charge of the Dutch Theater he was able to save the lives of some 600 Jewish children. In this he was helped by a number of different Dutch resistance groups.

Such rescue came at a price, however. In order to remain at his post he had to show himself to be an effective administrator of Nazi dictates, which meant organizing the deportation of thousands of Jews to the euphemistically named "East." Moreover, to achieve such effectiveness he was obliged to develop a relationship with the Nazi in charge of the deportations, Ferdinand aus der Funten, at that time a senior officer of Amsterdam's Central Office for Jewish Emigration. Süskind was therefore seen by many to be a Jewish collaborator, the more so as he used his position in order to secure the safety of his wife Johanna and their daughter, Yvonne.

During the entire operation, Süskind and those around him were never betrayed or discovered by the Nazis, even as he worked seemingly hand-in-hand with aus der Funten. Only a few people, moreover—those directly involved with the escapes—ever knew the details of Süskind's activities.

Süskind experienced considerable turmoil over his role, particularly the dilemma over the issue of saving his family or saving others. Every leader of every Jewish Council throughout Europe was confronted with one fundamental question: should the Nazis be met with opposition at every turn, or should one collaborate with them if by doing so it would be possible to save at least some lives? Does one become a traitor, or a hero? After his realization of what the Nazis were actually doing by sending transports to the East, he sought to thwart their deportation plans so far (at least) as the children were concerned.

On September 2, 1944, time and luck ran out for the Süskind family. They were sent to Westerbork, but, even there, Süskind attempted to find a way to help people escape. In this endeavor, however, he failed. From Westerbork, in October 1944, the family was deported to Theresienstadt. As this happened, a forged letter, purportedly from a high-ranking Nazi, was in Süskind's possession. It described how Süskind had been valuable to the Nazi administration in Amsterdam, and he hoped it could serve as some sort of guarantee for him and his family. He attempted to present it to the commandant of Theresienstadt, Karl Rahm, but a kapo got in the way and instead pushed him into a railcar headed for Auschwitz.

Johanna and Yvonne Süskind were murdered immediately upon arrival. The fate of Walter Süskind himself has been disputed. Most accounts argue that he was believed to have died on February 28, 1945, on a death march somewhere in Central

Europe, but another version is that he was murdered by Dutch prisoners in Auschwitz who believed he was a collaborator.

In 2012 a Dutch film was made about the exploits of Walter Süskind. The eponymously titled *Süskind*, directed by Rudolf van den Berg, compares well, in several areas, to what is possibly the best-known of all Holocaust movies, *Schindler's List* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993). In fact, a number of parallels can be drawn between the two. One vitally important difference can be observed, however, apart from the obvious fact that Oskar Schindler was not Jewish, while Walter Süskind certainly was. Unlike *Schindler's List*, there is nothing remotely resembling a happy ending in *Süskind*. The heartbreaking end of the movie mirrors the tragic reality that was Walter Süskind's own story.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Birkenau; Children during the Holocaust; Sobibór; Westerbork

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Sweden

Sweden is a Scandinavian country situated in northern Europe. Sweden's population in 1939 was approximately 6.5 million, with only a tiny minority of Jews, perhaps numbering only several hundred. The country had a long-standing tradition of neutrality and had remained aloof from World War I. When World War II began on September 1, 1939, the Swedish government immediately declared its neutrality, although the nation was tied to Germany economically. At the time, Sweden was supplying some 50% of Germany's iron-ore imports.

In the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union, Sweden provided moral support for the Finns, and at least 10,000 Swedes volunteered to fight on Finland's behalf; however, the Swedes were careful not to be drawn directly into the conflict themselves. When Germany invaded Norway and Denmark in the spring of 1940, the Swedish government augmented its defenses but insisted on retaining its neutrality.

Eventually, Sweden was cut off from much of the rest of the world and fell increasingly within the German orbit. To prevent a German invasion and occupation, the Swedes temporarily accommodated Berlin, including permission to employ

Swedish rail lines to supply German troops in Norway. Germany also compelled Sweden to permit the passage through Sweden of a German army division in preparation for the June 1941 attack on the Soviet Union as part of Operation Barbarossa.

By the late summer of 1943, with German military fortunes flagging and under pressure from Allied nations, Sweden revoked its transit arrangements with the Germans. Thereafter, although it remained neutral, Sweden in fact generally worked with the Allies to bring an end to the war. It did not, however, insert any of its military forces into the fighting.

During the war, Sweden ended up becoming a significant refuge for Jews fleeing persecution and potential death in other areas of Europe. In fact, numerous Swedes, encouraged by their government, undertook a sizable number of rescue missions. In the fall of 1943 some 5,500 Danish Jews were spirited out of that country and sent on small boats to Sweden, where they took up residence until the end of the war. Many Swedes in fact supported and aided the Danish resistance movement. Beginning in the summer of 1941, at least 900 Jews from Norway took up temporary asylum in Sweden. Sweden also became a destination for Jews fleeing the war in the Baltic States.

In the late winter and spring of 1945, as the war in Europe was drawing to an end, the Swedish Red Cross, along with Danish officials, launched a major campaign to rescue prisoners being held in various European prisoner-of-war and concentration camps. The effort began as a way to rescue prisoners of war but was soon expanded to include civilians as well. After being rescued, most were transported to Sweden. The Swedish Red Cross reported that 15,345 prisoners were rescued, of whom half were Scandinavian and the rest from other parts of Europe. Only a minority of these individuals were Jews, but the effort helped Sweden overcome suspicions that it had accommodated the Nazis too generously in the early years of the war.

Arguably the most important Swedish contribution to the saving of Jewish lives during the Holocaust can be attributed to Swedish diplomats in foreign missions. In this regard, names such as Raoul Wallenberg, Per Anger, and Valdemar Langlet stand high in the annals of goodness in the face of the Nazi genocide.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Norrman, Sven; Operation Barbarossa; Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Segerstedt, Torgny; Wallenberg, Raoul

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Switzerland

Switzerland has had a history of being a neutral country since the 19th century and was a state under a position of armed neutrality during World War II. Switzerland also has a pattern of accepting refugees in times of war. Although taking thousands of Jewish refugees during World War II, its record is a mixed one—often bordering on exclusion of Jews while taking in refugees from other backgrounds.

Leading up to and during the war, Switzerland permitted 23,000 Jewish refugees to enter, but frequently this was only in order to transit to another destination. These refugees were safe from the war but were not given the same assistance that non-Jewish refugees were given. During the war the Swiss Aid Society for Jewish Refugees, a collaborative group of Swiss Jewish aid organizations, was established. In 1939, when war broke out after the German invasion of Poland, Switzerland immediately began to mobilize its troops.

Earlier, after Hitler and the Nazis had risen to power in 1933, thousands of Jews left Germany and tried to gain entry to Switzerland. When Germany annexed Austria in 1938, the number of refugees increased. However, the Swiss government divided these refugees into three groups: political refugees, who were granted immediate entry; Jews, who were granted entry for a short period of time, and only allowed to use Switzerland as a transit area to a final destination; and other refugees, who were rejected and removed as soon as possible. The Swiss government was able to talk the German government into stamping a “J” in Jewish passports, to further distinguish Jewish refugees from the non-Jews who were fleeing Germany. This was intended to enable the Swiss border authorities to be even more selective of those who crossed into the country.

In October 1939, only a month after the war had started, the Swiss government began to approve a series of laws that made it more difficult for immigrants, and particularly Jews, to enter the country. This was mostly because Switzerland, although remaining neutral, was nonetheless still dependent on Germany economically. After France surrendered to Germany in the summer of 1940, the Swiss government knew that a German invasion was a real possibility. In order to combat the genuine possibility of future German aggression, the Swiss government effectively closed the Swiss border to

immigrants and delivered 20,000–25,000 fleeing Jewish refugees into German hands.

This action was because of direct fear of German invasion, and the Swiss government felt that turning these refugees back to the Germans was a means of tamping down any invasion prospects. The German army, however, had a plan to invade Switzerland, Operation Tannenbaum, as soon as France surrendered. The Nazis had their eye on the country due to part of its population being ethnically German, and therefore they wanted to bring them into the Reich. Additionally, Switzerland's Italian-speaking regions were desired by Benito Mussolini, Hitler's ally and Italy's fascist dictator.

Eventually, Operation Tannenbaum was cancelled and never carried out. A small Nazi support group within Switzerland tried to gain support for the country to be annexed by Germany as Austria had been, but this movement never took strong hold and was put down quickly. With a fear of invasion in 1940, the Swiss military, under the leadership of General Henri Guisan, was ready to defend Switzerland from the Germans. This fear, however, never came to fruition.

In 1941 the Swiss government was more accepting of Jewish refugees from Belgium and the Netherlands, and this saved thousands of lives. However, in 1942 the Swiss border police force was able to pass a regulation refusing travelers the defensive status of "refugee" on racial grounds, which meant that their Jewish background denied them the protections of a refugee. Most of those who made it through the border left Switzerland for another destination. Toward the end of the war, only 25,000 Jews had been granted refuge in Switzerland. From World War II's beginning to its completion, Switzerland took in approximately 300,000 refugees; of these, only 26,000 were Jews. It has been estimated that over 30,000 Jewish refugees were denied protection in Switzerland during the war, with at least 10,000—and perhaps many more—Jewish children among those who were refused entry.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Credit Suisse; Grüniger, Paul; Lutz, Carl; Refoulement; Riegner Telegram; Szálasi, Ferenc

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Szálasi, Ferenc

Ferenc Szálasi, as the leader of the infamous pro-Nazi Arrow Cross Party and government, was responsible for the deaths of thousands of Jews during the last six months of the existence of the Jewish community in Hungary. Born on January 6, 1897, in Kassa, Hungary, Szálasi was brought up in a strict family with a very religious mother. Like his father, Szálasi pursued a military career and served as liaison with the General Staff during World War I. He was promoted to captain in 1924, appointed to the General Staff in 1925, and by 1933 was a major.

During his rise in the military ranks, Szálasi began developing his own political-ideological program for the restoration of the Hungarian state following its dramatic reduction in size due to the post-World War I Treaty of Trianon. He did this as a member of the secret Hungarian Life League—a "race-protecting" organization—that he joined in 1930. His first published work—the *Plan for the Construction of the Hungarian State*—reflected his sense that he had a messianic role to play in the resurgence of Hungary.

After resigning from the military in 1934, Szálasi established a number of ultra-nationalist, right-wing parties, including the Party of National Will (sometimes the "Nation's Will Party") in 1935, and the Hungarian National Socialist Party in 1937, both of which were banned by the government as being too extreme. The parties he founded drew most of their support from the lower classes, due, in part, to the centrality of nationalism, anticommunism, and antisemitism in their policy positions.

Szálasi founded the Arrow Cross Party (*Nyilas* in Hungarian) in 1939. It won 25% of the votes in the Hungarian Parliament that year, but it was banned by Hungarian regent Admiral Miklós Horthy when World War II broke out. It combined elements of Italian fascism and German National Socialism, but it differed from Nazism in its goal of creating a Greater Hungary (a goal contrary to Germany's vision of Nazi dominance throughout Europe) and in its approach to the Jews. Rather than focusing on extermination as the answer to the Jewish Question, the Arrow Cross Party looked more to emigration. That, however, soon changed.

Germany invaded Hungary in March 1944. In October, it removed Regent Horthy (in the so-called *Nyilas* coup), in part because of his reluctance to allow mass deportation of Jews. The Nazis installed the Arrow Cross Party as a puppet-government

with Szálasi as “Leader of the Nation.” The Arrow Cross government then went on a six-month reign of terror.

With Szálasi at the head of the new government, deportations of Jews resumed after a pause that Horthy had earlier imposed. By this time, Adolf Eichmann had already supervised the deportation of about 440,000 Jews from Hungary, mostly to Auschwitz, leaving the Jews in Budapest as the last Jewish community extant in Hungary. There they were consigned to “yellow star” houses, making them very vulnerable to gangs of Arrow Cross members that roamed the city, randomly assaulting Jews with impunity, including killing hundreds of them after marching them to the banks of the Danube. In November 1944 a ghetto was established for about 70,000 of the city’s Jews. On Eichmann’s command, Szálasi ordered that approximately 25,000 Jewish men and 10,000 Jewish women be marched out of the city to build fortifications around Budapest. In addition, also beginning in November 1944, he ordered that about 80,000 Jews be forced to march toward the Austrian border.

Szálasi never had time to implement his ideology of “Hungarism”—his own mixture of fascism, Hungarian nationalism, and antisemitism—due to the surrender of Hungary to the Soviets on February 13, 1945, less than six months after Szálasi’s installation as head of government. During that short time, however, he and his Arrow Cross Party were responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Jews.

Szálasi fled Hungary but was captured and returned by American troops in May 1945. He was tried in a Hungarian court in Budapest, found guilty of war crimes and high treason, and was hanged on March 12, 1946.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Arrow Cross; Eichmann, Adolf; Hungarian War Crimes Prosecutions; Hungary

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Szenes, Hannah

Hannah Szenes was a Hungarian-born Jewish paratrooper trained in Palestine to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. She



Hannah Szenes was a Hungarian-born Zionist who migrated to Palestine during World War II. In 1943 she enlisted in the British Army in the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force and began training as a paratrooper for the British Special Operations Executive. She was one of 37 Jewish SOE agents who parachuted into Yugoslavia to assist in the rescue of Hungarian Jews about to be deported to Auschwitz. Arrested by Hungarian authorities almost as soon as she crossed the border, she was imprisoned and tortured before being tried for treason in October 1944. She was executed by a German firing squad on November 7, 1944. The photo here shows her in the garden of her home in Budapest in 1937. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Beit Hannah Senesh)

was born into an assimilated family in Budapest on July 17, 1921. Her father, Béla Szenes, had been a well-known writer and playwright, but he died when Hannah was six years old, leaving her and her brother, György, to be raised by their mother, Katharine. Following her famous father, she demonstrated literary talent, keeping a diary from the age of 13 until shortly before her death.

As a student she attended a high school for Protestant girls that also accepted Catholics and Jews, and it was here that she first experienced antisemitism. As she grew older, she sought to learn more about what it meant to be Jewish; she adopted

Zionism as her political lodestone and joined Maccabea, a Hungarian Zionist youth movement that helped to develop her skills in Hebrew and her love for *Eretz Yisrael*.

In 1939 Hannah finished school and made the decision to emigrate to what was then the British Mandate of Palestine. She studied first at the Girls' Agricultural School at Nahalal, and then, in 1941, settled at Kibbutz Sdot Yam, near Haifa. She continued the diary she had begun in Hungary, as well as writing poetry and even a play about kibbutz life. The work in which she was engaged included working in the communal kitchen and the kibbutz laundry.

In 1943 she joined the Palmach (the combat units of the Haganah) and was soon training for a special mission: a secret scheme that would see her join the British army and be parachuted into Nazi-occupied Europe. She would assist Allied efforts behind the lines and make contact with resistance fighters in an attempt to offer aid to European Jewry. At first she studied wireless operation procedures, and in January 1944 she moved to Egypt to be trained as a paratrooper. She was one of a unit of 33 people of both sexes.

In mid-March 1944 they were dropped into Yugoslavia, where Hannah spent three months with Tito's partisans. Entering Hungary had to be put on hold for a time, as the parachute drop coincided directly with the German invasion of Hungary. Instead, Hannah worked with the partisans until the time was opportune to cross into Hungary.

On June 7, 1944, just as the deportation of the Hungarian Jews was at its most intense, Hannah decided to move into Hungary with the aim of reaching Budapest. It was an extremely dangerous time; in fact, her two partners on the mission, Yoel Palgi and Peretz Goldstein, both counseled against proceeding. In spite of their caution, she decided to go ahead alone. Within hours of crossing the border she was arrested by Hungarian gendarmes; finding her British military credentials and radio transmitter, they imprisoned and tortured her for the transmission code so they could track down all the other parachutists. She was tortured repeatedly for months but refused to divulge anything about her mission. When the authorities arrested her mother (who did not know Hannah had moved to Palestine or that she was back in Budapest on a secret military mission), she still would not speak.

Seeing themselves with little other option, the Hungarian fascist authorities tried her for treason and spying. The trial began on October 28, 1944, its outcome a foregone conclusion. Convicted as a spy, she was sentenced to death by a German (not Hungarian) firing squad on November 7, 1944. When facing her executioners she refused a blindfold. At the time of her death she was 23 years old.

In 1950 the remains of Hannah Szenes were taken to Israel and reburied in the military cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. A tombstone was erected for her in November 2007 at her kibbutz in Sdot Yam, and with the end of the Cold War a Hungarian military court overturned the original decision and posthumously exonerated her.

Hannah's diary was published in Hebrew in 1946. Her poetry contains lines that have become iconic in Israeli literature, the best known of which is the poem "*Halikha LeKesaraya*" ("A Walk to Caesarea"), commonly known as "*Eli, Eli*" ("My God, My God"), set to music by David Zahavi and sung or played in most Jewish remembrance services to this day. Another of her poems, "*Ashrei Hagafur*" ("Blessed Is the Match"), equals it for recognition and has been quoted frequently since the Holocaust. Written after she was parachuted into Yugoslavia, the most crucial lines are:

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.
Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret fastness of the heart.

Hannah Szenes remains a national heroine in Israel, where she is representative of all that Israeli society seeks in terms of idealism and self-sacrifice in the face of adverse circumstances. As a resister, she was unable to achieve her objectives, but the symbolism of her actions was (and remains) immense.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Partisans; Hungary; Yugoslavia

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Szeptycki, Andreas Alexander

Andreas Alexander Szeptycki was a Polish-born Ukrainian-Greek Catholic priest and prelate who served as the archbishop of Lvov (Lviv) in southeastern Poland from 1901 until 1944.

Szeptycki was born on July 29, 1865, in Przyłbice, Poland, into an aristocratic family with strong ties to the church. He studied in Kraków and Wrocław, earning a doctorate in law in 1888. He then entered a seminary in Domobryl, taking the

name Andrew (Andreas); his given name had been Roman. He was ordained a deacon in August 1892 and became a priest in the Order of St. Basil that same year. In 1894 he earned a doctorate in theology from the Jesuit seminary at Kraków. A well-respected and learned clergyman, Szeptycki was named bishop of Ivano-Frankivsk (Stanisławów) in 1899. The following year he was appointed archbishop of Lvov and was confirmed in that position in 1901. He was to hold his place here for the remainder of his life.

In the early 1900s Szeptycki visited the United States and Canada, where he ministered to Ukrainian Greek Catholic enclaves. He spoke out against the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and was arrested and jailed by Russian authorities. Szeptycki had always been a proponent of religious ecumenism, and his interest in this went beyond Christian denominations. Indeed, he had studied Hebrew in the seminary and regularly visited Jewish communities, where he read and preached from the Torah.

On September 22, 1939, Soviet troops rushed into Lvov, which had been under Polish control, and occupied the city. Meanwhile, as German troops occupied western Poland, an influx of some 200,000 Polish Jews flooded into the city. The Soviets forced many of Lvov's Jews to liquidate their businesses and close their synagogues, part of a wider effort to "Ukrainize" the city. Archbishop Szeptycki publicly denounced Soviet policy, but his protestations had little impact on Soviet occupation authorities.

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Germans occupied Lvov and began to implement

the Final Solution there. Jews were targeted, persecuted, rounded up, placed in a squalid ghetto, and many were deported to death camps. Szeptycki was outraged and deeply troubled by German policies toward Jews, and he took an early public stand in which he denounced anti-Jewish activities. He also instructed his clergy to report to him antisemitic activities and to preach against antisemitism. He even wrote and distributed a pastoral letter titled "Thou Shalt Not Kill," which was aimed at German occupation officials, and threatened to excommunicate anyone in his flock who collaborated with the Nazis. By 1943 the archbishop was sheltering 21 Jews in his home and cathedral and had facilitated the sheltering of as many as 200 other Jews in monasteries and convents under his control.

Archbishop Andreas Szeptycki was later hailed by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations, and in general his tenure in office brought much good to the archdiocese. He died in Lvov on November 4, 1944. He is considered the 20th century's most influential prelate in eastern Poland and Ukraine.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Ukraine

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T

Taylor, Telford

An American lawyer best known for his role as the counsel for the prosecution at the Nuremberg Trials, Telford Taylor was born in Schenectady, New York, on February 24, 1908. After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1932, he held a series of legal jobs with the federal government. One of these would have a profound impact on his career. From 1939 to 1940 Taylor was a special assistant to U.S. attorney general Robert Jackson. During World War II he joined the U.S. Army as a major in 1942, rising to the rank of colonel by 1944. He worked in intelligence analyzing information obtained from the Ultra code. Near the end of the war, Justice Robert Jackson, now U.S. prosecutor for the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, had remembered Taylor's earlier work and personally requested him for his staff. Taylor acknowledged that he had no experience with international law in general or war crimes in particular, and he also believed that, despite the high-profile nature of the appointment, it would be detrimental to his legal career because he had planned to enter private practice after the war. Nevertheless, the excitement of the work involved convinced him to take the job. Although motivated largely by his own admittedly selfish reasons, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to bringing fair and impartial justice to those who had committed war crimes.

As the Allies gathered more information related to Nazi atrocities, it became clear that there was a need for more trials than those convened by the International Military

Tribunal at Nuremberg, which tried only the top-ranking Nazis. Taylor thus became the chief U.S. prosecutor for the 12 subsequent trials conducted under Control Council Law Number 10. In this regard, he helped prosecute judges, industrialists, doctors, and others, all in the same manner, adhering strictly to due process and the rules of evidence. He left Nuremberg still committed to law, but seeing a need for an international legal regime that would be applied fairly to all belligerents, not just those on the losing side of war.

Once discharged, Taylor briefly worked with the Small Defense Plants Administration. He then became a private attorney, about the same time that Republican senator Joseph McCarthy began his anticommunist witch hunt in 1950. Taylor was one of the few men who stood up to McCarthy from an early date, denouncing his actions in speech after speech and defending many of those McCarthy had accused of "un-American activities." His past experience trying Nazis was one of the reasons he opposed McCarthy so vehemently. Indeed, he viewed McCarthy's attempts to subvert the democratic process as the equivalent of the takeover of the German government by the Nazis in the early 1930s.

After taking on McCarthy, who fell from grace in 1954, Taylor turned to writing. In all he wrote nine books, most focusing on World War II and receiving critical acclaim. His 1992 book *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials: A Personal Biography* told the story of his experiences as a war crimes prosecutor. Taylor never left the law completely, however, and served as a special observer to the 1961 Eichmann Trial

in Jerusalem, which he denounced as a violation of the process of due process and fairness. He also worked to help free Jews imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Taylor died on May 23, 1998, in New York City.

ELIZABETH PUGLIESE

See also: Ferencz, Benjamin; Jackson, Robert H.; Judges' Trial; Manstein Trial; Nuremberg Trials

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Ten Boom, Corrie

Cornelia (Corrie) ten Boom was a Dutch rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust, proceeding from a firm Christian belief that demanded she help those in need. It is estimated that overall she and her family saved the lives of upward of 800 Jews.

She was born in Haarlem, near Amsterdam, on April 15, 1892, the youngest in a family of four children. She had two sisters, Betsie and Nollie, and a brother, Willem; their father, Casper, was a jeweler and watchmaker. Cornelia was named after her mother. Their home was always crowded, as Corrie's three maternal aunts also lived with her family. In 1924 Corrie, having learned at the feet of her father, became the first licensed female watchmaker in the Netherlands. As she became older, she established a youth club for teenage girls, ran a church for people with disabilities, raised foster children in her home, and engaged in other charitable works. After the Nazis invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, Corrie was forced to close down the girls' youth club.

The ten Booms were members of the Dutch Reformed Church, and Corrie came from a family tradition that had long championed Jewish causes. Already during the 19th century, Corrie's grandfather had supported efforts to improve Christian-Jewish relations, and her brother Willem, a Dutch Reformed minister assigned to convert Jews, studied antisemitism and ran a nursing home that, in the late 1930s, became a refuge for Jews fleeing Germany.

Within months of the German takeover, the social, political, and legal climate of the Netherlands had been transformed. It did not take long for the ten Booms to become involved in resistance activities, with various extended family members taking a number of different underground roles. Corrie became directly involved when she, her father, and her sister Betsie decided to hide Jews in the family home. She established contacts with members of the resistance,

who assisted her through obtaining extra ration books and building a hiding place in the family home. This tiny secret room, built into Corrie's bedroom behind a false wall, became a refuge for Jews, students, and political dissidents. It could hold up to six people, standing, and was serviced by a rudimentary ventilation system.

The "hiding place," also known as "*de Beje*"—an abbreviation of their street address on the Barteljorisstraat, a shopping street in Haarlem—thus became a center of short-term rescue. From this start, Corrie became a leader in what became nicknamed the "Beje movement," in which a series of safe houses was established throughout the Netherlands.

On February 28, 1944, a Dutch informant betrayed the ten Booms and denounced them to the Nazis. That same day the Gestapo raided the house, and Corrie, her father, brother, sisters, together with other family members as well as some resistance fighters, were arrested. In total, the Gestapo arrested more than 30 people in the ten Boom family home. Although German soldiers searched the house thoroughly, they did not find the Jews who were at that moment concealed in the hiding place next to Corrie's room. They remained there for nearly three days, until the Nazis gave up their surveillance and Dutch resisters, who knew they were there, moved in and rescued them. By the end of the war, all but one survived.

The ten Booms were sent immediately to Scheveningen prison. Nollie and Willem, and Corrie's nephew, Peter, were released straight away, but Corrie, Betsie, and their 84-year-old father Casper remained incarcerated. Casper died 10 days later after having fallen ill. Corrie and Betsie stayed at Scheveningen until June 1944, when they were transferred to the concentration camp at Vught. In September 1944 they were deported to Ravensbrück, where Betsie died on December 16, 1944.

Corrie was released from Ravensbrück on December 28, 1944, in what was believed to have been a clerical error. She traveled by train to Berlin, where she arrived on January 1, 1945. From there she made her way back to the Netherlands.

After the war, Corrie set up a rehabilitation center for concentration camp survivors. In a Christian spirit of reconciliation, she also took in and sheltered those who had cooperated with the Germans during the occupation but who were now homeless and without the means of making a living. She returned to Germany in 1946 and began a worldwide ministry that led to her appearing in more than 60 countries. As an evangelist and motivational speaker she would refer to her experiences in Ravensbrück, and as a social critic she protested the Vietnam War. Her main message focused on reconciliation as a means for overcoming the psychological

scars left by war. She also wrote a great deal, with many inspirational books appearing advocating a Christian message of love, goodwill, and human understanding through the embrace of Christ's message.

The main written work for which Corrie ten Boom was remembered was the story of her own family in their confrontation with Nazism during World War II. This was titled *The Hiding Place*; appearing in 1971, it became a best seller. In 1975 it was made into a motion picture with the same name, directed by James F. Collier and starring Jeannette Clift as Corrie and Julie Harris as Betsie.

In recognition of her work during the war, Corrie ten Boom was knighted in 1962 by Queen Juliana, and, on December 12, 1967, for her efforts in hiding Jews from arrest and deportation, she was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. In 1977 Corrie, by now 85 years of age, moved to the United States, where she settled in California. She died on April 15, 1983, her 91st birthday.

In resisting the Nazi persecution of the Jews, Corrie ten Boom suffered imprisonment, internment in a concentration camp, and the loss of family members. She followed both the letter and the spirit of her Christian beliefs, seeing that what had to be done was a duty that all those purporting to be true Christians should have fulfilled.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Netherlands; Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Righteous among the Nations

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Teudt, Wilhelm

On February 2, 1934, the Nazis in Germany, in pursuing their ideal of a completely Jew-free society, began unveiling a new, "Aryan" version of the Bible. The first offering in this regard was a rewritten Book of Psalms that eliminated all references to Jews, "reworking" them in order to purge them of their "Jewish taint."

The new version appeared in a hymnbook written by an eccentric author named Wilhelm Teudt. Born in 1860, Teudt, who studied theology and worked as a pastor from 1885 to 1908, was an amateur archaeologist who spent much of his time searching for an ancient Germanic civilization. In 1921

he joined the German National People's Party, and in 1933, at the age of 73, he moved on to the National Socialists—the party that, on January 30 that year, had come into office under Adolf Hitler.

Teudt's new version of the Psalms numbered 75, rather than the original 150. As an example of his efforts, his version of the 87th Psalm read as follows:

The Lord loveth the height of Germany more than all the dwellings abroad.

The Lord loveth the yew tree of the Odenwald and the oak of the Baltic.

I will make mention of the vulgar Euphrates and the Ganges, where our forefathers ruled.

Behold the lands of the Goths, the Longobards, and Andalusians: it shall be said our brothers were born and died there;

But on Osning the Lord shall count those sprung from blood of the sons of Mannus: Ingo, Istu, and Ermin.

Osning is part of the Teutoberger Forest: Ingo, Istu, and Ermin were ancient Germanic gods.

This can be compared with the original, which states:

His foundation is in the holy mountains.

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.

Selah.

I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.

And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.

Teudt maintained in the foreword to his book that Jesus was of pure Aryan blood and that "His whole spirituality" was "foreign to Jews." He could not delete the whole of the Old Testament from Christian scripture, but he stated, instead, that many features of it were obnoxious and had to be pruned.

American readers knew of Teudt's removal of all references to Jews as he worked through the Old Testament. They read about it in the pages of their newspapers and discussed

the issue in their churches. Of course, as with most things the Nazis began, Teudt's initiative did not stop there. Hitler's ultimate intention was gradually to "Nazify" the church, beginning with the scriptural underpinnings upon which it rested. In 1939 he authorized the creation of what we would today call a think-tank in order to rewrite the Bible completely; its charge was to remove all references to Jews and Judeo-Christian notions of compassion. Those appointed to work on this thoroughly Nazi version of the Bible had the brief of "cleansing" church texts "of all non-Aryan influences."

In addition to his work redrafting the Psalms, Teudt's beliefs in German *völkisch* culture led him to develop theories that, even among his peer group, were considered outlandish. Believing in an ancient, highly developed Germanic civilization, Teudt's interest in what he called "Germanic archaeology," through an investigation of Germanic pagan sacred sites, developed in the 1920s. He held that he possessed a paranormal ability to picking up the vibrations of his Germanic ancestors, which provided him with the capacity to visualize ancient sites as he was excavating them.

Studying ancient Saxon shrines, his work attracted the interest of senior Nazis, who were obsessed with locating the spiritual elements of Aryanism. Developing an ever deeper fascination with Saxon culture as the seedbed of all that Germanic culture would become, he viewed the conversion of the Germanic tribes to Christianity before the turn of the first millennium as the greatest catastrophe ever faced by Aryan civilization.

After Teudt joined the Nazi Party, he was rewarded by Adolf Hitler through appointment to a professorial position. He founded or became a member of a number of esoteric research organizations, and his work was valued by the Nazis through the awarding of prizes and various honors. Wilhelm Teudt died on January 5, 1942, in the city of Detmold, Lippe.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Aryanization; Protestant Churches, German

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such shattering force as to call into question society's basic understanding of humanity. Among the many questions it raised are those that examine Jewish and Christian theology in a post-Holocaust world. Of all of those theological questions, none is more basic for Christians and Jews than "where was God?" Also, for Jews it was "how could it happen to us?" and for Christians "how could we have done it?"

Although theologians wrestled with these questions even while the Holocaust was still in progress, it was not until the 1960s that they were examined and debated in a public and robust way. In August 1966 Richard L. Rubenstein, a conservative rabbi born in 1924 in New York, wrote in his book *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (since retitled: *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism*) that it was impossible to believe in the traditional Jewish concept of God after Auschwitz. That concept includes God's omnipotence, omniscience, mercy, engagement in history, and covenantal relationship with the Jewish people.

In making the argument that he did, Rubenstein was rejecting the position of Orthodox Judaism that Jewish suffering during the Holocaust was part of God's plan, just as Jewish suffering has been throughout history. This generally meant that the Jewish people were being punished for a sin—perhaps straying from the laws of Torah, or establishing the land of Israel without waiting for the coming of the Messiah. No matter the explanation, Rubenstein found the possibility that Hitler was an instrument of God to be "obscene." Rubenstein's position proved to be deeply unsettling to Jewish and Christian theologians alike, and it opened the door to examining the meaning of the Holocaust from a religious perspective.

If Rubenstein's position represents one end of the spectrum in response to the Holocaust, then Emil L. Fackenheim's response represents the other end. Fackenheim was born in Germany in 1916 and was a rabbinical student at the time he was sent to a concentration camp, from which he was released after several months. He ultimately relocated to Ontario, Canada, and then to Israel.

Fackenheim sought a middle ground between the unquestioning acceptance of the traditional Jewish position regarding suffering and Rubenstein's conclusion that God—as conceived in traditional Judaism—cannot exist in light of the Holocaust. He did so by declaring a 614th commandment (in addition to the Torah's 613), namely, that it is commanded that "authentic" Jews in a post-Holocaust world must survive and must do so as Jews, lest Hitler be able to declare a posthumous victory over the Jewish people. The

Theological Responses to the Holocaust

There was nothing small about the Holocaust. It impacted, directly or indirectly, fundamental tenets of civilization with

source of this commandment is what Fackenheim calls “a commanding Voice” that “speaks from Auschwitz.”

For many, Fackenheim went too far. He accused death camp prisoners who during the Holocaust were unable to believe in God of being Nazi accomplices and stated that whoever argued with his assertion that there was a “commanding Voice” at Auschwitz was willfully abandoning God.

It is clear that Rubenstein and Fackenheim both viewed the Holocaust as a unique and theologically significant event in Jewish history. Rubenstein saw the horror of the Holocaust as proof that the God defined by traditional Judaism does not exist; Fackenheim saw it as evidence of God’s engagement and commanding voice. Further, Rubenstein, having rejected the God of the covenant, also thereby rejected the covenant itself. By contrast, Fackenheim saw the covenant as affirmed by the Holocaust in the sense that it was the means by which a new commandment was given to the Jewish people.

Other Jewish theologians—Eliezer Berkovits, Martin Buber, Arthur A. Cohen, Abraham Joshua Heschel, David Weiss Halivni, and Steven T. Katz, among many others—address the same issues as Rubenstein and Fackenheim but find themselves somewhere between their polar-opposite positions.

For example, Irving Greenberg, an Orthodox rabbi who was born in 1933, writes that the two foundational positions of Judaism—God’s engagement in history and the absolute value of every person—were critically threatened by the Holocaust, thereby necessitating certain basic changes in the Jewish understanding of faith and covenant. Faith must be recognized as coming and going, as sometimes clear and strong, and other times as overwhelmed by the reality of the Jewish children who were thrown alive into the flames of the crematoria. The covenant, too, must be reframed from a “commanded covenant”—one that was entered into by the Jewish people in response to a demanding God—to a “voluntary covenant,” one that is freely entered into, and one that is subject to renewal. Greenberg answers the question of where God was during the Holocaust by saying that God was there with the Jewish people during, and sharing in, their suffering.

The theological issues with which Christians must wrestle are no less daunting than those facing Jews. Germany was a highly cultured country where virtually every non-Jew was a member of a church: two-thirds were Protestant, and one-third were Roman Catholic. Christianity was one of the bulwarks of German society. All of the leading Nazi leaders were associated with a church, including Hitler, who was a Catholic who never renounced his Catholicism and was never excommunicated. So the question is this: how can men educated in the Christian faith lead a program of

extermination of innocent men, women, and children? On a broader level, how can millions of Christians, including some clergy, follow these leaders on a crusade to kill every Jew in Europe?

Among the many Christians who have sought to answer these questions—such as Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who dealt with the incongruity between Christianity and Nazism during the Holocaust, as well as post-Holocaust theologians, including Harry James Cargas, Alice and Roy Eckardt, Eugene J. Fisher, Hubert G. Locke, John T. Pawlikowski, and John K. Roth—several can be cited for their critical role in the evolution of post-Holocaust Christian theology.

Harry James Cargas, who was born in Hamtramck, Michigan, in 1932 and who died in 1998, converted to Catholicism at the age of 19. It was shocking to him when he realized that probably every killer in the Nazi regime had been a baptized Christian. His statement to the effect that no other event, save the crucifixion, was as tragic as the Holocaust in Christian history, reflects the importance he ascribed to the need to somehow reconcile the fact of the Holocaust with the Christian faith that was so central to him.

He was a prolific author, but it is possible to identify what was perhaps his most significant contribution to post-Holocaust Christian theology. What made it so valuable was the fact that he did not focus on theological concepts but set forth 16 concrete proposals for what was necessary for Christianity to redeem itself from its complicity in the Holocaust. Some of those proposals were: Hitler must be excommunicated; there must be full recognition by all Christians of the ways in which Christianity was in error about and harmful to the Jews; the Catholic Church must reevaluate and reconsider its understanding of evil and of history; the Vatican must open up all of its archives for the period of the Holocaust; the terms “Old Testament” and “New Testament” must be changed so as to eliminate any implication of the latter replacing or fulfilling the former; and missionizing the Jews must be curtailed and those efforts be turned toward making Christians better Christians.

Franklin H. Littell, who was born in 1917 in Syracuse, New York, and who died in 2009, was a minister of the United Methodist Church, a renowned educator, and a prolific author. Of greater importance, however, was his courageous declaration that Christian antisemitism and the theological principle of supersessionism had a direct causal relationship with what happened to the Jews in the Holocaust. Supersessionism is the belief that Christianity supersedes Judaism in every important respect, some of which are: the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament; the revelation through Jesus

supersedes revelation at Sinai; and Christians replace the Jews as the people of the covenant. This renders Judaism marginalized, if not totally irrelevant except to the extent that conversion of the Jews to Christianity is a prerequisite for the second coming of the Messiah.

Littell was so concerned with the actions of Jesus's followers during the Holocaust that he questioned whether Jesus was a true prophet, for how could the followers of a true prophet do what was done against the Jews? He also refused to allow Christians to look upon what Hitler and millions of Nazis did as an accident. Instead, he wrote that what they did was reflective of a Christianity that was "formless and heathen at heart."

Over the decades since the end of the Holocaust there has been an increasing understanding by the Protestant and Catholic churches of the role Christian theology played in what became the Final Solution, and significant efforts to turn away from the Christianity that allowed it. The Catholic Church took a tremendous step in the direction Cargas and Littell would wish it to go when Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, generally known as "Vatican II," on October 11, 1962. One of its objectives was to address relations between the Catholic Church and the Jews. To that end, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, known commonly as *Nostra Aetate* ("In our time"), was proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965.

Paragraph 4 of *Nostra Aetate* spoke directly to the church's theological position relative to the Jews (who are referred to as "Abraham's stock"). It rejected the accusation against the Jews of deicide that had long been a part of Christian theology, absolving the Jews—both those at the time of Jesus's crucifixion, and all those since—of that crime. It made clear that the covenant between the Jews and God is still in force, that Christians should not put themselves above the Jews or refer them as "rejected" or "cursed" by God. It made no mention of the millennia-long goal of converting Jews to Christianity, and it referred to the Jews as "beloved by God."

Nostra Aetate has been followed by the Catholic Church with documents that further confirmed this new relationship: in December 1974 and June 1985, documents on how the principles of *Nostra Aetate* should be taught; in March 1998, a document titled *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*; in 2002, a document regarding the need for Catholics to understand how Jews approach the Hebrew Bible; and in December 2015, a document that further explores the meaning of *Nostra Aetate*.

The Protestant churches have also responded to the theological implications of the Holocaust. In one of the earliest post-Holocaust statements—issued on October 19, 1945—the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany

(*Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*) issued the Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt (*Stuttgarter Schuldbekennnis*), which reads, in part, "With great anguish we state: through us has endless suffering been brought to many peoples and countries. . . . we accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously . . . and for not loving more ardently."

Except for statements from the World Conference of Churches (WCC), which currently represents more than 345 churches around the world, as a general rule each denomination has made its own declaration regarding its relations with Jews in light of the Holocaust. At the founding assembly of the WCC in 1948, churches represented by the organization were asked to denounce antisemitism as being "absolutely irreconcilable with . . . the Christian faith." At the third assembly, in 1961, the WCC—much like Vatican II would do later in the 1960s—rejected the charge that the Jews of today were responsible for the death of Jesus. This was echoed by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) in 1964.

The United Methodist Church issued its statement regarding the need to establish a new relationship with the Jewish community in 1972. In 1987 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognized the ongoing covenant between God and the Jewish people. That same year the Presbyterian Church (USA) rejected supersessionism. Seven years later, in 1994, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America denounced the virulent antisemitic statements made by Martin Luther in the 16th century and characterized antisemitism as "an affront to the Gospel."

These are but a few of the more than 100 declarations by various denominations and organizations from around the world acknowledging the role that religious antisemitism played in the Holocaust and pledging to reject all aspects of antisemitism going forward. Efforts to reconcile the Holocaust within Jewish theology, within Christian theology, and between Christians and Jews continue.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Barth, Karl; Bonhoeffer, Dietrich; Cargas, Harry James; Fackenheim, Emil; Rubenstein, Richard

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Theresienstadt

Located in the town of Terezín, some 35 miles from Prague in northwestern Czechoslovakia, Theresienstadt was a Nazi-established Jewish ghetto as well as a concentration and transit camp. The camp was contained within an old fortress constructed in the 17th century. It became operational on November 24, 1941, and was liberated by Soviet troops on May 8, 1945.

Theresienstadt was designed to fulfill two primary functions. First, it was a transit point for Czech Jews who were being deported to concentration camps, death camps, and forced labor camps located in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Second, it was a labor camp where elderly, disabled, or prominent Jews were housed. The Nazis perpetrated an elaborate hoax by implying that detainees who remained at Theresienstadt were being treated well as “retirees”; they even called the camp a “spa town.”

In 1942 the Nazis began deporting large numbers of Jews at Theresienstadt to the east, where many perished. Nevertheless, the Germans continued to allude to the camp in quite glowing terms in an effort to disguise their activities and keep the outside world from learning about the true scale of the Holocaust. In 1944 the Germans permitted representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit the facility, after receiving negative press about the Nazis’ deportation of Dutch Jews to Theresienstadt. The visit occurred in June 1944. When ICRC officials arrived, they were impressed with what they saw. Gardens had been cultivated, barracks were clean and renovated, and buildings were freshly painted. Camp officials even staged social and cultural events for their visitors, many of which included detainees. When the ICRC personnel left, however, deportations from Theresienstadt were resumed, and they continued until October 1944. Camp authorities had, of course, forced internees to perform renovations and other projects prior to the visit of the Red Cross.

At least 140,000 Jews were either interned or passed through Theresienstadt between 1941 and 1945. Of that number, some 90,000 were ultimately deported to death or concentration camps in the east; the vast majority of them perished. Some 5,000 children were transported to the east

via Theresienstadt, and it is estimated that about 90% died in death camps. The death toll within the camp is estimated at 33,000. Many of those individuals died from disease, illness, malnutrition, exposure, or abuse by camp personnel. By mid-1942 the death toll became so high that camp authorities had to build a crematorium just outside the walls that processed as many as 200 bodies per day.

Unlike most concentration camps, Theresienstadt boasted a vibrant cultural scene; in this case, it resembled many Jewish ghettos. Because the camp housed a number of artists, writers, teachers, actors, and musicians from Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Austria, prisoners benefited from concerts, plays, lectures, art exhibits, and other cultural happenings. The library at Theresienstadt held an impressive 60,000 volumes, and although they were officially forbidden from instructing children, older prisoners held daily classes for hundreds of students.

On May 2, 1945, with Adolf Hitler dead and Soviet forces pressing in from the east, camp personnel turned over control of Theresienstadt to the ICRC. Soviet troops officially liberated the camp on May 8.

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See also: Concentration Camps; Ghettos; Haas, Leo; Herz-Sommer, Alice; International Committee of the Red Cross; Jonas, Regina; Music and the Holocaust; Propaganda in the Holocaust; Slovakia; Weiss, Helga; Westerbork; White Buses

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Thierack, Otto

Otto Thierack was a Nazi jurist and politician. He was the Reich minister of justice under Adolf Hitler between August 20, 1942, and April 30, 1945.

One of his first steps as justice minister after assuming office on August 20, 1942, was to direct the president of the People’s Court that in criminal proceedings against the Jews, the decisive factor must always be their Jewishness rather than their culpability. Thierack not only made penal prosecution of all unpopular persons and groups harsher but he also waived any pretense of legality and simply began handling “antisocial” prisoners (usually Jews, Poles, Russians, and

Roma) over to the SS. Thierack came to an understanding with Heinrich Himmler that certain categories of prisoners were to be, to use their words, “annihilated through work.” As Reich minister, Thierack ensured the reduction of clemency proceedings for those sentenced to death.

Otto Georg Thierack was born in Wurzen, Saxony, on April 19, 1889. His father was a merchant. In 1910 he commenced the study of law at the University of Marburg and received his doctorate in 1914 from the University of Leipzig. In World War I he served as a volunteer in the German army, reaching the rank of lieutenant. He suffered a facial injury and was decorated with the Iron Cross, second class.

After the war he resumed his interrupted law studies, graduating in 1920 with his assessor (junior lawyer) examination. He then entered the judicial service of Saxony as a junior lawyer, and in 1921 he was appointed a public prosecutor at the district court in Leipzig. In 1926 he became a prosecutor at the Supreme Court of Dresden.

In 1932 Thierack joined the Nazi Party and became the leader of the National Socialist jurists organization (the *Rechtswahrerbund*), which led to his career as a leading Nazi judge. In 1933, after the Nazi assumption of power in Germany, he became the Saxon minister of justice. In 1935 he was appointed vice president of the Reich Court in Leipzig. At the same time he also represented the minister of justice in coordinating the integration of Nazi jurisdiction in the Reich.

On May 1, 1936, Thierack was appointed president of the People’s Court (*Volksgerichtshof*), where he concentrated on tightening its jurisdiction. This court prosecuted people accused of crimes against the Third Reich, in closed sessions, and without the right of appeal. He held the position of president of the People’s Court, interrupted by two periods in the German army in World War II, until 1942 when he was succeeded as president by Roland Freisler.

On April 23–24, 1941, Thierack was a participant in the meeting of judicial officers about the so-called “destruction of life unworthy of life,” in the context of *Aktion T-4* medical murders.

On September 9, 1942, now as justice minister, Thierack gave directions to the president of the People’s Court that “in criminal proceedings against the Jews, the decisive factor is their Jewishness, rather than their culpability.” The following month he introduced monthly legal briefs that presented model rulings—decisions, with names left out, upon which German jurisprudence was to be based. He also introduced in proceedings of public interest the so-called *Vorschauen* (“previews”) and *Nachschauen* (“reviews”), which required that the higher state court presidents were to discuss with the

public prosecutor’s office and the State Court president—who had to pass this on to the responsible criminal courts—how a case was to be judged before the court’s decision. This was to be done at least once every two weeks.

One year later the Third Reich changed the laws again, this time removing Jews from the jurisdiction of the court altogether and leaving their fate in the hands of the police or the SS. This legalized the sending of “asocials” or certain foreign prisoners or forced laborers—Jews, Poles, Gypsies, Russians and Ukrainians—directly to the SS, by sending them to concentration camps in the East, where they would be “exterminated through work.”

After Hitler’s intervention, Thierack ordered death sentences were to be enforced immediately. In the opinions of the trial court, the prosecutors, the attorney general and other bodies, petitions for mercy were in principle no longer necessary.

At Thierack’s instigation, the execution shed at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin was outfitted with eight iron hooks in December 1942 so that several people could be put to death at once, by hanging (there had already been a guillotine there for some time). When a number of mass executions began on September 7, 1943, it also happened that some prisoners were hanged “by mistake.” Thierack simply covered up these mistakes and demanded that the hangings continue. He was recognized as one who was ruthless in the furthering of his career, power hungry, and ambitious. His support staff described him as hardworking and resilient, but also high-handed and autocratic.

At the end of the war, Thierack was arrested by the Allies and imprisoned at the prisoner of war camp at Eselheide in 1945. He committed suicide in jail on November 22, 1946, before he could be put on trial at Nuremberg.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Asocials; Euthanasia Program; Slave Labor; Volksgerichtshof

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Third Reich

The Third Reich (*Das Dritte Reich* in German), was the name used by the Nazi Party to describe Germany under its rule. In

the German language the term *Reich* translates to the English word “empire”; hence, the Third Reich was Germany’s third empire, following the Holy Roman Empire, which was shattered by Napoleon Bonaparte, and the Second Empire, which had been fashioned by Otto von Bismarck and lost through the reckless rule of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Nazi propagandists also referred to their domain as the “Thousand Year Reich,” but it lasted just 12 years, from 1933 until Germany’s defeat in World War II in 1945. During that span, the Third Reich persecuted and killed millions of people for racial and political reasons; initiated and waged World War II throughout Europe, the Atlantic, and North Africa; and brought unparalleled destruction.

The Third Reich was proclaimed when the Nazis assumed political power in Germany at the end of January 1933. Although much power was concentrated in Adolf Hitler’s hands, the Third Reich functioned more like a chaotic bureaucracy, with constant institutional and personal conflict at lower levels of the government and party. Despite this, it maintained itself through both the acceptance and support of much of the German people and the intimidation and repression of opponents.

The Third Reich received strong initial popular support because it appealed to nationalist feelings and seemed to offer a solution to the economic Depression of the early 1930s. Hitler and the Nazis pulled Germany out of that deep worldwide crisis and solved the problem of widespread unemployment through massive rearmament programs and other public works projects. The Nazis also appealed to the national pride of many Germans offended by defeat in World War I and the harsh peace terms of the Treaty of Versailles. They claimed to unite Germans from all walks of life and political perspectives into a higher unity, a nation with a unified sense of purpose and destiny. Toward the end of the 1930s, however, public support waned and was replaced more and more by acquiescence ensured by the threat of state-sanctioned violence.

The basis for the Nazis’ belief in the higher unity of all Germans was biological. Hitler and the Nazis believed in enduring, unchangeable racial differences between different nationalities. The Third Reich was to be an extensive empire of “racially pure” Germans, in which other races served as slaves or were eliminated altogether. These goals led to the murder of millions of Jews, Roma, and members of other nationalities, as well as Germans with hereditary diseases. The concentration camp system, initially begun in 1933 to imprison political prisoners, evolved into a complicated but ruthlessly efficient system of enslavement and mass murder.

Hitler sought to expand the Third Reich by annexing or invading other countries. He and the Nazis precipitated World War II when Germany divided Poland with the Soviet Union (after annexing Austria and Czechoslovakia during 1938–1939). Following the outbreak of war, the Third Reich subsequently conquered and dominated almost the entire European continent, stretching from the Atlantic coast of France to deep into the Soviet Union. Ultimately, however, the main countries allied against Germany—Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States—succeeded in defeating and occupying Germany and destroying the Third Reich in 1945.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Brandt, Karl; Bureaucracy; Final Solution; Hitler, Adolf; Holocaust; “Racial Hygiene”; Weimar Republic

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Tiso, Jozef

Slovak nationalist leader named president of the Slovak Republic in 1939. Born on October 13, 1887, at Velka Bytca, Slovakia (then Hungary), Tiso was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1910. In 1918 he helped to found the Slovak People’s Party (SPP), representing it in the Czechoslovakian Parliament in 1925—where he also served as minister of health between 1927 and 1928. With the death of SPP leader Andrej Hlinka in August 1938, Tiso took over as head of the party.

On October 6, 1938, he became prime minister of an autonomous Slovakia, which had been created under the terms of the Munich Agreement. In March 1939 the Czechoslovakian government deposed him for promoting Slovak independence, but Tiso received Adolf Hitler’s support during a visit to Berlin on March 13 of that year; the following day he proclaimed Slovak independence. The Germans occupied what remained of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939, and the next day Tiso placed the new Slovak state under the protection of Germany, primarily to avoid its annexation by Hungary.



Jozef Tiso was a Slovak Roman Catholic priest who led the first Slovak Republic between 1939 and 1945. A leader of the Slovak People's Party, Tiso remained an active priest throughout his political career and was supported by the Vatican in his efforts to uphold Catholicism in Slovakia during World War II. As a major collaborator with Hitler's Germany, he was convicted and hanged for treason, war crimes, and crimes against humanity on April 18, 1947. (AP Photo)

On October 26, 1939, Tiso became president of the newly created Slovak Republic. Although he personally opposed Nazism, he was forced to share power with the fascist paramilitary Hlinka Guards, and his government willingly collaborated with the Germans, allowing some 68,000 Slovakian Jews to be deported to German concentration camps.

Tiso's government survived an internal uprising in August 1944 but fell to the Red Army and Czech partisans in April 1945. Tiso fled to Austria but was apprehended by U.S. authorities and extradited to Czechoslovakia, where he was tried and convicted of treason and war crimes. He was executed by hanging in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, on April 18, 1947.

CHARLES R. SHRADER

See also: Catholic Church; Czechoslovakia; Hlinka Guards; Slovakia

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Topography of Terror

The Topography of Terror (*Topographie des Terrors*) is a museum complex in Berlin, Germany, documenting the history of the various Nazi policing institutions located in the immediate vicinity of the district, and of the crimes originating from there. It is located on the site of buildings that, during the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945, were the headquarters of the Gestapo and the SS. Between 1933 and 1945 these organizations, together with the Security Service SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, or SD) and the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or RSHA), were the foci of National Socialist terror.

The street address of the museum is on Niederkirchnerstrasse, formerly Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse. The buildings were largely destroyed by Allied bombing during early 1945, and after the war the boundary between the American and Soviet zones of occupation ran right across Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse. The area became the boundary between the two zones, with the Berlin Wall eventually running along the south side of the street. After the end of the Cold War, the wall at this part of Berlin was never demolished and is thus the longest segment still visible today. This remnant of the Berlin Wall now forms part of the museum site.

As part of the celebration of Berlin's 750th anniversary year, it was decided to transform the area into a museum. The first exhibition took advantage of an excavation of the cellar of the Gestapo headquarters. Several of the cells where prisoners were held and tortured are clearly visible, and are among the first sights that greet visitors to the museum.

A number of attempts at creating a permanent museum and memorial followed, but it was not until 2010 that the current structure took shape and opened to the public. The Documentation Center followed the design of architect Ursula Wilms and was officially opened on May 6, 2010, by German federal president Horst Köhler. The opening coincided with the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The Topography of Terror maintains three permanent exhibitions that are open to the public, all of which are presented in both German and English. The first of these is the “Topography of Terror” permanent exhibition itself. The focus of the exhibition outlines the central institutions of the SS and police in the Third Reich, highlighting their crimes not only in Germany but across all of occupied Europe, and educating visitors as to their victims. The second of the facility’s permanent exhibitions examines Berlin as the Nazi capital, emphasizing National Socialist rule and its consequences for the city and its population. Finally, the Topography of Terror offers a tour of the ground on which the site is located, providing an overview of the historic location and the site’s use during the Nazi period and the post-war era.

As an educational facility, the Topography of Terror operates a specialist library focusing on the police, SS, and Gestapo, as well as on National Socialism generally. It holds some 25,000 volumes and a large periodical collection. In the same vicinity, a seminar center for events, lectures, and school groups can accommodate up to 200 people.

The Topography of Terror Foundation provides comprehensive advice and coordination tasks in the field of national and international memorial sites, and it is arguably the most important authority for all other memorial sites in Germany. Through this, it also serves the purpose of coordinating and promoting international collaboration. With more than one million visitors a year, the Topography of Terror museum is one of the most frequented memorial sites and institutions of its kind in Berlin.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Gestapo; Museums and Memorials; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Schutzstaffel; Sicherheitsdienst

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war is built on two related components: the engagement of all aspects of society—not just the military—to support and wage war, and the need to destroy all aspects of the enemy’s society, which also is fully engaged in supporting and waging war.

Total war stands in contrast to a “limited war,” meaning a war carried out by professional armies on clearly defined battlefields and conducted so as to protect civilians, to respond to enemy actions in a way that does not exceed proportionality, and to conduct oneself, individually and as a group, in recognition of the common humanity of both parties to the conflict.

Although aspects of total war can be seen as early as the French Revolution, it is clearly the dominant form of warfare of both the American Civil War and World War I. The destruction inflicted on Atlanta and the South by Union general William T. Sherman and the mobilization of total national resources by all countries involved in World War I, including manpower and entire economies, represent two key characteristics of total war.

It was in World War II that the full meaning of total war was realized, requiring the populations and resources of entire nations to field large armies with weapons of enormous destructive power, and to target the populations and resources of enemy militaries so as to limit or prevent altogether their ability to do the same. This transformed the world into a battlefield where the distinction between the front lines and the home front nearly disappeared.

The concept of total war and the reality of the Holocaust have a disturbing relationship. A total war need not include genocide, but genocide is in itself an act of total war. The Holocaust is an example of total war conducted against a particular victim group that was seen by the perpetrators as “the enemy,” without distinction between those members of the group, if any, who constituted an objective threat to the perpetrators, and those who did not. It did not limit its violence to the front lines; instead, it reached into the homes, the synagogues, and the businesses of the victim group without regard to military necessity.

Total war means that vast numbers of civilians will support the imposition of untold death and destruction on an enemy population, and, further, that large numbers of civilians will be the victims of the combination of indiscriminate or collateral damage and the intentional perpetration of mass murder. In the process, the first and perhaps most important casualty is the concept of the innate value of human life. When millions are dying, the death of any single person loses its ability to shock, is stripped of the moral

Total War and the Holocaust

The term “total war” or “limitless war” refers to the all-encompassing efforts of entire nations to completely destroy their enemies—combatants and noncombatants alike. Total

complexities that normally would be associated with ending a human life, and therefore combatant countries become free of cultural restraints to pursue their efforts to defeat the enemy not only militarily but also in its entirety.

This is seen clearly in the Holocaust. One of the shocking and almost universal observations in survivors' memoirs relates to descriptions of the ease with which the Nazis and their collaborators chose who lived and who died, and then processed the killing in a way that prompted no more moral anguish than what was associated with the commission of any mundane day-to-day activity. While this attitude may be expected in soldiers killing other soldiers, the application of the same amoral approach to the killing of civilians—and to see doing so as a necessity, an integral part of the war process—is what brings the Holocaust within the ambit of total war.

Total war makes no difference between soldier and civilian, but it also makes no distinction between those civilians who cannot possibly constitute a threat—the ill, the weak, the very young, the very old—and those who could conceivably be capable of bringing harm to the military cause. During the Holocaust there were few killers who showed any hesitation to perform their duty to kill or facilitate killing, even when their victims were the most innocent and vulnerable of society. That does not mean that the killers did not have any psychological concerns about what they were doing. For example, with few exceptions, members of the *Einsatzgruppen*, who were responsible for the up-close shooting of old men, women, and children, needed alcohol to deaden their innate moral revulsion at these types of killings. This is a reflection of the lingering power of traditional concepts of right and wrong, but ultimately those concepts proved all too susceptible to the pressures and propaganda of a country intent on the extermination of a particular victim group.

Total war, even more than limited war, subsumes the individual to the will of the group regarding both the actions of the perpetrators and their perception of the victims. The power of group identification, along with the fear of being ostracized from the group, was a substantial motivator in the actions of the killers of the Holocaust. Since the widespread and intentional death of civilians is one of the distinguishing characteristics of total war, and since under any other circumstances the perpetration of such actions would be anathema, the need to diffuse individual guilt by sharing it with the group is a critical element of mass murder. This was clearly the case in the Holocaust. Similarly, the actions of the Nazi killers were such that it became necessary for them to view their victims not as individuals but as faceless members of a vilified group.

Just as in the case of total war, so too the Holocaust fails to meet any of the criteria of a limited war: its deaths were not incurred on the battlefield; it made no effort to protect civilians—in fact, just the opposite; it showed no proportionality in its responses to the Jews' real or perceived threat; and it most certainly and sadly did not recognize the common humanity of the perpetrators and the victims.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Genocide; Holocaust; Kommissarbefehl

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Touvier Case

The Touvier Case, a trial that took place from March 17 to April 20, 1994, almost 50 years after the end of World War II, was historic on two accounts. First, it was the first judgment of “crimes against humanity” brought against a Frenchman; second, it showcased the long-standing involvement of the Catholic Church in protecting war criminals from World War II. The filing of the complaint and the subsequent trial would never have happened by the will of the French government or of the French courts without the constant pressure of human rights activist Serge Klarsfeld and publications from historians like Robert Paxton.

Paul Touvier was born on April 3, 1915, and after failed attempts to settle himself professionally he joined the *Milice* (a highly politicized militia) of the collaborationist Vichy regime, where he soon rose to the rank of chief of intelligence in the region of Lyon. His counterpart in the German occupation administration was the notorious “Butcher of Lyon,” Klaus Barbie. In this position, Touvier was responsible for a number of murders of Jews and of individual persons with real or suspected ties to the Resistance. Upon the collapse of collaborationist rule in France, he went into hiding and was sentenced twice in absentia to the death penalty for collaboration with the enemy and treason by French courts during the *Épuration* (the mass legal purge of Vichy officials) of the late 1940s. Arrested during a robbery in 1947, he escaped and found shelter within institutions of the French Catholic Church. In 1967 his condemnations to death from the 1940s expired because of a 20-year statute of limitations regarding

such judgments under French law. Some minor judicial restraints remained valid, and therefore elements of the French Catholic clergy lobbied President Georges Pompidou to grant a pardon to Touvier. This occurred in 1971 and caused a public outcry when it was publicized by the media a year later. The outrage increased when it was revealed that Touvier was claiming property as his own that had been seized from Jews during the war. Soon thereafter, former Resistance fighters tried to bring legal action against Touvier on counts still punishable under French law. Touvier again went into hiding, aided by the Catholic Church, now with the Archbishop Lefebvre splinter group.

Although the French justice system took some steps to bring the absent Touvier to court again during the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was not until the trial of Klaus Barbie in 1987 that the Touvier case reentered the public debate. Barbie, who was not a French citizen, was the first person in French legal history to be convicted on counts of the nonprescriptive “crimes against humanity.” Pressure now mounted to bring the same charges against the most important French subordinate of Barbie: Paul Touvier. In 1989 he was finally arrested in his hiding place, but French judges demonstrated an unwillingness to convict him and they suspended proceedings in 1992. After a public outcry, a higher court ordered a trial in 1993.

The trial did not get under way until March 20, 1994. Nevertheless, the charges had to be reduced, as many cases of murder were ineligible for trial under French statutory limitations, as they were “merely” individual war crimes and not “crimes against humanity.” However, the killing of seven people of Jewish origin in 1944 in retaliation for a Resistance killing of a prominent Vichy figure “qualified” in the legal sense for charges on account of “crimes against humanity.” Touvier’s defense argued that the killing of the seven persons had been the lesser evil, as Touvier thereby had avoided the killing of even more people, which had been ordered by Nazi occupation officials. This argument, however, failed to convince the court. Touvier was ultimately sentenced to life imprisonment. An appeal was rejected in 1995, and Touvier died in a prison hospital soon after, on July 17, 1996. His funeral service took place in a Parisian Catholic church administered by Lefebvre followers and was attended by prominent figures of the extreme right and by one member of the French Chamber of Deputies.

OLIVER BENJAMIN HEMMERLE

See also: Barbie, Klaus; Catholic Church; Crimes against Humanity; Vichy France

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Trawniki Men

Named for the concentration camp in which they were trained, “Trawniki men” (*Trawnikimänner*) or “Trawnikis” were auxiliary police guards who played a deadly role in the day-to-day process of mass murder that was the Final Solution.

In order to implement Operation Reinhard—the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* (the German-controlled section of Poland that was not annexed to Germany)—trained men were needed to guard extermination camps, enforce and escort deportations, liquidate ghettos, and shoot—up close—Jewish men, women, and children into mass graves. Most of the men who trained under this program were Soviet prisoners of war who “volunteered” for this in exchange for release from the horrid, starvation-level conditions in which they were held. As such, they were part of a larger group called *Hilfswilliger* (volunteers), also called *Hiwis*.

The facility in which they trained was part of the Trawniki concentration camp, built where once there was a sugar refinery outside the village of Trawniki, some 20 miles southeast of Lublin. The camp was established shortly after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, Germany’s invasion of Russia in July 1941, on the orders of SS-Gruppenführer Odilo Globocnik, SS and police leader (*SS-und Polizeiführer*) of the Lublin District. He placed SS-Hauptsturmführer Hermann Höfle in command of the camp and SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Streibel in command of the training program and facility for the Trawniki men.

The Trawniki camp served several functions over its three years of operation. For its first three months (July through September 1941) it was used to hold Soviet civilians. Beginning in September 1941 and continuing to July 1944, it was the training center for Trawniki men who were to be Guard Forces (*Wachmannschaften*) as part of *Aktion* Reinhard. It served as a forced labor camp from July 1942 to September 1943, at which point it functioned as a subcamp for the Majdanek concentration and extermination camp, also located in the Generalgouvernement, near Lublin.

From the inception of the training program through late 1944, more than 5,000 men were screened for sufficient levels of anticommunist and antisemitic sentiments, recruited and trained for their role in the murder of the Jews. Not all were Soviet POWs. Others were conscripted *Volksdeutsche*, that is, men who were “Germans in terms of people or race,” but were not living in, nor citizens of, Germany. Most were from Eastern Europe so that the Trawniki men—the Soviets and the civilian conscripts—could communicate with (in reality, order) prisoners in a language they could understand, such as Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Estonian, Latvian, and so forth.

Trawniki men were trained for and participated in some of the most violent aspects of an already monstrous campaign of mass murder. They served as guards at almost all of the Nazi extermination camps, such as Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka (more specifically, Treblinka II, the killing site within the Treblinka camp). They were brutal participants in the deportations of Jews from ghettos to the assigned extermination camp, and in the liquidation of those ghettos. Thus, in the ghettos of Warsaw, Czestochowa, Lublin, Białystok, and others, they killed all Jews who had not yet been deported.

Perhaps their most notorious task was to kill hundreds or thousands of Jews at a time, shooting them individually in the soft spot immediately below the back of the skull, or forcing them to lie down on their stomachs on the rows of bodies that were killed before them, and then shooting them, even as the next row of victims was brought to the edge of the open pit to await their turn. Some of the members of the German army or the Reserve Police Battalions found this task—killing innocent men, women, and children in a close up and personal way—to be psychologically difficult, so it was not unusual that the Trawniki men—who seemed to have no such qualms—would take over the killing operation.

The Trawniki training camp, which remained operational to the very end, was overrun in July 1944. After the war, Globocnik and Höfel committed suicide. Streibel, along with other leaders of the program, was charged and brought to trial, only to be acquitted in 1976.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Collaboration; Concentration Camps; Death Camps; Ghettos; Globocnik, Odilo; Holocaust by Bullets

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Treblinka

Consisting of a labor camp and an extermination camp, Treblinka contributed mightily to the death toll of the Holocaust with approximately 870,000 victims—almost all Jews—killed there during its operation. Treblinka was located near the villages of Treblinka and Malkinia, about 50 miles northeast of Warsaw, in the *Generalgouvernement*. Two conditions made this an ideal location in which to carry out the tasks of the camps: it was in a lightly populated but heavily wooded area; and it was near a rail line, with a station stop at Malkinia, which allowed for a spur to be built to the camp.

Treblinka was one of three extermination camps established as part of Operation Reinhard (*Aktion Reinhard*), named after SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), who was assassinated in June 1942. Belzec and Sobibór were the other two Operation Reinhard extermination camps.

Treblinka consisted of two camps. Treblinka I was a forced labor camp (*Arbeitslager*), opened in November 1941. Its prisoner population was composed of Jews, and non-Jewish Poles for whom the camp was a means of political detention. Though held in two different areas of the camp, both cohorts did hard labor, primarily in a gravel pit. Deportees who appeared capable of work when they arrived at Treblinka were housed here. The commandant of Treblinka I was SS-Sturmbannführer Theodor van Eupen. He served in that capacity from the camp’s inception until its closing in July 1944.

Treblinka II was the extermination camp (*Vernichtungslager*). It was completed and operational in July 1942. This was where virtually all Jews from each deportation train were sent after being adjudged incapable of performing the tasks required in Treblinka I. It was here that they were gassed within hours of their arrival.

There were three commandants of Treblinka II. They were SS-Untersturmführer Dr. Irmfried Eberl, from July to August 1942; SS-Obersturmführer Franz Stangl (who had served as commandant of Sobibór), from August 1942 to August 1943; and SS-Oberscharführer Kurt Franz, from August to November 1943.



Treblinka was an extermination camp established by Nazi Germany for the purpose of facilitating the Holocaust. Functioning between July 23, 1942, and October 19, 1943, it is estimated that at least 700,000 and possibly up to 900,000 Jews were killed in its gas chambers, rendering it a killing site second only to Auschwitz in the number of Jews murdered there. A Jewish revolt in October 1943 saw the end of the mass murder operations at Treblinka. (Mondadori Portfolio via Getty Images)

Treblinka II was composed of three areas. The first was the reception area where the Jews who made up the human cargo packed into railroad cattle cars detrained. The second area was divided into two subsections. One included housing for the German and Ukrainian staff, administrative offices, storerooms, a clinic, and workshops. The staff consisted of 20 to 30 SS men in command and administrative posts, all of whom had received their training through their participation in the *Aktion T-4* operation under which Germans who, due to physical or mental disabilities, were deemed to be living “lives not worthy of living” were killed by carbon monoxide gas. Ninety to 120 Soviet prisoners of war, as well as Ukrainian and Polish civilians, served as guards, and some participated in tasks associated with the gas chambers. They were schooled at the Trawniki labor camp, which was the training center for Operation Reinhard police and guards.

The second subsection of Treblinka II was composed of the barracks for the Jews who temporarily worked in the camp at the camp’s workshops, while the third area was the extermination center. The entire camp was surrounded by two fences of barbed wire and numerous watch towers.

Sometimes referred to as the “upper camp” (and identified to its incoming victims as a transit camp), the extermination site of Treblinka II was maintained in its own fully fenced area, with a large earthen mound and branches intertwined in the fence to make it difficult for anyone outside of the area to see what was happening. It contained three gas chambers (which would be expanded by another 10 as more trainloads of victims kept coming). The process that led to the gas chambers began in the reception area.

Deportation trains were often 50 or 60 cars long. As each train approached the “station” where the victims would

detrain, the train would stop and be broken into segments of 20 cars each. Each 20-car train pulled into the reception area and was handled before the next segment of the deportation train pulled in. There the doors of the train cars were thrown open and the Jews who managed to survive the trip—often lasting for days, with no food, water, sanitation, or light—would be berated and beaten in order to bring them all out into the bizarre scene that awaited them. Once they were out of the cars and on their way to the next step in this process, a special work unit (*Sonderkommando*) of Jewish prisoners jumped into each car, removing the bodies of those who did not survive, collecting whatever food, clothing, and valuables were left behind, and cleaning the car so it could be put into use for the same purpose again.

Jews who were unable to walk were taken to an “infirmary” (*Lazaret*) with a Red Cross flag on it. They passed through the building and exited on the other side where they were shot and thrown into huge pits that were already dug for just this purpose. Those who were able to walk were immediately divided by gender (children with the women). A very few of the men and women—the strongest among them—were selected to go to the forced labor camp—Treblinka I—while all the rest would be just minutes away from their deaths. The condemned group entered two barracks—men in one, women and children in the other—where they were ordered to remove all their clothing to prepare for a shower before they would be allowed into the camp. During this time, all valuables—money, jewelry, and so forth—were collected from them, to be stored and sorted in large storerooms until shipped back to Germany. Beginning in the fall of 1942, women and children were shorn of their hair.

Then these people—naked and no doubt terrified—were forced by fists and whips to run down a path—itsself fenced in and covered with branches to hide what was happening—from the barracks to the building with gas chambers. This path was called the “tube.” As soon as they left the undressing barracks, another special work unit would gather up all the clothing (which would be examined for valuables and taken to storerooms for sorting) and clean the room so the next group of victims could be brought and the process repeated.

The gas chambers at Treblinka used carbon monoxide as its killing agent. It was generated from a large diesel engine in a shed (although some reports refer to other sources for the carbon monoxide) and then piped through to the “shower heads” in the gas chamber. There unsuspecting victims took up to 30 minutes to die.

Disposal of the bodies began after a second set of doors was opened and the remaining gas dissipated. Not far from

the gas chambers’ doors were huge trenches where the bodies were buried. This was the case until Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler issued an order in early 1943 to exhume all the buried bodies and burn them in an effort to destroy all evidence of the killing that took place there. This began the horrible process of opening the graves and moving the bodies to large pits with burning pyres, some built using train track railings. The burning continued for several months.

There was a Jewish resistance group at Treblinka that began its planning for an uprising in April 1943, which took place on August 2, 1943. The first step was to break into the armory in the camp and take weapons. Before this could be completed, however, the Germans became aware of the prisoners’ actions, meaning that the prisoners were unable to arm themselves sufficiently to take control of the camp as they had planned. Instead, the resistance group set fire to buildings (but the gas chambers remained unscathed), and hundreds of prisoners stormed the fence surrounding the camp. Fewer than 100 were able to escape and survive until liberation.

The killing operation continued through August 1943. The camp was dismantled throughout that fall and winter, with the gas chambers destroyed and a farmhouse built in its place. Soviet forces entered the camp on August 16, 1944.

The number of Jews killed at Treblinka—there were other groups killed there, such as 2,000 Roma, but the victims were almost all Jews, and almost all from Poland—is staggering. In the 15 months from July 1942, when killing operations first began, until the fall of 1943, when operations ceased, it is estimated that more than 870,000 Jews were killed, including: 254,000 from Warsaw and another 112,000 from the Warsaw district; some 337,000 Jews from the Radom district; 35,000 from the Lublin district; more than 107,000 from Białystok; and approximately 29,000 Jews from other countries, including Greece, Macedonia, Slovakia, and Salonika.

Two postwar trials were held in Düsseldorf related to the perpetrators of these mass killings. The first—from October 12, 1964, until August 24, 1965—tried and convicted 10 defendants, including Commandant Kurt Franz. At the second trial—from May 13 to December 22, 1970—the only defendant was Commandant Franz Stangl. He was sentenced to life in prison.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Death Camps; Franz, Kurt; Gas Chambers; Greece; Jewish Resistance; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Final Solution; Operation Harvest Festival; Resistance Movements; Roma and Sinti; *Shoah*; Slave Labor; Sonderkommando; Stangl, Franz; Wirth, Christian; Wolff, Karl

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Triumph of the Spirit

A motion picture produced in 1989, based on the life of a Greek-Jewish boxer named Salamo Arouch, who was a victim of the Nazis incarcerated at Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp between 1943 and 1945. Arouch, who came from the city of Salonika, had represented Greece at the Berlin Olympics in 1936 and was Balkans middleweight champion prior to World War II. On March 15, 1943, with the Nazi assault on the Salonika ghetto, he and his family were deported to Auschwitz. Upon learning Arouch's identity, SS guards in the camp arranged bi-weekly boxing matches involving Jewish and Roma inmates: the winner would receive an additional food ration; the loser would be consigned to the gas chamber at Birkenau. Arouch was reputed to have fought in no fewer than 200 such bouts. *Triumph of the Spirit*, a motion picture directed by Robert M. Young, starred Willem Dafoe in the role of Salomo Arouch. A controversy regarding the movie arose soon after its release when another Greek-Jewish survivor of the Auschwitz boxing matches, Jacko Razon, claimed that the film actually told his story, not that of Arouch. Nothing came of the controversy, however, and the film, which was shot on location in Auschwitz itself, was met with critical and popular acclaim.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Arouch, Salamo; Auschwitz; Olympic Games, 1936

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Trocmé, André and Magda

André Trocmé was a French Huguenot pastor who, with his wife Magda, *née* Grilli di Cortona, directed a remarkable rescue effort of Jewish and other refugees in the village of Le

Chambon-sur-Lignon and its surrounding areas, a rural mountainous region in south-central France known as the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon.

Born in Saint-Quentin-en-Tourmont in northern France on April 7, 1901, Trocmé was the son of a French father and German mother, and the product of a strict bourgeois Huguenot upbringing. As an eyewitness to the horrors of World War I, he was shattered by its tremendous violence and the decimation of an entire generation, and advocated for the resolution of conflict through nonviolent means. In 1926 he married the equally dedicated Magda Grilli di Cortona, whom he had met while conducting graduate work at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. They would have four children: Nelly, Jean-Pierre, Jacques, and Daniel.

Trocmé became an outspoken proponent of nonviolence, making him a controversial figure in the French Protestant church. Seeking to limit his influence, he was sent to the remote parish of Le Chambon, though once there he did not hesitate to impart his pacifist convictions into his work. In 1938 he and Pastor Edouard Theis, who came to the village to assist him, opened the École Nouvelle Cévenole, a coeducational secondary school based on the principles of tolerance, pacifism, and internationalism.

Trocmé's preaching was also politically shaded. He spoke out against Nazism in neighboring Germany, pointing out its discriminatory policies toward Jews. With the coming of World War II, his opposition toward the Nazis, and his pacifism, would be tested in a manner he did not anticipate.

In 1940 France capitulated to Germany in a few short weeks. On June 23, 1940, the day after the armistice was signed, Trocmé and Theis emphasized their views in a celebrated sermon directed squarely at their Protestant Huguenot congregation: "The duty of Christians is to resist the violence brought to bear on their consciences with the weapons of the spirit—we will resist whenever our adversaries try to force us to act against the commands of the Gospel. We will do so without fear, but also without pride and without hatred." When the deportations of Jews began in France in 1942, Trocmé urged his congregation to give shelter to "the people of the Bible," the more so as the village and its outlying areas were quickly filled with hundreds of fleeing Jews. Trocmé showed the way by enjoining his congregation to take in refugees—particularly children—in need of sanctuary. From this point on the people of Le Chambon would prove over and over again that they were willing to open their doors courageously to Jews and other persecuted refugees seeking shelter.

Magda Trocmé also assisted refugees in their search for safe havens, connecting them with those prepared to take

them in. While not part of any formal resistance network, the efforts of the Trocmés to assist Jews overlapped with the work of many others who were supporting rescue efforts in the area.

As a result, large numbers of people found permanent shelter in and around Le Chambon, while others were sheltered temporarily until a way could be found to smuggle them across the border into Switzerland. They were housed with local townspeople and farmers, in public institutions, and in homes for children. There were many ways in which people provided help. It was not only a matter of families being prepared to accommodate the Jewish refugees; when the Jews (nicknamed “Testaments” by the villagers) arrived at the local train station, designated members of the community would meet them before spiriting them away to their new homes. Schools found ways to accommodate increased enrollments, and fabrications of school registers were made so it appeared as though the children—with changed names—had always been there. With very few dissenters, the entire community of Le Chambon, it seemed, banded together as one in order to rescue Jews.

While the people of Le Chambon were effectively hiding the children “in plain sight,” the Vichy authorities learned of Pastor Trocmé’s clandestine work. Accordingly, in January 1943 he and Pastor Theis, together with the local headmaster, Roger Darcissac, were arrested and imprisoned for several weeks in the St. Paul d’Eyjeaux internment camp for political prisoners, near Limoges. When he was arrested and first told to desist from his rescue activities, Pastor Trocmé made a famous statement: “These people came here for help and for shelter. I am their shepherd. A shepherd does not forsake his flock. . . . I do not know what a Jew is. I know only human beings.”

After a period of imprisonment, they were released through the intervention of several individuals—including André’s cousin Daniel Trocmé, who was also involved in refugee work in Le Chambon, and who was himself later arrested; deported to Majdanek, he died in 1944.

Following his release Pastor Trocmé continued his efforts on behalf of Jews and others in Le Chambon, but he was forced to go into hiding for several months. His absence did not deter the residents of Le Chambon, nor close down the rescue operation he had begun. They continued welcoming persecuted Jews into their homes, providing a sanctuary for them and enabling many to see out the war in relative safety.

No one knows precisely how many Jewish refugees were hidden or saved at Le Chambon during World War II. Some estimates consider about 3,500 Jewish refugees were saved; others range as high as 5,000, taking into account those Jews

who at least passed through Le Chambon and vicinity, as well as those who remained for any length of time.

After the war, André and Magda Trocmé continued the cause of nonviolent resolution of problems, with André serving as European secretary for the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, a nongovernmental pacifist organization founded in 1914 in response to the horrors of war in Europe. He spent his final years as pastor of a Reformed Church in Geneva.

On January 5, 1971, Yad Vashem recognized Pastor André Trocmé as one of the Righteous among the Nations, with Magda receiving the same recognition on May 14, 1984. In an unprecedented move, in 1998 Yad Vashem presented this honor to the entire village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon.

Pastor André Trocmé died on June 5, 1971, in Geneva, followed by his wife Magda on October 10, 1996, in Paris. Both are buried in the family grave in Le Chambon.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Righteous among the Nations; Upstander; Vichy France

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The Truce

An Italian-produced motion picture, filmed in English-language dialogue, recounting the post-Holocaust return of Italian Jew Primo Levi from his liberation at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp to his home in Italy. The movie covers a period of nine months, during which Levi, played by actor John Turturro, is shunted around eastern Europe under the direction of Soviet liberation troops. Given the multinational composition of the prisoner body, Levi shares his experiences with other Italians, Poles, Greeks, Russians, and—always present—German soldiers who had been forced to surrender to the Red Army. The movie was directed by veteran Italian filmmaker Francesco Rosi and released in the United States through Miramax Films in 1996. *The Truce*, based on Levi’s 1963 memoir (*La Tregua*),

is a movie proceeding from an uncommon scenario, namely, a postgenocidal situation. While many (perhaps most) Holocaust and genocide-related movies deal with events surrounding the period of the killing, *The Truce* is unique in addressing the multitude of issues facing survivors upon their liberation. For this reason, it stands alone within its genre.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Levi, Primo; Liberation, Concentration Camps

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Turkey

Often referred to as the bridge between Europe and the East, Turkey was officially neutral in World War II until months before the end of the conflict, when, on February 23, 1945, it declared war on Germany. The extent of its efforts to save Turkish Jews from the ravages of the Nazis, however, belies that characterization of neutrality.

Once the heart of the mighty and wide-flung Ottoman Empire, Turkey had seen that empire diminish in size and power beginning in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was known as “the Sick Man of Europe.” Its theocratic government held back its development while other countries in Europe were experiencing the new thinking of the Enlightenment and a general growth in prosperity. This led to a revolution in the early 20th century when the religious and political leader of Turkey—Sultan Abdul Hamid II—was overthrown by a Turkish reform group called the Young Turks. Although promising sweeping reforms and modernization, the Young Turks soon turned from that orientation to one of extreme nationalism, pan-Turkism, and expansionist irredentism.

The plans of the Young Turks to restore Turkey and the Ottoman Empire to its former glory were stalled when the western Balkan countries of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia formed the Balkan League and broke free from the empire in the Balkan War of 1912, greatly diminishing the empire’s presence in Europe. During World War I, when it was allied with Germany and the Central Powers, Turkey again found itself on the losing end of a significant and

humiliating military defeat, this against the Russians at the Battle of Sarikamish in January 1915.

Turkey was more than an ally with Germany in World War I. Its army became in some respects an extension of the German military. In an effort to improve the ill-trained and poorly disciplined Turkish army, Germany embedded officers into virtually every Turkish unit. Despite this infusion of leadership and weaponry by the Germans, and notwithstanding its victory at Gallipoli in 1915, Turkey’s overall experience in World War I—its relationship with Germany, the losses it suffered on the battlefield, and the difficult conditions at home—left Turkey reluctant to take sides in World War II. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who became president of Turkey in October 1923, sought to modernize Turkey during the interwar years. To that end, he invited the leading scholars and scientists of Europe—including Jews—to live in Turkey and contribute to its movement forward.

Turkey’s neutrality during World War II provided some level of security to Jews living there and also gave it diplomatic access to Germany and its occupied countries. Thus, for example, the Turkish embassy in Vichy France was able to play a significant role in protecting the approximately 10,000 Turkish Jews living there. These efforts were spearheaded by diplomats on the ground—the ambassador, consuls, and deputy consuls—but were fully supported by the Turkish government, as seen by the direct intervention by the Turkish foreign minister and the president in early 1944 when the Vichy government planned to deport all of its Turkish Jews to “the East,” meaning to the extermination camps of Poland. The plan was cancelled.

Turkey defied the Germans in a number of ways. It refused to close the Bosphorus Strait or the Dardanelles, something requested by Germany because they were waterways by which Jewish refugees attempted to flee Europe. It allowed Jews who reached Turkey to continue to its southern coast and the Mediterranean Sea for travel to Palestine. If turned back by the British, those Jews were given safe harbor in Turkey. It allowed for the presence of various Jewish organizations—for example, the Jewish Agency—on Turkish soil to help bring European Jews to safety and, ultimately, to Palestine.

Turkish diplomats were especially active. The Turkish ambassador to France, as well as consuls in Paris and Marseilles, made certain that Jews’ papers proving Turkish citizenship were up-to-date and issued false citizenship cards if necessary. But their most significant efforts were made to exempt Turkish Jews living in France from the many and onerous anti-Jewish laws and regulations applicable to French

Jews. They did this by sending strong official statements to French diplomats, in which they rejected the argument made by those diplomats that by living in France, Turkish Jews were implicitly accepting the rules and regulations of that country.

The basis on which Turkish diplomats made their arguments was a simple and courageous one: that Turkey did not treat its citizens differently because of religion, and therefore would not allow other countries to do so. Although this was not consistent with its treatment of the Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians during World War I, Turkey's diplomats—especially Selahattin Ülkümen, the Turkish consul general on the island of Rhodes; Namik Kemal Yolga, the Turkish deputy consul general in Paris; Necdet Kent, the deputy consul general in Marseille; and Behiç Erkin, the Turkish ambassador to Paris—argued again and again that Turkish Jews were not to be subject to any rules or restrictions based on their religion.

When Germany and France sent notice that all foreign Jews needed to be repatriated to their homelands no later than May 1944 or else they would become subject to the rules applicable to all Jews, Turkish diplomats arranged for trains to return some 2,000 Jews to the safety of Turkey.

It was not just Turkish Jews that Turkish diplomats helped. Jews in Eastern Europe—in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, among other places—as well as Jews in Greece also benefited from their efforts. And it was not just its diplomats who did the helping. The papal nuncio to France—Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (who would become Pope John XXIII)—helped many Jews to survive the Nazi onslaught.

There was one significant lapse in Turkey's generally protective attitude toward Jews. In December 1941, a ship—the *Struma*—filled with more than 780 (some accounts put the number at 769) Romanian Jewish refugees on their way to Palestine was towed into Istanbul (its engine had died). While British and Turkish officials argued over the *Struma*'s right to continue on to Palestine, its passengers were not allowed to disembark. They were restricted to the ship because of Turkey's fear that if the British did not let them enter Palestine, Turkey would have to take them in. Finally, on February 23, 1942, the ship was allowed to proceed (it had to be towed from Istanbul; its engine was still not working), but on the next day it was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine, killing all passengers and crew.

The estimates of the number of Jews saved because of the efforts made by the Turkish government and its diplomats vary widely, from a low of 15,000 to a high of 100,000, with the consensus somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Rescuers of Jews; *Struma* Disaster

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U

Ukraine

In 1939 Ukraine was a Soviet socialist republic and had a population of 41.34 million. The republic had a sizable Jewish population, and in places like Kiev, Jews made up 25% or more of the total. In Odessa the figure was estimated to be almost 35%. Although most Ukrainians lived in the Soviet republic in 1939, a number of Ukrainians also lived in areas controlled by Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. When the Germans attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, Ukraine was hit severely, and Jews suffered grievously, chiefly because of Nazi policies that sought their complete extermination in the region. Indeed, the Germans hoped to clear Ukraine of much of its native population so that it could be used as a German colony after the war.

Even prior to Operation Barbarossa, Ukraine had seen substantial misery. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's drive to collectivize Ukraine's overwhelmingly agricultural production sector during the late 1920s and 1930 resulted in widespread famine that had wiped out several million Ukrainians by the mid-1930s. The economic dislocation this fostered brought hardship to urban Jews in Ukraine, and some non-Jews blamed the Jews for the country's general economic misfortune.

Prior to the German invasion, antisemitism in Ukraine was certainly an undeniable part of everyday life for most Jews, but it was not nearly as pervasive as it was in other parts of Europe, and the Soviet government did not, as a general rule, sponsor antisemitic laws or ordinances. In fact,

Ukraine's Jewish population had been increasing since the late 1930s as Jews living further west fled east, away from the threat posed by Nazism. Between June and September 1941, however, as German armies fought their way into Ukraine, some 100,000 Jews evacuated the capital of Kiev. That, however, still left some 60,000 Jews in the city, most of whom were ill, elderly, women, or children.

Alleging—falsely—that the Jews had been responsible for bombings in Kiev as German troops secured the city, German mobile killing squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) retaliated by promulgating one of the worst single incidents of mass killing in the history of the war. On September 29–30 the killing squads shot civilians—most of them Jews—execution style at Babi Yar, just outside Kiev. Also killed were Roma, Soviet prisoners of war, and anyone suspected of being a communist. In two days 33,771 men, women, and children were killed. Some claim the true number killed might be closer to 100,000. The following month, German and Romanian troops murdered some 50,000 Jews in Odessa.

In all, the *Einsatzgruppen* were probably responsible for the deaths of 500,000 Jews in Ukraine between 1941 and 1944. Many more Jews were deported to concentration, forced labor, or death camps, where the vast majority of them died or were murdered. German extermination policies alone were responsible for the deaths of at least 3 million Ukrainians; as many as 900,000–1,000,000 were Jewish. The mass murders were sometimes committed with the help of local collaborators.

The Soviets began retaking Ukrainian territory in late 1943, slowly pushing the Germans to the west. In November Kiev was liberated, but the city's entire prewar Jewish population had by then been slaughtered. It took the Soviets until May 1944 to liberate most of Ukraine, but the Ukraine military campaign only added to the Ukrainians' misery. In July 1944 Soviet troops secured all of the country, and Ukraine once more became a Soviet republic. It would remain so until it declared its independence on August 24, 1991, at the end of the Cold War.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Babi Yar Massacre; Einsatzgruppen; Lubny Massacre; Odessa Massacre; Ohlendorf, Otto; Opdyke, Irene Gut; Sheptytsky, Andrey; Slavs; Szeptycki, Andreas

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UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG) is a comprehensive international legal convention that details the definition and meanings of genocide and provides very general guidelines for the punishment of genocide perpetrators. The United Nations General Assembly was promulgated on December 9, 1948, and signed by 22 member states on December 11, 1948, who agreed to then proceed to ratification by their own home governments. The Convention, which remains in force, recognizes that genocide is a crime under international law.

The UNCG's definition of genocide has not been without its critics. Some have argued that it is unnecessarily expansive, as it enumerates behaviors that are not necessarily lethal. That seems to fly in the face of the philology of the term "genocide," which literally means the killing of people. Others detractors have asserted that the Convention does not go far enough, because it does not include the killing of people on the basis of political or social affiliations in the definition of genocide. This was the result of several states'

efforts, including those of the United States and Soviet Union, to exclude politics and social affiliations from the definition for specific internal political reasons. Also absent are groups identified on the grounds of gender or sexual orientation, or cultural group. Despite these concerns, however, the UNCG has remained an important component of international law and has been invoked many times since 1948.

The UNCG would probably not have been approved when it was had it not been for the herculean effort of one man: Raphael Lemkin. Lemkin, a Polish Jew, was a lawyer and historian who fled Poland in 1939 and settled in the United States in 1941. By then, he had already spent much time contemplating mass murder and its implications for the international community. He published and lectured widely on the subject, and in 1944 he coined the term "genocide" in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*. That book placed Lemkin's quest to enact an international convention against genocide in the public spotlight. In 1945 he published an article, "Genocide—A Modern Crime," which was read widely and lent even more credence to his efforts.

In 1945–1946 Lemkin served as a legal adviser to the Nuremberg war crime trials in Germany, and he redoubled his efforts to push for a global convention against genocide. In 1946 Lemkin was told that his idea of a genocide convention would be formally considered by a UN committee. Although the proposal encountered some turbulence early on, the UN General Assembly unanimously approved a convention banning genocide in December 1948. By then, however, Lemkin had seriously undermined his own health in his quest to establish a genocide convention. The convention went into effect on January 21, 1951, and until the end of his life in 1959, Lemkin worked tirelessly to secure U.S. ratification of the measure. That would not occur until November 4, 1988, however, when President Ronald Reagan signed the ratification agreement.

Today, there are still only 41 signatories to the UNCG. Nevertheless, it is regarded as the bedrock of international law dealing with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. A number of courts have since been established to indict and prosecute such crimes, including the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and the International Criminal Court. All of these owe their jurisdiction in to the UNCG.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: A Crime without a Name; Crimes against Humanity; Genocide; Kuper, Leo; Lemkin, Raphael; War Crimes

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United Partisan Organization

The United Partisan Organization (*Fareynegte Partizaner Organizatzye*, or FPO) was a Jewish anti-German underground organization in the ghetto of Vilna (Vilnius) during World War II. Throughout December 1941 a number of meetings were held involving members of various Jewish youth groups in Vilna, in which options for resistance to the Nazis were discussed. Over time, a nascent resistance movement began to form, and it was decided to remain in the ghetto and fight rather than trying to escape. On December 31, 1941, before a gathering of 150 members of the He-Halutz (Pioneer) youth movement at Straszuna 2, Abba Kovner made a speech in which he proclaimed that "Hitler plans to destroy all the Jews of Europe, and the Jews of Lithuania have been chosen as the first in line. We will not be led like sheep to the slaughter!" Kovner declared that all the Jews who were taken from Vilna were murdered in the Ponary Forest, and he called upon the Jewish youth to organize for armed struggle against the Germans.

Three weeks later, on January 21, 1942, the Fareynigte Partizaner Organizatzye was established. A meeting was held at the home of Josef Glazman. Representatives from Vilna's major Jewish youth groups met: Abba Kovner, from *Hashomer Hatzair*; Glazman, from Betar; Yitzhak Wittenberg and Chyena Borowska, representing the communists; and Nissan Reznik of Hanoar Hazioni. Other groups came into the movement soon after.

That the groups had agreed to unite, given the fractious nature of Jewish communal politics before the war, was an indication of just how serious the matter was, and Kovner played an important role in the unification process. In forming themselves into a formal resistance movement, the group had multiple aims: to prepare for mass armed resistance in the ghetto; to perform acts of sabotage; to join the partisans where possible; and to convey the message to other ghettos that they, too, should revolt. Wittenberg was appointed commander, with Glazman and Kovner his staff officers. The FPO was one of the first ghetto resistance organizations to be established.

The FPO was organized into two battalions, each composed of 100 to 120 fighters. It sent emissaries to Grodno, Białystok, and Warsaw to promote the idea of resistance, as well as to inform them of the mass extermination of the Jews that had been taking place in Vilna. An attempt was also made to send several female emissaries (*kashariyot*) into the Soviet Union, but they were arrested by the Germans before they reached safety. Most managed to escape, however, and made their way back to Vilna.

At its height, the FPO had some 300 organized members. They carried out acts of sabotage beyond the ghetto confines, such as mining railway lines used by trains going to the front lines; they sabotaged weapons and equipment in German factories where underground members worked, and they created documents for fellow Jews. Where possible, they also attempted to obtain weapons, buying some from the local Polish population and stealing them and then smuggling them into the ghetto from a nearby German arsenal. FPO members also prepared and stored Molotov cocktails for use whenever an uprising might take place. Before they had the opportunity to do so, however, fate intervened.

In early 1943 a Polish communist by the name of Kozlovsky was captured by the Gestapo. Under extreme torture, he was forced to divulge the names of any other resisters, and one, a Lithuanian partisan named Vitas, was revealed. Vitas was also captured. When in due course he also was tortured, he surrendered the name of Yitzhak Wittenberg, the FPO commander.

Jacob Gens, the chairman of the Vilna Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), knew of the FPO's existence and had maintained contact with Wittenberg and other leaders. On July 8, 1943, when the Germans learned about the existence of the FPO, they ordered Gens to find Wittenberg and deliver him to them. Gens might have privately sympathized with the ideals of the resistance but held that its existence endangered the continued existence of the ghetto. Thus, on the night of July 15, Gens, together with Salek Desler, chief of the Jewish police, called Wittenberg and others from the underground to his office for a "meeting." It was a trap; after a few moments, armed SS men appeared with machine guns drawn. Desler identified Wittenberg, who was immediately arrested.

Members of the FPO who had accompanied the leaders to the meeting and were waiting outside attacked the Gestapo and rescued him. Furious, the Nazis told Gens that if he did not bring Wittenberg back at once they would liquidate the ghetto. Ghetto inhabitants now took a stand. Terrified, they demanded that Wittenberg be handed over, lest they and

their families be deported to their deaths. The choice was clear: surrender Wittenberg or civil war would break out in the ghetto.

During the day Wittenberg met with members of the leadership group. He thought of taking his life, but word came from Gens that the Germans had demanded him alive. Abba Kovner told Wittenberg the sad truth that either he hand himself across or the FPO would be forced to fight the people who were demanding that he give himself up. Wittenberg would not tolerate the idea of Jew fighting Jew while the Nazis looked on, and so, regrettably, he handed command over to Kovner and went out into the street with the words “*Ich gehe*” (“I Go”) and gave himself up to the Jewish police. Gens accepted the surrender in person.

Wittenberg was taken out of the ghetto and handed across to the Germans, who placed him in a cell. When they came to begin his interrogation the next day, they found him dead. He had taken poison—some said it was smuggled to him by Gens—in order to avoid the torture that was awaiting him.

In July 1943 Abba Kovner became the leader of the FPO, but a rift had opened within the organization. Some members argued that the ghetto could not be defended because most Jews were not prepared to fight; the best way to resist the Nazis, they felt, was through escaping to the forest where they would join the partisans. The first group of 21 left on July 24, 1943, calling themselves the “Leon” unit in honor of Wittenberg’s resistance codename. Others remained.

Six weeks later, on September 1, 1943, the Nazis began liquidating the ghetto. Led by Kovner, the remaining FPO commanders issued a call for the Jews not to go “like sheep to slaughter,” and rose in revolt. The fighters, however, had little support from the inhabitants, who thought they were being sent elsewhere to work. The FPO saw that they were fighting alone and gave up on a ghetto uprising for lack of support. Escaping to the forests through the sewers, they were met by those who had joined the partisans earlier and were already under Soviet command. Here, they were able to establish themselves as Jewish battalions within the Soviet partisan movement. Over time, however, some of the Jewish units were disbanded and their members absorbed, while others were joined by non-Jewish partisans. This came about as a result of a Red Army directive, which was opposed to the idea of separate Jewish units.

Meanwhile, back in the ghetto, most of those who did not join the revolt—the majority—were captured and sent to labor camps in Estonia, where they were eventually killed by the SS. FPO members, on the other hand, now that they had been transformed into Soviet partisans, lived to

participate in the liberation of Vilna by the Red Army on July 13, 1944.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Gens, Jacob; Jewish Partisans; Jewish Resistance; Kovner, Abba; Ponary Forest; Vilna Ghetto

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United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., is both a memorial to the Holocaust and its victims and a study center on the Holocaust and genocide more broadly. Since its opening in 1993, more than 30 million people have visited it, with the numbers increasing every year.

The archival collection is massive: 50 million pages of records, 13,000 artifacts, 80,000 photographs, and a listing of several hundred thousand survivors. It has developed 10,000 oral histories. The memorial was built on land adjacent to the Washington Mall, with \$190 million in private donations.

Although its primary function is educational, the pilgrimage aspect of its halls and memorials are what attract most visitors. James Ingo Freed, the museum’s architect—himself a Holocaust survivor—designed the memorial as “a resonator of memory.” The Hall of Remembrance is a large octagonal room of great simplicity; it has an eternal flame.

The permanent exhibition is a disconcerting experience intended to draw the visitor into the experiences of the Holocaust. It avoids the museum display approach for one of involvement. Visitors arrive at the exhibits by an industrial elevator, where they receive the identification card of a real Holocaust victim. They exit the elevator to walk through a history of the Holocaust with pictures and videos, including survivors’ accounts. The fate of “their” prisoner is shown in the identification card they have held throughout the duration of their visit.

Hate groups have made the memorial a focus of attacks on several occasions. On June 10, 2009, Museum Special Police Officer Stephen Tyrone Johns was shot by an antisemite, James Wenneker von Brunn, who later died in prison.

January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, is observed as International Holocaust Remembrance Day with a candle-lighting ceremony at the museum. During the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April, a week of observances is held. The Holocaust Memorial Museum holds the national ceremony on the steps of the Capitol rotunda.

NORBERT C. BROCKMAN

See also: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*; Liberation, Concentration Camps; Museums and Memorials; USC Shoah Foundation; Wiesel, Elie; Yad Vashem

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United States Response to the Holocaust

The American response to the Holocaust was marked by pronounced hesitancy. It was also conditioned by U.S. cultural biases, antisemitism, politics, media coverage, and Allied war aims.

After World War I, Americans retreated into a period of considerable isolation. Many believed that turning inward and staying out of the affairs of the world—especially Europe—would insulate their nation from conflict and war. This isolationism was reinforced by the advent of the Great Depression of the 1930s and further reinforced by a profound sense of xenophobia—the intense dislike and distrust of anyone or anything deemed “foreign.”

It is no surprise, then, that the U.S. Congress began enacting legislation beginning in 1921 that greatly curtailed immigration to the United States. The Immigration Act of 1924 further limited immigration, and, because of the way it was structured, it most severely curtailed immigration from southern and Eastern Europe (the latter region where most of the world's Jews resided). In 1940, citing national security concerns, the U.S. government delayed or cancelled visa approvals from Nazi Germany and Austria. And after the U.S. entrance into World War II in December 1941, the small stream of immigrants to America virtually dried up.

Most of the Jews who made it to the United States before the Holocaust (about 150,000 of them) arrived prior to 1941.

Another factor affecting the U.S. response to the Holocaust included pronounced antisemitism among many non-Jewish Americans. Indeed, the U.S. State Department was especially suffused with antisemitism, and State Department official Breckinridge Long actively worked to prevent Jewish refugees from migrating to the United States. Even American Jews themselves were conflicted in their response to the Holocaust. Although many Jews supported the Democratic Party and President Franklin D. Roosevelt, they were hesitant to press the president too strongly over immigration and refugees, fearing an antisemitic backlash.

The American press also played a role in U.S. ambivalence toward the Holocaust. Most media outlets did not emphasize or even report on German atrocities committed against Jews. They tended to focus on U.S. war aims and how American GIs were faring in Europe and Asia. Even America's preeminent news daily, the *New York Times*, tended to shy away from coverage of the Holocaust. This bias against Holocaust coverage continued even after 1942, when the enormity of the German atrocities had become known in the West.

From a political standpoint, Roosevelt stood little to gain but much to lose if he moved too hastily on the issue of immigration and Jewish refugees. For the Americans, as well as their British, French, and Soviet allies, winning the war was of paramount importance. If aiding the Jews in Europe could have brought a speedier conclusion to the war, the Allies would probably have done so. But relieving the Jews' plight, no matter how horrific, was very much tangential to winning the war.

All of this is not to say, however, that the Americans did nothing to alleviate the plight of European Jews. In March 1938, after the German annexation of Austria, Roosevelt called for a conference to determine the disposition of thousands of German and Austrian Jews seeking to flee Nazi persecution. The resulting July 1938 Evian Conference, involving delegates from the United States and 31 other nations, ended with no firm policies toward lifting restrictive immigrations, however. In December 1942 the United States and its allies issued a joint statement specifically condemning the Germans for engaging in mass murder against the Jews, but this was the only such statement made during the entirety of the war and did not lead to a change in Allied war aims. Furthermore, by then, 2 million Jews had already been deported to concentration camps, and several hundred thousand others had been systematically killed.

American Jews were buoyed briefly by the 1943 Bermuda Conference, where the issue of Jewish refugees was to be discussed. That meeting, however, was obscured in secrecy and sidelined by discussions of prisoners of war and other issues unrelated to the Holocaust. In early 1944 Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board, upon the urging of his Treasury secretary, Henry Morgenthau Jr., which aided some Jews in gaining easier access to America, but it was largely too little too late.

The United States and its allies had several opportunities to intervene in the Holocaust, but for reasons that are not altogether clear, they refused to do so. Clearly, however, a combination of war aims, internal and international politics, and antisemitism combined to play a role in this inaction. Inexplicably, the Allies decided not to bomb rail lines leading to the Auschwitz death camp in Poland, even after it was clear what was taking place there. Some Allied planners wanted to bomb the camp but were rebuffed. Late in the conflict, when Adolf Eichmann made it known that he would “ransom” Hungary’s Jews for cash payments, Washington, London, and Moscow demurred. The offer may well have been insincere, but the Allies did not pursue it. In the end, America’s response to the Holocaust was regrettably slow, episodic, and far too tepid. But it also mirrored the reactions of the international community as a whole.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz Protocols; Bermuda Conference; Blood for Goods; Evian Conference; Riegner Telegram; Roma and Sinti; SS *St. Louis*; War Refugee Board; Wise, Stephen S.

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two major institutions of German society—other than the government itself—were the church and the university. Each had to determine how it would react to the Nazi regime.

A significant number of Protestant churches—called the German Christians—embraced Nazi ideology and integrated it into their concept of Christianity, while others—called the Confessing Church—sought to keep Nazism out of Christianity. The Catholic Church entered into an agreement with the Nazi government just months after Hitler’s appointment as chancellor, agreeing to keep out of the politics of the regime in exchange for the promise (honored more in the breach than in fact) by the government to keep away from the church’s primary responsibilities, namely, religious worship, education of the young, and maintaining its humanitarian organizations, such as hospitals and orphanages.

Just as the Protestant and Catholic churches were forced to find accommodation with the new regime, so too were universities: How would they deal with the national program at the heart of the new regime’s vision for governing, namely, nazification?

On April 7, 1933, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service required the dismissal of Jews from the civil service. The section of the law that called for this is referred to as the “Aryan paragraph.” The application of the Aryan paragraph to the church would require the dismissal from the clergy of all non-Aryans if they were considered to be Jews as the state defined them. This would also apply to parishioners by requiring that so-called “Jewish-Christians,” meaning Jews who had converted to Christianity, no longer be considered members of the church. The application of the Aryan paragraph was a matter of heated debate, with the German Christians arguing that it did apply, and the Confessing Church arguing the opposite.

No such questions existed regarding the application of the Aryan paragraph to German universities since, as state-funded institutions, they were subject to the April 7, 1933, law regarding the civil service, meaning that all employees of universities—faculty, staff, and governing bodies—were state employees. This set in motion a crisis for each university; if they were to follow this law it meant the dismissal of all Jewish faculty, a move that would have a different impact on each university, since some—such as the University of Tübingen—had never given a full professorship to a Jew, while others would find their faculty greatly reduced by such a move. In all, some 1,200 Jewish faculty members were dismissed as a result of this law.

The decision to dismiss Jewish faculty on the sole basis of their being Jewish created a moral conflict for some of the

Universities, Complicity in the Holocaust

A key component of Nazi ideology was the concept of *Gleichschaltung*, the coordination of individuals and institutions with Nazi ideology; what is often called “nazification.” The

non-Jewish faculty. While some were fervent supporters of the Nazi government and ideology, others found the intrusion of the government in affairs of the university to be an assault on the pursuit of knowledge that is the purpose of the university, and an invasion of free speech and free thought that should be subject only to reason and the accepted standards of scholarship. The issue of academic freedom became even more acute for some when the Reich minister of education required that university curricula include courses and programs consistent with Nazi thought and goals, especially those courses that extolled past German accomplishments and power. To be excluded from curricula were courses that might acknowledge the role of the Jewish people in history, or shine a neutral or positive light on the Jews. Courses in the humanities were relegated to a secondary position, and courses in the sciences were elevated. New courses on “racial science” abounded.

Whatever their discomfort with these requirements, only a very few faculty members in all of Germany’s universities voiced opposition to the new Nazi rules. This might well be explained by the ability of the new government to intimidate opposition thinking, reminding any faculty member so inclined that the newly established camp, Dachau, had been established for just these purposes. Also, the absolute certainty that speaking up would result in the immediate loss of one’s job no doubt discouraged many from objecting.

Intimidation by the government and the fear of losing one’s job, however, is only part of the explanation for the acceptance by universities and their faculties of requirements that cut at the foundation of Western civilization’s concept of higher education. Universities as a whole in Germany were bastions of conservatism and nationalism. Members of their governing bodies and faculty, like so many other elements of German society, felt the humiliation of the loss of World War I, suffered through the ensuing economic crises—hyperinflation and the worldwide depression set off by the Wall Street crash of 1939—rejected the ill-fitting and ineffective Weimar Republic, and yearned for a return to German glory. Further, they, too, were the products of the antisemitism that continued to sweep across Germany, especially now that it was a keystone of the Nazi government.

The next step in the Nazi efforts to close off higher education to Jews came on April 25, 1933, when the Law against Overcrowding in Schools and Universities set forth the requirements that had to be met regarding the makeup of student enrollment in order for universities to be considered sufficiently nazified. The law imposed a limit on the number of new admissions of Jewish students to colleges or universities

at the percentage of Jews in the general population, a number that was less than 1%. The nationwide quota for new admissions was later set at 1.5% of the total applicants. Second, the percentage of Jewish students enrolled in a college or university could not exceed 5% of a school’s total student population. Given the disproportionately high percentage of Jews enrolled in colleges and universities in Germany in the 1930s, this meant the expulsion of a significant number of Jewish students.

As with the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service passed several weeks earlier, the Law against Overcrowding in Schools and Universities contained certain exceptions, limited, however, to children of World War I veterans and children of certain mixed marriages.

Non-Jewish students at universities were in many cases radical antisemites and supporters (if not members) of the Nazi Party. Many students pushed for the dismissal of Jewish faculty, protested against their reinstatement if that was being considered, and railed against the continuing enrollment of any Jewish students. Much of the pro-Nazi and anti-Jewish fervor came from the National Socialist Student League ((*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*, or NSDStB), and some of it spilled over into violence against Jewish students and faculty. It was from the rabid antisemitism of students in German universities that book burning took place across Nazi Germany on and after May 10, 1933.

In November 1938, just one week after the murder of Ernst vom Rath by Herschel Grynszpan that touched off the pogrom called Kristallnacht, a decree was issued by the Reich minister of education prohibiting Jews from attending lectures or even entering university buildings. The elimination of Jews from all aspects of universities in Nazi Germany was complete.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Gleisaltung; *The Mortal Storm*; Nazi Book Burning; Protestant Churches, German; Weimar Republic; White Rose

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Uprising

Made in 2001, *Uprising* is a motion picture about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April–May 1943. Produced and directed by U.S. filmmaker Jon Avnet, the film has an all-star cast including Leelee Sobieski, Hank Azaria, David Schwimmer, Jon Voight, and Donald Sutherland. A long film of nearly three hours' duration, *Uprising* explores the background to the Warsaw Ghetto revolt, the resistance leadership, and the heroism of the revolt itself. The style adopted by Avnet is semi-documentary in format, telling the story in a linear fashion through the eyes of the main historical characters involved: Adam Czerniakow, Mordecai Anielewicz, Yitzhak Zuckerman, and SS Major General Jürgen Stroop, among others. Considered by many to be a definitive cinematic interpretation of the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt, *Uprising* won or was nominated for numerous awards, including Emmys and Golden Globes. Although a made-for-television movie, it also had short seasons in selected cinemas throughout the English-speaking world, usually showings to packed houses.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Anielewicz, Mordecai; Czerniakow, Adam; Stroop, Jürgen; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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Upstander

An upstander is an individual, group, or institution that performs a positive action in order to aid a person or group of people who are the victims of injustice and/or are in distress. The term is most commonly associated with those who have stood up to help the victims of genocide and persecution, sometimes at great personal risk. But there are in fact different types of upstanders, including those who help the poor and disadvantaged and civil rights activists, among many others. Common tactics employed by upstanders include bringing attention to the plight of victims, advocating for government policies to help those being persecuted, and directly intervening in situations in order to protect and save lives. An example of this would be the people in German-occupied countries during World War II who let Jews hide in their homes in order to protect them from the Nazis.

This is in contrast to a bystander, who knows that someone is suffering injustice but takes no action.

In more recent years, the term upstander has been employed to counter bullying, mostly in school situations. In this case, upstanders can play a wide variety of roles, from directly challenging a bully, protecting a person or group from bullying, or promoting an atmosphere in which bullying is discouraged. Indeed, in states like Texas, educators have gone even further, teaching about genocide within the context of bullying. Upstanders in anti-bullying programs can include students who positively defend themselves or others from bullies; individuals who report bullying to teachers, parents, or others in authority; or those who attempt to change social and cultural attitudes to ensure that bullying is discouraged or eliminated. There are currently a number of websites and organizations that focus on upstanders and bullying, such as the National School Climate Center, the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida, Stomp out Bullying, and the National Bullying Center.

The Holocaust spawned countless upstanders who assisted Jews in one way or another or helped hide them. There were upstanders in every country touched by the Holocaust, and many tried to help or intervene at great personal peril, as most places occupied by the Germans had passed laws (or had laws imposed on them) that made aiding or hiding Jews a capital crime. Some of the more famous Holocaust upstanders, whom the world Jewish community and the State of Israel refer to as Righteous Among the Nations (Hebrew, *Chasidei umot Ha-olam*), include: Miep Gies, who hid Anne Frank, her family, and several other Jews in Amsterdam between 1942 and 1944; Raoul Wallenberg, who helped rescue thousands of Jews from near certain-death in Hungary; and Oskar Schindler, who shielded some 1,200 Jews from deportation or death by employing them in his manufacturing business. Well over 25,000 such people have been recognized by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust authority in Jerusalem.

Examples of upstanders who in some way intervened in other genocides include: Nicholas D. Kristof, an American journalist who helped publicize the recent genocide in Darfur; Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager in Kigala who shielded some 1,300 mostly Tutsi refugees during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide; Rigoberta Menchú, who wrote passionately about her experiences during the Guatemalan Genocide, thus focusing world attention on it; and Dith Pran, a Cambodian journalist who revealed fully to the world the horrors of the genocide in Cambodia. Upstanders not tied to genocide per se are legion, and they include civil and human

rights activists in the United States and abroad, women's rights activists, antiwar activists, antipoverty activists, and even environmental activists. People involved in these activities are considered upstanders because they adopt a positive stand toward a particular wrong or problem and are acting on behalf of others or themselves.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Albania; Alice, Princess Andrew of Greece; Bonhoeffer, Dietrich; Delbo, Charlotte; Galen, Clemens August Graf von; Karski, Jan; Kreyssig, Lothar; Krützfeld, Wilhelm; Landmesser, August; Lichtenberg, Bernhard; Lipke, Janis and Johanna; *The Mortal Storm*; Münch, Hans; Norrman, Sven; Opdyke, Irene Gut; Osako, Tatsuo; Pius XI; Rabe, John; Righteous among the Nations; Scholl, Hans and Sophie; Segerstedt, Torgny; St. Hedwig's Cathedral; Trocmé, André and Magda; Von Faulhaber, Michael; Von Moltke, Helmuth James; Wegner, Armin T.

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USC Shoah Foundation

Established in 1994 by American filmmaker Steven Spielberg, the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education (formerly Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation) moved with considerable speed toward realizing the vision of a video-based, interactive archive of tens of thousands of survivor testimonies, an irrefutable record that transforms our understanding of Holocaust history and influences the way in which all history and the social sciences are taught and learned. In 2006 the foundation commenced a partnership with the University of Southern California (Los Angeles), which has permitted the foundation to increase its presence among scholars and educators by making its history search technologies and archival holdings available to more people. The foundation has also expanded its purview and collection to other genocides, although the Holocaust remains its principal focus. Currently, the foundation's archival staff is working on a project to document and make available for viewing thousands of victims' and survivors' testimonies from the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Since its establishment, the foundation has conducted or collected more than 52,000 interviews with Holocaust survivors in more than 30 languages and 50 countries. It has also developed an indexing system—a thesaurus—to make survivor testimonies fully accessible through keywords, geographical locations, and biographical information; and it has developed technology that provides electronic viewing capacity at numerous locations around the world. In addition, the indexing system is being used to create other genocide databases, to include the Rwandan genocide. Interviews in languages other than English are subtitled so anyone may watch and understand them.

The Shoah Foundation's multimedia archive of eyewitness testimonies of the Holocaust is the world's largest interview archive ever assembled of a single event. It would require nearly 12 years to watch all the testimonies from start to finish.

Looking up and accessing material is quite simple. The key can be a single word or person's name. An end-user types these words at a computer interface at any one of the Shoah Foundation's repository sites at museums and educational institutions around the world—words like “lullaby,” “Auschwitz” or “liberator.” These keywords will call up relevant sections of all the catalogued testimonies in the archive that touch upon this theme. Researchers may search within individual testimonies as well as across the entire collection with the touch of a finger.

A team of historians, archivists, and information technologists developed the foundation's English-language keyword authority list as well as the digital technology and custom-designed software that support it and make the accessing process easy. The index is supplemented by tens of thousands of additional personal and place names contained in the archive database.

While the outline of Holocaust history is well known, human stories, the stories from which we can perhaps learn the most, are now coming to light through the Shoah Foundation's and other projects' efforts. Many of the testimonies in the foundation's archive contain information previously unknown to historians and the world at large. The purpose of the Shoah Foundation is to gather interviews; catalogue them; disseminate them to named repositories, the most notable of which include Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage, and the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University; and then to make this material available for educators, scholars, historians, and filmmakers to learn the

story of the Holocaust and other genocides and to teach tolerance in classrooms. The foundation also offers online exhibits, classroom products and lesson plans, documentary films, teacher workshops, and international forums so teachers from around the world may interact on issues relating to the foundation's databases.

MICHAEL BERENBAUM

See also: Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies; Survivor Testimony; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Yad Vashem

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Ustashe

The Ustashe (literally, “rebels”) was an extreme right-wing Croat nationalist movement that fought for the secession of Croatia from Yugoslavia prior to and during World War II. Following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the Croat nationalists were disappointed to see their dreams of an independent Croatia crushed with the establishment of a new multiethnic state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later to be known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Croat radical nationalism eventually expressed itself in the creation of the Ustashe, which employed terrorist means in order to achieve its nationalist ambitions of an independent state.

The start of World War II provided the Ustashe with an opportunity to try to establish an independent Croatia. In 1941 the Ustashe came to power with the support of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and formed a fascist puppet state in Croatia. Governed by Ante Pavelić (1889–1959), Croatia incorporated Bosnia and Herzegovina and had a significant Serb population. The Ustashe pursued a policy of ethnic cleansing against Jews, Roma, Muslims, and Serbs in territories under its control. It established a network of concentration camps, the largest of which was Jasenovac (about 60 miles south of the Croatian capital of Zagreb) that became as notorious in the Balkans as Auschwitz was in Nazi-occupied

Poland. Implemented with merciless brutality, the Ustashe's extermination policies were responsible for the deaths of more than 500,000 Serbs, 20,000 Roma, most of the country's Jews, and untold thousands of political opponents. Well over 150,000 Serbs fled or were deported from Croatia, and as many as 200,000 Orthodox Christians were forced, often at gunpoint, to convert to Roman Catholicism.

Yugoslav resistance to the Germans and their supporters, the Croatian Ustashe and Serbian general Milan Nedić's government, centered on two factions. Colonel Dragoljub “Draza” Mihajlovic, who strongly supported restoration of the monarchy, set up the Chetniks (named for Serb guerrillas who had fought the Turks); while Josip Broz Tito, leader of the Yugoslav Communist Party since 1937, headed the second resistance group, the Partisans, which were particularly active in Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia. After failing to develop a cooperative approach against the Germans and Ustashe, Tito and Mihajlovic turned against each other. Ultimately, the Partisans gained an upper hand and by the end of the war their numbers had reached over half a million men and women.

After the war, Tito's Partisans exacted vengeance on their opponents, including the Ustashe and Chetniks. Within weeks of the war's end, the Partisans had executed without trial up to a quarter of a million people who had sided with the Germans, most of them Croats. However, many of the Ustashe leaders were able to flee to safety in South America. Pavelić himself fled to Argentina, where he reorganized the Ustashe in exile. He was, however, wounded in an assassination attempt in Madrid in 1957 and died two years later from his injuries.

ALEXANDER MIKABERIDZE

See also: Croatia; Ethnic Cleansing; Hudal, Alois; Jasenovac; Pavelić, Ante; Resistance Movements; Roma and Sinti; Serbia; Yugoslavia

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V

Vaivara

Vaivara was a Nazi transit and concentration camp established in northeastern Estonia in August 1943 near the Vaivara train station. It served as the main concentration camp in Estonia, created originally as a camp for Soviet prisoners of war. Over time, it became the largest concentration camp in Estonia, with about 20 other smaller labor camps. Approximately 20,000 Jews passed through Vaivara, most of them from Latvia and the Lithuanian ghettos of Vilna and Kovno. In addition to serving as a concentration camp, it had the function of a transit camp, housing up to 1,300 prisoners at a time prior to them being sent off to labor and death camps. Most of Vaivara's prisoners were Jews, but it also included Russian, Dutch, and Estonian inmates.

Vaivara's commandant was SS-Hauptsturmführer (captain) Hans Aumeier, who also assisted in Dachau, Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and other concentration camps during the Nazi period. Directors of Vaivara included Max Dahlmann, Kurt Panike, and Helmut Schnabel. Franz von Bothmann served Vaivara as the camp's chief physician, while the camp was guarded by an Estonian SS unit.

While in Vaivara, prisoners worked at various forms of hard labor from sun up to sun down. Some of the work in which they engaged included assembling railways, crushing stones into gravel, digging ditches, and felling trees. Daily food rations consisted of seven ounces of bread with "ersatz" or substitute jam or margarine, vegetable soup, and coffee.

At night the prisoners were forced to sleep in wooden huts, divided into five sections. Each section housed anywhere from 70 to 80 prisoners. Prisoners had barely any access to water, and they were allowed to wash themselves only rarely, and as a result sicknesses and lice were prevalent throughout the camp.

The camp administration at Vaivara conducted regular "selections," when they would choose which inmates were fit for work and which ones were not. Those who were deemed too old, too young, or too sick to perform work were killed. The first of these selections took place in 1943, soon after the camp had opened; 150 Jewish men and women were killed after being found unfit to work. Soon after, the same selection and execution process took place again, and 300 Jews were killed. After these first two selections, similar processes leading to the murder of prisoners at Vaivara took place approximately every two weeks; eventually, this was repeated roughly 20 times following the camp's inception. Five hundred more Jews were murdered in these actions. During one of these, Jewish children, who until then had been kept separate from the rest of the camp in their own hut, were taken and killed. Those who survived the selections were nonetheless still subjected to severe beatings and possibly death at the hands of the SS officers who supervised Vaivara.

When the Soviet Army closed in on Estonia and Vaivara in 1945, hundreds of the remaining inmates were taken west on death marches. Some of the prisoners were transported to Saki, another camp in western Estonia. Lagerführer Helmut

Schnabel, one of Vaivara's directors, was tried for war crimes in 1968 and sentenced to 16 years in prison; his sentence was reduced to six years the following year. Hans Aumeier, Vaivara's commandant, was sentenced to death in Kraków, Poland, and executed on December 22, 1947.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Concentration Camps; Estonia; Vilna Ghetto

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Vel' d'Hiv Roundup

The Vel' d'Hiv Roundup was a raid and mass arrest organized and carried out by French authorities and police under the direction of Nazi Germany on July 16–17, 1942. The reasoning behind the raid was to round up the Jews of Paris under an action code named Operation Spring Wind, and then transport them to death camps located in Nazi-occupied Europe. The captives were taken to the cycling and sports stadium known as the Vélodrome d'Hiver ("Winter Velodrome") in the 15th Arrondissement of Paris, near the Eiffel Tower.

In the months leading up to the Vel' d'Hiv Roundup, Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the German SD, Fritz Sauckel, the organizer of forced labor for German armament factories, and Adolf Eichmann, the SS official in charge of Jewish policy, had made several trips to Paris. During this time, the French officials in charge of the "Jewish Question" were replaced with a German administration, ultimately accelerating the anti-Jewish policies in France.

At the request of German authorities, at 4:00 a.m. on the morning of July 16, 1942, approximately 4,500 French police officers began arresting Jews living in Paris. More than 11,000 Jews were arrested on the same day and confined to the Vélodrome d'Hiver (known colloquially as the Vel' d'Hiv). French police officers were instructed to make the arrests quickly and without discussion. The arrested Jews were forced out of their homes and only allowed to take shoes, a blanket or sweater, and two shirts.

Over the course of several days 13,152 Jews were arrested, of which 5,802 were women and 4,051 were children. Although French police had previously been arresting Jews in Paris, the raids that began on July 16, 1942, were the first



The Vel' d'Hiv Roundup, code named Operation Spring Wind, was a mass arrest of Jews in Paris that took place on July 16–17, 1942. Conducted by French police at the behest of the occupying Germans, it was part of a larger campaign intended to eliminate France's Jewish population. The roundup saw the arrest and confinement of over 13,000 Jews (including some 4,000 children) in the stadium known as the Winter Velodrome (Vélodrome d'Hiver, hence its abbreviation of Vel' d'Hiv). Here, they were held with little in the way of water or food, in extreme overcrowding and no sanitary facilities. Most were transported from the Vel' d'Hiv to the transit camp at Drancy, from where they were shipped off to their death at Auschwitz. This photograph is the only known image of the roundup at the Vel' d'Hiv. (Apic/Getty Images)

to specifically target women, children, and the elderly. Despite various warnings of the forthcoming raids, many women and children did not go into hiding, as they expected the police to target only adult males, as they had done in the past. As it turned out, children between the ages of 2 and 16 were arrested, together with their parents. Many of the Jews who were arrested were already refugees from Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Russia.

The arrested Jews were placed on buses, with the instructions that all of the windows on the bus were to remain closed to restrict their airflow. The buses transported 5,000 of the arrested adult Jews to the transit camp at Drancy, with the remainder sent to the Vélodrome d'Hiver.

The majority of those arrested and sent to the Vél' d'Hiv were women and children, who were held there for several days. Over time conditions in the stadium deteriorated dramatically. The detainees were kept in extremely crowded conditions, deprived of water, food, and sanitary facilities. Within a week, the number of Jews held in the arena had reached 13,000, including 4,000 children. The stadium's dark glass roof, painted blue to avoid bombings, in conjunction with all of the windows permanently sealed shut for security, raised the heat significantly in the already warm summer month of July. Of the 10 restrooms available, 5 had been sealed shut due to the windows offering an escape route. Other than tap water, the only food or water that was brought in was by several doctors and members of the Red Cross, who were allowed to enter. Any Jew who tried to escape was shot on the spot; in some cases, desperate individuals took their own lives.

In the week following the arrests, the Jews at the Vel' d'Hiv were deported to transit camps at Beaune-la-Rolande and Pithiviers in the Loiret region south of Paris, and to Drancy, near Paris. At the end of July and the beginning of August, the Jews detained in these camps were separated from their children and deported. After shaving their heads and a violent body search, most of these Jews were then transferred by train in freight cars to Auschwitz and murdered. More than 3,000 babies and children were left alone in Beaune-la-Rolande and Pithiviers. Of the 13,152 Jews that had been arrested, fewer than 100 survived. None of the more than 4,000 children, who were all deported to Auschwitz, survived. In the two months that followed the arrests, approximately 1,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz every two or three days, and by the end of September 1942 France had deported almost 38,000 Jews. Approximately 780 of these Jews survived and remained alive in 1945.

There were varied French reactions to the arrest and deportation of the Jews, ranging from active collaboration with the Germans to indifference, empathy, and rescue efforts. Certain elements of French society, such as the media and the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, voiced repulsion for the arrests and treatment of the Jews, and publicly protested the events. The sight of Jewish mothers holding their babies and children being placed under arrest were the turning points that led to the French public's condemna-

tion of the arrest and deportation of the Jews in France during the German occupation.

A number of markers have been installed in the area to commemorate the victims held captive in the Winter Stadium; there are no photographs of the events of July 16–17, 1942. A commemorative plaque located at 8 Boulevard de Grenelle now sits facing the Bir-Hakeim metro station. The plaque mentions the number and eventual fate of the Jews who were held in the Vélodrome d'Hiver. It was not until 53 years after the event, on July 16, 1995, that France publicly acknowledged its role at the Vélodrome d'Hiver in a historic speech given by President Jacques Chirac.

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Birkenau; Bousquet, René; Dannecker, Theodor; Drancy; Eichmann, Adolf; Heydrich, Reinhard; Operation Spring Wind; Sauckel, Fritz; Vichy France

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Venezia, Shlomo

Shlomo Venezia was a Greek-born Italian Jew who chronicled his experiences as a forced laborer at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. He was born in Salonika to an impoverished family on December 29, 1923, as part of an Italian-Jewish émigré community. As a teenager he worked odd jobs. With the entry of Greece into the war in 1941, Salonika was occupied by Italian troops, who attempted to shield Italian Jews from antisemitic persecution from the Germans. In March 1944, however, Venezia and his family were deported to Athens, and then sent by boxcar to Auschwitz-Birkenau, arriving there in April 1944. Upon arrival, he was separated from his mother and two younger sisters, who perished in the gas chambers.

Selected for forced labor because he was young and healthy, Venezia was soon made a member of the *Sonderkommando*, prisoners who were forced by the Nazis to herd newly arriving prisoners into the gas chambers and then deposit their corpses into crematoria. The work was grim and gruesome, and his shifts lasted for 12 hours, seven days a week. Venezia worked in the Sonderkommando for nearly nine months before being shipped out to Germany in

January 1945. At that time, all surviving prisoners were force marched west to Germany in brutally cold weather. Venezia survived the horrific ordeal and moved to Italy after the war, where he worked in a hotel on the Adriatic coast. Later, he and his wife opened a small shop in Rome.

For many years, Venezia did not discuss what he witnessed or what he was forced to do, although the experiences affected him deeply. In the early 1990s, however, when rightist groups in Italy began to emerge and antisemitism became a concern, he decided to speak publicly about his experiences in a variety of venues. He also commenced a long-standing professional relationship with a French journalist, Beatrice Prasquier, who began to interview him at great length about his World War II years. The result, published in 2007 as *Inside the Gas Chambers: Eight Months in Sonderkommando at Auschwitz*, is a book that provides excruciating—and sometimes macabre—details of his work at Auschwitz. The book has been translated into some two dozen languages, and is only one of a handful of testimonials by a Sonderkommando survivor; Venezia was the only Italian to have provided such a record.

Shlomo Venezia died in Rome on October 1, 2012.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz; Salonika; Sonderkommando

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Vichy France

Vichy France (July 1940–August 1944), formally the French State, was a French government led by Marshal Philippe Pétain. Beginning in July 1940, it succeeded the French Third Republic. Following France's military defeat, the National Assembly granted extraordinary powers to Pétain, who held the title of president of the council. The Vichy regime enthusiastically collaborated with Nazi Germany to a significant degree, despite remaining officially neutral in the war. It implemented antisemitic racial policies and conducted raids organized by the French police to round up and deport Jews in both the northern and southern zones of France, and in doing so went further than the orders demanded by the Nazis.

Following the Franco-German Armistice of June 22, 1940, France was divided into two main zones: a northern zone

occupied by the German army, and a southern unoccupied “free zone”; the two were separated by a demarcation line. Adolf Hitler divided France as a means for defense, and thus, the unoccupied zone became an independent state, known as Vichy France, named after the government's administrative center in Vichy, southeast of Paris. Paris remained the official capital. The Germans continued to control three-fifths of the country. This included northern and western France, and the entire Atlantic coast. Pétain administered the remainder of the southeastern two-fifths of the country from Vichy.

French politician and statesman Pierre Laval joined Pétain's government after the armistice was signed. Laval persuaded the National Assembly to grant Pétain the authority to enact a new constitution so that he was able to gain full power in the new French government. Pétain, an 84-year-old war hero from World War I, turned the Vichy regime into a nondemocratic collaborationist government. The Vichy government was not limited to the unoccupied zone of southern France, actually holding limited civil jurisdiction that extended over all of metropolitan France except for Alsace-Lorraine. Under the terms of the Armistice, Vichy was able to keep the French navy and the colonial empire under French control, while avoiding full occupation by Germany and maintaining its independence and neutrality. The two million French prisoners of war condemned to forced labor were used to maintain Vichy's tributes and support for Germany. Pétain and his government made a concerted effort to go beyond the armistice and agree with a more permanent treaty with Hitler.

Vichy maintained public order for the first two years after the armistice, and Germany provided little in the way of interference, though, significantly, the Germans ordered the French police to round up immigrant Jews, communists, political refugees, and any individual labeled as “undesirable.” The newly established Vichy government voluntarily enacted its own measures against these “undesirable” individuals. A special commission was set up in July 1940 in order to review naturalizations granted since the 1927 reform of the nationality law. Vichy denaturalized approximately 15,000 individuals, mostly Jews, between June 1940 and August 1944.

Pétain enacted legislation that set up antisemitic laws in October 1940, which applied to metropolitan France and its overseas territories progressively through 1940 and 1941. These laws, known as the *Statut des Juifs*, were not mandated by Germany. Jews were denied their citizenship and eventually banned from professions such as show business, teaching, the civil service, and journalism. French Jews were forced

to wear yellow badges. Police confiscated their telephones and radios, and a curfew was enforced beginning in January 1942. Jews were also required to travel in the last car of the Parisian metro and were limited to certain public areas.

Vichy enacted an intense propaganda campaign within the Commission for Jewish Affairs, which intended on “aryanizing” Jewish businesses. Jewish property was confiscated, while more than 40,000 Jewish refugees were held in concentration camps under French control. Vichy used the internment camps previously opened by the Third Republic to intern enemy aliens, putting them to new use. The camps were established by Vichy as transit camps for the implementation of the Holocaust and to remove all “undesirables” from society, including Jews, homosexuals, and Roma. Drancy internment camp, founded in 1939, initially to intern French communists, became the central transit camp to hold deportees awaiting transport to the death camps in Eastern Europe.

Vichy tightened its antisemitic legislation, applicable in both zones, in 1941. French police in Paris carried out the first mass arrests in May 1941, and a total of 3,747 men were interned. The French police, under the orders of René Bousquet, the secretary general to the Vichy regime, and Jean Leguay, the second in command of the French police, organized the Vel’ d’Hiv raid, which took place on July 16 and 17, 1942. A total of 12,884 Jews were arrested by the French police, including 4,501 children and 5,802 women. The majority of these Jews were held in the winter sports stadium in horrifying conditions for days before being sent to the gas chambers at Auschwitz. The French police were willful in their collaboration with the Nazis. Overall, by the time deportations ended, the Vichy government aided in the deportation of approximately 76,000 Jews to German extermination camps.

French citizens were either eager to collaborate with Nazi Germany, or they favored Pétain without supporting Nazi collaboration. Many actively supported fascist beliefs, played active roles in taking Jewish property, and supported Jewish deportation. For its part, the United States encouraged Vichy to oppose military collaboration with Germany. American concern was that France should not take action that was not specifically laid out in the armistice, as this could adversely affect Allied war efforts.

Within the Vichy government, Pierre Laval remained the force behind the collaboration, which he saw as part of a necessary long-term strategy of Franco-German reconciliation. Pétain claimed that Germany and France shared the common goal of defeating Britain, but he also hoped to keep German troops out of unoccupied France. Vichy officials also went above and beyond what the Germans asked of them in

the hope of delaying German intervention in French domestic affairs. The French overestimated exactly how much France mattered to Hitler, which was purely economic rather than political.

On November 10, 1942, German troops occupied Vichy France as a security measure following the Allied landing in Algeria and Morocco. The Germans abolished Vichy’s small armed force, as a result of which France lost its navy and remaining colonies that had not yet crossed over to General Charles de Gaulle’s Free France or been occupied by the Allies. Upon occupying Vichy, Germany continued the ongoing actions to arrest Jews and deport them to the death camps in Eastern Europe. Vichy was able to exercise its remaining jurisdiction over all of metropolitan France, and as Pétain became virtually useless, residual power devolved into the hands of Laval. The *Service d’ordre legionnaire* (SOL, “Legionary Order Service”), a collaborationist militia created by Joseph Darnand, became independent in 1943. The French militia (*malice*) was directed by Pierre Laval and led by Darnand, who held an SS rank and pledged loyalty to Hitler. The militia aided German forces with repression of the French Resistance.

Resistance against Vichy, initially started in June 1940 by de Gaulle with the Free French forces to counter the Vichy regime, continued to grow in strength as the resistance movement became more organized. The relationship between France and Britain was also important, as Britain supplied the French with equipment. The French Resistance returned the favor by supplying Britain with intelligence reports. By 1944 there were approximately 100,000 members of the various resistance movements in France.

The liberation of France took place after the success of D-Day (Operation Overlord) in June 1944. German forces surrendered in Paris and Charles de Gaulle, president of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, entered the French capital. The French militia was disbanded, along with many collaborationist organizations.

German forces removed Pétain, along with his ministers, to Germany. They established a government-in-exile at Sigmaringen. Following the liberation there was a period consisting of executions of Nazi collaborationists. In 1945 Pétain voluntarily returned to France; he was charged with treason and convicted to death by firing squad. De Gaulle opted instead to commute his sentence to life in prison. Most of the individuals convicted were given amnesty five years later. Pierre Laval fled to Germany and Austria, but was captured and returned to France, where he was found guilty of collaboration with Germany and was ultimately executed as a traitor to France, along with Joseph Darnand. René Bousquet

was assassinated in 1993 while awaiting his prosecution in Paris.

The French undertook efforts to prosecute many individuals for crimes against humanity beginning in the mid-1970s and 1980s. This included Bouquet and Klaus Barbie (the Butcher of Lyon), and Jean Leguay, second in command of the French police. The French government claims that the Vichy regime was an illegal government that differed from the French Republic and was established under foreign influence. In 1995 former French president Jacques Chirac recognized the responsibility of the French State for aiding the French police and assisting the Germans in the enactment of the “Final Solution.”

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Abetz, Otto; Action Française; Collaboration; Drancy; France; Laval, Pierre; Le Chambon-sur-Lignon; Operation Spring Wind; Papon, Maurice; Pétain, Philippe; Touvier Case; Trocmé, André and Magda; Vel’ d’Hiv Roundup

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Vilna Ghetto

The Vilna Ghetto was located in the town Vilna (or Vilnius) in northeastern Poland. Both Lithuania and Poland had claims on the city following World War I; prior to World



A ghetto was established at Vilna by the Nazis in the area known as Reichskommissariat Ostland. Although known before the war as the “Jerusalem of Lithuania,” the Holocaust saw the reduction of the Jewish population from some 40,000 Jews to practically none. Such Jews who managed to survive did so by hiding in nearby forests or, in rare circumstances, obtaining refuge from compassionate non-Jews. (Jewish Chronicle/Heritage Images/Getty Images)

War II, it was considered to be a part of Poland. However, after the Germans and Soviets signed their nonaggression pact in August 1939, Vilna, along with the rest of eastern Poland, was handed over to Soviet occupation. The Soviets, in turn, then considered Vilna to be part of Lithuania. A city of 200,000 people, 30% of whom were Jewish, Vilna was known as the “Jerusalem of the North,” with 106 synagogues, despite a 60% Catholic presence. Approximately 265,000 Jews lived in Lithuania at the time of German occupation in 1941; by the end of World War II, 95% of them had been exterminated. No other Jewish population was so devastated in the Nazi-occupied areas of Eastern Europe.

The Soviet army began to occupy Vilna on September 19, 1939. At that time, of Vilna’s population of 200,000, 55,000 were members of the Jewish community. An additional 12,000 to 15,000 Jews fled from German-occupied Poland to find refuge in the city. In 1940 Lithuania was annexed to the Soviet Union, but on June 22, 1941, German troops attacked the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa and invaded Vilna. By June 24, the city belonged to the Nazis.

Nazi administrators and policemen were not far behind the German army. Nazi SS-Standartenführer Franz Walter Stahlecker commanded a taskforce of police and SS officers that were brought to Vilna; also in command with Stahlecker were SS men Horst Schweineberger and Martin Weiss. By July 1941 the Nazis had implemented a series of antisemitic laws in Vilna and the rest of Lithuania, and soon after this the *Einsatzgruppen*, together with Lithuanian collaborators, began to murder the Jewish population. In short order they were responsible for the murder of 5,000 Jewish men in the Ponary Forest, eight miles outside of Vilna. Such killings at Ponary would continue well into 1944, resulting in the death of more than 100,000 people. Of these, approximately 70,000 were Jews.

The Vilna ghetto was established by a Nazi military administration in September 1941, and from the beginning Vilna was separated into two sections. In Section 1 were placed able-bodied Jews who could work, while Jews who were considered unable to do so were put into Section 2. Families were also evicted from their homes and sent to Lukiszki, a prison outside of Vilna, but would never make it to the ghetto before being taken to Ponary. Soon after the ghetto was established, the Nazi administrations posted an order saying that any workers without permits would have to move into Section 2. In one night, 3,000 Jews attempted to leave Section 1, but only 600 of them survived to Section 2.

The *Einsatzgruppen* would continue to liquidate Section 2 by murdering its inhabitants at Ponary. Those Jews able to

work, and who survived the move from Section 1 to Section 2, underwent forced labor in factories or construction. Jews were often told they were being transferred to new projects, but were then taken to Ponary to be killed. Jacob Gens, the head of the ghetto’s *Judenrat* (Jewish Council), was responsible for both keeping the peace and ordering deportations. Gens, a controversial member in the history of the ghetto, defended his collaboration with the Nazis as being for the greater good of the community. At one time he stated, “When they ask me for a thousand Jews, I hand them over; for if we Jews will not give them on our own, the Germans will come and take them by force. Then they will take not one thousand, but thousands. With hundreds, I save a thousand. With the thousands that I hand over, I save ten thousand. I will say: I did everything in order to save as many Jews as possible . . . to ensure that at least a remnant of Jews survive.” By the beginning of 1942, the Vilna ghetto had been reduced from 32,000 inhabitants to just 15,000.

On January 21, 1942, the *Fareynikte Partizaner Organizatsye*, or the United Partisan Organization, or FPO, was organized in the Vilna ghetto. This resistance movement was led by Abba Kovner, Yitzhak Wittenberg, and Josef Glazman. The group was one of the first resistance groups to form in a ghetto within Nazi-occupied territory during World War I. The group hid weapons for self-defense throughout the ghetto, with Kovner making the call to the remaining inhabitants of the ghetto: “Hitler plans to destroy all the Jews of Europe, and the Jews of Lithuania have been chosen as the first in line. We will not be led like sheep to the slaughter! True, we are weak and defenseless, but the only reply to the murderer is revolt!”

In June 1943 Heinrich Himmler ordered the final liquidation of the Vilna ghetto. The FPO found out about Himmler’s plans, and in September they rose, unsuccessfully, against the Nazis who had come into the ghetto to begin forced deportations and killings. Some 80 to 100 members of the FPO managed to flee the ghetto to fight the Germans in the forests outside of Vilna. Establishing their own units and working with Soviet troops, FPO resisters fought until Vilna was liberated in July 1944. Of the 57,000 Jews who lived in the city when the Germans invaded Vilna, it is estimated that only 2,000 to 3,000 Jews survived the German occupation.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Borkowska, Anna; *Einsatzgruppen*; Gens, Jacob; Ghettos; Kempner, Vitka; Korczak, Rozka; Kovner, Abba; Lithuania; Music and the Holocaust; Operation Harvest Festival; Ponary Forest; Schmid, Anton; United Partisan Organization; Vaivara

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Vittel

Vittel (*Frontstalag 121*) was an internment and transit camp located in northeastern France near Nancy. The Germans established it in 1940 to hold British and American citizens,

as well as other citizens of Allied countries, who were of value for later prisoner exchange. Some of these internees included Jews. Several thousand individuals remained at Vittel, either in a long-term period of confinement or a brief stay prior to a destination exchange. These internees were mostly Americans, Russians, British, and also Jews from Poland and Austria who possessed falsified British and American passports. Hundreds of American and British families were interned in Vittel from September 1942 until their liberation by the U.S. Army on September 12, 1944. On February 23 and June 20, 1944, a total of 72 Jews who were citizens of enemy Allied countries were transferred to Vittel from Drancy internment camp in Paris. Across the span of its operation, Vittel sent a total of 300 Jews to Drancy, to be interned prior to being sent to their deaths in Auschwitz.

Vittel was comprised of luxurious hotels inside a park in the Vosges Mountains near the German border and did not



In 1941, the German military established an internment camp in the town of Vittel in occupied France. The Germans used the camp primarily to house British and American citizens residing in France, but over time the SS decided to utilize the site at Vittel as a location for Jewish prisoners from outside France who could be held as hostages to exchange for German citizens interned abroad. Most of Vittel's Jewish detainees were deported to Auschwitz in 1944, where they were murdered. The photo here shows remaining prisoners at Vittel after the town was captured by the Third Army on September 19, 1944. (Broderick/Getty Images)

appear to look like a Nazi internment camp. The Germans presented Vittel as a model camp and used propaganda to ensure they did not have opposition from international humanitarian organizations. Vittel received supplies from the Red Cross, while some of the children were permitted to attend school and participate in a variety of activities. However, despite the model of apparent fair treatment of internees, the park where Vittel was situated was surrounded by three rows of barbed wire and was closely guarded by a patrol of the *Wehrmacht*.

During the 19th century, Vittel had been a well-known spa with many grand hotels that accommodated guests who came for the curative mineral waters. The establishment of an internment camp at Vittel provided the Germans with the opportunity to utilize these hotels for the purpose of housing prisoners recuperating from treatment at the local hospital.

Earlier, the renowned hotel and spa complex had a huge capacity, with more than 2,000 rooms. During the first phase of the war in 1940 the French government had utilized Vittel's 11 hotels to take the place of field hospitals, and hundreds of soldiers and civilians who were bombing victims were treated there. Shortly after the Armistice of June 22, 1940, at the beginning of August, the German command took control and created a closed hospital for prisoners of war. With the German occupation, thousands of French citizens and foreigners were sent to internment camps in France for various reasons. Vittel was one of these. Most of the British families and single women were transferred here from Saint-Denis and Besançon, detained in unused barracks in completely unacceptable conditions. In early 1942 women over the age of 60, men over 75, and children under 16 were released. This reduced the overall population to approximately 2,400. A number of North American families and women were included in this number. Jews arriving in Vittel were housed in separate hotels.

In early 1943 the internees at Vittel included not only British and American citizens but also a group of Polish, Belgian, and Dutch Jews. Some of these internees were transported from the Warsaw Ghetto and held forged Latin American passports or visas. The Jews holding these papers were accommodated at the Providence Hotel and then isolated by barbed wire from the rest of the camp. SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann sent a delegation from Berlin in order to determine the validity of the passports held by these Jews. The delegation determined that the passports were invalid, stating that the Jewish police in the Warsaw Ghetto had forged the papers. When checked further, the Latin

American governments in question refused to recognize the passports, leaving the Jews from Warsaw in deadly danger. Jewish organizations such as the American Joint Distribution Committee and humanitarian groups such as the Red Cross urged American and British authorities to pressure the Latin American countries to honor the documents. A written request for protection of the Jews from Vittel was sent to the Latin American countries; however, the governments still refused to recognize the passports. In late March 1944 the passports held by the Jews in Vittel were finally validated, but by this time 250 Jews at Vittel had already been sent to their deaths at Auschwitz.

One of these Jews was Yitzhak Katzenelson, a poet and dramatist in Hebrew and Yiddish. Katzenelson possessed a Honduran passport upon his transfer from the Warsaw Ghetto to Vittel in May 1943. He was transferred to Auschwitz, where he perished on May 3, 1944. Some of Katzenelson's works were hidden in Vittel and were transferred, after the war, to the archives of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum in Israel, named in his honor. The center was the first Holocaust memorial museum. It is located on a hill overlooking the Acre Valley in the Western Galilee.

Vittel was finally liberated on September 12, 1944, in a combined operation of Allied forces and members of the French Resistance.

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See also: Concentration Camps; Drancy; Museums and Memorials; Warsaw Ghetto

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Volk

A German word that, depending on its context, could mean “a people” (as an ethnic group), “the people” (as a community), or “a nation” (as in those inhabiting the same homeland). The meaning of the term is actually difficult to convey in English. It implies a “*völkisch* community” rooted in the soil of the homeland (*heimat*); this community shares centuries of ancestral tradition and is linked together by deep spiritual forces. The general idea of the Volk had an almost mystical understanding for the Nazis of the ties that bound together the German people as a separate and distinct entity from others.

As a modern concept, the notion of the Volk had its origins in the 19th century, in which various Romantic nationalist movements embraced a folkloric idealized past as a way to include all Germans in a potential glorious future. It provided these German Romantics with a self-description of the nation-state as an organic living entity. Such ideas as these had a strong influence on those who were to become ideological champions of the Nazis during the 1920s and beyond, adding the dimension of race to their idealized Romantic beliefs.

As a result, *völkisch* ideas were often best expressed by the German expression *Blut und Boden* (“blood and soil”), reflecting a sense of both the racial purity of the flawless “Aryan” and of a uniquely distinctive Germanic culture. Once adapted to Nazi ideology, the term was able to provide a foundation for the “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) and thus to the elimination of various groups of so-called “undesirables” who could never be part of the German people and who were considered to be completely unassimilable.

The popularization of the term saw it used in many contexts both before the Nazi assumption of power and during the Third Reich itself. Applications abounded: the Germans were referred to as *Volk ohne Raum* (“a people without space”); one of the greatest political slogans under the Nazis called for the unity that came with “*Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer*” (“One Nation/People, One Empire, One Leader”); the German people were referred to as a “*Herrenvolk*,” or “master race”: and the “national” or “people’s” community was known as the “*Volksgemeinschaft*.” The “people’s car” was the *Volkswagen* and the “people’s radio” the “*Volksempfänger*.”

Given that only Germans could belong to the Volk, Jews, as an outside people, could never share in German *völkisch* life. Moreover, the term Volk referred to all Germanic peoples, not just the Germans themselves—which was convenient in an environment based on race and race hierarchy. By extension, the Germanic Volk could extend beyond Germans and embrace Scandinavians, Dutch and Flemish, and even the English, though each would have its own *völkisch* traditions.

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See also: Blood and Soil; Nazism and Germany; Nuremberg Laws; Reich Citizenship Law; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Volksgemeinschaft

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Volksgemeinschaft

A German term, in Nazi parlance *Volksgemeinschaft* acquired a pseudo-mystical and racial understanding, which definitionally excluded Jews and other “non-Aryans.” Though originally the result of the work of German sociologist and philosopher Ferdinand Tönnies, who drew a distinction between “community” (*Gemeinschaft*) and “society” (*Gesellschaft*), combined with the idea of the *Volk* (people), it was all too easily adaptable to the Nazi agenda of elevating the status of the German people in the aftermath of their devastating defeat in World War I. (Tönnies himself would later join the Social Democrats, oppose the rise of Nazism, and protest against their use of his ideas.)

The use of the word *Volk* itself acquired a pseudo-mystical dimension as well, and was reflected in two equally important terms manipulated by the Nazis for their political needs. The first of these was the slogan *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer* (“One People, One Empire, One Leader”), and the ultimately more menacing term *Herrenvolk* (“Master Race”). Linked as well were the Nazi concepts of *Blut und Boden* (“Blood and Soil”), which argued that the German people were connected, literally and physically, by the reality of their blood, to the very soil that was their home. This elevated the rural agricultural life of the peasant farmer (both men and women) as superior, seeing *Lebensraum* (“living space”) as the *natural* right of the German people to expand their geographic base as their population increase warranted, along the way either destroying or enslaving the people already living there.

The racial-biological understanding of *Volksgemeinschaft* is best seen in its embodiment of the idea of “Aryanism” within Nazi racial thinking, based upon its false developmental perception of a hierarchy of races, with the Nordic (that is, Germanic)—tall, blond hair, blue-eyed, long-headed, straight nose—at the top, and Russians, Serbs, Poles, Roma (called, disparagingly, “Gypsies”), and above all, Jews at the bottom. These were the so-called *Untermenschen* (subhumans), or inferior human beings. Any intermixing would thus result in a decrease in the “purity” of the Germanic body and the Germanic soul or spirit and must be prevented to the point of the annihilation or extermination of these races at best, or, if this was not possible, then at least their

enslavement. Under the Nazis within Germany itself, such persons and groups would come to be labeled *Gemeinschaft-fremde* (“community aliens” or “community enemies”). Though late in the war and never implemented, a “Law for the Treatment of Community Enemies” was passed in 1944. Such “aliens” or “enemies,” guilty of leading “a worthless, unthrifty or disorderly life” (and thus “a burden or danger to the community”), were to be turned over to the police and/or welfare authorities, and incarcerated in a camp. By that point, however, such groups were already almost nonexistent in Germany itself and under restriction—and worse—in the conquered territories.

As a consequence of all of these factors, given the interweaving of these concepts, Adolf Hitler thus presented himself to the German people as the embodiment of the people; the implementation of his political program, in this sense, thus put into practice the will of the people. German jurist, professor of law, philosopher, and political theorist Carl Schmitt, who joined the Nazi Party in 1933, further legitimized the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* in his writings by (1) further denigrating non-Aryans, specifically Jews; (2) justifying the Nazi dictatorship and its leader; and (3) continually praising the “spirit” and “soul” of the German people as superior to all other peoples.

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Aryanism; Asocials; Blood and Soil; Lebensraum; National Socialist Program; “Racial Hygiene”; Schönerer, Georg Ritter von; Sondergericht; Stuckart, Wilhelm; Volk

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(*Volksgerichtshof*), which would operate as a special court outside the existing court system and constitution. It was established on April 24, 1934, with jurisdiction over a broad range of political offenses, and exclusive jurisdiction over such offenses as Conspiracy to High Treason, State Treason, Listening to Enemy Radio Broadcasts (from 1939), Criminal Malice, Seditious and Defeatist, and Aiding the Enemy (from mid-1941). “Political crimes” ranged from minor offenses—such as trading on the black market, work slowdowns, criticizing Hitler or the government, or protesting about work conditions—to defeatism, espionage and sabotage, and treason against the Third Reich. These offenses or crimes were viewed by the court as *Wehrkraftzersetzung* (“incapable of a defense”) and were accordingly punished severely. The court decided the extent of evidence to consider, and defense attorneys could not question the charges.

With almost no exceptions, cases in the People’s Court had predetermined guilty verdicts. There was no presumption of innocence, nor could the defendants adequately represent themselves or consult an attorney. A proceeding before the People’s Court would follow an initial indictment in which a state or city prosecutor would forward the names of the accused to the court for charges of a political nature. Defendants were hardly ever allowed to speak to their attorneys beforehand, and when they did the defense lawyer would usually simply answer questions about how the trial would proceed and refrain from any legal advice.

The People’s Court proceedings began when the accused were led to a prisoner’s dock under armed police escort. The presiding judge would read the charges and then call the accused forward for “examination.” Although the court had a prosecutor, it was usually the judge who asked the questions.

Defendants were often berated during the examination and never allowed to respond with any sort of lengthy reply. After a barrage of insults and condemnation, the accused would be ordered back to the dock with the order “examination concluded.” The defendant was not permitted to choose defense counsel, who had to be a lawyer approved by the chairman of the Senate. Defenders and defendants were often given only a day or even a few hours’ notice before the trial of the prosecution allegations. Often the lawyer and the accused did not know each other until the notice of trial, nor could they contact each other before the hearing.

After examination, the defense attorneys would be asked if they had any statements or questions. Defense lawyers were present simply as a formality and hardly any ever rose to speak. The judge would then ask the defendants for

Volksgerichtshof

The *Volksgerichtshof* was an important arm of the Nazi judicial system. In 1933, pursuant to the Enabling Act, Adolf Hitler ordered the formation of the “People’s Court”

a statement during which time more insults and berating comments would be shouted at the accused. The verdict, which was almost always “guilty,” would then be announced and the sentence handed down at the same time. In all, an appearance before the People’s Court could take as little as 15 minutes.

The death penalty was meted out in numerous cases. There was no possibility of appeal, and verdicts could be carried out immediately.

The Nazi courts did not employ standard legal procedures or principles, like the presumption of innocence, trial by peers, or the right to cross-examine witnesses. Appointed by Adolf Hitler, judges in the People’s Courts were expected to be “reliable.” In some trials, one man alone acted as judge, jury, and court recorder.

The conduct of the Nazi courts worsened after the outbreak of World War II. The number of death sentences increased dramatically: in 1936 11 death sentences were issued; by 1943 there were 1,662 death sentences, about half of which were indictments from the People’s Court. By 1945 approximately 5,200 death sentences were carried out. Death sentences were imposed for offenses such as “disseminating news intercepted on radio,” derogatory remarks about Hitler, or doubts about the so-called “final victory.”

The two notorious judges who shaped the People’s Court were Otto Georg Thierack, who presided from May 1, 1936, to August 19, 1942; and Roland Freisler, who presided from August 20, 1942, to his death on February 3, 1945.

Prior to the Battle of Stalingrad across the winter of 1942–1943, there was a higher percentage of cases in which not guilty verdicts were handed down. In some cases, this was due to defense lawyers presenting the accused as naïve, or defendants adequately explaining the nature of the political charges against them. However, in nearly two-thirds of such cases, the defendants would be rearrested by the Gestapo following the trial and sent to a concentration camp. After the defeat at Stalingrad, and with a growing fear in the German government regarding defeatism among the population, the People’s Court became far more ruthless and hardly any defendants brought before the tribunal escaped a guilty verdict.

Some hearings were very rapid. An example of this was the treatment of the “White Rose” members. On February 18, 1943, this group of Munich University students was caught distributing antiwar leaflets. On February 22, 1943, three of the White Rose group, 21-year-old Sophie Scholl, her brother Hans Scholl (22), and Christof Probst (24) were tried and found guilty in less than an hour, without evidence being

presented or arguments made by either side. The three were guillotined just six hours after their arrest. Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, and Kurt Hüber, other members of the White Rose group, were later also tried and executed. The People’s Court sentenced other members of resistance groups, such as the Rote Kapelle, the Bästlein-Jacob-Abshagen group, the Edelweiss Pirates, the Kreisau Circle, and the conspirators of the unsuccessful July 20, 1944, Bomb Plot attempt on Hitler’s life.

Many of those found guilty by the court were executed in Plötzensee Prison in Berlin. The president of the court often acted as prosecutor, denouncing defendants, then pronouncing his verdict and sentence without objection from defense counsel, who usually remained silent throughout. The court almost always sided with the prosecution, to the point that being hauled before it was tantamount to a death sentence.

On February 3, 1945, the court’s president, Roland Freisler, was conducting a Saturday session of the People’s Court when U.S. Air Force bombers attacked Berlin. Among the buildings hit was the People’s Court. Freisler was killed when an almost direct hit on the building caused him to be struck down by a beam in his own courtroom. His body was reportedly found crushed beneath a fallen masonry column, clutching the files that he had tried to retrieve.

In 1956 the German Federal High Court of Justice granted the so-called “Judges’ Privilege” to those who had been part of the Volksgerichtshof. This prevented the prosecution of former court members on the basis that their actions had been legal under the laws in effect during the Third Reich. The only member of the Volksgerichtshof to be held liable for his actions was Chief Public Prosecutor Ernst Lautz, who in 1947 was sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment. He was pardoned after serving less than four years of his sentence and was granted a government pension.

Of the other approximately 570 judges and prosecutors, none were held responsible for their actions related to the *Volksgerichtshof*. Many, in fact, went on to have successful careers in the West German postwar legal system.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Enabling Act, 1933; Freisler, Roland; Thierack, Otto; White Rose

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Von Faulhaber, Michael

Michael von Faulhaber was a Roman Catholic priest and prelate and the most senior German Catholic opponent of National Socialism and antisemitism.

He was born on March 5, 1869, in Klosterheidenfeld, Germany, and entered a Catholic seminary in Würzburg in 1889. On August 1, 1892, he was ordained to the priesthood and undertook pastoral work and research in the diocese of Würzburg. He served as chaplain and vicar rector in Rome from 1896 to 1898 and taught sacred scripture in Strasbourg before becoming bishop of Speyer in 1911. He was then appointed archbishop of Munich-Freising in 1917 and four years later was made a cardinal. When Papal Nuncio Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII) wrote to Rome in 1923 complaining about the Nazi persecution of Catholics, he noted that the attacks "were especially focused" on the "learned and zealous" Cardinal Faulhaber, who "had denounced the persecutions against the Jews."

In 1934, the year after Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, Faulhaber published a book that defended the principles of racial tolerance and called for the people of Germany to respect the Jewish religion. In 1933 Faulhaber wrote to the then-secretary of state Pacelli, describing the persecution of the Jews as "unjust and painful." In 1935 Nazi officials called for him to be killed, and in February 1936 police confiscated and destroyed one of his sermons; this also happened twice the following year. During the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, Faulhaber provided a truck to salvage religious objects from a local synagogue before it was destroyed. In May 1939 demonstrations against Faulhaber took place throughout Bavaria, and posters were hung with the message: "Away with Faulhaber, the friend of the Jews and the agent of Moscow."

After World War II began in 1939, Faulhaber gave an address that sharply denounced National Socialism. Martin Niemöller, a noted German Protestant leader who spent seven years in concentration camps for his opposition to Hitler and the Nazis, said that Faulhaber's sermons showed him "to be a great and courageous man." In his 1945 memorandum to U.S. general William Donovan, Fabian von Schlabrendorff praised Faulhaber for stating his opposition to the

Nazis and influencing other Catholics to do the same. Schlabrendorff reported that "decisive credit" for the Catholic opposition to Nazism "ought to be given to Cardinal von Faulhaber from Munich . . . whose personal sermons branded Nazism as the enemy of Christendom."

After the war, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, the leading U.S. voice for the Jewish cause, called Faulhaber "a true Christian prelate" who "had lifted his fearless voice" in defense of the Jews. Faulhaber continued to preach that antisemitism was the "scourge of mankind." On June 12, 1952, Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber died in Munich, just one year after having ordained Joseph Ratzinger to the priesthood. Ratzinger went on to serve as Pope Benedict XVI from 2005 until 2013.

RONALD RYCHLAK

See also: Catholic Church; Kristallnacht; Upstander

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Von Moltke, Helmuth James

Helmuth James Graf von Moltke was an aristocratic resister to the Nazi regime, executed for treason in January 1945. He was born on March 11, 1907, on the family estate at Kreisau, Silesia. His mother, Dorothy, was a British subject from South Africa. He was the great-grandnephew of Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, one of Prussia's outstanding military commanders during Germany's wars of unification, and grandnephew of Helmuth Johann Ludwig von Moltke the Younger, who served as chief of the German general staff between 1906 and 1914.

Helmuth James von Moltke's parents were Christian Scientists, though their son became an Evangelical Christian when he was 14. He studied law and political science between 1925 and 1929, moving between universities in Breslau, Vienna, Heidelberg, and Berlin. In 1928 he became involved with an organization called the *Löwenberger Arbeitsgemeinschaften*, or Löwenberg working groups, in which college teachers, youth movement leaders, young unemployed, students, and young farmers were brought together in a voluntary work camp in Silesia, where all could learn from one another and discuss matters of mutual social and political interest.

In 1931 he married Freya Deichmann, who had begun her own studies in law at the University of Bonn. She also attended seminars at the University of Breslau, where she worked for a time as his research assistant. On October 18, 1931, they were married in Cologne and moved to the family estate at Kreisau before relocating to Berlin, where he finished his law degree; at the same time, Freya also studied law, receiving her degree from Humboldt University in 1935.

The same year he was given the chance to become a judge but declined on the ground that to do so he would have to become a member of the Nazi Party. His personal beliefs regarding democracy held him back; there had been times in earlier years when he had expressed open criticism of Hitler, and he was known to oppose the regime in office. Rather than become part of a system of which he disapproved, he opened his own legal practice in Berlin. Between 1935 and 1938 he undertook additional legal training in the United Kingdom in the hope of joining the British bar. This plan was stymied owing to the outbreak of war in September 1939.

With war, he was drafted into German military intelligence (the *Abwehr*) within the armed forces high command in Berlin. It was here that he first began to demonstrate his opposition to the Nazi regime, advocating humane treatment for prisoners of war and the observance of international law, and acting to undermine human rights abuses in German-occupied territories.

In early 1940 Helmuth and Freya von Moltke and another aristocrat he had known since 1938, Peter Graf Yorck von Wartenburg, began to gather around them an informal group of around two dozen opponents of Nazism, many of them also aristocrats, to imagine a new and better Germany. What emerged from this was the Kreisau Circle, centered on von Moltke's estate at Kreisau, though meetings also took place in Berlin.

The group became one of the main foci of German opposition to the Nazi regime; small though it was, it was comprised of many elite members of society. Through his contacts, von Moltke reached out to Protestant and Catholic Church leaders, as well as to what was left of the social democratic movement.

In a voluminous correspondence with Freya and others, he asked many questions about where Germany was heading and what degree of responsibility each person would have to acknowledge after the war. In one of his letters from October 1941, referring to the slaughter of the Jews in Russia, he wrote: "Certainly more than a thousand people are murdered in this way every day, and another thousand German men are habituated to murder, . . . What shall I say when I

am asked: And what did you do during that time?" In October 1941 Jews in Berlin began to be deported. In the same letter, von Moltke wrote: "Since Saturday the Berlin Jews are being rounded up. Then they are sent off with what they can carry. . . . How can anyone know these things and walk around free?"

He had hoped that he could use the law and his social contacts to bring about some sort of humanitarian dimension to military events, and he knew he was not alone; others, such as Admiral Wilhelm Canaris and General Hans Oster, both of whom were his superiors in the *Abwehr*, felt the same. Throughout the war, he pleaded for the Geneva Conventions to be respected, and after Operation Barbarossa in the summer of 1941 he wrote a controversial legal opinion urging Germany to adhere to international law. He also ordered the removal of Jews to countries offering a safe haven, possibly not realizing that few states were prepared to do so. In addition, he attempted to reduce the scale of mass murder by writing reports drawing attention to the psychological problems faced by German soldiers who witnessed and/or participated in the wholesale shootings accompanying *Einsatzgruppen* operations.

From his own perspective, knowing about these things only served to reinforce his own opposition to the war and the Nazi Party. Pursuant to this, one of his actions was to disseminate confidential information on Nazi war crimes to those outside the Nazi Party, in the hope that it would be passed on to the Allies.

Of course, rejection of orders placed him at risk, and on January 19, 1944, he was arrested by the Gestapo after it was discovered that he had warned members of another resistance group, the Solf Circle—an informal resistance gathering of German intellectuals who were arrested and executed in September 1943. Only later was it discovered that von Moltke was also involved in the failed coup attempt of July 20, 1944, against Hitler—something about which he had very mixed feelings, fearing that Hitler would become a martyr if he was assassinated.

Facing Judge Roland Freisler before the People's Court (*Volksgerichtshof*), von Moltke found himself in a delicate position, fighting for his life. It transpired that no evidence could be found that he had actually participated in any conspiracy to bring about a coup. Freisler therefore was forced to concoct a new capital charge; looking over the record of the Kreisau Circle, he determined that discussions of a future Germany based on moral and democratic principles met the criteria for the death penalty. As von Moltke noted in a letter to Freya, this signified that he was going to his death for his

ideas, not for anything he had done—a damning indictment against the regime he was opposing. In what was an inevitable judgment, Helmuth James Graf von Moltke was sentenced to death on January 11, 1945, and executed on January 23 in Berlin-Plötzensee prison.

Von Moltke was not a pacifist, he but believed strongly in international law and the laws of war as essential tools to protect the innocent and reduce the brutalities that war generates. In one of his final letters, written to his sons while awaiting execution, he gave his reasons for acting the way he did, declaring that ever since National Socialism came to power he had attempted to make its consequences “milder for its victims and to prepare the way for a change. In that, my conscience drove me—and in the end, that is a man’s duty.”

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Freisler, Roland; Upstander

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Vrba, Rudolf

Rudolf Vrba was a Slovak Jew who escaped from Auschwitz on April 7, 1944, and provided testimony detailing the enormity of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. He was born Walter Rosenberg in Topoľčany, Czechoslovakia, on September 11, 1924. His father, Elias Rosenberg, owned a sawmill. Walter was excluded from the local high school at the age of 15 because he was a Jew, so he began work as a laborer. He did his best to keep his head down in the early years of the war (and before that, in the Nazi occupation of the Slovak “protectorate”), but in 1942, when antisemitic measures intensified, he decided to try to get to Britain to join the Czechoslovak army-in-exile.

He only made it as far as the Hungarian border before he was picked up and handed over to Slovak authorities. Sent to a transit camp, he escaped but was soon apprehended. On June 15, 1942, he arrived at Majdanek and was then immediately transferred to Auschwitz, where he arrived on June 30.

He was put to work exhuming bodies from mass graves (which were then cremated) and also as an orderly tasked with sorting through the personal possessions of detainees destined for the gas chambers. He rose to become a camp registrar, and it was in this role that he began to calculate and, as he wrote

later, “mentally record” statistics relating to those transported to the camp. Before long he was planning an escape.

On April 7, 1944, Rosenberg and fellow prisoner Alfréd Wetzler, also from Slovakia, managed to flee the death camp through finding a flaw in the otherwise impenetrable security system. They managed to return to Czechoslovakia, where they met with the Slovak Jewish Council at Žilina.

After a brief period to recover, they provided the council with extremely detailed testimony of what was occurring at Auschwitz. The testimony, when transcribed and typed, totaled some 40 pages. It contained an exhaustive description of the geography and management of the camp, and of how the prisoners lived and died. It also gave a comprehensive list of every transport that had arrived at Auschwitz since 1942, chronicling their place of origin and how many people from each transport were murdered. The report also included sketches and information regarding the layout of the gas chambers. Rosenberg was later to state that much of his information about the operation of the gas chambers and crematoria came from *Sonderkommando* workers such as Filip Müller.

The report was copied and passed on to Rudolf Kasztner, head of the Zionist Aid and Rescue Committee in Bratislava. He, in turn, passed it to Gisi Fleischmann and Rabbi Chaim Michael Dov Weissmandl, who arranged for a much wider distribution, including Hungary’s Foreign Ministry and the Vatican. British and American operatives saw copies as early as mid-June 1944, and it was broadcast in part by the BBC and condensed and printed in the *New York Times* on June 20.

After the report had been handed to the Slovak Jewish Council, Rosenberg was given a new identity and new papers in the name of Rudolf Vrba, which he legalized after the liberation. On August 29, 1944, the Slovak army revolted against the Nazis, and Vrba joined a Czechoslovak partisan unit in September 1944. He gave April 7, the day of his escape, as his birthdate.

When World War II ended, Vrba was celebrated as a national hero. He was awarded the Czechoslovak Medal for Bravery, the Order of Slovak National Insurrection, and the Order of Meritorious Fighter. Moving to Prague in 1945, he read biology and chemistry at Charles University and earned a doctorate in biochemistry. Chafing under the yoke of communism, however, he defected to Israel in 1958 and then moved to Britain in 1960, where he became a British citizen.

In 1963 he published his memoir, *Escape from Auschwitz: I Cannot Forgive*, which he wrote with the assistance of Irish journalist Alan Bestic. This was based on a series of articles he wrote for the *Daily Herald*, timed to coincide with the 1961 trial of SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann in Israel. The book was translated into several languages,

although, interestingly, it did not appear in Hebrew until 1998. During the trial itself, Vrba presented written testimony against Eichmann.

Vrba detailed not only his daring escape but also the mishandling of his report. He considered that it signaled a lost opportunity that might well have led to the deaths of more than 400,000 Hungarian Jews, who were deported to Auschwitz beginning in May 1944—less than a month after his escape. Vrba maintained that the Zionist Aid and Rescue Committee delayed passing on his testimony, in which he had warned of the Nazi plan to deport the Hungarian Jews. He also claimed that the Allies did not act quickly or forcefully enough given the information he had provided. For the remainder of his life, Vrba believed that more could have been done to mitigate the effects of the Holocaust.

Vrba moved to Canada in 1967, taking a faculty position at the University of British Columbia. He became a Canadian citizen in 1972. In 1985 he testified at the Toronto trial of Ernst Zündel, a publisher of Holocaust denial material who had been charged with knowingly publishing false information in an attempt to foment social or racial intolerance. When Zündel's defense attorney, Doug Christie, accused Vrba of having fabricated the events at Auschwitz, Vrba shot back that he had witnessed the evidence of unmistakable mass murder with his own eyes. The confrontation between the two was a memorable highlight of the trial for those who were there to see it. Rudolf Vrba died of cancer, aged 81, on March 27, 2006, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: *Auschwitz Protocols*; Hungary; Kasztner, Rudolf; Slovakia; Soos, Géza

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Construction on the camp began in May 1942, and it became operational toward the end of the year. The first political prisoners arrived before construction was complete, coming from another Dutch camp at Amersfoort. The initial group of Jewish prisoners arrived at Vught during January 1943, and by May of that year their numbers had increased to 8,684.

In its first design, Vught was divided into two sections, a Jewish camp and one for political prisoners. The Jewish camp was intended to serve as a transit camp, calculated to hold Jews prior to them being deported, first to Westerbork, and from there to death camps situated in Poland. The so-called “security camp” took in Dutch and Belgian political prisoners. In May and August 1943 two additional areas of Vught were created: a camp exclusively for women, and what was essentially a penitentiary within the camp, where prisoners in detention were kept.

The camp measured 500 by 200 meters and consisted of 36 living and 23 working barracks. Surrounding this complex was a double barbed-wire fence, with watchtowers placed every 50 meters around the perimeter. Just outside the camp were the SS barracks. Some prisoners were permitted to work outside the camp in a factory owned by the Dutch electrical company Philips. Here, up to 1,200 prisoners were employed in conditions that the company claimed were decent; these included a cooked meal every day and exemption from deportation. Such conditions were valued, the more so as elsewhere in Vught circumstances were, quite simply, appalling. Particularly at the start, the food was poor and the SS guards were exceptionally brutal (even by SS standards). Hundreds of prisoners died during the first few months of the camp's existence.

With one of the functions of the camp being the transit of Jews to death camps, a number of convoys left Vught during the course of its existence, bound for Germany and Poland. In June 1943, for instance, hundreds of Jewish children were sent to Sobibór, while there were additional transports of Jews sent in November 1943 and June 1944. Most convoys, however, went first to Westerbork, which was the major transit camp for the Netherlands.

By May 1943 Vught held nearly 31,000 prisoners of all backgrounds: Jews, political prisoners, resistance fighters, Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and criminals, among others. This period saw the high point of Vught in terms of prisoner numbers, though it took more than another full year before the camp began to be liquidated in the summer of 1944. On June 3, 1944, one final group of prisoners was transported out. It was comprised of 517 workers from

Vught

Vught was a concentration camp established for Dutch political prisoners, located in southern Holland near the city of 's-Hertogenbosch. Called by its Dutch name of Kamp Vught and known to the Germans as Konzentrationslager Herzogenbusch, Vught, together with Natzweiler-Struthof in France, were the only Nazi concentration camps in Western Europe outside of Germany.

the Philips factory. When sent to Auschwitz, they were used as slave labor by another electronics company, Telefunken, though only 160 of these survived. Most of the men had been killed; two-thirds of those who stayed alive until liberation were women, and nine were children.

As Allied forces were approaching Vught during the fall of 1944, the SS began to work on dismantling operations at the camp, and most of the prisoners were transferred to concentration camps further east. Across the period September 4–5, 1944, many of the women were transferred to Ravensbrück; the men were sent to Sachsenhausen. By September 5–6, 1944, Vught was practically empty. On October 26, 1944, the camp was liberated by Canadian troops. They found a total of no more than around 500 prisoners still there, all of whom had been slated for execution by the Nazis that day. Were it not for the arrival of the Canadians, there was every likelihood that they would have been murdered. Another 500 or so inmates were discovered dead in piles near the gates; they had been murdered earlier that same morning.

Altogether, owing to hunger, sickness, murder, and general abuse, some 749 men, women, and children lost their lives during the camp's existence. A large number—329 of them—were killed at an execution site known as the Fusilladeplaats. They were for the most part members of the Dutch resistance, brought to Vught from various prisons and

murdered between late July and early September 1944. The perpetrators were members of the Dutch SS, who were routinely used by the Germans to guard the watchtowers.

After the war the camp was used as a prison for Dutch collaborators and up to 6,000 Germans, evacuated from various parts of the Netherlands until their repatriation later in 1945. The camp remained open as an internment facility until 1949. On December 20, 1947, then-Princess Juliana (who would be crowned the following year) unveiled a memorial at the site with the names of all those who had lost their lives at Vught. Then, in April 1990, the National Monument Camp Vught was opened by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. It is accompanied by a visitor center and museum, containing exhibitions from the time of the camp's existence. There is also a national monument commemorating the victims of the camp and all those who passed through it.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Concentration Camps; Natzweiler-Struthof; Netherlands; Westerbork

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W

Waffen-SS

Military component of the German SS that fought alongside the Wehrmacht (German Army) as an elite National Socialist force. Created in 1925 through the merger of the guard organization of the Nazi Party (the *Stabswache*) and the Nazi *Stosstruppe* (“shock troops”), the SS initially functioned as a bodyguard unit for the Nazi hierarchy and contained the most ideologically fervent party members. Party leader Adolf Hitler appointed Heinrich Himmler as the SS-Reichsführer in 1929, and Himmler eventually increased SS membership from 280 to 50,000, endowing members with a distinctive black uniform (designed by Hugo Boss), as well as the skull and double runic S symbols. Himmler’s aim was to transform the SS from its security function within the Nazi Party into a separate and powerful bureaucratic policing organ of the German state.

Between 1933 and 1936 Himmler combined all state police functions, merging the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*, or secret state police) with the Nazi Party’s security organization (*Sicherheitsdienst*, or SD) to create the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA). He ensured his organization a more pervasive role in 1939 after his appointment as Reichskommissar for the Strengthening of German Ethnicity. Through this post, the SS was assured economic and political control of occupied Europe, especially in the east, where Nazi ideology envisaged a German territorial expansion (*Lebensraum*) and the subordination—and, eventually, the elimination—of the Jews. To achieve this goal, Himmler created a separate economic office

for the SS, the *Wirtschafts und Verwaltungs Hauptamt* (WVHA) and oversaw the Race and Population Resettlement program (*Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt*, or RuSHA).

Himmler had much higher ambitions for the SS than mere police functions, however. He wanted it to be a professional military body that might one day subsume the German Army itself. As its political and bureaucratic functions expanded, the SS formed illegal military units, originally known as *Verfügungstruppe*, or special assignment troops. On March 17, 1933, Josef “Sepp” Dietrich established, on Hitler’s direct order, a personal armed guard, the *Liebstandarte*. Early on, members of the unit served, among other things, as honor guards and color guards at parades and other events, such as the 1934 Nuremberg party rally. The rally involved Dietrich’s SS *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*, composed of 2,600 men. But Himmler also employed such units in liquidating the leadership of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA, or storm troops) during the Blood Purge of June 1934.

To qualify for the *Verfügungstruppe*, males had to be between 17 and 22 years old and at least 5’11” tall. These units were supposed to be superior to army formations in training and morale and were to receive the best weapons. Early armed SS personnel also included concentration camp guards, the *SS-Totenkopfverbände* (or Death’s Head formations), organized by Theodor Eicke. By March 1936 the SS was subdivided into five *Sturmabteilungen* (battalions) totaling 3,500 men: No. 1 Oberbayern, No. 2 Elbe, No. 3 Sachsen, No. 4 Ostfriesland, and No. 5 Brandenburg. After Germany



The Waffen-SS was the armed wing of the SS. At its peak strength it numbered 38 divisions during World War II and was deployed in combat roles, particularly on the Eastern Front. Volunteers and conscripts came to the Waffen-SS from German-occupied countries in Europe, as well as other collaborationist regimes not directly involved in the war. As an SS organization, the Waffen-SS was founded on Nazi racial ideology. The photo here is from a prewar march of the most important division of the Waffen-SS, the SS Leibstandarte, in Berlin in 1938. (Mondadori Portfolio via Getty Images)

introduced conscription in 1935, the SS organized two 5,000-man regiments, the Deutschland and the Germania.

On October 1, 1936, the SS Inspectorate was created to supervise the two SS officer training schools in operation at Bad Tolz and Braunschweig, under the supervision of Oberstgruppenführers Paul Hausser and Felix Steiner. Early applicants had to have served at least two years in the army. Training emphasized physical fitness and endurance rather than parade-ground drill, so that fully equipped troops could march or run 1.86 miles (3 kilometers) within 20 minutes. There was also a rigorous combat-training course. Steiner's demanding standards meant that, in 1937, only 15 of every 100 SS applicants were accepted. Steiner also sought to instill a sense of family in each SS unit, encouraging officers to consort with noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and not to address one another by rank but rather as "comrade." In addition, the SS oath contained a sense of elitism and

personal bond to the Führer: "I swear to Adolf Hitler, as Fuhrer and Chancellor of the German Reich, loyalty and bravery. I vow obedience to you and to the superiors whom you shall appoint, obedience unto death, so help me God."

The SS motto was "Loyalty is my honor" (*Meine Ehre Heisst Treue*). Mystique and symbolism were used to entice and muster group solidarity. Only those who had graduated from the two officer training schools and possessed the rank of *Untersturmführer* or above were permitted to carry a special dagger. SS recruits were also tattooed in their armpits, and the first 10,000 received an SS ring (later on, only officers who had served three years might wear the ring). Himmler also created a pseudo-Arthurian court at Wewelsburg Castle near Paderborn in Westphalia, where he organized a round table of favorite officers (the Circle of Friends of the SS-Reichsführer), with a runic coat of arms for each member.

On August 17, 1938, a decree by Hitler set up a separate headquarters for the military training of these SS units and established their military character as fighting (Waffen) SS. For obvious reasons, the leaders of the Army High Command (OKH) rejected the idea of another military establishment independent of its authority and had some success in limiting its size. By the eve of the war, there were only about 23,000 men in the SS formations, including the Death's Head groups. But with the coming of the war, the size and scope of SS activities increased dramatically. During the Polish Campaign of September 1939, Waffen-SS regiments were merged together within regular Wehrmacht divisions. In October, the first three SS divisions were formed, one each from the Verfügungstruppe (later known as SS-Das Reich Division), the Death's Head units (SS-Totenkopf Division), and the police (Polizedivision). Hitler's Leibstandarte, initially a motorized regiment, became a fourth SS division (SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler). In November, the various SS branches were united under the name Waffen-SS.

SS divisions were fully integrated into the regular army command structure, but that did not mean that there was no tension between regular army and SS commanders. The SS divisions were highly politicized and supported the National Socialist credo and its racial policies, especially in Eastern Europe. They were also guilty of numerous atrocities. The same was not true of many German regular army units. There was also anger in the army over the fact that the SS units had claim on the best weaponry. Sharp tensions and inefficiencies also existed within SS headquarters, where Himmler mirrored his master in practicing a divide-and-rule style of leadership.

The Waffen-SS role was greatly expanded after the German invasion of the Soviet Union began in June 1941. It was a foregone conclusion that the SS would play a paramount role during this ideological war of annihilation. In addition to the 1st SS Panzer Division (Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler), there were five other Waffen-SS divisions at this time: the 2nd SS Panzer Division (Das Reich), the 3rd SS Panzer Division (Totenkopf), the 4th SS Polizei Panzergrenadier Division, the 5th SS Panzer Division (Viking), and the 6th SS Gebirge Division (Nord, composed largely of Norwegians). The SS Einsatzgruppen (special action groups), death squads to murder Jews and communists, were also formed, a third of their membership being recruited from Waffen-SS units. Four of these groups of about 3,000 men each were formed by July 1941 to follow Army Groups North, Center, and South into the Soviet Union. Their role of exterminating Jews and Soviet officials had been decided prior to the Soviet invasion,

and it was sanctioned by Hitler through his Commissar Order (*Kommissarbefehl*) of May 1941, as well as the operational orders to the Wehrmacht stipulating that no German soldiers were to be disciplined for any action against the civilian Soviet population.

SS formations fought on all battlefronts in which Germany was engaged, with the exception of the Western Desert campaigns. As casualties mounted and following the general army reform of May 1943 that reduced divisional size, Waffen-SS units were amalgamated and renamed. By the end of the war, when the total number in the SS mounted to more than 800,000 men in 38 divisions, some 200,000 were foreign volunteers (*Freiwilligen*). This practice of recruitment was accepted despite the SS pretense of representing only the most racially pure Germanic elements. Among the militarily effective new formations were the 9th SS Panzer Division (Hohenstaufen), the 10th SS Panzer Division (Frundsberg), and the 12th SS Panzer Division (Hitler Jugend, composed largely of Latvians).

Paradoxically, the early Waffen-SS units suffered higher casualties than their regular Wehrmacht counterparts, specifically as a result of their ideological zeal to fight the enemy. As the war progressed, antisemitic and anticommunist elements of the occupied populations formed their own Waffen-SS units: Nordland, which was the first non-German organized unit (Norwegian and Danish); Lettisches (Baltic); Skanderbeg (Albanian); Maria Theresa (Austrian); Kama (Croatian); Nederland (Netherlands); Hunyadi (Hungarian); Charlemagne (French); Bohmen-Mahren (Czech and Slovak); Kalevala (Finnish); Galicia (Ukrainian); and Kaminski (Ukrainian and Russian).

Some Waffen-SS units were among the most effective German military formations and there were a number of capable commanders. Undoubtedly, the most effective of the latter was Hausser, who became the first SS general to command a German field army and directed the Normandy defenses beginning in late June 1944. But Waffen-SS formations were also the most brutal German military units in their treatment of enemy prisoners and conquered peoples, and they committed numerous atrocities. The growing strength of the SS also posed a real threat to the ascendancy of the Wehrmacht, especially in the last year of the war. Hitler despised many of the army generals, and it is clear that, had Germany won the war, the Waffen-SS would have replaced the Wehrmacht as the army of the Reich. In all, as many as 250,000 Waffen-SS members may have been killed during the course of the war.

See also: Eicke, Theodor; Einsatzgruppen; Gestapo; Himmler, Heinrich; Komissarbefehl; Lebensraum; Reichssicherheitshauptamt; Schutzstaffel; Sheptytsky, Andrey; Stroop, Jürgen; Wolff, Karl; Zuehlke Trial

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Wagner, Richard

A composer and music theorist of consummate brilliance, Richard Wagner was one of the world's most controversial artists. His dark and innovative operas, with their unique style of orchestration, use of chromatics, and leading motives, changed the genre of opera forever. He also published hundreds of essays, used mainly to promote artistic idealism and antisemitism. A revolutionary, Wagner was alternately loved and hated and continues to inflame emotions more than 130 years after his death.

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born on May 22, 1813, in Leipzig, Germany. He was the ninth child of Friedrich and Johanna Wagner, but his true parentage was never certain, least of all to him. Prior to his birth, his mother carried on an affair with an actor-painter friend of her husband's, Ludwig Geyer. When Friedrich died in December 1813, Geyer moved in with the family, marrying Johanna in August 1814. Wagner never knew who his true father was, a question that was to surface in his operas, as all but one of his heroes are fatherless.

Wagner's schooling was sporadic, and he was mostly self-taught. He enrolled at Leipzig University in 1831, studying piano and composition. Unlike other composers, Wagner never became proficient on the piano or any other instrument, and his formal training was brief. Instead, he engaged in close studies of the quartets and symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven. His first composition, *Symphony in C Major*, was performed in Leipzig in 1833, the year he left the university to become operatic coach at Würzburg. There he composed his first opera, *Die Feen (The Fairies)*, which was never staged in his lifetime.

Wagner became conductor of the theater in Magdeburg in July 1834 and wrote his second opera, *Das Liebesverbot (The Ban on Love)*, based on William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. *Das Liebesverbot's* debut was a disaster, with only three people in the audience and a fistfight between the cast backstage. Wagner never attempted to stage it again. While

in Magdeburg, Wagner fell in love with Minna Planer, an emotional actress three years older than him who traveled with a "younger sister" who was actually her illegitimate daughter. Wagner and Planer were married in Königsberg in November 1836, but it did not take Planer long to realize that her husband would probably never hold a job long enough to pay off his debts. She ran off with a businessman in the first months of their marriage but eventually returned to Wagner.

Wagner began conducting the theater in Riga in 1837 and started work on his third opera, *Rienzi*, the story of a 14th-century Roman who unites his neighbors against corrupt nobles before being assassinated. *Rienzi* included a ballet and ended with an onstage fire. Wagner's debts in Riga mounted, and after two years there, he decided to try his hand in Paris. Unable to pay his creditors, he and his wife slipped away from Riga by ship to London and then traveled to France.

Wagner stayed in Paris from 1839 to 1842, working as an arranger for publishers and theaters. He wrote the text and score to *The Flying Dutchman*, as well as several articles that brought his antisemitism to light. Wagner was convinced that the entire Jewish establishment in Paris was conspiring against him, but he used his friendship with Jewish composer Giacomo Meyerbeer for his benefit anyway. With Meyerbeer's help, *Das Liebesverbot* was accepted for production at a Paris theater, but it went bankrupt before the play could be performed. *Rienzi* was then accepted for production in Dresden, prompting Wagner to return to Germany. *The Flying Dutchman* was subsequently accepted in Berlin, largely thanks to Meyerbeer.

Wagner's first years back in Germany were some of his most successful. *Rienzi* was a huge hit in Dresden when it was first performed on October 20, 1842, despite its six-hour running time, and it was followed the next year by *The Flying Dutchman*. Innovative in the way it integrated music with drama, *Dutchman* was initially not as successful but led to Wagner's appointment as conductor of the court opera, directing all music in the theater, palace, and church. His next opera, *Tannhäuser* (1845), was the first of his works based on Germanic legends and the last staged in Dresden.

Wagner upset the Dresden theater establishment in 1845 by proposing a series of reforms, including more rehearsal time, pensions, a minimum wage, and sick leave for everyone from performers to janitors. He next became involved in the Revolutions of 1848, writing pamphlets and giving speeches advocating revolution. He befriended Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin and participated in the Dresden

uprising of 1849. When Prussian troops finally quelled the activity, a warrant was issued for Wagner's arrest. He managed to escape to Weimar, where Franz Liszt staged the first production of Wagner's *Lohengrin* in August 1850. By then, Wagner had escaped to Switzerland using funds borrowed from Liszt. He would not return to Germany for 11 years.

Wagner arrived in Switzerland in debt and with no prospects. He vented his frustration by writing a pamphlet in August 1850 titled "Judaism in Music," a vicious pronouncement of antisemitism. He wrote several nobler works as well, including *Art and Revolution*, *The Art Work of the Future*, *A Communication to My Friends*, and *Opera and Drama*, all published between 1849 and 1852. *Opera and Drama* outlined an operatic production Wagner had actually begun working on in 1848 that would create a new relationship between words, music, and staging and become one of the greatest artistic works of Western civilization—the four-part *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

From the beginning, Wagner knew *The Ring of the Nibelung* was a revolutionary work, and it would be years before it was ever staged. He was able to complete the first two parts of the *Ring*, *Das Rheingold* (*The Rhinegold*) and *Die Walküre* (*The Valkyrie*), in Zurich, where he relied on the financial resources of Otto Wesendonck, a prosperous merchant with whose wife, Mathilde, Wagner had an affair. Though Wagner called it a "drama," today it is known as the first "music drama," a musical poem set to continuous vocal and symphonic texture. Several basic themes make up the texture and are expressed by both the performers and the orchestra. These *leitmotifs*, or leading motives, express the dramatic and psychological development of the characters and the story. Wagner knew that he could not afford to stage such a revolutionary and encompassing work, so he set the *Ring* aside for several years and concentrated on more "normal" productions, composing *Tristan und Isolde* (1857–1859), considered his most difficult work, and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (*The Mastersingers of Nurnberg*, 1868), his only comedy.

In 1859 Wagner left Zurich embarrassed over his public affair with Mathilde Wesendonck. He and his wife agreed to separate, and for the next several years he traveled between Venice, Paris, and Vienna. A production of *Tannhäuser* in Paris in 1860 was a disaster—it was booed off the stage on three separate nights—and he left Paris to conduct in Germany and Russia before settling in Vienna to prepare for a production of *Tristan* that never materialized. By 1864 Wagner was 51 years old, more than broke, and in debt all over Europe. Amazingly, he received the miracle he needed.

Dining in Stuttgart in May 1864, he received word that the 18-year-old king of Bavaria, Ludwig II, was a great admirer of his and wished to settle his debts, provide for his well-being, and give him whatever he needed for his work. Never one for pride, Wagner enthusiastically raced to Munich.

The next six years saw the production of all of Wagner's operas in Munich, including the first performances of *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1868), *Das Rheingold* (1869), and *Die Walküre* (1870). *Die Meistersinger* was a huge success despite its length (it is the longest opera ever composed) and was performed throughout Europe, providing Wagner with much needed funds. He remained in debt, however, and compounded his problems by interfering in Ludwig's government and carrying on an affair with the wife of his conductor. All but driven out of Munich, Wagner moved back to Switzerland in 1865, where Ludwig set him up in a lakeside house. There, he set to work completing *Siegfried*, the third part of the *Ring* he had stopped work on more than a decade before. Wagner received word of his wife's death in 1865 and in 1870 married Cosima von Bülow, the former wife of his conductor and the daughter of Liszt. They had three children together prior to their marriage.

Wagner completed the four-opera *Ring*—*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Die Götterdämmerung* (*The Twilight of the Gods*)—by 1872 and broke the contract he had made with Ludwig promising it would be performed in Munich. He felt the Munich theatrical facilities were inadequate and proposed building a new theater solely for the *Ring*. He drummed up funds and support all over Germany after deciding on a location in Bayreuth, a small Bavarian village. The theater's foundation was laid in 1872, and on August 13, 14, 16, and 17, 1876, the first complete production of the *Ring of the Nibelung* was performed at the Bayreuth Festival House. The entire event took more than 18 hours, comprising a drama cycle about gods, humans, dwarves, and every aspect of the human condition. It took Wagner more than 20 years to complete the *Ring*; since its first presentation, it has been interpreted in hundreds of different ways, with critics only agreeing that it forever changed the genre of opera.

The performance of the *Ring of the Nibelung* was a worldwide event, and afterward, Wagner fell into a depression. He conducted a series of concerts in England but otherwise dedicated himself to his last opera, *Parsifal*, and essay writing. He started a newspaper, the *Bayreuther Blätter*, to propagate his ideas on everything from vegetarianism to the benefits of a Germany without Jews. A spiritual opera

intended for the amazing acoustics of the Bayreuth Festival House, *Parsifal* was a huge success when it opened in 1882, and many felt that Wagner must surely be finished. He moved his family to Venice and died there of a heart attack on February 13, 1883. He was buried at the family home, Wahnfried, near the Bayreuth Festival House, where the world's largest Wagner festival continues every summer.

One of the most fascinating figures of the 19th century, Wagner arouses emotions like no other composer and is one of the most studied. By the time of his death, he was the most talked about composer in the world, either loved or despised for his music or his life. To many, he was the epitome of Germany and German nationalism, and Adolf Hitler's later adoption of Wagner as the composer of the Third Reich forever associated him with a devastating time in world history. Nevertheless, his influence is immeasurable, his conception of music evident in 20th-century film scores, symphonies, and modern program music.

Because of Wagner's antisemitism, his works were not performed in Israel until recently. In 1981 conductor Zubin Mehta attempted to "insert" a Wagner piece into an encore with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The audience protested, shouting "shame, shame," while an usher stormed the stage brandishing his arm with a concentration camp tattoo. Mehta was forced to end the performance. Subsequently, the Israel Philharmonic vowed not to play Wagner until all Holocaust survivors had passed away. Attitudes began to change (although controversy remained), and on October 27, 2000, conductor Mendi Rodan led the Israel Symphony orchestra in *Siegfried*.

MELISSA STALLINGS

See also: Music and the Holocaust; Propaganda in the Holocaust; Schönerer, Georg Ritter von

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Waldheim Affair

The Waldheim Affair consisted of allegations of involvement in Nazi atrocities against Kurt Waldheim, the former secretary-general of the United Nations, when running for the presidency of the Austrian Republic.

Kurt Waldheim was born on December 21, 1918, in Sankt Andra-Wordern, Austria. He was educated at Vienna's

Consular Academy and the University of Vienna, where he received a doctor of jurisprudence degree. His education was interrupted by his draft into the German Army, in which he served on the Russian front until 1941, when he was wounded. He then returned to the university, although some documents suggest that he was a German staff officer stationed in the Balkans from 1942 to 1945.

In his later autobiography, Waldheim claimed that although a junior officer in a German SA unit before 1939, he had spent most of the war in Vienna recuperating from wounds and studying law. After the war, he entered the Austrian Foreign Service and served in numerous capacities both at home and abroad: a delegate to the negotiations on the Austrian State Treaty, the director general for political affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ambassador to Canada, and foreign affairs minister. He served as Austria's permanent representative to the UN from 1964 to 1968 and again from 1970 until 1971. In that year he failed in his effort to become Austria's president but was, instead, elected as secretary-general of the UN, a post he held until 1982, when he was defeated in an effort to win a third term of office.

As secretary-general, Waldheim visited areas of special concern to the UN that included South Africa, Cyprus, and the Middle East. In 1973 he took part in the Paris International Conference on Vietnam, and in December that year he presided over the first meeting of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East. In 1974 he visited the Sudano-Saharan area of Africa, where the UN had undertaken major relief efforts to assist victims of a prolonged drought. Overall, Waldheim's tenure was efficient but less dynamic than that of some of his predecessors.

Waldheim began his second campaign to become president of Austria in late 1985. He had served two terms as UN secretary-general and established a reputation as a man of peace. His attempt to win a third term in 1981, however, was blocked by the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Waldheim retired to Vienna. He published his autobiography in 1985.

Despite Waldheim's presence, the Austrian presidential campaign of 1986 merited little international attention until *Profil*, an Austrian news magazine, printed a series of articles alleging that Waldheim had omitted crucial details about his service in the German Army during World War II and in his presidential campaign. *Profil* revealed evidence that Waldheim had spent considerable time on duty in the Balkans and in Salonika, Greece. Although the magazine did not accuse Waldheim directly, it did note that his unit had murdered Yugoslav partisans and deported Jews to concentration

camps during his service. Waldheim responded by saying that he had no knowledge of any atrocities and had simply “done his duty as a soldier.”

The election instantly attracted controversy. The allegations regarding his possible complicity in Nazi war crimes, including vicious reprisals against Yugoslav partisans and the deportation of Jews, prompted sympathy for Waldheim in Austria. This sympathy was instrumental in helping him become elected, at the same time also inspiring an antisemitic backlash. The claims prompted the U.S. government to declare Waldheim an undesirable alien; as a consequence, he became the first head of state ever placed on a watch list of undesirable aliens and was denied entry to the United States. He was an international pariah for most of his tenure; many other states also treated Waldheim as *persona non grata*, leaving Austria isolated internationally. Only the Vatican, the Soviet Union and its satellites, and a few Middle Eastern states allowed Waldheim to visit.

Waldheim appointed a historical commission to investigate the allegations against him. The commission found no evidence that he was directly involved in war crimes but did conclude that he had to have been aware of crimes committed while he served in the Balkans. The commission also determined that Waldheim had done nothing to stop the atrocities and that he lied about his military career in an effort to avoid exposure. Waldheim claimed the report was full of “manipulations, lies, and forgeries” and asserted that his problems were caused by an international Jewish conspiracy. Nevertheless, he had been included on a list of war criminals compiled by the Yugoslav government after the war, although he was never prosecuted.

The affair quickly became the focus of the presidential election. Older Austrians generally supported Waldheim, claiming that Austria was a victim of Nazi aggression and an unwilling participant in the war. Younger Austrians, however, tended to be more suspicious and called for an open discussion of Austria’s Nazi past. Amid growing tensions, the Austrian government launched its own investigation, which largely exonerated Waldheim. Where the U.S. report had concluded that there was “a *prima facie* case that Kurt Waldheim assisted or otherwise participated in the persecution of persons because of race, religion, national origin or political opinion,” these new findings found no evidence that Waldheim had participated in war crimes. At the same time, the report concluded that as a translator in the unit, Waldheim must have had knowledge of the atrocities.

After heated debate and a run-off election, Waldheim emerged as president of Austria in June 1986, winning 54%

of the vote. Waldheim remained in office after this ambiguous finding, claiming that he did so in the best interests of the Austrian people. He also went on Austrian television to plead his case. He admitted that Austrians had played some role in the Holocaust, which he described as one of the greatest tragedies in human history, and he condemned fanaticism and intolerance in all forms. The international community remained unmoved. Whether or not Waldheim affected Austrian opinion is hard to say. He chose not to run for reelection in 1992. At the very least, Waldheim gave Austrians the chance to discuss a complicated past that had been kept under wraps for nearly 50 years.

Kurt Waldheim served as president of Austria, a primarily ceremonial position, for six years. In July 1992 he was succeeded by Thomas Klestil. Waldheim died in Vienna on June 14, 2007.

TIMOTHY C. DOWLING AND PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Austria; Yugoslavia

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Wallenberg, Raoul

Raoul Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat who volunteered to be sent to Budapest in 1944 on behalf of the World Jewish Congress and the American War Refugee Board in order to save Jews threatened with deportation at the hands of the Nazis.

He was born in Stockholm on August 4, 1912, to Raoul Oscar Wallenberg, a Swedish naval officer, and Maj (Maria) Sofia Wallenberg, *née* Wising. The large Wallenberg family was one of the most famous in Sweden, comprising bankers, diplomats, industrialists, and politicians over several generations. Wallenberg’s great-great grandfather, a man named Benedicks, was Jewish, a fact of which Wallenberg remained proud all his life.

After completing his compulsory military service, Wallenberg studied for a year in Paris before being sent, in 1931, to the University of Michigan, where he studied architecture



Raoul Wallenberg was a Swedish businessman and diplomatic envoy, widely credited for saving the lives of tens of thousands of Jews in Nazi-occupied Hungary during 1944. The protective passports he issued were an important element in his life-saving activities, as were the arrangements he made to shelter Jews in buildings which, through a diplomatic sleight-of-hand, he managed to reclassify as Swedish sovereign territory. Wallenberg is one of the iconic rescuers of Jews among the thousands named as Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem. This undated photo shows Wallenberg just before his disappearance in 1945 after being summoned to Soviet military occupation headquarters in Budapest. (Staff/AFP/Getty Images)

and graduated with honors, winning a university medal for academic excellence. Upon returning to Sweden he learned that his American degree did not qualify him to practice as an architect, so he spent the next period of his life wandering through a variety of occupations in various places around the world: in a construction company in Cape Town, South Africa; at a branch office of the Holland Bank in Haifa, Palestine; and finally at an import-export company back in Sweden, the Central European Trading Company. Within eight months he was a joint owner of the company and its international director.

This not only gave him administrative experience but it also enabled him to ascertain at firsthand the nature of conditions in Germany and occupied countries under the Nazis. As a necessary part of his business dealings he also made numerous trips to Hungary. He learned to speak Hungarian and made many contacts in Budapest that would soon be useful for the purpose of saving lives.

As the war progressed and Hungary's earlier successes began to slip away, Germany decided that its ally should be occupied to ensure that it would not surrender as Italy had in September 1943. Accordingly, on March 19, 1944, German troops invaded Hungary and a pro-German puppet government was installed. For the Jews of Hungary—the last large Jewish community thus far untouched by the Holocaust—Nazi antisemitic measures now arrived like the eruption at Vesuvius. By May 1944 the mass deportation of Hungary's Jews was in full swing, at the average rate of 12,000 each day.

In 1944 the United States established the War Refugee Board (WRB) to try to save the remaining Jews of Europe. The WRB soon learned that attempts were being made in Sweden to rescue Hungary's Jews, and a committee was established in Stockholm at its behest to discuss suitable candidates to lead a rescue mission in Budapest. Initially, Count Folke Bernadotte was proposed, but he was rejected by the Hungarian government as someone with whom they could do business. The next to be suggested was Raoul Wallenberg, already known to many Hungarians. He was approved by the committee and by the end of June 1944 was appointed first secretary at the Swedish legation in Budapest. His was a singular mission: to start a rescue operation.

Wallenberg took up his position in July 1944, with the campaign against the Jews of Hungary at its height. Already more than 400,000 Jews from the countryside had been deported, mostly to Auschwitz. Budapest was about to be hit.

Together with fellow Swedish diplomat Per Anger, and building on the precedent established by the Swiss vice-consul in Budapest, Carl Lutz, he issued "protective passports" (*Schutzpässe*), which placed those holding them under Swedish protection. The Swedish legation negotiated with the Germans for the bearers to be treated as Swedish citizens and exempt from wearing the yellow star. In no time at all, more than 700 passes had been issued, though Wallenberg saw an immediate need for a much greater number. He requested that the Swedish government send more of everything: people, money, and anything that could aid in the creation of a rescue infrastructure.

Even before Wallenberg had commenced his activities, Valdemar Langlet, the head of the Swedish Red Cross in

Hungary, had already been finding ways to assist the Swedish legation. He rented buildings for the Red Cross and put Swedish signs on them to give the impression that somehow they were official diplomatic premises. Wallenberg then capitalized on this by renting 32 additional buildings and declared them to have diplomatic immunity. Adorned with Swedish flags, they were then used as hiding places for Jews. It is estimated that these buildings eventually housed well over 10,000 people.

Wallenberg did not use traditional diplomacy, and he employed everything from bribes to threats of extortion to save lives. One way was by employing Jews in the Swedish legation offices. By the time the war ended, at least 340 Jews “worked” in the embassy, with another 700 living in the building.

His “protective passes,” moreover, had no official status whatsoever, though he created credibility for them through the confident manner in which he introduced them—such that Hungarian and German officials accepted them without demur. At the start of his mission, he was only given authority to issue 1,500 passes, but without waiting to be told otherwise he negotiated a further 1,000 and then kept going until he had raised the quota to 4,500.

With the war coming to an end and the Soviet Red Army advancing on Budapest during the late fall of 1944, the Nazis intensified their efforts to deport the remaining Jews. Wallenberg went to train stations from where Jews were to embark, entered railcars with Jews inside, and handed out protective passes. He stood on tracks to make trains stop, after which he repeated the exercise. He was even known to climb on board carriage roofs and stuff protective passes into the air vents for the people inside.

When the Nazis began to deport large numbers of Jews on death marches, in conditions where freezing and starving Jews were subjected to brutal conditions, Wallenberg, like Lutz, Anger, and other members of the diplomatic community, was there too. He accompanied the death marches for as long as he could, handing out more protective passes and demanding that those holding them be freed.

On January 17, 1945, with the end of the war nigh and the liberation of Budapest close, Wallenberg was arrested by Soviet troops on charges of espionage. On his way out of the capital, he stopped at one of the “Swedish Houses” to give its inhabitants a final farewell. He was never seen in public again. Just why he was arrested has ever since remained a mystery, though one explanation is that through his work with the War Refugee Board the Soviets considered him to be an agent of the U.S. government and, therefore, a spy.

Moreover, his fate was for a long time a matter of intense speculation. The actual locations of his imprisonment were never confirmed, and all information about his detention is essentially speculation. Even the date and circumstances of his death are uncertain. At first, the Soviet government denied that he had been arrested at all; then, when they confirmed this, they insisted that he died of a heart attack on July 17, 1947. After the downfall of communism and the end of the Cold War, a former member of the Politburo, Alexander Yakovlev, announced in 2000 that Wallenberg had been executed by the KGB in 1947 in Moscow’s Lubyanka prison.

It has been estimated that Raoul Wallenberg’s actions in Budapest during 1944 and early January 1945 saved the lives of more than 30,000 Jews. His influence, however, far exceeded this number. When Soviet forces liberated Budapest in February 1945, more than 100,000 Jews were still alive, mostly as a result of his efforts and those of other members of the diplomatic community, which, it has been argued, he was instrumental in mobilizing. According to Wallenberg’s colleague at the Swedish embassy, Per Anger, Wallenberg is therefore responsible for saving those 100,000 lives.

Due to his efforts on behalf of the Hungarian Jews, Raoul Wallenberg has been celebrated throughout the world. He has been awarded the status of honorary citizen in the United States, Canada, Hungary, Australia, and Israel, and on November 26, 1963, Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous among the Nations. Monuments have been dedicated to him, with streets and squares named in his honor, and when the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was being built in Washington, D.C., its street location was designated as 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Hungary; Lantos, Tom; Lutz, Carl; Perlasca, Giorgio; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations; Soos, Géza; Sweden; War Refugee Board

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Wannsee Conference

A day-long conference of German leaders called to discuss the bureaucratic demands of arranging for the emigration, deportation, concentration, and elimination of the Jewish population within Germany and the occupied territories.

The conferees also established policies for the treatment of Jews who were of mixed blood or in mixed marriages.

The conference was convened and organized by the head of the SD, Reinhard Heydrich, who invited 15 top Nazi bureaucrats and SS officers to plan for the concentration of Jews and their execution. It took place in the Wannsee villa in suburban Berlin on January 20, 1942.

The German invasion and occupation of much of Eastern Europe, especially Poland and the Soviet Union, presented a demographic challenge to the German government because of the large Jewish populations in those areas, especially in Poland and the western Soviet Union. By the end of 1941, the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, recognized that deportation and emigration were no longer adequate for the task of eliminating the Jewish population. He authorized Heydrich to create the bureaucracy and arrangements for a “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). The Wannsee Conference dealt with these matters. Jews from across Europe were to be “evacuated” to the east, with the “Jewish question” to be resolved first in the area of Poland known by the Nazis as the *Generalgouvernement*.

Those attending the conference were: Reinhard Heydrich (head of the RSHA), presiding; Adolf Eichmann (Reich Main Security Office, IV B4), in attendance; Alfred Mayer and Georg Leibbrandt (Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories); Wilhelm Stuckart (Reich Ministry for the Interior); Erich Neumann (Head of the Office of the Four Year Plan); Roland Freisler (Reich Ministry of Justice); Josef Bühler (Director General of the *Generalgouvernement*); Martin Luther (Foreign Office); Gerhard Klopfer (NSDAP Chancellery); Friedrich Wilhelm Kritzinger (Reich Chancellery); Otto Hofmann (Race and Settlement Main Office); Heinrich Müller (Reich Main Security Office); SS-Obersturmbannführer; Karl Eberhard Schöngarth (Commander SD / SiPO Kraków); and Rudolf Lange (Commander SD Latvia).

The organizational challenges of identifying, transporting, housing, and eventually eliminating what the conferees overestimated as a population of 11 million European Jews (this number included those in neutral nations, such as Ireland, Turkey, and Switzerland) demanded that the Nazi government establish an infrastructure and clear procedures for implementing the goals of the regime. Although much of the discussion focused on forced emigration and deportation to Eastern Europe, the underlying objective of the conference was initiating, systematizing, and coordinating the “Final Solution.” Specific topics discussed at the conference included estimating the size of Europe’s Jewish population, organizing a systematic sweep of Europe to eliminate all

Jewish remnants, and confronting local resistance in occupied countries.

Using the Nazi racial laws (the Nuremberg Laws), those attending the Wannsee Conference established criteria for dealing with mixed-blood Jews (so-called “Mischlinge”) and mixed marriages. Mischlinge were divided into a complex classification system based on “Mixed Blood of First Degree” and “Mixed Blood of Second Degree.” This juridical understanding of race was designed to bring about the complete extermination of Jews in Europe.

A stenographer carefully documented the day’s events in a complete record of the conversations, of which Adolf Eichmann served as conference secretary. At the end of the meeting, Heydrich gave Eichmann strict instructions about how to draw up the minutes, based on the stenographer’s record. They were to be carefully drafted, using coded, euphemistic language. The result was a short summary document in which the purposes of the meeting were outlined, together with conclusions as to next steps. Only a very limited number of copies of these minutes was sent out, with instructions that all were to be destroyed later. One, however, remained; in 1947 Martin Luther’s copy was located, enabling the story of the conference at Wannsee to be reconstructed. Then, at the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem, many of the conclusions drawn by earlier researchers were confirmed and extended by Eichmann’s own testimony.

Today, the location of the conference, the villa Wannsee, is a Holocaust memorial and museum known as the Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz (House of the Wannsee Conference). It was opened on January 20, 1992—the fiftieth anniversary of the conference.

JAMES CARROLL

See also: *Conspiracy*; Desk Killers; Eichmann, Adolf; Final Solution; Freisler, Roland; Heydrich, Reinhard; Himmler, Heinrich; Lange, Rudolf; Mischling; Müller, Heinrich; Nuremberg Laws; Nuremberg Trials; Schöngarth, Karl Eberhard; Stuckart, Wilhelm

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War Crimes

The broad concept known as “war crimes” is a legal category within international law that identifies punishable offenses for violations of the generally accepted laws of war. Such laws have been evolving for many centuries and received an early codification in the work of the Dutch philosopher Hugo Grotius, particularly his 1625 book *De iure belli ac pacis* (*On the Laws of War and Peace*).

The laws of war underwent something of a revolution from the late 19th century onward, beginning with the first Geneva Convention in 1864 (and subsequent Geneva treaties in 1906, 1929, and 1949, with three protocols in 1949, 1977, and 2005). Other important international legislation pertaining to war crimes includes the two Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907; the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928; and an array of multilateral agreements, treaties and conventions passed by the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Where the Holocaust is concerned, confusion exists in relation to the application of the term war crimes owing to the fact that antisemitic actions undertaken by the Nazis were for the most part carried out against civilians, not in combat, and often by paramilitary or nonmilitary forces such as the SS (though the Waffen-SS does fit the category of “military”). Often, the related term “crimes against humanity” is more appropriate in describing Nazi mass murders of Jews—though an even more specific legal construct, genocide, is probably the most appropriate descriptor for what the Nazis did to the Jews from mid-1941 onward.

As a legal concept, the notion of war crimes has been further refined through the development of important case-law precedents; first, through the International Military Tribunals at Nuremberg and Tokyo in the aftermath of World War II; and second, through the ad hoc courts set up to cover the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1999 (the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) and the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 (the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda). On July 1, 2002, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established after a lengthy period of negotiation. Sitting in The Hague, its role is to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Though the ICC did not possess any retrospective jurisdiction when it was established, it is generally held throughout the world that it represents the best hope for the prosecution

of war crimes in the future, and for creating a culture that will reject such crimes as an option available for armies, states, and individuals in times of war.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Crimes against Humanity; Csatory, Lazlo; Ferencz, Benjamin; Flick Case; Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial; Globke Trial; Grese, Irma; Hungarian War Crimes Prosecutions; I.G. Farben Case; Judges’ Trial; Koch Trial; Krupp Case; London Charter Agreement; Majdanek; Manstein Trial; Mauthausen Trial; Moscow Declaration; Netherlands Tribunals; Nuremberg Principles; Nuremberg Trials; Sauckel, Fritz; Speer, Albert; UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; Zuehlke Trial; Zyklon-B Case, 1946

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War Refugee Board

On January 22, 1944, U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9417, establishing the War Refugee Board (WRB). Roosevelt’s action created a board that consisted of top U.S. cabinet officials: the secretaries of state, war, and the Treasury. During its brief lifetime, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, Secretaries of State Cordell Hull and Edward Stettinius, and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau served on the War Refugee Board.

Roosevelt’s executive order instructed the board to develop plans to rescue and provide relief for the victims of Nazi tyranny. The War Refugee Board, with cooperation from the State, War, and Treasury Departments, worked with both foreign governments and private relief institutions to accomplish their mission. John W. Phele was the first executive director of the WRB. Phele, a part of Morgenthau’s team at the Department of the Treasury, created its basic policies and planned for the rescue and relief operations. He was, however, a part-time director. In Washington, D.C., the War Refugee Board had a small administrative staff and relied on assistance from the larger affiliated departments. In January 1945 Phele resigned from the board and was replaced by a full-time administrator, William O’Dwyer.

The WRB sent special representatives to various parts of Europe (areas conquered by the Allies as well as neutral countries such as Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden) to initiate

immediate efforts to provide rescue and relief. Neutral countries were urged to publicly announce the presence of safe havens inside their borders. The board worked with the International Red Cross, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (founded in 1938), and, in 1945, with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to give help to refugees.

The board, through various surreptitious methods, also used underground forces in Nazi-occupied territories to hide refugees from German forces and helped them to escape to Allied areas or neutral countries. WRB-sponsored operatives used a variety of means, including the issuing of false identification papers and bribery, to assist tens of thousands of refugees.

Sadly, the War Refugee Board's accomplishments were limited. The establishment of the board was too late in the war effort to save millions of Europeans doomed to die in labor and death camps. In addition, the board did not have all the administrative and diplomatic tools necessary to accomplish its tasks in an effective manner. In the final analysis, historians will always debate the nature of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's response to the Holocaust. From a historiographical standpoint the scholarly assessment ranges from a belated but wholehearted effort, to complete abandonment.

Despite the valid criticism of the War Refugee Board's record, it must be remembered that it did save tens of thousands of lives by its actions. More than 200,000 Jews were saved by WRB efforts. Romania, for example, provided a safe zone for 48,000 Jews. In Bulgaria, 120,000 Jews were spared deportation to Nazi camps. Ultimately, these refugees fled from the Balkans through Turkey into Palestine.

In September 1945 the new president—Harry S. Truman—signed another executive order (No. 9614) that ended the War Refugee Board. The board issued a “Final Summary Report” the same month. In November 1945 Rabbi Jonah Wise, vice-chairman of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, wrote a letter to the membership of his organization commenting that despite the end of the War Refugee Board, its work was not finished. Wise wrote that the people rescued from the death grip of the Nazis needed to be saved from “hunger and other dangers” in the perilous postwar world. In the wake of the catastrophic tidal wave of the Nazi period in Europe, Wise's thoughtful call to the American Jewish community and others to help displaced Jews who had nothing but the clothes on their back would take years to complete.

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See also: International Committee of the Red Cross; United States Response to the Holocaust; Wallenberg, Raoul

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Warsaw Ghetto

Prior to the onset of World War II, the Jewish community of Poland was among the largest in the world. Warsaw, Poland's capital, was home to one of the world's most numerically flourishing Jewish communities and was comprised of an extremely rich diversity of religious and secular traditions, from those who were traditionally observant (Orthodox) to those who were progressively observant (Reform), as well as a plethora of secular scholars, intellectuals, and *litterateurs*.

In the context of the Holocaust, however, it is well to keep in mind the historic Jewish religious concept of *Kiddush Ha-Shem* (Sanctification of the Divine Name of God), the concept of martyrdom by which Jews went to their deaths refusing to surrender their commitment to their faith and its values, all the while knowing that such refusals to surrender were guarantors of death. (It should also be noted that the Nazi “contribution” to the “journey of antisemitism” was the injection of a racial/biological hatred by which there were, ultimately, no avenues of escape such as conversion or emigration.)

The Jews of Warsaw were confined to the imprisonment of the ghetto on November 16, 1940, and reached a maximum population of 450,000 children, women, and men. That they actively continued and created both a rich cultural and religious life during this time—what some have labeled a form of “spiritual resistance”—is tribute to their ongoing commitments as a distinct people and unique faith community. This active social, cultural, and religious life thus became, in the words of Rabbi Isaac Nissenbaum (himself a victim of one of the Nazi *Aktionen*), a profound expression of *Kiddush Ha-Hayyim* (Sanctification of Life).

Soon after their confinement after the initial assault and conquest of Poland and the beginnings of World War II on

September 1, 1939, the Nazis imposed a Jewish Council, or *Judenrat*, on the community. Under the leadership of Adam Czerniakow—who would commit suicide rather than turn over lists of Jewish children to their murderers in the *Grossaktion Warschau*—synagogues were functioning, schools (both religious and secular) for children of all ages were in place, and adult education classes and cultural events (lectures, symphony concerts, string quartets, poetry readings, choral concerts, literary readings, and theatrical performances) were calendared and publicized. From an early date, all such activities were increasingly banned by the Nazi overlords, and as a consequence (and so as not to be defeated), these activities went underground until the massive roundups and deportations that began in July 1942 and continued to September the same year. Though books were later burned as fuel to warm apartment homes during the brutal Polish winters, libraries were also organized and the Jews regularly made use of them, returning books read so others could momentarily escape from their living hells, and until the final liquidation of the ghetto beginning on Passover Eve, April 19, 1943.

As regards the religious communities, both Orthodox and Reform, holy days were observed with more than 600 groups engaged in prayer in 1940. Passover Seders were held, Yom Kippur fast days were observed, and even Chanukah celebrations, with its emphasis for children, were held. Rabbinical students and others continued to study the Talmud—the central and authoritative texts of postbiblical rabbinic Judaism—as well as the nonlegal Judaic materials. Many of the rabbis continued to teach and give sermons during worship, classes, and other opportunities. For example, Rabbi Kalonymus Shapira, former chief rabbi of Piaseczno, also a victim of Nazi perfidy, would regularly speak publicly while attempting to bolster the faith of his community. Of equal importance regarding the lives of religious Jews was the work of Rabbi Shimon Huberband, *Kiddush HaShem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland during the Holocaust*, translated into English by David Fishman in 1987. His work was part of the collection of artifacts organized by historian and social activist Emanuel Ringelblum and his circle, attempting to document the day-to-day lives and experiences of the ghetto dwellers under the title *Oneg Shabbat* between September 1939, and January 1943.

The entire collection of Ringelblum's archives was buried in several milk cans and numerous metal boxes. In 1946 ten of the metal boxes were found, and in 1950 two of the milk cans were unearthed. Whatever other boxes there were, as well as the third milk can, have never been discovered. Even

partially, it remains the best journey into the reality of those who lived those years but would later be deported to their deaths. Less well known but nonetheless important, however, was the Warsaw Ghetto's "forgotten chronicler," Rabbi Ruben Feldshu, whose pen name, "Ben Shem," translates as "son of the Name (of God)," author of an 800-plus page diary detailing daily life in the ghetto, transcribed from Yiddish into Hebrew, published only in part and yet to be fully published in either Yiddish, Hebrew, or English.

On the educational front, classes in secular subjects as well as Hebrew-language and Yiddish-language instruction were carefully organized, initially in classroom settings, but later in homes as well. Students at all ages attended those classes, perhaps the only occasions for hope in their vulnerable existences as they witnessed their parents' and friends' murders, and saw themselves wasting away as food sources and caloric intakes were regularly diminished by Nazi design. Even without proper school materials (textbooks, paper, pencils, etc.), teachers taught, often from memory, and students learned.

Particularly noteworthy was the work of Janusz Korczak (born Henryk Goldszmit), educator and pediatrician, and director of the orphanage in the ghetto. Refusing to escape, he ultimately led his students to the trains for deportation to Treblinka, where he was murdered in 1942.

Not to be outdone, and central to keeping up the hope and lives of those within the Warsaw Ghetto, were the cultural activities for adults organized by the leading scholars, intellectuals, artists, and musicians who found themselves imprisoned there and who would later become its victims. Among those murdered were poet and dramatist Itzhak Katzenelson, violinist and conductor Simon Pullman, poet and actor Wladyslaw Szlengel, and writer and translator Lidia Zamenhof, among others of equal repute.

Summing up the experience of the Jews of Warsaw, in 1998 scholar Nehemiah Polen wrote that the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto "truly lived a heroic existence: in the face of the enemy's efforts to destroy them from within, they worked valiantly to preserve their cultural and religious traditions, never giving up hope that the world would one day emerge from darkness." His words still ring true, as he concluded, "In a very real sense, we are the beneficiaries of their heroic struggle."

STEVEN LEONARD JACOBS

See also: Czerniakow, Adam; Ghettos; Globocnik, Odilo; *Holocaust*; Jewish Resistance; Katzenelson, Itzhak; Korczak, Janusz; Łódź Ghetto; Majdanek; Mann, Franciszka; Milchberg, Irving; Music and the Holocaust; Norrman, Sven; Oneg Shabbat;

The Pianist; Ringelblum, Emanuel; Ringelblum Archives; *Shoah*; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Wolff, Karl; Żabiński, Jan; Zuckerman, Yitzhak

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Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

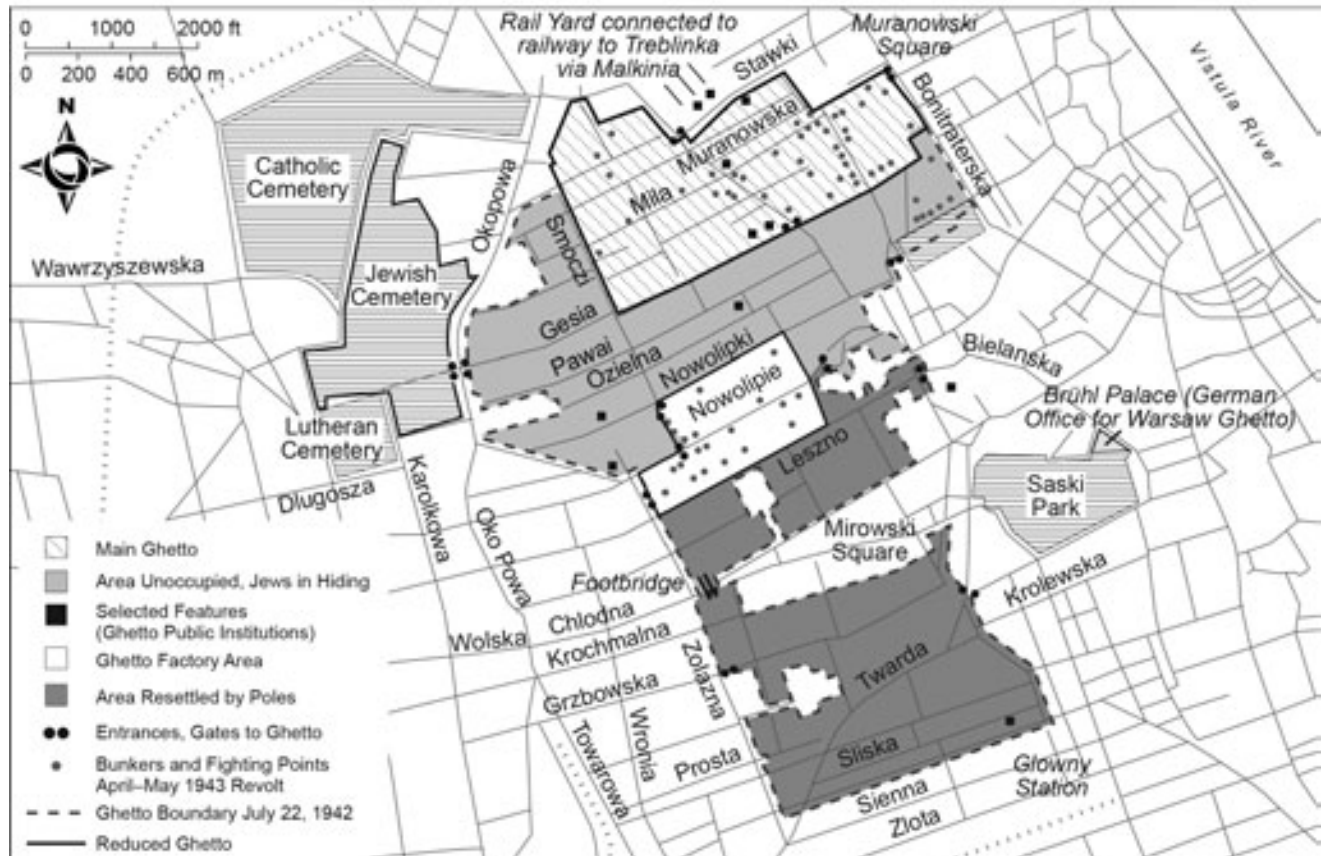
Through the summer of 1942, the Germans deported or executed more than 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, leaving between 55,000 to 60,000 there. Aware through authenticated reports of the mass killings that were taking place of the deported, and resolved to fight back, inhabitants of the ghetto formed the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, or ŻOB) and prepared to obstruct future German deportations.

Lightly armed and poorly trained for combat, the ŻOB saw its first action against a small German *Aktion* in January



The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was the 1943 act of Jewish resistance against the Nazis. It began on April 19, 1943, and lasted for over a month. It was the largest single revolt by Jews during World War II and resulted in the total destruction of the ghetto. The intention of the uprising was not to defeat the Nazis but to delay their final effort to transport those still remaining in the ghetto to their certain death at Treblinka. The Nazi commander of the SS, Jürgen Stroop, brought the revolt to an end by ordering that the entire ghetto was to be burned, block by block, until he could pronounce that “the Warsaw Ghetto is no more!” (AP Photo)

WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING 1943



1943. Surprised by the opposition and suffering several casualties, the Germans withdrew from the ghetto to regroup their forces and evaluate the situation.

Shocked that the Jews would arm themselves and fight another round of deportations, the Germans returned in force in April to liquidate the ghetto completely. On April 19, 1943, Waffen-SS, police, and Wehrmacht units moved into the ghetto to complete the January operation. To ensure success, they sent in columns of troops, a tank, and two armored cars. Shortly after they began to fan out to round up the Jews, the ŻOB struck with pistol fire, homemade hand grenades, and Molotov cocktails. The small ŻOB force was reinforced by another 250 fighters attached to a separate group, the Jewish Military Union (ZZW). The battle, beginning on April 19, lasted until May 16.

Despite facing an overwhelming superiority of men and matériel, the ŻOB forced the Nazis from the ghetto within two hours, a noteworthy, though short-lived, achievement. Chagrined and angered by the resistance, SS General Jürgen

Stroop, the police chief of Warsaw, ordered his troops back into the ghetto. Using their superior firepower, they forced the ŻOB fighters from the rooftops and into the buildings and below the streets into the sewers. Desiring to force a rapid conclusion to the Aktion, Stroop petitioned and received permission from SS-Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler to use whatever means necessary to eliminate resistance. Unable to quell the ŻOB, the Germans set about systematically destroying each building in the ghetto with explosives and fire.

The commander of the ŻOB forces, Mordecai Anielewicz, was killed with many of his inner circle on May 8, when the command bunker at Miła 18 was destroyed. In a communiqué dated April 23 to another leader of the resistance movement, Yitzhak Zuckerman (who was at that time outside the ghetto), Anielewicz wrote, “my life’s dream has been realized: I have lived to see Jewish defense in the ghetto in all its greatness and glory.” Despite the losses, members of the ŻOB continued to engage the German troops. Increasingly frustrated

by his units' inability to subdue the resistance completely, Stroop ordered that the main synagogue be destroyed as a signal that the reduction of the ghetto was at an end. On May 16, with sporadic fighting continuing as small bands of ŻOB fighters persistently engaged the German troops, Stroop declared the operation complete when Warsaw's most prominent synagogue collapsed into a pile of rubble. In his report to his superiors, he acknowledged that 16 of his troops were killed and 85 wounded. Deaths among the ghetto's inhabitants ran into the thousands, with roughly 50,000 taken into custody and either shot outright or deported.

Although some members of the underground Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, or AK) assisted the ŻOB during the ghetto uprising, the majority did not participate in the fighting, waiting instead for their own planned revolt.

A leather-bound scrapbook consisting of German memoranda and pictures of the devastation was later presented directly to Heinrich Himmler, General Friedrich Krupp, and Stroop himself. Though not materially affecting either the outcome of war, nor the Nazi genocide of the Jews, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising remains the symbol of Jewish resistance to Nazi tyranny.

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See also: Anielewicz, Mordecai; Edelman, Marek; German Army, Role in the Holocaust; Gutman, Israel; Himmler, Heinrich; Jewish Fighting Organization; Kaplan, Chaim A.; Karski, Jan; Lubetkin, Zivia; Meed, Vladka; Milchberg, Irving; Oneg Shabbat; Operation Harvest Festival; Resistance Movements; Stroop, Jürgen; *Uprising*; Warsaw Ghetto; Zuckerman, Yitzhak; Zygielbojm, Shmuel

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Warsaw Rising

The Warsaw Rising was an attempt by Polish insurgents to gain control of the city of Warsaw from the Germans, preparatory to holding it prior to a Red Army advance that would liberate the entire region and drive the Nazis out altogether. During the revolt, the Poles generated fierce resistance, which lasted from August 1 to October 2, 1944.

By the summer of 1944 the Red Army had pushed the German Army almost completely out of the Soviet Union,

and continued moving west across German-occupied Poland. The Soviets, however, had split with the London-based Polish government-in-exile and established their own communist provisional government. As the Soviet troops advanced, they disarmed the Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, or AK), a branch of the London-based government. On July 26, the London Poles ordered AK commander General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski to capture Warsaw from the Germans before the Soviets arrived.

The AK had around 40,000 fighters in Warsaw, and they were desperately short of arms and ammunition. Although they had some clandestine arms factories in the city, their total armament amounted to little more than 2,000 pistols, 1,000 rifles, 25,000 homemade grenades, and a handful of antitank rifles. The German garrison in Warsaw numbered more than 21,000 well-equipped, combat-experienced troops, including three Waffen-SS divisions and two Wehrmacht panzer divisions. Lieutenant General Reiner Stahel had command of German combat units around Warsaw.

Operation Burza (tempest) began on August 1, 1944. The lead units of the Red Army were only some 12 miles away, closing in on the east bank of the Vistula River. On the first day of the rising, the AK gained control of most of the west bank of the Vistula, but the Poles never managed to take the bridges. Fighting back almost immediately, the Germans took Warsaw's Old Town on August 2. By the next day, German reinforcements were pouring into the battle, and the Luftwaffe had begun round-the-clock bombing of the Polish-controlled areas.

The savage street fighting ground on for weeks, with the Polish insurgents using the city's sewers for lines of communication and as routes of escape. SS Chief Heinrich Himmler ordered that the entire city should be "razed to the ground" and all its inhabitants killed as an object lesson to all other cities under German occupation.

On September 10, Red Army units under General Konstantin Rokossovsky finally moved into Warsaw's Praga district on the east bank of the Vistula. After five days of heavy fighting, the Soviets consolidated their positions on the east bank, and then ceased to advance. Not only did the Soviets provide no further support to AK forces fighting desperately on the other side of the river, they also refused permission for Western Allied aircraft to land on Soviet airfields after making supply drops to the beleaguered insurgents. Under pressure from U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Soviets finally allowed a single wing of 110 U.S. B-17 bombers to refuel at Poltava for a supply drop on September 18.

On September 30, as the Germans systematically reduced the pocket of Polish resistance, Bor-Komorowski appointed General Leopold Okulicki as his successor in command of the AK. Bor-Komorowski and his surviving fighters finally surrendered on October 2, after 63 days of fierce resistance. Some 15,000 insurgents and 150,000 Polish civilians died during the rising. Another 700,000 of Warsaw's inhabitants were sent to concentration or slave labor camps, where 245,000 later died. Approximately 93% of the city was an unrecognizable pile of rubble.

The Germans lost about 10,000 killed during the fighting. Shortly after suppressing the rising, the German army withdrew from Warsaw at its own pace, and the Red Army followed it into the city. Soviet commanders later claimed that stiff German resistance and the lack of supplies had prevented them from giving the AK any more support. Many historians, however, have suggested that the Soviet commanders were following specific orders from their leader, Joseph Stalin, who wanted the German army to eliminate any Polish opposition to the establishment of a postwar communist government under Moscow's control.

DAVID T. ZABECKI

See also: Himmler, Heinrich; Ochota Massacre; Resistance Movements

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Wegner, Armin T.

Armin Theophil Wegner was one of the earliest voices to protest Adolf Hitler's treatment of the Jews and the only popular author in Nazi Germany to publicly remonstrate against it. Born on October 16, 1886, in the town of Elberfeld, Wuppertal, he was descended from an old aristocratic Prussian family with roots reaching back to the Crusades. He was educated in Zürich, Breslau, and Berlin, where he graduated with a doctorate in law. After graduating he took a range of jobs, but always had a love for writing. Already by

the age of 16 he had published his first book of poetry, and between 1909 and 1913 he established his reputation as one of Germany's most promising young poets.

With the outbreak of World War I he enlisted in the medical corps as a volunteer nurse in Poland and was decorated with an Iron Cross for assisting wounded troops under enemy fire. In April 1915 he was sent to the Ottoman Empire as a member of the German Sanitary Corps with the rank of second lieutenant. Wegner's unit was stationed along the Baghdad Railway in Syria and Mesopotamia, where he witnessed death marches of Armenians during the Armenian genocide.

Between July and August 1915 he investigated the massacres more closely, traveling throughout the region, speaking to a wide range of people, collecting documents, making notes, and photographing everything he saw. He managed to send some of this material to Germany and the United States, but disclosing what he saw was forbidden and Wegner was arrested by the Germans at the request of the Turks. In December 1916 he was recalled to Germany; although some of his photographs were confiscated and destroyed, he successfully smuggled out hundreds of negatives, which today provide an outstanding archive documenting and testifying to the veracity of the Armenian genocide.

In 1920 Wegner married German Jewish author Lola (Leonore) Landau and became an activist for pacifist movements. In 1921 he testified in court on behalf of Soghomon Tehlirian, an Armenian who shot and killed former Ottoman minister of the interior Mehmed Talaat Pasha in Berlin on March 15, 1921.

A new book published in 1922, *Der Schrei von Ararat (The Scream from Ararat)*, saw Wegner reach the peak of his popularity as a writer. In 1927 he and Lola made a trip to the Soviet Union and the Soviet republic of Armenia, and after this trip he wrote a new work, *Five Fingers over You*, in which he described the underlying political violence of Soviet communism and predicted the extremes of Stalinism.

Back in Germany, Wegner then witnessed the onset of Nazism, predicting that the antisemitic policies of the Nazis would lead to the destruction of Germany's reputation, possibly forever. Noting how no one appeared to be seeing what he was seeing, he felt he had to do something if he was not to become complicit in the silence surrounding the intensifying persecution of the Jews. In 1933 he wrote a long open letter to Adolf Hitler in which he denounced Nazi antisemitism, and with this he became one of the earliest voices protesting Hitler's treatment of the Jews. The letter was written a few days after the failed nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses

on April 1, 1933, but, despite its being an open letter, no newspaper in Germany was willing to publish it. As a result, Wegner forwarded it directly to Nazi Party headquarters in Munich.

The letter was received by the head of the party chancellery, Martin Bormann. A few weeks later Wegner was arrested by the Gestapo, imprisoned, and tortured brutally in the infamous Columbia House prison. He was then sent to concentration camps at Oranienburg, Börgermoor, and Lichtenburg; in all, he suffered imprisonment in seven camps and prisons before he was released and could flee to Rome, where he assumed the alias Percy Eckstein. After these experiences, he never felt at home again in Germany and remained in exile for the rest of his life.

On May 23, 1967, Yad Vashem recognized Armin Wegner as one of the Righteous among the Nations, and in 1968 he received an invitation to Armenia from the Catholics of All Armenians to be awarded the Order of Saint Gregory the Illuminator.

He died in Rome at the age of 92, on May 17, 1978, as it was said “virtually forgotten” by Germany. Some of his ashes were later taken to Armenia to be honored at a posthumous state funeral at Tsitsernakaberd, near the Armenian Genocide Memorial’s perpetual flame.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Bormann, Martin; Righteous among the Nations; Upstander

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Weidt, Otto

Otto Weidt was the owner of a Berlin workshop for the blind, in which he protected his Jewish workers against deportation during the Holocaust. He was born on May 2, 1883, to Max and Auguste Weidt, *née* Grell, in the north German city of Rostock. Upon finishing school he followed in his father’s footsteps and became a paperhanger. After the family moved to Berlin, he became involved in working-class politics, with

a special interest in anarchism. A hearing problem saw him avoid service during World War I, which was convenient in view of the fact that he was also a convinced pacifist.

Due to growing blindness, by the 1930s he was forced to abandon his work as a paperhanger, and instead learned the craft of brush making and broom binding. In 1936 he set up a brush- and broom-making workshop for the blind at Grossbeerenstrasse 92. In 1940 he moved to another premises at Rosenthalerstrasse 39 in central Berlin, where he applied for and was assigned a workforce from the Jewish Home for the Blind. Practically all his employees were blind, deaf, or mute—and Jewish.

His small factory was considered important for the war effort, with one of his bigger clients being the Wehrmacht. Having the factory classified as “vital,” therefore, enabled Weidt to continue in business with the workforce at his disposal, even though it was said that he never actually completed his orders for the army in full so as to keep the workshop operating. Up to 30 Jews were thus employed at any one time during the years between 1941 and 1943. Weidt also employed, as office workers, eight Jews without disabilities, which was, of course, strictly forbidden.

In the normal run of events, all Jewish labor had to be negotiated and approved through the labor employment office. Jews would for the most part be sent on forced labor rather than to civilian factories. Weidt, however, managed to pull this off through developing good relationships with the authorities, together with a mixture of bribery and flattery. In this way, he succeeded in keeping his workers and overriding the objections of government inspector Alfred Eschhaus, a notorious antisemite.

In 1942 the Gestapo began to pay careful attention to Weidt’s factory and started arresting and deporting his employees. He confronted them face-to-face over this, emphasizing his workers’ status as “protected” and producing appropriate documents (falsified, as it turned out), together with additional bribes. Of greatest use in the short term, perhaps, was a secure hiding place he created for his workers at the rear of the factory.

Once, when the Gestapo had arrested several of his workers, he went in person to where they were being held near the ancient Jewish cemetery on Grosse Hamburger Strasse. Facing down the SS officers guarding them, the half-blind Weidt succeeded in securing their release at the last minute. Like Moses leading the children of Israel, he then led the group of blind and deaf Jews, walking through the streets of Berlin all wearing their Jewish stars, back to the workshop on Rosenthalerstrasse.

When he was unable to secure the release of others who were deported to Theresienstadt with their families, Weidt made sure they were supported and somehow sustained. At considerable expense, he organized a supply of food parcels for up to 25 people and arranged for them to be delivered to the camp. All in all, more than 150 parcels arrived.

When Weidt received a tipoff that a major pogrom against the last Jews in Berlin was about to take place on February 27, 1943—the so-called *Fabrikaktion* (“Factory Action”)—he made sure to keep the workshop closed so as not to present the Gestapo with a convenient concentration of Jews all in one place. He was, however, helpless to stop them being arrested in their homes, and many were deported to their deaths.

Among those Weidt managed to save were Inge Deutschkron and Alice Licht, two sighted women who worked in the office, and Hans Israelowicz, who was arrested and imprisoned in the Jewish community building at Rosenstrasse 2–4 until the protest by the non-Jewish wives and mothers of those inside managed to get them released in March 1943.

Alice Licht was one of those who went to Theresienstadt (in her case, to accompany her deported parents), and whom Weidt supported through the provision of food parcels. When she was later deported to Auschwitz, Weidt, pretending to be on a business trip, actually went to the camp in June 1944 in an attempt to help her. Unable to gain access, he hid clothes and money for her nearby. When the inmates of the subcamp in which she was working were taken on a death march, Alice made her escape and eventually returned to Berlin in January 1945. She then lived in hiding with the Weidt family until the end of the war. Her parents never returned.

Weidt managed to obtain an Aryan work permit for Inge Deutschkron from a prostitute. This permit, unfortunately, had to be discarded three months later when the police arrested the prostitute, but in the meantime Inge managed to survive and find a safe space for herself working in the Weidt workshop.

After the war Otto Weidt established an orphanage for child survivors and a retirement home for those who were elderly. The Otto Weidt workshop remained functioning until 1952, when East Berlin communist police closed it down. By that stage, owing to Otto Weidt’s death of heart failure on December 22, 1947, it was managed by his widow, Else. At the time of his death, Otto Weidt was 64 years of age.

On September 7, 1971, Yad Vashem recognized Otto Weidt posthumously as one of the Righteous among the Nations, and in 1993 Inge Deutschkron affixed a plaque

honoring him on the site of the workshop. In 1999 a museum was opened there, the Museum Blindenwerkstatt Otto Weidt. Since 2005 this has been administered by Berlin’s German Resistance Memorial Center (Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand).

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Fabrikaktion; Gestapo; Krützfeld, Wilhelm; Rescuers of Jews; Righteous among the Nations

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Weimar Republic

The Weimar Republic is the name given to the government of Germany during the period between World War I and the beginning of the Nazi regime. It was a democratic, liberal government, and as such was an anomaly in German history up to that point.

On October 28, 1918, by which time it was clear that Germany was about to lose World War I, sailors stationed at the Kiel naval base refused to obey orders to prepare for a final—and no doubt disastrous—battle with Britain’s Royal Navy. The Kiel Mutiny was thus the beginning of what became the German Revolution of 1918 (November 1918–August 1919) that would ultimately lead to a dramatic change in the German political structure. It was from this revolution that the Weimar Republic was born.

The revolution, which spread throughout Germany, put great pressure on Kaiser Wilhelm II to abdicate, which he did against his will on November 8, 1918. The next day the Weimar Republic was proclaimed with Friedrich Ebert, leader of Germany’s Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, or SPD), as its chancellor. Two days later, on November 11, the armistice ending World War I was signed.

Before elections were held on January 19, 1919, to select a National Assembly, Germany found itself confronted with a radical leftist coup attempt by the *Spartakusbund* (Spartacists) movement that sought a communist takeover of Berlin. It ultimately failed, in part because of the ferocity of the *Freikorps* (Free Corps), a paramilitary group made up primarily of disenfranchised soldiers returned from the defeat in World War I. The Spartacists would regroup and be renamed

the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (Communist Party of Germany, KPD).

The elections that followed for the National Assembly resulted in the SPD receiving the largest percentage of votes and forming a governing coalition with the German Democratic Party (*Deutsche Demokratische Partei*, DDP) and the Center Party (*Deutsche Zentrumspartei*). The National Assembly met in Weimar (not in Berlin because it was still too unsettled) on February 6, 1919, and elected Ebert as its first president.

The National Assembly not only adopted a democratic constitution—the Constitution of the German Reich, referred to as the Weimar Constitution—on July 31, 1919, but it also signed the Treaty of Versailles on behalf of Germany. As it turned out, neither action was popular with the German people. Among other things, the treaty required Germany to concede territory to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Poland; admit responsibility for the war; pay reparations; limit its standing army to 100,000 men; and destroy its planes, ships, and submarines. In light of these provisions the treaty's unpopularity was widespread. Germans found it both onerous and humiliating.

The negative reaction to the Weimar Constitution can best be explained by its radically different orientation when compared to what Germany had long been used to. The constitution was based on the U.S. model in the sense that it provided for an elected president and congress, an executive with powers to be used in crises (Article 48), and a strong liberal commitment that focused on the protection of the rights of individuals. This contrasted sharply with the authoritarian government it replaced, with its emphasis on militarism, nationalism, and the primacy of the state.

Other concerns gave rise to the Germans' negative reaction to the constitution and the republic that it defined. World War I had ended in a way that came as a surprise to many Germans, who had been inaccurately told all along that they were winning. The country's defeat was so humiliating and ignominious that the government and the people needed to explain it in a way that would not put the responsibility where it properly belonged, namely, on the German military. Thus was born the myth of the "stab-in-the-back" (*Dolchstoßlegende*), which declared that the reason for Germany's defeat was the presence of a fifth column at work within Germany. Although other groups were also accused of sedition, the Jews became the primary scapegoat.

This myth brought antisemitism to the forefront at a time of great uncertainty and unrest in Germany. Much of the population saw the new form of government as a threat to

the very foundation of society. In an environment where the Jews were blamed for the loss of the world war, it was easy for Germans to associate the unwanted democratic Weimar Republic with them. The democracy brought with it the rationality of the Enlightenment, with its belief in individual rights, and the rejection of monarchies and militant authorities. In short, the Jews were seen as bringing modernity to a society that coveted its long-standing traditions and unbending values.

Modernity was seen not only in a new form of government but also in a new value system that encouraged creativity, emboldened people to think for themselves, and embraced new schools of thought in the fields of art, architecture, dance, music, and morals, to name just a few. The old ways were falling by the wayside while abstract art, the Bauhaus school of architecture, expressive dance, jazz, promiscuity, and an acceptance of homosexuality swept in. These changes, as a component of modernity, were also seen as the fault of the Jews, due, in part, to their high visibility in some of these areas.

With these changes in government and culture, there was also an increased fear of "godless communism," which had only recently taken control in nearby Russia. As seen, efforts were made by the Spartacists to bring a communist government to Berlin, but that was not the only attempt of its kind. Perhaps the most significant such effort occurred in Munich in April 1919, when the state government was replaced by a Soviet Republic. Lasting about four weeks, at which time a strong assault by the military and the Freikorps ousted the communist government, its very presence in the heart of Bavaria increased still further the general fear of communism. This had a direct impact on the Jews of Germany because of the conflation of communism and Judaism in antisemitic thinking, and especially in the Nazi worldview. This was clearly captured in Hitler's coinage of the word "Judeo-Bolshevik" to describe Jews.

The Weimar Republic was challenged not only from the left. In March 1920 a failed coup—the Kapp *Putsch*—was staged by the conservative and monarchist military in protest of the liberal, reformist Weimar government. These various efforts—from the left and the right—to unseat what was seen by many as a radical and dangerous experiment in democracy gave strong reason to believe that the Weimar Republic was inefficient and unworkable. When Ebert died in 1925, the election to replace him revealed the deep divide in German society, so much so that Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was elected to the presidency, an interesting choice to lead a liberal democratic government when he was

so clearly a symbol of the old order of the monarchy and the military.

The dire economic conditions that Germany faced in the early years of the Weimar Republic were seen as more proof of the government's weakness and the threat posed by the Jews. The German population was told—and many came to believe—that the crushing postwar economy was the fault of the Jews, or more specifically, of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy that, according to the myth, controlled global finances.

The Weimar Republic faced an economy that had been devastated by four years of war. Unemployment was as common as food was scarce. The homeless multiplied, depending on the succor of the churches and welfare institutions to stay alive. The belief that things could not get worse was soon proved inaccurate when Germany experienced a level of hyperinflation that ultimately made money worthless except to the extent that it could be burned to try to keep a house warm. By the end of November 1923, it took 4.2 trillion German marks to buy what one U.S. dollar bought. This, too, was blamed on the Jews.

Other concerns arose during the 1920s that threatened the Weimar Republic. Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had to pay reparations to the Allied countries. In 1921 it was determined that the amount of the reparations was to be the equivalent of \$33 billion U.S. dollars, surely a burden that the struggling German economy could not shoulder. When Germany continued to miss payments, France moved troops across the border to occupy a part of western Germany called the Ruhr in an effort to siphon off profits from the Ruhr area or otherwise force Germany to make its payments. The fact that the much-hated French were on German soil—something they were unable to do during the war—was another humiliation to the German people and seen as further proof of the weakness of the struggling Weimar Republic government.

It should be noted that the French occupation of the Ruhr was one reason Adolf Hitler and the nascent Nazi Party attempted a *Putsch* to remove the Weimar government. It began in Munich in November 1923, and it was Hitler's vision that he would lead an ever-growing horde of followers—angry especially about the French—from Munich (where the Putsch began in a beer hall) to Berlin. This so-called Beer Hall Putsch was an utter failure, resulting in the death of four policemen, 16 Nazi Party members, and the arrest and imprisonment of Hitler and other leaders. In one respect, however, the Putsch was a success for the Nazi Party; it brought Hitler and the party to national attention during

the trial of the party leaders. Ultimately it would be the Nazi Party that would put an end to the Weimar Republic in 1933.

By the mid-1920s inflation had been brought under control, reparations payments had been made more palatable under the so-called Dawes Plan of 1924, and a level of prosperity and stability returned to the Germany of the Weimar Republic. In October 1929, however, the Wall Street crash that began in the United States brought all economic progress to a halt. All of Europe, but especially Germany, suffered terribly during these years with skyrocketing unemployment, homelessness, starvation, violence in the streets, and a loss of hope in the future.

The Nazi Party performed better in national elections in inverse proportion to the financial strength of Germany; as conditions deteriorated, the Nazi Party's share of the votes increased. In this terrible depression of the early 1930s, the German people were becoming increasingly desperate, as they looked back on the Weimar Republic as an abject failure. The democratic government and the Jews were held responsible for all of Germany's woes since the loss of World War I, including, most of all, a deep sense of Germany having lost its way, and now being in immediate need of a new path to greatness. The conditions of the 14-year Weimar experiment created a society ripe for a superman (*Übermensch*) promising to reverse these injustices and recapture Germany's past glory. These were the conditions in which Hitler and the Nazi Party would rise to power.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Communists in the Holocaust; Enabling Act, 1933; Gürtner, Franz; Hitler, Adolf; Mommsen, Hans; Nazism and Germany; Reich Flight Tax; Third Reich

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Weiss, Helga

Helga Weiss is a well-known Czech artist and Holocaust survivor. She was born Helga Hoskova-Weissova in Prague in 1929 to a Jewish family. She began keeping a diary in 1938, as World War II neared and the Germans occupied her country. One of her early entries was a description of her

family's terrifying ordeal in a Prague bomb shelter, as German planes flew above the city. In December 1941 Weiss and her family were forced to leave their apartment—and virtually all of their belongings—when the Germans forced them into the ghetto at Theresienstadt, located to the northwest of central Prague. She and her family would remain there until 1944, at which time they were deported to Auschwitz.

Weiss's diary, published in 2013 as *Helga's Diary: A Young Girl's Account of Life in a Concentration Camp*, mainly details her experiences during 1944 and 1945, after deportation; however, the book also describes events at Theresienstadt. In it, she chronicles the physical and mental strain of living in an enclosed ghetto and then the horrors of the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Mauthausen. Despite the deprivations and hardships of her young life, Weiss nevertheless acknowledges that the years in the Theresienstadt ghetto were not universally bad. There she became a young adult, experienced her first crush, and spent quality time with her family. The diary has not been heavily edited, so readers will experience it through the lens and words of a child and teenager, rather than an adult reflecting back, which Weiss hopes will make it more accessible.

Weiss's most riveting—and harrowing—experiences occurred after her deportation in 1944. Weiss and her mother arrived at Auschwitz in October 1944 (her father was also sent there, but the family was separated by gender and Weiss's father was killed sometime later). Upon arrival, Weiss lied about her and her mother's ages to avoid being sent to the gas chambers. Instead, she and her mother became laborers. Later on, after the Germans began to liquidate Auschwitz as Allied troops closed in on Germany, Weiss and her mother were sent by rail to the camp at Flossenbürg. When Allied troops approached that camp, the Germans sent detainees on a 16-day death march to Mauthausen. Weiss and her mother barely survived the ordeal. When Mauthausen was liberated in the spring of 1945, Weiss writes that she was numb and took no pleasure in the event because she was so sick and had seen so many horrific things.

After the war, Weiss returned to Prague and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts there. She also apprenticed under the well-known Czech artist Emil Filla and went on to become one of the foremost artists in postwar Czechoslovakia. After the 1989 revolution, she displayed her work in Germany, Italy, and Austria. She has since been recognized many times for her courage and artistic talent, receiving the prestigious Medal of Merit in 2009.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Auschwitz; Mauthausen; Survivor Testimony; Theresienstadt

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Weltsch, Robert

Robert Weltsch was the prewar editor of a twice-weekly Berlin Jewish newspaper, the *Jüdische Rundschau* (*Jewish Review*). He was born on June 20, 1891, in Prague to a long-established Jewish family; his father, Theodore Weltsch, was an active member of the Jewish community and played an important administrative role in communal organizations.

Theodore's son, Robert, studied law at the Karl-Ferdinand German University of Prague, where he joined Bar Kochba, a Zionist student association to which many young Jewish intellectuals were attracted. He served as the association's leader in 1911–1912. Between 1910 and 1914 he published articles in German-language Zionist newspapers, an activity he continued after he began serving as an officer on the Russian front in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I.

After the war, Weltsch was invited to Berlin to serve as editor-in-chief of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, where he would remain until he left Germany 1938. A committed Zionist, Weltsch was keen to develop the idea of a joint Jewish-Arab commonwealth for Palestine, in which statehood was rarely discussed and never advocated. One of the reasons behind Weltsch's opposition to a singular Jewish state in Palestine stemmed from his reaction to any form of nationalism or chauvinism, which he attributed to the horrors of war he had witnessed in the trenches. Given this, he was fearful as to where the organized Zionist movement might lead. Accordingly, he became one of the leading lights of the movement Brit Shalom, which advocated a binational Arab-Jewish presence in Palestine focusing on ideals such as political equality, cultural autonomy, and socioeconomic coexistence. This led to hostility toward him from some circles within the Zionist movement, and periodically there were moves to have him removed as editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau*. These were unsuccessful, however, and he retained the post until he departed Berlin.

As one who was in many respects a semi-official voice of German Jewry through the pages of his highly influential newspaper, Weltsch saw that he had an important responsibility to somehow accommodate Nazi antisemitic measures

while at the same time showing that the Jewish community would not be cowed.

On April 1, 1933, the Nazis organized a boycott of all Jewish shops, banks, offices, and department stores. This was arguably the first overtly antisemitic measure adopted by the new Nazi government, and it was a failure. The boycott was mostly ignored by the German public, forcing the measure to be called off within three days.

Weltsch, alert to the possibilities the boycott signified for the future, reacted by publishing an article on April 4 that became famous as one of the earliest Jewish responses to Nazi anti-Jewish persecution. Titled “*Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck!*” (known around the world by its English title as “Wear it with Pride, the Yellow Badge!”), Weltsch’s editorial was a call for the Jews of Germany to recognize the reality of their situation and confront their changed circumstances with dignity and in solidarity.

He wrote that in light of the new regime, “Today the Jews cannot speak except as Jews. Anything else is utterly senseless. . . . We live in a new period . . . indicating that the world of our previous concepts has collapsed. That may be painful for many, but in this world only those will be able to survive who are able to look reality in the eye.” He continued, in italics, that in view of the Jewish self-deception that they would always be accepted as Germans, “*It is not true that the Jews betrayed Germany. If they betrayed anyone, it was themselves, the Jews.* Because the Jew did not display his Judaism with pride, because he tried to avoid the Jewish issue, he must bear part of the blame for the degradation of the Jews.”

He noted that during the boycott a number of antisemitic signs appeared on the streets. “One often saw,” he wrote, “windows bearing a large Magen David, the Shield of David the King. It was intended as dishonor.” In light of this new realization, in which “the Jew is marked as a Jew” with “the yellow badge,” he now called upon the Jews of Germany to “take it up, the Shield of David, and wear it with pride!”

The prescience his statement displayed was acute, as the Nazis did not actually require Jews to wear yellow armbands with the Star of David until September 19, 1941. Rather, Weltsch was referring to a German Jewish community that had, until that time, seen itself as a thoroughly integrated part of German society. Now that the Jews were being marked out, he was alerting them to the need to unite in view of what was now their “difference” from mainstream society—a metaphoric “yellow star,” so to speak.

During these early years of the Third Reich Weltsch made a number of trips to Palestine, reporting back to the *Jüdische Rundschau* on what he saw there. He tried to encourage the

Jews to leave Germany, though unconvinced that Palestine was the right place. Still, he foresaw that whatever befell Germany’s Jews would, soon enough, extend across all of Europe, so perhaps any refuge—including Palestine—would have to be considered, as a war would mean that all the Jews in Germany “would be lost.” He acknowledged that with things getting worse by the day he would be lucky to escape with his life—something he was able to do in September 1938, immediately prior to the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, when he left Germany for Palestine.

He worked there for many years as a correspondent for the newspaper *Haaretz*, and in 1945 moved to London as the newspaper’s European correspondent, covering the Nuremberg Trials during 1945–1946. While in London, Weltsch also edited the *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute* from 1956 to 1978. This quickly became a high-class academic periodical publishing scholarly articles focusing on German Jewish history. He remained in London as a political journalist until his return to Jerusalem in 1978, where he died on December 22, 1982, aged 91.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: April Boycott; Jewish Resistance

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Westerbork

Westerbork, a transit camp located about 12 kilometers from the village of Westerbork in the northeast of the Netherlands, had originally been set up in October 1939 by the Dutch government as a place to hold German Jewish refugees who had entered the Netherlands illegally, following the closure of the border on December 15, 1938. Financed partly by Dutch Jews, the first refugees arrived at Westerbork on October 9, 1939.

On May 10, 1940, the German army invaded the Netherlands and had forced the country to surrender by May 14. At the time of the invasion, there were about 750 Jewish refugees at Westerbork. The occupying authorities imposed their antisemitic policies soon after taking over the country, dismissing Jews from the civil service and requiring that they register the assets of their business enterprises. They also took over Westerbork, turning it into a place to detain resisters and then, in late 1941, into a deportation camp. As the

year unfolded, the number of Jews increased, to the point where the Nazis had assembled a population of 1,100 Jewish refugees, mostly from Germany, while at the same time the Nazis enlarged the camp for future use.

On July 1, 1942, the Nazis took direct control, and Westerbork became transformed, officially, into a transit camp (*Durchgangslager Westerbork*). Two weeks later, on July 14, 1942, a “selection” took place to see who was fit enough to work; the rest, numbering 1,135, were deported to Auschwitz two days later. By the end of July nearly 6,000 Dutch Jews had been similarly deported. An SS officer, Erich Deppner, was appointed as commandant, overseeing initial deportation operations across July and August 1942 and taking responsibility for the first transport of Jews to Auschwitz. Upon being relieved, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler complimented Deppner for his “good work.”

New rail lines were then added, and by November 1942 deportation trains came straight into the camp in order to enable the more rapid loading of Jews for Auschwitz. Over time, other trains were sent to other death camps in German-occupied Poland, as well as places such as Bergen-Belsen, Theresienstadt, and Vittel, France.

From this point on, deportation trains consisting of around 20 cattle wagons or freight cars would arrive each Monday evening. A list of 1,000 people would be compiled by the Jewish Council (*Joodse Raad*), and on Tuesday the trains would leave Westerbork. From that first train on July 16, 1942, until the procedure came to an end on September 3, 1944, a total of 97,776 Jews were deported from Westerbork: 54,930 to Auschwitz in 68 transports; 34,313 to Sobibór (19); 4,771 to Theresienstadt (7); and 3,762 to Bergen-Belsen (9). Taken overall, 101,000 Dutch Jews and about 5,000 German Jews were deported to their deaths in Poland, together with about 400 Roma. The camp also served as the location of imprisonment for Dutch resisters, and toward the end of the war some 400 female resisters were also deported to their deaths.

Of all those deported, only 5,200 survived. Some, numbering 876, of whom 569 were Dutch citizens, managed to avoid deportation and outlasted the Nazis at Westerbork. Others who had been deported and survived did so at Theresienstadt or Bergen-Belsen. Almost all those who had been sent to Auschwitz and Sobibór were murdered immediately upon arrival.

Regardless of the camp’s core function as a deportation facility, Westerbork also served as a regular concentration camp, with a permanent prisoner population of approximately 2,000 prisoners. Many of these Jews, possessing British

or American citizenship, were exempted from deportation. The Nazis considered that they could be used as “currency” for “exchange”; for each Jew, the idea was that several German prisoners of war could be traded. Moreover, it served the Germans to maintain this presence, as the SS could point to the fixed structures—which included a school, a hairdresser, an orchestra, and even a restaurant—as evidence to newcomers that this was the type of environment to which they were being sent in Poland. Certainly, this reduced problems during the deportation process and even encouraged people to board the trains to Auschwitz and Sobibór. The added tragedy of Westerbork was that over time most of the “permanent” residents of the camp were themselves deported to their deaths.

On April 12, 1945, with the Allies approaching, the Nazis abandoned Westerbork and the Canadian 2nd Infantry Division liberated the camp. Westerbork was then given over to house Dutch collaborators with the Nazis, with other uses brought into play in later years. The camp was demolished in 1971, and a monument was erected on the site. In 1983 a museum and memorial site was opened at the location of what had been part of the former camp area.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Bergen-Belsen; Concentration Camps; Netherlands; Sobibór; Süskind, Walter; Theresienstadt; Vught

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White Buses

The so-called “White Buses” was an initiative undertaken by the Swedish Red Cross and the Danish government to rescue prisoners from certain concentration camps, in particular Theresienstadt, and then transport them to neutral Sweden. Even though the operation was initially created in order to save concentration camp inmates hailing from Scandinavian countries, it expanded to save prisoners from other countries as well.

A total staff of about 300 rescuers was able to save 15,345 prisoners from the camps. Of these, about 7,795 of those rescued were Scandinavian citizens and 7,550 of those were

from elsewhere. Those of non-Scandinavian citizenship included prisoners from Poland and France. In particular, 423 Danish Jews were saved by the “white buses” from Theresienstadt, located in the German-occupied territory of Czechoslovakia. This effort by the Swedish Red Cross and the Danish government contributed to the fact that the Danish Jewish population was one of the least affected Jewish populations in Europe. The term “white buses” was used because the buses were painted white with red crosses, to keep them from being confused with military vehicles.

On April 9, 1940, the countries of Denmark and Norway were invaded by Nazi Germany. Several Norwegians were instantaneously detained, and after only two months of occupation, Nazi administration established the first prison camp at Ulven, outside Bergen, in western Norway. As pressure increased between the Nazi authoritative powers and the Norwegian resistance, growing numbers of Norwegians were put under arrest and held in Norwegian prisons and camps to be later deported to prisons in Germany. The first groups of Norwegian prisoners arrived at Sachsenhausen concentration camp in early 1940. Detentions in Denmark began when the coalition government resigned in the summer of 1943.

The Scandinavian detainees in Germany were separated into several categories. These included the civil prisoners, who lived privately and maintained definite freedoms, to the *Nacht und Nebel* (NN), or “Night and Fog” inmates who were intended to be worked to death. As the number of Scandinavian resisters and other opponents increased, Scandinavian priests worked to visit concentration camps. In Hamburg, Norwegian priests Arne Berge and Conrad Vogt-Svendsen visited prisoners, brought them food, and brought letters to their families in Norway and Denmark. Vogt-Svendsen also visited and kept correspondence with the civilians jailed at Gross-Kreutz, in Brandenburg, Germany.

The priests and citizens of Gross Kreutz were able to compile a list of all arrested and detained Scandinavians. These lists were sent to the Norwegian government-in-exile in London through the Swedish embassy in Berlin. In Stockholm, Sweden, the Norwegian diplomat Niels Christian Ditleff threw himself heavily into relief work, conscious of the fate of the Scandinavian prisoners. By the end of 1944 there were approximately 8,000 Norwegian prisoners in Germany. Most of these were not Jewish and had been arrested for a variety of reasons. In addition, there were some 1,125 Norwegian prisoners of war.

The Danish admiral Carl Hammerich worked with undisclosed plans for an excursion, code-named the *Jyllandskorps*, to rescue Danish and Norwegian prisoners from the German

camps. Hammerich had strong networks with Norwegian priests who visited the concentration camps, the relief group at Gross-Kreutz, and with Ditleff in Stockholm. By the beginning of 1945 there were roughly 6,000 Danish prisoners in German camps. Again, most of these were not Jewish, though those who were found themselves almost exclusively incarcerated at Theresienstadt. During 1944 the Danes had made extensive preparations, including the registering of inmates and strategies for transferring resources, as well as making food, shelter, and quarantine available for those rescued, if they successfully made it to Denmark. Hammerich visited Stockholm in February, April, and July 1944 to discuss these plans with Ditleff.

In the Norwegian government, Major Johan Koren Christie wrote a memorandum on September 23, 1944, stating that the Norwegian prisoners should “stay put” and wait until they were liberated by the quickly moving Allied forces. The Gross-Kreutz assemblage found out about this memorandum a month later. Johan Bernhard Hjort, a Norwegian Supreme Court lawyer, rejected Christie’s advice, advising against the suggestion to “stay put.” Hjort explained that the prisoners risked being killed, and that they had to be saved before Germany was occupied by Allies.

While Ditleff tried to influence the exiled Norwegian government by discussing the rescue of Norwegian prisoners with Count Folke Bernadotte of the Swedish Red Cross, the Danes obtained a German permit to retrieve prisoners. The first transport, on December 5, 1944, included Danish policemen from Buchenwald. By the end of February 1945, the Danes had freed 341 prisoners, most of them sickly.

DANIELLE JEAN DREW

See also: Denmark; Nacht und Nebel; Neuengamme; Norway; Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Theresienstadt

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White Rose

The White Rose (*Die Weisse Rose*) was a small, student-led resistance movement based in Munich, Germany, from 1942 to 1943. The group’s opposition to Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party was based on religious morality and humanitarianism,

with little, if any, political motivation. The movement's major form of protest involved campaigning for the overthrow of Nazism and the revival of a new Germany dedicated to the pursuit of goodness and founded upon Christian values. The main activity of the group was the distribution of pamphlets that denounced the activities of the Nazi Party and decried the murder of innocent German citizens, including Jews.

The White Rose was founded by brother and sister Hans and Sophie Scholl. Involved with the Hitler Youth as adolescents, the Scholls became increasingly disenchanted with the Nazi Party during their years at the University of Munich. Their father, Robert Scholl, was arrested in 1942 for publicly doubting Germany's ability to win World War II. Joining with fellow students Christoph Probst, Willi Graf, and Alexander Schmorell, and encouraged by their professor, Dr. Kurt Hübner, the Scholls designed an anti-Nazi pamphlet titled *The White Rose*, after a novel that had inspired them when they were children. That initial pamphlet, one of what eventually became six, was secretly published in June 1942. The pamphlets attracted public attention, and copies were frequently made and distributed. Eventually, White Rose pamphlets were disbursed throughout Germany and Austria.

The range of the White Rose group expanded beyond the University of Munich. Students at the University of Hamburg joined the White Rose, and at its highest point, it had about 80 members. The distribution of the pamphlets continued steadily and was interrupted only in the summer of 1942 when Hans Scholl, Probst, and others were sent to fight on the Russian front.

On February 18, 1943, a janitor spotted Hans and Sophie scattering copies of the sixth White Rose pamphlet from a balustrade in the atrium of the University of Munich. The janitor had the Scholls and Probst arrested. The students were sent to trial before the People's Court (*Volksgesichtshof*) on February 22, 1943, and stood before Judge Roland Freisler, who berated them for their treasonous activities. They defiantly admitted their crimes and were executed by guillotine that afternoon. Hans was 24, Sophie was 21, and Probst was 22. Later, Dr. Huber, Graf, and Schmorell were also beheaded; the rest of the students caught were sent to concentration camps or also executed later in the year.

An alternative name for the White Rose, used by some, was the *Scholl Kreis* (Scholl Circle). After World War II ended, the White Rose movement began to be seen by Germans as an admirable example of resistance to evil. The Scholls have become revered, as evidenced by the more than

200 schools and a square at the University of Munich that are named after the brother-sister team. The White Rose Foundation and White Rose International are contemporary organizations that seek to preserve the memory of the White Rose and continue its tradition of "principled resistance."

JEREMY SOLOMON

See also: Freisler, Roland; Resistance Movements; Scholl, Hans and Sophie; Universities, Complicity in the Holocaust; Volksgemeinschaft

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Wiedergutmachung

The German word *Wiedergutmachung* (literally, "to make well again") refers to the reparations or compensation the German government agreed to pay in 1953 to the survivors of the Holocaust. The sum would amount, over the years, to more than 100 billion Deutsche Marks (DM)—nearly 60 billion U.S. dollars.

On September 27, 1951, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) stated that compensation for victims of National Socialism was limited by the necessity to support war-disabled persons as well as to provide for refugees and expellees. In response, Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, convened a meeting in New York a month later in which it was made clear to the 23 major Jewish national and international organization participants attending that a new organization, to be called the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany (the Claims Conference, or JCC) would be created. The Claims Conference was tasked with negotiating with the German government a program of compensation for the actions of the Third Reich through the Holocaust.

To this day, the Claims Conference represents the world's Jews in negotiating for compensation and restitution for individual victims of Nazi persecution and their heirs. It administers compensation funds, recovers unclaimed Jewish property, and distributes funds to institutions providing social welfare services to Holocaust survivors and others, which preserve the memory and lessons of the Shoah.

For the Allies, restitution and compensation was a precondition for the foundation of the West German state. Stipulating the main features of the indemnification laws, France, Britain, and the United States signed the Transition Treaty with the FRG in 1952. In December 1951 a mere 5% of West Germans polled admitted feeling “guilty” toward Jews; a further 29% recognized that Germany owed some recompense to the Jewish people; 40% of those surveyed thought that only people “who really committed something” were accountable to pay; 21% considered the Jews themselves were partly responsible for what happened to them during the Third Reich.

Cold War politics intervened. The FRG stood at the frontlines of the Cold War, and the United States could not afford to strain the economy of a key ally, and as a result the Supplementary Federal Law on Compensation for the Victims of National Socialist Persecution (1953) and the Federal Indemnification Law (1956) limited compensation to a small group of survivors.

Restricting the recipients of disbursements to residents of the FRG, the compensation laws excluded slave laborers, “euthanasia” victims, Roma, homosexuals, Soviet POWs, as well as active members of the Communist Party. Payments did not reflect the scale of the Nazi crimes. Each day spent in a concentration camp, ghetto, or Nazi prison was “compensated” by five DM. The Final FRG Law of 1965 terminated indemnification; the last application deadlines ran out on December 31, 1969.

In the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany), *Wiedergutmachung* was mostly directed to Poland and the former Soviet Union. Persons directly victimized for political, racial, religious or ideological reasons by the Third Reich were eligible for compensation under the terms of the Federal Compensation Law (BEG) of 1953 and 1956, including Jews who were interned in camps or ghettos, had to wear the yellow star, or who lived in hiding. By the mid-1980s more than four million claims had been filed and paid. Approximately 40% of the claims were from survivors living in Israel; 20% were from Germany; and 40% were from other countries. To avoid disbursements to individual survivors, agreements with single countries were created, and Adenauer thus began negotiations with Israel and also with the Claims Conference in 1951.

Israel’s relations with Germany in the years following World War II were very tense. Not only was Israel intent on providing a haven for what remained of European Jewry, it was also recovering from the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and facing a deep economic crisis that led to a period of austerity. Unemployment was high, and foreign currency reserves

scarce. The Israeli government took a practical approach, arguing that an agreement with West Germany was the only way to sustain the nation’s economy. The opposition, by contrast, argued that this was blood money.

In 1951 Israel made a claim to the four powers occupying Germany regarding compensation and reimbursement, based on the fact that Israel had absorbed and resettled 500,000 Holocaust survivors. They calculated that since absorption had cost 3,000 U.S. dollars per person, they were owed 1.5 billion dollars by Germany. They also figured that six billion dollars’ worth of Jewish property had been pillaged by the Nazis but stressed that the Germans could never make up for what they did with any type of material recompense.

Negotiations were held between Israeli foreign minister Moshe Sharett and Adenauer. Fierce opposition to the agreement came from both the Israeli right and the left, with advocates on both sides arguing that accepting reparation payments was the equivalent of forgiving the Nazis. Within the Knesset (Israeli parliament) the decision was ultimately accepted by a 61–50 margin, but not before riots interrupted the plenum debate for the first time in Knesset history.

The Reparations Agreement between Israel and the FRG was signed on September 10, 1952, and entered in force on March 27, 1953. The Arab League strongly opposed the motion and threatened a boycott of the Federal Republic of Germany after it passed the agreement, but this was abandoned when it was realized that the Arab League would suffer far more from losing trade with West Germany than West Germany would from the Arab League.

Under the agreement, West Germany was to pay Israel for the costs of “resettling so great a number of uprooted and destitute Jewish refugees” after the war, and to compensate individual Jews, via the Claims Conference, for losses in Jewish livelihood and property resulting from Nazi persecution. The payments were made to the State of Israel as the heir to those victims who had no surviving family.

Germany paid Israel a sum of more than 3 billion DM (mostly in deliveries of goods), and 450 million DM to the JCC. In return, Israel turned down the demand that Germany should individually compensate survivors living in Israel. This initiated a series of arrangements with other countries. Between the 1950s and the 1990s, Germany signed treaties with Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, and the United States. No reparations were paid by Germany to the Roma people.

Contracts with other countries, however, did not sufficiently expand the compensation system. Large numbers of

victims were still excluded from payments, which is why new claims for amends emerged persistently. Whenever the FRG faced sufficient pressure, compensation expanded. For example, after Jews from several Eastern European countries migrated to Israel and the United States throughout the 1970s, West Germany established a fund to disburse one-time payments of 5,000 DM to Holocaust survivors. This was one of several “hardship funds” that were meant to fill gaps in the system of indemnification.

A major gap in the West German compensation system concerned former slave laborers. It is estimated that the Nazis forced some 12 million people to work for the German war effort. When the FRG signed the London Debt Agreement in 1953, the contract deferred the question of indemnifying slave laborers to the conclusion of a peace treaty between the Allies and a unified German state. Although this protected West Germany from claims by former slave laborers, survivors and their representatives were able to file legal actions against German companies that used slave labor. As a result, in order to deter future claims, I.G. Farben, Krupp, AEG, Siemens, and Rheinmetall paid small amounts of money between 1957 and 1962. As class actions against the profiteers of slave laborers resurfaced following German reunification on October 3, 1990, the German government negotiated between industry and the plaintiffs. Agreeing to pay 10 billion DM after a long period of consultations, protests, and legal actions, the German government established the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility, and Future” in August 2000. Providing funds, 6,500 companies cooperated in creating the endowment. As “work” in the ghettos was not considered to constitute slave labor, moreover, Germany paid one-time pensions of 2,000 Euros to survivors of Nazi ghettos in 2002.

Throughout the long history of compensation, the FRG tried to limit payments; still, the German payments added up to more than 68 billion Euros by 2010. Austria and the German Democratic Republic, by contrast, paid comparably insignificant amounts.

Compensation is still publicly debated in Germany. In November 2012 the government extended payments to survivors from Eastern Europe who had not yet received indemnification. Simultaneously, victims’ lawyers have been struggling to expand pensions for former ghetto laborers.

In the 1990s Jews began making claims for property stolen in Eastern Europe. Various groups also began investigating what happened to money deposited in Swiss banks by Jews outside of Switzerland who were later murdered in the Holocaust, and what happened to money deposited

by individual Nazis in Swiss banks. In addition, individual companies (many of them based in Germany) began to be pressured by survivor groups to compensate former forced laborers. Among them are Deutsche Bank, Siemens, Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW), Volkswagen, and Adam Opel.

In response, early in 1999 the German government proclaimed the establishment of a fund with monies from these companies to help needy Holocaust survivors. A similar fund was set up by the Swiss, as was a Hungarian fund for compensation of Holocaust victims and their heirs. At the close of the 1990s, discussions of compensation were held by insurance companies that had before the war insured Jews who were later murdered by the Nazis. These companies include Allianz, AXA, Assicurazioni Generali, Zürich Financial Services Group, Winterthur, and Baloise Insurance Group. On behalf of U.S. citizens, the U.S. Foreign Claims Settlement Commission reached agreements with the German government in 1998 and 1999 to compensate Holocaust victims who immigrated to the United States after the war.

EVE E. GRIMM

See also: Concentration Camps; Confiscation of Jewish Property; Euthanasia Program; Ghettos; Homosexuals; Roma and Sinti

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Wiesel, Elie

Elie Wiesel was a Romanian-born American writer, thinker, and teacher, world-renowned for his work in raising awareness of the Holocaust and its meaning for contemporary society. For many, he was the conscience and expression of all Holocaust survivors. A prolific author, his work has been extremely influential in dealing with the moral responsibility of any person to fight hatred, racism, and genocide.

Wiesel was born on September 30, 1928, in the town of Sighet in Transylvania, when it was still part of Romania prior to its occupation by Hungary in 1940. With the Nazi invasion of Hungary in the spring of 1944, his entire village was first incarcerated in two ghettos in Sighet. He was then deported to Auschwitz, where he was tattooed with the number A-7713.

He and his father were at that time separated from his mother and sisters. The two remained together for a year, surviving a death march to Buchenwald in the winter of 1944–1945, until Wiesel's father died just a short time before the camp was liberated by the Americans in April 1945. Both of Wiesel's parents and one of his sisters perished during the Holocaust.

After the liberation, Wiesel was taken to Paris where he lived in an orphanage. Between 1947 and 1950 he studied the Talmud, philosophy, and literature at the Sorbonne, attending lectures by Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Buber. Working as a teacher of Hebrew and a choirmaster in order to supplement his income, he then became a journalist. He steadfastly refused, however, to write about or discuss his Holocaust experiences. A meeting with the 1952 Nobel Laureate for Literature, François Mauriac, however, convinced him of the need to begin writing about his experiences, and his best known work, *Night* (1960), was the result. *Night* came to be a symbolic recording of the experience of all Jews, and as a result Wiesel thereafter dedicated his life to ensuring that no one can forget what happened. For Wiesel, “Never Again” would be more than a phrase; it was his life's mission.

In 1955 Wiesel moved to the United States and made his home in New York. In 1963 he became an American citizen, recognized as one of the most powerful voices in Holocaust consciousness in the world. Wiesel's work received recognition from the U.S. government in 1978, when he was appointed chair of the Presidential Commission on the Holocaust, established by President Jimmy Carter. In 1980 the commission was renamed the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, and Wiesel retained his position as chairman until 1986. In further acknowledgment of his contribution to the betterment of society, Wiesel was awarded the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal of Freedom in 1985, the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 (for advocating worldwide against violence, repression, and racism), and an honorary knighthood in recognition of his advocacy work for Holocaust education in the United Kingdom. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1996.

Wiesel's many writings showed an author possessing a highly diverse range of skills. He made compelling and profound contributions to literature and theology, and it might be said that his input to Holocaust writing was among the most important ever composed. It was his opposition to indifference, and his quest to try to ensure that “Never Again” became the guiding principle directing the actions of everyone, that led Wiesel to condemn, over and over again,

what he called the sin of indifference. Putting his own words into practice, one of the first things Wiesel and his wife, Marion, did after he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 was to establish a foundation to promote peace and human rights throughout the world, the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity. The foundation's mission, rooted in the memory of the Holocaust, is to combat indifference, intolerance, and injustice through international dialogue and youth-focused programs that promote acceptance, understanding, and equality, and in fulfillment of this mission it runs multiple programs both domestically and internationally.

In November 1992, during the Bosnian War, Wiesel went to Belgrade, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and the Manjaca concentration camp. Upon his return, he publicly urged U.S. secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger to speak out against the genocide that was occurring. He was unsuccessful, but 18 months later, at the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., he made a further public plea to President Bill Clinton on the necessity of addressing the Bosnian genocide. Again, however, he was not successful. Such initiatives were not isolated; for decades Wiesel's was an imposing voice in speaking out against injustice and genocide around the world, notably with regard to apartheid in South Africa, the so-called “disappearances” in Argentina, the treatment of dissidents in the Soviet Union, Serb actions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Saddam Hussein's actions against the Kurds in northern Iraq, and the genocide of black Africans in Darfur at the hands of the government of Sudan. In September 2006 Wiesel addressed the United Nations Security Council in the company of leading actor George Clooney about the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, urging immediate international action for the purpose of saving lives.

In 2007 the Wiesel Foundation issued a letter, signed by 53 Nobel laureates, condemning Armenian genocide denial by the Turkish government and its supporters. Alongside such activities, Wiesel was also a major advocate for Jewish rights around the world, and in earlier times he was an outspoken critic regarding the respective difficulties faced by Soviet and Ethiopian Jewry.

Wiesel's major concern was that in the decades since the end of World War II nothing substantial had been learned as a result of that terrible conflict. All the cries of “Never Again,” so frequently uttered at the time of the liberation of the camps, had, in his view, amounted to little of substance. According to him, after a cataclysm such as the Holocaust, people should be looking out for the welfare and safety of each other, but this, so far, has not yet happened. Having

survived the Holocaust, Wiesel devoted his life to fostering the kind of understanding that would enable people to see the necessity of developing compassion and defeating indifference, and thus prevent more atrocities and other genocides. At the age of 87, Elie Wiesel died at his home in New York on July 2, 2016.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Buchenwald; *Night*; Schacter, Herschel; Survivor Testimony; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

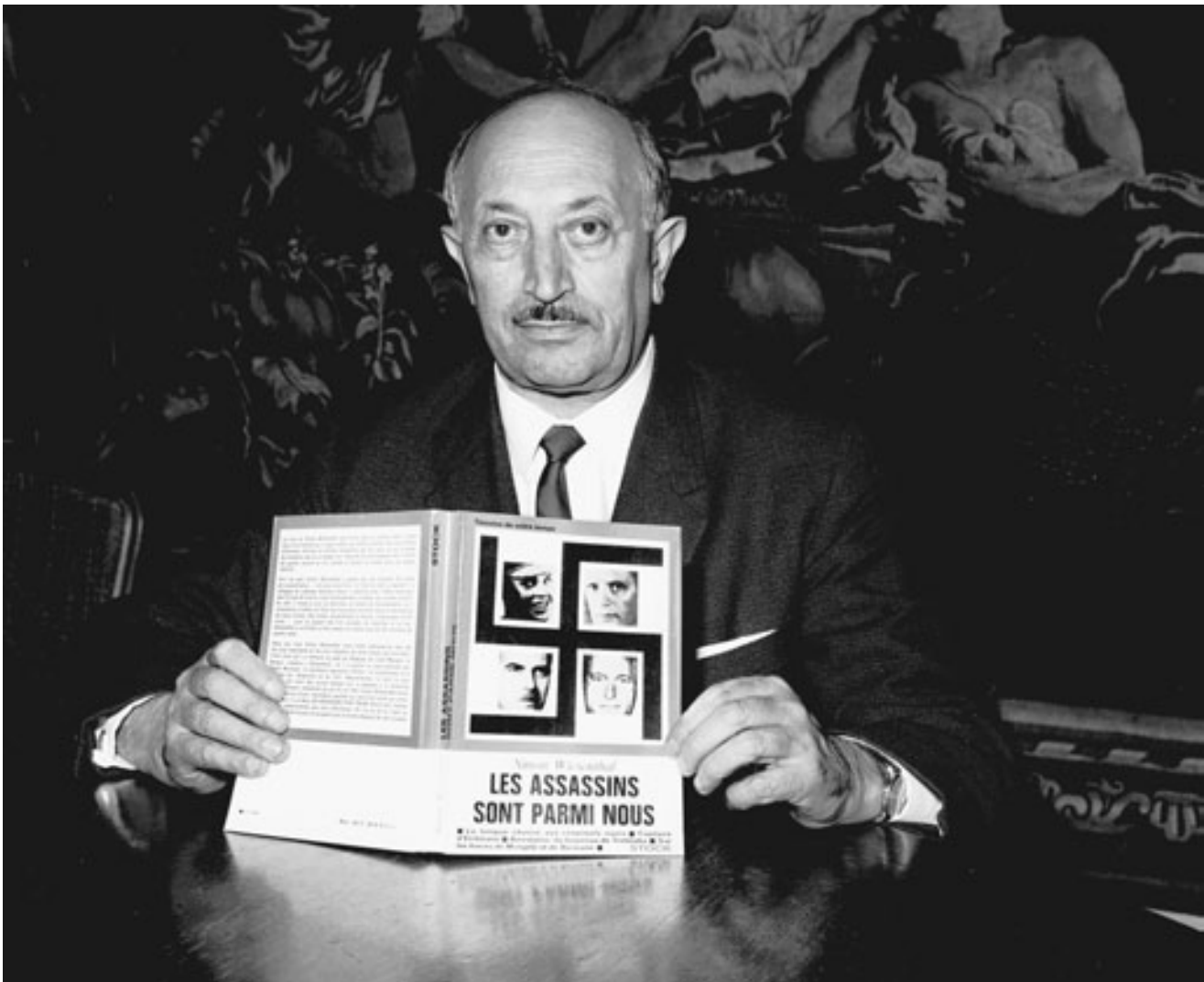
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Wiesenthal, Simon

The self-proclaimed “bad conscience of the Nazis,” Simon Wiesenthal used his experience during the Holocaust to devote his life to tracking down Nazi officials who escaped prosecution or disappeared at the war’s end. From 1956 onward, Wiesenthal directed Austria’s Jewish Historical Documentation Center, where he collected evidence of Nazi wartime atrocities and analyzed information on the whereabouts of Nazi war criminals.

Wiesenthal was born on December 31, 1908, in Buczacz, Galicia (in present-day Ukraine), in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His father was killed during World War I. His mother took the family to Vienna, Austria, for a period before returning to Buczacz to remarry.



Simon Wiesenthal was an Austrian Holocaust survivor best known for his postwar successes as a leading Nazi hunter. Surviving several concentration camps during the war, he then worked hard gathering intelligence and tracking down fugitive Nazi war criminals, with the intention that they be brought to trial. Among those he played a role in bringing to justice were Adolf Eichmann and Franz Stangl. He is pictured here in 1967 holding a copy of one of his books, *The Murderers Among Us*. (Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)

Wiesenthal graduated from school in 1928 and applied to the Polytechnical Institute in Lvov. Turned down because of quotas that limited the number of Jews who could be accepted to the institution, he instead attended the Technical University of Prague, where he earned a degree in architectural engineering in 1932.

After graduation, Wiesenthal found work in an architectural firm in Lvov, Poland, and in 1936 he married Cyla Müller. In 1939 their peaceful life was disrupted by the division of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union under the terms of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. The Soviet Army occupied Lvov and began a purge of Jewish professionals and other bourgeois elements. Wiesenthal's stepfather was arrested in that purge and later died in prison. Wiesenthal was driven from his job, and he and Cyla were interned at a labor camp outside of Lvov.

Conditions for Poland's Jewish community only worsened after Germany rescinded its agreement with the Soviets and launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. The implementation of Nazi genocide policies that followed all but annihilated Poland's Jewish population. By the end of 1942 most of Wiesenthal's and his wife's relatives had perished in the Nazi death camps.

The Wiesenthals were lucky to avoid a similar fate. Cyla's blond hair made it possible for her to pass as a non-Jew, and Wiesenthal arranged with the Polish underground to provide her with false identity papers. In exchange, Wiesenthal, who had been forced by the Germans to work on the Lvov Eastern Railroad, drew detailed maps of the railroad junction points that the resistance could use for sabotage purposes. Cyla survived the war because of the deal, working first in Warsaw and then in the Rhineland under the Polish name Irene Kowalska.

Wiesenthal himself managed to escape from the labor camp in October 1943. He was recaptured by the Germans in 1944 and sent to the Jancwska concentration camp. He arrived there just as the German Eastern Front collapsed under the advancing Red Army. The Nazi soldiers at the camp forced the remaining 34 prisoners (all that remained of the camp's initial population of 149,000) to retreat westward to Mauthausen in eastern Austria. Wiesenthal barely survived the forced march and weighed an emaciated 100 pounds when Mauthausen was liberated by U.S. troops on May 5, 1945. He and Cyla were reunited at the end of the war, both amazed to find the other still alive. Cyla gave birth to their daughter Pauline in 1946.

Immediately after the war, Wiesenthal began working for the War Crimes Section of the U.S. Army, gathering evidence of Nazi crimes and atrocities. He also worked for a Jewish

relief organization. In 1947 he created the Jewish Historical Documentation Center in Linz, Austria. The purpose of the center was to gather evidence for the future prosecution of Nazi war criminals. The center's mission, however, was not to be realized. As Cold War tensions heightened, both the United States and the Soviet Union lost interest in tracking down former Nazi officials, and most of Wiesenthal's volunteer staff turned to other pursuits in frustration. Wiesenthal closed the center in 1954, turning over most of its files to the archives of Yad Vashim in Israel.

Wiesenthal held on to one file—that of Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi bureaucrat who had technically and efficiently implemented and overseen the Holocaust. Eichmann had vanished immediately after the Nazis' defeat, and Wiesenthal painstakingly followed reports of his whereabouts, passing on information to the Israeli government. When Eichmann was captured by Israeli agents in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1959, Wiesenthal was sufficiently encouraged to reopen the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna. Eichmann was later found guilty by an Israeli court of mass murder, for which he was executed in 1962.

Wiesenthal and his small staff once again began gathering evidence and carefully analyzing information on the possible location of war criminals. They were aided by numerous international informants who included victims of the Nazis, former German soldiers upset by their country's wartime atrocities, and even former Nazi officers. Wiesenthal's efforts resulted in 1963 in the capture of Karl Silberbauer, the Gestapo officer who had arrested Anne Frank and her family. In 1966 nine Nazi officers located by Wiesenthal were put on trial in what was then West Germany for the murder of Jews in Wiesenthal's former home of Lvov.

In 1967 Wiesenthal published *The Murderers among Us*, a memoir about his Holocaust experiences and efforts as a "Nazi-hunter" and the methods he used to accomplish his goals. He also wrote a second volume, *Justice, Not Vengeance*, which was published in 1989. Wiesenthal's experiences also became an HBO movie, *Murderers among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story*, which starred Ben Kingsley as Wiesenthal. He was also depicted by Sir Laurence Olivier in the film *The Boys from Brazil* (director, Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978). Wiesenthal served as a technical consultant for the film *The Odessa File* (director, Ronald Neame, 1974).

Wiesenthal's dedicated work for more than half a century earned him numerous awards, including the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor, which he received in 1980, and in 1986 the French Legion of Honor. The Simon Wiesenthal Center, with permission to use his name, was founded in Los

Angeles in 1977 with the purpose of keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive and fighting existing bigotry around the world. As lauded as he became, Wiesenthal also had his critics, who variously downplayed his role in the capture of Eichmann and questioned his “sightings” of Josef Mengele.

Toward the end of his life, Wiesenthal maintained a quiet existence with Cyla in Vienna, Austria, doggedly pursuing his lifelong work. Following the Yugoslav Wars of the early 1990s, he spoke out in favor of a war crimes trial, stating that “[Holocaust] survivors should be like seismographs . . . they should sense danger before others do, identify its outlines and reveal them.” In recognition of his tireless efforts, Queen Elizabeth II gave Wiesenthal an honorary knighthood on February 19, 2004. He died at his home in Vienna on September 20, 2005.

ILISA HOROWITZ

See also: Eichmann, Adolf; Mauthausen-Gusen; Museum of Tolerance; Stangl, Franz

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Wilde-KZ

Wilde-KZ was the abbreviation for the longer German term *Wilde-Konzentrationslager*, alluding to unauthorized places of incarceration established in Germany by local Nazis in the earliest stages of the Third Reich. They were given the name because, as it was suggested, they sprang up like wildflowers after refreshing rain following a long period of drought.

These camps frequently operated without any apparent system or direction. There was little in the way of planning or procedure. Often, the very location of these places was impromptu. For example, Dachau was a former gunpowder factory, Oranienburg was originally a brewery (and later a foundry), and Börgermoor and Esterwegen were initially simply rows of barracks set down on open expanses of marshy heathland. Elsewhere, prisoners had to build their own habitations and begin their camp life living in tents. The *Wilde-KZ* were rapidly established, highly improvised affairs. Little regard was paid to administration, discipline, or utilization. Some were run by SS officers; many were

staffed by SA men, often locals, who knew or were known by those they were guarding. The essential function of these camps was to gag political opposition to the new Nazi government of Germany (which was appointed to office on January 30, 1933), and generally to intimidate the wider population through the camps’ reputation for arbitrary brutality. Only with a more coordinated approach to political incarceration through the establishment of the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps in mid-1934 under Theodor Eicke did the *Wilde-KZ* give way to a unified form of administration, discipline, and ethos. Most of the *Wilde-KZs* had closed down by the spring of 1934.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Concentration Camps; Dachau; Eicke, Theodor

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Winton, Nicholas

Sir Nicholas Winton was a British stockbroker who organized a rescue operation that brought 669 children, almost all of them Jewish, from Czechoslovakia to safety in Britain before the outbreak of World War II. He was born Nicholas Wertheim (some sources say Wertheimer) on May 19, 1909, in West Hampstead, England. His parents were Rudolf and Barbara Wertheim, German Jews who had come to London in 1907. In an effort to acculturate, they changed their name to Winton, converted to Christianity, and ensured that their son was baptized into the Church of England. Rudolf Wertheim-Winton, a successful banker, saw that his family wanted for nothing, and Nicholas was raised in a life of some comfort. After attending the Stowe School in Buckingham (where he began but left without graduating), Winton followed in his father’s footsteps as a banker, learning his profession working in banks in Hamburg, London, Berlin, and Paris. In 1931, after working for the Banque Nationale de Crédit in Paris, he returned to England and began his career as a stockbroker at the London Stock Exchange.

As a young man Winton held progressive views on a number of issues, aligning himself with many matters close to the agenda of the Labour Party. He was opposed to the Conservative government’s policy of appeasement, and expressed apprehension over German Nazism.

In December 1938 Winton was about to leave for a Christmas skiing holiday in Switzerland when he received a phone call from his friend Martin Blake—a teacher at London’s Westminster School and an associate of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia—asking him to forego his vacation and instead come immediately to Prague. The British Committee had been established in October 1938 to provide assistance for refugees created by Germany’s annexation of the Sudeten regions after the Munich Agreement the previous month. Winton was happy to do so, and upon his arrival in Prague Blake introduced him to his colleague, Doreen Wariner, arranging for him to visit refugee camps filled with Jews and political prisoners.

Winton was appalled by what he saw, and Blake and Wariner invited him to assist in helping Jews in danger of their lives. He decided to act and began to establish an organization to aid Jewish children at risk.

The timing could not have been more opportune. On the night of November 9–10, 1938, the Nazis launched the pogrom that became known as Kristallnacht, and Winton learned that in the aftermath the British government had approved a measure to allow the entry of Jewish refugees younger than 17 on the proviso that they had a place to stay and landing money of £50 to enable them eventually to return home. He then also learned that some Jewish relief organizations in Britain were planning to rescue German and Austrian Jewish children on what became known as the *Kindertransport* (“children’s transport”) program. This was an initiative that eventually brought some 10,000 unaccompanied children to safety in Britain.

Winton was told, however, that whereas the *Kindertransport* initiative applied to Germany and Austria, there was no organization in Prague to deal with Jewish refugee children. Accordingly, he put together a small team to help organize a rescue operation for children in the Czech lands. Without authorization, he established a Children’s Section of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia and began taking applications from parents in Prague. Racing against the clock to find foster homes in Britain, raise funds, and obtain exit papers, Winton opened an office in Vorsilka Street in which his appointees, Trevor Chadwick and Bill Barazetti, worked continually to assist the thousands of parents who soon began lining up trying to find a safe haven for their children. After Winton returned to Britain, leaving Chadwick in charge in Prague, he contacted a number of foreign governments asking if they would be prepared to accept the children. Only Sweden and Britain agreed to do so.

In trying to save as many children as possible, Winton worked to arrange facilities for their reception in Britain. He faced many obstacles. The Dutch government had closed its borders to Jewish refugees after the *Kristallnacht*, and Winton knew he would have to negotiate an agreement in order to enable the children to transit through Holland for embarkation to Britain. He also had to find foster homes, so that he could assure the Dutch authorities that the children had somewhere to go and would not remain in the Netherlands. To secure places in British homes and hostels, he placed newspaper advertisements seeking families prepared to accept the children and then made arrangements for their transportation. He also had to raise money to fund this and the British government’s £50 pound guarantee required for each child.

At every turn he was successful, and on March 14, 1939—one day prior to the German occupation of the Czech lands—the first of Winton’s transports left Prague by plane for London. He then arranged another seven transports, leaving Prague by train across Germany to the Netherlands, and then by ferry to Britain. In London, the children were met by their British foster parents. The last trainload of children to arrive in Britain from Prague left on August 2, 1939.

One further group of 250, the biggest thus far, was scheduled to leave Prague on September 1, 1939. They did not make it. On that day Germany invaded Poland, and all German borders were closed. Two days later, Britain and Germany were at war, and all further rescue activities ceased. The train carrying the 250 children was shunted out of sight, and the children were never seen again. Overall, Nicholas Winton found homes in Britain for 669 children, many of whose parents would later perish at Auschwitz.

After the war, Winton’s rescue efforts remained practically unknown and unremembered. In 1988 his wife Grete—whom he had married in 1948 and who knew nothing of this earlier episode in his life—found a scrapbook from 1939 chronicling the full story. His attitude was that he did not think anyone would have been interested.

Winton’s achievements were recognized around the world, particularly in Britain and the Czech Republic. In 1993 Queen Elizabeth II awarded him an MBE (Member of the British Empire), and on October 28, 1998, the president of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, recognized his achievement with the award of the Order of T. G. Masaryk. Queen Elizabeth then went further than her earlier award and knighted him on December 31, 2002, for his services to humanity. In 2008 the Czech government nominated Winton for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize, and in 2010 he was named a Hero of the Holocaust by the British government. On October

28, 2014, he was awarded the highest honor of the Czech Republic, the Order of the White Lion, by Czech president Miloš Zeman, and finally, on February 23, 2015, he was awarded the Freedom of the City of London. Winton's Jewish birth disqualified him from being declared Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

Sir Nicholas Winton died peacefully in his sleep on the morning of July 1, 2015, at Wexham Park Hospital in Slough. He was 106 years old.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; Czechoslovakia; Kindertransport; Rescuers of Jews

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Wirth, Christian

Known for his brutality both to Jewish victims and his own SS staff at Nazi extermination camps, Christian Wirth was involved in—if not, directly responsible for—the mass killings of Jews in three of the six Nazi extermination camps situated in Poland. It seems that he had the perfect experience and temperament for such actions.

Wirth was born on November 24, 1885, in Oberbalzheim in Baden-Württemberg, in southern Germany. His years before World War I, and prior to his association with the Nazi Party in 1931, were spent first in the construction trade and then with the police department in Stuttgart. He served valiantly in World War I, where he was wounded and highly decorated. After the war he returned to Stuttgart, where he became a leading police detective and later was responsible for other detectives working homicide.

His early roles in the Nazi Party were in the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) in 1933; in the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*) in 1937; and in the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) in 1939, where he was promoted to *Obersturmführer* (first lieutenant) in October of that year. His brutality was already well known: his success rate for getting confessions from suspects that no one else could was impressive.

His education in the workings of the Nazi regime continued when he was assigned at the end of 1939 to the German “euthanasia” program (*Aktion T-4*). That was the Nazis’ first

large-scale, organized killing operation, addressed this time not at Jews but at German citizens with physical and mental disabilities that under Nazi ideology rendered them as leading “lives not worthy of living.” It was while working as the administrative director at a euthanasia station in Brandenburg that Wirth was first involved in killing by gas. He also learned there and at another euthanasia center in Hartheim Castle that carbon monoxide gas was very effective for killing a large group of people relatively quickly, and that for such a program to be efficient, the victims must be deceived into believing that they were not going to their death until it was too late for them to do anything to stop it. Wirth was so good at this work that he was appointed head of the program in mid-1940.

With this as background, Wirth soon found himself involved from the very beginning with the Operation Reinhard (*Aktion Reinhard*) program. This program focused on the extermination of the Jews of Poland, and to that end it created three so-called Operation Reinhard extermination camps: Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka (all built in the *Generalgouvernement*). In December 1941 Wirth was ordered to set up the first of these camps, Belzec, and was appointed its first commandant. By mid-March 1942 Belzec’s killing capacity was operational.

As Belzec’s commandant—in which capacity he was referred to as “Christian the Savage”—Wirth was in a position that allowed him to experiment to determine what steps needed to be taken to make the killing center run as efficiently as possible, “efficiently” meaning, in this case, the ability to kill and dispose of the bodies of as many Jews in as short a time as possible. To that end, Wirth, drawing on his *Aktion T-4* experience, recognized the importance of deceiving the victims for as long as possible as to the real purpose of the camp. He often personally made a welcoming speech to new arrivals, assuring them that they had come to a transit camp and that they had nothing to fear.

He also recognized the importance of speed in this operation. It was critical that the victims be moved as quickly as possible from arrival to execution. In a manner that seemed to contradict his principle of keeping victims calm, he ordered that they be forced to run from one place to the next, always being beaten or whipped if they did not do so fast enough. The goal was to disorient them so that any thoughts or feelings other than terror would be impossible. Another decision he made was for Jews themselves to do as much of the work in the extermination process as feasible.

Less than six months into Belzec’s killing operations, Wirth was promoted again, this time to be the supervisor of all three of the Operation Reinhard camps, meaning that his

command was extended from Belzec to include Sobibór and Treblinka. In that capacity, Wirth set out to increase killing efficiency in those camps as well. In the summer of 1943 Himmler promoted him to *Sturmbannführer*.

A massacre with a particularly cruel name—"Operation Harvest Festival," committed in November 1943—also was Wirth's doing. As the Operation Reinhard camps began to be closed, Wirth saw to it that the Jewish laborers in Nazi camps, including Trawniki and Madjanek, were killed. Some 42,000 Jews were murdered as a result.

Wirth was now assigned to Trieste, where his job was to establish a death camp in San Sabba and to fight partisans. On May 26, 1944, he was killed by Yugoslav partisans. He was buried with full honors.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Aktion Reinhard; Belzec; Death Camps; Euthanasia Program; Nisko Plan; Operation Harvest Festival; Schutzstaffel; Sicherheitsdienst; Sobibór; Sturmabteilung; Treblinka

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Wise, Stephen S.

American Reform rabbi, U.S. Jewish leader, and Zionist, Stephen Samuel Wise was born on May 17, 1874, in Budapest, and emigrated to New York City as a child. He was educated at the City of New York's Columbia College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1892. In 1901 he received a PhD from Columbia University and then pursued rabbinical studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He became a Reform rabbi and a committed Zionist by 1914. Wise also established several synagogues and participated in a number of meetings of the American and World Jewish Congress. A close associate of future president Franklin D. Roosevelt, Wise was an eloquent proponent of social and economic change and strongly backed the New Deal.

In the early 1930s, when the Nazis ascended to power in Germany, Wise spoke out sharply against the regime and its racial policies and antisemitism. He helped spearhead an effort to boycott German-made goods and organized anti-Nazi protests in New York City, and also attempted to use his influence with President Roosevelt to convince him that the United States must actively resist the Nazis. Strong

isolationist sentiments in the United States, however, largely prevented such action. Despite this, Wise was influential in persuading the State Department to increase the number of visas to Jews fleeing Europe during 1936–1939.

By early 1942 reports of the enormity of the Holocaust had begun to trickle into the United States, and Wise moved quickly to publicize it and strategize how to stop it. In November 1942 he held a press conference in which he detailed the reports coming out of Europe. He also appealed to the U.S. public for help in ending the slaughter of innocents. The next month, the United States and 11 of its allies issued a declaration denouncing the Germans' attempts to exterminate European Jewry. Wise repeatedly urged Roosevelt to make cessation of the Holocaust a major war aim, but other exigencies prevented the president from doing so. This greatly saddened Wise, and as the war drew to a close, his influence among American Jews had begun to wane.

In 1945 Wise was sent to the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, where he helped formulate policies designed to help Holocaust survivors and to prevent such an atrocity from happening again. Wise was often criticized for not having taken a strong enough stance with the Roosevelt administration prior to the war, when Nazi policies toward the Jews were already clear and obvious. Others faulted him for not being aggressive enough to stop the Holocaust during the war, but there was only so much Wise could have done in that regard. Roosevelt's primary goal was to defeat Japan and Germany, and he had to act in concert with U.S. allies, for whom the Holocaust was not a central concern.

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise died on April 19, 1949, in New York.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Riegner Telegram; United States Response to the Holocaust

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Wolff, Karl

Karl Wolff was SS-Obersturmbannführer and Supreme Head of the German police forces in Italy in 1945. He stood trial in 1964 before the *Schwurgericht* (Court with a Jury) of the *Landgericht Muenchen II*. Charged as an accessory to the

murder of more than 300,000 Jews killed while he was the adjutant of the Reichsführer-SS, Heinrich Himmler, between 1942 and 1943, Wolff was tried as a so-called “*Schreibtischtäter*,” literally, a “desk perpetrator,” someone not physically present at the crime but culpable for reasons of administrative responsibility.

Born on May 13, 1900, in Darmstadt, Karl Friedrich Wolff served in World War I. After the German defeat in 1918, he could not continue his military career and started an advertising agency that failed. In 1931 he met Hitler and Himmler, and decided to enroll in Himmler’s newly formed SS. Letters to his wife reveal that Wolff shared the ideas of “eliminating the Jews,” although he might not have dared to believe or plan actively how this could become reality. Wolff, a pragmatic and cool analyst, always followed the easiest path of self-advantage; attracted by the SS ideal of building a new German elite, he was obsessed with becoming part of it.

From 1932 Wolff had the personal attention of Himmler, who was impressed by the character and perfect manners of the “young gentleman.” In 1933 he became Himmler’s chief of personal staff, and as such was drawn into his inner circle, and it was recognized that his notable diplomatic ability was useful to his boss. Wolff became Himmler’s shadow, taking part in every meeting and accompanying Himmler on several inspection tours, including ones to concentration camps. At the same time, Wolff maintained contact with the different circles Himmler wished to address informally, such as industrialists, officers, or journalists. In his position as Himmler’s adjutant, Wolff controlled access to the Reichsführer. To strengthen his position against his political rivals, Wolff became head of the Reichsführer-SS chancellery, and supervised the SS organizations “Ahnenerbe” and “Lebensborn” on Himmler’s behalf.

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Wolff was promoted to the position of liaison officer for Himmler at Hitler’s headquarters, and was named a general of the Waffen-SS to emphasize his position, although he was not a trained general staff officer. He became isolated from his duties and powers at Berlin, but at the same time involved in the racial war of the SS in the East. Wolff participated in several meetings dealing with the murder of the Jews; he knew of the so-called “Generalplan Ost” and of the gas chambers. He also participated several times, together with Himmler, in mass shootings of Jews and communists, including in Minsk in 1941.

Wolff’s involvement in planning the deportation of the Jews of Warsaw in July and August of 1942 became obvious after the war. During that period, up to 300,000 Jews had

been deported to die in the gas chambers of Treblinka, and Wolff could not deny having personally ordered several trains to start the deportations.

With defeat in sight, Wolff was perfectly clear about his responsibilities and the guilt of staff members of the SS. After the fall of Mussolini in July 1943, Wolff became supreme head of the German police forces in Italy. Besides the police work in occupied territory, he was also concerned with deportation of Italian civilians for slave labor in Germany. And as he controlled the rear areas, he became involved in the war against the partisans.

Although he followed the lines given by his patron, Wolff also looked out for more positive action, because he felt strongly that he had to earn a new reputation. After the deportation of the Jews of Rome by a special SS group from Germany, an action ordered by Himmler against Wolff’s advice, Wolff became more isolated from Himmler. He was on good terms with the Vatican and the Italian bishops, and became one of the most important German negotiators for the surrender in the south of Italy. In exchange, the Allied partners promised Wolff the new life he longed for; in a secret agreement, he was given the promise that he would not be prosecuted for actions committed during his command in Italy, including harsh anti-partisan tactics.

Wolff’s role in the deportation and deaths of the Jews was another matter. Because he never had an official function in the chain of mass murder of the Jews, it was quite difficult to bring Wolff to trial. Only the existence of some letters in which Wolff not only ordered the trains for the deportation but also expressed himself content and happy in very antisemitic phrases allowed him to be tried at all. Several former colleagues testified as to Wolff’s important role as the “right hand of Himmler,” but nobody could testify that Wolff had killed personally, as he had always been eager to remain the image of the “gentleman with white gloves.”

Based on the contents of his letters, in March 1965 Wolff was found guilty and sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment. He was released in 1969 on medical grounds and died in Rosenheim, Germany, on July 17, 1984.

KERSTIN VON LINGEN

See also: Himmler, Heinrich; Schutzstaffel; Treblinka; Waffen-SS; Warsaw Ghetto

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World War II

The origins of World War II lay in the ideological drive for expansion manifest in the Nazi worldview. The basic goal was to create an expanded Germany to the east, thereby capturing “living space” (*Lebensraum*) in order to form a new superpower: the Thousand Year Reich. In so doing, Adolf Hitler envisaged destroying the Soviet Union and eliminating France as a continental power. Further, this would be combined with an ethnic revolution in the region, promoted by the Nazis as being a defense of all Germanic (or “Aryan”) peoples. It was this racial aspect that distinguished Nazi policy from older forms of German expansionism. As far back as 1934, Hitler ordered his generals to be ready for war “within eight years.” This policy of rearmament was given a substantial fillip by the failure of the West to react to Hitler’s remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936. Hitler believed that he could forge allegiances with Great Britain and the Soviet Union in order to gain the time to fulfill this plan. With regard to the latter, Nazi diplomacy resulted in the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, signed on August 23, 1939. Hitler believed that despite the lack of a formal alliance, this promise of non-aggression by the Soviet Union would deter Britain from fighting. The pact itself was mutually beneficial. For Joseph Stalin, not only did a secret protocol allow for westward territorial expansion but it would also very likely result in a war between Germany and the imperial powers that would engender favorable conditions for the wider spread of communism in Europe. Hitler’s Germany was, therefore, a “friend” of communism—though not an “ally”—and Soviet terminology dubbed Hitler the “icebreaker of the revolution.”

Hitler had offered the Polish government status as a satellite state at the beginning of 1939. When this was turned down, Hitler decided to destroy Poland. After invading the country on the morning of September 1, 1939, it took less than two weeks for the rest of the country to be overrun by the German forces, and this was followed by a Soviet invasion. Initially the German public did not have a great enthusiasm for the offensive. This was a period when the Nazi Party was in decline in the popular consciousness, despite the fact that Hitler’s own standing remained high. However, morale was improved by the swift victory. Unprecedented Blitzkrieg tactics allowed for a new form of warfare, far removed from the trenches of World War I, to be implemented. The combination of modern technology with a belief that the “spirit” of the Teutonic warriors of old was working with them in winning breathtakingly rapid and decisive victories was typical of the Nazi idealization of modern warfare. Following this victory, the ethnic cleansing

programs that would develop into the Holocaust began to evolve. For example, Heinrich Himmler was given the role of “Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of Germandom,” and under his governance 1 million Poles were removed from western Polish provinces and replaced with German immigrants. The majority of Poland was placed under the rule of a Nazi governorship, which formed the “Government of Central Poland” (termed more generally, ironically in French, as the *Gouvernement*), and the Reich directly annexed Upper Silesia, West Prussia, Poznan, and Danzig.

Following the invasion of Poland, German attention turned to Denmark and Norway in the spring of 1940. These invasions were pragmatic, as the supply of Swedish iron ore was essential for the German war machine. A British-occupied Norway might have halted this flow of raw materials. Again, easy victories followed, despite substantial British and French intervention in northern Norway. Attention then switched to Western Europe, and May 10, 1940, saw the Blitzkrieg sweep across Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, and France. In the previous winter, Germany had developed a plan to attack France at the north of the defensive barrier, the Maginot Line, via the Ardennes Mountains. This proved highly effective and split the Allied armies; the French capitulated after only six weeks, and 300,000 British and French troops were forced into a legendary evacuation via the port of Dunkirk. On June 16 Marshal Henri Pétain became the new French head of state, and an armistice was signed. Hitler toured Paris in triumph and returned to Germany to a genuine excitement at the dramatic victories in Western Europe, fueling National Socialist propaganda of a virile “people’s Germany” that was triumphant over Western decadence. The British, now under the newly installed leadership of Winston Churchill, declared that there would be “no surrender”—this despite high-level British discussions for a negotiated peace. Hermann Göring’s plan to defeat Britain in 1940 via Luftwaffe bombing raids—the Battle of Britain—failed to remove Britain from the war or destroy the Royal Air Force (RAF). Both countries maintained aerial bombing raids on civilian and military targets.

Instead of invading Britain, Hitler decided to fulfill a greater objective: the destruction of the Soviet Union. This was an ideological “war of racial annihilation,” as Hitler informed his generals, rather than a battle for expansion. Hitler was convinced that the Red Army had been emasculated as a result of the Great Purges, a belief greatly encouraged by the Soviets’ poor performance in the invasion of Finland in November 1939. After some delays in the spring of 1941, Operation Barbarossa was launched on June 22. Some 147

divisions were allocated to the invasion, initially joined by Romanian and Finnish troops. Despite warnings of an attack, the invasion came as a surprise to Stalin. Consequently, the Soviets lost most of their air force, and Germany soon made vast gains, taking a huge number of prisoners of war. However, by the winter of 1941–1942 the German forces had failed in their initial aspiration of knocking out the Red Army in five months, and they were ill prepared for the freezing conditions of the Russian winter. To compound these logistical problems, German supply lines had become increasingly overstretched by Hitler's decision to split the attack between Moscow and Ukraine. The occupied Soviet territories were chaotically administered, and it is difficult to overstate the brutality that the Germans unleashed on the local populations, which served to unify the Soviet forces in the defense of "Mother Russia" in what now became the "Great Patriotic War." Logistical difficulties were then compounded by the Japanese attack on the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, and the resultant German and Italian declaration of war against the United States later that same week. Not only did this draw Germany into a state of war with the United States, thereby demoralizing the home front, but it also freed experienced Soviet troops from the Siberian Front to fight the Nazi invasion: it was clear that Japan would be too busy with Southeast Asian expansion to nurture designs against the Soviet Union.

In 1942 Albert Speer was promoted to minister for armaments and war production, and he brought about dramatic increases in the construction of wartime materials, more than trebling production in three years. This was often achieved through the use of foreign prisoners and slave labor in the concentration camps. From its peak at the start of Operation Barbarossa, enthusiasm in Germany for the war began to dwindle. Optimism was still very much alive and well in Germany during 1942, especially with news of Erwin Rommel's victories in North Africa and U-boat supremacy over British shipping in the North Atlantic. However, 1942 also saw the suspension of Nazi reforms to the state welfare and insurance schemes, and so the redistributive aspect of Nazi "socialism" and plans for a massive increase in social housing were shelved in favor of the essential war economy.

The war turned decisively against Germany in 1943. In February, German forces were defeated at Stalingrad—a battle that Hitler swore he would never lose—and in May, Rommel was defeated in North Africa. By the summer, the U-boat campaign was turning in favor of the Allies and in July the Germans were defeated in a massive tank battle around Kursk. Consequently, it was not until 1943 that the Goebbels propaganda machine

reached its height in order to counter the increasingly gloomy news of the war's progress, compounded by rising prices and intensified Allied bombing campaigns. By this time, Hitler's health—mental and physical—had begun to decline. Often meetings with military personnel led to histrionics from the Führer and sometimes to major disputes over tactical matters. Hopes for avoiding a German defeat were dwindling, and they now lay either in the possibility that the Red Army would not be able to maintain its unique ability to absorb a truly colossal rate of attrition, or with the idea that an increased Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe would lead to a squabble that would destroy the Allies' unity. Such hopes were finally dashed with the D-Day landings in Normandy in June 1944. The success of this invasion was made possible by the massive industrial capacity of the United States to produce war materials, in combination with the fact that the Allies had cracked Enigma, the German codes. Although the initial battles were by no means certain, the Allies soon proved successful and began moving eastward.

By 1944 the Nazi regime had become increasingly unstable. The July Plot against Hitler's life augmented the power base of the SS and its leader, Himmler, in whom Hitler now placed a deep trust. He gave the former chicken farmer the position of "commander-in-chief of the reserve army and supreme commander of the Army Group Vistula," the sort of promotion that is indicative of a wider characteristic of the Nazi war machine—placing people in positions for which they had no real training. This gave Himmler prime responsibility for defending Germany from the onslaught of the Red Army, a task in which he failed spectacularly. In these final months, Martin Bormann rose, too, and plotted against Himmler and other high-ranking Nazis, a development that was symptomatic of the fact that the upper echelons of the Nazi Party were riddled with infighting. In the shadow of imminent defeat, Himmler and Göring both sought peace settlements, the latter, incredibly, acting under the false belief that he was now Germany's de facto leader. Hitler, however, was determined that Germany would not surrender. In his final testament, written in his Berlin bunker, he expressed no contrition for the frightful destruction he had unleashed, and prophesied that a new National Socialist Germany would one day rise again from the ruins. It was here, on April 29, 1945, that he married Eva Braun and later committed suicide. Before doing so, he promoted Goebbels to chancellor, Bormann to party secretary, and Admiral Karl Dönitz to Reich president and supreme commander of the armed forces. On May 7, 1945, German representatives signed an initial peace and unconditional surrender order, and the following day they signed an unconditional surrender to all the Allies in Berlin.

For Italy, too, the war followed a tragic path. Although war was central to fascist ideology, it is clear that initially Benito Mussolini had no intention of involving Italy in such a great conflagration. Italy lacked the military infrastructure to mount a major war against Western powers, and Mussolini was happy to limit himself to piecemeal expansionist policies in Africa and the Balkans. Despite the “Pact of Steel” of May 1939, Mussolini did not enter the war immediately. In fact, he regarded the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact as criminal; backed Finland after the Soviet invasion of that country in November 1939; and sold weapons, including airplanes, to France until May 1940. On June 10, 1940, when France was on the verge of defeat, Italy entered on the side of Germany in hopes of territorial gains. Mussolini wanted only a partial association with Nazi expansionism. Therefore, he decided to fight a “parallel war” in Italy’s interests, basically to make Italy the key regional power in the Mediterranean and North Africa. In October 1940 Mussolini ordered an invasion of Greece that quickly ran into difficulties because of the military strength built up under Greece’s Metaxas regime in the interwar years. Italian troops were forced into retreat. Mussolini was rescued in April 1941 when Hitler overran Yugoslavia and Greece, delaying Operation Barbarossa. This was due to an anti-German coup in Yugoslavia and a British military expedition supporting Greece. After that Italy was stripped of its military independence. Italian troops were sent to aid the invasion of the Soviet Union and also to Rommel’s campaign in Africa. The latter sat awkwardly with the Italians’ self-image, at least at a rhetorical level, of performing a civilizing form of imperialism, emancipating indigenous populations from British and French rule. However, despite their own atrocities committed in Africa, it is worth noting that the Italians did not comply with the Nazi Jewish policy and maintained the second highest survival rate of Jewish populations among occupied countries.

The hostilities highlighted the fact that the Italian fascist war machine was a weak force, negating the ideals of the fascist new man. Further, it became increasingly obvious that the Italian Fascist Party and its associated militia, the MVSN, were both ineffective and corrupt. By 1943 public confidence in the regime collapsed, as it seemed to many that the war was contrary to any Italian interests. Mussolini, however, could see no way out and felt that Italy’s destiny was tied inextricably to Germany. Following the Allied invasion of Sicily on July 9, 1943, a meeting of the Fascist Grand Council was called for July 24. There, Dino Grandi collected signatures supporting a resumption of rule by King Victor Emmanuel III. Mussolini was deposed, and a new government was created under

Marshal Pietro Badoglio. Mussolini was placed under arrest, and the new government signed peace terms on September 8, the eve of the Allied invasion of Italy.

German forces then invaded, and the peninsula became the site of civil war between antifascists and a combination of German and fascist forces. Mussolini was rescued on September 12 and coerced by Hitler into running a puppet state. Installed in a villa near Salò, Mussolini was essentially a prisoner of the SS. The Italian Social Republic, or the Salò Republic as it was popularly known, initially attempted to introduce a new “socialization” scheme that would reorder the economy along more corporatist lines. The German Reich terminated these reforms, as it was fearful of a drop in essential wartime production. The republic did gain a genuine minority support, however, and it founded a new army of around 500,000 men and a new militia, the National Republican Guard. However, the Allied invasion was too powerful, and the republic was eventually defeated. Partisans captured Mussolini at the end of April 1945. He was executed, and his body was hung in a square in Milan.

In other invaded territories, Hitler preferred to set up satellite regimes that, in the main, drew on local conservative forces, rather than either drawing on indigenous fascist forces or governing annexed regions directly from Berlin. The Scandinavian countries were given somewhat lenient treatment, and Denmark, Norway, and Holland were allowed relatively autonomous governance. This stemmed from a belief that Scandinavians, the Dutch, and the Flemish were “racially redeemable.” The most notorious of these was the regime of Norway’s Vidkun Quisling, who ruled in Germany’s interests for most of the war, and whose name became synonymous with such a relationship. Holland, Denmark, and Belgium also developed collaborationist regimes. However, because of contingencies of administration, indigenous fascists did gain more significant positions of power in some invaded countries. In Romania, Hitler’s main concern was to make the country a stable satellite and bulwark in support of the invasion of the Soviet Union. The Iron Guard did, however, briefly seize power. In 1940 King Carol realigned Romanian allegiance from Britain to Germany and offered Horia Sima and others from the Iron Guard places in the government. However, when Germany transferred Transylvania to Hungary, Carol’s popularity dropped. Carol installed General Ion Antonescu as dictator, and the latter then forced the king to abdicate in favor of his son Prince Michael. Other parties were unwilling to form a grand coalition, so Antonescu relied on the Iron Guard to back his pro-German Romanian nationalism. Thereafter, the Iron Guard became the only political

party in Romania, and Sima became vice-premier. “Romanianization” commissars from the Iron Guard peppered the country and even gained new powers over industry. Overall, this simply resulted in bad (and increasingly unpopular) administration. Antonescu attempted to appropriate the Iron Guard, emulating Francisco Franco’s tactics with the Falange in Spain—a policy that Hitler backed. However, amid increasing political tension, on January 21, 1941, the legion carried out a full revolt, seized local government offices, and enacted a vicious Jewish pogrom. This rebellion was crushed, however, and the Iron Guard was banned. Antonescu remained in power, and Romanian forces were sent to the Eastern Front in return for territorial gains. Antonescu also presided over Romania’s own Jewish genocide, the largest by non-German forces during the war.

Hungary was also reinvented as a Nazi satellite state in which the Arrow Cross, led by Ferenc Szálasi, eventually secured power. The regent, Admiral Miklós Horthy, initially resisted the Arrow Cross. He favored the rise of the new radical-right party, Hungarian Renewal, under Béla Imrédy. Hitler, too, initially resisted Szálasi and preferred to give power to Imrédy after Hungary entered the war as a German ally. The Arrow Cross held representatives in the Hungarian parliament and set up a biological racial office in 1942. The advance of Soviet forces in 1943 led to a full German occupation in March 1944, and Horthy was forced to put a more radical-right government into office; yet Szálasi refused to be a party to this coalition. By the autumn of 1944 German authorities wanted to put Szálasi and the Arrow Cross in power. They seized the existing government, and Szálasi was installed. By this time, half of the Jewish population had been transported to death camps, and under Szálasi the rest were deported. Szálasi developed an ideological project for a new “Hungarian Order,” and a “Corporate Order of the Working Nation” comprising a nationalized and “controlled” economy. By March 1945 the country was under full Soviet occupation, and Szálasi was captured and executed for war crimes.

After invading Yugoslavia, Hitler dismantled the country, following which the Ustashe rose to power in Croatia. The leader of the Ustashe, Dr. Ante Pavelić, was put at the head of the new Independent State of Croatia and remained there throughout the war. He developed a charismatic leadership and “mystical bond” with the nation. Under this administration chaos reigned, and a culture of very high ethnic violence developed. That resulted in the attempted extermination of a large proportion of the Orthodox Serb population, some 1 million strong. The regime also spontaneously executed around 40,000 Jews.

After the French defeat, Marshal Pétain headed what was the most independent of the satellite states, Vichy France. Comprising southeastern and central France, the regime maintained official sovereign status and formal diplomacy throughout the war and was allowed to keep France’s colonial empire. Essentially, this was an authoritarian, right-wing dictatorship modeled on Franco rather than Hitler or Mussolini. It did, however, respond to widespread desires for patriotic reform and announced a “national revolution.” This involved the promotion of conservative values, the reintroduction of religious instruction in schools, and the modernization of industry along corporatist lines. Also, new youth and veterans’ organizations were formed. Antisemitic policies were introduced in 1940, and the French police ended up deporting tens of thousands of Jews to Germany and beyond. In August 1941 the regime became more authoritarian when Pétain suppressed political parties, formed new courts, and created a new national police force. Mandatory labor was introduced in 1942, basically to ensure that French youth worked for German interests. However, by 1942 the Vichy Zone (also called the “Free” or “Unoccupied” Zone) was under direct German occupation, which blocked further constitutional reform. From that point onward, Pétain was a mere figurehead. Marcel Déat and other indigenous French fascists were given positions in the assembly. After the Allied invasion in the summer of 1944 the government was moved to Sigmaringen in Germany, in order to organize guerrilla tactics opposing the liberation.

As the war progressed, it developed an increasingly global aspect. There was a significant Europe-wide, rather than exclusively German, input into the German armed forces, reflective of the way that for many across Europe the war took on the face of a genuine ideological conflict between “European Civilization” and “Asian Bolshevism.” For example, the Waffen-SS drew on not only non-national *Volksdeutsche* (“ethnic Germans”) but also other volunteers from Northern, Eastern, and Western Europe, and even non-Europeans. This was often constructed in terms of a somewhat convoluted Nietzschean ideal of the emergence of European “supermen.” However, it was more likely that these recruits were inspired by deeply felt anticommunist sentiments that allowed any Nazi atrocities to be justified in the greater good of defeating Bolshevism. Typical of this fusion between increasing Nazification and anti-Bolshevism was the leader of the Belgian Rexist movement, Léon Degrelle, who spent a great deal of time on the Eastern Front. He also developed a “Eurofascism” that argued that Nazi-style racism must become manifest in all nationalisms,

which would result in a unified European community of nations after the war.

World War II was devastating for the fascist worldview. Inherent to fascism—especially Nazism—was the idea that war was the ultimate test of the nation and of the new fascist men created in its name. Consequently, the comprehensive defeat of Nazi expansionism, which drew other forms of fascism and authoritarian right politics into its hurricane, revealed the inherently self-destructive nature of fascist ideologies. In the postwar dynamic, this has meant that fascist ideology has sought to build ideological constructions that either attempt to transcend this history through sophisticated metapolitical discourses of “organic nationalism,” or else fetishize these experiences, often in esoteric paramilitary groupuscules.

PAUL JACKSON

See also: Hitler, Adolf; Italy; Lebensraum; National Socialist German Worker’s Party; Operation Barbarossa; Soviet Union; Speer, Albert

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World War II, Outbreak of

On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, as a consequence of that invasion, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

Although the conflict that would become World War II was, at that stage, still localized to those countries (as well as the countries of the British and French Empires), it carried an awful potential to spiral into something much worse. Germany was already allied to fascist Italy, and, a few days before the invasion, Germany had signed an alliance with the Soviet Union. For several years prior to this, smaller countries all over Europe had been coalescing into alliances and groupings for their mutual defense in case of the unthinkable.

What did this mean for the Jews of Europe? The beginning of World War II, on September 1, 1939, marked a new phase in German policy toward the Jews.

It is important to realize that the war did not coincide with the start of the Holocaust—though it must also be said that Nazi anti-Jewish measures in Poland were not long in coming. Indeed, within a month the first ghettos were established, with Nazi Germany taking advantage of Poland’s conquest in order to begin persecuting the Jews.

This, however, was a piecemeal persecution. At the beginning of the war the Nazis did not yet quite know what to do with the millions of Jews they had just seized. After all, the previous six years had not seen a complete eradication of Jews from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, and Jewish numbers in the “Old Reich” were substantially less than they were in the newly occupied territories. The question of how to deal with the much larger Polish Jewish population was therefore one that made the Nazis pause—though only for a short while. The upshot of Nazi interim measures—which were to remain in place, and would then drive the Final Solution as it developed—was the creation of a system of ghettos throughout Nazi-occupied Poland.

The main tool the Nazis employed to achieve their murderous aims during the Holocaust could be found in the death camps, and it is these institutions, thoroughly unprecedented in purpose and design, that make up the starkest feature of the Holocaust. Nothing, either before or since, approximates the Nazi death camps in design, intention, or operation. Yet the outbreak of war in September 1939 did not see the immediate establishment of these camps, even though the invasion of Poland generated the circumstances that would allow for them later.

Nowhere has any other malevolent regime introduced establishments like the Nazi death camps of Lublin-Majdanek, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibór, Chelmno, or Auschwitz-Birkenau. They were, and remain, thoroughly unmatched in human history. As such, they became the most lucid and unequivocal statement German National Socialism made about itself, demonstrating beyond doubt that it was an anti-human ideology in which respect for life counted for nothing. Put together, all these aspects of what the death camps represented added up to a new dimension of genocide.

Yet this could not have been foreseen when war broke out in September 1939. For all the persecution that had thus far taken place in the Old Reich, the Holocaust, as we have come to understand it, had not yet begun. The “ground zero” of the Final Solution—the extermination camps—was still several years away.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: British Response to the Holocaust; France; Poland

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Wrobel, Eta

Eta Wrobel was a commander of Jewish partisans in the forests of central Poland during the Holocaust. She was born Eta Chajt into a solidly middle-class family of 10 in Łuków, eastern Poland on December 28, 1916. In early 1940, soon after the war began, she began working as a clerk in an employment agency, but quickly began her resistance activities by creating false identity papers for Jews in the work office set up by German Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Łuków. She also smuggled guns she had stolen from Nazis in Łódź, and somehow got them to Łuków. She was, however, eventually denounced and arrested by the Gestapo.

Imprisoned in Lublin, she was beaten and tortured in order to divulge the names of other resisters. She held out for 10 months before being released for work duties building the death camp at nearby Majdanek. This was highly unusual, as Jews were at no time ever permitted to do such work, but Eta had assistance from outside the prison through the intervention of the family of one of the other prisoners. On the way to the worksite, she managed to slip away from the wagon on which she was riding and ran into the forest. Here, she was met by her father, who had escaped the destruction of the Łuków ghetto.

The ghetto had been established in May 1941 and was destroyed before the end of 1942. By then the population had grown to nearly 12,000. Deportations, mainly to Treblinka, took place in early October and early November, while some 2,200 Jews were shot into pits. Whatever remained of the ghetto was transformed into a slave labor camp, but over the next few months thousands of those who had survived the initial deportations, and others who had been relocated there from elsewhere, were shot dead or transported to Treblinka. Only about 150 Jews of Łuków survived the Holocaust.

Under these circumstances, it was ironic that Eta could count herself as one of the survivors of the Łuków ghetto, given that she had already been imprisoned by the Gestapo. Having fled to the woods, she then helped organize an

all-Jewish partisan unit numbering about 80, which, because of innate military skills, she ultimately commanded. She was active on missions with men and made important strategic decisions under which the unit would steal German supplies, set mines, and engage in skirmishing.

The unit lived rough. They slept in cramped quarters and had no access to medical attention. Unlike the other seven women in the unit, she refused to cook or clean. On one mission Eta was shot in the leg and went to see a friendly Polish doctor. The bullet was difficult to remove, and he kept asking her to come back when the swelling went down. All that led to was intense pain and sustained swelling over several months, so eventually the doctor gave her a knife and a bottle of alcohol, and she dug the bullet out herself. It was said that the experience she gained from this was beneficial in other ways, as she then learned how to remove bullets from wounded fellow partisans.

In July 1944 the Soviet army liberated Łuków. Eta came out of hiding and was asked if she was interested in becoming the mayor of Łuków. She readily accepted this on the ground that by doing so she could make a positive difference for the future. On December 20, 1944, she was married, and in 1947 she and her husband, Henry, moved to the United States, settling first in Brooklyn before moving to New Jersey. They raised three children, who in turn produced nine grandchildren. Eta, for her part, was the only child in a family of 10 to survive the Holocaust.

After settling in the United States, Eta spent much of her time engaging in community activities such as raising money to assist in anticancer initiatives. In later life she traveled throughout New Jersey educating schoolchildren about her experiences and generally imparting to them a lifetime of accumulated wisdom wrung from the most testing of conditions. In 2006, at the age of 90, she wrote her memoirs, a book titled *My Life My Way*, written in conjunction with Jeanette Friedman.

Eta Wrobel died on May 26, 2008, in Highland, New York, at the age of 92. Before her death, she summarized her years with the partisans by saying, "The biggest resistance that we could have done to the Germans was to survive."

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Gestapo; Jewish Partisans; Majdanek

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Y

Yad Vashem

Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, was established in 1953 by an act of Israel's Knesset (parliament) to commemorate the six million Jewish men, women, and children murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Holocaust. Located on the western slope of Mount Herzl on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem, the site was chosen specifically because the area was not at that point crowded out with competing draws of historical significance.

Yad Vashem is charged with educating both Israeli citizens and the global community, through documentation and publication, about the tragic events of the Holocaust (in Hebrew, *HaShoah*). The site consists of a large complex containing the Holocaust History Museum, memorial sites such as the Children's Memorial and the Hall of Remembrance, the Museum of Holocaust Art, sculptures, outdoor commemorative sites such as the Valley of the Communities, a synagogue, a research institute with archives, a library, a publishing house, and an educational center named the International School for Holocaust Studies.

Included among Yad Vashem's stated tasks are the following: to commemorate the Jews murdered by the Nazis; to commemorate the destroyed communities; to acknowledge the heroism of those who fought against the Nazis; to acknowledge the non-Jews, called *Hasidei Umot Ha-Olam*, or "Righteous among the Nations," who risked their lives to save Jews; to establish appropriate projects of memorialization; to do

appropriate research to tell both the story of the victims and the heroes as well as the lessons to be learned; and to represent the State of Israel where like-minded projects are involved.

In pursuit of its principal mission of education, the International School for Holocaust Studies each year holds courses for over 100,000 students, 50,000 soldiers, and thousands of educators from around the world. Courses for teachers are offered in seven languages in addition to Hebrew, and the school also sends its faculty abroad to advance education about the Holocaust.

Yad Vashem also engages in important publication ventures, such as producing *Yad Vashem Studies*, a peer-reviewed semi-annual scholarly journal on the Shoah. Published since 1957, it appears in both English and Hebrew editions and deals with the latest research on various aspects of the Holocaust. In addition, Yad Vashem publishes record books of Jewish communities; a multivolume *Comprehensive History of the Holocaust*; and has primary responsibility for the development, revision, and publication of the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*.

As an academic institution, Yad Vashem's library and archives contain more than 50 million pages of testimony, 80,000 volumes, nearly 100,000 photographs, film footage and the videotaped testimonies of survivors, and 4,500 periodicals. Throughout the year it also hosts numerous conferences on a wide array of issues related to the Holocaust; these are attended by scholars and educators from across the globe. Yad Vashem's extensive website appears in several



Yad Vashem, established in Jerusalem in 1953, is Israel's official site of memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. It consists of a Holocaust History Museum, memorial sites such as the Children's Memorial and the Hall of Remembrance, a Museum of Holocaust Art, various sculptures and outdoor commemorative sites such as the Valley of the Communities, a synagogue, a research institute with archives, a library, a publishing house, and an educational center known as the International Institute for Holocaust Studies. Pictured is one of the memorial sites at Yad Vashem. (Michael Nicholson/Corbis via Getty Images)

languages, including English, Hebrew, Russian, German, Spanish, Farsi, and Arabic.

Central state ceremonies are held at Yad Vashem each year on Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day according to the Hebrew calendar, 27th day of Nisan). This corresponds to the start of the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt in April 1943. The focus of the remembrance service takes place at the Hall of Remembrance (*Ohel Yizkor*), where an eternal flame burns in memory of those murdered by the Nazis. A crypt in front of the memorial flame contains ashes of victims.

A core goal of Yad Vashem's founders was to recognize non-Jews who, at enormous personal risk and without

financial or ulterior motives, chose to save Jews during the Holocaust. Those recognized by Israel as among the Righteous are honored in a section of Yad Vashem known as the Garden of the Righteous, an avenue of carob trees planted in honor of the Righteous among the Nations. In many cases, these trees have been planted by the recipients themselves or by members of their family.

Other important sections of Yad Vashem include the Hall of Names, where a display features 600 photographs of Holocaust victims and fragments of Pages of Testimony that are reflected in a pool commemorating the victims whose names are unknown. Inside the hall can be found the approximately

2.2 million Pages of Testimony collected by Yad Vashem thus far. Empty spaces have been set aside for Pages that have not yet been forthcoming from families—it is recognized that in many cases, this will be impossible owing to whole families that were wiped out by the Nazis. In addition, the approximately 1.5 million Jewish children who were murdered by the Nazis have been remembered in a designated Children’s Memorial, where the names, ages, and birthplaces of those known to have died are continually recited.

Yad Vashem also houses the world’s largest collection of artwork produced by Jews and other victims of Nazi occupation in 1933–1945, as well as the Valley of the Communities, a 2.5-acre monument in which the names of over 5,000 Jewish communities that were destroyed (and those few that survived) are engraved.

The name of the overall complex is taken from a verse in the Book of Isaiah: “Even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name [*yad vashem*] better than sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall never be effaced” (Isaiah 56:5). This reference was considered suitable for the Holocaust memorial, as it symbolized a national place of commemoration from the Jewish people to those who have no one to carry their name after death.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Bauer, Yehuda; Bingham, Harry; Gutman, Israel; Museums and Memorials; Righteous among the Nations; Survivor Testimony; USC Shoah Foundation

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Yellow Star

The yellow star was a badge that Jews throughout Nazi-occupied Europe were forced to wear as a means of identification. Following the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 came several local decrees that required Jews to wear a distinctive sign in the area known as the *Generalgouvernement*. One of the initial signs was a white

armband with a blue Star of David; in other areas a yellow badge in the form of the Star of David was attached to the left side of the breast and on the back. The requirement that all Jews wear the Star of David, inscribed with faux Hebrew lettering spelling out the German word *Jude* (Jew), was then extended to all Jews over the age of six in the Reich. By the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, a decree issued on September 19, 1941, and signed by SS Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich, spread the requirement to other German-occupied territories in Europe and Northern Africa. The identifying yellow Star of David was similar in design in most of the German-occupied territories, however the local language for the word Jew was used: *Juif* in French, *Jood* in Dutch, and so on.

The practice forcing Jews to wear badges or distinguishing articles of clothing by law has been found in Europe as far back as the 13th century. Jews were required to wear distinguishing garments through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period. The practice was largely phased out during the 17th and 18th centuries, and finally abolished in Western Europe during the French Revolution and the emancipation of the Western European Jews throughout the 19th century.

The Nazis resurrected the practice of making Jews wear identifying articles of clothing during the Holocaust. In 1938 they compelled Jewish shopkeepers to display the words “Jewish business” in their windows but did not introduce distinctive signs to be worn until after the occupation of Poland. Earlier, following the Kristallnacht pogrom known as the “Night of Broken Glass” (November 9–10, 1938), it was Reinhard Heydrich who first recommended that Jews should wear identifying badges, but it was not until after the September 1939 invasion of Poland that the Nazis introduced the mandatory wearing of badges.

The first instance of Jews being forced to wear identifying badges was in the town of Włocławek in central Poland by SS-Obergruppenführer Josef Kramer. On October 24, 1939, without awaiting orders, Kramer ordered that all Jews in Włocławek were to wear a distinctive 15-centimeter sign on their back in the form of a yellow triangle. Other commanders in the occupied east rapidly adopted the identifying badge and by the end of the year, all Jews, regardless of age or sex, in the Polish territories were required to wear badges. It was announced that severe punishment was in store for any Jews who did not wear the identification on the front and back of their clothing. Due to the antisemitic sentiments prevalent among certain sectors of the Polish public, the new German measure was met with enthusiasm. After the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 (Operation



A Croatian Jew, left, wears the symbol that all Jews in Yugoslavia had to display on their chest and back during World War II. Alongside, a Jewish woman wears the badge which is of yellow cloth with the Star of David. Jews in many parts of Nazi Europe were required to wear a yellow cloth patch emblazoned with a Star of David in order to mark them off as Jews within a non-Jewish environment. In Poland, the practice began when Jews were forced to wear a white armband with a blue Star of David on it, but this underwent a change over time. In many places, the German word *Jude* (Jew) was added to the star; this was then gradually introduced in non-German speaking areas in occupied Europe (for example, *Juif* in French or *Jood* in Dutch). (AP Photo)

Barbarossa), the Germans continued to require Jews to wear badges in all newly conquered territories.

In the Old Reich proper, the order for all Jews to wear identifying badges was issued on September 1, 1941, and applied on September 19. That date also applied to the Jews of Moravia, Slovakia, and Bohemia. Dates for other parts of Europe varied. In Holland, the order was applied in May 1942; in Belgium and France in June 1942; in Bulgaria, it was September 1942; in Greece, February 1942; and in Hungary in April 1944. It was only in Denmark that the Germans were unable to impose the identification regulation. According to popular legend, King Christian X had threatened to wear the badge himself had the Germans imposed the regulation on his country's Jewish population. The story is apocryphal, but it represents the dedication the Danish king felt for his country's Jews.

The age at which Jews were required to wear the identification badges was six years of age for Germany and most of

Western Europe, and 10 years of age for most of Eastern Europe; however, in certain areas the age differed. In some ghettos even Jewish babies had to wear identifying armbands or stars.

The type of identifying badge also varied, though many took varying forms of a yellow badge in the shape of the Star of David. The badge was sometimes inscribed with the letter *J*, written in the local language, with stylized Hebrew-style lettering. Other forms of identification included white armbands with a blue Star of David, yellow arm bands with or without inscription, a Shield of David in various colors, a yellow button, a metal tag inscribed with a *J*, a yellow triangle, or a yellow circle. When the Jews were forced to live in ghettos they were sometimes also made to wear distinctive signs indicating the region in which the ghetto was located. In some ghettos, certain individuals were given unique badges to identify them as having special skills; these groups included police officers, doctors, and factory workers. Jews were responsible for buying

and distributing their own badges. Jews caught without their badge could be fined, imprisoned, or even executed.

The main objective in the introduction of the identifying badges for Jews was to create a divide between the Jews and the non-Jews, and to restrict Jewish movement. The identification badge was also a psychological tactic aimed at dehumanizing the Jews of Europe, marking them as different and inferior to everyone else. There was little choice to be had: either conceal the identification badge and, if caught, risk severe punishment; or wear the badge and become an easy target. Thus, the distinctive badges became an effective means to help the Germans facilitate their plan to exterminate the Jews. Helmut Knochen, chief of the Security Police in France and Belgium, stated that the yellow badge was “another step on the road to the Final Solution.”

Reactions to the identification badges varied throughout Europe. Some Jews reacted with dignity to the order and wore the identification badge as if it were a decoration, not realizing the danger of wearing the distinctive sign. Nearly all Polish Jews wore the identification badges for fear of severe punishment; however, they felt bitter about having to wear it. Some non-Jewish Poles met the identification policy with enthusiasm, seeing it as an opportunity to remove the Jews from commercial, economic, and public life. In Germany, where Jews had already been experiencing public hatred for years, the introduction of the identification badges was met with a wave of Jewish suicides.

The badge was not made compulsory in the unoccupied zone of France. In the occupied zone, however, the order enforced the wearing of the yellow star for all Jews older than six. Many French Jews refused to wear the badge, while some French non-Jews wore the identification badges themselves to express empathy for the Jews. In Czechoslovakia, the government had to ban hat tipping toward Jews, which became popular as protests against the German occupation. In Holland, an underground newspaper expressed its solidarity with the Jews by printing 300,000 stars, inscribed with words such as, “Jews and non-Jews are one and the same” or “Jews and non-Jews stand united in their struggle!”

JESSICA EVERS

See also: Generalgouvernement; Ghettos; Heydrich, Reinhard

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Yom Hashoah

Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) is a Jewish commemoration day dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust. *Shoah* is a Hebrew word meaning “catastrophe” or “utter destruction.”

Yom Hashoah is held on the 27th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan (which occurs in late April or early May on the Common Era calendar) and is an official holiday in Israel. In 2005 the United Nations designated January 27 as the international Holocaust Memorial Day, and that date is acknowledged in most of the countries of the European Union. Neither day is recognized in the United States, but the Jewish community and many in the Christian community hold a commemoration on or near Yom Hashoah.

The day was inaugurated by law in Israel in 1953. Yom Hashoah is not a religious day in the Jewish liturgical calendar, and there is no set ritual. Many people will light candles (often 6 candles symbolic of the 6 million who died), though much greater emphasis is placed upon holding some form of commemoration rather than the form the observance will take. In Israel, a siren will sound, at which point everyone stops any activity in which they are engaged—including cars on the roads and highways. Integral to the day is the retelling of the stories of what people experienced. The United Kingdom first celebrated a Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2001, the year following the opening of a permanent Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum.

J. GORDON MELTON

See also: International Holocaust Remembrance Day

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Yoran, Shalom

Shalom Yoran was a Holocaust survivor, a Jewish partisan during World War II, and an author who published a highly acclaimed memoir in 1996. Yoran was born Selim Szyner near Warsaw, Poland, on June 29, 1925. In September 1942, as Nazi troops descended upon his hometown of Raciaz, his world was turned upside down. His family was forced from its home, and as the Nazis were rounding up the town’s Jews

Yoran and his elder brother managed to escape into nearby woods. They left behind their mother and father, both of whom eventually perished (almost all of Raciaz's Jews died in the Holocaust). The brothers spent a frigid winter hidden in an underground shelter in Poland; in the spring of 1943, they began their first insurgency mission against the Nazis by torching a factory that made gun parts for German weapons. "This was the turning point in the war," wrote Yoran in his memoir, as it made him not merely a victim but rather a partisan who could fight back and avenge the death of his parents and others. "No person should succumb to brutality without putting up a resistance," he counseled.

From that point forward, Yoran and his brother engaged in a host of partisan exploits, including sabotage, shooting German soldiers, planting land mines, and destroying bridges and other infrastructure. They eventually reached northeast Poland, near the Belarus border, and joined other Jewish insurgents who were working with Soviet troops. Yoran and his brother encountered rampant antisemitism even among Soviet and non-Jewish Polish forces. It was then, wrote Yoran, that he began to long for a Jewish homeland, which helped him to persevere, even amidst much depravation and discrimination.

Toward the end of World War II, Yoran and his brother joined the Soviet-controlled Polish Army as it made its way into the German homeland. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Yoran made his way to British-controlled Palestine and there helped facilitate Jewish immigration, despite Britain's refusal to allow Jews entry. He eventually became a legal resident of Palestine and adopted the name Shalom Yoran. After the founding of Israel in 1948, he joined the Israeli Air Force and later became an executive for an Israeli aircraft maker. In the late 1970s he moved to the United States, where he remained in the aircraft industry.

When he moved from Israel, he discovered a pile of notebooks and diaries he had kept during and after the war, which became the basis for his 1996 memoir, *Defiant: A True Story of Escape, Survival, and Resistance*. Yoran was a co-founder of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City and spoke widely about his wartime experiences after publishing his book. After a period of declining health, he died in New York on September 9, 2013.

PAUL G. PIERPAOLI JR.

See also: Jewish Partisans; Survivor Testimony

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Yugoslavia

A European country in the western Balkans, Yugoslavia was the creation of World War I. It was one of the most diverse and complex of European countries, given that it was a union of multiple countries and provinces, many of which had been at odds—if not at war—with each other, sometimes with histories of conflict going back centuries. The Axis occupation during World War II, and the treatment of Yugoslavia's Jews, was no less complex.

During the interwar years, "Yugoslavia" ("Land of the South Slavs") was a union of various countries and regions, including Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, and the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. It was also a monarchy—the Kingdom of Yugoslavia—with King Alexander of Serbia as its monarch. It had a total population before the outbreak of World War II of approximately 15.5 million people, 43% of whom were Serbs, 37% Croats, and 7% each Slovenians and Macedonians. Of the approximately 80,000 Jews in Yugoslavia, 40,000 were in Croatia, 16,000 in each of Serbia and the Bačka region of Vojvodina, and 8,000 in Macedonia. Most Jews belonged to the middle class and could be found in industry, commerce, artisan activities, and banking.

Three major religions layered a religious division over the nationalism that already separated the countries. Sitting as it does on the dividing line between Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, it is no surprise that the westernmost areas in Yugoslavia—Slovenia and Croatia—were predominantly Roman Catholic, while the easternmost country—that is, that which is geographically closest to Istanbul—namely, Serbia, was predominantly Orthodox Christian. With the defeat of Serbia by the Ottoman Empire in 1389, Islam was introduced into the region, explaining why, for example, Bosnia's population includes a plurality of Muslims, and why Kosovo's population is overwhelmingly Muslim.

The Axis invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia in World War II was consistent with the variegated nature of the country. Almost immediately after neutral Yugoslavia finally agreed to join the Axis powers and signed the Tripartite Pact on March 25, 1941, the highly unpopular decision triggered an overthrow of the regent, Prince Paul (brother of Alexander who was assassinated in 1934), who was replaced by Peter, Alexander's son. Hitler, upon hearing of the change in the monarchy and the rejection of the Tripartite Pact, made the decision to invade Yugoslavia.

On April 6, 1941, Germany and its allies, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria, invaded Yugoslavia, and within 10 days

Yugoslavia surrendered. Occupation of the country was split among the Axis powers: Serbia and the region of Banat in Vojvodina were occupied by Germany; Montenegro, southwest Slovenia, most of the Adriatic coast, and Kosovo were controlled by Italy; Croatia, which annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, was renamed the Independent State of Croatia, controlled by Germany and governed by the fascist, nationalist Ustashe movement, a puppet government of the Nazis; the Bačka and Baranja regions of Vojvodina were occupied by Hungary; and Macedonia was occupied by Bulgaria. To some degree, how the Jews fared depended on the part of Yugoslavia in which they lived.

Serbia was governed by a Nazi puppet government headed by its prime minister, Milan Nedić. One of the first acts under the German occupation was the requirement that all Jews register with the government, followed shortly by a number of other anti-Jewish laws and restrictions, including removal of Jews from public service, the requirement of wearing a yellow badge, and assignment to forced labor units. Several detention and concentration camps were established, including Topovske Šupe, and later, Semlin (Zemun, or Sajmište). As a result of partisan and Chetnik (pro-monarchists) resistance, Hitler ordered that 100 Jews be killed for each German killed. This proved to be disastrous for the Jews, resulting in the murder of about 8,000 Jewish males. With some 6,300 women and children killed by the use of a gas van over a three-month period in early 1942, almost all of the Jews of Serbia had been murdered.

The Jews in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina suffered greatly under the so-called Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, or NDH). Headed by Ante Pavelić, the Ustashe government was said to have stunned even the Nazis by its cruelty. It was responsible for the murder of perhaps as many as 340,000 Serbs in 1941 and 1942, and their treatment of the Jews was no less lethal.

The Ustashe government established camps throughout the occupied territory, including Jadovno (an extermination camp established in April 1941) and the infamous Jasenovac (actually a complex of five camps), in which as many as 20,000 Jews were killed. In addition, about 7,000 Jews were turned over to the Germans and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Italian occupation zone of Croatia—along the Adriatic coast—was a much different environment for the Jews. Italy refused to transport the Jews to German camps, and instead sent some to the island of Rab (from which they were

liberated) off the Adriatic coast, and others to refugee camps in southern Italy.

The prewar Jewish population of 14,000 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had been incorporated into Croatia, found itself in the hands of the Germans. Among other actions, 3,000 Jews were sent by the German occupiers to Jasenovac in the middle of November 1941, with a total of about 9,000 Jews sent there by the end of August 1942. Some 6,000 to 7,000 children were killed there.

In January 1942 the Hungarian occupiers of the Bačka and Baranja regions of Vojvodina shot 600 Jews in the city of Nova Sad. After Germany invaded Hungary in March 1944, 16,000 Jews from the Bačka and Baranja regions were transported to the custody of the Germans who sent them to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

More than 7,000 Jews in Hungarian-occupied Macedonia were sent to a transit camp in Skopje in March 1943, and from there to the extermination camp of Treblinka.

These were only some of the actions taken against the Jews in Yugoslavia during the Holocaust. In total, more than 66,000 Yugoslavian Jews were killed between 1941 and 1945. About 4,500 Jews were active in the partisan resistance movement.

Jews were not the only people to suffer in Yugoslavia during World War II. As many as 25,000 Roma were killed in Croatia alone, while it is estimated that throughout Yugoslavia as many as 90,000 Roma were killed in total. When combined with the approximately 66,000 Jews and over 300,000 Serbs (killed at the hands of the Croats), it is clear that Yugoslavia was the site of widespread mass murder.

MICHAEL DICKERMAN

See also: Bulgaria; Croatia; Horthy, Miklós; Hungary; Italy; Jasenovac; Pavelić, Ante; Serbia; Szenes, Hannah; Ustashe; Waldheim Affair

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Z

Żabiński, Jan

Dr. Jan Żabiński was a Polish Christian zookeeper who, with his wife Antonina Żabiński, *née* Erdman, protected hundreds of Jews by hiding them in the zoo precincts during World War II.

Born on April 8, 1897, in Warsaw, Żabiński grew up in Jewish neighborhoods and attended Jewish schools, even though he was not Jewish. A Catholic whose father raised him as a staunch atheist in a working-class Jewish neighborhood, at university he studied agriculture and zoology. In 1931 he married Antonina Erdman, who had been born in St. Petersburg in 1908 and whose parents had been killed during the Russian Revolution. By the time war began with the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Żabiński was director of the Warsaw Zoo and a teacher of geography in the private Kreczmara high school. He was a well-known author of many popular books about animals and biology.

When war came, the zoo suffered heavy bombardment. Many of the animal cages were blown open, and animals roamed around the city until they had to be shot by Polish troops. Upon their arrival in the city, the Germans appointed Żabiński superintendent of Warsaw's public parks, providing him with an opportunity to visit the Warsaw Ghetto under the pretext of inspecting the trees and small public garden inside. This provided a further chance to keep in touch with Jews he had known from before the war, whom he provided with a means of escape. He extended this help to

others—those with whom he shared professional connections, as well as strangers who needed his help.

In trying to find some sort of accommodation for those he was rescuing, Żabiński and Antonina considered the one clear option available to them: to employ the zoo cages that had been left empty of animals as a result of the Nazi occupation. These, Żabiński realized, would make excellent hiding places. In ensuing months and years, these cages became temporary shelter for hundreds of Jews until more permanent places of refuge could be found. And, along the way, the Żabińskis found an unknowing ally to assist them from among the Germans.

A Nazi named Lutz Heck, who was a zoologist, animal researcher, and director of the Berlin Zoo, brought Nazi ideology into animal breeding through the development of a program that would attempt to revivify extinct “German” species such as the aurochs (*Bos primigenius*) and the tarpan horse (*Equus ferus ferus*). He would use the disused Warsaw Zoo as his laboratory, and thus, with his authority, the zoo remained open. Heck was far from being an altruist; he was known to be cruel toward some of the animals, and he certainly had no specific love for the Warsaw Zoo, stealing the most valuable animals and taking them to German zoos. Still, by enabling the zoo to remain open, Heck gave Żabiński (whose code name in the Polish resistance was Francis, for Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals) a place where he could engage in his rescue work, right under the noses of the very people who were seeking the Jews' death.



Jan Żabiński and his wife Antonina were a Christian couple from Warsaw. A zoologist by profession, Żabiński was the Director of the Warsaw Zoo before World War II, doubling as superintendent of the city's public parks during the war years. Along with their son Ryszard, the Żabińskis sheltered hundreds of displaced Jews in the grounds of the zoo once it ceased operations on account of the war. They were later recognized by Jerusalem's Yad Vashem for their heroic acts in saving the lives of Jews during the Holocaust. This photo shows a commemoration of the Żabińskis in Warsaw from 2015. (AP Photo/Czarek Sokolowski)

The Żabińskis also took Jews into their own home located at the zoo. Antonina and their son, Ryszard, took care of the Jews' personal needs, providing warm clothing and food, while Jan Żabiński sought documents that could protect them outside. The underground organization known as *Zegota*—a code name for the Polish Council to Aid Jews (*Rada Pomocy Żydom*)—provided funds to assist Żabiński in caring for those he had rescued. At the same time as he was hiding Jews, Jan Żabiński became a leader and active member of the Polish underground Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*). He taught biology at an underground university and continued smuggling food into the Warsaw Ghetto even as he was trying to save lives in the zoo. In addition, he conducted active military work as a bomb maker, and went on missions sabotaging trains. He eventually fought in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, was wounded, taken as a prisoner of war, and removed to Germany.

Throughout the war, Antonina Żabiński kept a diary; after the ghetto was liquidated in 1943, she went into hiding and continued to work on it, recording events for posterity. As the fighting in and around Warsaw intensified during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, she gave one of her notebooks to her husband. He buried it in the zoo grounds, where it was retrieved in April 1945 by author Rachel Auerbach, who later arranged for it to be published.

In the course of the Nazi occupation, Jan and Antonina Żabiński helped to save the lives of approximately 300 Jewish men, women, and children. In recognition of this feat, on September 21, 1965, Yad Vashem recognized them as Righteous among the Nations, and the following month they were present for the conferring ceremony and planted a tree on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem.

When asked several years later about his motivation for helping so many people, at such risk to himself and his

family, Jan Żabiński replied that his actions were based on the “progressive-humanistic upbringing” he received at home and at school. He said that he was never able to find any logical reasons for why people hated Jews, only “artificially formed ones.” For her part, Antonina, whose parents had been murdered by the Bolsheviks, was aware of where politically motivated violence could lead. She believed that every living thing is entitled to life and respect, making her incapable of turning away from suffering.

Antonina died on March 19, 1971, in Warsaw; Jan died on July 26, 1974, also in Warsaw. In 2007 an American writer, Diane Ackerman, celebrated the life of Antonina Żabiński with a bestselling book titled *The Zookeeper's Wife*. It was based in part on Antonina's wartime diary.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Rescuers of Jews; Resistance Movements; Righteous among the Nations; Warsaw Ghetto; Zegota

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Zegota

The term “Zegota” was a code name for the Polish Council to Aid Jews. The council operated from late fall 1942 until the liberation of Poland in 1945. In Polish the name of the organization was *Rada Pomocy Żydom*, though unlike many such organizations during World War II it did not go by an acronym.

The council originated as the Provisional Committee for Aid to Jews (*Tymczasowy Komitet Pomocy Żydom*), which was founded on September 27, 1942, by writer Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and a member of Poland's social elite, Wanda Krahelska-Filipowicz, known by her nom de guerre, “Alinka.” This was a largely Catholic group, which was transformed into Zegota on December 4, 1942. Zegota became a broad-based joint organization of Jews and non-Jews from different political orientations. Zegota was the brainchild of Henryk Woliński, a member of the Home Army, who first developed the idea of such an organization; its general secretary was a member of Poland's Socialist Party, and its treasurer was a member of the Polish Democratic Party. Its fundamental aim was the common cause of saving Jews in danger from the Nazis, and in this Poland was the only country in Nazi-occupied Europe where such an organization, run jointly by Jews and non-Jews from a wide range of political movements, existed.

After a circuitous route, by the late spring of 1944 much of the funding it received was coming from the Polish government-in-exile in London. The financial resources needed to save even one Jewish life ranged from 6,000 to 15,000 zlotys. Depending on the situation, Zegota's monthly budget ranged from 500,000 to 2 million zlotys, which, though seemingly large, did not meet the needs of saving many Jewish lives. As a result, and wherever possible, Zegota operatives sought to prop up their resources in alternate ways.

Overall, Zegota helped save some 4,000 Polish Jews. Its means were many, but it was found to be much easier to assist Jews if they were outside ghettos and on the “Aryan” side. Medical attention was provided for Jews in hiding, along with food and false identity documents. Zegota attempted (and often succeeded) in providing help for Jews in forced labor camps, while financial aid was provided when possible. Sometimes, it was able to assist in escapes, though these often could not be planned; it was more usual to take advantage of local circumstances as and when they presented themselves. One of Zegota's major tasks related to the forging of documents, such that on average Zegota was said to have been producing up to a hundred sets of forged papers.

Zegota also played an important role in saving Jewish children by placing them with foster families, or relocating them to orphanages and convents. In Warsaw the head of Zegota's children's section, a Polish social worker named Irena Sendler, assumed near-legendary status through personally taking care of over 2,500 Jewish children. Sendler, who was one of many members of Zegota recognized by Israel's Yad Vashem as Righteous among the Nations, was nominated for a Nobel Prize before her death in 2008.

By the time the council was established, most of Poland's Jews had been killed, but the organization's activists, at enormous personal risk, managed to help several thousand Jews. Indeed, it has been estimated that about half of the Jews who survived the Holocaust in Poland—a figure representing more than 50,000 people—were helped by Zegota in one way or another.

To as great an extent as possible, Zegota operated as a professional organization. Although extensive in its spread, it worked on the basis of smaller cells, with up to 100 of these in Warsaw alone. Elsewhere, it operated in Krakow, Vilna (Vilnius), and Lvov (L'viv), with specific “departments” covering areas such as legal, housing, clothing, children's welfare, medical care, and finances, among others.

Poland, the only Nazi-occupied country where helping Jews was punishable by death, was also the only country that saw the establishment of an organization such as Zegota. It

has been estimated that during the war perhaps up to 20,000 members of Zegota were captured and executed by the Germans, with thousands of others imprisoned and sent to concentration camps. It was remarkable that the location of Zegota's head office in Warsaw, at 24 Zurawia Street, was well known to Poles but was never raided by the Germans. Zegota was a truly unique phenomenon within the horror of the Holocaust, which bought the lives of tens of thousands of Jews at the cost of tens of thousands of Poles. In an environment in which the history of Polish relations with Jews has frequently been soured by expressions of antisemitism, this stands as a shining example of what could have been done throughout the rest of Europe if more people of goodwill decided that it was necessary to make a stand.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Poland; Rescuers of Jews; Żabiński, Jan

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Zimetbaum, Mala

Mala Zimetbaum was a Jewish woman from Belgium best remembered as the first female prisoner to escape from the Auschwitz extermination camp. She was born on January 26, 1918, in Brzesko, Poland, the fifth daughter in a large family. In 1928 they all emigrated from Poland and settled in Antwerp, Belgium. Mala, an excellent student, became proficient in several languages (Flemish, French, German, English, and Polish) but was forced to leave school because of the family's difficult economic circumstances. She went to work, first as a seamstress for a major fashion house and then in one of Antwerp's many diamond factories.

On or about July 22, 1942, Mala was arrested for the first time by the SS. She was released but arrested a second time during a roundup on September 11–12, 1942. She was sent to the transit camp at Mechelen/Malines, and then, on September 15, to Auschwitz. She reached what would be her final destination two days later. After arrival, and having survived the preliminary selection process, she was sent to the women's camp at Birkenau, with the registration number 19880.

Owing to her proficiency in languages, Mala was chosen to serve as a "runner," or courier, and a translator for the SS.

This position came with privileges; she could move relatively freely between different parts of the camp and could speak up on behalf of her fellow inmates. She was also able to smuggle tiny items between compounds.

Mala's attitude toward her privileged position was that she had been given a gift with which she could help those around her and thereby save lives. It also provided her with an opportunity to make connections with the camp resistance movement.

Her tasks included working in the camp hospital, where she could warn of forthcoming selections among those patients too weak to continue working, or who seemed less likely to recover quickly. She tried to ensure that they would leave the hospital as soon as possible if she knew that a selection was imminent. She also had responsibility for assigning to new work details those who had been sick once they had been released from the hospital. This gave her some measure of discretion in allocating less demanding work to those women who were physically less able to handle harder forms of labor.

Among the prisoners Mala met was a Pole, Edward (Edek) Galiński. Edek was brought to Auschwitz as an early Polish political prisoner, having arrived on June 14, 1940. Determined to escape, he had made attempts before he met Mala, though nothing had materialized. After he met her, however, things changed. The two fell in love, and Mala said she was prepared to escape with him—her motive being to let the world know about Auschwitz in order for the killing to stop.

On Saturday, June 24, 1944, they made their escape. Edek wore an SS uniform and carried a gun obtained from Edward Lubusch, a member of the SS guard detachment known to assist prisoners. Disguised as a guard, Edek led Mala, a prisoner being led to work, out of the camp by showing a bogus SS pass. They succeeded in escaping to a nearby town, but on July 6, 1944, they were captured by a German patrol. Returned to Auschwitz, they were sent to Block 11, the punishment block, where they underwent a long period of interrogation and torture. The Gestapo was particularly interested in learning who their conspirators were in the escape and, in particular, who provided them with the SS uniform. They remained true to their promise to Lubusch and did not break under the torture.

On September 15, 1944, Mala and Edek were executed. Orders were received at Birkenau that the executions were to take place at the same time, though in the men's and women's camp respectively.

As he was hanged, Edek shouted defiantly, "Long Live Poland." Mala's death has become shrouded in legend. According to one version, she was brought forward toward the gallows by SS Unterscharführer Johan Ruiters, and as her

sentence was read out by SS officer Maria Mandl she took a razor blade she had hidden in her hair and slit her wrists. At the same time, as blood poured from the wounds, she slapped Ruiters, who attempted to stop her. This resulted in the other SS officers present closing in on her and beating her as they attempted to take the razor blade away.

It is here that reality becomes mixed with fable. With the blood draining away her life, some accounts assert that she shouted at Ruiters, saying that she was dying a hero while he would die a dog. Others assert that she shouted at the prisoners assembled to witness her execution that they should revolt. Another claimed that she told the prisoners they would soon be liberated. Even the precise circumstances of her death are uncertain. Some say she was taken to the camp hospital and died on the way to the crematorium. One account has it that an SS officer had said an order arrived from Berlin that Mala was to be burned alive in the crematorium. Other accounts hold that she was poisoned or shot to death at the crematorium entrance, while yet others say that she actually was thrown into the furnace alive.

Notwithstanding the differences between the various versions of Mala's death, it is clear that this was a remarkable young woman. Her courage in the face of the Nazi terror, her willingness to put herself at risk in order to ease the lives of those around her (and even to save those lives), her attempt to escape in order to tell the world the truth about Auschwitz, even the love she managed to find in the midst of the horror, all these point to a woman who refused to allow the Nazi evil to prevail. Her resistance was truly inspirational to all those around her and remains so today, making Mala Zimetbaum a genuine heroine of the Holocaust.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Birkenau; Gestapo

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Zuckerman, Yitzhak

Yitzhak Zuckerman, also known as Antek, was a key leader of the *Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa* (Jewish Fighting Organization, or ŻOB) in the Warsaw Ghetto, and one of the few survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April–May 1943.

Born in Vilna in 1915, he attended a Hebrew high school before moving to Warsaw in 1938 to work for the *Dror Hechalutz* Zionist youth movement. As a young man he embraced socialism as well as Zionism.

Soon after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Zuckerman fled to Soviet-occupied eastern Poland, where he organized Zionist youth groups. In April 1940 he returned to Warsaw to try to stimulate resistance to the Nazis. It was at this time that he met another underground leader, Zivia Lubetkin, and the two fell in love.

When the Germans launched mass deportations from Warsaw during the summer of 1942, Zuckerman was among the first calling for armed resistance. This would prove to be difficult to achieve, largely on account of opposition from members of the Warsaw Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), in particular its chairman, Adam Czerniaków.

On July 22, 1942, the Nazis began what they termed *Grossaktion Warschau* (Great Action Warsaw), an operation dedicated to the mass extermination of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. After Czerniaków's suicide on July 23, 1942, events developed at a rapid pace.

A meeting was called involving several leading members of the organized Jewish community, including Yitzhak Zuckerman, David Guzik, and Emanuel Ringelblum, among many others. Opinions were divided. Representatives of the left wing Zionist parties and Hechalutz called for some form of active intervention; others preferred to wait and see what would happen next. Not willing to wait and simply postpone the inevitable, on July 28, 1942, Hechalutz and its youth movement branches, *Hashomer Hatzair*, *Dror*, and *Akiva*, held a meeting in which it was decided to go ahead and establish a Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, or ŻOB). A command group was formed comprising Shmuel Bresler, Zuckerman, Zivia Lubetkin, Mordecai Tenenbaum, and Josef Kaplan. A delegation was sent to make contact with the Polish underground and obtain weapons on the Aryan side of Warsaw. This included Tova (Tosia) Altman, Frumke Plotnicka, Leah Perlstein and Izrael Chaim (known as "Arie" and "Jurek") Wilner. In November 1942 Mordecai Anielewicz was elected commander-in-chief. Zuckerman became one of his three co-commanders and also helped lead a political affiliate founded at the same time, the Jewish National Committee (*Żydowski Komitet Narodowy*).

On December 22, 1942, Zuckerman, Miriam (Gole) Mire, and Adolf Liebeskind were sent by the ŻOB to Kraków to meet with resistance fighters there. While in the city, they took part in an attack on a café that was frequented by the SS and the Gestapo. Liebeskind was killed. There is debate regarding Gole's fate. Some say she was killed soon afterward; others assert she played a part in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in the spring of 1943. Zuckerman, although shot in the leg, managed to escape and return to Warsaw.

Back in Warsaw, Zuckerman became the unofficial armorer of the ŻOB. He negotiated through contacts he had made with external resistance groups, attempting to procure rifles, pistols, ammunition, and grenades. These were smuggled into the ghetto via the Warsaw sewers, and his ongoing negotiations meant that he had a good idea of how he might navigate the labyrinth in the future.

When the Nazis initiated another round of deportations in January 1943, it was Zuckerman who led the ŻOB in fighting back against the Germans. This, however, was but a prelude of things to come.

In view of the fact that he spent a lot of his time outside of the ghetto, when the uprising began on April 19, 1943, he found himself on the wrong side of the wall. The ŻOB had been preparing for a revolt should the time arrive for no other alternative and all hope would be lost. From his position, Zuckerman did all he could to spread the word of the revolt and what the Jews in the ghetto were facing, and smuggled in any additional weapons he was able to obtain. By now, however, many suppliers had decided to curtail arms transfers for the Jews.

With the defeat of the uprising and the death of the other main leaders on or around May 8, 1943, Zuckerman returned to the ghetto as the sole surviving commander. He led some 75 ŻOB fighters (including Zivia Lubetkin), together with some of the few survivors of the *Żydowski Związek Wojskowy* (Jewish Military Union, or ŻZW) through the sewers and onto the Aryan side. While there, he wrote an important report on the ŻOB's role during the uprising, which he managed to send to London. He also maintained his military command role, leading a group of Jewish guerrillas in the Polish underground during the Warsaw Revolt that began on August 1, 1944.

After the war, Yitzhak Zuckerman and Zivia Lubetkin became involved in the Bricha movement, an underground network that helped survivors reach the Mediterranean coast on their way to Palestine. In 1947 he and Zivia Lubetkin married and settled in Israel, and in 1949, along with others who had been ghetto resisters and partisans in Poland and Lithuania, they founded *Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot* ("Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz"); here, a memorial museum, House, was established. In 1961 the Zuckermans were prosecution witnesses at the trial of Adolf Eichmann.

When Yitzhak Zuckerman died in Israel on June 17, 1981, he was buried at Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot, recognized by all as a hero of the Jewish people. Among the many mourners present to pay their respects on the day was Israeli president Yitzhak Navon.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Anielewicz, Mordecai; Czerniakow, Adam; Jewish Fighting Organization; Lubetkin, Zivia; Ringelblum, Emanuel; Stroop, Jürgen; *Uprising*; Warsaw Ghetto; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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Zuehlke Trial

From 1941 to 1944 Willy Zuehlke, a member of the Waffen-SS, served as a guard for two Nazi prisons located in Amsterdam that were run by the German Security Police (SD, or *Sicherheitsdienst*) and the Gestapo. These prisons held political prisoners, such as Dutch resisters, and Jewish "punishment cases"—that is, Jews who had gone into hiding and were either betrayed or discovered—before their deportation to German labor and concentration camps. Yet, despite his prominent position of authority in the capital city of the occupied Netherlands, Zuehlke's 1948 trial before the Netherlands Special Court in Amsterdam, and his subsequent appeal before the Netherlands Special Court of Cassation, is not especially well known.

Between the years 1943 and 1947, the government of the Netherlands established five Special Courts located around the country and devoted solely to trying wartime crimes. A special Court of Cassation, located in The Hague, was to serve as an appeals court for these dedicated Special Courts. In the summer of 1948, Zuehlke stood trial before Amsterdam's Special Court, accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during his tenure at two prisons. He was charged with two counts, the first concerning the Jewish prisoners in his custody and the second concerning prisoners in general. For the first count, Zuehlke was accused of having "cooperated in the German policy of humiliation and persecution of the Jews" by assisting in the imprisonment of illegally detained Jews. Further, he had allegedly struck, kicked, and forced his Jewish prisoners to engage in humiliating work. The second count alleged Zuehlke's "cooperation in the maintenance of a policy of terrorism and brutality against defenseless arrestees." Here, Zuehlke was charged with the

same physical abuse of prisoners as specified in the first count, as well as denying a condemned prisoner “spiritual aid” in the form of a priest. Additionally, Zuehlke was charged both as perpetrator—since he committed these offenses in his capacity as prison warden—and superior, since he commanded the prison guards who committed similar offenses. In his defense, Zuehlke cited his membership in the Waffen-SS as evidence that he had acted under duress and in accordance with superior orders.

The judgment of the Special Court in Amsterdam was rendered on August 3, 1948, and Zuehlke was found guilty on both counts. His offenses were pronounced to be “war crimes and/or crimes against humanity” in accordance with both Articles 6 (b) and (c) of the Nuremberg Charter (London Agreement) and Dutch municipal law concerning illegal detention and “the crime of ill-treatment.” He was, however, acquitted of the charge that he had denied spiritual assistance to condemned prisoners. The court declared that this behavior did not necessarily constitute a war crime. Further, there was no proof that Zuehlke had been authorized to forward such requests from prisoners or that such requests, even if forwarded, would have been successful. The Special Court sentenced Zuehlke to seven years’ imprisonment, taking account of the fact that the accused had not initiated the arrests of prisoners and that his ill-treatment of prisoners had not been of a rather serious nature. Further, the court maintained that Zuehlke had acted not out of a desire to attack his victims but “rather on account of his rough nature.”

Both Zuehlke and the prosecutor appealed this verdict before the Special Court of Cassation in The Hague, with Zuehlke maintaining that the punishment was too severe and the prosecutor arguing that it was too lenient. In December 1948 this appeals court upheld the initial verdict, in essence confirming that the “superior orders” defense did not absolve Zuehlke of criminal responsibility. However, in evaluating mitigating circumstances and the offenses committed, the Court of Cassation reduced his sentence to that of five years’ imprisonment. Furthermore, while the appeals court agreed with the first court’s conclusion that Zuehlke had not been personally responsible for forwarding the requests of condemned prisoners for spiritual assistance, it declared that the denial of spiritual assistance did constitute a punishable offense as both a war crime and a crime against humanity. This judgment perhaps remains the most durable legacy of the Willy Zuehlke case, an otherwise overlooked trial of a wartime prison guard. It is cited, for example, in recognition that the “invasion of the religious rights of

occupied territories” constitutes an offense under international criminal law.

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See also: Crimes against Humanity; Netherlands; Waffen-SS; War Crimes

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Zygielbojm, Shmuel

Shmuel Zygielbojm was a Jewish-Polish socialist politician who committed suicide in London in the aftermath of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising during the spring of 1943. His suicide was in protest of the inaction of the Allied governments to do anything meaningful to assist the Jews during the Holocaust, and was a powerful symbol of resistance in the face of inaction.

Zygielbojm was born to a poor family on February 21, 1895, in the Polish village of Borowica. He was one of 10 children. At the beginning of World War I, he and his family moved to the city of Chełm, and during the war years he became involved in the Jewish labor movement. Joining the Labor Bund, he rose quickly through the leadership, and in 1924 he was elected to the Bund’s Central Committee in Warsaw. By 1936, after a number of years as editor of the Jewish labor movement’s journal *Arbeiter Fragen* (*Worker’s Issues*), he was sent to Łódź on behalf of the movement to organize Jewish workers there.

With the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Zygielbojm returned to Warsaw, where he became a member of the defense committee that functioned during the siege and defense of the capital. He also served at this time as editor of the *Folkszeitung* (*People’s Newspaper*).

Once the city had been conquered and occupied, the Nazis demanded a dozen hostages from the Polish population who would be held responsible for the maintenance of order in the city. The mayor of Warsaw, Stefan Starzynski, advised the Jewish community that it offer up a worker to be one of the hostages, and named a woman, one Ester Ivinska. Zygielbojm, horrified at the idea of a civilian woman being so endangered, suggested himself instead. He thus became one

of two Jewish hostages, along with prominent industrialist, social worker, and philanthropist Abraham Gepner. Upon his release, Zygielbojm was called upon to represent the Bund in the newly established (and Nazi-imposed) Warsaw *Judenrat* (Jewish Council).

At the same time, he began to organize an underground movement. Despite being a member of the *Judenrat*, Zygielbojm resisted the very idea of the ghetto, and called on Jews to remain in their homes and not move into the ghetto until they were forced to.

This level of opposition was brought to the attention of the Germans, who summoned him for interrogation. Instead, he went into hiding. His involvement in the formal resistance movement did not, therefore, last long; his fellow party members, recognizing his value as an organizer and publicist and concerned for his welfare, thought it better that he leave Poland. In December 1939, therefore, he was spirited out of the country and moved to still-neutral Belgium. Speaking to a Socialist International meeting in Brussels, he described his observations of the persecution of the Jews—one of the earliest accounts during the war of the Nazi brutalities to reach the West. After the Nazi invasion of Belgium in May 1940, he moved to France; later still, he went to the United States. In both countries he worked to raise awareness of what was happening to the Jews of Poland. In March 1942 he went to London, where he joined the National Council of the Polish government-in-exile.

In May 1942 Zygielbojm received a report from the Bund that had been smuggled out from Warsaw. It was one of the first statements providing detailed information of the carnage. Even by this stage, the report calculated a figure of 700,000 murdered Jews, as well as providing the names and locations of killing sites and extermination camps.

Then, on December 2, 1942, Zygielbojm met with Jan Karski, who had been covertly brought into the Warsaw Ghetto to report on what was taking place there. Upon speaking with Karski, Zygielbojm was at once unnerved and more determined than ever to bring this news to the attention of Allied governments so that some sort of concrete action would follow.

Worse was to come. From April 19, 1943, onward, an uprising of the remaining Jews took place in the Warsaw Ghetto, leading to its destruction and the annihilation of its last inhabitants. News of the uprising was quick to reach London, and compounding Zygielbojm's despair was information he received that his wife Manya and 16-year-old son Tuvia had been killed by the Nazis.

On May 12, 1943, in a final act of protest at the seeming Allied indifference to the fate of the Jews, Zygielbojm

committed suicide in London. He left two letters: one for the Polish president, Władysław Raczkiewicz, and one for Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski. His message was straightforward: the Nazis were the ones doing the killing, but it was the Allies who had brought the Jews to their status of worthlessness. "The responsibility for the crime of the murder of the whole Jewish nationality in Poland," he wrote, rested indirectly "upon the whole of humanity, on the peoples of the Allied nations and on their governments, who up to this day have not taken any real steps to halt this crime." Chillingly, he then placed his own death alongside those of the heroes in the Warsaw Ghetto: "I cannot continue to live and to be silent while the remnants of Polish Jewry, whose representative I am, are being murdered. My comrades in the Warsaw ghetto fell with arms in their hands in the last heroic battle. I was not permitted to fall like them, together with them, but I belong with them, to their mass grave." He concluded: "By my death, I wish to give expression to my most profound protest against the inaction in which the world watches and permits the destruction of the Jewish people."

In what was his final act of resistance and in symbolic unity with those murdered in the Holocaust, Zygielbojm's body was then cremated, in accord with his own expressed wishes.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Jewish Resistance; *Judenrat*; Karski, Jan; Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

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Zyklon-B

Zyklon-B was a commercial form of hydrocyanic acid, manufactured by the German firm Degesch for use as a disinfectant and pesticide. It was used for the purpose of killing Jews in death camps during the Holocaust.

The death camps were institutions designed to methodically and efficiently murder millions of Jews in specially designed gas chambers employing crystallized hydrogen cyanide, which on contact with air oxidized to become hydrocyanic (or prussic) acid gas. This gas was manufactured under the trade name Zyklon-B. Initially, Zyklon-B had been developed as a delousing or fumigating agent for



Zyklon-B was the trade name of a cyanide-based pesticide invented in Germany in the early 1920s. It was comprised of hydrocyanic, or prussic, acid. It had been developed by the Degesch chemical company and was purchased by another firm, Degussa, where further development enabled its production for industrial purposes. The new product was also named Zyklon (“Cyclone”), and it was employed for the purposes of delousing clothing and as a disinfectant for public transport. In early 1942 Zyklon-B became a key gassing agent utilized by Nazi Germany in camps such as Auschwitz during the Holocaust. Pictured are canisters containing Zyklon-B pellets. (Corbis via Getty Images)

the eradication of vermin, and it was brought to Auschwitz for those purposes in 1941. Where Zyklon-B was not available, or the death machinery had not been equipped for its use, carbon monoxide from diesel engines was used, either in fixed installations or as mobile vans.

As an agent for mass death, Zyklon-B was introduced into the gas chambers through vents in the ceiling and entered the victims’ bodies through the mouth, respiratory organs, and pores of the skin. It killed most of its victims immediately.

By early 1942 Zyklon-B had emerged as the preferred killing tool of Nazi Germany for use in extermination camps. As a result of its use more than a million people were murdered.

The Zyklon-B consignments used at Auschwitz were produced by a firm called Degesch (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung mbH), a firm headquartered in

Frankfurt am Main. Its parent company was I.G. Farben, which, ironically, competed with other corporate companies to exploit concentration camp prisoners as slave labor, just as it was supplying Zyklon-B for the purpose of murdering them.

PAUL R. BARTROP

See also: Auschwitz; Death Camps; Degussa; Denial of the Holocaust; Gas Chambers; Gerstein, Kurt; I.G. Farben; Majdanek; Roma Genocide in the Holocaust; Zyklon-B Case, 1946

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Zyklon-B Case, 1946

In the Trial of Bruno Tesch and Two Others (March 1–8, 1946), also known as the Zyklon-B Case, the British Military Court in Hamburg tried Tesch, Karl Weinbacher, and Joachim Drosihn of Tesch & Stabenow (Testa), for complicity in the murder by Zyklon-B gassing “of Allied nationals interned in concentration camps, well knowing that the said gas was to be so used.” The indictment charged that the defendants had supplied the Nazi SS with Zyklon-B (prussic acid gas), in full knowledge of its use against human beings. Arguing that private individuals who knowingly provide state institutions with the means to commit mass murder are themselves guilty of war crimes, the prosecution charged that the defendants had violated Article 46 of the Hague Regulations of 1907 by abetting the extermination of citizens in territory under military occupation. The court convicted Tesch and Weinbacher and sentenced them to death, but acquitted Drosihn. The British executed Tesch and Weinbacher on May 16, 1946.

Testa was one among several firms involved in Zyklon-B distribution. In the interwar years, Deutsche-Gold-und-Silber-scheideanstalt (Degussa, German Gold-and-Silver Separation Society), I.G. Farbenindustrie AG (I.G. Farben, Community of Interests, Dye Industry), and Thomas Goldschmidt AG formed a holding company for insecticides, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung (Degesch, German Society for Pest Control). Degesch furnished gas-absorbent pellets, canisters, and other materials to manufacturers Dessauer Werke and Kali Werke. Heerdt-Lingler (Heli) monopolized sales in

southern and western Germany. Founded as a partnership by Tesch and Paul Stabenow in 1923, Testa's territory north and east of the Elbe eventually included Auschwitz, where it sold 12 tons of the fumigant in 1943. Until June 1942 Degesch had a controlling interest in Testa, after which Tesch became sole owner. Except when training personnel in fumigation or the use of Degesch delousing chambers, Testa's employees did not directly handle the product.

Convened under the Royal Warrant of June 14, 1945, the British Military Court of Hamburg consisted of Brigadier R. B. L. Persse (president), Lieutenant Colonel Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Major S. M. Johnstone, and Captain H. S. Marshall (alternate). The Royal Warrant provided for admission of limited hearsay evidence, but confined jurisdiction to war crimes, not crimes against humanity, committed by Germany or Japan against Allied nationals after September 2, 1939. The Royal Warrant also provided for the accused to testify in their own defense, a right availed by each defendant in this case. The indictment excluded German gas victims and, as was then customary, subsumed the Jewish victims' identity under the rubric of Allied nationalities. The British Military Court asserted jurisdiction over the Tesch Case because Testa was headquartered in Hamburg and the charges involved multiple nationalities.

Hearsay testimony and circumstantial evidence played crucial roles in the conviction of Tesch and Weinbacher. Bookkeeper Eric Sehm described a company travel report from late 1942, which summarized Tesch's interview with German officers, allegedly from the Wehrmacht (German Army), not the SS. After mentioning the shooting of Jews on the Eastern Front, the officials solicited Tesch's advice concerning the use of Zyklon-B for the enhancement of killing efficiency. Tesch offered technical assistance on the spot. Sehm took notes about the report but later destroyed them, on the advice of Wilhelm Pook, another witness who partly endorsed his account. Two former stenographers, Erna Biagini and Anna Uenzelmann, confirmed their superior's knowledge of mass murder by Zyklon-B. The court also

determined that Tesch had visited Sachsenhausen, Neuengamme, and Gross-Rosen concentration camps, but never Auschwitz. By emphasizing Tesch's meticulousness, his counselor inadvertently aided the case against his client, because the judge advocate subsequently cited that characteristic as proof that Tesch must have known how the SS used his product.

Unable to adduce direct evidence against Weinbacher, the prosecution stressed his position as *prokurist*, the deputy empowered to transact business in Tesch's absence. Denying that he had seen the damning travel reports, Weinbacher claimed that his heavy workload prevented his reading every document. For 200 days per year, however, Weinbacher directed the firm while Tesch traveled on business. The prosecution argued that Weinbacher was in a circumstantial position to know how the firm's customers used Zyklon-B.

As first gassing technician, Drosihn visited several concentration camps while servicing Degesch chambers. The prosecution was unable to prove that he knew of any illegitimate purposes for Zyklon-B before the end of the war, or that he was in a position to influence company policy.

Like the Nuremberg industrialist cases, the Zyklon-B case established the precedent that private persons could be held accountable for the commission of war crimes. The specific findings contrasted with the I.G. Farben Case, however, in which the defendants who had supervisory roles in Degesch were acquitted of complicity in genocide because the prosecution was unable to establish their direct knowledge of criminal activities.

JOSEPH ROBERT WHITE

See also: Degussa; Gross-Rosen; I.G. Farben; Neuengamme; Sachsenhausen; War Crimes; Zyklon-B

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Chronology

This chronology seeks to outline the essential contours of some of the specific developments in the history of Nazi Germany, the Holocaust, and World War II, while at the same time not simply replicating all of the events listed in the encyclopedia. It has thus been tailored toward the provision of some general dates that have been included in order to enhance historical context, while at the same time offering certain events and dates that might provide a lead-in for further investigation.

Given the fact that the Holocaust played such a huge role in the affairs of nations and peoples, not all events, people, or places could be listed owing to the fact that to do so would, in one sense, become too unwieldy. Not only would this defeat the purpose of providing an accessible chronology but it would also lead to many of the events of the Holocaust becoming buried in the minutiae of other events.

1919

January 5: The German Workers' Party (DAP) is founded by Anton Drexler and Karl Harrer

June 28: Germany signs Versailles Treaty, formally ending World War I

September 12: Adolf Hitler joins the DAP

1920

February 24: Nazi Party established when the DAP is renamed; it becomes the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP); Hitler presents a 25-point Program, the Nazi Party Platform

1922

October 24: Benito Mussolini and his Fascist Party Blackshirts March on Rome

1923

November 9: Hitler leads an attempt to overthrow the government of Bavaria; he fails

1924

February 24: Trial of Adolf Hitler for treason begins; he is found guilty and sentenced to five years in prison

April 1: Hitler commences his sentence at Landsberg prison

December 19: Hitler released from Landsberg having served just eight months of his five-year sentence

1925

February 27: Hitler declares the Nazi Party (NSDAP) to be re-established, with himself as leader (Führer)

July 19: The first of two volumes of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is published

1930

January 23: Wilhelm Frick becomes the first NSDAP member to become a minister in a state government

1933

January 30: Adolf Hitler is appointed chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg

February 27–28: Reichstag fire; arrests of political opponents of the Nazis begin almost immediately

March 5: Reichstag elections: Nazis gain 44% of vote in manipulated elections

March 20: Dachau concentration camp is established

March 27: The Enabling Act is passed

April 1: Jewish businesses are boycotted across Germany

April 4: Robert Weltsch writes an article in the *Jüdische Rundschau* titled “Wear it with Pride, The Yellow Badge!”

April 11: Nazis issue a decree defining who is a non-Aryan

April 21: Jewish ritual slaughter banned

April 26: Hermann Göring establishes the Gestapo

May 10: Books written by Jews and “undesirables” are publicly burned

July 14: The Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Defects is passed, forcing many Germans with “undesirable genes” to be sterilized

July 20: Nazi government signs Concordat with the Vatican

September 22: The Haavara Agreement is signed

1934

January 26: Germany and Poland sign a nonaggression pact

June 30: *Sturmabteilung* (SA) leadership is purged during what becomes known as the “Night of the Long Knives”

August 2: German president Paul von Hindenburg dies; Hitler declares the office of president abolished and names himself Führer of Germany

1935

September 15: The Nuremberg Laws are announced at the annual Party Rally

December 31: Jews holding civil service positions in Germany are dismissed

1936

July 1: Hitler Youth membership becomes compulsory for all “Aryan” boys

August 1: Summer Olympic Games begin in Berlin

October 25: The Rome-Berlin Axis is created

1937

January 26: A new law is passed prohibiting Jews from working in any official capacity

March 21: Papal encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* issued by Pope Pius XI

July 19: Buchenwald concentration camp is established

1938

March 12: The *Anschluss* (union) of Austria with Germany; all German antisemitic decrees are applied immediately to Austria
 July 6–14: International conference on refugees held at Evian, France; no action follows to alleviate the situation of Jews

August 1: Nazi Office of Jewish Emigration established to speed up the pace of Jewish emigration from Germany

August 8: Mauthausen concentration camp established in Austria

August 11: Nazis destroy the Nuremberg synagogue

August 17: Nazis require Jewish women to add “Sarah” and men to add “Israel” to their names on all legal documents

August 19: Swiss government refuses entry to Austrian Jews seeking sanctuary

September 27: German Jews banned from practicing law

September 29–30: Munich Conference: Britain and France surrender the Sudetenland regions of Czechoslovakia to Germany by negotiation

October 5: Passports belonging to German Jews are marked with the letter “J” to indicate their identity

November 7: Ernst vom Rath, third secretary in the German Embassy in Paris, is shot and mortally wounded by Herschel Grynszpan; vom Rath dies on November 9, precipitating Kristallnacht

November 9–10: Kristallnacht pogrom occurs in Germany and Austria. Nazi figures give 91 Jews killed and up to 10,000 arrested; 267 synagogues are destroyed; figures are likely much higher

November 12: Retail businesses are forcibly transferred from Jewish owners

November 16: Jewish children are forbidden from attending German schools

December 2: Roma are required to be registered

1939

January 1: Jews are banned from working with Germans under the Measure for the Elimination of Jews from the German Economy

March 15: Germany invades Czechoslovakia

March 28: Germany abrogates its nonaggression pact with Poland

May 15: The first prisoners arrive at Ravensbrück

May 17: The MacDonald White Paper is issued

June 17: The SS *St. Louis*, a ship carrying 936 Jewish passengers, returns to Europe after being denied entry into the United States and Cuba

August 23: The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact is signed

September 1: Germany invades Poland; a curfew is imposed on German Jews

September 3: France and Britain declare war against Germany

September 17: Soviet Union invades Poland

September 21: Reinhard Heydrich orders *Einsatzgruppen* commanders to establish ghettos in German-occupied Poland

September 27: Warsaw surrenders; Jewish Councils are established in Poland; Adam Czerniakow becomes president of the Jewish Council in the Warsaw Ghetto

October 8: A ghetto is established in Piotrkow Trybunalski, Poland

November 9: Łódź is annexed by Germany

November 23: Yellow stars required to be worn by Polish Jews over the age of 10

December 12: Labor camps are organized throughout Poland; Jews between the ages of 14 and 60 become forced laborers

1940

February 8: Łódź ghetto is established

April 1: Thousands of refugees are permitted into Shanghai, China

April 9: Denmark and southern Norway are invaded and occupied by Germany; Heinrich Himmler issues a directive to establish a concentration camp at Auschwitz

April 30: The Łódź ghetto is sealed off from the outside world

May 7: Nearly 165,000 inhabitants are sealed in the Łódź ghetto

May 10: France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg are invaded by Germany

May 20: Auschwitz concentration camp established for Polish political prisoners

June 4: Neuengamme concentration camp opens

June 10: Italy declares war against Britain and France

June 15: The Soviet Union occupies Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia

June 22: France surrenders to Germany; Marshal Philippe Pétain leads the pro-Nazi government established in Vichy

June 27: Romania cedes provinces Bessarabia and Bukovina to the Soviet Union

July 17: The first anti-Jewish measures are taken in Vichy France

August 17: The Jewish resistance group *Fortress Juive* is organized in France; it later becomes *Armée Juive*

August 29: Hungary annexes Transylvania

September 7: German forces begin aerial bombings of Britain

September 27: Tripartite Pact signed by Germany, Italy, and Japan

October 3: Vichy France passes its own version of the Nuremberg Laws

October 7: Nazis invade Romania

October 16: Germans officially establish the Warsaw Ghetto

November 4: Jewish civil servants in the Netherlands are dismissed

November 16: The Warsaw Ghetto, containing nearly 500,000 Jews, is sealed

November 20–24: Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia join the Axis

1941

January 2: Attempted coup in Romania by Iron Guard against government of Marshal Ion Antonescu

January 21–26: Romanian Iron Guard annihilates hundreds of Jews

February 9: Dutch Nazis riot against Amsterdam Jews

February 25: An anti-Nazi strike is held in Amsterdam protesting deportations of Jews, led by Willem Kraan and Piet Nak

March 1: Construction of Birkenau begins

April 6: Nazis invade Yugoslavia and Greece; Bulgaria annexes Thrace and Macedonia

April 21: Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp opens in France

May 14: Over 4,000 Jews are rounded up in Paris at the Vel' d'Hiv

June 22: Germany violates its nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union and invades (Operation Barbarossa); Hungary joins the Axis

June 27: Białystok occupied by Nazis; Białystok ghetto established

July 2: Ukrainian nationalists murder thousands in Lvov

July 17: Einsatzgruppen ordered to execute captured communists and Jews during Soviet campaign

July 20: Minsk ghetto established

July 31: Adolf Eichmann appointed to prepare the "Final Solution"

September 1: The German euthanasia program is formally ended, following the deaths of some 100,000 people

September 6: The Vilna ghetto is established

September 19: Jews in Germany are ordered to wear yellow armbands bearing the Star of David; German troops occupy Kiev

September 29: The Einsatzgruppen murders some 34,000 Jews at Babi Yar ravine, outside Kiev

October 7: Birkenau is established as the primary mass murder site of Auschwitz

October 22–24: Romanian and German forces massacre an estimated 50,000 Jews in Odessa

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October 28: Approximately 9,000 Jews are killed outside of Kovno

November 8: Plans are made for the creation of a ghetto in Lvov

November 24: Terezín (Theresienstadt) ghetto/concentration camp established

December 7: The Night and Fog directive begins in Germany; Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States into World War II

December 8: Chelmno extermination camp becomes fully operational; some 320,000 Jews will be murdered here

December 11: Germany and Italy declare war on the United States

December 31: Abba Kovner addresses the resistance in Vilna and makes the statement “We will not be led like sheep to the slaughter!”

1942

January 10: *Armée Juive* (Jewish Army) created in France

January 20: The Wannsee Conference takes place

January 16: Deportations from Łódź begin

February 23: Some 768 Jewish passengers, after being refused entry into Palestine, drown when the SS *Struma* sinks off the Turkish coast

March 1: Extermination by gas begins at Sobibór

March 17: Killings begin at Belzec extermination camp; it will see the murder of 600,000 Jews by the time it closes

May 18: Herbert Baum’s group of resisters in Berlin sets fire to “The Soviet Paradise” exhibition; all are caught and executed

May 21: Sven Norrman smuggles a consignment of documents and negatives to Sweden with full particulars of the annihilation of 700,000 Polish Jews at the hands of the Nazis

May 27: Reinhard Heydrich’s car is ambushed and he is seriously wounded in the attack and dies shortly thereafter; in response, German soldiers destroy the Czech village of Lidice, murdering most of its inhabitants and sending the rest to concentration camps

June: First anti-Nazi resistance pamphlet published by the White Rose group of Hans and Sophie Scholl

June 1: Jews in France, Holland, Belgium, Croatia, Slovakia, and Romania ordered to wear yellow stars

June 1: Treblinka extermination camp begins operation

June 29–30: Following acts of armed resistance by Jewish partisans in the ghetto of Slonim, the Nazis set the ghetto on fire; they spend the next two weeks murdering between seven and ten thousand Jews

July 13: Eighteen hundred Jews are massacred in Jozefów, Poland, by German Reserve Police Battalion 101

July 14: Mass deportation of Dutch and Belgian Jews to Auschwitz begins

July 16: Over 4,000 children are taken from Paris and sent to Auschwitz; overall, some 12,887 Jews in Paris are sent through Drancy

July 22: Mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka begins.

July 23: Adam Czerniakow commits suicide in Warsaw

July 28: The Jewish Combat Organization is formed in the Warsaw Ghetto

August 7: Dr. Janusz Korczak and 200 orphans under his care are gassed in Treblinka

August 17: Kurt Gerstein visits Belzec death camp and witnesses the gassing of up to 3,000 Jews

August 29: The Reigner Telegram is sent

September 2–3: Revolt of the Łachwa ghetto, arguably the first ghetto revolt of the Holocaust

October 15: The SS slaughters 25,000 Jews near Brest-Litovsk

October 25: The deportation of Norwegian Jews begins

October 22: SS put down a revolt at Sachsenhausen by a group of Jews about to be sent to Auschwitz

October 28: First transport of Jews sent from Terezín (Theresienstadt) to Auschwitz

November 19: The Soviet army begins its counteroffensive at Stalingrad, causing the German army to begin its retreat

December 24: Armed operations by the Jewish Combat Organization against German troops in Kraków

1943

January 17: Konrad von Preysing, bishop of Berlin, threatens to resign over the collaborative behavior of the German Catholic bishops

January 18–21: Renewed deportations of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto begin following a visit from Himmler; Jewish resistance begins in the ghetto

January 22: Deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto end, following the deaths of 50 Nazi soldiers

February 2: German forces surrender at Stalingrad

February 16: Theodor Eicke, head of the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps, dies when his aircraft is shot down

February 22: Christoph Probst, Hans Scholl, and Sophie Scholl are executed after admitting to distributing White Rose pamphlets

February 26: The first Roma arrive at Auschwitz

February 27: *Fabrikaktion* (“Factory Action”); the roundup and deportation of the last Jews in Berlin

February 27–March 6: Rosenstrasse protest in Berlin by non-Jewish wives and mothers against imprisonment of their Jewish husbands and children

March 8–9: Dimitar Peshev stops the likely deportation of Bulgarian Jews before the process begins

March 13–14: Liquidation of the Kraków ghetto
 March 23: Nazi deportation of Greek Jews begins
 April 5: Approximately 4,000 Jews are massacred in the Ponary Forest outside Vilna
 April 13: Mass graves are discovered in Katyn, Poland
 April 19: New deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto; first day of Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Britain and the United States begin the Bermuda Conference
 May 1: Bermuda Conference ends
 May 8: Nazi forces capture the Jewish Combat Organization's command bunker at Miła 18; Mordecai Anielewicz is among the dead found there
 May 12: Shmuel Zygielbojm commits suicide in London
 May 16: SS General Jürgen Stroop reports that the "Jewish quarter of Warsaw is no more"
 May 19: Nazis declare Berlin to be *Judenfrei* ("cleansed of Jews")
 June 2: 3,000 Jews killed following resistance in Lvov; another 7,000 are sent to the concentration camp at Janowska
 June 11: Himmler orders liquidation of all ghettos in occupied Poland
 June 25–26: Częstochowa ghetto revolt
 July 25: Fall of fascist regime in Italy; Mussolini dismissed by King Victor Emmanuel III
 August 2: Treblinka uprising
 August 15–16: Uprising of the Białystok ghetto
 August 23: Wilhelm Frick is named Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia
 September 3: The Allies invade southern Italy
 September 8: Italy surrenders to the Allies and declares war against Germany; German forces enter northern Italy in response
 October 1–2: German police begin deportations of Danish Jews; Danes respond with a rescue effort that saves the lives of 90% of the Jewish population
 October 14: Sobibór uprising
 October 16: Major Nazi raid and *razzia* (roundup) against the Jews of Rome, who are sent to Auschwitz
 October 21: Minsk ghetto liquidated
 October 30: The Moscow Declaration is signed
 November 2–4: Yitzhak Katzenelson writes *The Song of the Murdered Jewish People*

1944

January 22: U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt creates the War Refugee Board
 March 14: Hannah Szenes and others parachute into Yugoslavia

March 19: Germany begins its occupation of Hungary; Adolf Eichmann sent from Berlin to oversee the deportation of the Hungarian Jews
 April 7: Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wexler escape from Auschwitz, bringing details of the mass extermination of the Jews
 April 29: Hungarian Jews are deported from Kistarcsa
 May 15: Beginning of the deportation of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz; Jews from Ruthenia and Transylvania are deported
 May 16: Germans offer to free 1 million Jews in exchange for 10,000 trucks
 June 7: Hannah Szenes slips into Hungary aiming to reach Budapest, but is arrested immediately
 June 23: The Swedish International Red Cross is allowed to visit Theresienstadt
 June 30: Departure of "Kasztner Train" from Budapest
 July 9: Raoul Wallenberg arrives in Hungary, where he distributes Swedish passports and sets up safe houses for Jews
 July 11: Deportations from Hungary are halted by order of Regent Miklós Horthy
 July 20: German officers fail to assassinate Hitler in Bomb Plot
 July 24: Majdanek extermination camp is liberated by the Russians
 August 1–October 4: Warsaw Revolt
 August 2: Germany destroys the so-called "Gypsy camp" at Auschwitz, gassing some 3,000 in the process
 August 6: Łódź, the last Jewish ghetto in Poland, is liquidated with 60,000 Jews sent to Auschwitz
 August 23: Romanian dictator Ion Antonescu is deposed and turned over to Soviet forces
 August 25: Paris is liberated
 September 15: Execution of Mala Zimetbaum and Edek Galiński at Auschwitz
 October 7: *Sonderkommando* revolt at Auschwitz; one of the gas chambers is destroyed, 15 SS guards and 400 members of the *Sonderkommando* are killed
 November 7: Hannah Szenes convicted as a spy and executed by German firing squad
 November 8: Deportations resume in Budapest
 November 19: The Vatican and four other neutral powers in Budapest issue a collective protest to the Hungarian government calling for the suspension of Jewish deportations
 November 28: Himmler orders the gas chambers at Auschwitz destroyed
 December 24–29: Hungarian Arrow Cross fascists attack Jews in Budapest

1945

January 5: Roza Robota, Estusia Wajcblum, Ala Gertner, and Regina Safirsztajn, accused of supplying gunpowder to the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando*, are executed

January 17: Raoul Wallenberg arrested by Soviet forces for espionage

January 18: The evacuation of Auschwitz begins

January 19: The Soviet Army liberates Łódź

January 28: Soviet forces liberate Auschwitz

April 9: Evacuation of Mauthausen begins; Dietrich Bonhoeffer is hanged for his role in an attempt to assassinate Hitler

April 11: American forces liberate Buchenwald

April 12: U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies and is succeeded by Harry S. Truman

April 13: Soviets liberate Vienna

April 15: British forces liberate Bergen-Belsen

April 27: Soviet forces liberate Sachsenhausen

April 28: Former Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini is assassinated

April 29: American forces liberate Dachau; Soviet forces liberate Ravensbrück

April 30: Hitler commits suicide

May 1: Joseph Goebbels kills his wife and children before shooting himself as Berlin is surrounded by the Soviet army

May 2: Soviet forces capture Berlin

May 3: Theresienstadt is surrendered to the International Committee of the Red Cross

May 5: American forces liberate Mauthausen

May 7: Germany surrenders to the Allies in Reims

May 9: Wilhelm Keitel signs surrender documents in Berlin

May 23: Heinrich Himmler commits suicide

July 23: Marshal Philippe Pétain is tried for treason by France's High Court of Justice (trial lasts until August 15); sentenced to death, this is commuted to life imprisonment

July 25: Kurt Gerstein found hanged in his cell in a French prison

August 8: The London Charter Agreement is signed

September 1: Japan surrenders to the Allies after the United States detonates atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ending World War II

October 15: Pierre Laval is hanged in France

October 18: The International Military Tribunal of major war criminals begins at Nuremberg

October 24: Vidkun Quisling is executed in Norway after being found guilty of high treason

1946

June 1: Ion Antonescu is executed in Bucharest following a guilty verdict in his May trial

July 4: Forty-two Jews are killed in a pogrom in Kielce, Poland

October 1: The International Military Tribunal ends

October 15: Hermann Göring commits suicide in his cell at Nuremberg

October 16: Death sentences carried out at Nuremberg, as those condemned are hanged

Glossary

This purpose of this glossary is to supplement and explain some of the essential terms found when studying the Holocaust. In that sense, it extends the range of themes not covered within the encyclopedia itself. All, however, relate to the general fields in which the Holocaust can be approached as a field of study, and they can be applied to genocide more broadly as well. As such, the terms here will help to provide a broader context to assist users of the encyclopedia. Of course, it is intended that the definitions here will be a starting point for readers and not the last word on any of the topics being examined.

Assimilation

The process whereby members of an ethnic group replace their cultural practices with those of the dominant culture in a society. When this conversion is imposed upon an entire group of people by the state, it is often referred to as “cultural genocide,” because while members of the group being assimilated might not be systematically killed, their culture is often effectively destroyed. Assimilation policies are often a common precursor to genocide because they can be used by the perpetrators in the initial stages as a way to delegitimize or dehumanize the victims by portraying them as “nonhumans” from a “regressive” culture in need of reintegration into society. This can also be used later as a way for the perpetrators to “justify” the use of increased brutality against their victims if assimilation is seen as being ineffective in achieving the desired goals.

Atrocities

Appalling acts that are extremely brutal or cruel in nature. Within the context of

genocide, “atrocities” refer to acts of extreme violence or cruelty typically carried out against civilians, though atrocities can also be committed against military forces on either side. Examples of atrocities that tend to occur during genocide include murder, massacres, torture, rape, starvation, extreme deprivation, forced marches, enslavement, brutal violence, and systematic extermination.

Authoritarianism

At its most basic, an authoritarian regime is one that requires its citizens to submit to its authority, that is, the regime’s perceived right to rule in an autocratic or domineering manner. An authoritarian government is one in which political authority is usually concentrated in a small group or elite that possesses exclusive power over its population. Such power is for the most part antidemocratic, as authoritarianism does not allow for the popular will to predominate.

Bystanders

Those who are aware of the perpetration of crimes against humanity and genocide but do nothing to halt the crimes in question. In that regard, they are neither the perpetrators of genocide, collaborators with the perpetrators, nor the victims of genocide. Those who act as bystanders do so for a variety of reasons. Some, for example, might be hostile toward a victim population, though not sufficiently to involve themselves in the process of persecution; others might simply be apathetic as to what is happening to those without whom they have a direct interest; while yet others might fear for their lives or loved ones should there be repercussions for speaking out against the genocide or attempting to stop it.

Communism

An economic and social system developed by a number of writers during the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin), and with localized variations in most other countries. In theory, under communism, all means of production are owned collectively, rather than by individuals. In practice, a single authoritarian party controls both the political and economic systems. Communism as an ideology is diametrically opposed to the Western political and economic concepts of democracy and capitalism.

Crimes against humanity

A legal category within international law that identifies punishable offenses for gross violations of human rights, atrocities, and mass murder of noncombatant civilians. Such offenses are a relatively new category, largely the product of international human rights legislation enacted during the 20th century. Often, crimes against humanity are bracketed alongside war crimes, though they differ from these in that they are not, for the most part, violations of the laws of war; indeed, crimes against humanity need not occur in wartime at all. Acts that can be considered crimes against humanity include, but are not confined to, the following: murder, extermination,

enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape, and persecutions on political, racial, and religious grounds. Other inhumane acts not listed there can also be included, rendering crimes against humanity an evolutionary category over which international (or, less likely, national) courts have some degree of discretion. The term is rendered in the plural, highlighting that this is a category embracing a number of crimes. There is no generally accepted definition of crimes against humanity, and, to date, no universal international legislation covering such crimes exists. Crimes against humanity and genocide are not interchangeable terms, with the latter usually considered to be a crime of greater magnitude.

Deportation

While this term customarily means the expulsion of a person or group of people from any state or country, in most usage it refers to the expulsion of foreigners. Sovereign states reserve the right to deport foreigners who have committed serious crimes, entered the country illegally, or otherwise lost their legal status to remain. In situations of genocide and ethnic cleansing, however, deportation is employed as a euphemism for forced removal to camps or other locations in which the object is slave labor or death. Deportation can also involve summarily removing populations in order to claim the land they have left behind.

Dictatorship

An autocratic form of absolute rule, in which a government is directed by an individual known as a dictator, or by a small clique. In a dictatorship, leaders run a country unrestrained by customary law or a preexisting constitution, which they can themselves draw up, once in power, to serve as the basis of their rule. A dictatorship is thus a form of government that has the power to govern without the consent of those being governed. Allowing the governed no opportunity to have a say in how they are ruled, dictatorship is therefore the diametric opposite of democracy.

- Discrimination** The act of making a distinction between individuals and/or groups based on criteria other than qualifications or achievements, and then using such distinctions to prohibit such persons or individuals from realizing their maximum potential physically, intellectually, educationally, socially, economically, or spiritually. Racism and antisemitism are, perhaps, the two most well-known forms of discrimination, though discrimination can also be based on sex, sexual preference, age, physical size, and a plethora of other identifying characteristics. Education is considered to be a primary tool for successfully combating discrimination, but countering it is ultimately most successful when it is backed up by the force of law that prohibits such practices.
- Ethnicity** A group that defines itself and/or is defined by others as being of a common descent and sharing a common culture. This could include characteristics having racial, religious, linguistic, and certain other traits in common. In recent times this can serve as a defining characteristic of one cultural group as a way of distinguishing it from others.
- Eugenics** A term first used at the end of the 19th century, introduced as a way to explain the improvement of humanity through selective breeding and the elimination of hereditary factors that were seen to weaken the species. The idea was embraced enthusiastically by biologists, anthropologists, social scientists, and others in countries such as Germany, Britain, and the United States. The idea of eugenics became a critical element of Nazi thinking and was incorporated into the social ideologies of many other regimes in the early part of the 20th century.
- Expulsion** The removal of a lawful resident from the territory of a state by government authorities. Under Article 32 of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, national security and public order are the only grounds permitted for the expulsion of a refugee.
- The Convention states that the decision to expel an individual must be fair and just, and the individual must be allowed a “reasonable amount of time” to seek entry to another state. The expulsion of a population from a specified country or region can serve as both a genocide avoidance device or, depending on the circumstances, as an opportunity to engage in genocide. Some expulsions have been explained as being for the good of the affected population, while others have been motivated by a simple quest for land in which members of the existing population are considered superfluous and thus have to be removed. Expulsion, in short, can be based on a number of different premises.
- Fascism** A radical authoritarian political movement and system of government based on an extreme form of nationalism, advocating a centralization of authority, rigorous socioeconomic controls, intolerance of opposition, aggressive chauvinism, and racist discourse. While there have been many variations of fascism since it was first developed by the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, it is most commonly associated with the period of the 1920s to the 1940s, particularly in Europe.
- Genocide** A term coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin in order to designate the destruction of a group at the hands of another. To form the new term, Lemkin combined the Greek *genos* (race, tribe), and the Latin suffix *-cide* (killing). On December 9, 1948, after lengthy debate and substantial compromise, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, defining genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.” The means whereby this can take place include: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to

bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Mass graves

The fastest and most convenient means by which to dispose of a large number of bodies, mass graves can have mixed success as a means of concealing war crimes and genocide. Often, vegetation can grow over them quickly, making them difficult to detect, and the longer they are left the greater is the likelihood they may never be found. On the other hand, when sites are located, the evidence they contain can be used to bring perpetrators to justice. Mass graves can be the best source of evidence to determine the site of a massacre and whether or not genocide has actually taken place, though this is a highly skilled task requiring the professional expertise of forensic archaeologists and pathologists.

Mass killing

Both an unspecified number of deaths, and cumulative death by a series of large-scale killings. Defining mass killing can be difficult. Often, it is simply a substitute for the term “massacre.” It can apply to the eradication of a group of people, an entire village, or the inhabitants of a region. If mass killing is repeated often enough, the killing rate may, on some occasions, be deemed genocidal in scale. In some conflicts, mass killing is not necessarily genocide, but the danger always exists that under certain circumstances violence can escalate to such a degree that it might no longer be controllable. This often happens within the context of civil wars and ethnic conflicts. In the popular consciousness, mass killing is almost always viewed as the most obvious expression of genocide.

Massacre

A massacre is the intentional, indiscriminate, and merciless killing of a large number of people, in a situation of general slaughter, by members of a more powerful group or military force. Despite being indiscriminate in its

choice of victim, a massacre can be highly planned in advance and methodical in its execution. Massacres are usually accompanied by cruelty and are viewed as both barbarous and contrary to what may be termed “civilized” behavior. The term massacre does not readily equate with genocide, as a massacre is a singular event. Massacres certainly take place within genocide, however, and are frequently the primary manner in which genocidal regimes murder the majority of their victims.

Militia

At its broadest, the term militia refers to a military force comprised of ordinary citizens organized in times of emergency to provide defense, emergency law enforcement, or paramilitary service. However, in its modern usage, a militia is a force that is usually comprised of a number of informal groups that have one main characteristic in common; namely, that they act as armed factions using violence to attain their goals and objectives. In many situations, militias are employed as de facto military forces, but more generally they are looked upon as illegitimate bodies of irregular soldiers that are not endowed with the same moral codes or degrees of military discipline as regular troops. The term militia can be applied to paramilitary groups, guerrilla fighters, revolutionary armies, insurgents, and private armies.

Minority

The status given to subgroups within a society who are different from the majority of other citizens in terms of racial, religious, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic identity. The extent to which a nation-state demonstrates its commitment to its minority populations is a useful index to assessing that state’s overall internal stability and peace. Democratic countries have an avowed commitment to taking care of their minority populations, and most entrench some form of safeguard as to their welfare within the national constitution. In nondemocratic states, however, minorities are frequently scapegoated, singled out, or otherwise

- excluded from the national project. The vulnerability to which this often leads renders minority populations subject to persecution and, worse, all too often to physical violence.
- Nationalism** A term embracing the political idea that a group of people, united legally or by common cultural bonds, identify each other as belonging to a unitary nation with the right to self-determination. Nationalism recognizes that a group of people can have a strong identification with a polity that will be defined along national lines. The identity thus defined can embrace those who see themselves linked by common biology (as a race or ethnic group), or by social, cultural, or political bonds, in the form of a shared civic culture. Nationalism can be both inclusive and exclusive, and in some cases the identification of a nationalist culture is combined with a negative view of other races or cultures. When this takes place, violence in the name of ethnic homogeneity can manifest itself as the most lucid expression of nationalistic fervor.
- Peace** A state or period of mutual concord between governments, or groups of states, during which there is an absence of war or other hostilities. A period of peace is therefore characterized by a lack of, or no, violent conflict between states or other polities. The term *peace* is also given to a pact, treaty, or agreement to end hostilities between warring or antagonistic states or polities that have been at war, with the promise that they will abstain from further fighting, aggression, or enmity.
- Persecution** The act or practice of systematically mistreating an individual or group by another group. This implies physical actions (the infliction of suffering, harassment, isolation, imprisonment, fear, or pain) undertaken in a manner designed to injure, aggrieve, or afflict the affected group or individual. The most common forms of persecution are those stemming from differences in race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, political opinions, gender, sexual orientation, or beliefs, where these differ from those of the persecutor.
- Prejudice** The act of making premature judgment over another human being, community, or group, based on factors irrelevant to merit or ability. Prejudicial behavior is based on an acceptance of common or stereotypical misunderstandings, coupled with a propensity to scapegoat those who are different as a way of explaining how the world operates. Prejudice is therefore unreasonable and unjust, and those who experience it cannot overcome it through their own actions. When coupled with governmental, economic, military, and/or social power, prejudice can escalate into violence, mass murder, massacres, and, sometimes, genocide.
- Propaganda** The use of various means for the purpose of promoting or disseminating an ideological doctrine or agenda, usually at the expense of one group over another, and in a highly manipulative manner. Propaganda is usually organized and deliberate, and involves the use of books, newspapers, art, cultural events, theater, movies, radio, television, and electronic media. It has a diverse range of applications, from wartime to peacetime, from government to corporations, from religious to secular. Where genocide is concerned, what can be termed “hate propaganda” plays an important role in alienating a target population from those who would be (or are) its persecutors—in providing justifications to the general population as to why the persecution of the target population is necessary, in offering the means such persecution should employ, and in serving as a bolster for the government (or other authority) undertaking and directing the persecution. Propaganda thus acts to legitimize aggression and persecution. A propagandist’s key aim is to persuade others to share the propagandist’s view about the target group; as a result, simplified messages shorn of any possibility

of debate or further discussion are the preferred device for convincing the greatest number of people as to the veracity of the propagandist's claims.

Racism

The prejudicial and pseudoscientific belief that biological characteristics (for instance, skin pigmentation, facial features, bone structures, hair texture, and the like) are the primary determinant of human abilities and capacities, and that the human species is unequally divided between superior and inferior racial groupings based upon these physical attributes. Commitment to such a view has long resulted in active forms of discrimination in the areas of politics, society, culture, economics, religion, and the military. Practical applications of racism can translate into law, socioeconomic exclusion, discrimination, violence, and even genocide of those groups labeled as inferior on the grounds of racial difference.

Refugee

A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling, to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country. Seeking refuge elsewhere, a refugee is a person who is thus either fleeing from conflict or massive human rights violations, or has been expelled from his or her home in advance of such actions. Over time, the definition of refugee has expanded to include those who flee conflict and persecution by leaving their current place of residence to seek safety in another part of their own country.

Resettlement

The movement of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another state that has agreed to allow them entry. While the term implies the transportation of any group of people (whether as a family or colony) to a new settlement, common usage refers to the process of moving people to a different place to live on account of them no

longer being permitted to stay in the place in which they are currently living. When such resettlement takes place, there is usually a reasonable chance of them receiving permission to remain and eventually obtain citizenship.

Slavery

A slave is a person who is the legal property of another party (who could be an individual, a family, a corporation, or the state), in which the relationship is unequal, abusive, and established on a principle of total obedience to authority. Slavery almost always implies severe manual labor for little or no reward. While the impulse in a slave-master relationship is that the slave be kept alive in order to engage in the work demanded, the operation of a system of slavery frequently involves massive brutality and death (to say nothing of the violation of individual natural and human rights).

Stereotyping

The act of characterizing a group, or individuals within that group, based upon a preconceived set of mental images about physical (racial, sexual, or gender) or other (religious, educational, social, or political) features. Once labeled, the person doing the stereotyping will base his or her responses on these assumptions. The act of stereotyping involves making value judgments about the worth of the group or individual being stereotyped, most frequently in a negative, discriminatory, or disparaging manner.

Totalitarianism

A system of government in which no political or personal opposition is permitted, demanding total subservience on the part of individuals and institutions to the state. All modern totalitarian states are comprised of at least some of the following characteristics: a single-party state dominated by a single leader or a small clique; a weapons monopoly; a monopoly over the means of disseminating information in any form, public or private; a unifying ideology; an economic system that is either centrally directed, or in which the state plays a dominant role; a police presence that has permanently entrenched extraordinary powers

of arrest; and the capacity to employ violence in order to uphold the authority of the central authorities. Totalitarian states can be located on both sides of the political divide, usually on the extremes of a central axis.

War

A state of organized, armed conflict between different states, or different groups coming from within a state, which is usually open and declared. War is characterized by aggression and violence, is often prolonged, and is usually waged by military forces fighting against each other. The reasons for war are many, but generally these can be classified as defense, revenge, the rectification of earlier grievances, economic gain, territorial expansion, or regional dominance and control. Conflict that takes place during war is typified by high mortality, economic and social disruption, and physical devastation in the areas where fighting takes place.

War crimes

Acts committed during armed conflict that violate the international laws, treaties, customs, and practices governing military conflict between belligerent states or parties. War crimes are a legal

category within international law, identifying punishable offenses for serious violations (so-called “grave breaches”) of the accepted international rules of war, as defined in any of the international conventions signed at Geneva on August 12, 1949. War crimes recognize individual criminal responsibility where such violations occur, enshrining the idea that individuals can be held accountable for their own actions during wartime, provided a moral choice was able to be made at the time of the offense.

Xenophobia

Like prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping, xenophobia is based upon a false perception of others, whether as individuals or as groups, and is manifested through an intense or irrational dislike or fear of foreigners or strangers. Xenophobia may be racial, religious, cultural, social, educational, or political, resulting in heightened anxiety, and therefore intense hatred, of others, simply through their existence. Xenophobic behaviors can range from mild forms of discrimination to destruction of property, violent abuse, murder, and sometimes genocide.

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The literature of the Holocaust is vast and cannot possibly be replicated in a work of this size. The following list, therefore, is intended as a starting point only and gives a bare minimum of the type of works represented in the academic literature. It should be noted also that in many cases the sources of the accounts throughout this volume can also be employed as bibliographical references.

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THE HOLOCAUST

THE HOLOCAUST

An Encyclopedia and Document Collection

VOLUME 3: HOLOCAUST TESTIMONIES

Paul R. Bartrop and
Michael Dickerman,
Editors



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Preface

As a volume of personal testimonies from the Holocaust, this book has been arranged to maximize access and ease of reference for users. Because the testimonies are arranged alphabetically, readers can cross-refer to the list of entries at the beginning of the volume; when looking for the context in which the accounts appear, refer to the second list, in which names have been arranged thematically. Within the text, each account is introduced to enable readers to appreciate the setting in which the testimony takes place. Full sourcing of each account is also provided.

For this volume we have worked to locate testimonies that are largely new for a wide readership. In this respect, we have been fortunate to secure the very willing cooperation of three remarkable initiatives across three countries: the “Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program” (through the Azrieli Foundation, Toronto, Canada); the “Writing as Witness” project (through the Sara & Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource

Center at Stockton University, Galloway, New Jersey); and the “Write Your Story” project (Lamm Library, formerly the Makor Jewish Community Library, Melbourne, Australia). Quite clearly, the volume would not have appeared without the assistance of these three superb establishments, and we would like to thank, most sincerely, Elin Beaumont at Azrieli, Maryann McLoughlin at Stockton, and Adele Hulse and Leonie Fleiszig at Lamm, for all their help as our project unfolded.

Eve Grimm provided stalwart service; not only did she manually input everything into a readable format; she actually did it twice, after there was a major hitch involving our original selections. Were it not for her yeoman and uncomplaining service, there would not be a volume 3 in this encyclopedia at all. Elizabeth Snyder and Taylor Neff also provided assistance in a number of important ways, and the editors are grateful to them for their assistance as well.

Introduction

Survivor testimonies play the most crucial role in forming our understanding of what life was like during the Holocaust. As firsthand narratives written by people who lived through the barbarities of the Nazi system, testimonial accounts are among our primary links to the SS state. As such, it can be argued that all accounts, regardless of their artistic quality or historical accuracy, must be considered and respected. There is merit in every survivor account, even those which at first glance would seem to be of little use to the historian.

The testimonies employed in this volume are neither new nor unpublished. They are the reminiscences of European men and women who lived at a particular time in European history, and who were victims, perpetrators, or witnesses to the Nazi genocide of the Jews. They came from all walks of life and from all corners of Europe. Their accounts were produced contemporaneously, or from the perspective of a few months or after the reflection of many years. They offer a representative sample of the Holocaust experience, and what the survivors wish to be understood about that experience.

There are a number of issues relating to the distinctive quality of survivor testimony that need to be considered, however. For a start, we must ask whether (and to what degree) we can utilize survivor accounts as accurate pieces of history. For many, this is far from a clear-cut issue; some scholars actually situate their discussions in the category of literature rather than memoir or autobiography, oblivious to the fact that literature is precisely what testimonial accounts are *not*.

We therefore need to examine how testimonies may be assessed as a reliable source. After all, most accounts were written after the fact, when the survivors were safely away from the Nazis and their experience was but a nightmarish memory. Moreover, such accounts were for the most part not recounted by accomplished writers. Further, more often than not they were written for publication, suggesting that a sifting process had taken place in an author's mind or by an editor's hand, in which some elements of memory had to be sacrificed for the sake of publication while others were retained—and possibly even enhanced for the same reason.

Such considerations alert us to a type of memoir that needs to be read differently from other forms of historical documentation. Published survivor accounts are quite clearly “subjectively true,”¹ in that they chronicle events either directly witnessed by their authors or told to them by others at the time of their ordeal. It is this truth, and these events, that survivors attempt to impart to their readers. What is the historian, coming on the scene much later, to do with such material?

In his celebrated study published in 1976, Terrence Des Pres addressed this very issue:

To come from fiction to documents is to move from an ideal lucidity to the dense anguish of men and women telling as straightforwardly as they know how the story of what they saw and endured. . . . Their testimony is given in memory, told in pain and often clumsily, with

little thought for style or rhetorical device. The experience they describe, furthermore, resists the tendency to fictionalize which informs most remembering.²

For Des Pres, there is thus a certain dimension of truth in survivor testimony that is absent elsewhere. Once the dry statistical data of a prisoner's Holocaust experiences are known—the “why” and “where” elements, which generally differed from one person to another—the contours of their experience can appear remarkably uniform:

the world survivors speak of has been so rigidly shaped by necessity, and so completely shared . . . that from one report to the next the degree of consistency is unusually high. The facts lie embedded in a fixed configuration; fixed, we may come to believe, by the nature of existence when life is circumscribed by death.³

Therefore, survivors aim to tell their stories in as clear a manner as possible, the better to be able to convey to their audience the essence of what they went through.

In a court of law, such evidence serves a different purpose from that of the historian. To those who would argue that the only standard of proof to be adopted by a scholar should be that found in a courtroom, it must be pointed out that the evidence a judge is looking for is altogether different from that of the historian. In a courtroom, the prosecution, defense, judge, and jury all look for specific evidence of a precise type—the kind of evidence that will either acquit or convict a person against whom a certain charge has been brought. The questions asked, therefore, are of a very special nature; generally speaking, they do not look for the textures, smells, sights, and contours of a person's experience, nor do they explore the wider contextual backdrop against which things occurred.

Holocaust historians not only use all these things in an effort to reach an understanding of the past; they also permit the survivor to discuss “what made a *special impression* . . . at the time.”⁴ Such testimony is based on “an entirely different attitude to events”⁵ than that found in a courtroom, and even if it would not always pass for truth as a court would require it, it is nonetheless often more valuable for the historian than the kind of response that questions from a judge or attorney might elicit.

A point of clarification is in order, however, lest it be thought that all survivor testimony should be accepted at face value and without putting it through any tests. As Kurt Y. Ball-Kaduri wrote in an important essay over half a century ago, “it is impossible to set down theoretical rules for

such a selective process” as assessing the value of survivor testimony.⁶ Historians can accept or reject a survivor's account on the basis of known context and a broader understanding of an incident being recounted, but they cannot dismiss the survivor's impressions of the incident once it is firmly established that the survivor saw it take place. As Ball-Kaduri wrote:

testimony given by five to ten witnesses in regard to the same incident, is valid evidence. But it is not true to say that only one testimony, not supported by other evidence is valueless. Especially in the field of active Jewish life [during the Holocaust] there are cases where only one witness has survived, and nevertheless, or even because of this fact, his evidence is of value.⁷

It is quite true that every account should be verified where possible, but often this is simply not possible. After all, the Holocaust saw an immense amount of history taking place. As the Israeli historian Jacob Robinson observed in 1966,

The usual course of any particular community is even and uneventful; ordinarily, little of historical significance takes place, except in those rare times when a peak of military, political, intellectual, and moral activity is reached. Thus, on a continental scale, each year brings a few people, a few ideas, a few groups, to the fore. But the era of Nazi oppression was quite different. Then, in the span of only twelve years, every single Jewish community in Europe perforce was faced with the greatest crisis possible to a group—the crisis of existence. Every single Jewish community perforce reached its peak of activity, called upon its deepest spiritual resources, brought forth its ultimate answers to the questions of life and death, of relations between man and God.⁸

The challenge for the Holocaust scholar is thus “to rescue from oblivion a history as eventful and rich as that of a thousand years.”⁹

Given the event-laden historical richness Robinson described, it might seem as though such rescue would be a relatively easy (if time-consuming) process, but this is not the case. Yes, there was an enormous amount of activity taking place in many areas, but what may we know of such things where no one survived to tell the tale? How does one establish what happened in a community where a population that once numbered several thousand has been totally obliterated? From whom does one obtain eyewitness testimony,

if all the eyewitnesses have been killed? How does one examine written records, where none were kept? Are there any advantages in the historian visiting a site, if—as often happened—it had been destroyed by the Nazis? Many hundreds of small villages throughout Eastern Europe were literally expunged from the face of the earth. What happened there? How did the Holocaust manifest itself in these communities? We might never know, but the use of testimony, however fragmentary, will start the process of rescuing the history from the oblivion of which Robinson has warned us.

Further, it is through testimonies that we can appreciate the fears, miseries, and other features of life characterizing the Holocaust. Again, we are drawn to the conclusion that even one survivor account places us in a better position to try to understand what people went through, and we therefore find ourselves relying on whatever we can find to begin the long process of comprehending what happened.

It is thus necessary to consider every piece of survivor testimony individually, and to assess each on its merits. What historians make of these accounts must be up to them, and any scholar contemplating the study of the Holocaust is counseled to treat the subject with a combination of both rigor and respect. If all we have to go on as we attempt to reach an understanding of the Holocaust experience are the written accounts of survivors—and very soon this will be all we have left—then we must treat these accounts seriously.

Above all, we must be aware of just what it is the survivors are trying to convey. Generally speaking, they seek to convey a sense of what happened to *them*, as *they* remember it. Do they wish to be seen in a particular light? Perhaps. Is their intention to tell the truth as they understand it? Certainly. Do they hope to compose a particular set of images concerning their persecutors, or humanity in general? In many cases, yes. Overall, however, the reflections and reminiscences of Holocaust survivors are intimate accounts of individual experiences that the survivors wish to share with others.

Implanted within this need to tell the story as they know it is a particular consciousness of what surviving is all about. Of course, the reasons for survival varied from one person to another, but for those who set down their accounts for posterity surviving was frequently accompanied by an urge to bear witness to the evils of the Holocaust. It was, in this respect, its own revenge. As Terrence Des Pres has shown, survivor testimony is unusual as a genre not only “for the experience it describes, but also for the desire it reveals to remember and record.”¹⁰ The need to bear witness was often part and parcel of the reason for survival itself:

The testimony of survivors is rooted in a strong need to make the truth known, and the fact that this literature exists, that survivors produced these documents—is evidence of a profoundly human process. Survival is a specific kind of experience, and “to survive as a witness” is one of its forms.¹¹

It permits the survivor to allow the dead their voice;¹² it serves as a call to humanity, a signal to readers of the power of radical evil, a warning for the generations of the future.

How representative are survivor accounts? When assessing a given situation, can the memoir of any single survivor be held up as exemplary of life and conditions in, say, Auschwitz, and as therefore representative of all other survivor accounts? Do their accounts tell the full—or only—story?

As the testimonies in this volume show, there is no “right” or “wrong” way for survivors to remember their experience. Given that every survivor’s experience was unique and intimate to themselves, we must look at the totality of their experience alongside those of as many of their fellows as we can find, and ask broad questions that might be capable of being narrowed down later. Certain survivors might provide aspects of the picture that are neater, sharper, or more elegantly defined, but none can tell the whole story alone.

We could discuss in depth the literary dimensions of survivor testimony—nuances of language, the artistic merits of characterization, the expression of feelings, or the development of storylines—but these would reduce the survivors’ accounts to nothing other than pieces of literature. If it is the case that most survivors set down their experiences in order to convey something about their past lives to their readers, then the literary quality of their writing is not necessarily as important to them as it would be to a novelist or poet. The most important thing is that the message be conveyed.

Discussing Nazi concentration camps, for example, Cynthia Haft has identified what the differences between art and narrative represent when applied to survivor testimonies. She is careful to emphasize that she is discussing literature only; while many survivors have related their personal accounts as autobiography, those who continue their writing well beyond this often adapt forms of expression differing in style from the testimonial genre:

Because of a desire to render their works as faithful to detail as possible, many authors lost the perspective of their role as writers. The role of the writer is to recreate through language the passions that he wishes to convey to his reader. . . . To tell us how high the [concentration

camp barrack] blocks were, how many miles were walked in the fields, how much water there was to drink is not pertinent to literature. And these facts taken out of context, recited without recreating life in camp, will not evoke in a reader's mind what a camp was. The artist's role is not to tell the number of miles that a prisoner walked each morning in order to reach the swamp where he worked. It is rather to impress upon the reader's mind how the prisoner's legs felt, to impress upon the reader that distance is relative and that the longest walk he can take is along a path where at every step his foot digs into a fresh cadaver. These feelings are conveyed not by a strict attention to details in ounces and miles. . . . Details will not communicate the reality of the experience. The passions, the conditions will be transmitted to the reader by the effective and lyric author who never mentions the miles. The reader cannot reconstruct in his mind what Auschwitz was, but, by realizing the totality of the phenomenon, he recreates the subjective truth of the experience.¹³

Haft is fundamentally right, though perhaps a little harsh on those survivors whose accounts are not up to the literary standards she would prefer. If some survivors consciously or unconsciously sacrifice detail for artistic merit, it is because this is the best way for them to put their ordeal into words. The same is true for accounts that sacrifice literary merit for detail. Many survivors identify a powerful duty to get their story down as accurately as possible. As Shoshana Felman has put it, "to bear witness is to take responsibility for the truth." The process of testifying

is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit narrative, to others: to take responsibility—in speech—for history or for the truth of an occurrence, for something which, by definition, goes beyond the personal, in having general (nonpersonal) validity and consequences.¹⁴

Taking responsibility for history is thus not the preserve of either factual details or emotional reconstruction, but *both together*. A piece of testimony can no more be dismissed because of its paucity of detail than it can for a lack of sensitivity, or, as psychiatrist Dori Laub has noted in relation to his interviewing of a female survivor, "my attempt as interviewer and as listener was precisely to respect—not to upset, not to trespass—the subtle balance between what the woman *knew* and what she *did not*, or *could not*, know."¹⁵

For most survivors, the experiences they depict have become embedded in their souls,¹⁶ and the descriptions they provide almost always recount an atmosphere that is true if not necessarily believable. Not all accounts were written by educated people; many lack self-control and grammatical discipline, but they are no less true for that. Some accounts provide dates, for example, which we know are incorrect, and in other cases even a full chronological sequence of events is dubious. But we need to bear in mind that the Holocaust was a time that was not always dictated by a calendar in the sense that we understand it. What is true of dates, moreover, is equally true of numbers, of Nazi institutions and ranks, and even of activities undertaken by Jews in different parts of the same country. It must be borne in mind that trying to make sense of the whole from ground level was invariably impossible. And all this, of course, was compounded by language differences. Usually, all a survivor could "know" was the reality of which he or she formed a part. The rest inevitably had to be filled in later.¹⁷

Thus, survivor accounts do not ask us to try to "imagine" the Holocaust; for the most part, that is not what they are attempting to achieve. Lawrence L. Langer, the preeminent scholar of Holocaust literature, addressed the issue in an early essay:

The challenge of imagining the Holocaust—not the anti-Semitic tactics which led up to it, but its apocalyptic end in the gas chambers and crematoria of the death camps—is a permanent one, and will indeed grow more difficult for future generations who will lack the advantage of hearing living voices confirm the details of the ordeal they survived. The only evidence we will have available then is the kind we depend on increasingly today: verbal and visual accounts which inspire the imagination to conjure up an unimaginable world.¹⁸

Langer's major interest here is not to consider testimonial accounts as historical documents, but as triggers for the imagination:

the ultimate focus, the one requiring our constant collaboration, must be unambiguous—such art is deceptive and unfaithful if it does not bring us closer to the worst, and beyond the worst—to the unthinkable. Not in tribute to the dead, not to redeem them—but in agonizing confirmation of the catastrophe that consumed them.¹⁹

Most importantly, this confirmation must be recognized and understood by the generations of the future, which will have only published survivor testimonies from which to learn what happened.

For many survivors—possibly most—it is sufficient simply to tell their story, to record, to bear witness, to show that the world through which they lived was in fact all too real. The challenge is not one of “imagining the Holocaust.” Rather, it is of conveying to the world an understanding of what the survivor went through, of explaining the essence of the evil that one group of people inflicted upon another group of people, as seen from the perspective of one who was there as a participant-observer-victim. If there is, in short, nothing mysterious about the Nazis or the Holocaust they perpetrated, neither is there anything mysterious about the testimonies the survivors have written. They do not attempt to make magic, nor do they attempt to imagine the unimaginable. They simply try to tell the story from their own individual perspectives.

How, therefore, may we best employ survivor testimonies when trying to understand the experience of those who lived through those awful times? Certain themes keep reemerging, such as maintenance of morale, separation from loved ones, exposure to death, fleeing and hiding, the nature of relationships, and the struggle to maintain life in the midst of degradation and brutality. In looking at survivor accounts, we can be less concerned with how the survivors remember their experience than with what they actually say; with what they remember, rather than why they remember it.²⁰

Ultimately, a survivor’s testimony should be regarded as much as an historical document as a contemporary government memorandum, a diary entry, a letter, or a newspaper account. As with all documents, its applicability to a particular type of historical writing should be weighed prior to its use, and employed or rejected on that basis rather than according to some more subjective standard. All survivor testimony has its place. It is just a matter of finding where and how to use it.

Finally, a story. It isn’t a survivor’s story, though tragically, it should be. It concerns one of the greatest of Jewish historians, the Russian-Polish-Jewish scholar Simon (Shimon) Dubnow. Given the opportunity to escape the fearsome potential that a Nazi invasion might bring, Dubnow, aged 81, decided instead to remain where he was, in Riga, determined not to flee and hand the Nazis the victory they sought. A number of witnesses to his death were later to provide his biographer, Koppel S. Pinson, with the following record of his last moments:

When the Nazis entered Riga they evicted Dubnow from his home and seized his entire library. They summoned him for questioning at Gestapo headquarters and then placed him in a home for the aged. After a short period of ghetto organization the Nazis liquidated the ghetto at the end of October 1941 and a month later they carried out their first “action” against the Riga Jews. Dubnow was seriously ill, but friends managed to conceal him for a while. On the night of December 7–8 the Nazis carried out their second “action.” All the old and sick as well as the women in advanced pregnancy were herded together in buses. Dubnow was also taken outside to be squeezed into one of these overloaded buses. He was in a high fever at the time and was hardly able to move his feeble legs. A Latvian militiaman then advanced and fired a bullet in Dubnow’s back and the sainted martyr fell dead on the spot. The next day several friends buried him in the old cemetery in the Riga ghetto. A story went round that the last words that Dubnow muttered as he was being led out to the bus were: “Brothers, don’t forget! Recount what you hear and see! Brothers, make a record of it all!”²¹

We cannot be certain whether or not these final words were apocryphal, but there can be little doubt that they were the comments of one with an eye to posterity and the role of witnessing. It is the kind of story with which most survivor-authors could readily identify, and which they would certainly understand. Regardless of the literary or narrative quality of their accounts, all are driven by Dubnow’s exhortation to remember and recount. Those who survived—who confronted their most agonizing memories in order to write down their experiences, and in doing so provided us with a record and left us a legacy founded on human ideals and the value of life—have done their job. As stated earlier, what history will make of such material now rests with the historians.

Notes

1. Kurt Y. Ball-Kaduri, “Evidence of Witnesses, Its Value and Limitations.” *Yad Vashem Studies*, 3, 1959, p. 79.
2. Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 29.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Ball-Kaduri, “Evidence of Witnesses,” p. 82 (emphasis in text).
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Jacob Robinson, “Research on the Jewish Catastrophe.” *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 8, 2 (December 1966), p. 192.

9. Ibid.
10. Des Pres, *The Survivor*, p. 30.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 36.
13. Cynthia Haft, *The Theme of Nazi Concentration Camps in French Literature*. The Hague: Mouton, 1973, pp. 14–15.
14. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 204 (emphasis in text).
15. Ibid., p. 61 (emphasis in text).
16. Ball-Kaduri, “Evidence of Witnesses,” p. 82.
17. For an interesting perspective on how to “hear” the stories of Holocaust survivors, see Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History*. Westport: Praeger, 1998.
18. Lawrence L. Langer, “The Writer and the Holocaust Experience.” In Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton (Eds.), *The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy, and Genocide*. Millwood NY: Kraus International, 1980, pp. 312–313.
19. Ibid., p. 322.
20. A useful complement to this approach can be found in David Patterson’s outstanding *Sun Turned to Darkness: Memory and Recovery in the Holocaust Memoir*. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998.
21. Koppel S. Pinson, “Simon Dubnow: Historian and Political Philosopher.” In Simon Dubnow, *Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism*. New York: Atheneum, 1970, p. 39.

Holocaust Testimonies

JUDY ABRAMS

Context: Salvation

Source: Judy Abrams. *Tenuous Threads*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 25–29. Used by permission.

Judy Abrams was a girl living in Budapest when the Nazis invaded in March 1944. After lengthy periods trying to outlast both the Nazis and the Hungarian fascists, the Arrow Cross Party, she found herself hiding in a shelter. By February 1945—a bitterly cold winter—she and those with whom she had been taking cover finally heard the comforting words of a Soviet soldier, indicating that liberation had come for the Jews of Budapest.

That January 1945—a cold month in Hungary, especially in the unheated cellar—I had my brush with death by firing squad.

Not all the inhabitants of our tenuous shelter were equally fortunate. There was an elderly couple (they were probably in their fifties but seemed old to me) who occupied a small “room” at the far end of the cellar, a space previously used for storing wood or coal. They rarely spoke. Keeping to themselves, they exuded an aura of faded elegance in shades of grey: hair, clothes and the sadness that characterized their slow silent movements. Under the layers of outerwear to protect her from the cold, I imagined the lady wearing a simple dress of soft material in muted colors. She wore her hair in two wing-like rolls, held in place by fine, brown bone

combs, a style fashionable in the 1940s. Like my Aunt Marika, she never looked untidy. It was as though their previous life of ease and good taste had followed them into the recesses of the dingy cellar.

Relieved that we had escaped the ominous visit of the Arrow Cross, I was bundled off to our corner. There, in relative safety, I began to hear shouts and screams from the back of the basement. The outer door then slammed while the sound of continuing sobs lingered. A curious child, I listened to the whispered conversations and gradually pieced together the story. The “hoodlums” had not stopped at examining documents and faces. Hungarian gentiles were seldom circumcised. After the outdoor inspection, the Arrow Cross thugs led the elderly couple back into the cellar where the dignified gentleman was told to lower his pants. Their suspicions confirmed, they marched him off to join a contingent of Jews who had been “caught” and made to march toward the Danube, a certain death by firing squad. But before taking him away, the men had done something bad to his wife, to the elegant lady at the back of the cellar. This was a secret nobody allowed me to share. After this event, her hair was no longer carefully rolled on top of her head and the men’s clothes she put on did not give off the faint aroma of perfume.

Strangely, this story has a fortunate ending. One day, two young men arrived at the house carrying on a makeshift stretcher the old man we had taken for dead. In his younger years, he had been an Olympic swimmer. As the victims were lined up along the banks of the river facing the Arrow Cross

firing squad, he decided to take a chance. Before the bullets could reach him, he jumped backward into the icy Danube. Through the ice floes he swam to shore, where a woman found him naked and bruised but alive. She nursed him until he was ready to be returned to his wife by the young men. Who were the young men who carried him back? Sons? Friends? Neighbours? They asked for no compensation.

In her eternal black clothes, Nagyi began to look like an old Hungarian peasant. She bustled about baking yeastless bread, much like our ancestors did in the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Only now there was no Land of Canaan in sight. She still tried to maintain a semblance of discipline and refused to give in to my requests for pieces of the fresh loaves. Warm bread was bad for the stomach, according to the dictates of some obscure rules of health. She was the one who carefully portioned out the remaining bits of duck and the ever-shrinking stores of onions and potatoes in jute sacks.

Deprivation and anxiety did not improve her naturally stern disposition, nor did it make me into a more pliant child. I prayed with Mária and Auntie Superintendent, charming them with my faith. But with my grandmother I was more demanding and capricious. We were not well-suited to each other and needed the constant intervention of my gentle Aunt Marika or Mária, who usually took my side and cajoled me into a better mood by calling me “Kis Kutyám” (her little puppy) or other funny endearments. She managed to mollify my grandmother, too.

The thin walls did not muffle the sounds of battle. Bombs and cannon balls crashed into the ruins of the house above us, and sharp bits of shrapnel embedded themselves into the walls. Hand grenades were hurled into the garden as the gunfire came ever nearer. We had mixed feelings toward the Soviet liberators, who did not have a sterling reputation. Stories of looting and more terrible things done to women circulated. Besides, the closer the battle lines came to our house, the less secure our lodgings became. We were only barely below ground level. In the garden adjacent to ours was a real bomb shelter, dug deep and lined with cement. It was decided that we, the cellar-dwellers, would try to stay there during the day and return at night, when the fighting usually slackened. As we emerged from our dark hovel, we found the icy ground covered in debris. We stumbled and slipped, crawling. Keeping low, occasionally lying down as some manner of fire or shell whizzed overhead. Bullets glanced off the icy mounds and I seem to recall seeing bloodstains on the no-longer-white snow. I cried and begged to go back to the relative safety of the basement, but to no avail. Finally, we arrived at the shelter and went down the steps into the deep,

narrow tunnel where two parallel rows of benches lined the grey cement walls.

Auntie Superintendent and her respectable friends sat down next to the people already perched on the narrow benches, all of them wrapped in blankets against the cold. Our small group—Mária, Aunt Marika and I—took our places at the back of the shelter. It was wiser not to expose ourselves too much to the scrutiny of strangers in case something in our appearance, speech or behavior betrayed our ethnic origin. We sat there, separate from the others, listening to the muted sounds of battle all day long. Then, under the cover of darkness, we crept back to our insecure shelter, the mattresses on the sagging springs of ancient iron bedsteads, and ate something that passed for an evening meal.

In the morning I was adamant. I wept and screamed and refused to budge. My grandmother, whose nerves by now had been stretched to the limit, gave me one of her withering looks, threw down the pile of blankets she had collected for the journey and muttered angrily, “All right, Miss Hysteria. I’d rather die than listen to this. We will stay. Just stop!”

The epithet, Miss Hysteria, was usually counterproductive and only made me turn up the volume of my protestations. This time, I stopped crying immediately and allowed Nagyi to savour her verbal victory. To my relief, the treacherous trip to the bomb shelter was cancelled. We spent another day in our cellar, listening to the escalating sounds of combat, to my perverse relief.

In the evening, when the other tenants returned, they had terrible news. A bomb had pierced the cement casing of the shelter, thought to be impregnable. It had made a huge hole in the back, where we had sat the previous day. Surely, we would have chosen the same place again. Once more, we had narrowly escaped.

One day in February the sun slanted through gaps in the oilskin covering the glassless panes of the basement door. Everything was quiet. We knew that soon Soviet soldiers would be coming to “liberate” us, in addition to possibly “liberating” us of some of the few belongings we still possessed. Mária and my aunt hid, assuming that the rumours about the soldiers’ behavior toward young women were true.

And then, there he was. A short, dark-haired man in a Soviet uniform with rows of shiny medals on his chest. He had a kind, intelligent face. We had learned a few words of Russian in anticipation and I called out a brave hello—“Zdrastvuiyte.” To our surprise, he did not answer in Russian, but instead asked, “Parlez-vous francais?” (Do you speak French?). This was Nagyi’s moment. In her inimitable Hungarian schoolgirl French, she answered yes, “Vooi,”

gradually recovering her air of respectability as she translated for the inhabitants of the cellar the news that the Germans had finally capitulated. The war was over in Budapest.

HANIA AJZNER

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Hania Ajzner. *Hania's War*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2000, pp. 129–143. Used by permission.

The testimony of Hania Ajzner, told in the third person and referring to herself as “Ania,” relates to a young Polish Jew who was smuggled out of the ghetto in Warsaw and concealed with a Catholic family. She shows in this extract the steps that were taken to assist her process of adaptation into non-Jewish life, prior to being placed in a Catholic boarding school—where an entirely new set of tactics would need to be developed in order for her to keep her true identity a secret. The account ends on an ominous note, as the girls in her dormitory view the fires coming from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943.

“Remember, your name is Ania Zakoscielna. You were born in Rostowiec. Your father’s name was Jozef Zakoscielny. He was killed in 1939, in the army. Your mother’s name was Maria Zakoscielna. She died early in the war. Your grandfather’s name was Wojciech, grandmother’s Zofia. Never, ever mention Hania Ajzner, or anyone called Moniek, Sarenka, Lajzorek, or anyone else from the Ghetto, even if their name was Marisa, Jurek or Marjan. You are a Polish Catholic. You don’t know any Jews. Regard all the people you have known as dead, or, better still, as never having existed. The Germans might have got to know about them, and so they might be able to tie you to them. Now, let’s try again. What is your name?”

Her mother’s words, uttered during her training, immediately after leaving the Ghetto flashed through Ania’s memory. She was aware of her own voice making the possibly fatal slip: “. . . my friend Sarenka always said. . . Her parents called her Bambi. She was like a baby deer, Sarenka . . .,” she tried to cover up. She hoped that her new friend Danka did not notice. However was she going to manage to keep her story straight? This business of remembering two “life stories” was very difficult. That night, she tried to sort out her thoughts and plan her actions. She thought back to how she found herself here in this convent boarding school, away from her mother and everything that she had ever known.

It had been dark when they had arrived at the garage in an outer Warsaw suburb, called Bielany. The driver said to them, gruffly, “I can only take one lot of you at a time to just one address. Decide who’s going first. The rest of you will be safe here in the garage.” Mrs. Cytryn had no doubts about priorities. “We have to get the children out first. Take the Ajzners out now.” But one of the strangers had been talking to the driver and Ania saw him take out a roll of bills and hand it over. The man and his wife threw their bag into the bed of the truck and climbed into the cabin. The driver opened the doors of the garage, drove out, locked the doors again and drove off.

He came back later, parked the truck, locked the garage doors and went home. The escapees had to settle down for the night, a cold January night in Warsaw. Ania was glad that Mother had made her wear two sets of warm woollen underwear, as well as two jumpers, woollen stockings, her warm boots and her warm coat. The cold that was inside her combined with the cold that was outside her. It was so intense that she seemed to turn into an icicle and she wondered whether she would actually wake up in the morning. Halineczka and Ania were settled inside the cabin of the truck, as it was marginally warmer there. Everyone else settled as best they could in the garage. Ania woke up once during the night. Before she realized where she was, she called out, “Mummy, my doona has fallen down again!” Her mother reached into the cabin and hugged her, saying, “Ssh, it’s all right, dear. It will be morning soon, and you will be warm then.” Ania remembered where she was and what had happened, and for the first time she cried.

In the morning the driver came back again, and took the other couple of strangers out. The woman hesitated, looking at the children, but the husband pulled her into the cabin. Only the Ajzners and the Cytryns were left. Ania thought mutinously that if Father had been there, he would have been the first to go. It had been he who had arranged the whole escape, including the place where they were going. As it was, another freezing night was to be borne.

Daylight finally came. The sun was shining outside. The garage was made out of planks roughly nailed together and you could see out through the cracks between them. It stood in the middle of an empty block. Fresh snow glittered on the ground and was heaped up in drifts against the walls of the garage and there were icicles hanging from the beams inside. After relieving themselves into a slop-bucket, the escapees managed to melt some ice and wash their faces and hands with it. Then they ate some bread and jam for breakfast and drank some more of the melted icicles. Ania was worried that

they could not light even a small fire, but the smell of it would have betrayed their presence.

At some time during the day they heard the voices of some children who came to play on the empty block. Ania thought to herself that the world seemed all wrong. She should not have to sit there in the dark and the cold. She should be out there, playing tag, or blind man's bluff, or throwing snowballs and building a snowman. It was not so long ago that she would have been doing just that. In those days, she had been a little girl, just like every other girl, with a loving mother and father and lots of friends and cousins. Why did they all have to be sitting absolutely quiet, so that the sharp ears of little children would not hear them? Why should she be now hiding like a rat in a sewer, with all the power and majesty of the law bent on hunting her down? At one time one of the boys tried the lock on the door, but found that he couldn't get in. As it grew dark the children's voices died down and they went away. The truck came back. When the driver pulled in, he said that he could take another lot of them out that night. Mrs. Cytryn stuck to her principles, and said: "Women and children first. The Ajzners are next."

Ania, Halineczka and Mother got into the cabin of the truck, Aunt Marjan and Aunt Tola got into the back, and they set off. They arrived at Mrs. Maciejowska's apartment after dark, on the 25th of January. Their new hostess greeted them warmly. "You poor things, you must be absolutely frozen and hungry!" she exclaimed when she saw them. There were five of them, Ania, Halineczka, Aunt Maria (Mother), Aunt Tola, and Uncle Moniek. . . . "No, Uncle Marjan," she corrected herself. Thank heavens Halineczka was still Halineczka, even if she was now Wengielek instead of Ajzner. Mrs. Maciejowska bustled about, setting out bowls of steaming hot soup on the table. Then she set up a tub and filled it with hot water so that Ania and Halineczka could have a hot bath and go to sleep. They had to share a narrow couch, but they were both so tired that they fell asleep immediately.

The next morning there was a conference. Halineczka played with a doll, but Ania listened closely. First, they decided that staying together was too dangerous. The neighbours would soon notice extra food being brought in, even if Uncle Marjan and the girls remained hidden. So they would have to split up. Madzia would take Ania and move into a room with a reliable family. Uncle Marjan would go into hiding, and Aunt Tola and Halineczka would also find a room with a family. As soon as possible, Ania and Halineczka would be placed somewhere separately, either in a school or with families. Madzia was adamant that they had to keep as separate as possible. She did not say it, but Ania knew that it

was so that if one of them got caught, it would not endanger the others. She had often heard her parents discuss it.

Madzia knew where the leather, which Father had sent out of the Ghetto, was stored. She assured Uncle Marjan and Aunt Tola that it was stored with reliable people, and she would pick some up whenever they needed more money. Aunt Tola would help her to sell it afterwards. Aunt Tola and Madzia both had the appearance and language skills to pass for Aryans. Uncle Marjan had to remain in hiding. During the week before they dispersed, they had to become word-perfect in their stories.

Mrs. Maciejowska started to teach the girls catechism, as well as some of the most common hymns and prayers. They had to learn the morning hymn, "When the dawn rises," as well as the grace before and after the meals and the greeting, "Blessed and praised be He" instead of "Good morning" or "Good evening." Then they had to learn the order of the Mass. Mrs. Maciejowska said that they would just have to watch when people knelt down or stood up, and just do the same. "To be on the safe side, at the beginning, just stay on your knees as much as possible." Ania hoped that her knees would not start giving her trouble as they did every now and then since she had been sick.

It was a lot to learn and remember in one week. At all times they had to be very quiet. They all wore slippers so that people on the floor below could not hear them, and they were not allowed to go anywhere near the windows. "Remember, if you can see someone, they can see you too!" taught Mrs. Maciejowska. She had many Jews pass through her home, for high fees, but never staying for very long. If she had been caught giving shelter to Jews, she and all her family would have been shot on the spot.

"Remember, when you are out on the street, always walk decidedly, do not cower, and don't cast a separate shadow. Always walk close enough to people for your shadows to mingle. Don't make eye contact, but don't hang your head and look at your feet. Poles walk straight and proud." Ania thought that her head would burst with all the instructions. She had a further task, to drill Halineczka in all the new facts. Halineczka was very good. She must have been too frightened to ask any questions because she just repeated, conscientiously, everything she was told. She had her fifth birthday when they were still at Mrs. Maciejowska's, but only Ania remembered it and drew a birthday card for her. That got her into trouble, because Halineczka's new birthday was no longer on the 4th of February, and anyway, Polish children did not celebrate birthdays, only name days. That was the day of the saint after whom one was named and was usually, but

not always, close to the actual birthday. Babies tended to be named after the saint on whose day they were born and that saint became the baby's patron saint. Ania's and Halineczka's patron saint was Saint Anne, whose day was in August and their new birthdays were also in August.

After some ten days at Mrs Maciejowska's, Ania and her "aunt Maria" left. They moved into a room in a nice quiet apartment in Slowaki Street in a modern suburb called Zoliborz. It was a five-roomed apartment belonging to a couple of teachers called Jankowski. They were a friend of Joziek Ajzner from before the war. They had all belonged to the Socialist Party. When the Germans invaded, they closed most Polish schools so the Jankowskis lost their jobs. . . . Ania like staying with the Jankowskis. The apartment was light, airy and warm. Their room was redolent of the Christmas tree that was still there when they moved in, although it was removed soon after. There was another woman living in the apartment, also subletting a room. She was very quiet and just stayed in her room. All the rules still applied. Ania was not allowed anywhere near the windows, she wore slippers for silence, she was not allowed to flush the toilet or turn on a tap when there was nobody at home. "Aunt Maria" was not supposed to have a child, so Ania was not supposed to exist. . . .

Then one day, the lady who lived in the other room at the Jankowskis' was arrested. Ania saw some men arrive, ask Mrs. Jankowski quite politely for her, knock on her door and lead her out. They never saw her again. Mother was out at the time. Soon after, when Mother was home, they saw some Germans go in through the gateway into their building. Mother grabbed Ania's hand, and they ran out and up the stairs to the attics. They heard the Germans knock on a door of an apartment below theirs, but this time, they left soon after without having arrested anyone.

Ania's mother decided that having Ania with her was too dangerous. Mrs Jankowski told her that she knew of a woman who would take Ania into her home, for a price. One morning Ania found herself walking along a street, just like a normal person. Ania relished the few moments of being outside. They arrived at an apartment nearby where a family was living in two rooms. There was a bedroom crowded with a large double bed, a cot and a sewing machine. The woman, her husband, her sister and Ania were all to sleep in the double bed, and there was a baby in the cot. The other room, which had the kitchen alcove and the bathroom opening off it, was out of bounds for Ania, because the woman's customers, for whom she sewed dresses, would come to try them on there. Ania stayed there a week. She did not like it. The woman made her eat separately and did not give her the same food,

even though Ania helped to prepare it. She was not allowed to play with the baby, as though she was suffering from some contagious disease. And for the first time in her life, Ania found lice in her hair. When her mother came a week later, Ania complained, and the woman got very annoyed. Mother didn't say anything, just packed her things and took her away.

After a short time, Mother told Ania that she was going to boarding school. There was a very good boarding school nearby. So this was where Ania found herself at this time. That brought her back to her immediate problem. How was she going to manage to keep her story straight? Her problems were quite different from the ones they had foreshadowed. While she was still at school, she didn't have to pretend not to exist. She could look out of the windows, she could run around, she could play outside. The convent was a five-story building which stood in its own garden. There was a statue of St. Joseph with the Infant Jesus at the front, and a statue of Our Lady, with stars around her head. The school was run by the Sisters of the Resurrection. . . .

There was a strict daily routine, punctuated by the ringing of the Bells. They were woken by the Mass bell for those who attended the early Mass, then there was the dressing bell, breakfast bell, and so on for the whole day. . . .

In spite of the differences in the physical conditions, the school was conducted rather like the school in the Ghetto. . . .

What Ania found to be profoundly different, was that she had to guard her tongue all the time. She was afraid to go to sleep, for fear of talking in her sleep. The business of remembering two "life stories" and keeping them separate was very difficult. If she tried to forget her real life and just tried to concentrate on her "new life," there was not enough to talk about. She would have to not only make up a whole "new" life, but remember not to mix it up with her real life. . . .

While she was trying to find some sort of mental, or perhaps emotional, balance, she also had to cope with the everyday traps that beset her. She went into the Third Grade and found that all the girls in her grade, who were just a little bit older, about ten to her almost nine years, had just had their First Communion. . . .

At first she was glad that the other girls had had their First Communion, because she did not have to go to Communion with them, which meant going to early Mass every morning before breakfast and going to confession every Saturday. But her class-teacher, Sister Wawrzyna, decided that she ought to catch up with the rest of the class and she was given special tuition in Catechism after ordinary school was over. Her "Auntie" came to see her every Sunday, when all the parents visited. During those visits Ania recited to her "Auntie" all

that she had learnt during the week. “Auntie” wrote it down furtively, so that she could learn it herself and pass on the knowledge to Ania’s cousins, Rysia and Hala. . . .

The result of all this was that Ania learnt her Catechism very well indeed, so that she came top in the exam. The Sisters organized a special First Communion just for Ania, with a white dress, a veil with a wreath of spring flowers, and a special breakfast. It was all very festive, but what followed was a marked deterioration in Sister Wawrzyna’s attitude to Ania. Ania could not do a thing right. She was very upset and cried to “Auntie” because Sister Wawrzyna made fun of her and picked on her at every turn. Even the other girls noticed, and commiserated with Ania. But “Auntie” explained that that was one of the few nuns who knew that she was Jewish and she did not approve of a Jewish girl getting better results than the Christian girls.

One night, Sister Wawrzyna came into the dormitory after the girls had already settled down. “Get up, girls, come up to the windows,” and she drew aside the black-out curtains. They could see a red glow over the fields to the South. “That is the Ghetto, burning,” she said. “There was an uprising in the Ghetto. You must all pray, girls, for there are heroes fighting and dying there.”

Ania stood there in silence. Her first thought was that she must not show any more concern than the other girls. Then she thought of the people still there, in the Ghetto. She thought of the men who used to come and collect money to buy arms. She even thought of the little gun she had found, and hoped that it was of some use to someone, perhaps even being used right then. It was a long time before they went back to their beds. It was the 19th April, 1943.

KITIA ALTMAN

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Kitia Altman. *Memories of Ordinary People: For Those Who Have No One to Remember Them*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003, pp. 302–307. Used by permission.

After living a precarious life in the ghetto at Będzin, Kitia Altman was sent to a work camp at Annaberg—a place she describes as a “good camp” in a nondescript area. As she describes in this account, however, in July 1944 she and those around her are placed on a truck, and then a train, and transported to Auschwitz. At first, she anticipates that this transfer

will see her death, but upon realizing that she is to be moved into a barrack block she is able to start taking stock of her situation. Auschwitz, she begins to understand, will be a place requiring the most profound human realignment of beliefs regarding everything she has previously thought.

I’ve dealt with almost all of them now, faced and sorted them, decided whether to keep them or put them away. They’re all memories of a time I cannot forget yet don’t want to remember. Some I’ve come to like, others I fear. They’re all memories of a time I cannot forget yet don’t want to remember. Some images are etched in my mind so clearly that I think the event took place only recently. But I know it happened more than half a century ago.

There’s only one memory left and I can’t decide where to put it. Does it belong “before” or “after”? Or rather, does it mark the beginning of a unique and bizarre experience? I dare not face it yet, but I yearn to be able to. On occasions I’ve timidly attempted to lift a corner of the cloak that covers it. I feel I can’t postpone it much longer—time is moving fast towards the final hour. I close my eyes, take a deep breath and enter the time capsule.

Annaberg is what might be called a “good camp.” It doesn’t matter where it is. What matters is what it is.

I have with me a few possessions from Będzin—my own shoes still in good condition, a dress, a few blouses, a skirt, a jacket and a couple of changes of underwear. I have a comb and a toothbrush and Cesia has a small mirror. Do I have a coat? No, I don’t remember a coat. We don’t need a coat, we never go out. I sleep with my friend Cesia in one bed. We have a straw-filled mattress and a coarse sheet. The blanket is dark and heavy.

Annaberg is surrounded by forest. There are about 300 men engaged in felling trees. They leave in the morning, return at dusk. Often they sing on their way back. The women like hearing it. It makes us think of home, when men came back from work. We provide them with domestic comforts of sorts. We cook and they eat at a long table. We wash their garments and the men change when they return from work. We repair their torn clothing, sweep their barracks—it’s almost normal. Time is marked by events in camp and not by calendars or clocks. We pray nothing will change until the end.

I have a French “boyfriend,” Sammi. Sammi with his beautiful smile and teeth that are even and white. He sings for me, “*Parle-moi d’amour*.” We promise ourselves that one day we will exchange our family names and pre-war addresses.

One day we hear trucks rolling towards the forest. Only a small group of men returns. Sammi is not among them.

July 1944 comes to an end and clouds gather above our heads. An electrifying piece of news tears through the camp—there’s been an attempt on Hitler’s life, but he wasn’t killed. Will they kill us? We expect repercussions, but nothing happens.

One day an open truck pulls into the camp and we’re loaded on. We take nothing with us. At the station a long row of cattle wagons is waiting. We are pushed in and the rolling iron doors are closed. We hear the clang of the bar. We are silent and frightened.

The memory stops, covered in darkness. The chapter has ended.

The train comes to a jerky halt. I hear the iron bar being lifted and the rasp of the rolling doors. We fall out, spilling like potatoes from a sack, stumbling. We are hit by silence, the silence of death. There are hundreds of us yet not a sound. A soft rosy glow penetrates the darkness.

“How strange,” my human mind records, “the laws of nature still operate: day follows night. There is a strange smell and an eerie stillness. Figures in striped pyjamas stand motionless. “Are they really alive?” I wonder.

Someone whispers: “Auschwitz.”

“It is all true,” I say.

We fall into formations of five, trying to keep together, already feeling the separation and the loneliness.

The sign above the gate, *Arbeit macht frei*. The guard mumbles loudly, hardly moving his lips: “Auschwitz you enter through this gate, you leave it . . .” and he jerks his head, looking up. We follow his eyes and see flames and dense smoke vomited by the high chimneys.

“The pink glow, then, isn’t the work of nature,” my terrorized mind self-corrects automatically. Suddenly, it’s not important. I feel I won’t need this information any more.

The dawn breaks, cold and grey. We’re ordered to run. We run between two rows of identical low huts. Shapes crawl out, some wrapped in dark blankets, hair sprouting from skulls, eyes unfocussed. Men or women? We call out: “Where are we? Who are you?”

No answer, no sign they have heard us. Are we in an asylum? No birds or trees, no flowers or grass. Mud, sticky black earth, our shoes sink in. We can’t run fast any more. Suddenly: Stop. A huge, red brick building. Is this the end? Already? Inside, bare floors and walls. We see windows. This can’t be it.

We huddle together, only a few of us. Where are the rest?

People in striped dresses, women with red kerchiefs on their heads rush around. No one looks at us. Our small group is tighter, we tremble, brutalized by the terror of the unknown. No uniform in sight other than the stripes. A man

comes towards us—tall, handsome, well dressed, even in his stripes. I catch my thoughts like soap bubble, it lasts only a magic second, perhaps not even that long; a magic second when the bizarre reality of that place ceases to exist. Instead there is a handsome man, a beautiful woman, a meeting of eyes, a promise of a future.

“Are you mad?” my reason demands. “Here, now? This is the end of the world, there is no ‘after,’ there is no more.”

He is good looking in an elegant way.

“Anyone speak German?” A cultured, well-modulated voice. “You can ask me any question you like.”

“Will they kill us?”

“*Aber was, meine Damen!*”—with a slight, humorous smile. “Try another one, please.” If there is room for another question, I think quickly, then the unspoken answer is “No.” “Will our hair be shaved?” He eyes me boldly, with interest, as if he’d heard my mind ticking. Is it possible I am still attractive? On the threshold of physical destruction, is it the body that still matters? That has a last demand? Is it like the last ejaculation of a hanged man, the biological response of a mind already dead? “Your hair will be cut short,” he looks at me directly, “and it will grow quickly.”

What is he saying? Is it a promise of life, or is it the last comfort given to those who are going to die?

Cesia and I are the only two left talking to him. “My name is Dieter.”

I can’t see a yellow stripe above his red triangle. “Are you Jewish?”

“No.”

“Why are you here then?”

A short amused smile, a laugh. “*Mein liebes Fraulein*, there are others who hate them too.”

I look at him, surprised. He is serious now.

“In Vienna I was a lawyer. I’ve already forgotten the telephone number of my office, but this,” he points to the piece of white cloth with a number on it, stitched to his jacket, “this I’ll never forget!” He looks me straight in the eyes. “You better remember it too, I might be able to help you.”

“What is Auschwitz?” I ask.

He throws his head back and gives a short, throaty laugh. “Auschwitz exists only in Auschwitz. What is possible in the outside world is impossible here; what is possible here, in Auschwitz, can never happen in the outside world. Are you hungry?”

He snaps his fingers and a boy comes out from nowhere, running towards him. The pants of his *pasiak* are too long, the sleeves of his coat cover his hands. Without looking at him, Dieter barks a short order. The boy dissolves into the maze of

stripes and reappears carrying a white, enamel bucket full of a steaming liquid. A shiny, deep ladle hangs at the side.

Another magic moment, a soap bubble that bursts before it reaches full size. Friday night and my mother ladling out the chicken soup—it looks the same, but it can't be.

“Bitte, trinken Sie.”

We don't move. The aroma of tea invades our nostrils, we feel nauseous from hunger. How strange, are we afraid the tea might be poisoned?

Dieter watches, as if reading our minds. “Ach, so,” he says and plunges the ladle into the bucket and slowly takes a long sip. Without a word he passes the ladle to me. We drink the hot, sweet tea. More, more. We can't stop, we drink and drink. We've never tasted anything like it, there has never been anything like it—this tea from a white bucket, drunk with a ladle like my mother's in a place called Auschwitz.

The boy brings sandwiches. I look inside—honey and sardines. Nothing surprises me anymore. Dieter says “Aufwiedersehen,” and looks at me meaningfully. I don't understand. . . .

A shout. The space around us empties of people in stripes. Suddenly there are many of us girls, women, strangers. We have to undress, leave all our clothes behind and carry shoes in our hands. I lick the oozing honey and push the sandwich into the shoe. Cesia does the same. We are naked and still women. We run in single file between barbed wire, men stand on both sides looking, leering, lecherous. Some laugh, while some shouted obscenities. I see Dieter: there's a lewd twist to his lips that has changed his face. He isn't handsome any more, he isn't elegant any more.

I shout at him in anger: “Are you satisfied with the process of *entmenschlichkeit*? (dehumanization)?” I've never heard this word before—where did it come from? Has it always been in the human language? Or did it come to me at that very instant, when my humanity was violated and the world outside looked into Auschwitz—and was silent?

KITIA ALTMAN

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Kitia Altman. *Memories of Ordinary People: For Those Who Have No One to Remember Them*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003, pp. 324–329. Used by permission.

Having survived incarceration at Auschwitz, Kitia Altman was transferred to the women's camp at Ravensbrück, in

Mecklenberg, northern Germany. She describes the camp as being “clean and cold” when compared to Auschwitz. In this account, she outlines a little of what life was like for her at Ravensbrück, where discipline was meted out by antisemitic Polish prisoners and there was little opportunity for obtaining the little strategic advantages that would come in a corrupt system. She shows, moreover, that attitudes and behavior among the prisoners were far from predictable, and often did not even align with each other in this strange environment.

If any place could be a colour, Ravensbruck would be ice blue.

If there was only one adjective to describe it, it would be sterile.

And that's how I remember it: Cold and coldly sterile. Perhaps it was the time of year, wet and cold October, or maybe it seemed like that to me because I had come straight from Auschwitz.

Auschwitz, for all its horror, still seethed with humanity, albeit tortured and degraded. Screams, moans and howling were all human sounds. You could hear voices even if the words were incomprehensible. Here and there a name would be called, a name that could belong to hundreds of women, yet occasionally someone answered. But more often a name would be called repeatedly, each time with more despair until the voice ended in a shriek or a sob or simply faded amidst the other voices.

There was the all-prevailing smell of burning flesh and the putrid smell of open latrines, overflowing with human excrement like a mustard-coloured river. And there was the smell of Lysol, trying to suppress all other smells.

Ravensbruck, on the other hand, was clean and cold.

It was silent, the silence of death.

We were marched off to work in the early hours of the morning. Silence. No orchestra, no shouting. Only cold and silence.

The stone quarry was a long way away from the camp. We were given some sort of oilcloth covers as protection, not enough to keep us dry. Our hands turned blue from cold, too stiff to hold tools. It was impossible to work and the guards knew it. Yet we wanted to work, to avoid punishment and to keep warm.

Not even the roof and the four walls of the barracks could keep out the cold.

It was a known fact among us, veterans of several other camps, that Ravensbruck was run by Polish women, unlike Auschwitz, where the top positions were in the hands of Slovak Jewish women.

Our *Blockalteste* was Zofia. She has a pasty pallor and huge, dark rings under her watery blue eyes. She was a lesbian with a hoarse, rasping voice. She took narcotics and we soon learnt to tell when Zofia had been deprived of her dose. She became wild and raged, her strength was unbelievable and she destroyed everything in her grasp. She broke planks from bunks, tore up sacks filled with straw, hit, mutilated and even crippled other prisoners. To be a Jew on her Block was dangerous.

All the Jewish women were strictly segregated from the other prisoners in one part of the Block. There was no way to hide or protect ourselves from Zofia when she was in a deranged state and charged into our section.

There was only one person who could restrain her rages and calm her down: *Pani Maria*. *Pani Maria* was our *Stubenalteste*. Her family was old Polish aristocracy. Her name was hyphenated and at the time it impressed me greatly, but I have since forgotten it. She came to Ravensbruck when the Germans started to arrest members of the Polish intelligentsia, in a bid to remove leaders from the rest of the populace.

Pani Maria had the looks of a typical Polish noblewoman and not even Ravensbruck could change her demeanour. Her head was held high, her hair worn in a tight knot above her neck. She was a buxom woman with a narrow waist that curved generously into her hips then spread like a fan into a large swaying behind. She spoke German with a hard Polish accent and used only a limited and functional vocabulary. To emphasise that the language had been forced on her, she chose not to speak it correctly or fluently.

She welcomed any opportunity to have a conversation in Polish. Being in the Jewish part of the Block, she only had a chance to speak it when a transport of Polish Jews arrived. Ours was one such transport and soon some of us, myself included, established a respectful contact with *Pani Maria*.

But nothing prepared me for the scene I witnessed.

One evening our group returned from work, weary, cold, and with profound depression setting in. Gradually we had come to realise that although the threat of the gas chambers was no longer imminent, in this camp we would be worked to death. Here the work was real, not like Auschwitz where it had been devised as another form of torture and degradation. Here there was a daily quota of stones that had to be wrenched from the hostile ground and delivered—or else. Unlike Auschwitz, where a system of “organizing” had been highly developed and widely used and where bartering was part of daily existence, in Ravensbruck it was impossible to obtain an extra portion of bread or watery soup. There was nothing to buy or sell. Occasionally and only if one was there long

enough, you could “sell” services, such as mending clothes. My friend Cesia was particularly good at this and succeeded once or twice in scoring an extra portion of bread. As we were unable to supplement our food or obtain warmer clothes, we became more and more disheartened. We felt abandoned by the world and despite not being threatened daily by a “selection,” we had the fear of becoming unfit for work, collapsing and being left to die. Our spirits were sinking rapidly.

On that particular evening, we had returned from work to find the whole Block in a state of uproar and confusion. A transport of Hungarian Jewish girls had arrived. They were bewildered, frightened and could not comprehend what had happened during the few days between Budapest, Auschwitz and Ravensbruck. They had been brutally taken away from their families, yet still hoped that they had just lost them in the confusion of arriving in a strange country where no one spoke their language. They called out names, cried and stretched out their arms in gestures of despair.

It had been a long while since we had seen such a display of emotion. Our descent into the Valley of Degradation had started four years ago. Since then, we had learned not to feel or think. These girls, although not as emaciated as us, were much worse off. They still had in front of them the shock of realizing what had happened.

In the midst of the commotion I distinguished a single voice, soothing and calm, repeating in Polish: “*Spokojnie, spokojnie.*”

Pani Maria was kneeling in front of a young girl, washing her bleeding knee. She whispered softly: “Quietly, my child, quietly, don’t be afraid.”

The timbre of her voice, if not the actual words, eventually penetrated the consciousness of the girls and one by one, they calmed down. *Pani Maria* smiled reassuringly, putting her arms around some, stroking the matted hair of others.

I watched the scene, stunned.

After evening roll-call, I timidly approached *Pani Maria* and asked to speak with her. She had a bed for herself in our part of the barrack. It had a sheet and a thick blanket. She invited me to sit at the foot of the bed.

“*Pani Maria*”, I asked, “do you like Jews?”

“No, not at all.”

“But,” I said hurriedly, “I saw you being so kind to those Hungarian Jewish girls.”

“My child,” she said, making herself more comfortable on the bed, “these wretched girls are human beings first and Jews only second.”

My mind was confused. I could not understand the neat, surgical separation of human beings from Jews. Back home

in Poland, we were always Jews. From time to time, in a condescending manner, someone might say, “But Jews are human beings too.”

Pani Maria continued: “I am a member of the National Democratic Party.”

“The NDP? *Endecja*? The most anti-semitic party in Poland?”

“Yes, that’s true. But as you know, our motto is: “Economic boycott yes, but physical violence, no.” My child, this place is not Poland. These Jews are not an economic threat. To me they are all poor, persecuted human beings.”

I listened in disbelief. Here we had Zofia, a simple and brutal person to whom the fact of being a human being had no value at all. She was in a position of power given to her by a system based on an ideology of supremacy of one group over another. At the bottom of this hierarchy were Jews. Anyone was superior to a Jew.

And here I was, talking to a cultured, intelligent person in our mother tongue, who put her ideology of civilized hate away to nurture us with the milk of human kindness.

Pani Maria continued: “When the war is over, I’ll be as anti-semitic as before. I’ve accepted the duties of a *Stubenalteste* in the Jewish barrack only so I can protect the Jews from Zofia’s violence, which is unjustified. I will protect you here as best as I can. But I don’t want you back in Poland. Yet I don’t like to see you suffer like this either! It is inhuman.”

Some time in December 1944, when we were moved from Ravensbruck, I took with me the memory of the humanitarian Maria and vowed always to cherish it. However, the contrasting roles the two women played became blurred with time.

I hope *Pani* Maria survived and returned to Poland. I have fulfilled her wish and never returned to the land of my birth. It is clear to me now that we were as equally victimized by Zofia’s brutality as we were by *Pani* Maria’s ideology.

KITIA ALTMAN

Context: Salvation

Source: Kitia Altman. *Memories of Ordinary People: For Those Who Have No One to Remember Them*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003, pp. 357–363. Used by permission.

Toward the end of the war, concentration camp prisoners were exploited increasingly as slave labor for the purpose of making up for the rapidly depleting workforce, as all German

men were conscripted for military service. Kitia Altman found herself working in an underground facility that produced V-2 rockets. By December 1944, however, with the war in both the West and the East going badly for the Germans, the regime being experienced by the prisoners began to soften slightly. Then, without warning, the factory was evacuated and the women with Kitia were once more on the move. Instead of facing an imminent demise, however, the group was confronted by a thoroughly unanticipated development: their liberation. As Kitia shows though, despite their new status as free women, and with the opportunity to build new lives, “we were never totally liberated from our past.”

I sit in front of a blank page trying to conjure up a memory, any memory, stored in my mind from that time I cannot forget.

I find myself plunging my hand into the seemingly inexhaustible reserve of incidents, faces and events. What will the price be this time? Horror? Redemption? Pain? Humour?

Humour? How can anything that happened during the Holocaust be funny?

Well, it can, and it was.

Galgenhumor, gallows humour. The humour of the condemned was our defence against the dehumanisation, though we were unaware of this at the time.

Once when the air was foul with smoke from the crematoria, I heard a woman say: “That’s him. I can smell his feet.” The pent-up fear broke as we laughed longer and louder than the occasion warranted. The woman must have repeated the words to countless terrorised and frightened “newcomers” to shock them out of their fear, and to make the bizarre familiar. I found out the woman wasn’t married, so the feet she referred to were but a grim joke!

Calling someone a *Schmuckstick*, literally an ornament, was another endearment meant to ridicule our horror of physical deterioration: “Don’t let yourself go. You’ll look like a *Schmuckstick*.”

I’ve read that in some camps girls made up funny, satirical verses about the food, their looks and behavior. They sang these to the tune of pre-war tangos, fox-trots and waltzes. Inmates wrote and performed their own “revues” to the great delight and applause of their friends. The fun they made of themselves gave them the courage to face reality and spurred them on to spin dreams of the future.

After the usual Sunday delousing session, my head rested on the knees of my friend who performed the vital task of searching for hair lice, Cesia and I would engage in our own well-rehearsed dialogue which never ceased to amuse us.

One would say: “Oh, how I’ll miss this crackling sound!”—of a crushed louse between two fingernails. To which the other would reply: “Don’t worry! I’ll save you one for after the war.”

Humour was an important tool in our survival kit. It released our fear and gave voice to our hopes. But you needed friends to laugh with and friends whom humour could help. The humour of Auschwitz was cruel and brutal, because it had to prepare and toughen you for the hell into which you had been thrown. It hurt, but it made you stronger. However, not everyone could take the medicine.

This “funny” memory dates from a time long after Auschwitz. Perhaps not that long in terms of calendar days, because we didn’t count that way any more. What we counted were events—the unpredictable, unscheduled and often inexplicable.

We had been out of Auschwitz for three months; however, this was not clear to us until much later. We had almost settled down to a routine of working in the salt mine producing V-2 rockets, Hitler’s last secret weapon. We felt safe, far from the crematoria and falling bombs. We worked among German civilians, highly-skilled professional engineers, technicians and other experts in their respective fields. Our work was considered essential to the war effort and as a result our conditions, by comparison, were bearable.

It was Christmas 1944 and the earth’s belly kept us warm. On Christmas Eve, we were given thick soup and a larger portion of bread. We had heard from a reliable source that the following day everyone was to get a boiled potato, still in its skin.

Cesia and I were joined by another girl from Bedzin, our hometown. Her name was also Cesia and we called her “Little Cesia.” She was sixteen years old and the war was in its fifth year. She speculated whether this would be the pattern of our lives forever.

Just when such thoughts started to penetrate our minds, the journey back from the realm of evil began.

One day, it must have been in April, we didn’t go down the mine. None of us liked any change to the routine as we didn’t know what it would bring. How were we to know whether the next cattle train would be our last, or perhaps the first of our journey back to life?

The female SS officer, the one with a crown of blonde plaits around her head, called us and put her arms on the shoulders of the two girls nearest her. “*Meine kinder* (my children),” she said. “Anyone who needs clothes, please tell me. The warehouse is full of them.”

No one spoke. We all wore regulation stripes and in a camp no one wants to look different. We immediately suspected a trap. Next, another SS officer addressed us. “*Frauleins* (young ladies), please follow me in a formation of five. We are leaving the camp.” We felt no joy, just fear, the only human emotion left to us.

The column of undulating stripes moved quickly. Some guards, guns on their shoulders and malicious smirks on their faces, said: “This time you’ve had it! You’ll dig your own graves!” It was possible, but it didn’t add up. *Meine kinder* and *Frauleins* from the officers and this from the common guards?

The cattle wagons were waiting. The open doors revealed floors scantily covered with straw, but straw nevertheless! There were ramps in front of doors. No one shouted, no one pushed. The officer carefully counted sixty into each wagon. We had always “travelled” in hundreds before.

“Please sit down and leave a space near the door free.”

An elderly German soldier hopped in and placed a gun across his knees. The door closed and we heard the familiar clang of an iron bar. Inside, the wagon was dark. We uttered a sigh of relief—with a German among us, we felt safe. They wouldn’t drop gas or shoot at random if he was there. Only one German, yet we felt protected by his presence.

Our little group sat on the floor in silence, as did the others. The German calmly puffed at his pipe. We smelt the tobacco and saw flickers of sparks. The train moved slowly and no one knew what direction it took. We lost count of the hours. The little window in the wagon darkened and then after a while, a thin timid light managed to find its way through. Another day.

The German puffed at his pipe, the gun still across his knees. Suddenly the train came to a halt.

“*Raus, raus, alle raus! Los!*” Perhaps the smirking guards had been right after all.

The station was small and the sign bearing its name had obviously been removed. A tiny white square of a house was the sole visible structure. It seemed to be empty and it was. We were pushed in quickly and roughly. A double bunk was the only furniture and this was demolished in seconds by the surge of striped bodies. The door above a high stone step was slammed loudly. A small window was painted over with white wash.

In no time, we stood ankle deep in urine, faeces and vomit. Girls cried, wailed and called for help. The Germans opened the door and the stinking mass flowed out towards them. The door was quickly shut again.

The guards had been right, we would die here, drowning in our own excrement.

The girls near the window scratched off a bit of the white wash and we took turns to put one eye to it. Someone saw white buses arriving on the clean, empty platform. They had red crosses painted on their sides. We began to scream in terror.

“Alle Juden raus! Schnell, los!”

The door opened again and we scrambled out, our legs and the hems of our dresses stained with brown muck. We watched as horror entered the eyes of men wearing strange uniforms with Red Cross armbands. They motioned for us to enter the white, ambulance-like buses. No one budged. The men looked baffled and approached the German guards. The guards, their backs to us, tried to make them understand we were frightened because we thought the buses were gassing vans. We heard the word *“Gaz, Gaz.”*

No one knew what the men from the Red Cross thought, but one of them must have understood. He slapped his forehead with an open palm, then smiled broadly. He entered the bus and closed the door behind him. After a few minutes, a triumphant expression on his face, he opened the door and like a stage actor making a sweeping gesture, invited us all in.

Again, no one budged. Puzzled, he looked at the guards. This time we performed the pantomime, pointing to the motor saying “brr, brr” and by twisting a wrist, indicated turning a key. This time the Red Cross men quickly understood.

We wanted the motor turned on and only then for one of their men to enter the bus and close the doors. The men, satisfied they had finally understood our bizarre behavior, waited for us to move. Some of us were so weak we were unable to do so without support.

Erna, a Czech woman, was thin and straight as a rod. Even then, with her glasses askew, she looked like someone’s efficient and dedicated secretary. Her face carried a look of perpetual disapproval mixed with disbelief. Erna had always refused to acknowledge what was happening to her and around her. She believed someone had made a terrible mistake and would soon apologise for messing around with her orderly world. We protected her, so innocent was she of evil.

A young strong man ran and lifted her up in his arms, her thin dirty legs dangling from the wooden clogs. Suddenly we heard Erna’s voice, firm and clear: “At last, in the arms of a man again.”

Initially we just giggled, then the laughter took on a momentum of its own. It was deep, liberating, humanizing laughter. We no longer thought of Erna; we laughed because

we had discovered we were alive—not only in a physical sense, our bodies still moving and our eyes still seeing, but also emotionally. We were alive because our senses had started to serve us again! We had registered feelings other than paralyzing, destructive fear.

We saw sunshine, we saw a cleanly swept platform that didn’t hide any gruesome ghosts of terror and we could see the comical side of this unremarkable moment. Smelly, clumsy, pitiful and emaciated, we rejoiced in our freedom to laugh and be human again.

In years to come we used this freedom to rebuild our lives, to start families, learn professions and trades and to acquire experiences.

Yet, we were never totally liberated from our past.

FRED ANTMAN

Context: Before the War

Source: Fred Antman. *A Tale of Three Cities: Berlin, Shanghai, Melbourne*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Library, 2011, pp. 28–29, 33–34. Used by permission.

An eight-year-old boy in 1938, Fred Antman came from a Berlin Jewish family. He was subjected to various antisemitic measures at school, and then, in October of that year, witnessed the arrest and deportation of his Polish-born father—part of the much larger events leading, eventually, to the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938. Fred’s young age precluded him from appreciating fully the significance of what was happening, and it is interesting to note that in this account he is vague concerning precise dates. As the account proceeds, however, we see his later thoughts enter the picture, as he reflects on subsequent developments from his country of sanctuary, Australia.

The Nazis gradually began to target religious events. On 28 October 1938 my brother David became bar mitzvah in the Rykestrasse Synagogue. This was an exciting day for us and the reception that evening was our last family *simcha* (celebration) in Germany. The very next day the Nazi party decreed Jewish gatherings illegal, whether they were social or religious. The Rykestrasse Synagogue was to be burnt down in the following month, along with most of the other synagogues in Berlin, but as it was built within a block of apartments, private interests prevailed and it was only

wrecked. Today it is Berlin's oldest synagogue, standing proudly where it always has.

Since I was six years old I had attended a public school not far from our home. Suddenly I found that my classmates began avoiding me and would not allow me to participate in sporting events. I was given the cold shoulder. When I asked one of the boys why they were doing this, he told me that his father had ordered him not to have any contact with "Jew boys." Things deteriorated, and some of the boys began to set on me on the way home. They bashed me every day and called me "*Dreckiger Jude*" (dirty Jew).

My parents saw my dilemma and made arrangements to enroll me in a prestigious Jewish day school at the other end of the town. This required me to make a long subway journey to get there, but the environment in that school made me very happy. I made new friendships and most importantly was able to participate in the school's sporting events. I was a good athlete. . . .

October and November 1938: I clearly remember that at 6.00 one morning there was a knock at our door. It was the Gestapo. They told my father to get dressed quickly, pack a suitcase with the bare essentials and come with them. They offered no explanation.

My father came into our room and kissed my brother and me before leaving the house. As we were curious kids we ran to the window in time to see him being loaded onto a waiting truck. We did not believe we would ever see him again. This happened between 29 and 29 October 1938, when all Polish-born Jews were deported under the famous Nazi *Polenaktion*. My father's brother, Kalman, was deported at the same time.

As part of the ongoing campaign to destroy Jewish life in Germany, the authorities began deporting Polish Jews back to Poland. Poland refused to accept the 16,000 to 18,000 Jews who remained stranded in the border town of Zbaszyn. My father and his brother were among them. In November 1938 highly organized gangs from the SA and SS wreaked havoc on the Jewish population. They smashed the windows of all Jewish establishments and looted their contents. Synagogues were burnt to the ground and Torah scrolls trampled in the streets. Any Jews caught on the streets were beaten to a bloody mess with stanchions. Hitler then had the audacity to demand that the Jewish victims pay for the damage! This was the infamous *Kristallnacht*. I was only eight years old at the time and witnessed the destruction from the window of our third floor apartment. The next day I walked with my grandfather, Robert Vogel, to find it still burning. I saw the Torah scrolls lying in the streets amid the smashed stained-glass windows. I could not understand how anyone could be so

cruel. When I asked my grandfather to explain it to me he could not answer.

While this scourge against the Jews continued, the rest of the world remained silent, distancing themselves from the Nazis' hate campaign. Strangely, a rare voice of real protest came from the Aboriginal people in far off Australia. A meeting of the Australian Aboriginal Advancement League moved a resolution protesting against the cruel persecution of the Jewish people by the Nazi government in Germany. They asked that it be brought to an end. A deputation of Aborigines gathered on the steps of the German Consulate in Canberra to present their resolution and ask the Consul to convey its message to his government. We never knew whether the Consul did so.

Hitler confiscated Jewish properties and assets and imposed heavy taxes on Jewish businesses. With these financial gains he began to build the world's biggest war machine, creating a massive army that put the vast numbers of unemployed men into uniforms, and assembling an arsenal of heavy armory. With Herman Goering he built a superpower air force and dreamed of conquering Europe and, indeed, the world. He eventually succeeded in invading many countries, including Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, Belgium and Holland.

HENRY BARCLAY

Context: Before the War

Source: Henry Barclay. *Run, Henry, Run*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, pp. 73–80, 81, 85–86, 87–89. Used by permission.

In this account, Henry Barclay, a student from Poland studying in France, provides a fascinating view of what it was to be a Jew outside the danger zone. His family remained in Poland, but he was all too aware of developments in Germany and what they represented for the Jews—and also for Poland. On September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland; with France and Britain declaring war on Germany two days later, Henry decided that he had little other alternative than to join the French army. Although he received employment in early 1940, he instead joined the French Foreign Legion—a remarkable journey for a Polish Jewish graduate of a French university.

During that last year at university I shared my working space in the laboratory with Lamasuta and ate my meals with the Russian lady as usual. I also met a young student in the

library who came from Lvov. His name was William Henshaw.

Anti-Jewish propaganda gathered further strength after a Polish Jew shot dead a German diplomat in Paris in November 1938. That dead man was the third secretary at the German Embassy and that incident led to Kristallnacht, the “night of broken glass.” Antisemitic riots broke out in Germany and Austria. Synagogues were destroyed and shops looted. Many photos of these events were published in the world press. Everyone knew what was going on.

In my mail from home my parents had already mentioned the deportation of Polish Jews from Germany and said that there was now a committee in Lvov to help these German Jews. All kinds of rumours circulated in the coffeehouses I frequented but I had no time for them. I had to study.

I tried to contact Jurek to find out how he had done in his final exams in chemistry. But my search was in vain—he seemed to have vanished into thin air. I got in touch with his friend Nanette, but she too was unable to find him. Nanette began helping me understand the French language terms used in physics, because the Polish-French dictionary I had was useless on this subject. She had worked as a secretary for years and was a very capable young lady. Her linguistic assistance to me regarding the laws of physics was invaluable. We often met in coffeehouses, but sometimes also at my place. She was engaged to a wealthy businessman called Pierre, who also helped me. My uni friends began spreading a rumour about my having a new girlfriend, but Nanette was like a sister to me and she was a big help.

From the beginning of 1939 the money my parents sent from Poland suddenly became irregular. Sometimes it was sent through Belgium. I had the feeling that my financial situation was about to become very unstable. My university situation friends from Poland were experiencing the same problem and I began to wish that the university year was over.

By the beginning of June 1939 I was putting the final touches to my study for the final exams. My program was nearly finished so I contacted a few of my friends who had completed the exam the year before and asked them what it was like. I did not leave one stone unturned. I wanted to know everything I could about the exams from previous years. My first exam was in laboratory work; then came an oral exam and the last exam was in industrial chemistry. I remember the day of my exams well. I left home very early and on approaching the main entrance to the university a black cat ran across the street. I was superstitious and didn't want to use the front entrance so I went to the side entrance

to enter the exam hall. This cost me a few minutes of very precious time. I started to run and arrived at the main exam hall in the nick of time, just as they were closing the door. I was lucky.

After the exams my friends stayed back to discuss in great detail what they had written. I was so tired that I did not stay but went straight home and threw myself on my bed, exhausted. Over the next few days I watched the display area where they published the results on the board. When the chemistry results came in everybody was pressing close to the board to see the results. I came second in the year and graduated very well. I immediately wrote to my parents informing them of my marks. The day was 24 June 1939.

At this time a strange feeling came over me. I felt happy but somehow I did not know what to do next. I was very, very confused. After receiving their diplomas most of my friends, who were mainly Hungarian, left France and returned home. Some of my Polish friends suddenly disappeared and I did not know where they had gone. My Siamese friend, Lama-suta, left in a hurry for Paris. I was left with a lot of free time. I did not know what to do.

I started to read the newspapers to find out what was going on in the world. On the streets of Caen I occasionally came across some people speaking Spanish, remnants from the Republican army who had to leave their country. They were starting a fresh life in France to earn their daily bread. I realized that I had missed a lot of news regarding Adolf Hitler. He and his Brown Shirts were strengthening their dictatorship. The German Jews were the special objects of Hitler's attacks and were subjected to severe persecution. They had been eliminated from civil services, the justice system and medical professions. They had also been asked to hand over their precious stones and metals, such as gold, to Hitler's government. Britain, France and Poland signed a pact to support each other in the event of war.

I could not get my hands on any news from Poland, though I did hear that Polish troops had been sent to German borders. Eventually, at the end of July, a letter came from Poland dated 6 July 1939. My father mentioned that this was the second letter he was sending so as to be sure I would receive one of them. One came, but I never received any others. The letter was addressed to me, the “Engineer Chemist.” I was very proud of this and he was very proud of me. In his previous correspondence he had never mentioned anything about the political climate in Poland. This time he mentioned instability but did not explain it any further. He suggested I should continue my study and specialize in my profession.

He also mentioned that he would like to visit me in the beginning of August, but that he did not know if he would be able to get a visa or enough money. My mother was with my sister on holiday in Muszyna and he told me that they would be coming back to Lvov in two weeks' time. When my mail from Poland was delayed and I did not receive my monthly allowance, I knew something bad was going on in Poland. In the paper I could not find any answers and realized I would have to pay more attention to my survival. I had to make myself a program. First, I had to examine the newspapers daily and listen carefully to the news. Secondly, I arranged with my landlady to pay less rent. She agreed and this was a help.

From the day I arrived in France, I had saved money, so by the time my exams were over I had enough to keep me going for a few months. I also went to the employment office at the university and asked about a job. I had a lengthy discussion with the officer and he said that with my diploma I had a good chance of getting employment, yet this would take time and I would have to be very patient.

I sent two letters to my parents in Poland—one registered, one at the normal rate—hoping for the best. But somehow I felt it was no good staying in Caen, so I went to Paris for a few days to find out more information. The day I arrived was 1 September 1939. I felt like I had jumped from boiling water in Caen to the frying pan in Paris. The hotels were full and I arranged to share a room with some other students, because this was the only way I could stay in Paris. Paris was full of activity with lots of people everywhere. The coffeehouses were filled up and people who did not know each other were talking together like old friends. I tried to buy a newspaper, but they were sold out.

The main news was that on the morning of 1 September 1939 the Polish air force had been nearly completely destroyed on the ground by the Luftwaffe, which also knocked out some of the Polish railways. The Luftwaffe had attacked Warsaw and other Polish cities. They were organized and knew where to hurt the Poles the most.

German motorized forces then swept into Poland. It was a *blitzkrieg*, a lightning-fast war and something new in the way war was conducted. The fast-moving ground troops moved in conjunction with the air forces and the Polish army was no match for them. In other news I read that France and Britain had declared war on Germany. In the papers I found out that New Zealand and Australia had also joined Britain in the war against Germany.

In my hotel I met a young Jewish girl, a refugee from Germany. She spoke little Polish and I spoke little German. She

had managed to escape from Germany, where her parents had lived for many years, but had been expelled back to Poland when the Nazis took over. On coming to France she had lost contact with them and now she was searching for them with the help of a philanthropic organization of German Jews. She was also getting some help from an American refugee organization called HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), which had an office in Paris. She had been trying to get to America but in those days it was very difficult and time was a factor. I tried to find out more about Hitler from her, but she was very reserved.

I was advised to contact the Red Cross in order to receive news from my parents in Poland. They had big offices in Paris where people could send letters through Switzerland to Poland. They had a lot of requests and I was only one of many trying to get news of people in Lvov. From them I found out that Jews in Germany must wear a yellow Star of David on their clothes. There was war fever in Paris and the old army depots were very, very busy. They had a lot of volunteers wanting to join the French army. I was one of them. I asked if I could add my name to the list and was told that the only way I could join the French army was through the Foreign Legion. I wanted to join as soon as possible, but there were so many people wanting the same thing, they told me it would take a good many months before I would get an answer from them.

My Siamese friends had disappeared into thin air so my dream to work in Siam had been shattered. I could not find them anywhere. I abandoned my dream of working overseas and had to find work as soon as possible to be able to eat; it was not easy for a foreigner.

I left Paris on 29 September 1939 to return to Caen, hoping to find a letter on my desk, but my letterbox was empty. The last letter I received from my father was dated 6 July 1939.

Well, no more coming to Paris, Papa! I started reading the last letter he had sent me, over and over again. The more I read it, the more upset I became. I felt tears coming to my eyes. I felt lost.

After I arrived back in Caen, I went to the town hall, where I told them I would like to join the local civil defense. The Mayor of Caen wrote to me and thanked me for that. Wherever you went in Caen, whatever you did, everybody talked about the war. In Paris they had talked about the mystery behind the Maginot Line, whether it was strong or not, and whether or not Paris could defend itself. Everywhere you went, war was all people were talking about. Still, life must go on. . . .

The following day, 30 September 1939, was my lucky day. The university employment office sent me a letter saying that on 4 October I was to start a job with a company called Société Des Sucreries Ternyck, in the north of France. I was to confirm acceptance and start straight away. Beside the employment office was a library where I immediately borrowed some books on processing sugar from beetroot, which is how SST made theirs. For the next four months, my life was guaranteed. I had a job and now I had to improve my knowledge of sugar manufacturing. And that was that. In just a few hours your whole life can change. . . .

My work with the sugar company came to an end and I got my official certificate of leave on 26 February 1940. It stated that I'd been employed from 4 October 1939 until 25 February 1940, and was signed by the director of the company. . . .

I was sorry to be leaving the factory. I felt comfortable there and my employer had looked after me very well. Now I could live off the money I had received for so many months' work. I was tempted to stay in Paris for a week, but remembered that the French army was on the horizon. So I left for Caen by the shortest route I could find. In Caen I had a surprise waiting for me. It was an important letter from the French army requesting my presence at the Legion army depot in Marseilles. The Foreign Legion was founded by King Louis Philippe of France, for operations outside France. It had always been an elite unit within the French army.

I realized that I had very little time to get there. I contacted my friend William Henshaw and we discussed the future, although you can never really discuss what the future holds. I told him that I would be joining the French army until the end of the war and that I would write to him. I left him some of my possessions and told him that I would go to the Red Cross in Paris. I left him my address and told him to keep in contact with me, because during war, you never know what will happen. There are a lot of surprises every day and life is very unpredictable.

My landlady was sorry to see me go and wished me good luck. I told her I was joining the French army and going overseas. After I said goodbye to some of my friends in Caen I left with a lot of hope for the future. Everyone wished me good luck and I left for Paris. I did not stay long in Paris, where my main objective was to go to the Red Cross and leave them my address before I left for Marseilles.

On the train to Marseilles I met a lot of French soldiers and everyone was talking about the Maginot Line. It seemed that everyone had put all their hopes concerning the war into that line. On the other side, the Germans occupied what was

called the Siegfried line, consisting of obstacles, concrete barricades, cannons and fortified structures. This ran along the area opposite the Maginot Line. In the train I felt very confused. I was thinking about my parents and my sister, about what they were doing and what was going on in Poland. I was hoping that I had made the right choice in joining the French army. I took a risk and did not know if I had made the right decision. I hoped that I would get used to it. I also knew that in the Foreign Legion soldiers wore a distinctive white cap called a *kepi*. On arriving in Marseilles, I noticed a soldier on the platform wearing a *kepi* and asked him for directions to the army base.

It was a very emotional time for me, because I had never been in the army before and did not know what to expect. It was all a big secret to me. As recruits within the Foreign Legion, we were indoctrinated with the saying: "The Legion is my home, is my family, is my nation." The Legion Mystique was important and had resulted in many heroic acts and military victories. Men of fifty nations wore the white *kepis* of the Foreign Legion. The Legion's motto was *Legio Patria Nostra* (the Legion is our Homeland). The Legion had always thought that loyalty to the government of France was secondary to the loyalty to the Legion.

When I arrived at the Legion's office I stressed that I was a volunteer and would be there for the duration of the war. I also mentioned that I preferred to be incorporated into the tank division if possible. They knew I had certain factors in my favour, because I had all the necessary French permits for driving. I knew that within the Foreign Legion there were some of the toughest and most dedicated soldiers the world had ever known. They would live for the Legion and die for it too. For them the glory of the Legion surpassed all else. It took me a very short time to adopt this motto, because this is the only way I knew I would be a good Legionnaire.

France had always employed the Legion at the forefront of its colonial wars. I was told that I would be sent to the most famous military depot, at Sidi Bel Abbes in Algeria. The medical examination and physical testing of volunteers were very thorough in the Foreign Legion; they tried to eliminate all people not suitable for the army. I was tired after all the tests and there was no pause for a cup of tea between them; it was all hard work. Finally, they vaccinated us. We all queued up together—the big ones, small ones, skinny ones, fat ones. There was a six-foot-tall chap in front of me with magnificent muscles. I really envied him. I think he was a Yugoslav. I was a little shrimpy beside him. He was vaccinated before me and within the blink of an eye he had fainted into my arms. He was very heavy! Eventually I came before the

doctor and asked him for my injection. He said: “You got yours when you were holding the Yugoslav!” And he winked at me. This was my day.

BRONIA BEKER

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Bronia and Joseph Beker. *Joy Runs Deeper*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 26–31. Used by permission.

The love story between Bronia and Joseph (Josio) Beker was, if nothing else, characterized by devotion. In Bronia’s account of their attempt to avoid detection by the Nazis in the ghetto, followed by their escape to a secure refuge in the countryside, we see the physical stamina—and sacrifice—required for a successful time in hiding. We also see the efforts of a young woman to come to terms with why it was that she had the good fortune to fall in with Josio, whose connections enabled him to find ways to stay alive in spite of the many obstacles placed in their way. Finally, Bronia’s story provides us with a glimpse of some of the many challenges facing those who sought to stay ahead of the Nazis and keep away from harm.

One day in April 1943, a few days before Passover, the Germans surrounded the ghetto. Always on the lookout, we saw what was happening. In general, we slept very little, walked around at night on alert, and never got undressed to go to sleep. That day, we all ran down to the bunker, where we had food already prepared and cots to lie on. On a previous occasion, we had stayed there for two days and the Germans had gone through the house without finding anybody. On that day in April, ten of us went down: me, my father and sister, my half-brother with his two daughters, and my sister-in-law and her three children. After about six hours, we heard heavy boots running down the steps to our cellar. They were looking for us, digging.

We held our breath and didn’t move for about half an hour, until they left without finding our bunker. But the pipes through which we got air must have gotten covered during their digging. We couldn’t breathe. I was the weakest of all of us because of the typhus that I had just barely recovered from. I remember seeing my father sitting on the floor in his prayer shawl, praying, and my brother with a hammer in his hand trying to open the entrance to the bunker. Then I fell down and everything went black.

When I woke up, or, rather, when the doctor brought me out of my unconsciousness, I opened my eyes and saw many people around the bed in which I was lying. My cousin Cyla was beside me. The first thing I asked was, “Where is my sister Sarah?” When I saw the looks on their faces, I understood that she was gone. Everybody in that bunker except for me, all nine of them, had suffocated. I was alone.

I became wild with grief. When the doctor tried to give me an injection to calm down I grabbed him by the throat, wanting to kill him for bringing me back to life. I had felt so peaceful while sleeping, and it seemed to me that I had been woken from a good, sound sleep to face a dreadful life, alone and terrified. I could hardly move my right foot, which was very swollen and had a big sore where my garter had been holding my stockings. Because I fell first and was face down, I was close on the ground where there was still oxygen while everybody on top of me struggled for air. Somehow I survived, but I could taste the lime floor in my breath for a long time afterward.

I had been unconscious for about twenty-four hours. I was told that the day after the Germans left, my aunt got out of her bunker and, knowing where ours was, came looking for us. She opened it and called, but no one answered. She found everybody dead. Some neighbours started to pull out the bodies one by one. When they pulled away the body on top of me they tore away my garter, which had dug itself into my swollen flesh and left a wound on my leg.

When Josio came into my room he was stunned. I will never forget the look on his face—he could not believe that I was alive. I couldn’t understand it myself. I believe it was fate. From then on, Josio took care of me. I was completely helpless and couldn’t walk because of my sore leg. I would never have survived on my own and didn’t care at all. On that horrible April day it felt as though I had lost everybody. Only Josio had survived. He told me that the Germans had caught a thousand people, told them to dig their own graves, and then killed them all. Then the Nazis made the ghetto smaller yet again.

As I lay in bed, watching the peasants come into the house to take what they wanted, I thought how dear every little item had been to my mother, how she had collected those things over the years, how she had kept everything. It was a horrible experience, lying there in bed wanting to die, to go to sleep and not wake up. But Josio wanted me to live, so I did. He still had his mother, brother and sister, and their house remained within the new border of the ghetto. He gave me a small room at the back of his house and I moved in, taking the bare necessities and leaving the rest.

I could not figure out why he wanted me. He was so handsome, so good, so everything. He was all a girl could dream of. He could have had his pick of the most beautiful girls in town—there were still a few left—but he wanted me. He took such good care of me, better than a mother would. I lived in that little room in Josio's house for a month. Life was unbearable, but I thought, I can't keep crying and being a burden to Josio, so I told myself that I was away from home on a vacation and would soon be together with my family. Really, I saw no way out, no way of living through that hell. But Josio could get out of the worst situations, and he never gave up.

One day, Josio came running into the house. "The Germans are back in town!" He quickly picked me up and ran, his mother and sister following. We reached the fields outside the village and stayed there the entire night. In the end, we found out that it had been a false alarm, and came back. It was nevertheless clear that we just couldn't live like that anymore. Josio started to look for farmers who would take his mother, brother and sister. He found a few who were willing, but he couldn't trust just anybody. Finally, he found a very nice man, someone he had known for years, who was willing to keep them in a hiding place in his house. Josio and his brother then brought two bullets, thinking that if they were caught they would shoot one German and leave a bullet for themselves.

In the meantime, life in the ghetto became even more unbearable. The Nazis came to town more often, making all kinds of demands. We could tell that the end of the war was near and they were getting desperate. I didn't worry at all. I was not afraid anymore because I just didn't care what happened to me. But Josio did. Josio was making plans with his close friend Kawalek, a dentist, who still had a fair bit of money. The two were very fond of each other. Kawalek had a Protestant friend named Gnidula, who once said to him, "If things go really badly, come to me and I will keep you hidden in my house."

One day, in the middle of May, Josio and Kawalek took Gnidula up on his offer. They went to Gnidula's farm to build a bunker in his barn for us to hide in. They worked for two days, building the bunker under a chicken coop, and then came home. We stayed in the ghetto for two more weeks and then heard an announcement that it was to be liquidated. After June 1, 1943, no one would remain. The Germans were coming to take everybody away. After that date, anyone seen would be shot. We knew that the time had come to leave. Whoever had a place to go, left, and the rest remained, waiting. . . .

I will never forget the exodus from Kozowa. I was leaving everything behind and yet, we were lucky to have a place to go. We sneaked out in the middle of the night so no one would see us. We feared not only the Germans, but also the Ukrainians who lived all around us—they were our greatest enemies after the Germans. Some of them were always ready to point a finger at us, or even kill us themselves.

We left the house and everything in it, leaving the door open. All I took with me was a sheet, a skirt, a coat and pyjamas. We walked for a long time, reaching our destination before sunrise. When Gnidula saw me and Kawalek's wife he was furious. He wanted to take just the men, not the women, and it took a lot of persuasion before he finally agreed to let us stay. I thought that we were in heaven—Gnidula's house stood all alone in the middle of a beautiful field with green grass all around. He was a gardener and he had a strawberry field nearby. It was so very peaceful, a lovely day in June. The sun was shining, everything was green, and I could have stood there forever. But all that beauty was not for me. I had to hide, to bury myself somewhere. When I crawled into our bunker I felt safe. I didn't think that perhaps I was seeing daylight for the last time in my life, or that maybe I would never be able to feel sunshine again or breathe fresh air. It's hard to believe that I was actually happy to be there in the bunker, yet I was. I was thankful to be hidden from the eyes of evil men and to be together with Josio.

The bunker was a dark hole in the ground with an entrance through a camouflaged opening from the chicken coop. In the barn, there was a wall with wheat stacked against it, so when someone came into the barn, only the wheat was visible. We spent our nights in a narrow spot in the barn and moved around a bit in the morning, exercising before going to spend the day in the bunker, where we could only sit or kneel. At night we covered our feet with blankets and for light used a small bottle filled with kerosene and a wick. We played cards to pass the time. Gnidula came once a day to bring us food and tell us the news. He brought me a notebook and a pencil so I could write my thoughts and feelings. He wanted to know what it felt like, being buried alive. I wrote little poems for him, which he always enjoyed reading. I also knitted him a sweater. Every day he left a pail of water in the barn. We washed ourselves even on the very cold days when the water froze. Somehow, despite the ice water, none of us ever caught a cold.

We stayed in Gnidula's bunker for nine months, never raising our voice above a whisper and learning how to sneeze without making a sound so that no one would know we were there. We had to be careful that people who walked by the

barn didn't suspect anything because some of them wouldn't have hesitated to call on the Germans. Gnidula kept us well informed about the events of the war. The front lines kept moving closer to us and we had high hopes of surviving. In March 1944, about thirty kilometres from us, the front stopped and remained in one place for a whole month.

We kept waiting for the Soviets to liberate us, but sometimes we couldn't stand it any longer. We felt disgusted, angry and nervous, and we started to fight amongst ourselves. On calmer days we would tell each other our dreams and wishes. I wished that I could go over to a well and drink as much water as I wanted and walk with the wind blowing through my hair. Josio wished that he could cut a piece of bread from a whole loaf. Kawalek wished to drink from a clean, shiny glass. We kept making wishes and playing games and hoping that someday this would all end. When our spirits were low we prayed not to wake up. It would be so easy just to stay asleep forever without thinking.

DONALD (CHIPKIN) BERKMAN

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Donald (Chipkin) Berkman and Maryann McLoughlin. *Two Voices: A Mother and Son, Holocaust Survivors*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2010, pp. 24–30. Used by permission.

Donald Berkman was only an infant when the Nazis attacked the Soviet-occupied part of eastern Poland in the summer of 1941. Moved from his hometown of Druysk to ghettos at Vidzy and then to Swiecziany, the villagers of Druysk eventually arrived at the much larger ghetto of Vilna (Vilnius), where almost all of them were murdered in the enormous bloodletting that took place in the Ponary Forest. While Donald was too young to be fully cognizant of the broader details of his and his family's experience, certain things stand out in his memory—such as his survival with his mother, his being hidden as a result of efforts from a friendly priest, and the experience of “roaming the woods around Vilna until the end of the war.”

1941 had no Halley's Comet, but nonetheless it was a monumental year, a year of great destruction, a year of terrible losses. 1941 was the year of Operation Barbarossa when the Germans, in violation of the Non-Aggression Pact, turned on the Soviets on June 22, 1941, opening the Eastern Front. The Nazis unleashed 4.5 million troops, attacking the Soviet

Union along an 1800 mile front, laying waste their lands and killing helpless citizens. In 1941 as the *Wehrmacht* raped and plundered its way across the USSR, the *Einsatzgruppen* (special mobile killing units) followed, murdering thousands and thousands of Jews, living in *shtetls* and cities, for example at the Babi Yar massacre in the Ukraine.

Later in 1941, on December 7, without a declaration of war, the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor on the island of O'ahu, Hawaii, was attacked by the Japanese. . . .

1941 was also the year I was born—January 25, 1941. I don't remember much from my early years. I was born in Druysk, a *shtetl* that my mother has told me about. Druysk was an unusual town because the population consisted of Jews—523; Christians—0.

My father, Yosel Berkman, was a cobbler, just the soles. The customer brought the upper parts of the shoe, and my father attached the uppers to the soles or he repaired the soles on shoes. Yosel had a brother and sister. His father had died young. His mother, Shana, lived with us. My mother, Sara, did handling—she sold salt, herrings, needles, thread, and kerosene and went outside the village and sold these. My parents lived in a one room house with a thatched roof, a dirt floor, an outhouse, and a well for water right outside the house. My mother told me that the Soviets came in after the partition of Poland. They were Communists, but we were not. We were bourgeoisie. They rationed food and other commodities. People did not like them. People who owned land were taken to Siberia. We were not landowners, so they did not bother us. In fact, my mother worked in a Soviet store; they made her work there. She sold only three things in the Soviet store: herring, butter and kerosene.

The Germans came in soon after I was born in 1941. My mother later told me that one day, when I was six months old, there were rumors of a German *Aktion* (operation involving the mass assembly, deportation and murder of Jews). Everyone ran. However my mother was not in the room, so my aunt who had four children, grabbed me and ran, leaving her own six-month-old baby on the bed. The rumor was a false one. When my mother returned, she asked her sister why she hadn't taken her own baby. My aunt answered: “You have only one child. I had to save him.”

In 1942 the townspeople were removed from Druysk to a ghetto—a small ghetto in Vidzy, where my father and other male relatives cut peat and chopped down trees to be sent back to Germany. The women stayed inside the ghetto—cooking for the men and children. Some worked for the Germans sewing and mending uniforms.

After several months they moved us to Swieciany Ghetto, a bigger ghetto. There too the men worked in the woods cutting trees. When they were finished cutting trees in the one location, they were sent to the forest. They had to be available to work or they were shot.

Then these workers, including my father and all my other relatives, were to be taken to a ghetto near Vilna. Many were transported there from Vilna as well as from the small towns in the *Vilna Gubernia*. My mother had pneumonia—very bad feelings—about this transport. She hid with me in a closet for three days. When all was quiet again and the commotion had died down, she came out of the hiding place.

From the ghetto near Vilna, my father, his mother, Shana, only fifty two years old, our relatives, and the rest of the Jews from Druysk were taken to Ponar (Ponary) where they were killed in pits. There they were murdered, burned, and buried.

I am haunted to this day, wondering if my father had to watch his mother murdered. I am so glad he did not have to see my mother and me killed.

The six pits there had been used by the Russians for the storage of ammunition, kerosene and gasoline. However the Germans used two of the pits for killing men, women, children and babies. Most of the killing was done by Lithuanians, supported by the Germans. In three other pits, the *Sonderkommandos* burned the bodies. The *Sonderkommandos* lived in the sixth pit. The Lithuanians helped because they were grateful to the Germans for expelling the Soviets from Lithuania and promising the Lithuanians their freedom and, after the war, an independent Lithuania.

All the killing of the citizens of Druysk was done in three days in 1942. From the hundreds of Druysk Jews, only twenty-one people survived, including my stepsisters and me—eighteen adults and three children. Of forty-nine members of my family, including first cousins, only my mother and I survived.

After we had escaped deportation to Ponar, I remember we stayed for about three months in a monastery. The priest we knew arranged for us to hide there. The monks kept us for a while. My mother was kept there as a cleaning woman. They gave me a Polish name, Micha. One of the monks made a little cross for me. I walked around the monastery wearing this tiny cross. The monk also taught me Catholic prayers. When the Germans came around, the monks turned us away because they were afraid of being killed.

We then went into the woods, roaming the woods around Vilna until the end of the war. We went around searching for households that were sympathetic to Jews, for people who

would give us bread. Basically we lived in the woods for almost three years, scrounging around for food.

My mother was good at healing, using plants from the woods. Once I had a bad infection on my head. During the night she went into a barn and got pitch that was used on the cart wheels, and she put that pitch on my head. Pitch is loaded with coal tar, the same ingredient that is in tar soap and the black salve that people used to use. The wound on my head healed. Another time my hands were covered with an infection. My mother took my urine and put this on my hands and they healed. Urine contains urea so perhaps this healed my infected hands. Another time I had worms that came out in my stool. My mother saw this and fed me garlic, which helped.

At the beginning we tried to hook up with the partisans; however, the partisans would not take my mother because she had a child. The partisans were afraid of children. They thought the children crying, if they were with the group, would disclose their hiding place. They would have taken her if she would leave me because she was handy and strong. But she did not want to leave me—thankfully! Therefore the partisans would not take us. They chased us away. They were afraid that I would cry. Many people had suffocated their children rather than allowing them to cry and betray the group to the enemy. . . .

I remember the cold in the forest. I was always cold. Neither mother nor I had warm clothing. I did not even have a jacket. Lithuania has very cold winters and where we were was particularly cold. I was always cold, cold!

Clothes were definitely a problem. I grew out of mine. Mother's clothing became tattered and worn. Throughout the war she had only one dress. By the end of the war there was no material available, not for anyone. Mother eventually had to carry me in the front of her body. I helped cover her, and also her body heat kept me warm.

To keep warm at night when we slept, my mother would make a shelter of branches, or she would look for potato pits. Poor people, at that time and place, didn't have basements, so they dug holes in the ground where it was colder but where it would not freeze. They stored their extra food such as potatoes in these holes. They would line the holes with leaves, drop the potatoes in, and then cover the opening with a board, and place more leaves on top of the board. Potatoes were very important because they were one of the staples; peasants ate bread, potatoes, and herring.

My mother found these holes by scuffing her shoes along the ground. When she found a pit, we would sleep there. We would crawl in, piling leaves on top of us to keep us warm. At

night, in these holes we were warmer than we would have been, exposed to the wind, snow, and cold.

We awoke early in the morning. First thing: we would try to find water. The morning dew settled on the leaves, so we licked the leaves or the blades of grass.

Then mother and I foraged for berries, wild mushrooms, anything that grew in the forest or fields. We often went in to fields to steal a little corn. Corn from the fields was the best—sweet.

Toward the end of the war we found a dead horse. Mother cut pieces from the carcass and we ate them. We ate them raw; we could not have a fire because it would have signaled the Nazis that we were in the woods. In addition, mother had no way to light a fire. I still remember the good taste of meat.

After we ate something, we would hide in the forest for the rest of the day, we could not risk being seen. Mother would make a shelter of branches where we could rest until nightfall. At night we looked for more food. Then we could go up to houses; this was too dangerous during the day. We looked through the windows to see inside if there was a woman alone. Women tended to be more sympathetic. If a woman was in the house alone, my mother would knock. However, my mother would not try to knock if through the window she had seen a man. But sometimes we were so hungry, she had to knock anyway. She was afraid a man would turn us in. Some women and some men helped. Most turned us away.

After we ate, we looked for a place to sleep during that night.

This is how we spent most of our days and nights while we were hiding in the forests.

HENRY BORENSTEIN

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Henry Borenstein. *All Alone: A Young Boy Hiding in Wartime Poland*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2008, pp. 33–38. Used by permission.

A boy in the Warsaw Ghetto, Henry Borenstein was left largely to himself as various beloved members of his family became victims of the Holocaust. With little else to keep him in the ghetto, he decided that the only way he could take his revenge on the Nazis was to find a means to escape the ghetto and join the fight outside. This account relates his efforts to leave, and his subsequent flight; wandering the countryside and encoun-

tering other, smaller ghettos, he eventually boards a train for one more village—only to experience a shock when he arrives at his destination.

This event happened in the later half of 1942. My mother and my two aunts were both gone. I was alone.

One day I heard shooting in the yards and German voices screaming: “*Alle runter! Alle runter!*” “Everybody down!” I was living on the second floor. On the staircase was a window leading to a ledge that was about twelve inches wide. Without thinking too much about it, I climbed out of the window and onto the ledge. The drop to the ground was about four to five metres. I shuffled along the ledge, holding onto the wall, and managed to reach the opening to the *shul* by walking along the rafters.

I think I have mentioned already that in our yard, the second yard at 35 Nawleski, there were three synagogues: a *stibl* on the ground floor; behind that the Mizrachi place, and the main synagogue. I lay down on the rafters of the main synagogue and covered myself with a lot of holy books, just in case the Germans decided to look around. The women’s balcony was about four metres below me, but the staircase leading to it had been removed. So there was no way anyone could reach me from inside the *shul*.

Looking out through the holes I recognized someone I knew. Her name was Lonia. She married just before the war broke out and worked as a seamstress for my aunt. She was heavily pregnant with her first child and now the Germans had her. From my shelter I could see her terrified face. Lonia is another person I knew who is now gone.

I could still hear shooting in the yard and lay there under the books until everything went quiet again.

I stepped out into Nalewski Street, where lay the scattered belongings of the people who had just been taken away. I spied some potatoes dropped there by one of the victims and gathered up maybe two or three kilos of them. These potatoes enabled me to survive in the ghetto for another two or three days.

A few days later I managed to escape from the concrete jungle of the ghetto—although that was only the beginning. I was determined that the Germans would never take me alive, that if I could not fight them, then at least I would run and run and run! . . .

I was sitting on the curb of the road, about one hundred metres from the gate on the intersection of Leszno and Zelazna streets, trying to figure out how to sneak out of the ghetto. Suddenly, a Jewish policeman came up to me and asked me if I would go to the baker’s for him and buy some

rolls. This shop was about one hundred meters away, on the Aryan side. I said I would go. He told me to come closer to the gate and said he would wave his hand when it is safe for me to go across. He gave me a few *zloty*, said something to the Polish policeman and then, when the German *Żandarm* turned his back, he waved to me.

I went through the gate at exactly that moment, while the German had his back turned and the Pole was not watching.

I had only walked a distance of about ten meters on the Aryan side when I was suddenly surrounded by five or six Polish teenagers asking me for money. I knew who these kids were: we called them *szchmalcowniki*—people who hung around outside the ghetto for the express purpose of black-mailing escapees. They would not hesitate to denounce anyone they found to the Germans.

I already knew that Ukrainian and Latvian soldiers were positioned outside the ghetto to guard the walls and shot anybody who escaped, so I told the Polish boys to move on a bit further where nobody could see us—and then I would give them money.

I continued walking down the road and came to the door of the bakery, where there was a queue of Polish people. I ran inside the shop, leaving the Polish teenagers behind. I saw a door and just ran through it, emerging in the shop's empty back yard. I jumped up onto a tall rubbish bin and managed to scale the high fence. Then I found myself in another yard, but this one led to a street. I stepped out into that street, wondering where I should go next.

I jumped onto a tram and ended up at Dworzec Wschodni, the eastern railway station. I went to the booking office and bought a child's ticket to Rembertow, where my father was living.

There were plenty of Germans standing on the platform, as a hospital train was just passing, full of injured Germans from the Eastern Front. I managed to avoid them and boarded the train to Rembertow, a twenty-minute ride away. Just then I remembered that as a deterrent, the Germans had hanged a few Poles near Rembertow railway station.

I was not long in Rembertow, though I cannot remember exactly how long I stayed there. A couple of weeks after I arrived we heard rumours that the dreaded Einsatzgruppen, the mobile extermination teams, were about to arrive in the town with their killing apparatus. One morning at around seven o'clock I heard some turmoil down at the railway-station end of the ghetto and I just ran out the other side—I think into Okuniewska Street. I didn't even have time to say goodbye to my father. So now I had escaped from two

ghettos. By this time it was July and the weather was warm. Where was I to go next?

I had one idea. I decided to go to my uncle Rafael in Falenice. I went to the Rembertow railway station where I saw a few non-Jewish faces. I had been selling cigarettes to an engine driver who drove steam trains and had become friendly with his wife and son, who could not speak. He was mute. He was about seven or eight years old. When I went into the station the little boy saw me and began making noises and pointing his finger at me, to draw his mother's attention to me. I left the station quickly and hid.

Falenice was on the Otwock line, so I decided I would try and go there. I walked from Rembertow to Growchow, a suburb of Warsaw Praga. I took another tram and returned to the railway station to board the train to Falenice, without a ticket. The line to Falenice was narrow gauge. It ran alongside the river Vistula, then turned toward Falenice.

There was a ghetto in Falenice. I sneaked in and found my uncle. I told him what had happened in Warsaw and Rembertow. I had only been there a few days when the Sonderkommando (work unit of Nazi prisoners) arrived at one end of the Falenice Ghetto, and once again I ran out the other end.

Now I was completely on my own, with no friends or relatives to help me. All I had was my burning hatred of the Germans and a passionate desire to live. I did not want to go like a lamb to the slaughter and was determined to manage on my own. I decided I could just walk from village to village, trying to adapt to circumstances as they arose. My only assets were my immaculate Polish language, my green eyes and dark blonde hair.

While in Falenice I heard there were still Jews living in Wysoki Mazowiecki, so once again I jumped on a train without a ticket and went there, only to find that the ghetto had already been liquidated.

MAX BORNSTEIN

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Max Bornstein. *If Home Is Not There*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 105–109. Used by permission.

Jews hid from the Nazis all over Europe. Once a person reached the conclusion that hiding was the most viable option for staying alive, plans had to be made and help sought; successful

concealment, essentially a solitary undertaking, was usually not something that could be achieved alone. Max Bornstein was one who tried to do so by himself, and succeeded. As he sought to cross from occupied France into the so-called “free” or Vichy Zone, he faced a number of obstacles which he relates in this absorbing account of his escape.

Restrictions against travel for Jews were becoming increasingly severe, so I had to make a decision based on the most reliable sources of information available and work out a practical strategy that would, I hoped, lead me across the demarcation line. I was afraid that if I waited much longer it would become impossible to get out of occupied France and felt that I had no choice but to act quickly.

Sadly, so many Jews did not see the necessity of escaping, relying instead on Providence, hoping that the good Lord’s mercy would see them safely through this turbulent period. Even when they became aware that there was danger in staying, many chose to ignore it, unwilling to abandon everything they had worked so hard for to flee empty-handed to an unknown fate. My own aunt and uncle with their three children were among them. They lived in a lovely apartment with all the advantages of a secure economic future and chose to remain in Paris. In 1942, the Gestapo came knocking on their door. The three members of my family who were home, my aunt Leah, her son Philippe and her daughter, Luba, were interned in the transit camp in Drancy and from there deported to Auschwitz, where they perished in the gas chambers.

The night before I left Paris for the second time, all my friends again gathered to bid me farewell. We talked long into the night, reminiscing about the many good times we had shared. I will retain these memories of my good and loyal friends forever. I can still hear their last words to me, “Bonne chance, mon vieux. (Good luck, old pal.) We’ll see you after the war.”

A few of my friends came to the station this time to help me buy my ticket in case the clerk asked for identification. One of them was a native-born Frenchman, so the travel restrictions didn’t apply to him. Pretty soon I boarded the train heading for Moulins-sur-Allier, about three hundred kilometres south of Paris. En route, I had time to think about where I should get off the train—an all-important consideration if I was to avoid running into the German inspection that was most likely to occur at the main station there.

When the train got to within thirty kilometres or so of Moulins, I concentrated on looking for a small station or spot in between stations where it might be safe to jump off. All I

had with me was a backpack that contained only a few essentials—the best advice I had been given was to travel light. Looking out the window, I saw the train pulling slowly into a small station, probably Saint-Imbert, and when it came to a complete stop, I saw that the station was almost deserted—there was only one station attendant and a couple of other people; there were no German soldiers in sight. I went quickly to the exit and stepped off the train just before it began to pull out of the station. Cautiously, I walked from the station toward Moulins and the border crossing at the demarcation line to assess my chances for crossing over to the free zone. Needless to say, the actual checkpoint was swarming with German guards as far along the banks of the Allier River in either direction as I could see. From where I was standing, my prospects appeared hopeless, but this time I was determined not to turn back.

From my vantage point I could see—with much envy—how easily French people were able to cross over into the free zone. Even if I were remotely inclined to try requesting legal permission to cross over, they would arrest me on the spot for violating the rule that restricted stateless persons from travelling beyond a twenty-kilometre radius from Paris. On top of this, foreign Jews were not permitted into the unoccupied zone without first obtaining a permit from the Kommandantur.

The limited equipment I had brought with me included a pair of binoculars that I had purchased at the *Marché aux Puces* (flea market) just before leaving Paris. My first escape attempt had made me realize how useful binoculars would be in spotting German soldiers from a distance. Since any attempt to cross the demarcation line at Moulins would clearly be futile, I decided to follow a route south along the river. After trekking along roads and through fields for about four hours, I came across a farmer’s field that seemed like a good place to rest for a while.

I made an important discovery while scrutinizing the area around the field with my binoculars: the German observation posts were thinning out as they got farther away from town. These gaps might give me the opportunity I needed to sneak across the river. From my hiding place in the farmer’s field, I could observe the Germans’ every move and learn their routine. I watched them for hours until my hands were practically numb from holding up the binoculars and my persistence finally paid off. I was able to discern the pattern of their movements that would tell me when exactly to make a break for the river and swim across to freedom.

I noticed that at regular intervals the German guards strolled over to the next post quite a distance away, stopping

to chat for up to half an hour at a time. Everything seemed to be in my favour except for the fact that the sun would soon be setting and it would be much too difficult to make my escape in the dark. I didn't look forward to the prospect of spending the night in an open field, but there didn't seem to be any other choice. Fortified by the wonderful sandwiches my aunt had prepared for the journey, I settled down for what felt like the longest night I had ever experienced. As twilight gradually turned into pitch darkness and I could no longer see anything through my binoculars, I tried to use my backpack as a pillow and fall asleep. But try as I might, I couldn't get comfortable and I spent a very cold and restless night. Daylight couldn't come soon enough.

By the time dawn broke, all I wanted was a hot café au lait. My wristwatch told me that it was five o'clock, and it was becoming fairly light out. When I looked through my binoculars, however, I wondered if I was hallucinating. There were no Germans anywhere. By some strange miracle they had all vanished, leaving me free to safely make my escape across the river. I was so nervous that I kept checking to make sure that they weren't just napping or hiding, ready to jump out and grab me. I gathered up my courage, picked up my backpack, slung it across my back and cautiously moved toward the German control post until I was near enough to see that, beyond a doubt, the German sentry was not at his post.

To say I was baffled would be an understatement, but without any further hesitation, I took advantage of the situation and went straight to the river and took off all my clothes except for the bathing suit I wore underneath. I then packed my clothes into the backpack and strapped it tightly across my shoulders. With one final look all around through the binoculars to satisfy myself that I was alone, I plunged into the frigid river. The sudden shock left me gasping for air and my cumbersome backpack made every stroke more laborious than the last.

I wasn't a particularly strong swimmer and could only swim short distances before running out of breath. I also tended to panic unless I stayed close to the shore. Under the circumstances, I had to rely entirely on willpower to keep me going. The freezing water temperature was only a minor concern compared to the far more serious problem of remaining afloat. As my strength waned, my arms felt as heavy as lead, forcing me to stop and rest. I went into a real panic when several times I swallowed mouthfuls of water. When I checked my progress after the incidents, I saw to my dismay that I had only covered about a third of the distance. Using every ounce of energy to increase my pace, I forced myself to

labour on mechanically, afraid that my strength would give out at any moment.

The realization that the Germans might spot me and shoot me gave me the impetus to keep going. By the time that I had covered two-thirds of the distance and was within reach of the free zone, however, my strength began to seriously fade and I was consumed with fear. I was so exhausted that I could only occasionally kick my legs. At the very moment when my strength gave out completely and I was no longer able to stay afloat, on the verge of going under, I found within myself a renewed energy that came from pure determination. I managed to fight off my fatigue and before long I found myself grasping the shores of the unoccupied zone of France and my entry into freedom.

FRED BUFF

Context: Before the War

Source: Fred Buff (edited by Maryann McLoughlin). *Riding the Storm Waves: The St. Louis Diary of Fred Buff*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2000, pp. 34–35, 42–43, 48, 51–58, 60–69. Used by permission.

Fred (Fritz) Buff was a teenager from Germany who was a passenger on board the ill-fated SS St. Louis, a ship conveying nearly a thousand Jews seeking sanctuary in the New World. Bearing visas for entry to Cuba, they were to be sorely tested when the voyage terminated in Havana harbor on May 17, 1939. This remarkable testimony contains extracts from the diary Fred kept during the voyage, told in a clear and compelling manner. Although lengthy, it is an engaging narrative of a most tragic episode in the West's failure to rescue Jews when provided with the opportunity to do so in the months immediately preceding the outbreak of war.

May 13, 1939

On May 13, 1939, approaching 8:00 PM, the *St. Louis*, the largest motor ship of the HAPAG line, weighed its anchor to take almost 950 passengers to a distant land, a land where all these men, women and children expect to restart their lives, a land where all our thoughts and our eyes are focused upon—CUBA.

It is with mixed feelings that we board take our personal farewell from Germany by trying to sever all memories of our lives to date, yet to carry forward hitherto memorable life experiences.

With tears in our eyes we could not completely forget what we called our home, our place of birth. We clung to the telephone at the pier to call our loved ones with a last farewell, but one thought filled our hearts, the thought about our future.

This is how I spent the first evening aboard, at the ship's railing, thinking about my parents and my sister who had to stay behind; about the many people, both young and old, whom I had learned to esteem and to love during the short years of my life; and about dozens of other things which jogged my memory, especially the devastating events of the last few years, ever since the Nazi regime came to power in Germany.

It was a clear and pleasant evening on this 13 of May 1939, an evening which was to lead toward happier days. . . .

May 20, 1939

After being underway for seven days, we encountered the first ship on the horizon. It appeared to be a freighter that was sailing in the opposite direction—towards Europe.

With the exception of the glimpse of the Azores, we have seen only sky and water to date. Seeing another vessel provided us with some welcome diversion and conversational material.

Despite all the entertainment and other pleasant goings on, my thought frequently drifts towards Havana and Cuba, our country to be. I am comforted to have made good friends aboard the ship. Hopefully these friendships will continue ashore. With the uncertainties we must expect to face, we should not have to face them alone.

Today is the cut off day for all outgoing mail which is addressed to be returned to Europe with this ship. The assigned personnel have asked passengers to stop submitting mail. The large volume of mail already accumulated needs to be sorted and processed, apparently an overwhelming task for them.

The telegraph station is also a beehive of activity. It looks as if everyone wants to wire greetings and a progress report to relatives and friends about our successful crossing and impending landing. I also stood in line to cable my parents to tell them that all is ok with me.

Now that we have arrived at the doorsteps of a new world, I am filled with anticipation, yet rueful that my parents and sister were not as fortunate as I and had to remain in Germany. My only wish to them is for an early *auf Wiedersehen* (reunion).

For many fellow passengers Havana will end years of separation from their families and will mean reunification with their spouses and children.

We came aboard this ship in Hamburg as individuals with a common destiny, and we will leave this ship like a community that has had the good fortune to travel together and hopefully will have enjoyed much of a sorrow free two weeks voyage from Hamburg to Havana. When can we ever again experience such joyful days? . . .

May 26, 1939, Friday

The last day before reaching Havana was dedicated to luggage. All suitcases had to be packed and placed outside our cabin door by midnight. Only hand luggage could be held back. Everything was arranged for an immediate disembarkation early the next morning. During the last day land was visible on and off. These must have been groups of islands. Also Florida's shore was in sight, as an announcement had informed us through the loudspeaker system.

On this last day before Havana we were mostly occupied with landing preparations. We read the disembarkation instructions, visited with our newly acquired friends, and made plans to meet again in Havana.

Nervously we went up on deck to see if from there land was visible. May 27, 1939, tomorrow, exactly fourteen days after leaving Hamburg, we should be stepping onto *terra firma* (Latin for solid earth). . . .

Arrival in Havana, Cuba

May 17, 1939, Saturday

We have reached the harbor all right. At 4:00 AM, the ship's horn blasted several times to awaken us. However, most of us, including me, did not sleep anyway because of all the excitement of our arrival. Those who expected family reunions were already at the railings of the ship. I joined them and witnessed the ship's entering into the harbor. It was dawn. I was able to make out the outline of the palm-tree-lined shore and a bit later the villas of Vedado, Havana's "upscale suburb." This was a beautiful sight.

The streets were already coming to life with car traffic. Also pedestrians kept pace with the slow forward speed of the ship into the harbor. Some of the passengers already recognized their loved ones among those pedestrians and exchanged calls of welcome. What a reunion was ahead for them!

I rushed back to my cabin. I appropriately dressed for the impending landing, gulped down a cup of coffee, and returned to my observation post. I wanted to make sure not to miss anything of this evolving city, within hours our expected place of residence.

The sunrise was bright and rapid. The *St. Louis* dropped anchor. We were lined up for a medical examination. A doctor had come aboard. The line moved quickly and led into another line for the inspection of our landing permits.

At this rate of progress, getting off the ship should follow shortly.

At 8:00 AM, the ship was already surrounded by small boats, rented by family members and friends. They circled the ship searching for their next of kin among the densely occupied railings. The boats came close enough to the ship to establish eye contact and were within shouting distance.

Indescribable joy prevailed among the successful parties. Some bullhorn equipped boats were still seeking their connections.

More and more boats arrived at the scene. They were left undisturbed by the harbor patrol, but so far there was no indication that disembarkation was about to begin. The time of the early expected morning hour disembarkation had already passed.

Rowboats filled with local teenagers arrived at the scene. They had come to dive for and retrieve coins they begged to be thrown from the ship into the water. Their agility was amazing. Despite the obvious pollution of the harbor's water, they always seemed to come up with their reward.

There was no doubt, as yet, in anyone's mind that these delays were short lived and probably due to a *Manana* mentality, which we believed was prevalent in tropical environments. We patiently awaited signs of progress.

The horn sounded our call to lunch. The horn sounded again at 3:30 PM, our call to tea, and again at 6:00 PM, our call to dinner. With every sounding of the horn, we expected it to be our last sitting on the ship. Our optimism was premature. Conflicting calls from the circling boats below were not exactly helpful. Some claimed they knew we were still getting off this evening. Others only heard about *Manana*, while third options assured us that sometime tomorrow we will get off without a doubt! Not that we are in a great hurry, not while the ship's crew is taking good care of us, although those with family ashore would rather be welcomed in person.

May 28, 1939, Sunday

The next day came and went without change. Throughout the ship a degree of unrest and concern spread.

Yet the daily appearance of the small boats and the efforts of relatives, shouting encouragement up to the deck did have a somewhat calming influence.

One person aboard claimed to have heard the reason for the delayed landing: namely, the arrival of two additional shiploads of immigrants. Their disembarkation had taken preference over our ship. We questioned the validity of all those well intended messages; none had come from the captain of the ship or from other authorized sources.

The general unrest and nervousness aboard started to become of real concern as to the true meaning of these delays?

All of us had orderly documents as issued by the Cuban Secretary of Immigration. Without those we could never have boarded the ship in Hamburg.

One day after another, the little boats still appeared every morning and stayed all day. Again and again it was to be *Manana*, but by now even the shouter's voices had lost all vigor.

Something must have gone amuck. There was no doubt any more, yet we were in the dark as to the real reason. Are we destined to be quarantined? Why? Where? And for what reason?

The bulletin board told us of ongoing negotiations for our release, but there was no mention of a pending solution. All this led to more confusion and doubt.

Instead of lining the railings as we had been doing for the past days, we now took frequently to deck chairs as we brooded over the lack of progress.

An American warship had arrived in the harbor and anchored nearby. The warship fired salutary cannon shots, maybe a dozen or so, which apparently was the practice during diplomatic visitations. The unexpected booms woke us from our semi sleep and deep thoughts about our future. Even the unthinkable return with the ship to Hamburg had entered our minds for the first time. We forced ourselves to discount that possibility. *That* could not possibly become a reality!

June 1, 1939, Thursday

Six days had gone by—without an encouraging word. Before our eyes lied Havana, the city, its capital dome, the shore—the keys to our rescue and to our future!

Our nerves during these trying days had to endure a severe test. One passenger apparently could not bear the strain, so he cut the veins on both his wrists and jumped overboard in bright daylight. As once before, the call "Man Overboard" was heard and spread like wildfire. A lifesaving ring was again tossed in the victim's direction. Again a seaman courageously jumped into the water, and this time was

able to hold the victim from drowning until a boat came to the rescue. This took the man aboard and headed for the shore.

To keep control over our nerves became paramount. Weakness was no help whatsoever. It became our responsibility to deter others from doing likewise. Young men, myself included, were organized into a suicide patrol, to take our turn at policing the decks, especially at nightfall. Soon thereafter an important news announcement was circulated regarding our stalemated predicament, an indication of Cuba's President Brù's intractable stance. "On Friday, June 2, 1939, the *St. Louis* ship is to leave the harbor of Havana after its seven day stay."

President Brù had refused to continue negotiations unless this edict was carried out.

The boats were here again; this time it was not from happiness and joy, not after the adversity of the latest news. However, our daily visitors still tried to instill us with courage, even with their own heavy hearts.

Negotiations had not been terminated. There was still a ray of hope which should not be given up or set aside. . . .

June 2, 1939, Friday

One day later, on Friday morning, the day of our exit from Havana's harbor, the passengers were summoned to the large ship's lounge. The presidents of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or Joint) from New York and from Havana had come aboard to address the group. [Lawrence Berenson, an attorney, represented the American JDC.]

Everyone assembled in silence and in anticipation of the words from the leaders of our destiny. This gathering did not miss its objective and undoubtedly saved passengers and crew alike from further calamities.

The mere thought of being able to rely on the report of those distinguished men renewed our own spirit and strength for facing the immediate critical weeks ahead.

Surprisingly the President of the Cuban Customs Office followed with his own speech. It was difficult to hold back tears as he expressed his foremost wish, the early return of all passengers to Havana.

Most importantly all the speakers expressed the assurance that we will not be returned to Hamburg despite the absence of a favorable outcome as of this date.

These were obviously the most important and promising words for our ears. They eased our ominous suspicions about our future, even in the face of the impending departure from the harbor of Havana. By now, we almost looked

forward to our departure from there because as welcome as our visiting small boats were at the outset and after our arrival, the more disquieting they had become as time went on and as our outlook became cloudier day by day.

At 9:45 AM our visiting dignitaries left the ship. This was a dramatic parting for them as well as for all of us.

Soon thereafter, at exactly 10:00 AM the ship's bells rang, the engines started to hum, and the ship started slowly to turn its bow towards the exit of this scenic harbor.

Our hopes and expectations about a return to Havana had been somewhat enhanced by the earlier gathering and by the speeches of the prominent participants, especially since negotiations were alive and, as reported, in a productive atmosphere. . . .

Departure from Havana, Cuba

No one who was a passenger on the *St. Louis* will ever forget this departure. Everyone was emotionally drained, even the bravest were shaken. After all, hundreds of next of kin had been ashore waiting for our arrival. Just visualize all the women and children who saw their husbands and fathers only from the little boats below or on the nearby shore and who, after long separations, are now suddenly being torn apart.

It was also a calamity for those of us, me included, who had arrived without being welcomed by family members. Our hopes had been dashed. We had been set back in our aspirations and expectations only to return to uncertainty and darkness.

Slowly the *St. Louis* navigated out of the harbor followed again by a multitude of slower boats. This time they were not manned by friends or relatives, but by members of various organizations who had chartered these boats as a sign of sympathy for our plight. I counted as many as thirty of these boats that had decided to accompany us out of the harbor.

During these hours the passengers and the ship itself had become an international sensation, sadly and involuntarily.

The piers were jammed with people. It looked as if thousands of people were waving their handkerchiefs, as we did from the ship, while drying our teary eyes at the same time. In addition, hundreds of autos with their horns tooting moved along the quay at the ship's slow speed. They kept pace with us until we returned to the open waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Two official boats accompanied the ship well past the harbor's exit. One of these was a Cuban police launch; the other was occupied by the dignitaries of the morning's meeting.

Even the police waved to us and shouted “*Hasta la Vista!*” (See you later) and “*Auf Wiedersehen!*” (Farewell until we meet again) as expressions of sympathy.

During the seven days in the harbor several policemen had been assigned to duty aboard the ship. Many of us struck up cordial relationships with these officers. They were interested in our predicament as well as in our backgrounds and did not hesitate to voice verbal concerns for our safety.

It took little time for the ship to distance itself from the land until we lost sight of it altogether. . . .

The Fourteen Day Odyssey

Thrown back into the vast expanse of the sea, the ship seemed to cruise aimlessly between Cuba, the open sea, and the American coastline.

More than ten days after negotiations had taken place, a solution had not yet been found. How difficult must it be to find a place of refuge for less than 1000 desperate people?

Just now an announcement was posted that a decision would be forthcoming within two hours. Hardly anyone took this seriously. Too many times similar messages were prematurely announced and subsequently withdrawn with regrets. These highs and lows had sapped our energy and confidence.

Another day of great excitement was behind us. The ship had taken a northeasterly course which it had maintained for several hours at an advanced rate of speed—in the direction of Hamburg.

The effect on our nervous systems was just as if an exploding bomb had been dropped. The deck could have been compared to an inferno of aroused humanity. This was just too much to bear; any port other than Hamburg could be tolerated. Just the mention of the word brings back recollections, and the resolve of most of the people aboard was to die rather than ever see Hamburg again.

For some unknown reason, the ship’s course was reversed once again by 180 degrees and we sailed again in a southwesterly direction towards Cuba. But it was not long before we again headed northeast. There had to be a reason for this, but it escaped us. This could not just happen by chance.

This time the change caused less excitement because, during the night, a newly received telegram brought the first encouraging news. It stated that an as yet unnamed European country had apparently agreed to accept a certain number of the ship’s passengers, subject to the close of still ongoing negotiations with Havana.

Even this news was accepted with skepticism, but at least it revived a glimmer of hope that work on our behalf was still going on and that all was not lost.

This morning we were treated with a fairylike view as we sailed in close proximity along the Florida coastline. We were close enough to see the miles of beaches and also the tall buildings of the famed Miami Beach resorts. Large pleasure boats were fishing nearby; judging by the size of these yachts they had to be owned by well to do Americans.

An American Coast Guard boat was heading in our direction and a Coast Guard airplane circled the ship to monitor our course and to prevent anyone from attempting to swim ashore, enforcing the US decision of refusal and rejection.

We could not understand why this land of our dreams and also of our likely final destination would not liberate us from our agony and uncertainty? Isn’t this the land of large unpopulated and underdeveloped areas? It was very hard to accept the disinterest of the American government.

After two more days of status quo, a long expected telegram was posted that the ship was to head towards a small Cuban island Pinosa [*isla de Pinos*] and to land there with all of its passengers.

Although we had never heard of this island before, we were happy beyond words. We hugged and kissed each other. For the second time we rushed to the telegraph counter to inform our dear ones around the world of our fortunate turn of events and to ease their minds from worrying about this seemingly never ending odyssey.

This rerouting required another change in the ship’s course back into the more tropical zones. We were unconcerned that this island had few inhabitants or that we most likely will have to be housed in temporary structures of tents. We were convinced that this arrangement was only of a temporary duration. Again we packed our belongings and awaited further instructions about this new landing site. . . .

June 6, 1939, Tuesday

Within hours the ship turned once again in the direction of Europe, and we had to endure another disappointment. How could that last telegram possibly have been posted? Was it perhaps only intended as a sedative?

How were we expected to trust any further announcements? Are we destined to become another ship like the *Flying Dutchman* in Wagner’s opera? The ship which had to cruise around for seven years? The only credible answer for us now was to have solid ground to walk on!

Daily, dozens of calls for help from our ship's committee still leave the ship. Silence from everywhere is the only response. By now all the European countries have received our appeals. Europe might yet be the place of last resort, except Germany, although in our own minds we had already drawn the curtains for a final separation from the continent.

Last night the movie showed *Mother's Song (Mutterlied)* with Benjamin Gigli. It was remembered as a great film. But who could possibly have enjoyed any film, no matter how great, after what we had been through these past days.

As another diversion the activity staff started instructions in various languages. I attended an English class but had serious difficulty keeping my mind on the subject; others could not do much better. All of us were preoccupied with the more serious matter of survival.

We had already left the Gulf Stream behind, and the tropical temperatures are abating. Europe is approaching rapidly and irreversibly. America has been left behind. Our hopes and aspirations of returning there have faded away. The faster we are closing in on Europe, the slower time seems to pass: hours appear like days; days, like weeks. We feel as if we have aged by years.

How concerned our families must be as they follow our whereabouts via the world's news broadcasts. I, for one, am restless about the lack of any message from my parents and sister. It seems like a conspiracy for so many mishaps to occur all at once.

Our last resort now is Europe. We have reached a point of no return. Most of us aboard have assigned quota numbers from the United States and also affidavits that guarantee that applicants will not become a public burden upon our arrival there. These documents for US Immigration had been applied for prior to our embarkation and, therefore, should be honored regardless of where we might get off this ship, including by all the European countries, at least toward temporary asylum.

Several more days have elapsed. These were days of new occurrences and new tensions. Could the world possibly have heard our calls for help? Could our misfortune possibly still turn out for the better? We are now only a few days from Europe and are running out of time. No country has given its permission for our landing on its shores, but we are told that several incoming telegrams have confirmed Holland's willingness to admit 200 people.

Once before Holland [The Netherlands] was inclined to break the deadlock. This response proved to be premature. The question now is, Can it really be true this time, or is it

again only a rumor? If true, there are still over 750 more people who need to be admitted elsewhere, and the example set by Holland would have to be followed by others. The mood on board took a big leap for the better with Holland's initiative, which could be the opening development to bringing the odyssey of the *St. Louis* to an end.

Every day now we are summoned to the lounge to be updated by the ship's committee on rapidly developing events. We are also being reminded to remain calm and composed as the efforts for our release are moving toward success. . . .

June 16, 1939, Friday

We are now only one day from Europe. Another meeting has been called. "The die is cast!" England, France, and Belgium have joined with Holland collectively to absorb all the passengers of the *St. Louis* in approximately equal numbers.

Our jubilation is fantastic, indescribable and spontaneous. The horizons have opened up. We were not forgotten after five weeks at sea, most of the time under severe duress and mental strain.

Finally a harbor has been found for our rescue—Antwerp, Belgium. . . .

June 17, 1939, Saturday

All the passengers left the ship in Belgium. The Belgium contingency was transferred to Brussels. The three other countries were prepared to transport their allotment of passengers to their respective homelands.

MARIA CENSOR

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Maria Censor. *Letters to My Mother*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2000, pp. 58–65. Used by permission.

A Polish Jewish young woman passing as a Christian, Maria Censor was employed as a care worker in an orphanage in Radosc, near Warsaw, when she became aware of the fate of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto in April 1943. In this account she describes her own fate: having been caught by antisemitic Poles, denounced as a Jew and taken to Gestapo headquarters in Warsaw, she was released after being forced to surrender

some of her valuables. Upon her release, the traumatic situation in which she found herself wandering the streets until, eventually, she found her way home—still undercover, but at least safe for the time being.

Meanwhile I applied for a job of carer and kindergarten teacher in the children's home in Radosc near Warszawa. The home was run by a "Patronat" society caring for orphans and children of criminal prisoners. During the occupation children of political prisoners were naturally taken under the Patronat's wings. Again, as if by a miracle, I secured the position. The home was in Radosc, about four kilometres' walk through a forest from the railway station. It was beautiful, peaceful countryside, untouched by war. The home was in Radosc, about four kilometres walk through a forest.

The home stood on the edge of the forest, surrounded by a large orchard, the trees heavy with ripening apples, surrounded by a large orchard, the trees heavy with ripening apples and pears. There was a vegetable garden full of fresh vegetables. What bliss! A large dog of uncertain heritage came towards me wagging his tail furiously. He had spotted a sucker. I approached my new place of employment with mixed feelings. I was tired, having lugged my suitcase from the station on this very hot summer's day. I was apprehensive, for it was a live in position. Most of all I was worried about you, Mama. I knew we could not see each other for a long time and I was already missing you.

A man appeared, he introduced himself as Piotr (Peter) and took my suitcase. He was "old," maybe thirty. Mr. Piotr took me inside the house to a little office. He informed me that the "head" would see me in a few minutes. I was left there, standing, my suitcase at my side. The headmistress greeted me in a friendly manner and took me around the two storey building, explaining my duties as we looked at dormitories, dining and recreational areas and of course staff living quarters. I was to have an attic room with another group leader. There was a bed, washstand and a tiny cupboard space for each of us. There was another room for the other two carers right next door to ours. They had to walk through our space to reach their room.

Everything was orderly and clean and appeared well organized. I was happy. I thought of you, Mama, and hoped that you were as comfortable with your new surroundings as I was with mine.

All the children were outside playing on the undulating fields, games children play all over the world. They sounded happy. They looked well fed, so different from the city waifs, dirty and emaciated, congregating around the tannery. And

those others, the Jewish children starving on the streets of the Ghetto.

Mr. Piotr was the caretaker. He appeared extremely ill prepared for this demanding manual job. He spoke in educated Polish and looked like a well-to-do city dweller. His hands were clean and not callused. He worked hard and often was visibly exhausted. Who was Mr. Piotr? I suspected that he was in hiding like me. It worried me at the time. I was always very polite to him and felt sorry for him. Then an impossible thing happened. He, Mr. Piotr, fell in love with me. I welcomed the feeling that I had someone older looking after me, like a brother or an old friend of the family. We spent many evenings together, walking, reading, talking. Of course I had a big story, usually improvised, of my life in Swiecie, my two brothers and sister. My fictitious tale led to my present position of being alone and the whole "family" repatriated to their place of origin, which had been annexed to the Third Reich in 1939. Mr. Piotr was very nice, but I had no reason to suspect his attention as anything more than brotherly concern to make this little girl happier.

I had every second Sunday off duty. On one such Sunday Mr. Piotr invited me to go to Warszawa with him to visit his relatives. I had not left Radosc for many months. It was too risky to visit you, Mama. The Ghetto was being "liquidated." Transport after transport of cattle wagons passed through Radosc with their terrible cargo. Although I saw them with my own eyes, I did not want to hear the cries. I blocked my ears and averted my eyes, feeling so helpless, so useless. The children made my life possible. They were a lovely group. Starved of love, insecure, they thrived under my youthful non-disciplinarian care and I loved them all and enjoyed my work immensely.

I gratefully accepted Mr. Piotr's invitation and we travelled to Warszawa to visit his cousins. It became very clear to me that the "cousins," a lady and her partner, were not "working class." The greeting was cordial. The table was set beautifully, the food simple and well presented. Their table manners were impeccable. I was being very closely watched. Who were these people? On that "pleasant" Sunday afternoon the Ghetto was burning. The soot and smoke were in the air. The gunfire could be heard. The clouds of smoke obliterated the sun. The windows in the flat were tightly shut. Suddenly I felt scared, almost out of control and so helpless. For a few moments my usual assurance left me, my emotions took over. Somehow I regained control and was able to continue polite conversation with my hosts, hoping that they did not notice my lapse.

It was an incredible experience. I knew I was not the same person who a few hours previously had arrived at this friendly meeting. I felt empty inside. On arrival back in Radosc Mr. Piotr began to show me more than the usual friendliness. How dare he, this “old” man of thirty! I was totally disgusted and very disappointed in him and I told him so. I had lost a friend when I needed one so desperately. Was Mr. Piotr a friend? Who was he? The other three carers were much older than I and they all fitted the description of “old maids” in my youthful perception. Any of them would have valued Mr. Piotr’s attention, but he just retreated into his quarters and became almost a hermit. He went about his duties in silence hardly acknowledging anybody. I remained friendless.

My work with the children continued. Their state of hygiene had always been important to me. The home had one large area called “the bathroom.” It had not bathtubs, but a row of timber dividers forming square spaces, each with a tap and a shower, or rather a rubber hose with the perforated nozzle of a watering can attached. The dividers were knee high; the floor was tiled in light brown tiles. We only had hot water twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays when Mr. Piotr fired a big furnace. I remember scrubbing my charges vigorously, playing the “clean, clean” game, which I invented in order to make the children want to be clean. In summer the children got hot and sweaty and they learned to be “clean, clean” in cold water. Our group was reprimanded for making too much noise on cold water days. Imagine trying to keep twenty-five small children quiet while they are splashing each other with ice-cold water.

I conducted fitness classes for my “littlies” and the headmistress commended me for this enterprise. As a result I was asked to take the whole institution through fitness exercises every day during their summer school holidays. These took place before breakfast at six every morning. Some older children were only a year or two younger than I. The boys gave me a hard time, but after a while I was able to separate them from the group. I formed them into foot-racing teams and they raced against each other, providing entertainment for the others until breakfast time, when the runners received larger portions.

My stay in Radosc strengthened me physically, it toughened me. Mama, I thought of you, I wanted you so much at my side. There were nights when I dreamed of you. You were there, somewhere in the distance and I tried to reach you but my legs would not move. I would wake up in terror, hoping that in my sleep I did not reveal who I was. My roommate would sometimes make some comments about my

“nightmares” the next morning and I would be terrified that I had broken my cover.

Scant news wafted into my retreat. The liquidation of the Warszawa ghetto was always hotly debated. I tried to appear uninterested. The march of Dr Korczak and his children was mentioned with some sadness, since it was a well-known fact that the Jewish children were also looked after by the Patronat. The headmistress was very shocked that the whole orphanage had been deported. She kept saying that it could happen to us in Radosc too. Again, I tried to stay out of these discussions.

On the whole I became very complacent, more comfortable, until that fateful day of autumn 1943—the only time I was caught.

After eighteen months in Radosc Children’s Home I thought that with luck I could manage to live there till the end of the war. No such luck! One cold morning, two thugs walked in, and ordered me to come with them to Warszawa. I was in the middle of breakfast. I remember the bright yellow of the hot *mamalyga*, the cornmeal cereal I was eating. I followed the two men without a word. My workmates sat very quietly, fearful of the sense of danger that hung in the air. On the way out, I managed to throw on my warm coat and grab my “papers.” We walked through the forest, three kilometres to the railway station. It was a cold, beautiful morning. As we walked, the thugs told me that they knew I was Jewish. They were taking me to Gestapo Headquarters in Warszawa.

All the way, I kept denying their “preposterous” accusation. I did not cry. Nearing our destination, I told them I had a gold watch on a chain. Would they let me go if I gave it to them? They snatched the watch from around my neck and tore the little gold ring with its ruby teardrop off my frostbitten finger, leaving a gaping bleeding hole. Then they just let me go.

I ran and ran. Hungry, homeless, penniless, one hour to curfew – where to go, what to do? Cut my hair, change my appearance!

I found myself on Karcelak Square, a place where I had never been before, a market square where only “other people” went and you could have your pockets picked. Wind-swept, dirty, unfriendly. In the dusk I found a little hairdresser’s shop with one chair: “Please cut my hair and accept it as payment,” I said. This was a very dangerous move to make. The barber could have been suspicious. A Jew on the run, call the informers! They would strip this kid clean and throw her to the Germans. The barber cut my hair gently, a thick plait about seventy-five centimetres long, then

straightened the line at the back of my neck. I felt cold as I emerged, a short-haired Marysia and I felt different. Did I say Marysia? What a lapse, deadly dangerous. There was no Marysia in 1943. My name was Urszula, Ula, never to be forgotten, even in my sleep.

The curfew was approaching. Where to go, what to do? I, Ula with the short hair, with just what I was standing in: a skirt, a jumper, a coat, still a good coat from home. Shoes with holes in the soles, stuffed with paper, socks darned so many times and with so many colours that the original heels and toes were non-existent. The darns rubbed and blistered my frostbitten feet and made every step difficult, but they were steps I had to take to survive.

That cold evening, alone, lost, hungry, I started walking in the direction of Tatiana's address. By some miracle I had memorized it when some time ago, we had bumped into each other after having lost touch for two years. As in a dream I walked and found the place. Warmth enveloped me, a safe house, at last. No questions were asked.

Tatiana's one rented room with the use of a kitchen was heaven. Nobody asked me any questions and I also did not ask any questions—who the men were who came and went, who ate and drank, and talked and talked. . . . I just cooked and cleaned and I was accepted. I belonged, though I was never told as much in words.

Some days and some nights I was left alone, instructed to answer the phone that never rang. These lonely nights were horrifying. I constantly expected to be discovered, dragged out and shot. I sensed I was playing a dangerous game. It was the Polish Underground that I was working for, but I did not know it at the time.

Mama, after all these years, I cannot imagine how you suffered not having heard from me for months at the time. There was no way I could communicate and actually visiting you was extremely risky for both of us, but I had to see you to let you know I was still alive. I had to see you in the hospice, where you were placed in the care of nuns.

With more freedom to move around the city and living a short distance from the hospice, I decided to visit you. Mama, you were not surprised as I walked into your ward. My heart was beating fast and the relief of finding you still in the hospice was enormous. I felt as if I was going to faint. And you, Mama, you just smiled at me as if you were expecting me to come.

"What happened to your hair?" you asked. "Oh, I just wanted a change," I replied. All matter of fact, even if our hearts were racing, we could not cuddle or kiss, just a peck on the cheek. Remember, you were my "aunt." We had to be

careful. Remember, you had to call me Ula. I was wearing a man's suit jacket which was much too large for me. You looked at me and I knew what you were thinking. So I explained that it was fashionable to wear men's jackets in Warszawa in the spring of 1944. Spring of 1944—last time I saw you, touched you, talked to you.

This scene remains in my mind in full colour. So many years passed and yet I still remember your words: "You will survive, you will survive—alone." I did survive; I still feel guilty about it.

FANNY COOPER

Context: Western Europe

Source: Fanny Cooper. "Crossing of the Lake." In *Memory Guide My Hand: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing by Members of the Melbourne Jewish Community*, vol. 3. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004, pp. 61–66. Used by permission.

When Germany invaded Belgium in May 1940, a large number of Jews and others began a panicked flight south to France, away from the war and the advancing Nazis. Fanny Cooper and her family were among these. As she writes, they ended up in Vichy, or unoccupied, France, where they were left relatively unmolested until July 1942. From that point on, however, antisemitic measures instituted by the collaborationist government of Marshal Philippe Pétain saw the start of deportations from France to Auschwitz. With little other option but further flight, the family sought sanctuary in Switzerland. Fanny's description of what follows traces the family's journey across Lake Geneva by boat—other than her father, who had been arrested and taken to an unknown destination. The account ends on a positive note, however; one of the rare cases of a "happy ending" concerning a deported family reunited intact.

While rummaging in the garage through an old suitcase I found, to my great surprise, a pile of papers. They contained letters and various documents, the existence of which I had completely forgotten since my immigration to Australia in 1950. I also found an exercise book from the school I attended in Lausanne in 1943. I remembered having written that story (in French) and having received good marks for it from the teacher. I was the only refugee girl in the class. It was probably a free topic.

To be suddenly faced with the original and looking at my own handwriting when I was thirteen years old was quite a moving experience. What made it even more emotional was that I also found numerous letters exchanged with my mother, father, sister and cousins, who were each in a different location in Switzerland until the end of the war. We were the remnants of our extended family who were fortunate enough to survive, while my uncles, aunts, and a twenty-one year old cousin were not so lucky. I spent a couple of days (and nights) sitting on the floor, surrounded by all these ghosts from the past strewn around me. Memories of this distant and painful past came flooding back.

It all started in May 1940 when the Germans invaded Belgium. Our family of twenty-three people, including my grandmother, who was wearing a *sheitel* (wig) and only spoke Yiddish, joined the great exodus of hundreds of thousands of people: some in cars, some on bicycles, some on foot, some with wheelbarrows carrying the elderly and personal effects, some pushing prams with small babies—all running towards the South of France. The huge crowd was easily visible from the air and from time to time German planes came down very low and machine-gunned indiscriminately sending everybody scurrying into the ditches on the sides of the road. My family came out unharmed but not everyone was so fortunate.

We ended up in Nice, in Vichy—“free” France, where we lived in relative safety until July 1942. That was when Marechal Petain and his clique of collaborators decided to assist the Germans and began to round up the Jews, who were subsequently deported to Auschwitz. We immediately tried to find a hiding place. It was not easy. We were, after all, strangers in the city with hardly any acquaintances except for our Jewish refugee friends who were in the same situation. It was sometimes possible to find shelter for money, but we never felt secure, and kept running from one place to another nearly every night. Father, with his rather Jewish features did not dare to come out in the street in broad daylight, so he sent me, an inconspicuous twelve year old to do some necessary errands, such as selling valuables to keep us going. I went around the streets of Nice wearing a chain with a large, very visible crucifix on my chest. Of course I was scared, especially when I saw the black police vans of the French gendarmes roaming the streets and the herding of groups of Jewish families.

I remember one night when we were taken to a place which was supposed to be a private home. It at once looked suspicious to us. It had a long passage with doors on both sides and looked like a small hotel or boarding house. It was

already known that a hotel was the most dangerous place to be in. Since most refugees lived in hotels, it was the first place the gendarmes looked for Jews. The owner of that place, to whom we had paid the money, tried to reassure us, telling us that each door was a room of a member of his family. But we did not believe him and although we had nowhere to go, we hurried downstairs and into the street. We walked the streets all night, separately from each other and hiding in doorways when we saw a passerby or worse, a black police van hunting for people like us.

In the end, we managed to get hold of false papers and a smuggler who organized a train to the border and the crossing of Lake Geneva from the French to the Swiss side. That was the topic of the story I had written at school so many years ago and I reproduce a translated version of it below. . . .

Not a sound, not a movement. Little by little the night is approaching. It is dusk. The lake is glittering in the moonlight. Everything is so calm. Suddenly a slight murmur is heard—subdued, whispering voices, the crackling of steps on the gravel. Where is the caravan of dark shadows heading to? How many are there? Five, six, seven, walking straight down to the water? There, moored to the shore, is a flimsy rowing boat rocked by the slight swell, awaiting the passengers it will carry to the other side of the lake. Time is pressing. Furtively, the shadows step into the boat and make themselves as comfortable as possible on nets and pieces of shabby timber. They must not be seen or heard.

Who are these mysterious travelers? Are they smugglers? They may appear to be shady characters but in reality they are a small group of Jews. There is me, Fanny, aged thirteen, my grandmother, my mother, my older sister Berthe, my uncle Max and his wife. There are also the two boatmen.

That they are Jewish, in itself, reveals our predicament—the situation of hunted animals that are fleeing from France as from a fire, because today’s France is for us Germans—death. Taking every conceivable risk, we are attempting to reach Switzerland.

It is about nine in the evening and already quite dark on the October night of 1942. Now starts the crossing of the lake of which we are so eager to see the other side. Little by little the boat moves away from the shore. The boatmen command absolute silence, no sound that could alert the French police who are constantly on the lookout for escapees. Search beams are crisscrossing the lake from time to time. I will make no sound, I am much too terrified. I will pray to God for the success of our undertaking, while looking at the grey mountains of Switzerland discernable in the distance. I pray for patience.

The boat keeps gliding and with every passing second, France, the land of terror, is getting further away. How much I wish not to see France any longer and to reach the other side—Switzerland, the land of freedom! All that is heard is the rhythmic sound of the oars and the splashing of water. At this moment my thoughts are with my father who is not with us. I instantly recall the scene at the Thonon-les-Bais railway station where we disembarked after a long train journey a few days ago. I see the two men dressed in black standing at either side of the exit—Vichy gendarmes. They are not checking documents, they scrutinize the faces of the incoming passengers. A few are arrested, obviously on account of their Jewish features, my father among them. Grandmother makes a move toward her son, but I notice it. I grab her hand, pull her away with all my strength and whisper, “Come, Grandma, come.”

My poor daddy! Where is he now? He who tried to save the family by organizing our escape had been caught himself. What will happen to him? What will become of all of us? I just cannot understand why this is happening to me, to us. What have we done? The sight of a red light appearing on the water suddenly interrupts my thoughts. It is getting nearer and nearer. My eyes are widening in horror. Is it the French police who will arrest us, take us back to the inferno and destroy all hope of staying alive? Auntie Sarah, who sits next to me, puts her arm around me and whispers into my ear, “Let us pray together.” But it is only a fishing net. The panic is over.

The boatmen are working hard and we, the passengers are dreaming. What are we dreaming of? Of our past happiness, present misfortune, future hope?

From the distance I can already catch sight of the lights of Lausanne and Geneva. The sky is like black velvet strewn with diamond-like stars. The tranquility of the landscape should induce calm, but how can I be calm in the present horror?

The shore is approaching. It is getting closer and closer. Here she is—Switzerland—freedom at last. But are we saved? Perhaps we are being cheated by the boatmen who, after depriving us of our money, have taken us to a different part of the lake that may still be in France? Over the last few months we had been cheated so many times by those who were supposed to provide us with safe hiding places.

And now, is it really is Switzerland, will we be allowed to stay here? Rumours had been circulating that the Swiss authorities have begun to expel those attempting to cross the border. The last we heard was that only people with children were allowed to stay. I am the only child in our group—perhaps I am the savior. . . .

After his arrest in Thonon-les-Bains, my father was taken to a transit camp in Rivesaltes near the Spanish border, from where Jews were being deported to Auschwitz. He managed to escape and retraced his steps to the Swiss border, which he crossed a few weeks later, with two little boys, who he found wandering on their own. It was thanks to the children that my father was not expelled, and at the same time they were also saved.

SUSIE CYMBALIST

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Susie Cymbalist. *Susie's Story: Surviving in Budapest*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2011, pp. 69–74. Used by permission.

When the Holocaust hit Hungary in March 1944, it did so with overwhelming force and speed. Often, there was little time or opportunity for people to arrange a response adequate to the challenges that now confronted them. Later in the year, for those who managed to survive long enough—especially in Budapest—things began to settle down sufficiently to enable the possibility of escape or concealment for some. As Susie Cymbalist's account demonstrates, help from non-Jews was often crucial in assisting Jews, though some of the usual forms of subsistence (especially food) were often lacking in sufficient quantities. Susie's memoir is a corrective to the view that once people were in hiding they were necessarily saved; all too often, dangers awaited people from others than the Nazis.

Soon afterwards came the order for young Jewish women of around my age to assemble on the sports oval at the local high school where the Kisok met. (Kisok was the sports association for children in their high school years.) The order said what belongings we should bring. We all knew we could be deported to Auschwitz. By this time I was so demoralized I was ready to accept anything. I could see no possible way out and had lost the will to struggle against “the inevitable.”

Our benefactor, Dr Andor Bossányi, turned up at our flat with his usual bag of delectable food. I told him that my age group had been called to assemble and I intended joining them. He objected to this strongly and said, “You are not going anywhere until I tell you what to do!” I said, “What about my mother?” To which he replied, “I will take your mother but not your grandmother.”

The next day Dr Bossányi came to the flat and gave us his instructions: "Take off your yellow stars and walk back to your old block of flats at midnight. The house janitor will know of your arrival. He will put you into a windowless basement room until a taxi arrives to take you to my scarlet fever ward at the contagious diseases hospital." We knew of this hospital, which was located in the periphery of the city. It meant that we had to drive past heavily armed Arrow Cross guards.

Soon a taxi driver did arrive. No doubt he had been well remunerated and had received his instructions. Dr Bossányi told us not to talk to him and that when he called out to us to duck, we should get out of our seats in the back of the taxi and as low to the floor as we could. As we approached the armoured sentries at the border on the outskirts of the city, our driver accelerated and called out to us to duck. As we dived low we heard shots being fired. Luckily, they missed us and we arrived at the hospital safely.

The resident doctor was waiting for us and asked us if we had ever had scarlet fever. We had not, so he injected us with the germ, saying that if we came down with it we would have to stay there for six weeks. We were admitted to a ward with only two beds. Every morning Dr Bossányi, his resident and some nurses came to check us on their wards rounds. He had told them we were refugees from eastern Hungary who had been infected with scarlet fever. We actually did not contract the disease, though we had flu-like symptoms that lasted about a week. We spent about three weeks in that ward.

One morning Dr Bossányi returned to speak to us alone. He was somewhat agitated and told us he had been denounced by somebody on the staff. There was going to be a raid and we had to leave. Dr Bossányi gave us some money for public transport and an address in Buda where we were expected.

By this time the Russian army was halfway to Budapest and had occupied all of eastern Hungary. The Nazis knew they had lost the war but maintained their aim to keep exterminating as many Jews as they could. The Arrow Cross, under their leader, Szálasi, was extremely efficient at doing just that, so the trip to Buda was an anxious one for my mother and me. We went by public transport and had to change trams. We happened to pass our old home and one of the neighbours noticed us but pretended not to have seen us. We had been the only Jewish residents in that block of flats. . . .

On our trip to Buda, eventually we found our destination, the home of a retired army colonel. He had been giving false identification cards to army deserters, but told us he had run

out of them. We would have to stay in his and his wife's apartment until a new supply arrived. We felt somewhat safe, for the time being.

The new cards arrived and the retired colonel told us we would be going to two different places. My mother was going to a small Catholic hospital on the Buda side. It was protected by a Papal or Vatican flag. The doctor in charge was, of course, part of the underground. His name was Dr Szentiványi and he neither received nor requested anything for this dangerous work. It was known that if the Hungarian Nazis discovered a Jew being hidden, not only was that Jew shot, so were his accomplices. As well, my mother was in need of some medical treatment; she had fainting spells, possibly brought on by low blood pressure.

An older single woman (whose name and address I have completely forgotten) was introduced to us. She offered to look after me, but for a price. As mother had been brave and clever enough not to have surrendered her diamond jewellery, when the woman came for me, Mother picked a platinum Movado watch surrounded by diamonds out of her little pouch. When she handed it to the woman, she had the good sense to say that she would give her more when she handed me back safely after liberation. The watch was of great value, but this woman risked her life by hiding a Jew.

My identification card was in the name of a refugee from Debrecen, which is in the east of Hungary and already occupied by the Russian army. If a Hungarian soldier had asked me just one question about the city I would not have been able to answer and would have been shot.

The woman took me to her flat which was on the third floor of a modern building in Lipótváros in District V, an area previously popular with middle-class Jewish people. That made me even more anxious about being recognized by somebody. By this time Budapest was being bombed regularly and the order was for tenants to go down into the safety cellar each night, where there were stretchers for everybody. However, I was too nervous to appear among the crowd of about fifty for fear of being recognized, or asked about Debrecen, and stayed in the apartment at first. One morning I woke up and looked out of the window and everything looked different. When the woman I was staying with came upstairs from the shelter, she was white-faced and agitated. "There was a lot of bombing last night," she told me. "One bomb fell opposite this house and you can see the ruins of the building. You can't stay in the flat alone any longer. You must come down the cellar tonight. If anything should happen to you, we would both be in great trouble. It would be most suspicious."

That night I went down to the shelter in great trepidation. The woman introduced me as her relation, a refugee from Debrecen. Luckily nobody knew me and nobody asked me questions about Debrecen. My next big worry was about the Arrow Cross soldiers, who regularly searched the area for Jews in hiding. The rumour was that they were somewhere in the neighbourhood. An announcement was made that all the bridges that crossed the Danube were going to be exploded and if anybody wanted to go across to Buda, the next day would be their last chance to do so. I had the silly (on hindsight) idea that I should go over to visit my mother in the hospital. I did not realise that Arrow Cross soldiers would be checking people's identification papers at each end of the bridge. A couple near me were checked, but they just looked at me and let me go. My mother was looking very frightened and even more worried than when I had left her. She wanted me to stay with her, as apparently the doctor in charge was quite agreeable to this. But I thought the two of us would be even more suspicious and decided to return to the flat in Lipótváros alone. I confronted the same identification checking at the Buda end of the bridge. Once again I was extremely lucky and was not asked to produce my papers nor asked any questions about Debrecen.

After this my problems only increased. My food consisted of one bowl of soup made from potatoes stored in the cellar by an Italian family. They cooked for everybody. There were also red onions piled up high in a corner, by the same family. I ate one raw onion every day. I also may have eaten onion cooked with the potato soup. I can't remember now.

We had only one toilet in the cellar and there was another on the ground floor just inside the building. A man was on his way to this one when he was hit at the entrance of the building with a splinter from a bomb, which proved fatal. It was the nature of Russian bombs to disintegrate into multiple splinters. He just lay there for weeks, as it was impossible to shift him while bombs were falling incessantly. His wife was still in the cellar with us.

I had just one set of clothing, including a skirt. A young man whose stretcher in the cellar was near mine (and who, I later realized, was a military deserter) offered me a pair of army long johns. They were my one precious item of warm clothing for a long time, even much later when I joined queues at bakeries or cycled across the icy Danube to the office I worked at in Pest.

The situation regarding food was becoming more and more difficult. One day, in the few minutes of pause between bombs, somebody called out that there was a dead horse on the road nearby. People rushed out with knives to cut pieces

off the still-warm carcass and made soup out of it. I could never touch that. Interestingly, after not having eaten much for a while, I didn't feel hunger any more.

MAUD PEPER DAHME

Context: Western Europe

Source: Maud Peper and Maryann McLoughlin. *Chocolate, The Taste of Freedom: The Holocaust Memoir of a Hidden Dutch Child*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2015, pp. 18–25. Used by permission.

Maud Peper was a small Dutch girl who, with her sister, was hidden on a farm in the rural Netherlands during the Holocaust. The Spronks, who took them in, were an elderly Christian pair who arranged for the girls to assume a new identity as part of a charade designed to secure their safety. In recounting her experiences, Maud provides a useful snapshot into how a child perceived the many changes around her; moreover, she shows that the young age at which a child observes these developments need not necessarily preclude her from demonstrating a certain level of understanding of what she sees. Maud's testimony ends with a roll call of those in her circle who lost their lives at the hands of Dutch Nazis on October 3, 1944.

Jan Kanis left us on a farm in Oldebroek with Mr. and Mrs. Spronk, Kobameuje and Hendrik, who were in their sixties and had no children. Mrs. Spronk's brother, Evert Flier, lived with them. He was a deaf mute and used a trumpet-hearing aid that we yelled into so that he could hear us. He had a little building on the side of the house where he made wooden shoes.

The farm was located on a major highway. In the back of the farm were meadows. The area was very poor; these were hard times. The farm had no running water or toilet. We used an outhouse and a water pump.

The first day we were there the Spronks made us hide in the wheat field because German soldiers were walking around. I wasn't scared because they told us we were playing a game—hide and seek. We had just arrived and already had to hide! They gave me a black umbrella in case of rain. We then zigzagged through the wheat. The wheat was very high because it was August but the wheat had not yet been harvested. It started to rain, so I opened the umbrella. You could see the umbrella for miles. Rita started crying, wanting her "mommie." So between the crying and the umbrella, the

Spronks decided to take us back into the house. That evening a couple of relatives came over to meet us. I don't recall the conversation other than my telling them, "I am so grown up that I can wear the yellow star. And I know how to spell and write my name."

After the relatives left, the couple took me aside. That very first night they told me why they were concerned.

During that first night on the farm, the Spronks talked to us about our names and our stories. I knew my name, but they changed it. I was now Margje (Margie); my sister, Rika. They said that our last names were now their last name—Spronk. We had to call the Spronks, Auntie and Uncle; him Oom and her Tante. Rita, however, could not say Tante but said Tannie instead, so we called her Tannie.

Then they said that this is your story, and you must remember it: "You are our nieces. Your family was bombed out of the city. You were homeless but are now living with us. You are no longer Jewish. You are now Christian. You have to remember this! If you do not remember this correctly, the German soldiers will take us all away."

A decision was made that we could not attend school. They were afraid that we might reveal something about our previous life to one of our classmates whose parents might be a Dutch Nazi. Our story was drilled into me every single day. I lived in constant fear; I was scared to death, knowing that if I messed up, we would all be taken away. Rita and I were now *Onderduikers* (literally divers, or underground), the name given to Dutch people who were hiding from the Nazis. The German edict was that anyone hiding Jews would suffer the same fate as the Jews. For a six and a half year old child, this was really scary and overwhelming.

On the highway in front of the farm, there were no cars except military traffic and the Roma's ("Gypsies") wooden carts. When we were first there, we saw the Roma a lot. The adults warned us, "They steal children." We ran like the wind whenever we saw them coming. . . .

Later I remembered that these Roma used to ask for our cats. They were very hungry. So like many Dutch, the Gypsies killed and ate cats and dogs because there was very little food available during the war, especially towards the end of the war.

In addition to the troop movement, the Nazis had placed a huge anti-aircraft gun in the back of the farm. One morning, Rita and I went outside to get eggs the chickens had laid. We saw German soldiers sitting at an anti-aircraft gun. Rita went up to them and asked them if she could shoot the gun. They told her, "You're too little. Wait until you are older." Rita did not realize the danger of conversing with the

German soldiers, as I did. This really frightened me. We saw a lot of soldiers walking around. We could have been stopped and questioned at any time. I learned recently that most of the villagers knew who we were but never disclosed our identity until after the war.

Rita was young, so she didn't understand. Therefore, at first, we had to stay in the house most of the time until I learned my new name and story. In the beginning the only time we went out was to go to church on Sundays. . . .

The Spronks were deeply religious. So we too were brought up by the Spronks to be very religious. We read the Bible every night and went to church every Sunday. We began to forget our Jewish religion. In the beginning I knew that Rita and I were Jewish, and I knew that Jews were being hidden. By the end of the war, I remembered nothing about my Jewish upbringing. In preparation for Sunday church, on a Saturday night before bed, we would get a bath in a big wooden tub in the barn attached to the house. The water was heated, and we used the same water to wash ourselves. I remember that once we got lice in our long hair. I remember so well because they cut our hair. They put a paper on the floor, combing out as many lice as they could. Then they covered our hair in powder and then put a kerchief around our head. I found out much later that the powder was DDT.

After church one Sunday, Tannie and Oom took us on the back of their bikes to visit Tannie's widowed sister, the Widow Blaauw, who lived on another farm. There I found my former kindergarten teacher from Amersfoort, Eva Schnell, and her husband Alfred. That was so very exciting! Someone who knew us. Every Sunday after church, we went to see them. Mrs. Schnell was teaching us to read and write. Then she and her husband disappeared; I never saw them again.

I learned what had happened to them much later, long after the war was over. The Widow Blaauw, Eva, and Alfred were betrayed to the *Moffe* (Germans). The Dutch were given money for uncovering hidden Jews, so there was literally a price on our heads. One day there was a *razzia* (search and round-up); German soldiers came to the Widow Blaauw's farm and went right to the haystack, which was under a metal roof to keep the hay dry. The Germans found Eva and Alfred in a room under the haystack. Because the widow was hiding Jews, they told her that they were taking her son Jan. She said, "No, take me. This is my farm. I am the one hiding them." They took her son anyway.

The German soldiers took my teacher Eva and her husband, Alfred, to Zwolle for interrogation. The plan was to keep them overnight and then take them to Westerbork in

the Netherlands, a German transit camp. From Westerbork, Jews were transported to Sobibor Death Camp. However, that night a pair of Dutch Nazis (NSB) came into that facility taking the couple and four men into a park. They told the Jews to dig six holes. My teacher, with her hands on her hips, protested: “The Germans told us they would be taking us to Westerbork!” She had no idea about Westerbork. The Dutch SS immediately shot her, and she fell on top of the men who were digging holes—their graves. The rest were then shot. The next day the German Nazis could not find the six to transport them to Westerbork. They investigated and found out what had happened the night before. Therefore they had the Dutch Nazis dig up the bodies so they could be accounted for. They then sent their bodies on a train to Westerbork with other detainees, where they were buried in a mass grave.

After the war, one of the Dutch NSB had told the story about what had happened that night when he was arrested.

On October 4, 2001 a monument was unveiled to the six murdered on October 3, 1944. The monument, a small column of dolomite, is located in “Het Engelse Werk (The English Work),” the park in Zwolle where they were shot. The text on the pedestal reads as follows:

Shot on 3 OKTOBER 1944

CORNELIS BAKKER 15-05-1922

ALBERT BROUWER 09-07-1919

HANS MARIUS KOOPAL 15-08-1920

JACOB KOORN 04-11-1922

ALFRED SCHNELL 10-06-1900

EVA SCHNELL-JOLOWICZ 19-11-1913

Tannie’s niece, Bea Kramer, told me that the son, Jan Blaauw, had been spared. He worked in a milk factory, pasteurizing milk. The director of the factory intervened, saving him; he had him released from internment in Zwolle.

It was extremely dangerous to hide Jews. When caught, both the non-Jew and the Jew usually were murdered.

EKATERINA DANOVA

Context: Evading the Nazis

Source: Ekaterina Danova. “A Ghetto in the Cupboard.” In Julie Meadows and Elaine Davidoff (Eds.). *Memory Guide My Hand: An Anthology of Life Stories by Members of the Melbourne Jewish Community from the Former Soviet Union*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2008, pp. 19–28. Used by permission.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union, Operation Barbarossa, took place on June 22, 1941. After a series of stunning reverses in the months that followed, the Red Army was able eventually to hold the line, and the Nazi offensive stalled outside Moscow before the year was out. Along the way, however, much territory was lost, and a vast number of towns and cities were occupied by the invader. One of these was Simferopol, in the Crimea. Here, a young girl, Ekaterina Danova, hid in a cupboard in order to avoid being picked up by the Nazis. Her ordeal, as she relates, lasted for two-and-a-half years, until the tide of war began to shift and she was able to come out. Managing to reach the forest, she joined a partisan unit and lived to return to the house where she had obtained her original refuge. The rest of her testimony is a poignant statement of the aftermath of the war and her salvation.

Throughout my life—which I can now say has been a long one—I have often had to fill in all manner of forms and write descriptions of myself. Over the years, these multi-paged questionnaires have grown thinner and the last time I fitted myself onto one of these pages was back in 1969 for Leningrad Television. What happened half a century ago is described in simple words: “In 1941 my parents were shot by German fascists and I was adopted as a daughter by the Danovs, spending time with a partisan squad.”

At different times, bureaucrats have drawn different conclusions from these snapshots of my life. In 1953, when I was recommended for postgraduate study by the Science Council of the LGU (Leningrad State University), I wasn’t accepted because I was Jewish. Yet much later, as a Russian, I was confirmed as the chief editor of Leningrad Television.

My children knew even less about my life than the above description—they just knew the part about the partisan squad. Insofar as none of us ever put together documentation about our time with the partisans, that chapter of my life has not been of much interest to my family, which, to my joy, has ended up being uncommonly harmonious and strong.

My sons consider their happiest time to be that spent visiting their grandmother Katya in the Crimea, in her basic little house on the outskirts of Simferopol. That was her own little house, and not the one she, Ekaterina Trofimovna Kolesnikova, her husband, six-year old son and paralysed mother-in-law were living in when the German occupation began. Back then they rented an apartment in a house with a large courtyard, as was the norm in the south. The water supply and communal toilet were all situated in that fine courtyard, and each resident knew everyone else’s business since

they saw each other every day. You couldn't have called the apartment their "home"; it was just one small room, and an even smaller kitchen with an oven, and a door which opened right onto the yard.

I'm recalling this not to demonstrate how meagre the life of the Soviet intelligentsia was back then, particularly those working the land, but so that you might understand how difficult, or even impossible, it would have been to hide any living creature there, especially a child.

The Germans entered Simferopol on 1 November 1941 without any resistance, just after the town had suffered two days in the hands of local marauders. The remaining Jews were quickly placed under a system of control: they couldn't appear on the street without a six-pointed star on their clothes, otherwise they could be shot for any sort of offence, or if they simply did "certain things."

"Certain things" was so broad a term that my parents preferred staying at home. No one felt safe, even at home—a soldier could burst into the home of a *Jude* with impunity, to steal or just to throw his weight around. There were so many of these raids during the next month and a half that on the threshold of winter we found ourselves without food or anything to sell. Nobody even wanted to entertain the thought that soon food might no longer be necessary. Perhaps I was the only one who didn't understand, suffering as I was from a lack of outside exercise and friendship.

Still, everyone was shaken by the new order for all Jews to assemble with their essential items in the student quarter. In the student quarter we saw many old and helpless people who hadn't been evacuated to the East in time; everyone was either standing, sitting or lying down. They were led away in groups and on 16 December it was our turn. Many dragged out the time on the way there, hoping for some miracle. Eventually we reached the place, by which time the shooting was already proceeding at full speed, nine kilometres down the Feodosisky Highway.

Even though Simferopol was the capital of the Crimean USSR, you could walk from one end to the other at a pinch. It's a stone's throw from the students' quarters to the Feodosisky highway, but at that time it felt as though we had to walk for an eternity. Dad carried his newborn niece in his arms. His sister had many children, all boys up till then, but a long-awaited daughter had been born, only to die on the spot. I don't even remember whether she had been given a name.

Mum led me along by the arm. Her sister Eva hadn't turned up at the assembly point, and much later I was told that she had been spotted among the partisans. Obviously,

she died during one of the German sweeps of the Crimean woods.

Local women, who had been driven out of the nearby houses by the Germans, were working on widening and deepening the anti-tank ditches set aside supposedly for the defence of the city. The shooting was taking place in front of these women and they were ordered to dig more if the capacity of the ditch was insufficient. I know all this now through various accounts, but back then I was literally only four steps from death (as the words of the famous song goes) in that huge common grave. For me those four steps, alas, weren't a metaphor—it actually happened.

Only later, after turning that day over and over again in my mind, did I fully comprehend everything that happened. In the end there was more than enough time for contemplation. When our column drew level with the crowd of women watching, Mum suddenly pushed me into them, as if discarding me. Who could guess what moved her then—one last desperate impulse or a flash of blinding hope? Perhaps it was Mum's reliance on a one-in-a-million chance to save her child. All I heard was a wild cry behind me, some swearing in German, and then the sound of footsteps as we ran off as fast as we could.

That street, Ishunskaya, no longer exists and the tank ditch is overgrown with grass and poppies. (The poet, Voznesensky, describes its gruesome postwar fate in his poem "The Ditch"). What happened next? "Some woman" and I rushed into an unfamiliar courtyard, then into a house, and suddenly the door of a dress cupboard slammed behind me. It all went too quickly for me to have time to understand anything.

Understanding came later as I endured the stuffiness—until I worked out how to break a hole in the back panel—of the old single-winged cupboard and the rheumatic pain in my writhing child's body and the incessant but quiet sobbing.

From that moment on we were all terror-stricken. I suppose in that instant my female savior had not even thought about what dangers she would be exposing her family to, or that in saving a stranger's child she might be condemning her own. The Germans often made announcements and then actually proved their words were matched to their actions: for any Jew hidden, every member of the family hiding them would be executed. They had already hanged some of Simferopol's imprudent and kind-hearted citizens from the lampposts in the main streets.

But she wouldn't have it any other way. Much later, in a moment of special tenderness, she, a non-believer, told me

that Providence had sent me to her and that it had been much harder for her to give life to me than to her own son. This last statement was the utter truth. Her momentary outburst of philanthropy passed and then came the time for unbelievable, daily—even hourly—feats of emotional and physical strength. My “ghetto in the cupboard” lasted for two and a half years!

It started with the whole family, stunned and frightened to death, having to speak in whispers. Six-year-old Volodya, under the pretext of some illness, was not allowed outside until the summer; he had to learn to keep quiet about the “girl in the cupboard.” “She must be from Sevastopol, and the Germans kill people from there.” Alas, this was all too true.

It’s hard to understand how this woman endured it all, how she lived, constantly fearful of arousing suspicion amongst her neighbours through a careless gesture or word, conscious of her responsibility to her husband and relatives, and depressed and anguished by fear.

There was also the problem of how to feed a family with an extra mouth—there was nothing left with which to barter for food. But perhaps one kind deed leads to another.

Whether that is true or not, Ekaterina Trofimovna and her husband joined the anti-fascist underground movement. In the book *In the Crimean Underground* by Kozlov, she appears under the nickname of “mother” and Lugovoy, the commissar of the northern alliance of Crimean partisans, mentions Danova in his book *Blood Brothers*.

She and her husband collected medical supplies and clothes for the partisans, but the main thing they did was to take part in organizing the escape of Soviet prisoners of war from a camp on River Street. I have a clear memory of a pilot—or rather the sight of the terrible scarring from his torture and injuries—washing himself at our well, having sought out Ekaterina Trifomovna right after the war to thank her for having saved him.

In March 1944 the arrests of members of the underground began, with those who survived fleeing into the woods to the partisans. This was the most dangerous of all undertakings—to exit unnoticed beyond the city limits, rendezvous with a connecting person, then travel fifty kilometres at night through the ploughed spring fields which intersected with the surrounding road, to finally reach safe cover in the woods before daybreak. For me, who for years had not known fresh air and hence had almost forgotten how to walk, this was another difficult physical trial. It turns out that when you fall flat on the ground it gives you new strength, and if, moreover, the barrel of a machine gun is pointed at your chest

(those knowing the place of rendezvous were killed) then miraculously you find your second wind.

Exhausted, Ekaterina Trofimovna dragged her children along behind her; me more often than not. This was the second time she saved my life, since on the very night that we literally crawled into the forest—our new *home*—the Simferopol Gestapo arrived at our house. One of the underground members, captured earlier, had been unable to endure the interrogations. . . .

We made it to the partisan squad before the liberation of Simferopol, which happened in April 1944, and entered the city along with the army. It seemed that now we would finally be able to live in peace. But new woes awaited us.

It wasn’t enough that we found our humble house ransacked, and the clothes we’d had (I’d long since outgrown mine) lying charred in the fires. The most terrible and unjust of all was the subsequent mass deportations of Tatars, Greeks and, later, Armenians, from the Crimea. Ekaterina Trofimovna, a Russian, was married to an Armenian! Those in mixed marriages were allowed to choose and she chose to stay behind with us, her husband and her children.

I was the deciding factor in the argument at home. Neither Ekaterina nor her husband could contemplate condemning me once again to persecution on the basis of nationality, now coming from our own people. So I never saw Sergei Danov again. All I have left of him is the surname that I share with my brother, and the memory of this good, kind man. Ekaterina Trofimovna, left as she was with two children, couldn’t, of course, have a personal life—she raised us on her own and as far as I remember was constantly working.

My partisan ribbon easily opened the door for me into seventh year at school, although prior to the war I had only finished third year. But my fellow classmates, who had returned from evacuation in the East, helped me catch up and I finished tenth year with a gold medal award.

Then there was Leningrad University, where, by the way, I wasn’t accepted into the journalism department on account of having spent time in occupied territory. Rather I was accepted into the Russian Language Department. Later, I worked with my husband in the far north, before returning to Leningrad, where I eventually did become a journalist.

And through all these years, Grandma Katya, as her grandsons—my children—came to call her, shared our joys and difficulties. I always considered her to be my mother and didn’t want anyone to think otherwise. I dare to hope that I was a good daughter to her. In any case, her letters to me attest to this, especially the ones written in her later years.

She never wanted to leave her beloved Crimea for good. By then a pensioner, she grew flowers and roses, but she did spend the winters with us. In fact, she never lived in a flat of her own, with heat, running water or an inside toilet.

My Simferopol friends, *émigrés* to Israel, saw trees planted in Jerusalem in honour of those people who had saved Jewish children. They wrote to me about it. In the Spring of 1991, I sent a letter to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, hoping that by the fiftieth anniversary of this Russian woman's heroic deeds, my people, from my historic homeland, might pass on a word of thanks to her and perhaps help her somehow in the difficult, last years of her life.

Indeed, events in our country at that time promised her all manner of new hardship. While the verification and questioning of witnesses dragged on in Israel, the break-up of the former Soviet Union meant that we ended up living in two different countries, with all the consequences of that division. True, some friends from before the war managed, after a struggle, to finally obtain documents for her stating that she had been a member of the underground and a war veteran; all this was done to help increase her small pension. Despite the food coupons in circulation in St Petersburg and Crimea, we managed to warmly mark her eighty-fifth birthday.

But she could no longer spend the winters with us as she used to—she was afraid of the political instability. Three months after her birthday, on 10 March 1993, she was gone. She had been lifting a heavy bucket of coal to stoke the oven. The doctor said the last question on her mind was whether I knew and if I was coming to her. I was held up. Due to a lack of fuel, there were no flights to Ukraine.

Then finally, a letter came from Yad Vashem: “We inform you that a medal and a ‘Righteous Person of peace’ award of honour go to your adoptive mother, Ekaterina Trofimovna Kolesnikova, and in the very near future these decorations will be sent to the Israeli Consulate in Moscow.”

Now my children know the whole story—I am writing it down for the first time especially for this book of memoirs. Somehow the bitter feeling that everything happened too late, that I was too slow, remains with me. . . .

All that remains to be said is that a long time after the end of the war a miracle occurred: I received one last message in the form of a note from my birth mother. It was on a sheet of paper from a student's exercise book and written with a pencil she'd obtained God-knows-how. In it she is thinking only about me, telling me not to cry, not to believe the ‘rumours’ or fall ill, and asking me to love the people who saved me. This meant that she must have been snatched from me but

not shot along with the others. She must have suffered alone with the Gestapo, probably tortured and humiliated before she died!

Until my last year in Ukraine I took flowers, grown by Ekaterina Trofimovna, to the Monument to Those Who Died at the Hands of the German Fascist Occupiers. The monument is situated on the Feodosisky Highway at the beginning of that tank ditch, not far from a traffic-police post positioned there to prevent any further violations of our lives.

Now the names of my parents—Maria Lvovna and Solomon Solomonovich Feldman—are in the Hall of Memory at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. In the Simferopol Cemetery in Crimea there is also a memorial to my second mother, while in Jerusalem her name is inscribed on a marble tablet.

JOZEPH DE HAAN

Context: Western Europe

Source: Jozeph de Haan. *My Recollections of Holland 1935–1945*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2009, pp. 10–17. Used by permission.

In this testimony, Jozeph de Haan begins by informing his readers that from mid-1942 he was left alone, but that he was invited by a colleague of his father, Mauritz Trompetter, to come and live in a room in Trompetter's family apartment. When the Trompetters soon decide to go into hiding, however, Jozeph decides not to follow them, but, rather, remain in the apartment alone. The story that then unfolds shows us a young man who is taken under the wing of the Dutch resistance, removing him from the dangers of hiding in the city and taking him to the countryside in Friesland. In the account that then follows, Jozeph recounts a broad variety of adventures in which his life and safety were often threatened, but through which he continually emerged unscathed.

By mid-1942 the situation was becoming hopeless. The *razzias* (raids, round-ups) conducted by the Grune Polizei (under Nazi rule German police wore green uniforms) were becoming more frequent. Huge areas were blocked off and hundreds of Jewish people rounded up and deported. After my father and stepmother were taken from our home in the Blasiusstraat, I continued to stay on at home alone.

It was during this time that a colleague of my father, Mauritz Trompetter, heard that my parents had been taken by the

Germans. He immediately asked me to come and stay in his second floor apartment at number 34, Krugerstraat, which I did. Several weeks passed by before Mauritz, his wife and their son, Gerrie, decided to go into hiding in the northern province of Friesland.

For many Jewish people going into hiding seemed the only way to avoid being rounded-up and deported, but it was not an easy thing to do. It was a matter of having complete trust in people who were often total strangers. Thank God, there were still some very decent God-fearing Dutch people willing to help their Jewish countrymen. It was certainly not without great risk because everything was punishable with the bullet. Nevertheless, these courageous people did help whenever they could.

I was given the option of going into hiding with the Trompetter family but I was too scared to venture out into the streets and declined their offer. The family left everything behind; a lifetime of possessions, taking only a small suitcase with them for their trip into the unknown. As I closed the house door behind them, I hoped this was only a bad nightmare I could be awakened from in the morning. The reality was far bleaker.

I was now in the Trompetters' home in Krugerstraat. I continued to sleep there for many nights and did not go into the street. How I survived those lonely days is hard for me to remember now. I do remember thinking about the family often and hoping they had reached safety. I wondered where they could be, but of course there was no news from them at that stage. Mr. and Mrs. Soeters and their three children lived on the first floor of the apartment complex at number 34. Mrs. Soeters was a member of the Salvation Army and a wonderfully brave Christian woman who was not in the least intimidated by the Germans. This was later proved when the German Jewish couple she was hiding in her house were found when her house was raided. Naturally, they were all taken prisoner, including Mrs. Soeters. The Jewish couple perished, but Mrs. Soeters' faith triumphed and they let her go the next day. I think they were really frightened of her for she knew her bible and used it to her advantage.

For several weeks after that incident Mrs. Soeters told me she suffered from depression. On hearing the Trompetters had left she insisted I come down to sleep in her apartment one floor below. Again I was faced with a dilemma. The Germans were aware she had hidden Jews before. Would they come looking again or would they think she may have learned her lesson? I finally accepted her offer and this wonderful lady looked after me for several weeks. However, I was always very worried in case the Gestapo paid us a return

visit. To me, her courage stands out like a lighthouse in the night and I remember her with admiration.

Approximately two months went by when one Tuesday the doorbell rang and two gentlemen from the underground, or resistance movement, arrived to collect some clothes for the Trompetter family who were hiding in a very small place near Birdaard in north-east Friesland. Apparently the family were now enjoying some kind of very limited freedom. During my conversation with these men I asked if I could go back with them to Friesland. They promised to fetch me on Thursday afternoon.

The two days of waiting were agonising and the tension indescribable. Firstly, I was not sure if they would come, and secondly, my false identity card (given to me by a friend of Mrs. Soeters' son, Cor) seemed rather amateurish. Looking down at the roughly stuck together card I read that my name was now Willem Walvis. Luckily I never needed to show this card to any German official because I am sure the deception would have been obvious to a trained eye.

True to their word the two men arrived on that Thursday afternoon. I left the relative safety and warmth of the Soeters' home where I had sheltered in one room for about two months. We had arranged that one fellow walked about one hundred meters in front of me and the other man followed far behind me. I walked without the yellow Star of David which I had taken off my clothing.

We arrived at the Muiderpoort station and as arranged, boarded a railway carriage bound for Enkhuizen. I clearly remember sitting opposite my saviours and not talking at all. Instead, I tried to read a small book brought along for the purpose. I can assure the reader that I never got further than the first page.

After what seemed like an eternity we arrived at Enkhuizen, a small town that lies on the Western side of the IJsselmeer. From there we crossed this stretch of enclosed water by ferry to Stavoren in the province of Friesland. The men from the resistance movement had organized the train and ferry tickets so I did not have to interact with any officials on my journey north. However, to my dismay the boat was packed with German soldiers and some civilians. I knew the ordinary German soldier was not out hunting for me. After a while I started to read and felt slightly better.

After docking at Stavoren we boarded another train for our trip to Leeuwarden City. Previously I had been briefed about the Gestapo control at Leeuwarden railway station. I was terrified at having to pass by these officials at such close proximity. I felt my heart pounding as I walked through the small iron turnstile at the exit where I had to present my

railway ticket. My steps felt heavy but to my great relief I was soon outside the station. I followed the men from the resistance and climbed into a taxi (running on coal) and we continued our journey north.

A long trip followed. By now it was getting dark. We were driving through small places that were totally unfamiliar to me. The men spoke in their own language (Fries), a language I could not understand at all. It sounded like Greek to me!

At last we arrived at our destination but where that was I did not know. I was ushered into a small room where I met a farmer and his wife, so I presumed. They offered me some coffee and having not eaten all day I was indeed ravenously hungry and happy for the bread that was also offered. After the two chaps from the organization left the farmer and his wife showed me where I could sleep, for which I was most grateful. Very soon I fell into a deep and exhausted sleep.

The next morning an elderly Jewish couple joined me. They too came from Amsterdam and we exchanged information. Later they were placed in hiding somewhere else. I stayed with this farmer for approximately six weeks and in that time began to understand a bit of their language. I found out that the town I was in was called Rensumageest.

I was soon transferred to a place in Utsigh near Genum, where I spent some time with a farmer called Vermeulan and his wife. If my memory does not fail me, her name was Griet. I recall they had a daughter with blond hair who was going to be married.

To reach Utsigh I was given a bicycle and told to follow another fellow from the resistance movement who was also on a bicycle. Looking at the map later, I realized how far we had cycled from Rensumageest to reach Utsigh. It was a huge trip on a bicycle with no lights to guide me. I had to follow this fellow in front of me and he went hell for leather. I lost him several times along the way, but thank God he waited for me to catch up. It was one of those dark nights with no moon to guide us or any street lights to help us navigate.

Eventually we reached our place of destination and again I met new people who would place themselves in great danger to help me. Meeting different people was now a little easier as I had started to grasp a bit more of the Friesian language.

Whilst staying with the Vermeulens I can recall that one morning a cyclist approached the farm having come from far away. This was an unusual occurrence in such a tiny village. I watched from behind a curtain of the farmhouse, and as the man got nearer I recognized that much to my delight the cyclist was none other than my father's colleague Mauritz Trompetter! He had heard through the grapevine that I was hiding in Utsigh with the Vermeulens!

I was delighted to be reunited with a person from my past but at the same time terrified for his safety, as he had to cycle all the way back to Birdaard, which was a great distance indeed. His reply was, "Don't worry, it's very safe. Here we are as free as birds!" I was amazed and scared at the lack of security, that someone in the underground organization should have simply told him where I was hiding! Clearly all was still well on the Friesian front.

But that feeling of freedom was soon to end. It was clearly the lull before the storm. Early one morning late in the summer of 1943 (I know all this because the cows were still grazing in the meadows and milking always took place at the same time, around 4 am), the Germans struck like thieves in the night. They came in their trucks, rolling along the small country roads with their headlights switched off.

At that time of the morning the flat Friesian countryside was always very quiet. Hardly anybody ever travelled then, except for farmhands going about their early morning routines. It was just after 4.00 am and the farmhands were about to start milking in the meadow opposite the farmhouse where I was hiding. They rushed over to the farm and knocked loudly on the window, alerting the farmer that they had seen Germans in the village of Genum, the nearest village to us, and warning me to get out fast.

I had been sleeping upstairs when the farmhands knocked on the window below. In an instant I was wide awake. I jumped into my boots and trousers, grabbed my jacket and bolted out the back door of the farmhouse. As the night air filled my lungs, I froze in my tracks. It was as if a dark blanket had been thrown over my head. Complete darkness surrounded me. I felt the back door behind me. All I could do was to drop to the ground and crawl on my haunches towards the small canal running behind the farmhouse.

Eventually I felt the water of the canal against my fingers. I knew the only way to get across the two metre wide stretch of water was via a wooden plank that lay across the canal. I crawled around in the darkness until I eventually found the plank, which I crossed on my hands and knees. Once on the other side I ran as far as I could away from the farm.

By now it was getting somewhat lighter or perhaps my eyes were getting used to the darkness. Suddenly in the distance I noticed some cows being milked by the two farmhands who had knocked on the window. Unfortunately, I never found out their names to properly thank them for what they did for me that night.

Again my life had been spared. Within thirty minutes the Germans reached the farmhouse where I had been hiding and demanded to know where I, Jozeph de Haan, was. They

knew my name, a fact I only learned after the war. I also subsequently learned that the leader of the underground movement in charge of Jewish placements in Friesland was killed by his own people. He was a traitor and informed the Germans of the whereabouts of the approximately fifteen Jewish people hidden in the area. Unfortunately the Trompetter family must have been caught during that raid as they never returned to Amsterdam after the war. After making several enquiries I heard that they had indeed been taken the very same night I had managed to escape the enemy's clutches.

At that time there must have been several hundred Jewish people in hiding throughout the province of Friesland. From my personal experience I think Friesland should be acknowledged as perhaps the bravest province in the country, for saving the lives of many Jewish people in desperate need of food and shelter. Shelter was the difference between life and death. I cannot speak for any other part of the Netherlands, but in Friesland there were many brave and heroic God-fearing people in small villages and towns doing their bit to save the persecuted and putting their own lives at risk to do so.

After my escape from the Vermeulens' farmhouse I managed to stay ahead of the Germans. A friend of mine from Amsterdam, Appie Rijksman, also managed to escape in the nick of time from his hiding place with the Folkertsma family in the town of Genum when the Germans burst into the farmhouse. Like mine, his escape was also a miracle and he joined me a few hours later somewhere in the middle of nowhere. We teamed up and gave one another moral support.

Soon a local farmer, Klaas Dreijer, found us and directed us to a barn far in the outback which became our temporary home and a good roof over our heads. Appie and I made use of a long pole Klaas gave us to jump over the many canals that crisscrossed the meadows along the way. Klaas, whom we later found out was a major underground resistance worker, provided us with everything to last the six or seven weeks we spent in the forlorn barn. It was only ever used during the autumn and winter months by the farmers. If there was a sudden change in the weather they could take animals there to shelter during a storm.

The farmers in the area were fantastic. Small children, always the same ones, brought us food. Sometimes we had so much food we told the kids to please tell their Mamas not to send us anything for a few days. I can never thank those farmers enough for what they did for us during that time.

When it was time for us to leave the barn, again Klaas Dreijer came to the rescue. He found us a temporary place of safety near Holward where another farmer was willing to risk

his life and take us both in. I remember the three of us walked there in pounding rain. Once more we felt most indebted to Klaas for finding us another safe haven.

Unfortunately I lost touch with Klaas and his wife after they immigrated to Canada after the end of the war. I have tried several times over the last forty years to find him but to no avail. I am not sure if he or his wife is still alive today.

From the farm where Klaas took us we could see the island of Ameland. I remember it was a cold wet winter's night and after warm coffee and something to eat, the farmer bade Klaas farewell and took us to a small separate building, away from the main farm building. It was an old hay barn with a hay loft at the top. The farmer (unfortunately I do not know his name) was well prepared for us and had made makeshift sleeping accommodation available in between bales of straw, high up in the loft. To get up there we climbed through the old chimney, stepping left and right on the protruding stones and landing in the middle of bales of hay.

It was nice and warm and soon we were lulled into a deep sleep in our new surroundings by the droning sounds of the wind charger right above our heads, a device that supplied electricity to the farm. The next morning the farmer told us we must stay in the barn at all times. Naturally we agreed to this request as we had no desire to wander around the place. It must have been winter for it was bitterly cold. Many times we climbed back upstairs through the chimney to sleep and get warm.

Food was brought to us by one of the farmer's children, a boy who must have been about six or seven years old and spoke fluent Friesian. With some suspicion Appie and I began to chat to him about the lovely food his Mama had made for us. Then we hesitantly asked him whether he liked kugel and pears, a special Jewish dish prepared in most Jewish households on Friday evenings. He replied, "Oh yes! That's lovely!" Of course we never let on that we were Jewish and actually shed a tear or two, for that boy instinctively knew what we had meant and spent many hours in our company. . . .

We knew our hiding place near Holward was temporary and eventually the day arrived for us to leave. Once again our rescuer Klaas secured a place for me and a different hideout for Appie. I was to go to Heskampen, a farm owned by Jan Rosier and his family, and Appie was placed with another Folkertsma family in Genum. They may have been relatives of the first family where he was hidden. We kept in contact with one another for most of the time and on rare occasions got together for a chat.

Jan Rosier owned the largest farm in the Blija area. I kept myself well hidden and never ventured out during the day

whilst staying at the Rosier family farm. Only after dark, at around 9.00 pm, would I stroll around the farmhouse for some much needed fresh air, together with Sieb and Johannes, the farmer's sons. I slept in a well-concealed hiding place behind Johannes's bed. Every evening I removed the wooden partition separating his bed from mine and secured myself into this small cavity by locking the wooden plank from the inside. I slept on a mattress practically in the eaves of the sloping roof. This was the safest place for me in case trouble came knocking, which did happen on two occasions while I was with the Rosier family.

One of my close encounters occurred one morning when two German soldiers, both elderly men from a garrison in a larger village, cycled along the farm road leading to the house. The German Alsatian belonging to Jan Rosier was my hero because he barked like crazy and would have bitten the soldiers if it were not for Johannes calling the dog to back off. The Rosier farm was the largest in the area and the German soldiers were also running out of food. So they scrounged whatever they could get from the local farmers.

Jan Rosier was a real Friesian and detested the Germans. He was not going to give them anything! As for me, well I was sitting in my hiding place not knowing what was going on downstairs. I heard later that Jan had made out as though he did not understand a thing they were saying and they left empty handed. Jan's philosophy was that if you gave once they would come back for more. There were only two such incidents and I survived both. . . .

[D]uring the spring of 1944 I tried my hand at spinning wool on a wheel. I needed to keep busy as I had to stay inside. During this time I made at least one hundred balls of the best handmade wool and I was able to supply all of the family. . . . I stayed inside throughout the autumn and winter of 1944 while the boys went skating on the small canals that had frozen over, wearing their new jumpers. . . .

Having some work to do certainly helped me during this difficult time.

Eventually 14 April 1945 arrived and I was still living with the Rosiers. At first we heard many rumours of the events that were unfolding, but then news broke out that the Canadians had taken Dokkum to the north-east and that the fighting was practically over. Johannes and I took to the tandem bicycle and pedaled at great speed to the village. That was a day I never will forget because on the road to Dokkum we came across hundreds of German soldiers who had surrendered to the Allies. We stopped and all I could do was stare at them. I had to pinch myself to believe it was true.

Standing there it dawned on me that I was free at last. Johannes turned to me and shaking me out of my trance said, "Come on Willem, let's go home!" I have no words to describe the grin on his face and the emotions boiling up inside me. The realization of freedom sank in during the trip back to the Heskampen, which had been my home for nearly sixteen months.

TOMMY DICK

Context: Central Europe

Source: Tommy Dick. *Getting Out Alive*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2007, pp. 4–8. Used by permission.

The Nazi invasion of Hungary on March 19, 1944 brought the Holocaust to that country almost immediately, with the occupiers utilizing preexisting Hungarian antisemitic legislation and records in order to maximize the process of Jewish registration prior to arrest and deportation. Tommy Dick, who relates these initial measures, found himself increasingly subjected to tighter and tighter controls over his previously held freedoms. As he explains, once he was called up for compulsory labor service—a euphemism for slave labor—he tried to find ways to make the experience bearable. His one consolation was that if he was working in a labor battalion at least he would not be deported to certain (and immediate) death. This was his only solace, however; absent this from the equation and, he writes, “it was awful.”

Before the war, we experienced discrimination, but life was tolerable. My father was the director of a large brick factory. My mother's four sisters were all married to professional people and her father was an adviser to the government on fiscal and financial matters. I understood that during World War I—when Jewishness was still viewed as a matter of religion and not as a matter of race—my maternal grandfather became Lutheran partly because he had aspirations to be minister of finance.

With the outbreak of World War II, discrimination against Jews intensified. If one's parents were born Jewish, one was classified as a Jew. Universities had quotas placed on Jews to make sure they never represented more than a small fraction of the student body. This effectively barred them from getting a higher education and entering into professions. Jews were deemed too unreliable to be drafted into the

army, but they were drafted into labour battalions and sent to the Eastern front to do dangerous hard labour. Many Jews were driven on to minefields to test the ground before soldiers set foot on the area. Laws were passed to protect the “purity” of the Aryan race, making mixed marriages illegal. A Jewish man could be convicted of fornicating with an Aryan woman and would be imprisoned for years.

When I was in high school, students had to engage in elementary military training twice a week. Part of the training consisted of handling a gun, taking it apart, cleaning it and shooting with dummy bullets. As my parents had been born Jewish, I was deemed unreliable and had to train separately from the rest without a gun. Not that I liked guns, but the segregation was humiliating. Still, except that some kids were of the unfortunate age to be drafted into military labour battalions, life was stressful but bearable. Hungary was an ally of Germany but was, at least nominally, an independent country.

Then, on March 19, 1944, the country was occupied by the German army.

Now, years later, I can still recall the horror, the fear and my feeling of total helplessness during those first days of occupation. I remember how surprised we were to learn that the German occupiers considered the elimination of Jews—they called it the “Final Solution”—their number one priority. The German army had been in retreat since the battle of Stalingrad, which took place between August 21, 1942, and February 2, 1943. By the spring of 1944, the Germans were fighting for their survival, and yet they began to arrest prominent and not-so-prominent Jews. One wondered if they did not have strategically more important tasks. They must have had lists of Jewish people and addresses, obviously prepared with the help of Hungarian collaborators. With ruthless efficiency, they sought out Jews. No one knew the criteria that placed someone on the list. For Jews there was no escape from that terror. My father had a bag of necessities packed in case there was a knock on our front door.

Days after the occupation, billboards appeared on the streets declaring that Jews (defined as anyone with two Jewish-born grandparents) must wear a yellow Star of David sewn onto outer clothing while out in public. A curfew was ordered along with many other restrictions, all under the threat of arrest. New orders were posted daily. One listed all the locations of empty stores where Jews had to deliver their radios at designated times. The dilemma we faced is vivid in my memory. On the one hand, there was the humiliation of seeing an endless queue of compliant Jews lining up around the block to hand in their radios; on the other, the question

had to be asked: Was it worth risking arrest or having my father taken away for hanging on to a radio? To understand the fear one must also consider the hostility of the vast majority of Hungarians toward Jews. No one could be trusted as most Hungarians were collaborating with the Germans. It must have been easy to be defiant in Denmark where the king had demonstrated his support for Jews. This seemed to encourage the population to follow his example and resist. But nothing like that happened in Hungary. In fact, a large segment of the population actively supported the repressive measures against Jews, while others remained passive. Many couldn't care less. In many cases, I suspect there was a selfish element in this support as it was known that when Jewish families were deported from other German occupied countries, their homes were taken over and the contents, furnishings and other assets were easily looted by collaborators. So why would they not support the system? Why would they not behave like vultures?

I shall not forget the sad sight of my parents' friends who came to our apartment every day wearing the humiliating yellow star on their coats to bring us news of the arrests of friends and relatives. Soldiers would stop one on the street and demand documents. They were looking for escapees from auxiliary military units or for “parasites”—people who were not working.

I had a paper from one of my father's friends stating that I was employed by his company. The paper boosted my confidence, but I don't know if it would have stood the test if questioned. Luckily, I never had to find out. The soldiers conducting the raids had absolute authority and we had absolutely no rights. They could arrest someone because they did not like his or her looks. There was no remedy. One would simply disappear, so there was an impulse to stay at home, not venture out, not tempt fate, not stretch one's luck. Life during those very uncertain times had many facets. We vacillated between great caution and a devil-may-care attitude. Stay at home to avoid getting caught in a raid, or enjoy today because there might not be a tomorrow.

There was an equally compelling urge for hedonism and to use up what little time there was left to enjoy life to its fullest. Of course for a nineteen-year-old boy there is no greater enjoyment than sex. Luckily for me and for my friends, the nineteen-year-old girls in our social circles were of the same view. So we went out and went at it with gusto. I am sure that the parents of these society girls knew about their daughters' affairs, but they did not interfere. They too must have known this might be the end of the line, so they let them enjoy it if they could.

Those of us who were not arrested and whose parents were still at home were able to adjust to life's uncertainties in Budapest. But early in May, distressing news started to trickle in from around the country. Jews in the cities, towns and villages were being rounded up and held in barracks and sports arenas under deplorable conditions. The deportations had started. We knew about concentration camps, although we did not know about the gas chambers and ovens. The news from the outside made it evident that sooner or later it would be our turn. My life caved in on May 20, 1944, when notices appeared on the street ordering Jewish males of my age group to report to designated labour camps on June 5. We were told what clothing and equipment to bring and that the camps would be directed and staffed by the Hungarian army. We were also told that military discipline and law would apply. This meant that if one tried to escape, one could be court-martialed and shot as a deserter.

This was scary stuff. I had never been away from home except to summer camp and I knew this would be no summer camp. Where would we be sent? What would be the conditions in the camp? What kind of labour would we have to perform and how punitive would it be? Would the soldiers guarding us be humane or sadistic? I asked these questions, but expected no answers. I wondered if there was any advantage to becoming a forced labourer. Well, maybe. My friends and I reasoned that it was inevitable that after the deportation of all the Jews from the countryside was completed, they would turn to Budapest to finish off their deadly task. Perhaps from that point of view, the labour camp would temporarily provide a somewhat safer haven as the inmates might not be in their homes to be deported.

Other than that, it was awful.

MARIAN DOMANSKI

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Marian Domanski. *Fleeing from the Hunter*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 44–47. Used by permission.

While some Jews fleeing the Nazis managed to find a ready hiding place in their town or village, others were not so fortunate, and often had to roam far and wide before locating a safe refuge. Marian Domanski was one such person. Arriving in a small village in Poland, he managed to find sanctuary among a farming community, where he became part of the

local scene tending livestock. Unfortunately, his time in hiding here did not last long; as he writes toward the end of his account, local administrators received orders that villagers with horse-drawn carts were to be pressed into service so as to transport Jews to train stations—with deportation to death camps their final destination.

The liquidation of the ghettos, which had been rumoured among the farmers when I was in the village of Kozaki, turned out to be true, and almost everywhere the news of mass killings now became common knowledge. It was strange, because in the little town I came to next, in spite of all the rumours, the Jews didn't know of the liquidations, or maybe they knew, but didn't want to believe it.

But there was a different atmosphere in the air. While I was looking for work, sometimes the villagers' remarks put me on my guard, and I would realize that they were suspicious of me. I knew I would be in serious danger if they discovered my background. I was afraid to approach the village administrators to seek a proper night's accommodation and also didn't dare ask any of the farmers for food. Fortunately, at that time of summer, the gardens were full of vegetables, so I ate carrots and turnips that I picked from gardens. I slept in haystacks and dressed in a homespun, village-made coat jacket that I had received somewhere during my service. I had cracked heels from walking barefoot, and autumn was approaching.

I continued roaming from village to village, losing my sense of direction and circling among the Ukrainian villages that were located in that part of Poland. I hoped to find a farmer who needed my services—it was the only work I could do to survive—but I would need real luck at that time of the summer to find such an opportunity. In spite of all the difficulties, I stayed in the countryside and explored villages where, by instinct, I felt my survival was possible. I wandered to many places, sometimes returning to a village where I had been before because someone had informed me that a farmer there was looking for a herdsman. During my wanderings, I came upon a village named Sokoły, where a sign indicated the direction to the town of Persow, five kilometres away.

Instead of looking for a job in Sokoły, I decided to go to Persow.

The evening had already set in, and as I passed through the village centre, I walked past a group of women. It was common in those villages for women to gather together in the evenings and exchange information while their husbands talked in another group close by. One of the women asked me

where I was going. Feigning confidence, I replied, “To see my uncle in Persow.” She shot back, “What’s your uncle’s name?” She caught me off guard. I blurted out “Pinkowski,” a name I had heard elsewhere. She called out to a group of men standing nearby, “Hey, Franiuk, in that Persow town, is there a man by the name of Pinkowski?” “No!” came the answer, but I stubbornly insisted that my uncle did live there. With that, I strode off in the direction of Persow, leaving the interrogators behind. I didn’t realize that in that little town, located not more than five kilometres away and no bigger than the village I had just left, people knew each other. And so I went to Persow and headed for my imaginary Uncle Pinkowski, the name I soon came to adopt.

When I arrived in the town of Persow, I was surprised at how small it was. There weren’t any sidewalks and the road was just dirt, pressed down by use. On both sides of the dirt road stood single houses with no barns attached. There was only one main road, with one or two shops, and a few more houses were scattered around.

On arrival in a new place it was my habit to explore what kind of people lived there. This time, I was more concerned about a roof over my head and therefore I didn’t follow my usual custom, but knocked on a door straight away. It was too good to be true—the people were not only pleasant, but also Jewish. It turned out that nearly the whole town was Jewish and because it was small—similar to Dubeczno—there was no ghetto there. It didn’t mean, however, that the Germans had forgotten them. Close by, the Sobibor death camp was already working at full capacity. Perhaps the town was too small for the Germans to be bothered with yet, or perhaps it was their policy to leave Jews alone in certain places, to allay suspicion until their liquidation was about to be completed.

But now I stood before a kindly Jewish tailor who invited me to stay the night at his home. In the course of our conversation, the family learned about my difficulties and my attempts at finding work. The tailor told me not to worry. “I have three children and will welcome you as my fourth,” he said. I felt grateful and secure. At last I had found someone who was prepared to take care of me.

As a tailor, my host had customers among the local farmers. After several days, he called me to his workroom and introduced me to a man who wished to hire me to look after his cows for the fall season. At the end of the season, I would come back to my newly-adopted family. To my great surprise, the man sitting in the workroom was Franiuk, from the village of Sokoły, who had said that in Persow there was no family named Pinkowski. So it turned out that, contrary to

my intentions, the farmer for whom I was to work knew that I was a Jew. When riding with him in his horse-drawn cart, he instructed me not to tell anyone where he had brought me from or of my heritage. He then made a few suggestions, one of them being that the name Czesiek (short for Czesław) would sound more authentic than Grzegorz (Gregory), the name I had been known by in the village of Barczewo. From then on, I became known as Czesław Pinkowski. It felt strange and ironic to be with a farmer who was aware of my identity. All summer I had been running away from farmers who suspected my heritage, and now I was conspiring with one in the hope that no one else would learn the truth.

The next day, I led Franiuk’s cows to the pasture, where I met other boys looking after cows. I introduced myself as Czesław Pinkowski and from that day on I tried to blend in and be part of the community. I was the only non-local among them. Unlike other villages, in Sokoły there were no hired servants except for me; every boy was looking after his own family’s cows. But the boys treated me like one of the crowd; they of course didn’t know my heritage, and were very friendly toward me. I was part of the group and even dressed like them, with bare feet and tanned skin from being outdoors all the time. I even spoke like them. They were Ukrainian and, since I had spoken Ukrainian before in Kozaki and Barczewo, I had the opportunity to expand my knowledge of the language and become more fluent.

The boys were industrious and I soon learned from them how to weave and shape baskets. We collected materials on our way to the meadows. White willow trees grew by the roadside and by the drainage ditches. At the other end of the village was a forest of mixed trees and among them were slim junipers that were useful for basket-making. I would proudly bring some new baskets to Franiuk from time to time. Time passed and the potato harvest had started and rainy days became more frequent. With a sack over my head for protection against the rain and a whip in my hand, I looked after Franiuk’s cows and in exchange I enjoyed a relatively comfortable life with the friendship of Franiuk, his wife and their two children, and the village boys.

One day in the forest, while herding the cows on the other side of the village, I discovered an ideal spot to build a hiding place. Jurek, the boy from Warsaw, and I used to discuss such plans when we were together in Kozaki. But a truly safe hiding place was only a dream. The good times in Sokoły didn’t last—the Germans took care of that. In the autumn of 1942, the Nazis proceeded with their plan to eliminate all the remaining Jews in Poland, particularly those still living in small towns surrounded by villages. The time for the

liquidation in our area arrived in October and there were soon no more opportunities for Jews to run away before the transports to the death camps began. All of the village administrators received orders from the municipalities to recruit villagers with horse-drawn carts to transport Jews from all the small towns and villages to the railway stations. There, the Jews were to be loaded onto freight trains and transported to killing centres.

NATHAN DUNKELMAN

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Phyllis Rozencwjic Dunkelman and Maryanne McLoughlin. *In Fire & In Flowers: The Holocaust Memoirs of Nathan and Phyllis Dunkelman*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2014, pp. 9–22. Used by permission.

Nathan Dunkelman and his family lived in the Jewish district of Łódź. In this account, readers are provided with a portrait of life in the Łódź ghetto. The account is told in the third person, with Nathan's own voice muted. Nonetheless, we see how this one person perceived the developments around him, and, through this, a short history of the Łódź ghetto is provided. Nathan's account is highly detailed and is rich in its narrative style, which extends through the summer of 1944 and the liquidation of the ghetto. It became the last major ghetto surviving in Nazi Europe.

Nathan and his family soon saw what the Germans were capable of. His father lost his business. Markets were closed to Jews. So his father could not sell the dishware and porcelain. Soon they were enclosed in a ghetto where there were few opportunities.

In 1940, the Nazis created a separate district for the Jews in northern Łódź, in the Old Town of Łódź and in the adjacent Baluty Quarter, one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Łódź. These were the most run down and impoverished parts of the city. The article “The Establishment of the Litzmannstadt [Łódź] Ghetto” explains that the decree, issued by the Chief of Police Johann Schäfer, announcing the “opening of a separated district for Jews in Łódź” appeared on February 8, 1940, in the newspaper *Lodscher Zeitung*. The decree indicated the borders of the ghetto. Non-Jews who had lived in the ghetto area were forced out. A stockade and barbed wire enclosed the ghetto. After *Pesach* (Passover), April 23–29, 1940, the ghetto was

sealed off from the rest of the city on April 30, 1940. According to the article “Litzmannstadt Ghetto: Introduction” over 180,000 people were packed into an area of 4.13 square kilometers.

The ghetto was like a city, with many streets. Three bridges, guarded by *Schupo*, or *Schutzpolizei*, crossed over to the other sections of the ghetto. In the middle were the “Aryans” or non-Jews. The Jews of Łódź, including some Jewish refugees, were moved into the homes on these streets, crowded into apartments and houses. Nathan's street became a ghetto street, so their home where they had lived for twenty-nine years, was in the ghetto. Their apartment was in a three story building with quite a few apartments. In the family apartment were his father, mother, aunt, and five sons. The Germans did not move anyone else into the apartment.

In 1940, Nathan's father, Yacub, became seriously ill with an infection; a carbuncle, a cluster of boils, had become badly infected, spreading over his entire back, and had to be operated on. What his father didn't know was that he “had sugar” or diabetes. There was no medication in the ghetto for this. Nathan's father died during surgery. He was only thirty-nine years old.

During this time, horrible things were going on. People were living on top of other people. When Nathan was twelve years old, and he was confined to the Łódź Ghetto, his schooling ended. There was only underground schooling in the ghetto, and Nathan could not go to the underground schools because he had to work. Nathan said that his mind was not on schooling but on surviving. With their father and grandfather dead, Nathan, thirteen years old, and his older brother, Osher, fourteen years old, had to support the family. They worked for the Sanitation Committee clearing out out-houses. They had to put in a certain number of hours each day because there were so many yards to clean up. This work was very hard.

Luckily his mother, Sara, did not have to go out to work. His mother had very high blood pressure and edema (retaining fluid). They told her not to drink anything. Nathan cooked her food without water until it was pasty. This is what she ate. The only treatment that was efficacious at that time in Europe was leech therapy. The saliva of leeches contains enzymes that can help lower blood pressure. But Nathan and his mother had no access to leeches, so his mother had to stay in bed most of the time.

Because they were sanitation workers, Nathan and Osher had a special ration. Food was rationed in the ghetto from June 2, 1940. . . .

Most people were given ration cards for one pound of bread per person for a week.

In other ghettos, such as Warsaw, food, medicine, and such were smuggled in from outside the ghetto. However, in Łódź this was difficult if not impossible because the Jews were dependent on the Germans for food, medicine, and other necessities. The only legal currency in the ghetto were specially created ghetto marks, the so-called “rumki” or “chaimki” named after the head of the Ältestenrat (Council of Elders), Chaim Rumkowski. Starving Jews traded their remaining possessions and currency for the ghetto marks at the Bank for the Purchase of Valuable Objects and Clothing, a bank founded by Rumkowski. With this currency they bought what they could.

Every week Nathan’s mother went down to the food distribution center where she was given something to cook. The family got more than the others because of the brothers’ demanding work. After a day’s work, Nathan and Osher sat in the house. They were young but exhausted by the work. They went to bed early and slept. There wasn’t much to do in the ghetto and besides they were tired.

In addition to special rations, Nathan and Osher were given tickets for Jewish theatre that was performed in the ghetto. This was a privilege extended to sanitary workers and a treat for the brothers.

When he was thirteen years old in 1940, Nathan should have had his Bar Mitzvah. However it was too hard to make one in the ghetto, especially without his father. People prayed in their houses and yards; they did not go to synagogue. Although it was his religious duty at thirteen years of age, Nathan was not able to fulfill the duty of “laying on” the tefillin until after the war. He did pray, asking G-d many times how it was possible that the good Jews who believed in him were being persecuted and murdered in the ghetto.

Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, a controversial figure, was the chairman of the Ältestenrat (Council of Elders) in the Łódź ghetto. Many loathed him. Others were grateful to him. Nathan said he didn’t know Rumkowski; he never had a close connection to him. Nathan had only seen Rumkowski from a distance; Rumkowski, his white hair billowing, was riding in a carriage protected by two Jewish policemen. Nathan said that Rumkowski was a good old man and intelligent. Rumkowski believed that if the Łódź Jews became indispensable to the war effort, the Germans would leave them in peace. Therefore Rumkowski petitioned the Nazis, asking them to deliver raw materials to the ghetto where workers would transform these raw materials into finished

products, such as military uniforms, shoes, and weapons. Orders placed by private individuals were also filled. . . .

Rumkowski believed in survival through work; he set up over 120 factories and found the thousands of workers needed to operate them. For a long time the German occupiers needed the Łódź ghetto, and that is the reason it continued to exist. The Łódź Ghetto lasted longer than any other ghetto, except Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, a special case.

Nathan says that Rumkowski was controversial because he was asked to do the impossible. Rumkowski was the leader of the ghetto, and people believed he had the responsibility to protect them from harm and supply them with basic necessities such as heat, work, food, housing, and health and welfare services—for 230,000 people. Yet he was also the one asked to supply the Gestapo with whatever they wanted, including people. They would come to him and say, “We need 50,000 Jews.” Rumkowski tried to deal with the Gestapo, saying he could give them 10,000 or 20,000, whatever. He made these deals and saved people’s lives for a time. According to Nathan, some people said he was an evil man; others, that he was a good man. Nathan thinks that Rumkowski had no choice but did the best he could do, considering he was forced to make “choiceless choices.” Ultimately he had to deliver what the Germans wanted. . . .

But from the end of 1942 until 1944, the selections were halted because the Germans needed the products produced in the Łódź ghetto factories.

Many people hid from these selections, not coming out until the selections were over. They hid in cellars and attics, outhouses and cemeteries, wherever people thought would be safe. After two or three days, up to a week, people hid and then came out until the next selection. Some people managed to escape the ghetto. This was extremely difficult because there was not a sewer system in Łódź as there was in the Warsaw Ghetto. Moreover, the Jews did not work outside but inside the ghetto. The escapees went over to the Polish side of Łódź. Some survived; some did not. Nathan met some of the survivors after the war. They had given away whatever they had, money and jewelry, whatever they had. This was the price for a life.

Nathan’s family was not wealthy. But he remembers exactly that in 1940—and he does not know what happened to precipitate this—his father and mother gave the children some money to hide on their bodies; in case it was needed, they would have this money. Then they came to the ghetto, and the money was used little-by-little for buying food.

Jews from Łódź were not the only people in the ghetto. Twenty thousand Jews from outlying areas and also from other countries such as Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia were sent to the Łódź Ghetto in the fall of 1941. Nathan remembers seeing Jews that had come from Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Luxembourg. They were well-dressed, well-educated, nice people, mostly elderly. These Western European Jews were used to better lives than the Polish Jews. Nathan said they could not stand the hunger and the cold. When he was walking in the ghetto streets, he saw their swollen corpse-like bodies. Many of the Western Europeans had died like flies. Most of these newcomers never adjusted to ghetto life. . . . They were sent seventy kilometers from Łódź to Chelmno death camp and murdered in the gas vans sometime in April and May of 1942.

Nathan said that thousands of “gypsies” (Roma) were also sent to the Łódź Ghetto from Burgenland, a multi-ethnic Austrian state, bordering Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia. . . .

In December 1941, all the Roma were transported to Chelmno death camp, just days after it opened, where they were murdered in the gas vans. Nathan and his family knew nothing about Chelmno. They knew nothing about what was going on outside the ghetto, nor did they know the course of the war. Nathan said, “Maybe others did, but none of my family knew what was going on—even to the last minute.”

The worst selection was the *Gehsperre Aktion* (curfew action) carried out in September of 1942. On September 4, Rumkowski made a speech, called the “Give Me Your Children Speech.” In this speech, addressed to the mothers of the Łódź Ghetto, Rumkowski begged them to give him their children. The mothers refused. . . .

During the *Gehsperre Aktion*, ghetto residents were forced to remain in their homes. Jewish policemen, supervised by the German police, went into homes, one by one, searched them, brutally dragging away children, the handicapped, ill and elderly, and transporting them to Chelmno death camp where they were murdered. (Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration camp had not yet been built.) About 16,000 Łódź Jews were murdered, including 5,800 children under ten years old, elderly over sixty-five, and the infirm, as well as those in the hospitals. The Nazis wanted no one in the Łódź Ghetto who could not work. Nathan did not know, however, at the time where they were being taken.

Nathan’s grandfather was one of those taken away during this selection. His grandfather was a pious Jew who had believed in G-d all his life. His mission in life was to study. His grandfather had many old books bound in leather.

People would come and say that they would like to buy one of these books. His grandfather always said, “No. I will never sell these because they belong to my grandchildren.” These books like everything else were destroyed when the ghetto was destroyed by fire.

Life in the ghetto continued, but it wasn’t much of a life. Working conditions were cruel. There was hardship and hunger. People worked to pay for their rations. People were given a ration of a loaf of bread for a week and ate that in a day or two. If they had money to buy extra food, they ate that in the next two or three days and then starved themselves until the week was up when they received another food ration. First people became like skeletons. Next they swelled up from edema and died in the streets.

Nathan and his brother brought home enough food for the first five or six days for their family. It was not a lot of food, but they survived. Whatever money they had, they spent.

The ghetto was horrible—worse, Nathan says, than the concentration camp. Thousands of people died of starvation, disease, and cold.

People prayed every day, three times a day. Yet although they prayed, they believed G-d had forgotten them.

By June of 1944, the Germans knew that the Soviet Red Army was advancing closer to Poland. Therefore, they had to liquidate the ghetto as quickly as possible. The liquidation was accomplished between June 23 and August 29. Nathan remembers that in the summer Hans Biebow, the German Chief of the Ghetto Administration, who had played a major part in the selection process, called the Jews together at the clothing factory. He spoke to them. “*Mein Juden*, you will all go to the Reich, to Germany, to work. We need you there. Take your pots and pans. Take your family. Take everything you possess. You are going to the Reich to work.” . . .

The Łódź Jews did not know that this was the end. Although perhaps some few knew, Nathan’s mother, Sara, Nathan, and his brothers didn’t know. They believed they were going to work in the “old” Reich.

The Germans wanted to burn everything, so there would be no evidence. Every day another shipment of Jews was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. Nathan and his brothers were assigned to the ghetto clean up, so they were among the last ones to leave. His mother was with them until the last minute.

That summer of 1944, Nathan became very ill. He had typhoid—diarrhea with blood—and lost weight. He was sick for two or three weeks when their summons to the transport came. People called them “wedding invitations.” People

were never told in advance what would happen or when. Within minutes the SS wanted them ready for the trains. Called in August 1944, Nathan and the rest of his family were ready.

HORST PETER EISFELDER

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Horst Peter Eisfelder. *Chinese Exile: My Years in Shanghai and Nanking*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003, pp. 5–18. Used by permission.

In this account Peter Eisfelder, a young German Jew, recounts the efforts his parents made to secure a safe passage out of Germany from an early date in the Nazi period. It is an excellent review of the struggle facing many German Jews throughout the 1930s, with various options tried and found wanting. With options for the United States, Costa Rica, and Australia falling through, one last chance was the Chinese city of Shanghai—a place in which the immigration regulations were more relaxed than they were practically everywhere else around the world. Eisfelder’s testimony is rich in detail, conveying a story that is little-known outside of a narrow readership.

My parents, Ludwig Leopold (Louis) and Hedwig Eisfelder, foresaw the inevitable outcome of Hitler’s policies and tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to leave Germany from the very early days of the Nazi ascendancy. They both turned forty years of age shortly after Hitler came to power in 1933.

The first and most obvious choice for many people during those days was to migrate to the USA, but at that time America was experiencing the depths of the Great Economic Depression. Entry could only be gained if one could produce an “Affidavit”—evidence that a person within the United States was willing to declare, under oath, that they had sufficient financial assets to guarantee that “the new arrival” would not burden the country’s social services for two years.

One could well have assumed that my family’s solution to the problem was simple, given my father’s considerably older brother Hugo lived in New York and was a wealthy man. He had moved to America before the turn of the twentieth century and it was said that in the mid-1920s he had bought out (or was bought out) by his business partner for something like a million dollars, a staggering sum in those far-off days. Sure, he too lost a great deal during the stock market crash of 1929, but there was more than enough left to

ensure him a comfortable retirement. Hugo, however, made it absolutely clear to my father that whilst he was prepared to render some financial aid, namely exactly US \$1000, such assistance would only be given upon our arrival in any country other than the United States! (the reasons behind this are a long story in itself).

Consequently, my father applied to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) for assistance. HIAS was an old-established institution with offices around the globe, including Berlin, who declared themselves willing and able to help us reach the Argentine, where they operated several Jewish farming communities. As a result, the four members of my family learnt Spanish, but after several years of evening classes, it became evident that nothing would come of the frequent promises made by the HIAS staff. As things became increasingly uncomfortable in Hitler’s Third Reich, new plans were made, this time to reach Costa Rica, a seemingly quiet and attractive country. Again, however, nothing eventuated as neither the Argentine nor Costa Rica was issuing entry visas.

In an endeavor to get as far away as possible from the looming prospect of war in Europe, Australia looked like a promising alternative. Rumour had it that a landing permit could be gained with evidence of good health and at least £200 (\$400). Although a princely sum in those days, Australian officials deemed it sufficient capital for a family to establish itself in business and prevent any financial burden on the nation.

Our efforts to leave Germany at that time were managed by the *Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland* (Aid Union of German Jews). They informed my parents that apart from the necessary £200, which we could raise thanks to Uncle Hugo’s promise of money, evidence was also required of our ability to conduct some trade, profession or craft. As both my parents were keen cooks, good at baking and producing the most fanciful of cakes, they proposed to open a cake shop upon arrival in Adelaide. Our family’s hopes were set on Adelaide as a new home “because it was neither too large nor too small.” In order to convince the *Hilfsverein* of their ability to produce cakes of a high standard, my parents were asked to work for one day at *Dobrin*, Berlin’s leading Jewish cake shop and caterer, to its management’s satisfaction. While my parents performed to everyone’s approval, the firm’s apprentice, young Richard Stern, also watched them. Many years later in Melbourne, Richard and I were to become very close friends.

With all the experts now certain we would have no difficulty in gaining an entry permit for Australia, preparations

were set in motion to leave the land of our birth, where our ancestors had lived and toiled for untold generations, and for which my father had fought in the bitter battles of the First World War. We decided to apply for passports to facilitate a quick departure once we received the Australian landing permit. It was a risky decision during those days of Nazi madness when passports issued to Jews usually expired within six months. Once the passports were issued, we would have to leave the country before their expiry date, or risk imprisonment in a concentration camp and face almost certain death. Consequently, after several months of anxiously awaiting news from Australia, all of us were greatly disappointed and despairing when the telegram arrived from Canberra saying: “His Majesty’s Government regrets that it is unable to grant your request for an entry permit.” Hoping against hope that we had misunderstood the telegram’s content, my uncle Alfred, a linguistic expert, was called in to confirm the news.

Now we had to act quickly. There was very little time left before our passports expired and with every door shut, Shanghai remained the only choice. When my father mentioned this to his Jewish employer, he responded: “Since when have you become an adventurer?” His boss thought it was safer to take one’s chances in Germany than risk the unknown quantity of Shanghai. He was not alone in this view. No one seemed to know much, if anything, about the place, not even its exact location. Judging by my school atlas, Shanghai seemed to be on the coast just as its Chinese name implied. *Shang* “upon” and *Hai* (the) “sea.” So it transpired that swimsuits were bought for all of the family in anticipation of glorious beaches that didn’t exist—a further miscalculation on our part, as Shanghai is quite a long way from the ocean. The good people at the *Hilfsverein* tried to be helpful. Through their contacts around the globe, they had answers to every query. When we asked about our destination, their answer was very definite: “It is colder in winter and warmer in summer.” Thus, it seemed, exhausted their knowledge of Shanghai.

Exactly a year earlier Shanghai had been the scene of heavy fighting between Japanese invaders and the Chinese who frantically tried to fight them off. The fighting resulted in the death of several thousand innocent civilians. Many sought refuge in the neutral territories of Shanghai’s International Settlement and French Concession, but even these regions suffered enormous damage to lives and property as the result of misaimed bombs.

For all our desperate planning, heading into the war zone of Shanghai now seemed like leaping from the frying pan

into the fire. Yet left with little choice, we took up the challenge and obtained tickets from the Italian shipping line Lloyd Triestino for passage from Trieste to Shanghai on the passenger line *Conte Verde*. Our departure was booked for 30 October 1938.

As my bar mitzvah had been planned for late November, it was hurriedly brought forward to be celebrated ten days before our departure from Berlin. After my performance at Synagogue, the family gathered at our apartment to celebrate the event. Our guests found the table spread with delicious, fancy cakes prepared by my parents just for the occasion. Sadly, it would be the last time many of my relatives would be together. Only three relatives would follow us to Shanghai and only two survived. I met with those two in New York some thirty-eight years later. All my other relatives fell victim to the Holocaust.

We left Berlin on 26 October 1938, travelling by train via Vienna, Zagreb in Yugoslavia and on to Trieste. On reaching the German border, we were subjected to a rigorous inspection by customs. No one was allowed to leave the country with any valuables or German currency. Only foreign currency to the value of ten German marks or just over US\$2 per person was allowed to be taken out. During inspection of our belongings, one of the customs officers tore open a packet of *Persil* washing powder, suspecting hidden jewellery.

Covered from head to foot with the stuff, the officer became furious and barked out: “Has anyone still got German currency?” My brother Erwin, almost two years my senior, piped up and said most innocently, “Yes, I still have two *Pfenniger* (pennies).” Even though this did not even amount to a fraction of a US cent, it made the officer even angrier. “Out with you, everyone *out!*” he shouted. My mother and our travel companions, a lady acquaintance and her twelve-year-old daughter were consequently marched off and subjected to intimate body searches. We were released only at the very last moment, as the train was about to move on and out of Hitler’s “Thousand Year Reich.”

Unlike so many others, we were not penniless when we arrived in Trieste. A distant relative living in Italy had mailed an envelope containing 1000 Italian lire in notes to our hotel. I don’t know the equivalent value in American dollars, but it was certainly enough to allow us a few carefree days in the city.

We boarded the *Conte Verde* on 30 October for a voyage that would prove memorable for many reasons—more than the fact that I was often seasick and celebrated my thirteenth birthday at sea. We had many adventures on that journey,

much of which I have written about in another narrative. I can still vividly recollect our arrival at the docks the evening we sailed. None of us Eisfelders had ever seen an ocean liner before and on reaching the waterfront we were duly impressed, perhaps in awe, of the huge *Conte Verde* brightly illuminated against the dark sky. Even though it was close to midnight before we settled into our four-berth “Tourist Class” cabin, a splendid repast was awaiting us in the dining room. Indeed, that’s how it was for the entire four-week voyage; food was plentiful and very, very good, but regretfully I was mostly too seasick to enjoy it. . . .

While there were about another hundred and fifty German-speaking Jewish refugees on board, few of them were children. I found it difficult to communicate with some of them as they spoke dialects I could not understand. Most of the time at sea I was confined to my bed and felt miserable.

Whenever the liner reached port, I was quick to recover and take the opportunity to see a fair bit of the world en route, although the boat never stayed in a port for more than a few hours. I have vague recollections of wandering the streets of Venice, of being taken around Brindisi by horse drawn coach and seeing Port Said at night. I recall witnessing a magnificent sunset over the Egyptian Desert as we moved through the Red Sea, of visiting Aden and viewing Bombay at night. I saw Colombo by taxi, monkeys in Singapore’s Botanical Garden, marveling at the display of neon lights all over Manila that even outlined the city’s churches. I even recall enjoying coffee and cakes at a Hong Kong hotel restaurant. Of course the Italian lire we were given in Trieste held no value ashore, but we managed well with a sum of English sterling my mother had earned baby-sitting a young child travelling first class to India.

During our voyage news reached us of the horrors taking place in Europe. News gleaned by fellow passengers from English language newspapers in Bombay told us of the notorious *Krystallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) on 9 November 1938, and of the horror of Nazi mobs burning synagogues all over Germany, taking thousands of Jews into concentration camps and killing a good many in the process.

When, on the morning of Thursday 24 November, as the *Conte Verde* steamed up the Whangpoo River, we gained our first glimpse of our future hometown, were we surprised! We had a vague notion of what Chinese architecture looked like, taken from such reliable sources as the “Willow Pattern” tea set. What we expected to see were small huts with swept up roofs, bamboo or mud-brick walls. What we saw instead looked like a miniature version of Manhattan—skyscrapers larger than any we had seen in Europe! It seemed

unbelievable that this remote corner of the globe had been touched by an American influence yet to reach Europe. We were pleasantly surprised to see such evidence of Western civilization.

After the *Conte Verde* berthed in Shanghai, several representatives of the International Committee, a local aid committee, met the ship to greet the Jewish refugee migrants. The committee was generally referred to as the “Komor Committee” after its chief executive Paul Komor. He was a Hungarian national and not Jewish. It seems that Mr. Komor also had some close links to the German Consulate in Shanghai.

In anticipation of our arrival, the committee had already arranged accommodation. Each family was duly handed a slip of paper with the address of their new home. We were also instructed to report to the committee rooms the next day for information regarding our future activities and advice about jobs, careers and schooling.

Disembarking along the Shanghai and Hongkew Wharf, we were then carried by small tender (ferry) a couple of kilometers upstream to the customs shed. By the time we had cleared customs it was late in the afternoon and, being a winter’s day, it was also quite dark. On leaving the shed we found ourselves in front of the main customs house, a very imposing building many stories high. From its large clock tower, bells chimed hourly, the peel heard far and wide. Along the street even larger and more impressive buildings towered, headquarters of banks, newspapers, the twenty-story Cathay Hotel (now called Peace Hotel) and equally tall Broadway Mansions (now Shanghai Mansions).

Despite careful planning, most of our luggage failed to arrive at Trieste before we left for Shanghai. With Germany having occupied the Sudetenland at that time, German authorities redirected many trains, emptying their contents to make room for troops and guns. Consequently, as we now boarded a sleek taxicab and gave the Chinese driver the slip of paper bearing our new address, we held all our worldly possessions in our hands, in just a few small suitcases. . . .

To me, a strange town always looks distinctly different the first time I look at it. The many new sights held an atmosphere of anticipation and anxiety for me until I began to find my bearings and become more familiar with my new surroundings.

As our taxi made its way past the big buildings of the “Bund” (an Indian term meaning embankment), Shanghai’s best-known street along the waterfront, we pondered the magnificent accommodation we were being taken to. As the driver crossed Garden Bridge, a large bridge spanning

the Soochow Creek, the cab was forced to slow to a halt in front of a small sentry box positioned halfway across. A dwarfish figure of a Japanese soldier appeared from the sentry box and barked: “*Pass neezzanee* (show your passes),” causing the Chinese driver to bow as low as he could while holding up some kind of document. The soldier peered at us *foreigners* and, with a growl in his voice, indicated our vehicle could proceed.

It seemed we had now entered that part of the International Settlement north of Soochow Creek, a creek perhaps twice as wide as the Yarra River downtown in Melbourne. This section of the International Settlement formed the Japanese defence sector and had been used by the Japanese as a base for their 1937 invasion of China. During the fighting in August and September 1937, as China tried to expel the Japanese from this bridgehead, large sections of this part of the International Settlement were laid waste. Although foreign-owned wharves and warehouses behind high walls along the riverfront had largely been spared, very little else remained. However, there was an isolated house here and there, and the occasional cluster of houses only slightly damaged and made habitable again. As we now drove on into the night along unlit streets, all we could make out of this desolate expanse were shells of burnt-out homes, shops and the skeletons of factories. We saw very few people.

Less than a kilometer down the road we came upon another bridge spanning a smaller creek and manned with yet another Japanese soldier wishing to inspect the driver’s pass. As we proceeded, we passed a column of Japanese soldiers marching in the opposite direction. What struck us with awe was the fact that many of them were wearing a mask over their nose and mouth. In our innocent ignorance we saw this as a muzzle of some kind, possibly inflicted as a punishment. Only later did we learn that this was a widely practiced health measure designed to prevent the spread of infections such as the common cold.

As we drew closer to our destination, the driver indicated that he could not find the address, ‘125/3 Wayside Road’ that we had given him. Due to the fighting, burning and looting some twelve months earlier, few street signs or street lights remained to guide us, and houses rarely displayed numbers. In short, we found ourselves amid a wilderness of ruins, in a strange city in an even stranger land, lacking a common language with the driver and in almost pitch darkness. In spite of our predicament, I had great confidence that my parents would find a way out.

Suddenly out of this darkness a towering figure loomed, turbaned, with a flowing black beard, dressed in a uniform

and carrying a huge electric torch. He was an Indian Sikh and member of an elite unit of the International Settlement’s Police Force. His unit was housed in barracks undamaged by war, a magnificent multi-storey apartment house not far from where we were stranded. He was both courteous and helpful, quickly locating our new home in a little lane off the main street.

As we drew up alongside the house, we saw a small Russian Church to our right and to our left, a fairly respectable three-storey house similar to many found in London. An elderly Russian lady, who had obviously been expecting us, greeted us at the door with a flood of Russian words. Like so many of her compatriots who had fled ‘Mother Russia’ around 1917, she considered her sojourn here in China a purely temporary arrangement. She, and thousands like her, lived in the few remaining houses of Hongkew, as this part of town was called, ready to leave at short notice and return to a Russian ruled by a Tsar and mad monks. Speaking only Russian and dutiful churchgoers, their homes were decorated with pictures of the Tsar and his family and the Imperial Russian flag occupied the place of honour. Their boys wore the uniforms of Tsarist military cadets, indicating their readiness to fight and shed blood for the restoration of the despotic regime.

Our new landlady led us upstairs to a room on the second floor that was to be our home. It was sparsely furnished but still roomy, about 4 m by 7 m and had large windows. It also had a fully enclosed verandah, virtually another room, perhaps 4 m by 2 m in size. It was late evening when we arrived and what was perhaps more important than our immediate surroundings was the thought of food. We had eaten our last meal on board the *Conte Verde* very early that morning and we had nothing edible, nor any crockery, cutlery or kitchenware of any kind in our small suitcases. Still, rescue it seemed was not too far away.

From the room below we heard what sounded like the old German Imperial Anthem, *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz*. As our landlady led us downstairs, we discovered it was only the tune we recognized; it was identical to the melody of the former Austrian anthem being played on a creaky gramophone by the Schönfeld family in the room below. Mr Schönfeld had fought in the Austrian Army during the First World War and was taken prisoner by the Russians. He subsequently spent many years in their country and acquired a fluent knowledge of their language. Mr Schönfeld had two sons about the same age as my brother Erwin and me. Both became residents of Melbourne after the war, the older son writing under the pen name of “Robert Amos,” author of many radio and TV plays.

Mr. Schönfeld escorted us to a small Russian general store in Wayside Road, which in later years became part of the commercial hub of the Ghetto. We purchased soap, towels and a few other odds and ends, before proceeding on, under Mr. Schönfeld's guidance, to a Russian restaurant known as The Olympic. It was nestled among a long line of more or less roofless and floorless shops. Here our spirits were revived by a plate of *borsht*, a traditional Russian soup made from redbeets, potatoes, cabbage, meat and a final addition of fresh cream. This was followed by a big tureen filled with frankfurters floating in pink water and a generous helping of potato salad. To quench our thirst we drank *kwass*, a Russian lemonade supposedly made from fermenting bread. In hindsight though, I am certain that what we actually drank was just plain lemonade (or "7 Up" as it is called in the USA), made from water, carbon dioxide, sugar and citric acid. Having missed out on many meals on board ship, I greatly enjoyed this modest feast.

On returning to our quarters, we finally began to take in the scene around us. It was cold and wintry, a situation made even more difficult as we had no bedding or much in the way of spare clothing. We covered ourselves with everything we had, from overcoats to raincoats, and managed to settle down for the first night in our new home. Yes indeed, as they had told us in Berlin, Shanghai was colder in winter and warmer in summer! In time we would experience summer shade temperatures in excess of 39° C with very high humidity as the rule rather than the exception. But for now, winter brought the mercury down to hover around freezing point, snow would fall and sometimes remain on the ground long enough to form a white mantle. Having so little to rug ourselves up in, and no means of heating our room, our first few nights in Shanghai fell well short of the tropical beaches we had expected to find.

ELKA EKSTEIN

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Elka Ekstein. *Chutzpe un Draystkayt: A Teenager with Chutzpah and Tenacity in the Holocaust*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2006, pp. 24–28. Used by permission.

Having survived the final liquidation of the Bialystok ghetto in August 1943, Elka Ekstein and her friends hid in a bunker in the city, from which they managed to hold body and soul together in trying circumstances. Living between an existence in

hiding and outside forays to obtain food and water, the group was finally found and arrested by the Germans in November 1943. In this account Elka shows how she managed to survive despite having contracted typhus, and that, in an astonishing turn of fortune, she was sent to a work camp rather than being murdered on the spot at the time of her arrest.

The second selection in the Bialystok Ghetto, the selection that was to leave the area *Judenrein* or "cleansed of Jews," began at 4:00 am on 16 August 1943. That's when the Germans entered the ghetto, occupied the factories and set up their headquarters in the Jewish Council building.

Sonia and I and Sonia's friend from Grodno, Nehu Galante, were up and getting ready to go to work when we heard that the gates of the ghetto were already closed and they would not let the outside workers leave. The Germans made loud announcements that everyone was to gather on the square in order to be deported to Lublin for work. We could bring with us one package weighing no more than five kilograms.

On that morning a group of young Jews retaliated. They had stored arms and were determined to fight back. I can't remember now whether or not I knew there was going to be an uprising. We heard the sounds of so much shooting, but the Germans threw a grenade into the wooden house where the young ones were hiding and burned it down with most of the rebels still inside. Those who ran away were shot immediately. I was on the square by that time looking for a place to hide and saw that house burn down.

The ghetto was being liquidated and there were no more hiding places. Apparently 40,000 Jews were taken away during that *Aktion*, most of them going to Treblinka, the last transport of Jews to be taken there. On 18 August the buildings of Treblinka were all demolished and new grass grown over the site so there was no sign that the place had ever existed.

An official from the *Judenrat* was standing on Kupiecka Street with a few Nazis and they were calling out the names of families who were to be allowed to continue working in the factories. We realized then that some Jews were going to be left in the ghetto and began to think again about hiding.

Sonia, Neha and I stood on the square beside a big white brick building. I think it was on Jurowiecka Street. Haike Niselkovski, another friend of Sonia's, lived there. We saw people running into that house, which gave us the feeling that there was a bunker in there. This house was not far from the wooden house that had been burned down.

A boy from Grodno, a neighbor of ours, was standing on the square with me. He wanted to come with us but I couldn't

make more trouble for the people in the house and just drifted away from him. I never saw him again.

We followed the people into the bunker, a disguised room right up beside the wall of the building. It was behind a wardrobe and a small table stood nearby. At first the people inside didn't want to let us in and said there was no more room for us. I told them that if they didn't let us in I would inform the Nazis and we would all die. So they let us in.

There were quite a few of us in that hidden room, including the three Golding sisters, Dora, Sara and Chayele, who had a son my age and also an older daughter who ran away from the house. We never heard of her again. There was also another Chaya, Chaya Sojka and her sister-in-law, Liza. Liza was married to Chaya Sojka's brother. Several of the women's husbands were there and a couple of other men whose names I don't remember. Haike Niselkowski, Neha Galante, Sonia and I hid with them. . . .

During the first six weeks no one went outside for food. We lived on mouldy bread and corn. Our natural functions were dealt with right on the floor and we took it outside at night.

There was an underground bunker in the same building and we moved between that and the hidden room. The entrance to the underground bunker was under a piece of tin laid in front of ovens so that fire would not burn the floor.

We all stayed in hiding in that building for three months after *Judenrein*, risking our lives to go out into the empty ghetto to bring back water and any food we could find in the empty houses. We took whatever we could find, even if it was mouldy and rotten. We even managed to find a few vegetables still growing in the gardens, though with the winter coming on there soon wasn't much left. I remember getting some tomatoes. While out foraging during the night we sometimes ran into other Jews who were also still in hiding and getting water from a pipe.

During this period I contracted typhus, which lasted for several weeks. I was burning with fever and couldn't eat.

We went out at night according to a roster and one night it was my turn. However I was still very sick and Chaya's son had already died in the bunker from the typhus. So on this night, when we had been in hiding for three months, Naha Galante said to me: "Elkele, I'll replace you tonight and you swap for me another time." Like Sonia, she was ten years older than me.

Naha stepped outside and they caught her. We heard the shouts and then the shot when they killed her. It should have been me. I felt as though my mother was praying for me and looking after me. This happened on the evening of 4 November 1943. We were in the hidden room at the time and were frightened that the Gestapo had seen where Naha had

stepped out from, so we left that room and moved into the underground bunker.

During that night the men went out of the bunker to do some cooking in the attic and one of them returned with a pot in his hands at around 6.00 am when it was just turning light. The Poles had been watching the house very closely since the Germans had shot Naha and this man was seen. The Germans immediately began shooting. They stormed into the house and found our entry into the bunker because the women had not managed to disguise it perfectly. Meanwhile, some of the men managed to run away. That was on 5 November 1943.

We were marched out of the house and taken to the local jail, where we stood for a whole day. Slowly a crowd of several hundred Jews gathered, as quite a few bunkers were hidden away in the ghetto. Some Poles were even keener than the Germans to get rid of the Jews and eagerly ran around hunting us out to hand over. Anyone who tried to make a run for it was shot. All the children who were found that day were put onto a truck standing nearby. We knew they were going straight to the crematorium.

I was miserable with fever and could barely walk. I was so frightened, but my will was stronger than anything else. Another selection was held right there in front of the jail. Someone had a pair of high heeled shoes they told me to put on and I rubbed my cheeks with some red colour from the bricks, so that I would not look like such a child. After the children left, the rest of us were sent either to the right or the left. Fortunately, Sonia and I were both sent to the right side, so we were still together.

We were held in that prison from 5 November until 22 November 1943, about three weeks.

On 22 November the murderer of the Bialystok Ghetto, Kommandant Fridel, greeted us in the prison yard and made a speech in which he declared we were lucky. The first group they found in the bunkers had been shot, but we were going to a work camp.

ARNOLD ERLANGER

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Arnold Erlanger. *Choose Life*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003, pp. 62–75. Used by permission.

Arnold Erlanger was a German Jewish refugee living in the Netherlands when, on August 27, 1942, he was called up for

labor service. This was the start of a period which, as he writes, saw his “journey through hell.” This account relates Erlanger’s sojourn across a number of Nazi concentration camps in the Netherlands, until he was transferred by boxcar to Auschwitz. Surviving the initial “selection” between those who were to die and those who were to work as slave labor, he was sent to Auschwitz III, known as Monowitz—there to work in the industrial complex at Buna, managed by the I.G. Farben cartel. While a brutal environment, it was nonetheless a place where Erlanger managed to find sufficient space to be able to hold body and soul together for one more day. . . .

On 27th August 1942, without any warning, I received a notice to report to the De Zomp Labour Camp in Ruulo by 1st September. We were told that we would be working for the Heidemaatschappij, a forest company run by the Dutch government, near Ruurlo. As far as I can remember, I was the first one to receive that notice. We thought it would be a great opportunity to remain in Holland and work for the Dutch government instead of being transported to the east. As there were no ghettos in Holland, it seemed too difficult for the Germans to collect the Jews who were spread over the many small villages. It did not take us long to discover that the call-up to work in the Netherlands was just another Nazi ploy to round up Jews.

On our arrival in Ruurlo, the Dutch Federal Police (Marechausee) tried to instill some optimism in us. “It will not be long. Keep your spirits up and it will be all over in a few weeks!” they repeated. Ruurlo was not one of the worst labour camps in the Netherlands. Every two weeks, we were allowed to write to our families. We were not allowed to speak to any of the guards but had to salute them. After two weeks our Commandant was replaced by his deputy. When we asked what had happened to the Commandant, he replied: “The Commandant is in the concentration camp at Ommen learning how to treat Jews.”

In the middle of Ruurlo, opposite the hotel Avenarius, lived Mrs Weijler-Kropfeld. We passed her house every morning at seven o’clock. It was still quite dark and our capo Hess, a German Jew, and another inmate, entered her shed and deposited the mail we had written and at the same time, collected any mail and parcels sent to us by family or friends. We took these into the forest where we worked and the Dutch supervisor from the Heidemaatschappij looked the other way, as we devoured the news and the meagre food.

In the last weeks of September 1942, the Commandant returned from Ommen. He had been taught very well and he very quickly showed us what he had learned. During that week,

we were betrayed and the Commandant found out that we had been collecting mail and food parcels. This was strictly prohibited. One day, the man who knew Mrs Weijler and regularly collected the mail, was ill. I took his place and together with Mr. Suesskind, gathered whatever was waiting for us. Before we were able to rejoin the group, the Commandant appeared and screamed the usual Nazi *Sau Juden* (swine-Jews) and ordered us to return to the camp. He told capo, Hess, Suesskind and me, that we would be sent to the Erika Concentration Camp in Ommen. The following night, Hess escaped.

On 1st October, Suesskind and I were transported by train via Zwolle, to Camp Erika in Ommen, under the supervision of two policemen from the Marechausee. The policemen made us understand that if we wanted to escape, they would look the other way, on the condition that they would not be blamed. My Dutch was not good enough to take such a risk. If caught, the treatment would definitely be worse than anything I imagined at that time. Then I did not know that there could be anything more terrible than Ommen.

I had no friends in the Ruurlo Camp and the only person I became close to was Hans Andriesse from Den Hague. I soon learned that the complete Ruurlo Camp was emptied a few days later and all inmates were sent to the transit camp at Westerbork. The arrival at Ommen was the start of my journey through hell.

Erika Camp in Ommen

On the evening of 3rd October 1942, Suesskind and I were taken to the oval in Camp Ommen to face our initiation ceremony. All the prisoners stood around the oval under the guard of the SS and the Commandant. The center of the oval was covered with loose sand.

“Come and play some enjoyable games,” said the SS officer as he pointed a finger toward Suesskind and me. We were ordered to press one finger from our right hand into the sand and one finger from the other hand into one ear and keep turning our body around the finger in the sand. The Germans called it “*grammophonplatten-drehen*” which means “gramophone records turning.” The Commandant in Ruurlo had already told us about this game. The intention was that after a few turns, you would feel dizzy and fall to the ground. This is exactly what happened. The game expanded and I had to crawl using my elbows and not my knees, whilst Suesskind stood on my back. Then he had to crawl and I had to stand on his back. Whilst I was lying on the ground, I was kicked by a SS man who broke one of my ribs. The loose sand covered my face and penetrated my eyes. My face swelled

and I could barely open my eyes. I am unsure of how long this ceremony lasted, but I still remember that it was the evening of Simchat Torah, the Jewish Festival of the Torah.

After returning to our barracks, one of the SS guards approached my bunk. He could see that I was suffering and unable to work the following day. He quietly talked to me. He told me that every morning, the Commandant walked through the barracks to ensure that everyone went to work. I can still recall the exact words of that SS man: "Tell the Commandant that you had only arrived in the camp yesterday and that during the night, you had to go to the outside toilets. As it was very dark, you walked into one of the light poles and that was the reason for your swollen face. If you don't tell him that, you know exactly what will happen next time you go to work." I knew exactly what he had in mind. I would probably not return alive.

The following morning, as the Commandant approached, I told him exactly what I had to say, remembering only too well what the SS guard said. I was unable to work for five days and was left in the barracks.

The camp in Ommen was one of the smaller KZ (concentration camps) used mostly for anti-Nazis or war criminals. Our work in Ommen consisted of carrying buckets from the toilets to the fields and spreading the manure without gloves.

On 20th October, I and several other Jews were called to the office of the Commandant and told that we would be kept in Westerbork as criminals. This means that we would be kept in Westerbork in a special security barrack and then sent to Auschwitz on the first transport. When the Commandant returned the few personal belongings I had with me on arrival, I wanted to express my appreciation. Unfortunately my conversation skills in Dutch were limited. In Dutch, as in German, you speak to superiors differently than to a friend, unlike the English form "you" which is used for everyone. I unwittingly addressed the Commandant as "je," which in German is "du" instead of addressing him in the respectful "ze." He became terribly offended and taking a broom that stood in the corner, hit me over the head screaming: "You schweine Jude. You address me as if I was one of your friends." The yelling ended when the broom broke. The following day I arrived in Westerbork still believing on our faith. Was it not a miracle that I survived the camp in Ommen?

Westerbork

After my arrival in Westerbork on a penal transport, I learned that several chaverim and chaverot from our Hachshara were already there. The first group came to Westerbork from the

Elden Hachshara. They were saved from deportation to the east because they convinced the Nazi commander that they were skilled workers and would be extremely useful. As many more arrived in Westerbork, they joined what was by then called Kvutzat Hachshara. As the camp population grew, it needed a larger, well-trained work force. There was a great shortage of labourers in the Netherlands so the chaverim were all marched off to the farmers in the nearby village of Hooghalen as well as other villages close by.

I was soon able to send my friends a message through one of the inmates from Westerbork. The running of the camp was left to Jews under the leadership of a Mr. Schlesinger. As soon as one of my friends from Enschede learned of my arrival in Westerbork, they immediately smuggled me out of the criminal barrack, the Straf-barracke and hid me in a barrack that was used as a synagogue. This was only necessary on a day a transport was to leave Westerbork, and they were able to do so for three weeks. In the meantime, they added my name to the list of the Kvutzat Hachshara, which made my immediate transport to Auschwitz unlikely.

I was able to make contact with the rabbi of Westerbork, Rabbi Frank. He was the last rabbi in Ichenhausen and we knew each other. I still suffered a lot of pain from my broken rib and the rabbi was able to get me a mustard plaster from the hospital. Within a few days, the pain almost disappeared. Sometimes, when I bent down or made a wrong movement, the shooting pain recurred but on the whole I was much better. Meeting Rabbi Frank in Westerbork was another miracle for me. Unfortunately, he perished in Auschwitz. From the end of October 1942, I was able to go with the other chaverim outside the camp and work on the farms. My name no longer appeared on the list of criminals.

By talking to various inmates, I became aware of the Weinrib list of people who would be candidates for a pogrom. This was a plan to buy visas for entry into Switzerland. The names of all members of the Kvutzat Hachshara were transmitted in the summer of 1943 to Switzerland. My girlfriend, Milly Dzialozinsky was on the list as she had a close connection with someone who established the link with people in Switzerland. Weeks and months went by without any progress towards this exchange, until some of us were placed on the list for transport to the east. My name, together with six others from our Enschede group, was called for transport on 14th September 1943. I tried to have my name removed from the list. I remembered that Mr. Schlesinger was a very distant relative of my father's. Through one of the contacts in his office, I sent a message that an Erlanger is on the transport to Auschwitz and should be taken off the list. My request fell

on deaf ears. We did not know then that the transports from Holland went straight to Auschwitz. Much later in my life, I found out that all the transports between March 1943 and July 1943 had gone to Sobibor. Only two Jews survived in Sobibor, the rest were murdered.

In Westerbork we were herded into train wagons—men, women and children. We took some food with us. There were no washing or other facilities in the wagons. In the four corners stood a large barrel that served as the communal toilet, in full view of everyone. It was impossible for every person to sit down at the same time. The train stopped several times but we could not see where we were going until we had arrived. We assumed that since we were travelling eastward, Auschwitz would be our destination for most of the trains went in that direction. . . .

Auschwitz

The doors of the wagons opened to the usual screaming of Nazis in SS uniforms. “*Raus, raus* (get out, get out!).” We realized that this must be Auschwitz. The people who died in the wagons during the transport were left on the floor. Several younger men were directed to run to the left, whilst the majority, women, men and children were directed to run to the right. We still had no idea about what was going on. If you were directed to go to the left and wanted to go to the right, to join your wife, child or somebody from your family, you could but those who were directed to the right were not allowed to join us on the left.

About two hundred of us, all young men, were taken to Monowitz, to the labour camp called Buna. The information flow worked remarkably well in camp and we soon learned that those on the right were taken to the crematorium in Birkenau, three kilometers from Auschwitz. The slave labourers were mainly employed by I.G. Farben-Industrie to build and work in a factory making synthetic rubber.

As soon as we arrived in Buna, we were taken to the showers. It was usual for the Nazis to act in such a way, so we were not anxious. We took off our clothing and were told to place them together with our other belongings so that we could find them later. When we came out of the shower at a different spot, we were taken into a storeroom to receive our prisoner’s garb. Our belongings had disappeared. We had to walk towards long tables. Other prisoners were sitting at these tables and waiting for us. They tattooed numbers on our left arm. We were numb but in our minds realized that we were no longer human beings with a name. We had become a number. My number was 150645. . . .

Looking at my prison clothes and the numbers on my arm made me realise that my life was no longer in my hands. I hoped and prayed to survive. Luckily, I remained together with chaver Wolf Wolfs. We were ordered to the same barrack but lost contact with the other four chaverim who had arrived with us. Thus began my life in a concentration camp.

We learned that the head of the barrack is the capo, called Blockaelteste. He was usually a co-prisoner who had been a long-time inmate and often a criminal or political prisoner. He did not have the death sentence hanging over his head like we Jews, but it was used by the Nazis to run the inner workings of the various concentration camps, the KZs.

The days were hard and monotonous. Every morning, we were ordered to the oval and divided into various groups. We marched in formation through the gates, accompanied by an orchestra playing at the entrance to the camp. It also played on our return. We were escorted to work by SS guards. Even though I was an arc-welder, as a new arrival, I was directed to work with a group about half an hour’s march away. Our work consisted of digging trenches and throwing the earth into the trolleys. On the last part of this journey, we were forced to sit on trolleys pulled by a tractor. These resembled trolleys used in mining to move coal. The backs were removed and we had to rush to sit on boards that were put in their place. It was a hurried and dangerous journey resulting in injuries when many fell off. The capo, a non-Jew, treated us in the same manner as the Nazis. It was easy for him to find a reason to punish us as individuals. The guards formed an artificial fence, standing perhaps a few hundred meters from where we were working. No one was allowed to go further than this artificial fence.

This work continued for several weeks. It was strenuous and made more difficult with the autumn weather. In our thin prisoner’s uniform, we were exposed to cold and rainy days. I believe that it was a boring job for the SS guards too but they found ways and means to amuse themselves at our expense. Whenever possible, the Nazis showed their disgust, particularly towards intellectuals. We usually worked with six men on a team filling a trolley. One man in our group was an intellectual. This could be seen in the way he used the spade and moved around. It seemed that one of the guards became bored and without any provocation, lifted his rifle and shot this man in the hand. Naturally, the man screamed and the guard fired another shot that also hit his hand. Due to the excruciating pain, he fell to the ground. The gunman approached and shot him. He then ordered us to carry the dead body several hundred meters away behind the artificial fence. We told him that we couldn’t do this, as he may shoot

us. The guard told us that we had to obey him. He would come along and nothing would happen to us. We did as we were told. I realized quite soon that some of the Nazis were so indoctrinated that if they killed one of us, they did not kill a human being, just one of the numbers disappeared.

HANNA GRANEK ERLICH

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Hanna Granek Erlich and Maryann McLoughlin. *An Exile from a Paradise: Memories of a Holocaust Survivor from Będzin, Poland*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2014, pp. 29–35. Used by permission.

Gross-Rosen was a concentration camp located in eastern Germany. Like many of the more important camps, it embraced several subcamps used for exploiting slave labor. Hanna Granek Erlich was one of these slave workers. The factory in which she was set to hard labor was a weapons manufacturing plant at Peterswaldau. The conditions, as she outlines, were deplorable; in fact, her account is an excellent depiction of just how repellent these conditions were. Moreover, her period at this location was lengthy, lasting from January 1944 until her liberation by Russian forces on May 5, 1945.

Peterswaldau (Pieszyce) concentration camp, where I was sent in January 1944, was a sub-camp of Gross Rosen Concentration Camp in Lower Silesia, Germany. I was there for about a year. Peterswaldau sub-camp was located in the Owl Mountains (Góry Sowie), now part of Poland, about 30 miles north of Wrocław (Breslau); it was a small forced labor camp.

At night we slept in an old, dilapidated factory building, at the Diehl Factory where they manufactured weapons (now Diehl Stiftung & Co), mostly time bombs. We slept in a room with over fifty women. We slept downstairs on bunks covered with straw, and over us, upstairs, the men used to sleep. Conditions were dreadful. The hall was filthy. We were full of lice. We had to put some paper between the upper and lower bunks because lice were falling down from the top bunks. I could hear them; they sounded like uncooked rice when they hit the paper. I slept despite the lice because I was tired from working.

I worked seven days a week, from morning to night, in the Diehl Factory office. We didn't dare make a mistake. We weren't supposed to make mistakes. We were not allowed to

make mistakes. They would beat us or even kill us if we made mistakes. At the munitions factory I heard screaming and saw people being beaten.

It was freezing cold in Peterswaldau. We hid straw in our clothes to help us keep warm. We had only cold water. We could take one shower on Saturday, and then we had to rush because other girls were waiting for us to finish. The bathing facilities were only fit for swine.

The food was disgusting—spinach soup again! The SS women were terrible, but one was especially terrible. She used to scream at us and, worse, beat us with a piece of wood. She was horrible. There was no reason for her to hit us; she hit us only because we were Jews. Once I was hit by an SS male guard, but he was not as brutal as this SS woman. Every morning at roll call, the SS used to count us on the hill, where it was particularly cold. One morning I wasn't standing straight or something, so the SS walked over to my row and hit me on the face with her hand—that time she used her hand. We called her *Tygrysica*, female tiger. She was always hitting and screaming. Every day we had to encounter her; we looked out the window and saw her standing and watching us. *After liberation, we tried to find her, but we couldn't. I don't know if she was caught and tried for her cruelty.*

In the morning, a group of girls used to get up very early in order to wash up with cold water. The winters were so cold that we could see the ice on the windows.

We also washed our clothes in cold water: that is, what little clothing we had. We did not have uniforms; we wore our own clothes. The SS had given me a smock to wear as a coat.

Some girls tried to escape. They left but were captured. They had an opportunity to escape because we walked to work every day early in the morning when it was dark, and we came back in the darkness. Two tried to escape under cover of darkness. They were both from Sosnowiec. One day when they were counting us, the SS announced that we were short two people. They said, "If we catch them, you know what will wait for them." Those girls, who had tried to escape, were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. *One survived. How she survived I don't know. . . .*

I saw terrible atrocities in Peterswaldau. One evening they brought in two men from a different camp. The SS told us that the men were sick with typhus. They put those men in burlap bags. The men were alive! In the bags we could see that they were moving. We had to stay up all night to watch the men die.

The Lagerführer was a butcher, a real butcher, so he took his truck and ran over the two people. We didn't know why

they were treating the men this way. But the whole camp had to turn out to see the *Lagerführer* run over them.

We had to stand a half a night, and the next morning, when they released us, we went to the latrine. In front of the sinks were wooden slats; under these, on the ground, were pools of blood. Later we discovered that one was a son of the Grajower rabbi, from Będzin. I don't know who the other man was. While we had stood there waiting for the men to die, the SS had given us coffee, a little bit of brown water. It was very cold standing there. When they finally let us go in the morning, we didn't sleep at all because during the night we were awake, forced to watch, and in the morning we had to go to work.

Most of the time the women's section was quiet because we were working. Women worked inside the buildings such as in the office and the factory. Some were in the kitchen; some, in the laundry; they were busy there. The men used to go outside to work. Once in a while, when they were counting the people at roll call, we would realize that someone had died.

But I wanted to mention too that at the same camp I had an uncle, Fischel Gelbart, with his son Herschel. I tried to help them, so I used to go into the kitchen when the kitchen girls used to peel the vegetables and the potatoes. The kitchen was in the same building where I worked. I asked them if I could have a few potatoes for my relatives. I went to my uncle's and my cousin's work detail and asked the *Schreiber*, the man who took care of them, to let them cook the potatoes. *Neither my uncle nor my cousin survived.*

Another way that I could help was with food cards because I had access to those. I had a few friends in the camp: my papa's good friend and two school friends were there. I used to give them another ration card, so they could have a little extra bit of water and potato or for spinach with sand. Nobody counted the cards, so I "organized" away two or three cards and gave them to my friends. This was very risky. If I had been caught I would have got twenty with an iron stick on my backside.

But I wanted to help wherever I could. With extra food, people could perhaps survive until the war was over. A little extra food gave them a chance. . . .

In February 1944, while we were still at Peterswaldau camp, we were told that a group of girls were being sent to our camp. We were anxious as we waited for them. We were waiting and waiting. The transport came in the middle of the night. We were standing and waiting for them, thinking: "Maybe I'll see my mother." They arrived—about 1000 young women. We didn't see them disembark the train; we

saw them only after they had been processed. They came into the building. Their heads were shaved, and they wore striped uniforms. All were Hungarian girls. They told us that they had come from Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. They understood German; they had lived on the border with Austria and Hungary. Some of them spoke Yiddish. We usually spoke Polish at home; however, among other family members, my parents spoke Yiddish, so I understood some Yiddish.

We asked what Auschwitz-Birkenau was like. They reported that there was dirt and hunger and typhus. They told us that people in the camp were all dying. They told us about the terrible smell from the dead. People couldn't survive the terrible hunger; they were severely malnourished. They saw this from their barracks. They said that there was no hope, none at all for our relatives. They told us that they knew NOTHING, NOTHING. Auschwitz was hunger and brutality and atrocity. They had just thought about how to survive. They weren't thinking about the war.

The next day these women were sent to work. The Nazis could use everybody to make munitions. We worked as slave laborers in the ammunition factory, assembling fuses for bombs. We made the timing devices for the bombs. The women were treated worse than animals; they were exhausted and hungry. They were punished for the slightest mistake.

We were very close to Bytom (Beuthen) which was not very far from the Będzin border, where the fighting was occurring. Even before the Soviet army arrived, we heard the detonations from the bombing of buildings. Because they were planning to retreat before the Soviet advance, the Germans put all the bomb timing devices in wooden boxes. Next, three days before the Soviets liberated nearby Peterswaldau, the Germans put the wooden boxes into a hole, poured acid on them, and loaded them in too. Then the Germans woke us up in the middle of the night and took us out in trucks. We thought that we were being transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. We thought that would be our end. Instead they told us to throw all the boxes from the trucks.

Then suddenly one day the war was over. The *Judenälteste* (Jewish unit leader) came and told us, Children, look out the little windows, and you will see a white flag on the post office. Put your best clothes on [as if we had any "best" clothes—most did not]. The war is over!"

We thought that the Germans would dynamite the building with us inside, but the Czechoslovakian men who worked in the factory shouted from upstairs to the few girls downstairs that nobody was left. The Germans had fled. To

reassure us, the Czech workers told us not to worry that they would guard the building.

I had worked in Peterswaldau from January 1944 until May 1945, for about fifteen months. I was liberated on May 5, 1945, by the Soviet Red Army.

GARY FABIAN

Context: Central Europe

Source: Gary Fabian. *A Look Back Over My Shoulder*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2002, pp. 14–26. Used by permission.

After the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia, the insecurity felt by many Jews often led to a panicked flight away from what was perceived to be a very real danger. Gary Fabian and his mother sought some measure of safety by moving far to the south of Slovakia, and in this account he describes the perils of living one step ahead of the Nazis as well as the journey to get away from them. While trying to retain some semblance of freedom, they found themselves to be in “double jeopardy”; not only were they Jews on the run from the Nazis, they were also German-speaking in a Czech and Slovak environment. Eventually, as we see, his whole extended family took their chances in Prague, there to try to start life anew.

My mother and I travelled by train to the other end of the country, to Trenchin in Slovakia, not far from the Hungarian border, where friends of ours lived. As we did not hold Czech citizenship and travelled on a German passport, the Czech authorities refused permission for us to stay. It was the ultimate irony, experienced by tens of thousands across the face of Europe in those turbulent days. Germany had by this time declared that Jews were no longer citizens of the Third Reich, and just to give it official confirmation, all passports held by Jews were stamped with a large red “J”—denoting “Jew.” As German passport holders, we were in fact stateless, and constantly threatened with expulsion by the Czech authorities.

Literally hundreds of people in this position were taken daily to the nearest border and sent into the strip of territory between countries, known as “no man’s land.” Both countries on either side refused them entry into their territory. In the late 1930s a whole army of “non persons” spent months on end being expelled, illegally re-entering a country, then being arrested and expelled again. They had become the

unwanted and innocent pawns in a deadly game of politics in which they were totally powerless.

About a week or so after arriving, we left Trenchin again and travelled back towards the centre of Czechoslovakia. A week later, sitting on grimy trains, being shunted for hours on end to sidings off the main track to allow troop transports to pass, we arrived in Brno, the capital of Moravia. There we finally met up with my father and my maternal grandparents.

We found a room at the house of a Mrs. Pfeffer. The five of us lived in a room that under normal circumstances was barely adequate for one person. This was our temporary “castle,” living in hiding. If the police had discovered we were living there, we would most likely have been arrested on the spot as illegals, taken to the nearest birder and shoved into no man’s land with little or no ceremony.

If there was a knock on the door we would only open it to a pre-arranged signal, living in constant fear of discovery and arrest. After a few weeks, our landlady, fearful of the consequences of being detected with illegals under her roof, asked us to leave. It was practically impossible to find alternative accommodation under the prevailing circumstances. We decided to head toward Prague, the capital, with the hope that in a larger city we could lose ourselves from the eyes of the authorities.

As the general situation throughout worsened and conditions in Germany became more severe every day, a vast number of refugees were moving around Europe. All countries became extremely strict in trying to control the influx of refugees into their territory. Spot checks were set up on highways, at railway and bus stations and any other points of entry. Anyone found without valid documents was arrested and expelled without ceremony or delay.

Our situation was precarious, but we were helped by a stroke of luck. We met up with a former employee, a Czech named Pavel, who was also anxious to avoid drawing himself to the attention of authorities. He had been an active member of the Communist Party for many years, and the political climate of the day was not exactly welcoming to people of his convictions. Things were getting a little uncomfortable for him, and he decided that Prague would provide a better place in which to lose himself at that time.

We still had our car, a Fiat designed for four. The six of us, my parents, grandparents, Pavel and myself, somehow managed to squeeze ourselves into it and we headed off towards Prague. Just a few kilometers short of it we were stopped at a roadblock where the constabulary was carefully checking documents. There was a hurried conference held in the car

on what to do. Pavel assured us to leave things to him and all would turn out well. When our turn came at the checkpoint, he coolly handed his documents to the gendarme and a brief exchange took place between them in Czech, a language we did not then speak or understand. At best our Czech was minimal, as German was the official language of that part of Czechoslovakia in which we lived. Pavel's documents were examined briefly, handed back and we were waved on. Having travelled a few minutes in silence, my father finally asked him what the exchange with the gendarme had been about.

With a grin on his face, Pavel explained, "I told the constable you were relatives from my village and not very bright. It was no good asking you anything as you would not understand anyway." This produced some merriment, probably more from a feeling of relief than humour. Half an hour later we arrived in Prague. While we had arrived at our destination, in reality our overall situation had not really changed for the better. We still were illegal immigrants without valid documentation. The authorities were becoming increasingly more stringent, arresting and expelling aliens. The army of unwilling nomads roaming the face of Europe in search of a sanctuary grew weekly, or even daily, during the dark months of the later part of 1938.

GARY FABIAN

Context: Salvation

Source: Gary Fabian. *A Look Back Over My Shoulder*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2002, pp. 39–43. Used by permission.

At 11 years of age in May 1945, Gary Fabian had by this stage already been a prisoner in the concentration camp/ghetto of Theresienstadt (Terezín) for three years. In this account he provides us with his recollection of the final hours of camp life, prior to the arrival of the Russians as liberators—and what happened next. The account extends Fabian's story slightly beyond the liberation, as the reality of what he had lived through began to sink in and enable him to reflect on something almost as scary as the past through which he had managed to survive . . . the future.

As 1944 came to a close and 1945 dawned, rumours kept persisting about Allied advances into Europe. Nothing certain was ever learned, but hope springs eternal. Two people

with a sense of humour decided to test the bush telegraph. They passed on the "information" that twenty tanks had entered Prague. Within two hours the rumour came back to them that twenty thousand American tanks stood three kilometers from Prague. It was an interesting exercise in mass hysteria, fueled by optimism and despair.

Suddenly, in March 1945, transports from the east started arriving in the ghetto from concentration camps. These contained human wrecks, which the Germans started clearing out of Poland and East Germany as the Russian army advanced. This was part of their frantic bid to remove the evidence of their atrocities. Many of these people had previously been at Theresienstadt. At this point we all learned the whole horrible truth of what had happened. The majority had been in Auschwitz, and it was our first real confirmation of the mass extermination. True, there had been rumours over the years that filtered back somehow, but very few people were told of these rumours. Of those who heard them, most refused to believe them as it was outside normal human comprehension to accept what was happening.

It became obvious that the Germans planned something diabolical in Theresienstadt as their final act. Strange constructions were being built on the outskirts, and the bush telegraph spoke of gas chambers, large moats that were to be filled with people and flooded, and similar plans in the making. Great unrest swept through the ghetto. A new menace also threatened. The human wrecks coming back from the east brought typhoid with them, and an epidemic broke out which ultimately claimed three thousand victims.

The Germans were engaged in frantically burning records and shipping stores out in the daily convoy of army trucks. Something was in the air. An atmosphere of anticipation, fueled by hope, pervaded the ghetto. Despite the threat of diabolical German plans consistent with the pattern of their behaviour over the past twelve years, it seemed that perhaps some light was appearing at the end of the tunnel. There was hope that the nightmare would soon end.

Spring had come again. It was May 1945, and we had been in Theresienstadt for almost three years now. To an eleven-year-old this is almost a third of a lifetime. I could only vaguely recall life before I came there. One night, on 4 May, a great deal of shooting took place around the ghetto. Everyone was terrified. Was this going to be the Germans' final act of destruction? So near to the end and all seemed to be lost. It felt as if it went on for hours, but towards dawn it suddenly stopped and all was silent.

Hours passed, but all remained still. A few of the more adventurous souls ventured outside. The Germans had

simply vanished, as in a puff of smoke, and not a single one was left. The word spread and people everywhere rushed out to see for themselves. There were knots of excited people all over the place, talking, laughing or just standing around looking up at the morning sky. I was amongst them, standing in the street.

Suddenly we heard a low noise. It sounded like some motorized vehicles in the distance. “My god, the Germans are coming back,” somebody cried out. Great consternation broke out. Before anyone could take action, three tanks came around the corner. They were Russian tanks. It is doubtful if the Red Army ever got a more enthusiastic welcome anywhere in the world than those three tanks on that day.

It was over. The nightmare had finally ended and freedom dawned for the fifteen thousand inmates still left in the ghetto. But the after-effects were still to take their toll, and for some three thousand typhoid victims it was too late. They died in the weeks after the liberation.

Forty-eight hours after the Russian tanks arrived, the International Red Cross moved in and took charge, in conjunction with the Russian army. At that stage, food and medicine was brought in, as well as doctors and nurses. Some amazing scenes were to be witnessed. Many of the inmates spilled into the adjoining countryside, taking hold of property the Germans had abandoned. Horses were brought in and one fellow, when asked what he would do with the horse, scratched his head and said, “I don’t know, it’s spoils of war.”

The reality of what had happened started to sink in. Many were the only survivors of their whole family and did not really know where to go. It was difficult, often impossible to return to normality after the events of the previous six years. While we did not know what had happened to my grandparents, in our hearts we knew that the chance of their survival was almost nil, but we still hoped we were wrong. . . .

We stayed on in Theresienstadt until late July, and then returned to Bodenbach, called Podmokly in Czech, the town we had hastily left in 1938. The family business, confiscated by the Germans and run as a German enterprise, now became booty of war and the Czech government nationalized it. While our family applied for compensation, our claim was lost somewhere in the system and never came to anything. Our family, however, could be described as fortunate. Both my parents and I had survived, but my grandparents on my mother’s side and my grandmother on my father’s side had perished. We decided Europe no longer had any attraction to us. It was time to seek a new world, a world where greater

opportunity could be found, without living with the ghosts of events that lurked in every corner of Europe.

IDA WEISBAUM FEINBERG

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Ida Weisbaum Feinberg and Maryann McLoughlin. *If the Dawn Is Late in Coming: Surviving Vilna and Vaivara*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2008, pp. 30–39. Used by permission.

A ghetto was established by the Nazis at Vilna after their occupation of Lithuania on June 25, 1941. The Vilna ghetto was known for its brutality and high mortality rate, as starvation, disease, shootings, and deportations to concentration camps and extermination camps steadily took a horrendous toll on the population. In 1943 Ida, her husband Sender, and her father were deported from the ghetto to the Vaivara concentration camp, the largest Nazi camp in Estonia. Ida survived, despite typhus, malnourishment, hard labor, and a death march. Her memoir is one of the few we have of Holocaust survivors sent to Vaivara. Here, she describes what life was like at Vaivara, up to and including her liberation in 1944.

Upon arrival in Estonia, I discovered the destination of the train that had deported us. We were sent, as were tens of thousands of Jews from other countries, to forced labor camps in Estonia as part of the Nazi resettlement plan. The main holding camp was Vaivara, a concentration and transit camp in northeast Estonia, located near the Soviet/Estonian border. . . .

In 1943, I arrived in Estonia and was sent to Vaivara. . . . My father and Sender had also been deported, but they were not deported in the same cattle car as I. We had arrived from Vilna after a journey of several days, a journey that seemed much longer because of the over-crowded cars, the stench, and the lack of water.

At Vaivara, the cattle cars were unloaded, and we lined up. I saw that the camp was surrounded by barbed wire as well as by a kind of moat—a ditch full of water encircled the camp. I looked for Sender and my father among the others. However, I did not see them. I felt very much alone.

After selection in Vaivara, the women who had been selected for work were taken to a building, stripped, and put on tables. They shaved us all over. Some young girls cried and cried. I said to them, in Yiddish, “Don’t cry! As long as

you have a head, you'll have hair. Don't give them the satisfaction of seeing you crying." At this time they gave me a striped uniform and my number, 1055 or 1059, on a *shmatte* . . . that I pinned to my clothing.

They then put us in wooden huts with thin walls that were not insulated against the heat and cold. These huts, the so-called barracks, were divided into three sections with seventy or eighty prisoners in each section—each hut was very over-crowded. In my barrack, there was a small stove but it didn't heat well; therefore I was very cold—freezing. We slept in three-tiered bunk beds, ten in a row. I wore a blanket in the morning to wrap around me when I went to roll call in the brutally cold early morning air.

Each day we had roll call at 5:00 AM. We waited a long time while they counted us before we could go to work. In the morning we had a watery drink they called coffee. In the afternoon we were given watery soup to drink and a small piece of moldy bread to eat. I was desperately hungry. I "organized" potatoes from the fields so I wouldn't starve. I hid them in my clothing when I returned to the camp. I used to roast them in the small stove in our barrack.

Water was scarce. There were no washing facilities. In the beginning there were just holes to be used as toilets. Later there were boards with holes in them—inadequate because there were many prisoners. I washed in snow or with a little of the drinking water they gave us. I tried to keep myself clean because I was afraid that I would catch diseases if I didn't.

Despite my efforts at cleanliness, I caught typhus. Many people in Vaivara died from typhus carried by lice. These were big lice—all over everyone, thousands of them. I was very ill, but some kind person in my barrack helped me, giving me warm water to drink. Therefore, somehow I survived this deadly disease. I also survived a big selection in which three hundred people who had typhus were taken away to be murdered.

Later there were selections every two weeks, when about 500 prisoners were murdered—often taken to the forest and shot by the German or Estonian SS.

Their bodies were carried away and burned by Jewish men, *Sonderkommandos* (special *Kommando* or work duty, dealing with corpses). They were forced to do this. Most *Sonderkommando* only lasted three or four months, and then they were killed, so they would not tell about what they had seen.

The Germans forced me to do many different kinds of work: I worked in the woods, chopping wood; I cleaned police stations for the Germans; and I worked on

the railroad, laying down new railroad ties. All of this was back-breaking work, especially to malnourished people; the SS wanted to work us to death.

We were guarded by a few older German civilians, who could speak Polish. They were good to us, sometimes giving us salt or whatever food they could hide for us.

In July and August of 1944 the Soviet Army advanced north through Nazi-occupied Estonia toward Vaivara.

I saw neither my father nor my husband in Vaivara Concentration Camp. However, over a year after my arrival in Vaivara, when I was sent to a sub camp to work, I saw my father. He was working at different jobs, in the woods or on the railroad. I was so happy to see him and to know that he was still alive. I had hoped to see that Sender may also have survived. Then, I heard, they had taken my father away to the woods and murdered him. They gave me his shoes to hurt me so that I would know he was dead. I was terribly upset. . . .

Ahead of the advancing Soviet army, the SS began to evacuate Vaivara Concentration Camp and its sub-camps in late August 1944. In Western Europe, the Allied armies began liberating other concentration camps in April of 1945. . . . Many prisoners from Vaivara were sent west by the sea to Stutthof Concentration Camp, a camp about 22 miles east of Danzig. Others were sent on death marches along the Baltic coast.

I was sent on a death march to the south, wearing wooden clogs, which were almost impossible to walk in. The weather was already quite frigid. I was freezing. I said to the Germans walking with us, "Kill me here." But they didn't. Other women on the death march encouraged me, coaxing me, "Come with us. We'll help each other." So they *shlepped* me with them.

One night we stopped at a cement factory to rest. People from the village came to look at us. They didn't know what was going on. In Polish I said to them, "I am a Jew." They may already have known this because the SS had painted a red cross on the back of my coat—to mark me as a Jew. In addition, I wore my number on a *shmatte* pinned to my coat. One Pole said to me, "I live across the road. I'll walk across. You follow me because, otherwise, they will kill you tomorrow." Four of us escaped like that. (*Two of us are still alive.*)

I stayed with these Poles for six weeks. They were refugees from other areas of Poland, sent by the Germans to do slave labor. These kind Poles gave me food. In the daytime they hid me and watched for the Germans. At night I slept in a bed with pillows! Other places in the village were hiding the other girls.

When the Germans left the area, the Russians, advancing from the east, arrived near the cement factory. So I was liberated and had to then think what I would do. I decided to go back to Vilna to try to find Sender. I met a Polish woman, also a refugee, who helped me because I was weak and malnourished. She took me on a train. I got off at a small train station, at a suburb to the west of Vilna. When I got off the train and walked into the station, I met this Holocaust survivor group there. I knew some of the people in this group. They were trying to decide where they would go.

I stayed in this village with the other survivors for a while. Then I began walking east towards Vilna to see if I could find anyone alive. I still had a little hope that Sender had survived—but only a glimmer of hope.

JOHN FREUND

Context: Central Europe

Source: John Freund. *Spring's End*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 15–21. Used by permission.

A young Jewish boy living in Czechoslovakia, John Freund and his family were citizens of the territory overrun by Nazi Germany in March 1939. The changes wrought by this development were immediate, but to a 9-year-old boy their impact was somewhat muted. As shown in this testimony, the resilience of children provided John and his friends with the opportunity to recalibrate their lives in such a way as to maximize their childhood pleasures while they were able to do so—in an environment of increasing gloom. It is a memoir of light in an ever-darkening world, in which the innocence of children offered hope to those around them—and provided each with the support they needed in order to prevail over the system that would have destroyed them.

I was nine years old in 1939 when the German army rolled across the Austrian border into our town. It was a grim day. The scenery was full of armoured trucks, tanks, soldiers in dark green uniforms and the occasional low-flying airplane. With them, the Germans brought their dreadful Nazi ideology. They were led by their leader, Adolf Hitler, perhaps the greatest criminal political leader of all time.

When the Germans came, most people stayed indoors, but there were some who welcomed them. These were people who hated the Jews. These people were envious of those with

more than they and now it was their turn to show their true colours. Nobody knew what would happen. The war had not yet started; the Czech army was ordered not to resist the invaders. The Germans took over quickly and people were arrested on the first day of the invasion. Soon, orders began appearing on bulletin boards and in newspapers.

We Jews were hit the hardest. Signs that read “Jews not permitted” appeared in cinemas, coffee houses, streetcars, public buildings, public parks and elsewhere. Schools were ordered not to allow us in and public swimming areas became prohibited to us. Once, as I walked near my home alone, I noticed my Grade 3 teacher across the street. He crossed toward me and, as we passed, he shook my hand and quickly said. “Be brave.” He took a great risk, as even talking to a Jew was regarded as a crime.

Discussion among the adults at home was often in German—perhaps so that we children could not understand. At night, we would listen to the news from England on our shortwave radio, as Czech radio was now in the hands of the Germans. At this time, there were pessimists and there were optimists. The pessimists thought that in one to two years all would be back to normal, while the optimists thought weeks. In the end, the war lasted six years and, for us, things never got back to normal.

I could no longer play with my non-Jewish friends. My friendship with Zdeněk and other non-Jewish boys came to an end. There were about three hundred Jewish families in town, and I did not know many of them. Some were professionals like us—doctors and lawyers. Others were small storekeepers and several were wealthy manufacturers. I became good friends with a group of four boys who were all my age. In our group, there were two Rudis, one Henry, one Paul and me. Before the war, Henry and one of the Rudis were rich. The other Rudi and Paul were poor. After the Germans took everything from us, we were all poor. We were required to wear a yellow Star of David on our outer garments, over our lapels. Our parents warned us to stay away from certain parts of town where it was known that there were hooligans and Nazis. I do not think that we were subjected to too much abuse at that time. Did all this drive us to despair? No way. Life went on. We wore our Stars of David, but not in shame.

In our town there were about two hundred Jewish youngsters and about one hundred of us were between the ages of ten and eighteen. Excluded from the general community, we formed our own. My schooling moved from the schoolhouse to our living room. Groups of children met and were instructed by young Jewish teachers. Schooling was

improvised; the older boys and girls taught the early grades. I was ten years old when I had my first Latin lessons. I still remember “amo, amas, amat” and my introduction to algebra. We read about animals and distant lands. We sang songs in Hebrew which, for me, was a strange language that until that point had been used only in prayer. We dreamed about the faraway land of Palestine where Jews were making a fresh start. Occasionally, a father of a friend would be arrested and would disappear. We had to give away our car. Father was forced to close down his medical office and we had to live off his savings.

Another Jewish family lived in our building. They were simple, poor people who lived next door to the butcher’s store. Their place was warm and smelled of cooked meat. I don’t remember their names, but their daughter Anna and I became friends. I often visited their warm apartment, where we sat around, talked and played cards. In time, we were ordered to give up half of our apartment. We lost two of our four rooms to some insurance office. Our maid, Maria, had to leave us, but she would often come to visit.

Some friends succeeded in leaving the country. They went to Palestine, England, Canada and the United States. It became more and more difficult to get permission to leave. My father was among the optimists and thought all would soon return to normal. He and his friends liked to joke about Hitler and the Nazis. Unfortunately, the whole thing was far from a joke.

Among the more pleasant memories from this time—1940 to 1941—were the summer days spent along the River Vltava. Although we were banned from public swimming, we were allowed to swim along a narrow strip of land by the road. This strip was a half-hour walk from town, or a ten-minute ride by bicycle, and was near a railway bridge. It was called U Vorisku, named after the Voriseks family who owned and leased us the patch between the fields and the river. We bicycled, jogged, walked or ran the U Vorisku. It soon became a hub of activity. Swimming past the shoreline was treacherous, especially for younger children. The older boys had a tiny boat that was used to rescue the daredevils who tried. The water in the river was filthy, with pieces of raw sewage floating on the surface; one never put one’s face into the water. Yet it was a place where we could cool off and have fun.

We were permitted to set up benches and changing rooms along the river. We had space for four ping-pong tables and when everything was cleared we even had room for a small soccer field. Someone brought a soccer ball and volleyball net. We played soccer along the narrow field and when the ball ended up in the river—as it often did—it took several minutes

to retrieve it. I was ten and would always play soccer with the older boys. I played the defence position. I was small, tough and daring, and stopped every attack on my team’s goalie.

My real success, however, was in ping-pong. We had two tables situated underneath a shelter behind the changing cabin. I played as often as I could. There was a tournament toward the end of the summer of 1941. We were divided into three age groups: under ten, ten-to-fourteen, and fifteen and older. I had early success, eliminating most of my opponents quickly. In the semifinals and the finals, I won every game. At an evening ceremony, I was awarded a brand-new white cork racquet and a plaque with my name engraved on it. There was dancing and singing. That evening, I felt that everyone liked me. These youngsters were my friends. They were the Harrys, Jirkas, Pavels, Karels, Rudlas, Lilkas, Ritas, Ankas, Suzans, Lidias and Cecalias. There were Poppers, Kopperls, Kohns, Herzes, Holzers, Frishes, Stadlers and Levys. There were even more, but I have forgotten most of the names. We were young, enthusiastic and mischievous, but we were always good to one another. Great warmth was established among us young people and we developed a deep love and respect for each other.

The two summers of 1940 and 1941 were among my happiest. Some days we worked on the Voriseks’ farm, helping with the harvesting. I held a large canvas bag under a chute and filled it with oats or wheat. For our work, we received a large slice of fresh white bread, thickly covered with goose liver and fat.

We all had daytime duties. The older boys and girls were learning trades. Under orders from the Nazis, the Jewish community had to submit information about our properties and compile lists of our addresses, so the younger children, like myself, delivered this information in sealed envelopes. The moment we finished our duties, we would rush to our favourite spot along the river. We played team sports and our friendships intensified. Every moment in the sun was cherished and when it rained we would huddle under trees. In addition to athletics and games, we would sing. Sometimes there were fights, usually ending with someone coming home with a black eye.

When the days began to shorten and the cool air returned, we knew our beautiful summer was coming to an end. Several of the older boys decided that we must not hibernate but continue with our friendships. They started a handmade magazine named *Klepy* (Gossip). It was typed and illustrated and only one copy of each issue was printed. One issue had a picture of me kicking a ball on the front cover. The first issue merely gossiped about our summer activities at the river.

However, subsequent issues had stories and jokes. Contributions by the readers were sought and published. All readers were given a chance to read the single printed copy and were asked to comment on the issue. There were twenty issues of *Klepy*. Here is an example from an early issue:

What is the goal and purpose of our Klepy? First of all, to prove that a healthy spirit and sense of humour is within us and that we are not diminished by the difficulties of our days. We are capable, in moments of rest from our labour, to occupy our minds with worthwhile thoughts and humour.

During this time, two boys were afflicted with epilepsy. The worst case was Fricek K. He was new to Budějovice, having come from the Sudetenland a few years earlier. Fricek was always with his cousin Erich. They were both ten years old. Fricek had frequent epileptic fits, sometimes as often as every half hour. He would fall to the ground, lie on his back, and emit terrifying shrieks. When this would happen, his cousin Erich would open Fricek's mouth, which was full of froth, and pull out his tongue, caressing his forehead. The sick boy would shake wildly for three to four minutes and then appear to be in a deep sleep for a few minutes. After that, he would get up, looking weak and dizzy. This frightening event occurred many times each day.

Another person who had the same affliction was an older man we called Mr. Papa. He was a confectionery vendor. He had a wagon with candies, apples and chocolate bars. He could always be found in the shade under the large railway bridge. I used to buy a chocolate rum ball from him whenever I could afford it. His epilepsy was quite different. His attacks came only once every two weeks. When they occurred, he would fall on his back, breathing heavily, and lie in this state for almost a full hour. There was nobody qualified to do anything for him, other than give him a glass of water when he finally came to. After an attack, he would not show up to work for a few days. But when he did come back, it was always with a fresh supply of apples, chocolate bars and candy.

The summer of 1940 passed and we had only our memories to keep us warm. We looked forward to next summer—until it came. During the summer of 1941, our lives were in imminent danger. These threats were not from our fellow citizens, but from the mad dictator in Berlin. As the days became shorter and cooler, we cherished each day and prayed that the summer of 1941 would never end. For many, this would be their last summer.

Around this time, we, the Jews of Budějovice, started to take some interest in religion again. Our beautiful, tall

synagogue had two steeples and many beautiful entrances and was located in a fine part of the city. It was built in the late 1800s. The Germans could not stand competition from another God, so they blew up the synagogue—completely wiping out any trace of the original building. Without the synagogue, services were held in a large, decorated warehouse. Our rabbi, Rudolf Ferda, inspired the participation of the children, and soon Friday night services were full of boys and girls. A chorus of ten- to twelve-year-old girls and boys was organized and their beautiful voices made many at the services tremble with joy. The boys learned to pray and, both in fun and seriousness, imitated our cantor by holding services at home. Rabbi Ferda was a good man. His long sermons always included the theme that Jewish history winds itself like a red thread through the ages. He spoke in Czech with a German accent, and sometimes we could not keep from bursting into laughter. However, when he ordered us out of the sermons, we were really sorry.

A special relationship developed among the young Jews who were shunned by the general community and vilified in newspapers and on radio. We found new strength and helped each other through the hard times. When a very poor family came to town with many children, room was quickly found to help them. Our family took in a little girl who lived with us for a while.

My father was no longer permitted to practise medicine and spent the summer days working in a friend's garden. He loved it. We worried about what would happen when our savings were gone. We got used to eating less and eating cheaper food: bread without butter, potatoes and, only rarely, meat.

The summer of 1941 came to an end. We still went to U Vorisku in the fall and sometimes in the winter, where we would walk around and look forward to the next summer. But this was not to be. In April 1942, the whole Jewish community (just under a thousand people) were taken from their homes and resettled in the ghetto Terezín (Theresienstadt, in German).

HANS FRIEND

Context: Before the War

Source: Hans Friend. "The Night of the Crystals (Die Krystallnacht): The Brother's Story." In Julie Meadows (Ed.). *Memory Guide My Hand: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing by Members of the*

Melbourne Jewish Community. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 1998, pp. 50–52. Used by permission.

The testimony that follows is best read alongside that of Marianne Roth, also in this volume. Hans and Marianne, a brother and sister, were living in Berlin before the outbreak of war. When Marianne wrote her recollection of the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, Hans decided it was necessary for him to also put pen to paper—if only to give his perspective of the events of that night. It is a testimony that offers a different view of the pogrom, in that Hans was able to view the events from a different vantage point than did his sister. The account is an excellent example of how in the study of history the perception of eyewitnesses is crucial, and that in order to arrive at understanding as many viewpoints as possible need to be considered.

My sister showed me her written account of the *Night of the Crystals* and I was amazed how my memory of that fateful night differed from hers; sometimes she recalls events of the past which I never knew of or completely “forgot”—or suppressed!

Yes, I do remember one morning when our parents forbade us to go out into the streets of Berlin. Our parents had gone out and my sister and I decided against their wishes, to see for ourselves what was going on. Streets full of broken glass from smashed windows of Jewish shops, a burning synagogue. . . .

I DO REMEMBER. It was in the middle of the night, three or four am, when the phone rang. It was a friend of my father, a headmaster of a secondary school, who said, “Leave your house at once and take your son with you. Nazi ‘stormtroopers’ are on the way to take you to a concentration camp.” My father’s friend had no choice but to become a member of the Nazi party, lest he lose his job or worse, go to prison. I wish I could remember the name of this good German man. He risked his life to save us.

We left our house, leaving behind my mother and sister and walked, all night, the streets of Berlin. We crossed over a fashionable boulevard called “Kurfurstendamm,” a boulevard with many elegant shops, cafes and restaurants. Brown-shirted members of the SA, the Nazi “army,” everywhere, smashing all the windows of Jewish shops and painting anti-Jewish slogans on their walls: “DON’T BUY FROM THE JEWS” and “DOWN WITH THE JEWS.” Broken pieces of glass lying everywhere on the streets, looking like crystals of snow reflecting the light in the early hours of this morning.

It was not beautiful snow—but broken bits of glass from shops owned by Jewish “Germans”—shattering the dreams of my father. He was a proud German and at the same time, a religious Jew.

We walked on, casually and slowly, not to make it obvious that we were afraid, that we were Jews; we passed the beautiful synagogue in the Fasanenstrasse—burning. We were told later that the caretaker who lived in it was burnt alive. I reminded my father to phone my uncle to also leave his house and we quickly phoned him from a phone box—just in time. We were told later that the Gestapo (secret police) came soon after; he was safe, for the time being.

As the morning arrived we phoned my mother who had gone to an aunt of mine. We talked in code just in case the Gestapo was listening in. At night we stayed with relatives and friends at “safe houses.” We were told that households with mixed marriage partners, one Jewish the other not, would not be visited. Where we slept I have forgotten, except that we stayed one night at the Urlands in a fashionable suburb of Berlin, a charming couple. Every night we slept somewhere else.

My father looked pale and worried. The only quarrels I remember witnessing between my parents were concerned with leaving Germany. My mother wanted to leave while my father postponed leaving. After 1938 it was not Germany which did not allow Jews to leave without their possessions or money; all other countries would not allow them to enter, except in small numbers.

Fear of unemployment, of refugees becoming a burden to the State—were given as reasons. My father feared that he would not be able to teach mathematics, physics or chemistry in another language or even get a position in another country. Of course, he never dreamed that a cultured country like Germany could ever sink to such unspeakable depths as to murder its citizens.

I loved my father dearly. . . . He had already suffered greatly under the Nazi regime. He was a Doctor of Mathematics and also taught physics and chemistry in high school. Before the Nazi era he was an adviser and examiner appointed by the Silesian Ministry of Education. He had also studied mineralogy and philosophy.

In 1933 when Hitler came to power, my father was transferred to a little town, and in 1935 was sent to work in a state library—in order not to teach “Aryan students” any more. In 1936 he was pensioned off and taught in a Jewish school in Breslav in an honorary capacity. In 1937 he was appointed assistant headmaster in a Jewish school in Berlin, the school I attended.

After being fugitives for one week, my father went to the police station and gave himself up. Being a man of total integrity and honesty, he could not go on hiding like a criminal. “Go home with your son,” the police officer said, “this *aktion* (persecution) was organized by the S.A. (Hitler’s army), not the police. We know that you are an honest man and anyway, this *aktion* only lasted a week. And from now on nothing will happen to you!”

We went home. After one or two days my father suddenly had great stomach pains and was rushed to the Jewish hospital. A stomach ulcer, fully controlled for years, had burst due to the stress and shock of the “CRYSTAL NIGHT.” A few days later he died—a broken man.

He often used to say ironically, “The thanks of the Fatherland are due to you,” the official slogan of the German government after the First World War. . . .

And when thoughts of the Nazi era come to my mind, I push them away and think of something pleasant—I don’t want to cry. . . .

The irony of it all: because my father had died in December 1938, I, a half-orphan, was allowed to get onto a children’s transport in May 1939 that took me by train and boat together with other orphans to London and freedom. When saying goodbye to my mother at the railway station, I did not realise that I would never see her again.

My children have heard little of what I experienced in Nazi Germany. It’s called the “conspiracy of silence” by those who survived and felt guilty having survived. It took me over fifty years to actually write on paper the happenings of this one week.

GEORGE GINZBURG

Context: Western Europe

Source: George Ginzburg. *A Will to Live: A Story about Hope and the Strength of the Human Spirit*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003, pp. 92–100. Used by permission.

The Mechelen transit camp, known as Malines in French, was the major assembly point for the Jews of Belgium prior to them being sent on to the death camps in Poland. In this account of what life was like at Mechelen, George Ginzburg provides a detailed record of the daily record and how it was that he managed both to survive and also to undergo the experience of being on one of the deportation trains that left the camp.

Eventually, after several days, he arrived at what he refers to as the Anus Mundi—the asshole of the world—Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The main assembly transit camp was in *Maline* (Mechelen in Flemish), a town between Brussels and Antwerp. It was an ancient army headquarters, known as Dossin Barracks of St. Georges. Its cobble-stone-paved parade ground could accommodate well over a thousand people. Two senior officers, *Kommandants* Frank and Rudolph Stackman ran the camp. Here the Gestapo assembled thousands of foreign and Belgian Jews, many of whom had escaped from Nazi Germany years before hoping to find a safe haven in Belgium. The men, women and children came straight from their homes dressed in their best clothes, assembled in the courtyard, clutching their most valued possessions.

As well as the transit camp, Belgium also possessed a concentration camp called Breendonk. It was strictly for political prisoners, mostly Belgian Patriots. The SS *Sturmabführer* Phillip Schmidt ruled Breendonk. He was in charge of the whole operation, a drunkard, infamous for his sadism and cruelty. The camp was modelled on Germany’s camps, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Esterwege, Buchenwald and the like. New arrivals to the St Gilles Prison spread the word that anyone taken to those concentration camps would never leave; inmates died from hunger, exhaustion, maltreatment or executions.

The scene that confronted me at Maline (Mechelen) was difficult to fathom. We were thrust onto a large parade ground among hundreds of men, women and children. The SS *Kommandants* stood at the front, each flanked by a German shepherd, whip by his side and a cigarette dangling from the mouth as he said,

“Welcome to *Umsatzlager* (Transit camp) Mechelen,” he smiled. “My name is *Obersturmführer* SD Frank. My colleague here is SS *Kommandant* Steckman. I don’t bite, only my dog Fritzl bites, but then, only Jews. Ha! Ha!” Frank’s laughter pierced our hearts.

We were registered and shown to our living quarters by an “orderly,” one of the inmates of the camp. I saw a kitchen full of provisions. It was stocked with food brought in by prisoners from their homes. It was confiscated, put into a large food store and sorted by a group of ten or so women. There were fruits and preserves, meat and sardines, poultry and sausages, bread and jams, coffee and sugar, rice, flour and plenty of drinks. There was shelf upon shelf of food, including many items we had not seen in recent years. Such foodstuffs were only available on the black market.

SS *Obersturmführer* Frank was a blond, smartly groomed man in his early thirties, a real ladies' man, always polite and smiling but very firm. Many women flirted with him, putting on their charm in return for little favours, sometimes with the full encouragement of their husbands. It sickened me to witness the passive approval of husbands and boyfriends. We all slept together in a large dormitory-like hall. There was no privacy. Often husbands and wives went missing at night. Everybody had to look after himself. Throughout the day music blasted through loudspeakers, only interrupted by announcements or the calling-up of individuals.

Fresh bread was delivered daily to the food store by our own camp truck with a Flemish driver called Janeke. I often volunteered to load the truck at a bakery in the Maline township; life was a little easier this way and there were also some side benefits. Janeke carried a pistol and there was also a guard sitting in the back of the truck. I was often tempted to jump, but if unlucky, I would have received a bullet in my back.

Life in the transit camp became more pleasant when I befriended an attractive woman who was much older than I. She became my sleeping partner, both literally and sexually; she would keep me warm under the blanket in that big hall. I felt alive again, I felt like a man, at least for a short time, and time with her allowed me to forget my suffering.

At times my mind wandered and I asked myself, "What are my parents doing in Berlin at the moment? Which of my friends remain? Where is Walter now?"

We were given small privileges and I phoned my uncle twice but was only able to speak with my aunt. All phone calls were monitored so I had to be careful what I said. I asked her to phone Berlin and find out if my parents were okay but not to tell them about me; I didn't want them to worry any more than they already did. She asked me if I needed anything for the trip to the labour camp. I thanked her politely and told her that I would contact her again, and I enquired about my baby cousin Marie Louise, asking her to pass on a big kiss.

I volunteered to be an orderly but was given work as an interpreter. I spoke German, French and Russian fluently and was often called on to interpret between the camp internees and the German authorities. More and more people arrived almost daily and despite the fact that at least one transport left every week from Maline Railway Station, the camp was still badly overcrowded. Moving amongst the crowds, I exchanged news with anyone I could on people I had seen or knew to be alive. On occasion I talked with people who knew of the fate of my friend Leon. I had not seen

him since the Gestapo grabbed us. They told me that Leon had died from the beatings inflicted on him during Gestapo interrogation. I thought about my own ordeal—why had I survived?

The transports became routine. The luggage, numbered and marked, went separately to the station. Eventually my name appeared on the next transport to Germany or Poland. I was asked if I wanted to be a transport leader and take responsibility, maintain order and protect the children and the elderly. I accepted the role, knowing it would not be easy, especially with the children and the sick. However, I wanted to help those in need. We prepared to depart the following day, 12 September 1942.

We walked slowly to the train station. It was the tenth transport leaving Maline that day—our number totaled 1048 men, women and children. As we walked, we carried what we could hold: handbags and rucksacks filled with food. We knew Poland, or East Germany or wherever we were going, would be freezing cold: women wore their furs and the men dressed in their winter coats. Several fully armed *Grüne Sicherheits Polizei* (Green Security Police) escorted us.

Waiting for us at the station was a long cattle train, with open sliding doors, straw-covered floors and small windows secured with barbed wire. At least there would be some light and air. We were told to tolerate these conditions because of the war and because all passenger trains were being used by the German armed forces. However, as soon as we reached the German border, we would be transferred to more comfortable trains.

The last two wagons were filled with suitcases, which we helped to load. All cases were well marked and painted with Belgian names and addresses. I noticed that some of the boxcars were marked with the letter "K" for the Polish town Katowice while other wagons were marked with the word "Juden." Some bore the word "Birkenau," but none of us had ever heard of it. While we waited on the platform, we received hot *Ersatzkaffee* and bread with jam. Everyone filled his or her bottle with drinking water. Two orderlies and I helped to fill bottles and distribute food. Everybody was asking us where we were going, but we had no answers.

We were ordered into the train. For each wagon there was a list of 70 to 90 people. They were so cramped; there was no room to sit. Families stuck together and I appointed one responsible person as supervisor per wagon so he could report any serious problems to me. The only way we could communicate was via the German police guards, and only during train stops.

Hygienic toilet buckets with chloride powder, toilet paper, period binds and aspirin were placed in every wagon. One doctor, some bandages and medication were required for every three wagons. Tears were flowing and people kissed and hugged. The guards closed the doors, bolting them on the outside with iron bars. On the front of the train hung two German swastika flags and the canvas banner, *Räder rollen für den Sieg* (Wheels rolling to victory). Armed guards then took their places on the wagon rooftops, in their boxcars and hanging on the outside steps.

The whistle blew and the train pulled out of Maline Station. Nobody waved goodbye; the station was empty. Inside our wagon, people stood quietly, contemplating the future. I still felt optimistic. Surely God would bestow His mercy on us. We knew that the war must end one day and we would be telling our stories to our children; but nobody ever imagined what those stories would be.

We settled. Most of the people in our wagon fell asleep. Some moaned and groaned; it was difficult to breathe while others smoked. Fears pervaded conversations. What were the Germans capable of? Would the Germans keep their word and transfer us to a passenger train? Germans had a reputation for keeping their word—the Nazis were supposed to be the party of decent people. But then, as Hitler made clear in *Mein Kampf*, they also wanted to destroy the Jews and any other opposition. I stopped thinking about all of this and tried to focus on the current situation.

We were moving quickly through the Belgian countryside and took turns to look out of the small windows in each corner of the wagon. Some of us gathered in a corner and sang French, Hebrew and Yiddish songs. Others were talking to their children or rocking then to sleep; some were hugging and kissing; each found his own way to comfort his fears and grief. Sometimes passing through a small country station, children and women waved us by. The train did not stop. Through our window I could see the guards lying flat on the rooftops, their automatic rifles in their hands.

Finally, after many long hours, our train came to a stop at a small station. SS guards were waiting for us on the platform. I looked out and noticed many twenty-five litre army containers with *Ersatzkaffee* (artificial coffee) and tea ready for distribution. As the train stopped, SS soldiers screamed for every second wagon door to open. I heard the bolts shift and the doors rolled open. “Nobody comes out until told. Whoever jumps out, will be shot on the spot. Children, women or men, do you understand?” There was absolute silence. Then came the order, “All official orderlies and train *Führers* (train leaders) out on the platform in front of your

wagons.” This meant me. Shielding my eyes, I moved out into the bright sunlight. Children with their mothers came out first. An SS officer shouted, “There is coffee, tea and cold fresh water. Take bottles and cups with you.” I helped organize the distribution of drinks.

Out they came. Tired, jaded and pale, no make-up and hair uncombed, in fur coats and jewellery. Many wore coloured scarves around their heads. Women were begging for milk for their babies; they were given one small tin of powdered milk per wagon. The elderly had to be supported. I was busy helping them in the queue and pouring their drinks. Once they had taken a drink, they had to move quickly back into the wagon. The famous *Scheisskübel* (shit buckets) on the train had to be replaced by empty ones. This was the most awful job I had ever been given. Often I spilled some of the contents. The stench brought me close to vomiting. I regretted volunteering for the position of leader, but thankfully I had some help from other young men.

As everybody returned to the wagons, the counting began. When the doors were locked, those in the other wagons were allowed out. After an hour the whole procedure was completed and we started rolling again.

It was hard to breathe. Not enough fresh air came in through those little windows and the smell of human bodies and cigarette smoke was foul. On many occasions, I asked people to refrain from smoking but it was all in vain. Many were very nervous and the smoking calmed them. Besides, I was a smoker myself at the time and depended on handouts, so I didn’t push the issue. There was a lot of coughing, vomiting, crying and groaning throughout the night. Despite this, exhaustion led me to sleep for a few hours. The train with its human cargo continued rolling throughout the night. There were no more stops.

In the morning, the sun streamed through the small openings and we all tried to get a breath of fresh air and a glimpse of the German countryside. Heading towards Frankfurt over the Rhine, the train stopped many times, sometimes for hours, to give way to military trains laden with soldiers, trucks and tanks, heading for the Russian Front. The odour from human perspiration and waste, cigarette and cigar smoke combined with the lack of fresh air was becoming overpowering. Most of us were nauseous and it was almost unbearable. Water became a critical problem, particularly for the elderly, babies and children. Mothers needed water to mix the powdered milk for their children.

The atmosphere was becoming increasingly desperate and whenever I requested water from the Germans, they would say, “*Später, später, bald* (Later, later, soon).” We

bypassed the cities, only travelling through little country towns until we arrived in Dresden.

We were so grateful to be out of the train. My helpers and I pumped water continuously from the railway wells until our arms hurt, but we were determined to fill as many buckets and bottles as possible with fresh water. During that time, some German peasants approached the railway station with fresh fruit, drinks and sandwiches. They tried to push this food for children through the windows, only to be moved along harshly by the guards. We had three very sick people on our train who needed immediate medical treatment but not nearly enough was available. We were told that many German soldiers in Russia also needed medication, and they came first. The sick would have to wait until we arrived at our destination where they would get the attention they needed.

I grew agitated and thought of escaping. But how could I? If only I could lift the floorboards of the wagon! I could see the rails through the slits in the floorboards, which were mostly old and rotten and held together by big steel bolts. Desperately I tried to break or lift them with a scout's knife but only broke the blade. If only I had a crowbar! I even tried to burn the boards from the inside but they would not burn; they were too moist. Some of my co-passengers started abusing and screaming at me, afraid of trouble. I soon gave up on the idea and tried to think of other possibilities. From past experience, I knew that the best approach would be to keep my eyes and ears open and to exercise patience.

It must have been our third or fourth day on the cattle train when it rolled into Upper Silesia in Poland. I could see people standing alongside the track waiting for us to pass. They gave us all sorts of signs that were difficult to understand. It seemed that they wanted us to throw our money and watches through the windows. When we did not comply, they made signs with their hands, which could only be interpreted one way; we would have our throats cut. We tried not to make too much of this, especially as we could not understand the Polish dialect.

We saw Catholic nuns standing on railway platforms, offering us drinks for the children. They were stretching out their hands and begging us in broken French, German and Polish to pass the babies to them through the windows. We could not believe what we were hearing, nor did we grasp the enormity of our situation. Later, I was told that some mothers did actually hand their babies over to the nuns. They were mostly from Poland and already were aware of their fate. Those of us from Germany still believed that we were going to work for the German war industry.

It was barely dawn when our train came to a halt. We could see open fields and a huge brick gateway with no signs or names anywhere. I knew we had recently passed Breslau and Katowice and that these were occupied territories in Poland, now incorporated into the Third Reich. We sat for thirty minutes, then the train started to roll again, but only for a few minutes before stopping again. We heard orders shouted. Floodlights lit a ramp revealing numerous SS soldiers and high-ranking officers with dogs and whips. Further along stood others in striped prison uniforms. We had arrived at the terminus, Auschwitz-Birkenau. *Anus Mundi*.

PAULETTE GOLDBERG-SZABASON

Context: Western Europe

Source: Paulette Goldberg-Szabason. *Just Think It Never Happened*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2002, pp. 22–29, 31–35. Used by permission.

Moving from place to place in France during the war, Paulette Goldberg-Szabason was a child during the Holocaust. In this account, she provides a listing of some of the locations where she and her sister sojourned while being looked after by the OSE—the Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants, or Children's Aid Society) a French Jewish humanitarian organization that assisted hundreds of Jewish refugee children during World War II. As a child she did not recall the time of passing from war to liberation, though certain events stood out toward the end of the war that remained in her memory. This is an excellent account of what it was to be a child in occupied and unoccupied France during the years of the Holocaust.

In the next few years, we kept on moving from place to place. I checked the names of those places with OSE records, but I could only verify that my sister and I were there, not exactly when the following stories happened. We were in Toulouse, Meripeix, Pau Gelos, Chateau de Chabbes in Creuse and Châtillon sur Indre, but not necessarily in that order.

Toulouse

We were taken to an OSE children's home in Toulouse. I had big sores on my head and body, probably infected bites from lice. They cleaned us up and shaved my head. My room was occupied only by girls. I was sick and in bed for most of my time there. I slept in a cot.

One night the building was bombed. Everybody ran outside, but I was carried down the stairs by someone. We stood in our nighties and watched half the chateau burning. I was not afraid and enjoyed feeling warm from the fire. Next day, we could see there was a terrible mess and we were taken down to a cellar where underground passages led to other buildings in the grounds.

I remember one girl, taller than me, who was in Toulouse when we got there. Her arm had been blown off during a bombing, not the one from the night before. She said they had pulled her skin and tied the ends together with strings. It was horrible. She was in so much pain and the wound kept seeping with infection. She asked the other children to wipe it for her. The adults kept promising to take her to a hospital, but when she begged them, they always said tomorrow. After a while, she disappeared, and I assumed that she must have gone to hospital, but these days I wonder if she died. We moved again. We had so many changes, that moving meant nothing to me. I never let myself become attached to anything or anyone.

Pau

When we were moving from place to place, my sister resumed responsibility for me. She went where people directed her to go and I followed blindly, not knowing what I was doing or where I was going. We arrived at the train station at Pau and walked down a road, passing farm after farm. We asked every farmer on the way for direction and each time, they said to keep going. We thought we would never find the farm of Jeanne-Marie Dubois. We walked for many hours and my feet hurt.

We eventually arrived and saw Madame Dubois looking out for us from a first-floor window. She waved as we came towards the house. It seemed like a warm welcome, but we were in for a hard time there. We were always kept very hungry at that house, although she herself seemed to have plenty to eat. I remember going out very early in the morning to pick up snails. I would bring them to Madame Dubois and she would wash them outside and bring them inside to cook them live in boiling water. We all ate them, and they tasted beautiful, like chicken. I remember stealing potatoes from the ground in her garden and eating them raw, and being constantly on the lookout for scraps.

I remember one episode when I was walking with a few children down a path. We were always looking for food and were so happy when we found apples on an overhanging branch of a tree. Suddenly, we were being chased. I screamed

for the others to wait, but they ran off, and as I was the youngest and the slowest, I got caught. A man grabbed my hand, took my apple away, and told me severely, never to steal again. I have dreamt about this moment throughout my life: running and running and getting caught, my hand frozen like a lump.

I was allowed to go to school each day to get a plate of soup. My sister was not given the same privilege. It was only for the littlest children. I remember lining up for the soup, and the nuns walking me back to the farm from where we were living. They were very nice to me. I don't know what went wrong, but suddenly we weren't allowed to stay inside Madame Dubois' house any more. For some time—days or weeks—we slept in the chook and rabbit shed. There was not enough room to lie down properly, and it was freezing cold. I ate fruit kernels and carrot and potato peelings, anything they threw out to the chooks. One night, we were taken away.

Someone must have reported the situation. I have since found out that the OSE had their people come around to check on our well-being and to pay our hosts for our keep but I can't recall having had contact with any other adults in that place.

Chabannes

This was how we got to Chateau Chabannes. We got a train to a station nearest to the Chateau and started walking. We were hungry, tired and cold and my sister made me walk and walk. I dragged my heels and resented her making me, when I was so tired. She never seemed to be tired, just determined to get us to the next place as soon as possible. Again, she kept asking farmers which way to go and they pointed in the direction we were going. We walked for half a day.

We stayed a short time at Chabannes, probably only a couple of weeks. It was a children's home in one of those large chateaux. I remember hardly anything about it, only a large empty ballroom with murals on the walls, where we were given a hot drink in the company of other children. Leaving Chabannes brings back a terrifying memory. The people looking after us woke my sister and me up very early in the morning. It was still dark outside. We had to be very quiet. They gave us each a hot cocoa and I was put into some clean clothes and a new pair of shoes. The skirt was long and the shoes, two sizes too big. We were put onto a wagon, hidden under a lot of hay and told not to move or do anything to alert people to our presence. Two farmers sat in front, and the wagon moved out of the grounds, pulled by two cows. I

could hear the clatter of the wooden wheels on the stony path. The farmers were stopped by some men (were they German soldiers or some check-point manned by French police?) who speared the hay with big forks. I curled up very small, scared to breathe. Only when the noise of wheels could be heard turning again did I feel relieved. I will never forget this.

After a while, I fell asleep as we travelled to the train station for our next destination. I found out only four years ago that the Germans were beginning to take the children away from these homes, so the OSE was spirited them away, a few at a time.

Mirepeix

Madame Forgue was a widow and always dressed in black. I did not know it at the time, but her husband had just died early in 1944, some months before we arrived. Her first name was Esther, an unusual name for a Frenchwoman, but she was not Jewish. In fact, she was a pious Catholic. I arrived at her house with a head full of lice and sores. She shaved me. I was always being shaved. I also had to let her know if there were worms in my stools. There were, but I always used to cut them into pieces with a wooden stick so that she would not see them. I didn't want to be different from the others. No one else was asked if they had worms in their stools. I always seemed to be the sick one. I remember having a swollen stomach, but I didn't think it was a sign of sickness.

The house was in a hamlet that consisted of a few farms and orchards, a church, a school and a marketplace. Madame Forgue's property must have been a farm when her husband was alive, but now she only kept her large kitchen-garden going. There was a huge barn, still filled with hay, but there were no cattle. The toilet was way down near the back fence next to a cemetery, and you could see big statues and crosses above the stone wall. I played hide and seek in the cemetery with the local children. I was the littlest, and the older kids teased me that the ghosts were after me. I felt scared, but did not run away from the game, because I wanted the company of the other children.

There were big crosses above our beds, and at night, Madame Forgue told me to pray, especially for my parents to be well. There was another boy, George, living in the house at the time. He was a few years older than me. He wanted to be a priest when he grew up and I learned to pray on my hands and knees from him. A number of times, George forced me and another little girl to go into the barn with him, where he

would sexually abuse us with a stick. It hurt a lot. Fortunately, he was caught hurting the other child, and the abuse stopped.

I attended school, but don't remember learning anything. I just sat and fantasized. I was in my own world, but what it consisted of, I can't remember. I enjoyed being on my own and walking to and from school. I always stopped at the river and stared into the water or threw stones to watch the ripples. The sight and sound of it was very peaceful and soothing. I often passed the women washing their clothes in the river. They were cheerful and friendly and always greeted me as I walked by and encouraged me to stay and chat for a while.

One day, I was undressed and examined at school by some visiting doctors and they thought something was really wrong. I left the room, talking silently to my stomach. I told it, "There's nothing wrong with you because you aren't hurting." The OSE archives tell that I was very sick and spent some time in hospital then. But the memory of it is blurry. I remember doctors and nurses, the ward with rows of beds and sleeping most of the time.

Chatillion-Sur-Indre

This was the last place where we were hidden and the memories are good and bad.

My sister and I took a long train journey and eventually came to a station called Chatillion-Sur-Indre. The train stopped and the guard called for everyone to get out, so it must have been the end of the line. It was dark and there were other children also coming off the train. People were waiting in the shadows to pick the children up. We were all gone from the platform in three or four minutes. A woman came up to us and asked if we had anywhere to sleep that night, and when we said no, took each of us by the hand. I trusted her straight away. She walked us to her home, gave us a wash and put us to sleep in a bed with beautiful white sheets.

Her name was Madame Henriette Gateault. We spent several months with her and this was the happiest period for me throughout the war years.

We had food and warmth, and I felt loved and cared for. She asked me to call her Maman Gateault. I went with her to church and to Mass and learned the practices of the Catholic religion. I remember looking at the image of Jesus and thinking how much pain he was in but I loved the image of the Virgin Mary holding her baby to her in the sunlight. She seemed real to me and it was her I used to pray to. I felt

secure and happy . . . as if I belonged. My sister refused to attend religious services and was never pushed to participate. Only once did Madame Gateault ask her where we came from, if our names were real and our ages. Celine would not tell her anything and was never asked again. . . .

Another memory that haunted me for many years, was when we were reciting the ABC and came to C which stood for “coq”—rooster. I had a panic attack and screamed hysterically. No one could stop me. I was put in the corner but continued crying. I was ordered to stop but I just couldn’t, so I was put out in the corridor. Years later, I realized why I had been affected like this. It was because of the animals we had slept with in Pau. There was a rooster there, I was scared stiff of. It kept menacing me and pecked me a couple of times.

Dinner time with Maman Gateault was always memorable. I would get the crouton (crust) and the heart of the lettuce. Pierre Doliveux was a lovely man and very kind to me, always joking and making me laugh. No one had ever tried to amuse me before. He made me feel special and important. He told me that if I ate the heart of the lettuce, I would become as strong as he was. I would be asked to find the lettuce heart on the platter at mealtimes, and when I had transferred it to my plate, he rolled up some lettuce leaves on his plate and said he’d found another heart. Imagine, a lettuce with two hearts! I was puzzling over this when Maman Gateault would whisper, “Don’t tease the child. You are upsetting her!” I remember, I couldn’t put my arms around Maman Gateault because she was so fat. My hands couldn’t reach around to her back, and she’d laugh when I tried.

Everything was wonderful until the day the Germans marched in without warning. Normally, news spread in advance and by the time the Germans came, the streets were empty. On this occasion, we had not time to go to the shelters. Maman Gateault and Lucienne quickly closed all the shutters. The Germans marched into the square, in their usual way. Then scattered and started shooting at houses and people randomly. Our poor shoe-maker and his whole family were ordered to come out but wouldn’t. As a result, they burnt down the whole building and he and his family were shot because of being Jewish.

Pierre was expected back for lunch and Maman Gateault kept praying that he would stay on his farm. We saw him as he turned the corner through the cracks in the shutters. He was pushing a wheel-barrow full of grass with the scythe on top, the scythe that I was never allowed to touch. Two German soldiers came up to him and started shouting at him. They disappeared in the direction of the square, which was only up the street. Maman Gateault was crying. We were

later told that he was interrogated and severely pistol-whipped. He died in hospital from his injuries a little while later. It was on the 15th August 1944. When I went back there nine years ago, I saw the names of those murdered by the Germans on a plaque in the City Square, and his name was amongst them. It was the worst time in the world for that town. There was death all around. I was numb and felt nothing. I didn’t fear death; I knew from an early age that it was coming, if not today, then tomorrow.

The wheel-barrow did a lot of work after the Germans left. I walked to the square and nobody stopped me. They were picking up bodies and silently walking down the street to bury them. I just looked and walked behind them with the other children, like a zombie.

The next time, we were all warned that the Germans were coming and we managed to hide. They didn’t interfere with the population this time. They simply took everything worth taking, even the cattle. When we came out of hiding, our home had been emptied of all the food, linen, blankets and tools. When I returned to Chatillion in 1993, I found out that the Germans had retreated through our village in August 1944 and committed atrocities and looted many farmhouses.

I don’t remember when liberation came, but I remember that suddenly I found the Germans sweeping the school grounds, and some of the children were saying you could spit on them or put your tongue out to them. There was a lot going on without us children knowing it. One day, they marched the town candle-maker down the main street, stripped him down to his waist, with what seemed the entire township walking behind. Then the farmers hung him. They had been given information that he had betrayed people to the Germans.

In November 1945, we were returning from visiting Lucienne in the hospital. She had just given birth to a baby boy. It was a sunny, peaceful afternoon and we were strolling home. I was lagging behind Madam Gateault and my sister, picking flowers from the footpath. Suddenly a black car stopped and two men in dark suits and hats ran out and grabbed us. They said, “Don’t be scared, we are Jewish. We are taking you back.” I could hear Maman Gateault screaming, “These are my children, don’t take them away.” I heard those words for many years to come. She loved me. She was good to me and I was so happy with her.

I hated those two men for so many years. What they did seemed so brutal at the time. I didn’t want to go with them, I didn’t want to be Jewish. Later I discovered that some families who had harboured children refused to part with them.

Some did so because they had grown to love them, others because they had baptized them and wanted to “save their souls.” Some even held them to ransom, demanding a large monetary reward. Maman Gateault did not fit any of these categories. We should have been given a chance to say good-bye properly.

JULIUS GOLDFARB

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Julius Goldfarb (translated by Philip Goldfarb with Maryann McLoughlin). *Julius Goldfarb's Diary, The Desperate Times: 1939–1944*. Pomona (NJ): The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, 2008, pp. 23–31. Used by permission.

The life of a Polish Jew during the Holocaust was never intended by the Nazis to last long—certainly not long enough to be able to keep a diary, which was an illegal activity in any case. And yet Julius Goldfarb was one who did so, and in this account we see something of the type of entries he managed to keep. Essentially a record of how people lived their lives in small towns and ghettos in Poland, Goldfarb's diary entries in the summer and late fall of 1942 offer valuable descriptions from which much understanding can be gleaned of the challenges facing Jews under the most trying of conditions during one of the Holocaust's bitterest periods.

July 18, 1942 Dębica

I received a card from Dora that things were very bad. The Germans were talking about moving the Jews out from Sedziszów. At the same time, twenty-one kilometers away in Dębica, they were talking about the same thing—moving Jews out. They were taking people from surrounding areas; the whole area was to be resettled. I had a passport (*legitymacje*-ID cards) stamped by the Germans, protecting me because I did work on the railroad.

In Dębica they collected all the Jews in one safe place, a pasture near the Dębica train station. All had to sit in a circle on the ground; no one at all was allowed to stand up. They were not allowed to move around even to keep warm (it was very cold at night). They were not even allowed to shiver. Around the circle, a whole company of SS and the blue uniformed Polish police were standing. It was pouring rain without stopping. The mothers cuddled their children to their breasts to protect them from the rain and cold. The

children were begging, “Mom, give me some bread. Give me some milk.” The people suffered all night sitting on the ground—the rain never ceased.

I decided to go back to Sedziszów to see what was happening there. I wanted to see for myself. I wanted to see my family. I decided to smuggle myself out of the camp. That was easy. The hardest thing was not to be caught outside the camp because that meant death. I hopped on a freight train and rode the 21 kilometers to Sedziszów.

I saw the same sight in Sedziszów as I had seen in Dębica. The Germans took all the people from the town and also from nearby towns, such as Wiele Pole. The people from Wiele Pole had to walk to Sedziszów. People who were beaten and died on the way were thrown on a wagon. The Nazis purposely let someone's head hang out and rub on one of the back wheels, mutilating the head. They often did this. They wanted everyone to see the cruelty of the Nazis so they would be feared.

They gathered the people from Sedziszów and from the nearby towns in a circle and they were not allowed to move. In the evening, they took the older people in our town to the Jewish cemetery where they had dug a giant pit. The barrels of the German machine guns were pointed at all the poor, old people who had to stand naked, squashed all together. After they began shooting, all the old people started to fall together, forever in a collective grave. Berta Pelenberg, a pregnant woman in her ninth month, was dragged by her long hair to the cemetery where she was murdered. Later the SS tapped young people and told them to cover up that collective grave.

Some took their own lives, rather than be deported to their deaths by the Nazis. Dr. Goldman lived with my best friend, Izzy, and his family. Dr. Goldman's wife, daughter, Yanka, and son Yurick, as well as Mr. Gold, his wife and daughter were told to go to the Sedziszów Train Station. Yanka Goldman was engaged to a Polish Christian, Pasternak, who wanted her to leave with him, so he could save her. Yanka refused to live without the rest of her family. The family knew what would happen. Dr. Goldman had prepared cyanide pills, so they took these pills before the trains were loaded. (I later saw where their bodies were buried in the cemetery.)

I ran back to the railroad station where the rest of my people were surrounded. I was looking for my family—for my dear wife and mother and all the rest of my family. I could not recognize anyone. It was pouring rain. I was far away from the people, hiding in the grass. I lay in the grass in the rain far away—looking—for almost the whole night. I couldn't clear my mind; it was as if I were in a trance. I

couldn't get back to reality to believe this whole thing was really happening. Who could have imagined this? They were shooting the people. Why?

As early as 9:00 PM, I heard echoes of shooting. In fact, I confirmed the tragic truth. They had shot everyone. Why? What did the poor people do wrong? I thought and I thought, but I couldn't get those suffering words out of my mind. However, I could not find the answer! My head was splitting from the pain.

I had to go back to Dębica to the camp barrack for morning roll call. Ironically, after roll call, all the workers were collected and taken to the Dębica train station. All the workers' faces had turned pale from what they had seen. They went back to Dębica depressed. In Dębica train station, people said to us, "Everybody should hide because they are shooting Jews wherever they see them."

It happened to us that they called to us on the train tracks and told us to report in. Around the station I saw dead people covered up like in a hill. A lot of other people were standing four in a row near the Gestapo and SS. Later the military was chasing them like cattle to the station where the cattle wagons were waiting—a whole train. They herded the people into cattle wagons. The floors of these wagons were deep with lime. One hundred and twenty people were in each car, thrown one on top of one another. They pushed them in and locked the doors. On each side, at the top, were little slits of windows covered with barbed wire. Inside there was no air to breathe and no water. On the steps of the wagons stood guards with machine guns. They were watching and saying to people, "You are going to another place to work in the Ukrainian fields." The same lie was repeated at every village and town—that people were leaving to be resettled in the East.

In the territories and in other places when Nazis deported people they generally would send out every one of them. In yet other places they left the people that they needed, such as specialists, to work. For example, in Dębica only a part of the city was settled out. Quite a while passed and no letters or post cards from where they had been taken were received by family. A few post cards had been thrown out from the wagons. If a good person found these on the tracks, he mailed it because it had been addressed.

We found that the trains from the Dębica area were going in the vicinity of the Belzec Death Camp where there was a crematorium. We had no other information from them. We worked on the tracks at the station and were left without homes or families.

We were six friends from Sedziszów where we worked. [Julius was the only survivor.] I talked with them

and proposed that we should hold on together and have a collective life like a family. We should embrace each other as family and watch over each other like brothers. We should hold together because we have had a tragedy happen to all of us.

From the day that they sent away the people all had to sleep in the barracks that belonged to the firm Ostbahn [the German company, operating the east railroad, a Polish railway system]. The director of the firm ordered that all Jewish workers had to live outside the city in barracks. The area was fenced in with barbed wire all around so they would not be able to escape. They squeezed in two hundred and fifty persons, all belonged to the company Ostbahn but who had worked in different workshops.

November 15, 1942

For the second time, on November 15, 1942, they started to "resettle" people, sending them to the gas chambers. On a Sunday, all firms had to work. We were standing by the *magazine* (warehouse). The people who worked there told us that SS and blue Polish police surrounded the whole ghetto. The head of the firm, Mazurkiewicz, told us to pick up our tools and go out to work as always. We were all very anxious. On the same day the workers who lived in the ghetto did not go out to work. We talked about what this meant. Because of what was happening, a German supervisor went to find out what was going on. The German came back with an answer: after this *Aktion*, our friends would go back to work. We were working on the main track of the station.

While we were out, they chased out all the brothers, sisters, mothers, and children from the ghetto. The same thing happened as the first time when they were shipped out in cattle wagons. On the way many people died. They suffocated to death in these cattle wagons—without air, the floors covered in lime. The lime was very dangerous.

We were looking at this. Can anyone imagine this? They are killing poor, innocent people. They push them in and one grabs the other and follows. They do this to satisfy their sadism. Those killers, part of the Fascist Socialist State, kill as if instinctively. The Germans did not forget about anything. They prepared crematoriums and different places of torture.

At noon, at lunchtime, we had a break to eat something. (At 5:00 AM we had twelve decagrams of bread, raw sugar, and *kava* [ersatz coffee, watered down coffee]. The bread had to last us the whole day. In the evening we had soup and whatever bread we had left.) We heard a loud whistle, and I

became scared. We thought this was a signal that more people would be taken to be “resetled.” However, it was only a locomotive whistle. The train carried people who had been relocated by the Nazis from other ghettos. We were looking out as they passed by; and heard the screaming, “Water. Water. Water.” Three times I heard them yelling for water. I felt the heat radiating from people’s bodies. From the little window in the train I felt the heat and smell coming out, and then screams from the people begging for water. [Because Julius worked on the railroad, he saw these trains.] It was so hot that the people undressed themselves in the train wagons—kids, women, men, the elderly! Even this did not help them. They desperately needed air and water, but although we tried to go around the wagons to help, the guards with machine guns wouldn’t let us. The atmosphere threatened us, and we were very sad and upset. The culture and civilization of the twentieth century was fading before our very eyes as the train moved away in the distance.

We were left with hearts of stone. In our mouths there were no words. All that was left were heavy sighs.

After we finished the work in the evening, we went back to our barracks in Dębica, which was three kilometers from the railroad station. We were all very troubled and depressed. We felt that every day there were fewer and fewer of us. Now there were very few left.

After we slept through the night, we again marched to work. When we were walking on the tracks, we saw a mound near the tracks. Under the mound were dead bodies—those who had died from hunger or who had suffocated to death because they had no air to breathe. The Nazis had thrown these bodies out of the train. The territory they died in had to bury them.

We then found out that a train had come to Dębica [which the Nazis had occupied since September of 1939 and where a ghetto had been established in 1941]. Until 1943 the Jews of Dębica had been deported to Belzec Death Camp. The first time, on June 29, 1943, not all the people had been deported; however, on December 15–16, 1943—for the second time—the Nazis were to deport people [this time to Auschwitz]. Now the ghetto of Dębica would be liquidated. Only a few people, like us, who were necessary, were left. The Gestapo gave us special passports (*legitymacje*—ID cards) with our photographs and Gestapo stamps; the text of the passports stated that we were living because we were needed to work for the company.

We were brought into the city together with another group of people who also had special passports. We were altogether about 350 workmen, and about 300 other people were hiding in bunkers.

The Gestapo gave a strict order to the *Ordnungsdienst* [OD], the Jewish police, leaders from the camp: they should search for people hiding in the vicinity of the camp. Many people had escaped from where they were supposed to be, so many so that even in one day they caught sixteen people. These Jews were brought to the cemetery in Dębica, where they were tortured and murdered. They had to strip naked. Then they had to dig their own grave, climb into the grave, and had to lie one next to the other, tied up, and then they were executed. Next machine guns did their duty. Some of them were only slightly wounded; some were not even touched. The OD paid no attention to us while they were covering up the grave.

The next day the OD took fifty-four people from the camp—most of them females and children. These people were so numb and depressed that they no longer cared what would happen to them. They had given up.

Then they let us know that at 9:00 PM in the evening, the *Kommandant* of the camp and a high chief of the *Sicherdienst* (SD) [Nazi Party security service and intelligence service] wanted to speak with us. This SD was a terrible person—a sadist. He liked to be honored but he treated people as if they were nothing. If any littlest thing that he did not like was done, he took out his gun and shot the person or persons. He was a tall, heavy man and always had a big cigar in his snout. He always had a revolver in his fist, and he always had a smile on his face.

He came at exactly 9:00 PM and ordered the *Kommandant* to bring him two ODs. He told the ODs to bring slowly in fifty-four people in a line. With a cigar in his mouth, he shot all fifty-four with a smile on his face. This was a game to him. At the time, during the execution no one had permission to leave the barrack. Even to look out of the window was forbidden. Everybody stayed in his own corner; we were all very scared and very sad. Nobody said a word. We stayed without any protection and without any power. Everybody’s heart was bleeding.

After a while the sound of gun shots was like an orchestra. After he left, I called him a cutthroat and a sadist. Then a wagon with two horses came and they slowly loaded the bodies, one by one. The horses did not even need to be guided to the cemetery.

How could this Nazi stoop so low! He called little kids to himself, “*Komm, Komm, Kleine. Hab keine Angst. Willst du Bonbons? Geh Dorthin.*” (Come little ones. Don’t be afraid. Do you want candy? Go there.) And when they went there he grabbed a little brother by the hair, lifted him with one hand, held him up, and shot him. He did the same things to many other children. When he left, the SS began their killings. They

shipped two wagonloads of people with the horses a third time. The horses took the bodies to a big grave, into which the SS dumped all the bodies.

One person stood up in the grave—an older man who had come from Mjelec. He had two wounds to his head, but he spoke with everyone. He told us he didn't feel anything. I was part of the group unloading the bodies into the grave, and he spoke to us. He begged us to help him. But the guards were fifty meters away, surrounding the area, and no one could help. The guards were watching the group that was covering the bodies.

One of the soldiers saw this man standing up. He ran over, and he told him to stand in the grave. With a clear mind, the man stood near the grave and begged for mercy, looking right in the soldier's face. But the soldier shot him anyway.

That whole week in the evenings the orchestra of shots was heard. In our camp in Dębica every day there were all kinds of death sentences—sacrificial victims from the Jewish people. The train police (German—*Ranschutz*) were always looking for people to murder—the intelligentsia, strong people, people in jail. They also looted them, stealing even their clothing. One day the *Ranschutz* came with the chief of the Gestapo; they took fifty of our workers—Jews—and put them in cattle cars and they hooked these up to a passenger train. They shipped them off to Tarnów, Poland, about fifty kilometers away [by 1941, a haven for Jews]. They hanged them. After a few weeks they finished everybody off.

The Richter Firm was liquidated. Under the Richter Firm thirty-four of our people were working. One day they went to work. The train police and the soldiers told us to stay away. Afterwards they let us know what had happened. The police were standing under the train bridge (an overpass). They waited there until the thirty-four came back from work. On both sides of the bridge the police and soldiers stood with machine guns. When the men came close they encircled them. The *Ranschutz* took them at 7:00 PM. The *Kommandant* of the camp begged them to let the people go because he needed them. But his pleas were for naught. In late evening, around 8:30 PM, we heard shots from the so-called “dead pastures,” where they had shot a lot of Jews. This pasture area was close to our camp. They were killed down to the last person. For what? I am asking, Why?

The camp was in panic. Chaos! People running around not knowing what to do. They ran around, trying to escape. But where? To the city? The chief of the Gestapo had warned us that if one person escaped, he would take five people from the barrack and shoot them. In the camp this brought an even heavier burden.

Within a short period of time, they transferred people to Rzeszów. More than half of our people, this little bit, worked at the same place until the end when they were deported.

In the fall of 1942, on the day of the High Holidays, as always they collected us near the gates and lined us up. They took us four in a row to march to work. When we crossed the gate, we were marching through lines of Gestapo. A taxi cab was waiting there and from the cab an SS leader got out. He rubbed his hands together and ordered them back to the barracks. Meanwhile the Ukrainian *Schutzpolizei* surrounded us. Then trucks arrived to take us away. They loaded us up and took us to Płaszów Ghetto that they had liquidated. They left in Płaszów thirty-seven people for three weeks. After the work was finished, one person had run away—an OD man. Therefore, Samuel and I became ODs for three days before they left Płaszów. I had to take the place of the man who escaped. They ordered me to do this and I functioned as an OD afterwards too. They took us all to Rzeszów when we left Płaszów.

MARIKA GOLDFAYL

Context: Western Europe

Source: Marika Goldfayl. “The Orphanage.” In *Memory Guide My Hand: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing by Members of the Melbourne Jewish Community*, vol. 3. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004, pp. 113–125. Used by permission.

The majority of Jews in France who were victims of the Holocaust were those referred to as “foreign” Jews—those who had arrived in France as immigrants before the war, or their French-born children. Marika Goldfayl’s father was an immigrant from Hungary who arrived in transit to the United States in 1924 and decided to remain. Although the family he established did well in France, the war and the collaborationist Vichy government combined to render the family vulnerable. By 1942, when Marika was eight years of age, her parents decided that she would be safer if hidden as an orphan in a convent school. The memoir here is a segment from Marika’s personal account of what it was like to be placed in this situation. It is a detailed document of orphanage life, and as a result a valuable depiction of this aspect of the Holocaust.

My father, Alexandre Rosenthal, came to Paris from Hungary in 1924, looking for political stability and work, but mainly hoping it would be a stepping stone to America.

However, the quotas were full for years to come. He was twenty and had extended family in Paris. In 1929 he went back home to the large provincial town of Kalocsa to visit his family. It was summer and one day he took off on his bicycle to visit Maria Mandel, a distant relative, a widow. She lived in Simontornya, about sixty kilometers cross-country. There he met her sixteen-year-old daughter, Magda, and fell in love with the shy, pretty girl. He wooed her through letters. In 1930 my mother, now eighteen, was brought to Paris by her mother to be married. They stayed in Paris but, like all foreigners, were unable to get French citizenship.

It was during the depression. They were poor but very much in love, a love that did not diminish with the years. My father was an observant Jew who prayed and laid *teffilin* every day. My mother worked as a seamstress and my father took whatever work he could find. He had trained as a pleater, but at times, he had to work as a housepainter, locksmith and noodle salesman.

I was born in March 1934, by which time my parents had opened a food store at 65 rue Villier de L'isle Adam, in the 20th *Arrondissement*. We lived at the back of the shop. The business flourished and the small area around our home was like a village, where everybody knew each other. My parents were a popular young couple, with friends both Jewish and non-Jewish. We soon moved to a small but pretty first-floor apartment a few houses up the street. We had to relinquish ownership to an Aryan in 1941 soon after the Germans invaded France.

I had started going to a state school, but my mother removed me and placed me in a Catholic school, by way of camouflage. After a while, she took me to a village not far from Paris, where she paid a kindly older couple without children to keep me. As the situation worsened, I was deemed too much of a risk to be kept on. I spent a few weeks with family friends in Alsace, but that didn't work out either.

In 1942 my father decided that our best chance of survival was for the family to split up. Because of his Semitic looks, he thought he would put Maman and me in greater danger of deportation by staying. Papa volunteered to work in Germany, as many men did during the war. It was a gamble for him. He was swarthy and had curly black hair—which was considered a “Jewish appearance.” His reasoning was that if anyone had a doubt as to his origins, they would dismiss the thought, since a Jew trying to evade detection would hardly volunteer to go to Germany. He was right, and he survived.

I was eight years old in the spring of 1942, when I was told by my mother that I had to go to yet another hiding place, an orphanage. Acquaintances of my parents, Monsieur and

Madame Massault, had arranged with the Mother Superior of a convent in the *quartier* San Michel that I should become a boarder in the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage located in the convent, while my mother fended for herself in whichever way she could.

The Messaults worked for a wholesaler at Les Halles wholesale market, where my father used to buy fruit and vegetables for the shop. They were a business connection, no more. They had no friendship links with my family, and yet they took the responsibility, at the risk of their safety and that of their three children, to organize my next hiding place.

Maman took me to the orphanage by *metro*. We only carried a small suitcase, as it was important to be inconspicuous. We got to the narrow rue de la Parcheminerie in the Latin Quarter, and there it was, the inhospitable building that would be my new home for some time. I noticed an old-fashioned shiny brass bell, the type that is set into the wall and is pulled but makes no sound on the street side. Maman pulled the bell and a thin, small, bent woman, nearly bald, came to the door. We entered through a smaller door cut into the large green metal front gate. There was a smell of cabbage and mustiness. Later, it became for me the ubiquitous smell of the orphanage. The concierge led us into the *parloir*, a cobble-stoned, enclosed waiting area just inside this green metal *porte-cochère*.

Inside it was dark, daylight only coming into one side of this forbidding parlour from a glass door. There were two long wooden benches lining the sides of the walls. At the back left-hand corner was a glassed-in, cage-like *loge* for the concierge, a dark stairwell and the glass door to the courtyard, through which I could see the statue of a saint in a recess in the wall, which was covered with ivy. We were told to be seated and to wait. I was frightened by this forbidding place, knowing that I was going to be left there. Writing this down now, more than sixty years later, my body and emotions easily recall that same feeling. My belly aches and my throat feels tight.

After a while, a nun came in. She was the Mother Superior—a large-bellied woman dressed in the St Vincent de Paul habit of that time, a starched white corner coif and a long blue garb. She walked in front of us, the wings of her headgear gently flapping. She showed us to her office and told us WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED OF ME. I was to fit in as quickly as possibly or, more correctly, blend in with the rest of the children, attend chapel and mass, learn the prayers and catechism as quickly as I could, mother the bits I initially did not know. Under no circumstances was I to go to confession or take communion. And I should not disclose my real

identity to anyone, even the priests, even though I had no false identity papers and my surname remained Rosenthal throughout the war. Mother Superior gave me a pink rosary, which was to be in my pocket at all times, because these beads had been blessed! What did all this mean? Neither Maman nor I understood the meaning of many of those words, but we acquiesced. There was a lot to learn and I learnt it all fast.

I would never set foot in Mother Superior's office again. After this initial preparation, Maman and I were directed back to the dark *parloir*. We said goodbye silently. Maman held me tight. I can still remember her familiar smell—*Chipre*, that old-fashioned sweet perfume. A tall, slim nun came to take me into the cold bosom of the Christian place. Maman walked out through that green metal door. I remember it making a bang and she was gone. Would we ever be together again? Papa had said that we would be, and that I should remember *Shema Israel* (Hear oh Israel) every day and do this even in a church. "Do not forget that you are Jewish, but tell no one, and we will be together again." Most of the time I believed him, but often I would sink into fear and despair.

As Maman left, the nun led me away. I reached for her hand but with a light smack on the hand, she told me never to do this again. My initiation into the life of a waif had begun. I was then handed over to a young woman called Mademoiselle Christiane, who took me to the second floor and the attic dormitory where she had a grown-up's single bed with a curtain around it. There were two large rooms leading one into the other. I was shown to a chipped black iron bed at the end of the second room and told that this was now mine, and I was to make the bed after getting up. At home we had doonas and not blankets, so I looked carefully at how I was to make the bed. Nothing in what I did should indicate that I came from a foreign home.

My personal clothes were to be stored in a large wooden box with all of the other children's Sunday clothes. I was handed a dress, a navy cape and a long calico pocket. This pocket with a vertical opening was to be tied around my waist under my dress, and to reach for a handkerchief I had to go through the vertical slit in the uniform and find the pocket beneath it. I changed from my grey and black velvet dress and fur coat into these very worn and thin clothes. I was given the number 79 and told to remember it, as it would always be my number. Most of the time, I would be addressed as 79. This first evening and night, I was cold and lonely but I did not cry. *Shema Israel*—Hear oh Israel, we will be together again.

At the orphanage most of the children had no parents, though a few were visited by their mothers, or other relatives. Some children had some disability like a club-foot or some minor intellectual retardation. The orphanage would have been funded by the social services of the time and by the Church. School was a little distance away from the orphanage. I do not recall any learning other than that which pertained to the catechism and copying from the blackboard.

I was hungry, lonely and in a general state of fear—more for my parents than for myself, as I thought that children would perhaps be spared. Why did I think this after I had seen my best friend Helen and her parents and sister Marie dragged screaming into a police car? They were Polish and were taken in the early days of the deportations. I had seen all this from our first floor window, I hid behind the curtain but I was a witness to their drama, their terror. Of course they never returned.

In July of 1942, I was able to spend the school holidays with my mother and uncle and family in Plessis, on the outskirts of Paris, where they were hiding. A photo taken during that time shows me with skinny limbs and a huge tummy, probably the effects of malnutrition. For a few weeks I was happy. I played and fought with my cousin Andre. Sadly, I had to go back to the orphanage and Maman had to fend for herself back in the apartment until she too had to seek shelter elsewhere. She was offered a non-paying job as a maid to a well-to-do family in the country.

I did not see my mother for a long time after that. Increasingly, I feared the future for me and my parents. I didn't know where Maman was. I only knew that she had to hide somewhere away from home. I clung to the knowledge that my parents' love for me was boundless; this was the only thing that gave me strength to cope. Their strength and love was lodged within me when I didn't know whether they were alive or not, or whether I would be abandoned and become like the other children in the orphanage, grey-faced, emotionless, and alone.

On the first floor of the orphanage was the chapel and a large school-like room where we would sit and do our homework. The girl who made the best religious drawing would receive a holy picture. The other room on this first floor had a chapel where we went every morning during the month of May, the month that celebrates the Holy Virgin. In contrast to the dirt and drabness of the rest of the orphanage, the chapel was the only place to have polished floors and flowers—white lilies on either side of the altar. The nuns looked different in this pious environment; even Sister Marie, who directed our routine, looked serene there. She was a short,

dark, perpetually angry Italian woman, and when she got really very cross, her starched coif would slide back somewhat, showing the dark stubble on top of her head. The children sniggered at this. I kept quiet . . . and another day would pass.

In the orphanage there were no toys or any understanding of children and their need for affection and imagination. There was some playtime, when we went out into the yard, but I was reticent, always aware that I might reveal my identity. At that time, before the notion of weekends was adopted in France, we had Thursdays and Sundays off schools. To occupy us on those long days, we would sit in the school-like room and clean our combs—one ordinary comb and another fine one for lice. This activity would take a whole afternoon because the process was designed to keep us occupied. We were given a small piece of white cotton cloth and by pulling some threads out in one direction of the cloth, it was possible to lodge a comb in it and by moving it up and down, clean it. As we were bathed rarely, both we and our combs were dirty.

I can only remember being bathed twice in the time I spent in the orphanage. The bathing took place in the basement. The bath was half-filled and a number of children would be washed with a cloth, but front and backside were not included in this ablution. The trick was not to be first, as the water was too hot, and not to be last, as the water was too dirty. I learnt to volunteer for the bath after the first couple of girls had gone through. I wasn't fussed about being dirty. We changed knickers only once a week, but the weekly hankie bothered me a lot. As I tended to have a constant cold, it had to be left at night over the rail at the end of my bed. It had usually somewhat dried by the morning, but it was smelly and stiff from days of snot!

Thursday afternoons we were allowed visitors and I saw my mother once, or perhaps twice. After that, she had to hide away from our home and Paris. I did not know where she was or whether she was alive, deported or in hiding somewhere. I had overheard grown-ups say that it was best if children did not know their parents' whereabouts. I feared that I would be abandoned in this cold place where I was unloved, hungry and alone. My identity had to be my secret. This was so much in contrast to the open and honest relationship I had with everyone prior to this time of shame—shame of being a Jew.

On Sundays children were allowed to go to their family for lunch and had to be back by 4.30 pm. Monsieur Massault picked me up before lunch most Sundays and I would wear my own clothes. I felt happy and normal but tried not to show it, so as not to bring attention to myself. The interior of

the Massault home looked like a typical French provincial house with its solid oak furniture, which had been in their family for a long time. The apartment had a smell of beeswax and food cooked with wine. The food was delicious, and I mostly won the games the Massault children, Simone and Pierre, played with me. I was a little younger than them and they kindly often let me win. There was also a baby, Chantal. The Massault home was warm, friendly and safe. Without their kindness and the weekly supplement of a decent meal, I do not know how I would have survived as well as I did.

The food at the orphanage was bad and severely rationed. It was neither sufficient nor nourishing enough, but I ate what I could. I had developed some stomach problems and was told to avoid vinegar and cabbage. In contrast, the nuns ate well.

Many a time I was on vegetable duty, which consisted of scraping the carrots and rutabaga—a sort of beet used as animal feed and given to cows in winter. I found it inedible but some kids ate it. The only good food was the small portion of wartime bread we got twice a day. I was most hungry before bedtime, and I began hiding a piece of bread in my pocket. I got caught once and after that became more careful about my smuggling activity. We ate out of old and dented metal dishes and then dunked them in a bucket of warm water on the way out of the refectory. These dishes were then stacked up, ready for the next meal.

Cold and hungry at bedtime, I devised a puppet show with my toes. No one could see this and I had a story to tell myself about what it would be like after the war. I think that I usually fell asleep before my story finished.

None of the children who were complete orphans played, learnt or made friends. They were passive and sad. One of the most unfortunate was a girl who wet her bed most nights. In the morning the nun on duty would rub the unfortunate child's face in her wet bedding. The sheet would then be hung over her bed to dry and the whole dormitory stank of it. At night a bucket was placed in the middle of the room as a toilet. If I had to use it, I would stumble half-asleep toward the bucket and if the thing was full, I would be awakened by the wet and cold feeling on my bottom. Nights were long and cold. At times, we could hear and see through the mansard windows the bombing that never felt far away and frightened us a great deal. The allies were bombing the railway yards and armament factories on the outskirts of Paris, possibly five to seven kilometers away.

Most nights a nun, Seour Cecile, who looked after the infants, would come to the dormitory for evening prayer. She told us that if we slept with our arms crossed on our chest,

not only would she give the lucky child a picture of a saint, but also if we died during the night in that position, we would become God's angels. These pictures were prized and collected by the children and I recall trying to sleep in that position, but I was too busy with my toes' thespian roles and my rescued piece of bread to keep my arms crossed over the blanket in the cold. Damn the consequences, I was cold and hungry! I followed the path of my own redemption by putting something in my belly and hope in my inner self. The evening prayer included a turgid passage in which we asked for God's forgiveness for having a body. We would kneel next to our beds, get undressed still on our knees and put on pyjamas, a task that required some agility in that position. I doubt that the nuns ever tried that exercise!

The refectory was a long room with a large framed picture of St Therèse de Lisieux behind glass. I was told to sit with the girls of my group. There were three groups, but I never saw the babies and rarely the older girls. I was one of the *moyennes*—the in-between age. There may have been twenty or twenty-five of us children sitting on a narrow bench at one long table. The first prayer was said over food. There was a prayer for many activities and the longest one was the bedtime one, said on our bony knees in the cold dormitory. Never mind the meaning, just be like the other children and never cry. A self-taught lesson swiftly learned. This was wartime and I had to survive well, as I thought that my responsibility towards my parents was to remain the child they knew.

One day I was told that the convent had been informed that there would be an inspection by the police, as they were looking for certain children. The word "Jew" was never mentioned but there was no need to say who they were looking for: clearly, it could only be Jewish children. I was told I had to leave and return perhaps after the inspection. The Mother Superior had died some time before this event, and my fear of being abandoned if my parents did not return was appeased. Some nuns must have known I was Jewish and I would not have to stay in this place for ever.

I left for our apartment. My mother had sewn a key and a little money in between the lining and the interlining of my fur coat. I took the *metro*, got home and found that the door was sealed. That is, the police had come for us and, as we were not home, had put seals all around the front door. The seals were wide, packaging-type tape with swastika stamps all over. With the edge of the key, I cut the tape going as high as I could but I was too short and our concierge, Monsieur Cuvilliez, helped me in the task. He apologized for not taking me in and giving me some food. I didn't realise to what

extent this was dangerous for him. I went inside and hid behind my old ebony piano for some time, as it was across the corner of the room. Was I there just one night? Was it more? I don't remember, but I do remember the chalk marks on the hessian at the back of the piano. Somehow—I can't remember how—I ended up back at the orphanage and safety.

I stayed there until the middle of winter 1943, when a man I didn't know came for me. Carrying my little suitcase, we went by train to what turned out to be his summer property, where his family lived and my mother was hiding as their maid. The man was a Monsieur Bach. He was the assistant CEO in a firm that manufactured submarine equipment, at that stage for the Germans. He never said a word to me from the time he picked me up, other than warning me that if there was an identify check, he would deny knowing me. He didn't know how well I had trained myself. I would not have revealed his connection to me. Better wet myself if I had to. We walked and walked and in the distance to the right there was a lake with the moonlight reflected in it. In the distance I could see electric light. He said, talking for the second time, that this was his home and I would find my mother there. I did not wet myself . . . and found absolute happiness when she held me with all the love I needed.

At last I had arrived at the end of my "Calvary." Anything could happen now, I had found my mother. By the end of summer 1944, Maman and I were back in our flat in Paris. This part of the war had ended. Now we had to wait until Papa came back from Germany. Maman took a job in a local button factory and together we waited for his return. By some miracle, we were reunited as a family on Mother's Day 3 June 1945 and on 25 November 1946 my little sister Annie was born.

VERA HERMAN GOODKIN

Context: Central Europe

Source: Vera Herman Goodkin. *In Sunshine and Shadow: We Remember Them*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2006, pp. 71–79. Used by permission.

A little girl born in 1930, Vera Herman Goodkin was a Czech Jew whose parents initially found it difficult to accept that the German people could become transformed into Nazi antisemites seemingly overnight. After the extension of German rule into the Czech lands in March 1939, however, reality had to

be accepted. In this account, Vera offers her recollections of what it was like to live under Nazi rule—not only in Czechoslovakia, but also in the family’s land of refuge, Hungary. She provides a testimony that covers a considerable number of topics, taking readers through January 1944. This was just two months before Germany invaded Hungary and the most intense period of mass killing against a single national Jewish community during the Holocaust.

In 1934, when I was about four years old, I started seeing guests I did not recognize in our home. They were neither relatives nor friends. Most stayed a few days, some a few weeks—only to disappear mysteriously and be replaced by others. A couple of years into this process, in 1936, I was old enough to wonder about the meaning of a conversation I overheard between my mother and my beloved maternal grandmother, Sally Burger, who happened to be visiting. “These German Jews who enjoy your hospitality as they seek a safe haven in England, Canada, Israel, or the United States may be seeing the handwriting on the wall. Don’t you think you and your little family should do the same?” My mother was quite upset as she answered, “This is the Republic of Czechoslovakia, our utopia—nothing bad could happen to us here, in this perfect democracy! The German economy is very bad, and Jews are used as scapegoats.” This view had been shared by the majority of German Jews who had learned to love their country and were reluctant to abandon the cultured lifestyle they had carved out for themselves through the generations, reiterating: “What, the nation of Beethoven, Mozart and Goethe, murderers? Never. If we just endure one more indignity, it will all blow over.”

Well, what grandma intuited did happen in our wonderful utopia, soon after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939. Needless to say, as we fled for our lives and tried to warn our Hungarian brothers and sisters, they said—with just as much conviction as my mother did three years before: “In this country, where Jews are among the greatest patriots and members of the aristocracy? Never!” And, of course, they too were wrong! Had we listened to grandma, she and other members of the family may not have been murdered in Auschwitz.

I have often been asked: “Why did the Jews of Europe LET it happen?” A simple question, in retrospect the answer is that while we had some options, we did not want to believe the dangers—and the world stood idly by. When we finally did believe, it was too late. Ultimately the Nuremberg Laws of 1935—race, citizenship, and marriage laws that discriminated against Jews—stripped Jews, all over Europe of their

constitutional rights, their dignity, and, eventually, their sense of humanity.

Volumes have been filled with variations on the dehumanization theme. We were stripped of our human dignity by degrees, with a never-ending series of edicts, harassments, and deprivations. Above all, we had become non-citizens, non-human beings—we could no longer vote or fly the flag; we were barred from parks and movie houses. We were no longer under the protection of the law. We could be beaten, spat on, or killed in broad daylight, and the perpetrators could walk away with impunity. In all Central European countries, the pattern was pretty much the same. After we were no longer allowed to practice a profession, run a business, own property, be admitted to universities or public schools, hospitals or parks, we were even required to surrender our winter outerwear.

Then in the summer of 1939, the professional men in my hometown, including my father, were put on wheelbarrow brigades to ferry large rocks across wooden planks connecting sheer cliffs. These laborers endured humiliation and abuse—aside from the obvious danger to life and limb. Work began at 4:00 AM without a lunchbreak, ending at sundown, and they were not even paid for this labor.

In view of the escalating brutality, in mortal fear of their own and their children’s future, friends of ours made a fateful decision. Parents of two boys aged six and twelve, they heard an SS patrol approaching their hideout and had to make an agonizing decision. Knowing that the twelve year old had the survival skills to try to make it on his own, they hid him, while keeping the six year old with them, thereby opting for life for one of their children and death for the other. Is it any wonder that a member of the Danish clergy, Pastor Ivar Lange, declared: “I would rather die with the Jews than live with the Nazis.”

To make sure that Jews could readily be identified and targeted for ridicule and abuse, a yellow felt star, six inches in diameter, was sewn on the left side of the chest of all adults and children. In Hungary, even infants did not escape this badge of shame that had to be pinned to their carriages and strollers. Failure to display the star prominently was a criminal offence punishable by penalties ranging from fines to sentences of death, depending on judicial whim.

My parents and I were subjected to dehumanization and persecution in many settings between 1939–1945. As a person saved by Raoul Wallenberg, I can emphasize the staggering contrast between a man like Wallenberg and the predominant majority of people in Nazi-dominated countries.

The process of dehumanization began with incredible manifestations and grew like a malignancy toward the ultimate goal of murder. The jovial barber refused to cut my father's hair. My third-grade classmates started to call me names. Family friends reduced the amount of contact, and, finally, appealed to my parents' sense of fairness to let them go completely, so they would not be troubled for associating with Jews.

Then came the curfew from sunset to sunrise. All the while, I heard and watched my father get up and go downstairs with a pail of water and a brush before dawn each day to scrub the scurrilous propaganda off his office sign, so that his remaining patients would not be affronted by that obscene graffiti. Soon he was forbidden to practice medicine and drafted into forced labor.

How prophetic were my hysterical screams of fear when I heard the Nazi troops in the town square on March 15, as I lay in bed recovering from a severe cold. "They're going to kill us!" I cried, and that was exactly what they had in mind, but in slow, painful stages.

In the fall of 1939, I remember being delegated to take a goose to the *Shochet* (a man in the Jewish community who is authorized to kill animals) for ritual slaughtering (a ceremony strictly forbidden by the authorities) when we still managed to have meat for the holidays, on the theory that no one would suspect a nine-year-old girl of such nefarious activity. Their reasoning was flawless, but even after all these years, I still shudder recalling the fear each time the bird stirred inside the bag and imagining a whole squadron of police descending on me, should it decide to squawk.

One might well ask: "Where did all this cruelty come from in a former ideal democracy?" I guess, I must agree with Voltaire that given a few rabble rousers, the rabble soon surfaces everywhere.

Throughout the fall of 1939, I remember my parents' frequent mysterious late night trips into Prague to meet with high officials who were afraid to associate with their now disgraced Jewish citizens by daylight. Whatever my parents sought, they were only partially successful. They did obtain permission to ship part of their belongings to storage in the United States. When survival was at stake, efforts to immigrate to the United States failed because of a technicality. The authorities refused to grant us a passport, and my father, a law-abiding citizen, would not leave the country illegally. Imagine that: a law-abiding citizen who has paid his taxes and honored his country, a man who would do nothing illegally, being refused a passport, being harassed, forbidden to practice his profession, and then forced to perform hard labor!

Thus, the last door to freedom was shut tight, and we became hostages. Homeless and virtually penniless, my parents admitted defeat. Shortly thereafter, in late 1939, we became seasoned escapees. With the exception of a few months spent in relative safety with my grandparents, as well as with my Uncles Zoltan and Denes in 1940 and 1941, for the next three and a half years, we huddled in more attics, cellars, and behind more false walls than we could have imagined. We managed, somehow, to keep ourselves one step ahead of the Nazis and their collaborators who were always ready, willing, and able to do the Nazis' dirty work by delivering three more Jews for bondage and destruction.

In the Spring of 1941, we left Hungary for a hiding place in Losonc (Czech name: Lučenec) in Slovakia, the area of the former Czechoslovakia with a large Hungarian-speaking minority. For a few months, in the daytime, the three of us occupied a tiny, windowless space like a walk-in closet in a summer cottage. At night, it became safe for me to sleep in an adjacent closet. Separated from my parents—if only by a thin wall—created tremendous anxiety, so much so that I would knock lightly on the wall at various times throughout the night, listening for the reassuring knock on the other side of the wall before I could fall asleep again. We had minimal contact with our rescuer, a "closet Social Democrat," my father's former colleague.

In the fall of 1941, when our rescuer began to feel at risk, we had to find another place—this time in a village east of Losonc, where our accommodations were even more claustrophobic. We hid behind a false wall and our diet was much more sparse. However, we were immensely grateful for the farmer's kindness and generosity that afforded us an opportunity to survive a bit longer. He, however, was reluctant to continue putting his family in harm's way. Consequently, we were on our way again in a matter of weeks, passed on from one member of a rescuer network to another. We were truly becoming "wandering Jews," spending the spring and summer of 1942 in a hideout in the densely wooded Tatra Mountains of Slovakia. With the threat of a cold winter coming, our next destination was the small town of Banská Bystrica where we were living in one rescuer's attic from December 1942 and another's cellar from late April until our capture in November 1943.

Having been denounced in our last hiding place in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, in November of 1943, we were visited by four members of the Jewish property confiscation team. The group consisted of one member of the SS, one representative of the Slovak Secret Police, one local collaborator (probably the one who had given us away) and one member of the

Jewish community, a young attorney forced to join the unholy trio to draw up papers, making this confiscation legal. We wondered why on earth they had bothered. There was nothing worth confiscating.

Within a few weeks after this visit, after the SS kidnapping of Jewish women between the ages of 18–25, both single and married, for the use of the German troops at the front, the Jewish community of Banská Bystrica was included on the Auschwitz deportation list. We knew that, as aliens, we would be part of the first transport. The situation looked truly hopeless until my mother found out that there was an underground group, akin to the underground railroad for slaves, consisting of some families whose farm properties spanned the Slovak-Hungarian border. Occasionally, members of these families were willing to guide escapees across to Hungary. Although it was common knowledge that almost the entire population of Hungary had already been deported in May and June 1944, there was still one notable exception: the Jewish Community of Budapest. Why? Because the War Refugee Board, the International Red Cross, the Vatican and the Swedish government intervened to stop the deportations of the Budapest Jews. While this last intact Jewish community in Europe was subject to the same edicts and harassment as the rest had been before deportation, they were still on home ground and ALIVE. As a result, getting to Budapest gave those capable of it a ray of hope for survival. We survived one day, one hour, at a time.

Understandably, there was great demand for the services of this underground group. My mother had many doors slammed in her face before she was able to make contact. We were instructed to remove the yellow stars, to be careful not to leave any tell-tale yellow threads behind, to get on a local train without any luggage, and try to look inconspicuous in the hopes of not being asked for identification papers. When we got off the train, we were to follow, at a respectable distance, a tall young man at the end of the platform.

We lucked out: the train trip went off without a hitch. The young man led us to a cottage in the woods consisting of one large room that held three generations of his family and some small farm animals. As we approached, he propped a long ladder against the attic window, motioning us to climb in through the partially opened window. Just before we did so, he whispered: “Please be quiet; my mother-in-law is a Nazi sympathizer. If she knew you were here, you would not be here very long.”

Obviously, we followed his admonition to the letter. We did get a bit stressed out when we realized that we were sharing the attic with the farmer’s rats. I remember removing my

head scarf and tying it round my father’s balding head to keep him from being attacked by those creatures. The next night, when the family was asleep, the young farmer propped the ladder against the window, signaling to us that it was time to go. We had heard rain on the roof all day, but we had no idea of its torrential proportions. By the time we reached the bottom of the ladder, we were soaked to the skin. Then the trek began. The young farmer led us into the darkness of a nightmarish November night. The downpour drenched our bodies, and the mud made walking difficult and painful. With each step, we sank ankle-deep into the mud. We literally had to extract each foot from the mud and shake off the excess before taking another step. That labor-intensive process kept us focused on getting ahead one step at a time. Our guide, however, noticed an unaccustomed flicker of light at a distance. Quite logically, he feared we might be apprehended because of a change in the usual guard, and he certainly did not want to be caught with us. His spontaneous decision was to turn on his heels and head home without a word, leaving us to our own devices in the pitch-dark forest in the pouring rain.

I can still remember the crippling exhaustion that overtook me, along with an eerie sense of relief that the journey was over. In my almost thirteen year old mind, I could only picture how wonderful it would be to slump down against one of those giant trees and go to sleep—the rationale being that I may just wake from this nightmare safe and sound. Then, of course, if the experience was real, not waking up may not have been the worst solution. I said so to my mother, but she was not impressed. Giving up my fantasy, I watched in utter amazement as she broke away from us, pursuing our guide at an incredible pace. “You have children of your own,” she cried out, “Are you going to let this one die?” Miraculously, she won.

He motioned to us to follow him to the border. The next night, we made it across the Hungarian border and boarded a train for Budapest where Jews, while harassed, still lived in relative safety. This successful escape bought us two more months, into January 1944, a miracle we could, at the time, appreciate more than the native Jewish population. As alien Jews, we had to appear for daily roll call at a police station. Aware of our poverty and special vulnerability, members of the Jewish community, particularly those fortunate enough to still be in their own homes, tried to help us out with frequent dinner invitations. We were especially befriended by one family. They had two young daughters, and our mothers had become close friends. One Friday evening when we were unable to let them know we would be late for a Sabbath eve

dinner because of some extra police harassment, the hostess was quite perturbed, bemoaning the fact that her excellent meal had grown stale. We tried to reassure her that it was still delicious, but she seemed inconsolable. When our reprieve, and theirs, was over, we lost contact with the family. *At a random post-war meeting my mother found out that our fate was ultimately much more merciful than theirs. They had been deported to Auschwitz, with only the mother and one daughter surviving. Most poignantly, as soon as mother's friend saw her, she threw her arms about her and exclaimed: "Oh, Margit, Margit! Now I know why cold potatoes don't matter!"*

SHIRLEY BERGER GOTTESMAN

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Shirley Berger Gottesman and Maryann McLoughlin. *A Red Polka-Dotted Dress: A Memoir of Kanada II*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2011, pp. 20–25. Used by permission.

Shirley Berger Gottesman's memoir of Kanada II in Auschwitz, and various other slave labor camps in Germany, is an astonishing testimony that both horrifies and inspires. Originally from Záluž, in Transcarpathian Poland/Ukraine, she lived with her parents and four siblings in a community that included her extended family, grandmother, aunts, and uncles. In April 1944 the family was deported to a ghetto in nearby Munkács, and a short time later they were sent to Auschwitz. Shirley, then sixteen, was assigned to Kanada II, given a uniform (the red polka-dotted dress), and told to sort the possessions brought from the cattle cars. Her barrack was only ten feet away from Crematorium IV. In her memoir (named for the red polka-dotted dress she wore), she describes the horror of what she both lived through and witnessed on a daily basis.

In the morning the *Kapos* (prisoners in charge of a group of inmates) took us to the big camp in Birkenau where *Lagers* A, B, and C were located. . . . They directed us to a barrack full of bunk beds.

Each morning we had to awake early and go outside for *Appell* (roll call) for a few hours, during which time we were counted. After *Appell*, they gave us food or something to drink. The food was unbelievably disgusting. We had one bowl for coffee and soup. We had no spoon; therefore we had

to drink everything. We always had to share with the women in our row.

Because I had just arrived, I could not grasp what was happening. I was not even hungry. I was in shock.

At *Appell* we had to stand in alphabetical order. They counted us off—there were so many of us! They wrote down names: our parents' names and our names. They gave us numbers with the Star of David insignia. My number was A5812. They painted a red line on the back of our grey dresses with enamel paint, so it would not come off. They were very professional and efficient.

The Aryans had green triangles; they worked in the offices. There were other colors as well. Some Russians wore red triangles because they were Communists, political prisoners.

I was assigned to the *Effektenlager II* (camp of belongings), called *Kanada II Kommando* (work group). It was called *Kanada* because many considered Canada a wealthy country and a desired emigration destination.

They took us to *Kanada II*, or Section BIIg, where the thirty barracks for workers assigned to *Kanada II* were located—between Crematoria III and IV. . . . At first, they took us every day from the Birkenau women's camp to *Kanada II*—back and forth. Then they emptied two barracks for *Kanada II* women, so we did not have to go back and forth to the camp. My barrack was ten feet away from Crematorium IV that had a disrobing area, a large gas chamber, and crematorium ovens. Across the street were barracks for "Aryans," for SS and office workers.

Each barrack had a *Kapo*, a foreman (*Führerarbeiter*), and a few helpers. The *Kapos* watched over us all; the SS over everything. The *Kapos* were on good terms with the Germans—not a friendship, certainly; however, they would schmooze around a lot of the time. I remember an Austrian from Vienna, an elderly gentleman, an office worker. He was sitting on a windowsill across from our barracks, playing a song on his harmonica: "Vienna. Vienna. You alone, You will always be in my dreams." I suppose he was homesick for Vienna. I was homesick and lonely. I wanted my mother and aunts.

There were fifteen barracks in the compound. These were for different commodities that we were sorting as well as for the bathhouse and the mechanics and carpenters. Shoes, dishes, and pans were sorted outside in huge piles.

We could go to Barracks 5, 6, 7; that is, we could go where we worked and to the bathhouse. We could go to these as we pleased. If we had to go farther, however, we had to have guards with us.

Very few people in comparison to the numbers in the camp worked in *Kanada*. There were a lot of Slovaks who had been there a long time. They spoke perfect German because Slovakia was so close to the border. Jewish people tended to learn a number of languages. I remember we were with people from Poland. I spoke Yiddish and Czech, so I learned Polish quickly. The women I worked with were older: I remember Guta, Genya, and Mikla; we worked in groups. I was like a child to them because I was younger.

One had had a child. At the selection, she was told, "Give the girl to her grandfather. That will be easier. You will work and her grandfather will take care of her."

Both the child and her grandfather were murdered.

We talked about our past and our future hopes. We tried to make the best of our present. Of the future we were frightened, at times.

We were lucky in that we could have showers there. Thousands in Auschwitz-Birkenau did not have that chance; instead, they were murdered in the so-called showers. We also could have all the clean clothes that we wanted. At first we wore grey dresses. However, they decided that they wanted to know who was who. Therefore, each barrack was assigned a different colored dress: the women in my barrack wore red dresses with white polka dots; another barrack had blue dresses with the white polka dots. To me this seemed incongruous—bizarre! To be wearing cheerily colored uniforms, and ten feet away people were being gassed and burned. They still painted the red stripe on the back of our dresses.

In early June 1944, I began working in *Kanada II*. From the cattle cars everything was brought to *Kanada I* or *II*. We were isolated in our section of *Kanada*, sorting. I saw only what happened near my section. I worked sorting what people had brought in. I sorted these into different piles. Then the trucks came and hauled the bundles away.

When I went to the barracks to work, I looked at what was happening in Crematoria III and IV. Long lines went into the building but never came out. Girls who had already been there for years told us, the more recent arrivals, that everybody not selected for work was gassed and burned.

They said, "It is only a matter of time; we will all go there."

When later I found my two aunts, Helen and Pepe, still alive in the camp, they said to me: "Imagine, the *Blockova* (Polish barrack leader), said, 'You will never see your parents again.' Imagine how mean she is."

I said, "No. She is correct. Look over there."

Helen said, "No!"

I said, "Yes. Believe it."

Two crematoria were on one side; two on the other side. When we went to work, we had to go between the crematoria. We could see inside. Near the crematoria the grass was nicely kept—green. I saw chimneys. The fumes were terrible, especially in the summer. The odor of burning flesh! *Years after, when I smelled burning, I would scream. For example, when my husband was burning trash.*

Once I saw a bunch of men with black faces marching from the crematoria; they looked like chimney sweeps. As they marched past me, I offered one a hankie. We could say a word or two, always we mentioned the town where we were from. If the *Kapos* saw us talking longer, we were beaten. These men, I learned, were the *Sonderkommandos*, who emptied the gas chambers, pulled the gold teeth of the victims and cut their hair; they also searched the bodies for valuables that they may have hidden. Then they burnt the bodies in the ovens, and when the bodies were consumed by the flames, they removed the ashes. They said that the *Sonderkommando* who worked inside prayed. I also heard that every three months, they changed the *Sonderkommandos*. The work was very hard on them; they rapidly deteriorated. Then the older ones were themselves put in the gas chambers. They selected new strong *Sonderkommandos* from incoming groups.

Daily and nightly I saw lines and lines, ten or fifteen feet away, all marching in a line. They motioned to us. We couldn't tell them. We motioned back, rubbing our cheeks—we meant by this to wash or to shower. . . .

I never saw anyone I knew in line for the gas chambers and crematorium. Our group had come in one transport. When I went home, people my age, as well as those younger and older, had not come back. Only a dozen or so returned. . . .

The people were usually quiet, walking slowly; rarely did they talk—they were too exhausted. The people had usually traveled for days. They didn't resist. They had been made to give up life before they were even in the gas chambers. The whole set up, traveling for days and everything! They were debilitated and despondent.

The transports usually arrived at night. People didn't know where they were going or where they had arrived. The SS sent them through quickly. Once they were inside the building we didn't hear anything. I heard that they prayed. . . .

It was unbelievable. No one could have imagined that they would do to people what they did. They were so systematic and so organized. Everything was planned to the T. Scientists must have worked on the plan. It was so unbelievable. I can't even conceive of what they did. Impossible! We were ready for work. We were even ready not to have enough food.

We were *not* ready to be gassed. It is unbelievable to think that some of us could live through this and not lose our sanity.

I. BETTY GREBENSCHIKOFF

Context: Before the War

Source: I. Betty Grebenschikoff. *Once My Name Was Sarah: A Memoir*. Ventnor (NJ): Original Seven Publishing Company, 1992, pp. 32–37. Used by permission.

Like many Jewish children who witnessed firsthand the German antisemitic pogrom of November 9–10, 1938—the so-called Reich Kristallnacht—Ilse Kohn (Betty Grebenschikoff) was horrified by the violence that was brought against the Jewish community. In one sense, however, this was, as she writes, a “culmination” of the Nazi measures since 1933. Betty’s account relates how it was that her father sought ways to secure safety for her and her sister Edith, in particular by finding a means to send them to Palestine. When this did not eventuate due to their mother’s refusal to part with them, another attempt was made to relocate the whole family to some Latin American country, but this, too, fell through. Finally, after these false starts, the family secured passage on a Japanese ship for Shanghai, there to start a new life that would see them escape Germany just four months before the outbreak of war.

Smoldering anti-semitism in Central Europe finally burst into full bloom, with the encouragement and active participation of the Hitler regime. Restrictions and penalties levied at Jews, so-called Aryanization of Jewish businesses and enterprises in Germany became more and more widespread, culminating with what came to be known as Crystal Night, in November of 1938. Hundreds of Jewish stores, homes and synagogues were destroyed by the Nazis while the police looked the other way. In many cases, the authorities helped in the destruction, as well as taking part in beatings and abuse of Jewish people, who had the misfortune of being out on the streets that night.

Every pane of glass in our synagogue on Levetzstrasse was shattered. We used to go to this temple, with my parents, on the High Holidays and for Friday evening Shabbat services.

After the *Kiddush* was sung by the Cantor and the congregation, the children were always invited by the Rabbi to gather on the *Bimah*, where little glasses of grape juice were

poured for us. We all stood in a row, drinking our *wine*, then we went back to sit with our parents, as the service continued.

The building was gutted, the prayer books and torahs with their embroidered velvet covers set on fire. The police, aided by mobs of hooligans, forced Jewish men and women to clean up the debris in the street on their hands and knees. Several weeks later on the way to my grandparents’ house, we walked by some of the looted Jewish shops and synagogues. We could still hear glass crunching beneath our feet.

Old, confident beliefs of security and safety in the civilized world of German life and culture were shattered along with the glass that night. That security proved to be just an illusion, was difficult for German Jews to comprehend at first. But the time had come to face reality. Nothing would ever be the same again.

Beginning on a small scale in 1933, Hitler’s regime of terror escalated over the next few years. The assimilation of the Jews into German sciences, their contributions to musical, educational and cultural pursuits ended in arrests, persecution and death.

By the late thirties, my parents were desperately looking for ways to escape from Germany. Besides trying to get the family to safety, my father also tried to avoid the expected summons by the Gestapo. They were rounding up Jewish males for what was euphemistically known as “Questioning.” Frequently these sessions were followed by imprisonment.

“Well children, aren’t we lucky? We are all getting new middle names.” My father was still trying to appear optimistic, while at the same time my mother was in tears.

In the summer of 1938, another edict had been handed down by the Germans. It was the addition of the name Sara for Jewish females, and Israel, for Jewish males, to be used as legal middle names. All our papers had to be changed to the new names at the police station, to better identify us officially as Jews.

At the age of eight, the significance of this latest intentional degradation escaped me at the time.

I was fast becoming confused by all my names anyhow. My middle name of Margot was dropped for the time being. From my great-grandmother Bettina, I had inherited a third name, Betty. That name disappeared altogether for several years, until I resurrected it later, when I was about sixteen.

According to the Germans, from now on I was officially Ilse Sara Kohn. My last two school report cards were made out in this name. My teachers signed them, including their new middle names. However, my father ignored the whole

business and sent my report cards back to school, using his original Max Kohn signature.

Emigrating to the United States or other desirable countries was difficult for us, as we did not have necessary quota numbers or visas. Born in Czechoslovakia, my father carried a *Fremdenpass*, which was an identity certificate for people without a proper passport. This *Fremdenpass* had to be renewed punctually by the German police. For reasons known only to themselves, the Germans did not choose stateless Jews for the concentration camps, when they first started with their selections. Later, no more exceptions were made.

Living in Berlin since he was a young man, my father fought for the Germans in the First World War. He never held a German passport and did not qualify for German quota numbers for immigration to the U.S.A. Not having a proper passport, he was also denied entry into many other countries. Beside all these problems, the fact remained that we did not have any relatives outside of Germany who could sponsor us anyway.

Jewish leaders urged their people to leave the country as soon as possible, or at least to send their children out of Germany. My sister and I were put on the list of *Aliyah* children who were being sent out to Palestine.

These children became part of the early kibbutzim settlers of what later became the State of Israel. My cousin Heinz Kohn whose Bar-Mitzvah I attended two years earlier, went to Palestine on one of these transports. As it turned out later, he was the only member of his family to survive the war. He told me his story some five decades later, when we re-established contact with each other.

Heinz became a volunteer soldier in the British Army in Palestine when he was eighteen years old. He was to spend nearly five years in the army, serving in Egypt and Libya and was present at the Allied invasion in Salerno, Italy. During that time, his mother Rosa, who was my maternal grandfather's sister, her husband Karl and a sister Lizzy were sent to Theresienstadt by the Germans. They did not survive. Heinz, whose Hebrew name is Seew, now lives in Israel with his wife Deborah, surrounded by their children and grandchildren.

Edith and I were all excited about leaving for Palestine. We belonged to a Theodore Herzl Club in Berlin, where we learned to sing Hebrew pioneer songs. We had heard all about kibbutz life in sunny Palestine, where everyone lived and worked together, marching off into the fields to pick oranges, wearing little sunhats and waving blue and white flags. At least that was the way it looked in picture books. It sounded good to us, we could not wait to pack our bags. But my mother did not want to split the family up. At last, after

much agonizing, she refused to let us go, afraid that she would never see us again. Her instinct was of course quite right, but we were rather disappointed that we were not going to be pioneers after all.

For a while it looked as though my father might be successful in getting us all out to South America. Spanish lessons by a tutor started at home. The one phrase we all remembered was "*Vaya con Dios, señor, pero vaya.*" In later years this became a family joke. One of us would whisper it to the other, when a guest overstayed his welcome. "Go with God, Sir, but go."

The South American venture fell through and the Spanish tutor was quickly replaced by an English speaking one, just in case we could go somewhere where English was needed.

I remember waking up one night, that spring, when my Onkel Ernst came to say goodbye to us. His white scarf contrasted against his navy blue coat, as he stood in the dark corridor embracing my mother. Carrying only a small suitcase, and a summons from the Gestapo tucked in his pocket, he fled to Prague, where he had arranged to meet his fiancée, Martel. After a quick marriage ceremony, they went across to England, where they made a living hiring themselves out as a butler and maid team.

When the war was over they settled in Nottingham. My uncle, by then known as an anglicized Ernest Miller, went into the insurance business, Aunt Martel operated a boarding house for many years.

Our family made several trips to the Berlin train station to say good-bye to friends and relatives. There was a distant cousin whose name was Ilse, just like mine. She was from the Koeppler family and was being sent out to England along with a group of Jewish children. Her navy beret jammed over her straight brown hair, she waved to us out of the train window, until we could not see her anymore. She survived the war, living with an English family, who later adopted her. Her sister, Marianne, was a nurse and was not allowed to leave by the authorities. The Germans used her to work in their hospitals during the early part of the war. Later she was sent to her death in a concentration camp, along with her parents.

As more and more countries refused entry to us, it finally became clear to my parents, that the one place left for us to save our lives was China. Many thousands of miles away, accessible only by a long sea voyage, it was a totally different country whose climate, oriental environment and questionable political and economic outlook, not to mention the language problem, was largely unknown to us. Shanghai was, however, the one spot where European Jews were permitted

to land without a visa, affidavit or certificate of guarantee, considered so necessary by other countries.

The Japanese shipping company, *Nippon Yusen Kaisha*, whose ships sailed to the Orient, gave my father a negative reply, when he tried to buy tickets for a sailing to Shanghai. They were booked for months ahead. However, when my father returned again and pleaded with them to re-examine his papers, which incidentally contained 500 German marks for the shipping officer folded inside, the reply was more hopeful.

A few days later, my father received a telephone call with the good news. Two first class cabins were reserved for us on the *Kashima Maru*, sailing from Naples to Shanghai, on May 21, 1939.

JADZIA (JEANETTE) ALTMAN GREENBAUM

Context: Salvation

Source: Jadzia (Jeanette) Altman Greenbaum and Maryann McLoughlin. *2 More Weeks, Deutschland Kaput!* Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2008, pp. 40–45. Used by permission.

Bergen-Belsen was perhaps the supreme example of the chaos, overcrowding, and general horror that struck all the Nazi concentration camps, and the image of the camp at the time of its liberation by the British in April 1945 has left just as indelible an image of the Nazi system on the Western mind as Auschwitz has in its. Born in the Polish city of Będzin, Jadzia Greenbaum survived a series of labor camps and a death march before arriving at Belsen. Even at that time, she was barely alive, and then she contracted typhus, as well. The account here describes her recollections of that awful time in Belsen, and the liberation of the camp by the British that saved her life.

From Flossenbürg, they took us on a cattle train. We were on this train for one week with little food. They gave us black, clay-like bread and told us to save it for a few days. There was no water unless it rained. Then we would stick our hands out and get a little rainwater. There was only a bucket for a toilet. But who needed to go! We didn't eat. We didn't have water except for a little rainwater.

While we were traveling, we thought that they were taking us north. But then they took us south. Then the train stopped

and we stayed a half-day on the tracks not moving. After this they brought us to Bergen-Belsen. By this time there were a lot of dead people on our train.

When we stopped we saw a little gully with big frogs in the water. The water was clear so we ran over and drank the water in that gully. What did we care about being sick! We needed water.

One German soldier said to us, "You are going to a paradise, to Hotel Paradise." We could not believe him. An older German soldier passing by said, "*Kinder*, you won't get out from here." . . .

Then they began to march us into the camp. At the entrance to Bergen-Belsen we saw little bungalows with little ribboned curtains on the windows and flower gardens around the bungalows. Initially we thought these were for us. (Actually, the SS lived in them.) However, once past the bungalows, we started to see barracks, then we saw dead bodies, and we saw skeletal people barely walking—*musselman*. As we were walking down the road, we saw a wheeled wagon that people were pushing. The wagon was loaded with dead bodies. We started to smell something dreadful. We could not understand what the smell was. Then we realized that dead people were piled up behind the barracks and the bodies were being burned. We let that wagon through and then we saw the barrack-section where we would be staying.

I saw that Bergen-Belsen had two main sections with a road running through the middle; one section on one side of the road and the other section on the other side. They took us into one section where we saw a huge tent and a big barrack. There were three rooms in this long barrack. In the first room were non-Jewish Polish women from the Warsaw Uprising (not the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in which Jewish Poles fought). In the second room, more Polish women. In the third we went in to take a look and dead people were lying there. We looked in the tent—dead people there too. Next they took the dead bodies from the third room, putting these in the big tent. We were given the third room.

We went into the big room. Then we looked down at the cement floor. The floor seemed to be writhing. We looked closer and saw white crawling things—maggots from the dead bodies that had been in the room or big lice from their bodies. We wanted to leave immediately. The guard said, "No one leaves." We started to stamp on the maggots or lice. They told us to sit down on the floor. There was only one straw bed; this Mitzi and her two sisters took.

Next day when we woke up we were covered in lice. Mitzi came out and she and both sisters were also full of lice. She said, "Don't be shy." Each one took the back of the other girl.

“Lice each other.” She said, “You are full of lice. This is how you kill them.” Then she showed us to how to crush them with our nails. From then until the end of the war, I had lice. A lot of girls became ill from typhus that the lice carried. But I didn’t have typhus then.

We had no water not even to drink, and no toilet. Sometimes we needed to use the toilet. We had to go outside to an open pit that had a few seats. Running water was on the other side to clean away the waste. I went over one time.

Because we were so crowded the non-Jewish Polish women figured they could take a few Jewish women in their barracks. They took in forty of us. I was one. That was a little, teeny bit better. At least I was not on cement but on plywood on top of cement. But I still had the lice. Polish women had lice too. The whole place was full of lice.

Behind us was a road and barbed wire. On one side they were burning the dead. On the other side were foreigners, civilians—English, American, South American, and Chinese, wearing their own belongings—dressed nicely. The Germans had taken them as hostages, I suppose.

One night the Polish priest, a prisoner, came into the Polish barrack. He told them to pray. He said, “The war will soon be over.” I said, “We’re Jewish.” He said to us, “You pray in your way. We’ll pray in ours.” So we prayed. . . .

Suddenly we heard little tanks approaching and stopping. We ran to the wires, screaming, and sticking our hands out the wire. We ran so hard that the dust from the ground came up in clouds. We saw a star on the tanks. I thought, “O my God! We’re liberated.” Then the tank turned around and went away. We were so disappointed that some girls began to cry and sob.

Later that day a jeep with four speakers drove in, broadcasting in many languages. “The war is not over, but you are liberated. However, we cannot open the gate and let you out because of the typhus in the camp. We still have to fight the Germans; we cannot let our soldiers become ill with typhus. We are bringing you food.” We never got this food for two or three days. . . .

At last we knew we had been liberated. No one was on the watchtowers anymore. The Germans had run away before the British had arrived. The Germans had told the Hungarian POWs to watch us. Some girls got out and went over the ditches and the Hungarian guards shot them just before the end. Two girls tried to escape and one was shot. This was heartbreaking!

When the Germans left they had taken the foreign citizens with them, they left only the sick foreigners and a lot of clothing. We didn’t have clothing, just rags. We went over, opened the wire between the barracks, and took some clothing. I

took myself a fur coat. At least I was warm. But I was still hungry!

When we came back, the English started to give us food. We sent girls to the kitchen with a clean garbage can and they brought us back the food. At first they fed us a hearty soup with big pieces of meat and fat. They meant well, but this was not good for people who had not eaten for days and who were not used to a rich diet. People became very sick and some died.

MIRIAM YONISH GREENMAN

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Miriam Yonish Greenman and Maryann McLoughlin. *Interrupted Lives: The Holocaust Memoirs of George and Miriam Greenman*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2012, pp. 62–66. Used by permission.

Escaping to the forest was a tactic adopted by many Jews when the opportunity (and inclination) was present, though all too often the forest was a false haven. Overall, it has been estimated that only around 10% of all those who adopted this strategy survived World War II. Most of those who found themselves in the partisan unit commanded by Tuvia Bielski and his brothers, however, did manage to survive. Miriam Yonish Greenman and her mother were among them. Miriam’s account, part of which is reproduced here, outlines her experiences with the Bielski otriad (unit), and shows how the opportunities for survival were enhanced as a result of membership in this unique Jewish self-defense formation. The efforts of the Bielskis and those who found their way into their forest stronghold were life-saving and life-affirming, providing hope in an environment of hopelessness.

A few months after the May 1943 *Aktion*, my mother decided that we should escape to the forest to join the Bielski partisans. My stepfather did not want to go, he said that he felt safe working in the hot houses. *He joined us later*. My mother told him that she had to save her child. She dressed me in an outfit on which she had sewn special buttons; these buttons were gold coins, covered with cloth.

So many people left the Lida Ghetto for the partisans that when the area-commissar saw that the ghetto was being diminished, he instituted measures in order to stop people fleeing the ghetto. He issued a command to the *Judenrat* that the ghetto was to be fenced in with a three layered high barbed-wire fence. . . .

Despite the fence . . . the young partisan emissaries from the Bielski partisans continued to come to the Lida Ghetto. They gathered our group together. We took off the Jewish stars, and in broad daylight, we walked out of the ghetto. We walked a few days to reach the forests. On the way, we slept in Polish villages. The men guarded us with rifles. We were as much afraid of the other partisans as we were of the Germans. Some of them would kill Jews and take any money or weapons that they had. We finally reached the Bielski *Otriad* sometime in the summer of 1943.

When I first saw Tuvia Bielski, he had a lot of people gathered around him. Sitting on a white horse, he greeted us—mother and me and the other refugees. He greeted us with so much love. I adored him. He told us, “I don’t know who will survive because we are always chased by Germans. I do promise you that no one will shoot you in the back.” I couldn’t have imagined that I would ever see this legend—this tall, handsome soldier.

Tuvia could feel when morale was low in the camp. He would gather us together and speak to us. He had this knack, this power, to convince us that we would survive. He told us that we had been left to die, but that we had the right to live. He gave us hope. After he spoke, we felt that we would be safe. *I’m sorry that I lost touch with him. In Israel they didn’t acknowledge his heroism.*

There was always danger from the Germans. The partisans had sabotaged the Germans, for example, by dynamiting the railroad and blowing up bridges. Therefore, the Germans used to chase us all the time. I remember being chased and shot at by Germans. A bullet passed so close by my head that my ear was inflamed.

I remember the conditions in the forests. While we were in the camp, I never felt as though we were living like human beings. We were constantly being chased. There was very little food. We were very cold all the time. In the winter we had to contend with snow and ice; even in summer it was cold. Sun did not penetrate through the trees. I remember during the summer, even in July and August, that we had to wear winter clothes. What was left of them! They were ragged. The soles of my shoes were held on by string. We were cold, but at the same time we were bitten by huge mosquitoes. There was always mud. However, when morale was low, as it often was, Tuvia knew what to say to perk us up.

In the camp my mother became friendly with friends of the Bielskis. Mr. Dvoretzky, his wife and two daughters, Cyla and Luba. Mother and I would go together with her and her daughters and beg for food. One day a peasant sent drunken Russian partisans after us. Mother said that it was not good

coming to these farms with young girls. So the Dvoretzskys and my mother built an underground shelter where we could hide. Dvoretzky was a good man. People who knew him, liked him. The peasants would give him bread. . . .

While we were with the Dvoretzskys, I developed a horrible rash from mosquito bites that became infected with pus. I didn’t want my mother to know about the rash. I knew she would be upset and worried, so I hid it from her. My sweater became stiff with pus. Mr. Dvoretzky, our friend, told me to go off to the side to pick up the big green leaves growing there. He said to put the leaves against my arm, holding them on with string. I couldn’t stretch my hand to reach the leaves, the wounds hurt. My mother followed me and then asked what I was doing. I took off my sweater and she saw my arms covered with infected wounds. Mother said, “Why didn’t you tell me?”

I said, “It is much better. I was afraid to tell you. The women would have thought I was contagious.” Eventually I healed.

We were always running from the Germans. Eventually the Germans mounted a huge operation to rid the forests of partisans. They put a price on Tuvia’s head of 100,000 Reichmarks. . . .

As we were running through the Naliboki Forest swamp, something bit me on the little toe. It swelled three times its normal size. My mother was very worried because she figured that a snake had bitten me and that I would die of the venom. Eventually the swelling subsided, and I was able to walk with ease. We stayed in this swampy place for the last few months of the war.

Towards the end of the war, my mother caught typhus. Her hair fell out and she was emaciated. She looked old, like a seventy-year-old woman. One day she looked in the mirror but quickly turned around to see who was behind her. She thought the face in the mirror was someone else’s face.

ZINA GURLAND

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Zina Gurland (translated from Yiddish by Odeda Rosenthal and edited by Maryann McLoughlin). *But Where Is Tanya?* Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2013, pp. 9–13. Used by permission.

The Nazi occupation of the Lithuanian city of Vilna—known colloquially as “the Jerusalem of Lithuania”—was character-

ized by two major developments: the introduction of ghetto life for the city's large Jewish population, and the massive bloodletting that took place in the nearby Ponary Forest, an area that had traditionally been a weekend retreat for Vilna's residents. Zina Gurland was a young mother who experienced the terror of Nazi rule in Vilna and tried desperately to find ways to protect her daughter while at the same time being forced to work as a slave laborer in the ghetto. Her realization is that only through possession of a work permit could she find some form of guarantee that she would not be sent on a convoy to Ponary. Hers is a story that ends on a poignant note of uncertainty.

We must again warily worm our way across the large city on foot, babies in our arms, balancing our few belongings and some food. A gypsy approaches us in a whining voice: "Don't go back! Run to the woods! They are slaughtering all the Jews in town: I saw it myself!"

How can we go into the woods with infants? But the gypsy cries and wails, "such pretty infants. Such young women. Don't go to the slaughter." His tearful eyes beg us to save ourselves. They haunt me still. We should have believed him I suppose, but we thought, "How can you trust a . . . a gypsy?"

Back home we see neighbors run around aimlessly, crying. Last night a son, a sister, a child was kidnapped. . . . The gypsy appears before me again as I head to my apartment. He emerges like a ghost, and I hear him cry in a high-pitched voice resembling that of a beaten animal. "They are murdering Jews in Ponar!" Ponar? Ponar was one of the open areas of woodland and ski facilities outside the sprawling city of Vilna, the historic, elegant, and cultured capital of Lithuania. Ponar is a place that has held many sweet childhood memories for us. It is the wooded park where we spent many winter hours skating, skiing, and giggling as we glided down on sleds flushed with the warmth of youth and the sunshine that glistened on trees and snow.

But already before the war, when the Russians had overtaken free Lithuania after its short period of proud independence from Poland, they had begun to build holding tanks for oil in the area of Ponar. The gypsy says that the Germans order Jews to stand on top of the lip of the unfinished tanks and use them as target practice, shooting at them until they drop inside. He says they pour chlorine on the still-alive bodies, writhing while dying. He says he saw it with his own eyes.

Some sport. Once Jewish Maccabee Sports club events were held there. We had been members and competed. We often used the spacious locker rooms to change our uniforms and to clean up after the events and skiing. Can we really

imagine that these locker rooms have been transformed into a house of slaughter? Is this image real? I rush back to my mother and sister, but my mother is gone. I return to my own place, at Zawalna Street No. 60, change, wash, and nurse my baby, falling asleep from exhaustion.

In the morning an announcement is made on a loud-speaker. Jews must go to ghettos. Until now, we were merely harassed and attacked by soldiers or hauled away. Now they come and shoot us on the spot if we do not obey. Certain limited areas have been announced, and Jews must stay within those areas. There are officially two ghettos, but it seems that Ponar is an unspoken third choice.

My sister and I are so used to putting on lipstick and makeup before dealing with the public at my mother's restaurant that even now when we go out, we still find ourselves doing it, and I do so before leaving the house to check what is going on. I decide to see if my mother returned. I am grabbed by Lisa, her neighbor, and whisked into her place. The Germans confiscated all of my mother's belongings. As we speak in whispers, a knock is heard at the door. Lithuanians and Germans rush into the apartment. We are ordered out and told we have fifteen minutes to report for assignment to a ghetto. I begin to descend the stairs with Tanya on my arm, aiming for my sister's place. My head is swimming. A mass of humanity is in motion below me. Jews from all over are streaming down the street with packages, with children at their sides or on their arms. They are being rushed by guards, faster, faster, faster, into the ghettos. Packages dropped by trembling, hurried people tumble onto the streets, tripping up some, and are soon to be picked up by other townspeople. Jews from afar appear to be among the masses. Who knows how long they have managed to carry their belongings? Perhaps they let go of these items while holding the more precious weights of infants and terrified toddlers. I see Germans hitting Jews with weapons that look like sawed off broomsticks. They whip at random. They prod. They punch. They yank. They slap. The screams reach the heavens.

I cannot allow myself to be swept up in this mass. I squirm back upstairs to my mother's empty house. As I open the door I see to my surprise that my mother is there. When did she get here? Never mind. She tells me that she had managed to survive, and that she had heard that his house would be within the ghetto. Quickly we decide that we will all stay in Ethel's apartment, which has three rooms plus a kitchen.

Before long, this limited space is filled with others. My sister's bedroom becomes home for her and her baby—Chazie, my mother, my daughter Tanya, and me. The living room

becomes the abode of my husband's sister Raya, her husband, Joseph (who is the vice president of the Jewish Bank), their daughter, Ola, who is twelve, as well as Liza, her daughter, mother, and brother, and the brother's girl friend who has a daughter aged four. In the second bedroom are Dr. Zlatkin, one of the physicians in the Jewish Hospital, his wife and two sons, one aged five and the other, twelve, and their old uncle.

Once members of a sophisticated community, we are all like hunted animals enveloped in terror. Within days we are told there will be some changes. We need white passes to remain where we are. We are, in fact, according to the Germans, in Ghetto No. 2. Those who have no pass will have to go to Ghetto No. 1. Ghetto No. 1, we soon find out, is the last stop before being sent to Ponar. No one who is shipped to Ponar is seen again. Only those who "work" there return. And how do we get a white pass? The only way to get a pass is to report to work. I go. Then my sister goes, and my mother follows. We get white passes. I am assigned work in the barracks on Willkomirshe Street. I shovel horse manure.

A few weeks pass. A new ruling is announced. An "Occupational Pass" is required. I get a pass from the office of the director of the ghetto whose name is Mürer. His office is on Povulanske Street, in a makeshift hut, near the grounds of an estate that is being built. Who is this estate for? Ah, yes, for Mürer.

My new job is to carry batches of bricks to this project. My hands are ripped to shreds. My strength ebbs. My breasts, filled with milk, hurt. No doubt my child is hurting too. She has not been nursed the whole day. I hope she has been given some food, but I must not allow myself to think. I dare not take one brick less. I have seen how the German's stick cracks bones. We are "lucky" to have work.

It is now the end of July 1941. Someone has just run down the street and shouted that they have emptied the ghetto. Manya, who had been working on the same project as I, comes and tearfully whispers to me the same awful news while we are carrying bricks. I scream inside, "My mother, my child!" But we dare not stop carrying those bricks.

Two men convince the guards that they should be given some time to check the ghetto. They return to inform us that no, it was not Ghetto No. 2, but Ghetto No. 1 that has been emptied. We are relieved for the moment. But is this fair? What did those people do to deserve this? The long day ends and we return to our homes. It is nighttime. Like a moving shadow, my mother stands by the stairs holding my child. I cry with joy. They are alive!

Within days we are told that we need a yellow pass. Such a pass allows a man to have a mother, a wife, and two

children. But how can we get a yellow pass? Not everyone at my work was given passes. I have no husband and no pass. Nor does my sister, nor my aunt, nor Tanya.

Can anyone tell us how to get a pass so that we may stay alive?

LUSIA HABERFELD

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Lusia Haberfeld. *Lauferin: The Runner of Birkenau*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2002, pp. 40–48. Used by permission.

Luisa Haberfeld was a child transported, with her mother, from the death camp at Majdanek to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Whereas at Majdanek she was registered with a metal identification disc, at Auschwitz she was tattooed, her head was shaved and she was cast into the labor pool—"branded forever," as she writes, "like cattle." In this account, Luisa chronicles a little of her experiences at Auschwitz, in particular her efforts at finding ways to live in an environment not designed for the purpose of facilitating survival. One of the features of her testimony concerns the ways in which trade and barter were prevalent, exchange relationships common among prisoners in her area owing to its proximity to the otherwise closed world of the Sonderkommando.

For some reason, the Germans decided to move us from Majdanek. They made another Selection, and we were naked again, except only for the metal discs with our registration numbers, which we wore round our necks. This time, cigarettes saved my life. The doctor who was selecting young and healthy women lit up a cigarette, thus distracting himself for a second. In that moment, my mother pushed me through to the selected side. The Polish women who were writing down the numbers of those selected to live, quickly put my number down. I was saved again.

Two thousand women were selected to march out of Majdanek. When the Germans counted us, there were two thousand and one! They re-counted us many times. We stood for hours being counted. Eventually, they called out our numbers, and the one person not on their list was about my age. Her name was Halinka Finkelstein, and she had attached herself to this transport to be with her aunt, whom she pretended was her mother. We expected that they would shoot her, but for

some reason they did not, and allowed her to join the transport. Possibly because we were all going to be gassed anyway.

Our column was followed by an ambulance, and I remember thinking how kind and caring of the Germans this was. We only found out later that, in that ambulance, was the deadly Zyklon B gas, the gas used for killings. And en route, we actually spent a whole night in the gas chambers! We were herded into a large area, with a concrete floor and shower heads overhead. The heavy door was shut on us very tightly, and there was one small window in that door. Later, we found out that the window was there so that the Germans could watch their victims dying. It was only in the morning, when a German soldier opened the door and said to us “Children, you have been spared,” that we understood that we were in Majdanek’s gas chambers.

As I am writing of this episode, the most devastating thought has just occurred to me. Rysio, my brother Rysio, could have been gassed in the same spot where my mother and I spent the night. I have met some women in Melbourne who spent that night with us in the gas chambers. Everybody whose tattooed number starts with forty-eight thousand, is a witness to that night.

Once again, we marched and then again were herded onto cattle trains. This time, nobody suffocated, and this time, every carriage had a German soldier—for us to have his doubtful company, for him to amuse himself. And amuse himself he did. Every few hours he would point his gun and shoot somebody, just for sport and fun. I might have killed ants the way he killed his victims.

Starved and half dead, we arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau. The date was July 1943. Once again, we were formed into a column, in rows of five, and were marched through a big double gate, with the inscription above it, *Arbeit Macht Frei*—Work Will Set You Free. Imagine our feelings as we passed through the gates to the music of a Strauss waltz, played by an orchestra of young women only, seated by a gate. We were totally confused. What a wonderful reception! I think, perhaps, the whole idea was to confuse us.

What followed was sheer hell. They took us to a building where they cut our hair and tattooed numbers on our arms. Being a child, I started crying. My mother turned to me and said, “Lusia, if we will have our heads, we will grow our hair.” I gazed at her, and she looked terrible. My beautiful mother with shaven head. She went first to have her arm tattooed, to show me that it would not hurt. Thus, she became 48702, and I, 48703. We were branded forever, like cattle. But the human spirit is not killed so easily. They did not kill ours. They came very close many times, but the final victory was ours.

An announcement came over the speakers that if any children were in this Transport they should go to special barracks where they could get better food and treatment. Remembering my father’s advice always to do the opposite to what the Germans tell you, I did not go for that special treatment. And Special treatment they did get. Four weeks later, all the children who went to the Children’s Block were taken out one night and gassed.

Then one day, our luck changed. It all started when my mother caught malaria. We had many diseases in Auschwitz, because of the terrible conditions, and some people said that the Greek girls had brought the malaria with them. I don’t know. My mother used to get her attacks every afternoon at four o’clock. I was devastated. She was very sick, shivering and feverish. We desperately needed quinine. The price of quinine in camp was a loaf of bread for one tablet. We had not seen a whole loaf of bread since before the Camps. It was a hopeless situation.

Then a woman gave me some advice. The Gas Chambers and Crematorium were next to our camp, divided from the camp by a ditch and electric wires. The woman told me to ask somebody from the *Sonder Kommando* for quinine, as they had everything that the people on the Jewish transports brought with them to Auschwitz. The people of the *Sonder Kommando* were Jewish men who worked in the Crematorium. We were forbidden to go anywhere near this place, and going there was risking my life. But I took that woman’s advice—I had no option. I lay low in the ditch, and presently a man arrived and asked me through the wire, what I wanted. “Quinine,” I said. “My mother is very sick.” He looked me over, then said, “My name is Moshe. I am from Grodno. I will send you our doctor.”

I waited, and another man came, Chaim Kaminski. Chaim Kaminski saved my life many times although I saw him only twice. He was a good-looking man of medium size, dressed in navy jacket and riding boots. He had been a teacher of Hebrew language in Grodno, and he was the *Capo* of *Sonder Kommando*. He wanted to know how old I was, and I told him the truth. He looked at me for a while, and then he said something very touching and sad. He said, “you remind me of my little daughter who was killed by the Germans. I will look after you.”

After asking me which block I was in he said, “Don’t ever come here again, they will kill you. Go back to your block.” I went. Four hours later, the *Blokova* called me to her room. Chaim Kaminski had sent a whole bottle of quinine for my mother, a toy for me, and a big piece of cake for us. For the *Blockova*, he had sent perfumes, cosmetics, and other gifts,

with instructions to look after me and my mother, and not to send us out to work. He also sent a beautiful letter to me, as though to his own child. My mother and I became very special, for we had somebody to protect us, someone who had a big pull in that Camp. We used to call it *protekcija*.

One day, I went to the ditch again, and he came. I wanted to get a good job. A good job was a passport to life. This time, he sent me to a place called *Beiklerdungs Kammer*, which was the clothing depot. In it was deposited all the clothing that came with the Jewish transports from all over Europe. It was our job to sort it, good clothing going to Germany, the rest, the unwanted things, staying in the Camp.

Kaminski gave me a very long cigarette holder with a cigarette, similar to the one Audrey Hepburn smoked in one of her films. This he sent as a gift to the Capo of *Beiklerdungs Kammer*, Frau Schmidt—better known in the Camp as Frau Schmitka. He sent her this gift with his love. Later, I found out that they were in love.

I presented myself to Frau Schmidt. She called me her little heart and asked me whether I would like a dress or shoes, or both. She was most surprised when I declined and asked her for a job. She looked me over and started to laugh. Then she stopped and said, “Come tomorrow. I will talk to the *Ausferin*.” The *Ausferin* was an SS woman who was in charge of the *Beiklerdungs Kammer*. I thanked Frau Schmidt, and promised to come the following day.

Frau Schmidt, Schmitka, was a well-known personality in the Camp, and had enormous power. She was chic, a Christian and a political prisoner. Apparently, she had been secretary to one of the Ministers in Czechoslovakia. To me, she looked old, because I was a child. Today I see her differently. She always ran through the Camp, as fast as the wind, always in a black silk uniform, with a white scarf on her blonde hair. While we all lived worse than pigs, she had a room of her own in the barracks of the *Beiklerdungs Kammer*, beautifully decorated in pink, with pink curtains and bedspread. Her room would be luxurious even today, in a free world. She also had her own cook and valet; and yes, she was a Capo, but she harmed nobody. She most certainly saved my life on many occasions.

I presented myself to her the next day, as she had told me, and I became a messenger girl for the clothing store, being sent everywhere by the SS woman. I was called *Lauferin*, which, in German, means “messenger girl.” Both my mother and I owe our survival in Auschwitz to Chaim Kaminski and Schmitka.

The Germans had worked out that on the daily food rations we received, we could survive only three months. That meant that if you wanted to live, you had to organize extra food, and I became the best organizer there was. There

was a huge metal water container in the store, and whenever I was sent for water, I hid items of clothing in the container. Each time I was sent out on an errand, I wore extra clothing on me. This clothing I used to sell to the Polish girls who worked in the camp kitchen. They had plenty of food. Of course, it was forbidden for us to enter this area, but I bribed my way in, and sold the things I had smuggled out of the store for margarine and other food.

Cigarettes were like currency in the Camp. For some reason they were illegal in the women’s Camp, but of course, some women still did smoke, although I do not know how cigarettes found their way into Auschwitz. There were people who would even change their meagre portion of bread for a cigarette—they did not live very long. Then, again, there were people who had enough food and could afford a little luxury like a cigarette, although the punishment if found smoking was twenty lashes. There were people who had better positions than others and so had more food, and those who had enough to eat looked for other things, like warm clothing, or a pillow, or a blanket—things that had found their way into the Camp from new arrivals. The people who worked on the railway had these things for sale. And the currency was cigarettes.

Whenever we had more food than we could eat, having bartered the things I had taken from the *Beiklerdungs Kammer* and sold them, my mother would exchange the surplus food for cigarettes. When our food ran out, we changed the cigarettes for bread. People who lived only on the given rations did not live long. As long as you had that little extra, you lived, another day of misery and hell.

I also used to trade at barracks called *Paketen Kammer*, which was where non-Jewish women used to receive parcels of food from relatives living free, outside our hell. Thanks to all this wheeling and dealing, my mother and I survived. I also bribed the *Blokova* not to send my mother to work outside. Such outdoor work was a death sentence.

MAGDA KELEMAN HAFTER

Context: Central Europe

Source: Magda Keleman Hafter and Maryann McLoughlin. *No Longer Does the Wind Weave: Magda’s Memoir*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2010, pp. 1–5. Used by permission.

Magda Keleman Hafter was still a child when the Nazis destroyed Czechoslovakia during the period 1938–1939. First, under the terms of the Munich Agreement of September

1938, the country was mutilated when it had the Sudetenland ripped away; then, in March 1939, Germany took over the Czech lands and transformed Magda's native Slovakia into a "Protectorate." For Magda, these developments shattered her otherwise contented childhood. The Slovak puppet government instituted discriminatory measures against Jews, prior to her town being taken over by the Hungarians who then introduced antisemitic measures of their own. Magda's account here ends when, at the age of 16, she became aware of the dangers young women faced at the hands of the occupying Hungarians—a terrifying prospect for a girl from an otherwise sheltered background.

I was born in 1926, during the inter-war period (1918–1939) in Zemianska Olča (Hungarian: Nemesócsa), a town on the Danube River in central Europe, west of Kománo, in southwest Slovakia. We were about 50 to 60 kilometers from Pressburg (Bratislava), later the capital of the Slovak Republic. In 1926, Zemianska was in Slovakia, a part of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. Before that, for about one thousand years, according to Buhler and Fatran, the area had been part of the Hungarian Empire. Zemianska Olča is now in the Slovak Republic. My history, along with the history of all the Jews of Slovakia—*Oberlander* Jews—is intertwined with Slovakia's chaotic twentieth century history.

At the time of my birth in 1926, although Slovakia was part of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, my parents remembered when the Hungarians still ruled Slovakia. They spoke both Hungarian and Slovakian. They said that Zemianska Olča had always been a Hungarian area. The policemen and teachers were Hungarian, for example.

My family was not large. My father, Eugen (Jenö) Kelemen, from Zemianska Olča, had originally been a Kohn. His father, Ignatz Kohn, had four sons who all changed their names in 1916. (It is a mystery to me why they changed their names. Possibly antisemitism, but I am not sure.) Their father's only stipulation was that the names they chose began with a K. My father changed from Kohn to Kelemen. My father married Yolanda (Jolan) Weiss, a Hungarian. My brother Alexander, was born on January 3, 1926.

I came from a loving and comfortable home. We lived at 63 Main Street in a lovely house in Zemianska Olča. We had electricity, hot water, and even a radio. Our house was well-heated by coal.

My father's business was across from our home. My father owned a small but prosperous department store . . . he also owned a warehouse for milled grain. His store was divided into two attached sections in one store, he sold yard

goods such as corduroys, silk, wool, and flannel, ready-made clothes such as men's suits, heavy shawls, rain coats, umbrellas, glass, cakes, candy displayed in jars, packaged cookies, and dry goods such as flour, sugar, chocolate. In the other store, he sold pots, pans, leather shoes, work boots, work pants, socks, lamps, kerosene, oil, and petrol. He also sold liquor, but "closed" liquor, which meant he was not allowed to pour glasses for customers.

When I was five or six years old, my father used to put me up on the counter where I would dance and sing for his customers. When I was older, I used to watch that people didn't steal from the store. We had help in the store as well as at home.

My mother worked with my father in this department store. She was very fashionable and a good mother. She cooked sometimes because we liked her cooking, and she cooked Passover dishes and preserved fruit. Most of the cooking and housework, however, was done by a live-in servant. Once a week a woman came and washed our clothes. She hung the clothes in the attic in the winter and outside in the summer.

My family was orthodox but not Hasidic. In Zemianska Olča, two percent were Jews, about eighty families. Of these ninety percent were orthodox. We kept the Sabbath and my father attended synagogue. Our family kept kosher.

My father closed his store on Saturdays and on Jewish high holidays such as Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur and out of respect for his Christian neighbours on Christmas. He also closed if there was a funeral. None of his customers expected us to be open on those days; we all knew each other in Zemianska Olča.

We kept *Shabbos* and walked on the Sabbath (from Sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday) to synagogue or wherever. There were horse and buggies and bicycles, but walking was nothing to us. We walked many places.

My family was very close with our relatives. I remember one uncle, my father's brother, came often to our house to visit. My paternal grandmother, Antonio Berger Kohn, lived with us. She died in 1938 at home. I never knew my paternal grandfather, who died before I was born.

The people in Zemianska Olča were not antisemitic. Our neighbours were Christians. On Christmas they served us candy and fruit but no cakes. They knew what, as Jews, we didn't eat. No one offended us or our religion. We exchanged gifts at Christmas and Rosh HaShanah. On New Year's we welcomed people in to listen to the radio. We served them potato latkes, donuts, and fried chicken.

Our best friend was Mariska Szanis, a Methodist, my neighbor. We went to school together up until I had to leave

the gymnasium. I called her parents “aunt” and “uncle” and she did the same with mine.

For two years, I went to the Catholic school with three or four other Jewish children (my school is still there). The nuns at the school respected Jews. When the Catholics prayed or attended chapel, we were excused. Then through eighth grade I attended the public school. I was good in math and science. On Tuesday afternoons I went to Hebrew school. After I had finished the eighth grade, I went on to gymnasium in Komárno about thirty-five kilometers (21.7 miles) west of Zemianska Olča. I traveled there by train with Mariska. I was in the third year of gymnasium when my schooling was interrupted. Mariska completed gymnasium. . . .

By the late thirties we were hearing very scary rumors about Hitler. To frighten us, teenagers would shout: “Hitler’s coming!”

Despite the rumors, no one believed that anything bad would happen to us. That is until the end of 1938 and the spring of 1939.

What did affect my town and my family was the First Vienna Award, giving parts of Slovakia to the Hungarians. . . .

Then in March of 1939, in addition to being threatened by Hungary, according to “Holocaust in Slovakia,” Hitler warned Józef Tiso (1887–1947) to declare Slovakia independent of the republic of Czechoslovakia. Tiso, a professor of theology, a parish priest, and a fascist politician, became the president of the Slovak Republic, a protectorate of Nazi Germany between 1939 and 1945, and a member of the Axis from November 1940.

Our town was not immediately affected by the breakup. Life continued as before until the Hungarians occupied Zemianska Olča. When the Hungarians marched in, the Slovaks had to leave. We were allowed to stay because my mother was Hungarian, and my father had gone to a German school.

However, the Hungarians took over Jewish businesses. . . . In 1941, my father had to give up his store. His store license was revoked; therefore, his store had to be closed. They made him leave all the merchandise in the store. However, he was allowed to rent his business to a non-Jew, so he rented his business to Mr. Luki. My father was heart-broken by this.

Although many Jews became poverty-stricken, we were solvent because my parents had saved money. However, we did not live as comfortably; for example, we were not allowed to have a servant.

Beginning in September of 1941, we had to wear the yellow Star of David outlined in black with the word “Jew” in the center; thus, we were easily identifiable as Jews and subject to

persecution, ghettoization, and deportation. Passed in September 1941, the Jewish Codex, “a code of extreme anti-Jewish laws,” . . . according to Buchler and Fatran, “defined Jews on racial grounds and required them to wear the yellow Jewish Badge.” In 1942, we were only able to shop at certain times. During the rest of the time we had to stay in our homes. We were also subject to deportation to forced labor camps.

Jews were afraid to disobey these laws because we felt there was no escape. The Germans were all over the place. The only place to go was to Palestine and that was a difficult journey, especially with a family.

Zemianska Olča had become Hungarian; the Hungarians, but especially the Hungarian gendarmes, were very cruel. During the years, 1941–1942, as persecution increased, I often had to hide, staying away from home, in a family friend’s home—with a non-Jewish couple. The Hungarians would force their way into Jewish homes looking for young women; my mother had heard what they did to girls and was afraid for me. I was sixteen then. My parents wanted me to be safe staying in a non-Jewish home.

LESLIE HARDMAN

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Leslie Hardman. *The Survivors: The Story of the Belsen Remnant*. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1958, pp. 1–3, 9–10. Used by permission of Vallentine Mitchell.

Rabbi Leslie Hardman, a British military chaplain, came to Bergen-Belsen soon after its liberation in April 1945. When he arrived, what he saw beggared all description. In this memoir, he has attempted to convey something of what he encountered in the camp. We read his incredulity, for example, at seeing those still alive, who, he writes, were “a tottering mass of blackened skin and bones, held together somehow with filthy rags.” As for the vast number of dead, his immediate feeling was that they were asleep; he had no idea that so many could be dead in such a concentrated space. With such carnage, he felt overwhelmed: “a pygmy grappling with a mountain.” The challenges he would face over succeeding weeks would be enough to make him question everything he had thought was “normality” up to this time.

The day after the entry of the British troops into Belsen on April 15th, 1945, I returned from Holland to my regimental

headquarters at Celle. When I arrived I was greeted with a brooding, heavy stillness; over everything was an ominous hush. I went into the mess and found several officers, all of them strangely quiet. They greeted me in silence. I asked,

“What’s happening? What’s wrong?—there seems to be a peculiar feeling. . . .”

One of them came over to me; he said reluctantly:

“We’ve uncovered a concentration camp.”

He turned his head away, but not before I caught the pity in his eyes.

The Colonel sent for me, and I went with a stone instead of a heart. I found him grim and white-faced; something had changed him too.

“Keep a stiff upper lip, Padre,” he said. “We’ve just been into Belsen concentration camp, and it’s horrible; but you have got to go there; you’ll find a lot of your people. It’s too late to go now, go tomorrow morning.”

The following morning I went by car from Celle to Belsen, some twelve miles’ distance. I drove at reckless speed, and yet I felt that my truck was moving at a snail’s pace. By the time I had steeled my nerves to pin-pointing my thoughts on how soon I could reach my people, how soon I could do something for them.

As I drew closer to the camp, before reaching the gate I saw nailed on almost every tree the warning sign, “Danger—Typhus.” As I got out of the truck I had a sense of shock; I knew I should have anticipated it, but to be faced suddenly with that dreadful disease enveloped me in a chill which was almost paralysing. I did not need to be reminded of the Colonel’s words:

“A lot of your people are there.”

I showed my pass to the two British Tommies guarding the entrance, and walked into Belsen Camp.

I shall always remember the first person I met. It was a girl, and I thought she was a negress. Her face was dark brown, and afterwards I learned that this was because her skin was in the process of healing, after being burnt. When she saw me she made as though to throw her arms around me; but with the instinct of self-preservation, I jumped back. Instantly I felt ashamed; but she understood, and stood away from me.

I looked at her; fear, compassion and shame were struggling for mastery within me; but she was the more composed of the two. We walked into the compound, keeping our voluntary “no-man’s-land” between us. Suddenly my body stiffened, and I stood in my tracks. Before and around me were lying dozens of emaciated bodies, naked, semi-naked, huddled together.

“Are they all asleep?” I asked.

“No, they’re dead; they’ve been there for days,” the girl replied unemotionally, stating the simple fact.

I tried to look at them again. I had to look in order to know, to learn, and if possible help; but these were beyond help; these, my people. The foul stench which polluted the air sickened me, and only the girl’s presence enabled me to overcome my nausea.

As we walked on, towards us came what seemed to be the remnants of a holocaust—a tottering mass of blackened skin and bones, held together somehow with filthy rags.

“My God, the dead are walking!” I cried aloud, but I did not recognize my voice.

“They are not dead,” said the girl. “But they soon will be.” . . .

This was what confronted me on the 17th day of April 1945. I had walked into something a thousand times more appalling than I had steeled myself to meet. . . . “Keep a stiff upper lip, Padre!”

A terrible feeling of helplessness engulfed me. What could I do? How could I save them? Where could I begin? I was a pygmy grappling with a mountain.

“Many of your people are there.” My people?—anyone’s people—everyone’s people. These once human beings, flesh and blood like you and me, were now reduced to hideous apparitions bearing no resemblance to man, but only witnessing to man’s inhumanity.

God help me! I am small and alone but I must help them; and I must not waste a moment, because every moment another soul dies.

ANNA MOLNÁR HEGEDŰS

Context: Central Europe

Source: Anna Molnár Hegedűs. *As the Lilacs Bloomed*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 13–21. Used by permission.

The German invasion of Hungary on March 19, 1944, hit the Jews of that country like a whirlwind. Up to this point Hungary, though allied to Germany, had refused to hand over its Jews to the Third Reich. Now, the SS moved in under “Jewish specialist” Adolf Eichmann, and the full force of the Final Solution was brought to bear. One of the first measures the Nazis and their antisemitic Hungarian collaborators introduced was the registration and concentration of Hungary’s

Jews, and in this testimony Anna Molnár Hegedűs chronicles the impact of some of these first steps at “ground level.” The ways in which the Nazi onslaught was brought to bear against Hungary’s Jews forced a vast number of adjustments, compromises, and evasions, as Anna details here.

We were roused from our restless sleep by the strident ringing of the doorbell. Just as the maid, frightened, came in to announce that a policeman was looking for my husband, the policeman entered our bedroom. In a polite tone, he said, “Don’t be alarmed, there is no problem. I would just like to ask Mr. Director to quickly get dressed, and Mrs. Hegedűs to pack two sets of underwear for him and enough food for two days.” I asked him to leave the room while I got out of bed but he insisted that he could not, nor even turn his back. Most likely, he was supposed to keep an eye on us to make sure that my husband did not commit suicide.

We both got up with wild panic in our hearts, appearing calm on the surface. Zoltan started to get dressed and I began to pack as the policeman continued to reassure us that there wouldn’t be any problem. My husband said good-bye to me, Ágnes and János, who were terrified, but we all held back our tears valiantly. We burst out crying only when he and the policeman had left the apartment. Dr. Endre Borgida, an elderly and ailing lawyer, was also taken from the building.

No sooner had they left than the doorbell rang again. Even in those early days, every ring of the doorbell jangled our nerves and made our hearts race, as we could not expect anything good from any new arrival. But what came next exceeded all our expectations. In burst a cocky, young Hungarian officer, whom I happened to know by sight. It was Lieutenant Solyom, a leader of Levente, the fascist youth corps. He was an infamous antisemite and sadist who habitually beat up and tortured not only Jews but even the gentile Levente members. He didn’t bother to introduce himself. “I want to see the apartment,” he declared at the top of his voice.

The army had already claimed two rooms of my apartment. One was occupied by a physician and ensign, a rather decent man who, after my husband was taken away, came to offer his assistance in case I needed anything. I concluded that the lieutenant was interested in the other room requisitioned by the army and I indicated exactly that. “I told you I am interested in the apartment, not this room!” he shouted vehemently.

Shocked, I asked, “Are you telling me that you want to take over the whole apartment?”

“No, that’s not the case,” he answered in an honest manner, just as one would expect of an officer. Then he rushed out.

He reappeared an hour later with his wife, a farmer’s daughter whom he had married along with her three hundred acres. This young woman in her twenties came in without saying hello, looked over the apartment, and, with her nose in the air, declared that it would do. That didn’t surprise me—we had moved into this beautiful, brand new place only three weeks earlier. She stated that I had to hand over the apartment in twenty-four hours and that I needed to vacate the premises right away. I thought I hadn’t heard her right. “You might have the right to throw me out of this apartment in my own building,” I said, “but I demand to have the order in writing. On second thought, I will not move out. I have no place to go. You may throw me out on the street if you feel you have the right.” At that point she declared that I could leave the furniture behind if there wasn’t any place to store it, but the curtains and curtain rods belonged to the apartment, so I couldn’t remove them. This was a novel assertion, but in those days bigger surprises were a regular occurrence.

I had had enough excitement for one morning, and left to find out what had happened to my husband and the others who had been picked up with him. I met up with my girlfriends, who were busy trying to deal with the same problem. In all, eighty prominent Jews had been arrested—doctors, lawyers, factory owners, wholesalers—in other words, anyone who was considered sufficiently wealthy.

We managed to get permission to provide dinner for the men and took turns cooking sumptuous meals at the community kitchen. Ági signed up as courier and carried the cauldron just to be able to see her adored father and talk to him. In this way, we found out that the men had not been harmed. A Gestapo officer was conducting an investigation into their financial affairs.

My mind somewhat eased about my husband. I dashed to the hospital to see my dear mother, who had been admitted with a case of pneumonia. She had fallen ill while we were in Bikszád. My sister Erzsike Blum, whom my mother lived with, had taken her to the hospital. She was out of danger as far as the pneumonia was concerned, and we were overjoyed to see one another. I told her about the pleasant time we had had in Bikszád and that we were well off and weren’t having any problems. I said that the only reason Zoltán hadn’t come to visit was that he had been called away on business. Our prime concern was to shelter her from anything that might trouble her, to spare her the disturbances that each new day

brought. After all, it could cause her to take a fatal turn to learn that her son-in-law, whom she loved as if he were her own son, was in prison, that we had been ordered off the train, and that we were about to be evicted from our own home. Let her continue in blissful ignorance for as long as possible.

I anxiously awaited her full recovery and rejoiced to learn that she was over the crisis. If I'd had an inkling of what the future held in store for us, I would have begged God to take her soul then, to spare her the ghetto and the trauma of deportation at the age of eighty-four. Then we could have given her a burial, wept for her and mourned her, as was her due after having raised six children as a widow. Instead, once home from hospital and restored to health, she found out all that had happened so far, and she would soon experience all that was to come.

The next day, I went downtown to find out whether Lieutenant Solyom had the right to throw me out of my apartment, and there I ran into a girlfriend of mine. "I guess," she said with a mournful face, "you haven't heard yet what happened." All the blood rushed out of my heart. Had something happened to my husband? Seeing my fear she quickly continued, "The Germans ransacked your apartment." Relieved that it was nothing worse, I hurried home to be received by a sight similar to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The contents of the wardrobe were scattered all over the floor; the beds were upended in the middle of the room. Frantically, our maid recounted how a German officer had burst in with a white-bearded civilian interpreter. They had headed straight for the wardrobes, opened them, scrutinized their contents, taken some items and tossed the rest aside. She had no idea exactly what was gone because she had been sent out of the room. I went to the other wardrobe where we kept our files, documents and other valuables, which at the time we still thought important, and in the lock I spotted a key I didn't recognize. I turned the key and the wardrobe opened—nothing had been touched.

The maid was surprised, since the intruders had not noticed the key and had sent her for a hatchet to break open the wardrobe. Instead, she had run to fetch the ensign, who wouldn't allow them to break open the beautiful piece of furniture. The ensign recounted the rest of the story. The Germans declared that they would seal the apartment, which was now officially requisitioned, and no one was allowed to enter it. The ensign protested, at which point they considered leaving his room open, but they did not accept this proposal until finally he pledged to ensure that we not remove anything from the apartment. The Germans

left, carrying off quite a few items and promising to return soon to transport the rest away. In the meantime, no one was to touch a thing.

I stood, panic-stricken, slowly discovering how much was missing. First and foremost, the knapsack filled with all the essentials that I had prepared for my husband. How would I replace it? Among the missing items were pillows, duvets, men's underwear, János's suitcase that had not been unpacked since our return from Bikszád, and a lot of women's hosiery; there was not a handkerchief or stocking left in the whole house.

"What am I supposed to do?" I asked the physician. "The Hungarian officer ordered me to vacate the premises in one day. According to the German officer, I'm not allowed to remove anything. Where will all this lead? Whose orders should I follow?" He reassured me that I should just go ahead and tidy up the apartment. He was convinced that this attempt at thievery was a private undertaking on the part of the German officer en route from the front, and that we wouldn't ever see him again. He said that if I was still worried, I could store our valuables in his room.

Distressed, I ran upstairs to see my friend, whose elderly, ailing husband had been taken away along with mine. She was sitting, dejected, in her locked apartment. I found out from her that the man who had visited us was not an officer in transit but rather a lieutenant of the Gestapo, the same one who was in charge of guarding and interrogating our husbands. She had gleaned this from their conversation.

Later, while in the city, I learned that we had gotten off lightly compared to some, whose apartments were completely sealed, never to be entered again, not even to remove so much as a handkerchief. From then on, I didn't have a peaceful moment in the apartment, as there was always the chance that they would come back at any minute. I was worried day and night, and my only desire was to get away from this place.

Lieutenant Solyom soon showed up with the authorization to requisition the apartment and offered again, now in a congenial tone, to let me leave my furniture behind if I had no means to store it. I was not ready to do him this favour, but since I had no use for the light fixtures, I offered to leave them behind, at which point his wife interjected haughtily that she had no use for Jewish light fixtures. Amazingly, she didn't hold it against the curtains that they were Jewish! They kept those for good.

It was time to move, but where? I turned to the gentile manager of our factory for advice. He listened to my story with indignation and immediately offered to hand over his

own apartment to us. “How could I accept such a sacrifice?” I asked.

“Just go ahead and move in without a second thought,” he replied. It was rumoured that this part of the city would become the ghetto, in which case he’d have to move anyway. That’s when the possibility really struck me for the first time, even though it had been mentioned frequently of late, that we would be returning to the Middle Ages, with Jews forced into ghettos.

I thought through his offer carefully, but realized there was no point in accepting it. It made no sense to furnish a big apartment since, if this area was to become the ghetto, I wouldn’t be allowed to keep it anyway. I thanked our good and faithful friend for his kindness, and rented a large room on a street that was sure to be included in the ghetto. I furnished it handsomely and thus freed myself from the chore of taking care of a large apartment and household, for which I no longer had any patience. I had much greater problems to deal with.

Among all my concerns, the one that weighed most heavily on my mind was still Ágnes. How could I save her from the ghetto? Where could I hide her before moving there with my son? I didn’t want her to accompany us, as I was tormented day and night by horrible images. It would simply drive you mad, just imagining what might happen to young women exposed to every whim of the German soldiers.

During these days of tribulations, a kind Christian friend of ours, Gizi (née Strempl) Steir, was a true support. She and I discussed what needed to be done and, with my husband under arrest, it was she who took care of our affairs. She stood by us body and soul. She suggested that we send Ágnes to a convent in Felsőbánya, where she had good connections as her son had been schooled there for several years. She could take Ágnes and enroll her as a student. Ágnes was willing to entertain the idea. She had always done her studies at a convent and she liked the sisters; her only concern was how she would be able to correspond with her fiancé from there, but we set that aside for the time being. We packed her oldest outfits, the ones from her school days: black stockings, shoes, cotton underwear left over from my trousseau, all the while laughing at the prospect of how this fashionable young lady would look in such garb. We agreed that Gizi would pick her up in a car the next morning, and since those wearing a yellow star were not able to travel any more, Gizi would also procure some gentile identifying document for her.

After having made the big decision, Ágnes spent the whole night crying at the thought, once again, of being separated from us, and when Gizi arrived the next morning, Ági implored us not to subject her—perhaps needlessly—to the anxieties of travelling with false papers. Let Gizi travel alone,

she said, and once it was certain that she had been accepted, she would go back with her the following day. In vain, Gizi tried to cajole her into sticking with the original plan, in case some obstacle might arise, but she could not convince Ági to accompany her. Gizi drove off and returned that same evening, beaming. “It’s all arranged,” she said. “It’s a pity though, that Ágnes did not come along, because she could have moved in right away.”

The head of the convent school had driven back with Gizi to discuss the financial arrangements and to take Ági back with her the next day. In the meantime Ági had come to accept this solution, and while we were trying to figure out how she could manage to keep corresponding with Pali, a letter arrived from the mother superior. She wrote that they would not authorize Ágnes’s enrollment, that they were afraid of the consequences. Our joy exceeded our disappointment: Fate wanted us to stay together after all! We had passed up the last chance for her escape.

The next day, May 3, the ghetto order was issued. I started dashing around to place my furniture and other valuables with gentile acquaintances and friends, so that I would be ready to move as soon as possible. When all was done and my lovely new apartment that I had outfitted only a few weeks earlier stood empty, I said goodbye to the physician-ensign who had shared our trials during those awful days. “You see,” I said to the doctor, “this is what it looks like when they put into practice those things that sound so “appealing” in the editorials: *Let’s break the spirit of the Jews; let’s bring them to their ruin.* Here, a happy home has fallen apart; a happy family, whose only thought was for each other, has become destitute and homeless.”

I moved into the ghetto well ahead of time and was next faced with the problem regarding the “Declaration of Property.” I had to do this all on my own and in the most detailed fashion possible, including each and every asset, all the while being threatened with what would be done to those who made a false declaration or left something out. The spectre of internment was constantly thrust in our faces and, in our naivety, we never imagined what a delight internment might have been compared to what actually awaited us. Thus, I declared every valuable without a single omission, and listed the names of our gentile friends who were storing my surplus furniture and items of value.

At the same time, my husband was also being interrogated on the same subject. I was fearful of inadvertently contradicting him. Indeed, I was living in fear of everything. After dealing with this matter, I could at last go out to see my mother, who had been brought home from the hospital. I also needed

to do some grocery shopping, which I hadn't been able to find time for amidst all of my problems. Needless to say, we had to stock up on goods for our life in the ghetto.

My errands complete, I headed up to my new home, the ghetto. On the way, a troop of soldiers drew up beside me and broke into a horrible Jew-baiting song, full of the most obscene insults. It made my face burn. I started running like someone being pursued, and it wasn't until I arrived home that I finally glanced at the newspaper I had picked up earlier. This was an antisemitic rag called *Szamos*, run by Mr. Albert Figus, a former freemason and a current member of parliament for the Arrow Cross Party.

The announcement right on the front page, in large type, read: "The gates to the ghetto will be closed as of four o'clock this afternoon and no one will be allowed to leave through them. Starting tomorrow, Jews will be forced to move into the ghetto from the city." The signatories, county prefect Barnabás Endrődi and Mayor Lászlo Csóka, had proudly completed their work for Lászlo Endre, the antisemitic hangman-in-chief who organized the establishment of the ghettos. Perhaps he would recommend these glorious patriots for higher honours.

ELSA HELLINGER

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Elsa Hellinger. *Luck, Again and Again: A Survivor from Michalovic*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Lamm Jewish Library of Australia, 2013, pp. 41–42, 43, 44–48. Used by permission.

Elsa Hellinger was a young girl from rural Hungary who went to Budapest in the hope that she might be spared persecution at the hands of the Nazis. In this memoir she describes her attempts at finding safety, made more difficult owing to her unfamiliarity with a big city and inability to adjust to the many changes she was forced to make. She also shows the combined effects of hunger and unsanitary living conditions, and why, as a result, she was vulnerable even without enforced measures from the Germans. Living one step away from the Nazis did not, as we see, necessarily guarantee survival.

Everyone was telling me it was not good to stay in Kassa and it would have been better if I went to Budapest. I had never been to a big city before and I was scared, so my cousin Jacob offered to take me there. Henrik told me of an old widowed relative, Berta Stern, who lived in Budapest with her maid. He said that maybe I could stay with her.

When I arrived in Budapest I went to Berta's house and told her my story. I thought she would tell me I could stay with her, but she told me to go to Jewish Welfare and said they might be able to help me. At the Jewish Welfare office there were about four people also looking for assistance. The man in charge said, "If any of you are refugees, I'm sorry but I can't help you." He had to say that, even if he didn't mean it. I was so naïve at the time I didn't realise that, and left the office.

I went back to Aunty Berta (who was not really an aunt) and found that her son, Sandor Stern, a wealthy stockbroker, and her grandchildren were there. It was Friday evening, when she had dinner with them. When I told Sandor my situation he said, "Don't go anywhere; stay here with my mother because then at least she will have company." Even though she also had a maid. I stayed there for a few months but ran out of money. I needed clothes, so I said, "Aunt Berta, send your maid away. Pay me something and I will do her work." And that is what happened.

Hungarian citizens had ration cards, but refugees could not get them. Aunty Berta sent me to buy bread on her card, which didn't always mean I'd get just a whole loaf. Sometimes one or two slices were added to make up your ration. I always ate these extra slices on the way home. Berta kept everything behind locked doors and the keys hung from her belt. One day she made walnut rolls and hadn't yet locked them away when she went to the bathroom. I took advantage of this to eat some. . . .

She (Berta) was really very understanding and probably also knew that many times I ate the extra bread slices. . . .

I was falling ill from a combination of heavy goose fat and lack of nutrition.

I wrote to my aunt Esther Baum Englander and told her I was sick. Her family had fled to Debrecen, but she came to Budapest to see me. While she was there, Aunty Berta sent me to the caretaker for something and he said, "Tell me, Miss, how come you haven't got ration cards?" I replied, "As I told you before, my parents are very poor and have a lot of children, so I left my card with them." The caretaker continued, saying, "A man was here and said you are a refugee." I immediately guessed that no man had come at all and that the caretaker himself had become suspicious. So I went upstairs and said to Aunty Esther Baum Englander that I thought I had better escape. I packed up a few things and left the house with her. One hour later the police came to look for me! We went to see Margaret and spent an hour with her, then my aunt had to return to Debrecen and I was on my own again.

I was always in fear of my life. People were often caught with false papers and shot by the side of the Danube so their

bodies fell into the river. Although it was dangerous, I went around looking for work and accommodation. I saw a sign on a gate that read not “Room for rent” but “Bed to let.” I went into the house and asked the woman there, “Who else is sleeping in this room?” She said “Just myself and my little boy.” So I rented the bed. When I came back in the evening I saw there were four beds lined up in a row and the “little boy” was about nineteen years old and six foot tall. Of course, I couldn’t sleep all night because I needed privacy. I left the next morning. That day I got a very good job working in a factory making ladies’ coats. By this time, I had changed my name again. At first I had used my own name that was on the document the Feldmans arranged that said I was born in Hungary. When I left Aunty Berta’s I took the same name as my sister was using, that of Rose Landau, the girl who was already living in Palestine. So we both lived under her name but with no ration card.

My food problem was worse than ever. Milk, butter and meat were only available with ration cards, which I did not have. I found out you could get yoghurt without a ration card, so before I went to work every day I got up early and stood in a queue to buy yoghurt. I took it to work and made sure I ate it only at 10.00 am, so it served as breakfast and lunch. After work I went to various restaurants to eat, but could only have a bowl of soup or some vegetables—either cabbage, beans, lentils or potato goulash without meat. If you wanted to eat meat in a restaurant you had to have a ration card. One day they brought me some soup and there was a fly in it, so I asked for another bowl and ate that. I mentioned this to a friend at work and she said, “Are you kidding? It was the same bowl of soup—they just took the fly out!”

I looked around for another place to stay after I found out the “little boy” was nineteen and went to live with a gypsy lady. The gypsies were as persecuted as the Jews were. The lady’s husband, a musician, was in labour camp. I lived with that lady for a few months. Her flat was in the street opposite Nemzeti Színház, the main theatre of Budapest, which was off a street called Sziv Utca (street in Hungarian), which means Heart Street. This was the red-light district, though I did not know it at the time. When I walked home from the factory in the evening men used to call out to me, “Little one! Sweetie-pie!” Then someone explained to me what was going on there.

I was scared to stay with the gypsy lady any longer and left for another place with an old maid who had just one room. She slept in one bed, another girl in another bed and I slept on the couch. It was full of bedbugs. One night I was twisting and turning so much the old lady put the light on and there were blood spots all over my nighties from where I had been

bitten. I got used to it after a while. There was no bathroom and the toilet was outside. That was on the corner of Izabella Utca and Király Utca. I stayed there a few months. Then I had to change my job because the factory ran out of work. I got another job working in a millinery factory in Király Utca, where I stayed for some time.

Then it was time to move on again. It was a Saturday when I left and took another place. On the Sunday morning the Americans carpet-bombed Budapest. Many planes flew overhead and a bomb fell on the building I had just moved out of. I heard the old lady was very badly injured and a few others in the building died. The other young girl had already left by then. I forget where I went next, but after that I moved in with a lady called Mrs Kohn in Péterfi Sandor Utca. I knew her through a girl from Michalovce who used to live there, but had already been gone for some time. I changed my name again.

I ran into two brothers I had known in Michalovce, though they originally came from a village. They had managed to escape from Germany in uniform. Being tall, blond and blue-eyed, they looked like real Germans. They told me they saw a German soldier take a little baby and smash its head on a rock. They saw another woman with a baby in her arms. One soldier said to the other, “I’ll get the mother and you take the baby.” Then they shot them.

I never told anybody my address. If I met anyone I knew on the street I would always walk off in the wrong direction and then stop at an open gate and say I lived there. When the person walked off I would carefully make my way home. I had to be very careful, as the police would beat people for information about Jews in hiding and promise to let them go in exchange for information. I had to make sure they had no information about me.

TERRY GOLDSTEIN HERSKOVITZ

Context: Salvation

Source: Terry Goldstein Herskovitz with Maryann McLoughlin and Judith Herskovitz Wizmur. *Once a Flower always a Flower*. Margate, (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2012, pp. 20–24. Used by permission.

Terry Goldstein Herskovitz was a young Hungarian Jewish woman who turned 20 at the end of 1944—just as Soviet forces were closing in on the Hungarian capital of Budapest and liberation seemed only days away. She had survived the

murderous Nazi assault against the Jews of Hungary, and now had to face a future of uncertainty and insecurity. Indeed, surviving the liberation presented considerable problems on its own, as Terry shows. Barely escaping rape at the hands of her rescuers, she received solace from her comrades in the safe house that had enabled their salvation from the Nazis, though she remained the lone surviving member of her family for a considerable period. Some of her family members, she recalls, “struggled back,” but many others had been murdered. The experience of liberation was, therefore, double edged; although she survived the Holocaust, it was at the expense of a future in which she could not count most of her loved ones still around her.

I am not sure about dates, but sometime in early 1944, while I was living in Budapest, all the Jews were required to wear stars designating them as Jews, and young Jewish girls were rounded up for work camps. I wore the star at first. But I soon realized that something had to be done. I was still living with Lazar Gizi and Pali, who were like parents to me. By this time Pali had been forced into a work camp. My parents were taken away from their home in Beregszász in March or April of 1944, to Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp, along with all of my siblings, Regina, Aurum, Louis, and Armen. Along with their children, Regina and Aurum perished. I never heard from my parents again.

Gizi told me that she would not let me go to a labor or a concentration camp. Gizi and I decided to assume false identities and go into hiding. I ripped off my yellow star and bleached my hair blonde. A Christian friend of Pali’s agreed to help us. Gizi and I left Budapest, travelling to a remote rural location near Szombathely, Hungary’s oldest city. Pali’s friend took us to a remote farm where his sister lived. We holed up in a tiny attic in the farmhouse, where we hid for six months, from May until October. We never left the attic, so we had no access to the outside world. The woman passed up a little food each day. Because there was no bathroom, we had to pass down a bed pan daily. In the summer the attic was stifling hot; we felt as if we would suffocate. With no activity of any kind, the days were very long. I lay in the excruciating heat. There were no diversions, and I couldn’t leave, even at night.

We stayed in this hiding place until one night when we heard someone walking outside. A group of thirteen Russian soldiers, escapees from a German prison, were passing by. When we heard Russian voices, we rejoiced, thinking that we were being liberated. For the first time we came out of hiding. They asked for a map that we were able to provide them;

then they went on their way. A few days later these Russians were captured by the *Wehrmacht* (German army). The soldiers revealed our location, and the Germans came to the farm and arrested us. After a terrible series of train rides through areas under attack by the U.S. and British forces, we were taken back to Budapest. The Germans took us to the infamous *Andrássy út 60*, headquarters of the Gestapo, a place used by the Nazis to process, interrogate, and torture Jews. The place was swarming with people, rats and lice. The lice were the worst thing—horrible. They were crawling all over us. We were forced to stay there for a time until we were processed and sent to the Jewish quarter of Budapest—several blocks of the old Jewish quarter of the city surrounding the main synagogue, a closed ghetto established in 1944. We burnt all our clothes to kill the lice and get new clothes. Amid this terror, one sweet and unexpected moment stands out. On December 13, my twentieth birthday, Gizi somehow found a little flour and baked a small bun to wish me “Happy Birthday.”

I honestly don’t remember how long we spent in the ghetto before there was a selection. After the selection, we were sent from the Budapest ghetto to the Ujlaki brickyards in Obuda. Young, healthy people were selected to board trains leaving Budapest, presumably headed for concentration camps or labor camps, while older or sickly people were left behind in the ghettos. Gizi put rags on me so that I would look old. However I was a healthy twenty-year-old at the time, so the disguise didn’t work. I was selected to get on the train. I was separated from Gizi and Pali because they were older and somewhat sickly; they remained in the ghetto. (Pali had returned to Budapest from the labor camp.) I was herded onto the train along with what seemed to be hundreds of others. As the train was pulling away from the station, one of the Hungarian guards, commenting that I was a pretty girl—I had beautiful long hair—threw me down from the train, muttering something like “it’s a shame.” The train was slowly leaving the station, so miraculously I landed without being hurt. I was later told that no one who was on that train survived. . . .

The siege of Budapest began on December 29, 1944. Bullets were flying. During the siege all the windows of Spanish House were blown out. I was in bed on the eighth floor when a bullet flew in through the window, missing me by a centimeter. I spent the rest of the battle in the basement of the house. It was winter and I was freezing cold. We had no heat and had to scavenge for food, which was nearly impossible because we were locked in the house and could not leave. But the hardships we endured in the basement of the Spanish

House were nothing compared to what was going on in the other parts of the city.

Even this late in the war, the Germans were still rounding up as many Jews as they could. . . . There was no safe place to go to in Budapest.

Finally, after six weeks, the fighting was over. The siege ended when the city unconditionally surrendered to the Soviets on February 13, 1945. The Soviets then took control of the streets.

However, my nightmare was not over. As the youngest in the Spanish House where we had all sought refuge, I was sent out to forage for food for the older people in the house. I left the Spanish House and had gone only one block when the shooting resumed. They were shooting like crazy. I ran into a house. To my horror it seemed to me like the whole Red army was there. I understood a little Russian, and I heard one soldier say to the other, "Give her to me. Give her to me." The first guy who wanted to rape me dragged me into another room. He was very drunk. I was fighting him, but he started to rip off my clothes anyway. I fought him fiercely. Luckily he was so drunk that he fell down, giving me the chance to run out. As I was running, the others shouted lewd taunts at me. The soldier who tried to rape me actually grabbed his gun and shot at me; he missed me by a hair as I rounded the corner of the street.

I was badly shaken, traumatized, but I understood that it could have been much worse. I barely escaped being raped by this large group of drunken Soviet soldiers. I knew the Soviets had a penchant for raping women. Some say it was retaliation for what the Germans had done to them during Operation Barbarossa when they laid waste to the U.S.S.R., raping and pillaging.

When I returned to the house, the others saw that my clothes were ripped, assumed that I had been raped, and worried that I would be pregnant. I asked, "How do you get pregnant?" I didn't know. Because of their concern, I thought for a while that I was pregnant and was relieved eventually to find out I was not.

As the Soviet siege of the city ended and life started to get back to normal, those of us who had survived the brutality of the Nazi occupation of Budapest waited anxiously and eagerly for word about our relatives. We had no inkling—how could we?—about gas chambers, death camps, or the millions of Jews who had been murdered by the Nazis.

I learned that as people drifted back from the labor camps in Germany and concentration camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, a center for inquiries about Jewish survivors had been set up in Budapest. I ventured to the center to seek

word of my parents and siblings. There, I experienced the most momentous awful and shocking moments of my life—to that point. I was told something so unfathomable and so gruesome that it was impossible to believe. They told me, "Don't wait for your parents or the children." I was told that they would never return home. I was told that they were all dead—murdered—gassed at Auschwitz-Birkenau! Gassed! Murdered!

I could not believe any of this. All I could do was scream and scream. How could this happen? How could such kind, loving, caring, honest and peaceful people like my parents have had this happen to them? I screamed and screamed! I found no answers anywhere, only an overwhelming sense of grief and desolation for what was lost. My world was shaken to its core. The only hope was that some of my siblings had survived and would return.

Around the corner from where I lived was a school where survivors would come to check in. I was frantic, visiting the site every day, praying that family members would appear. One day I was told that a young boy named Goldstein had returned. My heart practically stopped, hoping beyond hope that he was someone from my family. It turns out that even though I suffered terrible losses, I was one of the "luckier" ones. Eight of the original twelve survived.

My brother, Miki, who was only fourteen, vaguely remembering my old Budapest address, was able to find me! We met on the stairs of Gizi's apartment; he was coming up and I was going down. I almost didn't recognize him; he was so much older looking, so changed.

My siblings, Lilly, Shami, Miki, Shari, Sam, Louis and Armen straggled back. Avrum and Regina were murdered along with their spouses and three or four children each. The spouses and children of both Louis and Armen were also murdered, along with my youngest siblings, Mutchu and Lulu. Murdered!

When I think back on all that was lost, my thoughts sometimes wander to Mutchu and Lulu, both of whom were extraordinary in their own ways. Mutchu was precocious; at the tender age of five he had saved up enough money from who knows where to actually board a train to Kivjzd to visit the rest of the family. We had no idea where he had gone, so we frantically searched everywhere for him. After several days he returned from Kivjzd, relieving our anxiety. Mutchu was particularly skillful at playing practical jokes and embarrassing his older siblings.

On one occasion, when Shari's boyfriend came to visit on the train from Budapest and the family was trying to make a good impression, he appeared at the railroad

station pretending he was a pauper who wanted to earn a coin carrying the boyfriend's suitcase. As for Lulu, he was a gorgeous child with big, bright blue eyes and the blondest hair. In fact, since my parents and all the other children had dark hair, we wondered where he had come from. To think that these two precious children, along with a million and a half others, perished, is unbelievable.

HELENA JOCKEL

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Helena Jockel. *We Sang in Hushed Voices*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 25–33. Used by permission.

Opportunities for surviving in a place like Auschwitz were always limited, but in a system that relied on slave labor there were sometimes ways in which enterprising prisoners could make it work on their behalf. Helena Jockel shows two examples of this. The first is through a profile of a young prisoner named Regina, who was a Lauferin, or “runner”—one who acted as a messenger conveying SS commands from one part of the camp to another. The other is through Helena’s own example as a kitchen worker. Working indoors, with access to warmth and the occasional bit of extra food, enabled her to gain an advantage over the fate otherwise intended by the SS. Helena’s account goes beyond these two examples, however, and gives a good set of insights into “the small acts of courage” that “made it possible to survive.”

It was my incredible luck that shortly after I arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau, I met a young woman named Regina and we became very close friends. Regina, who was Polish, had been only thirteen years old when she arrived at the camp. It was extremely rare for a girl so young to survive beyond the initial selection; most went straight to the gas chamber. By the time I met her, Regina was probably fifteen or sixteen. In some ways she was still a child, but an exceptional, unusually smart child. She saw terrible things, even more than I did, yet she had incredible strength and an unusual instinct for survival.

Regina worked as a *Läuferin*, a messenger and interpreter, in Auschwitz-Birkenau. The *Läuferin* played an invaluable role as a liaison between the *Blockführer* (the leader in charge of a prisoner barracks), the *Kommandoführer*, who was the leader of a specific labour detail, the *kapos*

(prisoners who supervised their fellow inmates) and the prisoners. She had to stand next to the SS guardhouse waiting for orders and if SS officers wanted important messages passed to other officers, Regina would run back and forth with the messages. This gave Regina access to key information that most of us prisoners did not have. In many ways, the *Läuferin* had some semblance of power, at least compared to the powerlessness of other prisoners.

Because Regina knew some of the female SS guards personally, she sometimes received special treatment and could ask for favours. It helped that she was beautiful. She was often helpful to other prisoners and was therefore also somewhat protected by them. To this day, I do not know why she chose to help me, but I do know that Regina was responsible for saving not only my life, but also that of my sister Agi, who had arrived at Auschwitz from Mukačevo about the same time that I did. Regina helped us intentionally by finding us both jobs in the kitchen. There is no doubt that our kitchen work helped me and Agi survive.

For one thing, in the kitchen I had access to water, which was extremely rare, and I also got warmth from the kitchen fire. I didn't use soap because I believed the stories that the soap in the camp was made from the fat of human flesh; nevertheless, I was able to wash with warm water and a rag every day. I scrubbed my body vigorously so I wouldn't get lice and scabies or any of the other diseases that were killing so many of the prisoners. Most importantly, I could also get a bit more food (if you can call it that) than most, which I could in turn share with some of my friends. Given that we were on a starvation diet, every morsel made a difference.

Regina not only helped by getting us work in the kitchen. There were numerous other ways in which I owe my survival to her. She read newspapers and informed me about what was going on with the war, information that I passed on to my group. People listened to me. Any news of how the war was going meant so much to me and my friends. The link with the outside world was invaluable to us.

Out of gratitude, I tried to help Regina in return. I translated secret letters between Regina and her boyfriend, Eric, a Czech prisoner who worked as a maintenance man for the SS. Since they both moved around the camp for work, they managed to meet and fall in love. Regina didn't speak Czech and Eric didn't know any Polish, but I helped them communicate with one another. Eric had an important role in my life as well. As a skilled worker who fixed things all over the camp, he, too, had good connections and access to newspapers. After updating me on how the Germans were faring in the war, he would sometimes say, “Pass it on to your girls.”

When I spread the news in the barracks, knowing that the Germans were being defeated gave us hope. And hope, in Auschwitz-Birkenau, was like gold. Sadly, when the camp was evacuated, I lost contact with Regina. Someone told me that both she and Eric had survived, but that somehow they were lost to each other. . . .

The everyday routine of a kitchen worker at Auschwitz was grueling. Every morning, I was woken up at 4:30 a.m. to go to the kitchen and light the fire so that we could prepare the daily “soup.” It wasn’t really soup—It consisted of water with a few carrots and rutabagas thrown in. The soup also included a powder called “ava” or “awa” that the kitchen staff scooped out of a paper bag. We were told that the powder was supposed to calm us down so that we wouldn’t get overly excited and riot or revolt. We were sure that it wasn’t good for us, this ava, but we ate the soup anyway. It tasted bad but gave us some feeling of fullness.

After we prepared the soup, we had to line up in the *Appellplatz*, the outdoor roll-call area. We stood out in the *Appellplatz* at attention until about 7:00 a.m., no matter what the weather was like. We were forced to wait until we were all counted. Then, my group went back to the kitchen to work until noon. Each day at noon all the women stood in line to be given the ersatz soup that we had made in the morning. Thin and watery, it tasted terrible, but at least for an hour or two we didn’t experience a feeling of starvation. Then we went back to work until three or four in the afternoon. The other girls who worked with me in the kitchen had the same routine. There was some comfort in being with the same group of women every day. It made me feel, somehow, more alive.

At seven o’clock each evening we lined up outside, at attention, for another roll call in the *Appellplatz*. Standing there, exhausted from hunger and hard labour, we were counted to make sure we were all present. Often, the SS women were not successful at reaching the same number of prisoners as they had counted in the morning. But the numbers were never the same from one *Appell* to the next—how could they be? The dimwitted SS guards didn’t even realize that women had died between the morning roll call and the evening one. Nevertheless, when the prisoner count was short, we stood, waiting, until it was corrected. We stood and stood and stood. It could be all night.

In the evening we were each given a piece of bread that tasted like mud. It was mouldy. Sometimes there was also a piece of hard cheese that came with it. There were times when I would hoard my piece of black, mouldy bread, saving it for later. When I lay down to sleep at night, I put it under

my head so no one could steal it. I also slept with my soup cup next to my body to keep it safe. One time, I woke up and realized that the pathetic piece of bread that I had so carefully saved was gone. I cried so hard. Under the circumstances, it was not unreasonable that a fellow prisoner would steal my bread. We all had to survive. But I still cried pitifully for that mouldy bit of bread.

A few weeks after I began work in the kitchen, I got a number tattooed on my arm. Not everyone in Auschwitz-Birkenau received a tattooed number, but the kitchen workers did. You cannot imagine how elated and happy I was when I got that number. It may seem strange that getting a number was something positive for me—most of us believe that being identified solely by a number is humiliating and degrading. In this case, however, I imagined that somewhere, somehow, the truth would come out. To me, that number on my arm meant that I was unique and identifiable—and that I could be found by someone. In fact, in the end, it was because of that number, #A16501, that my brother Joseph was able to find me in Prague, after the war.

It hardly seems possible that amidst the horror and chaos at Auschwitz-Birkenau, I could have recollections of some experiences of astonishing beauty and great poignancy. And yet, I do. One of those instances involved a group of Italian women who arrived just a few weeks after I did. They were artists, or more specifically, engravers. I don’t remember how I found out this detail, but somehow I knew their profession. What I remember most is that these women were hauntingly beautiful. They had sorrowful eyes, full of pity and regret.

The Italian women stuck together as a group. It felt like such a tragedy that nobody could speak with them. I think they spoke Italian, a Judeo-Italian dialect. Since I knew Latin and a bit of Hebrew from school, I was able to have a bit of exchange with them, with the help of some hand gestures. What impressed me was that in order to survive they seemed to be blocking out the tragic reality in which they found themselves. I tried to convey to them that what they were experiencing was not normal. I tried to tell them that we loved them. To me, these women were spiritually and physically magnificent. They appeared to be so pure, so naïve, their hearts open with an emotional transparency that penetrated my soul. I still do not clearly understand why my encounter with them had such a powerful and lasting effect on me. I was strangely affected by them, even to this day. None of them survived. Not one.

That spring, around the same time that I met the Italian women, I spotted my sister Roszie, through the electrified

barbed-wire fence that separated various sections of the camp. She was holding her infant son in her arms. I had lost touch with her when she and her husband, Emil Jockel, had been deported from Znojmo in 1941 and I didn't even know that they had a child. They had been sent to Terezin (Theresienstadt) concentration camp in 1942, where she had given birth to her son, Henri, in 1944.

Some months later, all three were moved to the Czech Family Camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, known as the *Familienlager Theresienstadt* (Theresienstadt Family Camp). The men, women, and children in the so-called family camp were assigned to separate barracks, but they were allowed to gather together in the open space outside their barracks. When I saw Roszie, it was from a distance of about twenty metres. All we could do was shout at each other over the fence dividing the sections of the camp. We weren't close enough to have a proper conversation. We spoke like this a few times over the next days and I was able to learn about what had happened to her since we had last seen each other. One of the things Roszie told me stuck with me: if she died and I survived, she told me, she wanted me to take care of her husband and little Henri.

From mutual acquaintances, I was able to figure out what happened to Roszie next. The *Familienlager* was scheduled to be liquidated in July 1944. Out of 11,000 prisoners held there (from the original transports of 20,000), those who were young and healthy were selected to work in other concentration camps. Roszie was among them. She told me that she planned to give her baby a sleeping pill so that she could sneak out with him, but sadly the baby woke up and the SS guards took him away from her before she left.

An aunt of ours was also in the camp with Roszie. Because she was old, she was not selected to leave Auschwitz-Birkenau and little Henri ended up with her. So they stayed in the camp, my aunt and little Henri. Then, from July 10 to July 12, 1944, with dogs and sticks they came. The SS took the old people, including my aunt and my nephew Henri, to the gas chambers. I heard the barking and the screaming. The liquidation of the family camp was complete. . . .

In addition to these individual tragedies, every day at Auschwitz held a new humiliation. We were not allowed to speak to the female SS guards directly. We had to wait to be addressed and then follow orders absolutely. One time, someone in the camp had broken one of the tanks in the latrine. There was human waste on the floor and the smell was disgusting. An SS woman ordered me to clean it up and as I started to clean the latrine, I began to gag and wanted to vomit. The guard kicked me with her high boots and beat me.

Another prisoner, Terka, a Muslim girl, saw what was happening and jumped in to help me. She cleaned the latrine with me while covering me with her body so I didn't get killed. I felt so humiliated and ashamed. I suffered not only from the pain of the beating, but also from an overwhelming feeling of helplessness. It was difficult to accept that one human being could inflict that much misery and torment on another.

I often felt worthless. It was clear to me that our lives were not worth anything. In the kitchen one day, a female SS guard said that she was surprised that Agi was Jewish since she was so attractive. The guard had been taught that Jewish women were covered in hair and crawled on all fours when no one was looking. In the eyes of the SS, we were worse than animals because we were worthless. When a human life is not appreciated there is nothing much you can do to protect yourself or others. You have no power. You cannot explain your actions or defend yourself. You are totally exposed and totally vulnerable.

The small acts of courage were what made it possible to survive. One evening, for example, we were made to stand for hours and hours in the *Appellplatz* for roll call. When we were finally released, some of the women who need to go to the bathroom went straight to the barracks to relieve themselves in the latrines. When they got there, however, the doors were locked. A few of the poor women were in agony after holding it in for so long. Not being allowed to empty their bladders was torturous. This was the last straw for some of us, and we began to shout in resistance, "Let us pee!" over and over again. "Don't let them suffer!" I called out. "Don't torture people so much!" One of the female guards heard us yelling and came to the barracks.

The guard must have recognized my voice because she came directly over to me, as if I were to blame for the rebellion. The other women were sure that I would be killed. Then, something unexpected happened. A friend of mine from Mukačevo, a woman named Hilda, came to my aid. I had known her before the war, and she was normally very quiet and reserved. Yet she rallied everyone together and encouraged them all to shout. All seven or eight hundred women in the area began shouting so loudly and with such intensity that the female SS guard grew afraid and left.

There was another way we could resist—with hope. As we sat on the hard wooden bunks in our barracks, with only our thin, torn dresses to cover us, we still hoped that we would survive. Some of us even tried to learn new languages. By that time, I had already learned some English and spoke it quite well. I also remembered Hebrew from high school and taught Hebrew words to my friends. It was a time of

emptiness, pain and desperation, a time when it was impossible to imagine a way out. There was no way out. But I often thought about miracles.

An extremely important part of our resistance was singing. Although it seems paradoxical to talk about music and Birkenau in the same breath, singing was a key part of our existence. When our work was done and the guards weren't present, we could find safe moments to sing Hebrew songs. We had to be careful never to sing in front of the SS because they would have beaten us to death. I couldn't sing well, but it didn't matter. None of us were really singers. I would teach my friends the words to songs I had learned in school and the women with good voices would figure out the tune. Together we combined words and voices, our voices hushed so that no one would hear us. It gave us encouragement and lifted our spirits; in those moments, we didn't speak about death and killing.

These were not the only music events in the camp. There were also concerts organized by the SS—although these were hardly happy occasions for the Jewish prisoners. I recall one concert that was spontaneously arranged under orders from the camp administration.

We were called to the *Appellplatz* and commanded to sit on the ground. What we saw in front of us was a group of men in their filthy, striped prison uniforms, emaciated from hunger, each one holding a violin, a cello or a wind instrument. They were told to take their places on a platform and began to play—and, oh, how beautifully they played. Starving and ill, the musicians played waltzes by Johann Strauss II while the SS guards danced to the music.

I began to cry. I cried inconsolably because those musicians were playing music that had been created to make the world a more harmonious and beautiful place. Yet, these men, imprisoned and starving, were forced to play through suffering and humiliation. Strauss's waltzes and operas, which brought joy to listeners for a hundred years, had nothing in common with Hitler and his ideology.

CHAIM A. KAPLAN

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Chaim A. Kaplan. *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966, pp. 305–312; 318.

Chaim Aron Kaplan was an educator and diarist of the Holocaust who chronicled the day-to-day events of the Warsaw

Ghetto, making a record of life there under German occupation. He had devoted his efforts to education and writing. In September 1939, at the start of World War II, he decided to detail Jewish life in Warsaw and thereby preserve a record for posterity. This was to become Kaplan's Scroll of Agony, in which he commented on the frequent murder of Jews and the constant ill-treatment they experienced. Scroll of Agony would become one of the most powerful and inspiring testimonies from the Holocaust period, as the entries in this account show. He attempted to remain objective despite the dire conditions and saw his mission as preserving a record for posterity, focusing strictly on facts and situations as they appeared.

Anyone who could see the expulsions from Warsaw with his own eyes would have his heart broken. The ghetto has turned into an inferno. Men have become beasts. Everyone is but a step away from deportation; people are being hunted down in the streets like animals in the forest. It is the Jewish police who are cruelest towards the condemned. Sometimes a blockade is made of a particular house, sometimes of a whole block of houses. In every building earmarked for destruction they begin to make the rounds of the apartments and to demand documents. Whoever has neither documents that entitle him to remain in the ghetto nor money for bribes is told to make a bundle weighing fifteen kilos—and on to the transport which stands near the gate. Whenever a house is blockaded a panic arises that is beyond the imagination. Residents who have neither documents nor money hide in nooks and crannies, in the cellars and in the attics. When there is a means of passage between one courtyard and another the fugitives begin jumping over the roofs and fences at the risk of their lives; in time of panic, when the danger is imminent, people are not fussy about methods. But all these methods only delay the inevitable, and in the end the police take men, women and children. The destitute and impoverished are the first to be deported. In an instant the truck becomes crowded. They are all alike: poverty makes them equal. Their cries and wails tear the heart out.

The children, in particular, rend the heavens with their cries. The old people and the middle-aged deportees accept the judgment in silent submission and stand with their small parcels under their arms. But there is no limit to the sorrow and tears of the young women; sometimes one of them makes an attempt to slip out of the grasp of her captors, and then a terrible battle begins. At such times the horrible scene reaches its peak. The two sides fight, wrestle. On one side a woman with wild hair and a torn blouse rages with the last of

her strength at the Jewish thieves, trying to escape from their hands. Anger flows from her mouth and she is like a lioness ready for the kill. And on the other side are the two policemen, her “brothers in misfortune,” who pull her back to her death. It is obvious that the police win. But during the fight the wailing of the captives increases sevenfold, and the whole street cries with them.

But isolated incidents don't hold up the operation. The police do what is incumbent upon them. After the completion of the arrests in one house, they move on to another. The *Judenrat* prepares a daily list of houses in which blockades will be made that day. And here a new source of income is opened up for the graft-chasing police. The wealthy and the middle-class have yet to be brought to the transports. For those who have no documents, banknotes turn into documents. There is almost a fixed price for ransom, but for some it is cheaper, all according to the class of the ransomed one and the number of people in his household.

Two actual cases are known to me. One of the members of our family ransomed himself off with a substitute for money. In place of the ready cash which he didn't have at the time of the hunt, he gave a silk umbrella as a “gift” not to be returned. An acquaintance of mine, a Hebrew teacher, a downtrodden pauper with a crippled son, was forced to give 300 zloty—his last nest egg, since he had no expectation of new earnings from teaching Hebrew. In this instance the price was too high, for expulsion of a cripple means expulsion to the gates of hell. Sick people and cripples are killed by the Nazis while still en route.

But from the time they began to hunt down passers-by on the street, the sorrow of the expulsion became even greater. For this barbarism the beloved *Judenrat* will find no atonement. One who is seized in his apartment supplies himself with some clothing and food for the journey. His loved ones take their leave of him, fall on his neck. Not so one who is seized on the street. He is taken to the transport as he is, without extra clothing, without food and sustenance, and usually without a penny. No treaties avail him. He is led out to the transfer point like a lamb to the slaughter.

Life in the ghetto has been turned upside down. Panic is in its streets, fear on every face, wails and cries everywhere you turn. Trade has ceased; bargaining has been silenced; and most importantly, smuggling has stopped. Where there is not smuggling, costs go up, so that the price of bread has reached sixty zloty. Prices have increased tenfold, all businesses have ceased to exist. Everyone's staff of bread has been broken. From whence cometh our help? We are lost! We are lost!

July 28, 1942

The situation grows graver by the hour. Through the window of my apartment near the scene of the “hunting,” I beheld those trapped by the hunt, and was so stricken that I was close to madness. For the detainees, the thread of his life is cut in an instant, and the work of an entire lifetime in which his best efforts were invested becomes abandoned property.

Before my very eyes they capture an old woman who walks with a cane. Her steps are measured, and she makes her way with great exertions. She is unable to straighten up. On her face there are marks of nobility and signs of a family status now past. She too was arrested by a lawless Jewish scoundrel. He needs clients, and even this old lady counts, “as is,” without clothes or linens, without even food. She will be sent “to the east.” She will be fortunate if she doesn't live long.

A young mother of two little children from 19 Nowolipki Street was caught and sent off. The dear children were left orphans. There is not comfort for her husband and their father. And there are similar victims by the hundreds. Today, about 10,000 people were taken. They are shoved into freight cars which have no places to sit and no sanitary facilities. If anyone survives that journey, it is nothing less than a miracle. In truth we have reached extremity. Death is precious when it is quick and swift, when it takes your soul and you pass on into your eternity. But a death which comes by the agonies of starvation and the tortures of the oppressor, who prolongs the death agony and turns his victims into living skeletons—this is the cruelest of punishment. Have we truly sinned more than any other nation: have we transgressed more than any generation?

Never in my life had I known the pangs of hunger. Even after I was pushed into the ghetto I ate. But now I too know hunger. I sustain myself for a whole day on a quarter-kilo of bread and unsweetened tea. My strength is diminished from such meagre fare. At times I can't even stand up. I fall on my bed, but rest eludes me. I am in a state of sleep and am not asleep, of wakefulness and yet I am not awake. I am plagued by nightmares. Fear and worry pre-occupy me—fear lest I be seized and deported; worry about where to find my bread. My income has stopped. The sums owed to me by others are lost. Besides what he needs for food, no one has a penny to his name, and payment of debts isn't taken into consideration at all.

But the main thing is fear of expulsion. The only ones partially insured against expulsion are workers in the factories that German firms have taken under their protection. Many

factories accept workers skilled in their trades, and even those who are unskilled but have money. Thus a new economy has begun in the lives of the ghetto Jews who have not yet been expelled.

I am tired. The sequel will come tomorrow, if I'm not caught.

July 29, 1942

The expulsion is reaching its peak. It increases from day to day. The Nazis are satisfied with the work of the Jewish police, the plague of the Jewish organism, and the police too are satisfied: the Nazis, because through industry and cruelty, the police have succeeded in supplying exiles above and beyond the daily quota originally specified, and close to 70,000 people have already gone into exile; the police, because they are lining their pockets. This income is fortuitous and apparently not dangerous. The Nazis don't bother about details. Give who what you will, as long as there is no shortage of human material for expulsion. In any event, the respite that the bribe creates is only temporary. A house which is blockaded today can be blockaded tomorrow too, and the next day, and so on ad infinitum. A man who was released once can be caught again—even by the same policeman who let him go the first time—especially since the police have nearly 2,400 dogs. The wiles of the policemen know no bounds. Besides taking bribes, they also steal and rob. How? They order the inhabitants of the house to go down, while they themselves remain in the unguarded apartment. Thus they profit from all that is abandoned.

This criminal police force is the child of the criminal *Judenrat*. Like mother, like daughter. With their misdeeds they besmirch the name of Polish Jewry which was stained even without this. At the transfer point where the exiles are collected, the policemen traffic in bread. These loaves of bread, which the police force gets in abundance free of charge, are sold to the hungry and oppressed captives at eighty zloty a loaf. For delivering a letter, ten zloty. They are growing rich on these profits, and for the time being they are experiencing the eternal reward in this life—until the Nazis take pity on them as well. Their day will come, and they too will be destroyed, but they will be the last.

Nazism is not original. They took everything from Bolshevism, only that they expanded its rottenness. This is the same Bolshevism in black paint. There is no difference but that of colour. Bolshevism came and said: "Everyone must work!" Nazism came after it and said likewise: "You are idle! Go ye unto your burdens!" But Bolshevism spoke out of its

desire to improve the world; Nazism spoke out of hatred for the Jewish people.

With one stroke of the pen the face of Warsaw was changed. They made an end of its peddlers; its beggars and paupers and down-and-outers were collected; its stores were closed; its streets were emptied. Everywhere there is the silence of the graveyard. Everything has passed away—disappeared in one day. It is as if the earth had opened and swallowed up all its crowds and noises, its secrets and vices, and the entire tribe of ants that scurried through its streets from dawn until curfew.

When the Nazis decreed expulsion for the "unproductive population," people went into hiding as though they had been erased from the face of the earth. Now there is hunting for the sake of expulsion, where once they traded and bartered.

The unproductive population included most of the ghetto dwellers. In the eyes of the Nazis, anyone who doesn't take a needle or shovel in hand is in no way productive. Based on this, the entire population of the ghetto was scheduled for expulsion. They therefore tried to save themselves by a change in approach: You want us to work? By all means—only allow us to live. One is not overscrupulous about the means in time of danger. Immediately a great movement arose to set up factories to work for the good of the German army, and the German commandant invited German firms to establish branches in the General Government. The Jewish shop-factories received raw materials from these firms and began to manufacture for each one what was required to meet their obligations to the commandant. In this way factories for the various trades were opened which employed tens of thousands of people. Thus the expulsion decree caused people who had been store-keepers, tradesmen, peddlers, servants, teachers, lawyers, engineers, and all kinds of other middle-class people to stream towards the factories. Hence-forward, only one who is enrolled as a worker in one of the factories under the protection of some German firm has the right to remain in the ghetto. A certificate (*Ausweis*) granted by a firm of the Reich has the power to save its bearer from expulsion and from all the other troubles that have attached themselves to us. Within a week, tens of thousands of tradesmen, peddlers, unemployed men, idlers, spreaders of false rumours, and bums have been turned into creative workers, into a productive element; they sit hunched over a needle, sewing buttons on a pair of army pants.

The entire ghetto is a mammoth factory producing for the good of the German army. We have become a laughing-stock!

July 30, 1942

The seventh day of the expulsion. Living funerals pass before the windows of my apartment—cattle trucks or coal wagons full of candidates for expulsion and exile, carrying small bundles under their arms. Their cries and shrieks and wails, which rent the very heavens and filled the whole area with noise, have already stopped. Most of the deportees seemed to be resigned to their fate. Only an occasional sound, the tear-drenched echo of a protest, is heard from some unfortunate seized while she was engaged in the activities of everyday life. Misfortune descended upon her unforeseen. She knew that there was an expulsion, but she was almost positive that it would never come to her. And behold, it is come! Woe to her! Alas for her soul! But her shrieks and complaints are sown upon the wind. It is finished, decided. She is going toward a new “life.”

Amid the tragedy of sudden expulsion, one minor detail is perhaps the most tragic of all: People come to the transfer point voluntarily, saying: “Take me! Save me from the quagmire of the ghetto! I will die anyhow; there is famine in the ghetto. Comfort the dying!” But these are the words of a small minority of people with no roots in the soil of the ghetto.

Besides the blockading of houses and hunting in the street, there is still a third method of expulsion—premiums. Large posters have been put in many courtyards to say that all those who voluntarily come to the transfer point for expulsion will receive three kilos of bread and a kilo of marmalade to take with them in their wanderings. They are given until the thirty-first of July. Today I haven’t gone outside the house, because the sword of expulsion strikes all in the streets of the ghetto. They take everyone who comes to hand, those dressed in finery and those dressed in cast-offs—all of them, all of them swallowed up by the wagon. They are not even paying attention to the certificates of those who work for the German factories, which should be a protection for them.

The soothing rumours that the expulsion will cease, that only a certain percentage will be exiled, that the many factories abetting the victory of the German army will enable the rest of the Jews to remain in the ghetto, have not materialized. Nothing of the sort. The tempo of the expulsion increases from hour to hour. On every hand there are catchers. Besides the uniformed Jewish police and the non-uniformed auxiliary police, pure Germans have also come to this task. They dress in civilian clothes so that people won’t spot them.

All day long the ghetto has been deathly silent. During the working hours in the factories the number of passers-by

decreased to a minimum. Those who have not yet managed to be accepted in some factory are afraid to stick their noses out for fear of being caught. They hide until the wrath shall pass. Perhaps salvation will come! Perhaps there will be a change for the better! But for the time being, the oppressor does not stay his hand.

There is one category among those “insured” against expulsion whose eyes reflect fear, who, despite the documents in their pockets never go out of the doors of their houses and, within their houses, hide in inner rooms. These are the “officials” of the Jewish Self-Aid Society, who numbered over two thousand at the outbreak of the catastrophe. It is the strength of the Jewish people that in times of disaster they invent something out of nothing, build bridges out of paper. If it works, it will work; and if not, what have you lost? Before the expulsion, the Self-Aid employed about four hundred people who were registered with the labour office, and there were also full-time officers who held work cards in accordance with the laws of officialdom. Suddenly, the calamity! Thousands of people were left without legal protection and doomed to exile. Accordingly, the directors of the society, with the consent of the *Judenrat*, decided to provide their friends with a legal haven in the form of “legitimizations,” documents stating that So-and-so was an official of the society. They based their plan on the fact that the expulsion decree had a paragraph which stated specifically that officials of the Jewish Self-Aid Society would have privileges comparable to those of officials of the *Judenrat*. A veritable factory for legitimizations was set up. Anyone who had had any connection whatever with the activities of the society from the time of its establishment to the present day, whether as a salaried employee or a volunteer, received certification as one of its officials.

Within three days, over two thousand certificates were prepared and distributed—a tremendous job even for a well-equipped and refined technical apparatus, let alone an organization as inefficient as the Self-Aid. Here no one stood in long queues, but rather on top of one another. The pushing and crowding of hundreds of people with the fear of death in their eyes reached horrible proportions. Mobs pushed their way into the officials’ offices and urged them to speed up their work. The result was exactly the opposite. Order was disrupted, work was interrupted and delayed: anger and hysterics from both sides. No one had any assurance that such a certificate would be legally accepted, but it is good to have something in writing to lean on. People seek comfort in the fact that for the time being the Jewish police are handling everything, and the police are under the orders

of the *Judenrat*, which considers the certificates legal. Everyone said, “It carries no real guarantee. In the end it will come under censure and be nullified. But for the time being it has validity in the eyes of the Jewish police, and that’s enough for me. I’ll at least be able to go and look for a more secure hiding place.” In point of fact it did save many people. They were seized and later released. I too find refuge in the shadow of a certificate. Blessings upon the Self-Aid.

I have just been informed that 57,000 people have already been deported. The teacher and writer Aron Luboszycki, a refugee from Lodz, was among them. . . .

August 2, 1942

My lot is even worse because I have neither money nor a factory job, and therefore am a candidate for expulsion if I am caught. My only salvation is in hiding. This is an outlaw’s life, and a man cannot last very long living illegally. My heart trembles at every isolated word. I am unable to leave my house, for at every step the devil lies in wait for me.

SONIA KEMPLER

Context: Before the War

Source: Sonia Kempler. *The Wheels of Memory: Growing Up with a War on My Shoulders*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2010, pp. 29–34. Used by permission.

The night of November 9–10, 1938, is universally remembered by the name the Nazis gave to the anti-Jewish pogrom they instituted at that time, Kristallnacht. A joke name for the “crystals” shining in the moonlight—shards of glass from the tens of thousands of broken windows from Jewish homes and businesses—the Kristallnacht was a signal to Jews that their future in Nazi Germany was at an end. In this account Sonia Kempler relates what it was to be a Jewish child during that awful night and in the weeks that followed, and what the experience of living through it portended for her family.

The evening of 9 November 1938 was to become known as *Kristallnacht* (literally, “night of crystal” but more commonly, “night of broken glass”). On that night and all through the following day, the Nazis went on their first intense rampage. Jewish shops, schools and synagogues throughout Germany were attacked by Nazis, Hitler Youth,

and their followers. The windows of Jewish homes and shop fronts of Jewish-owned businesses were broken and looted right across the country.

Broken glass covered the streets everywhere. The reflection of streetlights shining on all that broken glass and the rays of the sun next morning gave the whole place an eerie crystal-like appearance. What a sight it must have been! What pain and heartbreak, tears and suffering it took to achieve this unforgettable landscape.

My parents, my two brothers and I huddled quietly in our apartment. The drapes were drawn closed, the lights were out. We sat in complete darkness, in total silence, not daring to make the slightest sound for fear the mob might come upstairs and break into our home. My little brother, Max, was only two and a half years old and it was difficult to keep him still, but with his beloved baby bottle and some gentle cradling he slept blissfully through most of the commotion going on outside.

Fear is contagious. I could sense my parents’ fear and although I did not comprehend the seriousness of the situation, I knew instinctively that we were in great danger and that I had to keep quiet. I remember looking at my parents’ frightened faces and becoming terrified when I saw tears glistening in their eyes. I was only nine years old, a scared little girl. I was shocked to see that my parents, grown-up “old people” could be so terrified. When I look back I still find it hard to believe that my dear “old” parents were only thirty-eight and forty-two years of age at that time.

The noise rising from the street was intensifying and coming nearer. I remember the sound of breaking glass, of screaming victims and bellowing Germans.

My father had covered Max and me with a heavy quilt so that if we did make a noise it would be muffled by the blanket. In the middle of the night, when everybody thought I was asleep, I overheard snippets of whispered conversation. Across the road at the butcher’s place somebody had tried to run away from the pursuing mob and seek refuge on the rooftops of the building. But he was spotted and his attackers came after him. He fell from the roof and was killed. Did he fall or did he jump? The question seemed to hang heavily in the air. Somebody ventured to say that he was probably lucky, that he may be better off dead. I cried silently into my pillow.

History confirms all the cruel details of that horrible night. Many people were badly beaten. Old men were dragged along the streets by their beards. Religious Jews in their ritual garb were forced to parade with derisive and insulting placards around their necks. They were ridiculed, kicked and beaten by the raging hordes.

Jewish schools and synagogues were burned to the ground. Books and prayer books were burned publicly, the fires watched by hysterically cheering crowds. This was the night when all our lives changed forever. This was the beginning of the bitter end. . . .

The rioting and destruction in Leipzig was repeated simultaneously all over Germany. In the city of Jena three professors of its well-known university were among those arrested. No distinction was made between rich and poor, workers or professionals. The only criteria needed to qualify as a victim was to be Jewish.

Thousands of Jewish businesses were destroyed during that horrific night. More than 200 synagogues burned to the ground. Hundreds of people were beaten up and at least a hundred killed. Countless homes and schools were vandalized. The fire brigades did not respond and the police were ordered not to intervene. More than 3,000 Jewish men were taken to concentration camps such as Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. The resulting wave of righteous indignation from some quarters was feeble and did not last long.

On 12 November 1938 new orders were issued. Jews were no longer to own any businesses. Their driver's licenses were revoked and they could no longer visit or use sports grounds or other public venues. There was even a decree forbidding Jews from owning homing pigeons.

To add insult to injury the Jewish population of Germany was fined one billion Deutsche Mark for damages incurred on *Kristallnacht*. The events of November 1939 truly portended the destruction of European Jewry.

Anybody who still believed that life might return to normal and that there could still be a future in Germany for any Jew, whether German or not, should at that stage have come to the realisation of utter hopelessness.

Next morning everything seemed to have quieted down. My father covered our radio with a blanket, which I remember finding a very odd thing to do. He then climbed under the blanket to listen to the morning news. He seemed relieved when he told my mother there had been an announcement about the events on the previous night. According to the news reader, all the rioting and destruction had been the doing of the populace gone wild. The pogrom had definitely not been instigated by the government or any higher authorities. Jewish people were urged to accept this explanation. They should feel free to leave their homes and venture outside to resume their normal lives. They had nothing to fear!

My father announced that he would go down to buy bread, milk and a newspaper, and would be back in ten

minutes. We were gathered around my mother in the dark room, for neither the windows nor the drapes had been opened since the riots had started. The minutes ticked by. Mutti peeped outside from the corner of the curtains to see if Vati was on his way back. We could sense that she was becoming more and more anxious. The minutes turned into hours but there was still no sign of our father. We sat there waiting all day long, and throughout the next days, and the next weeks.

It was obvious that the Germans had made a false conciliatory radio announcement to lure people out of their homes. They certainly succeeded, for people left their homes by the hundreds only to be arrested as soon as they reached the street. Many of our friends and relatives were apprehended in the same round-up that morning, among them my favourite uncle, Lutz, and my cousin Jupp.

The next day Heini took me for a walk past both our schools and to our synagogue. There had been fires everywhere and piles of books were still smouldering in the schoolyard. Tears stung our eyes, partly from the smoke and partly from the devastation we witnessed. When Heini saw my tears he said, "Look at what the Nazis did and don't ever forget it!" We were both crying when he finally dragged me away from those scenes of destruction and took me back to the relative safety of our home.

After a while my mother managed to find that my father, uncle and cousin had all been incarcerated in Buchenwald, one of the early German concentration camps. Mutti and Tante (Aunt) Julchen began discussing horror stories, which somehow filtered through to them. They often spoke in *F-Sprache*, a kind of pidgin German we kids were not supposed to understand. They spoke of beatings and horrific cruelties, of prisoners dying and their ashes being returned to their families. Mutti's eyes were constantly red from crying and we all walked around in fear. After weeks of trying to contact the powers that be, there finally came a promise of Vati's immediate release if proof could be provided that he would leave the country within three days of leaving the camp. The same went for my uncle and cousin, and probably for many other prisoners.

Three days! Without passports, visas or emigration papers! After great effort and expense a travel agent was found who was willing to sell them a passage on a boat leaving Hamburg for Ecuador. The agent knew perfectly well these tickets could not be used without the necessary travel documents, but he was interested in making money and Mutti was grateful for his help. Thanks to those tickets, my father, uncle and cousin Jupp were liberated from

Buchenwald in time to travel to Hamburg “to catch the boat.” Of course they never went to Hamburg. Instead, they went into hiding in Leipzig.

Six weeks after he had gone out that day to buy bread, Vati came home. It was late December 1938. He was lucky to escape from the Nazis’ clutches, for even in those early days many people disappeared, never to return.

What rejoicing when our haggard-looking father locked us in his arms, amongst laughter and tears. This was the first joyful reunion of several others to come, for our family was to be separated and united several times more before emerging from the long, horrible nightmare, only in its infancy in 1938.

RUTH FISCH KESSLER

Context: Before the War

Source: Ruth Fisch Kessler and Maryann McLoughlin. *The Blue Vase: A Memoir of a Vienna Kindertransport Child*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2013, pp. 4–12. Used by permission.

In the aftermath of Kristallnacht, Jews all over Germany scrambled to try to find a way out of the Nazi trap. In this account from Ruth Fisch Kessler, we see one element of this; the surrender, by her parents, of their daughter in one of the Kindertransport transfers to safety in Britain. A little girl of only five years of age, Ruth’s testimony here is told honestly and in memory images, through which she attempts to compose a narrative of her time with her host family, the Webbers of north London. Safe in this friendly environment, Ruth recalls the impact of the outbreak of war in September 1939, and her experiences of life in the street where she was living.

In March 1938, the Third Reich incorporated the Republic of Austria, the birthplace of Adolf Hitler, into the German Reich. This union, or *Anschluss*, was disastrous for the Jews. Anti-Jewish legislation that had been promulgated in Germany also applied to Vienna and the rest of Austria. Austrian Jews were excluded from the cultural, social, and economic life of their communities. Jewish-owned factories and businesses were closed or Aryanized, that is, forcibly transferred to be owned by Aryans.

Then, on the 9th and 10th of November of 1938, appropriation turned to destruction. The Nazis called this Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass because of the shards of

glass from synagogues, Jewish homes and businesses that littered the streets, especially in Berlin and Vienna. Kristallnacht is certainly a euphemism. What really happened was a violent anti-Jewish pogrom, now called the November Pogrom by historians. This state-sponsored pogrom was carried out in Germany but also in Austria and the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia occupied in 1938 by German troops. During these brutal two days, synagogues were looted and burned; Jewish stores and homes were vandalized and plundered. Thousands of Jewish were arrested, beaten and sent to Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen Concentration camps where hundreds died because of the brutal treatment that they experienced. After the November Pogrom—the turning point in the Nazi persecution of the Jews—many Austrian Jews emigrated from their homeland so that by the spring of 1939, only about 115,000 Viennese Jews remained. I don’t know if my father’s store was vandalized. My parents and sister kept these troubles from me. I knew nothing about any of these horrible things.

During the spring of 1939, when I was still five years old, my small, close, safe world became large and scary. I remember it as if it were yesterday. My parents came to me and told me that they were sending me away. I would be going away on a train to England. They explained that they would come later. I did not understand the reason I was being sent away.

On May 12, 1939, I remember being put on the train with other children. My father, mother, and Erika were standing on the station platform. I repeatedly asked them, “Are you coming soon?”

“We’ll see you soon” they cried in return, tears flowing. I will never forget the tears in my mother’s eyes. She was crying, despairingly. I never saw my sister or my mother again. Then the train pulled out of the station. The train was like the trains we see in movies—a dark cave. Most of the children on the train and the ship were older than I. I was one of the youngest.

The Jewish Community Organisation (*Kultusgemeinde*) in Vienna had planned the transports, which became known as “Kindertransports” (children’s transports). . . .

Before I left on my Kindertransport, my father had sent a letter through the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) to sponsors in England. Although my safety was his foremost concern, my father wanted to be sure that I would be cared for by not only a Jewish family but especially a Jewish family that was religious.

It was very hard to find homes for the youngest children, and most families would only take one child. The Webber family wrote back to my father promising that I would be

sent to Hebrew school. The Webbers could only take one child. By the time a home was found for my sister, Erika, it was too late. Erika did not want to leave my mother.

I don't remember where we disembarked the train or the ship that took us across the English Channel. But I have since read that convoys of children traveled by train to ports in Belgium and the Netherlands, from where they sailed to Harwich, a seaside town. From Harwich they traveled by train to Liverpool Street Station in London where they were met by their foster parents. I do remember Liverpool. I can still see the huge room crowded with children. HIAS delivered me to the Webbers. The Webbers, Stella and Michael Joseph, and their daughters, Joan, sixteen years old, and Greta, ten years old, were there to greet me. They picked me up and took me to the heart of London, to Cricklewood, London, NW2. I can still recall the phone number: Gladstone 3036. . . .

The Webbers' home in Cricklewood was near Hampstead Heath in North London. The house had a gate that led to a big backyard in which there was a garden. Later a bomb shelter was built in the backyard. Their home was beautiful. This was unlike how we lived in Europe. Rarely did an urban family had a single home; most lived in apartments. The house had two kitchens because the family kept kosher. There was a lounge, a sitting room, and a dining room. At the top of the elegant winding stairs were the bedrooms, a bathroom and a room with tub and running water. I was awed by all these rooms and the conveniences.

Each of the daughters had their own room. At first I had my own room, but then the family hired a maid and I shared the room with her. Another bedroom was a nursery where they had more dolls and games than the legendary F.A.O. Schwarz toy store in New York. I wanted only to read the fairy tale books. Perhaps I needed "and she lived happily ever after" stories.

I arrived carrying my little suitcase. I had "European" hair, frizzy hair, and I was wearing knee socks, a dress, and a coat. I could not speak English, and they could not speak German. But in two weeks I was speaking near fluently. The Webbers asked me to call them "Mommy" and "Daddy." Mrs. Webber was very strict; Mr. Webber wasn't. The girls were very kind. I adapted and became part of the family. They gave me a signet ring with an "RWF" on it that I still have. They had put their initial "W" in the middle.

They were a nice Jewish family. They kept kosher and celebrated *Pesach*, *Yom Kippur*, and *Rosh HaShanah*. They made sure that I continued to practice the Jewish religion. I fasted on *Yom Kippur* a half day up to the age of thirteen,

when I then fasted all day. The Webbers sent me to synagogue on Saturday; I walked the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to synagogue by myself.

Mr. Webber loved me. He owned a pub in Piccadilly Circus in London's West End. He brought gum and candy home from the pub. Servicemen, such as American GIs, gave these treats to him. Preparations for D-Day had brought thousands of GIs to the U.K. Great Britain was rationing candy, bread, milk, meat—almost everything, so it was fantastic to receive these treats.

I had attended kindergarten in Vienna, but now I was old enough for primary school, what we call elementary school in the U.S. I walked to a public school up a hill, about a mile and a half to two miles away. I made friends. During the holidays, the school had a Christmas tree that was marvelously decorated. In addition, the Webbers sent me to *cheder* (Hebrew school) three times a week; I went from 5:00 to 7:00 in the evening. I walked three-quarters of a mile during the blackout period. There were no street lights at all, and home had blackout shades. I wasn't frightened. I wasn't scared of the dark, and probably I didn't realize what was happening. . . .

On September 3, 1939, when I was five years old, the war against Germany started. In March 1939, Great Britain and France had promised to attack Germany in the event of that country's aggression against Poland. Indeed, Great Britain had signed a formal treaty in August 1939, guaranteeing the integrity of Poland's borders. Therefore, when Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later.

At the beginning of September, British citizens were ordered to cover their windows with black material, so their lights would not be seen by any German bombers. Millions of gas masks were distributed. Chemical weapons such as mustard gas and chlorine had been used during World War I, by both the Allies and the Central Powers; therefore, the British were anxious. Like another school book, I had to carry a gas mask under my arm to school every day.

By June 1940, the bombings began in earnest. This air war was called the Battle for Britain. Germany had already conquered France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Hitler was determined to take Great Britain. The bombings were very bad. At home, during air raids, I remember going under the bed or under the dining room table. One time after an intense bombing raid, the plaster came down from the ceiling, but that was as bad as it was for the Webbers and me.

If there was a raid during the day, I had to put on my gas mask and get under my desk. One day I would play with a friend, and the next day her home would be bombed and she would be killed. No bombs hit the Webbers' home, but four houses across the street were bombed. The homes were flattened; only rubble remained.

MURRAY KOHN

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Murray Kohn and Maryann McLoughlin. *Weep Tears of Blood*. Pomona (NJ): Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, 2009, pp. 55–60. Used by permission.

Moniek (later Murray) Kohn was a young prisoner in Auschwitz who, with his father, suffered numerous torments at the hands of the Nazis. Entering Auschwitz in November 1942 at the age of 12, he was liberated from Theresienstadt in May 1945. In the account produced here, he shows the numerous ways in which daily life at Auschwitz was accompanied by violence, and where death was a constant companion. Showing just a sliver of the nature of existence in the camp, Murray Kohn provides a detailed view, in just a few words, of the kind of things for which a prisoner could be punished, and of what the impact of this was for a person's sense of self-worth. It is a penetrating look into the concentration camp experience from a perceptive witness-participant.

Dr. Mengele was responsible for the selections. Imagine standing with your father in line, hearing Mengele say, "Rechts," (Right). That would be okay. But when he said, "Links" (Left), you were finished. We were dying every minute during selection. Everyone was envious: "You are still with your father." But when we were separated, all night long I could not sleep. In the morning, I ran to see if he had been spared.

Mengele also experimented on people. He was especially fond of experimenting on twins and dwarfs. He was responsible as well for sterilization experiments. As a warning against escape, surgically dissected bodies with their intestines pouring out were displayed on planks at the entrance to the camp. This was our frequent "show and tell."

Such beatings! We were beaten by the SS or by the *Kapos*, usually German prisoners, "lifers," released from prison to supervise inmates of concentration camps. The *Kapos*

would beat us if the bedding was not straight. There was also the *Stubemeister*, the one responsible for the barrack. He would beat us for having straw on our bunks. These beatings hurt, but they hurt more when my father was beaten. When I saw my father suffering, my pain was unbearable. We were constantly insulted, molested, beaten, one day after the next.

If the *Stubenältester* didn't like us, he would skim the soup and give us the watery part or cut a smaller portion of bread. If he liked us, he dipped the ladle deeper into the cauldron for a thicker soup. Food was life. However, the food they gave us was a teaser, 500 calories or less—an active boy should consume anywhere from 2500–2800 calories. They gave us bread in the evening and a little soup. This had to hold us until the next bowl of soup at lunch. I couldn't sleep because I was hungry. But I saved a little piece of bread for the morning, which I had to hide; otherwise, it would have been stolen. The morning liquid was an herbal mixture that tasted more like medicine water.

We were dead bodies in motion. Father had a habit of not eating. He would give his bread to me, telling me, "I found a piece of bread elsewhere." One day a man died, and my father broke off a piece of bread which stuck out of his pocket. A Ukrainian prisoner reported him to Hoess, "He stole bread." He assigned father to twenty lashes.

The head of Block 11 said to father quietly, "Yell loud and clear. I'll pretend that I am hitting you hard." For six weeks after this whipping, father could not sleep; his body was black and blue. All of a sudden, father's foot swelled up. He had to tear the seams of his pants in order to wear them. He barely could walk. I had to take him to the emergency room, which usually was a death sentence. For four to six weeks I didn't hear from my father. When Mengele came in, he ordered them to send father on a cart to Birkenau. The inmate doctors there loved my father; therefore, they exchanged a dying inmate's ID card for my father's.

Six weeks later one of the male nurses came to my block and asked, "Does anyone know Moniek Kohn?" The nurse had brought me a note. Father had an interesting calligraphy. The paper said, "*Mein kind, ich leb.*" (My son, I am alive.) When he left the clinic, he was emaciated. Hungry, but alive.

I was working at D.A.W. (SS workshops and armament industries) where I got to know a couple of men. After lunch, which was usually a watery soup served from a barrel, one said, "Go. Have your father clean out the can." I signaled my father to come. He used to finish two gallons of soup. How he

swallowed all this, I don't know, but he slowly regained his strength.

As hungry as we were, we did not eat bread on Pesach (Passover). We would barter bread for potatoes on Pesach. On *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) we fasted. We *davened*. Sundays were supposed to be a day for rest and cleaning. If we were not chased out to work, we got together and sang Hebrew and Yiddish songs and told stories. Some led *Talmud* classes, by heart, for we had no books.

People from Ciechanów got together every Sunday. We started out with the question: "What are you doing? Do you have enough food? Where are you working? Do you have an extra portion of food?" We put everything together—some had too much, sometimes from stealing or becoming sick and not being able to eat. In this way we spread food to the needy. Nobody from Ciechanów was starving because we were sharing. Our friend and landsman, Motel Bergson, worked as a bread distributor for the camp. He made sure that every landsman received some bread. He kept us alive.

Did we act like human beings? Yes. Did we act like animals? Yes. People do not understand what it is like to be really hungry. . . .

One time I was working in a building that was an extension of a salami factory. The salami was made from horse meat, from dead horses; this is what they fed us. I was there for three months. I ate as much as I wanted during this period. I walked in and grabbed a salami. But we were not satisfied with this. We wanted to share with others, so we stole and brought back to camp. I helped my father by giving him food. And how many times they caught us! We were beaten, really beaten up, terribly beaten up. Not only bloody noses. But we kept on doing this because we wanted to help and to share with others.

Many people did turn into animals; hunger can do many terrible things to human beings. You could see this when a man died. Other inmates grabbed his piece of bread from his hand. Moreover, after work, at *Appell*, we were given our watery soup and our bread ration for the day. No sooner had lights gone out than people went around, crawled in the dark, to steal the piece of bread from their fellow prisoner who had kept a piece for the morning. Many nights people could not sleep because they feared losing their bread. I cannot blame people for this. "Hunger" in a concentration camp meant certain death. Even before a person died from starvation, Mengele hastened the process through his selections.

People were also kind. I was separated by a fence from Canada, a warehouse where they brought the clothing and possessions of those murdered and those waiting to die from

malnutrition and over work. These were sorted in Canada. One day I was sitting by the fence to gulp down a little soup at lunch when someone yelled, "Moniek. Moniek." I recognized a girl from my public school. She said, "I have something for you. Come tomorrow at the same time." The next day I came and found my mother's pocketbook and photographs of my mother, sister, father, and me. They had been wrapped around a stone and thrown over the fence. She was later shot by an SS guard over a cigarette.

Not long after, another SS guard found the photograph of my mother. For having the photo, I was beaten continually for two hours. Then my body was as black as my father's. They asked me, "What else are you hiding? Gold, diamonds, money?" They said, "If you could hide a picture, you must have hidden other things." I never disclosed who had given me the photograph because I would have endangered her life.

Being searched was just part of the daily routine in Auschwitz! Murdering and torturing were part of the Nazis' jobs. They murdered and tortured during the day, and at night they played with their children and went to the theatre with their wives. That is the irony. The concentration camps were not 700 miles away. They were next door. This was their work—professional murderers, without conscience.

JUDY KOLT

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Judy Kolt. *Tell It to the Squirrels*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2009, pp. 57–65. Used by permission.

Judy Kolt, born Izia Jablonska in 1936, spent much of the World War II years on the run with her older sister Tosia. In the testimony produced here, she describes just a tiny snippet of the life she led when hidden by Catholic nuns in a convent boarding school in Poland. In showing how the nuns sought ways to disguise the Jewish identity of the girls in their care, she sketches a small cottage industry of subterfuge and life-saving deception. As the war closes in on the girls, however, Judy outlines the constant necessity forced upon them to move on to other places of refuge. This account points up an important element regarding the practice of hiding Jewish children from the Nazis; the fact that long-term refuge was rarely possible and that ceaseless movement was often the

only way to facilitate (though never guarantee) some measure of safety.

The events of that fateful day, 3 June 1943, will stay fresh in my mind till the day I die.

The big girls who were to take Communion were being pampered and groomed by the novices. All was chatter and bustle, as they arranged the girls' hair, which had been tied into curls with white scraps of cloth overnight, to make Shirley Temple locks when released. Each girl was wearing a long, flowing, silky dress embroidered with gold thread. Some of the dresses were being adjusted for the last time, with a tuck here and a stitch there. I watched as my big sister, Tosia, donned her white dress and a crown of white flowers that was placed on her dark hair. There were times when our hair was dyed blonde, but the picture I have from that day bears witness to my memory of her at that dark time. There was surely no one as beautiful in the entire world as my Tosia! Love for her filled me entirely. How I wished I was a big nine- or ten-year-old and could walk proudly in a white dress beside her!

The ceremony passed like a dream. Then we had a party and the parents came—all those blonde women with their little hats. Mamusia wasn't there but my Tatus was. I was so proud to stand beside him as we posed for a photograph with Tosia and Father Ussas. It was such a wonderful day that I forgot the constant fear and tension that resided deep inside me. To celebrate, Tatus took us to a restaurant for lunch. I had never been in a real restaurant before, and I was floating on air. How could I imagine what was about to unfold? The following events remain engraved in my memory as if they happened just yesterday. Like a newsreel in my head, I am destined to see it played again and again in my waking hours and in my sleep:

We are eating rolls and waiting for the soup—tomato soup with rice. My stomach is making noises in anticipation. Two men in gabardine coats walk through the door. They come towards us. The waitress comes out of the swinging door with a tray of soup, but stops walking. The men bid my father to accompany them into a room. The waitress brings the soup and spills some on Tosia's beautiful white gown. She leans down to wipe the stain and whispers, "Run children." Tosia takes my hand and we do not run but walk slowly to the door. We pass the office and hear a rasping voice shouting at my father. Tosia grips my hand very hard. We open the door and go out into the street. Steadily we walk to the corner, and then we run and run. We seem to run forever, and eventually get to the Pole Mogotokie (Mogotowskie Field), where the

agricultural plots are. We squat in a patch of maize and rest. I don't know how long we are there. I remember it getting very cold and finally, when it is dark, we make our way back to the convent. . . .

Sister Wanda worried that when tortured, our father might give away our whereabouts, and so she lost no time in transferring us immediately away from the convent. We were given temporary shelter by the Sisters of Resurrection in their convent boarding school located in the Warsaw suburb of Sady Zoliburzkie. The girls there were very curious about where we came from, but we had been well trained to give away as little as possible. Tosia, normally so outgoing, kept chatting away about her First Holy Communion, but she was pale and tense. When I questioned her about it, she hugged me and said, "Go to sleep, little sister. Let's pray that we'll see Tatus again." I felt shaking and frightened, but could not quite understand what had happened.

Anna Kaliska in her memoirs (April 1959. The original is in the Szymanow Archives) writes:

The father of two little girls who used to be with us and later were sent away to Wrzosow, a Jew hiding under a different identity, has been captured; between his papers was found a note with the address of the Kazimierzowska Street convent. An order came for Sister Wanda to present herself at Gestapo headquarters. A few days in a row she went there for interrogation. I remember her marching off with a determined look, carrying a large black umbrella, which she took with her, while we conducted heated, emotional prayers in the chapel for her safe return. Sister Wanda would return unhurriedly, with a smile on her face. After some days—peace, and the little Jablonskis were away safely in Wrzosow.

In fact, it was not until some weeks later that we went to Wrzosow. After spending some time with the Sisters in Zoliburz, I believe we were taken for a short while to Szymanow, a country retreat belonging to the Niepokalanki Order. I guess Sister Wanda did not want to keep us in any place for too long, so as to mislead anyone trying to find us.

From there, we were taken one early morning when it was still dark, together with three or four other children and two nuns, back to Warsaw. This was no easy feat. There were aggressive German patrols everywhere. When we were woken and dressed, each of us was given a cube of sugar with a Valerian drop on it—to strengthen our hearts, sister said. It tasted delicious.

As provisions, we had a small sack of flour, a loaf of bread, a jar of beetroot jam and a pot of lard. As the sun rose we

walked through a forest and stopped for a breakfast of bread, jam and berries. Sister suggested we all take a little nap. When we woke the lard was gone. All that was left was an empty little pot and a satisfied dog resting in the sun. Someone must have left the top off. Sister was devastated. After a couple of hours of walking, we reached a convent belonging to another order of nuns, who wore black habits. This convent housed a boys' boarding school. These nuns agreed to give us shelter until it was possible to travel on.

The atmosphere was very tense, because the siren sounded very often. We spent most nights in bomb shelters. After some days, our small bag of flour dwindled away. When we approached our hosts for food, they were reluctant to feed us. Perhaps they had fears of running out of supplies themselves if many others in need arrived unexpectedly, as we had, especially with the war escalating around them.

Our Sisters did not approve of this reluctance to keep us from hunger. Their own convent shared whatever they had with those who entered their doors, to the best of their ability. Having discovered ample supplies in the cellar, they decided that we should "borrow" some. Since I was the smallest, it was easy to lower me down through the small window into the cellar. I filled the sack with flour, passed it through the window, and then the sister helped me up again. At that moment, we were confronted by our hosts. With an angelic smile on her face, Sister pointed a finger at me and said, "This is a saintly child. It is through her that Our Lord feeds us. With my own eyes, I witnessed a miracle. I looked and saw her suspended in the air, and when I looked again, our sack of flour was full." This must have shamed our hosts, who blushed a little, smiled, and no more was said.

After some weeks in this convent, our little group moved on. We were again in the Mironowskie Hills on the outskirts of Warsaw, I think in Czerno. I have memories of a long park within sight of a villa. At the end of the park, there was a large cellar, with a rather low ceiling. I have since discovered it was a wine cellar. We were there with two nuns, one of them Sister Irene, as well as three or four other girls. We had to be very quiet and were not allowed to move about. There were also a few other groups of people there. I vividly remember that food was brought to us three times a day by the Grey Nuns: mock coffee and bread with beetroot jam in the morning; hot soup, occasionally with some bread for lunch; and again, bread, sometimes with a spread, but mostly plain, in the evening.

Finally, we moved on to Wrzosow. I have a distinct memory of being driven there in a German military truck, and can only surmise that the nuns were able to spin some convincing tale to a sympathetic soldier. We ended up in Willa

Jutrzenka in Wrzosow, a very large, impressive white building in a rural area. During the occupation, it served many purposes, one of which was a secret warehouse for defence materials and weapons for the underground. It also had a primary school that was teaching forbidden subjects to its pupils. When the Germans came by, all they found was an orphanage, a soup kitchen, a kindergarten, and trade courses for girls, such as dressmaking. We finished up in the orphanage. The nuns who looked after us were not our familiar "white nuns." They wore the short grey habits and grey caps of the Ursulan Order, although I believe that the gracious mansion, the Willa Jutrzenka, had been bequeathed to the Niepokalanki in July 1940.

There were many babies and toddlers there, and it was the older girls who were responsible for them. The lack of food was a problem for everyone and the atmosphere was very tense. Nightly alarms were so frequent that in the end nobody went into shelters unless we heard bombs or grenades exploding. The nuns, although caring, were run off their feet. The front was coming closer and closer and they had wounded fighters and many refugees to worry about.

Tosia, who at the age of ten was one of the big girls, was given the job of changing the babies' nappies in the morning, washing them and changing their linen. Changing dirty nappies is not a job any ten-year-old girl easily takes to, so she became ultra-religious and started going to early morning mass at the crack of dawn before the babies woke. In this way, she was often able to avoid this particular task.

Her new devoutness proved very profitable. She met a woman in church who took a liking to her and would often bring her some homemade bread or even cake, which Tosia of course shared with me. This woman also arranged for Tosia to wash the windows of her first-floor apartment, for which she paid her in food. Eventually, some of the woman's neighbours also had their windows washed. This was a wonderful supplement to our meagre diet, although a dangerous way for a ten-year-old to earn food. She had to lean out of the first-floor windows to reach the panes, risking losing her balance. Another way that my brave sister had of gaining extra food was nightly excursions to steal apples in a nearby orchard, which she exchanged for bread with some of the local urchins who were always hanging around the villa. I was allowed to help in this activity as well.

My headaches and nosebleeds were getting more frequent, often preventing me from being helpful in the daily work. This did not endear me to the nun in charge. She often told me what a burden I was. Secretly I named her the Grey Nun with the Black Heart.

In the garden, there was a little fountain adorned with an angel on top. It was almost hidden by high bushes, and I loved going there. It became my haven, a private place for dreaming. In the quiet and solitude, I allowed myself to imagine Tatus coming for us one fine day, and taking us back to Mamausia. In my daydreams, I saw us bringing her a bunch of forget-me-nots, as we had done once before on Mother's Day, when Tatus took us to see her in the convent of the Sisters of the Family of Maria. Only this time, Mamusia would keep the flowers, instead of us having to take them to the chapel to present them to the Virgin Mary.

When lost in these beautiful thoughts, I did not feel the pain in my limbs, the weeping sores caused by my chilblains, the rumble in my stomach or my headaches. Tosia had told me more than once that Tatus was dead, that he would never come back for us again, but I knew that this was absolutely not true.

The nuns tried to make life as pleasant as the circumstances allowed. We were all suffering from malnourishment but, as children will, we still had fun. We played games, skipped and sang. One day, we had a special party. I was told there would be bread with real mock honey for lunch. We children waited for the lunch bell with anticipation, and when we sat down at the long tables, to our delight, there was the promised bread and honey. Quite a few guests were there, amongst them some German soldiers with their Polish girlfriends, who, I was told, were visiting their babies. The prayers over, I reached for my bread and honey, when the Grey Nun with the Black Heart took hold of my wrist and said, "Honey is not good for your headaches. You are not to have any."

As she walked away, Tosia whispered in my ear, "Go to your fountain." I did, straight after lunch. Tosia met me there with half of her honey bread. I bit into it and tasted sheer ecstasy. Just then, I saw the Grey Nun with the Black Heart come towards me. I quickly stuffed the rest of the bread into my mouth and proceeded to swallow it. The woman grabbed hold of my hair, pulled my head back, and stuck her finger down my throat again and again, until I vomited. "I told you it would make you sick," she said as she walked away. She was the only nun who was ever unkind to me. She should have been a prison warden.

August 1944—Another clear memory:

There is a lot of commotion in the sick room. Men are coming and going, some under their own steam, others helped by friends. Sisters wearing aprons are bringing hot bowls of soup,

tending the men's wounds where necessary, and preparing straw pallets for them. The children help wherever possible. Forgotten are the childish games. Many other people are now arriving in Wrzosow. Some are family groups, others are alone. They all find shelter, and somehow the food is made to go round. The nightly alarms are increasing. The children help out with the labour on nearby farms, as all the men seem to have disappeared. My back is continually hurting and I find it difficult to straighten it. The only thing to look forward to is the generosity of the farmers' wives. They are very kind to the orphan children, and we often get to share their meals of Zurek (fermented rye flour borsht) and potatoes, or foods I remember eating with my nanny in the kitchen when I was a little girl. I'm happy here at the orphanage but I'm always so tired. I wish I could just shut my eyes and sleep and sleep and never have to go anywhere else again. But that is not to be. We are being evacuated to Laski.

HENRI KORN

Context: Before the War

Source: Henri Korn. *Saviours: The Story of a Jewish Altar Boy*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004, pp. 41–45. Used by permission.

Henri Korn was a German Jewish boy living through the first years of the Nazi regime in the 1930s. Sometime during the second half of 1938 he received an intense personal shock when he was taken to the principal's office and told that he could no longer attend the school where he was enrolled. He did not understand at the time that this was on account of his Jewish identity; all he remembered was the pain it caused him to be told that "I was no longer part of all this," and that "I was lost and alone." Soon enough, all his schooling came to an abrupt end.

Despite all the experiences I lived through in Poland at the time, it did not connect me to my Jewishness. As soon as we returned to Germany, the family observed none of the Jewish rituals, so they retained no importance or meaning to me. Due to my family's assimilation into the Germanic way of life, I believed I was the same as any of the other children in my class. I had noticed the painting of incomprehensible slogans on shop windows and walls that had something to do with Jews. There were posters plastered wherever a vacant spot was

available, with caricatures ridiculing ugly people with hooked noses, but they were people who meant nothing to me.

Soldiers were marching during the day, preceded by bands belting out stirring marches. On occasional nights, groups of men in different-coloured uniforms would parade, holding torches and shouting raucous anthems. These men belonged to the fanatic factions of the Nazi regime, the SA who wore brown shirts and the SS who were fitted out in black. They screamed at, threatened and attacked people for no apparent reason.

All these events had an eerie feeling about them, but I wasn't personally affected, mainly because my parents kept any concerns they had away from their children. It is also possible that my father didn't feel seriously threatened at that time. He still thought Nazism was a passing phase, a mental aberration that the common sense of the German people, his people, would eventually reject.

In the autumn of 1938, an edict became law, which forbade Jewish children from attending Aryan schools. It caught up with me when I was eight years old, nearly nine. By then I was in my third year of primary school. One morning, my teacher tapped me on the shoulder. This was no cause for alarm. She had been my mentor for three years and I liked her a lot. "Follow me," she said. "We are going to see the principal."

I felt myself beginning to shake and fear gripped my chest, forcing me to breathe in short bursts. Good children were never summoned to the principal's office. What had I done wrong? One never questioned a teacher, so I followed her silently up the marble staircase, which rose like a mountain towards the heavens. I had never been up those stairs before, as the primary section was housed on the ground floor. My teacher, tall and straight in posture, didn't speak or look at me as we passed the floors where the middle and high school classes were held. We reached the top floor where the administrative offices were located. A discreet knock on a door and we entered a spacious room furnished with a large desk, behind which sat our principal. I had only ever seen him at a distance during the Monday morning flag-raising ceremonies. I approached him, my legs like jelly. In a most friendly manner, he asked us to sit down. My teacher flattened the back of her skirt with both hands and sat first, as good manners dictated. "My dear boy, it is my sad duty to inform you that you are no longer able to attend this school. You won't be able to understand the reasons for this decision, so we won't discuss it. Yet it is with much regret that I am obliged to tell you that you are no longer welcome here."

I was stunned, not able to grasp the significance of his words. I looked at my teacher. Tears were rolling down her

face. She did not look at me, but stared at the principal, who leaned over towards me.

"Accept this book as a gesture of friendship and to remind you of this school. When you read it in the future, remember us."

He opened the book, signed and dated it. He then asked the teacher to also sign it. He handed it to me and shook my hand. My teacher and I climbed down those many stairs and when she reached the door of our classroom, she stopped me from going in. "Wait here," she said and went inside to fetch my school bag. At the front door, which she opened for me, my beloved teacher said good-bye with a quick wave of the hand and told me to go straight home.

I slowly walked across the schoolyard clutching the book. I made my way home on that cold November morning, uncomprehending and miserable.

"Mother!" I yelled. "I'm no longer allowed to go to school. Why? Why can't I go to school?"

My mother stared at me. Tears rolled down her face, but she said nothing, not one word of explanation or comfort that I can remember. I was shocked to see my mother so helpless and upset. I got the message that nothing could be done. I asked no more questions. I was filled with yearning for what I had lost.

What a beautiful school it was. I loved Monday morning when the flag was raised. All the classes were lined up in columns three abreast. The formations were perfect and each group was a long rectangle, so accurate, as if drawn with a ruler. I also liked the ceremonial way documents were handed to the teacher during class. If messages were delivered, issued from the headmaster for instances, there would be a loud knock on the door. In would come a student dressed in the uniform of a senior Hitler Youth. He would click his heels to attention and raise his arm shouting "Heil Hitler." He would then proceed in still military steps towards the low platform occupied by the teacher. Two metres away, he would again click his heels, his body straight as a ramrod and exclaim once more "Heil Hitler" with arm raised. Slowly advancing, he would hand over the note. Stepping back, he would again raise his arm in the Nazi salute, turn on his heels and walk out of the classroom. This routine always impressed me. I was longing to grow up so I could also be part of this wonderful display of military discipline.

Now I was no longer part of all this. I was lost and alone. The book I had been given became my treasured possession. It was a compilation of German history, literature and science, put together for older children. Later on, when the situation became more and more dangerous, my mother tore out

the page with the signatures of the principal and the teacher to protect them from possible Nazi vigilantes.

The local synagogue community, to which my parents did not belong, organized emergency classes for about eighteen children staffed by sacked Jewish teachers. Our classes were held in the community hall. We learned the basic skills—reading, writing and counting and the Hebrew alphabet. We were also shown how to plant vegetables on a tiny plot of land in front of the synagogue, in response to government instructions that every German had to plant vegetables on whatever land they owned, or even on public land, to overcome chronic shortages of food.

My schooling there lasted no more than three weeks. Day after day, groups of men in uniform, encouraged by screaming women, abused us in the foulest language. Our little garden was vandalized and the walls smeared with slogans of hatred. All of this forced the closure of the synagogue and its tiny classes. Each of the teachers invited five or six children to come to their homes for further tuition. One week in my new venue, we were discovered, possibly reported by a neighbor. An angry mob made up of Hitler Youth, a few SA men and an ill-assorted group of adults congregated outside, shouting abuse, hurling stones and breaking the windows. The police didn't intervene. Luckily the hecklers did not invade the house, they just stood outside and screamed. We did not dare leave the premises. As night fell, the hooligans retired. All was not quiet and dark. Parents had been advised not to pick up their children. The teachers delivered us home later that night.

It was not an isolated incident, and within about three weeks, all schooling stopped. Soon people we knew as friends and acquaintances turned their heads away as we passed them in the street. It hurt my father a great deal, and he would mumble bitter words about disloyalty.

HENRI KORN

Context: Western Europe

Source: Henri Korn. *Saviours: The Story of a Jewish Altar Boy*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004, pp. 110–116. Used by permission.

From his home in Germany, young Henri Korn moved to Belgium, where, his parents hoped, he would be safe from Nazi antisemitic depredations. The German invasion of Belgium in May 1940, however, precluded all possibility that Henri Korn would be guaranteed a safe future. In this account,

we see what life was like for him in the boarding school to which he was sent—where antisemitism, far from being something that happened on the outside, was very much in evidence. It was here, also, that he began to learn the horrible truth about what was happening to Jews in other parts of Europe.

The dormitory we were to occupy looked like a recent addition and was at some distance from the mansion. Each floor opened to a large room containing about forty beds. Reserved for our female caretaker was an area which was totally surrounded by a white curtain that slid on an elevated rail. I was surprised to find that all our guardians were female. The only male seemed to be the gardener, who looked very old.

The women in charge wore white dresses and covered their shoulders with purple capes. They never smiled or spoke words of encouragement to us. On Saturdays all the inmates were sent to the showers. I noticed that some of the bigger boys were already well developed and hairy but they still had to submit to being washed by women. These female attendants assisted our cleansing by wielding brushes with stiff bristles running down our backs. They seemed to enjoy the cruel pleasure of cleaning our ears by driving into the ear duct a fine ivory shaft, the tip thinly covered in cotton wool. The pain was excruciating and everybody attempted to run past our minders, ears covered with outstretched hands.

The 1940 invasion had swept through the area, leaving in its wake the burnt-out shell of a tank sitting in the middle of our playground. We acted out war-like games within and around it, debating the combat value of soldiers of the nations caught up in the present conflict. When we went on excursions, we were given strict orders not to pick up anything that lay around, as it might be dangerous. I remember seeing a helmet behind some bushes but was not game enough to break rank and retrieve it. A few of the boys, more defiant of rules, picked up cartridges, bullets and other debris. Guy, my friend, with whom I always walked, bent down and grabbed what turned out to be the detonator of a grenade. He hit it against a tree and it blew up. It was a small explosion, but enough shrapnel entered his leg to create an emergency and he was sent to hospital. I never saw him again and no amount of inquiring revealed what had happened to him. I was alone now and had nobody to confide in. This accident happened just one week after we had arrived.

On Sundays all the boys marched off together to somewhere unknown. I was left all on my own to pace the large

wooden shed that passed for our indoor playground, or walk around the yard. Nobody told me they were going to church. I was shocked to be left behind, imagining it as a punishment for some misdemeanor I had unknowingly committed. Everybody was back by lunchtime and I noticed a rise in the level of noise and boisterous behaviour. I took that as proof that all the others had gone to a treat, like a Sunday parade.

The worst thing that happened to me in the three months at "rehabilitation" was an anti-Semitic attack on me personally. It came from a woman teacher during class. How well I remember this particular incident! Classes were held six days a week. Two female teachers took different subjects and pupils, aged from ten to fourteen, sat in the same class. One of the instructors lived on the property; the other pedalled in from a nearby town and taught us two days a week. The latter wore sports-style clothes and had a mannish, ugly face, round and large, with two closely set eyes. In one of her classes, she launched a question at me I couldn't answer. Her face turned red with rage.

"You son of Judas!" she screamed at me, literally pointing me out to the class. "This is the son of Judas!"

The students sat in stunned silence. The end of the period could not come soon enough, and as we filed out of the classroom the other boys kept an uncomfortable distance from me. It was already dark as we silently climbed the steel stairs that ran behind our mansion, for our weekly weigh-in. The food, although plentiful, consisted mainly of potatoes glistening with pork fat. Every Friday night, the scales would tell the nursing staff whether we were gaining weight. After our evening meal we all went to bed where, at last, I could be alone with my thoughts. Who was Judas? I knew by the viciousness of the teacher's outburst that calling me his son was meant to be insulting. I felt very alone. Sadness rose inside my chest. I didn't know how I would cope if she attacked me again in that crazy manner. I stayed awake for a long time on that cold night. Contrary to my expectations, over the next few days none of the boys teased me or tried to hit me. Their obvious sympathies did not lie with the teacher.

The Sunday following the incident, I was informed, along with some other boys, that our parents were coming to visit us that day. I was thrilled. It was so unexpected. All of us receiving visitors were scrubbed, combed and dressed in fresh clothes and presented to our parents in fine fettle. Visits lasted about three hours and took place in the old spacious glasshouses, formerly used to grow exotic fruit and trees.

I rushed up to greet my mother with great excitement. Turning to the man who I expected to be my father, I faced a complete stranger. He was a short man of about forty and wore the peaked cap so favoured by working class men. He was obviously not Jewish. "This is Jacques Van Zeebroek, a close friend," said my mother. She gave no further explanation of why he was there. Later, I was to find out that my mother had met him when she went to visit my sister at her sanatorium and had asked for directions from him, a total stranger. He was to become the savior of our family, and to this day, I do not know why he decided to undertake this dangerous task. I asked him where my father was. Mother said it was better for him not to be out in the open too much. He couldn't speak French and looked Jewish.

Mother was eager to find out how I was faring. I didn't want to tell her about the abusive teacher in front of this stranger, but my self-control vanished in a flood of tears. Finishing my tale of woe, I cried as never before. Mr. Van Zeebroek rose, and without a word, strode toward the lady supervisor, who sat behind a small desk.

"I must see the Principal immediately!" said my newly-found defender.

"Oh! The Principal's busy. I'm not sure whether she's available right now." Mr Van Zeebroek interrupted her sternly.

"I am acquainted with the Department's Director-General and I demand to see the Principal before I lodge a serious complaint."

The supervisor got up from behind her desk and without further ado told us to wait. "I'll be back shortly."

On her return, she directed us to a door by the side of the mansion. It opened up to a steep staircase rising quite high to the floor above, which contained the offices. On top of the landing stood a large lady dressed in black, who introduced herself as the Principal. Beside her stood a tall clerical gentleman wearing a long, dark frock and a metal cross on his chest. I had never seen the lady in black nor the chaplain before. We all sat down in a small office. On being asked the nature of the complaint, Mr. Van Zeebroek began to describe the incident and berate the pair for allowing an innocent child to be bullied in this unfair manner. To allow a teacher to make these remarks was beyond comprehension.

"I know the Director-General and I shall lodge a strong complaint tomorrow morning." Looking at the priest, he said loudly, "Your teaching encourages hatred and prejudice."

In flustered tones, the chaplain denied the charges but conceded that in these difficult times full of frustration, some people behaved badly. The principal promised to follow up the result of the investigation.

We left the office and came downstairs. I was both delighted and shocked at Mr. Van Zeebroek's attack on such eminent personages. The three of us walked towards the gate to explore the wide expanse of frozen countryside. It was a silent landscape with the frost covering everything. Only the pussy willows were out, their furry little beads braving the severe cold. I kept pleading to be allowed to leave the sanatorium. I begged and cried, but was told it could not be done half-way through the cure. My mother begged me to be patient, saying that I would be home in a month. They left soon after for the station.

Monday passed uneventfully, but Tuesday was when my tormentor would be taking the class. The next morning my heart was beating a drum charge. With great reluctance I dragged myself towards the classroom. Standing on the podium was a young woman who introduced herself as our new teacher.

What a sense of relief! Heads turned towards me with quizzical looks and a number of faces broke into sympathetic smiles. The warmth of budding friendship grew out of this incident, and the rest of my stay was much more pleasant.

I went back to school in Brussels at the beginning of 1942. The war situation kept everybody guessing. The Americans had entered the war while I was at rehabilitation. The Germans kept claiming that Moscow would fall any day. It never happened, and the news filtering through from illegal sources spoke of huge German losses on the Eastern Front. I remembered the prophecies of the German sergeant in May 1940, and hoped they were turning out to be correct.

Frightening tales of persecution against Jews in Poland, Russia and other countries were becoming more frequent. At school, in spite of Nazi rhetoric about Jews, there was little abuse from non-Jewish teachers or students. Nevertheless, on one school outing, we had a terrific fight. Our class was the only one where the first and second best were not Jewish students. We put to flight our gentile opponents but cornered the top two students and gave them a beating for their presumption. The combatants who had escaped our onslaught did something that had never been done before. They went to get help from the Flemish boys who were generally quite a lot bigger and heavier than those in the French section. In normal times, there was little love lost between French-speaking and Flemish-speaking boys. The Flemish

boys seemed more prone to believing the incessant anti-Semitic propaganda, so we didn't hang around in order to be beaten up by them.

The Nazis had issued an order early that spring under which all Jews had to wear the Yellow Star of David. We duly collected the cloth badges and began to sew them on all our outer garments. Remarkably, as a sign of solidarity, a number of gentile students at our school asked for spare badges and sported them proudly in support of the Jewish students.

Shortly after, the round-ups began. At first Jews went peacefully, having been asked to take sufficient clothing to "resettlement." My father ran around urging people not to go.

Rumours had turned to reality and the deportations had begun. In May 1942, an article appeared in the German press, claiming that Pabjanice, the town my mother grew up in, had been declared *Judenrein* (cleansed of Jews). A week later, a second article appeared revealing that all the elderly men had been executed at the local market square. This presumably included my grandfather. The Germans complained that the doomed Jews refused to obey orders. They were told to kneel and bend the head forward for easier targeting. They refused and instead threw themselves down on their stomachs, wrapping their prayer shawls tightly around their bodies. This made the shooting more difficult and stressful to the killers.

CHAIM BENJAMIN KÜNSTLICH

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Chaim Benjamin Künstlich. *L'Chaim: Surviving Soviet Labour Camps to Rebuild a Life in Postwar Poland*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2009, pp. 53–56. Used by permission.

In line with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939, the Polish city of Lwów (modern-day Lviv) was occupied by the Soviet Red Army on September 22, 1939. Given its location and large Ukrainian-speaking population, the city became a major center for the newly installed communist regime in the region of eastern Poland. In this account, Chaim Benjamin Künstlich describes what life was like under the changed conditions, forced as a result of the earlier Nazi invasion of Poland that allowed the Soviet takeover. A hint is given, moreover, of how the circumstances would change

even further, when he writes that the Soviets began deporting Jews out of the city when “war broke out between Russia and Germany” in June 1941. Although short, the account provides a neat summary of life on the “other side” of the Polish invasion.

It was still September when we arrived in Lwów. We three brothers rented a room at 7 Maczyńskiego Street, from a Mrs Mochinicka. We worked at different jobs to earn a little money. I gave lessons to younger boys in mathematics, though for a time I didn't work and my brothers supported me.

I had a nice golden Omega pocket watch one of my brothers had given me and I sold it to buy food. We had a few *złoty* and bought things such as a pair of trousers, socks or shoes at the market and resold them at other markets for a little profit. Everyone else was doing that too. Other family members fled towards the Russian border, to escape from the Germans. Hamek came, as did Lola and her husband Arnold, with his sister Ella, and her husband Jashek Cygielfarb. Arnold was conscripted into the Red Army and died on the front on his first day. Cesia and Henek came with Lus'ka and Amnon, who were unable to return to Palestine because, unfortunately, they did not have their papers. Lus'ka had arrived on a three-month visa and had applied for an extension. When the war broke out in September 1939 her passport was still with the authorities (Starostwo Grodzkie). Their offices closed and she was unable to retrieve her passport, thus precluding her from leaving Poland.

Hania came to Lwów in December 1939. By this time the town had been occupied by the Russians. Hania had to walk across the Bug River barefoot. This was now the border. It was dangerous, but women were less likely to be harassed than men. Once across, she was able to find transport into Lwów.

As we found various family members in Lwów, the room filled up with people. At times we had maybe seven or eight people living together.

My mother wrote a letter to me soon afterwards saying that if I was with Hania I should marry her. We were married on 8 January 1940. My mother liked Hania very much and we had a wonderful marriage.

It is the Jewish custom that a marriage simply needs to be recognized by three Jewish people who will swear that they know the couple by their names and by where they grew up, and know that they are free to marry. Ours was a very simple wedding with only ten people present. It took place in a pri-

vate house belonging to a friend of Hania's sister and we celebrated with a *kiddush*.

I was no longer living with my brothers when we got married. By that time, Efraim was already married to a girl from Lwów. Her father was a lawyer named Landau and her family lived in 52 Lwowska Street. She was a nice-looking girl, a teacher. They had a small wedding, which Eliezer, Hania and I attended. Efraim's wife was very nice to me—everyone always loves the baby in the family and they looked after me.

We continued to make a few *złoty* on which to live. I got a job as a waiter in Lwów in a licensed restaurant that sold beer and vodka. But Hania and I had only six months together as a married couple before we were deported to Siberia.

When the war broke out between Russia and Germany, the Russians began collecting Jewish and Polish refugees and sending them to Siberia on goods trains. The rule was that only people who had been born in Lwów, or men who had married girls born in Lwów, could stay in the city.

Cesia and Henek were both working in Lwów and got permission to stay. The Russians knew them as communist sympathisers and gave them Russian passports. Efraim had married a Lwów citizen and was thus allowed to stay.

Eliezer went to live in Tarnopol. Lola ran away to the depths of Russia with her deceased husband's family—where she spent the war years. Some people went back to Poland rather than go to Siberia. We heard later that they were taken by the Germans.

MICHAEL KUTZ

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Michael Kutz. *If, By Miracle*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2013, pp. 45–51. Used by permission.

In and around the forests of Minsk, partisan units were active almost from the beginning of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. While there was a resistance movement in the Minsk ghetto led by Mikhail Gebelev and Hersh Smolar, in the forests vigorous partisan resistance was undertaken at the order of (and with support from) the Soviet government. Michael Kutz, who was in one of these units, has left us an illuminating account of his time as a Jewish

partisan, describing not only the life of his unit and the activities in which they engaged, but also his personal story until the relief of the unit by the Red Army in the summer of 1944. His shock at seeing the ruins of Minsk was offset by the pride he felt at being a legitimate soldier in the fight against Nazism.

By mid-summer, our partisan group had increased to 150 people. Throughout the year, and during the fall in our area, the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow established links with several partisan groups. Under the direction of their Belorussian Headquarters of the Partisan Movement, they helped us partisans co-ordinate our efforts against the German occupation. Political commissars from the Soviet government helped to expand the operations against Germany.

Our enemies were definitely feeling the impact of the partisan resistance. In response, the Wehrmacht launched offensives against us, surrounding the forests and shooting at us with heavy artillery. At night, they threw rockets that lit up the woods, enabling them to drop their bombs with accuracy. In the fall of 1942 our group decided to break through the German blockade that encircled the forest where we were living and go deeper into the Bobruisk forest near the Berezina River to the base of a partisan detachment, an otriad, under the leadership of Commander Leventzow. The commissar was Comrade Lepeshkin and the group's unit took orders from Semyon Ganzenko, the head of a brigade in Western Belorussia. Our group, and our smaller detachments, joined this larger group and obeyed the orders of the Central Command. Their otriad included civilians and Red Army soldiers who had escaped from the labour camps, Jews from Bobruisk and Slutsk, and thousands of Jews who had escaped from the Minsk ghetto and brought with them a great deal of ammunition. The Minsk Jews could protect themselves and therefore didn't have to deal with the antisemitism that other Jews who had escaped into the forest did. In general, antisemitism wasn't as prevalent in the Leventzow otriad because the Bobruisk Jews had been members of the underground in the ghetto, and they were able to contribute significantly to the partisans in terms of both weapons and manpower; some had also acquired important skills from doing forced labour in the German military aerodrome.

At the beginning of 1943, parachutists from Moscow landed in our forest—they were members of the Komsomol, the youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union, who had volunteered to fight with the partisans. The Central Command had recently ordered partisan groups to include Soviet citizens in the partisan fight, which automatically applied to Jews as well as non-Jews. As a result, Jewish men, women, children and the elderly were now more protected, and some partisans even provided weapons to unarmed Jews in the forest. In the early spring of 1943, Semyon Ganzenko established a partisan unit in West Belorussia to specifically recognize and protect Jewish partisans, including women, children and the elderly. Sholom Zorin led this otriad of about four hundred partisans, most of whom were Jews from Minsk. I also heard about a detachment of around one thousand Jewish men, women and children under the leadership of Tuvia Bielski and his brothers, who had assumed responsibility for protecting all Jews, even the elderly and those who were malnourished and in poor health. To provide for all the survivors, the Jewish leaders of this partisan group set up their own self-sustaining camp, complete with workshops and a kitchen. They would come out of the forests at night and order peasants in the nearby villages to give them food and warm clothing. News of these partisan groups encouraged me to continue to fight.

I was also thrilled to learn that about two hundred Jews had escaped from the ghetto in Mir and that among them was my cousin Meir Zaturensky, who was a year older than me. Sadly, I never met up with him—I heard he was killed during an operation.

I also heard the story of a young man from my town, Shlomo Lansky, who had become an active partisan in an otriad outside Pinsk. He had been a leader of the Betar youth movement before the war and had succeeded in escaping into the forest from Nies' wiez ghetto uprising in July 1942. During one of his partisan operations he was captured, tied to a horse, dragged to a village and tortured, but he didn't reveal any information. Belorussian informants who witnessed his execution told us that when he was hanged in the public square in the town of Hancevicz, he cried out from the gallows, "I am not the first Jew and I am not the last Jew to be hanged, but we will survive you, and all you murderers will be brought to justice. We Jews and the groups of fighters in the forest will kill you wherever you are. We will give you no peace. Your bodies will be swallowed up by the swamps of Polesia."

We received orders from Moscow to intensify the struggle against the Nazis, to attack them on the main roads, to tear up railway tracks that carried soldiers and heavy artillery and tanks to the front, to set fire to the bases where gasoline and

oil were stored, and to destroy the police guard posts and those who manned them. Our orders were to give them no rest, day or night.

Since we now had radio contact with Moscow, we heard everything that was happening on the frontlines. We got the good news about the defeat of German Field Marshal Rommel's army in North Africa at the end of October 1942. In the Second Battle of El Alamein, the German army had lost their best tanks and weaponry and approximately 30,000 soldiers, while others had been taken prisoner. We also reveled in the news about the battle of Stalingrad: German Field Marshal Paulus and the powerful Sixth Army had surrendered on February 2, 1943. Soviet Marshal Rokossovsky, the commander of the Stalingrad front, gave them generous terms of surrender: they would not be killed. Field Marshal Paulus and twenty-two high-ranking generals were taken prisoner along with 90,000 Wehrmacht soldiers. Hitler proclaimed three days of mourning throughout Germany and all the lands occupied by the German army. We rejoiced at the news of those defeats, which indicated that Germany would lose the war.

We also heard quite a bit about Wilhelm Kube, the General-Kommissar for Weissruthenien (Belorussia) who worked out of Minsk. He was the one responsible for allowing the Jews in the Minsk ghetto to stay alive for the time being. Most were tradesmen who were forced to do a great deal of work for the German war machine—in particular to supply the Wehrmacht with underwear, uniforms, warm boots, warm coats and other items. The Jews in the Minsk ghetto knew that of all the ghettos of eastern Belorussia, theirs was the only one left, and that the same fate that befell Jews in other cities awaited them. They were well organized and kept in contact with the partisans. Often, groups of hundreds of Jews armed with weapons managed to smuggle themselves out of the ghetto and join the partisans. The Minsk ghetto ended up being liquidated in October 1943; by that time thousands of Jews, especially young people, had managed to escape into the forests.

In the fall of 1943, the Partisan Movement Staff of the Belorussian Command ordered Wilhelm Kube's assassination. A Belorussian girl by the name of Yelena Mazanik worked as a maid in Kube's residence, and lived on the premises. After many secret meetings, the partisans convinced her to carry out the attack on Commisar Kube, promising her that she would go down in history as a heroine of the Soviet Union. On September 22, 1943, she placed a

time-bomb under the mattress in Kube's bed. When she got off work that evening, she managed to leave the premises, despite the fact that the building was guarded by the Wehrmacht and the SS. Later, when Commissar Kube went to sleep, the bomb exploded, blowing him into pieces. The partisans were able to get Yelena safely into the woods and she worked with them until after liberation. Hitler declared a week of mourning for Kube's death and in retaliation ordered the authorities of Belorussia to kill one thousand citizens of Minsk.

Early in 1944, we received news that the siege of Leningrad had been broken, the historic city had lost hundreds of thousands of its civilians, but had not surrendered. With the daily news that the German armies were experiencing substantial losses and being forced to retreat, we expected the Allied armies to open up the second front any day, which would hasten the destruction of the Hitler regime. As the Yiddish saying goes, *as men lebt, derlebt men alles*—if you live long enough, you experience everything. Finally, the exciting news arrived from Moscow that on June 6, 1944, the Allied troops—American, British and Canadian soldiers—under the command of American General Dwight D. Eisenhower and British general Bernard Montgomery, had stormed the coast of Normandy and destroyed the German positions there. In Belorussia, the German army began retreating toward our area. All the partisan groups were ordered to be careful of retreating German soldiers, who, with the Red Army in pursuit, were trying to hide in the forests.

Eventually, the Germans surrendered to the partisan units. Defenceless and demoralized, hungry and thirsty, the Wehrmacht soldiers and officers begged us to spare their lives. Our orders, however, were to interrogate them and shoot them. The partisan intelligence officers extracted very important information and although the soldiers told us that they were only following orders, among the captured were members of the SS and Einsatzgruppen officers responsible for murdering the Jewish population in the occupied areas and sending people to labour camps in Germany.

The members of the Red Army to reach our part of the forest that June were the reconnaissance groups. When we saw the columns of tanks and artillery, we celebrated, embracing and kissing the Red Army soldiers. Several Jewish officers and soldiers among them, with tears in their eyes, spoke to us in Yiddish and reassured us all that they had routed the Germans on all fronts and had taken revenge on them.

We had been liberated! Finally, we were free. We were excited, of course, but each one of us wondered where we would go once we left the forest. Most of our homes and families no longer existed. We had survived, but what awaited us?

The Red Army soldiers started clearing out the mines that the Germans had placed on roads and bridges. After they left the area, the Red Army advanced further to liberate Minsk, so we couldn't yet leave our encampment because the front was not far away. We waited impatiently for the liberation of Minsk, the capital city of Belorussia. After fierce fighting, Minsk was liberated on July 3, 1944. We prepared to leave the forest and walk to Minsk, where a grand parade was being organized for July 16. During the two-day journey to get there, as we walked through fields and along the roads, we saw destroyed German tanks and army trucks, as well as the bodies of German soldiers. From all directions, partisans walked toward Minsk with smiles on their faces, carrying their weapons and singing patriotic songs.

When we arrived in the capital, we saw a city in ruins, with most of the walls and buildings reduced to rubble. At the city centre, we stood in military columns, ready to march past the platform where the high command of the Belorussian partisans stood. Red flags and pictures of Lenin and Stalin decorated the platform. Crowds of people applauded each group and its leaders. When I marched by the high command with my unit, I heard tremendous applause for our group. The leaders made speeches in which they presented statistics on the number of military operations that had been carried out during the German occupation and the number of German soldiers and collaborators who had been killed. According to the chief commissar, 1.5 million partisans had fought in the forests against the Nazis in the German-occupied areas. Giving us all certificates stating that we had been members of the partisans, he called upon the younger partisans to enlist in the Red Army to help expedite the defeat of Nazi Germany. The rest he told to return to their former homes so they could participate in the reconstruction of their towns and cities and rebuild the local economies. At the end of the ceremony, as the orchestra played the "International," everyone sang along.

The most difficult moment for me was saying goodbye—probably forever—to everyone I had lived with as a family, over the two years in the forest. We had no addresses to give to one another because none of us knew where we would end

up. But we all cried tears of joy at having survived the Nazis and regained our freedom. We comforted each other with the hope that we would see each other in the future.

ALICE LANDAU

Context: Central Europe

Source: Alice Landau. *Snippets from My Family Album*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2009, pp. 151–157. Used by permission.

Hungary was occupied by Nazi Germany on March 19, 1944, and almost immediately the full force of the Holocaust, so apparent elsewhere, descended on the country's Jewish population. Alice Landau was one of those caught in the Nazi net. Roundups of Jews took place around the country, with prisoners incarcerated in makeshift ghettos and labor camps while arrangements were made for them to be deported to their deaths at Auschwitz. Alice's account here chronicles her experiences from the summer of 1944—when deportations were taking place in full swing—to her arrival in the late fall at a police station in central Budapest, there to await an uncertain future.

The forced camp in Király Erdő had a very high fence around it and approximately 3,000 Jewish men were already in residence when I arrived. There was an additional high wooden fence in one corner where a few hundred ultra-Orthodox men from Szatmár were housed. We managed to peep behind this fence. I had never seen people of this type, dressed in the Chassidic manner with *tallit* and *tephillin*, praying morning and night. Further inside the camp was another wire mesh fence separating us fifty-two closely guarded women from the men.

A loud bell woke us at 5.30 am. The cleaning and washing facilities were only a few cold taps. There was mud all around. What was called breakfast consisted of watery *ersatz* coffee and a hunk of stone-hard bread. Eventually this bread broke two of my front teeth, necessitating extraction. Later I got a bridge to replace them and have worn it ever since. By 6.00 am we had to line up, four by four, and march to the steel factory. Guards and wolfhounds watched us. At the Manfred Weisz Steelworks in central Csepel we were allocated to the dirtiest and hardest task. With many other women I worked alongside

bricklayers, mostly repairing bomb damage where it was absolutely necessary. We carried second-hand bricks or cement from one site to the next in large wooden boxes with handles on each end. This had to be done fast, and G-d help you if you dawdled. We were all city girls and not used to this kind of work.

There were often air raids during the day. The blaring sirens gave us the shivers. I felt them in every nerve. Moreover, it was forbidden for us to enter any of the shelters. I always tried to reach a corner of the factory where some men in our group could be found. Most of them were my father's age and they tried to calm and protect me as much as possible.

It gave us great delight when we noted the planes had British signs on them as they swooped low over the factory. We hoped they would land one day. Maybe we just felt less terrified by the sight of their insignia.

On 2 July 1944 the morning shift arrived with the news that the Gestapo had surrounded the ghetto and were marching all the unfortunate Jews, including my mother, brother and many other relatives and friends, to the railway station, where they were shoved rudely into cattle wagons and transported. At that stage we had no idea where to. Others came to inform us of this with much glee and many derogatory comments. Each of them felt like a knife stab in my heart. Some others said they were being taken to the country for farm work. A few, with more sympathetic hearts, made kinder comments.

Oh, we camp inmates felt so helpless! Although we learned the real truth only after the war, none of us slept that night. We all just cried out in agony. I was blaming myself for not going with my mother and brother. I just kept repeating over and over again: "I should have gone."

The following weeks brought much more uncertainty and an increasing number of air raids. The factory was manufacturing ammunition, tanks and other war supplies. At the beginning of the war it had been taken away from its original owners, Baron Manfred Weisz and Sons, a Jewish family, and put entirely under Nazi management. Naturally it was a prime target for the Allies.

One day our good friend Sanyi Csicsics stopped beside me and whispered: "Alice, if you can, meet me near the fire station." I managed to sneak away and he told me: "very shortly a lot of the labour camp people will be taken away to be deported." He pointed at a big cupboard and said: "get in there, fast!" The next minute I found myself locked in with a big key. I was frightened out of my mind. I curled

up and I am embarrassed to tell you that I wet myself and vomited.

All kinds of yelling, swearing and rude noises reached me. This left me even more terrified. After a couple of hours it was dead quiet again. This was even more frightening. Not much later my well-meaning friend appeared with the key and released me from my confined space. I am most grateful to him, that he found a way to save me. I discovered that a large percentage of my fellow prisoners had been taken away and the camp in the Royal Forest was now half empty.

At one stage a Protestant minister came along, bringing with him a number of copies of the New Testament. He made us an offer: "Should you consider converting to Christianity, the Church could find a way to save you." It was agonizing. He left with a promise to return in a couple of days. I must admit I was tempted. This was a situation in which any human being would grab at straws, but when the time came I pulled out. Thinking of my grandparents and my childhood, I just could not face a life of living as a different human being. Judaism was not really strong in me, but it was impossible to deny my heritage. In fact, converting proved of no help to those who did so.

We struggled on. By this stage I had become a very undernourished young girl, just skin and bone, and with very little hope or courage left in me. Only thoughts of being reunited with my family one day kept me going. I still had not received any news of their whereabouts. News of the horrors of Auschwitz only reached us later. Thinking back over the passage of events, I am almost embarrassed by the fact that I spent the war under much more comfortable circumstances than millions of others. At least I survived.

We received unreliable stories about the Red Army approaching from the east, very fast. It could not be quick enough for us. Hitler's army was desperate, but the more desperate they became, the more Jews they murdered.

The great river Danube was a natural border and the combined German-Hungarian army prepared their defense along it. On 25 October 1944 (my birthday) Miklos Horthy, the Hungarian Regent (Hungary was still a monarchy) declared the end of Hungary's involvement by laying down arms. The steel factory gates opened and happy music played. We were informed that the war was over, that we were free to go. There was great celebration and relief, but regretfully, this did not last long. With a friend, Bandi Szilágyi, I went to the only place I knew I would feel safe, to the home of Sanyi Csicsics and his family. I received a big welcome and we went on celebrating.

Late the next day the radio started blaring Nazi songs again and announced that Hitler's troops had once again taken over the city and given much more power to the Hungarian Arrow Cross. All of Hungary was virtually collapsing, though at the time we could not claim to be witness to this development.

The next morning my friend Sanyi went out, returning white as a ghost. He told us he expected to be arrested again any minute. He had found another friend who was prepared to take the risk of hiding me, but it was not my friend Bandi. Sanyi gave me the address and said I should leave at once. I had a giant red triangular shawl I had knitted in school, which seemed like a hundred years ago. I wound it around my head as it was late October and very cold. Also, I mistakenly believed no one would recognise me.

I did not get very far before I ran into a very anti-Semitic gatekeeper from the steelworks. He greeted me with a tirade of anti-Semitic curses and dragged me by the arm, shouting: "you bloody communist Jew!" (According to the enemy, Jews were all communists.) "I know what your kind can do," he continued. "I hated your father for doing so much for the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions. I will see you dead! You will see!"

Meanwhile, he forced me along the road, all the way to the police station.

At that infamous place I was questioned for several hours. "Why were you wandering the streets? What were your intentions? How come you left the labour camp?" There was no taking into consideration the events of the past couple of days. "We know your parents were stupid socialists, out to destroy the new system. We will deal with you, you rotten Jew!"

After some hours of agony, a prison van materialised and I was pushed into it with much force. It was pitch dark. I could hardly see beyond my nose. I could not see my companions or where we were heading. We had a jerky ride, stopping every so often to collect more unfortunate Jews picked up on the boulevards of Budapest.

Finally, in what appeared to be the middle of the night, we arrived at the infamous Marko Street jail. There was more questioning, more beatings. Some hours went by until I was dragged into one of the cells, which was already full of prostitutes. My torturer's final remark was: "Early in the morning we will put an end to your miserable life."

I landed in the lap of one of the elderly "ladies of the night." They could not have been nicer to me, cuddling my poor battered body and wiping my tears. My mind was

racing. How had I got myself into this position? If only my mother were here to cuddle up to. Where is my beloved father? I could not see any hope, but tried preaching to myself: "Alice! Pull yourself together! You are known to be such an optimist, so where did your courage go?" Finally I fell into a sleep of utter exhaustion.

Every time I woke up there was one single thought racing through my mind: "I am so young! I want to live and they won't let me! There is so much to life. I am a good person and this evil mob wants to take it all away!" Maybe this thought was blinding me to other thoughts. I could not accept what I had been told, that I would be shot in the morning.

HELEN LAWNER

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Helen Lawner. *Surviving the Warsaw Ghetto: A Three Generational Perspective (Reflections by Miriam Tisher and Her Children)*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2006, pp. 34–41, 43–46. Used by permission.

Life in the Warsaw Ghetto presented risks every day, in myriad ways, and yet people managed to find ways of staying alive if the opportunity presented itself. The portents were never good, with massive overcrowding, poor food and not much of it, disease, and the periodic depredations of the Nazis. In one sense, given this, it was left largely up to the ghetto residents to get on with the process of managing the ghetto on their own. So long as they were productive, they might still have a chance of surviving, so finding suitable work in the ghetto was an ongoing quest. Helen Lawner writes here that periodic "selections" often meant death through deportation to Treblinka, and that, therefore, efforts were made continually to find a way out before that eventuated. The account here actually mentions a transport to Treblinka, and how it was that the residents of the Warsaw Ghetto knew what went on there.

In 1940, on Yom Kippur, the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw was established. It consisted of a big ghetto and a small one, joined by a pull-up pedestrian bridge. There was an area under the bridge where Jewish people were not allowed to stay. The Nazis, the Ukrainians and the Jewish policemen guarded all the entrances to the ghetto. They shot at anybody who tried to get out without an official pass.

Soon after, the Nazis put up very high brick walls all around the ghetto, making it still harder for all of us. There was little food inside the ghetto and every morning I could see corpses on the street. The epidemic of typhoid killed the young and the old. It was sometimes a “blessing” when a case of typhoid occurred within a block of flats, because then the Germans avoided coming near so as not to catch the sickness, and for a while all the other inhabitants lived in peace.

There were many so-called shops (slave factories) within the ghetto. To name a few: Toebens, Schultz, Hofmans, Nuss and Brushmakers, where we were employed, meaning myself with my husband, his parents and two sisters (one married to Ignac) and their little daughter, Naomi.

My parents, my brother with his wife and my sister belonged to the Nuss group. Their work was to sort out iron-ware, hardware, scrap iron, etc. It was a hard job but my brother, Marek, was employed there to carry the goods out of the ghetto and on the way back he had a chance to smuggle some food into the ghetto in his trousers without being checked on.

Most of the factories employed women who knew how to sew and they worked on sewing machines. At the “Brush” factories I had to quickly learn how to make brushes and to my surprise, after only a few days of work, a supervising German declared that I was the best and quickest brushmaker. What an honour!!! . . .

We were not allowed to go out of the ghetto at all and the cruel Ukrainians and Latvians made sure of that. Every few days, people were taken away to the Umschlag Platz in Stawki Street, where the cattle trains waited for new victims to go to the infamous concentration camps. Unfortunately many died from hunger and suffocation during the long horrible journey without water or food. In the ghetto we used so-called rickshaws to travel around and for the boys on the bikes hooked up to the rickshaws, it was also a means of earning a bit of money.

I will never forget 6 September in 1942 when we were all woken up in the middle of the night and ordered to gather in the square formed by four streets: Geşia, Smoka, Niska and Zamenhofa. A selection was to take place between five and seven in the morning. We decided that my husband’s parents would stay back, hidden in the Brushmakers shop and the rest of us would go. My family at the Nuss shop decided that my sister, Lola, would go into hiding with our parents, but my brother and his beautiful wife, Hela, would come out.

Everybody was so confused and frightened, especially the older people. I remember when, at this difficult time waiting at the square for selection, Mrs Prylucka, the headmistress of the college I had graduated from in 1937, approached me with tears in her eyes, asking for help. I just did not know what to tell her since I was in the same situation and nobody could do anything to help anybody there, as we were all in the same terrible danger.

Soon after the selection started, somebody let us know that all the people from the Nuss shop were straight away being put on the train to Treblinka because the Nazis had decided that there were not too many people in this group worth worrying about. So, with one finger, the notorious Gubernator Frank showed them all to the left, which meant going on the train to Treblinka. I burst into tears and could not stop crying, when all of a sudden the Brushmakers were ordered to be ready for selection. My husband pleaded with me to stop crying and to be brave and courageous in the front line, to face Frank, with his riding whip, and to look straight into his cold eyes. I managed to do it, but just before Frank lifted his finger up to the right, Adek moved his one foot a little bit forward, being anxious to get it over with, because of my wet eyes. Frank noticed that and in anger whipped my husband, splitting his forehead and then stopped for a few minutes and angrily looked at Adek. But, supposedly, only because my husband did not move his head and did not show any reaction to the pain of his forehead, we finally got the order to turn right and we were safe. It was a miracle.

Over 1,000 men and women returned to the Brushmakers shop. . . .

Marek and Hela were taken to Treblinka death camp. At the time, nobody knew that the transports were going straight to the gas chambers. Marek and Hela, two young healthy and good-looking people, decided to approach an elderly German, telling him that they were both good, experienced farmers and would be pleased to work as such. The German did not answer, and there was straightaway an order for men and women to part. So they did. Luckily a working man who knew my brother called him by his name and told him not to take his shoes off but to lean down next to him and to do what he was doing, namely, sort out clothing.

Marek followed him and after a little while, to his horror, he picked up a white blouse with photos in the pocket and said to his friend that it was his wife’s blouse and their photos. He wondered how it was possible? His friend informed him that his wife had already been gassed. My brother was terribly shocked, as nobody knew at the time that Treblinka was a

death camp and not a labour camp. He said to the friend that if this was the case he would not spend one night there. He decided to escape straightaway, which he did. Whilst he was putting the chloroformed victims' clothes onto the train back to Warsaw, he immediately decided not to fill up one wagon and instead slipped in and hid under the clothes. A few other boys did the same thing. Before the train started to move, the Nazis checked the wagons but did not worry about the ones that were not filled up. The boys were safe.

Just before approaching the capital, Marek jumped from the train and made his way back to Warsaw. He visited his Christian friends in the evening to make a decision about what to do. A lady friend, a professional cosmetician, bleached Marek's hair and asked him to stay the night with them. Marek thanked the people, but refused the hospitality, for their sake. He decided to get on the roofs of Warsaw's buildings at night, to check whether there was any life left in the ghetto.

Early in the morning, he noticed some people moving around, so he got down from the roof and eventually met up with our sister and our parents, who were out of their hiding place. The next day he rang Adek and myself to let us know what had happened and asked us to tell everybody the truth that Treblinka was a concealed death camp and not a labour camp. As it happened Marek was *the first person* to inform the Jewish people about it.

Meanwhile, at the Brushmakers shop after selection, a few of our boys, mostly in the family, decided that the only way to eventually survive would be to get out of the ghetto and make some connection with the Christians outside. To make it more possible and less dangerous, they thought of building an underground tunnel. It seemed to be a crazy idea, but things were getting worse and more people were disappearing and we were losing all hope of survival.

The initiator of it all was Ignac Bursztyn, my husband's brother-in-law, a very wise man with an open mind. He told his brother Adam and my husband, Adek, about it in great secrecy. Adam was extremely clever with his hands and had a good knowledge of carpentry. The three men made a pact of trust, decided to involve a few friends to help and vowed that no wives nor sisters nor anybody else would be told about it. The work started. Every night in the dark the boys would disappear, coming back before daylight. They worked underground for a few weeks, night after night, and made brushes for the Nazis during the day.

I did not know where Adek was disappearing to. At first he told me that there was some work for him to do for the Germans and this was why he was coming back so tired.

Eventually, however, as we were a young married couple and very much in love, he decided to confess to me and I promised not to say a word to anybody. After a few weeks, they finished the tunnel which was equipped with electric lights and a big plaque with all their names on it. It was a masterpiece. . . .

Soon after the tunnel was completed, Ignac got in touch with a lady named Anka, who lived alone in a little house in Krasieński Park. He promised her some money to allow our people who were trying to get out of the ghetto to spend the first night at her place. She needed money and agreed to the plan. So the boys organized the outlet of the tunnel to finish in the park, on the other side of the ghetto. . . .

The tunnel was a blessing in these terrible times. Adam's sister-in-law Stefa had already been on the other side of the ghetto, on Aryan papers, and she had contacts with some Poles who were issuing false *Kennkarten* for lots of money. When my husband and I decided to get out of the ghetto using the tunnel, we let her know and met her at Anka's place. We paid her money and signed the documents. We sent her our photos a few days before leaving, and she had our two *Kennkarten* ready for us. My husband's name became Adam Krzeczowski and mine, Stanisława Kozyra, a maid servant who disappeared off the street having left her identity card at home. . . .

We stayed with Anka a couple of days and then we went to another place that had been organized for us just opposite the ghetto. Janek had a big flat at our disposal, and he was ready to accommodate the rest of our family as well as some friends. So, slowly, a few more people came out and joined us there. . . .

On 5 August 1942, the Nazis invaded the well-known Jewish Orphanage in Warsaw. I remember the terrible shock to the remaining Jews in the ghetto. They surrounded the streets Wielka, Sosnowa, Śliska and Złota in the small ghetto where the orphanage was. The SS men were accompanied by Ukrainians and members of the Jewish ghetto police. The children were given fifteen minutes to get ready. It was eight o'clock in the morning. The Nazis yelled, "*Alle Juden raus*" whilst blowing whistles. The children came down and lined up.

Doctor Janusz Korczak, the head of the orphanage, led the procession with their green flag in his hand, whilst nurses in their uniforms and teachers joined in. They all marched together despite the fact that Doctor Korczak had been given the option to stay back. The 200 children were singing all the way to the Umschlag Platz in Stawki Street where they were to get onto the train which would take them to the Treblinka death camp. We all cried bitterly.

CELIA LEDERMAN

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Celia Lederman. *Becoming Celia: The Story of Hafilng* 46996. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, pp. 29–33. Used by permission.

Celia Lederman was a prisoner at Majdanek, the infamous concentration and death camp established by the Nazis in Poland. She survived there longer than most, exploited as slave labor doing “useless work” in which she spent her time “dragging stones from one place to another and then dragging them back again.” Her account evokes much that seemed characteristic of concentration camp existence: harsh treatment, a regimented lifestyle, little chance of survival, and the uncertainty of any form of permanency. Without any hint that it was coming, Celia and her comrades, after nine months or so at Majdanek, were moved to Auschwitz—where her ordeal was to begin afresh.

We travelled for about one day and a night, stopping and starting again. It was late at night when we arrived at Majdanek. They let us out of the wagons like dogs and we discovered we had been sleeping on coal and were covered in black soot. A lot more people died during that night. In the morning the men were separated from the women. Laibl went with the men and I experienced my first selection. Older people, children and those who looked too weak to work were sent in one direction and those who looked strong were sent in another. Of course the weak ones went straight to the crematorium.

Those of us chosen to live were made to undress and German women in uniform looked to see if we had hidden any gold or jewellery on our bodies. I had absolutely nothing. We were thrown random items of clothing and taken to barracks. I wore the same clothes all the time I was at Majdanek, though between ourselves we swapped the things we were given to get something that fit. We had wooden clogs. A big German woman in uniform with the face of a murderer stood at the entrance to the barracks and whipped us as we walked in. Some of the people in charge of us were prisoners convicted of various crimes.

We slept in bunks and there were rats running everywhere. Every day people died and the corpses were piled up outside the barracks where the rats ate them. If I see a rat today I just go berserk. I can't stand it. I can't even cope with possums because even though I know they are vegetarian they look like rats to me.

We were rostered into duties loading the corpses onto the back of carts pulled by horses. It was a good job because we could remove any good clothing. We never left the bodies completely naked and shared what we took with whoever needed something. I stayed in the same barracks the whole time I was in Majdanek.

It was the usual camp nightmare, with *Appel* (roll-call) every morning, during which we stood for hours and hours in rain, wind and snow. Many people collapsed. *Appel* was always before sunrise, sometimes hours before sunrise. We could never wash ourselves or our clothes properly. Sometimes we managed to wash our underwear in a puddle somewhere and put it back on wet. This constant dirt led to open sores on our bodies. Although one of our duties was to keep the barracks clean, we were all covered in lice.

There were regular outbreaks of typhus in Majdanek but because I had overcome it in the ghetto I must have gained immunity and didn't get it again. The soup we got in the evenings was mostly water with a few vegetables, mostly turnips. Today I can't even look at a turnip, nor can I stand any dirt or untidiness.

One day, a few months after we arrived, I saw Laibl working on the other side of the wire fence. I called out to him and he waved back at me. Next thing I saw a *Kapo* (Jewish guard) step up behind him and hit him very hard on the head. I saw blood pouring down Laibl's face and thought he had been killed. I screamed and the *Kapo* on my side of the fence told me to shut up. From that moment I was convinced my brother was dead.

At Majdanek I was forced to do useless work, dragging stones from one place to another and then dragging them back. If we didn't work fast enough we were beaten. We worked at different sites, some of them a few kilometres from the camp so we had to walk there and back. If I went to get some water I was whipped across the back or shoved with a rifle butt. If someone died at work the body had to be carried back to be counted, to prove to those in charge that no one had run away. The *Kapos* had to account for every person.

There was a selection about two months after we arrived, during which they took a young girl away from her mother. The mother began to scream so they said, “*Verfluchte Judin!* (Filthy Jewess!) You can go with her!” There were selections all the time. It was so bad. We were so terribly hungry, covered in sores and almost wishing to die.

On the other hand I kept a light in my heart that I would meet up with my family. I had no idea anything had happened to them at Treblinka, as we knew nothing of the death

camps. New transports arrived in Majdanek constantly, sometimes weekly, sometimes every two days, sometimes dozens in one day. We were always looking to see if there was anyone from our family among the crowd.

We came back from work one day and were all holding our dirty little tin soup bowls and waiting for the soup to be brought to the barracks, when suddenly there was an order: “*Antreten!*” (Report!) They announced they were taking us away. The railway station was right at the camp and once again we were herded into cattle trucks. I was hoping to be with the girls I had become close to, but that wasn’t possible.

The train left that night and stopped at smaller camps where more Jews were packed into the wagons. We could barely breathe it was so crowded and people died in the wagons.

I spent about nine or ten months in Majdanek. . . .

We arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau in the morning, to be greeted with a selection led by the infamous Dr Mengele. He stood at the famous gate with *Arbeit Macht Frei* (Work sets you free) written above it, a slim elegant man with a monocle on a chain, high patent-leather boots and the uniform of a high-ranking officer. I can never forget that image of him. Mengele was the judge of life. He gave it and he took it away.

I don’t know how many people there were in our transport, more than a thousand, maybe two thousand. It was a sea of desperate people. An orchestra was playing as he sent people either to the left or right. As usual those sent to the left went straight to the crematorium. I was young and healthy and went to the right.

DES LEE

Context: Central Europe

Source: Des Lee. *I Had Nothing to Lose: A Life of Ups and Downs*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library 2010, pp. 38–41. Used by permission.

Des Lee (born Lévi Deszö) was a Hungarian Jewish boy from the city of Debrecen. In this account, he describes the establishment of a ghetto after the arrival of the Nazis in 1944, told from the standpoint of a perceptive 11-year-old witness-participant. He describes his understanding of ghetto life, the ways in which people tried to accommodate themselves to the changed circumstances, and, in tiny ways, to resist the Nazi impositions. At this stage of the war, he notes, the feeling was

that after the war “everyone would go back home and live a normal way of life again.”

On 20 March 1944 German soldiers entered Debrecen. We saw them with their tanks and motorcars and their big boots. It was very frightening. From 31 March we were forced to wear a yellow star sewn onto the front of our clothes. Jews who had converted to Christianity in the mistaken belief this would save them had to wear white armbands.

A few weeks later the Jewish area in the middle of Debrecen, around Jozsef Herzög Utca, was closed off and made into a ghetto. Although it was May, I remember the weather was still cold. The Hungarian Csendő, along with just a few Germans, pushed all the Jews of Debrecen into this area. We brought along some mattresses and simple household goods but had to leave everything else behind. We walked to the ghetto pushing handcarts with our things piled up on them.

My parents were very strong and stoic, just accepting whatever events arose. The chief rabbi of Debrecen, Rabbi Pal Weisz, had always sworn that nothing would happen to us, but my father knew this was not true.

Until this point we had lived in a flat by ourselves, but now we had to share a couple of rooms with other families in a big apartment building. Uncle Jenő came with us. Everyone slept on mattresses on the floor and my mother cooked for all the people in the flat. She constantly thought about food and preserved whatever she could for the winter months, such as fruit and vegetables. She had brought all her preserves with us to Debrecen, including the precious goose fat. Anyú had brought so much food we had to leave some of it behind in the flat. We were probably much better off than many other families in the ghetto and the people who were in our apartment were really very lucky to be with my mother. She was a first class cook. Everybody in the ghetto had something to eat because they had stocked up and brought food with them.

As the ghetto was established within the Jewish neighbourhood of Debrecen, there was a Jewish school in the middle and a *shul* beside it. Most of the children in the ghetto attended the school. The regular classes were conducted in Hungarian and we also learned Hebrew.

We young children still had our school life and I was in training with the physical education teacher. I was a chubby boy. My uncle Feri had been a champion wrestler and even got a medal from the Governor of Hungary, Miklos Horthy. Our physical education teacher was an ex-European wrestling champion who had been in the 1936 Olympics and had

trained with my uncle. He set up a gymnastics club in the basement and taught us how to wrestle. We loved it!

Ghetto life wasn't easy but we were alright, mainly because my mum was so capable. At first there were only a few thousand people in the ghetto but as time went on more and more Jews arrived and were just crammed in together, with three families to a flat. We were living right on top of each other.

My favourite teacher at this school was Mrs Stern. I have never forgotten her name because she treated me so nicely. I was her favourite, too, possibly because her family was short of food and I was able to supply her with a little. She survived the Holocaust and ended up teaching in Israel.

There was a Jewish Council in the ghetto, known as the Zsido Tanács, as well as a Jewish police force made up of ex-soldiers. They tried to keep everything stable and the ghetto clean. They had special orders from the Germans about how they were to look after everything. We still had a few business opportunities and there was plenty of racketeering on the black market. Our family had plenty of cash but I saw other people selling jewellery for just a small amount of food. There were the usual stories about swapping a mink coat for potatoes, a gold watch for bread. My father was a very heavy smoker and he would give anything for cigarettes. He had a good smuggling system for obtaining them while we were in Debrecen.

On 7 June 1944 the ghetto was sealed and my parents begged me not to go outside. There was a wall built all around the ghetto, part of it was in brick but other parts were wood and wire. We young cheeky boys crawled under the fence at a couple of different spots which we then carefully closed up again. We bought potatoes in the shops, where of course they overcharged us. We had to pay whatever they asked, but it didn't matter because we had plenty of money, thanks to trading on the black market. The main things we smuggled back in were potatoes and we were very careful to keep away from the Csendör. I used to sneak out with Pista Klein and some of his friends. I think my father used to sneak out too. The ghetto police didn't know what was going on.

People from the Zsido Tanács ran a ghetto kitchen where they cooked soup and some potatoes. My father was involved in cooking there, so we had a little bit extra. We had a family tradition of "all for one and one for all" that lasted throughout our lives. If I found food I always brought it back to share with everyone.

Our family managed but not everybody did. The old people died and their bodies were taken away on handcarts. That was the first time I ever saw a dead body. There was a

cemetery not too far from the ghetto and those people may have even had a proper Jewish burial. I don't really know. Babies were also being born in the crowded rooms, but there were plenty of Jewish doctors and nurses to help. More and more Jews from many different places were being pushed into the ghetto and the rooms became more and more crowded.

At about six or seven o'clock in the evening I listened to the radio with Pista Klein, who was full of courage. Radios were completely banned for Jewish people by this time and we had to be extremely careful. We listened to the British World Service in Hungarian, called *Angolrádio*.

By this time I was nearly eleven years old. For the past few years I had been listening to what people were saying about what was going on. We heard about death camps, but it was only rumour. We couldn't really believe that this was going on and wanted to survive until all the chaos was over. Already people were saying the Americans and the Russians were not very far away. Everybody believed in the *Moschiach* (*Messiah*) and that we would be protected. We prayed in the ghetto at the *shul* beside the school. We lived two houses away from the chief rabbi, Rabbi Pal Weisz, who tried to console his community. Nobody believed anything would happen to us other than that they would probably take us to labour camps to work. After the war everyone would go back home and live a normal life again. That was the general feeling and the common belief.

HELEN LEPERERE

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Helen Leperere. *Memories and Reflections*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2002, pp. 29–35. Used by permission.

Fourteen-year-old Helen Leperere was a Polish girl from Sosnowiec. In January 1941 she was forcibly removed from her family and transported to the Gabersdorf labor camp in Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland. Here, Jewish women were forced to work at local privately owned textile factories. By March 1944 the camp became a subcamp of the much larger complex of Gross-Rosen; it was liberated on May 6–7, 1945. Helen's account tells of her arrest and deportation, together with her arrival at the camp and orientation to its regime. It provides an insight into the otherworldliness of the concentration camp and is an important testimony from one who was

a young girl wrenched from her family and thrust into this thoroughly alien environment.

It is difficult for me to recollect precisely the first moments in the camp. I am trying hard to go over the first steps again and again but my memory fails me. There are so many blank spots. Fifty-eight years have passed—and that in itself would justify losing track of the events of so many years ago. But with me, it is not just the length of time; it is as though I would like to erase from my mind all that has happened to me. But I am getting old and it is time to put history into writing. Perhaps memory will guide my hand deeper into the past.

So . . . it really happened and in my family home, where I felt secure and protected. On a winter's night, in January 1941, a horrible banging at the door woke us up. A banging with rifles, yelling and kicking with boots. My mother moved fast. Immediately she ordered Bronia and my father to hide. Every household has a hiding place. Ours was an invisible opening concealed behind a normal wall in the bathroom. The banging on the door became quite frantic now, the screaming even louder.

Mother opened the door and two S/S men with rifles jumped in like wild dogs, shouting Bronia's name to come out. I said to my mother that I would go in her place. My devastated father agreed, saying that children would surely be sent back home at once. I was 14 years of age. I dressed myself warmly in woolen scarves and Natek's snow-boots, his only Barmitzvah present from our parents. This boy, whom I believed to be so spoilt by my parents, was now opening his heart and offering his most prized possession to me. The enormous despair in my parents' eyes, Maniusia's tears running down her pale face, haunts me still. This is how I remember them. I never saw any of them again. Never. Ever. Except my father once more from a distance.

"Escorted" by the two tall S/S soldiers with rifles on their shoulders, I was out on the street covered with deep, white snow. It was a beautiful frosty night, with clear sky and lots of crisp snow. Snow can be very beautiful and peaceful. But it can also be very frightening. Like when it combines with the sound of heavy boots marching on the snow . . . crisp, crisp . . . crackle, crackle. . . . Whenever I see snow on paintings or films, I hear the sound of those awful boots worn by the two S/S. Two tall soldiers with rifles escorting one 14-year-old-girl.

We were soon joined by other groups of bewildered young women and girls and were ordered to form groups of five abreast and march "*Schnell, schnell* (fast, fast)." Orders were

barked with occasional pushes with rifles. We arrived at a three storey building in Skladowska Street. This school was now transformed into a segregation point. That was at the beginning, because later the Germans did not bother with this way of "resettling." They simply caught people off the street and sent them away, to Auschwitz mainly. Thus the destruction of our people was conducted at a much quicker pace.

Chaos and commotion greeted us at the entrance to the school. Orders were shouted in German. We were pushed and screamed at and ordered to walk fast up to the third floor. The door was unlocked in a huge hall room, empty of furniture, but packed with women squeezed in like sardines. We were pushed and pushed until we were all in. Standing room only! Then the door slammed behind us. Women were sobbing and moaning all around us. Buckets were placed under the walls, which gave out suffocating smells.

Slowly the dawn began to appear and some daylight entered the hall. A commotion was heard from the street below. We heard names of people shouting to us, calling us. Our families stood in large crowds on the ground, trying desperately to call names of their loved ones inside, or trying to catch a glimpse of them. Inside everybody was struggling to get to the window. I was one of those who managed to fight through and get to the window. I was sure that my family would all be there. It was my poor father, standing all alone and looking, looking up searching for me. I kept shouting and trying to tell him: "Do not worry about me, I will be fine, I can work."

I think and hope he heard me, for he waved his hand. But he could not utter a word. In that one night he looked so much older and greyer. On the next day, I received a note from him, which he smuggled in through a Jewish policeman he knew. In that note he told me that the reason mother did not come to see me was because she was running around trying to bribe, pay, beg, anything to get me out.

It also told me to do everything I was ordered to and to look after myself and they would do all that is humanly possible to bring me back home.

We were kept at this school for about three days and nights. We were given no food, but some water and some watery soup. Standing all the time. Some were lucky to get a small spot on the floor and were able to sit, until they were kicked or pushed by others who fought for the place and thus were forced to get up. Loud barking greeted us at dawn of the fourth day: "*Raus, raus, schnell, schnell*" (out, out, fast, fast)! These words were to become very familiar for the next few years. Again we were ordered to form groups of five abreast

and march. Fast, faster! Some women had to be held from both sides, as they were half dead from the ordeal of the last few days.

We arrived at a train station that I had never seen before, as it was used for commercial transports only. Large cattle trains were lined up, their doors open wide. Again the familiar yelling and pushing until we were all in. Finally the doors were slammed behind us. Darkness again. Somehow my wagon was not so terribly overcrowded. We managed to take turns in sitting on the floor. I do not remember how long the journey lasted. Some women said it was five days, but it seemed like five years. We were of course unaware of the destination. But we all longed for the journey to be over, regardless of where it ended. Anything would be better than this dark, stinking wagon. Later I found that much worse is possible.

We were let out at some intervals to relieve ourselves, in the presence of S/S guards, and to collect our meagre rations of bread and water. Icicles were our saviours. Finally the train stopped. A lot of voices were heard from outside. After a very long time, the doors were unbolted. Familiar shouts and pushing. "Out, faster!" The barking of human voices was this time mixed with those of real dogs. Again, five abreast and march faster, faster! Deep snow was all around us. The trees and shrubs were thickly covered with snow. It was a beautiful picturesque scene, a valley surrounded by mountains.

Suddenly loud shrieks: "*Halt!*" Stop! We arrived in front of huge barracks, surrounded by barbed wire. A few German women in uniforms were standing awaiting us, legs apart, hands behind, their heads proudly held up, sarcastic smiles on their faces. How can such pretty, young women display such hatred on their faces, such mean looks in their eyes? We were to be at their mercy for the next few years. The place was called Gabersdorf. It was situated in Sudetenland, which was once Czechoslovakia and had now been annexed by the Germans.

It was January 1941. We were liberated by the Russians in May 1945.

During those years, women came and disappeared, "resettled." The sick and the old were sent to Auschwitz, also the "punished" ones, for crimes such as stealing a little food. Life in the camp began.

For a "welcome" we received the first taste of *Appel* (assembly). We had to stand to attention and listen to a speech in German, delivered by the *Lager Fuhrer* (camp leader). She was a highly-strung, unbalanced woman with long, black hair. We called her *Schwartzte Laya* (Black Laya).

She amused herself by chasing women into the barracks after we came back from a 12 hour-work day and she would have a bucket in her hand with which she would blindly hit us right, left and centre, yelling out: "*Laufen, schnell* (run, faster!)." I was very proud and vowed not to run and hide from her. The result was, of course, that I copped quite a few whacks on my head, after which I would cry half the night. It was not so much from the pain, but the loss of dignity. The girls laughed at me and called me stupid, they urged me to run and run. She called me *die Stolze* (the proud one). But my pride would not permit me to run. I walked with my head high, vulnerable to the whacks with the bucket that she bestowed with will. The foolishness of youth!

In her daily spectacle she would repeat over and over again that we were here to work, work. The lazy ones would be punished. Fortunately she was replaced after a while, as the higher German authorities must have realized that she was very unbalanced and incapable of running anything. We always suspected that the German guards complained about her and she was forced to resign.

After her "maiden" speech we were ordered into the barracks and allocated to our dormitories. We got our double decker beds, with thin straw mattresses, and one thin blanket each. It was winter, January, when frost painted the windows in the unheated barracks, but by then we were beyond feeling anything.

We just collapsed on the beds, me wearing Natek's snow boots. I do not remember what happened to them afterwards. Later on, as the camp started to fill with more incoming transports of women, we were forced to share our narrow bed with another woman. I do not remember if it was night or day for it was still dark outside. I remember the horrible shriek of the *Elteste* (the oldest). She was a Jewish woman called the oldest, not because of her age, but her position. "*Aufstehen* (get up)!" Shivering, we had to stand at the assembly. The "oldest" was the one who counted us and reported to the camp leader. This woman was extremely rough and particularly disliked me from the first moment. Power tends to turn ordinary people into villains.

Women were needed to scrub floors in the long corridors of the barracks. Why she picked me, I do not know—me and another young girl, Guta, a pretty 17-year-old. She ordered us to fetch the bucket with water, gave us each a small nail-brush and a rag and yelled: "Scrub, but fast!" Needless to say, we were quite hopeless. Every few minutes she would come to us and kicked the bucket of water with her boots, screaming: "Is this what you call clean? Scrub, scrub, faster, faster." We noticed that the camp leader was standing at the end of

the corridor with a nasty smirk on her face. I no longer recall how the ordeal finished. This incident completely broke my spirits for a while. I started to walk like a zombie, dragging my legs. I even gave up rations of bread to other women in exchange for them washing my underwear—we still possessed some at that time. I just cried and cried.

Then a girl I never knew before, from a different town even, stepped in. “Listen here,” she said in a stern voice, “This place is not for crying. We are here to work. You are not going to give up food for someone to wash your underwear, you are going to wash it yourself.” She watched over me like a guardian angel all through the years in camp, and thus my life-long friendship with Pola began.

FANNY LESSER

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Fanny Lesser. *Lives Entwined: Fanny and Max Lesser, Holocaust Survivors*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2007, pp. 32–38. Used by permission.

Fanny Lesser, one of eight children in her family, was born in Czechoslovakia. In 1944 she and her family were sent from the Chust (Khust) ghetto, then under Hungarian rule, to Auschwitz. They were among the five thousand or so ghetto inhabitants who were deported in four transports in late May and early June of that year. Most were sent directly to the gas chambers of Auschwitz, but a few, such as Fanny, managed to stay alive as a result of being sent on further. In this memoir, Fanny describes these and other developments until she was selected by Dr. Josef Mengele for slave labor and deportation with 300 other women to Weisswasser, a Nazi labor camp, later in 1944.

The freight cars we traveled in were closed cars with no toilets. The toilet was a hole in the floor to use to go to the bathroom but only when the train was moving. We were on this train for quite a few days. We had only the food we had brought. We had no water. I have no idea how people managed. Every time the train stopped, people would scream: “Water! Water!” The SS would then spray the train with water, tantalizing us.

Whenever the train stopped between Chust and Auschwitz-Birkenau, the SS used to come and holler, “If you have any gold or money, surrender it now. They will kill you,

when you get there, if you still have money or gold.” At every stop people gave the SS their jewelry and money.

Grandfather Noah and Grandmother Ethel, my mother’s parents, were with us. Grandfather had sold a cow for 300 pengars. My father said to him, “Noah, give us the money. We have to tear it up and throw it out.” Grandfather would reply, “We have to have money. What will we do when we arrive at this place? We need to buy food for the little ones.” My father became very stern with him, saying, “Noah, you have to give us the money. You see what is happening.” He finally gave the money to my father. We chewed it up into little pieces and threw it down the toilet hole.

The last stop! What it was, was Auschwitz! . . .

When we arrived at Auschwitz, the doors opened and I saw many SS officers with their dogs. I also saw boys in striped uniforms; I didn’t know then that they were our own people. The SS told us to get out of the freight car. I had my little sister, Ruhala, on my arm. One boy in a striped uniform came over to me and said, “Whose baby is that?” I answered, “My mother’s.” He told me, “Give the baby to your mother.” I thought, “Why is he saying this?” I gave Ruhala to my mother. I stayed with my cousin, Blanka, who was on our transport.

We got out of the freight car and they took us to the right. We were not allowed to turn around. I never saw my mother or Ruhala again. A friend told me that she had seen my father and older brothers alive after the selection. I prayed to G-d that they would survive.

Sarah—I never saw her again. She didn’t come with Blanka and me. Solomon was in line with my father and two older brothers, but he saw Mommy and insisted on going with her. Lea was young, so she went with my mother, as did Yosef and Ruhala. My sisters—Sarah and Lea—and my brothers, Yosef and Solomon, all were murdered, as well as my mother’s parents.

My uncles and aunts were in other ghettos, such as the Munkacs ghetto. My father had four sisters; three sisters from Munkacs died with all their families. In Korosmezo, another of my father’s sisters and a brother survived. This sister, Suri (Sarah), lost two children but after the war found her husband and had two more children that she named after the two that had been murdered—Zipporah and Moishe—now in Israel. My cousin Blanka survived with her three sisters: Ruska, Suri, and Helen, but her mother and father and four younger children died in Auschwitz. My father also had brothers with so many children that did not survive. My mother’s brother, Alex, who had married in 1940, survived in Budapest, Hungary, but his wife died in Auschwitz. He is still alive and living in Florida.

With the deportations from Hungary, the role of Auschwitz-Birkenau as an instrument in the German plan to murder the Jews of Europe achieved its highest effectiveness. Between late April and early July 1944, approximately 440,000 Hungarian Jews were deported, around 426,000 of them to Auschwitz. The SS sent approximately 320,000 of them directly to the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau and deployed approximately 110,000 at forced labor in the Auschwitz concentration camp complex. The SS authorities transferred many of these Hungarian Jewish forced laborers within weeks of their arrival in Auschwitz to other concentration camps in Germany and Austria.

After our selection at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the SS led us to a big hall. They shaved us everywhere. They made us stand nude for a long time until we had received the clothes they gave out. We were unrecognizable. I was not tattooed, although my brothers were. I got a number but I don't remember what it was. Then we walked to Birkenau that was only a few kilometers away. There we went to Block (Street) C to Barrack Sixteen. There were thirty-two barracks in Camp C, two of which were washrooms.

In Block C everyday selections occurred but in different barracks. Every day people were selected to go to work or to go to death. When I came into the barracks, I did not know about the gas chambers but there were girls who had been in Auschwitz since 1942 and 1943. They told us right away: "Don't think about if you have a mother or a father. All are dead!" I was fourteen years old. I cried. I still did not believe what they were saying.

They gave us very little food, watery coffee and soup, and a small piece of bread. We were always hungry. Every night we talked about cooking and baking. We were going to bake huge loaves of bread and never peel potatoes so we wouldn't waste even the peels.

In Block C, my cousin Blanka met this *Kapo*, Peter, a Polish prisoner, who cooked for the SS. He told Blanka that he would give her some food. I used to go to Peter, and he would give me a tin container of soup or stew. By the time I reached my barrack with this container, I had given away nearly all of the food; Blanka and I had hardly anything.

One day I said to Peter, "Oy! The cherries are in season. I love cherries." Soon after, Peter went to Krakow and brought back cherries for us. Oh, my G-d! I remember how they tasted.

Even raw potatoes—if we could find one—tasted like the best dessert.

Before this the International Red Cross had come in and the SS had showed them how well they were treating the

prisoners. "Why there is even a Czech family camp!" the SS told the Red Cross. The Red Cross never got off the lorries (trucks). The Nazi propaganda seemed to fool the Red Cross. However, they had killed them all, just as they had done to those in the Gypsy camp.

Dr. Mengele selected us. Mengele came every day and did the selections. Mothers and daughters were not supposed to be together. It was a law to separate families. People hid their relationships. My cousin, Blanka, and I were always together; this was dangerous.

Another danger was pregnancy. I remember a girl, Miriam, from the same city as my cousin Blanka. The *aelteste* (barrack leader) kept asking us, "Is Miriam pregnant? If she is, we will all be in trouble." Blanka answered her, "No! She does not even understand what pregnant is." But Miriam was pregnant, although she didn't know it—she was so innocent. Soldiers had raped her and she had a baby in the barracks. My cousin had learned to be a nurse and had worked in a hospital. She delivered the baby boy. Miriam was surprised when she saw the baby. He was a big boy but stillborn. I put him in a pail and went to the toilet and buried him. I had to do this to protect Miriam and the rest of the women in the barracks. Miriam survived and later lived in Israel.

Another case of a pregnant woman occurred in another barrack. One group consisting of four sisters and a cousin were together. The oldest sister was married and pregnant. Her sisters and cousin knew the SS would get rid of any pregnant woman. I risked my life helping her to hide out during selections. We knew which barrack would go through the selection process that particular day. When I heard there would be a selection in her barrack, I used to take her into my barrack, and I went to her barrack and answered for her during roll call—*Zahlappel*. The baby was born in the *Revier* (medical clinic). Her sisters took the baby out the *Revier's* little window, took the baby to the gate, and gave the baby to Germans who said they would give the baby to German people. The sisters didn't know for sure that the baby would survive. But, for sure, they tried to save the baby. They did save the mother, and all the sisters survived.

The SS officers would have roll call and count every single morning and night. We would line up—five to a row. If the count was off, no matter what, they would count again and again. Do you know where they found the missing? They found them dead. It was not possible to escape. During the day we stayed in the yard. Sometimes we were not allowed to stand up so we had to kneel for a long time. I heard in some barracks that they had to hold bricks up in the air when they were kneeling.

After roll call, we would go to the washroom where there was running water once a day. In back of the barracks there were holes where we could have gone to the bathroom. Our stupid *aelteste*, the head of the barracks, would not let us go to the bathroom behind the barrack because then she would have to clean up the area by hosing it down. She would hit us if she caught us.

We feared even more Irma Griese, the beautiful camp leader. She would beat us for the smallest thing; when I cut off my hem and used this material for a headscarf, she saw this and beat me. During the Nuremberg Trials after the war, Griese was sentenced and hanged.

In August of 1944, Mengele selected from C Block three hundred women. He selected young ones, examining our eyes and hands. We didn't know why. We were crying because we were afraid that he was sending us to the front to the soldiers. After we were selected, we waited four weeks in B Camp, across the wires, for a transport.

This waiting for the transport was especially bad because of the conditions. We were waiting on the other side of the barbed wires for the transport. We waited four weeks to go to Mährisch-Weisswasser, one of the 97 sub-camps of the Gross-Rosen, a Nazi slave labor camp in Poland. While waiting for the transport, we had no running water. Trucks brought water that we had to catch in our hands. Early in the morning, we would go into a little stream and wash ourselves because there were no washrooms.

One morning I saw outside many nude women. They had been on a transport that was turned back because the trains had been bombed. The SS brought the women back and then took all their clothes. Nobody could go anywhere. What they did was for spite—for no reason. I gave them something to wear. Among these women I saw my cousin, also named Fanny, and Aunt Rozia. Both survived and went to Israel.

Finally one day our transport arrived. We left for Mährisch-Weisswasser, a slave labor camp, in Germany.

ALEX LEVIN

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Alex Levin. *Under the Yellow and Red Stars*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 25–29. Used by permission.

One way of evading the Nazis, adopted by many throughout Eastern Europe, was escape into the forest—the deeper, the

better. For some, this translated into the quest for acceptance into a partisan unit, though often this was denied Jews owing to an all-pervasive native antisemitism in certain regions. For other Jews, avoidance of the Nazis was compounded by a secondary avoidance of partisan groups, leading to a much-reduced third option: withdrawal into the forest and establishment of some sort of self-sufficient community. This was fraught with potentially devastating challenges, but, as Alex Levin describes in the testimony presented here, the little group of which he formed part managed to get by, albeit with tragic consequences for some of their number.

One night, after Samuel and I had been wandering for about two weeks, living hand to mouth, we saw a small campfire in the woods. When we approached it carefully we found a group of Jews we knew from Rokitno—Rachel Wasserman, Rachel's two children, Bluma and Taibele, and her sister Dosya, Dvoshil Svetchnik with her son, Haim, and daughter, Henya, Shmuel Bagel, Avraham Eisenberg and Todres Linn.

The feeling of safety that we found in our reunion was brief. That night we were awoken by noises and saw three armed men standing in front of us. They introduced themselves as partisans, gave us food and left. The next night they came back and said they could take one woman to help them out. Dosya volunteered. But we'd been deceived—we soon found out that they were actually bandits. We never learned what happened to Dosya.

This event made us really understand how desperate our circumstances were. We couldn't go back to any civilized place and it was now getting cold and we would soon be in real danger of freezing to death. We were frightened and desperate and yet within each of us was a flicker of purpose, a determination to survive whatever might come. Motivated by fierce emotions we were unable to comprehend, we went deeper into the woods.

I don't remember how it happened, who might have made the decisions, but a group of us started working together. If that hadn't happened I'm sure that Samuel and I would have died. I don't remember how the plan took shape, but we began to make a shelter in the middle of the woods, far from the perimeter where it might be found. It was a crude dugout that was to be shared by ten people—Samuel and me; Dvoshil Svetchnik, her son, Haim (now Haim Bar On) and her daughter, Henya; Rachel Wasserman and her two daughters, Bluma and Taibele; and Gil Gamulka and her son Lova (now Larry).

Both adults and children helped make this ramshackle structure; each of us contributed what we could. We began

by digging a deep hole in the soil and reinforcing it with wood and bark around the sides and edges, which we built up slightly above ground level. Over the hole, which we came to call “the cave,” we piled branches and sticks over the top to form a roof that would both serve as camouflage and protect us. We were careful to make the dugout look like a natural outcrop of bushes.

Around the sides on the inside of the dugout were crude bunk beds for sleeping. We built a simple but effective fireplace in the centre of our hiding space and left an opening above it to allow the smoke to escape. We only burned oak since it gave off little smoke; fortunately the forest was very rich in old oak trees. We dug a small well outside the cave to provide us with pure water.

We called ourselves “the forest Jews.” It was an affectionate name, something that gave us a feeling of family and togetherness. This dugout became our home. We disguised it as well as we could—in fact it was sometimes even hard for us to find it when we returned from looking for food. An unusual oak with a branch bent in a particular way served as our only marker.

Our days passed with difficulty, mostly because of our fear of being caught but also, most immediately, because of the ever-present reality of hunger. Even in this seeming chaos, however, we established some sense of routine. We would approach the outskirts of a village, see a light in a window and beg for food. We never went into the centre of a village. Our days were focused on getting food and not getting caught. We were always looking for ways to fill our stomachs. Sometimes we looked for metal cans that we could turn into lanterns to scare away wolves. We looked out for police, horses and Germans. Sometimes we’d see tire tracks from a car.

Under less desperate circumstances, living in the woods might have been an adventure, but there was no sense of adventure for us in any of this. We had lost our parents, and now hunger and death followed us constantly. We had to find wood, mushrooms, whatever food we could find. We kept having to go farther away from our cave to find what we needed.

Because we knew it was a matter of pure survival, we felt no guilt at stealing what we needed. To get beets, turnips or potatoes from farmers’ fields in winter we had to dig through the frozen ground. We learned from the wild boars how to steal potatoes without leaving any trace that people had been there. We ate the white beets and turnips that farmers grew to feed to the barn animals, digging them up from the ground or stealing them from the storage sheds. Day after day went on like this. We always had to find food. There was never

enough food. I have never forgotten what it means to be so hungry.

We had no idea what was going on in the outside world. We didn’t have access to any information—no newspapers, no electricity, no radio. But the most important thing is that we two orphans adapted to life in the wild and survived.

By the time a year had passed, our situation had somewhat improved. Although our lives were still fraught with danger and hunger, the forest became more and more our home. We had learned more and more skills that helped us survive and made us that smallest bit more comfortable. Despite the odds, we hadn’t been caught. We became more secure and hopeful, extremely resourceful and clever. Survival was not a game for us but an earnest pursuit.

We learned how to make moccasins out of oak bark steamed over the fire. Instead of socks we wrapped our feet in sacks that the peasants used to separate the buttermilk from sour clotted milk to make cottage cheese. We stole these sacks during our nightly missions, ate the cheese and used the cloth. In winter we wrapped our feet in *volosin*, a very thin and soft but warm material woven from dried hay. We learned how to use the riches of the forest to survive. We learned to identify which mushrooms and berries were poisonous and which ones were good. We picked blackberries, blueberries, cranberries and raspberries. We learned to tap birch trees for a bittersweet-tasting syrup and made cups out of birch bark to catch the sap. Sometimes my brother even managed to get some wild honey from beehives.

We were always aware of the very real dangers around us, but in addition to them, we forest wanderers were tormented by another scourge—the terrible and incessant lice. They were large and insatiable. We had them not only in our hair but under our armpits and in our groins—they crawled everywhere. The worst thing about them was the constant itching that kept us awake at night. But the forest also taught us how to get rid of them: we stripped naked and buried our clothes in anthills. The ants ate the lice and their nits. We weren’t as successful in avoiding another plague—an awful rash that spread from between our toes all over our bodies to our arms, legs, chest and even our buttocks.

Other vivid, fearful and even painful memories of our time in the forest have long stayed with me. The screams of owls, like human screams, pursued us at night. They seemed almost mystical because they were ever-present, but also, in a sense, invisible. I can still hear the sound of howling wolves and see their glittering eyes following us as they looked for prey. I remember frequent encounters with foxes and with swamp snakes when we collected tall oak saplings.

Death, too, was a real part of our life in the forest. We had to bury two people in our group. In the fall of 1942, death came for Haim's mother, Dvoshil, and his sister, Henya. Dvoshil leaned on my brother's shoulder to sleep one night and by morning she had frozen to death. Soon her daughter Henya died as well. They both died of malnutrition and hypothermia, their bodies grey and swollen, their skin cracked. We buried them in a state of shock without any real ceremony. These nightmarish images still haunt me. Seeing these members of our group perish slowly was a very profound experience for a little boy of ten. The tragedy of what I had witnessed was almost too much to bear. I was more than frightened—I was literally dumbstruck and remained silent for a long time after these deaths.

"Everything passes—and childhood, and fairytales of the woods . . . Everything passes, alas, and only the grey wolves—oh, ever so immortal—greet us along the way." These words of the poet Naum Sagalovsky describe very well our life and struggle during that time. Some of what it was like in the forest is also expressed in a poem written by a friend of mine, Fred Zolotkovsky, when he visited Rokitno with me many years later:

*These dark woods are our salvation.
Knee deep in water, yet we are alive!
Dreams preserve us.
Our dugout is the sweetest home.
Our only hope that the Germans don't rush in
All at once with a pack of dogs,
That police won't notice with trained eyes
Smoke rising through the darkness.
We all are worth only a carton of salt.
One kilogram is the price for your whole life:
Your soul, and heart, and blood
And only because you are a Jew.*

BEREK LEWKOWICZ

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Berek Lewkowicz. *A Boy from Będzin: The Last Jewish Survivor of the Small Fortress at Terezín*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Lamm Jewish Library of Australia, 2014, pp. 5–8. Used by permission.

The arrival of the Nazis into the Polish town of Będzin in early September 1939 certainly came as a shock to young

people who had never known what war could be like. And for the Jews of Będzin, this was to be no ordinary war. As Berek Lewkowicz shows in this account, not only was the arrival of the Germans an event for which "I instinctively knew there was something wrong," but within a very short space he became aware of what that "something" was: an assault against the civilians rather than a war between combatants. Seeing the Nazis target the synagogue was an incident the likes of which "has remained with me all my life."

Będzin, 9 September 1939

The sound of many heavy motor vehicles, engines roaring, split the silence of the night. Waking to that unusual noise, I instinctively knew something was wrong. As the noise of the engines died down it was replaced by the tramp of heavy boots and shouted commands in German. I jumped out of bed and peered through the curtains of my bedroom window. What I saw about 200 metres away was an indication of what was to come, the memory of which has remained with me all my life.

The dark of night had become as bright as day with the light coming from the shining headlights of ten large military trucks with canvas awnings over the roof and sides. Two trucks were parked sideways across each end of the street to form a barrier with their open rears facing into the street. Mounted on the back of these two trucks were small but powerful floodlights manned by black-uniformed SS troopers.

The remaining trucks had been positioned to make a similar barrier blocking off the streets forming this area known as *Die Alte Markt*. In the street a black Mercedes staff car was parked opposite the entrance to the synagogue.

I could see German soldiers wearing heavy black military greatcoats and black battle helmets, each displaying the insignia of the SS, the dreaded *Schutzstaffel*. They all carried weapons—some a rifle, others a machine gun. Under the direction of an SS *Scharfführer* (sergeant) they were positioning themselves in a line down the centre of each street, weapons held at the ready.

As I watched I saw an SS *Hauptsturmführer* (captain) get out of the staff car. He was wearing a black raincoat and black cap and highly polished black jackboots. I could clearly see the silver death's head badge he wore on his cap. As his greatcoat swung open I saw the double lightning flash in the silver braid on the collar of his black tunic. A man wearing the black uniform of the German *Polizei* (police) followed him out of the car.

The officer held a clipboard in his hand and was smoking a cigarette. Taking it from his mouth he looked first to the left and then to the right to see that his troops were all in position. Satisfied they were where he wanted them, he called out an order and a group of men began to unload one of the trucks.

They appeared to remove square metal boxes, each with two canvas straps attached to them. They looked like the packs I had seen farmers carrying on their backs when spraying weed-killer on their fields. I was certain that's what they were when the soldiers started strapping them onto their backs. A long rubber hose with a metal nozzle at the end was attached to each box.

The SS *Hauptsturmführer* and the policeman had been standing at the door of the synagogue. They both moved back to the other side of the street and the officer called out a single word, "*Zweig*" (Branch out). The soldiers carrying the packs each turned on the small tap attached to the pack and directed the nozzle toward the synagogue and the houses standing on each side of it. Immediately a steady jet of fuel shot out of the nozzle. The soldiers began to spray the fuel over the buildings, going from one to the next to ensure that all of them were well saturated.

I could see other soldiers, similarly burdened with packs, spraying the houses in the streets that backed onto the *shule*. As I stood at my bedroom window and watched, the strong smell of kerosene came through the open top of the window. Horror-stricken, I suddenly realised what the German soldiers were doing.

After ten minutes of spraying continually, the packs were all empty. The soldiers went back to the trucks, unhooked the tanks from their backs and replaced them in the trunks. Then they each took a rifle from the stacks in the trucks and joined their comrades already lined up in the streets. When all was ready the *Hauptsturmführer* barked out the command "*Anfang Brennen!*" (Initial burn!).

At this the *Scharführer*, standing with a small group of *Unterscharführer* (sergeants), lit the torches they were carrying and began systematically to set fire to the kerosene-drenched buildings. There was a booming roar as the fuel caught fire and the buildings began to burn ferociously. Soon the agonized cries of trapped Jews could be heard and the stench of burning flesh filled the night air. People trapped in the burning houses were breaking windows to enable the mothers to push babies and young children out into the street, so the young at least might be saved. Seeing this, a trooper waited until the child began to fall from the window then, pointing his rifle upwards, caught the small body on the point of his bayonet.

By this time the synagogue was blazing fiercely from floor to ceiling, as were the houses surrounding it. Those men still trapped in the burning buildings tried smashing down the doors to push the women and children into the street, but as soon as the Germans saw anyone getting out of a burning building they shot at them. Soon the cries of the wounded and dying could be heard everywhere, along with the laughter of the SS, who called out to each other as though it were all great fun.

Sick at heart and full of horror at what I was seeing, tears of anger and sorrow ran down my cheeks. But there was nothing I or anyone else could do. Had I shown myself in the street, or tried to help the Jews trapped in the burning buildings, there was no doubt that I too would have been shot. To this day I don't know why our apartment building was spared.

By this time *Die Alte Markt* was ablaze from one end to the other. The heart-breaking cries of the wounded and dying filled the ears of those Jews who lived just outside the area being destroyed. Still watching helplessly through a chink in the bedroom curtains, I saw the SS captain and the policeman getting back into the staff car. They were then driven to the other end of the street where the heat from the fiercely burning buildings was not so intense.

After about two hours the fires began to die down somewhat, but the sickly smell of burning flesh was still strong on the air. The cries of those still trapped had also died down. All that remained of the buildings was smouldering ruins. There was little chance that many of the Jews trapped inside could have survived. Those who managed to get outside now lay in the street, dead or dying from the bullets or bayonets of the troops placed there to prevent anyone escaping.

The staff car returned to the middle of the street, where I had a perfect view of what happened next. The captain alighted from the car and stood leaning on the bonnet. He took a silver cigarette case from the pocket of his tunic and, extracting a cigarette, placed it between his thin lips. He put the case back, took out a gold lighter from another pocket and lit his cigarette. Then he stood erect from his leaning position, tossed the lighter into the air, caught it and replaced it in his pocket.

Slowly he walked along the street looking at the bodies strewn in the road. Now and again he nudged one with the toecap of his highly polished boot. If he saw any movement or sign of life in the body he took his Luger pistol from the holster in his belt, pointed it at the head of the body at his feet and pulled the trigger. It mattered little to him whether the shot he fired was into the head of a man, woman or even

a child. If it was a Jew and the body still had life in it, that life had to be extinguished. He saw the body of a dead woman with a baby lying whimpering beside it. Without hesitating for a moment he drew his pistol and shot the baby dead.

STEFAN LORANT

Context: Before the War

Source: Stefan Lorant. *I Was Hitler's Prisoner: Leaves from a Prison Diary*. Harmondsworth (Middlesex): Penguin Books, 1939, pp. 26–34. Copyright © Stefan Lorant, 1939. Used by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

Stefan Lorant was a journalist who originally came from Hungary. In 1933, when the Nazis came to power, he was the editor of the Münchner Illustrierte Presse, a nonpolitical illustrated newspaper with the largest circulation in southern Germany. On March 12, 1933 he was arrested, and for six-and-a-half months held in "protective custody" as a political offender. This account is taken from his diary, which he kept during his imprisonment. He noted down everything that happened to him on odd scraps of paper, pocket handkerchiefs, the backs of letters, envelopes, even toilet paper. He managed to smuggle these out of the prison. The published work appeared in English about eighteen months after his release, in April 1935, under the imprint of left-wing British publisher Victor Gollancz.

Next morning—it is the 14th of March—there comes a loud knocking at my bedroom door.

"What's the matter? Who's that knocking at this unearthly hour?"

The cook's sleepy voice answers me from inside the door:

"Two men are here. They say they've come from the police. Shall I open the door to them?"

"Yes. Open the door and let them in."

It is pitch dark in my bedroom. I jump out of bed, and throw open the shutters. Day is breaking. I look at my watch. It is six o'clock.

Who can want me so early?

The police. I repeat the syllables mechanically. "The police." The police!

Suddenly I am wide awake.

"Good heavens alive, the police have come to arrest me?" I am sleepy no longer. I put on my dressing-gown, and run into my wife's room.

"Get up, the police have come."

Niura stares at me in surprise. She does not seem to understand. In a voice heavy with sleep, she asks: "What do the police want you for?"

Meanwhile the cook has admitted the two officials. It is just like a film. The elder of the two shows me his written authorisation. "We are going to make a house-search," he says solemnly. "Where do you keep your papers and documents?"

"In my study."

"We'll look through them."

I unlock my desk. The elder rummages among the letters and manuscripts, while the younger turns his attention to the books in the book-case.

An hour passes—the two men have looked through everything.

"Please get dressed," says the elder. "We shall have to search your office too. You will come with us."

"Am I under arrest?" I ask.

"No. Our orders are only to bring you up for examination."

"Are you aware that I am a foreigner, under the protection of the Hungarian consulate?"

"Yes. We know that."

"And yet you are arresting me?"

"We are not arresting you. We are simply taking you to the police station."

I go to the telephone.

"Whom are you going to ring up" cry both at once, in startled tones.

"My consul. I am going to report this matter to him."

"I can't allow that," the elder official says, pressing down the telephone rest. "We can't have the consul turning up at the police station before you get there. After we've gone, we can't stop your wife ringing up the consulate. You can't telephone now."

I go to my bedroom to dress. For a second I reflect. Wouldn't the most sensible thing be to escape?

The two officials are waiting for me in the library. I am alone in my bedroom. I can easily get away by the back entrance. But, after all, why should I escape? I have done nothing wrong. I go back into the library. The two detectives stand on either side of me. I am allowed to take leave of Niura and Andi.

Andi howls as if his heart would break. He is not used to his father leaving the house so early.

"You haven't told me any stories this morning!"

"I'll make up for it this afternoon, my little man. Don't cry, now. I'll tell you a lovely story about the elephant then."

"And about the tiger, too," Andi instructs me through his tears. "And about the hippopotamus and the parrot and the monkeys, too. . . ."

"Yes, of course, I'll tell you stories about all of them when I come back. Don't cry, now."

The little fellow calms down. He calls after me down the staircase:

"Mind you don't forget to come home this afternoon."

"No, I won't forget."

Andi's words sound in my ears. When was it he called after me? Yesterday, the day before yesterday, ages ago? No, was only a week ago. . . .

The detectives drive with me to the office. Soldiers with rifles stand guard at the entrance to the building. What for?

We enter my office.

The two police officials begin to rummage in my desk.

"What are you really looking for?" I ask. "Can I help you at all?"

"What are we looking for?" one of them repeats irresolutely. "What are we looking for?" his companion echoes.

They seem perplexed. Apparently they don't know themselves.

"Let's ring up the inspector," the younger man proposes.

The elder official agrees. He telephones to police headquarters. He reports stiffly: "We haven't completed our search . . . no, we didn't find anything incriminating . . . are we to search for anything in particular? Very good, sir, I understand. Caricatures likely to bring members of the Government into contempt. . . ."

I laugh.

"We have no caricatures of members of the Government. The *Münchner Illustrierte Presse* is, as you know, an illustrated paper of a non-political character."

"Yes, yes, we know that," the official replies. "But we shall have to take something along with us, you know, to satisfy the inspector."

"Perhaps you'd like to take this basket of photographs?" I suggest, by way of a joke, pointing to a large basket filled to the brim with old photographs which we do not want.

The official nods, satisfied. He had taken my suggestion seriously.

"That'll give them something to do, up at the station, anyway," he says.

That finishes the search.

It is eight o'clock.

We leave the building.

The commissionaires salute as the big police Mercedes leaves the office yard with a basket full of unwanted photographs, a few private letters, and myself, guarded by two detectives. One of the compositors calls after me heartily:

"See you again soon!"

When we reach police headquarters the two detectives conduct me to the offices of the Political Police. We stand on the threshold of room 147. One or the officers already has his hand on the door, ready to go in, when a sudden thought strikes him.

He gives a start, and pulls me away from the door.

"I forgot to ask you whether you were armed."

"I never carry weapons," I answer, smiling.

He runs his hands over my body, gives a sigh of relief when he finds I have no revolver on me.

I am taken into the room. It is full of young men arguing excitedly. One or the other of them dashes into the next room, then comes back. There is a senseless rushing to and fro. Apparently the young men have no idea what they ought to be doing. It is easy to see by the look of them that they have not been attached to police headquarters very long.

No one takes the slightest notice of me.

We wait for some time.

Then the elder of the two detectives calls the attention of one of the young men to my presence. The latter gapes at me for a moment, scribbles something on a card, dashes into the next room, comes back after a while, gives the card to the detective, points to me, and shouts:

"Take him away!"

"Am I under arrest now?" I ask.

"You are being placed in protective custody."

"For what reason?"

The young official turns his back without answering. I am left to draw the conclusion that he does not know himself why he has had me arrested.

The two detectives conduct me to the floor below, into the receiving-room of the police prison. It is a strange sort of room. There are iron bars all around. This system of bars forms a number of gangways, all leading to a door in the farther wall. That door is the entrance to the prison.

A warder takes my hat, and places it on a shelf. There are many other hats on the wooden shelves. Respectable-looking

bowlers, elegant soft hats, cheek by jowl with ragged, greasy caps. They are all waiting for their owners who are in the prison. It is a graphic still-life.

I am also relieved of my fountain-pen, pencils, keys, and pocketbook. An official searches my pockets, and runs his hands over my clothes to make sure I have not concealed anything.

I am not asked to give any personal particulars. The warrant for my arrest is already neatly typed out, lying in front of them. It has been made out in advance. I take a stealthy look over the official's shoulder, and read on the sheet the words: "Reason for Arrest: Deportation."

So they want me out of Germany! What for?

A warder conducts me through the iron door. I am in the prison.

We go along an extensive corridor. Iron doors on each side. On the right a door stands open. I look into the cell. There is a wooden bunk fixed near the floor, with a drain near it, covered by a grating. No window. No light.

"Am I to be put in a cell like that, too?" I ask the warder, in alarm.

He laughs. "Why, that's the Dark Cell, for drunks. They sleep off their liquor there. You'll be on the fourth floor with the political prisoners."

We go upstairs.

The same scene on every floor: a long corridor, with a row of iron doors to left and right; over each door a number—the number of the cell.

We reach the fourth floor. A few prisoners are standing in the corridor. The warder points to one of the cells.

"That's yours," he says. "Number 47."

The cell is just being cleaned. The occupants, three unshaven men, are waiting in front of the door, and I stand with them.

As soon as the prison servant has finished cleaning, we go inside.

The iron door is locked behind us. I am a prisoner.

It seems a comic situation to me.

I remember the times when I had been naughty as a boy. I used to be locked in a room, when I had got up to mischief. Even then solitude was no punishment for me. And now it seems absurd to lock up grown men.

I laugh.

My three cell companions look at me in shocked amazement.

We introduce ourselves.

"My name is Karl Bach."

"My name is Link."

"Count Strachwitz," says the third of my cell companions.

"Delighted! Delighted! Delighted!"

Prison etiquette does not differ in the slightest from that obtaining in the best society among free men.

"Why have you been arrested?" My cell companions besiege me with questions.

"I have no idea."

They look at me searchingly.

"And why have you been arrested?" I enquire.

"We don't know any more than you do!" answers Count Strachwitz and Herr Bach in the same breath.

Herr Link, an oldish man with grey hair, is the only one of us who was aware of the reason for his arrest.

"I am a Social-Democratic trades union official," he says. We have scarcely started to speak when a warder comes to fetch Herr Link. He has to pack up his things, for he is being transferred to the prison at Stadelheim. He asks us to let his wife know where he is, in the event of any of us being released in the near future.

We three remain behind.

Herr Bach's bed is opposite the door, Strachwitz's and mine against one of the side walls of the cell. We sit talking on our mattresses.

Herr Bach, owner of one of the largest ready-made tailoring establishments in Munich, is in despair. He was arrested four days ago, and his case has not yet been heard. He has been racking his brains in vain for the reason for his arrest.

"Weren't you ever engaged actively in politics, then?" I ask.

"Never! I am only a business man. I have never had anything to do with politics."

"Then I can't understand why they've arrested you."

"It's because I am a Jew," he answers, in an expressionless tone.

Count Strachwitz tries to cheer up the downcast Herr Bach. "You'll see, Herr Bach," he says. "You'll be released tomorrow."

"You've been telling me that since yesterday morning." Herr Bach refuses to be comforted.

He draws up his legs, and sits on his bed like a harem attendant. There are parcels, paper bags, and leather suitcases all round him—on the bed and under the bed—all filled to overflowing with provisions. There are dates, choice fruit, cakes, sausages, chocolate, roast beef, new bread, chicken, butter, a thermos flask full of tea, another full of soup. Everything is to be found in these parcels. The worthy Frau Bach clearly does not intend to let her husband starve.

Twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon, the supplies are replenished. But, each time a fresh parcel of food arrives, Bach observes: "I'd rather be hungry and free!" Then he cuts himself a slice of fresh roast beef, and consumes it with an expression of profound melancholy.

Out in the corridor people come and go uninterruptedly.

The heavy boots of the S.A. men clump over the stone floor. Every moment an inquisitive eye looks through the spy-hole in the door of the cell. The S.A. men have been allowed to inspect the prison. The young fellows feast their eyes on the sight of the prisoners.

Now and then one will shout from outside:

"We'll soon show you, you pigs of Jews!"

Or else:

"You'll be hanged: the whole lot of you will be hanged!"

Sometimes we hear our own names mentioned, and then we see their eyes peering in at us.

The hours pass slowly. We are waiting to be fetched, for our cases to be heard. Bells are continually ringing from all the cells. All the prisoners want the same thing—to be examined.

The warders do not know what to say. They always give the same answer:

"When you're wanted, you'll be sent for."

The cathedral bells chime the quarter hours. One, two, three, four strokes. Another hour gone. And still no news.

Herr Bach grows more and more nervous every hour.

The afternoon drags on endlessly.

We lie down, and try to sleep.

My cell companion, Count Strachwitz, is the typical Austrian aristocrat as portrayed in novels—charming, friendly, cultured. He has travelled all over the world, and speaks many languages. He has only been in Munich a year, engaged in historical studies, and has written several political articles for Catholic newspapers.

"I was a windfall for the police," he tells me. "Last night I was sleeping in the house of my cousin, Baron Aretin. When they arrested him this morning, they took me along as well. That's how I got here."

"But Baron Aretin is a colleague of mine," I exclaim. "What's happened to him?"

"They've put him in the cell opposite ours, in number 39, along with Büchner, the editor."

"I'd very much like to see him! Are there many other prisoners here besides him?"

Count Strachwitz laughs at my simplicity.

"The whole building is full of political prisoners, and they keep bringing new ones in."

Evening comes.

The door of the cell opens. We are allowed to go and fetch water. Then each of us is given two blankets, and we are ready for the night.

The waitress from the police canteen brings our supper, consisting of cold meat, cheese, and bread and butter.

The day is over.

Herr Bach asks the warder to leave the light on overnight. He is afraid of the dark. The warder promises to do so. But Herr Bach does not trust him. He made the same promise yesterday, but turned the light out at twelve.

"Can't we switch it off ourselves?" I ask, ignorant of prison customs. The other two laugh. "You seem to forget that we are prisoners. The switch is out in the corridor. It is not we, but the warders, who decide when it is to be turned off."

Bach repeats gloomily:

"We are prisoners."

All the poor man can think of is that he is in prison. The very mention of the word throws him into despair.

"Don't keep on worrying yourself so, Herr Bach," I say, trying to console him. "Try to think of something else instead of the prison, and you'll feel better at once. Look at these blue check mattresses. Aren't they just like those on the beds in a ski-hut? Try to imagine that we are sitting in one of those huts, high up in the mountains. Outside a storm is raging, the wind is whistling, the entrance to the hut blocked with snow and we can't get back to the valley tonight. The hut is well heated; we have just eaten a supper fit for a king; we lack nothing. Only the . . . snow-storm we can't open the door, so what shall we do? We'll go to bed. When we get up, the sun will be shining again. We shall wax our skis, and speed away downhill like greased lightning."

Bach groans.

"Oh, you journalists, with your flowery fancies! You say we might be in a ski-hut. But look at my feet, they're dangling almost into the W.C. In front of me that horrible iron door with its spy-hole, eyes staring at me, voices abusing me . . . and you ask me to imagine we are in a ski-hut?"

"Try to think that you will be released tomorrow. You'll see that will help you," says Count Strachwitz.

Bach does not answer. He lies down on the bed in his clothes. He does not trust himself to undress. He folds his winter overcoat under his head, and stares at the ceiling.

In a few moments he is asleep. The cell resounds to his snores.

Sleep is out of the question. Herr Bach's symphony is far too loud. At one moment he snores in a high note, at another in a deep one, all in the most varied tones and modulations.

"A good conscience is a soft pillow," Count Starchwitz whispers.

We laugh.

So ends my first day in prison.

FRED MANN

Context: Western Europe

Source: Fred Mann. *A Drastic Turn of Destiny*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2009, pp. 66–73. Used by permission.

Fred Mann was a young teenager when war broke out in September 1939. His German Jewish family had earlier moved to Belgium from their home in Leipzig, trying to stay one step ahead of the Nazis. When Germany invaded Belgium in May 1940, Fred's status changed for a second time; from being a hated Jew in Germany, he was now a detested German, notwithstanding his refugee status. The account produced here describes his attempts at weaving an acceptable path through the various misunderstandings accompanying his days at school in Brussels, and how he overcame his classmates' prejudices. The testimony takes readers up to March of 1940, just two months before the Nazi invasion, and gives a very good snapshot into what it was to be a refugee from Nazism in a still-neutral (though threatened) country.

We hadn't been in Belgium very long before our world suddenly went topsy-turvy. The events causing this upset didn't take place in our immediate neighbourhood, but we felt the breath of disaster blowing in our direction nonetheless. When Hitler had seized the whole of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, the world didn't say, "Enough," and he clearly wasn't satisfied with his conquest of Poland. The unscrupulous bombing of Polish cities in September of that year should have served as a warning to the countries of Europe of what else they could expect from the Nazis, but even after war had been declared, all parties seemed to be waiting patiently for his next move.

Even more disquieting was listening to Hitler's speech to the German parliament on September 1, 1939, when the full force of his oratory came into play. On September 3, 1939, the Brussels newspapers quoted French prime minister

Edouard Daladier's September 2 speech before the Chamber of Deputies that laid bare Hitler's nefarious schemes. To us it spelled doom and instilled renewed fear for our lives. We had little doubt that the Germans would attack Belgium as soon as an outright war began.

That came to pass on September 3 when France and Britain declared war on Germany and within a few weeks, on September 27, 1939, Warsaw had surrendered.

Our life in Brussels continued with the possibility of a German invasion hanging over our heads like the sword of Damocles. We weren't sure when it would descend. We were, at best, living in a precarious existence with a suitcase mentality. Our landlord assured us that the Belgian fortifications were impenetrable, that the dykes, in particular, would repel any German access into Belgium. He magnanimously extended this bit of military theory to Holland, but didn't even bother to mention the famous Maginot Line of France since he was sure that the Germans would never get through the Belgian and Dutch defences.

It was in this atmosphere that I first entered my new school at the beginning of September 1939. I soon discovered that my situation had changed dramatically. I was no longer the "dirty Jew" ostracized and threatened by my school friends as I had been in Leipzig—now I was the *sale boche*, the "dirty German." What a transformation for a boy of thirteen and a half! I remember asking myself how it was possible that even though we hated the Germans, I was maligned as one. It no longer mattered in this Brussels school that I was Jewish, but the fact that I was born in Germany seemed more important than the fact that I had fled Germany to stay alive.

Under these circumstances I found it difficult to concentrate on my studies—even more so when the subjects were taught in a language I had yet to master. My comprehension was most challenged in the sciences. Fortunately, I found French relatively easy to learn and by Christmas the headmaster called my father in to discuss my progress. When I was first enrolled in the school, it was decided that because of my need to learn a new language I should repeat the school year I had just completed in Leipzig. The headmaster had thought that while this would slow down my academic advancement, it would significantly lessen the psychological effect of failing my year. At Christmas, though, the headmaster told my father that my French had improved enough for me to move into the class commensurate with my age. I wouldn't end up losing any time whatsoever. All I needed to do during the Christmas holiday was catch up on the work that the class had already studied. By Easter my school

grades were up to par, although due to a subsequent event, I never did find out what the end result of this switch at Christmas would have been.

My upgrade did bring about a change in my classmates' approach, though. Because I was with a whole new crowd in my new class and my French was now good enough to explain who I was and where I came from, I was no longer considered to be the "Dirty German" but was accepted as one of their own. They introduced me to some of the interesting sites of Brussels, including "Mannekin Pis," a statue that has caused a lot of controversy but in Brussels is highly revered. It is a bronze statue of a little boy standing at a corner urinating that is draped in different clothes appropriate for the season or ceremonial occasions. There are always fresh flowers at the foot of the tall pedestal. My classmates also showed me the magnificent Grand Place and the town hall with its statues of Belgian royalty and prophets on the bell tower crowned by St. Michael, the city's patron saint. The inside of the building, with its tapestries, is something to behold.

I was most grateful to my schoolmates for this exposure to Brussels history. I was now invited to their homes and parties. I went skating with them, and they in turn came to our apartment. They no longer looked upon my parents as German people to be avoided but as people who had fled from the Nazis and suffered at their hands. There was still not much interaction between their parents and mine, but this may have been due to the language barrier. My parents found it difficult to learn French, even though my father did acquire a smattering of the language.

I remember two very funny incidents concerning my father's lack of French. One day when he left to go to a meeting, my mother asked him to get a dozen eggs from a store on his way home. In those days men like my father did not go grocery shopping. When he arrived home he told us that he had a great deal of difficulty getting the grocery store clerk to understand what he wanted since the man didn't speak any Flemish. In desperation my father crowed like a cock and reached behind him with his hand, bringing the open hand forward to show that he had just laid an egg. The clerk got the message and, using his fingers, asked my father how many eggs he wanted. Another time, my father came home and declared that he wanted to meet Mr. "A. Louer" since he clearly owned a lot of real estate in Brussels and he could possibly do some business with him. He was not aware that "A Louer" means "For Rent" in French.

My parents settled into a circle of German-speaking friends, mostly people who, like us, had fled Germany. They met at the Café Royal at the Hotel Royal on the Place du Midi

with their emigrant friends on Saturday afternoons and one could almost believe that they had been transplanted from Café Felsche in Leipzig to Café Royal in Brussels. What a wondrous generation of people who, despite the hardships, attempted to conduct as normal a life as they could. Uncle Dadek had left Leipzig for Brussels three years ahead of us and established a small business, so he was able to employ my Aunt Rena. Her fiancé, Kurt Berliner, had come to Brussels from Berlin and, for a few months, life did take on some degree of normalcy.

We started to appreciate Belgian food and my aunt and I both especially loved the famous Belgian *pommes frites* that were sold at street stands wrapped in newspaper. It was quite surprising that the fat-laden and steaming French fries didn't melt the newsprint, but even if it had, it would probably have only added to the incredible taste. The secret to making Belgian *pommes frites* is that they are fried twice. There were other stands that served Belgian waffles covered with powdered sugar and whipped cream, and stands that sold the most delicious chocolates Belgium is so famous for. But best of all were the fresh oysters. The fish boats anchored below the bridge that spanned one of the canals between Brussels and Laeken. We would put money into one of the baskets attached to the bridge with long cords and lower it to the fisherman. He would then load the basket with the number of oysters, already pried open, that we had paid for and we would hoist the basket up. What a feast to eat these fresh oysters just a few hours after they had been harvested!

There were lots of new things for me to experience in Brussels—museums to visit, movies to see, parks to walk in and outdoor concerts to listen to. These were the things that I had not been allowed to do in Germany for the last three years of my residency there. It is only when you are not permitted to do something that you begin to realize the pleasure of experiencing it again. Freedom of movement can only really be appreciated by those who have been deprived of it.

After September, discussions about the state of war between Germany on the one side and France and England on the other seemed to fade into the background. My parents and their friends talked about it when they met at the coffee house, but in school we paid little attention. The Belgians really believed that their dyke system was a powerful deterrent to a potential German invasion.

We felt deeply for the people who were still under the German yoke. The news emanating from Germany and Poland sounded ominous for the Jews. The first *Judenräte* (Jewish Councils) had been established in September 1939, almost

immediately after Poland's surrender. In October the Nazis established the first ghetto in Piotrów, Poland as an unguarded and unfenced residence. There was no world reaction and it came as no surprise when we learned about it in Brussels since there had been many instances of such enclaves for Jews throughout history. In November 1939 the Germans introduced a decree that all Jews in Poland over the age of ten had to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David prominently displayed on the outside of their clothing. Forced labour for Jews had commenced and the first deportation of Jews from Austria and the Protectorates to the Polish ghettos started.

A boy's bar mitzvah is scheduled to take place on his thirteenth birthday and parents make arrangements for this event long in advance. The Torah portion that the young man is to read must be determined so that he can practice, but his recital includes various prayers, blessings and chants that must also be learned. When my thirteenth birthday approached in February 1939, we were still in Germany and the Germans had destroyed many of the synagogues during *Krystallnacht*. While some Jewish Orthodox services were held in secret, it was difficult for us to adjust to these services since we were members of the Reform movement of Judaism. Part of our religious service was conducted in German, but the Orthodox did all their traditional singing and conducted all their services in Hebrew. As a result, I couldn't be presented to "manhood" on my scheduled day.

One of the first tasks my father undertook when we arrived in Brussels was to look for a Reform congregation where my bar mitzvah could take place. Reform Judaism was practiced in the Grand Synagogue in Brussels, making it easier for me to be called to the Torah. It was a sad sort of affair that took place on March 2, 1940, shortly after my fourteenth birthday. Only my parents, Aunt Rena and her fiancé Kurt Berliner, and Uncle Dadek attended. I had no Jewish friends and certainly no childhood friends. There was really nothing of the joyous feeling we experienced when my brother had his bar mitzvah. Our present fate of running for our lives and being in strange surroundings was really highlighted during the event.

While the Saturday service was fairly well attended, most of the people present were there to witness the bar mitzvah of another boy on the same day. The rabbi had consented to let me attend as well on that Saturday, even though the other bar mitzvah had been scheduled a long time ago. The reading of the Torah was split between us and we both recited the "Baruch Sheptarani" blessing. After the service, the family of

the other boy had their Kiddush in the community hall of the synagogue. From the synagogue we proceeded to our small apartment to have lunch, but the spirit of Celebration was not with us. My parents were very aware of being in a foreign land where they encountered language problems daily and where the future was uncertain. Within two months their trepidation was confirmed.

PAULA STOTSKY MAY

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Paula Stotsky May and Maryann McLoughlin. *To Tell of Fire in the Night: A Holocaust Survivor's Memoir*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2010, pp. 22–29. Used by permission.

Born in Belitza, Poland, Paula Stotsky May was a happy girl whose life was turned upside down with the Soviet occupation of September 1939 and then the Nazi invasion of June 1941. Forced into the ghetto of Zhetel (Zdzięcioł) in February 1942, she survived the liquidation of the ghetto later that year and fled to the forest outside. In this account, Paula outlines some of the issues surrounding the difficulties she and her husband, Louis, encountered in trying to remain alive despite the difficulties presented by their situation.

On Wednesday night, Lisa, the teacher's daughter and my friend, brought me a bag with a cucumber and a piece of bread inside. I had not eaten for a week and had been in the Kino for four days lying on the floor.

Lisa whispered to me, "Tomorrow will be your last day here. They will take you away. Louis is alive and has returned to Belitza. Louis hid in our neighbor Billinkovich's barn with your sister and an older man, Dovidershl. When Louis left the barn, Billinkovich saw him and chased him away, telling him, 'Go away. We'll be killed if they find you in here.'

"However, Billinkovich didn't know that Betty and Dovidershl were still in the barn. Billinkovich gave Louis a bottle of water. After he was gone, Louis pulled a board away and gave Betty and Dovidershl a drink.

"Louis told them 'Be quiet.'

"Louis then hid in the garden. When it was dark, the three left there and went into the forest."

Dovidershl's brother, a partisan, later took Dovidershl to the forests to join the partisans. When he was with the parti-

sans, one day, they were looking for potatoes, but the Germans found and killed him.

When I knew that my husband and sister were alive, I was determined to survive.

On Wednesday the guards in front of the *Kino* let us outside to go to the bathroom. I had some money from the sewing machine that I could use to bribe the guards.

I said to this man, whom I knew from Belitza, “Zamke, you know the neighborhood. Let’s escape from Zhetel. Come with me.”

Another woman said to me, “I, too, want to go with you.”

I paid the Polish guards to let us go out to the toilet.

At twilight I left with Zamka and two others—one woman and another woman who had left her child and her mother.

The mother said to her daughter, “Take my shoes.”

Zamke knew how to leave Zhetel, but first we had to climb over the five-foot high wooden fence, jump down, and go through the garden, hopefully to safety. A ten-year-old Christian boy saw us and brought the Germans. They took us back inside.

I told Zamke, “We have to try again.”

Zamke’s wife was pregnant, so she could not leave. Her seventeen year old brother Baruch wanted to stay with his sister to protect her.

The second time some people and I went out and jumped into the same garden. The same little boy was watching. I ran into the garden and fell into a hole. I took a branch from a tree, covering the hole, so I could hide myself.

The Germans came searching, shooting in the air, and yelling, “*Raus. Raus.*” (Out. Out.)

Everyone but me was caught. I was the only one left. No one was allowed out even if people had to go to the toilet.

In the meantime I was lying in the hole. I didn’t know the town. I didn’t know where to go. I was crying. I knew I had to go to my teacher’s house.

My friend Lisa had said, “If you escape and come to us, don’t go to the front of our place because it is across from the post office, and there is always a big light shining into Slonmer Street.”

Therefore, I started walking toward Lisa’s house through back gardens, climbing over one fence, walking through the garden, and then climbing over the next fence until I reached Slonmer Street. There was a full moon, I remember. I was walking and walking and soon I was very tired. When I came to the end of Slonmer Street, I made a right turn and came to the street where the light from the post office was shining. I

went past there and crossed the street. I went to the toilet behind their house and closed myself in.

Mr. Billinkovich, their neighbor and the owner of the house, rented half his house to my teacher. Billinkovich came out next morning to let his cow out of the barn. While he was letting the cow out, I climbed up into the attic on the teacher’s side.

In the morning when the family woke up they heard me walking in the attic. They were very happy to see me.

The teacher’s wife, Mrs. Kurelow, brought me pancakes. I said that I was not hungry. She encouraged me to eat.

She said, “We love you, Perelka, but we can’t keep you. They will kill us and they will kill you. Mr. Billinkovich is scared; he may betray us.”

I said, “What do you want me to do? I could leave and hide near the Neman River.”

She said, “Wait till twilight. Lisa will take you out of the city.”

When I was hiding waiting for twilight, I heard trucks passing. In these trucks were the 360 people, including Besheva and her son, whom they had rounded up and held in the jail at the *Kino*. I heard the Nazis singing, “When Jewish blood runs, we gain strength.” These trucks were taking the Jews to the pit where they were shot by the *Einsatzgruppen* and buried in a mass grave.

At twilight, Lisa’s mother put a scarf over my hair and tied the scarf under my chin. Then she covered me with a huge five-foot shawl. She also put on my arm a sickle for cutting weeds, so I would look like a Christian coming from work. She gave me a bag of bread. Lisa took me to the Christian cemetery. She kissed me. We both were crying.

I never saw her again. . . .

I wanted to leave the cemetery, but I could not find a way out. I kept running around, searching. I eventually found the exit and started walking away from Zhetel. Everybody who had been working was coming back from the fields. They turned around and looked at me, wondering why I was going out of the city in the opposite direction from everyone else.

I walked until it was very dark. I came to a house and lay down. I made a mark so I would know which way I had come from. I was still not sure in which direction was the Neman River. While I was sleeping, I dreamed that I had to cross a creek with a log bridge.

In my dream, our neighbor, Judis Shykis said, “Don’t be afraid. Go across; you will make it.”

I heard someone walking. I called out, but no one answered me.

I said “Don’t be afraid.”

All I saw were fireflies. I lay down again.

In the morning I found two farmhouses.

I stopped at one of the farmhouses and asked the farmer, Shevilka, “John Shevilka, how do I get to the Neman River?”

His daughter was my age, so I guess he wanted to help me. He told me to take the road and showed me where to go into the forest.

I started walking through the dense Lipichanski *Puscha* (Dense forest). The trees were so tall and thick that I couldn’t see the sky. I walked in the darkness, crying, for hours.

Toward morning, I met Katia Shimenovich, from our village, Belitza. She saw me and said, “Who are you?” Katia didn’t recognize me with the scarf and shawl.

I said, “Perla.”

She said, “Who else?”

I replied, “Only me.”

Katia told me, “Come with me. My parents, Samuel and Czarna, and Ida, my sister, are here. All four of us survived.”

I stayed a while with them. Then I told them that I had to go to the Neman River to find Louis and my sister.

Shimenovich asked me, “Will you go and see a Christian woman by herself? Maybe you can buy bread from her.” I left. I was still in the clothes that my teacher’s wife had given me.

Shimenovich and another man hid under a tree while I tried to buy the bread. I went to the home of the Christian woman, Mrs. Trichicha.

She told me: “Come back tomorrow. I will have bread then.”

I went the next day to her house. When I came to the house, Rifka and her brother were there from Belitza.

“Perelka, where are you coming from? Louis is here with your sister Betty.”

My husband had learned from Shimenovich that I was alive. Louis’s brother Dovid was a teacher who taught with a Christian teacher. When I came to buy bread, the Christian teacher saw me and told Schlmen, another of Louis’s brothers, that he had seen me.

After this, Louis’s brother Schlmen, his girlfriend, her brother, and Louis’s four sisters, a total of seven people, gave material to a Christian woman to hide them. They built a bunker and stayed there one night. The next morning she brought the Germans and all seven were murdered. After the war Louis dug and found their graves. He knew the graves were theirs because in the grave he found and recognized his sister Ruthie’s hair pins.

I found out from my sister that they had also stayed with the Shimenovichs before I had gone there. Louis and I reunited. We started crying and laughing. He gave me honey and long pants, which later saved my life during the long winter of ice and snow. Louis had a rifle that he had bought to protect us.

We had to find hay or straw to put on the ground; I didn’t want to sleep on the cold and damp forest floor. Louis and I left my sister, Betty in the forest. As we were walking we heard the wolves howling.

Louis said, “I’ll shoot the gun into the air.”

I said, “No. Either the wolves or the Germans will hear and come into the forest after us.” We were scared and decided not to continue looking for hay and straw. It was so dark that we couldn’t find my sister. We decided to lay down to rest. I lay on the ground on top of the heavy shawl. The woods were so dark that I could not even see my hands.

We decided that we would look for Betty when it was light. Then we heard a voice.

It was Betty, saying, “You are here!”

It was so dark that we had not even seen her.

HANIA HARCSTARK-GOLDFEDER MAYER

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Hania Harcsztark-Goldfeder Mayer. *A Lucky Human Being: An Incredible Story of Survival*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2009, pp. 76–80. Used by permission.

While death marches at the end of the war were designed to evacuate the Nazi concentration camps in the east, their destinations were often hurriedly improvised. Many prisoners eventually arrived at Bergen-Belsen, which soon became hopelessly overcrowded, disease-ridden, and completely devoid of food and supplies of every kind. In this account, Hania Harcsztark-Goldfeder Mayer describes her march, the uncertainty of the day-to-day existence through which she suffered, and her eventual illness and delirium at Belsen; only the camp’s liberation by the British in April 1945, it could be suggested, saved her life.

As I witnessed the daily shootings and loss of strength among most of us, I had the craziest idea. One night, unable to sleep, I decided to escape! In my eagerness to flee I could

not even think clearly about what on earth I was doing or hoping for.

I walked out in the middle of a dark night, wearing my prisoner's attire and without waking my cousins. Shivering, I ran over the road to the woods and hid among the bushes. At dawn I began to watch the road for any movement. As it slowly became lighter I heard a noise and looking up saw a horse and buggy. The driver sat up front on the seat with another man and at the back of the buggy some large metal containers stood on a wooden platform. They may have been for milk.

I was not able to stay in the woods any longer as my feet and body were frozen. I walked onto the road to stop the cart and to my surprise, the driver pulled up. In my school-girl's German I asked the farmers if they could take me to the nearest township. They nodded their heads and pointed in the back, to where the cans were. I climbed up eagerly and sat among them. I could smell a very strange aroma, of vegetables dressed with Mayonnaise and onions—a salad. Hungry as I was, my saliva glands became very active. The two men were talking happily together when I noticed a small township nearby. Instead of asking to be let down I just sat, like a zombie. They stopped in front of a police station. All of a sudden they indicated I should step down. Keeping me between them they took me straight inside. Me, timid Hania! After all my bravery, to end up like that!

The two men kept me between them. They probably thought I would run away, but stunned as I was, there was little hope of that. They spoke to the officer in charge who listened to them, then looked at me. I can only imagine what he saw. He thanked the two men and they left. The officer was polite to me. He told me to sit and wait while he telephoned someone. After a short conversation he told me to follow him. A horse and carriage was waiting outside and I was told to get in and sit in the back. I did not know what was going to happen to me. My heart was beating so loudly I thought everyone could hear it.

The officer did not say a word, but after travelling down the road for a while I noticed some farm buildings nearby. The carriage stopped and the officer indicated I should step down and walk with him to one of the buildings. A man who looked like a farmer came outside and the officer spoke to him. I understood he was expecting a contingent of prisoners to arrive that night. Without saying anything the officer left. The farmer, for that is what he was, took me inside his house—a warm, living house with a family! They all looked at me as though I was a specimen from a circus.

The woman, probably the farmer's wife, indicated I should sit down. Speaking slowly in German and probably thinking I would not understand, she asked if I was hungry. I nodded my head eagerly. I had not been served such a fulfilling meal since before the war.

I stayed at the farmer's house until nearly nightfall, when he took me to the sheds to meet my co-prisoners. The surprise on their faces when they saw me was indescribable. After all their questions, the only thing of note for my single day of adventure was a strong smell of salad from sitting next to the containers in the back of the buggy.

As one day was much the same as another, I don't know for how much longer we walked. Eventually we arrived at a place where we encountered scenes I would not wish on anyone. We were completely at the end of our physical strength and shaking at the knees from exhaustion. We stood, longing to be able to sit down, while no one took the slightest notice of us. Around us we saw corpses left lying with their eyes open and mere skeletons of what had once been human beings. We just felt numb as we regarded what our future might yet bring, after having survived the Łódź Ghetto and the time in Auschwitz. The sight that lay before our eyes was a vision of hell.

After quite a while some people—I don't know who they were—divided us into groups and told us to follow them. I don't even remember what the barracks we were allocated looked like. We were told to stay there until morning and that this place was called Bergen-Belsen. We were also told that due to the conditions, several different epidemics were raging.

Maybe the incredible cruelty of living in hell makes one forget most of what went on. Maybe this is a device for self-preservation in order to be able to continue to struggle. I don't know. I mention this because I do not remember much of the days I spent in Bergen-Belsen. Perhaps, after having lost more than half my body weight, my brain just refused to function. That could have been a blessing.

On waking each morning we faced the fact that someone else from our group was missing and knew they had either died or been struck down with some disease. After some weeks I woke up one morning and could not lift my head. I felt hot and also shivery. The people in the barrack with me noticed my condition and called to someone in charge who took my temperature, which was over forty degrees. I was transferred to a so-called hospital, put to lie on the straw-covered floor and covered with grey army blankets.

There were other people in that place who were there before me. Each one probably looked like I did, or worse.

Later I was told this was a hospital for typhoid sufferers. I did not even know what typhoid was. I just lay there with my high fever noticing only that some people were taken out in the morning and others arrived during the day.

In the middle of one night I woke up to feel a heavy weight upon my chest. I was barely able to open my eyes but saw that a tall woman was standing on me. My head was against the wall and the woman was speaking in Polish. It seemed she wanted to climb up the wall to see her baby boy. She was talking about him and her eyes were red. I could not help her, but in any case, there was no one who could help me. After a few attempts at walking up the wall, her bare feet on my face, the woman lost her balance and fell sideways on top of me, where she stayed until morning. When the people working in this hospital arrived they took a dead body with open eyes off me.

I was getting weaker by the day as the high fever of typhoid took its toll. In that makeshift hospital we had to lie on the floor with our knees bent to make room for the next row of sick people. So many had to be accommodated as more and more people became infected with typhoid. The woman in the row below me rested her head on my bent knees.

Then I was liberated.

In my hazy state I was not aware of much. I opened my eyes just once. Several weeks later something of what I saw then came rushing back to me. I recalled having seen people crawling all over the floor. That vision was on the day the British Red Cross liberated us from Bergen-Belsen—15 April 1945. It was a miracle that they found me there alive, though barely.

LESLIE MEISELS

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Leslie Meisels. *Suddenly the Shadow Fell*, Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 35–42. Used by permission.

When Germany invaded Hungary in March 1944, the full weight of the Holocaust descended on the Jews of that country. Leslie Meisels, having survived deportation to Auschwitz owing to a rail bridge on the route to the camp having been blown up by resistance fighters, was sent instead to a labor camp in Austria prior to being evacuated to Bergen-Belsen. Surviving that experience, he and his family were then sent on

to Theresienstadt—though this train, too, never reached its destination. Leslie’s account here describes his experiences at Bergen-Belsen until his 18th birthday on February 20, 1945.

The Bergen-Belsen Camp was about half way between Hannover and Hamburg in north-western Germany. When we arrived at the gates of the camp in mid-afternoon, the weather was bitterly cold, rainy and snowy. I saw a long main street lined with pleasant bungalow-like buildings on one side—which turned out to be the guards’ quarters—then a kitchen complex, and farther down, a dark building with a tall chimney from which black smoke billowed. On the other side of the street were large blocks of barracks separated by barbed wire and in them I later saw hundreds and hundreds of emaciated, staggering and skeletal male and female inmates wearing striped uniforms made of thin fabric.

The guards led us into the right side of a building where we had to disrobe and shower. Then our clothing and belongings were given back to us and our group was taken to block 11, barracks F. Blocks were known by number, and the barracks within them, by letter. We soon found out that block 11 was a *Sonderlager*, which means special camp. We didn’t yet know exactly what that meant and why it was “special,” but we soon learned that the very fact that we remained together was unusual; in the other blocks, men and women weren’t kept together. It was also different that we were given back our own clothing—everybody in Bergen-Belsen was dressed in the striped *Häftling* (prisoner) uniform, with no overcoats or other warm clothing.

Back at the farm in Hollabrunn, my mother had told me to put my stamps, which I had brought from my album, into small envelopes, and she sewed them into the lining of my jacket. Those stamps survived with me inside my ragged jacket.

After liberation, we found out that our unusual situation was largely due to a single individual, Rezső (Rudolf) Kastner, a Hungarian Jew originally from Kolozvár (Cluj), Transylvania. Through his efforts, an unprecedented agreement was reached between some western Jewish organizations and high-ranking SS officers Adolf Eichmann and Kurt Becher. Using bribery, manipulation and cajolery, approximately 30,000 Hungarian Jews would be, as they referred to it, “put on ice”—taken to Austria for slave labour and exchanged, for money and other goods, to eventually end up in neutral Switzerland. Kastner, as a Hungarian Jew, was negotiating specifically on behalf of Hungarians and since the majority of Europe’s Jewry had already been slaughtered,

only the Hungarian deportees fit the requirements. In the end, about 18,000 Hungarian Jews were actually brought to Austria.

A very interesting coincidence happened as my mother, grandmother, brothers and I entered the barracks: on a worn-out cabinet, I noticed a message that read, "Today Dec 4, 1944 they are taking me and my family away from here, we do not know where to. Avrom Jungreis rabbi of Szeged." This had special meaning to us because he was the eldest son of our beloved rabbi from our hometown who had blessed me in Strasshof. He was the same age as my father and had grown up with him, so we knew him and his family very well. My mother and grandmother and I often talked about it later, that we had been so close to seeing him in Bergen-Belsen.

Rabbi Avrom Jungreis and his family were among the nearly 1,700 people from that block who were exchanged on December 4, 1944. They were part of a different group of people whose release had been negotiated by Kastner and, having arrived in Bergen-Belsen off a train from Budapest in July, they had been waiting for the technicalities to be worked out so they could reach Switzerland. The Plan was that the next train—ours—would bring in a similar number of people to be put into the same block for a future exchange. The fact that we were among the Hungarian deportees who had been collected from various slave labour locations in Austria was another miracle for my immediate family and certainly resulted in our survival. As it turned out, though, the exchange of our group never took place, in part because of the advancement of the Allied forces and in part, I think, because of a breakdown in negotiations.

The barracks, which housed around 130 of us, was about ten by fifteen meters, with narrow triple-decked bunk beds pushed next to each other. The beds were seventy-five centimeters wide and were shared by two people. My mother, two brothers and I slept on the top, on the third level. My grandmother, being older and in poor health, got a single bed close to the entrance, where there were other single beds for people like her who couldn't climb up to the higher beds. There was no heat and the building, made of simple wooden walls, wasn't insulated; if we left a cup of water at the end of our bunk bed at night, in the morning we would find a block of ice.

In our *Sonderlager*, the biggest difference I noticed from other blocks was that we were not forced to work. Every single day, regardless of rain, snow or cold, we were ordered to stand for an *Appell*, a roll call, from about 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., lined up in columns of five to be counted.

Across the main street from our block was the kitchen complex for the entire concentration camp. SS guards on motorcycles or in cars patrolled the street and prisoners pushed and pulled wagons along it, either with supplies for the kitchen or dead bodies piled like stacked wood. We soon learned that to our left stood the crematorium, which constantly, day and night, belched out black, horrible-smelling smoke. It was the smell of burning flesh, from Jews and others—political prisoners or Gypsies (Roma) or other "non-desirable" human beings. Sometimes, looking through the barbed wire, we saw some of the emaciated men who were pulling or pushing the wagons collapse. When that happened, the man was stripped of his clothing, thrown on top of the wagon and taken to the crematorium whether or not he was dead.

Bergen-Belsen didn't have gas chambers, but we later heard that it was infamous for being one of the cruelest of all the concentration camps. Its inmates were annihilated in unprecedented numbers through starvation, illness, sadistic beatings, and by being worked to death. Inmates arrived continually but the population of the camps pretty much stayed the same because of all the deaths. When the crematorium couldn't consume all the dead bodies, they were piled up in a mountain near it.

Although those of us living in the *Sonderlager* were given more food than the other camp inmates, this still meant that in the morning we only received about half a litre of brown liquid—called coffee—that was at least lukewarm and helped a bit in the freezing cold. At noon we got some sort of soup that had some potato or beet skins floating in it, and in the evening, again, some coffee-coloured water. For every ten people, we were also given one loaf of bread that was ten by ten by twenty-five centimetres. We could tell that the bread was made from a combination of sawdust, wheat flour and cornmeal, but that was our main staple of the day. It became extraordinarily important to divide it in even slices because starvation was taking its toll even within our *Sonderlager*. We couldn't risk people wanting to kill each other because, in their desperation, they might think that someone else had gotten a bigger piece. So somebody fashioned a kind of a blade to cut the bread into equal pieces so that everybody would have a 100 × 100 × 25 millimeter slice.

Because I had been a cabinet maker's apprentice before we were deported and as such had learned to measure, cut and judge dimensions properly, I volunteered to cut the bread. That made me an important person in the barracks and the few morsels (they had to be very few) that remained on the table after the slicing were my reward. I knew that if I

didn't do a proper job and someone felt that their piece was smaller, I could be lynched. Thankfully, everybody seemed satisfied and having this important job contributed to my survival.

In our block, life—if I could call it that while being imprisoned, stripped of my individuality and dignity—went on but the starvation diet made us all weaker by the day. We only endured because we had been given enough food during our slave labour on the farm and the strength and resilience that we had built up helped slow the devastating effects of hunger. The few pieces of dried fruit that my mother doled out to the five of us helped a little, too. With very sparing daily consumption, those dried fruits that we had brought with us lasted for a few months and contributed to the fact that, although we were skeletal when we eventually left the camp, we were still able to move.

It soon became evident just how different our *Sonderlager* was when we didn't experience the level of physical abuse we saw on the other side of the barbed wire dividers. The other prisoners were beaten regularly, without reason, just at the guards' whims. We saw them beaten with rifle butts and sticks, and we saw some of them being shot to death just for not being able to do the work they had been ordered to do.

We were also less restricted in our movements after the 10:00 p.m. curfew and were allowed to leave our barracks to go to the latrines. On a December night during Channukah in 1944, some young men in our block pretended to go to the latrines and instead came in our barracks near the window close to our bed bunks and entertained us by singing Chanukah and other Hebrew songs—"Maoz Tzur," "Hatikva" and "Tumbalalaika," with its repetitive refrain, as well as "Techezkna," with its lyrics in Hungarian. The latter song speaks about a time when all the *chalutzim* scattered all over the world will be in the land of the Jews and a Jewish flag will fly at the top of Jerusalem. The majority of us, me included, had never heard it before. Living amidst such hopelessness, hearing its uplifting, heartwarming and inspiring words were the most beautiful unforgettable experience. Even now, when I think about this moment, I get goosebumps.

Close to Christmas, the children from our block were ordered to go to the commandant's barracks, where they were given little pieces of chocolate or little bags of cookies that had come in packages from the International Red Cross. Again, we found out that the treats were only for our block. Children always welcome presents but in that moment it meant so much more—that they could go on living a little bit longer.

As the days went by, however, we grew more and more depressed by our surroundings. One day, during a roll call in late December, I noticed something crawling on the back of the person standing in front of me. When I asked the person next to me a whisper, "What is that?" he answered, "Oh, that's lice." We didn't have proper sanitary facilities, which made lice infestation unavoidable and lice brought typhus, a life-threatening disease that quickly became an epidemic. Soon, people either couldn't get up for roll call or fell while standing in it; they were taken away and never seen again. At my mother's urging, we spent a long time each day searching out the eggs and squashing them between our fingernails to decrease our chances of getting infested with lice; thankfully, we all managed to avoid the deadly typhus illness.

During those dreadful months, so much happened that I can only mention a few incidents. When there weren't any minor chores to do after roll call, we were usually allowed to roam around inside the block. Once, when I was standing by a barbed wire fence, I saw a group of inmates pushing a wagon filled with red beets toward the kitchen complex. I saw a few pieces fall off, either because a wheel rolled over a stone or an inmate "accidentally" shook it, and one rolled toward me. I grabbed it, hid it under my coat and took it to my mother.

Fortunately, none of the guards saw me do it. I was so starved that I hadn't thought about the times that I'd seen people get shot for that kind of thing; just seeing the beet rolling my way, I had to pick it up. A few bite-size pieces of that raw beet lasted a couple of days and was a critical additional food source for the five of us. Still, we so lacked vitamins that many of us, including me, were developing scurvy with its festering, open wounds. I still have scars on my legs relating to my experience with the disease.

On the night of my eighteenth birthday, February 20, 1945, I witnessed something extremely disturbing. Sometime after the 10:00 p.m. curfew we heard agonizing screams coming from outside our barracks. I went over to the window and defrosted a small hole with my breath so I could see the next block, which was about one metre away from the window. I saw a large group of inmates herded in there—already looking to be on the verge of collapse—being beaten with rifle butts and sticks with nails and other metal objects protruding from them. The scene that played out in front of me has forever remained in my mind and caused many nightmares. Just a few feet from my face, a man was savagely beaten by an SS guard using a stick with nails and as he fell down, the guard yelled at him to get up. When the man couldn't, he kept beating him until he died right there and

then. We found out later that those men had been driven thousands of miles on foot from the forced labour camp in the copper mines of Bor, Yugoslavia during those winter months. I tell this horrific story to the students who visit the Toronto Holocaust Centre to illustrate the fact that such hatred-fueled incidents like this from my past should never become their future.

Yet, another incident with an SS guard was just the opposite; this guard looked like Popeye—he always had a pipe in his mouth and even his features were similar—and he came in every night at 10:00 p.m. to turn off the lights and order us into our bunks. Each time, he would barely step into the barracks before starting to yell, scream and curse at us but while doing this, he would hand out small chocolate bars to the children. Amidst all the inhumanity, there were individuals who still had human feelings and were capable of demonstrating it.

ARLETTE DEMONCEAU MICHAELIS

Context: Western Europe

Source: Arlette deMonceau Michaelis. *Beyond the Ouija Board: A WWII Teenager in Occupied Belgium*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2005, pp. 40–46. Used by permission.

Arlette de Monceau Michaelis lived in Brussels, Belgium, during the Nazi occupation of that country from 1940 onwards. Although not Jewish, she and her family had a close relationship to Belgian and refugee Jews in Brussels, and sheltered many during the war years (resulting many years later in their being recognized by Israel's Yad Vashem as Righteous among the Nations). While covering a number of topics in the testimony that follows, an ongoing theme relates to the quest for an adequate supply of food during the Nazi occupation. It is an admirable glimpse into a theme discussed only fleetingly when others look at the refugee issue; how to provide adequate supplies for those being protected by those doing the sheltering.

One of the most important things for a teenager is FOOD. We were always at the receiving end of new and economical recipes. Everybody was skinny where I lived, and anybody that showed any increase in his or her girth or weight became immediately suspicious. We were dieting in unison. The question most often asked of thin Belgian women was, “Madame, what has happened to your opulent bosom?” To which she would answer: “The Germans went away with it.”

To men the comments were less delicate, more like “Your neck looks like a turkey’s.” A few months into the occupation we found out that there was a street in Brussels where you could find any kind of food you craved at extravagant prices. The street was the Rue des Radis, and there you could buy butter, coffee, potatoes, dried beans, white flour, all the things that made life precious now and yet were so ordinary in peacetime. I never went to the Rue de Radis although it was located close to my school. This was commercialism of the worst kind. Later on I found out that papa was buying “black market” butter for his own use, sneaking it into his office at the Savings Bank. It was his way to compensate for the vicissitudes of life and his way to rationalize his fall from grace—from civil engineer to mere bank clerk. This had been humiliating to him, but the butter he sneaked in and shared with me was his consolation. I never told my mother or my siblings about my discovery. Papa and I tacitly agreed to keep this our secret.

For our family, Rue des Radis was out of the question. We didn’t have the money to pay approximately \$50.00 for a kilo of butter, but the people who could afford to pay those prices were not all collaborators or “Nazi friendly.” Many had money. Belgium was a rich country before the war yet there also was a class of citizens that had made a lot of money selling soap on the black market during the First World War and they were the force behind the black market operation at Rue des Radis. The “Soap Barons” of WWI were at it again.

We used to dream of white bread, but flour was not available. Some times we could buy wheat grain on the black market and bring it home and grind it by hand on a small grinding machine. That was my reluctant brother’s job. My father had fastened the hand-operated machine on a sturdy table and had placed the whole contraption in the garage. However, after seeing how hard it was for my brother to grind the wheat kernels and turn the crank by hand, papa decided to “go electric.” He fastened a motor to the grinding thing with straps and metal hinges and fan belts and it looked rather professional. Brother Guy was delighted until he turned the switch on. The motor was so powerful that it sent table, grinding machine, and precious wheat grain, all over, almost taking my brother into the maelstrom it had created. Since the machine was made of cast iron, which happened to be breakable, you can imagine what had happened; but not to worry, Papa went to its rescue. He patched it so well with metal straps, screws, bolts, that made it look like an armored tank. I will never forget that machine and the way it looked after papa fixed it. In my mind it became comparable to a mutilated, bandaged war veteran, hobbling on crutches

needing our respect and getting it. However, the electrification had broken and now poor Guy had to turn the crank once again, pushing the kernels into the funnel with a screwdriver to make them go down more easily.

My sister and I sifted the roughly ground wheat kernels to make the precious flour, but we had to make sure that it wasn't sifted too finely. We had to make it as coarse as possible, no waste permitted, and the by-product was excellent. It was whole-wheat flour at its best not to be compared to the oat kernels we had tried before. It didn't happen often that we could buy wheat in the rough because it was very expensive. But the time had come for us to find some farmer who would sell us the surplus that the Nazis let them keep for their own use. My grandfather after searching his memory remembered some old buddy who had a farm and lived close to Brussels. However, the good people spoke Flemish only (Belgians living in Brussels spoke French and Flemish; however, many Belgians in the north spoke only Flemish and many in the south spoke only French). Since I didn't speak Flemish very well, the expedition to their farm was reserved mainly to my brother who dabbled in Flemish and my grandmother who spoke Flemish fairly well.

The farm was located in Meerbeek, a two-mile walk from the streetcar terminal in Ninove. Once there, we had to socialize a bit and then find out what extras the farmers had. They used to sell us butter, bacon, or potatoes depending on availability. I went there a few times though because one of the farm boys had a crush on me and had called a newborn calf "Arlette" in my honor. I tried to speak Flemish with him, but he was a shy young boy. The most painful thing was going back home with the provisions that weighed a lot and facing that long walk back to the streetcar stop.

The Germans eventually found out about the farmers' selling the surplus to the people and didn't like it. They used to stop the streetcars, inspect the packages, confiscate our food, and either fine us or send us to jail. Therefore, we had to conceal the food we brought back. We heard fabulous tales of a lady who had hung a slab of bacon between her legs, under a full skirt. Tales too of boys hiding butter under their caps. Oops, I borrowed that one from Tom Sawyer. Tales of potatoes being put in ladies' bloomers which had once again become fashionable, circulated.

We even heard of a man who went to get provisions armed with two suitcases and his German shepherd dog. He had bought a half pig and had put the meat in one suitcase keeping the other one empty. At the sight of a German patrol, he would sneak the dog into the empty suitcase and when the soldier would ask what he had in it, he would reply honestly,

"My dog," which of course the patrolmen would not believe. Then the police would renew his request and open the suitcase while looking at his prey with daggers in his eyes and then he would be totally surprised to be either licked or bitten by the confined dog. The patrolman never inquired about the content of the other suitcase being glad to be rid of the suspect.

My father once brought home a whole fresh ham, which my mother cooked. However, because it was huge we had to conserve it carefully. We hung it in the bathroom vent, a cool place—free of bugs, but not as cold as a refrigerator. It was fine until days later when it started moving. Maggots had taken residence near the bone but I think that Pelot scraped them out, rinsed it and ate the rest of the ham. Once again, Pelot to the rescue.

We also tried to grow our own veggies. Since our neighborhood was being planned and built, the sidewalks had not been completed. Space between the curb and the uncompleted sidewalk gave us the opportunity to grow something there. Moreover, Papa decided to cultivate the vacant lot next to our house. Not only *How to Raise Chickens for Dummies* hadn't been written yet, but also its comparison *How to Grow Vegetables for Dummies* hadn't been written either. So papa went to his favorite bookstore and bought the most complicated and convoluted guide on how to raise tomatoes, potatoes, onions, carrots, etc. that you could find. But we tilled the clay, sowed the seeds, planted the tomatoes and whatever we planted grew. Papa later sent me his book when I bought a house in the country and had plans to cultivate a garden.

The Belgians cultivate a lot of sugar beets, which becomes cattle fodder after the extraction of the sap, which in turn is used in making sugar. That crop also found its way to Germany, and sugar became heavily rationed although we were allotted a bigger ration during July and August, permitting us to make jelly and preserves for the winter. Our cravings for sugar, as well as our appetite for candy, had to be curbed because both were absolutely unavailable. However, papa found an article in some publication stating that if you were a beekeeper in good standing you were permitted to obtain twenty kilos of sugar as bee food. My father immediately applied for his ration of sugar, which was given him without even having a bee inspector check the states of the hives or their number.

Papa was raising phantom bees in phantom hives, and he was smiling with utter joy at his own cunning and licking his chops in anticipation of tasting sugar again. My mother didn't share his enthusiasm, wondering how he was going to

get out of an eventual inspection by the bee people, unable to show the authorities that the bees were just a ploy to get sugar. Oh, but papa was ahead of her. He had been studying bees and bee diseases and was ready to tell the inspectors that the bees had a disease called *Loque* and not only had the bees had to be destroyed but the hives as well since the *Loque* was such a virulent affliction that it threatened the lives of all bees in the country. So papa was especially happy to have hoodwinked the enemy once again.

The task of getting the sugar fell on us girls, so Ginette and I gladly obliged since we were promised an extra ration. We walked the ten miles to the destination and were given the heaviest bags of sugar that we could carry. It was deadly hot that day and the ten kilos might have been one hundred pounds that we each had to carry. We finally made it home, and papa used a teaspoon of the famous sugar to put on his strawberries. After one bite he got up gagging, grabbing his throat with his hands and spat the whole thing into the kitchen sink.

This famous sugar was mixed with sand but that didn't deter papa from counter attacking the problem. He melted the sugar in water, hoping for the sand to sink to the bottom of the container so he could harvest the sweet water and eventually crystallize the sugar by evaporation. We found out to our chagrin that the water was turning pale purple and after a thorough analysis, we found out the sugar contained the chemical aniline and therefore was unfit for human consumption. Now we understood why the "bee people" had appeared to be so lax when we put in the application; they knew all along that we were going to be fooled into believing we were going to fool them. We had tried and it had not worked out, but papa was not defeated. What will come next, we wondered?

As soon as my brother came home from school he would rush to the kitchen and search the food locker for something to eat. But that was strictly forbidden and considered stealing since all our food was divided equally among the five of us. Nobody was entitled to eat more than his or her share. But Guy had developed the knack of talking with his mouth full; therefore, if my mother asked him a question without seeing him, he could answer her perfectly normally as if his mouth were empty. Yet my mother smelled a rat and sought to catch him the act of stealing using clever methods of detection, but it had to be done quickly in order not to arouse his suspicion. She finally found the right thing to do and commanded him abruptly, "Guy, whistle." That he could not do with food in his mouth, so he was caught eating OUR food. And from that day on the door between the dining

room and the living room had to remain open when we came back from school.

Hunger was terrible to experience day after day. Sometimes the food we ate was of unknown origin. For example, we never knew what kind of flour was used in the bread we bought at the bakery. I believe that it was made from a variety of grains almost unfit for human consumption and we also knew that in order to cheat us the baker added an inordinate amount of water in the preparation of the bread, which increased its weight and made it hard to keep from spoiling. After two days the bread was moldy—my father swore it glowed in the dark, yet we never hesitated about eating it. Throwing out food was unthinkable.

We found out soon enough that the Great Reich needed coal and plenty of it. Therefore, we were unable to buy coal from our prewar supplier. Instead we had to burn wood, which became very expensive and hard to find. Furthermore, the wood we bought was sold by the ton or fraction thereof and the merchants used to deliver the logs soaking wet. After a few days the ton of wood had shrunk to half its size.

We were also unable to use our central heating system. The coal-burning furnace required too much wood; therefore, we had to use space stoves and hook them up to the fireplace. Then wood became scarce and we were forced to buy some kind of wet coal dust mixed with mud that when ignited smelled of rotten eggs. That pseudo coal was called *schlam*. Usually we were able to ignite it after a series of unsuccessful attempts. The warmth it radiated was minimal; the stoves were not big enough to heat our apartment, and our bedrooms had no heat at all. After having known a rather comfortable existence before the war, this cold was hard to bear.

As in every big city we had city gas, which became regulated by the enemy. It was given full strength two hours a day, between 7:00 AM and 8:00 AM and between 6:00 PM and 7:00 PM. In between there was not enough pressure to amount to anything; then after a short while the pressure died down altogether. The two hours per day rationing stayed the same for a few months until it was changed again. Then it became available every other day for one hour in the morning one day, and one hour at night the next.

We had a cooking stove in the kitchen that used wood, but it was hooked to a corner chimney which lacked the draft necessary for good combustion, but at least it was an alternative to gas cooking. And then papa once again had an idea that was worth a cool million. He discovered that if you placed an electric space heater on its back, took off the protective grill and put a different kind of resistance—the kind

you found in an electric hot plate—replaced the grill, keeping the space heater on its back, you found yourself the proud owner of a great electric range more stable and stronger than a flimsy hot plate. With the help of my sister, he turned out a lot of these and sold them to the grateful Belgians.

Our German tenants had plenty of coal and they used it in their private furnace but that didn't help us. They soon found out that their furnace was hooked on to our bedroom radiators upstairs, and they had the pipes cut off immediately. It felt as though our last contact with our previous life of comfort had been ripped away from us.

MARGA MINCO

Context: Western Europe

Source: Marga Minco. "The Stars," Chapter 3. *Bitter Herbs*. A Little Chronicle. London: Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 12–17. Translated by Roy Edwards. Originally published as *Het bittere kruid. Een kleine kroniek*. 1957. Used by permission of Marga Minco and Prometheus.

Anti-Jewish measures in the Netherlands were introduced progressively. As elsewhere, one of the ways in which the Nazis began the process of alienation of Jews from the wider population was through isolating them by marking them off visually. As of April 29, 1942, therefore, Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothing. In this account, Dutch girl Marga Minco relates the impact this had on her home life, as family discussions ensued over how the star was to be affixed and worn—a very personal aspect of the Holocaust that at one time or another had to be faced by all Jews.

The Stars

From the window of my bedroom I saw my father approaching in the distance. I had been out of hospital for some weeks. I still had to rest for a couple of hours each day, but I was quite well again.

The road in which we lived was all I knew of Amersfoort as yet. It was in a quiet suburb of new semi-detached houses, set in gardens. My father was walking along with short, firm steps, and raised his hat with a flourish to a woman who was standing in her front garden picking flowers. She appeared to say something to him, for he checked his pace for a moment. When he was close to the house I

saw that he was carrying a parcel in his hand. A small brown parcel.

I went downstairs, stuck my head around the door of the sitting room, and announced:

'Here comes Father, with a parcel.'

I went towards the front door. 'What is in it?' I asked.

'In what?' asked my father, placidly hanging up his hat and coat. He had put the parcel on top of the hallstand.

'What a question!' I said impatiently. 'In that parcel you've got there?'

'You'll see,' he said. 'Come.'

I followed him inside. He put it down on the table, while everyone looked curiously on. It was tied up with string, the knots in which he first patiently unpicked. Then he unfolded the brown paper.

It was the stars.

'I've brought several for each of us,' he said. 'Then you'll be able to sew them on all your coats.'

My mother took one from the parcel and examined it closely. 'I'll just see whether I've got any yellow silk in the house,' she said.

'They're orange,' I said. 'You'll have to use orange thread for them.'

'I think it would be better to take thread of the same colour as the coat you sew it on,' said Lottie, my brother Dave's wife.

'It'll look awful on a red jacket,' said Betty. She had come from Amsterdam to stay with us for a few days.

'I leave it to you,' my father said. 'But don't forget, they've got to be on the left side, at the height of your chest.'

'How do you know that?' asked my mother.

'It was in the newspaper, wasn't it?' said my father. 'Didn't you read it? They've got to be clearly visible.'

'What a lot you've brought,' said my mother, doling out two or three stars to each of us. 'Could you have as many as all that?'

'Oh yes,' said my father, 'as many as I liked.'

'It's certainly convenient,' she said. 'Now we can keep some in reserve for our summer clothes.'

We fetched our coats from the hallstand and got down to sewing stars on them. My sister Betty did it very carefully, with small, invisible stitches. 'You must hem them,' she said, when she saw how I was fixing the star on my coat with big, untidy stitches. 'That looks much neater.' 'I think they're awkward things to sew on,' I complained. 'How on earth can you get a hem round those beastly points?'

'You have to turn the hem in first,' said Betty. 'Then you tack the star on to your coat, sew it firmly in place, and pull

the tacking-thread out; if you do that, it's bound to look alright.' I tried again. I wasn't so skillful with needle and thread as my sister. After all my efforts, the star was still crooked.

'Now you can't read what's on it,' I sighed. 'But I don't suppose that'll matter. They'll know all the same.'

'Look,' said Lotte, 'it fits exactly into one of the squares on my coat.' We looked at her coat, which she put on at once.

'Very nice,' my mother pronounced. 'You've done it very neatly.'

Betty threw her coat on too. Together they walked up and down the room.

'Good as the Queen's Birthday,' I said. 'Wait a moment and I'll put mine on as well.'

'Yours'll fall off in no time,' said Lottie.

'Oh no,' I said. 'It'll never come off.'

'What are you doing?' asked Dave. He had appeared in the doorway and was looking at us in surprise.

'We're sewing the stars on,' said Lottie.

'I'm looking for my overcoat. Has anybody seen it?' he asked.

'It's here,' said Lottie. 'It isn't ready yet.'

'I've got to go out,' said Dave. 'Can I still put it on as it is?'

'Today you can still put it on as it is,' my father said.

'Would you like to wait a minute while I fix it for you?' I offered. 'I'm very good at it.'

'No,' said Dave, 'if I can, I'd like to be ordinary, for today.'

When he opened the garden gate and walked down the road, the five of us gaped after him as if there was something very extraordinary about him.

JANET ZUCHTER MOSKOWITZ

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Janet Zuchter Moskowitz (edited by Maryann McLoughlin with Ida Margolis). *The Miracle of Survival: Angels at My Back*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2007, pp. 44–47. Used by permission.

Janet (Jadzia) Moskowitz was born in the Polish city of Będzin, which was in the direct line of the Nazi advance in September 1939. In 1943 she and her family were deported to Auschwitz where, despite the odds, she managed to survive. Upon being sent to the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück, Janet Zuchter Moskowitz was sent to Neustadt Gleve (Neustadt-Glewe), a subcamp of Ravensbrück where she became part of the slave labor force. This account is an excellent short report

of the routine in the camp, but arguably more important is the lengthy personal reflection she provides in italics, in which she gives her thoughts on the concentration camp experience overall, and of its aftermath.

When we saw Ravensbrück, we thought, "This is the end." We said: "We came out from Auschwitz, but we will never come out of here!" Ravensbrück was large with a 25' high stone wall, with electrified barbed wire, enclosing the concentration camp. We went into the place and talked with the inmates there—mostly women. They said this camp was a tough, tough place. We had known the bad; now we knew the worst; Ravensbrück was the worst. . . .

We were also told about the terrible "medical" experiments they did at Ravensbrück. I saw a few girls who were not walking. I was told that SS doctors had done bone marrow experiments on them. . . .

When we were in Ravensbrück, we met girls from many concentration camps; some sent there on death marches as we were. We were put up in barracks that were cleaner than Auschwitz-Birkenau. We didn't talk too much together. Mostly we thought about the bread or water that we would be given. At Ravensbrück, in the morning, we also had the daily roll call. Then we sat and talked a little. We kept together with our group. We thought they would take us out to work. We talked together and decided that we wanted to be first on the list to go to work. We thought we should try to leave Ravensbrück because we were afraid of the medical experiments. We hoped that then maybe we would survive. This was March 1945.

While we were in Ravensbrück, we heard planes going over. The men, who had come to work on toilets or to take out bodies, sent notes to us and told us that the planes were American. A few weeks later the Germans asked us, "Who wants to work?" we raised our hands and registered our names. We wanted to leave this terrible place. Two hundred to two hundred and fifty women went by cattle cars to a town near Mecklenburg, Germany, to Neustadt Gleve, a sub-camp of Ravensbrück, where they were making Dornier airplane parts.

While I was waiting for them to send me to work, I stayed in a barrack with the other girls. We slept on the floor. However, we weren't beaten as much. Here there were no lice, and, therefore, there was not so much sickness. They brought in food for us to eat. Also several girls worked in the kitchen and brought us potatoes to eat.

A woman in the barrack, from Będzin, Jeme Oksenhändler (now Eisenstein) had only one arm that was amputated, in 1937, in a street car accident. Her mother and sister,

Regina, always put Jeme between them during selections so that the Nazis would not see that she had only one arm. Jeme had been very lucky: she was not sent immediately to the gas chambers. Later the Nazis discovered that Jeme had a beautiful voice, so they allowed her to sing and gave her jobs that she could do, such as taking messages. . . .

Each day the *stubendienst* (room orderly) marched girls out from the barracks to the factory. One day when I was waiting to be taken to the factory after roll call, they counted us but only sent about a quarter of the girls to the factory. It seemed as if they didn't need as many workers as before.

One time they said they needed people to unload the bread. Two older girls and I went to unload the bread. While I was unloading the bread I stuffed some into my pockets to take to my friends. Then they took us and put us in a room, and finding the bread we had hidden, they started to beat us. I thought, How long will this continue? I started to scream and scream. They took me to the barrack and put compresses on me. I was swollen and bruised black and blue. I couldn't get up the next day. I couldn't walk for a couple of days.

My time in the concentration camps changed my feelings about people. I heard such terrible, terrible stories about people—and not just about the Nazis—and what they did to other people. My husband, who had been married before the Holocaust, had a fifteen-year-old daughter Adele, who was just starting high school. In Auschwitz his daughter and wife had rashes on their bodies. They had an ointment to heal these but someone stole the ointment, and then during a selection because of the sores, my husband's wife and daughter were selected for the gas chambers.

Another time I heard that one evening the SS brought in water hoses and sprayed a group of Polish men, leaving them outside all night. By next morning they were frozen to death. Another time when a transport arrived, the SS doctors were wearing white coats, part of their efforts at deception. The doctors measured and weighed the people on the transport and then stood them against a wall and shot them from the other side. Such ways to kill us!

We were sent to concentration camps from all over Europe. The train conductors took us to the gas chambers and were glad. The SS marched us to the gas chambers and were glad. They worked us to death in slave labor camps and were glad.

When we were liberated, we thought we would come out of the concentration camps, tell the world what had happened to us, and they would feel bad for us and welcome us back to the towns and homes we had been driven from. When we came out of the camps, nobody wanted to see us or hear us. The

Poles hated us even more than the Germans. Not one Jew had been left in Będzin; Będzin was Judenfrei (free of Jews). I cannot picture Będzin without Jews. It was such a large Jewish community. Yet most of the non-Jewish Poles were glad the Jews were gone.

Town after town, in every corner of Europe. Even shtetls with only ten Jews—Judenfrei. Incredible! They found every Jew in every little town—even when fighting on two fronts. How? Why did people allow this to happen? Why, when we returned, did they murder us?

JANET ZUCHTER MOSKOWITZ

Context: Salvation

Source: Janet Zuchter Moskowitz (edited by Maryann McLoughlin with Ida Margolis). *The Miracle of Survival: Angels at My Back*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2007, pp. 42–43. Used by permission.

In this short account of a death march on which she was sent when Auschwitz was being evacuated in January 1945, Janet Zuchter Moskowitz describes the cold, the fatigue, and the horror accompanying her every moment after leaving Auschwitz. Her ultimate destination, Ravensbrück, was only reached after the survivors of the death march were placed on cattle cars; as she relates, only about two hundred of those who left Auschwitz survived to reach their new destination.

In January 1945, as the Russian front advanced, the Germans were afraid that the Russians were coming too close to the death camp. They did not want the world to know about what was happening at Auschwitz. Therefore, on January 17, 1945, after roll call, they told us to get ready to leave Auschwitz. They took us out — no extra clothes, no food. Yet I did have a warm coat and shoes. The coat had a red cross painted down the back. The SS wanted to be sure we stood out from the townspeople. With the red mark, people knew who we were. Walking through the towns along the way, it would not be easy to escape.

We marched through snow that was 3' deep. Why didn't they just leave us in Auschwitz? We marched without food in deep snow. We were dragging ourselves. Thousands of people died on this march.

After weeks by foot, train, and cattle cars, most prisoners of the 58,000 on the death march were killed (shot by the SS if they fell behind) en route to Germany. However, back in

Auschwitz-Birkenau, a few days after we left, the Russians arrived and liberated those left there. . . .

We were marched and taken by trains to Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, Germany, located 90 kilometers north of Berlin, near Fürstenberg. On our journey, we went through Rybnik, a town in southern Poland where many of our customers lived. I thought that maybe I should escape and find someone to hide me, but I didn't have the courage to do this. If I had been successful, I would have been saved; however, if I had been turned in to the Germans, I would have been shot. When we reached Germany, German civilians saw us. They looked really sad either because the war was almost lost or they regretted what the victims had experienced. We marched from morning until evening. Then they put us in barns, and we covered ourselves with straw. We debated hiding in the straw. In the morning they came with pitchforks and routed us—we were afraid they would shoot us. Very close friends stuck together. We ate ice and snow. I don't remember if they gave us any bread. We fed Mrs. Strubel the little bread we still had to keep her alive.

After a few days, they put us in cattle cars and we traveled two days to Ravensbrück. I think we were given bread on this train. The train stopped two or three times, so we ran down and got ice and snow to drink. In one place that we passed, people at the station tried to hand us food. But the German soldiers wouldn't let them. Not many prisoners from Auschwitz survived this death march—two hundred or so.

FILIP MÜLLER

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Filip Müller. *Auschwitz Inferno: The Testimony of a Sonderkommando*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, pp. 97–100. Used by permission of Routledge and Rowman & Littlefield.

Filip Müller was a Czech Jew from the city of Sered. In April 1942, at the age of twenty, Müller was deported to Auschwitz and became Prisoner Number 29236. Placed in a work group responsible for the construction and maintenance of the crematoria, Müller was destined to be one of the very few Sonderkommandos to survive Auschwitz. Although in subsequent years his story was told in piecemeal fashion, it was only in 1979 that a full account was published in English. In Auschwitz Inferno: The Testimony of a Sonderkommando (U.S. title, Eyewitness Auschwitz: Three Years in the Gas Chambers), Müller gave one of the most detailed accounts of how

the gas chambers and crematoria operated, from one who was there as a witness-participant.

In the first Republic of Czechoslovakia Theresienstadt, now Terezin, remained a garrison town. But after the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia by the Germans, all inhabitants were compulsorily resettled, while the town which is surrounded by wide ramparts became a ghetto for Jews from Bohemia, Moravia, Germany, Austria, and later also from Holland. From the autumn of 1941 an increasing number of Jews were quartered in the depopulated residential districts as well as in the roomy barracks of Theresienstadt. They provided a reservoir for the places of extermination which had been established further east, and very few of them survived the Third Reich. The little fortress, on the other hand, was used as a prison for political prisoners.

In September 1943 a few thousand Jews were deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz and put in the camp without the usual selection on the ramp. To us older prisoners this seemed almost unbelievable. Still more unbelievable was the fact that behind the barbed wire of their camp the detainees did not wear prison garb but were allowed civilian clothes. They did not even have their hair shaved off. Compared to the rest of the camp inmates their physical and mental condition was relatively good.

Nobody could find a valid reason why it was these Jews from Theresienstadt had been spared the walk to the gas chamber, or why their living conditions were incomparably better than those of the other prisoners. They were made to do the work of building their own camp, but they were never used as forced labour. Every month they were allowed to write one post-card and receive one parcel from outside. Pregnant women were given small quantities of milk, butter and even white bread. Children under six went to a nursery school, while the older children were taught by Jewish teachers. In the Family Camp there existed an excellent orchestra among whose members were well-known artists, and which on occasions had to perform before the SS. There was even a hospital where noted university professors and doctors worked, and all this in a place where, not 100 metres away, a human life was worth nothing. It was, therefore, not surprising that these unusual conditions led us to assume that the Family Camp was under the special protection of the International Red Cross. However, the secret order which I had read that night showed me that this was not so. It was more likely that the Jews in the Family Camp were used to provide an alibi for the Nazis, to demonstrate to the world how well they treated the Jews in concentration camps, and

that this was the reason why they had been given special status.

Voss was still sitting at the table, thoughtfully drumming the table top with his pencil and consulting his wrist-watch; then he began scribbling figures on a scrap of paper. After a while he turned to the *Kapos* and said: "To get the stiffs burnt by tomorrow morning is no problem. All you have to do is see that every other load consists of two men and one woman from the transport, together with a *Mussulman* and a child. For every other load use only good material from the transport, two men, one woman and a child. After every two loadings empty out the ashes to prevent the channels from getting blocked." Then he continued menacingly: "I hold you responsible for seeing to it that every twelve minutes the loads are stoked, and don't forget to switch on the fans. Today it's working flat out, understood?"

"Yes, *Herr Oberscharführer*," cried the two *Kapos*.

"And another thing," Voss snapped, "when you've finished, clean up everything, you know, hosing down, chlorinating, and all that sort of thing. And to finish up, lime-wash the walls! Everything clear? By 8 tomorrow morning everything's got to be shipshape! Off you go!"

About 500 dead bodies were still lying in heaps in the changing room. They must now be sorted according to their combustibility: for the corpses of the well-nourished were to help burn the emaciated. Under the direction of the *Kapos*, the bearers began sorting the dead into four stacks. The largest consisted mainly of strong men, the next in size of women, then came children, and lastly a stack of dead *Muselmans*, emaciated and nothing but skin and bones. This technique was called "express work," a designation thought up by the *Kommandoführers* and originating from experiments carried out in crematorium 5 in the autumn of 1943. The purpose of these experiments was to find a way of saving coke. On a few occasions groups of SS men and civilians visited the crematorium to watch the experiments. From conversations between Voss and Gorges we gathered that the civilians were technicians employed by the firm of Topf and Sons of Erfurt who had manufactured and installed the cremation ovens.

In the course of these experiments corpses were selected according to different criteria and then cremated. Thus the corpses of two *Muselmans* were cremated together with those of two children or the bodies of two well-nourished men together with that of an emaciated woman, each load consisting of three, or sometimes four, bodies. Members of these groups were especially interested in the amount of coke required to burn corpses of any particular category, and in

the time it took to cremate them. During these macabre experiments different kinds of coke were used and the results carefully recorded.

Afterwards, all corpses were divided into the above-mentioned four categories, the criterion being the amount of coke required to reduce them to ashes. Thus it was decreed that the most economical and fuel-saving procedure would be to burn the bodies of a well-nourished man and an emaciated woman, or vice versa, together with that of a child, because, as the experiments had established, in this combination, once they had caught fire, the dead would continue to burn without any further coke being required.

As the number of people being gassed grew apace, the four crematoria in Birkenau, even though they were working round the clock with two shifts, could no longer cope with their workload. According to the makers' instructions the ovens required cooling down at regular intervals, repairs needed to be done and the channels leading to the chimneys to be cleaned out. These unavoidable interruptions resulted in the "quota" of no more than three corpses to each oven load being kept to only very rarely.

The decision as to whether it was to be "express" or "normal" work was taken by the *Kommandoführers*. If outsiders or perhaps even the *Lagerkommandant* arrived at the crematorium for an inspection we switched over to normal work immediately. On such occasions Voss and his *Kommandoführers* would put on a grand performance. They pretended to pay meticulous attention to the strict observing of instructions, bustling about in a show of efficiency, ordering us around, hustling us along and generally creating the impression that the smooth running of the crematorium was their sole purpose in life. And if a stoker dared to push his iron fork against the fire-brick lining, if the fans were not switched off in time, or if anything else unforeseen occurred there would be much shouting on the part of the SS. "Can't you watch what you're doing, you bloody Jewish bastard," they would yell. "Watch it, or you'll end up inside the oven too!" Once the visitors had gone "express work" continued at the usual pace, significantly raising the output of the ovens.

In crematorium 5 the most floor space was taken up by the changing room, about 300 square metres. With its exposed rafters it looked just like a spacious barn. The changing room was on the same level as the two gas chambers and the cremation room. As in the other crematoria its scanty furnishings consisted of two wooden benches, numbered clothes-hooks and signboards along the walls. However, there was in crematoria 4 and 5 one signboard whose

inscription was actually correct. It was the one which referred to return “after the bath.” For in these two crematoria the changing rooms served also as mortuaries: after each gassing the corpses had to be dragged back there from the gas chamber. Nowhere were the omnipresence and inexorability of death more obvious than in this place. Because of our constant handling of the dead we seemed to forget they were corpses. We would talk to them as if they were still alive, and even though there was no reply it appeared to worry no one, for we supplied our own answers.

MIKLOS NYISZLI

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Miklos Nyiszli. *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eye-witness Account*. London: Granada Publishing, 1978, pp. 88–93. Used by permission of Penguin Books Ltd. and Skyhorse Publishing.

Miklos Nyiszli was a Hungarian Jewish medical doctor who was ordered to work with the notorious SS Dr. Josef Mengele at Auschwitz. As such, he was a de facto member of the Auschwitz Sonderkommando, though not engaged in the hard physical work of forcing other Jews into the gas chambers and operating the crematoria. In this amazing account, he describes the bizarre circumstance of a young girl who survived a gassing—and the pandemonium this caused among the Sonderkommando members who had never before encountered such an unprecedented occurrence. No one was supposed to come out of the gas chamber alive; therefore, the question arose as to what should be her fate? With little other option, Nyiszli had to take action, and he describes here what form that took—and why.

In number one crematorium's gas chamber, 3,000 dead were piled up. The Sonderkommando had already begun to untangle the lattice of death. The noise of the elevators and the sound of their clanging doors reached my room. The work moved ahead double-time. The gas chambers had to be cleared, for the arrival of a new convoy had been announced.

The chief of the gas chamber commando almost tore the hinges off the door to my room as he arrived out of breath, his eyes wide with fear or surprise.

“Doctor,” he said, “come quickly. We just found a girl alive at the bottom of the pile of corpses.”

I grabbed my instruments case, which was always ready, and dashed to the gas chamber. Against the wall, near the

entrance of the immense room, half covered with other bodies, I saw a girl in the throes of a death-rattle, her body seized with convulsions. The gas commando men around me were in a state of panic. Nothing like this had ever happened in the course of their horrible career.

We removed the still living body from the corpses pressing against it. I gathered the tiny adolescent body into my arms and carried it back into the room adjoining the gas chamber, where normally the gas commando men change clothes for work. I laid the body on a bench. A frail young girl, almost a child, she could have been no more than fifteen. I took out my syringe and, taking her arm—she had not yet recovered consciousness and was breathing with difficulty—I administered three intravenous injections. My companions covered her body which was as cold as ice with a heavy overcoat. One ran to the kitchen to fetch some tea and warm broth. Everybody wanted to help, as if she were his own child.

The reaction was swift. The child was seized by a fit of coughing, which brought up a thick globule of phlegm from her lungs. She opened her eyes and looked fixedly at the ceiling. I kept a close watch for every sign of life. Her breathing became deeper and more and more regular. Her lungs, tortured by the gas, inhaled the fresh air avidly. Her pulse became perceptible, the result of the injections. I waited impatiently. The injections had not yet been completely absorbed, but I saw that within a few minutes she was going to regain consciousness: her circulation began to bring color back into her cheeks, and her delicate face became human again.

She looked around her with astonishment, and glanced at us. She still did not realize what was happening to her, and was still incapable of distinguishing the present, of knowing whether she was dreaming or really awake. A veil of mist clouded her consciousness. Perhaps she vaguely remembered a train, a long line of box cars which had brought her here. Then she had lined up for selection and, before she knew what was happening, been swept along by the current of the mass into a large, brilliantly lighted underground room. Everything had happened so quickly. Perhaps she remembered that everyone had had to undress. The impression had been disagreeable, but everyone had yielded resignedly to the order. And so, naked, she had been swept along into another room. Mute anguish had seized them all. The second room had also been lighted by powerful lamps. Completely bewildered, she had let her gaze wander over the mass huddled there, but found none of her family. Pressed close against the wall, she had waited, her heart frozen, for what

was going to happen. All of a sudden the lights had gone out, leaving her enveloped in total darkness. Something had stung her eyes, seized her throat, suffocated her. She had fainted. There her memories ceased.

Her movements were becoming more and more animated; she tried to move her hands, her feet, to turn her head left and right. Her face was seized by a fit of convulsions. Suddenly she grasped my coat collar and gripped it convulsively, trying with all her might to raise herself. I laid her back down again several times, but she continued to repeat the same gesture. Little by little, however, she grew calm and remained stretched out, completely exhausted. Large tears shone in her eyes and rolled down her cheeks. She was not crying. I received the first reply to my questions. Not wanting to tire her, I asked only a few. I learned that she was sixteen years old, and that she had come with her parents in a convoy from Transylvania.

The commando gave her a bowl of hot broth, which she drank voraciously. They kept bringing her all sorts of dishes, but I could not allow them to give her anything. I covered her to her head and told her that she should try and get some sleep.

My thoughts moved at a dizzy pace. I turned towards my companions in the hope of finding a solution. We racked our brains, for we were face to face with the most difficult problem: what to do with the girl now that she had been restored to life? We knew that she could not remain here for very long.

What could one do with a young girl in the crematorium's Sonderkommando? I knew the past history of the place: no one had ever come out of here alive, either from the convoys or from the Sonderkommando.

Little time remained for reflection. Oberschaarführer Mussfeld arrived to supervise the work, as was his wont. Passing by the open door, he saw us gathered in a group. He came in and asked us what was going on. Even before we told him he had seen the girl stretched out on the bench.

I made a sign for my companions to withdraw. I was going to attempt something I knew without saying was doomed to failure. Three months in the same camp and in the same milieu had created, in spite of everything, a certain intimacy between us. Besides, the Germans generally appreciated capable people, and, as long as they needed them, respected them to a certain extent, even in the KZ. Such was the case for cobblers, tailors, joiners and locksmiths. From our numerous contacts, I had been able to ascertain that Mussfeld had a high esteem for the medical expert's professional qualities. He knew that my superior was Dr. Mengele, the KZ's most dreaded figure, who, goaded by racial pride,

took himself to be one of the most important representatives of German medical science. He considered the dispatch of thousands of Jews to the gas chambers as a patriotic duty. The work carried on in the dissecting room was for the furtherance of German medical science. As Dr. Mengele's pathological expert, I also had a hand in this progress, and therein lay the explanation for a certain form of respect that Mussfeld paid me. He often came to see me in the dissecting room, and we conversed on politics, the military situation and various other subjects. It appeared that his respect also arose from the fact that he considered the dissection of bodies and his bloody job of killing to be allied activities. He was the commandant and ace shot of number one crematorium. The three other SS acted as his lieutenants. Together they carried out the "liquidation" by a bullet in the back of the neck. This type of death was reserved for those who had been chosen in the camp, or else sent from another on their way to a so-called "rest camp." When there were merely 500 or less, they were killed by a bullet in the back of the neck, for the large factory of gas chambers was reserved for the annihilation of more important numbers. As much gas was needed to kill 500 as to kill 3,000.

Nor was it worthwhile to call out the Red Cross truck to bring the canisters and gas butchers for such a trifling number of victims. Nor was it worth the trouble of having a truck come to collect the clothes, which were scarcely more than rags anyway. Such were the factors which determined whether a group would die by gas or by a bullet in the back of the neck. And this was the man I had to deal with, the man I had to talk into allowing a single life to be spared. I calmly related the terrible case we found ourselves confronted with. I described for his benefit what pains the child must have suffered in the undressing room, and the horrible scenes that preceded death in the gas chamber. When the room had been plunged into darkness, she had breathed in a few lungfuls of cyclone gas. Only a few, though, for her fragile body had given way under the pushing and shoving of the mass as they fought against death. By chance she had fallen with her face against the wet concrete floor. That bit of humidity had kept her from being asphyxiated, for cyclon gas does not react under humid conditions.

These were my arguments, and I asked him to do something for the child. He listened to me attentively, then asked me exactly what I proposed doing. I saw by his expression that I had put him face to face with a practically impossible problem. It was obvious that the child could not remain in the crematorium. One solution would have been to put her in front of the crematorium gate. A kommando of women

always worked here. She could have slipped in among them and accompanied them back to the camp barracks after they had finished work. She would never relate what had happened to her. The presence of one new face among so many thousands would never be detected, for no one in the camp knew all the other inmates.

If she had been three or four years older that might have worked. A girl of twenty would have been able to understand clearly the miraculous circumstances of her survival, and have enough foresight not to tell anyone about them. She would wait for better times, like so many other thousands were waiting, to recount what she had lived through. But Mussfeld thought that a young girl of sixteen would in all naïveté tell the first person she met where she had just come from, what she had seen and what she had lived through. The news would spread like wildfire, and we would all be forced to pay for it with our lives.

“There’s no way of getting round it,” he said, “the child will have to die.”

Half an hour later the young girl was led, or rather carried, into the furnace room hallway, and there Mussfeld sent another in his place to do the job. A bullet in the back of the neck.

LUBA OLENSKI

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Luba Olenski. *A Life Reclaimed: A Child among the Partisans*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2006, pp. 63–67. Used by permission.

The challenges of staying ahead of the Nazis while on the run were many and, all too often, dangerous. In this account, a Polish Jewish woman, Luba Olenski, describes a little of her ordeal as she hid from the Germans by working her way through forests and streams toward an unknown destination where she hoped she would be safe. As she writes, she was on the run for five and a half weeks, during which time “my hopes began to fade of ever reaching the partisans”—her preferred destination.

I was later to learn that my decision to shelter at night and travel by day was by far the most dangerous one I could have made. The partisans did the exact opposite. Necessity dictated my chosen routine. Firstly, there were no streams, so the only place I could obtain water was at a well, usually situated at the

edge of the forest, and because I wasn’t strong enough to wind the heavy bucket to the top for myself, I had to ask for help. Generally, when I approached people at the well, they would leave me some water in the bottom of the bucket. Most often, there was a mug hanging by a chain that I could use. Secondly, if I tried to creep through a village at night, the barking of the dogs would have aroused the entire village and brought the *soltys* [village head] to investigate the disturbance. It was also quite possible that, if people could not see who was snooping around, the dogs may have been let loose to attack me.

I soon had a routine of walking through the fields by day, approaching the workers in the fields during their midday break and begging for scraps, and as evening fell, begging for food and shelter at houses in the village. No one ever offered me shelter. I was warned off by being told to make myself scarce. If I had hung around, there were always some people in the village who would not hesitate to take me to the *soltys*. Despite my fears, I got used to settling myself for the night at the wooded edge of the fields. On a good night, I had a piece of black bread to eat with a slice of salted fat from under the skin on the pig’s back, called *slonina*, but I was not always that lucky.

As August rolled into September, the days grew shorter and the nights colder. I had no jacket and no experience of country life. A peasant woman took pity on me and advised me to burrow into a haystack to sleep. I was extremely tired and the haystack was warm and dry and I slept deeply until I was woken by a loud and completely unfamiliar noise close by. I imagined that wolves were attacking me in my hiding place, but the noise turned out to be nothing more than the mooing of two cows as they chomped from the haystack. I was so city bred and unused to animals that cows used to frighten me, and I made detours to avoid them. I slept in haystacks a few more times, enduring the rustling and sounds of fellow lodgers—field mice. I could not always find a haystack nearby when night was about to fall. In any case, I decided that I felt better sleeping in the safety of the forest, hidden by branches or bushes, than emerging from a haystack into an open field before I knew who was in the vicinity.

The forest also had its terrors. I always feared wolves, though I never saw one. On one occasion, I was lying under a tree and woke to bright moonlight. The white birch trunk reflected the light, and the bark it had shed looked to me like heaps of writhing worms. Everywhere I looked, they seemed to surround me. I fled in terror until I realized what they were. As each night approached, I was filled with dread. Loneliness and despair overwhelmed me before I found respite in sleep.

As scared as I was of entering the forest, the approach of morning brought no relief. Worry about eluding capture for another day, worry about whom I could trust and where I might find the next scrap of food overwhelmed me. But there was no option but to crawl out of the forest and start again. I soon became a familiar figure moving through the countryside. After a few weeks it seemed that everyone in the area knew me, or had heard about me. I remember the names of only a couple of the villages I passed through: Hodeszew and Szweridi.

At the end of the potato harvest, the women disappeared from the fields and I soon found that the male farm labourers, who were harvesting the wheat, were not as generous as the women. Only a few of the older men were prepared to leave their scraps for me. I did not change my habit of approaching the villages at nightfall when the farmhands had returned from the fields. I was never offered shelter and only sometimes given food on condition that I take it and hurry away before any of the neighbours realised that help had been given to a Jew. Those few decent people who were prepared to give me food were understandably themselves very frightened, because the penalty for harbouring a Jew was death.

Looking back, I wonder how I remained free for so many weeks—how nobody handed me over to the Germans, despite the threats. It would not have been at all hard to detain me, as they still had the four young men. I can only surmise that the skinny girl, still very much a child, was so obviously vulnerable and innocent, nobody could quite bring themselves to betray her. Perhaps not every *soltys*, who I feared as much as the Germans, would have wished to collaborate with the hated invader by turning me in. Whatever the reason, although terrified, starved and exposed to the elements, I remained uncaptured.

I'm sure there must have been those who hated Jews even more than the Germans or, as in all situations of war, were willing collaborators with the enemy for whatever they could gain. There must have been plenty of others happy to prey on anyone as helpless and vulnerable as I was. I was about to meet somebody just like that, just when my daily life, such as it was, was becoming routine.

One day I came across an isolated farmhouse compound, far from any village—a *colonia* in Polish. As I approached, the dogs first began to bark and then to chase me. I was very frightened and began to run away, but a woman came out, silenced the dogs and invited me in, saying, "Come on, you poor child." She took me into the barn, where a large number of pigs were penned, and told me I could stay in the loft providing I made no sound and remained completely

hidden. She brought me food and told me that she would bring me more, once each day when she fed the pigs. The loft was warm and dry and there was soft hay to sleep in. After my meal of bread and potatoes, the most I had eaten in my wanderings, I fell into a long, deep sleep. I must have woken late the next morning. As the woman didn't bring me food on that first day, I noticed that there were dried pods stored in the loft and I tried eating the black seeds inside, and discovered that they actually tasted good. They were poppy seeds. All I could do to while away the time was to look out through the cracks between the weatherboards of the barn. The view I had was of bare and lonely fields. The barn seemed so much warmer and more secure than the bleak, chilly countryside.

After four days, I was feeling quite comfortable in this situation and began hoping I might be allowed to stay for an extended period, maybe even until the end of the war. On the fifth day, however, to my great disappointment the woman told me that the Germans were conducting house-to-house searches for runaway Jews and I would have to leave that very night for the sake of her safety and the safety of her child. I pleaded with her but to no avail. She took my clothes away stating that she needed them for her daughter, who was my size, and she replaced them with an old dress of her own, which was so ragged it was hardly a dress at all. She made me remove my shoes and handed me a pair of old, high-heeled shoes much too big for me and incongruous in the extreme. Needless to say, I had no option but to walk away barefoot and in flimsy rags much too large for me.

The loss of my shoes was a catastrophe. The soles of my feet were soft and the ground already cold. The daytime temperatures were continuing to fall, as winter approached. Worst of all, the grain harvests had almost been completed and the fields were covered in hard, unyielding stubble that easily pierced the tender skin of my feet and introduced infection. Nevertheless, I couldn't afford to stop. I was desperate to reach the sanctuary of the Bialawierza forest to find the partisans, although I had no idea how far it might be or even if I was heading in the right direction. I learned to carry a stick both as a protection to fend off dogs and as a support as I crossed rough ground with bare feet. . . .

My ordeal continued for five and a half weeks. I did not keep track of the days, although I always knew when it was a Saturday afternoon because the labourers used to tidy the fields in readiness for Sunday, when the fields were empty and I could hear the church bells. Having no regular food or water, and with painfully infected feet, my hopes began to fade of ever reaching the partisans.

FELIX OPATOWSKI

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Felix Opatowski. *Gatehouse to Hell*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2015, pp. 85–92. Used by permission.

Originally a native of Łódź, Poland, Felix Opatowski was sent to Auschwitz at the age of 17, after having been caught by the Nazis smuggling goods out of the ghetto in exchange for food. While at Auschwitz, he became involved with the resistance movement. In the aftermath of the revolt of the XII Sonderkommando in October 1944, suspicion fell on Felix as having somehow been involved in the revolt from outside the crematoria. In his wrenching testimony reproduced here, he describes how he was tortured by the SS for information regarding the smuggling of explosives into the Sonderkommando, and his eventual fate in the face of his ordeal.

The Underground had been working with the *Sonderkommando* for a while to organize resistance. As I mentioned earlier, the *Sonderkommando* had to deal with the dead bodies of prisoners; when they were sent to work in the crematoria they too were already condemned to die—because of their work, what they witnessed, the Germans only kept them alive for a period of time. Because there was no shortage of Jews, they didn't have to keep the same ones. But they always needed a few experienced people to teach the new ones what to do, so they left a few men there who became kapos. Maybe later on they got rid of them. I don't know. In each crematorium I think there was one kapo in charge, with numerous *Sonderkommando* prisoners under him and maybe a few foremen.

There were four crematoria in Birkenau. Crematoria I and II had grounds close together, III and IV were on the same grounds and then there were ditches. By the end of the summer of 1944, the *Sonderkommando* at Crematorium III knew that they were soon going to be killed, and the Jewish kapo there, in collaboration with the Underground, formed a plot to blow up the facility. I don't know how or if the prisoners working in Crematorium III got in touch with the prisoners at the other crematoria to let them know that something was going to happen but from what I understand, plans were somehow being made for an uprising.

There had been a terrible selection of Jews in the camp at the end of September 1944. A lot of people went to the gas chambers and I really don't know how I was spared. We had to go in through one washroom, walk past Mengele, and the ones who weren't chosen had to go in to another washroom.

I was free to go back to my regular work with kapo Manfred and I remember working near the Gypsy barracks. By this time, the Gypsies had been murdered. Sometime in August, a transport from Lodz had arrived and those who didn't go to the gas chamber went to the Gypsy camp. I was always trying to get near there because I thought that maybe I could find somebody I knew from Lodz. I happened to also be there when the uprising started.

At the time, I didn't know about the planning of the uprising. I'll tell you what happened from what I know. I don't know if it's all true, mind you. I want you to know that this is what I heard from one of the *Sonderkommando* who took part in it and whom I met later. There are probably other versions of this story, but I have to tell you what I know and what I heard from the horse's mouth.

Sometime in March or April 1944 they began to be very busy at the crematoria and the ovens never stopped; they were working round the clock. The Hungarian Jews, the Jews from Lodz, the Jews from France and from Belgium were coming in massive transports, one after the other. In the summer following this increased activity, I started to have a strong feeling that something was up. After all, I was smuggling packages from Buna, so I guessed something was going to happen, but I didn't know what—I didn't know that there would be an uprising on October 7, 1944. As a matter of fact, it wasn't supposed to be October 7. That's part of the reason that the uprising didn't go off as planned.

All around Auschwitz was countryside with lots of trees and fields. The Polish Home Army had somehow arranged with the Auschwitz Underground that on a certain date they would be close to the camp and would need a signal so they could make a surprise attack on the SS guards. It was decided that the Underground should blow up one of the crematoria as the signal. When the crematorium blew up, the Home Army would cut the electric wires and enter the camp. The Underground, along with prisoners in the camp, would seize and kill the German guards.

By August 1944, there were about 135,000 inmates at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Buna-Monowitz. The majority were women, but there were those who, even in their weakened state, were ready to fight anybody and anything, especially Germans. An Auschwitz inmate was no longer just any ordinary inmate. Many of us were ready to go and kill Germans with our bare hands, even knowing we would be killed ourselves. Our hate was so powerful that we didn't even care if we were going to die. As a matter of fact, I remember that toward the end of the war, areas near Auschwitz were bombed once or twice and we were happy. Why didn't they

bomb the crematoria and us together? We were begging for this.

The Underground knew that if they could get enough people like this going, they could form a small fighting force. There were also some soldiers in Auschwitz who could be helpful, too. On top of that, there were the factories, like Buna-Werke and I. G. Farben, and there were the hospitals—they thought they would be able to get everything they needed for a battle. But they needed a surprise attack to succeed.

The Germans, from what I heard later on, had dissolved most of the ghettos and were running out of Jews to bring into the camps. After all the activity of the spring, they didn't need the crematoria as much as they did before. Aside from this, although we didn't know it at the time, the Soviet army had already advanced into Poland. The German authorities at Auschwitz had received an order from Berlin to start shutting the camp down, starting with killing the inmates who knew the most, the *Sonderkommando*. When this became clear to the *Sonderkommando*, they knew they had to act quickly, or they would be killed before they had the chance to carry out their mission. Even though the timing was still being figured out, they knew what they were supposed to do with the supply of gunpowder. But they jumped the gun.

They knew that their time was short because the Germans had shot the Jewish kapo from Crematorium I and, soon after that, there was a big selection of *Sonderkommando* workers. The prisoners who saw this started to get panicky. On the day of the uprising, there was no communication with the rest of the *Sonderkommando* in the other crematoria. When the Germans next came for the *Sonderkommando*, some of them decided to put up a fight right away. The Germans began shooting and these men fought back. They grabbed whatever was at hand—sticks, bricks—and began shouting and fighting. The Germans called for more guards and the guards came with dogs and more guns.

I think it was maybe ten or eleven o'clock in the morning when I heard the explosion. We all looked up. A crematorium was exploding and burning. The *Sonderkommando* at Crematorium III must have set off their gunpowder, which started a fire. Crematorium III started burning. All this happened in a matter of half an hour to an hour.

From my vantage point near the Gypsy camp, it seemed to me that two of the crematoria were burning—I can still see it in my mind's eye—but I know now that only Crematorium III burned to the ground. I also know that because of this, transports temporarily stopped coming to Auschwitz.

The outbreak in the crematorium was premature because it turned out that the Polish Home Army wasn't yet ready to act. Some of the *Sonderkommando* from Crematoria III, however, still managed to cut the electric wire and escape. The rest were shot on the spot. In the end, the ones who escaped were also caught. From what I heard later, the Germans found them in a cabin about ten kilometres from Birkenau, surrounded it and attacked them with flamethrowers. Most of the *Sonderkommando* from Crematoria III were killed that day. But I was told by some of the *Sonderkommando* from Crematoria I who survived, and who I later got to know, that they caught one of the German kapos and threw him alive into the ovens. Either because of lack of communication or because the SS moved quickly to shut things down, the *Sonderkommando* in Crematoria II and IV didn't take part in the uprising at all.

Nothing happened to me at first. I finished my work and went back to the barracks. By then, everything was quiet. The only thing I saw were Germans, driving trucks that were bringing back the *Sonderkommando* who had escaped; they were dead. It was a shock for all of us. We hadn't known about the plans. It was apparently also a shock for the SS that in their pet camp, the pride and joy of the Third Reich, one of the crematoria could be blown up. Even more so, however, I can only imagine that it was a shock for the Nazi leadership in Berlin, especially Reichsführer Himmler.

It didn't take them long to figure out about the gunpowder. They realized that somebody must have smuggled it in. Who was going from the various camps and factories to Birkenau? The very first man the Gestapo arrested when they came into the D camp after the uprising was kapo Ziggy. There were others, but they knew of him and they took him first because he was a Jewish kapo. They asked him how many times he had brought the explosives into the camp. He said he didn't know anything. They told him to give them the names of all the men who worked with him.

The SS went around to the barracks with Ziggy, an officer keeping his rifle pointed at Ziggy's back. That showed us that kapo Ziggy was in trouble, but hardly anybody knew why. They were going from barracks to barracks because he said he didn't remember anyone's names, he only remembered faces. Little by little he pointed out a few hundred men to the SS, including me. I still wasn't sure what it was all about, but I had a hunch.

They took us to the main building of the Birkenau office. A high-ranking officer came out and talked to kapo Ziggy for a few minutes. Then he took out a revolver and shot him in

front of us. We were stunned. They had shot kapo Ziggy and maybe they were going to shoot us too. But still, nobody knew why for sure, though I guessed by then that it was something to do with the burning crematorium. They announced that they were going to interrogate us.

After the SS shot Ziggy, they assembled all the men who had gone from Birkenau to Buna on work details—in all, they had rounded up a few hundred prisoners. Other kapos were also taken since Ziggy couldn't name all the names and the SS didn't want to miss anyone. They divided us into groups of five and took us to an SS barracks, a *Schreibstube*, for interrogation. Before even beginning the interrogation, two SS came in and started torturing us. They started beating me over the head, left and right. Soon my left eye was hanging out so that I had to take my hand and push it back in again. I can't see out of that eye anymore. Luckily it wasn't severed altogether, so my eye was saved, but there's no sight in it. I was bleeding from my eye, my nose and my body and then I passed out.

I was lucky. They left me at the *Schreibstube* while they sent the rest to Block 11 for interrogation. I was unconscious for maybe a day. It was night when I finally got up, but I really don't remember if it was the same night or the next night. I came to in a pool of blood and it wasn't just my blood. There were many other guys lying around. I don't know how many were living or dead. When the SS went around and kicked the bodies, they saw that I was still alive. They dragged me out with a group of about fifty people and they tortured us some more. Some of the men in the group died right away. Soon there was shooting all around me, and people were killed left and right.

Meanwhile, from where I was, I could hear the telephones ringing and the voices of the women operators yelling to the officers to take calls from the administration in Berlin. The officers didn't want to talk to the officials in Berlin, who wanted to know if they had caught the guilty parties and killed them. In fact, the officials didn't know who was who. They didn't know where to start.

An SS officer hauled me to a bench where there was a vice. He took one of my fingers, put it in the vice and asked me in German if I had been at Buna. "Buna?" I answered. I wasn't going to admit I was there. If he was asking me, that meant he wasn't sure. I just shrugged and got hit over the head. He kept asking me and hitting me. This went on and on, but I wouldn't say anything. I had been a veteran for too long. If I'd said, "Yes," I'd be dead already. If I didn't admit anything, then I might have a chance. By the fifth or sixth time I said nothing, he started tearing out my fingernails. I

screamed and passed out. I'm lucky that I faint easily. I was plain unconscious.

The SS man revived me with a pail of water and when I came to he asked again, "Are you going to tell us? Where did you get explosives? Who was in charge? Who did you give it to?"

He grabbed another fingernail. I probably would have started talking but I fainted again. After a few fingernails he gave up. One nail is completely gone now. A few are partially gone. It's not easy to tear out fingernails and this guy was not an expert, just a plain, ordinary SS man. Some of the nails he tore out more, some he tore out less. But I was already in such pain that I resigned myself that either he was going to shoot me or he was going to take more fingernails so I just fainted.

After that ordeal was over I was left on the ground with a bunch of other guys. There was blood everywhere and nobody bothered us for a while. Two of the men near me had been shot and many others soon died from the torture. We were there for quite awhile, maybe a few days, with no food or water and nobody came in to talk to us for that time.

Imagine lying on a concrete floor, bleeding, in perpetual darkness. I didn't know if it was day or night. We were in a little room with small windows high up. There were several chairs, a bench and a table. There was an electric lamp hanging from the ceiling, which was only on when the SS came in, which they soon did again. At first, they interrogated prisoners one at a time, but later they took more of us together. I don't know if they planned it this way but it was definitely worse.

More than once, they tortured five or six inmates to death right in front of me. The only thing that was worse was hearing the screaming and crying from the hallways or the next room. It was clear that nobody could help us. I knew I was going to die and I only hoped it would be sooner rather than later. Even though I was not a big believer, I tried repeating prayers from memory to whatever God there was.

Finally it came to a point where they didn't get anything from us. My sense of time was vague but after what was probably a few days, they came in to take all of us out. They wanted to see who was able to walk. There were about fifteen or twenty of us who were able to get up after the torture.

From what I know, of the few hundred rounded up for interrogation and tortured, there were only two or three men who were runners for the Underground like I was. The rest of them were innocent people who just happened to go to work at Buna. The two Polish inmates who were my link to the Underground were also there. I only remember the name of one of them, Vlad. He was very good to me, trying

his best to stop the bleeding and helping me later. When we got a little bit better physically, he worked closely with me because he knew me and wanted me to survive. He also gave me a lot of information. The other Pole died during the interrogation.

If this chapter of my story is confusing, believe me, it was hard for me to figure out and write about. Think about where I was and what happened to me in those few days. Every event of those days is like a nightmare, even today, especially at night. I still feel the pain, mentally and physically. Whenever I think about this part of my life, I start getting anxious. I hallucinate so that I imagine that I'm talking about somebody else and my wife has to bring me back to reality.

GISELLA PERL

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Gisella Perl. *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz*. New York: International Universities Press, 1948, pp. 26–30.

Gisella Perl was a Jewish medical doctor specializing in women's health. From Sighet, Romania, in 1944 she was deported, along with most of Sighet's Jews, to Auschwitz. This account, taken from her 1948 memoir, relates her arrival in Auschwitz and the orientation she underwent along with the other women who had been selected to live from her transport. Upon learning that she was a German-speaker, a Nazi officer called upon her to translate on his behalf, leading to her attempting to calm those around her so that a panic would not break out—with the likely outcome that they would all be shot. As she relates, though, by that stage her own future was in doubt; having swallowed a copious amount of morphine, she entered the next phase of camp life in something of a stupor.

For eight days we travelled, day and night, toward an unknown goal. The police who accompanied us to the frontier spoke of a big, common Ghetto where we would be put to work. But when we saw, through the small opening of our sealed car, that the S.S. (Storm Troopers) took over our train at the frontier, we knew there was no hope for us. From then on we received no food, no water. The small children cried with hunger and cold, the old people moaned for help, some went insane, others gave life to their babies there on the dirty floor, some died and their bodies travelled with us. . . . Once in a while our jailer would enter the car in a renewed search

for valuables, or only to beat us and silence plaintive voices with brutal threats.

Then we arrived. We strained our tired, weakened eyes to read the name of the station: AUSCHWITZ. When the S.S. guards unsealed the door of our car and ordered us to get out, I ran to my parents, embraced them and begged them to forgive me if I had ever caused them heartaches. "You were always the best child any parents could have," they comforted me. My sisters and brothers embraced me silently. My husband drew me close. "Take care of yourself . . ." he whispered, "take care of your warm, generous heart . . ." My son just looked at me with his big, blue eyes. "Mother . . ." they said. "Mother."

No one who came out alive of a German extermination camp can ever forget the picture that greeted us at Auschwitz. Like big, black clouds, the smoke of the crematory hung over the camp. Sharp red tongues of flame licked the sky, and the air was full of the nauseating smell of burning flesh. A detachment of S.S. men with guns, whips, and clubs in their hands attacked us, separating the men from their wives, parents from their children, the old from the young. Those who resisted or were too weak to move fast were beaten, kicked and dragged away. In a few minutes we were standing in separate groups, almost unconscious with pain, fear, exhaustion, and the unbearable shock of losing our beloved ones.

Now, with a handful of S.S. officers, the camp physician took over the direction of this infernal game. With a flick of his hand he sent some of us to the left, some to the right. It took some time before I understood what this meant. Of every trainload of prisoners, ten to twelve thousand at a time, he selected about three thousand inmates for his camp. The others, those who went "left," were taken to the crematory to die a horrible death in the constantly burning fire. They were loaded into Red Cross trucks, in a weird mockery of human decency, and carted away; and all we ever saw of them again were their clothes in the storeroom of the camp.

Later I learned all about this bestial procedure. They were taken into small wooden houses, undressed, given a towel and a piece of soap and told to stand under the shower. They were trembling with expectation, yearning for the drops of water which would cleanse their soiled, exhausted bodies after the long days of travelling, and which would quench the thirst of their dry, hot throats. But instead of water a heavy, choking gas came out of the jets. Within seven or eight minutes some of them were asphyxiated, others only became unconscious and were tossed into the flames alive. The screams, the gurgling, choking sounds coming out of those wooden houses will forever ring in my ears.

The children, little blond or dark-haired children from every part of Europe, did not go with their mothers into the gas-chambers. They were taken away, crying and screaming, with wild terror in their eyes, to be undressed, thrown into the waiting graves, drenched with some inflammable material and burned alive. Hundreds of thousands of little children, the beautiful and the plain ones, the rich and the poor, the well-mannered and the naughty, the healthy and the sick, blue-eyed Polish children, dark-haired little Hungarians, round-faced Dutch babies, solemn little French boys and girls, all died to satisfy the sadistic instincts of these perverts.

We, who by mere chance were sent to the “right,” formed a column and set out towards the camp. The roadside was littered with rotting corpses showing the fate of those who fell out of line. We arrived before a large wooden building and were told to enter.

But suddenly the columns disintegrated, the unbearable tension exploded and the terror, the pain, the sorrow, and the loneliness turned women into screaming, panicky, and hysterical creatures. They refused to enter the building which had the sign *Disinfection* painted on it in big letters. Bullets flew, whips cracked and clubs fell with a dull sound, leaving broken bones and open skulls in their wake—but the pandemonium would not subside.

“Where is a doctor?” yelled one of the S.S. men. I stepped forward. He stood me on a table and I was given the first order of my camp-life.

“Tell these animals to keep quiet or I’ll have them all shot!”

“Listen to me . . .” I called to them. “Do not be afraid! This is only a disinfection center, nothing will happen to you here. Afterwards we’ll be put to work, we’ll all remain together, friends, sisters in our common fate. I am your doctor . . . I’ll stay with you, always, to take care of you, to protect you . . . Please, calm down. . . .”

My words had their effect. The women believed me, they fell silent and entered the building, one after another. Under the supervision of S.S. men and women other prisoners carried out the program of disinfection. We were undressed there before the laughing S.S. guards who showed their appreciation of some of the beautiful bodies by slashing them with whips. Everything that could have reminded us of our past life was taken away from us.

I was beyond caring. After my encouraging speech to the hysterical women I had swallowed the forty centigrams of morphine which I had hidden in a small bottle. I felt an ironical superiority as I held out my head to the scissors

and smiled under the cold shower. . . . My feet were winged by the effect of morphine as I entered the doors of Auschwitz, certain that I was going to the supreme happiness of oblivion.

MARGUERITE ÉLIAS QUDDUS

Context: Western Europe

Source: Marguerite Élias Quddus. *In Hiding*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2013, pp. 25–33. Used by permission.

The testimony presented here, from Marguerite Élias Quddus, is a highly evocative account of the arrest of her father, taken from the family home by French police. The collaborationist French gendarmerie, which carried out the orders of the government in Vichy, were those most frequently associated with roundups and deportations to Auschwitz. In the aftermath of her father’s arrest, Marguerite’s mother realizes that the only option is to flee and find refuge somewhere out of the Nazi (and Vichy) orbit. As Marguerite’s testimony shows, there were some good people who tried to help, despite the odds against them—but that doing so carried enormous risks.

I’m suddenly awakened by loud banging. My heart is pounding. The sound is coming from the back door. It’s hardly daylight. I hear Papa ask, “Who’s there?”

“Police! Open up! It’s the police!”

I’m trembling, hiding behind the curtains. Their feet come thundering up the stairs. They come into the room. I hear a lot of voices talking at once and I make out my father’s voice, arguing with them. The officers look mean.

“Why am I being arrested? On what grounds? And by what right? My papers are in order.”

The dog barks and Mama picks her up.

“We’ve been ordered to take you in. Bring the bare necessities and come with us.”

“Take me where?” Papa’s not letting them push him around.

“Get dressed. Hurry up!”

“It’s a mistake!” Papa says. Angry.

I’m terrified. Mama puts her hands to her head and mutters, “Oy vey iz mir . . . Oy vey iz mir. . . .” over and over. Papa is tight-lipped. He says softly, “It’s a mistake, there must be a mistake.”

“But you’re Jewish, aren’t you? There’s no mistake.”

“But I’ve never made a secret of it! I’ve declared it, as the government required. I can prove it, I have all the papers.”

They prevent him from moving. “Hey! Don’t touch anything.”

“I need to get my papers,” Papa forces his way past them. “Look here. See! ‘Voluntary recruit for the duration of the war.’ And here’s the declaration I spoke of, and my income tax. You can see everything’s in order.”

The officer interrupts, “You’re still a Jew. That’s enough. As for the rest, you’ll explain it at the police station. It doesn’t concern us.” Papa starts to go around the room, gathering his clothes.

“Where are you going? Stay here.” They follow him. My father replies, “Look, let’s be reasonable in front of my family. You know I’m no criminal. I’m a businessman. I have clients. Everyone in the neighbourhood knows me. This doesn’t make sense. . . .”

“That’s enough! Hurry up or else we’ll take you in like this.”

Papa answers, “Would you at least have the decency to let me get dressed in private.”

“Hurry up, then, instead of standing around talking. This is no time for discussion! Do what you’re told instead of creating trouble.”

If only I could scream “Papa is not a troublemaker!” He starts to dress quickly, frowning. Mama has put on her robe and her stockings. Her eyes are wild and I’m frightened. She turns away. With all that’s happening, I don’t think she sees my sister and me.

I do not feel sleepy anymore. I’m barefoot and shivering. My feet suddenly feel warm. . . . Oh, no! My sister has peed on the floor. I hold my breath but I feel like shouting.

Papa already has his trousers, shirt and jacket on. He quickly ties the knot of his tie. The officers are watching my parents out of the corners of their eyes. I’m shaking like a leaf. I’m so miserable! Papa ties his shoes and stands up. Adjusting his jacket, he says, “I just need to have a quick wash, if you don’t mind.”

“Certainly not. Who do you think you are?” They prevent him from going.

“I need to get my razor. LET ME PASS!”

“Don’t make trouble!” shouts the meanest one.

The three of them laugh. Papa takes advantage of the opportunity to open a drawer. One of them grabs his hand. “Okay, that’s enough, Éliash. We have others to pick up.” Papa pretends he doesn’t hear. “Rachel, remember what I’m

telling you: the children’s certificates of French citizenship are in there. Call Madame Graziani if you need to. Don’t worry about me. I won’t let the officials push me around.” My mother is still wailing, which infuriates me. Papa changes his tone and pleads with them, “Give me a minute with my wife, please.”

“Would you like us to play the violin as well?” says an officer with a smirk.

“There’s no time,” bellows the third one, already at the door. “We have to get going. He’d take advantage of it to run away. They’re sneaky!”

I don’t dare move. My legs are numb. You’ll be punished. If only Papa had his gun. He’s speaking Yiddish now. I don’t understand what he’s saying. I don’t care because the policemen don’t either. “Enough of that babbling. We’re in France here! Get a move on!” shouts an officer, pushing him toward the door. The dog leaps up and bites the lout. The other one gives the dog a kick in the ribs, yelling, “Filthy beast. Down!” Poor Choukette!

Mama croons her “Oy vey iz mir . . . Oy vey iz mir.” What does it mean? “Calm down, Rokheleh! Don’t get upset,” says Papa. With one shove, they push him out onto the landing. “Let me give my children a kiss!” he demands. My knees are shaking. “They can follow you to number 97, that’s where we’re meeting.”

I know that number, it’s Nicholas’ house. Papa puts his hat on askew and the collar of his overcoat is turned under. Mama hands him a small suitcase. “Here are a few clothes,” she says, sounding distressed. They rush down the stairs. I watch them from the top of the stairs, stunned, and then I follow Mama to the kitchen window like a sleepwalker. Papa tries to go into the toilet in the courtyard, but they don’t let him. They grab him by the arm and drag him like a convict. The concierge finds it funny, watching from her window. She infuriates me.

“See you soon,” calls Papa, looking back. My father knows what he’s talking about. She’ll see, he’ll come back! The officers and Papa are walking so fast that by the time we get to the window facing the street, they’re already far away. “He didn’t even shave and he had nothing to eat,” says Mama, upset. Seeing my sister and me, she changes her tone. “Get dressed, girls. We’ll go with him!”

I’ve never gotten dressed so fast in my life. Mama has made herself pretty. She’s holding a parcel in case Papa needs it. She goes out with Henriette without closing the door. Then she comes back and gets me. She walks very fast and Henriette follows us. When we get outside, they’re still there. Phew! We’re going to see Papa again! We’re wearing

our slippers. He's talking with Dr. David, Dr. Weisman the dentist, Monsieur Salonès and some other people.

"Moisheleh . . . Moisheleh!" Mama calls. He turns around. He's seen us. I'm so excited! He takes a big step forward. "Stop! Don't move!" says a nasty man.

The three of us walk toward him. With one leap, my sister and I are in his arms. He holds me so tightly I can hardly breathe but I don't get angry. I cling to his body and look hungrily at his face. I won't let him go without me. I kiss him in spite of the bristles of his beard. He looks into my eyes. I'll never let go of him.

What's this racket? A car has just pulled up and the policemen are pointing their guns. "My dear little girls, Henriette and Marguerite, we have to part now. But it won't be for long. Be good with Mama, don't give her any trouble. Promise?" We nod in agreement.

Someone opens the beautiful gate to the courtyard and they start lining the men up. Papa bends down, releases us from his embrace and sets us both on the ground. I refuse to let go of him. "Come on, children, it's Mama's turn now." I hold on even tighter to him. I'm the youngest, after all.

"You have to let me go. I need to talk to her." He gives me a gentle push. My mother is crying and he comforts her instead of me. In my distress, I'm jealous. He takes her tenderly in his arms. "Calm down, Rokheleh, calm down, please!" They whisper things into each other's ears.

"We've got everybody. It's time to go, ladies and gentlemen!" The officers call out the names, one by one, and roughly separate the women from the men. "David. Éliash. Solanès. Weisman." The men are packed like sardines into the khaki Citroën. Papa leans out and shouts, "Courage, Rachel! Courage, children! I'll see you soon!" I'm so miserable. Mama murmurs under her breath, "Courage, Moishinkeh, courage."

I have a stomachache. I have to go home. The cars pull quickly away. We wave to the one Papa is in as it disappears in the distance. The sun is rising and with it, my hatred. My heart is so heavy. . . .

Later that day, after Papa's arrest, Madame Dupont, a client of my parents, takes Henriette and me to her house. We turn at the corner at the Salvation Army Women's shelter and we walk and walk and walk, very fast! I don't even have time to look at what we are passing so that I can remember the way. I pray that we stop soon.

"Number 23!" exclaims Henriette. "Shhh!" says the lady, adding, "Someone might recognize you. That's why I didn't take your mother. We have to take precautions and be very careful because of the arrests." We go up to the third floor

and we have something to eat with the lady and her husband. Before we go to bed, she tells us, "You're going to sleep in trunks. If someone comes to the door, I'll close the lids and push them under our bed. Do you understand? Because if the police find you, they will take you away. Okay? Goodnight, children."

She goes back to her husband, who's already snoring. Soon, she's snoring too. It would be better if Mama were here. I can't sleep. I stretch and get up and my sister and I tiptoe to the window. It's dark out but we can see the blue sign of the municipal showers almost right across the street. "There! Do you see that? We're on rue Jules-Vallès, near home. Rue de Charonne is at the end," whispers Henriette. "If they're not nice to us, we'll run away without telling anyone." I change positions ten times before managing to fall asleep.

The next day, we try to leave, but the people grab us by our coat collars and stop us. They scold us, saying, "Honestly, children!" It's dangerous now and we have to be patient and wait. We spend three days playing with their cats before we can finally return home. . . .

Mama found a place for us with a kind lady in the country. I eat well and drink as much milk as I want, and the cat lets you pet it. We take turns on the swing under the tree in the yard. The lady never gets angry. When she has a minute she talks to us. Mademoiselle Aubertin, our violin teacher, came this morning with a parcel full of our clothes from Mama.

The weather is getting cold. The lady writes to Mama to ask for warmer clothes for us. But it's the concierge who answers:

Dear Madame,

Did you know that you do not have the right to keep Jewish children in your home? It is against the law. If you do not return them immediately, I will be forced to report you to the police. It is up to you not to be complicit. . . .

Madame Decuinière.

"What should I do?" the lady asks, wiping away tears. She reads the letter. "I could be convicted because you're in my house! I really don't have a choice." She gets her bicycle out. With Henriette's help, she puts our clothes in the suitcase, which she attaches to the baggage carrier on the back. She picks up everything that belongs to us, making sure not to forget anything. She puts it all in a cardboard box, which she places on the handlebars. Wearing our raincoats, we climb

on. It's uncomfortable. "I can't do any better," she says, sitting in the middle. The weather is bad and she pedals hard in the wind and the rain and the darkness, oblivious to the late hour.

It's fine with me. I'm not afraid anymore. I'm going back to Mama. We don't meet a single person on the road the whole way. My hands are wet through my gloves and my feet are soaked to the bone.

We get to Paris at sunrise. I'm delighted to get back. "We'll soon be at your house!" says the woman, out of breath. I can't wait to get there. I can hardly keep my eyes open. We stop. Here we are! The concierge is not at her window. Good! Everyone is sleeping. We knock on the door and in seconds my mother is there, taking me, dripping, into her arms. Oh, I'm so happy. The woman doesn't come up. She inflates her tires with the pump and heads off down the street.

That's the last I ever see of her.

IZZY RANDEL

Context: Salvation

Source: Izzy Randel and Maryann McLoughlin. *From Black Dust to Diamonds: A Memoir of the Holocaust in Dąbrowa Górnicza*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2010, pp. 24–27. Used by permission.

Klettendorf was a small forced labor camp in Poland where, as in many other places, private companies exploited Jewish slave labor. Izzy Randel, a young boy from Dąbrowa Górnicza, was a prisoner there until the camp was closed and he was evacuated in the face of the advancing Soviets in 1944 and sent to another labor camp at Bunzlau. He describes the harshness of conditions there, which became more intense with the onset of winter and a German sense of impending defeat. On February 8, 1945, it was Bunzlau's turn to be evacuated. Prior to a death march, arrangements were made to count the prisoners once more before setting out. By the time the Russians arrived the camp had been evacuated, but those few who had hidden, such as Izzy, were able to greet the first Soviet soldier who came into the otherwise empty camp soon after. Although they were now liberated, however, they were far from safe; the advice they received from a Soviet officer was to leave the area as soon as possible.

I was deported by train from Dąbrowa Górnicza. That train whistle was always in my ears—for me a scary sound. The train stopped in a few labor camps along the way. However,

those didn't need workers, so they sent us on. I was with Josek Lenczner, his father and two brothers from Dąbrowa Górnicza. We stopped finally in Klettendorf (Klecina, Poland), which was twenty to thirty kilometers from the German-Polish border.

Founded in August 1940, Klettendorf forced labor camp existed until the end of 1943. German companies used Jewish slave labor to work for them. . . .

After arrival and being processed, I was assigned work at a rail yard. Unlike many other camps, we still dressed in civilian clothing; we didn't have camp uniforms. I had to load and unload railroad tracks from freight trains. These steel rails were asymmetrical I-beams, 39 feet long (11.89 meters). A group of seventeen people, including me, carried one long railroad track. The railroad tracks were extremely heavy, weighing 480 to 720 pounds; therefore, even with the pillow I put on my shoulder as a buffer, my shoulder was bruised, hurting every day. Another of my jobs was sorting very long railroad tracks. They kept moving my group around so that we would keep working.

In 1942, I could still receive one package a month in Klettendorf. One day I received a piece of bread and when I began to chew on it, I discovered a letter inside the bread. A Polish man, who had worked a little for my father, mailed this package of bread and a letter, which Erna had prepared. In the letter Erna told me that my father, sister Sara, and brother, Motek, were very concerned about me. The good news was that they were still at Dąbrowa Górnicza. They were, however, very concerned about my health. I wrote them a long letter, telling them not to worry about me. I didn't ask more about them. I just wanted them to know that I was still alive.

I remembered the address of the Polish man who had mailed the package, but I had no stamp. I had to have someone mail the letter to the Pole; I wanted to contact my family to tell them that I was alive because their letter had brought me consolation and I wanted the same for them. I didn't know who to ask, but suddenly I had an intuition: I went to the worst SS officer; he was always angry, known as a killer. I watched him for a couple of days as he walked through the building where I was working. Then I took a risk, stopping him and giving him the letter, begging him, "German, please send this away for me."

He looked at me. He said not one word. He put the letter in his pocket and walked on. I turned and quickly walked away. He did mail the letter. I know he did because I received an answer to my letter. I received a package with bread and inside was another letter. This was the last package I received from home.

In the meantime, I began learning a trade, sewing. They had asked, “Who knows upholstery?” I told them that I did; I knew a little from working with my father. They sent us to a factory that made canvas covers. Every day we walked to the train station, then took a train, and walked to the factory at the military camp; then we reversed this returning to the barracks. At the factory I sewed canvas covers for military trucks. I sewed on a big sewing machine that I pedaled—the factory had no electric machines. Everything was okay. Life went on for a while at Klettendorf. I felt secure at the thought that my family was surviving at Dąbrowa Górnicza. . . .

Of my family, only Erna was left in Dąbrowa Górnicza. During the selection, she had hidden to save herself. From August 1943 to January 1944, she was in hiding; otherwise, she would have been deported as the rest were. But in January 1944, she, too, was caught and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

By 1944, Dąbrowa was *Judenrein*—without Jews. . . .

In 1944, the Nazis dissolved Klettendorf labor camp because the Soviets were advancing nearer and nearer. Jozek Lenczner, my friend from Dąbrowa Górnicza was deported to a different camp. I was transported by train to Bunzlau (Pl: Bolesławiec) about thirty kilometers west of Breslau (Wrocław).

At Bunzlau Concentration Camp, a former *Arbeitslager* (work camp), where conditions were especially harsh, we wore blue and white concentration camp uniforms. We wore a number, which we had sewn on the left side of the uniform jacket. We no longer had names or identities; instead, we were numbers. (I don’t remember mine.)

In addition to hunger and disease, the winters in Germany and Poland were terrible, extremely cold. My uniform was light weight, so in winter I put paper inside my clothing. I found paper in their trash cans, whatever paper I could find, and lined my clothing with it. I didn’t use newspaper; newspapers were like gold because they could give us a clue about how the war was going. Taking paper, even paper in the trash, was forbidden. I did it anyway because I knew I could die from hypothermia otherwise.

We frequently had our hair cut in Bunzlau—with hand clippers, in addition, they shaved our heads with straight-edge razors, one inch wide down the middle, so if we escaped, we would immediately be recognized as inmates of the concentration camp.

I hoped I would find friends from my hometown in Bunzlau, and I did find one, Herschel Rizman (who passed away in 2005 in Canada!). He was a landsman, a person from my place of origin—thus our relationship was very close, almost

like family. One could depend on a landsman more than strangers.

To supervise us, the Germans had brought in Polish *Kapos* who wore red triangles, the badge for criminal activities such as murder or for political reasons. They cooperated with the Germans and received more food. These *Kapos* told us, “You won’t last long here.”

One of the *Kapos* was especially brutal. A German *Kapo*, probably a killer, had lost his hand and arm up to his elbow. He could still beat us: he hit us with his elbow; he was quite proficient and powerful at this. I was told that a person should fall down when he was hit and he would have a chance of living, or if he didn’t fall down immediately, the *Kapo* would continue hitting him until he either died or fell down. This *Kapo* hit me for trying to take a potato from a truck. I was hit, fell down immediately, and he stopped. So I was safe.

Our work at Bunzlau was constructing barrack walls, floors, and roofs for soldiers. Trees came in by train and were unloaded and taken to the mill, where they were cut into boards. They gave us the boards into which we hammered nails to make 8 × 6 sections, for walls, a kind of prefabrication. Others constructed floors and foundations for pre-fab factories, where military equipment would be repaired, and for barracks, where soldiers would sleep.

I worked at this hard physical labor, and I was starving, malnourished. There was little to eat. We were given soup once a day and bread, very little, every three days. Some ate all their bread immediately. I could control myself and make the bread last. Some would exchange their bread for cigarettes; therefore, they lost the nourishment they could have gotten from the bread.

There were selections at Bunzlau, too. Every month there were two or three selections. I remember one Russian Jew who was praying for a piece of bread with some water; he wanted to have enough to eat once before he died. He died the next day—probably without the bread and water. At first, I thought the sick were taken away, so they would be treated and become well again. Then I realized that the sick never came back. They were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp and were murdered. We were close to Auschwitz-Birkenau, but, at that time, I never knew the camp was there or what was going on.

A half-year before liberation I was sick with typhus. In fact, about half the people in the camp had typhus. I had just gotten over the worst when we heard there was going to be another selection. A Jewish male nurse from

Sosnowiec told me and the others that he realized that we had typhus and were still weak; nonetheless, he told us that we must try to get work because if we stayed sick in the barracks, we would be selected. He told us, "Try to get up and go to work. You can die here after being selected, or you can die on the job. But you may live if you go to work and are not selected." He also advised us to eat first and to drink after we ate, but not together. He said we would get more nutrition that way.

All during those years we didn't hear any shots or airplanes. It was as if the world had died completely or that everybody had forgotten about us. Sometimes I found a German newspaper and read it; perhaps about ten times in all those years. I saw nothing about the Allies. Later I found out that the German army did not always tell their citizens if they had lost a battle, for example, the Battle of Stalingrad. . . . So I guess it is not surprising that I didn't read anything about the Allies in the newspapers that I found.

Then, Saturday, February 8, 1945, the Germans announced that we were moving out from Bunzlau.

They said, "Whatever we have in storage we are giving out. Everything will be given out. You don't need your uniform or your shoes or anything. We will give you others better than what you have."

They gave me wooden shoes to march in.

Shocked, I said, "Wooden shoes!"

I was in the children's barracks with the younger ones, those who were at least thirteen years old but capable of working. My friend, Herschel Rizman, was in another barracks; he was a little older.

We were talking. I asked him, "Will there be a selection?"

He didn't know.

I said to Herschel, "Let's stick together. We'll find each other and march together."

He agreed and went to his barracks to avoid our marching orders.

Then I realized that I could not possibly walk in those wooden shoes. Snow would stick to the wood, weighing my feet down, so I would not be able to walk. And my feet would freeze. I would be dead before long. I decided to hide. I looked for my friend to tell him, but I could not find him.

That Saturday they had brought in a transport of prisoners in transit. They were just to sleep over one night before moving on; about one hundred Polish prisoners or criminals were in the one barrack. One took a chance and escaped; he left the camp through the open gate, and went over to the

other side, where the Russians were. The SS didn't seem to care.

After midnight, as we were lining up for *Appel* (roll call) to be counted, I heard one SS man say to another:

"Get them out; it's too late to count them."

I thought: "If it's too late for you, maybe it's time for me."

I then went quickly inside my barrack, which was near where we were lining up. I went underneath the bed and hid. The Germans didn't miss me; they chased the others out as if they were herding cows. The dogs followed, barking and snarling. Ten minutes later no one was there but those of us who had hidden, maybe six or eight of us.

Later, after the war, I found my friend Herschel who told me that after weeks and weeks of walking that long distance in the cold and ice of winter, one half of the people did not make it from Bunzlau to Bergen Belsen in Germany. They were shot or froze along the way.

On February 8 and 9, 1945, we started to hear shooting from airplanes. I knew this was a life or death situation. Although we were joyous, we still felt we were in danger. We worried that the Soviets would kill us, thinking we were Germans, or that the Germans would come back suddenly and murder us. Bullets flew back and forth. Shrapnel killed people who were standing and looking at what was happening. Airplanes were dropping bombs.

Fortunately, however, the Russians soon realized that the camp had been evacuated. The Polish prisoner who had run to the Soviet side told them not to shoot or bomb us. In the meantime, the rest of the barracks were in flames.

A Soviet tank, with the gun turret rotating, advanced inside the gate. An officer began calling out, "We are Russian and Polish. Come out! Don't be afraid."

One went out. Then another. Then the rest went out.

They were Russians. I saw the red star on the tank. We were all dancing—we were so happy. Sadly, one boy was dancing around and touched the electric wire fence and was electrocuted.

The Russians advised us what to do if a plane began strafing us, "If you see a plane, no matter what kind, just go into the ditches. Don't run into the fields."

Apparently the air force bombers would not know who was running—Germans or prisoners—and would strafe us in the fields. If we were in the ditches, they would not see us as easily.

A Russian soldier next advised us, "get away from the front as fast as you can. Today we are here; tomorrow perhaps the Germans will be back. This is the way of war."

BETTY RICH

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Betty Rich. *Little Girl Lost*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 36–43. Used by permission.

In the first phase of the war between Poland and Germany in September 1939, sixteen-year-old Betty Rich's brothers were called into the army. At home, the immediate imposition of Nazi rule led to changes in the daily routines of life. Betty's recollections are of German harassment of Orthodox Jews; of the imposition of yellow armbands marking out Jews from the rest of the population; and of the arbitrary arrest (accompanied, as she was told, by beatings) of her father. Realizing that there were greater chances of securing her safety if she were to move, she left her home and went to Łódź—where, she anticipated, life would be a little easier. Beyond Łódź, she had heard that the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland was less harsh than that of the Nazis elsewhere, and set her sights on moving there. The account shows something of the confusion and uncertainty experienced as a result of this early time in the war, and of how this "little girl lost" dealt with the challenges it created.

When we came home from the countryside, my parents' first concern was for their three sons in the army. Were they still alive? Had they been taken prisoner? Nobody knew anything. Then we began to deal with our daily survival, which meant adjusting to the very strict orders that were exclusively targeting Jews. The ordeal began slowly at first with a curfew—we had to be in our house by five o'clock in the afternoon. If we were caught on the streets after that, we could be arrested or shot. These rules were posted in public and announced on the radio. Later on, the Jews were all forced to live in a particular part of the city—which happened to be the neighbourhood in which we were then living—and that was the beginning of the ghetto in Zduńska Wola. I don't think that I can describe my reactions to all of this as a very idealistic sixteen-year-old. I was numb and the shock didn't wear off. I remember only too well my first encounter with German soldiers. There was a shortage of everything immediately and we needed bread. The father of a girlfriend of mine, Esther, had a bakery, so I decided to go and ask her if I could get some without waiting in the very long line-up. The bakery was located in the centre of town with stores around it; in the middle was a big market square where merchandise could be displayed on portable tables.

Nobody was in the square when I went, as there was still so much chaos in the streets. But as I walked over to the bakery, I saw a group of German soldiers laughing very loudly, having real fun. As I got closer to the group, I saw about eight or ten Orthodox Jewish men with long beards. The Germans were forcing them to pull the hair out of each other's beards. I could see the pain on their faces and hair flying all over; I heard the Germans' laughter mixed with the faint, suppressed crying of the victims. I stood there for a few minutes, frozen to the spot. I couldn't survive in Zduńska Wola. I ran home, forgetting all about the bread, and crying hysterically, threw myself on my bed.

The days under the Germans passed without much thinking on our parts. We couldn't afford the luxury; we had to preserve all our strength to just get through each hour and each day. Meanwhile, two of my brothers, Yakov and Abram, returned. It turned out that they had been taken prisoner during the defense of Warsaw and then released. Fishel was still in prison. The battle in Poland had been over in just under four weeks—it was just a breeze for the Germans. Now life in our part of town was becoming somewhat normalized. People were called back to work and food coupons were handed out as payment; it was enough to survive.

Then a new traumatic experience occurred—putting on the yellow armband that all Jews were required to wear by November 1939. Somehow I determined it would only be temporary for me, although I didn't have any specific plan—I really hadn't yet come to grips with what was happening. I was lost in my own maze of anxieties and wished that I could control my thoughts; strange and conflicting emotions suddenly overpowered me. It's impossible for me to find the words for what I felt.

My next experience was even worse. In the second week of November, we heard that the Germans were rounding up all the Jewish men. What could we do with my father? He wasn't well. He wouldn't survive. But where could he hide? The German soldiers came and dragged him out of the house to join the other Jewish men, pushed them into buses and drove to the Sieradz prison. Why? Nobody asked and nobody knew.

Fortunately, my father came back after two weeks, but what a sight. They had shaved off his long beard and he wore some ordinary old clothes and a cap. We didn't recognize him. My heart was breaking, along with my poor mother's. But at least he was alive. They had subjected the men to constant beatings and some hadn't survived. This was one of the

first tactics the Germans used to scare us in preparation for what was to come.

At the same time, there was a great strength being born in me—a tremendous resistance and will to survive. We heard that our relatives in Lodz were starving. My mother's two sisters and their families couldn't even get any bread. I told my friend Esther, who was a member of Hashomer Hatzair, and she gave me six two-kilogram round loaves of rye bread from her father's bakery. I put them into a big sack, threw it over my shoulders, took off my yellow band and walked away to the railway station about twelve kilometres away.

I was determined to get on the train to Lodz—something indefinable was driving me. Whether I wanted to test my courage on top of wanting to help starving relatives I'm not sure, but either way, I had to do it. My parents didn't try to stop me from leaving and I boarded a train full of Germans. They even helped me up the few steps to the train. I did everything I could not to be noticed by some Poles on the train. I was at their mercy. I wasn't wearing my yellow band and all they had to do was point their fingers at me. I guess luck was with me. My relatives couldn't believe their eyes when I arrived. In retrospect, I can't say whether I did it for them or for a strange need in me to test my endurance under stress and fear. Was it all in preparation for the great moment to come?

One day, I saw my mother walking into the house looking completely discouraged and despondent. I knew right away what had happened because we had all been waiting for her. She had gone to get some bread and the line-up was very, very long. When five o'clock struck she had no choice but to come back empty-handed. The pain in her eyes was killing me. I picked myself up as if on command and quickly walked out the door. No one paid any attention to me. They probably thought that I was in one of my moods, that maybe I was going to walk around in a circle in the backyard as I usually did when the tension in me was unbearable. Again I took off my yellow band and I walked with my head up, with long steady strides, very determined. I felt certain that if I just showed complete confidence, the Germans would not suspect that I was Jewish. I knocked on the back door to Esther's parents' bakery and when they opened the door, they looked at me in surprise. Not many words were exchanged. I only said that my mother had been here and had not made it to the front of the line. I didn't have any ration coupons with me, but they let me take a few kilograms of bread.

No weight would have been too heavy for me, but I must have appeared not very strong to one passerby. A tall German soldier behind me said in German, "Little girl, isn't it

too heavy for you?" He was about ten steps away from me. I could almost hear my heart pounding with fear. My poor brain was racing like mad. What was I to say? I kept walking and didn't stop. There was no time to waste, though, and I had to come up with an answer for him. Suddenly, he was already beside me. "Please," he said. "Can I help you carry it?" I looked at him with my probably bewildered and fearful eyes and handed over my precious cargo. "Yes, it's heavy," he said. I still didn't know what to say. I already had a sense of impending disaster. The few minutes that had passed seemed a century long. "Where do you live?" he asked me. "Not that far." By that time, some of my father's distant relatives from a nearby town had moved in with us as their town had pretty much burnt down. I felt that I was left with only one choice as we got closer to my house: to sacrifice myself in place of all of the people in the house.

As I have always done throughout my life, I thought through all the possible outcomes before deciding how to reach into the depths of someone's heart. My intuition was right, but luck was also with me again. I said gently, "You know that I am Jewish. As you can see, I took off with my band. My mother came home without any bread and I can't stand seeing everyone go hungry tonight." He looked at me and said, "Okay, let's go to your house." "But we can't!" I responded. "Don't worry, I will not harm anybody." I didn't believe him and I was starting to feel desperate. "My father just came back from the prison," I said. "He won't survive seeing me walk into the house with a German soldier." "Please trust me," he said. "You can go ahead of me and tell them." I still didn't believe him but I went in anyway. I must have been shivering. "What is it?" Mother asked. "Are you cold?" "No, it's worse than that," I said. I told them the story and in walked the German soldier. There was dead silence. He spoke up first. "You have a very nice daughter; please don't be scared of me. I am just a man, like you. I also have a family and seeing this little girl carrying such a heavy load for her family, risking her life, touched something deep in me." Everybody took a breath of relief.

My father spoke perfect German. The man sat down at the table, asked for a cup of coffee if we had some and started a very normal, intelligent conversation with my father. Again, I don't have the words to describe the unreal scene. As the soldier was leaving, he emptied out everything he had in his military bag: sardines, canned meat, some chocolate. It turned out that he didn't approve of the whole damned war and, in a sense, he was also a victim.

Needless to say, we had a feast that evening, and, better yet, the soldier showed up a couple more times for a talk with

my father, bringing for us whatever he could. He was transferred out of Zduńska Wola before I left, and he came to say goodbye. Even if this man was only one isolated case, a drop of water in an ocean, it still reinforced in us the belief that there must be some decent human beings left among those Jew-haters, as we had initially perceived them all to be.

By November the weather had already grown colder and it became difficult to get coal. Winters in Poland can be very severe. Our places were heated by burning coal in big tiled ovens that were more or less like fireplaces. The heat from the ovens would radiate through the tiles. It was a very pleasant heat and we would sometimes leave the oven door open so we could look into the fire. I loved it. We used to throw in potatoes to bake on the burning coals. When the coal supplies suddenly dried up, I got a brilliant idea. The parents of Kazia Shapiro, one of my wealthy school friends, had a big textile factory, I remembered seeing a huge pile of coal in the backyard when I played at her place, which was just across from our orchard. Nobody would see me if I went in the dark, I thought. I made many trips, carrying the coal in big sacks, until I had accumulated enough for the whole winter. My girlfriend stood watch. I met up with Kazia after the war—she was one of the survivors I came across in Lodz. It's too bad I never saw her again after that. She was extremely bright and had enrolled at a university in Poland. As far as I know, she never left.

We had heard that the Soviet Union had signed a pact of neutrality with the Germans, known popularly as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The Soviets took over the eastern part of Poland, next to their border. Then we heard rumours that there were Polish Jews who were escaping to the Soviet-occupied area. Some of my friends' older sisters or brothers were intending to leave. Of course, everything was being organized in great secrecy. When I heard about it, I didn't even dare to think about it for myself at first. Then I tried to talk my parents and my whole family into leaving—we really had nothing to lose. But to my father, the Soviet Union was a godless society, so it was unthinkable for him. Besides, it wasn't easy to get to the border. We would have to travel by train to Lodz, then to Warsaw and then to the small town of Malkinia, where there was a strip of land that was on the border between the German- and Soviet-occupied areas. One could get caught at any moment. We never talked about my suggestion again—it had been instantly dismissed.

But the idea of leaving home was in my head, drilling and drilling its way through, and I continued to get more and more depressed and increasingly restless. I just didn't know where to begin. I didn't have any money, not even enough to

buy the first train ticket. So as much as I heard about some young people's plans, I couldn't really crystallize my thoughts at all. How and with whom could I go? Then I started to verbalize my thoughts. My father just shut me up, but my mother, as always, was listening. As time went on, I became obsessed with the idea. The more we felt the Germans' heavy boots in our lives, the more I knew that I had to leave. All my instincts were telling me to go, but I was scared. Where was I going to go and what would I live on? I had no occupation and would be all alone.

I used to lie in bed at night, giving in to my fears about leaving. And then I tried to tell myself that each one of us must find our own way, even though the entire world might be set on fire, even though everything might be in turmoil; each one of us had to take on the final responsibility for action. The idea of leaving persisted and completely consumed me. I couldn't think of anything else. My parents worried that I was losing my mind. I would go out during the day, meet with my friends, come home—leaving was all I could talk about. My siblings were content to stay and wait. They hoped for better times, but I couldn't see that in the future.

My parents argued about me all the time. Meanwhile, I was working at full speed, trying desperately to attach myself to a group of young people older than me who were planning to escape. I contacted some of them through my Zionist organization and finally persuaded them to let me join one particular group. But I needed two things: my parents' permission and some money—first to pay for the train and then, if we made it to the border, for a smuggler, a Polish farmer living in the area who knew how to get people across.

My campaign to leave had taken a couple of months and finally, near the end of December 1939, my parents said to each other, and to me, that they had no right, in a time of war like this, to hold me back. Maybe this was my fate. It required all my strength to hold back my tears. The tension of the last weeks was now overshadowed by the thought of parting, the final break and the total uncertainty of the future. My parents couldn't give me any money, though. My sister and one of my brothers gave me a little and the group took me in with less than the required funds.

I remember the last night I spent at home. I was very scared. My mother asked what I was going to do to support myself in a strange place, with no skills. I said, "I will wash floors and not take anything from the Germans." I packed a knapsack and said goodbye to my family. Only my mother took me to the bus station where I was to meet the group to go to Lodz, our first leg of the trip. I wasn't wearing the yellow band because Jews weren't allowed to travel from town

to town. We walked and talked; this was the last time I saw her. I had to detach myself quickly from any feeling of loss or sorrow. I needed every bit of strength to get to my destination, to be free.

PAUL-HENRI RIPS

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Paul-Henri Rips. *E/96: Fate Undecided*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 21–30. Used by permission.

A 10-year-old when the Nazis invaded Belgium in 1940, Paul-Henri Rips, from Antwerp, fled south with his family in advance of the Germans as the invasion proceeded. Persuaded to return, they then began to try to live as best they could under Nazi rule. This attempt at compromise was not to last, however, and in due course Paul-Henri found himself imprisoned under the SS. As he writes, it was “quite terrifying” given his young and vulnerable age; “I was alone and unhappy.” The situation for the rest of his family was hardly any better, and young Paul-Henri was especially worried about his father throughout this time. This account is one that signifies frightening times through which a child lived; a time when he was forced to grow up rapidly, or be lost.

When I was awakened some time later we were still in the border post, but we were soon ordered to climb into a truck. It was daylight, but we had no idea what time it was because the Wehrmacht soldiers had taken all our watches. We were driven into Dole and dropped off at the city prison, which was administered by the French police under the orders and supervision of the German SS. After our paperwork had been processed, a French gendarme took me to what looked like a dining room. The people in charge must have had some concern about having a child in the prison—they gave me a plate of brown lentils cooked with a little piece of meat and some of the French police officers sat around the table watching me eat. I was ravenous because I hadn’t eaten since noon the day before and I’ll never forget the taste of that plate of food for as long as I live. It tasted better than fantastic. After this superb meal, I rejoined my father in a cell-like room with barred windows, a long table and benches. It was in a semi-basement and one of the barred windows overlooked the cobbled exercise yard. There was a wash basin in one corner and a big bucket for body waste.

This room had been set aside for Jews only and at the time housed a few other Jews who had been arrested trying to cross the demarcation line. It seems that we were indeed the “Chosen People”—even in jail they gave us “reserved” rooms so we wouldn’t have to be bothered by the common riff-raff.

So began my first sojourn in prison. My mother and sister had been put in the women’s section of the same building, but we couldn’t communicate with them. You can imagine my father’s state of mind during the six weeks that we were held in the Dole city prison, not knowing how they fared. Rosh Hashana of 1941 came and went, and then Yom Kippur was upon us. My father was a traditional practicing Jew and I shall always remember his first Yom Kippur in jail: for the *seuda*, the meal before the fast, he received a piece of bread, a raw onion, a piece of raw cabbage and a raw potato. The next evening he broke his fast with the same ingredients, along with a cup of water.

The Jewish prisoners were not allowed to work in the fields like the other inmates—another proof of our “special status” that was actually intended to keep us away from the “Aryan” prisoners—a mix of resistance fighters and not-so-petty criminals. The patriotic non-Jewish prisoners who worked in the fields would hide vegetables under their shirts and throw them through the open part of the window. These men risked serious punishment if they were caught doing this. Our regular diet consisted of prison fare under wartime conditions, so whatever we received was a welcome addition to the prison’s menu. During the day the Jewish prisoners all sat in the room with the long table and benches and at night we were divided up into smaller cells. My father and I had a cell to ourselves.

On our first day in Dole German Feldpolizei (secret military police) officers took my father, mother, sister and me out to the *Kommandantur* for interrogation. They wanted to know everything about how my father had found the smuggler. They took my father in first and when he came out, we could see that he had been beaten, although we heard nothing through the door. His jaw was badly swollen, his breathing was shallow and he had two broken teeth. He told us that his chest was aching and a visit to the prison infirmary revealed that one or two of his ribs were cracked or broken. When we were alone for a little while later that day, my father told me softly in Yiddish that if I was called in for questioning, I must keep on telling them that as a boy I didn’t know anything about the arrangements my parents had made, adding, “Henri, a klapt vargayt, a wort bestayt.” (Henri, the pain of a slap on the face will go away, but a spoken word will

remain.) It was a piece of advice that I would have cause to remember later. Luckily, this time I wasn't called in, but we were very worried about how my mother and sister would fare under questioning. When we were briefly reunited with my mother and Sina that afternoon, we were relieved to find that, miraculously, they had been questioned only superficially. The guards then brought us back to the prison and we were separated again.

A few days later I woke up again covered in a rash and itching terribly. We were sleeping on bags of jute burlap sacking filled with straw, so my father assumed that various little creatures had sought refuge from the cold and taken up residence in our beds. Diseases in prison are treated with the utmost speed to prevent them from spreading, so I was bundled up and taken to the Hôpital Pasteur in town, on the banks of the Doubs River. When I arrived, there were no doctors available to diagnose what I had, so the staff put me in the isolation ward along with two African men—one from Côte d'Ivoire and the other from Senegal—and an Arab man from Algeria. All three of them were prisoners of war who had served with the French colonial troops during the blitzkrieg campaign in France in May 1940 and had been captured by the Germans. They had been taken prisoner and then released to help the farmers by working in the fields. The French farmers were happy to have them—with so many young men still in POW camps there was a huge shortage of farm labour. The farmers had a paternalistic attitude toward these men and treated them very well. The Senegalese, who must have been at least two metres tall and looked like a giant to me, received visits from the farmer and his family every few days, and they brought him sweets, nuts and other goodies.

The isolation ward was on the first floor with a window looking out onto the hospital's big garden and the Doubs River or one of the canals at the end of it. The Hôpital Pasteur was run by nuns and the one assigned to our ward was Sister Marie. She was well past middle age and of small stature, but what she lacked in physical appearance she made up for in attitude. She ran the ward with military discipline, her emphasis first on religion and then on cleanliness and obedience to her commands. Every morning at five o'clock, she would march in, switch on the light, fall to her knees, recite some prayers and only then say, "Good morning." Every evening at about six o'clock she would come in, distribute some sort of homemade brew that apparently had some sedative qualities, say, "Good night" and then turn out the lights.

The day after my arrival at the hospital, I was examined by a doctor who prescribed a black, foul-smelling ointment

for the large, sensitive blisters all over my body. He recommended opening the blisters so that the ointment could penetrate well into the skin and Sister Marie applied the first treatment in a rather brusque manner. It was most unpleasant and painful, making me squirm and complain.

The next day I met Sister Pidoue, whom I remember as a sweet, young, soft-spoken woman. When she administered the treatment, she did so with a light touch, all the time enquiring about any pain or discomfort. She was obviously from an upper-class family—her speech, vocabulary and demeanour showed education and refinement. She knew the circumstances of how I came to be in the hospital and tried to make me feel less lonely and depressed about not being with my family. She was worried that I was not getting enough nourishment, so she brought me fruit and sweets. After several days and an improvement in my health and appearance, she brought me a fishing rod and took me down to the river and showed me how to fish.

The hospital also served as a convent and a sort of haven where girls from poor families were given shelter, trained in the domestic arts and guided toward becoming nuns. They were general simple country girls and very much under the influence of their village and parish priests. As a result, when they learned that I was Jewish from one of the male orderlies who had befriended me, they began to regard me with certain distrust and maybe even a little fear. The reason for their attitude emerged during an encounter we had in one of the medieval galleries around the hospital's inner garden. Keeping a distance of about four feet away from me, they first asked me if the devil was my God and then insisted that he was. Over and over again they demanded, "Don't you worship the devil?" I was only eleven, but having attended the Tachkemoni School in Antwerp, I was able to explain that the God I worshipped was the one who created the world, that Jesus was a Jew, and that the Old Testament was the only one that counted for me. My friend the orderly laughed his head off over this exchange but didn't want to antagonize the girls too much because he liked one of them and wanted to get closer to her.

Sister Pidoue happened along during this high theological debate. She took me gently by the arm and in her soft lovely voice, said, "Henri, do not get into discussions with the girls or the cleaning staff or anyone else, as they are ignorant and don't know what they are talking about." She had been riding a bicycle, which she pushed into my hands. "Take the bike and go for a ride in the garden." If ever there was the perfect nurse, gentle, caring, comforting, then it was Sister Pidoue, may God bless her soul. I was a child, alone and bewildered,

separated from my family and far from my comfortable childhood world of Antwerp. Sister Pidoue was my guardian angel, just like the one described in the verse in the Traveler's Prayer: "Behold I send an angel before you to protect you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared."

I'm sure that most of the hospital staff knew about the Jewish boy from the prison. After a few days I was allowed to roam around within the grounds of the hospital, which looked like a medieval castle. During my wanderings, I became friends with the pharmacist who was a jovial, rotund man. He showed me his little museum of pharmaceutical articles, and proudly displayed a surgeon's kit that had apparently belonged to Napoleon's personal physician.

The ward room I was in was a rectangular room with the beds set against the walls and a table and chair in the middle of the room. At the far end, opposite the door, was a hand basin between the two windows that overlooked the garden. In the first bed was the black soldier from Côte d'Ivoire who, I am convinced, was mentally disturbed. He never answered when spoken to, but sang the whole day until he fell asleep. What he sang was just a few words in his language on an equal number of notes. In the beginning I was irritated and even angry with him, but eventually I became deaf to his monotonous aria. He didn't react even when the other African in the ward tried to speak to him. I think he was so homesick that he cut himself off from the present and lived in his own world.

The second bed was empty and in the third bed was the other African man, the Senegalese. He was goodness personified and as generous as Sister Pidoue. The orderly told me that he was in the last stage of tuberculosis—the coughing, blood-spitting stage. The specialist in contagious diseases who was attending him scolded Sister Marie for putting a child in a room with a patient in the last stages of tuberculosis. Nothing came of it, however—Sister Marie must have told him of my particular status because I never saw him again. The farm family with whom my Senegalese friend had lived and worked came to visit him the Sunday after I arrived and brought him fruit, nuts, sweets and biscuits. I remember how concerned they were for him. After they left, he brought me some of the goodies, telling me that he wanted to share with me because he couldn't eat it all and I had nobody to bring me treats. A few days later, I woke up in the middle of the night and saw Sister Marie and some orderlies around his bed. Between his coughing spasms, he saw me looking at him and gave me a big smile, as only he could, telling me not to worry, that it would be alright. He died the next morning,

and I watched the orderlies carry my new friend, whose heart was as big as he was tall, to his last and pain-free resting place.

The fourth bed was mine, where I lay in a sticky mess for a few days each time Sister Pidoue treated my blisters.

The fifth bed was occupied by a *goumier*, a Moroccan or Algerian soldier in the French colonial army who had been sent to work on a farm as a POW. He was in hospital because his toes had been frostbitten and had to be amputated. He wasn't exactly friendly and was always complaining. He told me he didn't like Jews, but he found me good enough to play checkers with, although he got very upset whenever I won.

After I had received treatment for about two weeks, a German doctor examined me and declared me fit enough to return to prison. After an emotional farewell from Sister Pidoue, I was escorted back to the prison and reunited with my father.

I was now back in jail, in the Jews' cell. It was really ironic—the Germans wanted the French prison authorities to keep the majority non-Jewish prison population who worked in the fields every day away from the much smaller Jewish population, so they claimed we weren't working because the Jews shunned physical work, especially farm work. The real result was that they spared us any physical exercise and, as the days went by, cut us off from any contact with the outside world and my mother and Sina. Not knowing how they were doing was torture for my father. We didn't know what was coming next and feared that we would be deported directly to Germany and beyond. Then, one afternoon without warning, my father and I were called out from the day cell and marched into the office. A few minutes later, we were overjoyed to see my mother and Sina come in to join us. The officers from the Feldpolizei, the German secret military police, who had interrogated my father the day after our arrest were there too. They were in a jovial mood, and we soon found out why.

We still weren't sure what was in store for us, but when we were taken out of our day cell we had been told to collect all our belongings and in the office, the French prison authorities began the process of signing us out. I suspect that my parents thought they would never again see any of the documents, money and jewellery that they had had to surrender when we were arrested. Before we left the prison, however, the guard handed us a parcel with at least some of our things, including my father's money and the purse with my mother's jewellery. After checking the contents, my parents had to sign a receipt for them. We were then escorted out of the prison into the late afternoon of a late autumn day and as we

headed toward the station, the guards told us that we were being transferred to a Sammellager, or collection camp, in Pithiviers, not far from Paris. We would have to change trains in Paris and because of the train schedule, we would be spending the night there—in a prison, of course. It suddenly became clear why the two officers were in such a good mood: the Germans were eagerly anticipating a night in Paris.

We boarded the train to the gare de Lyon station in Paris and were taken to a first-class compartment that had been commandeered by the officers. Although we were definitely not free and my parents were understandably worried about the future, it was good to be reunited with my mother and sister. We were allowed to converse, but only in German. One of the officers warmed up to us after my father bought him a few drinks. His name was Heinrich, which he translated into French as Henri. He kept repeating that all Heinrichs and Henris were “the best boys and men in the world.” At one point during the journey the train stopped at a fairly large station—it may have been Dijon—and the other officer stepped out. He returned with a big smile on his face, waving a newspaper. Addressing my father, he announced, “Tobruk ist gefallen”, that the Germans had captured the Libyan military post of Tobruk from the British, and proceeded to spend the rest of our trip talking to Heinrich about German successes in the war. By the time we arrived in Paris, it was evening.

I don’t recall how we got to the prison in Paris or how long it took us to get there, but we must have been quite a sight marching through the streets of Paris, flanked by German military police officers. After delivering us to the prison warden at the Prison de la Rue du Church-Midi, our two guards took off to enjoy Paris by night and papa and I were separated once again from Maman and Sina. We were led through locked gates down into the bowels of the prison until we came to a cell where we were left alone. I vividly remember walking through a number of gates that had to be unlocked and then locked again after we passed through. I can still hear the clanking of the jailer’s keys, the thud of the heavy cell door and the key turning in the locks. Soon after our arrival, the prison guards fetched my father for what I assumed was another interrogation. I was left alone in the cell deep in the bowels of the basement with a thin mattress on a pallet, a blanket and a high naked bulb that gave off only a weak light.

It was quite terrifying for an eleven-year-old boy—I was alone and unhappy and worried about my father. I was afraid that they would forget about me, like the prisoners in my favourite books. I had been an avid reader of *The Adventures of the Three Musketeers* and other novels of chivalry in which

noble heroes were always fighting either to free the unjustly imprisoned or to bring villains to justice. I thought about these tales as I lay on my straw mattress and stared at the ceiling. If these were the concerns of a frightened boy, you can imagine what my father’s state of mind must have been, separated from his wife and daughter, not knowing what was happening to them and afraid of what the Nazis had in store for us.

MOSHE ROBIN

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Moshe and Stefa Robin. *Stepping Into Life*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2002, pp. 54–63. Used by permission.

A Polish Jew from Sosnowiec, Moshe Robin’s account of life in the ghetto is noteworthy given that it focuses on the inter-relationship between the Nazi occupiers (in particular, an SS officer named Alfred Dreier) and the Nazi-appointed Jewish Council (Judenrat) led by one Moniek Merin, for whom Moshe Robin had little to say that is positive. All this time, as he notes, “the Jewish population in Sosnowiec dwindled,” with the Nazis extracting every ounce of labor from the young men and placing all who could not be of benefit to the Third Reich on transports to an unknown destination.

The Gestapo had a special department called the *Yot Abteilung*. *Yot* is the German name for the letter J, for Jude (Jew). The head of that department in Sosnowiec was an SS man by the name of Alfred Dreier.

The New Town Hall was built on land reclaimed from a disused iron smelting works. Behind the town hall there were a dozen acres of uninviting hilly land, full of sulphur-reeking iron slag dross. Few people ventured there during normal times. We called that land *Holdy*. The day after the burning of the synagogue Alfred Dreier, with a detachment of soldiers, marched out the hostages from the town hall basement into *Holdy*. He picked a low-lying spot and made them all sit down there, surrounded by his soldiers. He himself, with a small jockey-like horse whip under his arm, climbed on to a nearby hillock so that he could dominate the scene. From above he asked, “Who of you belongs to the Jewish Community Council?” Nobody owned up. He tried again: “I want those belonging to the Jewish Community Council to step forward.”

Although there were several dignitaries of the council in the crowd below, nobody moved. It didn't augur well for anybody to be picked out by the Germans. After another vain try, Dreier uttered an order to his soldiers, who quickly rounded up five of the hostages and marched them off to the base of the next hillock. Those that lingered or didn't jump were helped with licks and rifle butts. They were told to kneel down and were then mowed down with machine-gun fire.

After that, Dreier lit a cigarette and smoked it long enough to let the horror of what his soldiers had done to sink into the minds of the hostages below. He then came back again: "I want an elder of the community council to step out immediately, or my soldiers will pick out five more of you."

A short, thin young man pushed himself to the front. His name was Moniek Merin. As soon as he came forward, the soldiers kicked him around and a rifle butt broke some teeth. He fell down, bleeding from his mouth. Dreier came down from his hillock and approached him. He told his soldiers to lift the bleeding man. "You, Jew," he said, poking him in the chest with his whip, "you haven't obeyed my orders immediately and that's why the soldiers knocked your teeth out, but from now on you will be *der Judenälteste* (the eldest of the Jews, a sort of liaison between the Jews and the Gestapo). You will be responsible to me personally and if you don't obey any of my orders, you will pay with your head! *Verstanden* (understand)?" With that he smacked him across his face again with his switch to seal his appointment.

Thus started the nefarious career of Moniek Merin. He was a smallish man in his 30s, but looked 25. He had darting eyes with pin-size pupils and his movements were quick and nervous. Before the war he was a haberdasher, but he spent most of his time in the café houses playing cards. He lost most of his money there. He was divorced and led the life of a bachelor. He didn't have a good name among the merchants of the city. He liked to play the game of local politics, but even here, he wasn't very successful as he didn't have the command of the Germanic language.

With the backing of the German authorities, Merin built an organization called *Der Judenrat* (the Jewish Council), whose official aim was to administer to the needs of the Jewish population in the occupied territories of Zaglembe and Upper Silesia. In reality it was a tool in the Germans' hands, as they didn't want to waste manpower for things the Jews could do better than they could. Moniek Merin was in charge of the Judenrat. Closer to him was Fania Czarna, his offsider/secretary, who spoke and wrote German perfectly. She was his official translator and interpreter during meetings and conferences with the German authorities.

Shortly after the German occupation began, Sosnowiec became part of the Third Reich and Merin's organization became *Die Zentrale*—the central office for 27 smaller Jewish assemblies in the adjoining townships of Zaglembe and Upper Silesia. Merin became a source of energy and a great organizer. Of course, there was not a skerrick of democracy in any of his dealings. You had only to see how he appointed people to different functions in his set-up. He milked funds and gold from the smaller towns for the Central and the Gestapo. He was also the one who decided who went to work and to the labour camps, the forerunners of the concentration camps. Those Jews who quickly realized what it meant to be sent to a camp could bribe their way out by paying big sums of money to Merin. The Central exploited people's fears very artfully and asked for more and more contributions. Whoever could not buy their ephemeral freedom was sent away to a camp. The Germans kept demanding ever more slave labourers and Merin kept delivering.

Some means of enforcement was necessary to support these activities, so Merin created the Jewish Police. It was established on the pretext of keeping law and order, but it was responsible for bringing Jewish youths to the *Dulag* (Durchgang Lager, the transit camp), from where they were shipped to Germany.

Many German manufacturers, especially those involved in the war effort, found it profitable to establish factories in the new territories of the Third Reich. They simply confiscated existing buildings and didn't have to pay any rent. And they had a steady supply of unpaid workers in the Jews who preferred to work for them for nothing than be sent to Germany, away from their families. Those workers were issued certificates from the German bosses exempting them from deportation to the camps. What is more, because these factories usually worked in two shifts, these certificates also exempted them from the curfew, which could sometimes be of benefit for other purposes.

With the blessing of Alfred Dreier, Merin's Judenrat, as it came to be known, quickly appropriated the right to be the sole supplier of labour to those factories. For a hefty sum of money or jewellery, you could buy yourself a job, which spared you the anguish of being sent away to camp, at least temporarily.

In April 1940, my brother Shayek and I started working in a German factory owned by Hans Held, a shirt maker who produced shirts for the Wehrmacht. We were never paid for our labour, but our *Scheinen* (safe conduct) kept us in town.

Like any other family we tried to avoid deportation as long as we could, but we felt the noose tightening. In May 1941 my father was caught in one of the street round-ups

which the Jewish Police, with the help of the Gestapo, organized periodically when they couldn't achieve the necessary quota of deportees. His presence at home was indispensable. As Shayek and I were temporarily safe because of our passes, but Fishek felt that his turn was coming soon, he volunteered instead. So, for a sum of money, the Jewish Police substituted him for my father at the Dulag. Thus Fishek was the first to be torn from the family.

Two weeks later my maternal grandparents were taken with a transport of older people to the Dulag and I never heard of them again. The Jewish population of the town was thinning out all the time. Soon there wasn't a family, bar those who belonged to the Central, which didn't have someone in a camp somewhere in Germany.

Hell Deepens

The only news we could get at the time was what came through the grapevine. There were no papers and it was strictly forbidden to own a radio set. Of course, there were some sets hidden away by people in attics and other places, but when they tried to listen, all they could hear were German bulletins. Not many radio sets made before the war in Poland could pick up foreign stations and those people who had expensive, foreign made short wave sets didn't fare much better, because the Germans jammed all enemy stations, even for their own population.

However, Sosnowiec was an arterial town for road and train traffic and in the Spring of 1941, we saw train after train going eastward from Germany. Later on, those trains carried soldiers by the thousands, all going eastwards. Since Poland at that time had been conquered, we wondered where Hitler was planning to hit next.

We didn't have to wait for long. In June 1941 Germany attacked the USSR. Our hidden joy was enormous. The two felons in crime had fallen out and were fighting between themselves. Maybe, being busy with the Russians, Hitler would forget about those Jews. Some people who had fled previously to the USSR came back and told us that the German offensive had come as a complete surprise to the Russians. As well as intelligence being poor, they also firmly believed that Hitler would keep to the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, so they were totally unprepared for the onslaught. They described the complete chaos as the Russians retreated in disarray, leaving equipment and wounded behind. The Germans were advancing at enormous speed, taking thousands of prisoners on the ground and strafing those fleeing from the skies.

Our hopes of a let-up did not last long. If anything, the Gestapo increased the frequency of transporting Jewish slave workers. They also started to take away old people in the transports. After several of these transports, different rumours started to circulate in town, but they were so horrendous and revolting that nobody wanted to accept their credibility. We knew that there was a war going on and using the enemy's population for the war effort seemed a reasonable thing to do. But, to take old people and gas them! No! Not the Germans, who prided themselves on being a bastion of culture in the midst of Europe. The *Volk* (people) of Nietzsche, Schiller and Beethoven wouldn't stoop to kill old men and women. Nobody wanted to believe it and thought it was just malicious talk. But the rumours kept coming ever stronger, with more detail and from more credible sources. A deep gloom set in over the community. "If they take the old people now, who is going to be next? Where will it end?"

The Jewish community in Sosnowiec had a *beth yesomim* (orphanage). There were usually 30 to 40 children at a time, but because of the latest happenings—parents killed or sent to camps—their numbers increased to nearly double. One morning in June 1941, three military trucks arrived in front of the institute. The children, nurses and other staff were loaded onto the trucks. The cries of the children and nurses mingled with the SS soldiers yelling "*Schnell* (hurry)! *Macht schnell!*" It took them half an hour to empty the orphanage. The burly soldiers tossed the babies and small children onto the truck like pieces of wood. The trucks departed and nobody ever heard of them again. One of the nurses in that transport was a cousin of mine—Cesia Ehrlich.

There was a resistance movement in town, but it was very hush-hush, so much so that we only found out about most of their exploits after the war. Of course, the Germans didn't consider it in their interest to publicize the feats of the Resistance. From time to time we heard of a soldier who had been killed or of a bomb which had exploded. Usually, the next day, Gestapo cars raced wildly through the streets. There were arrests of people, whole families sometimes, and executions on the Holdy. There were several reasons why it was so pathetic. First and foremost was the shortage of any kind of arms. In pre-war Poland it was forbidden for the general public to own firearms. Obtaining a licence for a hunting or sporting rifle was fraught with difficulties. One had to produce certificates of good conduct, sobriety and trustworthiness from the police, a justice of the peace, a minister or similar. And, of course one had to be relatively wealthy. Poland didn't produce those things and as they were

imported, they were quite expensive and considered as luxury items. In any case, who needed them?

They were needed now, but were unavailable. It was a hard task fighting a well-armed enemy, with hardly any arms at all. A single rifle here or there, or a crude home made bomb which sometimes exploded early and maimed the guerrilla fighter, couldn't do much damage to the Germans. And the repercussions were always tenfold. It didn't help that there was no assistance whatsoever from the Polish population. On the contrary, they were only too happy to point the finger and inform the Germans about the Jews. Their endemic hatred for the Jews was much greater than their enmity towards the German occupiers.

In 1942 the Poles created their own underground movement, which they called AK, abbreviated from *Armia Krajowa* (Country Army). The AK was even more ineffective against the Germans than the Jewish partisans were. However, they were very good at luring the Jewish fighters into the forests under the pretext of helping them, and later taking away their few miserable arms and murdering them. The history of those years is full of such episodes. After the war, they were the ones who threw out returning Jews from moving trains and organized the pogroms in Kielce and other towns. They created the slogan: "Hitler didn't do a good enough job with the Jews. We shall complete it." During the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, a big banner across the buildings stated "for our freedom and yours," but no Pole lent a hand. Even the few rifles and pistols used in the uprising, the Jews had to buy for good money and smuggle them into the ghetto through the sewers. The Jews fought against the Germans alone, to the last. The outcome was predictable, but at least they died with a gun or a stone in their hands and not in the gas chambers of Treblinka.

As the war progressed the Jewish population in Sosnowiec dwindled. Most of the able-bodied men and women were sent to slave camps in Germany. The old and the very young were being sent to Auschwitz on journeys of no return. Those who could, made hideouts or built bunkers in cellars for themselves. Others tried to get into protected jobs in German factories. The SS, however, kept demanding more and more fodder for the German Works and Services Instrumentalities, from the Central. The pressure Alfred Dreier exacted on Moniek Merin was so great that eventually Merin gave way and declared all *Arbeitsscheinen*, the work safe-conducts for local factories, null and void. Suddenly, we became fair game to be caught on sight by the Jewish Police, or the SS, and sent on the nearest transport to Germany.

MOSHE ROBIN

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Moshe and Stefa Robin. *Stepping Into Life*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2002, pp. 94–100. Used by permission.

Moshe Robin was sent to Buzlau, a subcamp of the much larger camp complex at Gross-Rosen, Germany. In this account, he outlines the routine whereby as a newly arrived prisoner he was acculturated into the camp routine. He also shows how, over time, the camp developed; while the physical characteristics of the camp were built up, the condition of the prisoners deteriorated. Nonetheless, the prisoners did the best they could with what they had—and all they really had was their own determination to stay alive and work together in order to achieve that end. As he shows, awareness of the imminence of a Nazi defeat and liberation by the Soviets kept the prisoners going.

One Sunday morning in April 1944, while we were being mustered on the Appelplatz, a car and a truck arrived in the camp, stopping right in front of the prisoners. Three uniformed SS men alighted from the car and about a dozen men from the truck. These men were dressed in the striped, pyjama-like concentration camp uniforms, with different-coloured triangles on their left breasts. Most had black triangles, about two had purple ones and one, red. Later we found out that black meant criminal, purple Jehovah's Witness and red political, Communist or Socialist. All of these men had numbers on the triangles on their uniforms and none of them looked Jewish.

When one of the SS approached, the officer in charge of the guardsmen spoke to him and handed him something that looked like a letter. The officer saluted smartly, turned on his heel and stood aside to let the SS man take over. He announced, "From now on this camp will be known as *Konzentrationslager Bunzlau* (Bunzlau Concentration camp). Your present administration is now summarily dismissed, and these prisoners I brought with me will take over the running of the camp. They must be obeyed without contradiction." He pointed to the men in the striped pyjamas. "There will be a selection in half an hour. You will undress totally. You will only keep your belts and your footwear. You will be called by name and if you pass the inspection, you will be issued with a uniform like these prisoners have, and a piece of cloth with a number and a yellow triangle which you must sew on to the left

breast of your jacket. All your clothes, undergarments and other private possessions will be confiscated. The lockers will be removed; you won't need them any more. That's all for the time being. You can start undressing now. Put your clothes in the middle of the yard in a heap. You can't enter your rooms any more until after the selection."

Some of the black-triangle prisoners posted themselves before the doors of the barracks, to prevent the inmates from entering. Others armed with trolleys started wheeling the lockers out of the rooms. We were standing bewildered, in the middle of the yard, not knowing what to do, very loath to undress and part with our clothes.

On a nod from the SS officer, three burley black triangles with canes in their hands came forward and started beating up the perplexed inmates. "*Ausziehen* (undress)", they shouted, "*Schnell machen* (hurry up), *schnell, schnell!*" as their blows rained down on the hapless inmates. For about ten minutes pandemonium prevailed, until some started to remove their clothing. The others soon followed until the yard was full of stark naked men. The black triangles removed bundles of striped uniforms from the truck, then threw the discarded clothes, then the garments from the lockers, onto the trucks.

We were mustered again, naked and shivering and waited to be called before the selection panel by a purple-triangled German prisoner, one by one. My name was called and I ran into the room. There were two tables, a bigger one for two German officers and a smaller one for the second purple-triangled prisoner, who acted as a clerk. He asked the questions—name, date of birth and occupation in camp, which he recorded on a sheet, then the two Germans, who were probably doctors, took over. They asked about the state of my health and any complaints I had, but I didn't complain about anything as I remembered what happened to the sick ones in the infirmary at Markstädt. They hastily inspected my hands, feet, mouth and teeth and even my genitalia, then one of them nodded to the clerk, who handed me a piece of cloth with a number.

"From now on you will be addressed and you will report as 'Prisoner Number 35268', the clerk told me. "Your private name isn't relevant any more." He ushered me into an adjoining room where I was given a striped pair of pants and a jacket. My hair was clipped short and a 3–4 cm wide stripe was shaved down the middle of my head, from the front to the nape of the neck. The German prisoners had a name for that stripe—they called it *Lausenstrasse* (Lice Street).

It was late in the afternoon when they finished. About eight or nine inmates, older and ailing ones from the

infirmary, were ushered, still naked, onto the truck, which drove off. . . .

Life in the camp became hard. The criminals, who were now running the camp, didn't mix with the Jewish prisoners. They kept aloof to accentuate their Aryan superiority. They usurped a whole barrack for themselves, squeezing the inmates from there in with the rest. They always walked with a rod in their hands and beatings from the black triangles became commonplace. There was no after-shift or Sunday rest and they always found some additional chores in the camp or in the barracks for the inmates. Life became more regimented. There were very frequent inspections, often in the middle of the night, when they kept the tired inmates up for hours before another day's work.

One day, the SS officer accompanied by the burliest of all the black triangles who now acted as the *Lagerälteste*, came to our barrack and ordered the middle room emptied. The inmates from that room now had to double up with other prisoners in the remaining rooms. The SS officer said he was going to make a "showpiece toilet hall" there instead.

The prisoners, in their own time, removed the floorboards and installed the necessary piping. The hall was painted a beautiful white and cream. The floor was cemented and tiled, as were the walls to half their height. Six new toilet bowls were installed, as well as a new stainless steel urinal. The electricians were called in to put in new fluorescent lights and then, wonder of wonders, holders with elegant toilet paper in them were fitted on the wall next to each bowl. When it was finished even the Ritz wouldn't have been ashamed to own such a "toilet hall"! Two prisoners were assigned to clean, dust and polish the metal fittings, but it was strictly forbidden for anybody to go in and use it.

The quality of the food for the inmates deteriorated immensely, while the black triangles ate well and plentifully. The inmates grumbled under their beards. On the morning muster the SS *Lagerführer* (person in charge) came out with that kind of a sermon: "You are a very ungrateful lot. You wanted a beautiful toilet hall and I gave you one. You didn't think about how I paid for all those pretty fittings, did you? My budget is very limited. Well, I saved on your food. It won't hurt you to eat a bit less if you want to live in beautiful surroundings. I don't want to hear any more grumbles or you will regret it."

The real point of the story became apparent two weeks later. A commission of the Red Cross in Switzerland came for an inspection of the camp. The first thing our *Lagerführer* showed them was, of course, the "toilet hall" and

the commissioners duly noted that: “The inmates of the Konzentrationslager Bunzlau lived in luxury unparalleled in any other camp in the world.”

In all that misery, we tried to keep up our spirits in any way we could. We formed a “singing circle,” a quasi choir. Every Sunday afternoon, circumstances permitting, those whose voices were pleasing gathered around our *Dirigent* (conductor), Pinchas Orbach (I met him again after the war, here in Melbourne). We entertained ourselves and the other inmates by singing songs, mostly in Yiddish and Hebrew, but occasionally also in Polish and Russian. One of our capos, Naftali Feder, was an accomplished actor. He quite often recited for us, from memory, passages from I. L. Perez, Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Mocher Sforim and others, as well as poems by different Jewish poets. Sometimes even the black triangle German prisoners sat in the crowd and listened to the songs.

The other coloured triangles, although they lived in the barracks with the blacks, behaved more humanely. Of the two purple triangles, one acted as secretary in the office. The other, the one who assisted the two German doctors, helped the Jewish doctor who remained at his post as a male nurse. The red triangle replaced the cook.

One day a truck dumped a dead horse in the yard near the kitchen. Apparently it was the horse of our SS Lagerführer. It had fallen into a mole hole while he was riding it and had broken a leg. The Lagerführer shot the horse and decided that the meat was good enough for the inmates.

Suddenly there was meat ad nauseam. For three days each of the inmates was given a big chunk of horsemeat in his soup. On the third day, the cook let it be known that whoever wanted could have a second helping. There were many takers, with disastrous results. It was late August and the weather was pretty warm. There was no refrigeration in the camp and the horsemeat started to go bad. Our digestive systems, which for years now hadn't handled any fat, or meat of any kind, couldn't manage the sudden load of rotten horsemeat.

First, a lot of people were sick and vomited all over the place. The diarrhoea set in, to such an extent, that the infirmary couldn't handle it. Besides, they didn't have any drugs to administer. Sick inmates who couldn't wait were defecating in their pants, in the beds and in the aisles and the camp reeked like a sewer. The attendance at work halved and even those who turned up were green in the face and couldn't do much. It took over a week before the disease began to abate. Two of the inmates died. I was one of the early vomiters and maybe that saved me from the much worse, the diarrhea that

set in later. After that episode, even the black triangles eased off and slowly the camp came back to life.

The grapevine brought the news about the allied and Russian offensives, which lifted our spirits. In late November, in the quietness of the night, we could hear the cannon shots of the approaching Soviet Army in the distance. Those reports became louder and more distinct from day to day.

We could plainly see the unease in the Germans' faces. Their consternation shortly became raw fear, and the higher officials and military advisers disappeared from the plant, going deeper inland. Production in the factory stopped and tradesmen were ordered to remove the machines. They too were crated and shipped inland. More prisoners were assigned to the earthworks, digging deep trenches in the fields for protection against Russian tanks. As a last resort, the civil population was issued with *Panzerfausts* (anti-tank weapons).

In the first few days of February 1945 panic set in. Two of the SS officers disappeared. The Lagerführer decided to evacuate the camp and march the prisoners deeper inland.

ELFIE ROSENBERG

Context: Before the War

Source: Elfie Rosenberg, *Serry and Me: A Story of the Kindertransport and Beyond*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2001, pp. 25–37. Used by permission.

Bad Salzbrunn (modern day Szczawno-Zdrój), a spa town in Lower Silesia, saw happy prewar days for young Elfie Rosenberg; as she writes, it “had been a haven for my family before Hitler took power.” That came to an end, however, with the advent of the Nazis, after which everything seemed to change. Elfie’s highly descriptive account is related here with richness and care, as she chronicles her life and the many changes wrought by Nazi rule during the 1930s. With the Kristallnacht of November 9–10, 1938, she saw that it now became official policy for all Jews to leave Germany and that, as a result, she and her sister Serry were placed on a Kindertransport for Britain. They only just made it; “the boat we sailed on was the second last boat out of Germany.”

There were two Jewish guesthouses in Bad Salzbrunn. One belonged to the family Ruschin and the other to the Quartners. There wasn't a synagogue in Bad Salzbrunn so off we would go to one of the guest houses. Each had converted a

room into a prayer room, one for the women and the other for the men. My mother didn't always go so I usually sat beside my father with the men. The hum of the praying and having to sit still was often too much for me. I would start to fidget, which brought stern looks from my father. On Saturdays, Serry, who was more religiously observant than I, wouldn't even carry a handkerchief. "Carrying" is considered work, which is forbidden on the Shabbat.

For the High Holidays there were always enough people for the services and in the summer, also for Shabbes. But at other times, when there weren't enough men to make a *minyan*, Serry would ask the Jewish hawkers to help out. There were usually a few staying in cheap lodgings in our town, barely eking out a living. Dad would invite the hawkers home for a glass of tea and a card game. He sometimes let them win, considering it a mitzvah to let them think they had won some money rather than demeaning with a handout. My father always looked for the opportunity to help others.

The German population had their food rationed to help rearm the Fatherland. Serry tells me that meat could be obtained only once a fortnight, and that because of her bad heart, my mother was permitted to receive from Breslau a little extra—500 grams of kosher meat. This was around 1937. I was too young to appreciate what my mother was going through to provide for us. I certainly don't remember ever going hungry. Ironically, we were sent smoked chicken with a salami placed inside it by our "poor" maternal grandparents in Poland. They were then not suffering from food rationing as we were. Mum would hang the sausage on the kitchen window, where Serry and Dad would reverently slice off a small piece at a time. For them it was a huge treat, whereas Mum and I couldn't see what all the fuss was about. I can still remember the strong, smoky smell of that sausage. Our grandparents continued sending these luxuries right until the time we left Germany.

I remember another strong food smell, that of *speck*—bacon fat and cabbage in the passageway outside our apartment. It came from across the hall where a large non-Jewish family lived. I envied the freedom the children had running up and down the stairs. When I was very little I used to play with them. One of the boys, two years older than me, was my special friend. Then a time came when we started avoiding each other. Things soon got worse. My old friend, when he reached the age of ten, joined the Nazi Youth Movement. He was the same boy that not so long ago had played "doctors" with Herman and me and shared our toys. He wore his uniform with pride and strutted around as if he was king of the world. He became my tormentor.

Whenever we passed on the landing he would spit at me and call out, "Jude." He could reduce me to tears with merely a venomous glance. Then his abuse led to pushing and elbowing me out of his way. One day, he scratched my face so badly that I carried the scar for many years. There was nobody to complain to.

My parents had suffered a lot in Poland from anti-Semitic persecution. My mother told me about the pogroms that she had experienced as a girl and how badly they had affected her. When they moved to Germany, my parents thought that they had escaped this primitive racial hatred for good. Now they felt trapped and helpless. It was no longer their "safe, civilised Germany."

Bad Salzbrun had been a haven for my family before Hitler took power. German culture required people to be polite and courteous to each other and we happily fitted into this pleasant, orderly society. We got on well with our neighbours and the shopkeepers were friendly and helpful. The customers and suppliers with whom my father did business appreciated his trustfulness and integrity. Now, my parents felt betrayed by how easily the veneer of *gemutlichkeit* had fallen away. The situation in our small town was as bad as in the rest of Germany. I didn't understand much. I simply thought how horrid and repulsive I must be that so many people should hate me so.

Our young neighbor was one of the thousands of children who were willingly given by their parents to the Nazis for indoctrination. Propaganda films surviving from those years show strapping young boys and girls marching to bands singing: "the Flag is Greater Than Death." By 1933 the Hitler youth ruled the streets. They were made to feel powerful in their smart uniforms, as they marched in their multitudes carrying swastika-emblazoned banners and flags aloft. The boys sang songs like, "Happiness is an Authoritarian Regime." They took all their activities, even boxing and running, very seriously. They were being toughened up and groomed for a specific and deadly purpose, to be the rulers of the world. Toughness was the order of the day. They tried to "persuade" boys who had been reluctant to join them by marching in the streets of every city beating their drums, a message for them to come out of their homes and join in. The drum-beats must have sounded terrifying to those not taken in by the Nazi propaganda.

I could not understand how children could be so full of hate and arrogance. I was frightened of them. And yet, at times I yearned to be one of them. If only I wasn't a dark little Jewish girl but rosy-cheeked and confident, with blonde plaits wound around my head, I could belong, to also be part

of the glamour and excitement. It wasn't until recently, after seeing a movie on television that I could begin to see it from their point of view, to comprehend how totally indoctrinated they had been. I shuddered remembering that I was an eyewitness to the madness.

Serry started to attend a girls' Lyzeum (high school) in Waldenburg at the age of twelve. She stayed there for two years and then Jewish children were not accepted in state-run schools any longer. Catholic schools were still accepting Jewish children so my parents transferred to the private Catholic school in Bad Salzbrunn. She was a very good student, especially at Maths. Some of the pupils in her class would bully her to come early so they could copy her homework and woe betide, if she got her sums wrong! They would lie in wait, and in winter, put stones in snowballs and pelt her with them. Serry and I were verbally abused daily. The term "Jude" still gives me the shudders and, if I put my mind to it, I can still hear the echo of those demeaning taunts today.

By 1936, almost 100,000 boys and girls were in the arena for Hitler's birthday. Children commanded children. There were thousands upon thousands, all in the same uniform, carrying flags. Those smart uniforms, their Aryan ideals and their common purpose made them all equal. They were comrades. Hitler was their idol, their god.

The Nazis wanted to eradicate anything that was Jewish. Just three and a half months after coming to power in 1933, Hitler began the process of "cleansing" German libraries. Books by famous German authors such as Heine and Schnitzler were taken from libraries and personal collections and burnt in the streets. Paintings by Jewish artists were also destroyed.

In this atmosphere of sanctioned violence towards Jews, my father's business started to fall away. Some of his customers wouldn't pay, because who pays a Jew for his work? They knew that Jews had no legal recourse to complain. For years, there had been notices in shop windows saying "Jews not wanted as reps or customers" and Gentiles were urged not to buy from shops belonging to Jews. He was lucky to find a little out of the way shop where the Gentile owner wasn't afraid to sell him our daily provisions of food.

Now the terrifying threats and harassment of our small Jewish community began in earnest, with no authority willing to intervene. Every Friday night when the Shabbes candles were lit, the Gestapo would knock on the doors of Jewish homes and threaten whoever was within, shouting at them to leave, get out of the country or they would be arrested. Everybody was terrified but there was nowhere to go. Dad

tried to find a country that would be sympathetic to our plight, but to no avail. Even to return to Poland would not have been possible because Dad had avoided army duty due to the atrocious treatment meted out to Jews.

There was also a suggestion that Serry go on *Hachshara*. This was a youth program started by the Kibbutz Movement all over Europe whereby Jewish teenagers lived on collective farms learning Hebrew and farming whilst waiting permission from the British to enter Palestine. Only a trickle was granted that permission. But this plan did not go very far. We were too far from where such programs were being organised, and it was probably too late, with many people ahead of her wanting to take that option. Dad also suggested he try to go to South America on his own but Mum, fearing that something bad might happen to him, persuaded him not to go.

On October 10th, 1938, my father, together with many other Jews, was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to a prison in Waldenburg. Luckily, he was released after a couple of days. Then, on the 28th of October, there was an attempt to extradite us. The Germans decreed that all Polish nationals had to return to their "homeland" even though the Polish government had revoked their passports, making them stateless. 15,000 Polish-born Jews who had been living and working in Germany, some up to thirty years, were forced to take one suitcase, leaving all their other possessions behind. We were amongst these people.

I remember my mother packing her large handbag full of silver cutlery, possibly thinking she would be able to sell it, and a small suitcase of clothes. In her panic she forgot to take food. My vivid recollection is of many people milling around on the station platform and a blind old man sitting on a suitcase quite alone. Serry remembers a man wearing three hats. We made our journey by train to the border to Beuten (known as Bytom in Polish) amid gunfire shots from both sides of the border. We spent the night at the railway station and the next day we were transported in a cattle truck to Breslau. Then we were released to go home. How lucky we were that the Polish guards wouldn't let the train pass through into Poland.

Although we were very relieved to be back in our apartment, things got worse and worse. My father's working permit was confiscated and we had to live on our savings and any outstanding money from customers who still felt some obligation to pay. Then on the 9th November, 1938, the earnest anti-Jewish onslaught began with *Kristallnacht* when synagogues, houses and shops were burnt and Jews were beaten and tormented. I must have been protected from knowing

what was going on because I carry no memory of that momentous turning point in the lawlessness against Jews.

Our town with very few Jews had one incident that we know of. The large guesthouse owned and run by the elderly Ruschin sisters was the easy target. Serry remembers being told the next day, that they were put on an upstairs landing and a group of hooligans chopped down the bannisters around them, and then broke everything, including the windows. . . . “The Nazi scum broke into the guesthouse and beat up the sisters and closed them down as a Jewish ‘den of iniquity.’”

Now it was official policy. All Jews were told to leave the country. Those who could afford to pay or who somehow scraped together the money for the compulsory taxes were allowed to leave—if they could find a country to accept them. They were forced to surrender 80 percent of their property and savings and were allowed to take just 250 Reichsmarks, a paltry amount. Those who were unable to leave, had their bank accounts frozen. Most countries were reluctant to accept hordes of impoverished refugees. No wonder many of the poorer Jews were left to their fate to perish later in the concentration camps.

If there was one positive outcome of Kristallnacht it was the action of the Jewish community in England. A plea by British Jews in the House of Commons under Neville Chamberlain enabled unaccompanied children under the age of seventeen years to be allowed into Britain without a visa. The British organisation, the *World Movement for the Care of Children from Germany*, was begun by a Dutch social worker Gertrude Wijsmuller-Meyer. She went to Vienna to see Adolf Eichmann and demanded that 10,000 children be allowed to leave for England immediately. After suffering many indignities at the hands of the Gestapo, Wijsmuller-Meyer was granted permission to take 600 children out of Austria. And so the first Kindertransport was born and my life was ultimately saved by the heroic actions of this courageous lady. I regard her as my personal heroine. The Kindertransport between 1938 and 1939 saved approximately 10,000 children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. I am pleased that this book allows me, in a small way, to keep the knowledge of her actions alive more than sixty years later.

My parents saw this Kindertransport as the last opportunity to save their children. They thought we might have priority since we had family in London who would take us in. They had earlier written to distant family in Miami, pleading for them to help us. Their answer to my father was that they would see what they could do when they returned from their holidays. We never heard from them again. Luckily our

English family didn’t feel the same way. They concentrated all their efforts on helping Serry and me. The English authorities would not accept the adults, except to be employed in menial jobs. Mum could not imagine becoming a maid. Even if she had accepted such an arrangement, it would not have included my father.

By May 1939, my parents had to assure the authorities in writing that they would leave Germany within four weeks. The police came daily to want us to go or we would be sent to a concentration camp. When the papers came through for my sister and me to leave, it was too late for my parents to leave legally.

So they then had only one possible escape route, the one provided them by Uncle Foal who was the husband of my mother’s oldest sister, Golda. He had visited us from Paris in 1937 and clearly saw “the writing on the wall.” After he returned home, Mum started sending some of her more precious possessions out of the country for them to take care of. The result of it is that some of her monogrammed linen, crockery and *Havdala* and Sabbath candlesticks were saved. I inherited the candlesticks and have passed them on to my daughter, Yvette. They now adorn her table on Friday nights. We are proud to tell Rachel, Daniel and Mimi about how lucky we are to have them, and talk to them about their great-grandparents. In one of the parcels, Mum hid a diamond ring in a tube of toothpaste called “Idol” and wrote a note to Golda telling her that the toothpaste would make her teeth shine like diamonds. Golda fortunately, had no trouble understanding the message.

Before they could contemplate leaving, my parents had to make arrangements for Serry and me to be looked after until we were safely on the boat to England. They felt that we would be safe but obviously, there were no guarantees. They organised their trusted friends the Ruschins to look after us until we were taken to Breslau to an orphanage. From there, we would be taken by train to board the boat to England. The letters back and forth to the relatives in England and to the Refugee Children’s Movement would also have taken some time. All the details had to be documented and sent—exactly who would be looking after us and who would escort us to the orphanage.

All the arrangements now in place, my parents finally had no reason to stay. They bid us farewell on that traumatic night of June 20th, only weeks before war was declared. We can never imagine the heartache, fear and desperation they felt at leaving us behind. There could have been many unforeseen developments, living as we were at the mercy of the Germans. They also knew that there was no certainty that

they would successfully cross the border to Belgium. They had paid the smuggler 3,000 Reichmarks to escort them by train to a place close to the border. The rest of the way they needed to walk under cover of darkness, carrying a very small suitcase each.

From the moment they left us, Serry and I functioned on auto-pilot until we reached England. We simply did as we were told with no outward emotion. Neither of us remembers much of those last two weeks in Germany. We repressed our grief and fear as if in a deep hole.

Just before he left, Dad gave his *tallis* and *tefillin* to Serry and asked her to keep them safe for him until after the war. Was it because he really believed that we would meet again some day, or was it to leave a symbol of deep significance to future grandchildren if he didn't survive? The very next day the Gestapo came to arrest my parents because all Polish-born Jews were now being arrested. They had really left their escape till the very last minute. Of course, there was nobody at home. For many years I did not fully appreciate what a narrow escape they had had. A day or two later, a coded telegram came to the Ruschins from Brussels, letting us know that they had arrived safely at Dad's nephew's home. The telegram cryptically stated: "the uncle sends greetings." They were now preparing to travel to France to be with Mum's family in Paris. Frau Ruschin made Serry burn the telegram just in case the Gestapo thought Frau Ruschin was involved and she didn't want to be implicated.

Serry was, in fact, summoned to the Gestapo and it was Frau Horn who accompanied her, risking her own safety. Imagine a fifteen-year-old girl brought before a Nazi official in full regalia with the swastika flags all around, to be interrogated about parents who had just illegally left the country! Asked where they were, Serry, who was shaking with terror, blurted that they were out of the country and that she had received a telegram but had destroyed it. The Gestapo didn't believe her but Frau Horn supported her story. The Frau had a very strong character and was very German. She stood very erect and, with her stern demeanour, cut an imposing figure. They were both allowed to leave.

A few days later we were taken by train to the Jewish orphanage in Breslau where we stayed until we were shipped out to safety. Our kindly neighbours did not keep us because it was believed that orphan children were more easily allowed to exit Germany. From the orphanage to the arrival in London, my sister and I have a huge gap in our memory. I do remember a few things, for instance, that I had a small suitcase and on the inside of the cover was a list of its contents. The Government had restrictions on what we could take with

us. There was a name-tag attached to a string around my neck and I was clutching my two dolls, Ruth and Peter, the only toys I was allowed to take with me. They were my comfort and somehow helped me to keep in touch with reality. Everything else around me seemed like a dream. In Serry's suitcase she had her knitting and hidden in a skein of wool was a ring Mum had given her. It was forbidden to take jewellery out of the country and Serry was absolutely terrified of the ring being discovered. She realised that she was jeopardizing our safety, but followed our mother's wishes.

The trauma must have been immense for both of us, to have such a blank about those events. The things that were happening to us were overwhelming, almost impossible for the mind to grasp. I don't remember anything of my time at the orphanage, or the name of the ship that we left on. I remember other children being given their last cuddles and kisses and their parents waving goodbye to them. I badly missed my parents and felt again that I had been abandoned. There were so many children and so many instructions! As I write, I am trying hard to remember any other details, but I only find confusion. I am still making efforts to find out about that time in our life. . . .

Neither Serry nor I remember eating on our train journeys, nor drinking, nor going to the toilet, although someone must have been taking care of us. It was almost as if we were frozen all the way. . . .

The boat that we sailed on was the second last boat out of Germany. I found out later that one other boat was able to leave in July. Serry has memories of shaking off her distress to comfort some of the younger children who were sea-sick. I shared a bunk with a girl with curly red hair and I inherited her lice. On my arrival at my cousin's house in London, I suffered the humiliation of having lice for quite a long time before I alerted my cousin to my discomfort and shame.

JOSEPH ROSENBERG

Context: Central Europe

Source: Joseph Rosenberg. *Cutting My Life in Two: A Holocaust Memoir*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2010, pp. 1–4. Used by permission.

Joseph Rosenberg was born and raised in the small Hungarian city of Nyírtass, but moved to Nyíregyháza, near Budapest, in 1941. At that stage the Holocaust had not yet hit Hungary,

though a number of antisemitic measures were already in place. As a 12-year-old, his life revolved largely around school and home, though he was certainly aware of some of the unsavory developments taking place outside. In this account, he provides a useful glimpse into what it was like to be a young boy in this pre-Holocaust environment, where it seemed as though peace would prevail indefinitely. His testimony ends with the ominous words that by 1943 “my parents and neighbors were becoming very anxious about the war and the situation of the Jews.”

I was born Josef Rosenberg on a farm in Nyírtass, Hungary, in 1929, on December 23 or December 26. I don't know the exact date because we didn't celebrate birthdays. My parents were Nachman (Nathan) and Mindel (Malwyn). My father, Nachman, was a salesman, and my mother, Mindel, was a housewife, raising five sons. I had four brothers: Jenó, or Jachiel (1923), Ferenc, or Fischel (1925), Beru (1926), Miklós, or Miksa (1927), and then me, Josef (1929).

When I was three years old, my parents decided to leave the farm. I am not precisely sure why they left the farm; however, I know those years were hard times for farmers in Hungary. After World War I . . . prices for agricultural products were unstable and subject to tariffs in Europe and the United States. This made it difficult to export agricultural products. Then in the late 1920s and early 1930s, during the beginnings of the Great Depression, grain prices declined. . . .

We moved to Nyíregyháza, in northeast Hungary, a bigger city, with a population, in 1941, of 59,156. . . .

In Nyíregyháza, my family eventually owned an apartment building with six apartments: one for us; one for my aunt and uncle, my father's brother; one for the rabbi; one for a widow and her son; and the two others were rented by businessmen.

Because he was a salesman and had to travel, my father was away for long periods of time, but he came home some weekends and always on holidays. I remember one time when my father was home on Chanukah when we played cards, usually the game “21,” with him and other relatives.

My mother worked very hard, doing housework and raising five boys. She worked every hour, every day—24/7 as they say nowadays. In those days, life was more arduous; we had to carry the water from a neighbor's well. Mother would wash our clothes in a wooden tub, scrubbing them on a washboard. Although she had many chores, she prayed every night, seven days of the week; she was religious. Mother was a fine cook. I especially remember a delicious dish she made for Passover—sweet brine and matzos. Everyone liked this dish and would tell us: “Make sure your mother brings the matzos.”

Mother was very loving, I remember her taking me to a doctor when I was sick. She was crying because I was so ill. When we were walking home from the doctor's I told her, “Don't cry.” Another time when I was seven or eight years old I had a terrible toothache, but I didn't tell my mother. But my mouth and cheek swelled, and she realized something was wrong. When she took me to the doctor's, he told her the tooth was infected and if I didn't have surgery, the infection would go to my brain. My parents took me to a hospital where I had surgery and the infection cleared up.

Once I remember that Mother and I walked a few blocks from our home to a farm to buy milk. The farmer let my mother milk the cow for our milk. My mother squirted a little warm milk in my face. She also let me drink the milk directly from the cow. She was fun to be with.

I was a happy little boy growing up. I helped around the house. I played. I remember friends coming over to my house. Once I was sick, and my schoolmates came to visit me.

I was a religious person like my parents. My family was orthodox; therefore, we kept the Sabbath. We went to synagogue nearly every day. We had a synagogue in our back yard, for the rabbi rented an apartment from us. He had a *shul* where fifty families belonged. There was a *minyán* [a quorum of ten Jewish males] nearly every day. We sometimes went to the magnificent orthodox synagogue, which was famous because it was designed by the renowned architect, Lipót Baumhorn. Our synagogue was built between 1924 and 1932. I remember the bright colors on the walls and the Biblical scenes.

This synagogue survived the Shoah. . . .

Nyíregyháza was a famous religious community. In 1864 the city was chosen to be the site of a conference of forty-five Orthodox rabbis. The conference's aim was the condemnation of Hasidism, a sect of these forty-five rabbis, known as *misnagdim* (literally, “opponents”). Nyíregyháza was also the site of nineteenth-century blood libel trial—the belief that Jews use the blood of Christian children to make matzos for Passover.

Years later, antisemitism was still a problem and became worse as the 1930s and 1940s trudged on. I experienced some myself. I went to Hebrew school, to *cheder*. I attended public school for seven grades, learning history, grammar, reading, and writing. I didn't go to gymnasium, similar to U.S. high school but more advanced, because of the quota laws. . . .

I remember other persecutions because I was Jewish. As I said, antisemitism was nothing new for Nyíregyháza. By the late 1930s and early 1940s, even children were targets of

antisemitism. The non-Jewish kids called me “Jew,” as if it was an epithet. I could tolerate their calling me names; however, when they hit or shoved me, I fought with them. My brothers protected me a couple of times; they were stronger than I. There was not as much discrimination in school, mostly on the street.

One day, when I was eight or nine years old (1937 or 1938), I went to the barber shop. The barber, a non-Jew, cut off one of my side curls, *payos*. He did this to mark me. I never felt the same about my country again; we were always second class citizens in Hungary.

Despite the antisemitism and the rumors of persecution of the Jews in Poland and other countries, my life went on fairly normally. In 1942, towards the end of December, when I was thirteen, I had my Bar Mitzvah. On Saturday evening, I was called up to the bimah to the Torah and I said *Berakhot* (beginning with the word *barukh*, [blessed or praised]). All my brothers had gone through the same rite of passage when they had become obligated to obey the commandments. My parents had a gathering afterwards when I had to say a speech about my responsibilities as a Jewish man. Gefilte fish, challah, and wine were served at this reception. It was a relatively simple affair—there were no caterers then.

By 1943, my parents and neighbors were becoming very anxious about the war and the situation of the Jews.

FELA ROSENBLOOM

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Fela and Felix Rosenbloom. *Miracles Do Happen: Memoirs of Fela and Felix Rosenbloom*. Newham (Victoria): Scribe Publications, 1994, pp. 11–14. Used by permission.

Fela Perelman (later Rosenbloom) was a 16-year-old when the Nazis invaded Poland in September 1939, and in this account she describes the very personal impact the invasion had on her and her family relationships. Strictly speaking, this is an account of Fela's experience in a German labor camp, once she had been “recruited” from the ghetto to go and work in Germany. It is an intimate description of an often-overlooked dimension of how wartime was encountered; not of murder, but of a way in which staying alive could be found in and when an opportunity presented itself.

When the war broke out in 1939 I could not comprehend what had happened, could not make any sense out of it. I

was only sixteen years old. Suddenly I found myself living under German occupation. All Jews, including my father, lost their livelihoods. Then, in April 1940, the whole Jewish population was herded into a ghetto, like in medieval times. Over 200,000 were squeezed into a few kilometres in the poorest, dirtiest part of the city. Most of them were disposed, without work, without food. I grew up quickly to understand the enormity of the tragedy.

Felix did not trust the Germans from the first day of their arrival in our city. As their brutality towards Jews mounted from day to day, he feared that the situation of the Jewish people in Poland, especially the young men among them, would deteriorate dramatically. On 21 November 1939 Felix fled Lodz, with the consent of his parents, and went to the eastern Polish territories, occupied by the Soviet Union. It was a very sad day for his family and for myself. His parents worried a lot about how he would cope with the difficulties of everyday life in those uncertain times. Not one day went by that they did not mention Felix, their beloved, only son. His mother had tears in her eyes whenever she spoke about him.

I knew that Felix's parents loved me, but his departure brought us closer together. Immediately after his departure, they asked my mother's permission for me to stay with them for a week. Fulfilling his mother's wish, I slept in Felix's bed during the whole week I was with them. I left the ghetto in April 1941 when Felix's mother insisted that I take a portion of her bread ration, and practically forced me to eat it on the spot.

I wrote regularly to the Rosenblooms from Unterdiessen by Landsberg, my first labour camp in Germany. Once I received from them a parcel, containing summer dresses, shoes and a beautiful scarf: it was a special gift from Felix's father. I was envied by every girl in the camp. In the end I had to cut the scarf in two and give away one half to my friend. Felix was in the Soviet Union and I was in Germany—a world apart—with a slim chance of seeing each other again. However, that did not stop Felix's parents from caring for me. I loved them and respected them, hoping to show them my gratitude one day. Unfortunately, their lives were cut short—they perished in the gas ovens of Auschwitz in August 1944. . . .

The first summer in the ghetto was bad enough. Then came the winter. There was not yet any organized food or ration distribution. People—especially the elderly—starved to death or died of cold. Bread queues stretched for miles. Soup kitchens were the main supply of nourishment. But to obtain a bowl of soup one had to line up from early morning until late in the day.

My family suffered terribly. They believed that God was with them and would not let them down. I was the oldest and my brothers and sister looked to me for an example; but I just lay in bed, starving and crying all the time. I was not pushy enough for the bread queues and too proud to stand all day in line for a bowl of soup. I was disappointed with life, depressed, and very weak.

When spring arrived at last, there was an announcement that young women were sought to work in German labour camps. I enlisted as soon as possible. Of 15,000 women registered, only sixty-eight were accepted. I was the last one. My parents agreed that I should enlist. They knew that I would not survive in the ghetto. I was too proud, I was not tough enough for it. In Germany, they thought, I might have a slim chance.

A few days later, in April 1941, I took leave of my family and went to the assembly point for the departure to Germany. The most difficult one to part with was my young sister Bella. She loved me so much. She was ten years old at the time and was very dear to me. The first labour camp they brought me to was Underdiessen, near Landsberg, in Bavaria. They housed us in three wooden barracks, surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, and we were sent out to work in the fields of a large flax enterprise. It was very hard work for us, city girls not used to such labour. Our hands bled and all our bones ached after a long day in the field.

We were given not enough food; however, we were better off there than in the ghetto. Nevertheless, it was a sad life. We were not allowed to go out of the compound or to have any contact with the outside world. We entertained ourselves by celebrating each girl's birthday; we wrote cards and poems. I used to do a lot of the latter to occupy my mind. We also read books.

In the autumn we were transferred to Buchl, to work in a factory which processed the raw flax. We stayed there all winter. In the spring of 1942 they sent us to Lohof, near Munich, where we did the same work as in Underdiessen. Late in 1942 our whole group was sent to an ammunition factory in Augsburg. There we were employed in the production of very small weapons' parts. They taught us to operate machines and to use magnifying glasses and tweezers. They called us by our proper names—"Fraulein this" or "Fraulein that"—instead of by the first names we had been called in other camps. The German supervising engineers were the first people in Germany to treat us like human beings.

Although it was strictly forbidden to have any contact with us, one incident is worth noting. A German worker

quietly approached us and told us that he, his wife, and son would like to help us. He suggested that he and his young son could mend our worn shoes and his wife would try to get for us articles of hygiene, which we needed very much. Every day we left a parcel of a few pairs of worn shoes at an arranged spot and he picked it up, mended the shoes at night, and delivered them to the same spot the next day. We also got from him the articles of hygiene, which his wife brought for us. All of us were very grateful to those noble Germans. They kept helping us until we left Augsburg.

FELA ROSENBLOOM

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Fela and Felix Rosenbloom. *Miracles Do Happen: Memoirs of Fela and Felix Rosenbloom*. Newham (Victoria): Scribe Publications, 1994, pp. 14–21. Used by permission.

In this remarkable account, Fela Rosenbloom describes how, in early 1943, she arrived at Auschwitz and was "processed" into the camp; tattooed, shaved, showered, and dressed in clothing deemed appropriate for a prisoner, prior to being released into the camp proper. It is a detailed account that explains what happened next; after a regimen of hard labor with poor food, and in a situation of little or no sanitation, she contracted typhoid fever and almost died. In fact, she describes how she begged for death to take her and release her from her dreadful state. That she survived was exclusively on account of her being "adopted" by another prisoner (also named Fela) in the infirmary. This is a remarkable story of salvation in the face of a situation that would otherwise almost certainly have resulted in Fela's death.

In the spring of 1943, the policy of the Nazis changed: they set about making Germany *Judenrein*—that is, to cleanse it of all Jews. They gave each of us a ration of bread and marmalade, told us to pack our meagre belongings, and put us on a train, ostensibly going to a labour camp in Poland. While we were being searched before our departure, one official told me to throw away my many small items of a sentimental nature—my friends' birthday greetings and letters—and to replace them in my suitcase with food. There was, however, no food available. Two days later we arrived at a railway station marked Auschwitz. . . .

The first thing they did was to take away all my possessions and tattoo in ink a number with a triangle on my left

forearm. Each time the needle went into my skin it drew blood. It seemed to take such a long time but I still did not know what was ahead of me. This was only the beginning; we were so ignorant. We had no idea what was happening to us because we had never heard of this place before.

Then they shaved off my hair completely. I cried so much. I had such beautiful hair. At that time it was fashionable to have ringlets like Shirley Temple's, and when they shaved off my hair I became numb. With every cut I died a little. Everything inside me died. From that moment on, I felt that I was not alive any more, because my mother had always been so proud of my hair. My mother always used to tell me: "Oh, you're beautiful." When the Germans invaded Poland, her only worry was that they might cut off my hair. That was her biggest worry. She did not suspect that something worse could happen to me.

I will never forget the beginning of that madness. I felt: "this is the end. Something is very wrong."

Afterwards we had to stand completely naked in a queue and a woman started to shave off my pubic hair. German SS men with machine guns were standing around us and watching. I was told to stand with my legs wide apart to make her job easier. I was an innocent girl. No man had seen me naked before.

Then they sent us for a shower in a big building. After the shower, we had to get some clothes. Our own had been taken away by the female inmates who were in charge of us. There was a huge table with clothing on it, from which I was handed a Russian soldier's uniform which felt as though it had come from the First World War. After I put it on, somebody painted a large cross on my front and back. They also gave me a scarf to put on but my bare head could not hold anything; it was too slippery.

When I went out I caught a look at my face in the reflection of a window. I thought: "This is Hell. This is impossible. What is happening here cannot happen in a real world among normal people. How could normal people do things like this to other people?" It did not make any sense. I did not understand it. Why did they do this to me? What for?

I thought: "The one who arrived here is dead. This is not me. From now on, I am not the same. I am a different person and I don't know what they want from me." I wanted to die. I said to myself: "I'm still alive. I'm dead and alive." I did not know whether I was more alive or more dead. I was thinking: "How can I walk? How can I look at myself? The best thing for me would be to drop dead. Just to drop dead." That was my wish.

Afterwards, they kept us in quarantine for six weeks. When it ended, we sixty-eight girls, who had been together for so long, were separated and sent to different barracks. I was assigned to *Auser-kommando 104* (outside work outfit 104). We were led to work by armed SS men with large dogs. We were made to carry heavy rocks from one place to another. The hard labour was of no use to anybody; its only aim was to inflict pain and humiliation, to torment us. On the way to and from the camp we saw the smoking crematoria chimneys. We understood. This was where all of us would end up. The German guards jokingly told us that this was the *Himmel-kommando* (the heavens' work outfit).

The daily routine of terrible hunger, cold, exhaustion, overcrowding, and lack of the most basic means of personal hygiene, coupled with cruel beatings, soon reduced the number of able-bodied inmates considerably. To make things worse, an epidemic of typhoid fever raged in the camp. In the late autumn I, too, succumbed to the epidemic.

A lot of people were sick. They were taken to the so-called sick-bay, an empty barracks with no doctors, no medications, without anything to help the sick. There were just a number of orderlies doing their best—which did not amount to much. The sick were cramped on the bunks as in the other barracks.

They put me beside a girl who had diarrhea. I could feel her wet, soiled legs. She had high temperature and so had I. Once a day they came round with some food—a piece of bread and some watery stuff called tea. I covered my head and refused to take it. I said: "I am not hungry, I do not want to live." I was not sorry for myself, I was quite happy. I thought: "Now is probably the end of my suffering and I'm glad it will soon be over." I had lost my will to live. I was sure that I could not survive in those surroundings. It was just a matter of time.

In the sick-bay, selections were an everyday occurrence. When a selection was on, everybody had to be down from their bunk and on their feet. The SS men would walk through the barracks and assess each inmate. The inmates whose numbers were written down by them were sent to the gas chambers. The people who did not come down from their bunks were automatically sent to the gas chambers.

A few days after I was admitted to the sick-bay, a selection took place. I did not come down from the bunk. Some people were afraid to show their forearms. They wanted to live. In those terrible conditions, sick and miserable, treated worse than animals, they still wanted to live. If they could, they would hide in the tiniest nook or cranny, just to escape being sent to death, just to stay alive a little longer.

It was a large barracks, housing about 1,000 sick women. I was lying semi-conscious and happy in the knowledge that I would not suffer much longer. That evening somebody woke me up. It was Fela Hamer, a girl from our original group of sixty-eight. She was a nursing aide in the sick-bay, and she had spotted me by pure accident.

She said: “Fela, is that you? I can’t believe it. You have been put on the list for the gas chamber. You are too young to die. I must save you.” I begged her to leave me, to let me go. I kept on repeating: “Please let me die.” Another girl overheard us and started to yell at Fela: “Please save me, I want to live, she doesn’t want to, please save my life.” Fela told her that she could save only one and she wanted to save me. To this very day the desperate voice of that girl rings in my ears.

The notorious Dr. Mengele was at that time the commanding officer. Fela went to him and told him that I was her sister and the only one left in the family. She begged him not to send me to the gas chambers. Although he was not such a noble person, Mengele granted her wish because Fela was respected by the Germans for being a very good worker. Maybe it was pure luck that, when Fela approached him, the usually beastly doctor was in a good mood.

I had been having a dream when Fela Hamer woke me up. My body felt as light as a feather, and I was moving upwards, higher and higher. I felt no pain at all. I heard a horrible noise of the wheels of a passing express train and through it a loud voice calling my name: “Fela Perelman, Fela Perelman” (my maiden name). When I woke up at Fela Hamer’s urging, I heard a nursing aide say: “This one will not survive the night. In the morning we will have a corpse.”

That following night was the night of the crisis. Without medication, lying beside a diarrhea sufferer, I survived. But to survive the crisis was not enough. I was still sick with typhoid; I was still so weak. The problem was, how could I survive the next selection and not be sent to the gas chamber? In normal times, when one has typhoid fever, one goes to a hospital, has medical attention, is on a proper diet, is cared for, and has the affection of one’s family and friends. I was alone, without help, worse than an animal. Nobody cared about me except my girlfriend, Fela Hamer. To me, she was like an angel. What she did for me was the only normal thing in that mad world with mad people called Auschwitz. She took me into her quarters and gave me some food, but I had no appetite.

The next day, before the trucks came to pick up the sick people marked for the gas chambers, Fela gave me a nurse’s

uniform to put on. She forced me to get up, because it was dangerous to stay on the bunk. I could not walk, so she made me lean on her back. When the SS men made a roll-call I stood behind her and nobody could see that I was so sick. She washed me, dressed me, and did everything else that was needed.

As sick as I was, I had to do some work, because I was supposed to be a nursing aide. I had to help my friend get the sick people onto the trucks—the trucks that were taking them to the gas chambers. What an irony! I was meant to be one of them. I was too weak to be of any help.

I was given a chance to survive but I needed the physical strength to carry out some nursing duties. There were no toilets in the barracks. To relieve themselves, people used large buckets, one in each corner. I was asked to carry the buckets to a special truck, a fair distance away. It was winter, snow was falling, and the ground was slippery as I went out carrying a heavy bucket. I walked step by step, frightened that I might slip. While carrying the heavy bucket, I had to cross over a deep gutter. I had no strength at all. I put the bucket on the ground first, then lifted one knee with both my arms, and then the other knee. To empty the bucket into the truck I had to lift it up on a ladder. In the days to come, this was the job I had to do a few times daily.

When I recovered and was fit enough, Fela told me that it would be better for me to go back to the camp. She saved my life and I regained the will to live.

RITA ROSS

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Rita Ross. *The Sum of Three: Rutka, Jadzia, Rita*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2013, pp. 32–39. Used by permission.

During the Holocaust, Jews not only subsisted as best they could in ghettos; they often also hid in the so-called “Aryan” areas outside the ghetto walls. In order to do so, they inevitably needed the assistance of friendly non-Jews prepared to take enormous risks in carrying out their life-saving work. Rita Ross and her family were the recipients of such help, and in this account Rita provides a very useful set of insights into how those in her position managed to find ways to live under the most trying of circumstances—and, importantly, also how the interactions took place between the

Nazis and the righteous Poles who tried to shield their Jewish neighbors.

My father had always been an optimist, positive in his thoughts and actions. This attitude is what enabled him to survive during that time. Once again, he was determined to harness his natural resources and try to earn some money. He managed to obtain Aryan identity documents as although he had dark eyes and hair, he did not look Semitic. He even grew an “Adolf Hitler mustache,” then the fashion among many men, and was quite confident in his ability to pass as a Pole.

He began dealing in scrap metal in Warsaw, where he rented a room at the back of a *Konditorei*, a cake shop. He came to Pruszkow only at weekends, always with a box of pastries and my favourite, cheesecake.

The watch-repairing venture had resumed between Mozenko and Karol; now my father and Lucja Klimek joined the team. My father collected watches from Mozenko while Lucja sourced others in need of repair. They were all brought to Pruszkow to be repaired by Karol, and then taken back to Warsaw by Lucja and my father. In this way we managed to create a small source of income, which was supplemented by my father’s scrap metal deals.

Antoni Klimek was unable to contribute financially as he was in hiding as well, though for different reasons. Having witnessed the atrocities committed when the Wołomin Ghetto was liquidated, he found it abhorrent to continue working on the railway for the German army. When he helped the Bermans escape from their temporary refuge in the Wołomin railway station, he too became a fugitive. Knowing he was now a wanted man, and that the Nazis would come searching for him, Antoni and the Bermans fled to Pruszkow together. This was an additional element in a situation already volatile and fraught with extreme danger.

Antoni had to keep a very low profile and left our building only for a few hours every day, while always keeping a lookout for German soldiers. Not only did he risk his and his family’s lives by hiding us, our welfare drove him to take extraordinary chances. He returned from his daily escapades with wheat he had somehow obtained from farmers, as well as sausages, potatoes and onions. I don’t know if any of these items were obtained legally or not. Antoni milled the wheat and Lucja, Mania and my mother were the bakers and pastry-cooks. He insisted we consume large amounts of onions daily, as they were the only available source of vitamin C. This was necessary to avoid dental problems. It worked, because I do not recall any of us having to consult dentists.

Occasionally Antoni came back with a treat, horse meat. No one asked him how he had obtained it—it was food and very much appreciated by the adults as a change from our staple diet of bread, potatoes and onions. However it did not appeal to me. I still preferred my rye bread sprinkled with sugar, or the ultimate treat, cheesecake, which I consumed with passion whenever my father could supply it.

For the first fifteen months of our time in hiding my father commuted between Pruszkow and Warsaw. He and Karol Berman, two Jews, were the breadwinners for eleven people. They continued to do this until early 1944, when it became too dangerous, particularly after the heroic Warsaw Ghetto Uprising which lasted from 19 April to 16 May 1943. The situation was very tense. Poles prowled the streets looking for anybody with Semitic features.

My father’s luck seemed to have run out. One day, while still in Warsaw, he was accosted by two Poles, taken to an alley and ordered to drop his trousers. When the evidence of his religion became apparent he was threatened with immediate exposure. His false identity card was taken from him. Speechless with terror, he stared death in the face. For some unknown reason he never understood, the Poles said they would not denounce him and would even return his identity card, on condition he met them at a designated place with a certain amount of money. Some years later my father spoke to me of this episode. He told me he had said to the thugs, “How do I know I can trust you? How do I know you will let me go?” They replied, “You have no choice.”

He borrowed and scraped together an amount of money, met them as agreed and against all odds, they returned his identity card and let him go. But from then on there was no choice for him but to go back to Pruszkow and stay permanently hidden. And so he became a permanent occupier of the foldaway bed.

I was overjoyed to have my father (my *Tata*) with me at all times and not to have to wait for a whole week, or sometimes more, until I saw him again. I missed the cheesecake he always brought me but nothing was as good as having him with me, without being separated.

Years later, during Reginka’s and my frequent reminiscences, she spoke of our incredible good fortune in knowing the watchmaker, Mozenko. Now that my father was unable to collect the watches, Mozenko brought them to Karol out in Pruszkow and collected them in due course. I did not remember any of this, but Reginka did.

Recalling this, I am overcome. Mozenka—that is all I know of him, just that name. The man who informed my father of the Bermans’ survival and their hiding place; the

man who was instrumental in the meeting that led to our survival, and who subsequently assisted us financially by providing work for Karol. I am astounded by his extraordinary compassion and selflessness. There was no turning back, no alternative to the situation facing us. There was only one goal—survival—for six Jews, four Poles and a new baby born on 1 September 1944.

To supplement our living expenses, my mother, Lucja and Mania began baking biscuits, which Lucja and Reginka took around the shops to sell. There was little chance of Reginka's blue eyes and blonde hair endangering our lives and Lucja had no problems introducing "her niece." Although my mother bleached her hair as protection in the remote possibility of unannounced visitors arriving, she could not risk venturing outside and in the two years we spent with the Klimeks, like me, she never did. There was always an air of danger, as the Poles had a special talent for identifying Jews and the financial reward was enticing.

What did I do with myself in those two years? I had my special little chair in the corner of the living room and there I sat with my doll, entering a world of fantasy in which I had freedom, friends, could go to school and play in the park. Although restrained physically, there were no frontiers in the world of my imagination.

My mother taught me to read and write, so I read all sorts of novels copiously. The first novel I read was a Russian classic by Mikhail Sholokhov. It might not have been quite suitable for a little girl and my mother refused to explain certain parts of it to me. Until the day she died she recalled the pain she felt at seeing me play by myself, while Halinka and Zosia were at school and Reginka able to go out without much risk.

The Klimeks seldom had visitors, but for when they did the adults had devised a plan. The door was taken off the toilet and the back removed from a free standing wardrobe, which was pushed against the open space. If anyone knocked on the door we would immediately walk through the wardrobe into the toilet and stay there until it was safe to come out. I recall an incident when a neighbour came to visit Lucja. As usual, we climbed through the door of the wardrobe, my mother being the last one in. But her dress caught in the wardrobe door and she had to stay there while the neighbour admired Lucja's dress.

Just as we had always feared, one day the Nazis came looking for Antoni. He had also prepared for this and used his electrical expertise to install two front door bells. One in a hidden crevice was known to very few people, while the other was in open view. When the Nazis pressed the easily

accessible bell, Antoni sensed danger. He quickly hid in the attic while we hid in the toilet. Lucja let them in. Upon being questioned, she innocently told them she had not seen her husband for two months.

Lucja's origin was an immense help to us. Antoni spoke German. He and Lucja would often deliberately argue loudly in the apartment to make sure their German conversation was overheard by the neighbours. Lucja's nationality and mother tongue now became a formidable shield, a safety net for six Jewish lives.

When the Nazis came that time, Lucy was heavily pregnant and utterly Germanic in her speech and manner. Her portrayal of a typical German Hausfrau (housewife) was faultless. It was such a convincing performance she would never have been suspected of harboring Jews. The Germans' only interest in her family was Antoni's whereabouts.

That this slight, pregnant woman standing at the threshold of the door was the only barrier between us and the Nazis was barely plausible. They were only a few feet away from us, separated by a flimsy wardrobe, some hanging clothes and Lucja's small frame. The Nazis left believing she was a deserted wife, but warned her they would be back.

MARIANNE ROTH

Context: Before the War

Source: Marianne Roth. "Krystallnacht 1938: The Sister's Story." In Julie Meadows (Ed.). *Memory Guide My Hand: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing by Members of the Melbourne Jewish Community*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 1998, pp. 48–50. Used by permission.

The testimony that follows is best read alongside that of Hans Friend, also in this volume. Marianne and Hans, a sister and brother, lived in Berlin before the outbreak of war. When Marianne wrote her recollection of the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, Hans decided it was necessary for him to also put pen to paper by way of a corrective to Marianne's account. Together, they show how two eyewitnesses can arrive at different conclusions from the same experiences. In Marianne's case, as can be seen from the testimony, her observations were drawn largely from what she witnessed at home, while those of Hans came from a walk outside in the streets. Marianne's account ends with a postscript in honor of her mother, who became a victim of the Nazis after having been sent to Poland during the war.

This date marked the death sentence for European Jewry. The German Reich, on that day, demonstrated an open display of violence and murder against its Jewish population and there was nobody there to stop them. It led inevitably to the murder of my mother and of our whole large extended family—old people, young people, children. A thriving, educated, industrious society disappeared. Those few who managed to escape enriched their adopted countries in many fields of endeavor.

Hans and I were eyewitnesses to that dreadful night. The year was 1938; I was 18 years of age and still at school studying for my matriculation. I was attending a *Realgymnasium*, a private Jewish high school, where English, French and Latin were being taught, as well as mathematics, physics, chemistry, art, music, geography and biology. My father Eugene was Head of the Science Department.

On 9 November we were sent home from school at lunch-time, as a private *aktion* against Jews was anticipated. My mother asked me and my young brother Hans not to go out. Against her wishes I said, “Hans, we have to know what’s going on. We need to know for posterity.” Neither of us looked Jewish and I felt we were safe in the streets.

We left our apartment in Charlottenburg, Berlin, and walked towards our synagogue on the Fasanen Street. There we witnessed a mob of people, in broad daylight, shouting and cheering as they watched our synagogue burn. The mob was ecstatic, calling out vile and vicious things about the Jews. I believe the caretaker was burnt together with the synagogue, but whether he was trapped or had been locked in, I do not know.

We made our way home and saw Jewish shops being looted, windows smashed or painted over with swastikas or *Magen Davids*. Jewish men were being beaten. We later learnt that synagogues all over Berlin were burnt to the ground. The same night, the Nazis started rounding up Jewish men and even boys once they reached the age of sixteen. Most who were arrested were sent to concentration camps—to Dachau, Buchenwald or Sachsenhausen.

My father had been warned by his non-Jewish colleagues not to stay at home where he could be picked up. So my mother, father and brother stayed with Aunt Liese, who was widowed and then with another single aunt, as only where there were houses where there was no husband were safe to stay in. On 10 November, my father and brother walked the streets all through the night. So many arrests had taken place they no longer felt safe anywhere. My mother stayed with Aunt Liese that night and finally in the morning

both Father and Hans went back there. They didn’t know what else to do.

Meanwhile, I was left in our flat in Charlottenburg with our maid, a woman in her late forties. Jewish families were forbidden to keep servants under the age of forty-five in case, horror of horrors, a sexual relationship developed between them which could produce a “racially impure” offspring. There had been no incidents where women or children had been taken away and it was felt that I was quite safe at home with the maid, keeping an eye on things.

But unknown to my parents, I was enduring daily, terrifying harassment since the day they left. Every night at eleven o’clock and every morning at six, two huge Gestapo men in black uniforms came to the door. They asked for my father and when I told them that I didn’t know where he was, they searched the flat, looking under beds and into wardrobes. They then asked me many questions about my family.

Each time they came, I would shake with fear, although I would hide it as best I could. After they would leave, the only thing that calmed my terror was to go into my father’s study and begin sketching. Art was my passion then, as it is today and I remember during that traumatic period doing many sketches of my left hand in various positions. The hand is not easy to capture on paper and the concentration it took helped the fear to subside and my courage to return a little.

One time, the Gestapo men saw the Blue Box and asked what it was. I was too afraid to lie and I said that we put money in it for Israel. One of them sneered, “Why don’t you all go to Israel?” If only we had! For a number of years, I felt that we were like flies caught in a spider-web, but my parents could not see it at all.

The men in black asked again and again, each time more violently, “Where are your parents?” I replied as I always did that I didn’t know, that they had gone out, but I didn’t know where. My interrogators finally lost all patience with me. One of them said, “You cheeky brat! You tell your father to stay at home or we’ll take you in his place!” I became very agitated. I had no way of knowing whether this was a mere threat of more stringent punishment of Jews.

The next day they came in the afternoon. When they had gone through the whole charade again, they made me ring my aunt to find if my parents were there. When she answered the phone I said, “Aunt Liese, I am so worried. Do you know where my parents are? I haven’t seen them for some days.” She answered, surprised, “They are right here drinking coffee. You know they are with me.” The

Gestapo men were only three feet away, and watching me closely. “Auntie,” I said, “Is there any way you can find them for me? I need to talk to them urgently.” I hung up. “She says she’ll ring around and try to find them for me,” I said. “Maybe by tomorrow I will be able to tell you where they are.”

The Gestapo men left and I knew that it would be impossible to face them again. I left the flat, informing the maid that I was going to look for my parents. The Underground was close to our home and I took it to my aunt’s place. In a short time, to my great relief, I was reunited with my parents and Hans. When I told them what had been happening, they had to consider what to do next.

My father decided to trust that his reputation would protect him and to risk revealing his whereabouts. After all, he was highly regarded in his field and had warm relationships with many gentiles. He was a respected high school teacher, an examiner and a district head of teacher training. So a few days later, he went to the Charlottenburg Police Station, where he was questioned. The Police were quite civil to him and told him to go home and lock his door.

Four weeks later, he died from bronchial pneumonia and peritonitis. He had been sick since that fateful *Krystallnacht* when he had walked the freezing streets with my brother. His fear for our future had also worn him down. He was buried in the Berlin Jewish Cemetery, in Weisensee.

My brother Hans left in April 1939 for England with the Children’s Transport. One of my father’s colleagues was in charge of the list and he made sure that Hans was included. The reason he gave was that Hans was the only male left to carry the family name. After that, Mother sold most of our furniture and we moved into two rooms to live more cheaply.

Two years ago, nearly fifty years later, I visited the grave of my father. The pain that I could not express adequately when he died I had to feel in all its devastating strength this time. My mother has no grave that I can visit. Through a number of fortuitous events, I reached Melbourne at the onset of the war. Although we tried in every way possible to get her an entry visa, neither Hans nor I could get the authorities if England or Australia to accept our mother. It is a matter of continuing anguish for me that she was left to fend for herself and that we could not save her. . . .

Cecilie Margerethe Freund, aged 52, was taken from 31 Wielandstrasse on 14 April 1942, first to the Warsaw Ghetto and then to the gas chambers of the Trawnicky Concentration Camp soon after.

STEVE ROTSCCHILD-GALERKIN

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Steve Rotschild-Galerkin. *Traces of What Was*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 60–64. Used by permission.

A child in Vilna (Vilnius), Lithuania, Steve Rotschild was born in 1933. While it was difficult enough for his family to hold body and soul together during the war years, by the summer of 1944 it seemed as though all options for keeping the Nazis at bay were exhausted. As a result, the decision was made to go into hiding and await liberation from the advancing Russians. Walking the highways and byways of Poland in the hope of finding the forest presented a number of problems, as outlined in this memoir. Eventually encountering some Russian soldiers, Steve and his mother were advised to wait before they could emerge into the light of day; their liberators were combat troops, and there was as yet no guarantee that German forces in the area had been vanquished.

It was a hot sunny day in the middle of July 1944. Two women carrying bundles and leading three small children didn’t raise any suspicion. We were walking to the *kominy*, which means chimneys in Polish, a neighbourhood about five kilometers away, on the other side of town where Fruma and her family had a big house and business. It was too dangerous to walk on the main road because too many people knew her there, so we had to take a longer, roundabout way.

She led us off the road into some woods not far from her house, then up a hill where among the tall pines we found a trench dug most likely by some soldiers as some kind of defensive position. There was no one in the woods, so Fruma told us to climb into the trench and wait for her. She herself would go to see some of her neighbours whom she could trust.

It was pleasant on the hill among the pines and even though it was a hot afternoon, the air was dry and breezy and I soon fell asleep in the shade of the trench. I woke up when I heard Fruma’s voice. She had returned with a few boiled potatoes tied up in a kerchief and a jar of milk. Fruma was a few years older than my mother, of average height with light brown hair tied in a bun and a fine, light complexion with rosy cheeks. She was very energetic, always busy doing something, and stood for no notice from anybody. She told Mother that there wasn’t anywhere to hide out here but she had a plan. We would walk to Charnobur, a village about fifteen kilometers away where Fruma was born and grew up, and where she had a good friend who might be able to help.

By now it was evening, too late to start out and the women decided that we should spend the night in the woods and start out early in the morning. As the sun set and night fell we settled down in the trench and I was soon fast asleep. Suddenly, I was awoken by a blinding white light that shone through my eyelids. I saw above us something that looked like a bright star with rays radiating from it, descending slowly. I heard the drone of airplanes, the shrieking whistle of a falling bomb and finally, an explosion that shook the earth. Then more earthshaking explosions preceded by the nerve-wracking shriek of the bomb and flares in the sky, turning night into a strange bluish-white daylight. Even at the bottom of the trench we were completely exposed, everyone's face a contrast of white planes and black shadows.

Mother was holding my little brother in her arms, Miriam was clinging to Fruma and I was sitting with my back against the wall of the trench, looking up at the sky. I wasn't afraid. These were Soviet planes, piloted by Russians; they were bombing the Germans and I was totally confident we wouldn't be harmed by these liberators in the sky. I remember feeling grateful that someone was finally coming to rescue us. Fruma said there was a munitions factory not far from where we were and that the Soviets were trying to bomb it. Eventually the last of the flares burnt out, the bombs fell further and further away and soon it was dark and quiet again and I fell asleep once more.

The next time I awoke it was with a feeling of dread. I heard a man's voice speaking in German and opened my eyes to see a German soldier standing above us on the edge of the trench, holding a rifle. We all looked up at him and didn't move. Assuming that we didn't understand what he was saying, he spoke in broken Polish, "Go home, bomb finished." Then he disappeared.

I looked out over the lip of the trench. Although the sky was a pale blue, the sun was not yet up and a low-lying mist in the trees was making everything look grey. There was no sign of the soldier who had taken us for Poles.

We left the trench and descended slowly from the hill. At the bottom, the woods ended at a dirt road. With Fruma leading, we crossed the road and went down into a field of tall grass sprinkled with purple, yellow and blue flowers. The air was fresh and cool and we were walking down a narrow path running straight east toward the sun. The long grass, wet with dew, bent toward the middle of the path and brushed my bare legs with a pleasant coolness. The scent of grass and flowers was strong and I felt good, almost happy, and all at once I got the urge to run.

I ran past Fruma and Miriam. I ran down the path through the wet grass, scaring some birds that flew away, twittering in panic, and as I ran faster I felt so light that I imagined I could fly away, just like those birds. When I reached a small rise in the field I stopped and looked back, picked a handful of stems and began to chew, extracting a sweetish milk liquid from the thick stems while waiting for the others to catch up.

Finally, we came to a major road, the one that would take us to the village of Charnobur, but after walking some distance, we encountered too many people, horse-drawn wagons and a truck full of German soldiers. Fruma led us back into the woods and we continued walking down a path that ran alongside the road. But even here we met people going the other way and it felt as though our luck was about to run out.

It must have been close to noon, for the air in the forest was hot, even in the shade. We weren't far from the village when a man walking toward us blocked our path. He was short and wiry, in his forties, wearing a dark suit and hat and his small face was tinted grey, with the stubble of hair of several days. In his clenched fists he carried a sturdy staff, with which he now blocked the way.

"I know who you are," he said. "You are Jews."

He had recognized Fruma. The women pleaded with him to let us go, but he wouldn't budge. Mother took my father's gold watch from her wrist and gave it to him. As she handed him the watch, his gaze fell on the two wedding rings on her fingers. She removed them quickly, and he took them also. Then Fruma removed her wedding ring and gave it to him as well. All the while, Mother and Fruma were begging him to let us go.

Through the trees we could see a convoy of German soldiers going toward Vilna, mostly retreating from the Russian front. The man, holding his staff like a weapon, ordered us to stay there and walked quickly to the road, stopping one of the trucks in the convoy, all the while pointing at us.

I thought for sure that this was the end and was getting ready to run into the forest, but then the German, whose arm was hanging out the open window of the truck, gave a dismissive wave with his hand and the truck took off, leaving the man standing in a cloud of dust. Not waiting another moment, we took off at a fast pace toward Charnobur, glancing back to see if the man would come after us. Fortunately we never saw him again.

Fruma's friend lived on an isolated farm that bordered one side of the forest near the village. There was a small house where the family lived and a large barn that stood some distance away on the fields between the house and the

woods. It was in that barn, up in the loft where the hay and straw were kept, that Fruma's friend let us hide.

We stayed up there several days, maybe a week, without incident. Fruma's friend would come to the barn, usually at dawn, and bring some bread, potatoes, water and sometimes milk. There was nothing to do but look out at the fields and the woods through the cracks in the boards of the wall, but I saw no one, not even an animal. I don't know if we were there for three, four or ten days, as each day was exactly the same as the one before.

One morning as I lay on the hay, half-awake, waiting for the sound of the farmer's wife bringing food, I heard something from the direction of the woods. I quickly put my eye to a small hole in the edge of the board and looked out. Coming from the forest were several soldiers holding long rifles or machine guns, walking slowly toward the barn. A shiver went down my spine, my scalp tingled as the blood rushed to my head. Then I felt a surge of relief as if a threatening cloud had dissipated, letting the sun shine again. In the sharp, clear light of the early morning I had no doubt at all—these men were our liberators, the soldiers of the Red Army.

I told Mother and Fruma and then scrambled down the ladder and ran out the barn door. Mother and the others followed behind me. The soldiers stopped and waited for us to approach. The one in front, who must have been an officer, wore a round peaked hat with the red star on it and was holding a submachine gun with a round magazine attached, like the ones you see in the gangster films of the thirties. He was dressed the same as the others, in faded khaki shirts and pants tucked into dusty leather boots. The soldiers behind him wore long caps without the peaks, the red star on the front, and they were armed with rifles. As a group they did not look intimidating; they were smaller than the German soldiers we had seen the week before.

I was the first to speak. I said in Russian, "We are Jews." Mother, who was now beside me, also spoke in Russian, telling them we were hiding in the barn from the Germans. The reaction from the officer was not what I had expected. As far as I knew, most, if not all, the Jews of Vilna had been killed. I didn't imagine that anyone else from our camp had survived, so I expected that we would be taken to a safe place and treated as celebrities. Instead, the officer looked around before saying anything, as if he expected to see something beyond the barn and house. He told us that there were still Germans around and that we had better stay hidden another day or two. The Russians continued past the barn and past the house toward the village. Reluctantly, we went back to the barn and stayed there overnight.

KAZIMIERZ SAKOWICZ

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Kazimierz Sakowicz. *Ponary Diary, 1941–1943: A Bystander's Account of a Mass Murder*. New Haven: Yale University Press, © 2005, pp. 70–78. Used by permission of Yale University Press.

The Ponary Forest was the primary murder site of the Jews of Vilna and the region surrounding it. The forest was situated just a few miles south of Vilna (modern-day Vilnius, Lithuania), on the road to Grodno. It was well known before the war as a recreation area used for vacations and weekends away. From June 1941 until July 1944 at least 70,000 Jews were murdered at Ponary, together with Soviet prisoners of war and local residents who resisted the Nazis. In this extraordinary account, an eyewitness to the massacres, Kazimierz Sakowicz, relates his own observations of one of the massacres in an astonishing contribution to the memory of the Holocaust.

At last it [the train] arrived from Wilno and did not pass the house. So it remained in Ponary, because the sounds of the train's maneuvering could be heard. The policemen start a bonfire. Quiet! After midnight they go to sleep.

I wake up very early; quiet, already light. It is 5:20 in the morning. At about 6 the Gestapo arrive by vehicle. They open four freight cars and order the Jews to get out, but they don't move. Earlier, they were surrounded by a thick fence of Lithuanians and Gestapo. There are approximately 5–6 people in a row. They move.

The Jews are nervous, but they go. But when they came through the gate with the barbed wire and caught a glimpse from afar of the pits they understand what awaits them. The younger ones, even women, rushed to escape. A volley is fired. Five Jews [run] in the direction of the track—come up against the barbed wire; a German is after them and a few policemen heavy fire; 3 fall, and 2 get through a hole in the wire; but one immediately falls, hit before he even crossed the tracks. The second crossed the tracks to the forest facing me, but he began to limp and fell near a tree.

The rest of the Jews, mainly children and women, moved on. Facing the first pit a part of the procession is halted. A part—half of them—went on. When they reached the place where there is a thick forest, some courageous ones from this group again escaped.

The first group in front of the first pit is ordered to undress. Weeping, groaning, pleading, falling to the feet of the Lithuanians and Germans, who kick them and shoot the

most importunate. But after they have been beaten, they undress about ten metres from the pit.

Those who have poor clothing do not undress. They are driven to the pits and the Lithuanians began to shoot from the side. Then a man, already half undressed, at a German's order, dragged a woman to the pit, evidently fainted or dead of a heart attack. When the woman was thrown into the pit, the man who threw her turned around. The Lithuanians shot him in the head from a short distance; the way in which the skull burst into pieces could be easily seen, and the person, cut down, fell. At the same time the rest are being beaten. Already 5 people, a woman and three little girls, have been placed at the end of the pit with their legs inside it; from the back a Lithuanian with a revolver shoots, and all of them disappear in the pit. Again a few dozen people are beaten with rifle butts and quickly driven to the bottom, to the pit. From the edges of the pit the Lithuanians shoot at them.

At that moment further shooting begins—as can be seen, the second half of the group is also being shot. On the edge of the pits, 7–8 men and women are positioned. From the back a revolver is placed practically at their heads, and a Lithuanian shoots. One after the other falls, cut down into the pit. At the same time, some of the Lithuanians, [after] the liquidation of the majority of the first group, march back to the train for more victims. At last 3 men in their underwear remain in front of the pit along with clothing scattered about the sand. A policeman, taking advantage of the inattention of the Germans, kicks some clothing into the bushes. The German issues an order and three Jews quickly run toward the clothing, from which we see that they drag out (it can be clearly seen) a woman. This maneuver is repeated twice. At last they themselves jump into the pit. Three shots are fired. The end.

No, not the end. The Lithuanians throw the clothing onto a pile; suddenly one of the Lithuanians pulls a child from under the clothing and throws him into the pit; again a child, and again another. In the same way—to the pit. One of the Lithuanians stands over the pit and shoots at these children, as we can see.

What is this? The desperate mothers thought that in this way “they had saved” the lives of the children, hiding them under the clothing. Evidently they expected that when the clothing was collected the children hidden in that way might be saved. Unfortunately.

A few minutes' break and then comes a new group, which had been lying eighty to a hundred meters from the pit near the barracks, faces to the ground. And that group is divided

in half. Again the torment begins: they must undress; weeping, moaning, pleading. A woman shows the Lithuanians a child, evidently an infant; one grabs the woman and pushes her into the pit with the child.

At last a large group of men and women, not undressed and thus in miserable clothes, is driven to the pit. Shooting begins from above. At last 7 women in their underwear are positioned above the pit and shots are fired. Again from the other side of the pit 10 men and women are positioned above the pit and shots are fired. On the square 4 men remain in their underwear. They [the murderers] order them to place their clothing on the pile.

Again, a child. A Lithuanian directs them to throw him into the pit. The Jew picks him up and rushes with the child into the forest. They run after him; shots are fired. The Jew disappears into the thicket; shots can still be heard. Shortly afterward the Lithuanians return. Did he escape? One of the Lithuanians says something to the remaining three men—Jews accompanied by two policemen go into the forest. At this time the third group appears, preceded by furious shooting; the same starts again; undressing. A woman (it can be clearly seen) spits into the face of a German; at the same time a Lithuanian beats her with a rifle butt; the woman falls. On order of the German two Jews pull her into the pit. The shots do not hit her.

At this time Jews, accompanied by three policemen, come out of the forest; two are carrying a Jew, the third a child. Together they go to the pit. Three shots are fired. Shortly afterward, 40–50 people rush to the pit, driven by rifle butts. Again shooting from above into the pit. Again the same.

A man resists, shouts something, points to the children. A shot is fired—the man falls. A woman gets up, goes alone and crouches on the edge of the pit. She is followed by a teen-aged girl in a red sweater shouting “Mama” who crouches next to her. A German then indicates 4 people and from behind shoots each in the back of the skull from a distance of two to three meters.

Again they drive a few dozen people to the pit, holding back 4 men in their underwear. The Lithuanians standing over the pit start shooting. The end. A German gives an order and the 4 remaining run to the pit. No shots are fired. The German standing over the pit gesticulates, says something to the 4 in the pit. He lights a pipe, looks about, again shouts something toward the pit. Evidently those in the pit are busy with something. Maybe they are stacking the murdered bodies, leveling them, making piles? At last the German gives the Lithuanians the sign and four shots are fired.

A new group, the fourth, and the same, more or less in the same order, to another seven groups; all together eleven groups. At about 11 o'clock everything quiets down. Would that be all? Not at all. Because the train remains empty and a locomotive arrives to haul it away.

All the property of the murdered was off-loaded from the [train] wagons earlier and put on the ground. It made an enormous mountain of things—food, pillows, mattresses, baby carriages, baskets, suitcases, kitchen equipment, sacks with potatoes, of which there were the most, loaves of bread, clothes — all the stuff mixed together.

It seems that from 7 o'clock until 11 o'clock, forty-nine freight cars [of Jews] were shot; this was the composition of the first freight train.

And so in less than four hours, about 2,500 people were murdered—actually, even more. Very few escaped, some 50 people. The fact that such a small proportion were saved can be explained mainly because only individuals escaped. For example, when a group of 200–250 of the condemned are being led [to the pits], only 4–5 would suddenly start running to escape. However 50–60 Lithuanians would go after them, creating a commotion. As a result, the escapees are shot without any great difficulty, particularly because practically all commit the same error; they run through open ground, which is not forested. Nervous (evidently), this causes them to lose their *smekalka* [quick wits] to begin the escape attempt when the procession nears the forest.

It is not yet the end.

A new train arrives with victims.

Apparently the new arrivals immediately understood which “Kovno” they had been taken to, and what awaited them shortly. Consequently they changed their escape tactics, which generally yielded better results than with the first train.

When the railroad cars were opened and the condemned pushed out onto the tracks in front of the cars and arranged into groups, they immediately (practically all) rushed to escape in different directions. The majority escapes across the tracks in the direction of the road, etc. The Lithuanians shoot. One of the policemen falls, struck by a bullet, and they take him away. It turns out that another policeman aimed at a Jew and hit his colleague who got in the way. A Jewish woman in a beet-red sweater escapes, followed by a little girl. The woman got past the dangerous open place in front of the station and turned onto the little street. At that moment a shout was heard behind her and then the shout of

the child, “Mama, Mama.” She turns around and ran back, practically tripping on a policeman. A shot is fired—she falls dead.

The majority ran in the direction of Nowosiolki. The largest number of dead lay there on the streets, but there too the greatest number escaped. From that group, barely a few dozen people crossed beyond the wire [of the base], mainly women and the elderly. They are executed in front of the pit; a woman in a long, dark coat crying something, shouts in the direction of the German. A Lithuanian shoots from two to three meters behind her, and the woman falls.

The rest run away slowly and heavily. And a few Lithuanians charge them and beat them on their heads with clubs. Some of them jump to escape into the pit, blindly, like madmen. Numerous shots are fired; a woman, smeared with blood, in her underwear, creeps out of the pit with a dreadful shriek; a Lithuanian stabs her with a bayonet. She falls and a second one finishes her off with gunfire from nearby.

The rest are driven to the pit and placed in front of the pit; about 15–20 people.

I see children in their underwear; shots are fired. From the gate a new group, perhaps 400 people, appears, quite closely surrounded. Apparently the Lithuanians, learning from the escape of the first group, are guarding the second one carefully. All lie down in front of the pit with their faces to the ground. They count off several dozen people and lead them to the pit. They are saying something. At last one of the Lithuanians says something to the condemned, who begin to undress. A woman with a child in her arms and with 2 small girls hanging onto her dress: a Lithuanian begins to beat them mercilessly with a club. A Jew without a jacket throws himself on the Lithuanian to defend the woman being beaten. A shot is fired—he falls, practically at the feet of his Jewess. A second Lithuanian seizes the Jewish woman's child and throws him into the pit; the Jewish woman, like a madwoman, runs to the pit, followed by her 2 little girls. Three shots are fired.

Oh horror! That group—women, men and children—all are stripped naked. By themselves they obediently run to the pit—shots are fired.

Again, those who lie down are divided into two groups. They drive them [toward the pits]. The shouts of the Lithuanians—“Faster, faster”—are heard. They crowd around in front of the pits and are again stripped naked. Five Jewish women with children in their arms are sitting on the edge of the pit; a blonde in gray underwear; her hand shields the little heads of the children. Shots are fired. Three Jews are shot; from the place where the people are undressed they are

dragging a woman to the pit. Evidently she died suddenly. They return, carrying a woman by the arms and legs, then a man, then they return. A Lithuanian orders them to lie face down.

The rest of the groups get up; two women do not get up and lie there. A Lithuanian kicks them in the legs. Nothing. Other Jews carry them. All are stripped naked. They shoot. Three Jews stand up, tidy up the place, and then they themselves die. Among the clothing the Lithuanians find 2 children—to the pit.

KITTY SANDY

Context: Central Europe

Source: Kitty Sandy. *Stormy Weather: A Life's Journey from Budapest to Melbourne*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2006, pp. 18–25. Used by permission.

Kitty Sandy's observations of the German invasion of Hungary on March 19, 1944 furnishes readers with an admirable set of images that provide a measure of appreciation for how unexpected the event was for those who lived through it. In giving a little of her backstory, she then recounts some of the early measures instituted by the Nazis against the Jews—measures that were introduced within weeks of the takeover. Kitty's story is a summary of the horrible year of 1944 in Budapest, though the current testimony ends prior to the Soviet siege of the city and subsequent liberation of the Jews from Nazi (and Hungarian fascist) rule.

Sunday, 19 March 1944 was a windy, cool day. I was walking along Andrassy Út, that lovely boulevard in the middle of the city. The police were directing traffic as usual and the birds were consuming breakfast at their favourite cafes along the boulevard. I was going to a jazz concert for teenagers. The band had just started playing *Stormy Weather* when a man rushed on stage and whispered something into the ear of the conductor and rushed out. The conductor turned around to face the audience and announced that the Nazi army had occupied our country. He put down his baton and walked out. I always remember this scene when I hear *Stormy Weather*.

Going out into the street the picture that greeted me was frightening—tanks and more tanks. Apparently eleven German divisions rolled into Hungary on that day. It was all very orderly, there was no resistance.

I was attending school at this stage, where we learnt shorthand, typing, bookkeeping and related subjects. It was the only school that would accept me with my Jewish background. In Hungary *numerus clausus* and later *numerus nullus* meant that Jews were blocked from higher education. After completing eight years of schooling it was time for me to move on.

My application to the secretarial school was knocked back with the excuse that only two Jewish girls were allowed in that class for the year 1943/1944 and I missed out. My grandfather could not come to terms with this and was extremely upset. He decided to meet the schoolmaster personally and try again. We got in to see the schoolmaster and my grey-haired, well-known architect grandfather knelt down in front of him and begged him to enroll me in class. The schoolmaster took pity on him and I was enrolled. The incident left me devastated.

The humiliation my grandfather had to suffer on account of me was a terrible blow. He was a great man, respected by everyone and well known all over Budapest for his architectural designs. One of the buildings he designed with his partner was the Budapest Orthodox synagogue, for which they adopted motifs from early Zionist architecture, known as the Bezael style. This famous building still stands in Budapest and carries a plaque bearing my grandfather's name.

Another indelible incident took place near the apartment building where we lived. On the first floor resided a couple with a young army officer son, who was in the medical corps. One day in the summer of 1944 I met him on the staircase. We walked out into the street together, when one of the residents in our building came by. He called out in a loud voice, to be heard by all and sundry: "Shame on you, officer, walking with a Jewish girl." Of course Hitler had decided we were all *untermensch*.

In 1942 or so, a young man from Slovakia rented a room in my grandparents' flat. He was a Jewish refugee who had run away from his German-occupied country. About 55,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz from Slovakia. His nightmarish stories sounded almost unreal and the people of Hungary certainly did not believe the same thing could happen to them. But of course it did. Soon after the Nazis occupied Hungary in 1944, posters appeared daily on the streets of Budapest. The Jewish people realized they would be annihilated and by then it was too late to think of fleeing the country.

Prior to my stint at the secretarial school (called commercial school in Hungary), I attended a private school

maintained from Scotland. It was a Protestant school, where discrimination against other religions was not known and we studied the Bible every morning. My thinking was no different to that of my schoolmates. I was a Hungarian and that was that. But the incident with the schoolmaster made me realise that I was deemed different.

By 5 April 1944, we had to sew the yellow star onto our clothing. It had to be visible at all times. This was one of the early atrocities forced upon us after the Nazi occupation. Others followed. The Gestapo also got rid of anyone suspected of being anti-German. Non-Jewish people were not allowed to be employed in Jewish households, and we had to say goodbye to Margit, our maid. Travelling by public transport was not allowed. Telephones were taken away. Jews had to register all property and valuables. By 16 June, yellow-star houses came into being.

All Jewish publications were stopped.

One of the apartment blocks in the middle of Budapest became the headquarters of the Gestapo. Here interrogations, tortures and murders were the order of the day. As it happens, this same building was occupied in the 1950s by the ÁVO, the feared secret police of the Communist regime.

Early in April the bombing of Budapest began.

Frequent air raids resulted in students being sent home from school and the citizens of Budapest began to spend more time in the cellars and air raid shelters. The dreaded posters signaled more and more atrocities against the Jews. In the country, deportations began and in the capital city, Jews had to hand in jewellery, radios and valuables. My stepfather, who was Jewish, was called up for labour camp. He was first stationed in Budapest, but soon he was taken out of the country.

We were still in the apartment where we had lived for so many years and were constantly spied upon by the caretaker, who had to have been a citizen trusted by the Arrow Cross (the Hungarian Nazis). We tried to listen to the BBC news on our hidden radio, but this was a very dangerous exercise. If discovered we could have been shot. The caretaker's duty was to report anything suspicious. To hear some "real" news we had to listen to the BBC under the doona.

The ghetto was being established and the next step would have been moving into it. From the ghetto people were taken to concentration camps.

At this stage a poster appeared instructing women between the ages of eighteen and sixty to report to the grounds of the brick factory. My mother and her only sister had to go. I don't think I will ever forget that day. My dear old grandmother, whose life revolved around her two daughters,

was completely devastated. She was sure she would never see them again. Lying on a couch, she would not eat or drink anything all day long. I sat with her. I felt cold, lost, and everything seemed hopeless. But then a miracle occurred. My mother and aunt walked in the door late at night. For some reason I no longer recall, a number of women were sent home to reappear the next day.

This was the defining moment when we had to save our skins.

My mother's male cousin, Géza, was married to an Aryan. He worked with the Resistance and during the night manufactured false identification papers for the whole family, including my grandparents. Early in the morning we left everything behind and moved to various places on the other side of Budapest.

After 15 October 1944, the Arrow Cross leader Szálasi decided the easiest way to get rid of the remaining Jews was to march them to the riverbank and shoot them into the river. This was the fate of many Jews. By this time all Jews living in country towns were deported to various concentration camps.

A few weeks after living under false names, I was walking to the shops when I was stopped by two uniformed Arrow Cross soldiers asking for identification papers. I handed them my papers, which of course were fake. One of them scrutinized the documents for a few minutes. This seemed like an eternity to me. Finally he handed them back to me and allowed me to go. I was paralysed with fear. My only solace was the fact that I did not look suspicious and did not show my fear.

Soon winter set in and food was becoming scarce. One day early in December when I woke up feeling hungry and cold, I remembered when we celebrated this day known as Children's Day. We had to put our shoes in the window the night before and St Nicholas was supposed to fill them with chocolate if we behaved during the year. If we misbehaved, instead of presents we received a bundle of twigs, to smack our bottoms.

We were always a bit afraid when we woke in the morning and tiptoed to the window to see what St Nicholas (called *Mikulás* in Hungarian) had left for us. Now the only thing I felt was tremendous fear for what the future will bring.

My mother and I lived in a rented flat, but not as mother and daughter. We were "distant relatives," refugees from a small country town. I had to be very careful not to call her Mother. It was not an easy task, but I managed quite well until one night when we were in the air raid shelter during a heavy bombing raid, I called out: "Mother!"

A young Arrow Cross officer who lived in the next apartment from us heard it all. He was rather interested in flirting with me and I did my best to avoid him. I was frightened of him. His revenge came unexpectedly. “That Jewish whore, I had a feeling she was a fake,” he yelled. “I am going to shoot her.” He grabbed his revolver. The smell of alcohol was overpowering as he came closer in the dark, brandishing his gun. Because he was rather wobbly on his feet he decided to deal with the matter in the morning. Before daylight I crawled out of the shelter with just a small bag containing some bare necessities and took off for the other side of Budapest.

The only other place to go was where my grandparents, aunt and uncle were staying, in another rented flat in Buda.

The trip to Buda from Pest was daunting. By then almost all the bridges had been blown up by the Germans and I had great difficulty getting to the other side of the Danube. There were dead bodies and dead horses lying on the streets. I also passed some wounded civilians and soldiers.

When I finally arrived I certainly was not welcome. The four of them were hiding, equipped with false identification papers. Anything unusual would have rendered them suspicious. When I explained my situation there was no choice but to allow me to stay. By this time they were living in the cellar, due to heavy bombing day and night.

All the shops were closed and there was nothing to buy. As we were surrounded by the Russians, no supplies came in from the country. There was only dried potato skin, which we cooked in water, and black coffee. I had a packet of dry biscuits my mother packed for me before I left.

On my second day I noticed some activity in the courtyard. As we no longer had any air raid warnings (they did not function any more) we ventured out of the cellar when the sky looked clear.

During this “Safe” Period the German soldiers stationed on some of the flats were preparing to shoot one of the horses. They had nothing to eat either, nor did they have any food for their skinny horse. I stayed around, secretly hoping for some donation. As I was a rather nice-looking girl, the soldiers noticed me and started to talk to me. I explained to them that I was very hungry and would love a piece of that horseflesh.

Ever since my childhood I had loved dogs and horses. I cannot describe the sick feeling in my stomach when I witnessed the shooting of the horse. I had to close my eyes not to see the poor skinny horse falling to the ground. One of the soldiers handed me a piece of horseflesh, still warm, wrapped up in newspaper. I ran to the cellar, triumphantly clutching

this treasure. Grandmother cooked it and we had two meals out of it.

The soldier who gave me this “treasure” was called Franz. He was seventeen years of age. I don’t know if he knew what he was fighting for. I did not like to think what he would have done to me if he knew my background. He gave me most of his rations every day. It consisted of some biscuits, chocolates and coffee. These rations arrived in containers dropped from aeroplanes. More often than not they finished up on the Russian-occupied side of the Buda hills. Franz introduced me to the others. There were some officers amongst them. Luckily they did not wear the fearful SS uniform, as they were attached to the Wehrmacht forces. One evening he called me to listen to the guitar music they were playing. The song was *Papa Lehmann, Papa Meyer, Papa ich*, meaning that three soldiers had fathered the same baby. The other song was *Sehnsucht hab ich immer nur dir gehabt*, which translates as: I was always yearning for you.

I have never forgotten these two songs.

He gave me my first cigarette. I was terribly hungry and the awful taste of that cigarette took my appetite away. I kept dreaming of a piece of chocolate cake and every time, just as I was going to take a bite, I woke up. Every bit of food Franz gave me I passed over to my astonished grandmother, not letting on where it came from, just inventing some stories.

ILONA ELEFÁNT SCHWARCZ

Context: Salvation

Source: Ilona Elefánt Schwarcz with Eta Elefánt Hubscher (edited by Marianne M. Meyer and Maryann McLoughlin). *Leaves Swept by a Cruel Wind: The Holocaust Journals of Ilona Elefánt Schwarcz*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2013, pp. 1–15. Used by permission.

When Germany brought the Holocaust to Hungary after March 1944, one of the more immediate of many tasks required was the registration and concentration of the country’s Jews. Registration was a relatively simple process, as earlier Hungarian antisemitic measures had to a large extent already completed that task. Concentration prior to deportation was more difficult, as there were in Hungary neither ghettos nor concentration camps in the German sense. Consequently, improvisation had to take place—in factories, quarries, and (remembered most frequently by survivors) brickworks. In

this memoir, Ilona Elefánt Schwarcz writes of her experiences having survived such incarceration. She reflects from the relative security of the Feldafing Displaced Persons camp in Bavaria, and offers a compelling set of recollections and contemplation that have both a therapeutic and remembering function for her.

May 27, 1945

Feldafing am See, at a Displaced Persons (DP) Camp

After a long, long sorrow-filled year, I can once again take paper and pen in hand. How should I begin? In other words, how should I continue my interrupted journal?

My G-d, with a grateful heart I turn to You. You gave me, this tiny speck of dust, strength to survive this horrid storm. I prayed to You with a burning heart and You helped me. I thank You again, Lord, and on my knees I beg you—if You helped me withstand this trauma till now, please don't abandon me in the difficult days ahead. Give me stamina so that I can stand my ground and carry out my responsibilities. *Return my dear husband; my poor, tortured, old mother; and my dear young brother—who only together can mean life for me.*

About Mother, I dare not even think; I'm afraid. Please G-d! Allow me to know gladness once more, for life is so short; it's over before we realize.

Only two of us from a large family are left—my sister and I. The circumstances here are tolerable; we now have decent living quarters and enough food, and most importantly, we are able to keep ourselves clean.

It happened so suddenly that it is still hard to believe that we are really free again. Tomorrow the second homeward transport departs. Supposedly the truck will stop at another station, Marienbad or Carlsbad, to drop off the Czechs, where they will spend a few weeks. This stopover will mitigate the anxiety for those soul-searching people who can only think with much trepidation of what they will find at home.

Unfortunately, many of the young women were unable to cope, and very few can emerge with a clear conscience from the cursed Hitler mire. Thank G-d, our room could be considered one of the best, in that, sad as it sounds, the women with us have been able to maintain their decency longer than the others. Very few of the women have maintained their morals. Even among the more mature, married women and mothers, there were many who succumbed to their most base instincts. The concentration camp destroyed good taste, good upbringing, and extinguished the torch of purity

and sacred love. What remains is only the flickering flame of profane love.

June 2, 1945

Feldafing DP Camp

I will attempt, from memory, to record the horrors of those sad days. It won't be easy—not that they otherwise wouldn't remain vividly in my mind, but because I don't think I have the skill to relate my feelings in writing. It would require greater intelligence and more knowledge than I possess. One would have to be a professional writer to be able to accurately describe those painful hours, days, weeks, and months that followed the days we were forcibly taken from our homes.

My last lines were written only a few hours before we were driven out of our home, ready to leave, to where only G-d knew. I know now, in retrospect, after a year filled with pain and humiliation, “to where”: into destruction, extermination, extinction, and into an infectious quagmire of bodies and souls; into the torture, suffering, want and hunger, filth, beastliness and more. I search for stronger words, but cannot find them. All I ask is how could a human mind cause so many tears, bloodshed, mass graves and all the horrors of Hell, and in all this bury millions of innocent lives? Was he human, or was he the devil? It cannot be that the human brain is capable of such a plot! Only in the very depths of Gehenna could such satanic schemes be born.

A large nation became so decadent and simultaneously brought about their own destruction, and now the Germans are begging us for bread?

They can come and go only with a passport. The Americans constantly check the Germans' activities. Their faces reflect doubts and fears. When they are reminded of our plight, they quickly and easily absolve themselves by claiming they knew nothing and it was not their fault. The Auschwitz-Birkenau crematorium was supposedly unknown to them, and now they listen with pale, stone faces—“*Gott mein Gott*. G-d, my G-d!” They said they knew nothing of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Buchenwald, Gross-Rosen, Bergen-Belsen, Theresienstadt, Mühldorf and many other camps where tens of thousands of us, mostly the men, fell like flies last winter alone. Only what I myself saw on the day of arrival to Mühldorf, and during our stay there, is in itself enough for a lifetime of gnawing memories. However, what I saw, compared to what I have heard from others, is a pleasant dream.

Mühldorf is a small camp, and in this place alone, more than 2,000 people died by artificially induced “natural” death

[injected with fatal diseases]. Even now the thought of it, the look in their eyes, and their wretched condition makes me break out in a feverish sweat.

June 3, 1945

Feldafing DP Camp

Today is a beautiful day! The Starnberger See sparkles in the sunshine. It seems almost impossible that the story I am writing is true.

Nature—G-d's free world—is so magnificent. The sun's rays beam equally and indiscriminately on everyone, and yet the whole world is like a jungle—a jungle of human beasts. The vigilant tigers and leopards among the undergrowth could well take lessons in savagery from civilized man—the twentieth century “modern and cultured” man.

Even here where I'm surrounded by this glowing array of flowers, my heart aches unspeakably. Why can't I fly? Why am I bound to the earth? Why can only my soul grow wings, while my body is shackled helplessly? Why can't I search for my dear ones? I'm afraid of the future; what will I find? What will happen? Was it worthwhile surviving this Calvary where I still walk?

June 4, 1945

Fledafing DP Camp

I shall try to organize my thoughts. I am afraid that I'm overestimating my weak talent in undertaking the writing of these journals. Nevertheless, I will try.

The dates are not exact; I cannot remember them precisely. Only some of the dates are carved into my soul indelibly for eternity: MAY 20, 1944.

On that day we were driven out of our dear home and crammed into a ghetto—medieval times in the middle of the twentieth century—or can it be that the scientists erred and confused the order of the ages. People in the Middle Ages would have been astounded to witness modern-day man outdoing their barbarism. Not even in ancient times did such savagery occur where the victims numbered 6,000,000 Jews as well as [5,000,000] non-Jews. Such mentally unbalanced thugs, sadists, insane assassins could destroy countries, even an entire continent. That despicable mob of worthless trash would do anything for blood money and gold. They [the SS] used very selective methods of torture to destroy millions of innocent people, including infants and children. They plunged world Jewry into the depths of mourning, since none of us in any

country escaped the horrors without losing someone beloved and dear to us.

Remembering May 20, 1944, Miskolc Ghetto

There were thousands upon thousands who were stripped naked in mid-winter for the “selection process,” after which groups of about 120 men were locked into cattle cars and dispatched to a destination unknown to them at that time. The journey lasted five to six days. Upon arrival, all the SS henchmen had to do was bury most of them. The Gestapo was spared any effort; their work was done by frost and starvation.

May 20, 1944, was a Saturday. I have not much to write about my days in the ghetto. Those were a series of endless humiliations. Police cordons and barricades; innocent Jews delivered to the wondering, pitying, and even gloating looks of—for the most part—malicious, curious, and stupid people. The *Római II* [the Roman II] carried out its mission—murder. They searched for hidden Jewish riches, and if any were found, the Jew was summarily clubbed to death. These were not the Germans; they were Hungarian, but, oh, how beautifully they worked hand in hand.

Present Time, Feldafing

Today, those who rendered those “services” would be happy to undo what they had done, if it were possible, but I hope they won't escape the hangman's noose! I, who always professed with heart and soul to be a patriotic Hungarian, am remembering now a poem by Petőfi: “You, my nation, have sunk into depravity.” It is very appropriate.

We met Hungarian Arrow Cross families roaming the highways. They were hungry and homeless and we felt somewhat satisfied. They became fugitives as we had been. Let them be eternal wanderers.

Remembering, The Miskolc Ghetto

The poor among us remained in the ghetto. Presumably because members of *Római II* fancied themselves as having good taste, they gave work assignments only to those who appeared to be of some means. For example, they summoned a group of young women to the synagogue where the gendarmes had already taken up residence. There, the women were ordered to clean up, wash and iron the gendarmes' laundry. Already then, the Guardian of Israel began to slumber.

To leave the ghetto or speak with a non-Jew was strictly forbidden. But there were “good-hearted” people such as

those who would bring, for money, a loaf of bread. And for their trouble they would charge us a damask tablecloth with two wall covers, and “if we wouldn’t mind, some pots and pans, but don’t forget the lids.” They were nauseating, repulsive, like vultures—small but “dear” little memories.

June 5, 1945

Feldafing

I am outdoors again, under a tree with my blanket—the weather is beautiful.

Yesterday a new transport arrived. We found, among them, a few acquaintances from our city [Miskolc, Hungary]. They too had suffered through the winter, and just to hear how they were tortured was painful for us. At dawn—3 a.m.—they had roll call. There were days when they stood barefooted in the snow while the Nazis made them sing a song. Many of them perished. Hands and feet frozen—nails, even fingers, fell off due to freezing. They hungered and slept in unheated places—thirty-six on bunks intended for six! Everything was organized with a satanic mind. The motto was to kill the most, fast—and they did.

Remembering, June 5, 1944, Displaced from the Miskolc Ghetto

It was 4 a.m. at the break of day on June 5, 1944, and we heard noises. We were startled—or were we? We were kind of expecting all this for over a week now. A debilitating sight—observing our people’s displacement out of the ghetto into yet another place. Trucks loaded with knapsacks, suitcases, and bedding were on the move and, on top, were seated old people and children who could not make the long march on foot. The Gendarme’s coarse, wild shouting was heard all around us.

My G-d! Now they were here for us, and we must go off—again. We dressed; it took only moments. They had already pushed their way into our small ghetto room, and with a whip in hand, the man in charge ordered us in a brutal tone: “Everybody out with the bundles!”

We were in readiness—bundles tied. Each of us had one knapsack, one shoulder bag, and one large sack specially designed for food and bedding. Standing in lines in the yard, we lifted our eyes to heaven. The skies were cloudy; the dawn was very dark for us, and the drizzling rain slowly descended upon us.

The gendarme was checking everyone’s bundles, yelling, cursing. Fear was mirrored on our faces. We were the last in line. The officer opened our bundles one by one. From our

already down-to-the-minimum belongings, he rummaged through, all the while cursing loudly, and threw our items. Poor Mother’s prayer book was on the ground. The gendarme yelled: “Documents, photographs over here. Pocket-books, money, jewelry over there!” Everyone was frightened. I slipped off to the outhouse and cast into the sewer my remaining paper money, crumpled. I hid my wedding ring.

The inspection was over; the rain was falling more steadily.

We stood in pouring rain with our bundles. The gendarme refused to let us put our bundles back into the house. What meagre food we had in the sack had become inedible. Our tears blended with the falling rain as we were required to put our bundles in the outhouse. Next, prostitutes from the bordello examined the women among us, putting their dirty fingers into our bodies in search of hidden jewelry. The blood runs hot in my face, even today, just to think about the madness of such a filthy act. All we could do in our helplessness was to cry from the loathsome touch of these detestable tramps.

A policeman stood guard in the kitchen. With municipal assistance, the robbery went on. The policeman looked embarrassed; apparently he hadn’t lost his humanity yet. Before the body search our nerves broke down. My sister, Etz, and I asked the policeman to shoot us. He talked quietly, humanely, and tried to calm us. He could hardly believe what he saw, yet he did nothing!

The “examination” was over. We stood outside again. Long tables were set up. A young girl of sixteen or seventeen, and a man, were in charge. There was evil in her eyes. The man looked more humanlike. We proceeded, one by one. “Wallets, leatherware, gold collection. Turn over all your valuables,” the voice demanded. I did.

“That’s all the money you have?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Not true. You are a liar! Where is the rest? Where did you hide it? I warn you.” And so it went on.

Etz and Mother turned in forty pengő. The “honourable” thief put the money in an envelope and wrote the name and address on it. I was stunned! I had nothing to lose, so I asked: “Since when do holdup men do bookkeeping?” That question stirred up a big commotion, but who feared the consequences?

Poor Mother hid the glass cutter that belonged to Imre (my brother whom the Nazis killed in the Ukraine). It had only sentimental value to her, but the gendarme—stupid peasant that he was—thought he found a diamond, and triumphantly snatched it for the table. The Little bastard girl remarked: “They still hide—they can’t resist it.”

“But it is only a tool; you can buy it for two pengő.”

The girl answered: “You liar; you know very well that it is a diamond.” Then I insulted her: “If your heart is so rotten now, what will become of you ten years later?” They warned me again, but who cared anymore? All was finished!

June 6, 1945

I continue my sad story.

Remembering, Deportation to the Brick Factory

We were beggars already. All we had were the clothes on our back, two pairs of shoes, some underwear, two dresses, one comb, one brush, one pillow, and one quilt. We took half the amount of down out of the quilt to make it lighter. Nothing else! Food, we had; *that* they did not touch.

The wagons arrived—ten or twelve families for each one. First they loaded the packages. The gendarmerie was heavily armed. People were crying, some screaming, some sighing, some quietly sobbing. A woman was pleading for permission to take her washing bowl. “What for?” was the coarse reply. “There will be no need for washing where you are going.”

We helped Mother to the wagon; she did not even cry. She did what she was told. I don’t know where her strength came from, but she was strong—though one little incident did break my heart and her strong spirit as well. She was carrying a bottle of black coffee that she had to put down while changing hands to ease the burden of its weight.

The Gendarme yelled at her: “If you put that thing down again, I won’t let you pick it up.” Mother said, “The bottle is too heavy.” To which the peasant beast answered: “Shut up, you old Jew-woman, or I will knock your eye-glasses off your nose.” He wasn’t more than perhaps twenty or twenty-one years old—ripe for the rope! I wonder if he lived through the turmoil.

The procession was now ready to leave. We said a final goodbye to our last refuge, the small ghetto home, and then set out toward an unknown destiny. How we looked was written on the faces of the street people. They stared at us. Some bent their heads in shame. A good friend of the family, Louis Gacsal, in his army uniform, stood on the corner of Csengey Gustav Street, his head bent, perhaps in salute to us. He came to show his respect. Greeting a Jew was forbidden—especially for a soldier wearing the uniform of the Hungarian Army. He could be hanged for this.

Forward, forward, to the brick factory. Terrible place! No doors, no walls—only ceilings were there. The floor consisted of 25 centimeters of red brick dust.

June 12, 1945

Feldafing

Today is an anniversary date—one year since we were loaded as animals into wagon trains—seventy-five to eighty men in a wagon that could hold no more than six to seven horses. My G-d, what an anniversary! What a journey that was. The last journey of so many human beings—old and young, innocent, tiny babies as well.

Remembering, June 12, 1944, Brick Factory Barracks

We arrived! The wagons came to a halt. Packages were unloaded; there was chaos, hollering: “That’s my bag. Don’t step on it. Don’t break it.”

Small children were crying; mothers were weeping, too. What would they do with their tiny babies? Mothers cried: “How will I feed her?” “How will I bathe him?” “How will we keep them clean?”

There was a so-called office in the first barrack; two women were tending the administration. They had a list with all the names of those in the transport, and they had to be sure no one was missing. The two employees’ responsibility was to compare our names on their list with those on the second list which the gendarme had just handed over. They breathed with ease now; everything was fine; not one Jew was left behind in the city. All were caged.

Have you ever seen chaos? Everybody was running around, looking for a place to be. The barracks were numbered. Which one would be the best? It was not as dusty in this one; there were more people in that one. The entire county was here already. We met many friends and neighbours; we cried more and more. Frightened faces and frightening questions: “Where are they taking us?” “What is going to happen to us?” We knew we were in transport, but we didn’t know our destination.

Eight bitter days and nights we spent in the brick barracks. We had a taste of what would follow in the days and weeks to come. Too little water. One water supply for tens of thousands of people. The city fire company brought some water, but that was only a drop in the ocean for 30,000 thirsty mouths. We stood in lines for a drink of water. If we were lucky to fetch a half-bucket we used some for cooking and some for washing up. We built a fire between two bricks, on top of which we cooked something to eat—potatoes or watery soup.

On the other side of the fence an armed police guard stood every ten meters. Strangers couldn’t come near the camp. A fifty-meter distance was the closest anyone could get.

On our side of the wire fence, the German SS, with whips in hand, ordered the people around. Dirty beasts—trash of their German race.

With every passing day, we lost a little bit of our dignity. The first couple of days men and women tried to hold back nature's ways. Who would even dare think of using the latrine side by side? But on the third day, people gave up. There was no other way. How long can you deny your body its normal functions? So, on the third day we could no longer care about who sat next to us on the latrine pit. Men and women looked at each other with tears in their eyes. On the fourth day half-naked women could be seen here and there, while another held a towel to cover as much as possible. Whose shame was this? Ours?

They made the Jews dig a deep, long ditch. Then on both ends of the pit two wooden legs forming an X were erected. On the legs a board was placed for seating. It looked something like this: X-----X. Open for everyone's eyes—there it was. No fence around it. For two days people looked at it, but wouldn't humiliate themselves by using it. Finally they had no choice! German "civilization," not Jewish, came tumbling down!

A public kitchen came into being. That was another, though different, shame. Cooking became more of a problem day-by-day. Therefore, the kitchen collected the dry goods from all of us. The food would be cooked and distributed equally. In the end, the givers of goods were served beans and potato soups, while the kitchen personnel ate the chicken roast and drank the black coffee. The people rioted and demanded an explanation. They said the meat was for the sick, and since there was not enough coffee for everyone, it shouldn't be served at all. Mr. Gyémánt poured it out. It happened before in the city ghetto. G-d, forgive them. None of them survived.

June 26, 1945

Feldafing

It's been quite some time since I last wrote. I lack the patience. Time passes slowly; each day seems like a week. Life here suggests that nothing ever happened—a psychological puzzle. I can't forget, even for one second, what I have lost. I am sleepless, which for me is a tragedy. Day and night I fret. My thoughts are gnawing. I see the crematoria all the time. I don't like being among people, crowds. To be alone in the forest, listening to the beautiful song of birds, is what I enjoy. Since our liberation I feel more nervous.

BABA SCHWARTZ

Context: Central Europe

Source: Baba Schwartz. *The May Beetles: My First Twenty Years*. Carlton (Victoria): Black Inc. Publishing, 2016, pp. 108–113. Used by permission.

Baba Schwartz was a young Hungarian Jewish girl when, in the late spring of 1944, she and her family were deported from their home town to an unknown destination. The account she provides here is a concise and highly evocative memoir of the train journey they experienced during their deportation. Not only does Baba describe the nature of the trip; she also relates something of the textures, smells, and emotions accompanying it. While some excellent accounts exist of train deportations, few come as close as this one to recapturing, in a straightforward manner, the essential characteristics of such a harrowing ordeal.

On the twenty-second of May, everyone in the camp was ordered to pack up their belongings, except for their bedding, and march to the railway station in Nyíregyháza, a distance of about fifteen kilometers. "Why is the bedding to be left behind?" I wondered. "Are we going to a place where beds and bedding are provided? Or are we going to a place where we will not be permitted to sleep?" We did as we were told. There were a thousand or more of us—we vastly outnumbered those who were issuing the orders—but we dared not disobey. To rebel would have been futile: we would have been shot. And despite the rumours, we still had some hope that all would be well. Hope is tenacious.

From the Simapuszta ghetto we walked to the railway station in Nyíregyháza, carrying our rucksacks. My family kept close together and spoke little. Indeed, amongst the great throng marching to Nyíregyháza there was very little conversation. We were not baffled by the enmity of the Germans, nor by the eager complicity of the Hungarians. We were Jews, and this is what Jews suffered. Some survived, some perished.

A train with many carriages was waiting for us, not at the station itself but before the station, in a field. It was a train designed to carry cattle and the like. The carriages were made of horizontal planks of timber, once painted but now ancient and flaking. When the sliding doors of each carriage was drawn open, the interior appalled us. There were no seats, and the carriages stunk to high heaven.

We looked at each other, all of us in the crowd beside the train, and on each face one could see a recognition that our

lives meant nothing to those who had brought us here. The beasts that had once been conveyed in these carriages would have been going to slaughterhouses. And these carriages were now thought suitable for human beings. “Seventy to a carriage,” the guards shouted. “Seventy to a carriage!” Families were permitted to stay together. Fathers climbed into the carriages and reached down for their children, who were lifted up by their mothers. By this time there was fear in the air; many children were crying.

I clambered into a carriage with my backpack, then stood up and looked about quickly for Marta and Erna, who had gone ahead of me. My mother was already in the carriage too, and now Father climbed in and we were all together.

More and more people climbed into the carriage, and we were forced further and further back. “Dear God, there is no more room,” I thought to myself. But there was more room: our carriage did not yet hold seventy people. We were pushed further in, away from the door, keeping track of each other out of the corner of our eyes. “They can’t treat people this way!” I thought. Despite all we’d been through, I hadn’t fully accepted that the guards and gendarmes could do anything they wished to do; that they were unrestrained by any humane consideration.

On the faces around me, I saw terror, resignation, exhaustion. I looked down at the upturned faces of children who only came up to my waist. They were hoping, I’m sure, for some guidance from the adults around them. If anything in the world can be considered to be simply wrong—for all people, at all times, regardless of culture or religion—it is to subject children to the sort of dread and confusion that the Jewish children in that train carriage experienced. That can never be anything other than wrong. We can’t have a world unless we believe that.

The twenty or so carriages of the train were loaded with the Jews of Nyírbátor over a period of perhaps half an hour. We all had to stand as there was not enough room for us to sit. We waited for whatever was to come next. The train began to move, very slowly at first, building up speed. I had travelled on trains many times before, of course. I had always enjoyed the moment when the train pulled out of the station, and I loved watching the scenery change. But this time my heart sank when I felt the train begin to move. “People are not forced to travel in this way if the destination is anywhere good,” I thought. “We are going to a bad place, I know it.”

Many aboard the train were weakened by hunger, having spent a month at the Sumpuszta camp, and a number were ill. We ate what we had in our backpacks, and shared what

we could with those who had nothing. It might be thought that a type of solidarity would develop in a situation such as ours, but in reality it did not. Sympathy, yes, but not true solidarity. My mother’s great priority was to keep her children and her husband alive, so she fed us as best she could. It was the same for other mothers and families. There was no need to apologise for favouring one’s own family; everyone understood, I’m sure.

For the sick and weak, a journey of three hours on their feet would have been an ordeal. This journey would last three days. All were exhausted by the ordeal, driven almost mad by the continual dread we felt, and by the endless clatter of the metal wheels.

People must relieve themselves, whatever the situation. Our toilets were buckets. On the first day of that nightmare journey, we managed some modesty when we were forced to use the buckets. As we squatted, a family member would shield us from view with a coat. But crammed together in a cattle car as we were, we soon came to see that modesty would have to be dispensed with. Some took longer than others to accept this necessity, but by the second day, coats were no longer held up to screen those using the buckets. Initially I felt shame, but I soon came to accept that it was our common lot—that I was one amongst seventy, and all of us were compelled to overcome our embarrassment.

Then the train came to a halt. In the course of the journey, I had registered other stops. Even in the near delirium of my exhaustion, I had known at times that we were not moving. Maybe the train drivers were changing over; maybe something was blocking its way. But the train always resumed its journey, slowly at first, then, gathering speed until the *clack-clack-clack* of its wheels had returned to its regular, rapid interval. This time it was different.

I heard the release of steam from the engine, then silence. The tiny ventilation opening high on one of the walls of the carriage showed that it was dark outside. I’d been keeping track of time in a ragged way, and estimated that it was around four in the morning. It was the middle of spring and the days were lengthening.

“We’ve stopped,” I whispered to my mother. “We have arrived.”

My mother didn’t reply. I think all of us in the darkness shared the same feelings of anticipation and dread. Then I heard something like the clanking of a chain, very brief. After that, the silence grew more intense. I wanted to whisper to my mother again but I restrained myself.

What I did not know, what I could not have known, was that we had come to the gates of hell.

ZUZANA SERMER

Context: Central Europe

Source: Zuzana Sermer. *Survival Kit*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 35–40. Used by permission.

The German occupation of the Czech lands was taxing for everyone, but for Jews especially so. While ghettos were not established, the number of restrictions placed on Jewish life meant that food, medicine, clothing, and shelter were all in short supply for Jews. Zuzana Sermer explains how these constraints over daily life substantially robbed Jews of any opportunity of retaining an autonomous existence, and that as a result they were reliant on the help of others in a variety of ways. In describing the assistance provided by the Roskov family, for instance, she introduces us to the notion of the “White Jew”—non-Jews who helped Jews. To be labeled as one not only led to social ostracism; as Zuzana notes, “it could also have jeopardized their safety.”

After that first transport of 1942, I periodically went into hiding to avoid the *razzias* aimed at Jewish homes. One day, when it was safe for me to be at home, I was approached by two of my friends from Hashomer Hatzair. They asked me to meet with one of their “cells.” I had heard about these cells—they were often made up of four people and were a testing ground for young people who might be considered later on (once they had reached about eighteen years of age and proven their loyalty) to be part of a dangerous but righteous cause—an underground resistance.

Without giving it much thought I agreed and was given a task—to go to a store on Masaryk Street that sold electrical supplies and collect a sum of money from the owner. I removed my yellow band and went to the shop, discreetly conveying my password to the shopkeeper behind the counter. I then asked him for a particular sum of money, as instructed. The owner of the store was the last man in our town whom I would ever have suspected of being part of the underground. Perhaps he thought the same about me. We knew each other, but beyond the script, we didn’t say another word. He gave me the money and I took it and left.

My instructions were to purchase certain items of food with the money. I stopped at a delicatessen and then a bakery, running into no difficulty at either place. In spite of all going smoothly, my heart was pounding wildly. What if I were caught? What if this was a trap? Who were these people to whom I must deliver the purchases? But the rule of the cell was never to ask questions, so I kept them to myself.

The final destination was a Greek Orthodox church located on Lipová, the street where I now lived. I had to ring twice in order to get a response. Finally, the huge main gate was opened and I entered a courtyard. The main entrance was twenty steps further, but to me it felt like nearly twenty kilometers. I gave two short rings, as I had been told, and the massive, wooden doors were opened. I gave my password and was told to leave the basket of food at the door and then to leave. I did so with great haste. When it was over I felt invigorated, as though I had accomplished something important and was part of a chain that mattered. I never told my parents about this episode.

One week later I met up with the two friends who had recruited me and they thanked me for a job well done. It was then that I discovered how lucky I had been. The whole enterprise was betrayed the day after my task had been completed. The police raided the church and took those who were hiding inside it to an unknown destination. No more cell sessions took place. My two friends were also lucky not to be caught. Soon after, they slipped away to hide and fight with the partisans in the Carpathian Mountains.

To tell what became of one of them, Jan, I have to skip ahead to September 1945. The war had been over for more than three months and I was living with my husband, Arthur, in Bratislava. In the course of our efforts to establish a new home, I had decided to return to Humenné to retrieve some articles belonging to my late father. At that time, the journey of approximately 450 kilometers took more than two days to travel by train, with a long stopover in the city of Košice. I passed the time by browsing along the streets, and by chance I met some old acquaintances. It was then I learned of Jan’s fate—he was in jail in Košice. He had been there for two months, awaiting a hearing. Jan had lost his whole family, fought the fascists as a partisan and survived the war only to sit in a Slovak jail. This information infuriated me and no logical reasoning could have stopped me as I went off in search of the prison to see my friend.

The story was that Jan had been accused of participating in the Slovak National Uprising. While denying these allegations, he sat, frustrated, in jail. On impulse, I sought out the prosecutor and remarkably was granted an appointment in just one hour. I presented my case passionately, voice trembling, insisting that Jan had been falsely accused and must have a hearing at once. The prosecutor thought that my jailed friend and I were lovers; I assured him that our friendship was made of other stuff, born from the solidarity created by sharing a philosophy in desperate circumstances and a gruesome fate. My certainty of Jan’s innocence must have

been convincing. The prosecutor promised me that there would be a hearing the very next day.

By then, my train was due to depart in just thirty minutes. My feet barely touched the ground as I ran to the station, fueled by the promise I received—happily, a promise that was honoured. Jan was found innocent. He survived this last obstacle of the war and moved to Prague. We remain friends to this day. . . .

During the horrific, eventful summer of 1942, we heard rumours that new transports would soon begin. My parents were understandably frightened by these reports and did not want me to stay at home. They couldn't hide because of my mother's illness and miraculously, for some reason, they weren't deported. Others in our town who were bedridden or in wheelchairs or otherwise disabled had already been deported, but she was not. Masaryk Street was busy now, filled with strangers in uniform. Whenever new faces appeared on the main street, it was a bad omen. By now we knew that organizers of the transports transferred members of the Hlinka Guard between cities because they were afraid that the local militia would be more sympathetic to the Jews than strangers.

During these months of unrest I hid in a variety of places, some that I cannot believe I managed to endure. These hiding spots were both my refuge and my private hell. It is an understatement to say that surviving such an ordeal deeply affected me. It was a waking nightmare.

One such abhorrent hiding place was a crawl place in another family's home, where I hid for about two weeks. I could do nothing but sit or lie in one position for hours on end. At night I could go out to attend to my personal hygiene and to stretch my muscles, but then I had to return to my prison. For about a week in the summer I also hid in an attic. It was unbearably hot—so much that I fainted a few times. Still, each day in hiding was a day that I survived and was another day closer to the end of the war. Did I mention that I had been spoiled as a child? I was pampered no longer.

One of our neighbours from Masaryk Street, Mrs. Rokov, who was very fond of our family, suggested that I come to stay in their wine cellar for a short time. Certainly no one would look for me there. The house was very old and solid, built of stone and bricks, and had withstood both natural and manmade catastrophes. The wine cellar, however, was everything I dreaded and despised. It was deep underground where it was damp, cold and dark and it didn't take me long to discover that I shared my quarters with a nest of mice. I dread rodents. Even now when I see a mouse, I shriek and jump up on a table or chair. In truth, I would even climb

walls if I could, to avoid any kind of rodent. I cannot even look at a hamster. Even if a rodent is a remote image on television, I avert my eyes. It has been this way for all my life, so imagine then, knowing my revulsion for these creatures, how insufferable it was. Yet, I had no choice but to hide in this rodent-infested place.

Although I was provided with food, a small round table, a comfortable chair and a dim light, the basement was nonetheless cold and frightening. Whenever I unlocked the door and turned on the light, I gave the mice time to disappear into their holes. Only then would I enter. Still, I felt their presence and heard them squeaking. Sometimes I saw mice running from one hole to another and I would try shining my flashlight at them to stop them from scurrying and squeaking. I think that mice must reproduce frequently. More times than I care to remember, I saw newborns, as many as ten mice in one litter. But miserable as I was, I had to consider myself lucky—I had no rats for roommates. I couldn't handle more than two or three days of this in a row, but hid there on and off for about three weeks. It's no surprise that I developed a severe case of claustrophobia after this period of hiding.

Mrs. Rokov had known my mother for many years and felt sorry for her because of her illness. The Rokov family was wealthy and owned estates in the countryside near our town. They had two children—a daughter a few years older than me and a son who was younger. The Rokovs were traditional conservative parents who brought up the children in a religious and conventional manner. Both children attended the town's only Catholic school. Before the war the couple had been completely apolitical—they focused on their family and business matters. As long as these were prospering, they didn't appear to care much about what was going on in the rest of the world.

As is often the case, in spite of their identical upbringing, the couple's children chose different directions in life. The daughter, essentially a good-natured girl, was less ambitious than her parents. She was introduced to a young man from a nearby village who had just recently finished law school. Both sets of parents approved of and encouraged this relationship and blessed their plans for the future.

As an ambitious young lawyer, however, the young man found it advantageous to enroll in the Hlinka Party to secure a significant position. Although neither he nor his wife had previously been particularly political, this was common in those days. Eventually the young couple moved to Bratislava, the capital, where better jobs were available. I lost track of them during the war, but met them again later in Bratislava.

Mrs. Rokov's son had gravitated to the youth group of the Hlinka party while still living with his parents. I don't know how his parents found the courage to hide me under their house while a member of their own family wore the black Guardists' uniform. I was even more afraid of the son, with his allegiance to the Hlinka party, than I was of the mice in the cellar. Fortunately he had no taste for alcohol and so had no reason to go downstairs to the cellar. Much to his parents' chagrin, his interests lay completely outside of the house and he was seldom at home.

My parents, of course, felt deep gratitude toward the family and included them in their prayer. These people placed themselves in a position of very great danger for us. Neither the daughter nor the son was aware of my hiding in their cellar—their parents had to be very cautious. To be discovered helping a Jew would have earned them the label of “White Jew.” Not only would it have damaged their reputation, but it could also have jeopardized their safety.

ANNITA SHARPE

Context: Western Europe

Source: Annita Sharpe. *Escape to Les Vignes: A Childhood in Nazi-Occupied France*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2007, pp. 39–49. Used by permission.

The fall of France in June 1940 led to a great many changes—not only for the country, which was divided into “occupied” and “free” zones, but also for the Jews of France. Henceforth their treatment would be determined by whether they were French-born or foreign-born; and the distinction made all the difference in the world for the latter. Annita Sharpe, a young girl at the time, was too little to be able to appreciate fully the events swirling around her, though certain things did stand out. The observations to which she refers in this account are full of detail, providing a very useful window to understanding what life was like at “ground level” during the first years of the German occupation of France.

With the *Débâcle*, the capitulation of France, and in the wake of the German occupation in 1940, Papa came back from the army. As a child I was not aware of these historical events and the names they would be remembered by but I have clear recollections of how they impacted on my family. I remember being grateful that Papa had not been made a

prisoner of war like so many French soldiers, including my friend Hélène's father. Nor was he badly wounded in the fighting like his brother, Oncle Sam, who had to be treated for many months in a military hospital. He was officially designated “*mutilé de guerre à 100%*” (100% war wounded). This gave him, in the brief period before the German occupation, benefits such as reductions in fares and other advantages. He was never to fully recover from his wounds.

We had been living for too long in our cramped two-room apartment in Rue des Envierges. . . . Soon after Papa returned, we moved to Rue du Faubourg St Denis in the 10th arrondissement, to a larger apartment, which was very well situated opposite the Gare du Nord, the big northern railway station. Ironically, it had become easier and more affordable to rent good apartments during the occupation because so many people had fled Paris to take refuge in the country. This one was particularly spacious, with a big kitchen and a separate toilet and washing facilities. Our parents had a huge bedroom and we children shared another, even bigger. There was a room large enough to act as both a dining and living room and Papa even had a room for a workshop. It was sheer luxury!

Maman and Papa furnished each room with beautiful second hand furniture, which today would be considered valuable antiques. I can still remember the huge wardrobes with their bevelled mirrors and our antique beds. The dining room had a double-tiered buffet reaching up to the ceiling, all carved with lions' heads, fruit, flowers, leaves and columns. The table, with its carved pedestal, stood in the middle of the room. Maman often told how Grand-mère was so pleased for us to be in such a beautiful apartment. On her first visit she exclaimed, “You will even be able to make weddings for your children here!”

Nobody then knew what was in store for us. It was assumed by most people, even after the horrors of the past months, that life was going to resume with some sort of normality. I loved our new location and felt very grown up going to the local primary school on my own. I made a new friend called Hélène Conan, who lived across the road from us. We were in the same class. Later, our mothers befriended each other and were able to give each other moral support during the difficult times that were coming.

We hardly had time to enjoy our lovely apartment when Papa was arrested in a street roundup in Rue St Maur. It was August 1941, when I was eight years old. Somebody knocked on the door and when we opened it, there was a young man with a note from Papa, telling us this terrible news. He had left on his bike, as he had numerous times before, to pick up

materials for his work: leather, frames, cardboard and glue. That day he didn't come back home. He was caught in one of the street arrests ordered by the Germans and carried out by the French police. Till then, they had arrested foreign Jews but not French nationals.

Later, Maman was notified to come and fetch his bicycle from the police station, We kept hoping that he would soon be released but when that didn't happen, Maman was able to find out where he had been taken. It was to a suburb called Drancy, on the outskirts of Paris. At the time, it was a place where a lot of building was taking place, including large, cheap housing blocks and the first skyscrapers ever built. My Uncle Sam's parents-in-law, the Freilich family, fortuitously for us, lived in a pleasant little house in Drancy. Later, just to say the word "Drancy" would make anyone shudder because it became the dreaded transit camp for the deportation of Jews by cattle trains to Auschwitz and other concentration camps.

Maman took the three of us to stay overnight with the Freilich family. Maman had no plan other than to be near Papa and was hoping to gain permission to see him. No one was allowed near those unfinished grey concrete towers where he and many others were being detained. We could see, through spaces left for doors and windows and on the balconies, lots of men standing, stripped down to their singlets.

It was August and very hot. We stood on the footpath across the road trying to spot Papa amongst the others. Policemen kept coming over to us, warning us to move on. We moved a little way and then continued our vigil. We finally spotted Papa and he could see us, for Maman had deliberately put huge white bows in our hair. He waved at us and we jumped for joy and called to him, even though we knew he could not possibly hear us. We spent each Sunday for three months in Drancy, trying to bring this small comfort to Papa. Each time, the police tried to stop us. We could see he had lost lots of weight and Maman tried to send him food parcels but nothing was permitted the prisoners. Grand-mère Boubelou was distraught and kept saying, "I wish I could save him. I would gladly give my life to save him!"

But because Maman was often in tears, she would tell her, "You will see. He will come out of there and you will yet enjoy life together. You will be both laughing and you will be together! I can see it."

At one time we met a friend of Uncle Sam and Tante Germaine, at their apartment. I remember my aunt being heavily pregnant at the time. This woman knew that Papa was in

Drancy. She had a talent for reading cards and offered to read them for Maman. I remember what she said to her because Maman often retold this story in the years to come: "There will be a death of someone close but that will bring much good to your life. I see you making a very long voyage in the future."

In November 1941 Grand-mère Boubelou took sick with a bad chest infection. She stayed in hospital for a few days but then begged Uncle Sam to take her home. He promised to bring her clothes the next day but she insisted on leaving straight away. She said that if Charles were there, he would understand and take her home immediately because the next day, she would no longer be alive. This is exactly what happened and this is what Uncle Sam blurted out when he arrived at our place sobbing like a child. Grand-mère Boubelou had died during the night.

I shall never forget that day. It was terrible for me to see everyone so bereft, and, young as I was, I understood how sad a loss it was for me as well. My paternal grandmother had been a vivid presence in my life. In spite of being severely diabetic, she was very lively and loved to laugh. She was interested in everything. She always encouraged me to sing all my French nursery rhymes and songs to her and her own French was good. She was often at our place and she never stopped her granddaughters from looking in her bag. In fact, she carried special bread, which we liked to nibble; also some fruit, particularly small pears and there was always enough to share with us. I didn't see her as often as my other grandmother but I loved her very much. Very quickly, the whole family got together and took counsel. It was decided that every effort had to be made to get Papa out of Drancy so he could attend his mother's funeral. . . .

Maman went to the French authorities that ran the Drancy camps. Uncle Sam went with her to give her courage but waited some distance outside. He didn't go on for fear of being arrested himself. She often told us how the French guards railed at her, calling her dirty Jew. How dare she come and ask for a permit! She was made to go from one counter to another but wasn't getting anywhere. She was crying and kept repeating, "*C'est dégoûtant!*" (It's disgusting)—Papa was as French as they were. He had gone to fight for France and this was the treatment he was getting from his own compatriots!

One kind policeman, who had heard the whole altercation and seen how distraught Maman was, followed her as she walked out banging the door. He suggested she should try and go to the German authorities and told her where to go. Uncle Sam took her there. Again, as she walked into the

office, the French staff started to jeer at her, calling her “*sale youpine*,” which meant dirty Jew, but with an even more derogatory meaning.

She screamed at them, “I haven’t come here to address myself to you. You are only the lackeys here. I want to see the German officer in charge!” The altercation brought the German officer out of his room to see what was going on. He took her into his office and she explained that Papa needed permission to get out of Drancy to attend to his mother’s burial. There was no one else to do it. She was a woman alone with three children and it was impossible for her to handle it. He listened to her and said, “All right but only for twenty-four hours.” He rang the camp at Drancy to order a special release. Maman requested that Papa be told only that his mother was very sick and he was needed, so as not to be given a shock.

Papa told us that before they released him he was made to sign a paper and to swear on his honour to return to Drancy within twenty-four hours. I have no way of knowing for sure but I imagine that such a permit was unique in the history of Drancy. Again, the whole family took counsel. They decided that Papa was not going back; in fact he was not even going to his mother’s funeral. This was his opportunity to save himself. Tante Madeleine and Oncle Sam arranged everything to get him across the demarcation line to the Free Zone. They even had to pay for this costly operation because Maman didn’t have the money.

Papa arrived from Drancy. He was so thin! He told us how they had been herded into those unfinished buildings that had no water connected and how at first they were given no food for days. They were kept compliant only by being told that they would soon be released but three months had passed in the same terrible conditions.

After he had eaten and cleaned himself up, Papa was taken to the hospital to say goodbye to his mother. When he was told that everything was ready for him to escape to the Free Zone, he argued that he had sworn on his honour to go back to Drancy. He was persuaded not to be foolish and to agree to not even going to the funeral the next day. That same evening I saw my father cut open a long baguette (it was all we had in the house), pour some oil on it and devour it in a few minutes. He was starved. He told us how they had been given only one loaf of bread a day for all the men on his floor and how he had been nominated to apportion each morsel fairly.

Papa left early the next morning. Just as well he did not turn up at the funeral. The police were waiting for him at the

cemetery. I didn’t know then that he was hidden in Paris for a number of days. It was likely that the train stations leading to the Free Zone were being watched, so no risks were taken. Also, he was in a weak state and needed time to recuperate a little before undertaking this dangerous trip. It took some time before we knew that Papa had safely crossed into the Free Zone. He had gone to Limoges, where there was a family contact to help him.

I was only eight years old but had understood all the turmoil the family had gone through but had obviously not understood the dangers, since they were probably kept from me. I still thought with a child’s mind. When I told Maman that I knew Papa had not gone back to Drancy but had gone to the Free Zone, she slapped my face and told me never to say this, not to anyone! If asked, I was to say, “He has gone back to the camp at Drancy.” I was shaken and hurt. I still could not understand why I had been punished like that but the lesson was learnt.

It did not take long for Maman and us children to suffer the backlash from the authorities. We were followed, questioned and constantly badgered by the French police and their inspectors. They would barge in on us early in the morning, waking us and running from room to room, opening windows, hoping to surprise Papa at home or caught in flight. They were full of zeal and kept telling us that if they caught him, he would be shot. They kept asking me, “Where is your father?” I replied only “In the camp in Drancy.” We were all terrified.

Maman would sometimes leave Fanny and Bernadette for a few short moments to run downstairs to do some quick shopping. She must have been watched because as soon as she left, they would knock and talk to Fanny behind the door, asking her if Papa was home. When Maman surprised the inspector, he quickly started to run down the stairs. She was not afraid to tell him off for questioning a four-year-old.

Once I was followed from school and asked where my father was. Another time, Maman had sent me to the shop nearby to get milk and bread. I was on my way back when a man came running after me saying, “Here is the money you dropped. Lucky I saw it happen.” I was about to tell him that I didn’t think I’d lost any money, when he pushed some paper notes in my hand, where I was already clutching some change and walked quickly away. He was gone before I could work out what happened. I was already in our stairway when all of a sudden, he came running after me shouting that I was a little thief and liar. He was going to

teach me a lesson. I had lied about the money and he was coming to see my parents. He then asked me if my father was at home.

Maman opened the door when she heard the shouting in the stairway. I rushed in, sobbing my heart out and threw myself into the arms of Grand-mère for protection. We were all standing in the hallway and both Maman and Grand-mère tried to work out what had happened. I was crying too much to explain. The man was still shouting, “Little thief! Little liar! She should get a good hiding from her father! If he isn’t at home, I will do it myself.” All the time he was talking, he was stretching his neck to look into the other rooms. Maman told him that if anyone was going to punish me, she would do so herself. She gave him back his money and ordered him to go. I have a terrible knot in my stomach just thinking about this particular experience. This clumsy but frightening surveillance went on for six months.

Life was very difficult for Maman. She was left alone to care for and feed the three of us. I can’t imagine how she did it. It was winter and cold but we could afford very little heating, only the wood stove in the kitchen. My grandmother was often at our place helping as much as she could.

One morning, Maman sent me to the *boulangerie* to get bread with the requisite ration tickets. I stood in a long queue for some time and when it came to my turn, the *boulangère* told me that there was no more bread and, in any case, that my tickets were false ones. Maman was furious and went down to tell her off for taking advantage of a child so that she could keep the bread for her own dishonest purposes.

Once, Fanny took sick with a severe nosebleed in the middle of the night. Maman, in desperation, rushed across the road where there was a police station and appealed for help. A policeman came back to the apartment with her, wrapped Fanny in a blanket and helped take her to hospital. I was left, worried and fearful, to look after Bernadette. Fortunately, Fanny’s problem proved not to be as serious as first thought.

Everyone was suffering in those days, including my school friend whose father was a prisoner of war. Her mother also had three children to care for, no heating and little food. In this bleak time, both our mothers helped each other in small ways and gave each other moral support. We gave this woman all our family photos to take care of. Maman didn’t want them in the house because they could identify Papa and other family members. At the end of the war those and our radio were the only belongings that we were able to retrieve.

ANNITA SHARPE

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Annita Sharpe. *Escape to Les Vignes: A Childhood in Nazi-Occupied France*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2007, pp. 87–92. Used by permission.

The French commune of Les Vignes was long renowned as a place of tranquility and peace. As Annita Sharpe relates in this account, for some time during the war she barely saw any Germans at all. By the spring of 1944, indeed, it seemed as though everything would be well and that she and her family would survive the Nazi onslaught. But then one day without warning, “two black Citroën cars” appeared and arrested her and her family. While they were being driven away—at first, to Limoges—Annita’s questions were many, though she did her best to keep her thoughts to herself. The account she provides is an excellent example of how, even deep into the final phase of the war, the Nazis still maintained their quest to round up and eliminate Jews.

It was spring, 1944. We had been at Les Vignes for two years and had become part of the uncomplicated lifestyle of the countryside. Apart from those occasional raids to remove food from the farms, we didn’t see Germans in our hamlet. The short distance we were from the main road seemed to protect us from their presence. So on the day when the Gestapo caught up with us we were completely unprepared. They came in two black Citroën cars, which they parked right at the entrance of Les Vignes, just a bit further up from our place. This in itself was unusual and ominous. The local people used bikes. We rarely saw a car.

Maman and Fanny have told me something I was not aware of because I may have been at school or on an errand at the time. Sometime before our arrest, a woman, a stranger to our area, had come by on her bicycle and ridden backwards and forwards a number of times in front of our house, as if she was looking for something or someone. Maman was outside and was aware of her scrutiny. It made her nervous but since nothing further happened, the incident was forgotten.

We children were all at home the afternoon the men came. Why, I can’t remember. Was it a holiday or was it a Thursday when schoolchildren are at home? Memory simply eludes me. Hélène was still staying with us. Maman was outside talking to Mme Devoyon when the black cars arrived.

Papa was in a small room he had rented in a villa belonging to an elderly woman in the village. He had made this

arrangement only a short time before and we were not supposed to tell anyone, let alone take anybody there. Sometime earlier, Maman had found hidden in our house some tools, false papers and rubber stamps that Papa was using for his work for the Resistance. She was not sure of the extent of his involvement but insisted that this incriminating material had to be removed from our place. Just as well it had all been hidden somewhere in the little room where Papa also moved his sewing machine and some of his tools of trade. In case of a raid, he could say that this was where where he was making bags and leather goods.

A rather tall man, wearing a hat and glasses and dressed in dark civilian clothes, got out of one of the cars. He approached Maman and asked her, "Where does Mme Charles Szkop live?" Maman pointed in the direction of the house. He tapped her on the shoulder and said, with a smile on his face, "You are Mme Szkop." He gestured for her to go inside.

We have retold and relived the following moments in our lives many times, as if compelled to do it. They appear to me as frozen images, captured in time.

Next we are all inside the house. This man begins to ask a lot of questions and is joined by another in a leather coat. He turns to me. "Where is your father? What is he doing?" Maman answers for me that Papa is working in the fields, helping the farmers in their work. Meanwhile Hélène has understood who these men are and is getting agitated. She starts wringing her hands. I am sensing something awful but feel that Maman has not quite understood the situation yet. A terrible feeling of doom and terror comes over me. We are caught! All our fears are coming true. The fellow turns to me and asks, "What is your name?" I tell him, "Annita" and in a sickening, honeyed tone, he continues, "Do you know where your father is?"

I nod mutely and he replies, "Please go and get your father." Hélène pipes up, "I will go quicker" and starts for the door, which he is blocking. He points to me, "No, she will go." Maman then says, "Look, this girl is a friend of my daughter and came here to do some homework. She needs to go home." As I start to go outside, Hélène precedes me and runs across the road into the fields and disappears. I run down the road to my father.

Maman relates that while I was gone the man began opening cupboards and tossing everything out and he was soon joined by his off-sider. Maman asked them angrily who gave them the authority to do this and what were they searching for. "We are the German police," they replied. Her heart sank and she prayed Papa and I would not come back.

I ran into Papa's room and, breathless, told him what had happened, about the men wearing hats and rimless glasses,

one in a leather coat, and how I thought they were Germans because they had an accent when they spoke French. Papa turned white. Without a moment's hesitation, he took off his leather apron and we rushed back home. He was walking so fast, I had to run after him.

Maman was beside herself when she saw the two of us returning. The Gestapo, for that was who they were, asked for our papers and were surprised to see our name. They accused us of having false papers and being Jews. I do not understand why our name Szkop did not seem to them a Jewish name.

Maman started to scream that she was the Jewish one and that Papa was not Jewish. At that point they asked Papa to drop his pants. Papa refused to do it in front of us children. They took him into the bedroom. It took an instant and he was back in the front room, livid and shaking. Seeing my strong Papa like that, I began to cry. They asked us to pack a few belongings. We were under arrest.

Maman was defiant. She shouted at them, "We are not going with you. You are not taking me out of here alive!" One of them turned to her and hit her across the face so hard, she went reeling against the wall. We children started to scream and cry and saw Papa rush towards the man, his eyes blazing in fury, ready to hit him or jump on him. The other German pulled out his gun, shot in the air and held the gun at my father's head saying, "*Toi, ne fais pas le con!*" (You, don't be an idiot!) They gave us ten minutes to pack. My parents stood immobile and distraught, the gun still pointing at Papa.

I was the one who moved. I started to gather a few belongings. I opened our cupboard and found some underwear for both of us. I took a big, tan woolen shawl and spread it out on the floor and put everything in it. As I was taking a small sheet from the cupboard, I found some money hidden among the bed linen. I collected a few items of clothing for each of us, whatever I could find and made it up into a bundle. I then went to the cupboard under the window where we kept all our school books and equipment. I pulled out my library book and was hesitating about taking exercise books and pens and pencils when the Nazi with the unctuous voice said to me, "Don't bother with all this. There is a school where you are going!" I half-believed him but still took the library book. . . .

There was a shot outside in the vicinity of the cars. One of the Germans went out to investigate. Apparently a Jewish woman had been arrested ahead of us. She had asked the French driver who was guarding her if she could relieve herself behind the bushes. She had tried to escape, so he had

shot into the air. She had come out rather than risk being shot.

We were led out at gunpoint. As we walked out of the house toward the parked cars, one of the Gestapo men told Bernadette, “Go away, you are too little!” Bernadette was walking next to me. She looked up at me for a moment, stopped, turned on her heels and went running in the direction of her friend Denise Carreau’s place. We had no time to beg to keep our five year old with us, or to say goodbye! Mme Devoyon and her daughter Celine, who was holding her little daughter Solange, were watching the whole scene without moving or being able to say a word. They were probably in a state of shock.

The driver brought the first car up to the front door and we were all ordered into it. I paid little attention to the Jewish woman already there because I was still watching Bernadette through the back window of the car, still running on the road to her little friend’s place. I watched as one Gestapo man got into the second car. He pulled out onto the road and our car followed. I was without feeling by then, as if made of ice.

We drove towards Limoges in total silence and all the way the Gestapo man stayed swiveled round in his seat, watching us closely, as if he expected us to mount some resistance. As I relate this, my stomach is in a knot and I find myself reliving the terror of that day.

Much later, thinking about our arrest, the question arose as to why one of the Gestapo men had not accompanied me to my father? Papa had actually been denounced as a member of the Resistance, not as a Jew. We are guessing that they knew that this area was a hotbed of resistance and they worried about venturing deeper into this isolated village without more back-up. This is surmise but seems the only valid explanation.

SIDNEY SIMON

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Sidney Simon with Maryann McLoughlin (edited by Rosalie Simon and Maryann McLoughlin). *In the Birch Woods of Belarus: A Partisan’s Revenge*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2009, pp. 34–38. Used by permission.

When war came to Belarus in July 1941, Sidney Simon and his family were taken forcibly to a ghetto after the Nazis arrived in his area. One of five children, he was then 14 years old. After a period of terror at the hands of the Nazis the family

escaped the ghetto and sought sanctuary in the woods. Simon then joined the partisans and fought the Nazis until joining the Soviet army. His memoir, which recounts his experiences as a partisan and with the Soviets, provides an account of how and when Jewish opposition could take place, through the lens of what has become known as “forest resistance.”

My brother Mojshe belonged to a group of about twenty or twenty-two men. When Mojshe heard about the liquidation, he went to the woods with this group of men to meet up with the partisans.

After a short time as a partisan Mojshe was killed by the Germans and the police. The Germans had surrounded a clearing. As the partisan group went through this clearing that they had thought was safe, the Germans opened fire from all four sides. The partisans didn’t have a chance. One partisan, Jankel Orzhechowski, survived by jumping into the bushes when he wasn’t noticed.

After our family escaped the ghetto, we met Jankel. Jankel told us that my brother had escaped; Jankel said he had seen Mojshe running, running. My father and I didn’t believe Jankel, but he insisted this was the truth. Out of pain and concern to make Jankel tell us the truth, as if to stab himself, my father grabbed a knife, which I immediately took away from him. Jankel continued lying. He lied to protect my parents from pain.

A few days later—this was after Mojshe had left—my family escaped the ghetto because we were warned that, on April 28, 1942, all the Jews in the Żetel Ghetto were to be taken outside the ghetto, massacred, and buried. We went into a hiding place under a small stable—8’ by 12’. My brother, Richard, sisters Katie and Ida, my parents, and three more people—neighbours—hid there. We made a shallow, square box and filled this with manure. Under this we made a hole. We would get in the hole and pull the box over the hole to cover our hiding place. The Germans would open the door and look around, but they didn’t see anything but manure. We stayed there until night on the day the ghetto was liquidated. We heard a lot of explosions.

My father looked through the hole of the pipe we used for air and said, “They just got your mother’s sister Bashe Malke, her husband Shimen, and the baby (two or three months old).” They had hidden in another place under the floor of a house. My father continued, “They took them outside; she is holding the baby. Oh G-d, a German is choking the baby to death in his mother’s arms. Now he is killing Bashe! And her husband is watching. The German beast killed Bashe’s husband.” Can you imagine the brutality of this!

Then we found that my cousin, Hirshe Leizer, the Hebrew teacher, who had been with us and was married to Civia, and now with a little baby, was hiding too. The baby started to cry. The others said, "Smother the baby or they'll find us." Hirshe said, "I am not killing my baby. I'll go out." He went out, and they killed him; they threw in hand grenades and everybody was murdered, including Civia and the baby. . . .

This horror was our life every day. I never dreamed we would ever get out. This goes for the ghetto, the partisans, and whatever else I went through.

Night came. Father said, "I am going to walk out first. If you hear shooting, don't come out." He left. There were no shots. We did not wait. Without hesitation, my mother, then the children, and then the neighbors followed my father and so we left the hiding place. It was dark but flames flared occasionally. My father took a stick and held it over his shoulder so if anybody saw this they would think he had a rifle.

We made it to the woods and slept there. We saw no partisans. We had no food, except wild berries. At night my mother went to the village from house to house asking for a slice of bread. She would not let us go because it was too dangerous. I saw my mother leaving and I didn't know if she would ever come back. Life was treacherous.

We were looking for a place to settle. We saw a place close to houses. But could the occupants be trusted? Would they betray us? This place was not far from a house occupied by a family named Shavel. We felt safe even though we were not close to him. He could give us news about the Germans. He couldn't give us much food, however, because he was poor.

Finally the Germans decided to go into the woods and kill the "Stalin dogs," what the Germans called the partisans. Everybody heard the news and abandoned their hiding places. We ran deeper into the forest. We had to run through creeks. My boots got wet. It had been rainy and the ground was deep with mud; then it turned cold and the ground froze. My feet were frostbitten. They swelled so much that they had to cut my boots off.

The Germans were still searching in the woods; we were short of places to hide. To be safe we dug an underground shelter that we shored up with saplings so that it wouldn't cave in. There were steps going up to the door. Inside there were bunks. We made torches from moss and sticks, lighting these with a flint stone. Sometimes we would inhale soot, the residue of these torches. Eight or nine people, including my family, lived in this bunker—Majewski, his wife, and a baby, Sanford. The baby caused us anxiety because if the baby cried our bunker could have been discovered. The father said, "if you want my baby killed, *you* kill him." So one of

them put pillows over the baby's face. When they lifted the pillows, the baby was still breathing. They say that this baby was meant to live. After this, they agreed not to kill the baby, no matter what happened. The parents wanted to give their baby to a non-Jew; however, this man saw that the mother was having a hard time giving the baby away, so he said no. *That baby, Sanford, is alive today with a family of his own. We were invited to his wedding.*

When the Germans were in the woods looking for Jews, all the others from the bunker, except me, would leave the bunker and go deeper into the woods to flee. I could not leave; because of my frostbitten feet, I could not walk. When they left they would cover the opening of the shelter with wood to which they had attached moss and pieces of branches to camouflage the opening. I would be in the bunker hiding. I would hear the Germans calling to each other. I often would hear horses trotting and whinnying. Once a horse stepped right near me. If his hoof had been any closer, he and his rider would have been in the hole with me and I would have been killed. I had to wait in the bunker until the rest returned.

When the Germans were not searching for Jews and we were all in the bunker, I would sometimes climb out and put my feet in the sun. That seemed to help with the sores and cracks in my feet. During the night my feet would crack again. The next day I would start over again with my feet in the sun. I could feel the reforming during the day and then at night it would crack again. I would wrap my feet in burlap potato bags—these were dirty—full of mud and sand, but they were all I had. It was a wonder my feet did not become infected. In my old age, my feet are numb from the frostbite and I have trouble walking.

I tried to keep clean, using the snow to wash and rinse myself. We had to wear the same clothes all the time. In the spring when it was warmer, I would bathe and wash my clothes in a creek.

We had to move deeper into the woods to hide from the Germans who continued searching for Jews. I had to walk, leaning on two sticks, like crutches. I was in pain and very thirsty. One day I was so thirsty that when I saw a spot where a horse had urinated and the snow had melted, I knelt down and sucked the melted snow.

With me I had a hand grenade without the lever and a gun without ammunition. They were of no use to me but I kept them, hoping, I guess, that I would run into ammunition for the gun and a lever to arm the grenade. Eventually my feet were somewhat better. We continued hiding in the woods. We would still go to the villagers to ask for some food. We

would go out and get potatoes and bread and bring these back. Sometimes the partisans would drop off some food.

That was our life for a while until one day a group of partisans came along to see us and give us information, dropping off some potatoes. They had heard that someone had buried a gun in the vicinity, so they had come along and dug up the gun. It had been buried in the woods, wrapped in an oiled cloth. While they were visiting with us, they asked me if I wanted to be a partisan. I said, “Yes, but I don’t have a good gun nor any ammunition.” To be allowed to join the partisans a person would usually need to bring a gun and ammunition or they didn’t want him. But they said they had an extra rifle. They gave me the rifle—the buried one.

The partisans also received weapons from Russian planes that dropped ammunition and dynamite attached to parachutes. At the same time, they would also drop a Russian officer who made sure the partisans received the ammunition. For the time being, he became part of the partisans group.

The partisans would then make signal fires for the planes—in different designs at different times—so that they not only would know where to drop the supplies but also so that the Germans would not anticipate where they would be dropping the supplies. On rare occasions the planes circled but did not drop any supplies, as if they had intelligence that the drop was unsafe. This was disturbing to us, waiting for supplies that were desperately needed.

The partisans told me to ask my father if I could join them. I walked up to my father and said, “I would like to become a partisan. They have a rifle for me.” He said, “my son, do what you think is right and G-d should watch over you.” Thus, I joined the partisans.

GERTA SOLAN

Context: Central Europe

Source: Gerta Solan. *My Heart Is at Ease*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2014, pp. 13–16. Used by permission.

The German occupation of what remained of Czechoslovakia after the Sudetenland crisis of 1938 saw huge changes in the lives of Czech Jews. Gerta Solan, who lived in Prague, provides here an overview of some of those changes, as seen from the perspective of one who was a child living at home at the time. She shows, too, the steady attrition in the Jewish population, who became subjected to deportations from 1941 onwards.

Eventually, for Gerta and her family, this culminated in their own deportation to Theresienstadt (Terezín)—observed, as she tells us, by the local baker, who “watched smugly . . . as we left for the unknown.”

At the beginning of 1939, people, especially Jewish families, started to feel the strain of political changes. The Czech government of Emil Hácha was unable to prevent Slovakia’s separation from the rest of the country that was encouraged by Hitler and the ensuing crisis. Slovakia’s independence—led by Slovak premier Monsignor Jozef Tiso, albeit under German control—was declared on March 14, 1939. The very next day, German troops occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia and proclaimed it the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The area of Carpatho-Ukraine also declared its independence from Czechoslovakia, but Hungary soon overran and annexed it.

The fall of Czechoslovakia signaled the definitive end of the political system put in place by the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I, weakened France and England, and isolated the Soviet Union. Germany was now the dominant power on the European continent. Soon after this, my parents decided to move out of my grandparents’ place on Legerova Street and find an apartment just for the three of us. My mother found an apartment around the corner that she really fell in love with, but there was a catch—a German family was supposed to move into it. My mother, however, refused to see this as an obstacle. She made up her mind to go to the German Kommandantur on Bredovská Street and speak to the authorities about it. Father told her not to go, but she was determined. No one went there who didn’t have to. I myself wonder why she went.

Inside the building, with Father waiting nervously outside, Mother was taken to see a German officer. They could be gallant, especially with charming ladies. She told us later that he had kissed her hand, offered her a seat and when she explained her problem, he responded with a handsome smile that there should be no problem in assigning her the apartment. Mother started to give him the information he requested, but he suddenly looked at her directly and, with raised eyebrows, asked her, “Are you Jewish?” As soon as she nodded yes, he got up from his swivel chair, looked at her with fury and yelled, “Raus!” (Out!), pointing his finger to the door. My mother didn’t waste a second; she flew to the door, ran down the stairs and out into the street, took Father by the hand and said, “Run around the corner!” They were lucky to be safe and I guess Mother was happy to have gotten away that easily.

Mother found another beautiful apartment on the same street, on Platněřská, next to and across from the City Hall buildings. The entrance was elegant, the stairs and walls covered with marble. The building had an elevator and our apartment on the fourth floor had wonderful stained glass windows. We moved in and I think that my parents were happy there.

Unfortunately, City Hall soon needed to expand and as we were the neighbouring building, we received a notice to move out. Our new apartment building on the corner of streets Dlouhá 19 and Rámová 1 was, it turned out, right across the street from where the writer Franz Kafka had lived about two decades earlier. Today, there is a national memorial plaque on the house.

By the beginning of 1940, our situation had worsened drastically. Jews were only allowed to shop during certain hours and had an 8:00 p.m. curfew. We had to board the last compartment of the streetcar and we weren't allowed to attend theatres and movies or go to public parks. I could only play nearby in the old Jewish cemetery at Maiselova Street, where my friends and I jumped from one gravestone to another without any sentiment. We were just children who needed to be children. When I returned to this cemetery after the war, I spotted the large ancient gravestone of the well-known scholar Rabbi Loew right next to the entrance of the cemetery and then many others whose names were so familiar to me. There are twelve layers of graves there, one on top of the other. This was a piece of my past, my childhood. Sometimes even stones talk of sadness and human suffering. I took pictures of the stones and framed the photographs to hang on the wall in my living room.

Gradually, we were restricted from other aspects of regular life. That fall, Jewish children were expelled from Czech schools. There was one school for Jewish children right in the old Jewish quarter of the city but there were too many Jewish children in Prague to accommodate in that building. We had to take exams to be accepted and I was lucky to be one of the ones who made it in. There were still so many of us that we had to take turns going to class with another group of Jewish children. One group went to school for two months and for the other couple of months we did homework.

A year later, in September 1941, we were ordered to wear a yellow Jewish star on our dress or coat whenever we were outside. My mother liked to take advantage of her "Aryan" looks and didn't follow the restrictions for Jews. Sometimes she walked on the street without the star and came home after the curfew. Both Father and I got extremely nervous when she went out because if she had been caught, she could have been arrested and we might never see her again. We

were also ordered to hand over all our valuables, such as gold and silver jewellery and watches, to the Gestapo. I remember lining up in front of the Gestapo building in Střeřovice, on the outskirts of Prague, waiting for hours in the cold.

Far from our home, in the Strařnice district, the huge field that belonged to the Jewish Hagibor sports club was one of the only places where we could participate in all kinds of sports competitions and games. Close to my home, next to the only Jewish coffeehouse of Prague, was an exercise hall called Maccabi Hatzair where I met Fredy Hirsch again. He was a twenty-year-old gymnastic teacher of German origin, a leader and trainer of Jewish youth I had known from Mrs. Fridlander's gym hall on Wenceslas Square. He was such a handsome young man, every girl's dream, although we were too young to know he was homosexual. Everyone loved him and respected him. Led by Fredy, we participated in many wonderful games. My parents' friends still came every week in the afternoons to play chamber music, but had to be back home before curfew. I had a good voice and liked singing, and I was a member of the choir at the synagogue. It was one of the few activities I still did, along with playing piano every day, until the Nazis closed the synagogues.

In November 1941, Jewish families started to be deported to various camps, although we didn't know that then. There was nervousness in the air as Jewish people lost their homes. We helped friends and neighbours pack their things, sadly saying goodbye and wishing them good luck. It was the end of a carefree era and I felt the seriousness of the times.

Then, in June 1942, my parents and I were called up and we too had to leave our home. We marched out of our house with the allotted fifty kilograms in a knapsack and into a transport destined for Theresienstadt. The local baker, Mr. Matys, who lived on the corner opposite our apartment with his wife and six children, watched smugly with his big belly protruding as we left home for the unknown.

FRED SPIEGEL

Context: Western Europe

Source: Fred Spiegel. *Once the Acacias Bloomed: Memories of a Childhood Lost* (edited by Maryann McLoughlin O'Donnell). Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2004, pp. 74–79. Used by permission.

While the story of Anne Frank is well known, that of Fred Spiegel has barely surfaced except among a limited few. Born in Dinslaken, Germany, in 1932, Spiegel and his sister, Edith,

were sent to live with relatives in Holland after Kristallnacht, the “Night of Broken Glass”—the anti-Jewish pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, when the Nazis destroyed Jewish homes, shops, and villages in Germany and Austria. Separated from their mother, the Spiegel children were subjected to persecution after the German army invaded and occupied the Netherlands in May 1940. Fred Spiegel was sent to the concentration camps at Vught, Westerbork, and Bergen-Belsen, and was only liberated on April 13, 1945. Later, he was reunited with his sister in England in the fall of 1945. Spiegel’s memoir, as seen through this extract, deepens our understanding of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of a child.

We were assembled early on the morning of May 23, 1943, and put on a train—destination Transit Camp Westerbork. I had just turned eleven. I was with my sister Edith, fifteen years old, Uncle Max, Aunt Paula, and cousin Alfred, twelve years old.

Westerbork had been established in 1939 by the Dutch, as a camp for German Jewish refugees who had crossed the border illegally after *Kristallnacht* and had nowhere to go. It was taken over by the Germans in 1942; they considered it a perfect place for a transit camp because of its location in north-eastern Holland in the middle of nowhere, near the German border, and with good railroad connections east. It had previously been well organized by the Jews themselves when the camp was under Dutch control. The Germans took over on July 1, 1942.

Westerbork was very crowded because nearly everybody had a deferment, or exemption from being transported east to the so-called resettlement or work camps. These deferments were given for various reasons: for “essential” workers at the camp and for foreign or enemy nationals. Sometimes, with enough money, deferments could be bought. Because of this, it became difficult to fill the trains heading east every Tuesday. However, it was a transit camp, not a concentration camp, and very much better than Vught.

The problem was the weekly transports east to the “resettlement or work camps.” We had noticed a very long train, consisting of cattle wagons standing on a siding. Inmates of Westerbork told us newcomers, “This is the train that takes Jews east to resettlement and work camps—every Tuesday.”

The lists of those to be deported were prepared by the Jewish Council within the camp and submitted by the head of the council, Kurt Schlesinger, to the German commander, Albert Konrad Gemmeke. In order to make things easier for themselves, the *Judenrat*, or Jewish Council (Jewish leaders

selected by the Nazis) often put all the people arriving the previous few days on the lists before they knew them and often before the new arrivals had the opportunity to obtain an exemption or deferment.

Soon after my arrival in Westerbork, I narrowly escaped being deported on one of these transports. . . .

We had arrived in Westerbork late Monday afternoon after about a six hour train ride, and we were immediately separated, my cousin and I in one huge barrack, my sister elsewhere, and my uncle and aunt also in different barracks. Most people in our barrack had arrived together with us. Yet our first night in Westerbork was uncomfortable. Nobody was able to sleep much that night. The barracks were huge, noisy, and very crowded; each barrack held about 500 to 1000 people. Bunks were stacked three high.

Very early in the morning, the barrack leader started to read out the names of the people to be put on the train that day. As my name and my cousin Alfred’s name was called, we walked towards the train, carrying the few belongings we were allowed to take with us. It was dawn and the walk to the train was very scary. Nearly everybody was crying, especially the little children. The people not going on that train were under total curfew and could neither leave their barracks nor look out of the few windows. The only people we saw were the German SS guards with their dogs, Dutch policemen, and the Jewish camp police, or *Ordnungsdienst* (OD). I saw nobody I knew, nor anyone from my family, except Alfred.

When the OD started to push us on the train, I panicked. Everything was so crowded. Some people cried, but most went quietly onto the train. I screamed loudly, “I don’t want to go onto this train.” When Alfred heard me screaming, he also started to scream. This caught the attention of an SS guard who asked a Dutch policeman what the screaming was all about. He apparently answered, “I think the children are afraid and do not want to go on the train.” The SS guard then immediately gave the order to take my cousin and me off that train. The same OD, who had been pushing us on, took us off, and we were put in a small room isolated from everybody else until after the train departed—without us. I did not realize at the time that I had narrowly escaped death.

As I found out years later, this was very unusual. There was always commotion when these trains left because nobody wanted to be crammed on the trains going to an unknown destination eastwards. However, it was indeed a rare occasion when a German guard ordered a Jew to be taken off a train destined for the gas chambers. The Germans preferred that the Jews went quietly and orderly. Apparently my screaming did not fit in with their plans.

Years later, I also found out that nearly everybody who had arrived from Vught the day before was on this train and sent to the death camp at Sobibor in Poland. There were no survivors. Between March and August 1943, about 35,000 Jews were transported from Westerbork to Sobibor. Only nineteen people are known to have survived.

Uncle Max and Aunt Paula had not been aware that we were almost deported. Immediately upon arrival in Westerbork, Uncle Max had applied for an exemption, not to be sent on one of those trains east. He had been a soldier in the German army in World War I and for this, for the time being, he had received an exemption. He thought this would keep all of us safe from being deported.

However, he soon realized, especially after what nearly happened to us, that his deferment would not apply to my sister and me because we were not his children. He felt it was his responsibility to try and save us. My uncle consulted with Kurt Schlesinger, the head of the Jewish council. Schlesinger suggested that my uncle put us on the so-called Weinreb deferment list. For a large amount of money paid to Weinreb, a German Jew living in Holland, people were put on a special list of people who would not be put on those transports east. My uncle was ready to do this, even though it meant that it would cost him almost all the money he still had hidden with non-Jewish friends.

Weinreb had been highly recommended because he was able to pay off the Nazis to save himself, his family, and other people who were willing to pay. My uncle decided to go ahead, but somehow at the last moment changed his mind. He then decided to go to see the German SS Camp *Kommandant*, Albert Gemmeker, even though everybody, including Kurt Schlesinger, strongly advised him against it, as this was considered very dangerous and might cost him his life. But he saw Gemmeker and tried to convince him that my sister and I were British citizens and as proof he brought with him the Red Cross letters we had received from my mother who was living in England at that time. We were foreign nationals. We had those Red Cross letters to prove it. I was never quite sure what transpired, whether we now had deferments as British citizens or if we were still on the Weinreb list.

About six weeks after this incident, my Uncle Max's exemption expired, as all exemptions and deferments eventually did in Westerbork. My uncle, aunt, and Alfred's names were on the list to be sent east to one of those "work or resettlement" camps. I spoke to my cousin before he left and I said to him, "I will see you soon." I believed that my sister and I would probably follow them, being sent on a later

transport. Alfred seemed to have a premonition that this would not happen. He was crying and said, "I don't think so." Unfortunately he was right; as I found out after the war, they were deported to Sobibor and killed in the gas chambers on July 2, 1943.

Even though he would never know, my uncle's maneuvering had succeeded in keeping us off those trains to Sobibor and Auschwitz and allowed us to stay in Westerbork.

We could remain in Westerbork for the time being as we apparently were considered "Foreign Nationals" because our mother was living in Leeds, England, as an *au pair*, a foreign maid. We would now live in the orphanage of Transit Camp Westerbork, which was still under the jurisdiction of *Kommandant* Gemmeker.

JOSEPH STEINBERG

Context: Central Europe

Source: Joseph Steinberg and Maryann McLoughlin. *Death, Hideous, Hovers Overhead: A Memoir of the Hungarian Labor Service*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2014, pp. 24–25, 27–30. Used by permission.

It is sometimes an overlooked fact that Hungary was an ally of Germany in its invasion of the Soviet Union, and that the Hungarian military drafted thousands of Jews into labor battalions to serve on the Eastern Front. Joseph Steinberg, who tells his story in the third person, had a brother who was in one such unit; the good news he received was not just that his brother had survived this experience, but that he had escaped his captivity and joined the Red Army. By October 1944 the Russians were advancing on Budapest; the city was in a state of siege by Christmas. These events ultimately led to the end of the Holocaust for many of Hungary's Jews, though Joseph was among those who were instead marched at gunpoint out of Budapest on a death march into Austria, as this account describes.

While Joseph was in the labor brigade at Komáron, his brother Mark and many other Jews and political prisoners were in labor battalions on the Eastern Front aiding the Hungarian army that at that time was fighting alongside the *Wehrmacht* (German army). Most of them died of disease, cold or malnutrition. Others were killed fighting, especially at Stalingrad.

At the battle of Stalingrad, in January 1943, the Red Army had broken through at the Don River, obliterating the Second Hungarian Army, and some 40,000 forced laborers, Jews and political prisoners whose job it had been to clear minefields, died or were captured by the Soviets. In this action, Hungarian combat fatalities jumped by 80,000.

After the German defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943, Joseph remembers, Miklós Horthy, the Regent, went on the radio, addressing Hungarian soldiers. He told them not to fight any longer with the Germans. Horthy wanted to pull out of the alliance with Germany. This was dangerous for Hungary and for the Jews of Budapest who had been relatively sheltered up to this point.

But during this period, Joseph did have some good news. His older brother Mark, a forced laborer at Stalingrad for the Hungarian army, had joined up with the Czech army in Russia. He eventually followed the Red army all the way to Prague, Czechoslovakia. Travelling in a little truck with a doctor, he supplied medicine for the soldiers. Joseph found out Mark was alive because he had heard that Mark had sent a postcard to one of their neighbors in Svalyava. . . .

In October 1944, the Soviet army marched past Esztergom labor camp where Joseph had been sent from Komáron. They stopped, wanting to help the brigade. They gave labor members food. They also gave them transit papers, so they could travel by train to Budapest.

At this time the labor brigade received *schutzpass* (safe passage) documents from Switzerland. This meant that they were a protected (*védelem*) company, a company that enjoyed the protection of a neutral country such as Switzerland. Influential Jewish men, perhaps Joel Brand or Rudolph Kastner, who were in negotiation with Adolf Eichmann, chief of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), to trade safe passage for Jews in exchange for goods such as trucks to aid the war effort, had managed to get these passes for the labor brigade members.

They were told they could stay in a safe house already occupied by other men from the labor camps until the end of the war, but they stayed only for one night. They were in a five-storey building with two sub-basements. Joseph sheltered in one of the sub-basements at night during the heavy bombings by the Soviets. That night he fell asleep and when he awoke, he found that 400 people had been forced on death marches, ending up in concentration camps. Some of these were the men who were upstairs in the “safe” house. Others on that death march were young women who had worked next door in the sugar factory.

They were taken away by Germans, assisted by Hungarian soldiers.

The next morning after a night of bombing, two Hungarian soldiers came in with rifles. They told Joseph and the others: “We are your friends. Don’t worry.” Then they lined up the group and took them to a bunker that was nearby. As they were leading them, Joseph saw German tanks retreating from Budapest. The Hungarian soldiers marched them past the Germans to a bunker.

After a day and a night in the bunker, Joseph heard someone say that it was cold outside. Then a Soviet soldier with a machine gun opened up the bunker door. Because Joseph spoke Czech, he was able to explain that they were Jews with a labor company. When the fighting subsided, they were marched toward the areas that the Red army had already occupied. Some from their group went their own way—some of the women and three brothers. The women wanted to get away from the Soviet soldiers who had a reputation for assaulting women. A Jewish Soviet officer had tried to make the soldiers behave. This behavior by the Red army soldiers became a huge problem for women, not only the women of Budapest but also the women in the countries the Soviets passed through on their way to Berlin and especially in Berlin.

The siege of Budapest began on Christmas Eve 1944. The Red army continued the siege of Budapest until February 1945. . . .

At least 120,000 of the 200,000 Budapest Jews survived the siege: around 80,000 in the only remaining ghetto in Europe; another 20,000 living in houses protected by neutral countries like Switzerland; and another 20,000 hidden by Christian families.

Before the siege was over, Joseph, along with other labor brigade members, was marched to the border between Hungary and Austria to Kőszeg labor camp in Vas County, Hungary. The Hungarians were still allied with the Germans who needed slave laborers. Kőszeg labor camp (German: Guns) had been established in late 1944. With the approach of the Red army in 1945, the camp was liquidated. . . .

Joseph was spared the horrors of a death march because he had escaped. In March 1945, the Hungarian commander, Béla Király, later recognized as “Righteous among the Nations” by Yad Vashem, surrendered Kőszeg to spare it further destruction.

Joseph said that it felt tremendous to be free, to realize that he would not be deported to a death camp. His first concern, however, was his family. He wanted to find out who had survived.

MAX STERN

Context: Central Europe

Source: Max Stern. *My Stamp on Life*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003, pp. 40–47. Used by permission.

During the war years, a Slovak Jew, Max Stern, managed to hold body and soul together through various means until, in late 1944, it appeared as though his worst fears would finally be realized. With the certain knowledge that the Nazis were about to close in on the Jews of Bratislava, he decided that it would be best for him to go on the run. In hiding in various towns and villages, he received assistance from friends along the way, but always had to be careful lest tell-tale signs of his hiding place be revealed. Here he shows some of the pitfalls that befell those in hiding, as well as some of the necessary stratagems that needed to be addressed if these pitfalls were to be overcome.

As Hitler’s “Final Solution” gathered pace, we knew the time was not far off when we would all need a hiding place. I had contacts through the underground and forged Aryan papers, at that time in the name of Milan Stransky—with the initials M.S. for Max Stern. I also obtained a forged Argentine passport I never had the opportunity to use.

There was a German prisoner in Bratislava, a Volksdeutscher, who helped us a lot. I think he moved to Israel after the war. He printed anything we wanted—forged birth certificates, baptism certificates, passports. I still have a forged baptism certificate made out for my cousin. We chose Argentinian passports because it would have been too easy for the authorities to check on us if we had passports for other European countries. Argentina was too far away to check. We did not always have to pay for these forged documents, sometimes people who worked for the underground handed them out. If you had good contacts, good connections, you could get anything. We could also obtain genuine blank identity cards from the police. We just inserted our own names and photos.

In October 1944, late on the night of Yom Kippur, when most of the Jews were home after a day of prayers, the Germans decided to make our city “Juden rein”—cleansed of Jews. All Jews were to be immediately deported and all papers of exemption declared invalid. I’m not a great believer in miracles but one of them occurred that fateful night, when the Gestapo bypassed the house we lived in. We all slept

through the night and had no idea what was happening around us.

The next morning I left home, said goodbye to my parents and went to work. I never saw them again. I was twenty-three years old. As I walked down the street on that fateful day, I saw columns of people being led towards the railway station by S.S. guards with machine guns. I ran to police headquarters and asked my friends what was happening. They said: “Max we can’t help you anymore, go and hide.” The order had come through that Slovakia must be “Juden rein” and nothing could protect the Jews any more.

A long time before this, the family had discussed where we would all go into hiding when the need arose. Everybody had something organized. My father, mother, two sisters and two small brothers had arranged to hide in the greengrocer’s shop in the front of our building. That was where we always bought our fruit and he knew us very well. But my mother developed pneumonia and became very sick. My parents found it very hard to cope with all the children in hiding and the fruiterer became afraid. After they had been with him only two or three weeks he called the Gestapo and handed them in. It was very dangerous for him to hide them. If caught, he risked being deported himself. I don’t know whether my father paid him or not. I never came in contact with that man again, though I have a photo of him with my little brother Josi. My family was very, very unlucky.

Many years later I talked with other people who had been in hiding. We all agreed it was often worse than being in the camps. It was completely nerve wracking—we were afraid of every little noise and lived in constant fear of being caught. It’s a strange thing—when you are finally caught, you really couldn’t care less any more. It was often a relief.

My family was moved to a special camp, Marianka, for Jews with foreign papers, so called “foreign nationals.” Marianka is an old castle near Bratislava. My family all had forged Argentinian passports complete with a visa and an entry stamp, as well as proper police registration of their place of residence. Almost everybody had some kind of a forged document saying they were born Catholic or Protestant but these didn’t help. The Germans were always one step ahead of us.

Several hundred people were held in Marianka. My father sent me a message saying they were being well treated and had enough food, even meat. He wrote that it was safe there, that I should join them. The message was brought to me in hiding by Arnold, a detective in the Ustredna Statna Bezpecnost—the Central Security Police. I was very tempted to go,

but Arnold told me to stay put, as “you never know what the Germans are planning.” I took his advice and that probably saved my life. Later Arnold visited me in my hiding place and even took me to the barber for a haircut.

He always said you can’t trust the Germans. They were alerted to the fact that there were suddenly hundreds of Argentinian citizens in Bratislava. At the outbreak of the Second World War only three were officially registered. Arnold insisted I stay in hiding until we were convinced these passports would be recognized by the Germans.

While in hiding I was informed through an outside contact that all detainees at Marianka were deported on a special train which went directly to Auschwitz. Before they left I had a despondent letter from my father, but never heard from him again. Unfortunately my father, my mother, my brothers and sisters, my grandmother Marie, then in her late 80’s, together with my uncles Hugo, Dudi and their families were all in the same transport.

When I went into hiding immediately after the fateful Yom Kippur night of October 1944, I lost absolutely everything. I arrived at the place where my friends had previously arranged to meet in case of such an emergency, with only the clothes I was wearing, nothing else. Kiki Danzig, Laci Blumgrund and his girlfriend Erika Friedlieb arrived later in the morning. They too were really fortunate not to be caught on that critical night. My school friend, Fritz Bruck, with whom I had been imprisoned, did not make it to our hiding place and was deported to Auschwitz.

Erika had been living as an illegal in Hungary with her parents for some time, then came back to Bratislava and lived with Laci’s parents. . . .

Our hiding place was in one of the large picture theatres in the city, “The Redoute.” This was a famous and very beautiful baroque building, built in 1912. In peace time, balls, weddings of prominent people, concerts, dances, theatre performances and other events took place in its large ballroom. There was a high-class elegant café on the ground floor. Today it is the home of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra.

The underground movement had referred us to the theatre’s operator, Mr Alfons Drobny, a Czech national. He was a small man, about five feet high and wore a moustache. He was the uncle of Jaroslav Drobny, a very famous tennis player. Alfons Drobny was a wonderful person and risked his life purely for humanitarian reasons. A deeply religious Catholic, he never accepted or demanded any payment in return for what he did for us. Drobny supplied us with food and I doubt whether we had any money to pay him at that time. He

took great risks and the obvious consequences did not bother him. Leo Winter, the assistant projectionist, lived under the cover of Aryan papers and was actually employed in the theatre. We knew he was a Jew and he helped us when he could. Drobny had an assistant Joseph, who also helped us. . . .

Our hiding place was between the ceiling of the theatre and the roof. Here we placed stretchers and prepared food. The projection room was closed until five o’clock in the evening, during which time we were free to move around. The projectionist had another young apprentice we had to avoid however, so during screenings we had to leave the projection room and hide on the censors’ balcony, behind a curtain.

The picture theatre was poorly attended during the war, so only the ground floor was open. The balcony and private boxes remained closed. There were three film sessions—five till seven, seven to nine and nine to eleven o’clock. We watched them all from one of the closed boxes, three times a night. After a week or two we could act out the whole picture amongst ourselves, from memory—some were in German, others in Slovak. That is how we passed our time during the day.

The newsreels showed a lot of propaganda. Under the title “Wehrmacht News,” they showed the German army successfully advancing in Russia, but whenever they announced that “the heroic troops defended their territory” in such and such a city, we knew they were actually retreating. We heard about the battles in northern Italy and the liberation of North Africa, as we watched newsreels from various fronts in North Africa, Morocco and Egypt. We were amused when the Germans reported they had captured Tobruk. The next day they announced they had “withdrawn to secure positions.” The Germans never admitted they had been defeated or pushed out of anywhere.

In hiding it was very difficult for all of us, as there was no privacy. All the things you take for granted in everyday life became a problem. You can do with little food for a few days, but you cannot do without water and toilet facilities.

The disposal of human waste posed lots of problems for us, as there were no toilets. Next door to the projection room was a music school. They had evening classes between five and seven in the evenings, teaching violin to young boys. Mr Drobny managed to get a violin case for us and we wrapped the human waste in newspaper and put it to the side. After the musicians finished their classes, one of us would walk out with them, carrying the violin case. We would then deposit the waste in the park downstairs and return to the hiding place.

We also needed haircuts. This was when my friend Arnold from the police took us to a hairdresser who helped us and

never charged us for his services. These visits were dangerous, but we felt safe accompanied by a police officer.

Besides the food Drobny brought us, we also had a supply of lard hanging under the roof. It was winter so the cold kept it in good condition. We could cut a slice off it whenever we got hungry. Sometimes we had nothing else to eat. We also had some Hungarian salami, which keeps fresh for months.

WILLIE STERNER

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Willie Sterner. *The Shadows Behind Me*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 63–75. Used by permission.

The story of the German industrialist, war profiteer, and Nazi party member Oskar Schindler is now well known. That through his actions more than 1,200 Jews were saved from certain death at the hands of the Nazis has also been established conclusively. Several of those he saved have left their accounts of life with Schindler, including Willie Sterner, part of whose account is reproduced in the testimony that follows. The full story of Schindler inevitably involves a discussion of the Nazi commandant of the notorious Płaszów concentration camp, Amon Göth, but Willie's account here begins with him leaving the camp for Schindler's Emalia factory, located outside of Płaszów. It is a fascinating story, and a priceless addition to the legend of Oskar Schindler, "his" Jews, and the life-saving work in which he engaged.

I had never heard of Oskar Schindler or the Deutsche Emailwaren Fabrik, but I was happy to leave Płaszów. I thanked my friend Greenberg for keeping his promise and said goodbye. Greenberg said that he wished he could go with me because he had heard that things were very different at Schindler's place. I was ready to see what was different and hoped that Greenberg was right.

A guard took me to the Emalia, the enamel factory. A guardhouse stood on the left side of the front entrance. I gave my papers to the guard and he took me to the office on the right side of the entrance. My heart was beating furiously—who knew what would happen in this new place? I was greeted by Schindler's secretary, a lovely young Polish woman who smiled at me—that was a pleasant surprise—and said that I was all registered to start work. She said that I would be fine there, that I shouldn't be scared, that I was in a good place. Then she wished me luck.

My new camp was at the back of the enamel factory. Compared to Płaszów, the camp was small. The barracks were much smaller and there weren't as many barracks nor as many inmates in them. The camp looked a little better than Płaszów, but it was still a labour camp officially under the command of Amon Göth.

I asked a Jewish man who worked there if conditions in this camp were the same as Płaszów and he said that they weren't, that I would be safe because of the fine director Oskar Schindler. We were much better off than people in all the other camps, he told me, even if we were affiliated with Płaszów. We were very lucky to be here because we were being watched over by an angel. I felt better after talking to him and hoped that it would turn out to be true.

The next morning I was called to Oskar Schindler's office. He was a tall man with a friendly smile and he greeted me warmly. I was surprised that a German industrialist would talk to me not as a Jew but as a normal person. When he asked me for my name and I told him that it was Willie Sterner, he said that he would call me Willie. He talked to me the way a proper boss talks to a worker. I immediately felt more relaxed and comfortable with him. I wasn't afraid of him. I thought that I must have been having a nice dream because I knew that Schindler was a member of the Nazi party, and I didn't expect decent treatment from a Nazi.

Schindler asked me if I knew how to retouch old, damaged oil paintings. I said yes, that I had done that kind of work in Krakow. At the technical school for painters, I had helped my art teacher Professor Wagner retouch oil paintings at the Wawel Palace. I had also refinished antique furniture, so I said yes with confidence. Smiling, Schindler said that I would work out well there.

I needed tools, tubes of oil paint, and some dryer and turpentine, so Schindler drove me in his fancy car to buy the materials for my work. I was a free man for a few hours. Even though, when we got back to the Emalia, I lost my freedom again, my good friend Greenberg had been right—Schindler's camp was a much better place. I was very grateful to Greenberg and wished that he could come too.

I met other Jews at the Emalia—about 1,000 worked at the factory. A Mr. D. Shein (I don't remember his first name) was a nice man—he was a spray-painting specialist. Victor Dortheimer was a house painter from Krakow; I had known him before the war. Itzhak Stern, who worked as a bookkeeper, wasn't much of a talker, nor was he a particularly friendly person—he was always busy with his books. Another man I met was Abraham Bankier from Olkusz,

Poland. He had been the manager of Emalia before the war, and Schindler took pity on him and gave him a job. Bankier worked in the Emalia as the chief of the warehouse.

Mr. Wohlfeiler, a sign painter, was a gentle older man. Wohlfeiler's hands were weak, making it difficult for him to paint a straight line with his paintbrush. Schindler knew about Wohlfeiler's problem, so he told me to help him paint his signs and I said that I would do so gladly. Wohlfeiler was a very experienced sign painter and I learned a lot from him. I even learned how to do gold lettering.

The camp at Emalia also had its own Jewish police force, but there weren't many officers on it. The commandant, Zelinger, was a decent man from Olkusz. The Jewish police treated us well because Oskar Schindler had ordered it.

Although life at Schindler's place was a little more humane, as Jews, we still weren't free people. We lived with the same rules as in the camp at Płaszów and we were locked up just as we had been there. We didn't have much to wear and what clothing we had was worn and dirty. The small barracks in the camp, located about five minutes' walk behind the factory, were as sparsely furnished as the ones in Płaszów had been. We also lived with terrible nonstop noise, day and night, from large heavy machines in a nearby factory, but after a while I got used to it. We had no choice but to live with it. The truth is that we remained prisoners in a labour camp, but—thanks to Schindler's protection—nobody was beaten up or killed.

We also worked with Poles in the Emalia factory. Our Polish co-workers were paid employees who could go home to their families and friends at the end of the day—they were free people, free to walk around the streets of Krakow after work. I missed going home to my loving family. The Polish workers were the tradesmen in the Emalia—they had worked there before the war. The Jewish workers were their helpers. The Poles were very helpful to us and gave us news about the war, but they either didn't know our families or were afraid to tell us the truth. I enjoyed working with the Poles. Through these Polish workers I again started trying to make arrangements to join the Polish partisans.

The enamel factory produced pottery, dinner plates, cups, and pots and pans for the German army and Nazi party members. Schindler sold about 60% of our products on the black market, so he had plenty of money to spend on the Nazi big shots. Schindler bribed Nazi officers and party members with gold, cash, furs and jewellery, and hosted lavish parties with gourmet food, champagne and young, beautiful women. He did all of this to stay in the good graces of the patriotic

and fanatical Nazis. Schindler did not have an easy time—he always had to be careful and alert. If he had made any wrong moves with the Nazis, we would all have been dead—including him—but he was much smarter than them.

The Jews at the Emalia were all very lucky that our director was Oskar Schindler. He had charisma and he did a terrific job of watching over us. Determined to keep us away from all danger, he put his own life in danger. In our workplace, we had old people and young people. If they had been in another camp, they would have been killed because, according to the Nazis, they were not productive. But in the Emalia they were protected by Schindler, who made false documents for them. A sixty-eight-year-old man became forty-nine years old. A twelve-year-old boy became fifteen years old. There was another man who had only one arm. The Nazis were ready to kill him, but Schindler told them that this man did specialized work on important parts and that he did a delicate job with his fingers. This one-armed man, he told them, was the only man who could do the job. The Jewish man was then safe. Schindler made miracles happen that nobody else could. It is hard to describe how heroic he was. I was so glad that I was transferred to his camp.

At the Emalia I became Schindler's art restorer, retouching all his damaged oil paintings. I loved the artistry of the work and it wasn't a grueling job. I matched the colours to the old paint to make a damaged oil painting look beautiful again. The task took time, precision, concentration and some knowledge of art painting. I retouched and finished antique furniture as well. My workplace was upstairs next to Itzhak Stern's office. Stern sometimes watched me work and asked, "Are you an artist?" I said, "No, I'm a housepainter, but I have some knowledge of art painting." As I've already mentioned, though, Stern didn't talk much. I also did some work for high-ranking Nazis by decorating cups, dinner plates, mugs, and pots and pans with German slogans in gothic letters for birthdays and other important occasions for the Nazis from Berlin.

Schindler was very friendly and always talked to me. He had time for me even though I was a Jew. It was a real pleasure to have a conversation with him. He was a real mensch (a decent and honorable person). He always gave me news about the war, telling me, "Willie, don't worry. The war will be over soon." I knew he wanted to give me hope. I sometimes smoked cigarettes with him—he was a chain smoker—and he always "forgot" to take his cigarettes with him so that I could have them. We sometimes had a small glass of *Schnaps* (fruit liqueur) as well. Oskar Schindler was

a wonderful boss. I met his elegant wife, Emilie Schindler, when she came to visit her husband. Schindler introduced us by telling her, “This is Willie, the *Kunstmaler* (art painter).” After being introduced to me as Frau Schindler, she talked to me for a few minutes.

As a member of the Nazi party, Schindler had easy access to high-ranking Nazis, even in Berlin. Amon Göth was still our boss, but Schindler kept Göth away from us. It cost a lot of money, but he really did a good job of it. Schindler was like a father to me and his other Jewish workers. He was always there when trouble came to our people, but I didn’t know how long he would be able to protect us from Nazi tyranny and mass murder. He was playing at a dangerous game with the Nazis, but I trusted him.

I made some very nice artwork for Schindler. He was pleased, so he came to me with a gift certificate, telling me to take it to the warehouse to pick up my gift. Abraham Bankier, who, as I’ve said, was in charge of the warehouse, took the paper, looked at it and told me that I didn’t need all those things. He gave me a few cigarettes and said, “That’s all.” So I told him to keep the cigarettes for himself. I told him that I didn’t need his charity. I was really angry, so I told him that he was behaving like a small, stupid Nazi. After that, Bankier and I were no longer on friendly terms.

The next morning, I was retouching an oil painting in my workplace when Schindler came in. He was in a cheerful mood and after he said good morning, he asked me how I liked my gift. I told him that I didn’t get it because Bankier had told me that he didn’t have those articles in the warehouse. Schindler looked at me with disbelief and disappointment. He told me to come with him to the warehouse. When we got there, Schindler asked Bankier why he hadn’t given me any gift and Bankier got red in the face. In front of me, Schindler told Bankier that he hoped this wouldn’t happen again. I would get many more gifts, Schindler said, and he was sure Bankier would have enough merchandise in the warehouse to give me them. Then Bankier got all the merchandise that Schindler had ordered for me.

If this incident had happened with another German, Bankier would have received fifty lashes and lost his job or been shot. Bankier was lucky it was Schindler. The bonus I received was very nice—shoes, a shirt, coveralls, cigarettes and soap. I was sure that Bankier hated me now, but I didn’t care about him. Although Schindler was a Nazi and Bankier was a Jew, I preferred the Nazi Oskar Schindler.

While I was at the Emalia, Schindler decided to remodel his office, so I did a special job for him. He wanted a natural finish on the wood paneling and didn’t want me to use any

stain so the wood grain would show through. I’d never done a job like that before, so I had to think about how to do it. I decided to burn the top layer of the wood from the side with a hand torch. The fire caught only the top of the grain, and I was very pleased with the effect. After this part was done, I put three coats of clear varnish on the wood to create a beautiful natural finish. Schindler liked the finish very much, so I got another bonus certificate. I had no more problems with Bankier, but he didn’t talk to me—he definitely wasn’t gracious when he gave me my bonus.

Another job that I did was to paint a large map of Europe on one of the walls in the big dining room. I had never painted a map of Europe and only had a small printed map to work from, but the job came out professionally and I was happy with my map. Stern even came out of his office to tell me that I had done a nice job and asked me a second time if I was an artist. I told him again that I was a house painter, but that I now considered myself an amateur artist as well.

When I was nearly finished painting the map of Europe, Schindler came straight to me and, pointing to a place on the map with his finger, told me how stupid the Nazis were. He told me that the stupid German army was in disarray and had no chance against the Allies. Schindler was excited and had a smile on his face as he told me this. I didn’t know what to say, so I said nothing to be on the safe side.

It was a real pleasure for me to see how happy Schindler was that the Germans were losing on the battle front. He was an inspiration to our people. He gave us hope every day to stay on our feet, to endure our hard lives and hope for a better future. It felt good just being around him.

One day, while I was retouching an oil painting, I overheard a conversation in the office next door. Schindler was saying in a loud voice, “No, I cannot bring your parents from Płaszów—I don’t have much power there.” A young Jewish woman was in his office, with false non-Jewish identity papers from another country, a free person in Krakow. She was pleading with him and crying, but he said that he couldn’t help. The young woman left disappointed, but the next day her parents arrived at Emilia from Płaszów and their daughter came to visit. What a happy reunion! It was something only Schindler could have done. We were very happy for them.

On another day—I remember that it was a very hot day—I got nervous when I saw an SS unit arrive from Płaszów. They surrounded and entered the Emalia camp to take 10 per cent of our Jewish workers. All the camps affiliated with Płaszów—including ours—had been ordered to

send 10 per cent of their Jewish workers to be shot in the main camp. Commander Amon Göth had given the order and the SS had a free hand to take us because Oskar Schindler was out at the time.

The SS put all the Jewish inmates in a line in front of our barracks and selected who would go to Płaszów. I was one of the “lucky” ones chosen. As the SS army trucks waited to load up the victims, I knew it was the end of me. The rest of the chosen victims and I were all scared and shaken up. We were going to die.

Just then, our luck changed. Schindler’s private secretary—the beautiful, good-natured young Polish woman—saw the SS from Płaszów in the camp and called Schindler on the telephone to tell him what was going on. Schindler then called the Emilia guard commandant and gave him the order that no one was to leave the camp until he returned. We really enjoyed seeing the Emilia camp guards watching over the SS so they couldn’t take us to Płaszów. But I was so scared. We were all worried about losing our lives.

It wasn’t long before Schindler’s car sped into the camp like a jet. This was something beautiful to see—Schindler was with us. When he arrived, we felt some hope. But I also knew Commandant Amon Göth only too well. We waited to see whether we would survive or die.

Schindler was both furious and nervous. He took the SS commandant into his car and they drove to Płaszów to speak to Amon Göth. I’m sure that Schindler paid a very high price to get Göth to change his order. Then Schindler and the SS commandant returned to the Emalia and the SS commandant and his men drove back to Płaszów with empty military trucks. We were left behind—alive—in the Emalia camp thanks to our protector Oskar Schindler and his fine Polish secretary. They had saved us from a massacre.

From then on, Göth sent no more such orders to our camp. But other camps affiliated with Płaszów remained in danger because the 10 per cent muster still applied to them. They didn’t have angels like Oskar Schindler to protect them.

One morning not long after this terrifying event, Schindler called all the Jewish inmates to a meeting and gave a speech. He told us that he was going to create a strictly Jewish shift of workers at the plant. He wanted to make sure that all the Jewish workers survived and if we were deemed skilled, essential workers we would have more of a chance. As I’ve explained, up to this point the Jews had worked side by side with the Poles at the plant. The Polish tradesmen worked at the jobs that required experience, while the Jewish workers assisted them. In Schindler’s plan, however, a Jewish shift would take over the plant whenever the Nazis came for a big

inspection so the Jews would be seen as essential workers. The Polish workers would go home for the day, with pay.

We were very keen to make this clever plan work. We had little experience in making enamel products, but we learned fast from our Polish co-workers. Luckily, we didn’t have bad capos and Nazi sadists to make our lives more difficult. The camp was also only five minutes walking distance from the plant, so we wouldn’t have any problem getting there quickly if an inspection occurred with little warning.

We worked conscientiously to produce good work. We didn’t want to disappoint our director and protector, Oskar Schindler. We washed all the metals with a strong acid and chemicals and after the washing, put the metal pots, pans, cups and plates into big paint barrels. The paint was heavy and we couldn’t use brushes. Instead, using long pliers, we dipped the metal items in and took them out, shook them so that the paint spread evenly, and then took them to the drying area. Using long pliers again, we put the dry pots, pans, plates and cups into a barrel of finishing enamel. When we took them out, we shook the enamel to even it out, took the enamel articles to dry and then baked them in a very hot oven. The finished products came out beautifully and we felt real satisfaction in the job we had done.

Our people weren’t very strong, but they had the will to make this project work. Schindler was proud because the Jewish shift did the best work possible to help him save us. I wanted to show Schindler that we deserved to be saved, that we all appreciated his protection and that we would never let him down, so even in my spare time I volunteered at the plant to help out the Jewish shift.

A large group of Nazis did come from Berlin to inspect the factory. Schindler was smart, as usual. Before the inspection took place, he invited the Nazis to lunch and served them the best champagne and caviar. He gave gifts to the inspectors such as expensive oil paintings, gold, fur coats for their wives and cash. Schindler knew how to handle the German top brass—the inspection of the factory and camp was a success. Schindler was a genius at saving our lives.

Some time after this, Commander Amon Göth and his SS man, Green, came from Płaszów to inspect the Emalia camp. Göth and Schindler walked around our camp, with Green following behind. Green wasn’t too smart, but he was serious about the inspection and looked for any problems he could find with the Jewish workers. Göth, however, had come to mooch some cash from Schindler. The inspection was just an excuse.

After snooping around for a while, Green found a Jewish man named Chaskel whom he didn’t like. Green told Chaskel

to walk in front of him to a large hole in the middle of the camp, then ordered him to drop his pants. Chaskel thought that Green wanted to give him lashes. (Whipping Jews was normal in all other camps but not in the Emalia camp.) While he was waiting for the lashes, Chaskel turned his head and saw Green reaching for his revolver, so he started running toward Schindler and Göth.

With his revolver in his hand, Green ran after Chaskel, but couldn't shoot because he was afraid that he might accidentally hit Schindler or Göth. When he got closer to Schindler, Chaskel started to cry and said in Yiddish that he was the best worker there and that the SS man wanted to shoot him. Smiling, Göth watched the incident with great enjoyment. Schindler took Green aside and offered him a deal. Schindler told him that he needed Chaskel at work because he was a specialist and offered Green two bottles of *Schnaps* to let Chaskel go free. Green agreed, but said that the Jewish man had to be punished because he had tried to run away from him. Green ordered ten lashes, but Schindler told him that five lashes was enough because Chaskel had to be fit enough to go to work at a hard job. Green agreed to give Chaskel only five lashes. Göth stood nearby watching Green and Schindler negotiate. But Schindler was smart enough to deal directly with Green. If Göth had intervened, the deal would have been very expensive. Schindler was always clever at making deals with the Nazis. Schindler saved Chaskel's life and I was proud of him.

On another occasion, all the Jewish and Polish workers were eating in the factory's dining room. An SS man from Płaszów got very upset at what he saw and started screaming, "Juden raus!" (Jews, get out!). He told the Jewish workers that they had no right to eat with the Poles. It was *Rassenschande*, a racial disgrace. So we had to start eating our lunches outside.

When he found out what the SS man had done to us, Schindler got angry. He gave an order to demolish the dining room, so that all the Poles and Jewish workers had to eat outside. Schindler made sure that, at least in the Emilia, our people weren't humiliated by the Nazis.

One morning while I was retouching an oil painting, Schindler came into my workplace to lecture me about sabotage. He was very nervous and his face was white. Schindler asked me why I wasn't working and why I wasn't letting others work. I was really surprised to hear him talk to me like that. I knew that he liked me very much. I asked him who had told him such a terrible lie. He said that Victor Dortheimer had reported me to the office. I had known Victor Dortheimer before the war. He had been a house painter like me

in Krakow, and he now worked in the Emilia as a house painter. I had done nothing bad to him and was, I thought, on good terms with him, so I had a hard time understanding why he had reported me to the office for sabotage.

Schindler told me that he would normally have to send a report like this to Płaszów and that if Göth received such a report, I would be shot for sabotage. But Schindler was too good and smart for this, so he told me to avoid Dortheimer and not to even talk to him. He wasn't a foreman or a kapo or my boss. Schindler advised Dortheimer just to get back to work—he didn't want to hear any more complaints from him. Schindler told me not to talk about this stupid incident any more, and Schindler's relationship with me returned to what it had been before the "Sabotage" incident. I still don't know why Dortheimer did what he did, but I do know that if another German had been in Schindler's place, he wouldn't have questioned me. I would have been guilty as charged and shot for sabotage immediately.

The fact is that Jews did find small ways to sabotage things—often by working as slowly as possible. Schindler knew that we weren't killing ourselves for the Germans. That was OK with him. He understood Jewish feelings toward Nazi brutality. I think he was even glad, only too happy to keep silent.

There was a small ammunition plant at Schindler's factory. Jewish workers made grenade parts for the German army, but we didn't want to help the Nazi war machine, so as we worked, we did some damage to some of the finished products. We also never produced as much as the plant inspector was expecting. He was an evil Nazi—a military type—and our passive resistance made him furious. He prepared a report saying that production was down in the ammunition plant because of Jewish sabotage, and threatened to send the report to Płaszów. That report posed a serious threat to the Jewish workers—we would all be shot—but Schindler got a copy of the report, called the German manager into his office and told him that if he didn't destroy it, Schindler would make sure that he got transferred to the Soviet front. After this incident, the manager actually became friendly to all the Jewish workers. Production—and the same small sabotage—continued as before.

I remember another episode when two house painters were working on the stairwell that went up to Schindler's office. They were lying on the steps because they weren't feeling well, and were talking to me when Schindler came along. He told the two painters that if they didn't feel well, they should come with him and he would give them something to help. I went along, and Schindler gave us some liquor to

drink. It was really good. He told us that we'd be fine now. Any other German who knew that Jews didn't feel well on the job would have shot them.

I was lucky and proud to have known Oskar Schindler and to have worked for him. I will always remember his great help and protection. He will always be my hero and I will always think of him as my best friend. He did much more for us than I could write about. I will never forget him.

NINA STONE

Context: Central Europe

Source: Nina Stone. *Born to Survive: A Long Journey to Freedom*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Lamm Jewish Library of Australia, 2015, pp. 28–39. Used by permission.

The experience of Nina Stone, a small Jewish child from Poland, was as confusing as it must have been frightening. After escaping from the Nazis with her mother and grandmother, she was placed in a Catholic orphanage in Hungary, where she resisted the temptation to become a Christian in circumstances where doing so would have made her life much easier. The account here shows the experience of separation and concealment from a child's perspective, but is interspersed with extracts from the testimony of Nina's mother, as well. The result is a dual memoir that provides evidence of Nina's experience in layers, offering a richness of understanding sometimes lacking in other testimonies.

My mother heard they were taking children to extermination camps because the Nazis had decided they were not an asset. Somehow she got hold of someone my uncle knew in Budapest. Her name was Klara. She came to Riese, picked me up and took me to an orphanage in Budapest. My mother sent me off with a tiny old brown suitcase and said that if we could not meet after the war I would find the names and addresses of my grandmother's relatives in the USA carefully hidden between the two layers of cardboard the suitcase was made from. Someone would help me find them. That was the only security I had, besides my portion of bread.

My father was in the Szabolcz internment camp in Budapest. When I was on my way to the orphanage with Klara, I managed to spend a few hours with him at that camp. We had been separated for a long time and I really enjoyed my time with him.

It must have been terribly hard for my mother to send me away. . . .

For the first time since the war had begun I was totally on my own. There were many children in the orphanage, but I didn't mix well. Not only did I not know the language, though I was picking it up very quickly, I was a loner. The other children frightened me a little because they were so dirty and bedraggled, though I was too. I hated the orphanage and couldn't eat the food even though I was hungry. They gave us thick pea soup which stuck in my throat and I used to hide it. All the food was thick, like turnip and kohlrabi in thick sauce I could not swallow. But there were also jars of tiny little pickled fish I loved to eat with a scrap of bread.

I don't know how long I was in the orphanage—a few months. When they asked me where my parents were I said they were dead; I had killed them off in my mind. I was an orphan, just like the others. It was a kind of survival instinct to think the worst.

Many of the children fell sick as a result of an epidemic of scarlet fever and I caught it too. I was delirious with high fever and my teeth started to become loose. The Jewish lady Klara, who had brought me to the orphanage, was a social worker who knew my uncle Artur, as well as Raoul Wallenberg and a lot of other influential people. She came to see me, told my uncle I was dying and somehow they managed to get me out of there. I don't know how. I think I was very close to death when I left the orphanage. I can remember people looking down at me in bed and I could hardly see. Everything seemed very blurry.

Through the help of Klara I landed in a beautiful villa in Guggerhegy, a suburb of Budapest. The house was on a hill and out of danger and the owner had about twelve Jewish children staying there, along with a young couple with a baby to look after us. They let me help with the baby and I was happy because for the first time in my life I had children to play with. The young couple saw that I was pretty responsible and put me in charge of a girl who was older than me and much taller, but wet the bed every night. It was my job to wake her and take her to the toilet. I must have been around eight years old by then. The people made a fuss over me and I just loved it there.

Every Friday night we sat around the dinner table and our carer gave us each a small piece of bread with a bit of bone marrow on it. That was a treat we looked forward to every week. At least something nice happened there.

I spent about three months in that villa and could have stayed there forever because I was so happy. We were never hungry but never got sweets because there were none

available. One day we got a box of biscuits and found they were full of maggots, but we brushed them off and ate them anyway.

From my mother's memoir:

Around forty people were to be released from the camp and over the next few days we packed our things and left by train. At one station we had to wait for a connection with the next train and went to the restaurant for a meal. My brother found a violin and played while we all sang along and danced like crazy—the happiest and craziest night of my life.

On arrival in Budapest I went to see my daughter in the vial for homeless immigrant children. I was lucky to have the address and did not waste a moment getting there. I found Nina asleep and did not want to wake her in case seeing me gave her a shock because she didn't know I was coming. To my surprise she did not even know who I was. The poor child thought that both her parents had died and I was a distant relative, a forgotten auntie maybe, but not her real mother. What a painful experience.

Since she had left Ricse my appearance had changed considerably. We never had a mirror in the camp but once I found one in a shop in the nearby village and when I looked in it I nearly fainted as I could not recognize myself.

Also we could not communicate because in the year in which we had been separated she had forgotten how to speak Polish and my Hungarian was not good enough for a conversation.

Luckily, there was a girl there from Poland who was able to translate for me. Nina had already picked up Hungarian so well she had no accent and spoke like a native.

After our emotional reunion I decided to see Dr Polgar, the patron and owner of that villa, who was also the head of the Jewish community. I spoke to his secretary explaining that I was the mother of one of the children in his care. At the time Dr Polgar was in conference, but on hearing Nina's mother had arrived he interrupted this meeting and came out to greet me. He was so overwhelmingly warm and friendly it made me cry. He liked Nina very much and even said she was his favourite little girl. He said she was a very gentle and subtle girl who was also very disciplined and obedient. With tears in his eyes he told me I should be a very proud mother.

When my mother turned up for me I didn't even know who she was because I had decided I did not have a mother. She looked familiar and I thought she was an auntie. She couldn't

speak Hungarian and I could not speak Polish anymore because I had forgotten it. I spoke good Hungarian and understood Polish, while she understood Hungarian; so we could communicate. She told me she was my mother and had come to collect me. I said I didn't want to go. She had to force me to leave and took me back to Budapest where she had found somewhere to live. I don't know how she got away from Ricse. I think Raoul Wallenberg got them out before they were to be transported to Auschwitz. The whole family was on Wallenberg's list.

My mother was living in Budapest with my father, her parents and Uncle Artur, who was an exceptional man. He was working for a Zionist organization, supplying weapons and false papers and through him my mother got me a new birth certificate. She thought it was dangerous for me to stay in Budapest because at that time they were shooting Jews on the banks of the Danube, including many children, and throwing the bodies into the river. She tried to get me into a convent where I would be safe.

By this time I think it was 1944. My mother never wrote down any dates when she put her own memoirs together and I cannot be sure. Her nature was that when she decided to do something, nothing would stop her. She got an audience with a Hungarian cardinal by standing at his gate when he came out and just begged him to see her. She told the cardinal that although she herself was not Jewish I had a Jewish father, so she feared for my life. The cardinal told her to bring me to him and she made an appointment. I was brought before the cardinal and my mother gave him my new birth certificate. He was dressed in long deep scarlet and black robes with a big cross hanging round his neck. He also wore a big ring I had to kiss.

When the cardinal found out I couldn't speak Polish he said, "She is not Polish she is Hungarian," because my Hungarian accent was perfect. He said the only way he could help was if my mother could prove I was Polish. The he said, "I will ask her a question and she can write the answer in Polish." The trouble was that I had never been to school, but when I was around four my mother had got me a teacher who taught me the alphabet. The cardinal asked questions and I wrote the answers in Polish. I didn't think I even knew how to write whole words in Polish and to this day I believe God must have written the words for me. They took my writing to an interpreter who said I was definitely a Polish child, that no Hungarian child could have written answers like that. The cardinal said he would try to get me into a convent in Esztergom, about fifty kilometres north of Budapest, where I would be safe.

From my mother's memoir:

The cardinal wanted to meet my daughter personally before giving her a letter of recommendation to the convent. My third visit to the cardinal was with my daughter Nina who did not look at all Jewish, which helped at the time. He asked her to speak in Polish with me and to write a few words in Polish, which she did, although she had never attended any schools. The cardinal left the room with Nina's writing and returned looking satisfied—he had probably shown it to somebody who knew Polish. He then gave us a letter of introduction sealed with his personal stamp and addressed to the biggest convent in Hungary, which was in Esztergom.

The convent was a very old building with a big courtyard and built just below one of the most important cathedrals in Hungary. I hated that place. It was cold and miserable and the nuns scared me. Every time you passed the chapel you had to kneel and cross yourself. I had big sores on my legs from malnutrition and my knees hurt from all the kneeling.

One day my mother visited around midday. At noon every day we had to check the time on the clock and say a prayer. I was scared she was going to laugh and I looked hard at her, trying to tell her not to laugh or smile but just pray. I was terrified she would do something wrong.

We had to go to communion but I didn't want that holy wafer on my tongue, believing that if it went into my Jewish bloodstream I would not be Jewish any more. That was my worst nightmare. I got out of communion three times by saying I had to go to the toilet or simply disappearing. I never did get that wafer on my tongue. I was blonde with green eyes and while I loved being told I didn't look Jewish because it made me feel safe, in my heart and my blood I was Jewish.

From my mother's memoir:

After some time I had the feeling that my daughter was not happy and decided to visit her, travelling illegally to Esztergom. When I left the next day my little girl said goodbye to me with sad eyes, as though she was accusing me for leaving her behind. I could find no peace in my mind and Nina's sad eyes followed me constantly, day and night. I decided to bring her back and we would be together, no matter what happened. When she returned to Budapest after around nine months in the convent, Nina looked like a typical orphan—pale and lost with a long skirt and short hair. She told us about some of her experiences, which made us cry. Three

times the poor child had managed to avoid taking communion. A priest came to bless the children with holy water and she always found some excuse not to attend that ceremony. Apparently she thought that taking the wafer in her mouth and having holy water sprinkled on her would cause these things to enter into her bloodstream and she would become a Christian. It must have been very difficult for her to arrange all that in a convent. Frightful experiences and there were many others.

ANN SZEDLECKI

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Ann Szedlecki. *Album of My Life*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2009, pp. 53–61. Used by permission.

Ann Szedlecki, a 14-year-old Jewish girl from the city of Łódź, describes here the chaotic, frightening first few months of the German occupation, and how it was played out on a daily basis. With the keen eye of an observer, she shows not only how life changed, but a number of specific details characterizing the new arrangements; shortages, curfew, arbitrary punishments, and executions. Eventually, we see how Ann made up her mind to take her life into her own hands by leaving the stifling ghetto with her older brother, Shoel. While this was a huge step for one so young, Ann was also excited at the prospect—while at the same time not quite realizing that “my happy and carefree childhood was over.”

Our lives changed abruptly in the fourth week of August 1939 when a loud knock at the door woke us up at five o'clock in the morning. It was one of my father's employees letting us know that he wouldn't be coming to work—the government had announced a mobilization and he had been called up; he was being sent to the border. After he left, I opened the balcony door and stepped outside. I saw a lot of movement, mostly men in uniform on horseback and in horse-drawn carriages setting out to fight the enemy. Even at my age I could see that they were going to be sitting ducks. The newsreels and the newspapers told us how well the Germans were prepared. They had already occupied Czechoslovakia and claimed Austria as their own without firing a single shot. The Germans knew that they couldn't fail because the rest of the world had turned a blind eye to what was going on.

When my brother-in-law, Janek, was called up, we faced a serious problem. He had decided to sell his hardware store in Lodz that summer and relocate to the nearby smaller town of Koluszki, about twenty kilometres east, but he had received his draft orders before he could close the deal. My sister went to the authorities to explain that he was in Koluszki, but they assumed it was an excuse and that he was planning to desert, so they gave him twenty-four hours' notice to show up or face court martial. Luckily, Manya was able to get in touch with him. He came to say good-bye, wearing a uniform, and that was the last time we saw him. We later heard rumours that he had been taken as a prisoner of war on the outskirts of Warsaw and shipped to a camp in Romania. But there was no way to know for sure.

September 1, 1939 arrived and the Nazis started sealing the fate of European Jewry. Murder and unimaginable horrors were in store for us. The city was actually very quiet—the calm before the storm—except for newsboys shouting, “Extra!” and proclaiming that Poland was preparing Hitler’s coffin to bury him. Everyone said that with England and France on our side, it was going to be a short war. We read in the newspapers that the Germans were shooting with ersatz ammunition, and that it was up to Poland to finish the beast. Nevertheless, we started buying up food and other supplies.

Then, in the days immediately before the Germans entered Lodz, the looting of stores began, particularly Jewish and liquor stores. My sister’s store was no exception, even though there wasn’t much to steal since most of the merchandise had already been moved to Koluszki. We decided to close up our apartment and move in with Manya. We didn’t know what the next day was going to bring, but we had a premonition of things to come. We grew closer to each other, as if there was safety in numbers.

Lodz wasn’t bombed at all, but for days, every time we looked up at the sky there were hundreds of German planes flying on their way to bomb Warsaw into surrender. The weather was perfect for flying and bombing accurately and the invaders took advantage of it. Soon the capital city was under siege.

Panic broke out as news of the Germans approaching Lodz reached us. People started leaving the city by the thousands by whatever means possible. We wanted to go but our father, intent on keeping the family together, wouldn’t let us. He may have been right to make us stay. All those poor people ended up trapped outside the city and were bombed mercilessly by low-flying planes; dead bodies littered the highways. There was nowhere to run.

A week of uncertainty ended when German troops marched into Lodz on Friday, September 8, 1939. It was a warm, sunny day and I walked to the Plac Wolności to watch the arrival of the occupiers. They came on foot and in trucks, looking immaculate in their uniforms, boots shining. Many of them carried flowers from the German population of the city. City Hall and other buildings were decked out with huge flags with swastikas. In other words, the city rolled out the red carpet to welcome the invaders, whom some regarded as liberators. The large German population of the city opened their arms for their brethren, even though the community had lived in Poland for generations. There weren’t many sad faces in the throngs, and there were fewer Jews.

Signs of things to come appeared almost immediately. I witnessed a soldier pulling an elderly Jewish man’s beard and kicking him to the ground because he wasn’t working fast enough to fill the trenches that had been dug only a few days before to stop the German tanks. I remember how enthusiastic and patriotic we had felt when we dug those trenches.

At the end of September, after weeks of siege and relentless bombing, Warsaw capitulated and the triumphant German army occupied the city on October 1, 1939. In the conquered city, burned out, demolished buildings bore witness to the results of modern warfare. A beautiful, cultural city was reduced to rubble. Most of Warsaw’s defenders were dead, and while the valiant survivors could resist no longer, they were full of spirit.

My sister’s store faced the Zielong Rynek, the Green Market. On one Sunday soon after the Germans arrived, the stalls in the market were closed and some boys were playing soccer there when a truck with German soldiers went by. They stopped and joined the boys in the game, which frightened everybody. Another time, when I took my niece for a stroll in the park—this was before the harsh laws banning us from parks were passed—an older soldier next to me started playing with Miriam. With tears in his eyes, he told me that he had left a baby the same age back in Germany. I don’t remember any other demonstrations of kindness. Maybe the same soldier would think nothing of bashing a Jewish baby’s head against a wall to kill it. These examples are just too minor when you consider what was about to happen to us.

The Germans dynamited the monument to the Polish hero Tadeusz Kosciuszko at the centre of Plac Wolności as soon as they entered Lodz. I remember walking by one day and seeing it lying on the ground. Its head was separated from the torso and a victorious German soldier was having

his picture taken with his arm around his girlfriend and his foot on Kosciusko's head.

Before long, all kinds of decrees and restrictions started appearing, each one more dehumanizing than the last. There were so many of them that it's hard to remember them all, although a few stand out in my memory. No Jews were allowed to attend school or institutes of higher learning, regardless of age, which brought my formal education to an end at fourteen. We were banned from using public transportation and from entering any park, theatre or cinema. A curfew was imposed from seven at night until seven in the morning. We had to get off the sidewalk when a German soldier approached. Most shameful of all, we had to wear an armband as a sign of our Jewish identity on our sleeves. Disobeying this rule was punishable by death.

It wasn't safe for a male Jew of any age to be in the street. They were constantly being caught and put to work in forced labour, whether the Germans needed them or not. One of them was my father. We didn't see him once for a whole day and were very relieved when he came home with a loaf of bread after working in a bakery.

One evening, just before the curfew, I was walking home past the Deutsche Shul after visiting a girlfriend and saw a big crowd gathered. I stopped and watched in horror as soldiers rolled in barrels full of tar and set the building on fire.

"It's a great day," gloated one Pole.

"Don't be so happy," warned his friend. "They will start with the Jews, and finish with the Poles."

I couldn't stay too long to eavesdrop because it was so close to curfew. When I went past the synagogue the next day, there was nothing left except the lingering smell of fire. Another sign of things to come.

There was a public hanging of a Jewish man named Radner and two Polish men in the poor Jewish section of Lodz. Although the bodies were on display for some time, I wasn't allowed to go see them. I don't know what their crimes were. In Radner's case, it may have been that he wasn't wearing his armband, or some other "heinous" crime.

The bread lines were now longer and whenever a Jew got to the front of the line, he or she was pointed out and sent back to the end. Many times people went home without any bread. Some Jews thought they didn't look Jewish and didn't wear the armbands, putting themselves in terrible danger. Even if the Germans couldn't identify them, the Poles had no trouble spotting them and pointing them out. Sometimes I was able to get in line by four o'clock in the morning and, with any luck, came home with bread.

Any kind of social life stopped for us altogether. Our radios had been confiscated immediately after the Germans occupied Lodz. Ours had been a beautiful Philips short-wave radio with a "magic eye," a cathode tube for adjusting the station. I missed being able to listen to the music from France, the international news from Moscow, or short-wave broadcasts from the United States—even though I didn't understand what they were saying. All of the newspapers except German ones published in Polish had been shut down. My favourite had been *Express*. The curfew kept us from venturing out from early evening until morning, so we were left with each other for company. Our only joy was watching little Miriam, who at six months old was a delight. We hadn't heard any news from Malka's husband.

Poland's independence, which had lasted between the two world wars, was now ended. Germany occupied most of the western part of Poland and, because of the pact between the Soviet Union and Germany signed by Soviet minister Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov and German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop earlier in 1939, the Soviets now occupied the eastern part. For a brief period in 1939, the Germans allowed people to cross into the eastern parts of pre-war Poland now under Soviet administration. A steady exodus started, and my brother, Shoel, along with a few friends, decided to join the mass of people fleeing. Just a few days after leaving, however, Shoel returned home minus the gold watch and money that had been taken as payment by a guide who promptly disappeared. When Shoel returned home, we were relieved to be a family again and face our future together.

But the situation in Lodz was getting worse every day, so my brother decided to give it another try. His intent this time was to go to Soviet-occupied Bialystok, some 330 kilometres to the northeast, find a place to stay and then come back for the rest of the family. As things turned out his plan was impossible. My parents wouldn't leave Manya alone with baby Miriam and she had decided to stay in Lodz until she heard from her husband. As November 1939 drew to a close, my brother decided he would go alone. I, however, had a plan of my own—I wanted to go with him. For some reason, my parents didn't object. Did they have a premonition?

Shoel and I were ready to leave at the end of November, taking quite a bit of luggage with us. A horse-drawn carriage was called to take us to the railroad station and we said tearful goodbyes, not realizing that it would be the last time we'd ever see each other. We kissed for the last time and went out into the cold, dark night to face the unknown. As I entered the carriage, I heard my mother calling me. She rushed out

of the house, took the pink wool shawl off her shoulders and wrapped it around me. She kissed me again and said the words that I would always remember: “Be decent.”

I stuck to these principles in spite of terrible difficulties. I would have made her proud had she known. I was good and decent, but at what price? I was rewarded with years of hunger, loneliness and homelessness. And yet, I always felt her protective arms around me. Even though her woolen pink shawl was later stolen, it kept me warm—if only in the abstract. She kept watch over me.

There would be no more listening to family stories, no more bananas or mandarins when I was sick. No more being blessed every night before bedtime. No more good-night kiss.

From now on, life for me was going to be serious business, just trying to survive. As we were pulled away from our home, I turned for the last time to see my mother. She was wiping her eyes and waving. I waved back until we disappeared from each other’s view. The truth is that I didn’t feel apprehension about leaving. I was excited and ready for the first adventure of my life. But as it turned out, my happy and carefree childhood was over. I just didn’t know it yet.

TOVA TAUBER

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Tova Tauber. *Out of the Ashes: How I Survived the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Torgau Lager in Germany*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2010, pp. 14–20. Used by permission.

Tova Tauber was a 12-year-old girl when the Nazis enclosed the Jews of Łódź into a ghetto—a ghetto that, unforeseen at the time, would become the longest-lasting of any of the major ghettos in Poland during the Holocaust. In this short account, Tova concentrates especially on what daily life was like in the ghetto, where work was a major focus of existence and hunger was a constant companion.

Who could possibly imagine the systematic way in which the Germans began our annihilation? The ghetto was closed on 1 May 1940, when I was twelve years old. The ghetto was in the poorest part of Lodz, a very deprived area. There was quite a lot of poverty among Jews in Poland at that time, though people don’t want to admit that now. The majority just made do. And so began our hellish experience of five years in the

Lodz Ghetto, or the Litzmannstadt Ghetto. The Germans renamed Lodz Litzmannstadt, after one of their generals.

The first thing the Germans did was burn the synagogues, including a particularly beautiful one on Wolborska Street. They turned them all into stables. Many years later I went to Prague and Vienna with my husband and saw that the synagogues were not destroyed as they were in Poland. I was told the Germans had in mind a thousand year empire and planned to create a museum in Prague to show the world how the “sub-humans,” as they called us, lived. This is one of the reasons they recorded and filmed so much, to prove they were the master race. . . .

Aunt Esther was in the ghetto, as were other members of our extended family, but their number diminished by the day. They died of hunger or were sent to places unknown. My grandmother Sarah was lucky to die in the ghetto, as she did not have to experience the horrors of Auschwitz and was properly buried according to Jewish tradition.

The Germans insisted that Jews did not have blue eyes, which was ridiculous. They were obsessed with finding out if someone had Jewish relatives two generations back. But even some SS had Jewish blood, because German Jews intermarried more than any other Jews in Europe. . . .

Every day Jews from all over Europe came into the ghetto. The place was incredibly crowded, often with two families to a room. Poland was a backward country in normal circumstances, so these newcomers from the west succumbed quickly to sickness and death. Many were also shot. Bodies were collected from the streets every day and there was no end in sight. The ghetto was tightly sealed and it was very difficult to escape.

Our rations were miserly—too much to die and not enough to live on, though many people died anyway. The meagre ration of horsemeat could be exchanged for bread or vegetables, which meant standing on the street displaying the product in our open hands. I always felt embarrassed when doing this. Everything was rationed and you got so much bread to last you so long. Potato peels were prized. Today everyone says how healthy they are, but we didn’t get the potatoes, only the peels. Coffee was always mixed with chicory in Poland. In the ghetto we used to boil it and eat the sediment, which was not digestible. It pierced the stomach wall and people died from eating it. The Germans forbade that practice, not because they cared about us; they just needed workers.

The winter of 1940 was particularly severe. We received no fuel and had to scrounge and steal wherever and whatever, just to keep alive. Each family was allocated a little bit

of soil and we tried to cultivate vegetables. Hunger dominated our lives throughout those five years in the ghetto.

The German Kommandant, Hans Biebow, “Master of Life and Death,” said the Lodz Ghetto would be a place where the Jews would work. The Germans got what they wanted and Lodz was one of the longest lasting ghettos in Poland. Biebow became very wealthy because the Germans paid him for each slave who worked for him. He was a ruthless man and one of the first to be hanged at the end of the war.

There were factories producing everything, and of course we didn’t get paid anything. My job was to knit woolen caps for German pilots. We sat at a table and knitted all day long. Other factories produced uniforms for the German soldiers. We were happy just to be left alone. While we worked we thought, albeit naively and full of hope, we would be left alive. My sisters Adela and Bluma worked in the hospital. . . . My father tried to make a little business of buying and selling vegetables. I can’t remember what work Bella did, but she must have worked in a factory.

Practically everyone in the ghetto had similar experiences of starvation, torture and misery. We tried to keep a semblance of a life that would emotionally and morally sustain us, though some young people went to extremes of behavior. They thought they had nothing to lose. We tried to keep up our spirits. I was still quite young and had a thirst for knowledge. I still do. We couldn’t have a normal school, but some teachers gave us lessons secretly. I remember one taught us Jewish history. We also had a choir and a Sunday literary circle where literature was explained and discussed. We were given a little sandwich, an extra piece of bread and sausage, which was a great incentive to come along. Everyone tried to live as normally as possible despite the confined and terrible circumstances. . . .

Then came the fateful day when they ordered all children under the age of ten to be gathered. We knew what that meant. Marylka was nearly eleven, but we still hid her. Many people tried to hide their young children. One woman handed over her two beautiful children to the Germans and the next day she committed suicide. People went into a stupor and didn’t realize what they were doing. As they assembled, the Germans handed out chocolate to pacify them, but those children went to their deaths. The Jewish police in the ghetto wanted to save their own families, so they helped the Germans carry out this unfortunate task. It’s impossible to convey what people did to save their own skins. Not everyone followed blindly, but the majority did. Some still had the moral fibre to resist, to their cost. Others committed suicide rather than succumb. The ones with the task of executing German orders lasted a little longer.

It was the German policy to lull us into a false security. That way we would be easier to manage. Slowly, we heard a very little about the goings on elsewhere in Poland, but no Jew could really believe it. It couldn’t be possible. We could not believe they would kill us all—it was beyond anybody’s imagination.

ELSA THON

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Elsa Thon. *If Only It Were Fiction*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2013, pp. 45–50. Used by permission.

At the outset of the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, Elsa Thon’s father decided that he had to go to his country’s defense immediately. This led to an early confrontation with the Nazis; as Elsa’s family alternated between Warsaw and their home town of Pruszków, they met an advance guard of SS troops who began at once to taunt them on account of their Jewishness. From this point on, Elsa’s testimony recounts the increasing antisemitic measures as the fall of 1939 developed into winter, and then the year of 1940. By early October of that year the Nazis had organized the Jews of Pruszków into a ghetto. Elsa’s account offers an admirable description of Jewish life under the Nazis in this first phase of the war prior to the later liquidation of the ghetto.

It was a sunny day in “golden autumn,” as we called the season in Poland, when we heard the sound of heavy aircraft. The roar of engines was unusually loud and menacing. We all ran outside the house to look at the sky. Suddenly, darkness spread over us. I felt wrapped in a thick, smoky black cloud. I heard people saying, “Niemcy!” (Germans!) The darkness isolated me from my family. Although my mother and sister were near me, I felt surprisingly alone at that moment. That was the day war broke out. In Pruszków, the first bombs fell on the railway line. Then, the bombs fell all over the city.

After a few days of uncertainty, my father decided to go to Warsaw to help organize resistance. “We will fight the German forces,” he said. “We won’t let them occupy our capital city.” He was also hoping for help from his nephews in Warsaw, who had served in the military a few years earlier.

My whole family walked the seventeen kilometers to Warsaw. When we arrived at the homes of our relatives, my father asked my cousins about joining the army, but it was

already too late for volunteers to defend our homeland. There was no army to join—Poland was defeated only a few weeks after the outbreak of war. The speed at which the Nazis invaded crushed the Polish army's resistance in a short time. Now, I can see how mistaken my father's expectations were. He didn't realize that the mechanisms of war had advanced so much since 1914. In 1939, technology replaced old-fashioned combat as the barbaric means of destroying human lives. We walked back from Warsaw to Pruszków. Along the same road, German troops, who appeared to me to be all the same height, marched triumphantly towards Warsaw, singing.

Soon, the SS Death's Head Brigade began harassing religious men in the streets of Pruszków by cutting off their beards. Those they couldn't recognize as Jews were pointed out to them by local Polish Nazi sympathizers. Now, there were collaborators within Poland. Even children in the street pointed to a Jew, shouting "Żyd" to make the Nazis' work easier. The Lithuanians and the Ukrainians in the German military beat up Jews who were pointed out by the Poles. This was just in the first weeks of the invasion.

Then, German soldiers grabbed us in the street and we were forced to do cleaning jobs all around the city, no matter how old we were. My father was assigned to the Nazi headquarters since he spoke perfect German—he had learned the language when he was a prisoner of war in World War I. My mother was sent to clean a technical school and my sister to clean in a factory. I was sent to clean a technical school for a short time, where the students laughed at me and told obscene jokes at my expense.

I kept working at the studio, although Mrs Helena was careful not to let me be seen there. To avoid any contact with the German soldiers who came in to have their pictures taken, I worked in her bedroom by a table by the window. One day, Mrs Helena's father was beaten on the street. He had lived in Pruszków all his life, was well respected and until two years earlier, he had been the only photographer in the city. Photographs for schools, police and official institutions, as well as weddings, graduations and religious events had all been taken at the Abramowicz Photo Studio. Everyone in town knew him. He still worked in the darkroom, developing negatives and printing the positives. He was a huge man, old by this time. Even he wasn't exempt from the pattern of general harassment of Jews.

In November, Jews were ordered to wear an armband with the Star of David. Jews continued to be grabbed in the streets, beaten and forced to work. Terrorized, they submitted, resigning themselves to obeying German orders.

One day, I met a former classmate at the library. He was the son of the principal of Gymnasium Zana and we had shared the same bench in the Józef Piłsudski primary school for many years. Now he turned to me and said, "What are you doing here?"

"The same as you, borrowing books," I answered innocently.

"Not any more! You are a Jew!" he retorted. I told him that I had the same right to be there as he did. The two women clerks at the checkout counter stopped working, frightened. They knew me and my family, as far back as my grandparents. It was a Saturday afternoon, the library was crowded and people began to express their opinions on the situation. I can't say it was evenly divided and, although not all of them objected to my being there, no one defended my right. I was lucky that just at this moment a neighbor, a poet whom I knew from my work at the studio, came into the library and risked his own safety to get me out of there.

Actually, this was the second time I had come up against the principal's son. Our first run-in had happened when we were schoolmates. Polska Kasa Oszczędności, the Polish Savings Bank, had organized an essay competition on the subject of the floods in the Polesie region of Poland. The prize was a small strongbox with a lock. After we wrote our essays, my teacher told me that mine was the best and that she had sent it to the principal's office with the highest possible mark, 5+. Nevertheless the Gymnasium principal's son won the prize. During recess, the teacher told me, "You must know why that happened, but yours was the best." I recall it as the first time I felt discrimination in the school. Jewish boys were constantly harassed, shoved and mocked, but not so much the girls. Once war broke out, the distinction between Jewish boys and girls vanished.

In early October 1940, the Nazis ordered us to leave our homes, forcibly resettling us in the ghetto they had set up in a very poor area of Pruszków where Polish workers used to live. They ringed the area with barbed wire and an SS soldier guarded the one gate. The Nazis established a Jewish Committee, who designated a place for everyone to live. We were assigned one bedroom and a kitchen in a house where there was a little garden. An elderly couple and their daughter, who used to own a dairy store, lived upstairs. Dad immediately started to dig the soil to plant potatoes and cabbage in case our circumstances didn't change quickly. My father tried everything possible to assure our well-being, but he couldn't improve our lot. The entire Jewish population was suddenly in the same confused situation. I can't erase my memories of the ghetto and the misery we all felt.

Because the Nazis were rounding up the Jews for forced work and beating them on the way, Dad could no longer go out to continue his business. As my sister was older than me, my parents thought that she would be in danger too, so I was the one designated to sneak out of the ghetto, get to the outskirts of the city and go to a woman in a nearby village to ask for food. I brought back potatoes, molasses and bread. I had money to pay for it, but the woman wouldn't accept any money because she knew my father.

Although my mother and Aunt Dina still didn't get along, my mother asked my father to bring Dina and her daughter Toby to stay with us. Toby had worked in a bank but they wouldn't employ her any longer because she was Jewish. It didn't matter that Toby was associated with the Polish scouting organization and had served as a guard at the municipal building. Dina's other daughter, Marysia, had fled to the Soviet Union when the Germans invaded, but returned to Poland when she gave birth to a baby girl. Almost everyone from the Synalewicz family perished in the Holocaust. Only Aunt Dina's younger son, Benjamin, survived, and that was because she had pleaded with him to leave Poland and avoid being drafted into the military, as his father had been. In 1931, he was able to get to Argentina with his new wife, Sofia. My father had tried to persuade Benjamin not to marry her for some reason, so we weren't invited to their wedding, nor did Benjamin come to say goodbye before he left for Argentina.

During our time in the ghetto, my mother fell ill. Despite the ghetto curfew, I ran to a friend's place to get some kind of remedy. But she didn't get any better by the morning. Dad managed to sneak out of the ghetto and get to Dr. Stefen's private clinic to ask him for help, and the doctor took his bag and hat and followed him. He knew our family because my grandparents used to deliver food supplies to his clinic. At the entrance to the ghetto, Dr. Stefen explained that one of his patients was sick and the soldier let him in. The doctor diagnosed my mom with a liver disorder, gave my father some medication for her and recommended a light vegetable soup. I didn't know how to cook, but I figured that vegetables had to be peeled, cut up and cooked in water with salt. Aunt Dina offered to cook for my mom, but I wouldn't let her or anyone else do it. After a few days, she felt better.

Life in the ghetto was intolerable. We coped because there was nothing else we could do. The young people I knew held meetings in different houses to avoid being detected by the Nazis. A teacher, Mr. Koziebrodski, often came to our meetings. It was only a distraction—there was nothing we could do to help ourselves.

No one came to our rescue. The Catholic Church chose to be silent in the face of our torment. Maybe one word from them to stop the hatred in the name of God would have had some effect, but maybe not. Antisemitism was often taught in church. Polish priests such as Father Trzeciak who worked at a parish in Warsaw, fervently preached hatred toward Jews, without any encouragement from the Germans.

That January in the ghetto, in 1941, was my last birthday with my parents and sister. Friends dropped by and one of them, Zachariah Artstein, brought a poem he had written as a gift for me. Years later, I learned that he had been one of the heroes who fell in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Although we lived in precarious conditions, we still hoped that our lives would soon improve. But, little by little, stressed by the ongoing danger and daily humiliation, we began to feel hopeless. Then, we heard a rumour that we were going to be deported to the Warsaw ghetto.

AGNES TOMASOV

Context: Central Europe

Source: Agnes Tomasov. *From Generation to Generation*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 11–14. Used by permission.

The Slovak "Protectorate" was established on March 14, 1939, as a result of the Nazi invasion of rump Czechoslovakia. Established under the effective dictatorship of Monsignor Josef Tiso, Slovakia became a pro-Nazi puppet state of Germany. At first, under German occupation, the Jewish population became subjected to a number of Nazi-imposed antisemitic measures; by 1940 these had become entrenched in what became known as Slovakia's Jewish Code—the anti-Jewish legislation that formed the basis of all that was to follow—with the aim of ridding the country of its Jewish population. Agnes Tomasov not only relates the effects of this legislation as it pertained to daily life; she also shows how Jews were deported from her district, and why her family was exempted from the deportation. The pressure to find a way to survive eventually became too much, and in desperation her family, together with others, finally converted to Christianity. While this would not have counted for anything so far as the Nazis were concerned, it bought time in the quasi-theocratic Slovak state, time that contributed toward the goal of survival.

Looking back, I can see how much my childhood was marked with anticipation of the war and the war

itself—fortunately, perhaps, I didn't understand then how much I was affected by it. I was only nine years old when tragedy struck Slovakia and not yet fifteen when World War II ended.

On April 18, 1939, just over a month after the new Slovak state was officially proclaimed, its collaborationist government legislated its first anti-Jewish law: "a definition of the Jews," which classified Jews by religion. Other new laws soon followed, such as the "aryanization" of Jewish-owned businesses ("legally" transferring their property to non-Jewish citizens) and confiscation of their valuables, such as furs and jewellery. The government banned intermarriages and restricted Jews from certain modes of travel, no longer allowing them to drive cars or travel in first- and second-class trains.

In 1939, Jews and gentiles were still in public schools together and most of the non-Jewish children treated us horribly. We couldn't play in the park in the middle of the town: a sign at the entrance read, "JEWS AND DOGS ARE NOT ALLOWED HERE." I would look enviously at the gentile children who were playing there and think, "Why can't I be like them?"

We were restricted from all forms of entertainment. We were taken from school directly to our houses and I could only play inside with a few of my friends, Magda Neumann, Sipos and my non-Jewish friends, Eva Korinkova and Anna Simkova. But, as children will do, we still tried to have a little fun and one day my friend Magda suggested we go to a football game. This was strictly prohibited for Jews, but we went anyway. Unfortunately Mrs. Grofcik, whose husband was a high-ranking police officer, noticed us and began shrieking, "Jewish children are here; Jewish children are here!" We started to run. I felt a policeman grab me. He happened to be a patient of my father's, so he took me home and told my father what happened, asking him to punish me, which he did. I was not permitted to meet my friends anymore. I was devastated.

Public school was a daily grim experience until, in 1941, when I was eleven, the authorities threw us out of the public school and forced us to attend a separate Jewish school. Despite the shock of having to leave our school, we were happier than we had been in the regular public school where we had suffered so much humiliation.

The next step in the process of our degradation happened in the fall of 1941 with the establishment of forced labour camps in Sereď, Nováky and Vyhne. On March 9, 1942, the Jewish star, which had become compulsory to wear on the outside of our clothes on September 9, 1941, was enlarged

from two and a half inches to four inches. As a child who didn't understand the implications, I was actually proud to wear this yellow Jewish star.

On April 18, 1942, hundreds of horse-drawn carriages arrived from neighbouring villages bringing Jewish families to Bardejov; they were driven to the train station—at that time we didn't know where they were being taken. Almost a month later, on May 15, 1942, all of Bardejov's Jews were rounded up in the main synagogue and smaller houses of worship. My father was allowed an exemption by the minister of the interior because, as a dentist, he was considered to be providing an essential service. The deportation of the Jews who were being detained in the synagogues began on May 15, 1942; we found out much later that they had been deported to the Lublin district in Poland. They were crushed into cattle wagons, eighty people in each, without any food or water. The deportations continued in Bardejov until October 1942. By then, in total, over 58,000 Jews had been deported from Slovakia to Poland, over 2,000 of them from my hometown of Bardejov.

Altogether only seven Jewish families, including our own, were spared because they were designated as essential to the economy. According to the new laws, my father's exemption could cover his immediate family and two close relatives, so my stepmother's mother and her brother, Miklos, moved into our house. Our Jewish school was closed in 1942; the remaining few of us were placed back into the public school system. It was a miserable situation for us—the gentile students and teachers had only contempt for us. One of my Jewish friends, Vera Grosswirth, was in my class—her parents were also exempt because they were doctors. We were so terrified of the gentile students that during recess, when we had to leave the classroom, we went to the washroom and hid until the bell rang. It was the only way we could think of to avoid the constant abuse.

My brother, Ivan, who was then eight years old, would wait for me outside of the school every day so that we could run home together. One day, I came out and he wasn't there. I was terrified and searched frantically for him. I finally found him by the post office, where some students had pulled off his pants and started kicking him. I was able to drag him away from them since I was almost twelve years old and much stronger than his fellow students. The months that we were in this degrading school environment were hell.

I came home from that horrible school one day to find a Hungarian peasant sitting in our kitchen, waiting for my father. He told my father that he had been sent from Levice to take me back with him to my grandmother's place. Many

Slovakian Jews had escaped to Hungary, of which Levice was now a part, for safety. My grandmother had sent all the necessary documents for me to cross the border. I was elated, but my father gave the messenger some money and food and said, “Tell my mother-in-law that I appreciate her efforts, but Agi is my daughter and she will stay with me. If we survive, she will survive.” I broke down, completely dejected. I know now, however, that if my father had let me go, which I so desperately wanted, I would have died two years later with my grandmother in Auschwitz. She perished in the concentration camp with all her sisters and their families in 1944.

In 1942, the local authorities in Bardejov recommended that the remaining seven Jewish families in Bardejov convert to Christianity in order to remain there safely. Even though I had not been brought up in a religious environment, I didn’t want to convert because I knew that my mother was buried in a Jewish cemetery. My father couldn’t convince me, so he took me to see my schoolmate’s mother, Dr. Elisabeth Grosswirth. Dr. Grosswirth put pressure on me to convert, telling me that if I didn’t, I would be putting my whole family in danger.

A Protestant priest volunteered to help the remaining families go through their conversion—he would convert the parents first and, a few days later, all their children. Doing this would ensure that the baptismal documents showed that the parents were already Protestants when their children converted. Unfortunately, in my case, only my father would be identified as Protestant; my mother would still be identified as a Jew. On the day of our conversion, eighteen Jewish children went to the church, among them our friend Dr. Robert Zeman. Within an hour, we had all been converted.

CLAUDINE VEGH

Context: Western Europe

Source: Claudine Vegh. *I Didn’t Say Goodbye*. London: Caliban Books, 1984, pp. 20–24.

A little girl in France during the Holocaust, Claudine Rozen-gard was placed by her parents with a non-Jewish family in order to guarantee her life. Living in hiding presented all sorts of problems, but for Claudine the biggest of them all was surmounting her resentment at having to live like this at all, and, from her perspective, betraying her parents by living apart

from them. As this account shows, separation from loved ones during the Holocaust—particularly for children—was especially hard.

In 1942 my parents and I took refuge in a village in the Pyrenees where there was already another Jewish family, from Belgium. The youngest of their children, Régine, was my friend. Very early one morning, the French police came for them; her mother had collected some of their belongings together; a motor coach was waiting for them.

As they passed our house, Régine asked the driver if he would stop for five minutes so that she could say goodbye to me. He stopped the coach and she came into our house. I remember my father went out, thinking that if the driver had stopped to let Régine come in, perhaps he would agree to leave without her? It was her mother who stopped him. It would be too complicated, she said. Régine had never been away from her family. The coach left; the whole family was deported. Nobody returned.

After the War we read an advertisement in a Jewish newspaper; a relative had published a photograph of the family, asking anyone who recognized one of its members to get in touch with him. My mother wrote to him and he insisted on coming from Belgium to talk about them. The day that Régine was taken away, my parents decided to leave the village; perhaps we would not be spotted so quickly in a larger town? We arrived in Saint-Girons, in the Ariège region. My father was torn between two apartments; he chose the second one as the neighbor who had shown him round seemed to be a “good person,” he said. Later events proved him right; the same neighbor and her husband became my “godparents,” and it is they who hid me for more than two years.

One morning some French police inspectors came to warn us that they would be coming back to take us to a special residence. . . . and so, “godfather,” who was the manager of the Credit Lyonnais Bank, had one of their trailers brought over which he attached to the bicycle. In less than half an hour, my parents were hidden inside. When it was time for me to get in, there was not much room and “godmother” suddenly suggested: “Why not leave the child with us? She will only be a burden to you. We have no children; she’ll be our daughter, our pride and joy, trust us.”

I was trembling with fear. I only wanted them to hurry up and leave quickly so that they would not be arrested. I said: “Go quickly, go quickly. I’m staying.” I often heard my “godparents” say I was a gift from God: that is how important I was to them. My parents reached Toulouse and then the

region of Grenoble. I wrote to them every day. It was my own decision to do so. Did they receive all my letters? I have no idea. A short time after their departure, they managed to send me a false identity card, but I refused to change my name. I was called Claudine Rozengard and I did not want to be Christine I-don't-know-what.

I was so stubborn that, in spite of my "godparents" exhortations, I still refused. "Godmother" suggested that I adopt their name: Caperan; "godfather" had a niece, they would try to find a way. . . . I refused even more vehemently; I can still picture them, it was quite beyond their understanding: "She is usually so reasonable," they kept saying.

I wanted to keep my name. I was very much afraid that my parents would not be able to find me again. I would grow, change; and supposing they would not be able to recognize me? One incident has stayed in my mind; I was a bright pupil at school; prize-day was drawing near. My "godparents" were bursting with pride at the thought of the prize I was going to receive. Then a letter arrived from my father, instructing me not to attend the prize-giving ceremony. I was to report sick beforehand, so that my name would not be read out and repeated: it was too dangerous. When my "godparents" read the letter, it was too much for them. "Godfather" had been waiting for this day all year, and "godmother" was planning to dress up for the occasion. I had to go; I could not do that to them.

As for me, I wanted to go on to the platform and receive my prize books; and so I went. Every time my name was spoken I looked around the room like a hunted animal, expecting to be arrested at once. Nothing of the sort happened. The following year I was at the bottom of the class; the problem did not arise.

For the oral part of my matriculation examination, the last test was geography. Before I began, the teacher told me in a triumphant voice that I only needed two more marks to gain a distinction; it was virtually in the bag. Then, suddenly, I asked him to give me a naught for that test. As I knew that I had passed my matriculation, I did not want to go on with it.

He suggested that I had a little rest, he tried to understand what was going on; I retorted obstinately:

"Please give me a naught, I cannot go on any longer."

"You must be very tired, I am only going to ask you a very simple question; it will be impossible to give the wrong answer. What is the name of the river that flows through Lyon? Look, I know you know the answer; I will help you: the Rh . . . the Rh . . ."

And I answered: "The Rhine, which separates us from Germany."

I was not awarded a "distinction;" he was shattered; I was relieved; neither he nor I understood what had happened.

Subsequently, I refused to take any competitive examinations. It took me years to understand the significance of that decision.

In 1943 my parents made preparations to cross to Switzerland. They phoned to let "godfather" know, and asked him to take me to a certain town. "Godfather" and "godmother" refused to let me leave, they said they didn't want to give me back to my parents. "Besides, it's too dangerous," they added, "here at least you are safe." But, as I refused to stay, and because I begged them to take me there, they added: "If your parents abandon you again, there won't be anyone to take you in, we're warning you, we won't be able to take you back."

Had my parents "abandoned" me? It wasn't possible, it wasn't true! But, after all, they had gone away and left me with strangers, so. . . . My parents did not want to leave for Switzerland without me. At that time, any Jewish child could be arrested. I, however, was not worried.

The whole town of Saint-Girons knew that I was a little Jewish girl that Mr and Mrs Caperan were looking after, their adopted daughter: "the poor things, they so desperately wanted a child," people would say. When I had a teacher whose husband was a pro-German sympathizer, I stopped going to school; she was then replaced and I went back.

The headmaster had assured "godfather" that if the Germans raided the school, he would be the first to hear about it, and, as he lived on the premises, there was nothing to be afraid of. As for "godmother," one day she went to see the leader of the Militia (they had been very good friends before the War) and asked him to protect me. "I want you to know that if they touch a hair of that child's head, I'm the one who'll die." I was in the room during that conversation; she cried, he reassured her and promised that nobody would harm me.

After France was liberated, each day I awaited my parents' return. I would picture it; one day I'd come home from school and they would be waiting for me. I could hear the laughter, I could imagine the hugs and even the presents they would bring. The reality was not quite like that.

Effectively, one day, on my way home from school, a neighbor said to me: "Claudine, hurry, there's a surprise for you." I flung down my satchel, I said: "It's my parents!" and rushed off.

“Wait!” she then shouted, “your mother’s there but your father’s dead. . . .”

I stopped in my tracks, I picked up my satchel, I climbed the stairs that led to the flat, went towards my mother, and without shedding a tear, I simply said to her: “I’ve heard . . . at least I’ve got one of you, let’s never talk about it again.”

And, for more than twenty years, I was never able to pronounce the words “daddy” or “father,” nor could I bear to hear any allusion to that period of my childhood.

ANKA VOTICKY

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Anka Voticky. *Knocking on Every Door*. Toronto: ©Azrieli Foundation, 2012, pp. 37–41. Used by permission.

While the Nazis sought the removal of all Jews from Germany prior to introducing the murderous killing phase of the Holocaust in the death factories of the war years, they nonetheless also made the process of leaving as difficult as possible. In this account from a Czech woman, Anka Voticky, we see this contradiction in action. Striving to obtain exit papers in order to be able to purchase a ship ticket that would let her and her husband leave the Reich, she found a number of unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles placed in her way—and these hindrances were not only imposed by the Nazis. Anka’s account reads like a thriller, but one with a satisfactory conclusion in that “on schedule at five o’clock in the afternoon on April 10, 1940, we boarded the Conte Rosso and settled into our cabin.”

Since our plans to immigrate to England had been scuttled, we started looking for another possibility. We knew that our cousins Karel and Franta Gross were organizing an illegal transport to Palestine, so the next morning, Arnold and I went to their office. Slavek Polak, another cousin, was also there, along with a man from Vienna named Mandel who was a brother-in-law of my late uncle Zigmund, my mother’s brother. The four of them were trying to get people out of the country and we decided to go too. They took our names and in preparation for life in Palestine I went shopping for children’s clothes in large sizes that Milan and Vera could grow into. Unfortunately, we soon found out that this new plan had fallen through too.

On New Year’s Day 1940, we were still living together in my parents’ home. Life was more difficult from day to day because of the anti-Jewish restrictions and there didn’t seem

to be any hope of getting out. Then, in February, just when we were beginning to feel really hopeless, my brother phoned from Zurich to tell us that he could get us to China. My first reaction was to tell Arnold, “for heaven’s sake, if we’re going to die, let us die here. . . .” I didn’t know anything about China. Obviously, I wasn’t being very smart, but I had no way of seeing what our future would have been if we stayed in Czechoslovakia.

We received Vilda’s phone call on a Monday and on Thursday morning there was a radio announcement that Jewish men age eighteen to forty would now be allowed to leave the protectorate. I realized that we would have to seize the opportunity and said to my husband, “Arnousku, there seems to be no other way—we have to go to China. . . .” Arnold called Vilda and asked him to do everything possible to make the arrangements, the sooner the better.

I started immediately making the rounds of the necessary Nazi government ministries all over again to get exit visas. The official red tape had always been irritating, but what we had to do now was enough to drive a person crazy. One day I came home with an armful of forms that had to be filled out and signed—I sat at the table and signed forty times for myself, then forty times for Milan (Milan Josef Israel Voticky) and forty times for Vera (Vera Sarah Voticky); because the children were both minors I also had to sign each of their forms (Annamarie Sarah Voticky as mother). We had to add the name of Israel to each Jewish male’s name and the name Sarah to each Jewish female’s name so that we could be more easily identified as Jews. I signed the forms 120 times, endlessly signing, until I started banging my head on the table. Everyone gathered around me, trying to calm me down. My parents kept saying, “It’s nothing, it’s all right, it’s ridiculous, but look at the bright side, you are getting out of here. . . .”

In late March 1940, when the time came for us to get our exit visas, my husband came with me to the police headquarters. When we got inside, however, I asked him to stay in the corridor and let me go in by myself. At that point I thought that Arnold, as a Jewish man, was more at risk of being detained than I was—I couldn’t even imagine that Jewish women and children were just as vulnerable. Arnold agreed and waited in the hallway, pale with fear for me. I took out a 1,000 korun banknote and placed it inside my passport, then marched into the office and put the passport on the desk. The official at the counter slid the money deftly into the desk drawer and stamped the document—much relieved, with the stamped trophy in my hand, I turned and left the room.

But the hardest part was still to come—we now had to go to the Gestapo office in the affluent Dejvice district

in downtown Prague. It was located in a villa that had been confiscated from the Weinmann family, wealthy Jewish financiers and coal mine owners. There was another Gestapo office on Panská Street in the centre of Prague, in a building that had been confiscated from a family of wealthy bankers, the Petscheks. Taken over by the Gestapo, it was transformed into the sinister building known as “Pečkárna”—a place where people were killed. Just being in the vicinity of Gestapo offices was dangerous for us. Jewish men had to take off their hats from at least a block away—if they were seen with their heads covered, the Nazi thugs would beat them up. Foolishly we thought that if we came there with two small children, they would be softer on us.

When our turn came and we stood in front of the desk, the Gestapo man closely examined my passport. In the document, where the children were described as having blond hair and blue eyes, he crossed the words out and said, “Jewish children are not blond!” I kept quiet and just told myself, “Never mind him. . . . Who cares? . . . Just give me the stamp.” He finally did and Arnold and I walked happily all the way home from Dejvice. It was a miracle to have the exit papers for me and the children. We could really appreciate the significance of it because of all our experiences with how hard it was to secure them.

All that was now behind us—we had the precious exit visas. We could go to China! About a week later, on Saturday, April 6, 1940, at eleven o’clock in the evening, we left Prague. There were ten of us—me, Arnold, Milan and Vera; my brother Erna, his wife, Hilda, and their daughter, Eva. My parents and Liza had decided not to come with us—we all believed that elderly people would be safe from the Nazis, as would Liza as a professional social worker. Hermina Müller, my sister-in-law’s mother, came with us part of the way and my sister, Liza, and Aunt Herda, my father’s sister, accompanied us as far as Brno. My aunt Heda—who I looked very much like—was an exceptional cook and made the most wonderful pastries. On the train, as a parting present, she gave me some of her recipes. I still use them even now, and every time I do I think of my dear aunt and of that very last time I saw her.

I have an indelible memory of this fateful journey. Hilda’s mother, Mrs. Müller, left the train when we stopped in Pardubice and we watched her standing alone on the dark, deserted station platform howling in agony. The sound of her crying haunts me to this day. By the time we got to Brno, where Liza and Herda left us, we were all crying bitterly.

Early the next morning we arrived at the train station in Vienna, so familiar to us in the past. Then the train took us through the Austrian countryside, past picturesque villages,

so similar to the ones we knew at home. When we reached the Italian border and the SS men guarding the train got off, everybody else was cheering and jumping up and down, but we were too exhausted and emotionally drained to feel anything at all. By midnight, our train full of refugees had reached Trieste, Italy. There was an active Jewish community there and some of the local people as well as representatives of international Jewish organizations were waiting for us, offering sleeping accommodations. Arnold declined with thanks, saying that there were people who needed help more than we did. The ten of us went to a hotel.

In the morning, my husband and I went to the Swiss consulate, where Arnold presented our papers, showing that we had the proper documentation to board the ship the *SS Conte Rosso* on Wednesday, April 10, at five o’clock in the afternoon. We already had our tickets. Without any difficulty, the Swiss consul gave him a transit visa to travel from Italy into Switzerland—he was going to Zurich to meet my brother Vilda and get access to our funds in the bank there. But as soon as Arnold arrived in Zurich, he called to tell me that he was having trouble with the Italian authorities—they didn’t want to let him cross the border back into Italy. “The war in Western Europe is imminent,” explained the Italian consul.

In desperation, Arnold went back to the Swiss authorities, showed the official in charge the ticket and told him, “I have no choice—if I’m not back, my family will have to go to China without me. I’m staying right here, unless you call the Italians and persuade them to let me in, because I have to be aboard the ship by Wednesday.” He finally got permission to leave, but at two o’clock in the afternoon on Wednesday we were all waiting anxiously at the station in Trieste, not knowing whether he would arrive in time. You could have cut the tension with a knife. At last Arnold arrived, having successfully concluded all his business in Zurich. I heaved a sigh of relief and, on schedule at five o’clock in the afternoon on April 10, 1940, we boarded the *Conte Rosso* and settled into our cabin.

HALINA WAGOWSKA

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Halina Wagowska. *People and Places in War and Peace*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2009, pp. 23, 25–31. Used by permission.

The Łódź ghetto, where 10-year-old Halina Wagowska was, as she writes, in “prison,” was divided off from the “Aryan”

side of the city by an elevated bridge, or walkway. Although very young, Halina survived by passing herself off as older than her years and thus eligible for a work permit. Here, she describes her working life in the ghetto, which, it was believed, was able to last as long as it did on account of it being highly productive and lucrative for the war effort. As the war progressed, despite developments in other parts of Nazi-occupied Poland, Łódź remained “open for business.” Halina chronicles her time in the ghetto right through to its ultimate evacuation in mid-1944, which saw her start a new phase of her life under the Nazis.

My transition from a sheltered childhood to this, my first prison, put me in a state of shock that lasted for months. . . .

I now had to pretend that I was thirteen, not ten years old, and do it convincingly with no hesitation, blushing or averting eye contact when asked my age. We practiced it and I was chided for not performing well (when just a while ago, telling a lie was a big no-no in our family). But Father, the wise pessimist, said that I must be seen as useful, as children under the age of twelve were not regarded as much of a workforce and were thus at greater risk of disposal. Fortunately, I was tall for my age and with my long plaited hair coiled on top of my head, I did look older.

We moved into the (Litzmannstadt) ghetto shortly before the gates of the surrounding barbed wire were closed in on 1 May 1940. The area was known as Baluty, the industrial, inelegant part of Lodz. We were allocated one room in a first-floor flat in Limanowska Street. Kitchen and bathroom were shared with families who occupied other rooms. The window in our room looked out over a functioning tramline which traversed a part of the ghetto. The barbed-wire walls ran along the gutters on both sides of the street. I later wondered whether there were other streets in the world where the middle belonged to the free and the pavements to the imprisoned.

Further down the street a high, arched, wooden footbridge connected both pavements and allowed the tram to pass beneath. When the guard was looking the other way, many a gob of spittle landed on the passing tram.

I trudged up and down that bridge twice each day on the way to and from work. Mother worked in a clothing factory, Father in a place where empty food containers, such as barrels, crates and hessian bags were cleaned, counted and returned for further supplies of food rations. I worked in a factory where hats and various accessories were made.

In charge of the ghetto was a former social worker, Chaim Rumkowski, an elderly man given to shrill, rambling

speeches in the open square where we had to assemble to hear the latest announcements. He called us either his beloved children or lazy thieves and was regarded as mad and a megalomaniac. He was the puppet of the German commandant of the ghetto. We also had to gather in this square to watch public executions. The first one I saw, the hanging of six young men, recurred in my nightmares for a while. The German police raided the ghetto periodically to remove “unproductive elements” such as the ill, the crippled, the old and frail, and any children they could find.

My place of work was a large room in the basement. Two small windows near the ceiling reached street level but, covered in grime, they denied daylight. The walls and floor were of stone, as in any proper dungeon. It was here that the materials for hats, such as long rolls of felt, were dyed, steamed, stretched, stiffened and shaped. The acrid dye stuff simmered in large metal bathtubs; steam issued continuously from boilers; the floor was wet and slippery, light and fresh air minimal. We all looked like witches with eczema, red eyes, and multicoloured stained skin. But all this was overshadowed by the constant threat to life, the unpredictability of the next moment and the hunger.

My workmates were female milliners. They were very tough and rough and full of resentment towards me, a “Jewish princess” who could not even speak Yiddish. Nevertheless, on a couple of occasions they probably saved my life by hiding me under a table covered by a sheet of felt during a sudden inspection of the factory by the German police. They said I looked too young and stupid to be of any use as a hat maker. These women were brutalised by their poverty and awful working conditions.

A year later I was transferred to another section of the building where I embossed leather for hat bands, belts, etc. Later still I made epaulettes for military uniforms. This involved operating a special machine that embroidered a set pattern with silver and gold threads.

One day I noticed that if one particular thread were cut under the epaulette, it would all very slowly unravel into a shaggy clump of loose threads. The image of an immaculate army officer with a disintegrating epaulette delighted me. Here was my chance to sabotage the enemy! I told the lady in charge of this section of the factory, expecting praise for my scheme. She said, “Don’t you dare! It’ll be easily traced back and we’ll all hang for your tricks.” My parents also said as much.

It was the constant threat of mass killings for single small acts of disobedience—threats that were often carried out—that kept us going meekly towards the gas chambers. This behavior still puzzles outsiders.

There were weekly rations of food, mainly clay-like bread, potatoes or just their peels from German army kitchens, occasional portions of horsemeat and processed beetroot left after extraction of sugar. Variations of this occurred when a product no longer regarded as edible outside the ghetto was sent in. Each factory had a kitchen where hot soup was issued in the afternoon, one ladleful into our pannikins in return for the coupon received from the supervisor.

This was the main meal of the day, available only to those present at work. We urged the cooks to keep stirring the soup while they dished it out so that the few solid particles—bits of cabbage, potatoes or carrots—were distributed evenly. The soup coupon became a sort of currency and could be exchanged for other goods.

With the weekly rations it was difficult, but necessary, to divide the food evenly over the week and a feast-or-famine approach sped up physical deterioration. My parents were very strict about equal daily portions, but mine was always larger than theirs. My protests were to no avail. I was growing rapidly, at more risk of tuberculosis, so had to eat more and that was that. I felt very guilty about my eating part of their meagre rations and it led to an incident I'll never forget. At work I heard that a whole loaf of bread could be had for fourteen soup coupons. I decided to save mine and bring home this extra food. I felt light-headed and fainted a couple of times in those soupless days, but the anticipation of the great moment kept me going. It was timed for my parents' wedding anniversary when we were to share the ecstasy of a full stomach and for once I would be giving instead of taking. I was going to present it with a ditty I composed for the occasion—"Tonight we banish one tormentor, tra-la, tra-la," etc.—inspired by a popular melodrama. I thought my parents would be overjoyed and we would eat the bread until we were no longer hungry.

But it all went terribly wrong. I did not get a chance to sing my ditty. When I presented the bread my parents gasped, looked at me in horror and there was a long and ominous silence. I was told to explain how and where I got this bread. At first they were relieved to know that I had not committed some foul deed to get it. (Much later I realized that they were thinking of sexual favours, another currency in the ghetto, and panicked.) There followed a very angry reprimand for me going without the daily soup for a fortnight. They said I was a boundless idiot to behave so irresponsibly when health was so precarious. Never before had my parents reprimanded me so angrily. We had a slice of the bread each on that night and the rest was added to my ration over the next week. I was bitterly disappointed and resentful. (A couple of

years later Mother referred to this incident and said she knew it hurt but she had to teach me not to do it again.)

My favourite place was the garden. The tenants in our block of flats formed a working bee to remove the concrete floor of the back yard and plant potatoes. Someone miraculously obtained turnip and carrot seeds. Sewage enriched the soil and we soon had a crop of these vegetables, little though these were per person. This crop had to be continuously guarded against theft and we were rostered for a few hours duty each, outside our working shifts. I was usually on watch at night and used to meet several people from next door. We composed abusive doggerel about the Germans or planned perfect crimes against them. And we mocked Chaim Rumkowski, the appointed leader of the ghetto. I still recall one such gibe but it loses rhyme and rhythm in translation: Bells are ringing/Crows are crowing/Mad Chaim the First/Rules over millions. I enjoyed these meetings. There was an air of conspiracy and defiance and the Germans were not in control of these. It was in the garden that I formed a close and enduring friendship with Judith Winograd, who was of my age and lived with her parents in a nearby building.

Watching the passing trams from our window or the street below led to musings about the passengers: What did they think or feel on their trips through this prison? Many adults read books or newspapers or dozed. Some looked at us blankly. Once I saw someone grinning, another shook her fist at me. But children always stood at the tram windows, wide-eyed and agape. What did they think? What were they told about us? Particularly in 1943 and 1944, when we were so skinny and shabby, and so many were collapsing in the streets? Did these clean, secure and well-fed people feel comfortable on these trips? . . .

Gradually, during the ghetto years of slave labour I lost the habit of daydreaming and of recollecting moments, objects and sounds of beauty and happy events in my past. I guess that at first this was a way of dealing with the collapse of my world. But survival instincts concentrated my tiny wits on dealing with each moment in a guarded way in order to minimize the risks and dangers of each day and to cope with the sudden, unpredictable whims of our masters.

This adjustment to reality and its demands was costly as it prevented normal development and learning and caused a regression to the existence of a primitive creature. This process intensified during the following year. By mid-1944 starvation, the freezing winters and disease had claimed many lives in the ghetto. I am told that of the initial 167,000 inmates there were 70,000 left when, in July 1944, it was announced that we would be transferred to another labour

camp. We were each allowed to take a small suitcase of belongings. I filled all my pockets with family photographs.

The journey out of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto was memorable. The closed trains were so overcrowded that we had to take turns at sitting down. We travelled very slowly and there were frequent stops for several hours. On two occasions we got off to get bread and water from the last wagon. Though this was in an open field, we were not allowed to take out the dead or clean the wagons, only to empty the buckets that served as toilets.

One of the escorting soldiers found a very young baby in our wagon. He tore it from the mother, swung it upwards by the leg and smashed its skull on the floor. Blood and yellow bits of brain oozed out. He was about to shoot the mother but changed his mind, grinned and left. An officer looked in and said something about not allowing vermin to multiply. The mother went berserk. She wailed or laughed like a hyena—a nightmarish sound—for the rest of the journey, which took three days and nights

HALINA WAGOWSKA

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Halina Wagowska. *People and Places in War and Peace*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2009, pp. 44–49. Used by permission.

Stutthof concentration camp, located near Danzig (Gdansk), was an especially brutal place that claimed more than 85,000 victims during its existence from September 2, 1939 until its liberation on May 9, 1945. Halina Wagowska and her mother were imprisoned there, and in this report she describes a few of the characteristics of the camp as they pertained to her own personal story of survival. The viciousness of the place is especially in evidence here, with Halina experiencing a flogging in addition to witnessing some horrific treatments meted out to others by the Nazis. The account ends in January 1945 with the sound of the advancing Russian guns able to be heard in the distance.

Our morale was sinking fast, but on the rare days when the watery soup contained a few solid particles, potato or cabbage, there would be a wave of rumours about the imminent end of the war. It seemed that an extra calorie could generate a spark of hope.

Another momentary morale booster was any message thrown secretly over the fence by the men. It would usually be good news about German defeats or allied advances, all

probably invented to cheer us up. The messages were written on a piece of paper which was wrapped around a pebble and tied with a thread pulled out of cloth. Once, they sent us a small pencil and extra paper and asked us where we came from. In reply we asked about the date, since we had lost count of days and weeks. Sending it over the fence was my task and involved waiting till the tower guard looked the other way, then throwing the message and pebble swiftly and far enough over the fence and into a group of men so it was not seen landing on open ground.

One day I was caught by the overseer and became the star of a public flogging. The “special assembly” whistle ordered all to gather outside the nearby barracks. My crime was announced and I was put face down across a wooden box and lashed with a leather strap. The usual quota was fifty lashes. There was a strange silence, a lack of the usual noises in the camp. After forty lashes (counted aloud by the lasher) there was a sudden stop and the whistle to disperse. This started a rumour that the Germans were leaving the camp. It had to be something of that magnitude to cut short a public flogging! The reason remained a mystery. I remember staggering back to the barrack in the arms of a very distressed Frieda. She, Mother and Goldie spent the night putting wet rags on my swollen and bleeding back.

I think it was a few days after this that the front door of the barrack was opened up for inspection by high-ranking army officers. I was curled up on the floor nearby and heard the woman overseer say, “*Da haben wir unsere Untermenschen.*” (Here we keep our sub-humans.) I thought that, yes, it was a fair description. We now barely resembled normal humans. Covered in lice, filth and festering sores, many of us with double incontinence, we fought for scraps of food and abused each other. The language we used matched the surrounding reality. We referred to our guards in strings of obscenities and used crude, single, angry words instead of sentences. The normal language used by newcomers sounded pompous and ridiculously out of place. I thought any form of aesthetics would seem incongruous here. Frieda agreed and said that after five-and-a-half years of systematic deprivations, indignities and the special inhumanities practiced in Stutthof, we were now sub-human. Mission accomplished.

Late in 1944 groups of new inmates were put into our half-empty barracks—young Hungarian women forced to work on German farms. They arrived healthy and well fed and stood in shock at the sight of us. Those of us who could still feel anything felt sorry for them, for they were doomed to die from dysentery and dehydration within days. We had

slid into this hell gradually, acquiring immunity and coping tricks on the way, but they had suddenly crashed from a great height. Few could cope with that. Frieda tried to help by answering their many questions. They spoke in Hungarian and huddled in a corner away from the sub-humans.

One night I found one of them lying on the slippery edge of the latrine and screaming in pain. I got Frieda and others to help drag her inside. Soon she delivered a five- or six-month-old dead foetus. To cut the umbilical cord we cracked a small side window and used the sharp pieces of glass. But there was no way to stem her profuse bleeding. Goldie raised the woman's legs, but shook her head in despair. Frieda spoke to the woman softly and cradled her head in her lap. I wrapped the baby and pieces of glass (keeping one for some unforeseen need) in rags, took the parcel to the latrine and pushed it well down with a wooden paling. Frieda stayed with the woman till she died of blood loss. A few days later the baby's body could be seen floating on the surface of the excreta. (I see it occasionally popping up in my nightmares). We feared repercussions, but none came.

We rarely knew the exact date of our days. The months of the year announced themselves, approximately, through the seasonal weather. It was winter now, late November or early December, we thought. The random beatings and punishments became more frequent and more brutal. We hoped this meant that Germany was losing the war and the guards were venting their frustration on us. Our female overseers used a variety of gadgets: rubber hoses, pleated wires, sharpened sticks, long leather whips with a metal ball at the end. They swapped them for the fun of using a new one. We used the trick of shifting slightly so that not all blows fell on the same spot, but it was difficult to dodge these sudden, frenzied attacks.

The camp commandant visited more often too. He lived in a cottage outside the camp at the edge of the forest and we could see him playing with a toddler and a puppy dog outside his house. We saw a very tender and affectionate man, but once inside our camp he became a monster and his attacks, unlike the others, were always predictable. His method was a karate-like chop delivered with the edge of his palm to the area between the ear and the chin, which never failed to cause a loss of balance and one always fell backwards. He would then sink the heel of his heavy army boots into various parts of the victim's body. We learned not to turn over to protect the face and abdomen because he then kicked harder to turn the victim up again. Frieda called him a Jekyll-and-Hyde type, another puzzle to me until she related Stevenson's story of good and evil.

Mr Hyde used his routine on me one day and it got me a broken nose and a fracture at the base of the skull (the ethmoid, as I later learned), several broken ribs and two days in a coma. I was still unconscious the next day, and absent from the roll call. I was even dumped onto the pile of bodies outside the barrack, but Mother and Frieda dragged me back before the cart arrived. Somehow they propped me up for roll call on the following day. For some days afterwards I was badly bruised and all movement, even breathing, was painful. At roll call Frieda, who stood behind me, was caught propping me up again and got several lashes for doing so.

The special assemblies also became more frequent and we were required to watch the hangings of Russian POWs. I remember one in particular. Some struggled and others went quietly, but this young boy burst out singing the Soviet national anthem in a beautiful tenor voice. He sang until he slumped in the noose. He too is a sharp picture in my memory, with Frieda sobbing quietly beside me. That night Mother said she could no longer find words to talk and we huddled in silence.

The date of Christmas Eve announced itself through the raucous singing of carols by the drunken guards in their quarters. Christ's birthday was celebrated with more beatings and a lot of random shooting.

I think it was a few days later that Frieda spoke to me about my mother and some childhood memories. She added that in a world that allowed Stutthof to happen she did not want to be. I took it as one of her "global" statements and did not focus on it. Later, when she did not return to our usual place in the barrack I thought that she was with the Hungarian group. I set out looking for her in the morning and spotted her body "on the wire," electrocuted and suspended by the barbs caught in her clothes. The guard in the tower yelled and pointed his gun at me when I tried to approach. "In a world that allows Stutthof to happen I do not want to be," she had told me the day before, and I did not get the message. If I had I could have talked her out of suicide, watched her all night to stop her "going on the wire."

A panicky thought added itself to my guilt and despair: that Mother might also "go on the wire." Like Frieda she too made "global" remarks. I spent the whole night stressing her obligation to me and to Father, who would look for us after the war. I extracted a promise that she would not give up. Mother was now very weak and emaciated.

Then, within two days most of us became very ill and our barracks had large signs outside saying "Typhus." Overseers in gas masks and protective clothing entered our enclosure only to roll a barrel of soup on the snow-covered ground from the gate toward the barracks. I lost consciousness. When I

regained it some days later, I was among the very few survivors, surrounded by many dead, all in puddles of excreta.

Mother was next to me, skeletal, unconscious and unable to hear my pleas to hang on. She had terrible pressure sores and from one of her elbows the bone was protruding. It would have helped to get some snow from outside to wash the pus and muck out of these sores, but I was too weak to crawl out. So I tried to lick them dry. There was no other way.

A few in our barrack had not succumbed to typhus, apparently due to immunity from a previous exposure to the disease. They tried to feed those unable to move. Goldie, too, was alive nearby.

I don't know when we heard the distant thunder, a storm, we thought. But a message from the male side said it was the artillery of the approaching Russian army. I kept repeating this into Mother's ear, as if to penetrate the wall of unconsciousness. I hugged her and then felt her long sigh and her last heartbeat. Goldie felt her pulse and cried. I think it was late January 1945, and I don't know how to describe my feelings then.

ABRAHAM WAJNRYB

Context: Salvation

Source: Abraham Wajnryb. *They Marched Us Three Nights: A Journey into Freedom*. Melbourne: Jewish Holocaust Centre, 1988, pp. 1–10. Used by permission.

The death marches experienced by tens of thousands of prisoners are often portrayed as having taken place during the last days of the war, but what is often overlooked is the fact that the Nazis were constantly removing prisoners and closing down smaller concentration camps for a full year before the end of the war. In this account, a Polish Jewish survivor, Abraham Wajnryb, describes what it was like to be on one of the earlier forced evacuations, when he was moved from one camp to another while the killing processes of the Holocaust were still very much in train.

We stood ready to leave the barbed wire fence while the sun was still shining. The camp was lit up by its rays which looked as if they had come from far away to have another glimpse at the camp because what had happened on that day in the camp would never happen again. We built this camp and we knew everything that happened there—but what took place on that day had never happened before.

The rays of the sun had already lost their warmth, and their golden glow disappeared and with it the ball of light descended and faded. The sky became red and the illumination of the camp reddened and faded. Despite this we were able to see what was going on in the grounds of the camp. From the peaks of the cliffs surrounding the grounds came the first shadows questioning whether it was the right time to lower the veil of dusk. The shadows stood at the foot of the mountains waiting for the signal and with one stroke they would submerge the camp in total darkness so that no man would ever find out what had happened on that day. But the sun hesitated, realizing perhaps that this occasion might never be repeated and continued to cast its light. Thus we were able to see thousands of prisoners leaving the camp while there was still light.

This is what happened on that day, the day we left the concentration camp.

In Stutthof

We arrived at the camp in Schomberg in the autumn of 1944. We were sent from Stutthof in a goods train. It was a long row of carriages lined up at the railway station. As soon as the cattle had been unloaded we were pushed into the available spaces. It was getting closer to the end of summer and the air in Stutthof was still warm, clear and fresh. We worked there in a beautiful pine-forest, thick as a jungle. There were tall trees all around us so we could not see the blue of the sky. Hardly a ray of sunlight penetrated the dense tree-tops to let us know that there was still a sun and that it was still shining. We never even saw the tops of the trees. All day long we stood bent over the fallen trees chopping off branches and peeling bark back to reveal the white, smooth and clean trunks.

We would raise the tree trunks and place them on our shoulders—six shoulders on one side and six shoulders on the other—and we would carry them to an open cleared spot in the forest, where tens of hundreds of trunks were already lying. Our shoulders ached, our bodies bowed when carrying the trunks and they remained bowed when we returned to work to clean yet another trunk. No one could straighten his back to look up at the beautiful crowns. Only a prisoner who had lost his strength and collapsed was able to notice the fine shape of the tree tops, somewhere up there, very high. The cudgel of the supervising kapo forced the weak “culprit” to his feet, and still bowed, he returned once more to the vicious cycle: tree-trunk-clearing, again and again. When the first blow of the cudgel failed to raise the exhausted prisoner the kapo tried a second and a third blow. The kapo made sure

that the creature lying on the ground at his feet would stay there—and indeed the creature did so. Meanwhile the eyes of the prisoner remained open, gazing at the lovely crowns and beyond. Perhaps they were looking for the gates of heaven. Gates without barbed wire.

On the train to Schomberg

We were in carriages seven days and nights. We stood, squatted and sometimes sat down. In the last few days some found room to lie down and rest on the floor of the carriage because every day one, two and sometimes three prisoners died so we moved all the corpses to one side leaving more room. One day the guards opened the door of the carriage and brought a few buckets of water but after a short while they closed the door and locked it.

The movements of the train were not always the same. At times it moved quickly, sometimes we heard it crossing over from one track to another, at other times it moved slowly and calmly and there were also times when the train stood motionless for hours and hours. There were no real windows in the carriages just holes, cracks and crevices sufficient to allow some oxygen to enter for breathing—so only a few suffocated. The openings in the carriages also fulfilled another purpose, they enabled us to differentiate between day and night. In this way we were able to count the number of days we had been in transport. Some of the rays of the sun disrespected the orders of the S.S. penetrating the cracks and crevices to let us know when it was day.

The noises outside the carriages were also helpful in locating the sun in the sky. They were mostly the noises of explosions from bombs dropped by the airforce. The bombs usually exploded early in the morning and toward the evening. The hours in between were unduly long. We didn't have a watch in the carriage and we would listen to the roar of the planes as they drew nearer. When the bombs went off we knew what time it was. We soon learned that in time of hardship a watch loses its importance. Amongst the prisoners in the carriage were some who thought they could distinguish between the roar of the German planes and the roar of the Allied ones. Perhaps they really could distinguish or perhaps they had made the right assumption: the roar of a plane followed straight after shouts of "Flak" and explosions meant Allied planes, while a roar without bombs and without the artillery shots clearly indicated the planes were German. Mostly they were Allied planes. They flew in big formations and bombed German towns and eventually the response of the Flak to the bombing got weaker and weaker. In vain we

hoped for the day when they would bomb our train, moving or stationary. With this hope was a desire for vengeance akin to "May I die with the Philistines" (Samson in the Book of Judges), and also a spark of hope that in the confusion and disarray following the bombing, some of us would succeed in escaping. Such a possibility obviously out of the question and contrary to all common sense, was the product of the morbid atmosphere which prevailed in the carriage.

We never heard a bomb explode anywhere close to the train, and the camp at Schomberg was never bombed. Never—until the last day, when we left the barbed wire behind us. That was the day when the sun refused to set.

In Schomberg the planes used to appear with frightening speed, in great quantities, hundreds of them, coming from the north west. They would pass high over our heads, at the level of the cliffs and the tree covered peaks. Then they would turn in the direction of Ulm and Munich—but they never bombed the camp. They looked like silver threads passing in long rows, arranged in a strange formation that seemed to have no distinct pattern. But nothing changed in the camp.

The Brick Kiln

Close to the camp, at the southern edge was a big industrial plant with many buildings. It was a brick kiln. There prisoners would dig clay and prepare it to be baked in the kiln. Barbed wire encircled the buildings and the spacious grounds around them. From our camp we would see only part of the grounds, a few buildings and the big stack of the furnace. We could see the rest of the plant from the road which led to and from work, on the other side of the barbed wire.

We, the prisoners in the camp in Schomberg, did not work in the brick kiln. From this point of view we were the "privileged" ones. In the kiln a hundred, perhaps two hundred prisoners worked and it was said that they were taken from many different other camps in that region of Germany. Sometimes, from far away, we could see people going to and fro, in and out of buildings. They appeared to us to be soldiers, they were in uniforms, and they carried weapons, like the S.S. in our camp. On rare occasions we would notice the head of a prisoner jut out of the pit and disappear again. The pit was deep, nearly the height of a man, a terrifying quadrangle like a big grave waiting for the dead. The buildings stood next to the pit. The men worked in the pit. They worked there and they died there.

We heard stories about what was going on in the pit from the kapos in the camp, it was said that those special prisoners sentenced to die a hard and long death were sent to the kiln.

And it was also said that the commandant of our camp, himself, used to select whom to send there. He chose both: the prisoners suspected of planning to escape and the unsuccessful escapees who had the bad luck of not being killed on the spot. The prisoners in the pit did not survive more than one or two months. Once in the sick barracks with Tola Reznik and Szymon Gitelson, both good mathematicians, we worked out a “game of statistics” proving that the life expectancy in our camp was more than four months, we were the “privileged” ones because we could expect to live twice as long.

Traffic to the kiln was one way, there was no exit and no escape. When a prisoner died in the pit another one was immediately sent to fill the vacancy because the number of prisoners working in the pit had to correspond to the number of bricks planned to be produced. Prisoners were sent to the kiln in the morning after roll call. One would see bodies moving, only the panic in their eyes proved they were alive. Turning the clay into bricks, there in the pit, would ultimately turn their panic into eternal peace and their bodies into corpses.

The bottom of the pit was covered with water. On frosty nights in the winter months the water froze and when the prisoners stood on the ice it broke under their feet. They stood and worked in a mixture of water and clay waiting for night to come. At night they remained within the enclosure of the plant freezing and waiting for day to come. This was what their daily existence was like until they drew their last breath.

The Stack and the Barbed Wire

The smokestack stood amongst the buildings of the brick kiln. We could not see its base. It stood out above the roofs of the buildings—a challenge to the mountains and rocks surrounding it. The stack came to symbolize the pride, power and conceit of Germany and its desire to enslave the entire world. We reacted to it with hatred and repulsion together with intense horror. When we saw the Allied planes passing over the camp and the grounds of the brick kiln, we hoped, as we had on the train from Stutthof for a bomb which would obliterate the stack, the symbol of slavery and of a savage scoundrel ready to wipe out all human values in life.

Until the days of Schomberg barbed wire alone had symbolized the cruel authority and rough arrogance of the German soldier. In barbed wire we saw oppression. Pain and brutality. Barbed wire was still with us: it indicated the borders of the camp and separated us from the outside world. We would leave the camp for this other world twice daily: going to work early in the morning and returning from work at sunset.

For while we were in Schomberg the stack took the place of the barbed wire.

The wire surrounding the camp was electrified. Sometimes in the morning during roll-call, we would see a prisoner suddenly leave his line and run to the fence. He would reach the barbed wire and grab it; only a short shriek would pierce the air for a moment and then a brief flash of lightning would temporarily brighten the dim gloom of the early morning hours—bearing evidence of a “successful” escape, successful because the prisoner had left the camp forever. He was free, free forever. Only a whitish streak of smoke could be seen on the barbed wire fence; it soon vanished in the morning wind, while roll-call continued, as if nothing had happened. The S.S. never stopped the escapees from running to the wires, they did not shoot and they did not send the dogs in pursuit as if they did not care whether a prisoner escaped. When a prisoner did “escape” he was still counted. Other prisoners were sent to retrieve the corpse. They laid it down in the line next to the other prisoners. The kapo had only to transfer the dead prisoner’s number from the list of “leaving-for-work” to the list of “leaving-not-to-return.” Later on, the commandos working inside the camp would take care of the corpse and carry it to a small hill outside the barbed wire not far from the camp. A big mass grave was already waiting there. When it was full, soil was heaped upon it and another grave was dug for the corpses yet to come.

The barbed wire was not a German invention for World War II. Even before the War, I often used to see the same kind of wire, but the significance of its function never occurred to me. I had never felt the barbs in the barbed wire. Perhaps there is some negative connotation in every fence: some limitation of freedom, some partitioning between what is allowed and what is forbidden; perhaps every fence engenders fear, because of its power to divide. But I never thought that barbed wire, apart from serving as a fence could become a way of life; both symbol and witness of the power and hostility of the oppressor. It also became a symbol of those inside the fence who were reduced to shrieks, flashes and streaks of smoke vanishing into the air.

The first time the wire barbed my eyes was when I was first entering the ghetto (September 1941). The boundaries of the ghetto cut up the streets of Wilno, sometimes they ran along the footpaths and sometimes across the width of the streets. In the first case, the doors and windows of the buildings within the ghetto were shut, blocked up and often walled up, dividing the street into two worlds: one an Aryan world allowed to live, the other a Jewish world destined to die. In the second case a wall was erected from the façade on one

side of the street to the façade on the opposite side. Such a wall would completely close off the ghetto. On the wall was barbed wire. It is doubtful if this barbed wire had any real function in finalizing the division between the two worlds. The wall was very high, inside stood a Jewish policeman from the ghetto police, and outside an S.S. soldier whose sole duty was to watch the wall and shoot at will. But the barbed wire also carried a moral message signifying the way of life of the oppressor. It was the barbed wire which warned, day and night, without interruption, “verboten.”

Ever since then barbed wire has remained in my memory. It was in the ghetto, in all concentration camps, and did not cease to exist in the free world for many years after the War. I was in Jerusalem in 1960 and in many streets, adjoining the Jordanian territory I saw big yellow warning signs: “The frontier is ahead of you.” On the signs was a child squatting with the barbed wire behind him, and again I was re-reminded that the wire was still with us, that perhaps it was meant to stay with us as an integral part of our culture.

But in Schomberg the barbed wire lost its importance and symbolism. The stack took its place. It stood forcefully high and mighty, ruling the place surrounded by mountains. Hundreds of planes flew over and thousands of bombs exploded somewhere near the mountains, but only their echo reached us and sounded like the laughter of a hyena. This laughter woke us every morning together with the first scream and beatings of the day. The same laughter “saluted” us at the final roll-call after work. It was followed by another round of beatings.

We got up early in the morning, as usual. Within a few minutes we were standing in a row beside the planks which served as our beds. We got our piece of bread which was meant to be breakfast and to last until mid-day, when boiling water, with or without a trace of vegetables, was brought to our work site. After a few minutes we stood in another row ready to be counted for work. The living trembled because of the frosty winds blowing from the mountains at that early morning hour. Those who died at night rested quietly near the row of prisoners. They were not trembling, although their clothes, the prisoners’ uniforms, had already been removed. It was important that the number of prisoners living and dead was correct. As long as the sum total of prisoners at the morning roll-call was equal to the sum of prisoners who had returned from work the evening before—everything was in perfect order. The living went to work and the dead remained in the camp to be taken to the hill. The order was “wunderbar.” It was a day like any other.

ARNOLD WEITZENHOF

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Arnold Weitzenhof. *This I Remember: A Polish Youth Survives the Shoah*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2006, pp. 11–16. Used by permission.

A native of Gdov, Poland, Arnold Weitzenhof was only 12 years old when the Nazis invaded in September 1939. By 1940, the SS had rendered the town Judenfrei, or “free of Jews.” Arnold and his brothers were taken to a hastily improvised concentration camp at Stalowa Wola, and from there to a succession of other camps as the war unfolded. Eventually, he was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. In the account that follows, he describes a number of his experiences and observations during the war, and of how he managed to find opportunities to stay alive in spite of all he had to confront. It was a lot for one so young to have to take in, but his grasp for detail, sometimes understated, is excellent.

So Eddie and I escaped and went on to the highway. From the highway, not far from the river, we saw German boats. There were Russians on the other side. We saw a farmer on a wagon of potatoes, and I asked him if I could ride in the back. I told him that I was very tired. I had red hair and didn’t look Jewish as Eddie did with his black hair, so the farmer agreed. When the man said yes, I then asked him if Eddie could come too. He said yes. The farmer left us off at the train station at Sandomierz, where we asked directions to the ghetto there. However, in order to get into the ghetto we had to cross a bridge over the River Vistula, guarded by Germans. I bought a soda with some money I still had, and drinking this, Eddie and I crossed the bridge and were not questioned by the German guards who were in the guard booth.

Now we were inside the ghetto. We did not know anyone here; we still wanted to go to Kraków, where we planned to meet my brothers, but we needed help to get there. When we came to the first house in the Sandomierz ghetto, I knocked on the door, explaining to the woman who answered that we were from the work camp and were filthy and hungry. We told her that we wanted to go back to Kraków. The woman said, “I have two daughters and one is working outside the ghetto. She will tell you what train to take to Kraków. The woman gave us food and a bath. Soon the daughter returned from outside the ghetto, explaining that we should take the 8:00 PM train to Kraków. So we left the ghetto, again crossing the bridge, and again none of the soldiers stopped us.

At the station as the train was coming, I heard the whoo, whooo. But I ran back into the station to buy some candy for our journey. By the time I got back—in minutes—they had closed the gate. No other train was going to Kraków until 8:00 AM. So we sat in the station and waited for daylight. Two Germans came in asking for people's papers. They went to almost every table, but they didn't come to ours. In the morning we boarded the train. At the first stop people came in from farms to sell butter and eggs. I was so hungry. I was sitting next to a Polish woman who was cutting off big slices of bread from a loaf and then she would cut a slice of cheese. I was dying of hunger.

So I leaned over and said to her, "I am very hungry." She looked me over and then took her knife and cut a piece of bread and a piece of cheese. My cousin Eddie was across the aisle, so I said, "He is hungry too." She took out the knife again and cut another slice of bread and a piece of cheese for Eddie. She was a kind person. While we were on the train, we heard that the 8:00 PM train had been stopped by Germans and all the young people had been taken off and sent to work in Germany. That could have been Eddie and I. I was now happy I had bought the candy and missed the train. This was *bashert* (meant to be).

We arrived in a suburb of Kraków where we got off the train. I decided to head for the Jewish Quarter—Kazimierz. I figured there would be fewer chances of being picked up in the Jewish Quarter, I told Eddie that we would walk from there to the ghetto—Podgórze. We wanted, strange as it may sound, to get into the ghetto to meet Szymek and Samek. It was the evening and people were coming back from their jobs outside. The Jewish police at the gate said, "You can't get in there." A little later we came back and just went in with the rest. My cousin had lived there before the war. We found out that my two brothers had made it. We saw them in the ghetto. My older brother, Szymek, was thinking about running away to Palestine. . . .

While we were in Podgórze, they decided to liquidate the ghetto on March 13 and 14, 1943. However, they still needed laborers; they carried placards for us to stand under. They needed 120 people in the nearby labor camps. They chose me, and then my cousin Eddie was chosen. My middle brother, Samek, had shaved and developed a rash, so they did not choose him, because he looked diseased. At this time I didn't know what had happened to my older brother Szymek. Later I had heard from one of Szymek's friends that Szymek had been caught crossing the border and killed. I never heard from either brother again.

We were then taken ten kilometers from Podgórsze to Płaszów (originally a labor camp but later a concentration camp), to *Julag One* (abbreviation for *Judenlager*)—a sub-camp, which was on a highway; on the other side of the

highway was the other section of the camp in the old Jewish cemetery. The site chosen for Płaszów was the two Jewish cemeteries: the new Jewish cemetery on Abraham Street and the old Jewish cemetery on Jerozolimska Street. The old Jewish cemetery had had the richest gold roofs on the tombs and beautiful marble stones. The Germans had made these cemeteries into a concentration camp. They had desecrated the graves, removing the tombstones and using these slabs to pave the roads of the camp. The best marble had been sent to Berlin, and they made a horse stable of the synagogue there.

We were told to work on building a factory to make an assembly line for cars. I had to carry hods of bricks and run up and down scaffolding. This was very difficult work because the bricks, piled three or four feet high were extremely heavy. We had to run up and down with these bricks. *Later I had to have a back operation, I think, because of this work.*

After a time, I remember that typhus developed in *Julag One*. People were dying one after the other. By the third day I was lying on the floor so sick that I could not even pick up my head; what made it even worse was that the people on either side of me were dead. They sent in Jewish doctors and one, Dr. Margolis, said he was allowed to give only one shot, but he said to me, "I will give you two shots." He also gave me orange juice and a roll. Then one day he came in before I had really recovered and told me that I had to go to work because they were planning a selection of the barracks and any sick would be killed. I could not yet pick up my head, but I got up and as I ran, I started to feel better. After this, they closed the camp, burning the barracks, and we were taken to houses near the station. They had emptied houses there and we lived in them and worked on building the factory. By this time Eddie was very ill with dysentery and jaundice. *SS-Oberscharführer* Franz Müller saw Eddie and told the Ukrainian guard to kill my cousin. The guard said, "I can't." Müller took the guard's gun and shot Eddie, right before my eyes.

Then I had to carry huge square stones. We had to pick them up and run with them. We worked, both men and women. Six of the men's wives were there. The ordinary German soldiers were usually okay to us. That is, until they came and loaded the men into trucks and began to shoot the six women. One husband jumped out of the truck and ran into the gunfire. He too was killed. . . .

They drove us to the Płaszów camp, . . . in the old Jewish cemetery, and painted yellow oil paint on our clothes—to discourage escapes. I lived in Barrack #20. . . . This was the camp where the Schindler Jews stayed. *I never knew about the Schindler Jews who were in Płaszów at this time until after the war.*

The *Kommandant*, Goth (the third *Kommandant*, who came in February 3, 1944 to September 1944), killed three or four people before breakfast. He would ride his white horse after killing indiscriminately.

On the road my job was breaking up big stones into little ones to make a road. One day when I was breaking up stones, I was on a hill or mound overlooking the concentration camp. I saw through the fence a number of trucks arriving, bringing “used up” girls. They stood them before a tremendous ditch and then murdered them with machine guns. One of the guards who did this was named Yannos, whom I seen before in the first work camp at Stalowa-Wola. Yannos never betrayed me.

I was in Płaszów three or four months. The barracks were awful—wooden bunks, three deep, with only a little straw for a mattress. Here I was lonely without brothers or my cousin. I continued working, breaking large stones into finer stones for the roads that the Germans were building.

Once a huge truck was going to Gdov to pick up cement pipes. I asked if I could go with them. I went to my house but someone else was living there. I didn’t try to go in; I felt sad for my family and what had been.

YANKIEL WIERNIK

Context: Extermination Camps and Sites

Source: Yankiel Wiernik. *A Year in Treblinka: An Inmate Who Escaped Tells the Day-to-Day Facts of One Year of His Torturous Experiences*. New York: American Representation of the General Jewish Workers’ Union of Poland, 1945, located at <http://www.zchor.org/treblink/wiernik.htm>

The prisoner revolt at Treblinka was carefully planned down to the last detail. On August 2, 1943, after having built an arsenal consisting of hand grenades and rifles stolen from the camp armory, between 150 and 200 inmates rose in a coordinated action, rushed the fence, and attempted a breakthrough. Yankiel Wiernik was one of the few survivors of Treblinka, and in this account he relates the events surrounding the revolt. Most clearly, he shows how he was able to live through the revolt, make it through to the forest—and live.

The final, irrevocable date for the outbreak of the revolt was set for August 2, and we instinctively felt that this would really be the day. We got busy with our preparations, checking whether everything was in readiness and whether each of our men knew the part he had to play. It so happened that I did

not go to Camp No. 1 for several days because I was busy constructing an octagonal building with a suspended roof, resembling a guard station, that was to house a well. I was also constructing a portable building in Camp No. 2 which could be taken apart and which I subsequently had to move to Camp No. 1, where it was supposed to remain permanently. I was becoming impatient because I was unable to get in touch with Camp No. 1 and zero hour was approaching.

August 2, 1943 was a sizzling hot day. The sun shone brightly through the small, grated windows of our barrack. We had practically no sleep that night; dawn found us wide awake and tense. Each of us realized the importance of the moment and thought only of gaining freedom. We were sick of our miserable existence, and all that mattered was to take revenge on our tormentors and to escape. As for myself, all I hoped for was to be able to crawl into some quiet patch of woodland and get some quiet, restful sleep.

At the same time, we were fully aware of the difficulties we would have to overcome. Observation towers, manned by armed guards, stood all around the camp, and the camp itself was teeming with Germans and Ukrainians armed with rifles, machine guns and revolvers. They would lock us up in our barracks as early as 12 noon. The camp was surrounded by several rows of fences and trenches.

However, we decided to risk it, come what may. We had had enough of the tortures, of the horrible sights. I, for one, was determined to live to present to the world a description of the inferno and a sketch of the layout of that accursed hell-hole. This resolve had given me the strength to struggle against the hangmen and the endurance to bear the misery. Somehow I felt that I would survive our break for freedom.

A presentiment of the coming storm was in the air and our nerves were at high tension. The Germans and the Ukrainians noticed nothing unusual. Having wiped out millions of people, they did not feel they had to fear a paltry handful of men such as we. They barked orders which were obeyed as usual. But those of us who belonged to the committee were worried because we had no instructions about the timing of the outbreak. I was fidgety. I kept on working but all the time I worried that we might fail to establish contact which, in turn, would mean that we would perish miserably and in vain.

However, I found a way of communicating with Camp No. 1. My superior, Loeffler, was no longer there; he had been replaced by a new man whose name I did not know. We nicknamed him “Brown Shirt.” He was very kind to me. I walked up to him and asked him for some boards. Boards were stored in Camp No. 1 and he, not wanting to interrupt our work, went off with some workers to get them. The boards

were brought. I inspected and measured them, and then said they weren't right for the job. I volunteered to go over myself to select the material I needed, but I made a wry face as if I did not like the idea. And so I went to the storage shed with my superior, all the while shaking with excitement. I felt that unless I made the most of this opportunity, all would be lost.

Presently I found myself in Camp No. 1 and nervously looked around, appraising our chances. Three other men were with me. The storage shed was guarded by a Jew about 50 years of age, wearing spectacles. Because he was an inmate of Camp No. 1, I knew nothing about him, but he was a participant in the conspiracy. My three helpers engaged the German superior in a conversation to divert his attention, while I pretended to be selecting boards. I deliberately went away from the others, continuing to select boards. Suddenly, someone whispered in my ear: "Today, at 5:30 p.m." I turned around casually and saw the Jewish guard of the storage shed before me. He repeated these words and added: "There will be a signal."

In feverish haste I collected whatever boards were nearest to me, told my comrades to pick them up and started to work, trembling with fear lest I betray my emotions. Thus time went by until noon, when all hands returned from work. Again our committee met furtively and the word was passed around. I asked everyone to keep cool and remember their individual assignments. The younger ones among us were greatly agitated. As I looked at our group, I began to believe that we would really win.

Volunteers for the afternoon work shift were then selected. We assigned the weaker and less capable men to the first shift because it had no task to perform. The first afternoon shift returned from work at 3 p.m. The men we had picked then went to work, thirty in number. They were the bravest, the pluckiest and the strongest in the lot. Their task was to pave the way for the others to escape. A crew was also picked for fetching water from the well. At around 5 p.m. there suddenly was a great need for water. The gate leading to the well was opened wide and the number of water carriers was considerably augmented.

All those assigned to work with the corpses wore only striped overalls. A penalty of 25 lashes was meted out for wearing any other clothing while doing this particular job. On that day, however, the men wore their clothes under their overalls. Before escaping, they would have to get rid of the overalls, which would have given them away at once.

We remained in our barracks, sitting close together and exchanging glances; every few minutes someone would remark that the time was drawing near. Our emotions at that point defied description. We silently bade farewell to the spot

where the ashes of our brethren were buried. Sorrow and suffering had bound us to Treblinka, but we were still alive and wanted to escape from this place where so many innocent victims had perished. The long processions, those ghastly caravans of death, were still before our eyes, crying out for vengeance. We knew what lay hidden beneath the surface of this soil. We were the only ones left alive to tell the story. Silently, we took our leave of the ashes of our fellow Jews and vowed that, out of their blood, an avenger would arise.

Suddenly we heard the signal—a shot fired into the air.

We leaped to our feet. Everyone fell to his prearranged task and performed it with meticulous care. Among the most difficult tasks was to lure the Ukrainians from the watchtowers. Once they began shooting at us from above, we would have no chance of escaping alive. We knew that gold held an immense attraction for them, and they had been doing business with the Jews all the time. So, when the shot rang out, one of the Jews sneaked up to the tower and showed the Ukrainian guard a gold coin. The Ukrainian completely forgot that he was on guard duty. He dropped his machine gun and hastily clambered down to pry the piece of gold from the Jew. They grabbed him, finished him off and took his revolver. The guards in the other towers were also dispatched quickly.

Every German and Ukrainian whom we met on our way out was killed. The attack was so sudden that before the Germans were able to gather their wits, the road to freedom lay wide open before us. Weapons were snatched from the guard station and each one of us grabbed all the arms he could. As soon as the signal shot rang out, the guard at the well had been killed and his weapons taken from him. We all ran out of our barracks and took the stations that had been assigned to us. Within a matter of minutes, fires were raging all around. We had done our duty well.

I grabbed some guns and let fly right and left, but when I saw that the road to escape stood open, I picked up an ax and a saw, and ran. At first we were in control of the situation. However, within a short time pursuit got under way from every direction, from Malkinia, Kosow and from the Treblinka Penal Camp. It seemed that when they saw the fires and heard the shooting, they sent help at once.

Our objective was to reach the woods, but the closest patch was five miles away. We ran across swamps, meadows and ditches, with bullets pursuing us fast and furious. Every second counted. All that mattered was to reach the woods because the Germans would not want to follow us there.

Just as I thought I was safe, running straight ahead as fast as I could, I suddenly heard the command "Halt!" right behind me. By then I was exhausted but I ran faster just the

same. The woods were just ahead of me, only a few leaps away. I strained all my will power to keep going. The pursuer was gaining and I could hear him running close behind me.

Then I heard a shot; in the same instant I felt a sharp pain in my left shoulder. I turned around and saw a guard from the Treblinka Penal Camp. He again aimed his pistol at me. I knew something about firearms and I noticed that the weapon had jammed. I took advantage of this and deliberately slowed down. I pulled the ax from my belt. My pursuer—a Ukrainian guard—ran up to me yelling in Ukrainian: “Stop or I’ll shoot!” I came up close to him and struck him with my axe across the left side of his chest. He collapsed at my feet with a vile oath.

I was free and ran into the woods. After penetrating a little deeper into the thicket, I sat down among the bushes. From the distance I heard a lot of shooting. Believe it or not, the bullet had not really hurt me. It had gone through all of my clothing and stopped at my shoulder, leaving a mark. I was alone. At last, I was able to rest.

DAVID S. WISNIA

Context: Salvation

Source: David S. Wisnia, with Doug Cervi and Robin Black (edited by Maryann McLoughlin). *One Voice, Two Lives: From Auschwitz Prisoner to 101st Airborne Trooper*. Margate (NJ): ComteQ Publishing, 2015, pp. 64–72. Used by permission.

The end of the concentration and extermination camps in the East was in most cases accompanied by death marches of prisoners, long columns of which were sent out of the camps ahead of the advancing Soviet forces. David Wisnia was on one of these death marches, which made its way from Auschwitz-Birkenau to Gleiwitz in January 1945, prior to being forced onto a train for Dachau concentration camp in Bavaria. From there he was moved on again, but on this occasion he and his comrades contrived to find a way to escape the train on which they had been loaded. Recaptured, David Wisnia escaped once again, on this occasion with greater success. As he writes, “guided only by the sounds of artillery fire” he “walked towards the Soviets . . . relieved to be alone.”

Death March

My group was one of the last to march out of Birkenau in January 1945. I was more fortunate than most of my fellow

prisoners in that I wore two heavy jackets, a hat, socks, and a sturdy pair of boots that I had stolen from the *Sauna*.

But I was weaker in one respect. My cushy work detail in the *Sauna* had left me soft, unused to and unprepared for exposure to a Polish winter. The wind and flying snow menaced my exposed face and hands. Still, my boots would see me through whatever trials lay before me, and I was grateful to have them.

The SS guards, wielding machine guns, told us we were going to Gleiwitz, the closest large city in German territory, about twenty-five kilometers away. The term “death march,” which was given after the war, was accurate. Those who weren’t marching fast enough were shot on the spot, and people walking on the perimeter of the group were easy targets.

The Germans wanted as many people as possible to perish on the journey. As we marched in our rows of five, I made sure I stayed in the middle of the group. Indiscriminate shootings became commonplace enough for us to barely flinch at the sound of gunfire. We’d just quickly step around the bodies and keep on going. It was every man for himself, as usual.

As we marched towards Germany, I noticed German tanks, trucks, and soldiers attaching themselves to us. Some of the soldiers were in bad shape, wearing only paper bandages to dress their wounds. I didn’t know if I’d survive whatever came next, but those soldiers were a hopeful sign. Those German soldiers looked just as cowardly as any other human beings on the other side of victory.

Another threat to our survival during the march was the intermittent strafing our pitiful column received from Allied airplanes. When the planes swooped down, they were close enough for us to spot the red stars painted on them, but the Soviet pilots couldn’t tell there were prisoners among the Germans, so they continued to shoot at us.

Gleiwitz

We reached Gleiwitz after a full day of marching and spent the night in the large train depot there. There were about 900 prisoners who had survived the ordeal. We weren’t given any rations. I spent the night walking around the depot. The huge Gleiwitz train station, the biggest depot in the coal region of Silesia, had dozens of trains on tracks going in all directions. I contemplated trying to escape by hiding on a train and waiting out the imminent end of the war, but I was in German territory now. Who in Germany would help me should I be discovered? Moreover, the SS guards surrounding the depot from the outside with their machine guns were a discouragement. I decided it would be less risky to

continue on to Dachau, a regular concentration camp, because I knew there weren't any death camps in Germany.

The next morning, we were loaded onto open-roofed coal cars. I will never forget the bitter cold of that trip. Even though we were packed in as tightly as possible, with our bodies pressing against each other, they failed to offer much warmth. We headed deeper into Germany, away from the approaching Soviet army.

I thought I had witnessed horrors in Birkenau of such repugnance and evil that I could never be shocked by anything again. I was wrong. The punctiliousness with which the Nazis had carried out their murderous duties had only been possible because of their precision and orderliness: Transports arrived. Prisoners were sorted. Some entered the camp. Most went to the gas chambers. Corpses were incinerated in the crematoria. Ashes were carried to the ash pile. A new day dawned in Birkenau.

Dachau

At Dachau, all the sick harmony of a well-regulated killing machine was abandoned. Dachau was by far the largest of the four camps that served as a receptacle for the many thousands of human leftovers from all the camps in the East. The other three were Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, and Buchenwald. The Nazis had simply run out of time to murder all the Jews they'd collected. The Soviets were rapidly approaching.

I had never seen so many people confined to one place. It seemed like millions. Bodies lay where they fell or were tossed out of the bunks and into the hallways of the wooden barracks, where they were stepped on. These bodies were rotting in place. Most of the living were dead on the inside—*Muselmann*, waiting for nature to finish the job. There was no place to sit, to stand, or to lie down, even outside of the barracks. The Nazis had given up with pretences. It was a sure sign that the end of the war was near.

The question was: Could anyone survive the filth, deprivation, and disease of Dachau? It was its own kind of death-camp. My mantra became, "Survive another day. Survive another day." But how?

Initially in Dachau we received no rations. Luckily, I had left Birkenau with a rucksack filled with bread, turnips, and conserves that I'd been hoarding. Fellow Dachau prisoners tried to steal my food, grabbing for it. But I would punch them away. I was much stronger than most of them. Eventually, watery soup was distributed, but by the time you reached the front of the line for your share, someone would kill you for it. People behaved like animals because they were

so hungry. I, on the other hand, had almost no appetite due to the stench of the place.

When a man died in his bunk, I finally found a place to sleep. As soon as he was thrown over the side, I managed to scramble up and take his place. Unlike Birkenau, where it was three to a bunk, these were single slats. Because I was strong enough to fight, I was able to maintain the space for myself. If I hadn't been able to do this, I would have frozen to death outside. There was no such thing as an elite prisoner at Dachau.

On my third day at Dachau I went to the office, the *Schreibstube*, and learned that the Nazis were looking for young volunteers in good physical shape for *Arbeit* (work). The labor would be hard. They needed prisoners with the strength to carry twenty-five kilogram sacks of cement into underground bunkers that were being built to protect German airplanes from Allied raids. I immediately offered my services. I would have done any kind of labor to get out of Dachau. The office recorded my number and told me where to report when it was time to get on the train. I just had to hang on for a few more days.

Train Journey

Finally it was time to leave. Word spread that we were going southwest of Dachau, to a place called Mühlendorf to pick up more prisoners. From Mühlendorf, we would continue to Austria. A couple hundred of us, all men and young boys, got into cattle cars. The doors were locked shut with a metal latch, and one tiny window gave the only light.

As we travelled towards Austria, the retreating German Army attached themselves to us and other prisoner trains all over the area, trying to get away from the Eastern Front. We could hear the artillery at night becoming increasingly louder, so we knew the Soviets were close. We had no idea how far the Americans were at this point. We knew that the American and British forces were fighting in the West, but to us that seemed like a million miles away.

Because the German Army was attached to our train, with anti-aircraft guns at the front and the back as well as German vehicles and tanks travelling parallel to the tracks, we were again strafed by Allied fighter planes. The first time that happened, the train stopped and we were evacuated into the ravines next to the tracks for about half an hour. Our guards were actually trying to keep us alive because they needed our labor in Austria. We assumed the planes were Soviet because they had white stars painted on them.

During our second evacuation, the SS tried to shoot at the attacking planes with anti-aircraft weapons. The Allied

planes again didn't know there were prisoners on the trains. We felt the ground shake as bombs detonated quite close to us. The last car of our train was destroyed. I said to my companions, "We better get away from here. Somewhere along the way, we're going to get killed."

Before the third air raid, a small group of us decided to attempt an escape. We didn't want to survive the Nazi death machine only to be killed by friendly fire. And I had noticed something during the previous air raids that made me believe that an attempt could be successful. The guards were changing frequently. After each raid, it seemed as if they were becoming older and more haggard. The strongest SS members had been sent to the Front, where they were sorely needed. Paradoxically, we prisoners were young and strong. It gave us confidence.

While everyone, including the guards, was ducked over, trying to keep cover during the strafing, about twelve of us started moving away from the ravine in a group. It was open country, and we managed to get about a kilometer away. The land was flat, and we could see our trains in the distance. We approached a farmhouse with trees, gardens, and a barn surrounded by a wooden and wire fence. The majority of us got into the garden and lay down. The air raid stopped and it became quiet. It wasn't long before we could hear the SS screaming at the prisoners to get up and climb back onto the train. A few of the guards aimed their fury at us escapees and began shooting into the sky.

Soon, five SS guards arrived at our defenseless spot. "*Hande hoch!* Arms up!" they shouted. Slowly we stood up and lifted our arms. My luck had finally run out. Our liberation was possibly days away and I was going to be shot. Why had I survived so much only to die this way?

But surprisingly, after the guards lined us up in rows of five, they escorted us back to the train. We were numb with shock. Apparently they had no intention of shooting us in open country and staining Germany with the evidence. True, Dachau was in Germany, but Dachau was enclosed. After the war, German citizens could claim ignorance of the atrocities taking place there.

An illustration of how irrational they were: our guards were worried about the evidence of a few dead Jewish prisoners on German soil, in stark contrast to the millions they had already murdered in Poland and elsewhere in Europe.

I felt more daring after that close call. "They're not going to kill us, so why not try again?" I said to my buddies once we were back on the train.

This time we decided it would be smarter if the next time we tried to escape we separated immediately. We had made it too easy for the guard by being together. If we scattered in

opposite directions, maybe one person would be caught and surely shot this time, but at least some would get away.

Within the hour, we heard the inevitable BA-BOOM of another air raid. It was safer to remain in the ravine than to attempt an escape during the attack. When it finally ended, it took the SS a long time to get moving. Bomb-damaged trains needed to be unhooked from the line. We stayed in the ravine, guarded by men standing about 500 meters apart from each other. The sky began to darken.

Escape

As I was lying in the ravine with my arms over my head, I felt something hard under my hand. Miraculously, I had found a little hand shovel. To me it was a sign that I was meant to survive. Emboldened by this gift, I grabbed the shovel, snuck up to the closest guard from behind, and smacked him over the head and at the back of his neck as hard as I could. He crumpled to the ground, and my friends and I scattered. I'd never run so fast. I don't even remember my feet touching the ground. It was completely dark by the time I spotted a barn and stopped running. The barn wasn't locked so I went inside. Inside were hay, straw, animals, and pantries containing moldy cheese and heavy brown bread. I spotted a ladder leading to a loft and climbed up, feeling exhilarated by my successful escape. I had no idea where I was and was terrified of being caught. I decided to stay in the barn until the next evening and travel towards the Soviet Army during the night. I slept heavily on the warm, soft straw. No one came in to feed and water the livestock. The farm had been abandoned.

I woke up the next day to the sounds of the barn: the creaks of the old wood, the breathing of the animals. It was so peaceful. I stayed in the loft, eating bread and cheese, and contemplating my future. I had made my first objective. I was free. Now I had to figure out how to stay alive.

I could hear what I believed to be the Soviet artillery in the distance. As the hours rolled by it sounded as if it was getting ever closer. It was the fire of my liberators, so I decided I would leave the barn at nightfall and walk towards it. The closer I got to the artillery, I thought, the farther I would be from the SS and the site of my escape.

I was still wearing the same civilian clothes I had marched out of Birkenau in, with the hat to cover my short hair. I doubted I would be detected as an escaped prisoner. Similar to Vladék's peasant son over three years before, I now took on the persona of a young German worker.

When it was dark, I stuffed my pockets with the rest of the bread and cheese and crept quietly out of the barn. I walked

towards the Soviets, guided only by the sounds of artillery fire, walking in fields and farms, avoiding roads, until dawn. I hadn't seen any people or vehicles all night. It reminded me of my arrival in Sochaczew when the world seemed void of any people. This time, though, I was relieved to be alone.

GODEL WROBY

Context: Concentration Camps and Prisons

Source: Godel Wroby. *My Battle for Survival: From Mlyny to Melbourne*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004, pp. 41–51. Used by permission.

The labor camp of Skarzysko-Kamienna was a large compound located in Poland, comprising three factories employing slave labor. Attention was focused on a large munitions plant in the town. It was a place of particular brutality, with a very high death toll for those sent there. Godel Wroby, a young Polish Jewish worker from Łódź, was one of those deported to Skarzysko-Kamienna. His descriptions of life as a worker in this environment are abundant with detail, providing an in-depth profile into how Nazis, Poles, and German civilians viewed those under their dominion. As it was with a great many other similar situations, however, the workers were evacuated toward the end of the war as the Russians approached from the east, and Godel Wroby found himself on a train for the concentration camp at Buchenwald, deep inside Germany.

After five or six hours inside Czarnieckiego, I was put on a cattle train in a group of several hundred people. We traveled for a few hours until at about 4.00 am we came to a stop. The Germans called out “*Raus!*” (Get out!). We looked around and saw the station was called Skarzysko-Kamienna, so we were still in Poland. Ours was the only transport from the Lodz Ghetto to Skarzysko-Kamienna.

We were taken to an enormous camp, housing thousands of Jews in row after row of barracks and shown which one we were to live in. The barracks were fitted with two- and three-tier bunks, with one person to a bunk. Each bunk had a thin mattress and one lice-filled blanket. There were separate barracks for women.

The labor camp of Skarzysko-Kamienna consisted of three huge factories, called *Werk A*, *Werk B* and *Werk C*. They manufactured ammunition of all kinds and had been owned by the Polish government until 1939 when the Germans took

over and handed them to the Hasag Corporation—an old, established German manufacturer of ammunition, which, during the war, became the third largest privately owned company manufacturing ammunition after I.G. Farben and Hermann Goering Werke. By August 1942, the Skarzysko plant was using Jewish slave labour.

We new arrivals from Lodz were sent to work in *Werk A*. Less than half a kilometer from the barracks, *Werk A* was not only the biggest factory and the closest, it was also the cleanest, as the work there did not involve the use of poisonous gases or toxic ingredients. *Werk B* and *Werk C*, the smallest of the three, were a few kilometers further away, one to the east, one to the west. The day began with an alarm at 6.00 am, when the entire population of the camp had to assemble in rows of six for *Appel*, the roll call. While I was standing there I took one of the hankies out of my pocket and blew my nose on it. Immediately the man next to me snatched it off me. “What are you doing!” he said to me. I told him I was wiping my nose. “You don’t wipe your nose with a hankie like that here,” he told me. “For a hanky like that you can get a loaf of bread and two bottles of milk.”

Well, I was very happy to hear that. I understood exactly what he was saying and I had a whole sack full of these hankies. It was like money in the bank. That man told me he was coming from Warsaw and had already been in a camp in Lublin before coming here. He rolled up his sleeve and showed me the “KL” for *Konzentrationslager* tattooed on his left arm. He told me the camp at Skarzysko-Kamienna ran on starvation lines, but if you had money or anything to exchange, it could be a paradise.

The soup was made from dried sugar beets, which were as tough as the soles of shoes when they were cooked. They called it “Shoe-sole soup.”

My new friend already knew something about camps, while I knew nothing about how hard life could become. I only knew about the ghetto. He told me people were dying in this camp too, but that he knew the place from A to Z. He said that if I had anything to exchange I should make him my partner and we could survive together. I agreed and told him I had about one thousand of these hankies.

The camp was actually in the middle of the town of Skarzysko-Kamienna, where there was a flourishing black market. The manufacturer of ammunition required the presence of some experts, as well as we slave labourers. Polish engineers had worked these for years before the war and their children followed them in the trade. Even though the economic situation for these local people was much better than it was for us, they were hard pressed for some of the luxuries

they were used to having before the war and were willing to exchange food for things like gold, shoes and fine handkerchiefs. These exchanges were made inside the factories.

The Polish engineers were nice people and the factory to which I was assigned did very classy, fine, precision work, which involved using enormous machinery. I can't remember now exactly what we were making but we had to measure every tiny little thing. I enjoyed that work. The Polish *Meister* in charge of me sometimes worked a night shift beginning at 7.00 pm and ending at 6.00 am. The Poles could come and go as they wished, not like us, who were counted in and counted out of the factory. One evening he told me it was his wife's birthday. He showed me where he was putting his food for the evening and said that if the German supervisors came around and asked me where he was, I should say that he had been there but had just gone off somewhere. I could point to the food he had left as evidence he was still on the job. Then he went home. Of course the food was for me.

That was in *Werk A*. Fortunately, I was never sent to *Werk C*, which was the worst place. You only lasted two or three months working there, because in that place they packed picric acid, an extremely toxic yellow substance used in making hand grenades. The workers were given no protection against this poison, which turned their skin yellow within two months. We saw them when they came to *Werk A* for baths. They walked there from *Werk C*, several kilometers away, where it seemed there was no baths.

I was transferred out of *Werk A* to *Werk B*, as punishment for something I did.

I was still only a teenager and the bored fourteen-year-old son of a German *Meister* set out to make my life a misery. He found new ways to annoy me every day, such as pushing me while I was working. His father had no idea, but because he was the boss, this boy was able to wander around and probably annoyed others too. He was always turning up in the area where I was working and finding ways to make my life more difficult. He got me so annoyed that I decided I just had to knock him down, even though it meant risking my life. I just didn't care anymore.

I was working beside this huge machine in a row of such machines with a passage between them. My job was to lift up these iron bars, which were four meters long. They were longer than the machine, which was about three meters long. When out of the corner of my eye I noticed him coming up behind me, I picked up the iron bar and turned, so that it hit him hard. He fell back against the machine in the row behind us. Everybody saw this happen. I don't recall whether he was injured or not, but the Germans made a big deal out of it.

I was called up to their office, where they asked me why I had hit him with the iron bar. I told them it was an accident, that I had not seen him coming up behind me and had just gone on doing my job, which was to lift this iron bar off the ground and swing it around. I told them I had not seen him there. I had never seen him before. This young boy could not argue with that—he could not say that I had seen him and that I had seen him the day before and the day before that too, because it was not his place to be there in that row of machines. I knew he would not tell them he had been coming there just to annoy me. I just told them I did not expect anyone to be standing behind me while I was working.

The German boss did not believe me, but I told him that if he himself had been standing there behind me at that moment and I didn't know it, I could have hit him too. Finally they accepted that as the case, but also said that they had to punish me. So I was sent to *Werk B*. It wasn't that bad. I still had some money I had made selling the hankies. They had been a lifesaver for me. I was in *Werk B* for only about four or five months, though every day seemed like a year. The days were so long, the months were years. That's why I can't really say how long I was there—it must have been a few months. Time was something different back then. This was in 1944 and I was nearly nineteen years old.

I did the same work as everyone else there, but the food supplies were very bad and people around me were dying of hunger. Not me though. Thanks to the hankies I was well nourished and was never that hungry in Skarzysko. I was well off and I knew it.

My "business partner" was okay too. He was much older than I was and lived with a girl in the camp. That was a very common arrangement in Skarzysko, where girlfriends were known as "cousins." You would say: "She is my cousin." The women would come into the men's barracks. They were slaves, just like we were, and as women they didn't receive any favours. There were no morals at all in the camp. My friend wanted to introduce me to a "cousin," but I was still a virgin and didn't want that kind of relationship. I just wasn't interested and didn't even think about it. Some of the "cousins" got married in camp, but I don't know how long those relationships lasted, because I was not involved.

We were all waiting for a miracle. We didn't know anything about the movements of the Russian armies at that point, but we knew something was going on. You never heard anything directly, but there were rumours. We still knew nothing about other concentration camps.

One day at *Werk B* we were told they were liquidating the Skarzysko camp and we would be sent out of Poland. It was

because they were frightened of the advancing Russian Army. I still had a little money left.

We were put into cattle trains once again and travelled via Czestochowa, where the train stopped and we rested there for a day. We were divided into groups and some people were taken away to work in Czestochowa. By sheer coincidence, I met an older cousin there that day who had spent most of his time in Narutowicza Street in Czestochowa. His name was Godel Abrahamovich, the son of my mother's step-brother. He had come to the station just to look around and see who was there. He wanted to arrange things for me so that I could stay in Czestochowa, but there was no time to do it.

We got back on the train, where the conditions were very bad and so crowded we could only stand. The railway tracks had been destroyed in many places so we often had to get out and walk to another train. We found water at some of these stops, which was precious because we were not given anything to eat or drink. Many people died on the way. It took a few days to reach our destination, which turned out to be Buchenwald.

By this time it was autumn, but the day we arrived was beautiful, sunny. The sign over the gates read "*Arbeit macht Frei*," which means "work makes one free." We were shaved, deloused and given showers. Not even my hankies could do anything about that and those conditions were the same for everybody. When we were clean we were issued a striped uniform with a number on it and led into barracks.

Before 1939 Buchenwald had been a prison for German political prisoners. When Hitler took command he sent all his enemies there and when we arrived communists were running the camp. They were not *kapos*, they had their own ranking.

The barracks we were shown into was one big, clean hall, where we lay on the floor with loose straw as a mattress. There were about one hundred of us to a barrack. The communists came in and asked us where we had come from, noting that we looked very undernourished. They told us: "This is not a concentration camp in which you will disappear, where we will kill and burn you. This is a political prison for political prisoners and we have democracy here. So if you have a grudge against someone, you can talk about it and there will be no one to charge you for it or anyone to blame you for anything you might do." It was an invitation to take revenge. That was something we wanted to hear, as there were a few among us who did deserve to be very harshly punished—ten Jewish men who had gone beyond the limit, who thought themselves gods and treated us very badly in Skarsysko. They were under German command, but I'm sure that the Germans did not force them to do the things they did. I had not been in Skarsysko as long as the others and did not

know the details of what those men had done and continued to do, right up until the last moment. Now they had their chance for revenge.

I only knew one particular *kapo* who had approached us on our very first day in Skarsysko, asking us what we had brought with us. We didn't tell him, so he searched through our things. Fortunately, I had already given all my handkerchiefs to my new "business partner," but this *kapo* found the leather coat the woman had given me in Czarnieckiego and said he wanted it. I said no, because it was the only coat I had. I knew nothing about camps—I had just arrived. We argued, but he didn't get the coat, which I eventually sold to someone else.

We were given one bowl of soup in the factory and another when we returned to our barracks, but every time this man served us, he never aimed directly at the bowl but always poured it over our hands. He made sure he did it to me especially, because I had not given him anything that first day. The soup had usually cooled down a bit by the time my turn came, so at least it did not burn me, but pouring on my hands meant I always got less than I should have. That *kapo* was the only one of those ten men I knew. Maybe the other *kapos* had done worse things to people, but I didn't know of it personally. I didn't know these things because I didn't want to know and I think that was one of the reasons I survived. Knowledge could be dangerous. Interestingly though, every time I was hit it was by a Jew. There was just one occasion on which a German hit me, but that was much later on.

After the war and right up to this very day, I never hated *kapos* who survived, because many of them were forced to do what they did. But a lot of them did not have to go as far as they chose to in their cruelty to us. They took pleasure in humiliating us and were confident in their power. They thought themselves as powerful as the Pope—as more Pope than the Pope.

I was pretty young in comparison with the other people I was with in Buchenwald, who were twice as old as me. They identified the ten bad men amongst us who deserved punishment and held a meeting to decide what should be done to them. I was told that they could not be killed outright, because that is not the Jewish way of doing things. Instead, they decided to beat them for so long that they would die. And that's what happened. There were no weapons or pieces of wood or anything like that, so we beat them with just our hands and feet.

I don't regret contributing to that beating because those ten men were horrible, horrible people who had tortured their own people and degraded them to such a level it made their lives so worthless they just gave up.

Those men were already very weak and it did not take much for some of them to die quickly. Some died during that beating, others died the next day. The German supervisors just took the bodies away and no one said a word. It was a simple case of rough justice—an eye for an eye. I have always believed in that and I still do.

Everyone in the camps wanted to survive, but did not know how. The *kapos* thought that by serving the Germans they would be saved from the kind of hell the rest of us were going through. They believed there would be some kind of German paradise, just for them. On the other hand, if they had not done what the Germans ordered them to do, I don't know what would have become of them.

I don't just assume that people like those ten bad men were murderers because they were born murderers, or because they were forced to be like that. But they had to be punished because they did not have to treat us the way that they did. In Skarsysko the Germans were not in the camp, but much further away. The *kapo* leaders all came from the cities, though they couldn't care less where we came from—we were all just Jews in camp.

So on my first day in Buchenwald we punished those ten men and they died.

In comparison with the Ghetto and Skarsysko-Kamienna, Buchenwald was clean. We had no work to do and received meals three times a day. For us, this was a kind of paradise. In the two weeks I spent there I regained some of my natural strength.

I was still with the same group I had been with in Skarsysko, but although we knew each other quite well by this time, I never made any special friends in camp and remained a solitary person in every situation I was in. Maybe I was like that because I had lost my family while I was still so young, or because I was not used to communicating with so many people. Others came from more progressive, wealthier families, but life had been hard for me from the day I was born. There had never been any luxuries in my life and I was quite used to that. There was much less poverty in the city than in the country, where poverty was our daily companion. We were known as the *provincer*. Of course we did enjoy a natural freedom out in the countryside and knew how to organize ourselves, but city folk had a different mentality than us. It was interesting that, for all their wealth and sophistication, city-bred people did not last as long as those who came from the little villages in the provinces. We could survive the most difficult circumstances and I knew I had to make all my own decisions, by myself.

HALINA ZYLBERMAN

Context: Evading Persecution

Source: Halina Zylberman. *Swimming under Water*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2001, pp. 21–25. Used by permission.

Often one of the inhibitions for Jews seeking to evade Nazi persecution was a lack of assimilable traits. If a person spoke unaccented German, Polish, or French, or possessed stereotypical “Jewish” looks, that made all the difference between life and death. In the case of Halina Zylberman, her family’s assimilation into prewar Polish society gave them a distinct advantage over a great many other Polish Jews. In this testimony, Halina describes her experiences of “hiding in plain sight” in wartime Poland. While life was far from easy, she was nonetheless provided with opportunities denied others, including—remarkably for its time—finding a place to live.

One of the benefits of having been assimilated before the war was that my parents had a number of close friends who were not Jewish. Some of them had been trying to rescue us since the Nazis started rounding up the Jewish population. Finally, they put in place a plan that had a chance of succeeding. The first step was to remove us to a safe haven where we could begin to shed our Jewish identity. This eventuated, and two and a half years after the Germans marched into Poland, we found ourselves in the apartment of a judge and his wife. They had been our neighbours and acquaintances in our original apartment block, but they had moved to another part of the city.

For two weeks, we never left the apartment. We spent our time sleeping, reading and listening to the radio. We stayed hidden there for about two months while people arranged false documents for us. A woman friend of our hosts came and taught us the rituals and prayers we would need as Aryans. The only times we forgot our troubles were the evenings. After we had eaten, the judge would relate in detail the most fascinating cases in his career. Because my father had been a trained lawyer, the judge would go into all the finer points of the law, but he was never boring. He was a wonderful storyteller. For a while, we would forget that we were hunted outcasts and that a cruel war was all around us.

This wonderful man did not survive the war. Although we did not know it at the time, he was an active member of the Polish Underground. He was eventually caught and perished in a concentration camp. I will not name these wonderful people, because his widow, even after the war, chose to remain

incognito for reasons of her own, but I am pleased to acknowledge their altruism in this book.

Then it was time to go. Every day we were with our brave hosts, they were in danger. Father explained to me that we would be moving to Warsaw where nobody knew us. We would be accompanied on our trip by the caretaker of the building. This man had to go to Warsaw on business and offered to escort us. If we struck trouble, he would claim that we were distant relatives.

My father had bought our new identity papers at considerable cost. His were genuine papers, those of a Mr. Kucharski who had been killed in the first year of the war. The Polish Underground Organisation had replaced his photograph and signature with those of my father. They were expert at their work and the papers could pass close scrutiny. I had fabricated documents. The church where I was supposed to have been baptized had been destroyed by a bomb, so there was no proof to the contrary. My mother was on my father's passport as his wife. My papers named me as Halina Kucharska, which meant that I would be seen as their daughter. Before we left, my mother begged the judge to organize false papers for Stasia who was now in the ghetto in Lvov. He promised to do what he could.

It was 5:00 a.m. when we left and the streets were still dark. The judge's wife placed a cross around Mama's neck for luck. Then she and her husband saw us into a taxi. Our guide, Piotr, was waiting for us at the station. We had to queue for our tickets and I trembled at the sight of two German policemen, the Gestapo, standing with an Alsatian dog next to the gate leading onto the platform. The huge dog terrified me. I knew that it could be ordered to tear people into pieces. I panicked, thinking, "Can you smell Jewish blood in us?"

I froze and my legs refused to carry me further. Piotr said softly: "Halinka, come. And smile! The dog won't bite you." He gave me a little nudge. I smiled at Piotr as we approached the Gestapo. They seemed to study our papers for an endless time, and I was sure they would hear the pounding of my heart. Then, "*Alles ist in Ordnung*, all is in order," they said to the ticket checker, and turned to the next passengers without another glance in our direction.

On the platform, Piotr said to me: "From now on let a smile be your shield. Watch the people around you and try to behave like them." We were unpleasantly surprised to find that all the seats on the train were occupied and we had to stand. It was going to take some hours to reach Warsaw. A few peasant women with baskets full of eggs, milk and fruit were sitting on the seats, keeping their precious possessions

on their knees. They all wore several skirts, one over the other, and looked so huge, I suspected that their skirts concealed meat and other items that it was illegal to sell.

The train moved slowly and gradually, it became dark outside. I was exhausted from the preparation for our trip, so I closed my eyes and tried to relax. I was jerked awake when a Polish conductor came in to check our tickets and identification papers. He went indifferently from passenger to passenger, checked them off the list, said, "Thank you," and left.

Shortly afterwards, we heard the shuffling of heavy boots outside our compartment and the guttural sounds of the German language. Through the window in the doorway we could see the gleaming of police helmets. Instantly, everybody in the compartment became tense. No doubt, we were united by the same fearful question: "Will they come to us?" Then two of the SS men entered our compartment and again, we had to produce our tickets and identification papers. They examined them and the faces of the men by torchlight, since the light in our compartment was dim. I held my breath while they examined my father's face closely, but they seemed satisfied and passed onto the next man.

Finally they left, taking with them one of the peasant women, who began sobbing uncontrollably. There was no explanation why she had been singled out.

Eventually we arrived in Warsaw. Under happier circumstances I would have fallen in love with this great city. I had never before seen such heavy traffic and so many people in the streets. We hired the cheapest form of transportation, a bike-rickshaw, something I had never seen in Lwow or Krakow. Looking at the elegantly dressed men and women on Marszalkowska Street, I reflected on how little the war seemed to have affected them.

Our first contact was with a Mrs. Luisa Ratomska, who was an attractive, distinguished-looking lady in her mid-thirties. She was a blonde with striking blue eyes. She told us that she had done favours for Jewish people before us. Her husband, a major in the Polish army, had escaped to London.

While the adults spoke, I went out onto the balcony and was struck by an absolutely breathtaking view of Warsaw. I could see theatres, churches and parks spread out in front of me. There was hustle and bustle everywhere as people went about their affairs. My ears were assailed by the sound of passing trams and the tooting of taxis. I realized, teary-eyed, just how much of life I had missed since the Nazis had marched into Poland, making the annihilation of Jews their priority. "I'm free again!" I thought, exhilarated. "Free to go wherever I want!"

We stayed on in Mrs. Ratomska's apartment for two days. She had a sixteen-year-old son, Romek, and I was

smitten by his good looks. He had his mother's blue eyes and bore himself proudly. I was thirteen and had never been particularly interested in boys before, but I wanted so much for him to like me. He was polite, but didn't want to be friends. I was just one of the unfortunate people who found brief refuge at his mother's home, or possibly, I even only represented a danger to him.

Mrs. Ratomska was a patriotic Pole and a woman of principle. She hated the German invaders and had deep compassion for people who were persecuted by them. Today, I wonder at her courage. She must have known that if she was caught, she risked losing her life, and maybe Romek's too.

My father slept on a couch in the living room. My mother and I shared Romek's room. She was given his bed and I was on a mattress on the floor next to her. At the first sight of light I got up to look out of the window, assuring myself that I really was in Warsaw and that this wasn't a wishful dream. I couldn't wait to go out and explore.

"Why are you in such a hurry?" Mama asked. "Warsaw is not going to run away." I sat patiently through breakfast and then as soon as I was able, I went out. It was a beautiful day and the fragrance of summer was in the air. I was wearing a light dress and melted into the crowd, relaxed and happy. Stopping to look at a window display, I noticed a young girl smiling at me, then realized with a start that I was looking at a reflection of myself.

I must have walked for miles, savouring the people, the shops and the buildings. When I started out, it was from a church which I planned to use as my landmark. Later, I saw a similar church and mistaking it for mine, proceeded to get myself completely lost. How foolish to think that I could find my way around Warsaw by looking out for one church when there were so many of them!

Eventually I hailed a rickshaw. Riding in a rickshaw was such a novelty. I chattered incessantly to the driver, but was careful not to mention anything personal. I felt like a bird that had escaped from a cage to freedom; suddenly a glorious world was available to me. I found myself in a beautiful park-like boulevard lined with majestic oaks. I asked the driver to stop and climbed down and paid him. This was Aleje Szucha, a lovely part of Warsaw, and I wanted to explore it. Mrs. Radomska later told me that, before the war, the Polish aristocracy had their apartments there. Now the Germans had evicted the Poles from their homes and established their Gestapo headquarters there. I returned home by another rickshaw and my mother observed, "How radiant you look, Halinka."

We began to search for places to live. Mrs Radomska advised us to separate from my father in order to minimize

the danger of being caught by the Germans. She said there were secret agents mingling with people, specifically searching for Jews in disguise. If a man were suspected of being a Jew, the fact that he was circumcised would immediately give him away. No Polish Gentiles were ever circumcised. My father didn't want to endanger our chances of survival and he decided that we had to live apart from him. Each of my parents was issued with *kenkarte*, documents one always had to carry wherever one went, but since they did not refer to marital status, we would be safe if my father was apprehended.

HALINA ZYLBERMAN

Context: Eastern Europe

Source: Halina Zylberman. *Swimming under Water*. Caulfield South (Victoria): Makor Jewish Community Library, 2001, pp. 64–73. Used by permission.

Although Halina Zylberman and her family were living in hiding in Poland, life—and threats—continued. In the account that follows, Halina describes some of the daily trials confronting her family and those with whom they inter-related. In particular here, she alerts readers to how easy it was for the Nazis to shatter an otherwise secure environment with just one visit. By the time the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943 arrived, Halina's world had been turned completely upside down. She now became more than aware of the precariousness of her situation, even though still "passing" on the "Aryan" side of the ghetto wall.

Another young couple came to rent a room. Still remembering vividly how Marysia and her mother had arrived with their large empty suitcases, I couldn't help noticing that this young couple entered the villa carrying two suitcases with apparent ease. The young man appeared to be in his late twenties while his companion was a little younger. He looked a typical Pole, with his blonde hair, round face and blue eyes, but his wife's complexion was dark and her black hair was cut very short. Her hand must have been broken, as it was in a plaster cast. As we became better acquainted we often sat on the verandah while Zula sang for us. She had a very sweet voice and knew quite a few Polish songs. Occasionally we joined in humming. Zdzich talked to us of his pre-war life, which was very interesting. He had obviously come from a very wealthy background and had travelled a great deal. He brightened up our lives with his anecdotes of his life in Paris,

Rome and Vienna. I enjoyed his company and looked forward to our pleasant evenings outside among the oak trees. These quiet nights soothed our tired nerves and lifted our spirits.

Later, when we all confided in each other that we were Jewish, this couple told us that they had jumped from a cattle train. I knew nothing of how they ended up in our villa, but it must have been soon after their daring escape, because Zula had broken her arm during the leap to freedom.

It was Zdzich who taught me how to cook potatoes and which vegetables to put into a soup. I asked him how he knew so much about cooking and he replied that he was a chemist by profession, and that cooking was very much like chemistry. You just had to learn how to mix things.

I found myself becoming infatuated with Zdzich. I was fifteen and at an age where during normal times, I would be starting to “fall in love.” The fact that Zdzich was twenty-six, married, and that we were all in great peril, didn’t stop me from developing a real bout of puppy love. I knew I was being foolish and was careful not to let anyone, even my mother, suspect how I felt. Zdzich once told me, with a captivating smile, that when I lost weight and grew a little more, I would develop into an attractive woman. Though I felt terribly hurt that he saw this to be sometime in the distant future, it was still exciting to think that he, a mature man, was interested enough in me to make such breathtaking observations.

Zdzich was completely at ease with me, and I am quite sure that he never suspected the turmoil of emotion he aroused in me. And so we, for a few months, lived in relative peace, aware of the carnage around us, yet for a little while, almost untouched by it. One night when my father was with us, he answered the phone. “Please warn Mr Gestwinski to be careful tonight,” he heard a strange male voice say then the line went dead. Zdzich, when told the message, was terribly upset. He thought he knew who sent the warning and took it seriously. He was white faced and shaking but didn’t know where to go.

Around two a.m. we were woken by a terrifying pounding on the door. We were paralysed by fear knowing straight away that the Gestapo had arrived. The heavy sound of marching boots approached our door. There were two of them, and at the sight of their terrifying steel helmets with the swastika symbol—the death heads, their revolvers, their whips in hands, and those shiny, ominous boots, I thought I was going to faint.

They asked my father if his name was Geswinski and demanded to see his identification papers. With trembling hands he passed them his German Occupation Papers, his Kenkarta, which showed his name as Kucharski. “Who is Mr

Gestwinski?” he was asked. “You are not hiding him here?” one of them asked. He pocketed Papa’s identification papers and they began a search of our room. They were looking in the wardrobe when we heard a piercing whistle and the sound of running coming from the garden, followed by guttural shouts and a volley of shots.

There were, it seemed, two other Gestapo men in the garden. Then from Zdzich and Zula’s room we heard scuffling and Zdzich’s voice saying, “Yes, I am a Jew, but my father fought side by side with you during the First War and was decorated for bravery. Look, I can show you his Iron Cross.” There was the sound of a heavy blow, then Zdzich’s voice pleading, “Please take me, but leave my girlfriend out of it. She’s not Jewish. She’s completely innocent.”

For a moment the world stood still, then the words, “Bloody Jew” assaulted my ears, followed by a shot. The Gestapo men came back to our room. One of them said, “Maybe these ones are Jews too. What do you think we ought to do? Should we investigate them as well?” The other answered “We have orders only to arrest Gestwinski and his wife.” Then he laughingly asked my father: “Are you a Jew?” “Certainly not!” my father replied indignantly. Our Gestapo “friend” looked at his watch and commented that he was tired and wanted to go home to get a little sleep. He returned our papers to my father apologizing for the disturbance and they left. By mere luck or God’s will we were spared again, but this night haunted me in my nightmares for years to come.

As soon as we were sure all the Germans had left we headed, hearts in our mouths, for the Getswinkis’ room, only to be met in the hall by a pale and incensed Mrs. Skсыpkowa. “Imagine that! They have been living all this time under my roof and I never suspected them of being Jewish. How could they do this to me?” she exploded in anger. “Endangering my life like that! The Germans could have accused me of voluntarily hiding Jews. I could have been sent to the concentration camp!” Mama commiserated with her, saying it had never occurred to her either that they could have been Jewish. I looked at my mother and thought how convincingly she lied.

My father asked if she knew what had happened and she explained that as far as she could gather, Zdzich and Zula must have tried to escape through the garden when they heard the Germans pounding on the villa door, but the Germans had the place surrounded. When they were taken away she had glimpsed Zdzich with blood flowing from his eye. Mrs. Skсыpkowa, still upset, entered Zdzich’s room, only to back out quickly, her face pale and sick. “How horrible!” she cried. “What sort of animals are these Germans to do a thing

like that?" Anxiously I looked into the room, and felt my stomach leap in revulsion at the pool of blood on the floor beside an upturned broken chair.

A few days later, when Mrs. Skyspkowa had recovered from the shock of the incident and fully realized the implications, she decided to give her tenants notice. So once again we were faced with the problem of finding a room in overcrowded Warsaw, where the Poles were suspicious of each new face and increasingly reluctant to rent out a room.

One of my father's sayings was that our lives are like a wheel which constantly turns round and round, and that we should do everything in our power to turn the wheel upwards again. In retrospect, his attitude did much to help us perpetually struggle to stay alive. We never allowed ourselves to believe that one day we might also get caught up in the net, and killed. . . .

Our eviction notice coincided with the uprising of the last remaining Jews of the Warsaw ghetto, and the thunder of the battle became our daily companion. We learned, after the war, that the Jews put up a strong fight, using all available weapons including hand-grenades and stones, that they had constructed a network of tunnels under the streets of the ghetto, connecting various cellars so that they could travel freely from one area to another.

The Germans, never having considered the Jews as fighters, were stunned by the strong resistance they encountered, and retreated to await further orders from Germany. When those orders came through, hell erupted. In their attempt to crush the resistance, they attacked the ghetto with everything they could muster, including bombing from the air, but they couldn't quell the desperate, starving remnants of humanity. The Jews dug themselves into the cellars, living in indescribable conditions, moving constantly from one bombed-out building into another.

Then orders came from Berlin to raze the ghetto, so building after building was set on fire. I was on my way to school, waiting for a tram in front of a children's playground. I was not close to the ghetto, but a little distance away, perhaps a couple of city blocks. I was, like the rest of Warsaw, going about my business while people inside the ghetto were being burned alive.

A black pall of smoke was spreading and carrying its sickening smell all over the city. Then, before I could avert my horrified gaze, I saw people jumping out of windows like human torches. I could hear screaming. In the playground there were children on the swings. Some of them were making them go as high as possible to try to catch a glimpse of the horror over the wall. How could they? This image is seared

into my brain along with the smoke, the indescribable smell of burning buildings and human flesh and the screams, but at the time I was numb with shock. I continued to school. At night the fire was still burning fiercely and crackling flames reached to the sky. I remember nothing of the next few weeks.

My next clear memory is of some time later when the ghetto was still smouldering. I myself became an unwitting voyeur. It was a Sunday morning when Marysia begged me to come rowing with her on the Vistula. She did not tell me the reason but once on the river, she positioned us to a certain spot, where she was able to see if her building in the ghetto was still standing. It was, and somehow the fact that it had not been burned to the ground gave her a deep feeling of relief and satisfaction. And in some way I understood how she felt. . . .

The Germans began to arrest a huge number of people. Frustrated in their attempts to find the headquarters of the Polish Underground Organisation they went berserk, vengefully executing innocent people in reprisal for P.U.O. activities. We lived fearfully from day to day, waiting with whatever calm we could muster for the war to end, but it was almost impossible to stay calm or walk in the streets without dread. Even at night, we slept fitfully. Whenever we heard the sound of a car approaching, or German spoken, or somebody banging on a door, we trembled with fear.

We had added reason to be fearful. It seemed that a number of Jews had managed to escape from the ghetto in its last weeks. As a result, human vultures were redoubling their efforts to apprehend anyone in any way "suspicious" for purposes of blackmail or betrayal. Sometimes, the danger came from sources one couldn't begin to imagine.

My father was warned that a Jewish acquaintance, originally from Krakow, had turned "Jew-spotter" for the Gestapo. Soon after, they met in the street and although my father's blood froze, he greeted him warmly and invited him to a nearby café for a cup of tea. The informer suggested that they exchange addresses and my father readily agreed, and gave him a different pseudonym and address. He wandered the streets for some hours till he was sure he was not being followed, till he dared to go home. Fortunately, their paths never crossed again, but we were shocked to find that someone who was so well-educated and well-liked could have fallen so low.

One day, we were sickened to hear the sound of shooting from inside the ghetto. We were told that Jews had been found in hiding and were taken back to the ghetto to be shot. I looked in the mirror one day and noticed that my eyes looked like the eyes of a stranger to me. There was so much

sadness in them. It scared me because the Poles said they could always pick Jews by the sad look in their eyes. So I walked in the streets of Warsaw with my eyes downcast.

Though Ewa Kwiecinska had left our villa some time earlier and taken a flat of her own, my mother still worked in her dye factory, and they remained good friends. Mama was forced to take two days off work to look for accommodation and went vainly from place to place, but there wasn't a vacant room available in the whole of Warsaw. Mama returned to the factory totally dispirited. Ewa, seeing my mother so upset, suggested that we could rent a room in her flat. Mama was delighted. The only drawback was that Ewa's flat was situated in Zelazna Street, just outside the ruins of the ghetto. To keep a smiling face while walking next to its walls proved to be a heartbreaking and enervating experience.

I went to school every day but couldn't concentrate. I was depressed and terribly afraid. My mind no longer seemed capable of absorbing the horror of the things I was seeing,

and I wished with all my heart that I was a little girl again, unable to comprehend the danger surrounding me.

I became increasingly exhausted, both mentally and physically. I lost my self-confidence and my usually placid disposition and looked pale and ill. I could not bear living in Zelazna Street and suffered an inner turmoil of emotion I could not control. Sometimes I had to keep my hands in my pockets to hide their trembling. I was afraid of everyone and everything. I went through the motions—eating, sleeping, and going to school, but I had lost interest in everything around me.

Fortunately the political news we received through Ewa's P.U.O. friends was comforting. The Russians were advancing on all fronts and hopefully they would be approaching the Polish border soon. We also heard that the Polish Underground Organisation was at last preparing for an uprising against the Germans. With something realistically to hope for, I snapped out of my depression.

THE HOLOCAUST

THE HOLOCAUST

An Encyclopedia and Document Collection

VOLUME 4: DOCUMENTS ON THE HOLOCAUST

Paul R. Bartrop and
Michael Dickerman,
Editors



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Introduction

The documents that constitute this volume reveal nothing less than the extremes of human nature, exposing both the savagery of the perpetrators and the suffering of the victims. By doing so, they also reveal the tissue-thin nature of Western civilization during the dark days of the Holocaust: 2,000 years of Western values and culture were rendered impotent in the face of the Holocaust, totally helpless against the combination of a demagogue, an ideology that appealed to the basest of human instincts, a fearful citizenry desperate to hear what it needed to hear, and the power of the state that harnessed these forces and transformed them into terror and death.

It is not anticipated that these documents will be read from beginning to end. Almost always they will be read as each is needed for a particular purpose, but there would be much of value if they were read from start to finish. The insight gained by doing so, by seeing the whole picture and not just a piece of it, as overwhelming as it might be for the reader, provides a look into one of the most terrifying moments in modern history.

The documents here are arranged in the order of the “continuum of evil” that was the Holocaust. There are almost limitless alternatives to the way these documents could have been organized, but as laid out here they tell a story, with a beginning born of religious and then economic, political, and finally racial antisemitism; with a middle that includes the march from legal ostracism to the actualization of industrialized mass murder; and an end of victory, grief, and, for some, justice.

As will be seen in the first section of documents (“The Othering of the Jews”), antisemitism did not begin with Adolf Hitler, but he brought to it a “basic principle of the blood”¹ that became the foundation of an entire worldview (*Weltanschauung*), one that could be seen in its embryonic stage in his book *Mein Kampf*, written a full decade before his rise to power. There he used words that would become his lingua franca of evil:

Was there any form of filth or profligacy, particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it? . . . If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light—a kike!

Elsewhere, in an echo of Martin Luther some five centuries earlier (Document 1) and as a harbinger of what would come: “no one need be surprised if among our people the personification of the devil as the symbol of all evil assumes the living shape of the Jew.”

The othering process did not stop with an ideology of extreme racial stratification. It next took the form of innumerable anti-Jewish laws that oppressed and separated members of the so-called Jewish race. One need only read the titles of a few of the thousands of pieces of anti-Jewish legislation to understand their intent. Note the absence of direct reference to Jews in the titles of the earlier laws, whereas the later laws make no effort to hide the group to which they are directed:

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- Law to Remove the Distress of People and State (Document 10, March 1933)
- Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (Document 13, April 1933)
- Law against Overcrowding of German Schools and Higher Institutions (Document 17, April 1933)
- The Reich Citizenship Law (Document 20, September 1935)
- Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor (Document 21, September 1935)
- Decree Regarding the Reporting of Jewish Property (Document 27, April 1938)
- Regulation for the Elimination of Jews from the Economic Life of Germany (Document 35, November 1938)
- Police Decree Concerning the “Marking” of the Jews (Document 43, September 1941)

Note should be made of the types of documents included in the above list: laws, decrees, and regulations. Raul Hilberg explains in his book *Sources of Holocaust Research*² that these “public lawmaking acts” (*Rechtsetzungsakte*) reflect a hierarchy of authority. Thus, for example:

The law, as the highest enactment, might be signed by Hitler himself and by the ministers responsible for its creation. . . . Decrees [were] usually signed by a minister. . . . Whether something was a law or a decree was mostly a reflection of the rank of the signer rather than the intrinsic importance of the subject.³

As the reader will see, there are many other forms of *Rechtsetzungsakte* in this volume, but even this collection does not contain every type of Nazi government pronouncement. Hilberg again:

Every order had a specific effect on its recipients, enlarging or diminishing their authority or burden. The impact would be widened as soon as they passed it on to *their* subordinates, until the full brunt of what had been ordered might be felt by the victims. A letter, in turn, was a way of achieving clarity and agreement about an action to be taken. A report . . . fulfilled two purposes. It confirmed to the leadership the continual functioning of the administrative machine, and provided an overview that was a tool for shaping future decisions.⁴

Elsewhere, Hilberg writes of a *color coding* system:

In the Administrative Code of 1926, a color scheme was specified for . . . initialing and notations [on a document]: a green pencil for a minister, red for a *Staatssekretär*, blue for a *Ministerialdirektor*. . . . Adolf Eichmann . . . recalled the following colors for officials in descending order or rank: green for Himmler, blue for Heydrich, orange for Müller, and violet for Eichmann.⁵

The reader is urged to consult Hilberg’s book when “decoding” certain elements of the Nazi documents in this volume, including aspects not addressed here, such as the security classifications of the documents, signatures, formatting, distribution lists, notations, and so forth.

The othering process was made more acceptable to the broader German population as a result of a barrage of virulent antisemitic propaganda that was generated by the Nazi regime throughout its campaign of racial superiority. Legitimized by Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels (Document 49, September 1934) and disseminated in ways including the odious articles in Julius Steicher’s *Der Stürmer* (Documents 52 and 53, among others), Jews were so vilified—and so effectively and constantly vilified—as the source of all that was evil in the world that with few exceptions, Germans and later the people of many occupied territories throughout Europe came to accept the portrayal of Jews as subhuman, as akin to disease-carrying rats with the same right to life.

The next step along the “continuum of destruction” (and the next section of documents—“The Nazi Assault”) was the *physical* violation of the Jews. Efforts to “encourage” the Jews to emigrate quickly became orders to leave, but for many Jews, leaving Germany—whether voluntarily or not—meant leaving behind what had been their homeland for generations, forfeiting virtually all of their assets, being forced to live as impoverished strangers in a country with a strange language, and worrying desperately about how they would provide for themselves and their families, assuming, of course, that they could find a country willing to take them in. Even this option was closed to Jews once the Nazis banned emigration altogether. To see the policy on emigration change over time, compare Document 67 (January 1939) and Document 73 (October 1941).

Then came the first state-organized pogrom of widespread anti-Jewish violence: Kristallnacht, in November 1938. Jews who were surprised that they were the subject of onerous legal restrictions and humiliations now were stunned to see their homes, businesses, and synagogues

destroyed, often by raging fires that were allowed to burn unless they threatened the homes, businesses, or churches of non-Jews. SS leader Reinhard Heydrich's instructions (Document 80, November 1938) regarding the "spontaneous" demonstration of outrage by the German and Austrian citizenry over the murder of Ernst vom Rath includes the delineation between what should be destroyed and what should be protected. That the Jews were required to pay a fine for all of the damage done to themselves (Document 85, November 1938) adds insult to extensive injury and destruction.

In the latter years of the 1930s, the actual killing of innocent "others" began not with the Jews but instead with the non-Jews of Germany and Austria who were mentally or physically impaired. Building on an academic paper written in 1920 with the ominous title "Permitting the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life" (Document 90), Hitler's authorization (Document 91, backdated to September 1939) to murder those who, pursuant to a perverse cost-benefit analysis had no right to live, resulted in the murder of more than 70,000 innocents. By the use of relatively crude methods of gassing their victims, the ironically named "Euthanasia Program" became a practice ground for the more sophisticated methods of mass gassing that would be found in the extermination camps.

As for the Jews, even the violence of Kristallnacht would not satisfy the Nazis. The third section of documents ("Genocide") traces the development of genocide as it moved from ghettoization to mass shootings and finally to the industrialization of extermination. The purpose of the walled-in societies of the ghettos was twofold: to kill Jews by the cumulative effect of overcrowding, starvation, disease, exposure to the elements, and the all too common occurrence of arbitrary beatings and executions and to control and make easily available large numbers of Jews when the decision was made to proceed along the continuum of death to what came next. Almost all of the documents from 100 through 111 focus on various aspects of life in the ghettos, such as the constant threat of starvation; governance by the *Judenräte*, Jewish Councils required by the Nazis to be established in each ghetto; deportations; and ultimately liquidation of the ghettos themselves.

Then the story begins its terrible climax, as the ghastly mass murders by the *Einsatzgruppen* (Documents 117 and 119 through 126), whose reports of their deadly actions turn mass murder into nothing more than a production report to a supervisor, was only a part of the Nazis' remorseless and even enthusiastic determination to exterminate every Jew on the face of the earth. Although the killing methods of the

Einsatzgruppen were not as efficient as what was to come, they nonetheless resulted in the murder of more than 1 million Jews.

The step to efficiency came with the camps, but they were not all of the same type. Ranging from camps for political prisoners to slave labor camps to extermination camps, the Nazi vision of a world that is *Judenfrei* (free of Jews) drove an effort to exterminate an entire people in the fastest and most cost-effective way possible. The documents associated with this effort (Documents 129 through 149) are so damning, so inconceivable in the most literal sense, that it has been written about this entire undertaking that

There is something in the nature of thought—its patient deliberateness and care for logical order—that is alien to the enormity of the death camps. There is something no less in the reality of the death camps that denies the attentions of thought. Thinking and the death camps are incommensurable. . . . It is to think the unthinkable.⁶

The fourth section of documents ("Responses and Other Victims," Documents 150 through 163) reminds the reader that the victim groups—although the subject of the most horrible deprivation and despite being the target of the entire apparatus of the state—actually attempted and sometimes found a way to push back against the Nazi machine even though the ultimate outcome was known from the outset.

This section also makes clear that although the Jews alone were viewed as an existential threat to all of humankind, there were *non-Jewish* groups—the Romas and Sintis, homosexuals, Soviet prisoners of war, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Poles, and so forth—whose very existence, although they did not create a cosmic crisis as the Jews did, nonetheless was considered incompatible with the Nazi *Weltanschauung*, and they paid a heavy price indeed.

In this same section we see a disturbing reaction by the international community, one that was so inadequate to the task as to be almost nonexistent. Whether it was the refusal to offer refuge to the desperate victims (Documents 159 and 161) or the damning evidence of the U.S. State Department's intentional efforts to delay or deny immigration into the country (Document 162), the victims were too much left on their own as the Nazi death machine ground on.

The fifth and final section of documents ("Post-Holocaust Developments") brings us to what happened after the "continuum of evil" had run its awful course. Liberation forced the world to confront what it had ignored, minimized, or

could not believe could happen. There were scenes described in the reports by the liberators that no one who saw them could ever forget (Document 164). Also very disturbing were the conditions under which the victims were forced to live after their liberation with many of them still remaining behind barbed wire, and with inadequate efforts made on their behalf to connect them to family survivors, if any (Documents 165 and 166).

As the war came to its end, a commitment was made to bring the perpetrators to justice through the establishment of an International Military Tribunal (Documents 167 and 168), an effort that played out in a series of trials, most of which were held at Nuremberg, Germany. By reading trial records, including testimony on behalf of the prosecution and the defense as well as judgments of the court (Documents 170 to 175), a picture emerges of an effort to bring at least a modicum of justice to an event and individual actions so horrific as to leave even the severest of penalties wanting; ultimately, no punishment was commensurate with the crimes. However, coming out of these trials were the Nuremberg Code (Document 176) and the Nuremberg Principles (Document 177) that continue to this day to set internationally accepted standards of behavior.

On Sources and Citations

The majority of documents in this volume come from the voluminous record of the trials conducted in Nuremberg shortly after the end of World War II. The use of the Nuremberg record as the source for these documents was intentional, and this for several reasons.

First, the very fact that a document was included in the prosecution's efforts to bring the perpetrators of the Final Solution to justice confers a significance on it and vests in it a level of gravitas that demands its inspection and analysis. These documents are of great importance to our understanding of what happened, why it happened, and who—whether an individual or organization—was involved and responsible.

Second, Nuremberg trial documents are in the public domain,⁷ meaning there are no copyright restrictions on the text of those documents. The documents as formatted and presented in this volume are, of course, subject to copyright protection of the publisher, but the *text* itself of each document—*unless otherwise noted*—is available for use without restriction. Thus, by following the citations to the source of the documents, readers will find texts that can be used by students, teachers, and researchers in their efforts to come to grips with this moment in history.

In order to make full use of the Nuremberg trial documents, some explanation is in order. Trials that were held in Nuremberg after World War II can be divided into two subsections:

The first—the one that most people think of when they hear references to the Nuremberg trials—is the trial that indicted 24 major Nazi war criminals for crimes against peace (aggressive war), war crimes, crimes against humanity, and conspiracy to commit any of these crimes. This trial was held by the four major Allied powers: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Russia. Because of the international composition of the plaintiffs, the court that was created to hold these trials was the International Military Tribunal.

The second is a series of 12 trials held by the United States, sometimes referred to as “Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings.” Since these trials were not held by an international body, they are officially called the Nuremberg Military Tribunals and were conducted “under the direct authority of the Allied Control Council, Law No. 10.”⁸ Although some of these trials are known by their official names—such as *United States v. Oswald Pohl et al., Case No. 4*—many of them are better known by their unofficial names, such as “The Medical Case,” “The Justice Case,” “The *Einsatzgruppen* Case,” and “The RuSHA Case.”⁹

There are three sets of volumes relating to the trials held in Nuremberg:

1. The “Blue Series” is a set of 42 volumes that forms the official proceedings of the trial of the major Nazi war criminals. It is referred to in the citations for the documents in this volume as “*Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series.” This is followed by the volume and page numbers of the document and the document number.
2. The “Red Series” is a set of 11 volumes that forms the “Collection of Documentary Evidence and Guide Materials Prepared by the American and British Prosecuting Staffs for Presentation before the International Military Tribunal at Nurnberg, Germany.” It is referred to in the citations for the documents in this volume as “*Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series.” This is followed by the volume and page numbers of the document and the document number.

3. There is one set of volumes related to the 12 Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings. The “Green Series” is a set of 15 volumes that forms the official condensed record of those trials. It is referred to in the citations for the documents in this volume as “*Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series.” This is followed by the volume and page numbers of the document and the document number.

The easiest way to access the Blue, Red, and Green Series is to enter the following URL into your browser: https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Nuremberg_trials.html. This will take you to the Library of Congress Military Legal Resources. Here you will find links that take you directly to each of the series of volumes described above.

Document numbers have been assigned to each document by the Nuremberg trial prosecutors,¹⁰ with each number preceded by a prefix. The prefixes of the documents cited in this volume are:¹¹

1. NG (Nuremberg, Government). Documents pertaining to the activities of Reich ministries.
2. NO (Nuremberg, Organizations). Documents pertaining to the activities of Nazi organizations, particularly the SS and Security Police.
3. PS (Paris Storey). Documents selected under the direction of Colonel Robert G. Storey, Chief of the Documentation Division of the Office of United States Chief of Counsel for the prosecution of Axis Criminality.
4. L (London). Documents on German war policies and concentration camps obtained or processed in London.
5. UK Documents supplied by the United Kingdom.
6. NI (Nuremberg, Industrialists). Documents pertaining to German industrial and financial companies.
7. NOKW (Nuremberg, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht). Documents pertaining to the German Armed Forces.
8. D. Documents collected by the British on German industry and forced labor camps.

When making use of the documents in this volume, please keep the following in mind:

1. Some of the documents in the Nuremberg trials’ evidence volumes are produced in those volumes in whole, that is, without any language deleted from the original. Other documents are “extracts” (as they are called in those

volumes), meaning that the documents that appear in the evidence volumes do not contain all of the language in the original. Sometimes they are titled as “Extracts,” but other times they are not. To complicate the matter further, there are instances when language that appears in the documents in the evidence volumes has been deleted by the editor of this volume, and therefore what you read here is not the entirety of what you would read in the evidence volumes. Accordingly, the reader is urged to be mindful of the presence or absence of ellipses in the documents in this volume: if none exist this means that the document was produced in whole in the evidence volumes and this volume. If there are ellipses and/or the word “extracts” or “excerpts” appears in the title of the document, the reader should use the reference to the source that can be found at the end of the document to locate the document in the evidence volumes.

2. With one exception, footnotes are not reproduced in the documents in this volume. This is because most of the footnotes in these Nuremberg trial documents refer to other documents or sources not otherwise mentioned or included in this volume. The reader is urged to examine the original documents, using the citations in this volume, to determine if footnotes are in the original. The only exception is Document 145 (“The Auschwitz Protocol: The Vrba–Wetzler Report”), where the footnotes are explanatory without reference to outside documents.
3. All underlining and italics are in the original documents; none were added.
4. Misspellings and grammatical errors in the original documents are reproduced here without editing. Inconsistencies in spelling from document to document are not corrected, so the reader may see “Nuremberg” as well as “Nurnberg.” Similarly, diacritic marks are or are not used based on the original (e.g., “Führer” and “Fuehrer.”)
5. Unless indicated by “editor’s note,” all text in parentheses and brackets is in the original documents.

Some of the decisions as to which primary documents are to be included in a collection such as this are obvious—for example, no volume of documents can be complete without the Reich Citizenship Law of 1935—but the inclusion or exclusion of other documents reflect, for better or worse, judgments by the editor. For example, this volume includes not only the Wannsee Protocol, as expected, but also excerpts from a lengthy report by the Office of Strategic Services, Seventh Army, on the liberation of Dachau, a document not often included in these compilations but one

that provides important observations for the reader. Similarly, Reinhard Heydrich's orders initiating Kristallnacht are included, of course, but in addition telegrams sent by personnel in the United States Embassy, in Berlin, at the time the Kristallnacht terror was happening are also included, providing a perspective on that critical event not often seen.

Arguments can be made that some documents in this volume should have been excluded, while others not in this volume should have been included. Such is the problem an editor faces with tens of thousands of documents and a finite amount of space: choices must be made with the recognition that no two people will agree completely on what goes in and what stays out.

The documents that follow are the basic building blocks of the Holocaust. They provided the structure and foundation of the actions that would consume two-thirds of all European Jews. They also reveal the victims' response to a world that was becoming increasingly dangerous. Together they paint a picture of human nature that is as compelling as it is frightening.

Notes

1. Edouard Calic, *Secret Conversations with Hitler* (New York, 1971), p. 68, quoted in "Hitler's Racial Ideology: Content and Occult Sources," by Jackson Spielvogel and David Redles, accessed at: <http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/site/pp.asp?c=gvKVLcMVIuG&b=395043#1>.
2. Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001. Hilberg explains that after decades of using documents for his research, he asked himself, "what is the nature of my sources? They are not identical to the subject matter. They have their own history and qualities, which are different from the actions they depict. . . . This book is . . . an analysis divided into five chapters that deal in succession with the types of materials, their composition, style, content, and usability." Preface, pp. 7–8.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
6. Arthur A. Cohen, *The Tremendum: A Theological Interpretation of the Holocaust* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1988), p. 1.
7. Also included in this volume are documents in the National Archives that were not included in the Nuremberg trial collection. The text of those documents is also considered to be in the public domain.
8. Library of Congress, Military Legal Resources, at https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/NTs_war-criminals.html.
9. This is a reference to the Nazi Race and Resettlement Office, or *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*.
10. There are exceptions to the assignment of document numbers in the three series described here. Document numbers are not assigned, for example, to excerpts from trial testimony.
11. The following information is taken from Jacob Robinson and Henry Sachs, eds., *The Holocaust: The Nuremberg Evidence, Part One: Documents; Digest, Index, and Chronological Tables* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 11.

Documents

I. The Othering of the Jews

1. Excerpts from Martin Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 1543

Born at Eisleben, Saxony, in Germany, Martin Luther became a professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg in 1512. There he developed his belief that faith was the sole means to salvation. The famous posting in 1517 of his Ninety-Five Theses to reform the church, and his unwillingness to renounce them, led to his excommunication from the Catholic Church and the establishment of what would become Lutheranism. Luther's attitude toward the Jews was initially one of tolerance, convinced that they would eagerly convert to Christianity. When that failed, he condemned them in no uncertain terms, urging that they be rejected by his followers, even as they had been rejected by God. The following excerpts are from Luther's book The Jews and Their Lies, published in 1543. Given the large number of Germans who, in the years leading up to and during the Holocaust, were Lutherans, his influence on what would happen some five centuries later cannot be discounted. It should be noted that on April 18, 1994, the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) Churchwide Assembly adopted the "Declaration," which repudiates Luther's anti-Jewish writings, expresses deep regret for their historical consequences, and reclaims the desire to live in "love and respect for Jewish people."

I had made up my mind to write no more either about the Jews or against them. But since I learned that these miserable and accursed people do not cease to lure to themselves even us, that is, the Christians, I have published this little book, so that I might be found among those who opposed such poisonous activities of the Jews who warned the Christians to be on their guard against them.

* * * * *

Learn from this, dear Christian, what you are doing if you permit the blind Jews to mislead you. Then the saying will truly apply, "When a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into the pit" [cf. Luke 6:39]. You cannot learn anything from them except how to misunderstand the divine commandments. . . .

* * * * *

Therefore be on your guard against the Jews, knowing that wherever they have their synagogues, nothing is found but a den of devils in which sheer selfglory, conceit, lies, blasphemy, and defaming of God and men are practiced most maliciously and vehemingly on them.

* * * * *

Moreover, they are nothing but thieves and robbers who daily eat no morsel and wear no thread of clothing which

they have not stolen and pilfered from us by means of their accursed usury.

* * * * *

. . . for us Christians they stand as a terrifying example of God's wrath.

* * * * *

Alas, it cannot be anything but the terrible wrath of God which permits anyone to sink into such abysmal, devilish, hellish, insane baseness, envy, and arrogance.

* * * * *

. . . but then eject them forever from this country. For, as we have heard, God's anger with them is so intense that gentle mercy will only tend to make them worse and worse, while sharp mercy will reform them but little. Therefore, in any case, away with them!

* * * * *

Let the government deal with them in this respect, as I have suggested. But whether the government acts or not, let everyone at least be guided by his own conscience and form for himself a definition or image of a Jew.

* * * * *

Therefore we Christians, in turn, are obliged not to tolerate their wanton and conscious blasphemy.

* * * * *

What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing and blasphemy. Thus we cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of divine wrath, of which the prophets speak, nor can we convert the Jews. With prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames. We dare not avenge ourselves. Vengeance a thousand times worse than we could wish them already has them by the throat. I shall give you my sincere advice:

First to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians. For whatever we tolerated in the past unknowingly and I myself was unaware of it will be pardoned by God. But if we, now that we are informed, were to protect and shield such a house for the Jews . . . it would be the same as if we were doing all this and even worse ourselves, as we very well know.

Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed. For they pursue in them the same aims as in their synagogues. Instead they might be lodged under a roof or in a barn, like the gypsies. . . .

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them. . . .

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb. . . .

Fifth, I advise that safe conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside . . .

Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. The reason for such a measure is that, as said above, they have no other means of earning a livelihood than usury, and by it they have stolen and robbed from us all they possess. . . .

Seventh, I commend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam (Gen 3[:19]). For it is not fitting that they should let us accursed Goyim toil in the sweat of our faces while they, the holy people, idle away their time behind the stove, feasting and farting, and on top of all, boasting blasphemously of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat. No, one should toss out these lazy rogues by the seat of their pants.

* * * * *

. . . it must and dare not be considered a trifling matter but a most serious one to seek counsel against this and to save our souls from the Jews, that is, from the devil and from eternal death.

* * * * *

My essay, I hope, will furnish a Christian (who in any case has no desire to become a Jew) with enough material not only to defend himself against the blind, venomous Jews, but also to become the foe of the Jews’ malice, lying, and cursing, and to understand not only that their belief is false but that they are surely possessed by all devils. May Christ, our dear Lord, convert them mercifully and preserve us steadfastly and immovably in the knowledge of him, which is eternal life. Amen.

Source: *Luther’s Works*, Volume 47: *The Christian in Society IV* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 268–293. Used by permission of Fortress Press. [See also: http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Declaration_Of_The_ELCA_To_The_Jewish_Community.pdf?_ga=1.44553060.1796196638.1479227285]

2. Excerpts from “Cum nimis absurdum,” a Papal Bull by Pope Paul IV, July 14, 1555

Gian Pietro Carafa, who took the name of Paul IV upon his election to the papacy in May 1555, came to his calling from a family of nobility in Naples, one that groomed Carafa for the affairs of the papal court. He brought with him to his various roles in the Vatican a high expectation of personal piety and intolerance of what he considered to be heresy. His was an uneasy and unpopular papacy, beset as it was by the combination of his temper and his exalted sense of his papal role and what he considered to be his rightful exercise of power. As Pope Paul IV, he issued a papal bull in 1555 that has been characterized as being more of a reflection of his own biases than a pattern of papal intolerance. It takes its name from the Latin for its opening words, “since it is absurd.” In it he imposes restrictions that foreshadow what was to be seen in Nazi-occupied Europe: limits on where Jews may live, the requirement that they wear some type of distinctive marking, and a prohibition on owning property.

Laws and Ordinances to be observed by Jews living in the Ecclesiastical State Bishop Paul, the servant of the servants of God, for the future and memory of this matter

Since it is exceedingly absurd and improper that Jews, whose own guilt has consigned them to perpetual servitude, under the pretext that Christian piety receives them

and tolerates their presence, should be so ungrateful to Christians, that instead of gratitude they return arrogance to them, and they seek to exchange the servitude they owe to Christians for dominion over them; we, to whose notice it has lately come that these same Jews, in our dear city and in some other cities, holdings, and territories of the Holy Roman Church, have erupted into insolence, so that they presume not only to dwell side by side with Christians and near their churches, with no distinction of attire intervening, but also to erect homes in the better known sections and streets of the cities, holdings and territories where they dwell, and to buy and possess fixed property, and to have nurses, housemaids, and other hired Christian servants, and to perpetrate sundry other things in ignominy and contempt of the Christian name, considering that the Roman Church tolerates these same Jews as testimony of the true Christian faith and to the end that they, led by the piety and kindness of the Apostolic See, should at length recognize their errors, and make all haste to arrive at the true light of the Catholic faith, and thereby to agree that, as long as they persist in their errors, they should recognize through experience that they have been made slaves while Christians have been made free through Jesus Christ, God and our Lord, and that it is iniquitous that the children of the free woman should serve the children of the maid-servant—

1. Desiring to make sound provisions as best we can, with the help of God, in the above manner, we sanction by this our perpetually valid constitution that, among other things, in all future times in this city, as in all other cities, holdings, and territories belonging to the Roman church, all Jews should live solely in one and the same location, or if that is not possible, in two or three or as many as are necessary, which are to be contiguous and separated completely from the dwellings of Christians. These places are to be designated by us in our city and by our magistrates in the other cities, holdings, and territories. And they should have one entry alone, and so too one exit.
2. And in the individual cities, holdings, and territories where they dwell, they should have one synagogue alone in its customary location, and they may construct no new synagogue. Nor may they possess any real property. Accordingly, they must demolish and destroy all their synagogues except for this one alone. The real property which they now possess, they must sell to Christians within a period of time designated by the local magistrates.
3. And so that they be identified everywhere as Jews, men and women are respectively required and bound to wear

in full view a hat or some obvious marking, both to be blue in color, in such a way that they may not be concealed or hidden. . . .

4. [And they shall not] have nurses or serving women or any other Christians serving them, of whatever sex. Nor shall they have their children wet-nursed or reared by Christian women.
5. Nor may they themselves or anyone in their employ labor in public on Sundays or other feast days declared by the Church. . . .
7. Nor should they be so presumptuous as to entertain or dine with Christians or to develop close relations and friendships with them. . . .
9. Additionally, these Jews may carry on no business as purveyors of grain, barley, or other items necessary for human sustenance, but must be limited to dealing only in second-hand clothing. . . .
10. As for those among them who are physicians, even if they are summoned and requested, they may not come forth and attend to the care of Christians. . . .

Given at Rome at St. Mark's, in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord one thousand five hundred fifty-five, on the day before the Ides of July, in the first year of our pontificate.

Source: Steve Hochstadt, *Sources of the Holocaust*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 16–17. Used by permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

3. The Twenty-Five Point Program of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, February 24, 1920

The Program of the National Socialist German Worker's Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsch Arbeiterpartei), also referred to as the "25 Point Program," was initially the party platform of the German Workers' Party, but when it was announced on February 24, 1920, Adolf Hitler publicly took the opportunity to proclaim the new name of the party, which he would shape henceforth as he envisaged it should be. As the party's official program, it was to remain unchanged in view of the fact that it was already "perfect" and a guiding light for all Germans, until realized. Note should be made of both the antisemitic provisions (e.g., point 4) and the other provisions that suggest a party platform that is wider than antisemitism.

Given that this program was announced shortly after the German defeat in World War I, it is easy to see how it might appeal to the German populace.

National Socialistic Yearbook

Edited by: Dr. Robert Ley

Published by: Central Publishing House of the N.S.D.A.P.

Franz Eher, successor Munich

The program is the political foundation of the NSDAP and accordingly the primary political law of the State. It has been made brief and clear intentionally.

All legal precepts must be applied in the spirit of the party program.

Since the taking over of control, the Fuehrer has succeeded in the realization of essential portions of the Party program from the fundamentals to the detail.

The Party Program of the NSDAP was proclaimed on the 24 February 1920 by Adolf Hitler at the first large Party gathering in Munich and since that day has remained unaltered. Within the national socialist philosophy is summarized in 25 points:

1. We demand the unification of all Germans in the Greater Germany on the basis of the right of self-determination of peoples.

2. We demand equality of rights for the German people in respect to the other nations; abrogation of the peace treaties of Versailles and St. Germain.

3. We demand land and territory (colonies) for the sustenance of our people, and colonization for our surplus population.

4. Only a member of the race can be a citizen. A member of the race can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently no Jew can be a member of the race.

5. Whoever has no citizenship is to be able to live in Germany only as a guest, and must be under the authority of legislation for foreigners.

6. The right to determine matters concerning administration and law belongs only to the citizen. Therefore we demand that every public office, of any sort whatsoever, whether in the Reich, the county or municipality, be filled only by citizens. We combat the corrupting parliamentary economy, office-holding only according to party inclinations without consideration of character or abilities.

7. We demand that the state be charged first with providing the opportunity for a livelihood and way of life for the citizens. If it is impossible to sustain the total population of

the State, then the members of foreign nations (non-citizens) are to be expelled from the Reich.

8. Any further immigration of non-citizens is to be prevented. We demand that all non-Germans, who have immigrated to Germany since the 2 August 1914, be forced immediately to leave the Reich.

9. All citizens must have equal rights and obligations.

10. The first obligation of every citizen must be to work both spiritually and physically. The activity of individuals is not to counteract the interests of the universality, but must have its result within the framework of the whole for the benefit of all.

Consequently we demand:

11. Abolition of unearned (work and labour) incomes. Breaking of rent-slavery.

12. In consideration of the monstrous sacrifice in property and blood that each war demands of the people personal enrichment through a war must be designated as a crime against the people. Therefore we demand the total confiscation of all war profits.

13. We demand the nationalization of all (previous) associated industries (trusts).

14. We demand a division of profits of all heavy industries.

15. We demand an expansion on a large scale of old age welfare.

16. We demand the creation of a healthy middle class and its conservation, immediate communalization of the great warehouses and their being leased at low cost to small firms, the utmost consideration of all small firms in contracts with the State, county or municipality.

17. We demand a land reform suitable to our needs, provision of a law for the free expropriation of land for the purposes of public utility, abolition of taxes on land and prevention of all speculation in land.

18. We demand struggle without consideration against those whose activity is injurious to the general interest. Common national criminals, usurers, Schieber and so forth are to be punished with death, without consideration of confession or race.

19. We demand substitution of a German common law in place of the Roman Law serving a materialistic world-order.

20. The state is to be responsible for a fundamental reconstruction of our whole national education program, to enable every capable and industrious German to obtain higher education and subsequently introduction into leading positions. The plans of instruction of all educational institutions are to

conform with the experiences of practical life. The comprehension of the concept of the State must be striven for by the school [Staatsbuergerkunde] as early as the beginning of understanding. We demand the education at the expense of the State of outstanding intellectually gifted children of poor parents without consideration of position or profession.

21. The State is to care for the elevating national health by protecting the mother and child, by outlawing child-labor, by the encouragement of physical fitness, by means of the legal establishment of a gymnastic and sport obligation, by the utmost support of all organizations concerned with the physical instruction of the young.

22. We demand abolition of the mercenary troops and formation of a national army.

23. We demand legal opposition to known lies and their promulgation through the press. In order to enable the provision of a German press, we demand, that: a. All writers and employees of the newspapers appearing in the German language be members of the race: b. Non-German newspapers be required to have the express permission of the State to be published. They may not be printed in the German language: c. Non-Germans are forbidden by law any financial interest in German publications, or any influence on them, and as punishment for violations the closing of such a publication as well as the immediate expulsion from the Reich of the non-German concerned. Publications which are counter to the general good are to be forbidden. We demand legal prosecution of artistic and literary forms which exert a destructive influence on our national life, and the closure of organizations opposing the above made demands.

24. We demand freedom of religion for all religious denominations within the state so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the Germanic race. The Party as such advocates the standpoint of a positive Christianity without binding itself confessionally to any one denomination. It combats the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us, and is convinced that a lasting recovery of our nation can only succeed from within on the framework: common utility precedes individual utility.

25. For the execution of all of this we demand the formation of a strong central power in the Reich. Unlimited authority of the central parliament over the whole Reich and its organizations in general. The forming of state and profession chambers for the execution of the laws made by the Reich within the various states of the confederation. The leaders of the Party promise, if necessary by sacrificing their own lives, to support by the execution of the points set forth above without consideration.

Adolf Hitler proclaimed the following explanation for this program on the 13 April 1928:

Explanation

Regarding the false interpretations of Point 17 of the program of the NSDAP on the part of our opponents, the following definition is necessary:

“Since the NSDAP stands on the platform of private ownership it happens that the passage” gratuitous expropriation concerns only the creation of legal opportunities to expropriate if necessary, land which has been illegally acquired or is not administered from the view-point of the national welfare. This is directed primarily against the Jewish land-speculation companies.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 208–211, Doc. 1708-PS.

4. Excerpts from German Publications, Various Aspects of NSDAP Ideology, Various Dates

This collection of 14 excerpts from speeches, primarily by Adolf Hitler, and various statements range in date from the early 1920s to 1939. They set forth some of the political and ideological positions that formed the foundation of the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Several of them address the perceived unfairness of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles that were imposed on Germany following World War I, defiantly promising to ignore those provisions and calling for revenge on the “November criminals” who signed the treaty on behalf of Germany. Although other excerpts blame the Jews for the peace provisions and urge that Germany should rely on its own genius and has no need for the Jews, most of these pronouncements speak to the ideology of the Nazi party, including references to social Darwinism, Lebensraum (living space), German unification, the need for remilitarization, and protection against communism.

1. “It was no Peace Treaty which they have signed, but a betrayal of Peace * * * So long as this Treaty stands there can be no resurrection of the German people; no social reform of any kind is possible. The Treaty was made in order to bring 20 million Germans to their deaths and to ruin the German

nation. But those who made the Treaty cannot set it aside. At its foundation our movement formulated three demands:

1. Setting aside of the Peace Treaty
2. Unification of all Germans
3. Land and soil [Grund und Boden] to feed our nation. Our Movement could formulate these demands, since it was not our Movement which caused the War; it has not made the Republic; it did not sign the Peace Treaty.”

Hitler, Speech at Munich, 13 April 1923.

Adolf Hitler's Reden, Munich 1935, p. 66.

2. “The day must come when a German government shall summon up the courage to declare to the foreign powers: “The Treaty of Versailles is founded on a monstrous lie. We fulfill nothing more. Do what you will! If you want battle, look for it! Then we shall see whether you can turn 70 million Germans into serfs and slaves!”

Hitler, Speech of 1 August 1923.

Adolf Hitler's Reden, Munich, 1935, p. 90.

3. “Is it not these criminals, this Jewry, who are the real foes of the Republic, these men who from the day of its birth burdened it with the lie that this people was guilty of the World War? And have they not undermined the Republic and thereby given to the foreign powers the spiritual arms with which these Powers for the last three years shower blows upon us and oppress us and say to us ‘You deserve it, for you yourselves have confessed your guilt!’ And have they not opposed the Republic, who have so reduced all power of resistance that today every Hottentot State is in a position to lord it over Germany? And do they not ceaselessly oppose Germany, who have brought us, once the people of honour, so low that we have a reputation for the meanest economic corruption and the most debased political outlook?” [Gesinnungslumperei]

Hitler, Speech on “Free State or Slavery,” 28 July 1922.

Adolf Hitler's Reden, Munich 1925, p. 39.

4. “We must call to account the November criminals of 1918. It cannot be that 2 million Germans should have died in vain and that afterwards one should sit down as friends at the same table with traitors. No, we do not pardon, we demand-Vengeance.”

Hitler, Speech of 18 September 1922, p. 48.

Adolf Hitler's Reden, Munich 1925, p. 48.

5. “Clear away the Jews! Our people has genius enough—we need no Hebrews. If we were to put in their place intelligences drawn from the great body of our people, then we have found anew the bridge which leads to the community of the people.”

Hitler, Speech, 27 April 1923 on “The Paradise of the Jew or the State of the German People.”

Adolf Hitler’s Reden, Munich 1925 (Pamphlet), p. 77.

6. “Amid the most terrible disintegration the old Nordic racial spirit is none the less awakened to new, higher consciousness. It realizes finally that there can be no equality in the neighbourly existence [gleichberechtigtes Nebeneinander] of mutually and necessarily exclusive supreme values, to which either neighbour might at some time consent to its own present destruction [Verderben]. It realizes that elements racially and spiritually related may be included, but that foreign elements must undoubtedly be excluded, and, when necessary, overcome. Not because they are ‘false’ or ‘bad’ in themselves, but because they are foreign generically [artfremd] and destroy the internal structure of our essence.”

Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Eine Wertung der seelischgeistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit.

Munich, 1931; 4th ed., 1934, pp. 118–119.

Vansittart, Ed. *Thus Spake Germany*, 1931, p. 149.

7. “Therefore, the call for our own space, our own bread, is a condition for the validation of spiritual values, the forming of the German character. In this great struggle for existence, for honour, freedom and bread on the part of such creative nation as Germany, consideration cannot be given to presumptuous speakers of other people, who are as impotent as they are devoid of values. The land must be made free, so German Farmers’ Fists can plow it. Only through this, will there be a possibility for Free Breathing [aufatmen] for the German people, who are into the smallest space. Through this, too, the beginning of a new era of culture for the white man.

Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Eine Wertung der seelischgeistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit.

Munich, 1931; 4th ed., 1934, p. 676.

Vansittart, ed., *Thus Spake Germany*, p. 282, 1931.

8. “Always before God and the world, the stronger has the right to carry through his will. History proves it: He, who has no might, has no use for might.”

Hitler, Speech of 13 April 1923.

Adolf Hitler’s Reden, Munich, 1925, p. 55.

9. “Four and a half years after the proclamation of universal conscription [Wehrfreiheit], which restored the right of every German to fight with the weapon in his hand for the vital rights of his country, the German Wehrmacht was mobilized for the preservation of the Greater German Lebensraum. The Wehrmacht was prepared for this battle . . .”

Major Schmidtke, *Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch* 1941, p. 168.

10. “The only possible conditions under which a German State can develop at all must therefore be: Unification of all Germans in Europe, education toward a national consciousness, and readiness to place the whole national strength without exception in the service of the nation * * *”

Hitler, Speech, 10 April 1923 in Munich.

Adolf Hitler’s Reden, Munich, 1925, p. 50.

11. “We were not founded for an election, but to jump in as the last help in the hour of greatest need, at a moment when in fear and despair it sees the approach of the Red Monster. Therefore, the task of our movement is today not to prepare ourselves for any coming election but to prepare for the coming collapse of the Reich, so that when the old trunk falls the young fir-tree already stands there.”

Hitler, Speech, 5 September 1923.

Adolf Hitler’s Reden, Munich, 1925, p. 108.

12. “Only those organizations can lay claim to the institution of the leadership principle and to the national socialist meaning of the state and people in the National Socialist meaning of the term, which . . . have been integrated into, supervised and formed by the Party and which, in the future, will continue to do so.

“All others which conduct an organizational life of their own are to be rejected as outsiders and will either have to adjust themselves or disappear from public life.”

Organisationsbuch der NSDAP, 1937 and 1943 editions, p. 92.

13. “In the NSDAP, the Fuehrer has created for himself an instrument which, built up, developed, and geared to action

by him, sets the goal and direction for the entire German people. * * *

“The taking over of leadership by the NSDAP in 1933 brought about the seizure of all power instruments [Macht-mittel] and institutions of the state by National Socialism in order to mobilize these (instruments and institutions) for the intellectual and psychological preparation of the people for the complete removal of the oppressing treaties and of the humiliating situation of the Reich.”

Fritz Mehnert, Chief of the Main Organization Office of the NSDAP.

Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch, 1941, Munich, p. 175.

14. “The organization of the Party is so strong and so thoroughly developed that today it embraces [erfasst] all homes [Haushalte] of all Volksgenossen in the territory of the Reich, including the territories added in the years 1938 and 1939.”

Fritz Mehnert, Chief of the Main Organization Office of the NSDAP.

Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch, 1941, Munich, p. 179.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 79–82, Doc. 2405-PS.

5. Excerpts from *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, 1903*

The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion purports to be notes of a meeting held by Jewish leaders setting forth their plans for world domination. Although discredited shortly after its publication, it nonetheless has been the cause of countless Jewish lives lost over the years. Reflecting all the elements of classic antisemitism, it was originally used by the Russian secret police in an effort to fan Jew-hatred, and it has remained available and has been published in countries all over the world despite the indisputable fact that its origin is based on a French farce written by Maurice Joly in 1864, “*The Dialogue in Hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu*.” One of its most ardent believers was Henry Ford, who serialized it in his newspaper, Dearborn Independent, in 1920. It is so extreme and so clearly fraudulent that it might be read with

amusement were it not for the antisemitism it inspired and the victims who died as a result. Reference was made to it by several Nazi leaders, including Alfred Rosenberg, Josef Goebbels, and Adolf Hitler in his book Mein Kampf.

From the First Protocol

... A government finding itself under the influence of internal upheavals, or one that is at the mercy of external enemies because of the disordered conditions in its own land, must be undoubtedly consigned to oblivion. Then it is in our power. The dominance of money, over which we alone dispose, extends a straw to the government, which it must grasp for good or ill if it wants to keep from sinking helplessly into the abyss. . . .

Statecraft and the moral law have not the slightest to do with one another. A ruler who wants to rule by the moral law understands nothing about statecraft and is never for a moment secure upon his throne. He who would rule must labor with slyness, cunning, evil, hypocrisy. High moral character—openness, honor, honesty—these are the reefs of statecraft upon which the best will founder, because the enemy makes use of different and truly more effective measures. Let these character traits be the hallmarks and principles of non-Jewish realms. We can never and under no condition labor with such wrong-headed principles.

Our right lies in strength. “Strength” is a limited expression, not a universally valid concept. The word in itself never signifies more than: “Give me what I want so that it may be clear and self-evident to all the world that I am stronger than you.”

Where does right begin? Where does it end? In a state where power is badly managed and laws and governors are rendered impersonal by free-thinking rights, I shall create a new right. [I shall] demolish all institutions according to the right of the stronger, lay hands upon the law, transform all governing bodies, and become master of them. The power of these rights shall voluntarily transfer to us—because of freethinking.

The Invulnerability of Jewish Freemasonry

Since at present all the powers have begun to totter, ours will be more invulnerable than any of the others because it will be invisible. Thus it shall remain unshakable until that time when it has become so empowered that no act of violence can repress it. . . .

Before us lies a plan, the lines of which are drawn according to the rules of war. We cannot deviate from it without endangering the labor of many centuries.

The Masses Are Blind

To achieve the goal of common efforts, we must learn to grasp the worthlessness, inconstancy, and vacillation of the masses. We must understand their incapacity to understand the questions of state life and their own welfare. We must comprehend that the great masses of the people are blind, wholly without understanding, and that they willy-nilly stagger from Right to Left, backward and forward. A blind man cannot lead the blind without leading them into the abyss. Consequently, even the “inquisitive” and creative among the masses can never perform as leaders in governing the states. Even when they supposedly possess some intelligence, they are still not fit to act as trailblazers and leaders of the masses. They will attain to no other goal than the ruin of the entire people.

Only a personality, educated to self-mastery from youth, can recognize and act upon the great tendencies and principles of statecraft. . . .

Observe the drunkards, befogged by alcohol. They believe themselves to possess the right to unlimited pleasure, which they confuse with the concept of freedom. From that idea we take leave for all time. The non-Jewish peoples are befogged with alcohol; their youths are infatuated with humanism and premature vices. To these they have been led by our agents, administrators, teachers, servants, governesses to the rich, educational institutions, etc., as well as by our women in pleasure resorts and public houses. Among these I also count the so-called “society ladies,” who willfully ape the example of vice and ostentation. . . .

Force forms the basis, but cunning and fraud work as the means to power for such governments that are not willing to lay their crowns at the feet of the representatives of a new power. These are the only means to the goal that hovers before us. Therefore, we must not shrink from bribery, fraud, treason, if they serve for the attainment of our plans. In statecraft we must be clever enough not to shrink from strange methods, if power and subjection be achieved thereby. . . .

Already in antiquity we allowed the call for “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” to echo from the ranks of the peoples. Since that time, these words have been endlessly repeated in the most varied disturbances and upheavals. Sometimes the intentions have been honorable—to bring actual well-being and true freedom of the personality to the world; sometimes it has just been to satisfy the vanity of the masses. Not even the intelligent and clever non-Jews have recognized the inner contradictions in these words. They have not said that there can be no equality, no freedom in nature. All of nature rests

upon the inequality of forces, characteristics, peculiarities. Nature is subject to eternal laws. It is clear that the masses are a blind force. And the chosen upstarts are as blind as the masses themselves. The initiated, even if he is a fool, can govern, while the uninitiated, even when he is high-minded, can understand nothing about statecraft. All these things are forgotten by the non-Jews. . . .

In all the corners of the world, and with the help of our secret societies, the words “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” led gigantic crowds to our ranks and carried our banners to victory. Those words were the worms that gnawed at the welfare of non-Jews, everywhere undermining peace, calm, community, common values, and thereby destroying the foundation of their domination. Gentlemen, you see the consequences that have served the triumph of our cause. *They gave us the possibility of playing out the highest trump: the annihilation of noble privilege, or, better said, the actual system of non-Jewish noble dominance, which has been the only means of defense of the non-Jewish peoples and states against us. . . .*

From the Second Protocol

Economic Wars as the Basis for Jewish Hegemony

By all means we must seek to prevent wars from resulting in territorial gains. [If we can manage this, then the profits] will be transferred to the economic realm where we shall make clear to the nations that we hold complete power. Such situations deliver the warring parties into the hands of our associations, which are distributed over the entire globe, which have a million eyes at their disposal, and which know no territorial boundaries. Then our rights shall wipe out the rights of the nations and these shall be governed [by us] as the individual citizens are governed by their civil codes.

The Bureaucracy

We shall pick administrative officials from the citizenry on the basis of their slavlike capacities, and we shall not train them for administration. They will therefore sink to the level of pawns in our chess game and be in the hands of our schooled, gifted counselors, who have been trained from youth to exercise dominion of the entire world. As you know, these experts have created their knowledge of statecraft from our governmental plans, from the lessons of history, and from observation of the present. Non-Jews don’t understand [governmental] praxis based on the dispassionate observations of history. They are guided by a knack for science that does not use comparative results as a test. It makes

no sense for us to debate with them. Let them live on hope of future joys or in remembrance of the past. Most important is that they firmly believe in what we have slowly administered to them as the behests of science. To this end, our press continually instills a blind confidence in our doctrine. The intelligent among the non-Jews will give themselves airs on account of their knowledge, and skillfully they will seek to implement this “scientific” information without examining it logically. And neither will they suspect that it was injected by our representatives in order to educate people in the tendencies advantageous to us. . . .

Tasks of the Press

There is a great power in the hands of the present governments that decisively influences the mind of the people—the press. It has the task of advertising allegedly necessary demands, of giving expression to the grievances of the people, voicing, awakening, and deflecting their discontent. The press revels in the free expression of opinion. But governments do not understand how to use this power, and so they find themselves suddenly in our hands. Through the press we come into influence yet remain in the shadows. Thanks to it we have heaped up mountains of gold in our hands without having to bother ourselves about the streams of blood and tears that created it. . . .

From the Third Protocol

. . . We appear, as it were, to be the saviors of workers because we urge them to join the ranks of our army of socialists, anarchists, and communists. These, we pretend, are in universal service to humanity in a fraternal sense, and we recommend them to the workers fundamentally on this pretext. The nobility, which espoused the rights of productive workers, was so interested in their prosperity that the workers were of necessity satisfied, healthy, and strong. We, however, want just the opposite—that is, *the debasement of non-Jews*. Our power rests on the permanent hunger and weakness of the worker. Only in this condition will he have to subordinate himself to our will in everything. In his own circles, he will not find the independent strength to oppose us.

Hunger will procure the rights over labor for the money power far more securely than the legal power of the king was able to do for the nobility. With want, and the envy and hatred that spring from it, we will move the masses. With their help we will cast aside all those who are obstacles in our path. As soon as it is time for the crowning of our world ruler, these same masses will sweep aside everything that could still resist us.

The Principles of Instruction in the Future Public Schools of the Freemasons

The non-Jews cannot escape our scientific counsel, but we nevertheless do not disclose the correct way to them. That is why their school system overlooks the main thing, which we will adhere to unshakably after the erection of our realm. The one true doctrine of the social basis of life must be preached in the public schools—that which demands the division of labor and the consequent distribution of men into classes and castes. Everyone must be absolutely conscious that human equality is totally out of the question because of the necessity of the division of labor. The differentiation must be legally regulated. . . .

The true doctrine of the social basis of life, which we keep secret from non-Jews, states that position and occupation must be limited to a definite circle of men; otherwise the disparity between training and profession will give rise to human suffering. Once the peoples have made this doctrine their own, they will voluntarily subject themselves to the power of the state and the order deriving from it. With the present state of science and the direction that we have given it, the people trust blindly in the printed word and in the misleading doctrines that go with it. In their limitedness they hate every class they think stands above them; they misunderstand the significance [of these social distinctions].

Universal Economic Crisis

The conflicts described thus far will be essentially heightened by the approaching economic crisis, which will paralyze the stock exchanges and industry. With the help of gold, which we control entirely, and the underhanded ways at our disposal, we shall call forth a universal economic crisis. Simultaneously, we shall throw hordes of workers out onto the streets. Seized by a sort of rapture, the simpleminded masses will shed the blood of those whom they have always envied and whose property they can then steal without resistance.

However, they will not molest our people because the moment of the attack will be known to us. We shall take timely measures to defend our people. . . .

Since we already constitute a world power, we are invulnerable. As soon as we are attacked by one state, other states defend us. Our impregnable position is strengthened by the unceasing baseness of the non-Jewish nations, which cringe before power but are merciless toward the weak. They severely punish misdemeanors but judge real crimes leniently; they will not tolerate the contradictions of a free social

order but are endlessly tolerant of the violations that arise from the lust for power. They tolerate in their elected representatives misdeeds, the smallest of which would have resulted in the beheading of twenty kings! . . .

The word *freedom* plunges human society into the struggle against all powers, against the power of the divine and natural order of the world. When we come to sit upon the throne, we will expunge this word from the vocabulary of humanity. It is the essence of animalistic force and places the masses on the same level as the beasts of prey. These beasts are satisfied only, after they have tasted blood. Then they allow themselves to be put in chains quite easily. Deny them the drinking of blood and they do not sleep but rather slough off their skin.

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From the Ninth Protocol

The Application of Our Principles in the Education of the People

In the application of our principles, we must consider the peculiarities of the peoples and proceed according to plan. The uniform application of our principles to all peoples will not bring success, unless we do the necessary preparation. However, if we proceed cautiously, you will see that it takes no more than a decade to bring down the firmest character. Then we can list a new people among the ranks that have already been subjected to us. . . .

The Significance of Antisemitism

We have need of antisemitism, in order to hold our brothers in the lower strata together. I shall not go into this further since we have already spoken of this subject repeatedly.

The Rule of Force of the Jewish Lodges

As a matter of fact, there are no more obstacles for us. Our supreme rule stands outside legal limitations. Its principles are so firm that only the strong term “rule of force” can describe it. I can say with utter conviction that we are at present the legislators; our word is law and executive power is ours. We punish and pardon. We sit like the commanders of armies upon our chargers. A firm will guides us. We are heirs to a once-mighty party, which is now wholly dependent on us. We have at our disposal an unbending ambition, burning greed, pitiless revenge, and unrelenting hate.

From us goes forth the phantom of all-embracing Terror. . . .

The Subways of the Capitals

You can well imagine that the non-Jews, full of bitterness, will fall upon us with weapons in hand as soon as they discover how everything fits together. For this eventuality we have in hand a last, fearful means, before which even the bravest heart shall tremble. Soon all the capital cities of the world will be criss-crossed with tunnels and subways. In case of danger we shall, from these tunnels, blow up the whole city—government offices, courts, archives, and the non-Jews with all that they possess.

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From the Eleventh Protocol

Non-Jews Are Castrated Sheep

The non-Jews are a herd of castrated sheep; we Jews are the wolves. Do you know, gentlemen, what becomes of the sheep when the wolves break into the fold? . . . They will close their eyes and stay silent because we will promise them the return of all their stolen freedoms. But first [we shall tell them] all the enemies of peace must be overcome and all the parties must be overpowered. Need I tell you how long the non-Jews will have to wait for the return of their rights?

We have thought out a mendacious doctrine of the state and instilled it tirelessly among the non-Jews, without giving them time to reason about it. This has occurred because we can achieve our goal only along circuitous paths; the straight path is beyond the powers of our scattered tribes. To this end we have established the secret Jewish freemason lodges. No one knows about them or their goals, least of all the non-Jewish oxen whom we have drawn into participation in the open freemason lodges, in order to throw sand in the eyes of their tribal brothers.

God has bestowed upon us, his chosen people, the gift of being scattered throughout the world. In this apparent weakness of our tribe lies its whole strength. It has brought us to the threshold of world domination. The foundation is laid; only the building remains to be completed.

From the Twelfth Protocol

The Press under Future Jewish World Dominance

What tasks does the press fulfill now? It serves to inflame the passions of the people in the sense that we desire, or it fosters self-seeking political purposes. It is hollow, unjust, and mendacious. Most men do not know whom the press actually serves. We Jews have made it serviceable to our

purposes. When we arrive at power, we shall place it in chains and punish every attack upon us without mercy. The current situation is nonsensical. On the one hand, the necessary precensorship of books, periodicals, and newspapers costs the non-Jewish state a fortune. On the other hand, out of respect for alleged “public opinion,” it allows any mudslinger to cover it with filth, without intervening. We will know better how to protect ourselves from this and simultaneously create a considerable source of income from supervision of public opinion. It will happen in this way. Printed matter of all sorts . . . will be liable for a stamp tax, which shall limit the quantities of the same. Further, we shall demand a sizable sum as security from every newspaper publisher, printing house, etc. In case of attacks upon us, all or a sizable part of it will be forfeited. Now it may happen that a few parties will nevertheless sacrifice great sums of money in order to make their views known. But we have an answer to this, as well: as soon as a newspaper attacks us for a second time, it will be suppressed. None shall encroach upon the aura of our political infallibility without being punished! As a pretext for the suppression of a newspaper or periodical, we shall always employ the general formula that it has incited public opinion without grounds or cause. I ask you to note that in other cases attacks will be made upon us by newspapers that we ourselves have established. Such attacks will, however, always limit themselves to the points that we ourselves have earmarked for our uses. . . .

[Thanks to unfair taxes and fines] what we ourselves will publish in order to educate people in the desired intellectual direction will be so cheap as to find a ready market. The taxes will calm the fanatical desire to write, and the fines will bring writers under our control. Should a few of them, in spite of this, wish to write against us, they will be unable to find a publisher. Every publisher or printer will be obligated to get permission from us before accepting a work for publication. In this way we will learn in timely fashion of any planned attacks and be able to render them innocuous. We shall be able to take the appropriate measures or at least announce them in advance. For example, we can deny permission to publish on the grounds that the work deals with abuses that the government is already taking steps to correct. In certain circumstances, we may wish for the late publication of an attack because it will then involuntarily bear witness to the vigilance of the government, which has already begun to eliminate the abuses.

Newspapers and periodicals are the two most important tools for controlling intellectual life. Therefore, our

government will acquire ownership of most newspapers and periodicals. It will thus block the harmful influence of the unofficial press and work upon the mind and mood of the people in the most sustained way. For every ten newspapers or periodicals that stand aloof from us, there will be thirty that we ourselves have established. This, of course, cannot be divulged to the public. Outwardly, our newspapers and periodicals shall therefore adopt the most varied orientations and even feud with one another. Thus we shall gain the trust of the unsuspecting non-Jews, lure them to their downfall, and render them harmless.

In the first place will stand the official press, which will have the task of representing our interests in all cases and instances. Its influence will, for this reason, be relatively slight.

In the second place comes the semiofficial papers, which shall win the indifferent and apathetic for us.

In the third place we shall set our apparent enemies, who must maintain at least one paper that stands outwardly in the sharpest opposition to us. Our real enemies will consider this apparent resistance to be genuine. They will see the people who represent us as their own political friends, reveal themselves to them, and thereby to us.

Our newspapers will adopt the most varied orientations. We will support aristocratic, bourgeois, liberal, socialist, and even revolutionary papers. Like the Indian god Vishnu, they will have a hundred hands, each with the beating pulse of an intellectual tendency. As soon as one pulse beats faster, the invisible hands will direct the supporters of this tendency to our goals. Nothing is easier than to influence an excited mob that acts without reflection. Those ignorant fools who believe that their party paper represents their views [will not know that the papers] speak only our opinion or at least the opinion that suits us at the moment. They imagine they are following the guidelines of their party and do not notice that they march behind the flag that we have put in front of them. . . .

Since the real state of affairs will not become public, we will win the confidence of the people. Supported by this confidence, we will, as needed, arouse or pacify, convince or confuse public opinion so far as it concerns political questions. We will now print the truth, now lies, now facts, now corrections, all according to how we conceive of the news.

It is one of our principles always to test the ground cautiously before we set foot upon it. In consequence of these measures against the press, we shall surely defeat our enemies. In serious cases they will be unable to find a paper in which they can bring their views to full expression. We

shall make the most strenuous efforts to defeat them in a final way. . . .

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From the Fourteenth Protocol

Religion of the Future

As soon as we have succeeded to world domination, we shall tolerate no beliefs other than our belief in the one God, who has chosen us from among the peoples so that we shall determine the destiny of the earth. Therefore shall we destroy every other religion. Should the number of the godless be thereby increased, this can only serve our purposes. We shall point to the godlessness of the non-Jews as a deterrent example, and we shall spread the entrenched and thoroughly thought-out Mosaic doctrine over the entire world. This will contribute to the subjection of all peoples to us. We Jews, however, will explain our success as a result of the secret power of our doctrines, from which, as we shall say, all the creative and educational works of humanity issue. . . .

Pornography and Future Literary Activity

We have created, in the so-called leading states, a mindless, dirty, repellent literature. We shall favor this tendency for a little while after the achievement of world domination. In this way, the nobility of our political plans and speeches will stand out in sharper contrast. . . . Our leading men, whom we have educated in advance to rule the non-Jews, will suddenly and quickly conquer public opinion for us with a profusion of well-thought-out plans, speeches, essays, pamphlets, and so on. Then will the world finally fall to us.

From the Fifteenth Protocol

Simultaneous Revolution throughout the World

Some time will pass, perhaps even a whole century, before the revolution we are preparing shall break out in all states on the same day. [It will] reveal to all the total incapacity of the existing governments. Once we have achieved full dominance, we will take care that no kind of conspiracy takes place against us. Anyone found with weapons in hand or who rejects our domination, we shall mercilessly put to death. Every attempt to establish new secret societies will likewise be punished by death. The existing secret societies, which are well known to us and which have rendered us good service, we shall dissolve completely. . . .

You cannot imagine, gentlemen, how easy it is to lead even the cleverest non-Jew by the nose, especially when you find him in the state of self-exaltation. He is of such childish disposition that should he meet with even the slightest failure—for example, the absence of applause—this is enough to move him to slavish obedience to anyone who promises him success next time. *While we Jews scorn outward success and focus all our senses and endeavors on the carrying out of our plans, the non-Jews, by contrast, are ready to sacrifice all plans if only they can pocket the slightest external success.* The mental gifts of the non-Jews make the task of directing them to our purposes uncommonly easy. With the outward forms of tigers, they have the souls of gentle lambs. Their heads are full of drafts.

We have puffed them up and humbugged them into believing that the individual personality must dissolve into the totality, into so-called communism. The non-Jews are apparently unable to recognize that the idea of universal equality violates the supreme law of nature. Since the creation of the world, various species of beings and men have come forward, and the personality claims a decisive role. If we succeed in blinding non-Jews to this, that just shows, with surprising clarity, that their intelligence cannot measure up to ours. This is the best security for our success.

Source: Richard S. Levy (ed.), *Antisemitism in the Modern World: An Anthology of Texts*. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1991), 149–165. Used by permission of Richard S. Levy.

6. EXCERPTS FROM *MEIN KAMPF*, BY ADOLF HITLER, 1923

Adolf Hitler was imprisoned in Landsberg prison in 1923 following his and his very small group of followers' failed efforts to overthrow the government in Berlin and replace it with a government run by the National Socialist German Workers' Party. It was during his surprisingly short prison term (he was sentenced to nine months even though four policemen had been killed during the violence) that Hitler dictated Mein Kampf (My Struggle). Part autobiography, part racial screed against the Jews, and part an explication of his worldview (Weltanschauung) that would drive what would become the Holocaust, it has been criticized by readers as "bloated" and "plodding" and excoriated for its tortuous sentences. Nonetheless, it serves as a disturbing harbinger of what was to come and provides some insight into the early thinking of the

man most responsible for the Holocaust. Published in 1925, it became required reading during the Third Reich. The last two words of the book are "Dietrich Eckart," a tribute by Hitler to the man who was the source of many of Hitler's ideas regarding race, nationalism, and antisemitism.

Today it is difficult, if not impossible to say, for me to say when the word 'Jew' first gave me ground for special thoughts. At home I do not remember having heard the word during my father's lifetime. I believe that the old gentleman would have regarded any special emphasis on this term as cultural backwardness. In the course of his life he had arrived at more or less cosmopolitan views which, despite his pronounced national sentiments, not only remained intact, but also affected me to some extent.

Likewise at school I found no occasion which could have led me to change this inherited picture. . . .

Not until my fourteenth or fifteenth year did I begin to come across the word 'Jew', with any frequency, partly in connection with political discussions. This filled me with a mild distaste, and I could not rid myself of an unpleasant feeling that always came over me whenever religious quarrels occurred in my presence.

At that time I did not think anything else of the question.

There were few Jews in Linz. In the course of the centuries their outward appearance had become Europeanized and had taken on a human look; in fact, I even took them for Germans. The absurdity of this idea did not dawn on me because I saw no distinguishing feature but the strange religion. The fact that they had, as I believed, been persecuted on this account sometimes almost turned my distaste at unfavourable remarks about them into horror. . . . Then I came to Vienna. [Gradually], I encountered the Jewish question. . . .

My views with regard to antisemitism thus succumbed to the passage of time, and this was my greatest transformation of all.

It cost me the greatest inner soul struggles and only after months of battle between my reason and my sentiments did my reason begin to emerge victorious. Two years later, my sentiment had followed my reason, and from then on became its most loyal guardian and sentinel.

At the time of this bitter struggle between spiritual education and cold reason, the visual instruction of the Vienna streets had performed invaluable services. There came a time when I no longer, as in the first days, wandered blindly through the mighty city; now with open eyes I saw not only the buildings but also the people.

Once, as I was strolling through the Inner City, I suddenly encountered an apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks. Is this a Jew? was my first thought.

For, to be sure, they had not looked like this in Linz. I observed the man furtively and cautiously, but the longer I stared at this foreign face, scrutinizing feature for feature, the more my first question assumed a new form: Is this a German?

As always in such cases, I now began to try to relieve my doubts by books. . . .

I could no longer very well doubt that the objects of my study were not Germans of a special religion, but a people in themselves; for since I had begun to concern myself with this question and to take cognizance of the Jews, Vienna appeared to me in a different light than before. Wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished from the rest of humanity. . . .

The cleanliness of this people, moral and otherwise, I must say, is a point in itself. By their very exterior you could tell that these were no lovers of water, and, to your distress, you often knew it with your eyes closed. Later I often grew sick to my stomach from the smell of these caftan-wearers. Added to this, there was their unclean dress and generally unheroic appearance.

All this could scarcely be called very attractive; but it became positively repulsive when, in addition to their physical uncleanliness, you discovered the moral stains on this 'chosen people'.

In a short time I was made more thoughtful than ever by my slowly rising insight into the type of activity carried on by the Jews in certain fields.

Was there any form of filth or profligacy, particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it?

If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light—a kike!

What had to be reckoned heavily against the Jews in my eyes was when I became acquainted with their activity in the press, art, literature and the theatre. All the unctuous reassurances helped little or nothing. It sufficed to look at a billboard, to study the names of the men behind the horrible trash they advertised, to make you hard for a long time to come. This was pestilence, spiritual pestilence, worse than the Black Death of olden times, and the people was being infected with it! . . .

And now I began to examine my beloved "world press" from this point of view.

And the deeper I probed, the more the object of my former admiration shrivelled. The style became more and more unbearable; I could not help rejecting the content as inwardly shallow and banal; the objectivity of exposition now seemed to me more akin to lies than honest truth; and the writers were—Jews.

The relation of the Jews to prostitution and, even more, to the white-slave traffic, could be studied in Vienna as perhaps in no other city of Western Europe, with the possible exception of the southern French ports. If you walked at night through the streets and alleys of Leopoldstadt, at every step you witnessed proceedings which remained concealed from the majority of the German people until the War gave the soldiers on the eastern front occasion to see similar things, or, better expressed, forced them to see them.

When for the first time I recognized the Jew as the cold-hearted, shameless and calculating director of this revolting vice traffic in the scum of the big city, a cold shudder ran down my back.

But then a flame flared up within me. I no longer avoided discussion of the Jewish question; no, now I sought it. And when I learned to look for the Jew in all branches of cultural and artistic life and its various manifestations, I suddenly encountered him in a place where I would least have expected to find him.

When I recognized the Jew as the leader of the Social Democracy, the scales dropped from my eyes. A long soul struggle had reached its conclusion . . .

Only now did I become thoroughly acquainted with the seducer of our people. . . .

The Jewish doctrine of Marxism rejects the aristocratic principle of Nature and replaces the eternal privilege of power and strength by the mass of numbers and their dead weight. Thus it denies the value of personality in man, contests the significance of nationality and race, and thereby withdraws from humanity the premiss of its existence and its culture. As a foundation of the universe, this doctrine would bring about the end of any order intellectually conceivable to man. And as, in this greatest of all recognizable organisms, the result of an application of such a law could only be chaos, on earth it could only be destruction for the inhabitants of this planet.

If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men.

Eternal Nature inexorably avenges the infringement of her commands.

Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: *by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.*

To what an extent the whole existence of this people is based on a continuous lie is shown incomparably by the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, so infinitely hated by the Jews. They are based on a forgery, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* moans and screams once every week: the best proof that they are authentic. . . . For once this book has become the common property of a people, the Jewish menace may be considered as broken.

His unfailing instinct in such things scents the original soul in everyone, and his hostility is assured to anyone who is not spirit of his spirit. Since the Jew is not the attacked but the attacker not only anyone who attacks passes as his enemy, but also anyone who resists him. But the means with which he seeks to break such reckless but upright souls is not honest warfare, but lies and slander.

Here he stops at nothing, and in his vileness he becomes so gigantic that no one need be surprised if among our people the personification of the devil as the symbol of all evil assumes the living shape of the Jew.

The ignorance of the broad masses about the inner nature of the Jew, the lack of instinct and narrow-mindedness of our upper classes, make the people an easy victim for this campaign of lies.

While from innate cowardice the upper classes turn away from a man whom the Jew attacks with lies and slander, the broad masses from stupidity or simplicity believe everything. The state authorities either cloak themselves in silence or, what usually happens, in order to put an end to the Jewish press campaign, they persecute the unjustly attacked, which, in the eyes of such an official ass, passes as the preservation of state authority and the safeguarding of law and order. Slowly fear and the Marxist weapon of Jewry descend like a nightmare on the mind and soul of decent people.

They begin to tremble before the terrible enemy and thus have become his final victim.

The Jew's domination in the state seems so assured that now not only can he call himself a Jew again, but he ruthlessly admits his ultimate national and political designs. A section of his race openly owns itself to be a foreign people, yet even they lie. For while the Zionists try to make the rest of the world believe that the national consciousness of the

Jew finds its satisfaction in the creation of a Palestinian state, the Jews again slyly dupe the dumb Goyim. It doesn't even enter their heads to build up a Jewish state in Palestine for the purpose of living there; all they want is a central organization for their international world swindle, endowed with its own sovereign rights and removed from the intervention of other states; a haven for convicted criminals and a university for budding crooks.

It is a sign of their rising confidence and sense of security that at a time when one section is still playing the German, Frenchman or Englishman, the other with open effrontery comes out as the Jewish race.

How close they see approaching victory can be seen by the hideous aspect which their relations with the members of other peoples takes on.

With Satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people. With every means he tries to destroy the racial foundations of the people he has set out to subjugate. Just as he himself systematically ruins women and girls, he does not shrink back from pulling down the blood barriers for others, even on a large scale. It was and it is Jews who bring the negroes into the Rhineland, always with the same secret thought and clear aim of ruining the hated white race by the necessarily resulting bastardization, throwing it down from its cultural and political height, and himself rising to be its master.

For a racially pure people which is conscious of its blood can never be enslaved by the Jew. In this world he will forever be master over bastards and bastards alone.

And so he tries systematically to lower the racial level by a continuous poisoning of individuals.

And in politics he begins to replace the idea of democracy by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the organized mass of Marxism he has found the weapon which lets him dispense with democracy and in its stead allows him to subjugate and govern the peoples with a dictatorial and brutal fist.

He works systematically for revolutionization in a two-fold sense: economic and political.

Around peoples who offer too violent a resistance to attack from within he weaves a net of enemies, thanks to his international influence, incites them to war, and finally, if necessary, plants a flag of revolution on the very battlefields.

In economics he undermines the states until the social enterprises which have become unprofitable are taken from the state and subjected to his financial control.

In the political field he refuses the state the means for its self-preservation, destroys the foundations of all national self-maintenance and defense, destroys faith in the leadership, scoffs at its history and past, and drags everything that is truly great into the gutter.

Culturally, he contaminates art, literature, the theatre, makes a mockery of natural feeling, overthrows all concepts of beauty and sublimity, of the noble and the good, and instead drags men down into the sphere of his own base nature.

Religion is ridiculed, ethics and morality represented as outmoded, until the last props of a nation in its struggle for existence in this world have fallen.

Now begins the great revolution. In gaining political power the Jew casts off the few cloaks that he still wears. The democratic people's Jew becomes the blood-Jew and tyrant over peoples. In a few years he tries to exterminate the national intelligentsia and by robbing the peoples of their natural intellectual leadership makes them ripe for the slave's lot of permanent subjugation.

The most frightful example of this kind is offered by Russia, where he killed or starved about thirty million people with positively fanatical savagery, in part amid inhuman tortures, in order to give a gang of Jewish journalists and stock exchange bandits domination over a great people.

The end is not only the end of the freedom of the peoples oppressed by the Jew, but also the end of this parasite upon the nations. After the death of his victim, the vampire sooner or later dies too.

Source: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. Copyright © 1943, renewed 1971 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

7. EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECH BY HEINRICH HIMMLER ON THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BEGET CHILDREN, OCTOBER 28, 1939, AND JANUARY 30, 1940

Begun in 1935, the Lebensborn (fountain of life) project promoted the birth of German children conceived by couples with "racially pure" blood. It was not necessary for the couple to be married; all that mattered was that there should be an

increase in the Aryan population. Heinrich Himmler started this program and directed SS men to grow the German population that had been decimated by the large number of deaths incurred in World War I. He considered it the responsibility of "German women and girls of good blood" to become mothers "even out of wedlock." The Nazi government offered incentives and rewards for each child born. Here Himmler outlines the responsibilities of the SS men, explains the help that will be provided to pregnant women, and, in a subsequent statement, clarifies that this program will not result in SS men approaching the wives of soldiers in the field.

SS SOLDIERS FRIEND

[Der Soldatenfreund]

Pocket Diary for the German Armed Forces

With calendar for 1943.

Edition D: Waffen-SS

Reichsfuehrer SS and Chief of the German Police in the Reich Ministry of the Interior

Berlin, 28 October 1939

SS ORDER FOR THE ENTIRE SS AND POLICE

Every war causes the best blood to be shed. Many a victory of arms meant for a people at the same time a disastrous loss of living strength and blood. But unfortunately inevitable death of its best men, deplorable as that may be, is not the worst. Of much more disastrous consequences is the lack of those who were not begotten by the living during, and by the dead after the war.

The old saying that only those who have children can die in peace must again become an acknowledged truth in this war, especially for the SS. Only those who know that their kind, that all for which they and their ancestors have striven, is continued in their children, can die in peace. The possession most prized by the widow of a fallen soldier is always the child of the man whom she loved.

Though it may perhaps be considered an infraction of necessary social standards and convention in other times, German women and girls of good blood can fulfill a high obligation even out of wedlock by becoming mothers of children of soldiers going to the front, whose eventual return or death for Germany lies entirely in the hands of fate—not because of promiscuity, but because of the deepest sense of ethics. It is the sacred duty also of these men and women whose place has been determined by the state to be on the home front, to become parents of children again, especially now.

Let us never forget that the victory of the sword and of the spilled blood of our soldiers remains fruitless if it is not succeeded by the victory of the child and the colonizing of conquered soil.

In past wars, many a soldier has decided, out of a deep sense of responsibility, to beget no more children during the time of war, so as not to leave his wife and an additional child in want and distress in case of his death. You SS men need not have such worries; the following regulations eliminate them.

1. Special commissioners, personally appointed by me, shall be entrusted in the name of the Reich Leader with the guardianship of all legitimate and illegitimate children of good blood whose fathers were killed in action. We shall support these mothers and humanely assume the responsibility for the education and upbringing of these children so that no mother and widow need to have any material worries.

2. During the war the SS will care for all legitimate and illegitimate children begotten during the war and for pregnant mothers in cases of need and distress. After the war, the SS will generously grant additional material aid should these fathers who return request so. SS men and you mothers of these children, the hope of Germany show that in your belief in the Fuehrer and your willingness to do your share in the perpetuation of our blood and people, you are just as willing to continue the life of Germany as you have had the courage to fight and die for it.

The Reichsfuehrer SS
signed H. Himmler.

Reichsfuehrer SS and Chief of the German Police in the Reich Ministry of the Interior

Berlin 30 January 1940

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SS AND THE POLICE

You are all familiar with my order of October 28, 1939, in which I reminded you of your duty to become fathers of children if possible during the war.

This proclamation, which has been made in all decency and which considers, if correctly interpreted, problems to be faced in the future, has been greatly misunderstood by some people. I therefore deem it necessary for each and every one of you to know fully what doubts and misunderstandings have come up and what has to be said about them.

1. People are always shocked by the clearly expressed fact that there exist illegitimate children and that a number of unmarried women and girls have become mothers of such children, outside of matrimony. There is nothing to be discussed about that.

2. The greatest misunderstanding, however, resulted from the following statement: “Though it may perhaps appear an infraction of necessary social standards and convention in other times, German women and girls of good blood can fulfill a high obligation even out of wedlock, by becoming mothers of children of soldiers going to the front, whose eventual return or death for Germany lies entirely in the hands of fate—not because of promiscuity, but because of the deepest sense of ethics.”

Many have misconstrued this statement and think it is an encouragement for SS men to approach wives of soldiers who are in the field. Impossible as it is for this thought to be understood, it must nevertheless be cleared up.

a. That no one approach the wife of a soldier who is in the field is as much matter of fact to us SS men as it is to every other German. This is a simple and natural law of ethics and comradeship.

b. I further assert that out of the app. 250,000 SS men before the war, 175,000 are under arms today, mostly with the Wehrmacht in the front lines, others with the SS units and regiments of *Verfügungstruppen*, SS Death Head Units, military police, and with the SS Death Head Units on the Eastern front. That should be more than ample proof that the majority of SS are themselves at the front and not at home.

c. It is also feared that this order would tend to destroy family and honor, and that this order would cause men to be unwilling to marry. This can be refuted clearly by the following data: The percentage of married SS men on January 1, 1939, was 39%, while a year later it was 44%. These data speak for themselves and have not been surpassed by anyone so far as we know.

d. Another point comes up in connection, with this question: What do these people who spread or repeat such opinions, think of the German women? Even should some one man out of a population of 82 millions have the baseness or the human weakness to approach a married woman, then there are still two prerequisites necessary for seduction: the one who does the seducing and the other who lets herself be seduced.

We do not only believe that it is unethical to approach the wife of a comrade but also that the German woman herself

is probably the best guardian of her marriage. Any other opinion should be regarded by all men as an insult to German women.

e. The question why, according to the order of October 28 1939, the women of the SS and the policemen are accorded special care which is not being granted to other women, is also being raised.

The answer is very simple: because the comradeship and the will to sacrifice has induced SS leaders and men to make voluntary contributions which incidentally have been paid for years to the organization “*Lebensborn*”—thus raising the necessary means.

This should have cleared up all misunderstandings. It is up to you SS men, however, to make all German men and women understand the full implication of this so vital and sacred a question so much above any frivolity and ridicule, as must always be done in epochs where people are representatives of ideologies.

The Reich Leader of the SS
signed H. Himmler.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 466–469, Doc. 2825-PS.

8. “MY POLITICAL TESTAMENT,” BY ADOLF HITLER, APRIL 29, 1945

On April 29, 1945, one day before he and his long-term friend and newlywed wife, Eva Braun, committed suicide as Allied forces approached his bunker in Berlin, Adolf Hitler signed two documents: his private will and testament and what he called his Political Testament. In the former he appointed Martin Bormann, whom he calls his “most faithful Party comrade,” to be his executor, speaks of the decision he and Braun had made to commit suicide, and expresses their wish that their bodies should be burned immediately after their death. In the latter, he asserts that it was Jewry that wanted a world war despite his best efforts to avoid one. He expels Hermann Göring and Heinrich Himmler from the Nazi Party and appoints a new cabinet. It is notable but not surprising that in his final statement, his final words to the world, Hitler refers to “the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.”

The Secretary of the Fuehrer, Reichsleiter Martin Borman

Fuehrer Headquarters
29.4.45

Postal address Munich 33. Fuehrerbau.

Dear Admiral of the Fleet,

As, owing to the non-arrival of all divisions, our position appears hopeless, the Fuehrer last night dictated the enclosed political Testament.

Heil Hitler!

Your

[signature illegible, presumably Martin Bormann]

[Seal]

ADOLF HITLER

My Private Will and Testament

As I did not consider that I could take responsibility, during the years of struggle, of contracting a marriage, I have now decided, before the closing of my earthly career, to take as my wife that girl who, after many years of faithful friendship, entered, of her own free will, the practically besieged town in order to share her destiny with me. At her own desire she goes as my wife with me into death. It will compensate us for what we both lost through my work in the service of my people.

What I possess belongs—in so far as it has any value—to the Party. Should this no longer exist, to the State, should the State also be destroyed, no further decision of mine is necessary.

My pictures, in the collections which I have bought in the course of years, have never been collected for private purposes, but only for the extension of a gallery in my home town of Linz a.d. Donau.

It is my most sincere wish that this bequest may be duly executed. I nominate as my Executor my most faithful Party comrade,

Martin Bormann.

He is given full legal authority to make all decisions. He is permitted to take out everything that has a sentimental value or is necessary for the maintenance of a modest simple life,

for my brothers and sisters, also above all for the mother of my wife and my faithful coworkers who are well known to him, principally my old Secretaries Frau Winter etc. who have for many years aided me by their work.

I myself and my wife—in order to escape the disgrace of deposition or capitulation—choose death. It is our wish to be burnt immediately on the spot where I have carried out the greatest part of my daily work in the course of a twelve years’ service to my people.

Given in Berlin, 29th. April 1945, 4:00o’clock.

(Sd.) A. Hitler.

As Witnesses:

(Sd.) Martin Bormann.

(Sd.) Dr. Fuhr.

As Witness:

(Sd.) Nicolaus von Below.

[Seal]

ADOLF HITLER

My Political Testament

More than thirty years have now passed since I in 1914 made my modest contribution as a volunteer in the first world-war that was forced upon the Reich

In these three decades I have been actuated solely by love and loyalty to my people in all my thoughts, acts, and life. They gave me the strength to make the most difficult decisions which have ever confronted to mortal man. I have spent my time, my working strength, and my health in these three decades.

It is untrue that I or anyone else in Germany wanted the war in 1939. It was desired and instigated exclusively by those international statesmen who were either of Jewish descent or worked for Jewish interests. I have made too many offers for the control and limitation of armaments, which posterity will not for all time be able to disregard for the responsibility for the outbreak of this war to be laid on me. I have further never wished that after the first fatal world war a second against England, or even against America, should break out. Centuries will pass away, but out of the ruins of our towns and monuments the hatred against those finally responsible whom we have to thank for everything, International Jewry and its helpers, will grow.

Three days before the outbreak of the German-Polish war I again proposed to the British ambassador in Berlin a solution to the German-Polish problem—similar to that in the case of the Saar district, under international control. This offer also cannot be denied. It was only rejected because the leading circles in English politics wanted the war, partly on account of the business hoped for and partly under influence of propaganda organized by international Jewry.

I also made it quite plain that, if the nations of Europe are again to be regarded as mere shares to be bought and sold by these international conspirators in money and finance, then that race, Jewry, which is the real criminal of this murderous struggle, will be saddled with the responsibility. I further left no one in doubt that this time not only would millions of children of Europe's Aryan peoples die of hunger, not only would millions of grown men suffer death, and not only hundreds of thousands of women and children be burnt and bombed to death in the towns, without the real criminal having to atone for this guilt, even if by more humane means.

After six years of war, which in spite of all set-backs, will go down one day in history as the most glorious and valiant demonstration of a nation's life purpose, I cannot forsake the city which is the capital of this Reich. As the forces are too small to make any further stand against the enemy attack at this place and our resistance is gradually being weakened by men who are as deluded as they are lacking in initiative, I should like, by remaining in this town, to share my fate with those, the millions of others, who have also taken upon themselves to do so. Moreover I do not wish to fall into the hands of an enemy who requires a new spectacle organized by the Jews for the amusement of their hysterical masses.

I have decided therefore to remain in Berlin and there of my own free will to choose death at the moment when I believe the position of the Fuehrer and Chancellor itself can no longer be held.

I die with a happy heart, aware of the immeasurable deeds and achievements of our soldiers at the front, our women at home, the achievements of our farmers and workers and the work, unique in history, of our youth who bear my name.

That from the bottom of my heart I express my thanks to you all, is just as self-evident as my wish that you should, because of that, on no account give up the struggle, but rather continue it against the enemies of the Fatherland, no matter where, true to the creed of a great Clausewitz. From

the sacrifice of our soldiers and from my own unity with them unto death, will in any case spring up in the history of Germany, the seed of a radiant renaissance of the National-Socialist movement and thus of the realization of a true community of nations.

Many of the most courageous men and women have decided to unite their lives with mine until the very last. I have begged and finally ordered them not to do this, but to take part in the further battle of the Nation. I beg the heads of the Armies, the Navy and the Air Force to strengthen by all possible means the spirit of resistance of our soldiers in the National-Socialist sense, with special reference to the fact that also I myself, as founder and creator of this movement, have preferred death to cowardly abdication or even capitulation.

May it, at some future time, become part of the code of honour of the German officer—as is already the case in our Navy—that the surrender of a district or of a town is impossible, and that above all the leaders here must march ahead as shining examples, faithfully fulfilling their duty unto death.

Second Part of the Political Testament

Before my death I expel the former Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering from the party and deprive him of all rights which he may enjoy by virtue of the decree of June 29th, 1941, and also by virtue of my statement in the Reichstag on September 1st, 1939, I appoint in his place Grossadmiral Doenitz, President of the Reich and supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Before my death I expel the former Reichsfuehrer-SS and Minister of the Interior, Heinrich Himmler, from the party and from all offices of State. In his stead I appoint Gauleiter Karl Hanke as Reichsfuehrer-SS and Chief of the German Police, and Gauleiter Paul Giesler as Reich Minister of the Interior.

Goering and Himmler, quite apart from their disloyalty to my person, have done immeasurable harm to the country and the whole nation by secret negotiations with the enemy, which they conducted without my knowledge and against my wishes, and by illegally attempting to seize power in the State for themselves.

In order to give the German people a government composed of honourable men,—a government which will fulfill its pledge to continue the war by every means—I appoint the following members of the new Cabinet as leaders of the nation:

President of the Reich: Doenitz.
Chancellor of the Reich: Dr. Goebbels.
Party Minister: Bormann.
Foreign Minister: Seyss-Inquart.
Minister of the Interior: Gauleiter Giesler.
Minister for War: Doenitz.
C-in-C of the Army: Schoerner.
C-in-C of the Navy: Doenitz.
C-in-C of the Air Force: Greim.
Reichsfuehrer-SS and Chief of the German Police: Gauleiter Hanke.
Economics: Funk.
Agriculture: Backe.
Justice: Thierack.
Education and Public Worship: Dr. Scheel.
Propaganda: Dr. Naumann.
Finance: Schwerin-Grossigk.
Labour: Dr. Hupfauer.
Munitions: Saur.

Leader of the German Labour Front and Member of the Reich Cabinet: Reich Minister Dr. Ley.

Although a number of these men, such as Martin Bormann, Dr. Goebbels etc., together with their wives, have joined me of their own free will and did not wish to leave the capital of the Reich under any circumstances, but were willing to perish with me here, I must nevertheless ask them to obey my request, and in this case set the interests of the nation above their own feelings. By their work and loyalty as comrades they will be just as close to me after death, as I hope that my spirit will linger among them and always go with them. Let them be hard, but never unjust, above all let them never allow fear to influence their actions, and set the honour of the nation above everything in the world. Finally, let them be conscious of the fact that our task, that of continuing the building of a National Socialist State, represents the work of the coming centuries, which places every single person under an obligation always to serve the common interest and to subordinate his own advantage to this end. I demand of all Germans, all National Socialists, men, women and all the men of the Armed Forces, that they be faithful and obedient unto death to the new government and its President.

Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.

Given in Berlin, this 29th day of April 1945. 4:00 a.m.

Adolf Hitler.

Witnessed by

Dr. Josef Fuhr.

Martin Bormann.

Wilhelm Buergdorf.

Hans Krebs.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VI, pp. 260–263, Doc. 3569-PS.

9. DECREE OF THE REICH PRESIDENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PEOPLE AND THE STATE (REICHSTAG FIRE DECREE), FEBRUARY 28, 1933

On February 28, 1933—one day after a fire had destroyed the Reichstag, Germany's parliament building—Germany's recently installed chancellor, Adolf Hitler, on the pretext that revolution was imminent, persuaded President Paul von Hindenburg to sign a Decree for the Protection of the People and the State, suspending all basic civil and individual liberties guaranteed under the constitution. It empowered the government to take such steps as were necessary to ensure that this threat to German society was removed. Significantly, it made no specific references to definite adversaries; while directing itself in this instance toward communism, it contained the menacing portent of later restrictions that might be applied toward other "enemies." Its terms enabled the new regime to begin to entrench itself in office, paving the way for the Nazi dictatorship and dismantling Germany's Weimar Republic.

DECREE, 28 FEBRUARY 1933,
BY REICH PRESIDENT VON HINDENBURG,
COSIGNED BY REICH
CHANCELLOR HITLER AND REICH MINISTERS
FRICK AND
GUERTNER, SUSPENDING CONSTITUTIONAL
RIGHTS AND
INSTITUTING OTHER MEASURES
1933 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART 1, PAGE 83

1072 Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and the State (Reichstag Fire Decree)

Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of People and State of 28 February 1933.

Pursuant to article 48, paragraph 2 of the German constitution, the following is decreed as a defensive measure against Communist acts of violence endangering the State:

Article 1

Articles 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124, and 153 of the constitution of the German Reich are suspended until further notice. Thus, restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press, on the right of assembly and the right of association and interferences with the secrecy of postal, telegraphic, and telephonic communications, and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed.

Article 2

If in a state [Land] the measures necessary for the restoration of public security and order are not taken, the Reich government may temporarily take over the powers of the highest State authority.

Article 3

The authorities of the states [Laender] and local communities have to comply, within their competency, with the orders of the Reich government issued on the basis of article 2.

Article 4

Whoever disobeys the orders issued by the supreme State authorities or by the authorities subordinate to them for the implementation of this decree, or the orders issued by the Reich government in pursuance of article 2, or whoever solicits or incites others to disobey such orders, will be punished with imprisonment of not less than 1 month or a fine from 150 up to 15,000 Reichsmarks, unless other regulations make his act liable to a more severe punishment.

Whoever, by a violation of paragraph 1, induces a common danger for human life, will be punished with hard labor, or, in case of extenuating circumstances, with imprisonment of not less than 6 months, and, if the violation causes the death of a person, with death, or, in case of extenuating circumstances, with penal servitude of no less than 2 years. In addition, his property may be confiscated.

Whoever solicits or incites to commit a violation under the qualifications of paragraph 2, will be punished with hard labor or, in case of extenuating circumstances, with imprisonment of not less than 3 months.

Article 5

The crimes, which under the penal code are punishable with hard labor for life, are to be punished with death; i.e., in articles 81 (high treason), 229 (poisoning), 307 (arson), 311 (use of explosives), 312 ([intentional] flooding), 315 paragraph 2 (damaging of railroad installations), and 324 (poisoning causing public danger).

Insofar as a more severe Punishment has not been previously provided for, the following are punishable with death or with hard labor for life or with hard labor not to exceed 15 years—

1. Whoever undertakes to kill the Reich president or a member or a commissioner of the Reich government or of a state government, or solicits such a killing, or volunteers to commit it, or accepts such an offer, or conspires with another for such a killing.

2. Whoever under article 115(2) of the penal code (serious rioting) or of article 125 (2) of the penal code (serious disturbance of the peace) commits the act with arms or cooperates consciously and intentionally with an armed person.

3. Anyone who deprives a person of his liberty under article 239 of the penal code with the intention of making use of the person deprived of his liberty as a hostage in the political struggle.

Article 6

This decree comes into force on the day of its promulgation. Berlin, 28 February 1933.

The Reich President
VON HINDENBURG

The Reich Chancellor
ADOLF HITLER

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

The Reich Minister of Justice
DR. GUERTNER

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 160–163, Doc. NG-715.

10. THE ENABLING ACT: LAW TO REMOVE THE DISTRESS OF PEOPLE AND STATE, MARCH 24, 1933

Within 24 hours after the fire that destroyed the Reichstag building on February 27, 1933, an Emergency Decree was declared by President Paul von Hindenburg that allowed for the suspension of all personal liberties otherwise guaranteed under the constitution of the German Reich (the Weimar Constitution) to protect the Reich against the communist threat that the fire represented. Less than one month later, on March 24, 1933, the Law to Remove the Distress of People and State (the Enabling Act) was passed by the Reichstag, vesting in the government the authority to decree laws without regard to the provisions of the constitution that require laws to be passed by the Reichstag. It also allowed for those laws that were passed by the government to “deviate from the constitution.” Thus, the Enabling Act codified in legislation the sole power of the government to control all legal authority at the expense of the safeguards and procedures in the constitution that were intended to prevent that very thing.

THE “ENABLING ACT”

1933 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART 1, PAGE 141
Law for the Solution of the Emergency of People and Reich of 24 March 1933

The Reichstag has decreed the following law, which is hereby promulgated in agreement with the Reich Council [Reichsrat], after it has been duly established that the prerequisites of legislation changing the constitution have been fulfilled.

Article 1

Laws of the Reich can be decreed, apart from the procedure provided by the constitution of the Reich, also by the government of the Reich. This also applies to the laws mentioned in articles 85, paragraphs 2, and 87 of the constitution of the Reich.

Article 2

The laws decreed by the government of the Reich may deviate from the constitution of the Reich as far as they do not concern the institution of the Reichstag and the Reich Council [Reichsrat] as such. The rights of the Reich President remain untouched.

Article 3

The laws decreed by the government of the Reich are certified by the Reich Chancellor and promulgated in the Reichsgesetzblatt. Unless they dispose otherwise, they will come into force on the day following the promulgation. Articles 68 through 77 of the constitution of the Reich do not apply to laws decreed by the government of the Reich.

Article 4

Treaties of the Reich with foreign countries concerning subjects under Reich legislation do not require the approval of the authorities taking part in the legislation. The government of the Reich issues the ordinances which are necessary to carry into effect these treaties.

Article 5

This law comes into force on the day of its promulgation. It will become invalid on 1 April 1937; it will further become invalid if the present government of the Reich will be replaced by another one.

Berlin, 24 March 1933.

The Reich President
VON HINDENBURG

The Reich Chancellor
ADOLFHITLER

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

The Reich Foreign Minister
BARONVON NEURATH

The Reich Finance Minister
COUNTSCHWERINVON KROSIGK

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 163–164, Doc. NG-715.

11. BOYCOTT DECLARATION, MARCH 28, 1933

The anti-Jewish intent of the Nazi Party was well known even before its ascent to power in January 1933. Fearful of what

1074 Boycott Declaration

might befall the Jewish community in Germany once Hitler took power and aware of a growing number of abuses of the Jews there, Jewish organizations throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, and some European countries implemented a boycott of German goods. In response to this, the Nazi government announced a boycott of Jewish businesses in Germany, to begin at 10:00 a.m. on April 1, 1933. The Nazi government put the rabid antisemite Julius Streicher in charge of organizing the boycott and called for a concerted program of propaganda directed at convincing the public in Germany as well as in the countries that boycotted German goods that this was a defensive action intended to protect the German Volk while punishing Germany's Jews, who were seen as the source of the rumors of abuses and atrocities that set off this round of boycotts.

An Order to the Whole Party!

The following order is accordingly issued to all Party offices and Party organizations.

Point 1:

Action Committees for the Boycott against the Jews

In every local branch and organizational section of the NSDAP [National-Socialist German Workers' Party] Action Committees are to be formed immediately for the practical systematic implementation of a boycott of Jewish shops, Jewish goods, Jewish doctors and Jewish lawyers. The Action Committees are responsible for making sure that the boycott will not affect innocent persons, but will hit the guilty all the harder.

Point 2:

Maximum Protection for all Foreigners

The Action Committees are responsible for ensuring maximum protection for all foreigners, without regard to their religion, origin or race. The boycott is solely a defensive measure, directed exclusively against the German Jews.

Point 3:

Propaganda for the Boycott

The Action Committees will immediately use propaganda and information to popularize the boycott. The principle must be that no German will any longer buy from a Jew, or allow Jews or their agents to recommend goods. The boycott must be general. It must be carried out by the whole nation and must hit the Jews in their most sensitive spot.

Point 4:

Central Direction: Party Comrade Streicher

In doubtful cases the boycott of the store concerned is to be postponed until definite instructions are received from the Central Committee in Munich. The Chairman of the Central Committee is Party Member Streicher.

Point 5:

Supervision of Newspapers

The Action Committees will scrutinize newspapers most stringently with a view to observing the extent to which they take part in the information campaign against Jewish atrocity propaganda abroad. If any newspaper fails to do this or does so to a limited extent only, then they are to be excluded immediately from every house in which Germans live. No German person and no German business may place advertisements in such newspapers. They [the newspapers] must be subjected to public contempt, as written for members of the Jewish race, and not for the German people.

Point 6:

The Boycott as a Measure for the Protection of German Labor

The Action Committees, together with Party cells in industry, must carry into the enterprises explanatory propaganda on the consequence of Jewish atrocity campaigns for German production, and therefore for the German worker, and explain to the workers the need for a national boycott as a defensive measure to protect German labor.

Point 7:

Action Committees Right Down into the Smallest Village!

The Action Committees must reach out right into the smallest peasant village in order to strike particularly at Jewish traders in the countryside. On principle, it is always to be stressed that this is a matter of a defensive measure which has been forced on us.

Point 8:

The Boycott Will Start on April 1!

The boycott is not to begin piecemeal, but all at once; all preparations to this end are to be made immediately. Orders will go out to the SA and SS to post guards outside Jewish stores from the moment that the boycott comes into force,

in order to warn the public against entering the premises. The start of the boycott will be made known with the aid of posters, through the press and by means of leaflets, etc. The boycott will start all at once at exactly 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 1. It will continue until the Party leadership orders its cancellation.

Point 9:

Mass [meetings] to Demand the Numerus Clausus!

The Action Committees will immediately organize tens of thousands of mass meetings, reaching down to the smallest village, at which the demand will be raised for the introduction of a limited quota for the employment of Jews in all professions, according to their proportion in the German population. In order to increase the impact of this step the demand should be limited to three areas for the time being:

- a) attendance at German high schools and universities;
- b) the medical profession;
- c) the legal profession.

Point 10:

The Need for Explanations Abroad

The Action Committees also have the task of ensuring that every German who has any kind of connections abroad will make use of these in letters, telegrams and telephone calls. He must spread the truth that calm and order reign in Germany, that the German people has no more ardent wish than to go about its work in peace and to live in peace with the rest of the world, and that its fight against Jewish atrocity propaganda is solely a defensive struggle.

Point 11:

Quiet, Discipline and No Violence!

The Action Committees are responsible for ensuring that this entire struggle is carried out in complete calm and with absolute discipline. In future, too, do not harm a hair on a Jew's head! We will deal with this atrocity campaign simply through the incisive weight of the measures listed. More than ever before it is now necessary for the whole Party to stand in blind obedience, as one man, behind the leadership. . . .

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalioth eds., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction*

of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union, translated by Lea Ben Dor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/ Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 32–35. Used by permission of Yad Vashem.

12. EXCERPTS FROM JOSEPH GOEBBELS'S DIARY, APRIL 1 AND 2, 1933

Two entries from the diary of Joseph Goebbels, Reich minister of propaganda, written at the time of the German boycott of Jewish businesses, includes observations about the German public's reaction to the boycott that for the most part were inaccurate. He insists that the boycott was proceeding with "tranquility" and that the German people were fully supportive of the boycott. In fact, the boycott proved to be quite disruptive and was not well received at all by the public. Stationing members of the SA (Sturmabteilung, also known as the Stormtroopers or the Brown Shirts) to intimidate shoppers who might consider ignoring the boycott was not in keeping with the German concept of law and order. Further, not a few Germans chose to shop where they always had, regardless of the boycott declaration. In this sense, it seems that the entries by Goebbels were themselves written as propaganda rather than as an objective description of the situation. The boycott was cancelled by the Nazis after one day.

FROM THE IMPERIAL HOUSE TO THE REICH
CHANCELLORY

[Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei]

By Dr. Joseph Goebbels

Published by

"Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Franz Eher Nachf."

Munich, 1934. Pages 208, 290–292.

1 April 1933.

The boycott against the world atrocity propaganda has incited Berlin and the entire Reich to the fullest extent. For my own information I drive through the Taucutzien street. All Jewish stores are closed. At their entrances SA sentries are standing. The public has declared its solidarity everywhere. An exemplary discipline prevails. An imposing spectacle! Everything takes its course in the utmost tranquillity, within the Reich too.

2 April 1933.

The effects of our boycott are already plainly to be felt. The foreign countries are slowly coming to reason. The world will learn to understand, that it does not do any good, to try to learn facts about Germany through Jewish emigrants.

We are facing campaign to conquer with intellect, which will have to be carried out in the world in exactly the same manner, as we have carried it out inside Germany herself.

In the end, the world will learn to understand us.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 83–84, Doc. 2409-PS.

13. EXCERPTS FROM THE LAW FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL CIVIL SERVICE, APRIL 7, 1933

In keeping with the Emergency Decree and the Enabling Act that shortly preceded it, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service suspended the protections of law by requiring the dismissal of non-Aryan (i.e., Jewish) officials from the professional civil service. In addition to setting forth this requirement (known as the “Aryan Paragraph”), the law defined what is meant by the term “officials,” addresses rights to pensions of those who are dismissed, includes exceptions to the application of the law, and provides for dismissal of Aryan officials if their “former political activity” suggests that they may not in all cases act “in the interest of the national state.” The application of this law—specifically, the prohibition of non-Aryans from doing certain things—resulted in the dismissal of thousands of Jews, and its specific application to the church led to great concern in the Catholic Church as well as a split in the Protestant Church.

1933 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PAGE 175, Art 1–18, 7 April 1933.

Law for the Reestablishment of the Professional Civil Service

7 April 1933

The Reichsgovernment has enacted the following law, which is hereby proclaimed:

Art. 1

1. For the reestablishment of a national professional civil service and for the simplification of administration, officials may be discharged from office according to the following regulations, even when the necessary conditions according to the appropriate law do not exist.

2. Officials, as used in this law, means immediate [unmittelbare] and mediate [mittelbare] officials of the Reich, immediate and mediate officials of the federal states [Laender], officials of communes [Gemeinde] and communal associations, officials of public legal corporations as well as institutions and undertakings placed upon the same status as these public legal corporations (Third decree of the Reichspräsident for the safeguarding of business and finance of 6 October 1931—RGB1. I P. 537, 3rd part, Chapter V, Section I, Art. 15, subparagraph 1). The stipulations apply also to employees of agencies supplying social insurance, who have the rights and duties of officials.

3. Officials as used in this law also includes officials in temporary retirement.

4. The Reichsbank and the German State Railway Co. are empowered to make corresponding regulations.

Art. 2

1. Officials who since 9 November 1918 have attained the status of officials without possessing the required or usual preparation or other qualifications are to be dismissed from service. Their former salaries will be accorded them for a period of 3 months after their dismissal.

2. A right to waiting allowances, pensions, or survivors pension and to the continuance of the official designation, the title, the official uniform and the official insignia is not possessed by them.

3. In case of need a pension, revocable at any time, equivalent to a third of the usual base pay of the last position held by them may be granted them, especially when they are caring for dependent relatives; reinsurance according to the provisions of the Reich’s social insurance law will not take place.

4. The stipulations of Section 2 and 3 will receive corresponding application in the case of persons of the type designated in Sec. 1, who already before this law became effective had been retired.

Art. 3

1. Officials, who are of non-aryan descent, are to be retired; insofar as honorary officials are concerned, they are to be removed from official status.

2. Section 1 is not in effect for officials who were already officials since 1 August 1914, or who fought during the World War at the front for the German Reichs or who fought for its allies or whose fathers or sons were killed in the World War. The Reichsminister of the Interior can permit further exceptions in understanding with the appropriate special minister or the highest authorities of the federal states in the case of officials abroad.

Art. 4

Officials, whose former political activity does not offer a guarantee that they at all times without reservation act in the interest of the national state can be dismissed from service. For a period of 3 months after dismissal they are accorded their former salary. From this time on they receive 3/4 of their pension and corresponding survivor’s benefits.

Art. 5

1. Every official must allow himself to be transferred to another office of the same or equivalent career, even into such a one having less rank or regular salary—reimbursement for the prescribed costs of transfer taking place, if the needs of the service require it. In case of transferment to an office of lower rank and regular salary the official retains his previous official title and the official income of his former position.

2. The official can, in place of transfer to an office of lesser rank and regular income (section 11) demand to be retired.

Art. 6

For the simplification of administration officials can be retired, even if they are not yet unfit for service. If officials are retired for this reason, their places may not be filled again.

Art. 14

1. Against the officials who have been dismissed or transferred upon the authority of this law, the institution of civil service punishment proceedings on account of misdemeanors committed while in office with the object of cancellation of pension, survivors benefits, designation of office, title, official uniform and insignia. The institution of the proceedings must take place on 31 December 1933 at the latest.

2. Section 1 is also valid for persons who within one year of the date that this law becomes effective have been retired and upon whom the Articles 2 and 4 would have applied, if

these persons had still been in service when this law came into effect. * * *

Art. 17

1. The Reichsminister of the interior will issue in agreement with the Reichsminister of Finance, the necessary regulations for the execution and carrying through of this law and the general administrative provisions.

2. If necessary the highest federal state authorities will issue supplementary regulations. In this matter they must confine themselves to the framework of the Reichs regulations.

Art. 18

With the expiration of the periods established in this law, the general provisions valid for the professional civil services will be again completely valid, without prejudice to the measures taken on the basis of this law.

Berlin, 7 April 1933

The Reichschancellor
Adolf Hitler

The Reichsminister of the Interior
Frick

The Reichsminister of Finance
Count Schwerin von Krosigk

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 981–986, Doc. 1397-PS.

14. “WEAR IT WITH PRIDE, THE YELLOW BADGE!” APRIL 4, 1933

Robert Weltsch was editor of Berlin’s Jüdische Rundschau newspaper (a pro-Zionist paper). By the time Hitler had seized power in 1933, Weltsch had become one of the most articulate interpreters of the German Jewish plight, and on April 4, 1933, in response to the Nazi-led boycott of Jewish shops of April 1, Weltsch published an article titled “Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck” (“Wear It with Pride, the Yellow Badge”). While this was a time before Jews were required to wear the Star of David under the Nazis, it was, nonetheless, a

call for unity, strength, and solidarity in the face of Nazi persecution. He called on German Jews to accept the reality of the Nazi obsession with a “Jewish question” and to affirm their Jewishness with dignity and pride.

The first of April, 1933, will remain an important date in the history of German Jewry—indeed, in the history of the entire Jewish people. The events of that day have aspects that are not only political and economic, but moral and spiritual as well. The political and economic implications have been widely discussed in the press, though of course the need for agitation has frequently obscured objective understanding. To speak of the moral aspect, that is our task. For however much the Jewish question is now debated, nobody except ourselves can express what is to be said on these events from the Jewish point of view, what is happening in the soul of the German Jew. Today the Jews cannot speak except as Jews. Anything else is utterly senseless—Gone is the fatal misapprehension of many Jews that Jewish interests can be pressed under some other cover. On April 1 the German Jews learned a lesson which penetrates far more deeply than even their embittered and now triumphant opponents could assume

We live in a new period, the national revolution of the German people is a signal that is visible from afar, indicating that the world of our previous concepts has collapsed. That may be painful for many, but in this world only those will be able to survive who are able to look reality in the eye. We stand in the midst of tremendous changes in intellectual, political, social and economic life. It is for us to see how the Jews will react.

April 1, 1933, can become the day of Jewish awakening and Jewish rebirth. If the Jews will it. If the Jews are mature and have greatness in them. If the Jews are not as they are represented to be by their opponents.

The Jews, under attack, must learn to acknowledge themselves.

Even in these days of most profound disturbance, when the stormiest of emotions have visited our hearts in face of the unprecedented display of the universal slander of the entire Jewish population of a great and cultural country, we must first of all maintain: composure. Even if we stand shattered by the events of these days we must not lose heart and must examine the situation without any attempt to deceive ourselves. One would like to recommend in these days that the document that stood at the cradle of Zionism, Theodor Herzl’s “Jewish State,” be distributed in hundreds of thousands of copies among Jews and non-Jews.

They accuse us today of treason against the German people: The National-Socialist Press calls us the “enemy of the Nation,” and leaves us defenseless.

It is not true that the Jews betrayed Germany. If they betrayed anyone, it was themselves, the Jews.

Because the Jew did not display his Judaism with pride, because he tried to avoid the Jewish issue, he must bear part of the blame for the degradation of the Jews.

Despite all the bitterness that we must feel in full measure when we read the National-Socialist boycott proclamations and unjust accusations, there is one point for which we may be grateful to the boycott Committee. Para. 3 of the directives reads: “The reference is . . . of course to businesses owned by members of the Jewish race. Religion plays no part here. Businessmen who were baptized Catholic or Protestant, or Jews who left their Community remain Jews for the purpose of this Order.” This is a [painful] reminder for all those who betrayed their Judaism. Those who steal away from the Community in order to benefit their personal position should not collect the wages of their betrayal. In taking up this position against the renegades there is the beginning of a clarification. The Jew who denies his Judaism is no better a citizen than his fellow who avows it openly. It is shameful to be a renegade, but as long as the world around us rewarded it, it appeared an advantage. Now even that is no longer an advantage. The Jew is marked as a Jew. He gets the yellow badge.

A powerful symbol is to be found in the fact that the boycott leadership gave orders that a sign “with a yellow badge on a black background” was to be pasted on the boycotted shops. This regulation is intended as a brand, a sign of contempt. We will take it up and make of it a badge of honor.

Many Jews suffered a crushing experience on Saturday. Suddenly they were revealed as Jews, not as a matter of inner avowal, not in loyalty to their own community, not in pride in a great past and great achievements, but by the impress of a red placard with a yellow patch. The patrols moved from house to house, stuck their placards on shops and signboards, daubed the windows, and for 24 hours the German Jews were exhibited in the stocks, so to speak. In addition to other signs and inscriptions one often saw windows bearing a large Magen David, the Shield of David the King. It was intended as dishonor. Jews, take it up, the Shield of David, and wear it with pride! . . .

Source: Robert Weltsch, *Juedische Rundschau*, No. 27, April 4, 1933, From Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, and Abraham Margalio, eds., *Documents on the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), pp. 44–47. Used by permission of Yad Vashem.

15. LAW REGARDING ADMISSION TO THE BAR, APRIL 7, 1933

The Law Regarding Admission to the Bar required that non-Aryan (i.e., Jewish) lawyers no longer be admitted to the bar. A significant exception to the application of this law to Jews was included: the law did not apply to Jewish lawyers who were admitted to the bar before August 1, 1914; who fought at the front for Germany in World War I; or who lost their fathers or sons in World War I. The law also applied—without exceptions—to all lawyers who were involved in communist activities. As expected, the law reduced the number of Jewish lawyers allowed to practice their profession, but a significant number continued to do so under the exceptions included in it. Further, the language of the law—its frequent use of “may” rather than “must” and the absence of punishments set forth for the law’s violation—meant that this was not an absolute prohibition that made disbarment mandatory. That would happen, however, by a law passed in September 1938.

1933 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 188
Law Regarding Admission to the Bar, 7 April 1933

The Reich Government has enacted the following law that is promulgated herewith:

Art. 1. The admission of lawyers who, according to the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, of April 7, 1933 (RGL, I 175), are of non-Aryan descent, may be cancelled till September 30, 1933.

The provision of clause 1 does not apply to lawyers already admitted before August 1, 1914, or, who, during the World War fought at the front for Germany, or her allies, or who lost their fathers or sons in the World War.

Art. 2. Persons who, according to the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of April 7, 1933 (RGL, I, p. 175) are of non-Aryan descent, may be refused permission to practice law, even if there exists none of the reasons enumerated in the Regulations for Lawyers. The same rule applies in cases, as where a lawyer described in Section 1, clause 2, wishes to be admitted to another court.

Art. 3. Persons, who were active in the communistic sense are excluded from the admission to the Bar. Admissions already given have to be revoked.

Art. 4. The Justice-Administration can issue an injunction against a lawyer until it is decided, if use will be made of the right to revoke the admission in accordance with Art 1/1, or Art 3. The prescriptions of Art 9/b/2-4 of the Bar regulation

(Reichs-Law-Publication 1933, I, page 120) apply accordingly to the injunction against representation.

Against lawyers of that type as described in Art. 1/2 the injunction against representation is only then permissible when the use of Art. 3 is concerned.

Art. 5. To revoke the admission to the Bar is considered an important reason for the cancelling of employment contracts, which were concluded by the lawyer as employer.

Art. 6. In case the admission of a lawyer is revoked in accordance with this law, then for the cancelling of leases of rooms, which were rented by the lawyer for himself or his family, the regulations of the law about the cancelling right of persons concerned by the law for the renovation of professional bureaucracy, 7 April 1933, (RGL, Part I, page 187) will accordingly be used. The same will apply to employees of lawyers, who lost their job owing to the fact that the admission of the lawyer was revoked or an injunction against representation against him was issued in conformity with Art. 4.

Berlin, 7 April 1933

The Reichs-Chancellor
Adolf Hitler

The Reichs-Minister for Justice
Dr. Guertner

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 989–990, Doc. 1401-PS.

16. FIRST DECREE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL CIVIL SERVICE, APRIL 11, 1933

Four days after the promulgation of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service and the Law Regarding Admission to the Bar, both of which deprived non-Aryans of rights, this decree was passed to define what the term “non-Aryan” means. A non-Aryan is defined as a person who is the descendant of one Jewish parent or one Jewish grandparent. Note the difference between this definition of a Jew and the one set forth in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. In those laws, a person’s status

as a Jew was based on the number of the person's grandparents who were Jewish, requiring three or four Jewish grandparents to be considered a "full Jew." By comparison to that definition, the definition in this decree is far broader, resulting in a greater number of individuals who would be dismissed from the professional civil service or unable to practice law.

Pursuant to § 17 of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of April 7, 1933 (Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 175) the following is decreed:

I

To § 2 All civil servants who belong to the Communist Party or to Communist auxiliary or front organizations are unfit. They are accordingly to be dismissed.

II

To § 3 (1) A person is to be regarded as non-Aryan if he is descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents. It is enough for one parent or grandparent to be non-Aryan. This is to be assumed especially if one parent or one grandparent was of the Jewish faith.

(2) If a civil servant did not already have civil service status on August 1, 1914, he must prove that he is of Aryan descent, or that he fought at the front, or that he is the son or father of a man killed in action during the World War. Proof must be given by submission of documents (birth certificate or parents' marriage certificate, military papers).

(3) If Aryan descent is doubtful, an opinion must be obtained from the expert on racial research attached to the Reich Ministry of the Interior.

III

To § 4 (1) In determining whether the conditions specified in § 4, Paragraph 1, are present, the civil servant's entire political activity, particularly since November 1918, is to be taken into consideration.

(2) Each civil servant is required to inform the highest Reich or state authorities (§ 7), upon demand, to which political parties he has heretofore belonged. In the context of this ruling, *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold*, the Judges' Association for the Republic, and the Human Rights League are also considered political parties.

IV

All transactions, documents, and official certifications required for the implementation of this law are exempt from fees and stamp duties.

Source: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader* (Springfield, NJ: Behrman House, 1976), pp. 41–42. Copyright © Behrman House, Inc. www.behrmanhouse.com.

17. EXCERPTS FROM THE LAW AGAINST OVERCROWDING OF GERMAN SCHOOLS AND HIGHER INSTITUTIONS, APRIL 25, 1933

The Law against Overcrowding of German Schools and Higher Institutions imposed a restriction on the number of non-Aryans (i.e., Jews) who could be admitted to German secondary schools, colleges, and universities. It also required a reduction in the number of non-Aryan students already enrolled. It was explained that this was being done to eliminate a surfeit of students relative to the number of professional opportunities available. However, rather than basing reductions to correspond to those opportunities, the law required that the number of non-Aryans admitted and the number allowed to remain could not exceed the proportion of non-Aryans in the population to Aryans (although there was provision for using a higher proportion when determining how many currently enrolled students needed to be removed). Given that the Jews represented less than 1% of the German population at the time, the impact on Jewish applicants and students was dramatic.

1933 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 225
Law against overcrowding of German Schools
and Higher Institutions
of 25 April 1933

The Reich Government has enacted the following law that is promulgated herewith: * * *

Article 3

In those special schools and faculties where the number of pupils and students is greatly disproportionate to professional demand, the number of registered students must be reduced during the school year 1933 as far as it is, without excessive rigor, consistent with a proper proportion.

Article 4

The number of non-Aryan Germans, within the meaning of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil

Service, of 7 April 1933 (RGBl I, p 175), who may be admitted to schools, colleges and universities, must not exceed a number proportionate to the Aryan students in each school, college or university compared to the percentage of non-Aryans within the entire German population. This proportion is fixed uniformly for the whole Reich.

If, in accordance with Article 3, the number of pupils and students is to be reduced, there is likewise a proper proportion to be established between the total number of students and the number of non-Aryans. In doing so a somewhat higher proportion may be fixed.

Clauses 1 and 2 do not apply in the case of non-Aryans, whose fathers have fought at the front during the World War for Germany or her allies, or to children whose parents were married before the enactment of this law, if the father or mother or two of the grandparents are of Aryan origin. The number of these students is not to be included when calculating the quota of non-Aryans. * * *

Article 7

The decree is valid upon promulgation.

Berlin, 25 April 1933

The Reich Chancellor
Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 651–652, Doc. 2022-PS.

18. EDITORIAL LAW, OCTOBER 4, 1933

The Editorial Law eliminated Jews from any role in the owning, editing, or publishing of newspapers by authorizing the state to regulate them. The law also applied to political periodicals and establishments that “supply newspapers with intellectual content.” Section 14 of the law is notable for the limitations it puts on what cannot be put in a newspaper: anything that “tends to weaken the strength of the German Reich . . . the common will of the German people, the German defense ability, culture or economy . . . [or] offends the honor and dignity of Germany.” Professional Courts are required to

be established “for the protection of the editorial profession,” including the determination of whether what is put into a newspaper is in accordance with this law. Detailed instructions to administer this law are also included.

1933 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 713

Editorial Law

4 October 1933

The Reich Government has resolved upon the following law, which is hereby published:

Part One

The Editorial Profession

Section 1

The cooperative work carried on as main employment or based upon appointment to the position of chief editor in the shaping of the intellectual contents by written word, dissemination of news or pictures of the newspapers or political periodicals, which are published within the area of the Reich, is a public task, which is regulated as to its professional duties and rights by the state through this law. Its bearers are called editors. Nobody may call himself an editor who is not entitled to do so, according to this law.

Section 2

(1) Newspapers and periodicals are printed matters which appear in regular sequence at intervals of at most 3 months, without limiting their circulation to a certain group of persons.

(2) All reproductions of writings or illustrations, destined for dissemination, which are produced by means of a mass reproduction process are to be considered as printed matter.

Section 3

(1) The provisions of this law relating to newspapers are valid also for political periodicals.

(2) This law does not apply to newspapers and periodicals which are published by official order.

(3) The Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda will determine which periodicals are to be considered as political within the meaning of the law. In case the periodical affects a certain vocational field, he will make the decision in agreement with the highest Reich or State agency concerned.

Section 4

Cooperation in the shaping of the intellectual contents of the German newspapers is also considered as such, if it does not take place in the management of a newspaper, but in an establishment, which is to supply newspapers with intellectual contents, (written word, news, or pictures).

Part Two

Admission to the Profession of Editor

Section 5

Persons who can be editors are only those who:

1. possess the German citizenship,
2. have not lost the civic rights [buergerliche Ehrenrechte] and the qualification for the tenure of public offices.
3. are of Aryan descent, and are not married to a person of non-Aryan descent.
4. have completed the 21st year of age,
5. are capable of handling business,
6. have been trained in the profession,
7. have the qualities which the task of exerting intellectual influence upon the public requires.

Section 6

For the requirement of the Aryan descent and the Aryan marriage, section 1a of the Reich Law for Officials [Reichsbeamten-gesetz] and the provisions issued for its implementation will be applied.

Section 7

(1) Whoever has acquired the knowledge of an editor by training for at least one year (editor in apprenticeship) with the editorial staff of a German newspaper or an establishment of the kind mentioned in Section 4 and can prove this by certificate to the editorial staff will be considered as professionally trained. The apprenticeship served with a foreign newspaper may be made equivalent to the apprenticeship served with a German paper by means of the implementation order.

(2) The provisions of this law also pertain to the editors in apprenticeship with the exception of Section 5, Subsections 4, 5, and 6.

Section 8

The admission to the editorial profession will be affected by entry upon request in the professional editors' list. The professional rosters are kept by the offices of the regional

associations [Landesverbaende] of the German press. (Section 24, Subsection 2). The registration will be passed upon by the head of Regional association. He must decree the registration, if the requirements which are set forth in Section 5 are fulfilled. He has to reject it if the Reichsminister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda protests.

Section 9

(1) Upon application by the head of the regional association the head of the Reich Association of the German Press (Section 23) with the approval of Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda may permit exceptions from the requirements set forth (Section 5, Nos. 1, 3, and 6). This exception can be limited to certain branches of the activity of an editor. In this case the Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda grants the permission in accordance with the highest competent Reich or State authority.

(2) Exemption from the requirement of German [Reich] citizenship is to be granted to those of German origin if no special objections exist.

Section 10

The nominator must be notified in writing together with a statement of reasons of a decision by the head of the Land Association [Landesverband] rejecting an entry into the professional roster. The nominator may call for a decision by the professional court within four weeks after the notice. The appeal is not permitted if the circumstances fall within the purview of Section 8, 5th sentence.

Section 11

The head of the Land Association is required to decree the deletion of an entry in the professional roster if the requirements set forth in Section 5, Nos. 1, 2, 5, are not present, or the data furnished under Nos. 1–6 has been found incorrect, or the editor has given up his profession. Section 10, sentences 1 and 2 are correspondingly applicable.

Part Three

Exercise of the Profession of an Editor

Section 12

By registration in the professional roster, the editor becomes entitled to execute his profession with German newspapers or with German enterprises of the kind described in Section 4. If he moves into the district of a different Land Association, he will be transferred to the respective professional roster without further examination.

Section 13

Editors are charged to treat their subjects truthfully and to judge them according to the best of their knowledge.

Section 14

Editors are especially bound to keep out of the newspapers anything which:

1. in any manner is misleading to the public, mixes selfish aims with community aims
2. tends to weaken the strength of the German Reich, outwardly or inwardly, the common will of the German people, the German defense ability, culture or economy, or offends the religious sentiments of others,
3. offends the honor and dignity of Germany,
4. illegally offends the honor or the welfare of another, hurts his reputation, makes him ridiculous or contemptible,
5. is immoral for other reasons.

Section 15

Editors are bound to exercise their profession conscientiously and by their behavior inside or outside their professional activities prove themselves worthy of the respect which this profession demands.

Section 16

The publisher of a newspaper may compel an editor by means of a contract to observe the fundamental policies of a newspaper. The public duties and rights of the editor which derive from Sections 13 to 15, cannot be affected by policies.

Section 17

Contracts for the hiring of an editor must be in writing.

Section 18

The publisher of a newspaper must appoint an editor-in-chief and is required to report his name in writing to the Land Association concerned.

Section 19

The editor-in-chief is required to draw up in writing a plan for distribution of work, from which must be evident what part of the tasks of editing are to be taken by each editor and to what extent he has the authority to issue directions to other editors, in accordance with the terms of the contracts of employment and the supplementary directives of the publisher.

Section 20

(1) Editors of a newspaper are responsible under professional, criminal and civil law, for its intellectual content so far as they themselves wrote or selected it. The responsibility under criminal or civil law of other persons is not thereby excluded.

(2) The chief editor is responsible for the over-all editorial policy of the newspaper.

(3) The editor-in-chief is required:

(a) to take care that only such contributions are accepted as have been written or selected for acceptance by an editor.

(b) to take care that the first and last names as well as the residence of the editor-in-chief and his deputies, as well as that of each editor to whom a specific part of the direction of a newspaper is delegated, is reported.

(c) upon request to give information to anyone establishing a legal interest therein, as to which editor bears the responsibility for a contribution, so far as this is not evident from the data under subdivision b.

Section 21

Editors who cooperate in the shaping of the intellectual contents of a newspaper by their activity with an enterprise of the kind mentioned in Section 4, are responsible for the contents to the extent of their cooperation.

Part Four

Protection of the Editorial Profession Afforded by the Laws Relating to Association.

Section 22

The editorial group as a whole will watch over the fulfillment of duty on the part of individual professional colleagues and will look after their rights and their welfare.

Section 23

Editors are legally united to the Reich Association of the German Press [Reichsverband der Deutschen Presse]. By virtue of his registration on the professional roster every editor belongs to it. By virtue of this law the Reich Association becomes a public corporation. It has its seat in Berlin.

Section 24

(1) The Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda will appoint the head of the Reich Association who will issue a charter for the Reich Association, which will require the approval of the Minister. The head of the Reich Association will appoint an advisory councilor.

(2) The Reich Association is organized in Land Associations. Further details are regulated by the charter. Editors who live abroad must belong to a Land Association in whose district there is a newspaper or an establishment of the kind outlined in Section 4, by which they are employed.

Section 25

(1) The Reich Association is required:

1. to establish educational, advanced training and welfare institutions for the editors,
2. to give expert advice to Reich and Land authorities,
3. to cooperate in the making of stipulations for employment of editors,
4. upon request of one party, to negotiate among editors, and to settle differences in case both parties agree.
5. to maintain professional courts for the press.

(2) The Reich Association may assume additional duties for the achievement of the purposes provided for in Section 22.

(3) The Reich Association is authorized to impose dues on its members in order to meet its expenses. The regulations governing this must have the approval of Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. The dues are to be collected like public taxes.

Section 26

The Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda will exercise supervision to ensure that the Reich Association fulfills tasks which have been assigned to it.

Section 27

(1) Professional Courts [Berufsgerichte] will be established for the protection of the editorial profession.

2) Professional Courts of the first instance are the District Courts [Bezirksgerichte] of the Press. Professional Courts of the second instance is the Press Court [Pressegerichtshof] in Berlin.

Section 28

The Professional Courts have jurisdiction:

1. to try and to decide whether the registration in the professional roster for cases set forth in Section 10 is to be decreed.
2. to try and to decide upon removals under Section 11.

3. to interpret termination clauses in editors' contracts of employment [Anstellungsverhaeltnisses] under Section 30.

4. to try and to decide offenses of a professional nature on the part of editors (proceedings of an honor court).

Section 29

The termination of employment must be in writing and must contain a statement of reasons.

Section 30

A publisher may dismiss an editor because of the views expressed by him in the newspaper only if they are in conflict with the public professional duties of an editor or if they contravene the agreed policies. The Professional Court will, at the request of the editor, state whether the dismissal, in its opinion, has been contrary to the provisions of the preceding sentence or amounts to an evasion of them. Legal proceedings before the regular courts, if any have been initiated, are to be deferred until the requested opinion has been obtained.

Section 31

(1) An editor who fails in his public professional duties, as set forth in Sections 13 to 15, 19, 20, subsection 3, commits a professional misdemeanor. In such case the Professional Court may:

1. warn the editor,
2. punish him with a fine not exceeding the sum of one month's professional earning,
3. decree the removal of his name from the professional roster.

(2) His license to exercise the editorial profession and to call himself an editor is terminated with such removal.

(3) The Professional Court may temporarily deny an editor, against whom proceedings in an honorary court have been instituted, the right to exercise his profession.

Section 32

Professional Courts shall consist of the President and the lay judges [Beisitzer]. Alternates are to be appointed for the President and the lay judges. The President and the lay judges must be eligible for the office of judge or for higher administrative offices. They must possess judicial independence. The lay judges and their alternates have to be editors and publishers in equal numbers. All members of the Professional Courts are appointed by the Reich Minister for Public

Enlightenment and Propaganda. The head of the Reich Association will nominate the editors, while the head of the Organization of Publishers in the Reich Press Chamber will nominate the publishers.

Section 33

The District Press Courts with five members, the Press Court [Pressegerichtshof] with 7 members, the President being included in both cases.

Section 34

The procedure before the Professional Courts will be regulated by a code of procedure which is decreed by the Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in agreement with the Reich Minister for Justice after obtaining the opinion of the head of the Reich Association.

Section 35

The Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda may decree the removal of an editor from the professional list independent of the proceedings of the Professional Court, if he deems it necessary for pressing reasons of public welfare.

Part Five

Protection of the Editorial Profession Afforded by the Penal Laws

Section 36

Whosoever works as an editor despite the fact he is not registered in the professional rosters, or despite the fact that the exercise of his profession has been prohibited temporarily, will be punished with imprisonment up to one year, or fined.

Section 37

A publisher who entrusts a person who is not registered in the professional rosters or an editor who has been temporarily suspended from the exercise of his profession with the work of an editor as a main profession, or who maintains a newspaper without having appointed a chief editor, according to Section 18, will be punished by imprisonment of up to 3 months or by a fine.

Section 38

An editor who demands, accepts a promise of, or accepts a remuneration or any other advantage for an action which violates Sections 13 or 14, will be punished with imprisonment or fined.

Section 39

Whosoever attempts to induce an editor or a publisher or his deputy, by an officer, promise or granting an advantage, to undertake, bring about or tolerate the shaping of the intellectual content of a newspaper, in violation of Sections 13 or 14, will be punished with imprisonment or fined for bribery of the press.

Section 40

(1) Whosoever attempts to induce an editor or a publisher or his deputy by means of threats to undertake, bring about or tolerate the shaping of the intellectual content of a newspaper in violation of Sections 13 or 14 will be punished with imprisonment or fined for unlawful interference with the press.

(2) If the unlawful interference with the press is exerted by misuse of the dependent employee-status of the editor, then the punishment must be not less than 3 months imprisonment.

Section 41

In cases under Sections 38 to 40 the judgment may include less of civil rights in addition to imprisonment.

Section 42

Whosoever assumes the title of an editor, despite the fact he is not registered in the professional roster, will be punished by fine of up to 150 Reichsmark or by imprisonment [haeft].

Section 43

The license of a publisher against whom there is a final judgment for violation of provisions contained in Sections 37, 39 and 40, may be revoked by the administrative authority having jurisdiction in such matters under the laws of the State.

Part Six

Concluding Provisions

Section 44

Regulations enabling delegates of a law-making body to limit prosecutions are not applicable to cases under sections 31 to 35 of this law.

Section 45

(1) Sections 7, 8, of the Reich Law relating to the Press of 7 May 1874 (RGB I page 65) are not applicable to newspapers and political periodicals

(2) Otherwise the provisions of the Reich Press Law relating to the responsible Editor in charge [Redakteur] are applicable to the responsible editor [Schriftleiter or Hauptschriftleiter] of newspapers and political periodicals, insofar as Section 20, subsection 1 and Section 21 of this law are concerned.

Section 46

The Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda in agreement with the other Reich Ministers concerned may issue directives for the execution of these laws and for conversion from the old legal basis to the new one.

Section 47

The Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda will set the date on which this law becomes valid.

Berlin, 4 October 1933

The Reich Chancellor
Adolf Hitler
The Reich Minister for Public
Enlightenment and Propaganda
Dr. Goebbels

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 709–717, Doc. 2083-PS.

19. LAW EXCLUDING JEWS FROM MILITARY SERVICE, MAY 21, 1935

For the Jews of Germany, military service represented a portal to assimilation and acceptance in the larger German society. Some 100,000 German Jews served in the military in World War I, with approximately 12,000 losing their lives in the process. These numbers exceeded the percentage of Jews in the German population. Jews who served in World War I were confident that they would be seen as strong nationalists on a par with any other German soldiers, and they assumed that service would help eliminate the stereotype of the Jew as unwilling or unable to take up arms. Thus, it was with understandable disappointment that Jews learned in 1935 that their military service was no longer wanted or allowed. The timing of this law only served to further separate the Jews

from the rest of German society: it coincided with Hitler's call for all-out remilitarization and the imposition of mandatory conscription, both of which were in direct contravention of the Treaty of Versailles.

1935 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGES 609, 611, 614
Law concerning Armed Forces of 21 May 1935,
Chapter II, Section 15.
Aryan Descent.

(1) Aryan descent is a prerequisite for active service in the Armed Forces.

(2) An examining committee will determine whether and to what extent exceptions may be permitted in accordance with directives which the Reich Minister of the Interior sets forth, in agreement with the Reich Minister of War.

(3) Only persons of Aryan descent may become officers in the Armed Forces.

(4) Members of the Armed Forces and of the reserve who are of Aryan descent, are prohibited from marrying persons of non-Aryan descent. Contraventions will result in the loss of any military rating.

(5) The service of non-Aryans during war remains subject to special regulations.

* * * * *

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor
Adolf Hitler
The Reich Minister of Defense
von Blomberg
The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 686–687, Doc. 2984-PS.

20. REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

The Nuremberg Laws consisted of two constitutional laws issued by a special session of the Reichstag on September 15, 1935, at the Annual Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg, both of which were designed to further exclude Jews from all manner

of public life. One of those laws, the Reich Citizenship Law (the other was the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor), stated that only Germans or those related by blood could be citizens of Germany, thus excluding Jews from citizenship. This represented the ultimate legal division between Jews and non-Jews in Germany. For the many Jews who had been hoping that earlier anti-Jewish laws would not last or would become too draconian, this law represented undeniable proof of the extent to which their presence in German society was not wanted and would not be tolerated. Stripped of the rights and protections afforded to German citizens, their place in Germany became more tenuous and dangerous.

1935 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART 1, PAGE 1146
The Reich Citizenship Law of 15 Sept 1935

The Reichstag has adopted unanimously, the following law, which is herewith promulgated.

Article 1

1. A subject of the State is a person, who belongs to the protective union of the German Reich, and who, therefore, has particular obligations towards the Reich.

2. The status of the subject is acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich- and State Law of Citizenship.

Article 2

1. A citizen of the Reich is only that subject, who is of German or kindred blood and who, through his conduct, shows that he is both desirous and fit to serve faithfully: the German people and Reich.

2. The right to citizenship is acquired by the granting of Reich citizenship papers.

3. Only the citizen of the Reich enjoys full political rights in accordance with the provision of the laws.

Article 3

The Reich Minister of the Interior in conjunction with the Deputy of the Fuehrer will issue the necessary legal and administrative decrees for the carrying out and supplementing of this law.

Nurnberg, 15 Sept 1935 at the Reichsparteitag of Liberty

The Fuehrer and Reichs Chancellor
Adolf Hitler

The Reichs Minister of the Interior
Frick

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 7-8, Doc. 1416-PS.

21. LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND GERMAN HONOR, SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

The Nuremberg Laws consisted of two constitutional laws issued by a special session of the Reichstag on September 15, 1935, at the Annual Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg, both of which were designed to further exclude Jews from all manner of public life. One of those laws, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor (the other was the Reich Citizenship Law), prohibited Jews from marrying or having extramarital relations with non-Jews. It also prohibited the employment of German female domestic servants under the age of 45 in Jewish households, and the raising of the German flag by Jews. Of great importance, it set forth a definition of the term "Jew" to be used for application of these and subsequent laws. Generally, a Jew was defined as someone with three of four Jewish grandparents. A person with one or two Jewish grandparents would be considered, respectively, a Mischling of the second class and a Mischling of the first class. Many discussions and heated debates ensued among Nazi leaders about how each class of Mischling was to be treated under Germany's many anti-Jewish laws.

LAW, 15 SEPTEMBER 1935, FOR THE PROTECTION OF
GERMAN BLOOD AND HONOR
1935 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART 1, PAGE 1146

Imbued with the conviction that the purity of the German blood is the prerequisite for the permanence of the German people, and animated by the inflexible will to safeguard the German nation for all future, the Reichstag has unanimously enacted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

Article 1

(1) Marriages between Jews and German nationals of German or related blood are prohibited. Marriages concluded despite of this are void, even if concluded abroad in order to circumvent this law.

(2) Only the public prosecutor can file an action for nullification.

Article 2

Sexual intercourse (except in marriage) between Jews and German nationals of German or related blood is forbidden.

Article 3

Jews may not employ female German nationals of German or related blood below 45 years of age in their households.

Article 4

(1) Jews are forbidden to show the Reich and national flag or the colors of the Reich.

(2) They are, however, allowed to show the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right will be protected by the State.

Article 5

(1) Whoever violates the prohibition of article 1 will be punished with hard labor.

(2) Any man violating the prohibition of article 2 will be punished with imprisonment or hard labor.

(3) Whoever violates the regulations under articles 3 or 4, will be punished with imprisonment up to 1 year or with a fine, or with both of these penalties.

Article 6

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in agreement with the deputy of the Fuehrer and the Reich Minister of Justice, will issue the legal and administrative regulations required for carrying out and supplementing this law.

Article 7

This law comes into force on the day following its promulgation; article 3, however, not until 1 January 1936

Nuernberg, 15 September 1935, at the Reich Party Congress for Freedom.

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor
ADOLF HITLER

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

The Reich Minister of Justice
DR. GUERTNER

The Deputy of the Fuehrer
Reich Minister without Portfolio
R. HESS

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 180–181, Doc. NG-715.

22. FIRST REGULATION TO THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW OF NOVEMBER 14, 1935

With the passage of the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor—and with their elimination of citizenship for Jews and the prohibition of marriage or extramarital relations between Jews and non-Jews—the need for an unambiguous definition of who is a Jew became critical. This regulation sought to provide that definition by looking at the race of the person’s grandparents or parents. If three or four of an individual’s grandparents were “full Jews,” then the individual would be considered a “full Jew.” If two of the parents were “full Jews,” the individual would be considered a “full Jew” if any one of four additional conditions were met. The regulation, which also makes reference to an individual “of mixed Jewish blood” but does not define what that means, reflects the difficulty of maintaining the Nazi ideological position that Jews are a race, not a religion: Jewish status depended, under certain circumstances, on whether a person’s parents or grandparents belonged to the Jewish community or if a person was married to a Jew. Clearly, an unambiguous definition had not yet been achieved.

1935 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART 1, PAGE 1333

First Regulation to the Reichs Citizenship

Law of 14 Nov. 1935

On the basis of Article 3, Reichs Citizenship Law, of 15 Sept. 1935 (RGBl I, page 146) the following is ordered:

Article 1

1. Until further issue of regulations regarding citizenship papers, all subjects of German or kindred blood, who possessed the right to vote in the Reichstag elections, at the time the Citizenship Law came into effect, shall, for the time being, possess the rights of Reich citizens. The same shall be true of those whom the Reich Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Deputy of the Fuehrer, has given the preliminary citizenship.

2. The Reich Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Deputy of the Fuehrer, can withdraw the preliminary citizenship.

Article 2

1. The regulations in Article 1 are also valid for Reichs subjects of mixed, Jewish blood.

2. An individual of mixed Jewish blood, is one who descended from one or two grandparents who were racially full Jews, insofar as does not count as a Jew according to Article 5, paragraph 2. One grandparent shall be considered as full-blooded if he or she belonged to the Jewish religious community.

Article 3

Only the Reich citizen, as bearer of full political rights, exercises the right to vote in political affairs, and can hold a public office. The Reich Minister of the Interior, or any agency empowered by him, can make exceptions during the transition period, with regard to occupying public offices. The affairs of religious organizations will not be touched upon.

Article 4

1. A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He has no right to vote in political affairs, he cannot occupy a public office.

2. Jewish officials will retire as of 31 December 1935. If these officials served at the front in the World War, either for Germany or her allies, they will receive in full, until they reach the age limit, the pension to which they were entitled according to last received wages; they will, however, not advance in seniority. After reaching the age limit, their pension will be calculated anew, according to the last received salary, on the basis of which their pension was computed.

3. The affairs of religious organizations will not be touched upon.

4. The conditions of service of teachers in Jewish public schools remain unchanged, until new regulations of the Jewish school systems are issued.

Article 5

1. A Jew is anyone who descended from at least three grandparents who were racially full Jews. Article 2, par. 2, second sentence will apply.

2. A Jew is also one who descended from two full Jewish parents, if: (a) he belonged to the Jewish religious community at the time this law was issued, or who joined the community later; (b) he was married to a Jewish person, at the time the law was issued, or married one subsequently; (c) he

is the offspring from a marriage with a Jew, in the sense of Section 1, which was contracted after the Law for the protection of German blood and German honor became effective (RGBl. I, page 1146 of 15 Sept 1935); (d) he is the offspring of an extramarital relationship, with a Jew, according to Section 1, and will be born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936.

Article 6

1. As far as demands are concerned for the pureness of blood as laid down in Reichs law or in orders of the NSDAP and its echelons—not covered in Article 5—they will not be touched upon.

2. Any other demands on pureness of blood, not covered in Article 5, can only be made with permission from the Reich Minister of the Interior and the Deputy of the Fuehrer. If any such demands have been made, they will be void as of 1 Jan 1936, if they have not been requested from the Reich Minister of the Interior in agreement with the Deputy of the Fuehrer. These requests must be made from the Reich Minister of the Interior.

Article 7

The Fuehrer and Reichs Chancellor can grant exemptions from the regulations laid down in the law.

Berlin, 14 November 1935.

The Fuehrer and Reichs Chancellor
Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick

The Deputy of the Fuehrer
R. Hess
(Reich Minister without Portfolio)

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 8–10, Doc. 1417-PS.

23. COMPILATION OF EXCERPTS FROM NAZI ANTISEMITIC ARTICLES IN *DER SA-MANN*, 1935–1938

The Sturmabteilung (SA, also known as the Stormtroopers or Brown Shirts) was a paramilitary group that grew in size

and popularity under the leadership of Ernst Röhm, a long-time friend of Hitler and a member of the Nazi Party from its earliest years. It was a violent group that was used by the party for protection of its officials, intimidation of members of other parties, and fighting similar groups of other parties. With some four million members, it lost a large part of its purpose when Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power. It sought the acceptance of the German Army, but the officer corps considered it to be an undisciplined group led by a highly unprofessional man. During its existence as an organization it published a newspaper, Der SA-Mann (The SS Man), to report on SA matters and, as will be seen in the excerpts below, to constantly confirm and inflame violent anti-Jewish sentiments. It is in many ways reflective of the antisemitic rhetoric common to the Nazi Party in these years.

THE SA MAN
[Der SA-Mann]

* * *

[Articles Designed to Create and Foster an
Anti-Jewish Attitude]

Article entitled: “Finish up with the Jews”, with subtitle: “We want no women to buy from Jews, and no Jewish girl friends.” 27 July, 1935, p. 4. [This article reads in part as follows:] “German women finally wake up and do not buy any more from Jews. And you, German girl, also finally wake up and do not go with Jews any longer.

“The Jew is also a person? Quite right! Nobody has ever argued that point. The only question is: What kind of a person is he? Oh, I know German women, your groceryman is such an obliging and decent Jew, and your friend, German girl, is such a nice and polite person! Yes, I understand.

To the devil finally with this nursery tale.

Snake remains a snake, and
Jew remains a Jew! * * *

* * * “German women, if you buy from Jews and German girl, if you carry on with Jews, then both of you betray your German Volk and your Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, and commit a sin against your German Volk and its future! Finally, wake up German woman, aren’t you ashamed to give your household money to Jews? Do you know what you are doing thereby? You give the deadly enemy of the German Volk as well as your own and your children’s deadly enemy the weapons into his hands for the fight against Germany. Must

that be? Can’t you really go two or three houses further and obtain your needs from a German national?

“And you, German girl, you give your best, your honor and your blood to one of a strange race?

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?” * * *

Article entitled: “The Jewish World Danger.” 2 February, 1935, p. 5.

Article entitled: “Jewish Worries” (defending the practice of excluding Jews from certain resorts). 20 July, 1935, p. 4.

Article entitled: “Jews aren’t wanted Here”, with pictures posted on outskirts of villages showing signs bearing the same message. 1 June, 1935, p. 1. [The last portion of this article reads as follows:]

“Since the day when National Socialism unrolled its flag and the march began for the Germany for Germans, our battle also included the Jewry * * * Let the Jew continue with his methods against New Germany. We know that at the end we will remain the victor, for every day and every National Socialist deed brings out the Jewish lies and horror system more and more, and by waking up the people and their knowledge of the Jewish world danger, the last hope of the Jewry for the undermining of Germany will suffer shipwreck.

“But the high point of Jewish impudence and arrogance is, on the one side, to wage the war against Germany to the last, and on the other side, to expect that the German working people should carry their money into Jewish stores. Here our explanation and our battle must be employed.

“It does not do for innumerable citizens to daily buy from Jews and to fill the pockets of our enemies with their money, who find their work and bread through the National Socialist Germany, and who are citizens of the National Socialist Reich, and benefited by the National Socialist battle. He who buys from Jews takes goods and wages from his citizens.

“The greatest part of our people have given the right answer to his lies and boycott campaign. In thousands of towns and villages signs and posters say: “Jews are not wanted here!” Many thousands of new citizens have become anti-Semitic because of Jewish dealings. However, the whole German folk must realize and grasp the Jewish world danger.

“We break no windows of Jewish stores, we do not carry out any program or any demonstrations in front of Jewish stores. We only elucidate or explain to our blood brothers regarding the methods of the Jew, his fight against us and

against all peoples of the earth. Then, also, outside of the last German village, the sign will stand “Jews are not wanted here!” and then, finally, no German citizen will again cross the threshold of a Jewish store. To achieve this goal is the mission of the SA man as political soldier of the Fuehrer. Next to his word and his explanations stands his example.”

Article entitled: “God Save the Jew.” 17 August, 1935, p. 1.

Photograph showing SA men gathered around trucks upon which are pasted signs reading: “Read the Stuermer and you will know the Jew.” 24 August, 1935, p. 3.

Photograph apparently representing public SA rally showing large sign which reads: “He who knows a Jew knows a devil.” 24 August, 1935, p. 3.

Article entitled: “The Face of the Jew” (with portrait of a Jew holding the hammer and sickle). 5 Oct., 1935, p. 6.

Article entitled: “Jews, Blacks and Reactionaries.” 2 November, 1935, p. 2.

Article entitled: “The Camouflaged Benjamin-Jewish Cultural Bolshevism in German Music.” 23 November, 1935, p. 2.

Article entitled: “The Jewish Assassination.” 15 February, 1936, p. 1.

Article entitled: “Murder—the Jewish Slogan.” 4 April, 1936, p. 11.

Series of articles entitled: “The Jewish Mirror.” 8 weekly installments beginning 22 May, 1936, p. 17.

Series of articles entitled: “Gravediggers of World Culture.” beginning 5 December, 1936, p. 6 and continuing weekly to 13 March, 1937.

Article entitled: “Rumania to the Jews?” 2 January, 1937, p. 6.

Article entitled: “Bismark’s Position on Jews.” 2 January, 1937, p. 7.

Article entitled: “Jewry is a Birth Error.” 13 February, 1937, p. 5.

Article entitled: “The Protection of the German Blood.” 24 April, 1937, p. 1.

Article entitled: “Crooked Ways to Money and Power.” 24 April, 1937, p. 1.

Article entitled: “The Camouflage of Jewry—Beginning or End?” 22 May, 1937, p. 14.

Article entitled: “How come still German Jews?” 18 June, 1938, p. 2.

Article entitled: “Westheimer Jew Servants.” 22 January, 1938, p. 2.

Article entitled: “The Poor Jew—Well! Well!” 19 March, 1938, p. 15.

Article entitled: “Jewish Methods, Churchly Parallel.” 9 September, 1938, p. 4.

Article entitled: “Jewish World Revolution—out of the U.S.A.” 30 December, 1938, p. 4.

Article entitled: “Jews and Free Masons.” 13 January, 1939, p. 15.

Article entitled: “Friends of the World Jewry—Roosevelt and Ickes.” 3 February, 1939, p. 14.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 789–793, Doc. 3050-A-E-PS.

24. EXTRACTS FROM PAMPHLET ON “THE JEWISH QUESTION AND SCHOOL INSTRUCTION,” 1937

Der Stürmer, a weekly Nazi newspaper/tabloid edited by the notorious antisemite Julius Streicher, printed in a 1937 edition of the paper a pamphlet for teachers regarding how to teach German children about Jews and the so-called Jewish Question. Introduced by Streicher and authored by Fritz Fink, the pamphlet’s tone is clear early on when it refers to “the monstrous character and dangerousness of the Jew.” Consider the impact made by teachers who followed Fink’s directions. It is little wonder that German children schooled during the 1930s and 1940s harbored a deep-seated antipathy toward Jewish children and, indeed, all Jews.

Pamphlet “The Jewish question and school instruction” by
Municipal School Inspector [Stadtschulrat]
Fritz Fink, published
and printed by “Der Stuermer,” 1937 with a preface
by Streicher
Preface

The National Socialist state brought fundamental changes into all spheres of life of the German People.

It has also presented the German teacher with some new tasks. The national socialist state demands that its teachers instruct German children in social questions. As far as the German people is concerned the racial question is a Jewish question. Those who want to teach the child all about the Jew must themselves have a thorough knowledge of the subject. School Inspector Fritz Fink, with his

publication “The Jewish Question and schools instruction,” will help the teacher in acquiring some knowledge of the subject. He can and is entitled to do this, for he himself has been called upon by circumstances to take part in a struggle which enabled him to gain experience and knowledge concerning Jewish blood and its influence on the German People. Those who take to heart all that has been written with such feeling by Fritz Fink who for many years has been greatly concerned about the German People, will be grateful to the creator of this outwardly insignificant publication.

City of the Reich Party Rallies Nurnberg in the year 1937.

(Sgd) Julius Streicher

* * * * *

Introduction

“Racial and Jewish questions are the fundamental problems of the national socialist ideology. The solution of these problems will secure the existence of National Socialism and with this the existence of our nation for all time. The enormous significance of the racial question is recognized almost without exception today by all the German people. In order to attain this recognition, our people had to travel through a long road of suffering. In order that the coming generation be spared this suffering, let us, the German educators of our youth, instill in their hearts, from their early childhood, all there is to know about the Jews. No one should be allowed to grow up in the midst of our people without this knowledge of the monstrous character and dangerousness of the Jew.” * * *

Knowledge of racial and Jewish questions must grow organically out of our general system of school education. The racial doctrine and the Jewish question must be like a red thread marking the education of all age groups in our school education. There is no subject from which cannot be drawn an unsuspected full measure of valuable knowledge of the Jewish question.

The attached pamphlet, “The Jewish question and School Instruction,” was brought out in an urgent desire to show up some of these possibilities.

* * * * *

“From the ranks of the teachers comes now the question: ‘How should we represent the Jew to our pupils?’ Only one

answer can be given to this question: ‘In all his monstrosity, horror and dangerousness.’ Such as he is.”

* * * * *

A teacher who has come to a thorough understanding of the Jewish question will make use in his work of the “Stuermer.” He reads to the class extracts from an Article which describes how a Jew deceived a peasant etc.

Thus we glide from the purely outward appearance of the Jew to his inner nature. Our fight against the Jew is not for the reason that he is different in body to ourselves. The bodily difference is not the dangerous part of the Jew. We must make it clear to a child that in the strange appearance of a Jew, which is immediately conspicuous to us, lies a soul, which is fundamentally different in all its emotions and manifestations, from our souls. We must point out that the Jew thinks, feels, and behaves in a different manner from ourselves. That his way of thinking, of feeling and of behaviour is diametrically opposed to our morals and our laws.”

* * * * *

Jewry is Criminality

“ * * *. But the fact, that in deceit, usury, murder, etc. Jews see no crime but consider them as acts pleasing to their God when they are directed against non-Jews—will appear most monstrous to our children. At first it will frighten the children and they will shake their heads incredulously. In the same way as millions of people in Germany scornfully shook their heads when the national socialists and foremost of all the “Stuermer” exposed the criminal methods and criminal laws of the Jews. “But deceit, usury, falsehood are sins.” A boy in the class will cry out, “We are forbidden to commit them!” The teacher will ask: ‘Who forbade you to commit them?’ “Our conscience. The laws of the State, God.”

But if deceit, usury, falsehood, etc. are not crimes, not sin in the eyes of the Jews, then a Jew must have a different conscience, different laws, and a different God than we have, and thus the teacher and his pupils will suddenly find themselves thoroughly involved in the Jewish question and in its most serious aspect.

The manner in which he (the teacher) pursues the question with the children should make clear to them the fundamental reason for all Jewish acts.

One who has reached this stage of understanding, will inevitably remain an enemy of the Jews all his life and will instill this hatred into his own children.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VIII, pp. 30–32, Doc. M-46.

25. PROTECTIVE CUSTODY FOR JEWISH RACE DEFILERS, JUNE 12, 1937

This short directive was sent by Reinhard Heydrich, Heinrich Himmler's second-in-command, to various police offices. It is a chilling indicator of just how far the rule of law had fallen in the four years since Hitler's rise to power. Heydrich addressed how the law should treat a German man who had violated the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor by engaging in intimate relations with a Jewish woman and thus had become a "race defiler" (Rassenschänder). In response to an increase in race defilement, he ordered that each man who had been convicted of that crime and who had completed his mandated prison sentence should be considered a candidate for continuing confinement in "protective custody," presumably a status in the Nazi criminal justice system that could be continued indefinitely. In addition, he ordered that the Jewish woman involved in the incident should also be placed in "protective custody," even though she had not been subject to a prison term.

DIRECTIVE OF 12 JUNE 1937 FROM HEYDRICH,
CHIEF OF THE SECURITY POLICE, TO POLICE
OFFICES, CONCERNING
PROTECTIVE CUSTODY FOR JEWISH RACE DEFILERS
Copy

The Chief of the Security Police Berlin, 12 June 1937
S-P (II B) No. 4021/37

[Handwritten] Annulled 28 August 1937
[Handwritten] Ku

Subject: Protective custody for Jewish race defiler.

From what I can see from a statistical survey, cases of race defilement have increased considerably recently. In order to

take preventive measures against this danger, it is to be examined in every single case of race defilement whether protective custody is necessary after the sentence inflicted by law has been served.

For this purpose I request that a short report be made 1 month prior to the discharge of the condemned from prison with the valid judgment concerning the case of race defilement attached.

Apart from this I request that immediately after termination of legal proceedings in a case of race defilement in which a male person of German blood has been sentenced, the Jew-ess involved be taken into protective custody and reported to this office.

No publicity whatever is to be made of this order.

[Signed] HEYDRICH
S. Certified : [Signed] KASKATH
Clerk

To all—

Higher State Police Offices
State Police Offices
Higher State Police Offices
Criminal Police Offices

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 317–318, Doc. NG-326.

26. NEW LEGAL STATUS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES, APRIL 5, 1938

This letter from Hugh R. Wilson, U.S. ambassador to Germany, to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, is a detailed description of a law effective March 31, 1938 (an English copy of which was enclosed) that changed the legal status of the Jewish community in Germany to the detriment of that community. Specifically, the law deprived the Jewish religious community of its status as a "corporation under public law," something it had long enjoyed and that continued to be enjoyed by the Protestant and Catholic communities. As Wilson explained, this change removed the Jewish community's right to rely on "the State to collect taxes for the support of their religious and welfare activities," thereby jeopardizing the community's

ability to pay, for example, its clergy or to maintain its synagogues, schools, and welfare organizations. It was also feared that the law might subject the community to paying taxes on its assets, including its synagogues, cemeteries, and administrative buildings, all of which were protected from taxation by the legal status that was now being eliminated.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

Berlin, April 5, 1938

No. 74

Subject: New Legal Status of the Jewish Communities

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose a copy of *Gesetzblatt* Part I, No. 45, of March 30, 1938, containing a law depriving the Jewish religious communities of the semi-public status they have enjoyed as "corporations under public law" (Körperschaften des öffentlichen Rechts) and reducing them to the position of private societies. An English translation of this law is likewise enclosed.

According to information received from authoritative Jewish sources, the Jewish religious communities, or Gemeinde, have until now possessed in each city privileges in some respects similar to the established churches, receiving protection from the State and being able to depend upon the State to collect taxes for the support of their religious and welfare activities. In the same sense that the Catholic and Protestant clergy are regarded as State officials, the Jewish Rabbis also enjoyed that privilege. As a result of the law referred to above, the Jewish communities now become merely private bodies with a status similar to that of other duly registered associations (eingetragene Vereine) or clubs.

It is provided that this change shall take place as of March 31. It may be noted that the law is considered to have become law last January 1, but by virtue of the fact that it was only promulgated March 30, the Jewish communities have thus been deprived of a three months' period of notice which might have made it easier for them to adjust themselves to the new arrangement. Application of the law to Austria remains for the time being in abeyance.

As judged by local Jewish authorities, the law may have the following effects. The Jewish Gemeinde may no longer

receive, as of official right, the taxes levied upon their members by the state for the meeting of community expenses, such as the Rabbis' salaries, the upkeep of synagogues, Jewish schools and hospitals, relief work, old age pensions of contributing members and the payment of the salaries and pensions of officials of the community. It is understood, however, that it has been intimated to the officials of the Jewish communities that they may bring civil suit against non-paying members, just as certain other private associations and clubs are entitled to bring suit for the non-payment of dues. With the former legal basis removed whereby contributions were collected as State taxes, it is feared in some quarters that many members of the Jewish communities, particularly in the degree that they may suffer from the pressure of official and Party economic discrimination, may refuse to pay their contributions voluntarily, and it is perceived that the collection of these contributions by court process would be a costly procedure. On the other hand, certain other Jewish authorities rely upon the esprit de corps of the Jewish community members to induce them to continue to pay as contributions the sums they formerly paid as assessed taxes. It may be regarded as of some significance, however, that the competent Government officials have stated that they will refuse to divulge the sums formerly paid to the communities by individual members as taxes which in turn were based upon a proportion of the total income tax paid to the State.

Officials of the local Jewish community perceive that the law may work another hardship in that, following the termination of their public status, the communities may be called upon to pay taxes upon their property such as synagogues, cemeteries, administrative buildings, and so forth. Certain of the communities are understood, moreover, to possess archives and art collections of historic and intrinsic value, but they may not sell these (in order, possibly, to meet rising current expenses) without the permission of the Government.

While the new law in theory reduces the Jewish communities in Germany to the private status they occupy in other countries, it is nevertheless deplored as discriminatory, if taken in relation to the position that the other religious communities enjoy as established churches, and it is counted upon to hamper, to a degree that may possibly be very great, the social and welfare work of the already seriously harassed Jewish Gemeinde.

Respectfully yours
Hugh R. Wilson

Enclosures;

1. Copy of *Reichsgesetzblatt* Part I,
No.45 of March 30, 1938;
2. Translation of Law,
800
JDB-gw

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1709: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

27. DECREE FOR THE REPORTING OF JEWISH OWNED PROPERTY, APRIL 26, 1938

Expropriation of property owned by Jews in Germany was a goal of the Nazi Party from the very beginning of its rise to power, if not earlier. In order to accomplish that goal, the property to be expropriated had to be registered with the government. This decree implemented such a plan by defining who will be required to register their property and what property must be registered. The already difficult and tedious task of making this initial registration was compounded by the requirement that "every change of said individual's total property" that exceeded a certain threshold also had to be reported, making this an ongoing requirement. In addition to providing other details regarding the program, including penalties for failure to comply, this law included two provisions that were especially problematic. The first is its requirement that Jews of foreign citizenship must register their property. The second is the empowerment of the appropriate government official to make use of the reported property in the best interests of the German economy. The implications of this for the Jews of Germany could not have been made any clearer.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 414

Decree for the Reporting of Jewish Owned
Property of 26 April
1938

On the basis of the Decree for the Execution of the Four Year Plan of 18 October 1936 (RGBl I, 887) the following is hereby decreed:

Article 1

1. Every Jew (Article 5 of the First Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 November 1935 (RGBl I, 1333))

shall report and evaluate in accordance with the following instructions his entire domestic and foreign property and estate on the day when this decree goes into force. Jews of foreign citizenship shall report and evaluate only their domestic property.

2. The duty to report holds likewise for the non-Jewish marital partner of a Jew.

3. Every reporting person's property must be given separately.

Article 2

1. Property in the sense of this law includes the total property of the person required to report, irrespective of whether it is exempt from any form of taxation or not.

2. It does not include movable objects used by the individual or house furnishings as far as the latter are not classed as luxury objects.

Article 3

1. Every part of the property shall be valued according to the usual value it has on the effective date of this regulation.

2. No report is necessary when the total worth of the property to be reported does not exceed 5000 marks.

Article 4

The report is to be presented on an official form by 30 June 1938, to the administrative official responsible at the place of residence of the reporting individual. When such a report is not possible by this date the responsible office can extend the period. In such case, however, an estimate is to be presented by 30 June 1938, together with a statement of the grounds of delay.

Article 5

1. The reporting individual must report, after this decree goes into force, to the responsible office, every change of said individual's total property as far as it exceeds a proper standard of living or normal business transactions.

2. The reporting requirement applies also to those Jews who were not required to report on the effective date of this regulation, but who have acquired property exceeding 5000 Reichsmarks in value, after this date. Article 1 (1) clause 2, shall apply respectively.

Article 6

1. The administrative offices responsible under this regulation are in Prussia—Highest Administrative Officer [Regierungspraesident] (in Berlin the Police President);

Bavaria—Highest Administrative Officer [Regierungspraesident]; Saxony—The District Head [Kreishauptmann]; Wurtemberg—The Minister of the Interior; Baden—The Minister of the Interior; Thuringen—Reich Governor [Reichsstatthalter]; Hessen—Reich Governor; Hamburg—Reich Governor; Mecklenburg—Ministry of the State, Interior Department; Oldenburg—Minister of Interior; Braunschweig—Ministry of Interior; Bremen—Senator for Administration of Interior; Anhalt—Ministry of State Interior Department; Lippe—Reich Governor (Land Government); Schaumburg-Lippe—Land Government; Saarland—The Reich Commissioner for the Saar.

2. Austria—The Reich Governor has jurisdiction. He may transfer his authority to another board.

Article 7

The Deputy for the Four Year Plan is empowered to take such necessary measures as may be necessary to guarantee the use of the reported property in accord with the necessities of German economy.

Article 8

1. Whoever wilfully or negligently fails to comply with this reporting requirement, either by omitting it, or making it incorrectly, or not within the time specified, or whoever acts contrary to any instruction issued pursuant to Article 7 by the Deputy of the Four Year Plan shall be punishable by imprisonment and by a fine or by both of these penalties, in particularly flagrant cases of wilful violation the offender may be condemned to hard labor up to ten years. The offender is punishable notwithstanding that the action was in a foreign country.

2. Any attempt to commit such actions is punishable.

3. In addition to the imposition of the penalties under (1), the property may be confiscated, insofar as it was involved in the criminal action. In addition to hard labor confiscation may be made. Where no specific individual can be prosecuted or convicted, confiscation may be decreed independently, where the prerequisites for confiscation warrant it.

Berlin, 26 April 1938

The Deputy for the Four Year Plan
Goering

General Field Marshal
The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 1001–1003, Doc. 1406-PS.

28. AMERICAN JEWS LIVING IN GERMANY AND REPORTING OF JEWISH PROPERTY, MAY 9, 1938

On April 26, 1938, German Jews and Jews of foreign citizenship were ordered to register total assets with the German government. This letter, dated two weeks later, is from Hugh R. Wilson, the U.S. ambassador to Germany, to Germany's minister for foreign affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, protesting the requirement that Jewish U.S. citizens must declare their property to a foreign government. The letter of protest cites the treaties that would be violated by the imposition of this requirement on U.S. citizens and notes that the protection afforded to foreign citizens in those treaties applies without regard to race or creed. Wilson requests a quick response to what he, on behalf of the U.S. government, sees as an urgent matter.

Abschrift.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

Berlin, May 9, 1938

No. 69

Excellency,

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that I have been instructed by my Government to bring the following matter to the attention of the German Government.

On April 26, 1938, a decree was issued by the German Government and supplemented by instructions under which all Jews and their spouses whether German or foreign nationals are called upon to declare, subject to certain small exceptions, all property held in Germany while such declarations are not required from Germans generally nor from other foreigners. It appears further that the Commissioner for the Four-Year-Plan is authorized to use the fortunes so declared "in harmony with the requirements of German economy."

The Government of the United States considers that the application of measures of the nature indicated to the property of American citizens of the Jewish race would violate

rights accorded American citizens under the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Consular Rights between the United States and Germany signed December 8, 1923. Article I of this treaty in part provides:

“The nationals of each of the high contracting parties shall be permitted to enter, travel and reside in the territories of the other, to exercise liberty of conscience and freedom of worship; to engage in professional, scientific, religious, philanthropic, manufacturing and work of every kind without interference; to carry on every form of commercial activity which is not forbidden by the local law; to own, erect or lease and occupy appropriate buildings and to lease lands for residential, scientific, religious, philanthropic, manufacturing, commercial and mortuary purposes; to employ agents of their choice and generally to do anything incidental to or necessary for the enjoyment of any of the foregoing privileges upon the same terms as nationals of the state of residence or as nationals of the nation hereafter to be most favored by it, submitting themselves to all local laws and regulations duly established.

“The nationals of each high contracting party shall receive within the territories of the other, upon submitting to the conditions imposed upon its nationals, the most constant protection and security for their persons and property and shall enjoy in this respect that degree of protection that is required by international law. Their property shall not be taken without due process of law and without payment of just compensation.”

The foregoing provisions respecting rights in one country are applicable to all the nationals of the other country without exceptions based upon race or creed.

In view of the scope and purpose of the decree and its discriminatory character, the Government of the United States enters emphatic protest against its application to American citizens. It feels that on further consideration of the matter, the German Government will agree with the considerations set forth above and will give early assurance that the measures will not be applied to American citizens.

In view of the urgency which this matter presents, the Government of the United States would appreciate an early reply from the German Government.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.

(sgd.) R. Wilson

His Excellency Joachim von Ribbentrop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Berlin

Source: Nuernberg Doc. NG-1413. Also in *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Paper, 1938: The British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East, and Africa*, Vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954), Document 290.

29. THIRD REGULATION UNDER THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW, JUNE 14, 1938

Less than two months prior to the issuance of this regulation, all Jews were ordered to register the entirety of their property and estate with the German government. In keeping with that decree, this regulation orders the registration of all Jewish-owned industrial enterprises as well as any “societies, foundations, institutions and other enterprises which are not industrial undertakings.” Much of this regulation sets forth the conditions that caused an enterprise to be “considered as Jewish.” It also provides instructions regarding how and when registration is required, as well as the process by which a determination that an institution is Jewish can be appealed.

THIRD REGULATION UNDER THE REICH CITIZENSHIP
LAW, 14 JUNE 1938,
STATING THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH
INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES
ARE CONSIDERED JEWISH, THE REGISTRATION
OF JEWISH
ENTERPRISES, AND RELATED MATTERS
Third Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law,
14 June 1938, 1938
Reichsgesetzblatt, Part I, Page 627

On the basis of section 3 of the Reich Citizenship Law of 15 September 1935 (Reichsgesetzblatt, pt. I, p. 1146), the following is decreed:

Article I

Section 1

(1) An industrial enterprise is deemed to be Jewish if the owner is a Jew (sec. 5 of the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 Nov. 1935, Reichsgesetzblatt, pt. I, p. 1333).

(2) The industrial enterprise of a private partnership or a limited partnership is considered to be Jewish if one or more of the personally liable partners are Jews.

(3) The industrial enterprise of a legal person is considered as Jewish

1098 Third Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law

- (a) if one or more of the persons appointed as legal representatives or one or more of the members of the supervisory board of directors are Jews;
- (b) if Jews have a decisive interest in the concern by capital or by votes. Decisive interest by capital is obtained if more than one-fourth of the capital belongs to Jews; decisive interest by votes is obtained if the votes of Jews attain one-half of all votes.

(4) The provisions of (3) apply equally to companies operating under the mining laws but having no legal personality.

Section 2

If, in the case of a limited liability company or a joint stock company in which at least one holder is personally liable, no Jew was a member of the Vorstand or of the Aufsichtsrat on 1 January 1938, it is assumed that Jews are not decisively interested by capital or votes (sec. 1, 3b). The opposite is assumed on the date mentioned above one or more of the members of the Vorstand or of the Aufsichtsrat were Jews.

Section 3

An industrial enterprise is also considered as Jewish if it is under the dominant influence of Jews.

Section 4

(1) A branch of a Jewish industrial enterprise is considered a Jewish industrial enterprise.

(2) A branch of a non-Jewish industrial enterprise is considered a Jewish industrial enterprise if the manager or one of several managers of the branch is a Jew.

Section 5

The Reich Minister of Economics may allow exceptions to the provision in section 1 (3) (a) up to 1 April 1940.

Section 6

The provisions in sections 1, 3, and 4 apply equally to societies, foundations, institutions and other enterprises which are not industrial undertakings.

Article II

Section 7

(1) Jewish industrial enterprises shall be entered into a register. The Reich Minister of the Interior designates the authorities where the register shall be kept.

(2) Registration of industrial enterprise in which Jews of foreign nationality are interested requires the approval of the Reich Minister of Economics.

Section 8

(1) Entry in the register is decided by the authorities (sec. 7).

(2) The decision must be delivered to the owner of the industrial enterprise. Within a time limit of 2 weeks of delivery he may lodge a protest.

Section 9

(1) The deciding authority (sec. 8) can remedy the protest; if it refuses to do so, it must submit the case to the superior administrative authority for decision.

(2) The superior administrative authority also decides in other cases of doubt.

(3) Within 2 weeks of notification, the owner of the industrial enterprise is entitled to lodge a further protest with the Reich Minister of Economics against the decision of the superior administrative authority.

Section 10

(1) The protest (sec. 8 (2), sec. 9 (3)) must be submitted in writing to the authority whose decision is being contested and must be substantiated.

(2) In case of blameless failure to observe the time limit for lodging a protest, protest may be lodged subsequently.

Section 11

Entry of an industrial enterprise in the register will be effected when the decision to enter the industrial enterprise has become incontestable.

Section 12

If the conditions leading to registration cease to exist, the industrial enterprise is canceled in the register. If the owner of the industrial enterprise claims that the conditions have ceased to exist and if his application for cancellation is rejected, the provisions governing protestation (sec. 8 (2), sec. 9, sec. 10) apply.

Section 13

In the Province of Austria the foregoing administrative provisions are replaced by the provisions of the General Administrative Procedure Law (OeBGB1. No. 274-1925). Protests are under section 8 (2), section 9 and section 12 are deemed to be appeals.

Section 14

A decision of the superior administrative authority or of the Reich Minister of Economics may also be applied for by the competent Gauleiter of the National Socialist Party.

Section 15

Inspection of the register is open to everyone.

Section 16

Lists or compilations of Jewish or non-Jewish industrial enterprises may only be made according to the official list.

Article III

Section 17

The Reich Minister of Economics is empowered, in agreement with the Reich Minister of the Interior and the Deputy of the Fuehrer to decree that industrial enterprises entered in the register of Jewish industrial enterprises must bear a distinguishing mark after a date still to be fixed.

Berlin, 14 June 1938

Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

Deputy of the Fuehrer
R. HESS

Reich Minister of Economics
WALTHER FUNK

Reich Minister of Justice
DR. GUERTNER

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. VI, pp. 477–479, Doc. 1404-PS.

30. DECREE EXCLUDING JEWISH DOCTORS FROM PRACTICE, JULY 25, 1938

The licenses of Jewish doctors were terminated by this decree as of September 30, 1938, and no new licenses were allowed to be issued. Exceptions could be granted by the Reich minister of the interior, but even then the doctor's practice had to be limited to his wife, legitimate children, and Jewish patients.

Jewish doctors who practiced medicine in violation of this decree were subject to one year in prison and/or a fine. The economic impact on Jewish doctors prohibited from practicing was addressed in this decree but only for doctors who had been frontline soldiers in World War I and then only to the extent of a "maintenance subsidy" that the chamber of Reich doctors might choose to provide.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 969.

4th Decree relative to the Reich Citizen Law of 25 July 1938.

By virtue of Section 3 of the Reich Citizen Law of 15 Sept, 1935, (RGBl. I. p. 1146), the following is ordered:

Section I.

Appointment approvals of Jewish physicians expire on Sept. 30, 1938.

Section II.

The Reich Minister of the Interior or the Authority appointed by him, may authorize, on the recommendation of the Reich Chamber⁷ of Physicians [Reichsarstekammer]—the practice of medicine physicians until further notice whose appointment has expired by virtue of Section I. The permission may be granted by imposing taxes

Section III.

1. Jews, whose appointment approval has expired and who have not received an authorization, by virtue of Section II, are forbidden to practice medicine.

2. A Jew who has received an authorization by virtue of Section II must, with the exception of his wife and legitimate children, only treat Jews.

3. Whoever violates the regulations of Subsection I or II, either deliberately or carelessly, will be sentenced to one year of prison and a fine, or to either one of those punishments.

Section IV.

A Jew cannot be licensed as a physician.

Section V.

1. Physicians, whose appointment expired, according to the regulations of this decree, may be given, revocable at any time, a maintenance subsidy by the chamber of Reich physicians, in the case of want and worthiness, if they have been frontline soldiers. * * *

1100 Regarding the Exclusion of Jewish Doctors from Practice

2. The chamber of Reich-physicians will decide upon further details in agreement with the Reich-Minister of the Interior and the Reich Minister of Finance.

Bayreuth July 25, 1938.

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor, Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior, Frick

The Deputy of the Fuehrer, R. Hess

The Reich-Minister of Justice, Dr. Guertner.

The Reich-Minister of Finance by order : Reinhardt.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 533–534, Doc. 2872-PS.

31. REGARDING THE EXCLUSION OF JEWISH DOCTORS FROM PRACTICE, AUGUST 13, 1938

This letter from Hugh R. Wilson, U.S. ambassador to Germany, to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, addressed the impact of the Fourth Decree relative to the Reich Citizen Law of July 25, 1938, which prohibited Jewish doctors, with very few exceptions, from practicing medicine. Including statistics regarding Jewish doctors and non-Jewish doctors taken from a survey presented by Völkischer Beobachter (the Nazi newspaper), Wilson observes that the elimination of Jewish doctors from practice had been a long-held goal of the Nazi government and represented another step in the Nazi program of excluding Jews from the professions. He also comments on a seemingly unrelated matter, namely stories circulating about the treatment of Jews in Buchenwald, the largest concentration camp in Germany. When taken together, both actions by the Nazis—eliminating Jews from the medical profession and abusing Jewish prisoners in Buchenwald, prisoners who upon their release spread terror throughout the Jewish community by recounting what happened to them—served the same purpose: to strongly encourage Jews to leave Germany.

Berlin, August 13, 1938

No. 288

Subject: The Jewish Situation with Particular Reference to the Exclusion of Jewish Doctors from Practice

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington

Sir:

Referring to the Embassy's telegrams No. 374 of August 3, 5 p.m., and August 4, 4 p.m., I have the honor to enclose copies of REICHSGESETZBLATT, Part I, No. 122 of August 2, 1938, containing a law which terminates as of September 30, 1938, the validity of licenses to practice held by Jewish physicians. An English translation of this law is also enclosed.

The VOELKISCHER BEOBACHTER of August 4 presented a survey of the number of doctors who will be affected by the law. It explained that at the beginning of 1933 there were 6,480 Jewish doctors in Germany, including the "non-Aryan" crossbreeds and those with Jewish wives (the latter two categories, however, being numerically unimportant inasmuch as most of the Jewish doctors were full-blooded Jews). In the old Reich territory there are at present 4,220 Jewish doctors, 3,738 of whom actively engage in practice. The total number of doctors in the old Reich territory is given as 37,525, the Jews therefore representing roughly 10 percent of this figure. As of July of this year there were 6,949 doctors in Berlin, 1,561, or 22.4 percent of whom were Jews. Despite the steps hitherto taken to eject Jewish doctors from the more profitable of the various state sickness insurance institutions (see despatch No. 3832 of January 17, 1938), it would appear from VOELKISCHER BEOBACHTER'S survey that 816 Jewish doctors still work for these organizations in Berlin. The VOELKISCHER BEOBACHTER makes no attempt to describe the situation in Austria beyond mentioning that the proportion of Jewish physicians in Vienna is probably still greater.

It has been an open secret for a long time that the National Socialist authorities have been determined to exclude Jewish doctors, but have until now refrained from doing so for fear of creating a shortage of physicians when they were particularly needed to meet the requirements of a greatly expanded army. Even with the entry into practice of the new corps of young doctors who have been pressed into service with abbreviated periods of training, it would seem doubtful whether the sweeping removal of 22.4 percent of the doctors in Berlin, for instance, will not create a serious shortage.

Official commentaries explain that the licenses which henceforth will be granted certain Jewish doctors by way of exception will be issued only to a limited number of physicians to enable them to care for Jewish patients in cities where numerous and compact concentrations of Jews are to

be found, as in Berlin and Vienna. The provision in the law with respect to the summary denunciation of rent contracts is interesting. On the one hand it seems designed to assist Jewish doctors to free themselves from leases likely to prove onerous in view of the curtailment of their incomes. On the other hand it also enables landlords to rid themselves of Jewish tenants. This they are invited to do by the Berlin association of house-owners which explains that a shortage of premises has been a detriment in the past to "Aryan" doctors. The association requests landlords to inform it of possible vacancies which it in turn will endeavor to fill with "Aryan" doctors.

The preamble to the DEUTSCHES NACHRICHTEN BÜRO announcement of the enactment of the doctors law is worthy of notes. It states: "The Jewish question in Germany will be solved step by step, but resolutely, by legal ways." The proof of this assertion may be found in the recent and progressive exclusion of Jews from a number of professions such as watchman's services, private detective work, trading in real estate, etc., (see Embassy's despatch No. 246 of July 16, 1938). Incidentally the law canceling the licenses of Jews to engage in itinerant trades is being employed to deny them activity as travelling salesmen and commercial agents. The approximate coincidence of all these measures with the meeting and conclusion of the Evian Refugee Conference is perhaps too striking to necessitate further comment.

At present wide circulation is being given to extraordinary stories with respect to conditions in the new concentration camp at Buchenwald near Weimar where it is estimated that some 1,500 Jews are being detained (see Embassy's despatch No. 196 of June 22, 1938). While some of these stories appear somewhat extreme, such as the report that Jewish victims are being utilized to test the efficacy of new poison gases, the accounts of relatives of inmates and released prisoners seem to indicate that brutality and sadism are being practiced by the guards on a scale that has not been equalled since the early days of the regime in 1933. That the primary purpose of the camp is to encourage emigration rather than to punish specific delicts, is evident from statement received at the Consulate General from persons who have been released with the warning that if they did not leave the country by a certain date they would be reincarcerated. It is not too much to say that the apparently indiscriminate (sic) arrests without specific cause has created a state of near terror in many Jewish circles.

In accordance with the Department's circular instruction of July 21, 1938, two copies of this despatch are being sent to

the American Embassy, London, for the attention of the American Representative on the Inter-governmental Committee for Political Refugees.

Respectfully yours,
Hugh R. Wilson

Enclosures:

1. REICHSGRESETZBLATT I, 122
 2. Translation of law.
- File 800
JDB-MJP

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1777: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

32. SECOND DECREE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW REGARDING CHANGES OF FAMILY NAMES, AUGUST 17, 1938

By August 1938, the campaign against the Jews took something of a bizarre step with the issuance of this decree as a supplement to an earlier law regarding Jewish surnames and given names. Referring to a list that had previously been published of acceptable given names for Jews, this decree requires that any Jew with a given name not on the list must assume the middle name of Israel, for men, and Sara, for women. Further, the assumption of these names is required to be reported at the office at which the person's "birth and marriage are registered," as well as to the appropriate police office. The decree ends with penalties for its violation. The fact that the government had published a list of "Jewish given names," mandated these middle names for Jews with given names not on the list, and would require two months later that each Jew's passport have a large capital letter J on it, reflected the growing focus on identifying—and making public the identification of—Jews as a means of further stigmatizing them in German society.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PAGE 1044, 17 Aug. 1938

The second decree for the execution of the law regarding the change of the surnames and forenames of 17th August 1938.

1102 Elimination of the Jews from the Bar

On the basis of Article 13, of the law of 5 January 1938 (Reichsgesetzblatt I.S.9) concerning the change of the surnames and given-names, the following is ordered:

Art. 1

1. Jews may be given only such given-names as are cited in the directives issued by the Ministry of Interior concerning the utilization of given-names.

2. Para. (1) is not applicable to Jews who are foreign citizens.

Art. 2

1. In so far as the Jews are still using some other given-names different from those which are at their disposal according to Art. 1,—they are obliged to assume by the 1st January 1939, a second, additional given-name as follows; for males, the given name Israel and for females the given-name Sara.

2. The person having to assume an additional forename according to para (1) is obliged to give a written notification in this matter to the registration office at which his birth, and marriage are registered. The same notification is to be given to the proper police-official in the registerer's place of residence or customary habitat. The notifications are to be reported within a month from the date requiring him to assume an additional given-name.

3. In so far as the birth or marriage of the person who must register has been verified by a German diplomatic representative of a Consul, or has been verified in a German protectorate,—the notification, which must be made, is to be forwarded to the Register-Office I, Berlin. If the place of residence or customary habitat of the person registering is abroad, the notification in question, mentioned in Para (2), sentence (1) is to be forwarded to the competent German Consul instead of to the competent police-official.

4. For people who are unable, or are partially unable to conduct their own affairs, the obligation to register rests upon the legal representative.

Art. 3

As far as is customary in juridicial and business procedure to indicate the given-names, the Jews are obliged always to indicate at least one of their given-names. In so far as they are required to assume an additional given-name as mentioned in Art. 2,—this additional given-name is to be indicated also. The present directives regarding the management of a business are not hereby altered.

Art. 4

1. Whoever deliberately disobeys the directives of Art. 3 is to be punished by imprisonment of up to six months. Cases of negligent disobedience will be punished by imprisonment of no more than one month.

2. Whoever deliberately or carelessly neglects to give the proper notification according to Art. 2 is to be fined or punished by imprisonment of no more than one month.

Berlin, 17th, August 1938.

Reichs Minister of the Interior:
Representative, Dr. Stuckart.
Reichs Minister of Justice:
Dr. Guertner.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 185–186, Doc. 1674-PS.

33. ELIMINATION OF THE JEWS FROM THE BAR, SEPTEMBER 27, 1938

The April 7, 1933, Law Regarding Admission to the Bar reduced the number of Jewish lawyers allowed to practice law, but due to exceptions included in it and the fact that it did not impose mandatory disbarment, a not insignificant number of Jewish lawyers continued in their profession. This was changed, however, by this Fifth Decree to the Law Relating to the Reich Citizenship, making elimination of Jewish lawyers from the bar mandatory, with only a very limited exception. The application of the law is set forth separately for Germany and for Austria, which was annexed by Germany and became a part of the Reich on March 12, 1938.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, NO. 165, PAGE 1403.
Fifth Decree to the law relating to the Reich Citizenship
of 27 September 1938.

Article I.

Elimination of the Jews from the Bar (Attorneyship).

Section 1.

Jews are excluded from the profession of a lawyer. In as much as Jews are still lawyers they are to be eliminated from the bar pursuant to the following provisions:

Old Reich

a. Within the Territory:

The admission of Jewish lawyers to the bar is to be discontinued as from 10 November 1938.

b. Within the country of Austria:

1. On order of the Reich-Minister of Justice Jewish lawyers have to be taken off the roster of lawyers until 31 December 1938 at the latest.

2. Jews, however, who are entered on the roster of the Chamber of Lawyers [Reichs-anwaltskammer i.e. Bar Association] in Vienna, whose family has been resident in Austria at least 50 years and which have been fighting in the front-line may be exempted from the deletion for the time being. In this case the movement of deletion will be determined by the Minister of Justice.

3. The Reich Minister of Justice may forbid a lawyer to exercise his profession for the time being, until it will be decided, whether a deletion from the roster of lawyers will be effected.

Signatories:

The Fuehrer and Reich-Chancellor,
Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of Justice
Dr. Gursner

The Reich Minister of Interior
Frick

The Deputy of the Fuehrer
R. Hess

The Reich Minister of Finance
(in the name of Reinhardt)

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 535, Doc. 2874-PS.

34. POLICE REGULATION OF THE APPEARANCE OF JEWS IN PUBLIC, NOVEMBER 28, 1938

This short regulation gave local authorities the power to impose restrictions on Jews as to which parts of a city they could enter and when they were allowed to be out in public. Its brevity

belies its importance. In many ways it was the precursor of ghettoization, which restricted the Jews to a single, often walled-off location and, by enclosing Jews in a single area, eliminated altogether their ability to be seen in public, meaning, in this case, seen by non-Jewish Germans. Note the date of this regulation: it came less than three weeks after the infamous Kristallnacht, which resulted in widespread government-initiated and organized violence against Jews and their property, including their synagogues. This regulation continued the process of othering of the Jews that was so central to the Holocaust.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 1676
Police Regulation of the Appearance of Jews in Public
of 28 November 1938

On the basis of the Decree of 14 November 1938 Regarding the Police Decrees of the Reich Ministers (Reichsgesetzblatt I, P. 1582), the following is decreed:

ARTICLE 1

The Government Presidents in Prussia, Bavaria, and the Sudeten German areas, the proper authorities in the remaining provinces of the old Reich, the district captains (the Mayor in Vienna) in Austria and the Reich of the Saar district may impose upon Jews, both subjects of the German State and stateless Jews (Article 5 of the First Decree of 14 November 1935, Regarding the Reich Citizen Law, Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 1333), restrictions as to place and time to the effect that they may not enter certain districts or may not appear in public at certain times.

ARTICLE 2

Whoever wilfully or negligently violates the regulations of Article I is to be fined up to 150 Reichsmarks or punished with imprisonment up to six weeks.

ARTICLE 3

This police decree goes into effect the day after its promulgation.

Berlin, 28 November 1938

The Reich Minister of Interior

By order:

Heydrich.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 6–7, Doc. 1415-PS.

35. REGULATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF JEWS FROM THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF GERMANY, NOVEMBER 12, 1938

This regulation was issued by Hermann Göring in his capacity as plenipotentiary of the Four-Year Plan, a comprehensive economic plan for the years 1936 through 1939. Coming just days after the anti-Jewish violence of Kristallnacht that swept through Germany and Austria, it represented the achievement of two major goals of the Nazi government: elimination of the Jews from Germany's economy supported the basic Nazi party ideology that Jews were seeking total control not only of Germany's but of the whole world's economy, and by shutting off virtually all means available to Jews to earn a living, it exerted further pressure on Jews to emigrate. The regulation is comprehensive, barring Jews from operating a retail shop or managing a firm as well as selling goods or services or being a member of a cooperative society.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 1580
Order eliminating Jews from German economic life
of 12 November 1938

On the basis of the Decree of 18 October 1936 for the execution of the Four Year Plan (RGBl I, p. 887), the following is ordered:

Article 1

1. From January 1, 1938, operation of retail shops, mail order houses, independent exercise of handicrafts is forbidden to Jews. (Article 5 of the First Decree to Reich citizenship law [Reichsbürgergesetz] of 14 Nov 1935—RGBl I, 1933).
2. Moreover it is forbidden to Jews from the same date to offer goods or services in the markets of all kinds, fairs, or exhibitions or to advertise such or accept orders therefor.
3. Jewish shops operated in violation of this order will be closed by police. (Third Decree to Reich citizenship law of 14 June 1938-RGBl I, 627).

Article 2

1. No Jew can manage a firm according to the interpretation of the term "manager" under the law for national labor of 20 Jan 1934. (RGBl I, 45).
2. If a Jew is a leading employee in a business concern he may be dismissed with notice of six weeks. At expiration of this period all claims resulting from the employee's contract,

especially claims of compensation or pensions, become null.

Article 3

1. No Jew can be a member of a cooperative society.
2. Jewish members of cooperatives lose membership from 21 Dec 1938. No notice is necessary.

Article 4

Competent Reich Ministers are empowered to issue rules required by this decree. They may permit exceptions so far as this is necessary for transfer of Jewish firms into non-Jewish hands or for liquidation of Jewish concerns and in special cases in order to insure supplies. Berlin, 12 November 1938

The Commissioner for the Four Year Plan
Goering
General Field Marshal

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 172–173, Doc. 1662-PS.

36. JEWS BANNED FROM UNIVERSITIES, NOVEMBER 15, 1938

Announced in the Völkischer Beobachter (the Nazi newspaper) less than a week after the anti-Jewish violence of Kristallnacht that swept through Germany and Austria, this decree banned Jewish students from German universities by prohibiting them from lectures, exercises, and even entering university buildings. It referenced an April 1933 law that severely reduced the number of Jews allowed in universities but allowed some to remain, especially in the sciences. Consistent with the ever-tightening restrictions on Jews issued throughout 1938, the university doors were now literally closed to Jews. This was yet another blow to any in the Jewish community who still hoped for some normalization of relations between them and the broader German community.

VOELKISCHER BEOBACHTER
15/16 November 1938
UNIVERSITIES BARRED FOR JEWS

A decree of the Reich Minister for Education taking immediate effect.

It is known that the Reich Minister for Science, Training, and Education for a long time has admitted Jews to the German universities to a very modest extent only. The draft of a bill now in preparation provides that in future no more Jews will be admitted to German universities.

The indignation of the German people aroused by the infamous crime of the Jew Gruenspan called for immediate action as German students cannot be expected to work along with Jews in the universities and their installations any longer. Reich Minister Rust, therefore has ordered the rectors of German universities by telegraph to prohibit Jews from participating in the lectures and exercises as well as from entering the university buildings.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 371, Doc. 2683-PS.

37. ORDER CONCERNING UTILIZATION OF JEWISH PROPERTY, DECEMBER 3, 1938

This order by Reich minister for economic affairs Walther Funk and Reich minister of the interior Wilhelm Frick addressed the disposition of various assets owned by Jews in the Third Reich. It focused specifically on industrial enterprises; real estate and other properties; stocks, bonds, and similar securities; and jewels, gems, and objects of art. Relative to those assets, Jews could be ordered to sell or liquidate an industrial enterprise and sell real estate or other properties, in whole or in part. They were required to deposit securities at a foreign exchange bank and were prohibited from acquiring, pawning, or selling jewels, gems, or objects of art. This order was actually counterproductive for the Nazis. If their goal was to have more Jews emigrate, this order as well as others turned wealthy Jews into poor Jews, exactly the type of emigrant other countries were loathe to accept.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 1709
Order concerning the Utilization of Jewish Property of
December 1938

On the basis of Article 1 of the Second Regulation by the Administrator for the Four Year Plan based on the Decree of November 24, 1938 for the Reporting of Jewish-owned

Property (RGBl. I, 1668), the following is decreed in cooperation with the competent Reich Ministers:

Chapter I *Industrial Enterprises*

Article 1

The owner of a Jewish industrial enterprise (Third Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 June 1938, RGBl. I 627) may be ordered to sell or liquidate the enterprise within a definite time. Certain conditions may be stipulated in the order.

Article 2

1. A trustee may be appointed for Jewish industrial enterprises, the owners of which have been ordered to sell or liquidate (Article 1), for the temporary continuation of the enterprise and for the completion of the sale or liquidation, especially if the owner of the enterprise has not complied with the order within the definite period and his application for an extension of time has been rejected.

2. The trustee is empowered to undertake all judicial and extra-judicial actions and legal measures, which the business of the enterprise, its liquidation or sale require. His authority replaces any legally required power of attorney.

3. The trustee must exercise the care of a responsible businessman and is subject to State control.

4. The owner of the enterprise is to pay the expenses of the trustee in connection with his work.

Article 3

1. The owner of the Jewish industrial enterprise is to be notified of the instructions specified in Articles 1 and 2.

2. In case of absence of the person affected, notification may take place through publication in the *Deutsche Reichsanzeiger* and *Preussische Staatsanzeiger*. In these cases the day of publication is to be considered the day of notification.

Article 4

As soon as the owner of the enterprise is notified of the order through which a trustee is appointed according to Article 2, he loses the right to dispose of the property for the administration of which the trustee has been appointed. He regains this right only if the appointment of the trustee expires.

Article 5

The consent for the sale according to Article 1 of the Decree based on the Decree of April 26, 1938, for the Reporting of Jewish-owned Property (RGBl. I, 415) is necessary also

1106 Order Concerning Utilization of Jewish Property

in such cases in which the sale has been ordered; this also applies to the sale by a trustee.

Chapter II *Land and Forest Enterprises*

Real Estate and other Property

Article 6

A Jew (Article 5 of the First Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law of November 14, 1935) (RGBl I, 1333), may be ordered to sell wholly or partly his land or forest enterprise, his other land or forest properties, his other real estate or other properties within a definite time. Certain conditions may be stipulated in the order. The regulations of Article 2 to 4 are to be applied accordingly.

Article 7

1. Jews cannot legally acquire real estate and mortgages.
2. The regulations of Article 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the Decrees based on the Decree of 26 April 1938, for the Reporting of Jewish-owned Property (RGBl I, 415) are to be applied accordingly.
3. At the foreclosure of real estate, the court ordering such sale must reject bids if there is reason to suspect that the bidder is a Jew.
4. The rejection according to Paragraph 3 loses its force if the bidder protests against it immediately (Article 72, paragraph 2 of the Law Regarding Foreclosure) and if he proves that he is not a Jew.
5. If, as is provided in (4) the bidder protests the rejection of an offer, the decision on the public adjudication must not be made before two weeks after the conclusion of the auction.

Article 8

1. Jews require authorization to dispose of real estate and mortgages. They require authorization to dispose of other property if the sale has been ordered according to Section 6 of this decree. This also applies in the case of a trustee disposing of said property.
2. The regulations of (1) also apply to contracts in which an obligation to sell is assumed.
3. The regulations of Article 1 (2) and Article 2 of the Regulation under the Decree of 26 April 1938 for the Reporting of Jewish-owned Property (RGBl. I, 415) are to be applied accordingly. In disposing of immovable property, the regulations of Articles 4, 5 and 6 of said Decree are also to be applied accordingly.
4. In case of foreclosure of a piece of land, the bidder requires authorization for his bid; a bid for which the neces-

sary authorization is not proven immediately is to be rejected. Where the Reich Law regarding Foreclosure and Forced Administration is in force, in cases of Article 81, (2) of said law, public adjudication to a person other than the highest bidder is permissible only if the person can prove that consent was for this deal.

Article 9

1. The authorization according to Article 8 replaces those authorizations required according to the Regulation regarding Traffic in Real Estate of 26 January 1937 (RGBl I, 35), the Settlements (RGBl I, 659), the First Decree for the Execution of the Law of 17 August 1937, Regarding the Protection of the Reich Frontiers and Reprisals (RGBl I, 905) as well as according to price fixing regulations.
2. At the sale of land or forest enterprises or the granting of usufruct in such enterprises, the authorization according to Article 8 replaces the authorization according to Article 1 of the decree based on the Decree of 26 April 1938 for the Reporting of Jewish-owned Property.

Article 10

1. If a Jew sells a piece of land which is situated within the confines of Berlin, the Reich Capital Berlin has a right of preemption for the purpose of carrying out the measures of the General Building Inspector for the rebuilding of the City.
2. Articles 12 and 13 of the Decree of 5 November 1937 Regarding the Reconstruction of the Reich Capital Berlin (RGBl I, 1162) are to be applied accordingly.
3. The right of preemption does not exist if the Reich, one of the German States, or the National Socialist Party is involved in the legal transaction as a buyer.

Chapter III *Compulsory Deposit of Securities*

Article 11

1. Within a week after this decree goes into effect, Jews must deposit all their stocks, shares in mines, bonds, and similar securities at a foreign exchange bank. New securities must be deposited within a week after their acquisition. The holder of securities belonging to a Jew may not deliver them to anyone but a foreign exchange bank for the account of the Jew.
2. Insofar as securities are already deposited at a foreign exchange bank on behalf of Jews or titles registered or coupons deposited with an administrative authority for which preferred annuities will be granted, the Jews must immediately notify the said bank, the Administration of Public Loans

or the administrative authority by a written declaration of the fact that they are Jews. In case of (1) Sentence 3, this declaration must be made to the said holder.

3. The deposits and the registered titles are to be marked as Jewish.

Article 12

The disposing of securities deposited as Jewish, as well as the release of such securities require the consent of the Reich Minister of economics or an authority named by him.

Article 13

The provisions of Articles 11 and 12 do not apply to foreign Jews.

Chapter IV *Jewels, Gems and Objects of Art*

Article 14

1. Jews are forbidden to acquire, pawn or sell objects of gold, platinum or silver as well as precious stones and pearls. Such objects, except in the case of existence of attachments on behalf of a non-Jewish creditor at the time when this decree goes into effect may only be acquired by public purchasing offices, established by the Reich. The same applies to other jewels and objects of art insofar as the price of the individual objects exceeds one thousand Reichsmarks.

2. The provisions of (1) does not apply to foreign Jews.

Chapter V *General Regulations*

Article 15

1. The authorization for the sale of Jewish enterprises, Jewish real estate, or other Jewish property can be given under conditions that may consist in the payment of money by the buyer on behalf of the Reich.

2. Authorizations of the kind mentioned in Paragraph 1 may also be granted with the proviso that the Jewish seller is to receive obligations of the German Reich or registered titles against the German Reich instead of the total or partial consideration as provided for in the sales contract.

Article 16

The regulations specified for Jews in Article II also apply to industrial enterprises as well as organizations, foundations, institutions, and other enterprises which are not industrial, insofar as they are to be considered Jewish according to the Third Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 June 1938 (RGBl I, 627).

Article 17

1. The higher administrative authorities are qualified to issue instructions based on the regulations of Article I and II insofar as the special provisions of Paragraphs 3 and 4 are not to be applied. The higher administrative authorities are also to supervise the appointed trustees.

2. Section 6 of the Decree of 26 April 1938 determines which authorities are higher administrative authorities within the meaning of this Decree Regarding the Registration of Jewish Property (Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 414) with the proviso that the following authorities are qualified:

In Anhalt—the Anhalt State Ministry, Department of Economics;

In Baden—the Baden Minister of Finance and Economics;

In Wuerttemberg—the Wuerttemberg Minister of Economics;

In Austria—the Reich Commissar for the Reunion of Austria with the German Reich or the authorities named by him;

In the Sudeten German territories—the Government Presidents.

3. Insofar as it is a question of agricultural property, the Oberpraesident in Prussia (Agricultural Department) and the Higher Settlement Authorities in the non-Prussian States take the place of the higher administrative authorities. Insofar as it is a question of forest property, the Higher Forest Authorities take the place of the higher administrative authorities.

* * * * *

[Articles 18 to 23 are not necessary for understanding of law]

Article 24

This decree goes into effect on the day of publication.

Berlin, 3 December 1938

Reich Minister of Economic Affairs,
Walter Funk

Reich Minister of Interior
Frick

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 1–6, Doc. 1409-PS.

38. DECISIONS BY HITLER ON THE JEWISH QUESTION, RE: HOUSING, PROPERTY, AND SEGREGATION, DECEMBER 28, 1938

Hermann Gohring, plenipotentiary of the Four-Year Plan and Reichsmarschall, presents here a number of decisions by Hitler regarding the Jews. First, Hitler ordered that certain rules be followed regarding Jews as tenants, pronounced real estate as the last resource to be aryanized, prohibited Jews from using sleepers and dining cars on trains, and addressed things such as bans on swimming pools, pensions to Jewish civil servants, and the need to allow Jewish social care to continue lest Jews become a public burden. Second, Hitler gave instructions regarding mixed marriages, with and without children. Most interesting is the final paragraph of this document, which speaks of the status of a German woman married to a Jewish man. While married she is to be treated, under certain circumstance, as a "pure Jew." If she divorces her husband, she "returns to the German blood-kinship." Moving from the status of one whose blood was tainted to one whose blood was pure, simply because of the legal dissolution of a marriage, is difficult to fit logically in the Nazi blood-centric ideology.

NATIONAL SOCIALIST GERMAN WORKERS PARTY

The Deputy of the Fuehrer, Staff Director
Munich 33, Brown House, January 17, 1939

SECRET

Regulation No 1/39 g

Subject: Jews

After a report of General Field Marshal Goering the Fuehrer has made some basic decisions regarding the Jewish question. The decisions are brought to your attention in the enclosure. Strict compliance with these directives is requested.

Signed: M BORMANN

1 enclosure

Distribution: III b

Official:

[signed : signature illegible]

Office Rosenberg, Rec'd Nr 5827 Jan 19, 39; filed Feb 2
Submitted to

RL Jan 19

Urban Jan 20

Schickedanz Feb 13

COPY

Berlin, Dec 28, 1938

Minister President General Field Marshal Goering, Commissioner for the Four Year Plan

SECRET

Pursuant to my report the Fuehrer has made the following decisions on the Jewish question.

A.

I: Housing of Jews

1. a. Protective regulations for tenants will not be generally revoked in the case of Jews. It is desirable, however, to proceed in individual cases in such a way that Jews will live together in one house, as much as feasible under rental conditions.

b. For this reason the arianization of real estate will be *the last step of the total arianization*, that means that at present real estate is only to be arianized in individual cases where there are compelling reasons. An immediate concern is the arianization of plants and business enterprises, farm property, forests, etc.

2. *The use of sleepers and dining cars is to be prohibited for Jews.* Apart from that no separate Jew-compartments must be arranged for. Neither should any bans be pronounced regarding the use of railways, streetcars, subways, buses and ships.

3. The ban for Jews is to be pronounced only for certain public establishments etc. This includes such hotels and restaurants which are mainly visited by Party members (for instance: Hotel Kaiserhof, Berlin; Hotel Vierjahreszeiten Munich; Hotel Deutscher Hof, Nurnberg; Hotel Drei Mohren, Augsburg, etc.) The ban can further be pronounced for swimming pools, certain public squares, resort towns, etc. Mineral baths may, in individual cases and if prescribed by a doctor, be used by Jews, but only in a manner not causing offense.

II. Pensions are not to be denied to Jews who have been civil servants and who have been pensioned. It is to be investigated, however, whether those Jews can manage on a smaller pension.

III. Jewish social care is not to be arianized or to be abolished, so that Jews will not become a public burden but can be cared for by Jewish institutions.

IV. Jewish patents are property values and therefore to be arianized too. (A similar procedure was used during the World War by America and other states pertaining to German citizens.)

B.

Mixed Marriages:

I. 1. *with children* (half-Aryans 1 class)

a. If the father is German and the mother Jewish the family is permitted to remain in their present apartment. No ban for Jews regarding housing is to be pronounced against these families.

The property of the Jewish mother may be transferred in such cases to the German husband respectively the half-Aryan children.

b. If the father is Jewish and the mother German these families are neither to be housed in Jewish quarters for the time being. This because the children (half-Aryan 1st class) are not to be exposed to the Jewish agitation as they will have to serve later in the labor service and the armed forces. The property may for the time being be transferred partly or entirely to the children.

2. *without children*

a. If the husband is German and the wife Jewish par. I a holds true accordingly.

b. If the husband is Jewish and the wife German these childless couples are to be treated as pure Jews.

Property values of the husband cannot be transferred to the wife. Both can be lodged in Jewish houses or quarters. Especially in the case of emigration both spouses are to be treated like Jews as soon as the augmented emigration has been set into motion.

II. If the German wife divorces the Jewish husband she returns to the German blood-kinship. All disadvantages for her are dropped in this case.

signed: GOERING

Authenticated copy:

signed : JAHN

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 116–118, Doc. 069-PS.

39. EXCERPTS FROM THE LAW CONCERNING JEWISH TENANTS, APRIL 30, 1939

It is no surprise that yet another set of protections—this one protecting tenants—was stripped from Jews by Nazi authorities. Included in this law, for example, is the right for non-Jews to dissolve a lease if the other party is Jewish, regardless of the terms of the lease on the matter of termination. Also, there are the requirements that a Jewish tenant must take in other Jews if so directed, and Jewish lessors could not rent to others if they did not have the permission of the “communal authority” to do so. As with other laws promulgated in these closing years of the 1930s, there is an article in this law that addresses its application to mixed marriages. Signed by Hitler along with several Reich ministers, this document legalized practices against Jews that no doubt were being used before the date of the issuance of this law. Thus, in many ways this law simply codified anti-Jewish measures already in practice regarding matters of tenancy.

1939 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 864

Law concerning Jewish Tenants of 30 April 1939

The Reich Government has enacted the following law which is hereby promulgated:

Article 1 Abatement of the Tenancy Protection Provisions

A Jew cannot invoke the protection of the tenancy laws where the landlord in giving notice to vacate the premises can furnish him with a certificate from the communal authorities that his shelter is assured for the time subsequent to the expiration of the tenancy. This does not apply where the landlord is also a Jew.

Article 2 Premature Dissolution of Lease

A lease may be dissolved, where only one of the parties to it is a Jew, by the other party at any time within the legal term of giving notice, notwithstanding that the lease is signed for a specified time, or that the stipulated time of giving notice is longer than that fixed by law. . . .

Article 3 Sub-Leases

Sub-leases may be concluded only between Jews and Jews. Permission to sublet is not necessary where the house owner is also a Jew.

Article 4 Billetting

1. Where the communal authority so requires, a Jew shall be required to receive Jews as tenants or as sub-tenants in premises which he occupies as owner or on the basis of a tenancy, or has rented from another Jew. Where he refuses to make an appropriate agreement with the new tenant, the communal authority may fix the terms of such an agreement with binding force on both parties. The amount of the rental and the compensation to the owner for the sub-lease shall be determined by the communal authority, and where it is not the controlling rent authority, in concurrence with the competent rent control authority. . . .

Article 5 New Tenancies

Jews may rent to others new or vacant premises only upon the consent of the communal authority. . . .

Article 6 Application to Cases of Limited Ownership

Where the application of Articles 1–5 depends on the premise that the lessor is a Jew, the owner of the parcel of land, or the person entitled to its use shall be considered the lessor, notwithstanding he cannot sign a lease, or has not signed the lease because of limitations upon his power over such property.

Article 7 Mixed Marriages

Where the application of this law depends on the premise that the lessor or the lessee is a Jew, the following shall apply in cases of a mixed marriage of a lessee or a lessor:

1. Where the wife is a Jew, and where there are offsprings from the marriage, even where the marriage is no longer valid, the provisions of the law do not apply.
2. Where the husband is a Jew and there are no offspring, the provisions shall apply, no matter where the wife or the husband is the tenant or the lessor.
3. This does not apply to offsprings who are considered as Jews.

Article 8 Right of Disposal [Verfuegungsrecht]

1. Where the right of disposal of a parcel of land (property or right to use) [Nutzungsrecht] is transferred by a Jew to a non-Jew, after the effective date of this law, the provisions of this law shall apply as before the transfer, though a giving of notice to vacate before the time fixed is not permissible. This applies also to further transfers of the right of disposal. . . .

Article 9 Term of Vacating Premises

1. Where a Jew is forced to vacate premises under the provisions of this law, an extension of the time limit for vacating may be granted to him only where he can furnish a certificate from the communal authorities that other shelter cannot be found for him, owing to obstacles, or where the immediate vacating of the premises cannot be undertaken without serious danger to the health of one of the persons affected. The term fixed may be extended in accordance with the same premises stated above.

3. An immediate appeal against a decision refusing to grant an extension of time is permissible, even in such cases where only a decision against time extension is being protested by the tenant. . . .

Article 10 Order of Definition

1. Who shall be considered a Jew, shall be determined by the definition given in Article 5 of the First Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 November 1935 (RGB1 I, 1333).

2. The definition of Jewish enterprises under Article 1 of the Third Regulation under the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 June 1938 (RGB1 I, 627) shall be followed except insofar as Article 9 applies. A change in the ownership of a Jewish enterprise shall be considered as a change of the right of disposal in the sense of Article 8.

Article 11 Treatment of Pending Legal Actions affecting Leases

1. Where a legal action against a Jew or the marriage partner of a Jew is pending when this law takes effect, the court may stay the proceedings on the application of the plaintiff, in order to make it possible for him to give the notice required under the provisions of this law. Where the plaintiff has given notice to terminate the lease, he may petition for the reopening of the case and change the plea from termination to dispossession. Where the legal action is terminated by the quitting of the tenant, or his acknowledgment of the obligation to vacate, the court costs shall be voided; the costs out of court shall be borne by the tenant. . . .

Article 12 General Reporting Requirement

1. The communal authority may issue orders for reports on premises rented to Jews, or on premises which may be used for the shelter of Jews in accordance with the provisions of this law.

2. Whoever shall not, either wilfully or through negligence make such obligatory report, shall be punishable by a fine up to 150 Reichsmarks or by custody. . . .

Article 14 *Exceptions; Authorization*

1. The effectiveness of this law in the Ostmark and in the Sudeten German Territories shall be reserved to a later date.

2. The Reich Minister of Justice and the Reich Minister of Labor with the concurrence of the Reich Minister of the Interior shall be authorized to issue instructions for the administration and the enforcement of this law, as well as introduce the appropriate provisions in Austria and in the Sudeten German Territories.

Berlin, 30 April 1939

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor
Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of Justice
Dr Guertner

The Reich Minister of Labor
His Deputy: Dr Krohn

The Deputy of the Fuehrer
R. Hess

The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 10–14, Doc. 1419-PS.

40. EXCERPTS FROM THE TENTH DECREE RELATING TO THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW ESTABLISHING THE *REICHSVEREINIGUNG*, JULY 4, 1939

The Jewish community of Germany, as early as 1933, sought to organize itself to better deal with the Nazi regime. With various names over the years—the Reich Representation of German Jews, the Reich Representation of Jews in Germany, and, as it became known as a result of this decree, the Reich Association of Jews in Germany (Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland)—its responsibilities extended to all aspects of the lives and needs of the Jewish community. While not an official organization, it is characterized in this decree

as being endowed with “legal personality,” meaning that the Nazis recognized it as the nexus of all Jewish organizations and agencies in Germany. The Nazis saw as its primary purpose the promotion of the emigration of the Jews, while still recognizing its necessary functions regarding establishment of Jewish schools and welfare agencies. No doubt its most difficult and repugnant of tasks was the organization of deportations ordered by the Nazis, a role that some saw as collaboration. Not included in the Nuremberg trial document—and therefore not in this volume—are sections in the decree that address the matters of Jewish education and social welfare.

1939 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 1097

Tenth Decree Relating to the Reich Citizenship Law of July 4, 1939.

On the basis of section 3 of the Reich citizenship law of 15 September 1935 (Reichsgesetzblatt, Part I, p. 1146) the following is hereby decreed:

Article 1.

Reich Association of the Jews.

Section 1.

(1) The Jews will be united into a Reich Association.

(2) The Reich association is an organization endowed with legal personality. It bears the name “Reich Association of the Jews”, and has its headquarters in Berlin.

(3) The Reich association uses the Jewish worship congregations as local branch offices.

Section 2.

(1) The Reich association has the purpose of promoting the emigration of the Jews.

(2) The Reich association is likewise:

- a. Supporter of the Jewish school instruction.
- b. Supporter of the voluntary Jewish welfare administration.

(3) The Reich minister of the interior may transfer other missions to the Reich association.

Section 3.

(1) All Jewish citizens and stateless Jews belong to the Reich association, who have their residence or their customary abode in Reich territory.

(2) In case of a mixed-marriage, the Jewish partner is a member only,

1112 Decree on Identification of Jewish Men and Women in the General Government

- a. If the man is the Jewish partner and there are no offspring from the marriage, or,
- b. If the offspring are considered as Jews.

(3) Jews of foreign nationality and those Jews living in mixed marriage, who are not members by virtue of provision 2. are permitted to join the Reich association.

Section 4.

The Reich association is subject to the supervision of the Reich minister of the interior; its statutes require his approval.

Section 5.

(1) The Reich Minister of the Interior may dissolve Jewish clubs, organizations and foundations or decree their incorporation in the Reich Association.

(2) In case of dissolution, the regulations of the civil law are valid for the liquidation. The Reich Minister of the Interior can however appoint and recall administrators and regulate the type of liquidation in departing from the provisions of civil law. After the liquidation is carried out, the property of the dissolved Jewish organizations is to be transferred to the Reich Association.

(3) In case of incorporation, the property of the affected Jewish organizations devolves to the Reich Association. A liquidation does not take place in these cases. The Reich Association is responsible with all its property for the obligation incurred by the incorporated organization (institution).

(4) The Reich Minister of the Interior may abolish and change statutory provisions and resolutions of Jewish organizations and foundations, if they have decided upon regulations concerning the disposal of the property in departing from these provisions. Jews who have profited in some manner as a result of the subsequently repealed statutory provisions or resolutions, are obliged to give it up to the Reich association in accordance with the fundamentals of unjustifiable enrichment. . . .

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

The Deputy of the Fuehrer
HESS

The Reich Minister of Education
RUST

The Reich Minister of Church Affairs
KERRL

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 537–538, Doc. 2876-PS.

41. DECREE ON IDENTIFICATION OF JEWISH MEN AND WOMEN IN THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT, NOVEMBER 23, 1939

The occupation of Poland following Germany's successful invasion on September 1, 1939, resulted in Germany occupying the western half of the country and the Soviet Union occupying the eastern half, as a result of a secret agreement between the two countries made immediately before Germany's invasion. Germany subdivided its territory into two sections. It annexed the westernmost part, with the remaining German-occupied territory—the so-called General Government (Generalgouvernement) in the center of the country, between the German and the Russian zones—administered under civilian authority, with Hans Frank as its governor-general. This decree by Frank, issued less than two months after Germany's initial invasion, requires, effective December 1, 1939, all Jews age 10 and above in the General Government to wear an outer marking—in this case, a white armband—so they could be easily identified. This was not the first such order; Jews of all ages in the Polish town of Wloclawek were required to wear a marking a month prior to this decree. The requirement spread more slowly in the West, where the first such order was effective in September 1941.

VERORDNUNGSBLATT
OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL FOR THE OCCUPIED
POLISH TERRITORY
1939, Page 61.

Decree concerning the designation of Jews and Jewesses in the Government General of 23 November 1939

On the basis of No. 5 paragraph 1 of the decree of the Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich on the administration of occupied Polish territory, dated 12 October 1939 (Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 2077), I order:

1. All Jews and Jewesses, who are in Government General territory and who have reached the age of ten, shall be obliged to wear a white band not less than 10 cm wide on the

right sleeve of their coats and overcoats beginning 1 December 1939.

2. Jews and Jewesses shall procure these arm bands themselves and shall furnish them with the appropriate markings.

3. (1) Failure to comply is punishable by imprisonment.

(2) Judgment will be passed by special courts.

4. The necessary regulations concerning the execution of this order will be released by the Chief of Section for Internal Administration, in the Office of the Governor General.

Cracow, 23 November 1939

The Governor General for the occupied Polish territories
FRANK

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 368, Doc. 2672-PS.

42. LETTER EXPLAINING AMENDMENT TO NUREMBERG LAWS ON PUNISHMENT OF WOMEN GUILTY OF “RACIAL DISGRACE,” FEBRUARY 28, 1940

This letter from Alexander Comstack Kirk, chargé d'affaires in the U.S. embassy in Germany, to U.S. secretary of state Cordell Hull, explains an amendment made to the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, one of the Nuremberg Laws. Specifically, it clarifies the provision in that law prohibiting “racial disgrace” (Rassenschande), that is, extramarital relations between a Jew and a non-Jew. The wording of that law made it clear that in the event of such a violation, only the man was subject to punishment. However, in the First Decree of Execution of that law there was no similar statement limiting punishment to the man, resulting in some cases where the woman was also punished. Since this was not the original intent of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, an amendment was issued to correct the situation by emphasizing that punishment is limited to the man. Kirk notes the possibility “for denunciation and extortion” of the man by the woman involved in this violation, given that the woman would not be subject to punishment.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. [unclear]

Berlin, February 28, 1940

Subject: Amendment to the Nuremberg Racial Laws which Specifically Exempts Women from Punishment in the Commission of “Racial Disgrace.”

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington

Sir:

With reference to the Embassy’s despatch No. 2322 of September 19, 1935, forwarding a translation of “The “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor”, adopted in Nuremberg on September 15, 1935, and with reference to the Embassy’s despatch No. 2474 of November 18, 1935, forwarding a translation of the “First Decree regarding the Execution of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor”, I have the honor to transmit the original German text, as contained in REICHSGESETZBLATT, Part I, No. 33 of February 23, 1940, together with an English translation, of a law which supplements the First Decree of Execution referred to above by providing that in the commission of the crime of “racial disgrace” (Rassenschande, or extramarital intercourse between a Jew and an “Aryan”), the man is responsible and that accordingly the woman involved shall not be punished.

Curiously enough the same provision would appear to be inherent in Section 5, paragraph (2) of the original “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor” of September 15, 1935, which, with respect to Section 2 of that law which prohibits extramarital relations between Jews and nationals of German blood, states: “Any man acting in contravention of the prohibition contained in Section 2 will be punished by imprisonment or penal servitude”. In the First Decree of Execution of this law no mention is made of the degree of responsibility resting respectively upon the man or the woman in the commission of a crime of “racial disgrace”, and several instances are known in which an “Aryan” woman who had sexual intercourse with a Jew, or vice versa, a Jewish woman who had had sexual intercourse with an “Aryan” man, had either been given short terms of imprisonment or had been compelled to serve in a “Retraining Camp” (Umschulungslager), which for this purpose is the practical equivalent of a concentration camp. The law reported on in this despatch is apparently intended to place an end to such

wide constructions of the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor”, and by re-emphasizing the original provisions of Section 5, paragraph (2) of this law, thus clearly aims at placing sole responsibility upon the man, whether Jew or “Aryan”, who is the perpetrator of “racial disgrace”.

Incidentally, a local legal authority has pointed out that the supplementary law herein discussed represents possibly a radical departure from general penal practice in that it exempts a party to a crime (in this instance, the woman) from punishment as an accomplice or an accessory and furthermore, should the case fall within the scope of Austrian law, exempts the woman from punishment for dissimulation or for giving false testimony not under oath. It has also been observed that the absolute immunity granted women in this respect enhances the opportunities for denunciation and extortion which are known to have already been utilised in connection with this anti-Jewish law in particular.

Respectfully yours,
Alexander Kirk,
Chargé d’Affaires a. i.

Enclosures:

1. REICHSGESETZBLATT, Part I, No. 33, February 23, 1940.
2. Translation of Decree of February 16, 1940.

840.1

JDB/mhg

Source: State CDF 862.4016/2160: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

43. POLICE DECREE CONCERNING THE “MARKING” OF THE JEWS, SEPTEMBER 1, 1941

In March 1939, Bohemia and Moravia became a protectorate of Germany, as Germany occupied what was left of Czechoslovakia after the German annexation of the Sudetenland and Slovakia’s “independence” (actually, Slovakia was a German puppet state). Reinhard Heydrich was the Reich protector (Reichsprotektor) of Bohemia and Moravia at the time he issued this police decree regarding marking of Jews and restrictions on their freedom to move about as they wished. The marking—a yellow “Six Star” (Jewish star or Star of David)—was required to be sewn on the left chest of the outer clothing of

all Jews older than six years of age. This was four years younger than a similar marking requirement put into effect in 1939 in the General Government in Poland. Also, Jews were forbidden to leave their “residential district” without written permission. Under certain circumstances, exceptions were made from the marking requirement and the restrictions on movement for Jews in a mixed marriage.

1941 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, NO. 100, PAGE 547
Police decree concerning the “marking” of the Jews of
September 1, 1941.

Based upon the decree relating to the police decrees of the Reich minister of November 1938 (Reichsgesetzblatt I S 1582) and the decree concerning the legislative power in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia of June 7, 1939 (Reichsgesetzblatt I S 1039) it is ordered hereby in agreement with the “Reichsprotektor” in Bohemia and Moravia as follows:

Section 1

1. Jews (Section 5 of the first decree to the Reich citizen law of November 1935-Reichsgesetzblatt I, S 1333) who finished the sixth year of their age are prohibited to appear in public without a Jewish star.

2. The Jewish star consists of a “Six Star” with black contours in the size of the palm of the hand of yellow material with the black inscription “Jew”. It has to be worn on the left side of the chest of the clothing tightly sewed on.

Section 2

Jews are forbidden

- a. to leave the boundary of their residential district without carrying a written permission of the local police authority.
- b. to wear medals, decorations, and other badges.

Section 3

The sections 1 and 2 will not apply

a. to the Jewish spouse living in a mixed marriage, as far as descendants of the marriage are existent and these are not considered as Jews, and even then, if the marriage does not exist anymore or the only son has been killed in the present war.

b. to the Jewish wife of a childless mixed marriage for the duration of the marriage.

Section 4

1. Who contravenes against the prohibition of Sections 1 and 2, deliberately or carelessly, will be punished with a

penalty up to 250 Reichsmark or with imprisonment up to six weeks.

2. Further reaching police security measures and also penal provisions, according to which a higher penalty is incurred, remain effective.

Section 5

The police decree is also effective in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia with the provision that the Reichsprotektor in Bohemia and Moravia may adopt the instruction of section 2 to the local conditions in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia.

Section 6

The police decree will be effective 14 days after its promulgation.

Berlin, September 1, 1941

The Reich Minister of the Interior
by order
Heydrich.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 539–540, Doc. 2877-PS.

44. ELEVENTH DECREE OF THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW, NOVEMBER 25, 1941, AND ORDINANCE EXTENDING SAME TO TERRITORIES OCCUPIED OR ADMINISTERED BY GERMANY, DECEMBER 3, 1941

In this two-part document, a decree is set forth immediately followed by an ordinance that extends the application of the decree. The decree addresses the circumstances in which a Jew will no longer be considered “a member of the German State [Staatsangehoeriger],” which is defined as meaning a person who loses his “German nationality.” It also makes clear that the assets of a Jew who has lost his or her German nationality will be expropriated by the Reich. The circumstances that trigger the loss of German nationality and expropriation of assets is when a Jew “has his ordinary residence abroad,” a phrase

that the decree defines. Ironically, the expropriated assets of such Jews are to be used not for the war effort but instead for “all purposes connected with the solution of the Jewish question.” The related ordinance states that the decree also applies to Jews whose permanent place of residence is in German-occupied countries, or in territories such as the General Government in Poland. This decree and related ordinance are further examples of the Nazi effort to legalize the expropriation of Jewish-owned assets.

EXTRACTS FROM THE 11TH DECREE ON THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW, 25 NOVEMBER 1941, AND ORDINANCE OF 3 DECEMBER 1941, ISSUED BY DEFENDANT STUCKART IN AGREEMENT WITH DEFENDANT LAMMERS, EXTENDING THE APPLICATION OF PARTS OF THE 11TH DECREE TO TERRITORIES OCCUPIED OR ADMINISTERED BY GERMANY

1941 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 722

Eleventh Decree of the Reich Citizenship Law, 25 November 1941

Under section 3 of the Reich Citizenship Law of 15 September 1935 (Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p. 1146), the following is decreed:

Section 1

A Jew who has his ordinary residence abroad cannot be a member of the German State [Staatsangehoeriger]. Ordinary residence abroad is presumed when a Jew lives abroad under circumstances which indicate that his stay is not merely a temporary one.

Section 2

A Jew loses his status as a member of the German State—

- a. On the day this decree goes into effect, if on that day he has his ordinary residence abroad.
- b. At the time he takes up residence in a foreign country, if he takes up ordinary residence abroad later.

Section 3

(1) The assets of the Jew who loses his German nationality by virtue of this decree are expropriated by the Reich when the loss of nationality occurs. Furthermore, the Reich expropriates the assets of those Jews who, at the day this decree comes into force, are stateless but who have last possessed

1116 Eleventh Decree of the Reich Citizenship Law

German nationality, if and when they take or have taken their ordinary residence abroad.

(2) Assets thus expropriated shall serve to further all purposes connected with the solution of the Jewish question.

Section 4

(1) Persons whose assets, according to section 3, are expropriated by the Reich must not acquire anything from a German national by reason of death.

(2) Gifts from German nationals to persons whose assets, according to section 3, are expropriated by the Reich, are forbidden. He who makes or promises such a gift in violation of this prohibition will be punished by imprisonment up to 2 years and a fine, or by one of these penalties.

.....

Section 8

(1) Whether the legal basis for expropriation of assets exists shall be determined by the Chief of the Security Police and the SD (Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsfuehrer SS).

(2) The Senior Finance President of Berlin shall have the duty of administering and liquidating the expropriated assets.

Section 11

In order to avoid hardships caused by the expropriation of property, the Reich Minister of Finance may settle questions arising from the enforcement of sections 3-7 (and sec. 9). This applies also to cases where the assets have been, or in the future will be, declared forfeited on the basis of section 2 regarding the repeal of naturalizations and the revocation of German citizenship of 14 July 1933 (RGBl. I. p. 480).

Section 12

This decree applies also to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the annexed Eastern Territories.

Section 13

Regulations necessary for the amendment and execution of this decree will be issued by the Reich Minister of the Interior, in agreement with the Chief of the Party Chancellery and other Reich Ministers concerned.

Berlin, 25 November 1941

Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

Chief of the Party Chancellery
M. BORMANN

The Reich Minister of Finance
As Deputy: REINHARDT

The Reich Minister of Justice
Acting: DR. SCHLEGELBERGER

Confidential Ordinance, 3 December 1941, concerning
execution
of the 11th Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law

17512 B-6 December 1941—

[Initial] F.
[Stamp] Reich Chancellery
The Reich Minister
of the Interior
I e 5545/41-5013

Kindly mention the above
file no. and subject in
your reply

[Stamp] Confidential

[Illegible initials]
Berlin, 3 December 1941
NW 7 Unter den Linden 72
Phone: Local 120034
Long distance: 120037
Teletype: Local 317
Long distance: K 1617
Telegraph address:
Reich Ministry
of the Interior

To:

- a. Supreme Reich Authorities
- b. Reich Governors of the Reich Gaue (State Governments)
- c. Reich Protector for Bohemia and Moravia
- d. Governor General
- e. Reich Commissioner for Strengthening of Germanism
- f. Oberpraesidenten
- g. Regierungspraesidenten
- h. Police President of Berlin
- i. City President of the Reich Capital Berlin
- k. Repatriation Office for Ethnic Germans
- l. Main Trustee Office East

[To] *b*, *g*, and *i* with additional copies for the Police Presidents, Police Directorates, Landraete, and Lord Mayors.

Subject: Ordinance for the execution of the 11th decree to the Reich Citizenship Law.

Pursuant to Article 13 of the 11th decree to the Reich Citizenship Law of 26 November 1941, Reich Law Gazette I,

page 722, I order in agreement with the Chief of the Part Chancellery the following:

(1) The loss of citizenship and the forfeiture of property refers also to such Jews coming under this decree who have their permanent place of residence, or who will reside later on, in territories occupied by German troops or such territories which are under German administration, especially also in the Government General or in the Reich Commissariats Ostland and Ukraine.

(2) The publication of this ordinance shall be avoided. So far as authorities subordinated to the Supreme Authorities have to be informed of this ordinance, I request to effectuate it in a confidential manner.

As deputy

[Initial] L [LAMMERS]

[Signed] W. STUCKART

[Handwritten] For the information of the Reich Minister.

[Initial] F, 6 December

[Stamp] K

[Handwritten] JPD JPD 1830

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 189–192, Doc. NG-2499.

45. REGULATION ON THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM “JEW” IN THE *GENERALGOUVERNEMENT*, JULY 24, 1940

Hans Frank, governor-general of the General Government (Generalgouvernement), that section of German-occupied Poland not annexed to Germany, issued this regulation to clarify and confirm the working definition of the word “Jew,” including the concept of Mischlinge, persons who are considered Jews but not “full Jews,” for purposes of applying anti-Jewish laws in the General Government. After rejecting broader definitions, Frank used the one that was in conformance with the definition in force in the Reich, except that here there was also reference to persons who are former Polish citizens or stateless. In addition, this regulation defines what was meant by a “Jewish business enterprise,” including “Associations,

Endowments, Institutions and other organizations which are not business enterprises.”

Section 1

Where the word “Jew” is used in Legal and Administrative Provisions in the Government-General, it is to be interpreted as follows:

1. Anyone who is a Jew, or is considered a Jew, in accordance with the Legal Provisions in the Reich;
2. Anyone who is a Jew, or is considered a Jew, and is a former Polish citizen or stateless person, under § 2 of this Regulation.

Section 2

1. A Jew is a person descended from at least three fully Jewish grandparents by race.
2. A person is considered a Jew if he is descended from two grandparents who are full Jews by race and
 - a. if he was a member of the Jewish Religious Community on September 1, 1939, or joined such a community subsequently;
 - b. if he was married to a Jew on the date on which this Regulation came into force, or married a Jew subsequently;
 - c. if he is the product of extra-marital intercourse with a Jew in accordance with para. 1 and was born after May 31, 1941.
3. A grandparent is automatically considered a full Jew if he was a member of a Jewish community.

Section 3

1. Where the concept [person of] Jewish Mischling is used in Legal and Administrative Provisions of the Government-General, it is to be interpreted as follows:
 - a. a person who is a Jewish Mischling in accordance with the Reich Legal Provisions;
 - b. any person who is a former Polish citizen or stateless, and is descended from one or two grandparents who are full Jews by race unless he is considered a Jew under § 2, para. 2.
2. The provisions under § 2, para. 3 apply similarly.

Section 4

1. A business enterprise is considered Jewish if the owner is a Jew in accordance with §, 1.

2. A business enterprise which is owned by a Limited Company is considered Jewish if one or more members who are personally responsible are Jews. . . .
3. A place of business is also considered Jewish if it is in practice under dominant influence of Jews.
4. The provisions under para. 1–4 also apply to Associations, Endowments, Institutions and other organizations which are not business enterprises.

Section 5

Legal and Administrative Provisions issued for Jews apply to Jewish Mischling only where this is expressly stated.

Section 6

This Regulation comes into effect on August 1, 1940.

Cracow, July 24, 1940

The Governor General for the Occupied Polish Territories
Frank

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalio, eds., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*, translated by Lea Ben Dor 8th ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/ Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 214–215. Used by permission of Yad Vashem.

46. ADMINISTRATION OF PENAL JUSTICE AGAINST POLES AND JEWS IN THE INCORPORATED EASTERN TERRITORIES, DECEMBER 4, 1941

This decree addresses crimes committed by Jews and Poles in the Incorporated Eastern Territories (Eingeliederte Ostgebiete), meaning the western section of Poland that was annexed by Germany following its successful invasion of that country in September 1939. Reading this decree is chilling: it starkly reveals the extent to which the legal system in Germany had been corrupted and co-opted by the Nazi regime, providing virtually no rights for the accused, and placing all legal power in the hands of the state. This decree requires that Poles and Jews conduct themselves in conformance with German laws and regulations, and it then sets forth various offenses, the commission of which would result in the death penalty. Those offenses include such actions as manifesting “anti-German sentiments” or “making anti-German utterances.” The death penalty is allowed to be imposed even when it is not

prescribed by law. The fact that the right to appeal a decision is made available only to the prosecution is just one example of the ways in which the accused were completely unprotected by the laws and the procedures that were applied to them.

DECREE OF 4 DECEMBER 1941 CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF PENAL JUSTICE AGAINST POLES AND JEWS IN THE INCORPORATED EASTERN TERRITORIES 1941 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 759

The Ministerial Council for the Defense of the Reich
herewith decrees:

1. *Substantive Criminal Law*

I

(1) Poles and Jews in the Incorporated Eastern Territories are to conduct themselves in conformity with the German laws and with the regulations introduced for them by the German authorities. They are to abstain from any conduct liable to prejudice the sovereignty of the German Reich or the prestige of the German people.

(2) The death penalty shall be imposed on any Pole or Jew if he commits an act of violence against a German on account of his membership in the German ethnic community.

(3) A Pole or Jew shall be sentenced to death, or in less serious cases to imprisonment, if he manifests anti-German sentiments by malicious or inciting activities particularly by making anti-German utterances, or by removing or defacing official notices of German authorities or agencies, or if he, by his conduct, lowers or prejudices the prestige or the well-being of the German Reich or the German people.

(4) The death penalty or, in less serious cases, imprisonment, shall be imposed on any Pole or Jew—

1. If he commits any act of violence against a member of the German armed forces or its auxiliaries, of the German police force or its auxiliaries, of the Reich labor service, of any German authority or agency or of an organization of the NSDAP;
2. If he purposely damages installations of the German authorities or agencies, objects used by them in performance of their duties, or objects of public utility;
3. If he solicits or incites another person to disobey any decree or regulation issued by the German authorities;
4. If he conspires to commit an act punishable under paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), subparagraphs 1 through 3, or if he enters into serious negotiations about committing

such an act, or if he offers to commit such an act, or accepts such an offer, or if he obtains credible information of such act, or of the intention of committing it, and fails to notify the authorities or any person threatened thereby at a time when danger can still be averted; and

5. If he is found to be in unlawful possession of a firearm, a handgrenade, or any weapon for stabbing or hitting, of explosives, ammunition or other implements of war, or if he has credible information that a Pole or a Jew is in unlawful possession of such an object, and fails to notify the authorities forthwith.

II

Punishment shall also be imposed on Poles or Jews if they act contrary to German criminal law or commit any act for which they deserve punishment in accordance with the fundamental principles of German criminal law and in view of the interests of the State in the Incorporated Eastern Territories.

III

(1) Penalties provided for Poles and Jews are—imprisonment, fine, or confiscation of property. The term of imprisonment is to be not less than 3 months and not more than 10 years in a penal camp; for more serious offenses, imprisonment consists of 2 to 15 years in a penal camp in which a more severe regimen is enforced.

(2) The death sentence shall be imposed in all cases where it is prescribed by the law. Moreover, in those cases where the law does not provide for the death sentence, it shall be imposed if the act shows a particularly base attitude or is particularly serious for other reasons; in these cases the death sentence may also be passed upon juvenile offenders.

(3) The minimum penalty or a fixed penalty prescribed by German criminal law cannot be reduced unless the criminal act is directed against the offender's own people exclusively.

(4) If a fine cannot be recovered, it shall be substituted by imprisonment in a penal camp from 1 week to 1 year.

2. Criminal Procedure

IV

The public prosecutor shall prosecute a Pole or a Jew if he considers that punishment is in the public interest;

V

(1) Poles and Jews shall be tried by a Special Court or by the local court.

(2) The public prosecutor can file the indictment with a Special Court in all cases. He can file the indictment with the local court if the punishment to be imposed is not likely to be heavier than 5 years in a penal camp, or 3 years in a more rigorous penal camp.

(3) The jurisdiction of the People's Court remains unaffected.

VI

(1) Every sentence will be carried out without delay. The public prosecutor may, however, appeal from the sentence of the local court to the court of appeal. The appeal has to be lodged within 2 weeks.

(2) The right to lodge complaints is also reserved exclusively to the public prosecutor. Complaints will be decided upon by the court of appeal.

VII

Poles and Jews cannot challenge a German judge on account of alleged partiality.

VIII

(1) Arrest and temporary detention are allowed whenever there are good grounds to suspect that a punishable act has been committed.

(2) During the preliminary investigations, the public prosecutor may also order arrest and any other coercive measures permissible.

IX

Poles and Jews are not sworn in as witnesses in criminal proceedings. If the unsworn deposition made by them before the court is false, the provisions as prescribed for perjury and false sworn statements shall be applied accordingly.

X

(1) Only the public prosecutor may apply for the reopening of proceedings. In a case tried before a Special Court, the decision on an application for the reopening of the proceedings rests with this court.

(2) The right to lodge a nullity plea rests with the attorney general. The decision on the plea rests with the court of appeal.

XI

Poles and Jews neither can file private suits nor bring about action as coplaintiffs.

XII

The court and the public prosecutor shall conduct proceedings within their discretion according to the principles of the German Law of Criminal Procedure. They may, however, dispense with the provisions of the Judicature Act and the Law of Criminal Procedure, whenever this may be expedient for the rapid and more efficient conduct of proceedings.

3. *Civilian Court Martial Proceedings*

XIII

(1) Subject to the consent of the Reich Minister of the Interior and the Reich Minister of Justice, the Reich governor (or provincial governor) may, until further notice, enforce martial law in the Incorporated Eastern Territories, either in the whole area under his jurisdiction or in parts thereof, upon Poles and Jews guilty of grave excesses against Germans or of other punishable acts which seriously endanger the German work of reconstruction.

(2) The courts established under martial law impose the death sentence. They may, however, dispense with punishment and refer the case to the Secret State Police (Gestapo).

(3) Subject to the consent of the Reich Minister of the Interior, the constitution and procedure of the courts established under martial law shall be regulated by the Reich governor.

4. *Extent of Application of this Decree*

XIV

(1) The provisions contained in sections I-IV of this decree apply also to those Poles and Jews who, on 1 September 1939, were domiciled or had their residence within the territory of the former Polish state, and who committed the punishable act in any part of the German Reich other than the Incorporated Eastern Territories.

(2) The case may also be tried by the court within whose jurisdiction the former domicile or residence of the perpetrator is situated. Sections V-XII apply accordingly.

(3) Paragraphs 1 and 2 do not apply to punishable acts tried by the courts in the Government General.

5. *Concluding Regulations*

Within the meaning of this decree, the term "Poles" includes protected and stateless persons who belong to the Polish racial community.

XVI

Article II of the decree of 6 June 1940, concerning the introduction of German Criminal Law in the Incorporated

Eastern Territories (Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 844) no longer applies to Poles and Jews.

XVII

The Reich Minister of Justice is authorized to issue rules and administrative regulations concerning the execution and implementation of this decree and to decide in all cases of doubt, in agreement with the Reich Minister of the Interior.

XVIII

This decree shall come into force on the fourteenth day after its promulgation.

Berlin, 4 December 1941

The President of the Ministerial Council
for the Defense of the Reich
REICH MARSHAL GOERING

The Plenipotentiary for the Administration of the Reich
FRICK

The Reich Minister and Chief of the Reich Chancellery
DR. LAMMERS

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 632-636, Doc. NG-715.

47. MISCHLINGE: COMMENTS REGARDING TREATMENT OF JEWS OF MIXED BLOOD AND THEIR DESCENDANTS, MARCH 12, 1942

More important than the critical tone that begins this memorandum is its discussion of a question that had been asked but remained unanswered since 1935: How should Mischlinge (individuals with "mixed race") of the first degree (those who have two Jewish grandparents) and Mischlinge of the second degree (those with only one Jewish grandparent) be treated under the law? The answer to this question was literally a matter of life or death. With regard to Mischlinge of the second degree, there seems to be a consensus among Nazi leaders tasked with resolving this issue that they would not be treated as Jews. However, the treatment of Mischlinge of the first degree had always been problematic. Contrary to the assumption that the

Nazis would not hesitate to treat them as they would full Jews, they were very sensitive to the upheaval such a policy would have on tens of thousands of families and marriages throughout the Reich. The proposal made by the author of this memorandum, Dr. Franz Schlegelberger, the Reich justice minister, would give Mischlinge of the second degree the choice between being sterilized or being treated as a full Jew.

Berlin, 12 March 1942

In Charge of the Office
of the Reich Minister of Justice

Dear Reich Minister Dr. Lammers:

I am just being informed by my advisor about the result of the meeting of March 6 regarding the treatment of Jews and descendants of mixed marriages. I am now expecting the official transcript. According to the report of my advisor, decisions seem to be under way which I am constrained to consider absolutely impossible for the most part. Since the result of these discussions are to constitute the basis for the decision of the Fuehrer, and since one of the advisors from your Ministry participated likewise in these discussions, I urgently desire to discuss this matter with you on time. As soon as I have received the transcript of the meeting, I shall take the liberty in calling you to ask you if and when a discussion may take place.

With sincerest regards and Heil Hitler!

Yours devotedly
/s/ Dr. Schlegelberger

To the Reich Minister and Chief of the Party Chancellery
Dr. LAMMERS, Berlin
In charge of the Office of the Reich Minister of Justice
charged with the conduct of official business.

IV b 40 g RE

Berlin W 8, 5 April 1942
Wilhelmstrasse 65
Secret Reich Matter

1. The Chief of the Party Chancellery
SS-Oberfuehrer Klopfer
2. The Reich Minister of the Interior
Attn: The Secretary of State Dr. Stuckart
3. The Chief of the Security Police and the SD
SS-Obergruppen Heydrich
4. The Deputy of the Four-Year Plan

Attn: State Secretary Mr. Neumann

5. The Foreign Office
Attn.: Undersecretary Luther
6. The Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories
Attn: Gau Leader and State Secretary Dr. Meyer
7. The Race and Settlement Main Office of the
Reichsfuehrer-SS
Attn: SS-Gruppenfuehrer Hofman

RE: Final Solution of the Jewish Question

1. The final solution of the Jewish question presupposes a clear-cut and permanently applicable definition of the group of persons for whom the projected measures are to be initiated. Such a definition applies only when we desist from the beginning from including descendants of mixed marriages of the second degree in these measures. The measures for the final solution of the Jewish question should extend only to full Jews and descendants of mixed marriages of the first degree, but should not apply to descendants of mixed marriages of the second degree [Note: first degree presumably those with two non-Aryan grandparents, and second degree with only one].

2. With regard to the treatment of Jewish descendants of mixed marriages of the first degree, I agree with the conception of the Reich Minister of the Interior which he expressed in his letter of 16 February 1942, to the effect that the prevention of propagation of these descendants of mixed marriages is to be preferred to their being thrown in with the Jews and evacuated. It follows therefrom that the evacuation of these half-Jews who are no more capable of propagation is obviated from the beginning. There is no national interest in dissolving the marriages between such half-Jews and a full-blooded German.

Those half-Jews who are capable of propagation should be given the choice to submit to sterilization or to be evacuated in the same manner as Jews. In the case of sterilization, as well as in that of evacuation of the half-Jew, the German-blooded spouse will have to be given the opportunity to effect the dissolution of the marriage. I see no objection to the German spouse's obtaining the possibility of divorcing his sterilized or evacuated spouse in a simplified procedure without the limitations of Par. 53 of the Marriage Law.

3. An exception might be worthy of consideration with respect to those half-Jews who have descendants who are to become a part of the German national community and who are to lose themselves in it, once and for all. If these descendants are to be incorporated into the German folk community as full-fledged members—which has to be the aim in the

case of a genuine final solution of the Jewish question—it seems advisable to keep them from being judged as inferiors or from having feelings of inferiority which could arise easily out of the knowledge and the conscience that their immediate ancestors have been affected by the planned defensive measures of the racial brotherhood. It is for this reason that it should be considered whether or not half-Jews whose still-living descendants are likewise half-Jews should be spared from evacuation as well as sterilization.

4. I have no scruples against facilitation of divorce in marriages between racial Germans and Jews. This facilitation should then extend to marriages with those who are considered as Jews. The divorce will have to be granted upon the request of the German-blooded partner in a simplified procedure. I have considerable scruples about compulsory divorces, on motion of the public prosecutor. Such compulsion is unnecessary because the spouses will be separated in any case by the evacuation of the Jewish partner. An enforced divorce, moreover, is without avail, because, though it cuts the marriage ties, it does not cut the inner tie between the spouses; moreover, it does not relieve the German partner from the scorn to which he is exposed by clinging to his marriage. Finally, a clinging to marriage on the part of the German-blooded partner is to be expected only in the case of older marriages which have endured throughout many years. In these cases, in which the Jewish partner as a rule is not evacuated but confined to an old people's ghetto, the German-blooded partner who disclaims his membership in the German community should not be prohibited from being admitted to the ghetto.

[signed] Dr. Schlegelberger

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. Supplement A, pp. 814–816, Doc. 4055-PS.

48. THIRTEENTH REGULATION UNDER THE REICH CITIZEN LAW, JULY 1, 1943

This short regulation, signed by Wilhelm Frick, Reich minister of the interior, and Martin Bormann, chief of the Party Chancellery, and others addresses the disposition of the property of a Jew after his death. The regulation orders that the property in question be confiscated by the Reich, although exceptions

are allowed to be granted for non-Jewish heirs. In the case of those exceptions, the regulation does not include a mandatory form of payment by which the non-Jewish heirs would receive their legal share.

THIRTEENTH REGULATION UNDER THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW, 1 JULY 1943 1943 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 372

Under article 3 of the Reich Citizenship Law of 15 September 1935 (Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 1146), the following is ordered:

Article 1

1. Criminal acts committed by Jews shall be punished by the police.
2. The decree concerning penal law for Poles [Polenstrafrechtsverordnung] of 4 December 1941 (Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 759) shall no longer apply to Jews.

Article 2

1. The property of a Jew shall be confiscated by the Reich after his death.
2. The Reich may, however, grant compensation to the non-Jewish legal heirs and persons entitled to sustenance who have their domicile in Germany.
3. This compensation may be granted in the form of a lump sum, not to exceed the ceiling price of the property which has passed into possession of the German Reich.
4. Compensation may be granted by the transfer of titles and assets from the confiscated property. No costs shall be imposed for the legal processes necessary for such transfer.

Article 3

The Reich Minister of the Interior with the concurrence of the participating supreme authorities of the Reich shall issue the legal and administrative provisions for the administration and enforcement of this regulation. In doing so he shall determine to what extent the provisions shall apply to Jewish nationals of foreign countries.

Article 4

This regulation shall take effect on the seventh day of its promulgation. In the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia it shall apply where German administration and German courts have jurisdiction; article 2 shall also apply to Jews who are citizens of the Protectorate.

Berlin, 1 July 1943

The Reich Minister of the Interior
FRICK

Chief of the Party Chancellery
M. BORMANN

Reich Minister of Finance
COUNT SCHWERIN VON KROSIGK

Reich Minister of Justice
DR. THIERACK

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 685–686, Doc. NG-715.

49. SPEECH BY JOSEPH GOEBBELS ON PROPAGANDA, SEPTEMBER 1934

This lengthy speech by Joseph Goebbels, Reich minister of propaganda, provides great insight into his fundamental beliefs about the significance of propaganda in governing. Perhaps the most cogent definition that he provides of political propaganda is that its “purpose is to lead the people to an understanding that will allow it to willingly and without internal resistance devote itself to the tasks and goals of the leadership.” Elsewhere he describes it as being “indispensable to building a modern state.” And this: “A good idea does not win simply because it is good. It must be presented properly if it is to win.” Goebbels provides several examples of situations where propaganda was key to the acceptance by the people of changes made by the Nazi Party in German political and economic policy, adding this statement: “We could eliminate the Jewish danger in our culture because the people had recognized it as the result of our propaganda.” His conclusion reflects the importance he and the Nazi regime accorded to propaganda: “It may be good to have power based on weapons. It is better and longer lasting, however, to win and hold the heart of a people.”

It is difficult to define the concept of propaganda thoroughly and precisely. This is especially true because, in past decades, it was subject to unfavorable, and in part extraordinarily hostile, definitions by us Germans. First, then, we must defend it. Those abroad frequently claim that in the past we Germans were particularly knowledgeable in this area, and

knew how to apply it, but that unfortunately is not consistent with the facts. We learned the consequences of our neglect all too clearly during the World War. While the enemy states produced unprecedented atrocity propaganda aimed at Germany throughout the whole world, we did nothing and were completely defenseless against it. Only when enemy foreign propaganda had nearly won over the greater part even of the neutral states did the German government begin to sense the enormous power of propaganda. It was too late. Just as we were militarily and economically unprepared for the war, so, too, with propaganda. We lost the war in this area more than in any other.

The cleverest trick used in propaganda against Germany during the war was to accuse Germany of what our enemies themselves were doing. Even today, large parts of world opinion are convinced that the typical characteristics of German propaganda are lying, crudeness, reversing the facts, and the like. One needs only to remember the stories that were spread throughout the world at the beginning of the war about German soldiers chopping off children’s hands and crucifying women to realize that Germany then was a defenseless victim of this campaign of calumny. It neither had nor used any means of defense.

The concept of propaganda has undergone a fundamental transformation, particularly as the result of political practice in Germany. Throughout the world today, people are beginning to see that a modern state, whether democratic or authoritarian, cannot withstand the subterranean forces of anarchy and chaos without propaganda. It is not only a matter of doing the right thing; the people must understand that the right thing is the right thing. Propaganda includes everything that helps the people to realize this.

Political propaganda in principle is active and revolutionary. It is aimed at the broad masses. It speaks the language of the people because it wants to be understood by the people. Its task is the highest creative art of putting sometimes complicated events and facts in a way simple enough to be understood by the man on the street. Its foundation is that there is nothing the people cannot understand; things must only be put in a way that it can understand. It is a question of making it clear by using the proper approach, evidence, and language.

Propaganda is a means to an end. Its purpose is to lead the people to an understanding that will allow it to willingly and without internal resistance devote itself to the tasks and goals of the leadership. If propaganda is to succeed, it must know what it wants. It must keep a clear and firm goal in mind, and seek the appropriate means and methods to reach

that goal. Propaganda as such is neither good nor evil. Its moral value is determined by the goals it seeks.

Propaganda must be creative. It is by no means a matter for the bureaucracy or governmental administration, but rather it is a matter of productive creativity. The genuine propagandist must be a true artist. He must be a master of the people's soul, using it as an instrument to express the majesty of a genuine and unified political will. Propaganda can be pro or con. In neither case does it have to be negative. The only thing that is important is whether or not its words are true and genuine expressions of a people's values. During its period of opposition, the National Socialist movement proved that criticism can be constructive, indeed, that in a time which the government is in the hands of destructive powers it may be the only constructive element.

The concept of public education is fundamentally different. It is basically defensive and evolutionary. It does not hammer or drum. It is moderate in tone, seeking to teach. It explains, clarifies, and informs. It is, therefore, used more often by a government than by the opposition. The National Socialist state, growing out of a revolution, had the task of centrally leading both propaganda and education, uniting two concepts that are related but not identical, molding them into a unity that in the long term can serve the government and people.

Even during the time when we were in the opposition, we succeeded in rescuing the concept of propaganda from disfavor or contempt. Since then, we have transformed it into a truly creative art. It was our sharpest weapon in conquering the state. It remains our sharpest weapon in defending and building the state. Although this is perhaps still not clear to the rest of the world, it was obvious to us that we had to use the weapon with which we had conquered the state to defend the state. Otherwise we faced the danger that we could lose the people even though we had the power, and that, without the people, we lose power. We put what we had learned during our attack on the November pseudo-state in the service of our state. The great wealth of ideas and never failing creativity of our propaganda, proven during our struggle for power, was perfected to the last detail. Now we turned it to serve the state itself, to find meaningful and flexible ways to influence the people's thinking. The people should share the concerns and successes of its government. These concerns and successes must therefore be constantly presented and hammered into the people so that it will consider the concerns and successes of its government to be its concerns and successes. Only an authoritarian government, firmly tied to a people, can do this over the long term.

Political propaganda, the art of anchoring the things of the state in the broad masses so that the whole nation will feel a part of them, cannot therefore remain merely a means to the goal of winning power. It must become a means of building and keeping power.

This requires alert attention to the events of the day, and a trained and lively creativity that must include a complete knowledge of the soul of a people. A people must be understood in its deepest depths, or intuitively understood, for only then can one speak in a way that a people will understand. Propaganda must be the science of the soul of a people. It requires an organized and purposeful system if it is to be successful in the long run.

That is what we lacked during the war. That is where our enemy was superior to us. We must make up for that. We must take the techniques and dominance of the other side's opinion apparatus, which is all they really had, and fill it with the fire of the soul and the glow of new ideas.

Propaganda, too, has a system. It cannot be stopped and started whenever one wishes. In the long run, it can only be effective in the service of great ideals and far-seeing principles. And propaganda must be learned. It must be led only by those with a fine and sure instinct for the often changeable feelings of a people. They must be able to reach into the world of the broad masses and draw out their wishes and hopes. The effective propagandist must be a master of the art of speech, of writing, of journalism, of the poster, and of the leaflet. He must have the gift to use the major methods of influencing public opinion such as the press, film, and radio to serve his ideas and goals.

This is particularly necessary in a day when technology is advancing. Radio is already yesterday's invention, since television will probably soon arrive. On the one hand, successful propaganda must be a master of these methods of political opinion, but on the other hand, it may not grow stale in using them. It must find new ways and methods every day to reach success. The nature of propaganda remains the same, but the means provided by advancing technology are becoming ever broader and far-reaching. One need only consider the revolutionary impact of the invention of radio, which gave the spoken word true mass effectiveness. The technology of propaganda has changed greatly in recent years, but the art of propaganda has remained the same. Understood in this sense, propaganda has long since lost its odium of inferiority inherited from the past. It holds first rank among the arts with which one leads a nation. It is indispensable in building a modern state. It is something of a connecting link between government and people.

All propaganda has a bias. The quality of this bias determines whether propaganda has a positive or negative effect. Good propaganda does not need to lie; indeed, it may not lie. It has no reason to fear the truth. It is a mistake to believe that the people cannot take the truth. It can. It is only a matter of presenting the truth to the people in a way that it will be able to understand. A propaganda that lies proves that it has a bad cause. It cannot be successful in the long run. A good propaganda will always come along that serves a good cause. But propaganda is still necessary if a good cause is to succeed. A good idea does not win simply because it is good. It must be presented properly if it is to win. The combination makes for the best propaganda. Such propaganda is successful without being obnoxious. It depends on its nature, not its methods. It works without being noticed. Its goals are inherent in its nature. Since it is almost invisible, it is effective and powerful. A good cause will lose to a bad one if it depends only on its tightness, while the other side uses the methods of influencing the masses. We are, for example, firmly convinced that we fought the war for a good cause, but that was not enough. The world should also have known and seen that our cause was good. However, we lacked the effective means of mass propaganda to make that clear to the world. Marxism certainly did not fight for great ideals. Despite that, in November 1918 it overcame Kaiser, Reich, and the army because it was superior in the art of mass propaganda.

National Socialism learned from these two examples. It drew the correct practical conclusions from that knowledge. The ideal of a socialist national community did not remain mere theory with us, but became living reality in the thoughts and feelings of sixty-seven million Germans. Our propaganda of word and deed created the conditions for that. Mastering it kept National Socialism from the danger of remaining the dream and longing of a few thousand. Through propaganda, it became hard, steady everyday reality.

That which we only imperfectly and inadequately understood during the war became a virtuously mastered art during the rise of the National Socialist movement. Today one can say without exaggeration that Germany is a model of propaganda for the entire world. We have made up for past failures and developed the art of mass influence to a degree that puts the efforts of other nations into the shadows. The importance the National Socialist leadership placed on propaganda became clear when it established a Ministry for Public Education and Propaganda shortly after it took power. This ministry is entirely within the spirit of National Socialism, and comes from it. It unites what we learned as an opposition movement confronting the enemy and under

persecution from an enemy system, sometimes more from necessity than desire. Recently some have tried to imitate this ministry and its concentration of all means of influencing opinion, but here, too, the slogan applies; "Often copied, never equaled."

The organizational union of mass demonstrations, the press, film, radio, literature, theater, and so forth, is only the mechanical side to the matter. It is not so much that all these means are in one hand. The important thing is that this hand knows how to master and control them. Establishing a central office is not difficult. What is difficult is finding people who are experts in an area previously not a concern of the state.

We could not have done that ourselves had we not been through the great school of our party. It was our teacher. During fourteen years of opposition we gathered an enormous amount of knowledge, experience, wisdom, and ability. This made us able to use the wide-reaching methods of government propaganda without running the risk of losing the spirit behind them. Effective propaganda avoids any form of bureaucracy. It requires lightning-fast decisions, alert creativity, and inexhaustible inventiveness. The machinery of the organization would remain lifeless and rigid were it not constantly driven by the motor of the spirit and the idea.

It is, therefore, wrong to think that a ministry could replace what the movement alone is able to do. Cooperation between the party and the government was necessary for the major successes that we are proud of. Only when all means of propaganda are concentrated and their unified application assured is it possible to carry out major educational and propaganda battles, as we did before 12 November 1933 or 19 August 1934, which were of true historic significance.

If such an art of active mass influence through propaganda is joined with the long-term systematic education of a nation, and if both are conducted in a unified and precise way, the relationship between the leadership and the nation will always remain close. From authority and following will develop that type of modern democracy for which Germany is the model for the entire world in the twentieth century.

That is also the basic requirement for any practical political activity. A government that wishes to be successful over the long term cannot ignore it. Its projects and plans would fail were they not supported by the people. But the people must understand them in order to accomplish them.

One can only smile when one looks over our borders at the efforts of parliamentary-democratic parties that are all worried about this. Their attitude seems to be: "How can I explain it to my child?" A fear of the people is the

characteristic of liberal government theory. It has set the people free, and now does not know what to do with it. The hunt for popularity usually leads to nothing other than concealing the truth and speaking nonsense. One dares not say what is right, and what one does say leads to disaster. But that is presumably what the people wants. One no longer has the courage to say unpopular things, much less do them. The result is that major European problems are lost in useless debates while political, economic, and social crises of unprecedented magnitude face the nations.

There are times when statesmen must have the courage to do something unpopular. But their unpopular actions must be properly prepared, and must be put in the proper form, so that their peoples will understand. The man on the street is usually not as unreasonable as some think. Since it is he who usually has to bear the heaviest burdens that result from unpopular policies, he at least has a right to know why things are being done this way and not that way. All practical politics depends on how persuasive it is to the people. It is no sign of wise leadership to acquaint the nation with hard facts overnight. Crises must be prepared for not only politically and economically, but also psychologically. Here propaganda has its place. It must prepare the way actively and educationally. Its task is to prepare the way for practical actions. It must accompany these actions step by step, never losing sight of them. In a manner of speaking, it provides the background music. Such propaganda in the end miraculously makes the unpopular popular, enabling even a government's most difficult decisions to secure the resolute support of a people. A government that uses it properly can do what is necessary without running the risk of losing the masses.

Propaganda is therefore a necessary life function of the modern state. Without it, seeking great goals is simply impossible in this century of the masses. It stands at the beginning of practical political activity in every area of public life. It is its important and necessary prerequisite.

Let me give several recent examples. I need only sketch the details. They are too fresh in our memories to require elaboration.

There are no parliamentary parties in Germany any longer. How could we have overcome them had we not waged an educational campaign for years that persuaded the people of their weaknesses, harms, and disadvantages? Their final elimination was only the result of what the people had already realized. Our propaganda weakened these parties. Based on that, they could be eliminated by a legal act.

Marxism could not be eliminated by a government decision. Its elimination was the end result of a process that began with

the people. But that was only possible because our propaganda had shown the people that Marxism was a danger to both the state and society. The positive national discipline of the German press would never have been possible without the complete elimination of the influence of the liberal-Jewish press. That happened only because of the years-long work of our propaganda. Today, particularism in Germany is something of the past. The fact that it was eliminated by a strong central idea of the Reich is no accident, but rather it depended on psychological foundations that were established by our propaganda.

Or consider economic policy. Does anyone believe that the idea of class struggle could have been eliminated by a law? Is it not rather the fact that the seeds we sowed in a hundred thousand meetings resulted in a new socialist structure of labor? Today employers and workers stand together in the Labor Front. The Law on National Labor is the foundation of our economic thinking, realizing itself more and more. Are not these social achievements the result of long and tireless labor by thousands of speakers?

Germany suffers from a shortage of foreign currency. This affects the people in serious ways. Propaganda once again is the key to dealing with the problem.

The Hereditary Farming Law, the idea of the Reich Agricultural Estate, market regulations in agriculture, all these need propaganda to show the people their importance, which is necessary if they are to succeed.

We could eliminate the Jewish danger in our culture because the people had recognized it as the result of our propaganda. Major cultural achievements such as the unique "*Kraft durch Freude*" are possible only with the powerful support of the people. The prerequisite was and is propaganda, which here, too, creates and maintains the connection to the people.

The Winter Relief last year raised about 350 million marks. This was not the result of taxation, but rather many gifts of every amount. Everyone gave freely and gladly, many of whom in the past had done nothing in the face of similar need. Why? Because a broad propaganda, using every modern means, presented the whole nation with the need for this program of social assistance.

Forty-five million Reich marks of goods and services were provided. Eighty-five million Reich marks worth of fuel were distributed. One hundred and thirty million Reich marks worth of food were given out. Ten million Reich marks worth of meals were provided, and seventy million Reich marks worth of clothing.

Some of these achievements were the result of donations in kind, others of cash contributions. Street collections,

donations of a part of paychecks, contributions from companies, and gifts subtracted from bank accounts resulted in cash totaling 184 million Reich marks. Twenty-four million marks alone were the result of "One Pot Sundays." The Reich itself added fifteen million marks to the contributions of the people. The railway system provided reduced or free shipping with a value of fourteen million marks.

Of our population of 65,595,000, 16,511,000 were assisted by the Winter Relief. There were 150,000 volunteers. There were only 4,474 paid workers, of whom 4,144 were in the thirty-four regional party offices, and 230 at the national headquarters.

Propaganda and education prepared the way for the largest social assistance program in history. They were the foundation. Their success was that, over a long winter, no one in Germany went hungry or was cold.

Over forty million people approved of the Führer's decision to leave the League of Nations on 12 November 1933. That gave him the ability to speak to the world in the name of the nation, defending honor, peace, and equality as the national ideals of the whole German people. The issues of disarmament were put on firm and clear foundations. Once again, propaganda was the foundation for the nation's unity on 12 November, and therefore of the freedom of action that the Führer had in foreign affairs.

Each situation brings new challenges. And each task requires the support of the people, which can only be gained by untiring propaganda that brings the broad masses knowledge and clarity. No area of public life can do without it. It is the never resting force behind public opinion. It must maintain an unbroken relationship between leadership and people. Every means of technology must be put in its service; the goal is to form the mass will and to give it meaning, purpose, and goals that will enable us to learn from past failures and mistakes and ensure that the lead National Socialist strength has given us over other nations will never again be lost.

May the bright flame of our enthusiasm never fade. It alone gives light and warmth to the creative art of modern political propaganda. Its roots are in the people. The movement gives it direction and drive. The state can only provide it with the new, wide-ranging technical means. Only a living relationship between people, movement, and state can guarantee that the creative art of propaganda, of which we have made ourselves the world's master, will never sink into bureaucracy and bureaucratic narrow-mindedness.

Creative people made propaganda and put it in the service of our movement. We must have creative people who can use the means of the state in its service.

It is also a function of the modern state. It is the firm ground on which the state must stand. It rises from the depths of the people, and must always return to the people to find its roots and strength. It may be good to have power based on weapons. It is better and longer lasting, however, to win and hold the heart of a people.

Source: Randall L. Bytwerk, ed. and trans., *Landmark Speeches of National Socialism* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), pp. 41–51. Reprinted by permission of the Texas A&M University Press.

50. ARTICLE IN *DER STUERMER* ON THE HEBREW BIBLE, JANUARY 1935

Published by the rabid antisemite Julius Streicher, Der Stürmer, a tabloid-type newspaper, played a very different role than the Völkischer Beobachter, the official Nazi Party paper. While that paper at least pretended to be a real newspaper, Der Stürmer was a crass assemblage of antisemitic rants and crude, sometimes pornographic renderings of stereotypical Jewish males ravishing innocent Aryan girls and women. Its purpose was undeniable: to arouse in its readers a visceral anti-Jewish response that would eventually—and inevitably—spill over into violence. A leitmotif of the paper was blood libel, the charge from the Middle Ages that Jews killed Christian children to make use of their blood for the preparation of matzoh, the unleavened bread eaten during the Passover seder. Streicher was one of the defendants in the Trial of the Major War Criminals in Nuremberg, Germany, where he was convicted of crimes against humanity and hanged on October 16, 1946. This excerpt reflects the attitude often expressed in Der Stürmer regarding the Hebrew Bible.

DER STUERMER, No. 2, January 1935, Page 4.
THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF THE CRIMINALS

The history book of the Jews which is usually called the "Holy Scriptures" impresses us as a horrible criminal romance * * *

This "holy" book abounds in murder, incest, fraud, theft, and indecency. * * *

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 372, Doc. 2697-PS.

51. REPORT ON ANTI-JEWISH PROPAGANDA, AUGUST 6, 1935

This letter from Douglas Jenkins, consul general in the U.S. embassy in Berlin, to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, transmits an English translation of a truly disturbing example of Nazi propaganda. The leaflet it transmits accuses Jews of committing some of the most heinous crimes of which one could be accused, including murder, rape, theft, corruption, and did so in a way that was most likely to inflame a violent response. This type of scurrilous propaganda was not unusual in Nazi Germany. As noted by Jenkins, it was similar to the widely read tabloid Der Stürmer, the sole purpose of which was to incessantly reinforce the Nazi stereotype of Jews, and do so in the crudest of terms. The transmittal letter also addressed the encounter of a Jewish American who, despite her U.S. citizenship, was harassed and feared violence.

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Berlin, Germany, August 6, 1935

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: Anti-Jewish Propaganda

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy of a leaflet recently picked up on the streets in Berlin. A translation of this document is also enclosed. It will be observed that the leaflet violently attacks the Jews in the most unrestrained language. Unfortunately it is not known from what source these leaflets have come, but it may be said that they resemble the sort of propaganda published regularly in Streicher's weekly DER STUERMER.

While there have been no personal attacks on individuals of the Jewish race recently, the anti-Jewish campaign is being continued without any indication of abatement. In a recent speech Dr. Frick, the Minister of the Interior, declared that the anti-Jewish program would continue without hesitation but that the public must realize that individual attacks against Jews would not be tolerated. The Government, he

said, would carry on the campaign in a legal and orderly manner.

Signs "Jews are not Wanted Here" are still displayed at the entrance of many villages and smaller towns, and considerable anti-Jewish activity has also been noted at seashore resorts along the Baltic.

Recently a Miss Berta Gordon, a naturalized American of the Jewish race, called at the Consulate General to complain of treatment she had received at various bathing resorts on the Baltic Sea. According to Miss Gordon, who made an affidavit to be filed in this office, she went first to Kolberg where there was a large sign "Jews Not Wanted" hung across the highway leading into the town. Because of this sign Miss Gordon and her party decided to go on to another place called Henkenhagen where there was no indication of anti-Jewish activity. At Henkenhagen the hotel keeper assured the party they would be perfectly safe and that there would be no trouble. However, later in the afternoon Miss Gordon and the others were required to turn in their passports to the police, and the next morning the hotel manager asked them all to leave because he said he had received a warning from S.A. men that Jews could not remain in Henkenhagen. After some delay in the return of her passport. Miss Gordon says she and her friends left Henkenhagen and there was no further trouble. However, Miss Gordon insists that the landlord of the hotel was warned by the S.A. that if she remained she would be maltreated regardless of her American citizenship.

This case is the only one that has come to the attention of the Consulate General in many months involving direct threats against an American citizen, and for this reason may be of some interest to the Department. I may add that no action was taken by the Consulate General in Miss Gordon's case because her mother and brother reside in Berlin and she was afraid a protest from this office might result in the persecution of her relatives.

Respectfully yours,
Douglas Jenkins,
Consul General.

Enclosures:
Leaflet; with original of dispatch only;
Translation thereof, with original of dispatch only.

800
DJ: EMP

Translation of Leaflet
GERMAN CITIZEN
DO YOU KNOW

THAT THE JEW

oppresses	your Child
rapes	your Wife
rapes	your sister
rapes	your Fiancee
murders	your Parents
steals	your Property
ridicules	your Honor
derides	your Manners
destroys	your Church
spoils	your Culture
corrupts	your Race

THAT THE JEW

lies to you
robs you
deceives you
calls you a beast

THAT JEWISH

doctors slowly murder you
lawyers never help you attain your right
stores sell you spoiled foodstuffs
butcher shops are dirtier than pig-sties.

THAT THE JEW

has to do all the above according to the laws of the Talmud as it is for him a deed pleasing to his God.

GERMAN CITIZENS—THEREFORE DEMAND: Hard labor, cancelation of civil rights, confiscation of property and deportation for Germans who have sexual intercourse with non-Aryans. In cases of repetition, the death penalty. Their children are to be sterilized and cannot become citizens. They and the non-Aryan parent are to be deported. Women and girls who of their own free will start an affair with a Jew, are never to be granted legal protection. Hard labor for deceit and frauds.

THE JEW LIVES OF LIES AND WILL DIE OF THE TRUTH.

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1459: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

52. ARTICLE IN *DER STUERMER* ON RITUAL MURDER, APRIL 1937

Der Stürmer, the Nazi Party tabloid-type newspaper published by Julius Streicher, was one of the primary means by which the party disseminated its antisemitic propaganda. In addition to antisemitic stereotypes, including hook noses, obsession with money, and the carnal danger Jewish men represented for Aryan girls and women, Streicher kept alive a myth stemming from the Middle Ages. “Blood libel” was the accusation that Jews used the blood of non-Jewish boys and girls to make matzoh that is eaten during Passover. As absurd as that accusation was, Jews were killed throughout the centuries whenever a non-Jewish boy or girl went missing or had been killed. The picture that Streicher paints in this article from *Der Stürmer* is the classic accusation, including references to the “Talmud Jew” and supposed prayers from verses of the Hebrew Bible.

DER STUERMER, Nurnberg, April 1937, Number 14,
Vol. 15, Pages 1–2.
RITUAL MURDER

The murder of the 10 years old Gertrud Lenhoff in Quirschied (Saarpfalz) * * * The Jews are our MISFORTUNE!
* * *

Also the numerous confessions made by the Jews show that the execution of ritual murders is a law to the Talmud Jew. The former Chief Rabbi (and later monk) Teofiti declares, f. i., that the ritual murders take place especially on the Jewish purim (in memory of the Persian murders) and Passover (in memory of the murder of Christ).

The instructions are as follows:

The blood of the victims is to be tapped by force. On Passover, it is to be used in wine and matzos; thus, a small part of the blood is to be poured into the dough of the matzos and into the wine. The mixing is done by the Jewish head of the family.

The procedure is as follows: the family head empties a few drops of the fresh and powdered blood into the glass, wets the fingers of the left hand with it and sprays (blesses) with it everything on the table. The head of the family then says: “Dam Izzardia chynim heroff dever isyn porech harbe hossen maschus pohorus” (Exod. VII, 12) (“Thus we ask God to send the ten plagues to all enemies of the Jewish faith.”) Then they eat, and at the end the head of the family exclaims: “Sfach,

chaba, moscho kol hagoyim!” (“May all Gentiles perish—as the child whose blood is contained in the bread and wine!”)

The fresh (or dried and powdered) blood of the slaughtered is further used by young married Jewish couples, by pregnant Jewesses, for circumcision and so on. Ritual murder is recognized by all Talmud Jews. The Jew believes he absolves himself thus of his sins.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 372–373, Doc. 2699-PS.

53. ARTICLE IN *DER STUERMER*: “TWO LITTLE TALMUD JEWS,” DECEMBER 1938

This excerpt from a Der Stürmer article is one of many such attacks by Julius Streicher, the editor of the tabloid-type Nazi paper. Its characterization of the Torah—the first five books of the Hebrew Bible and the holiest of all Jewish writings—and the Talmud—a compendium of Jewish law, arguments and discussions among rabbis over the centuries and the ways of Jewish life and tradition—reflects the Nazis’ propaganda efforts to demonize the Jews by demonizing these books that are central to Judaism. It also speaks of Jewish rituals and practices as criminal, making Jews all the more vulnerable to a growing sense within the Reich (meaning at this time in 1938, Germany, Austria, the Sudetenland, and Bohemia and Moravia) that Jews and their “foreign ways” had no place in a Nazi-occupied Europe.

DER STUERMER, No. 50,

December 1938, Page 1.

TWO LITTLE TALMUD JEWS

The Thora is the old testament law book of the Jews. It contains:

The five books of Moses and all the oaths, curses, the criminal recipes and provisions of the God Jehovah for the Jewish people. The Talmud is the great Jewish book of crimes that the Jew practices in his daily life.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 372, Doc. 2698-PS.

54. EXTRACTS FROM “THE POISONOUS MUSHROOM,” A CHILDREN’S STORY, 1938

Published in 1938, The Poisonous Mushroom (Der Giftpilz) contained seventeen short stories, each with its own brightly colored illustration. It was written by Ernst Hiemer, illustrated by Philipp Rupprecht (Fips), and published by Julius Streicher, the infamous publisher of the Nazi tabloid-type newspaper Der Stürmer. The title of the book is explained in the book’s first story. While searching in the forest for mushrooms, a mother tells her young son that bad mushrooms are poisonous and look very much like good ones that are edible, making it hard to tell one from the other. The distinction between mushrooms becomes the model for the distinction between Germans and Jews: the Germans are the good people, the Jews the bad people who can disguise themselves, making their evil hard to recognize. The mother tells her son about the different kinds of “poisonous Jews,” each of which is depicted in its own chapter of the book: the Jewish peddler, the Jewish cattle dealer, the kosher butcher, the Jewish doctor, etc. Each story depicts the very worst of antisemitic stereotypes, and each ends with a short jingle, such as the one in the first of three excerpts included in this document.

THE POISONOUS MUSHROOM [Der Giftpilz]

A Stuermer book for young and old Fables by Ernst Hiemer
Pictures by Fips

Published by Der Stuermer—Nurnberg copyright 1938

* * *

[P.6] “It is almost noon,” he said, “now we want to summarize what we have learned in this lesson. What did we discuss?”

All children raise their hands. The teacher calls on Karl Scholz, a little boy on the first bench. “We talked about how to recognize a Jew.”

“Good! Now tell us about it!”

Little Karl takes the pointer, goes to the black board and points to the sketches.

“One usually recognizes a Jew by his nose. The Jewish nose is crooked at the end. It looks like the figure 6. Therefore it is called the “Jewish Six”. Many non-Jews have crooked noses, too. But their noses are bent, not at the end

but further up. Such a nose is called a hook nose or eagle's beak. It has nothing to do with a Jewish nose."

"Right!" says the teacher. "But the Jew is recognized not only by his nose . . ." The boy continues. The Jew is also recognized by his lips. His lips are usually thick. Often the lower lip hangs down. That is called "sloppy". And the Jew is also recognized by his eyes. His eyelids are usually thicker and more fleshy than ours. The look of the Jew is lurking and sharp

[P.9] Then the teacher goes to the desk and turns over the black board, on its back is a verse. The children recite it in chorus:

From a Jew's countenance—the evil devil talks to us,
The devil, who in every land—is known as evil plague.
If we shall be free of the Jew—and again will be happy and
glad,
Then the youth must struggle with us—to subdue the Jew
devil.

[P.32] Inge sits in the reception room of the Jew doctor. She has to wait a long time. She looks through the journals which are on the table. But she is most too nervous to read even a few sentences. Again and again she remembers the talk with her mother. And again and again her mind reflects on the warnings of her leader of the BDM [League of German Girls]: "A German must not consult a Jew doctor! And particularly not a German girl! Many a girl that went to a Jew doctor to be cured, found disease and disgrace!"

When Inge had entered the waiting room, she experienced an extraordinary incident. From the doctor's consulting room she could hear the sound of crying. She heard the voice of a young girl: "Doctor, doctor leave me alone!"

Then she heard the scornful laughing of a man. And then all of a sudden it became absolutely silent. Inge had listened breathlessly.

"What may be the meaning of all this?" she asked herself and her heart was pounding. And again she thought of the warning of her leader in the BDM.

Inge was already waiting for an hour. Again she takes the journals in an endeavor to read. Then the door opens. Inge looks up. The Jew appears. She screams. In terror she drops the paper. Frightened she jumps up. Her eyes stare into the face of the Jewish doctor. And this face is the face of the devil. In the middle of this devil's face is a huge crooked nose.

Behind the spectacles two criminal eyes. And the thick lips are grinning. A grinning that expresses: "Now I got you at last, you little German girl!"

And then the Jew approaches her. His fleshy fingers stretch out after her. But now Inge has her wits. Before the Jew can grab hold of her, she hits the fat face of the Jew doctor with her hand. Then one jump to the door. Breathlessly Inge runs down the stairs. Breathlessly she escapes the Jew house.

[P.61]

The pimf [Hitler boy between 10–14] so far has not said anything. Suddenly he stops. Then he grasps his two friends by the arm and pulls them away. They stop in front of a billboard. They read a large poster. It says Julius Streicher makes an address in the People's Hall about "The Jews are our misfortune".

"That is where we go!" shouts Konrad, "I wanted to hear him speak for a long time." "I have heard him once before at a meeting two years ago," says Erich. "Do tell us all about it!" the two pimfs beg.

The Hitler youth recounts:

"The meeting was overcrowded. Many thousands of people attended. To begin with, Streicher talked of his experiences in the years of struggle, and of the tremendous achievements of the Hitler Reich. Then he began to talk about the Jewish question. All he said was so clear and simple that even we boys could follow it. Again and again he told about examples taken from life. At one time he talked most amusingly and cracked jokes, making all of us laugh. Then again he became most serious, and it was so quiet in the hall that one could hear a needle drop. He talked of the Jews and their horrible crimes. He talked of the serious danger which Judaism is for the whole world.

"Without a solution of the Jewish question there will be no salvation of mankind".

That is what he shouted to us. All of us could understand him. And when, at the end, he shouted the "Sieg-Heil" for the Fuehrer, we all acclaimed him with tremendous enthusiasm. For two hours Streicher spoke at that occasion. To us it appeared to have been but a few minutes.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 358–360, Doc. 1778-PS.

55. EXTRACTS FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE SS PAMPHLET, “THE SUBHUMAN,” N.D.

Although not dated in the Nuremberg Trials evidence volume, the infamous pamphlet The Subhuman (Der Untermensch) was published by the SS (Schutzstaffel) in the early 1940s. It is a prime example of the Nazi conception of its war against the Jews as a cosmic battle for civilization itself. A passage not included in this document reads: “These subhuman creatures dwell in the cesspools, and swamps, preferring a hell on earth, to the light of the sun. But in these swamps and cesspools the subhuman has found its leader—The Eternal Jew!” In addition to these descriptions of the Jews, the pamphlet also equates Bolshevism and the Jews, saying “Bolshevism is as old as the Jew itself!” Similar to the phrase used so often by Hitler, “Judeo-Bolsheviks,” this only served to add political antisemitism to the pamphlet’s extreme racial antisemitism. Perhaps most disturbing about this pamphlet is that it seems to have been considered appropriate material to be used in schools.

EXTRACT FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE 5S
PAMPHLET “THE SUBHUMAN,” A PUBLICATION OF
THE SS MAIN OFFICE * * * * *

“As long as there are human beings on earth, the fight between humans and subhumans will be a historical law and the fight led by the Jew against the nations belongs, as far back as we can see, to the natural course of life on our planet. One can safely arrive at the conclusion that this struggle for life and death is as much a law of nature as the fight of the plague germ against the healthy body.”

Reich Leader SS Heinrich Himmler 1935

Just as the night rises against the day, as light and shadow are eternal enemies—so the greatest enemy of man who rules the earth is man himself. The subhuman—this biologically apparently entirely man-resembling creation of nature with hands, feet, and a sort of brain, with eyes and mouth, is yet an entirely different, a terrible creature, is only tending towards a human with anthropoid facial features—but mentally and morally lower than any animal. In the interior of this being is a cruel chaos of wild, unsuppressed fury—the inexpressible will to destruction, most primitive greed, entirely inconcealed obscenity.

Subhuman—nothing else. For not all that wears human features is equal. Woe to him who forgets this!

Whatever this earth possesses of great works, ideas and arts—man has contrived, created, and completed; he meditated and invented, for him there was only one goal—to work himself up to a higher level of existence, to shape the inadequate, and to replace the insufficient by something better.

So culture grew.

So the plow, the tool, and the house came into existence.

So man became gregarious; so family, nation, and state came into existence.

So man became good and great. So he rose far above all creatures.

So he became nearest to God.

But the subhuman also lived. He hated the work of the other. He raged against it, secretly as thief, publicly as slanderer—as murderer.

He associated with his ilk.

Beast called to beast.

Never did the subhuman preserve peace, never did he relax. For he needed semi-darkness, chaos. He avoided the light of cultural progress.

* * * * *

Publisher.—The Reich Leader SS, the SS Main Office.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 226–227, Doc. NO-1805.

56. NEWSPAPER ARTICLE BY THE SS, “JEWS, WHAT NEXT?,” NOVEMBER 24, 1938

This article attributed to the SS (Schutzstaffel), an elite paramilitary unit under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler, was written just two weeks after Kristallnacht, which resulted in widespread government-initiated and organized violence against Jews and their property, including their synagogues. It also followed by about four months the conclusion of the Evian Conference at which no nations—including the United States and the United Kingdom—except for the Dominican Republic agreed to take in more Jewish refugees. This explains the article’s cries of hypocrisy against the Western powers

when they accuse Germany of ill treatment of Jews. It states that now is the time to eliminate the Jews, but that did not yet mean physical annihilation; it meant the physical separation of the Jews from the rest of German society. It included references to the Jews' wealth, their unwillingness to engage in physical labor, and the threat of revenge by the Jews, all of which are long-standing antisemitic stereotypes.

Jews, What Next?

In 1933 and later we were simple-hearted and naïve. When so-called public opinion in the world lost control of itself because our "barbaric ways" prevented the Jews from abusing our wives and daughters, then we took it very seriously, and tried to explain the Jewish Question to the others from the beginning—what holy simplicity! As though one of these waterproof democrats ever had the least interest in it!

What is the real position? Neither Mr. Roosevelt, nor an English Archbishop, nor any other prominent diploma-democrat would put his dear daughter in the bed of a greasy Eastern European Jew; only, when it is a question of Germany, they suddenly know nothing of any Jewish question, only of the "persecution of the innocents because of their religion," as though we had ever been interested in anything a Jew believes or doesn't believe.

The real situation and truth is that these diploma-democrats know the Jewish question very well, in fact—one need only look at their immigration regulations and their fear of Jewish immigrants—and even derive practical conclusions from them, but pretend to be stupid and ignorant when they think they can harm Germany by this means.

Well then, that might still have surprised us a couple of years ago. Today we react to their screeching as to a continuous noise that is not capable of becoming any louder. It is known that the human ear can hear sounds only up to certain level of vibration. Sounds and noises of still higher frequencies are not heard. We have become immune to any increase in the great screaming of world Jewry.

Simple people derive an unshakable wisdom from this. . . .

There is a view that is heard at every step: if we had solved the Jewish Question completely and by the most brutal methods back in 1933, the outcry would have been no worse than it has been all the time since then, because we are solving the Jewish Question piecemeal, by single measures forced on us by the Jews themselves and their friends. This view is correct in itself. But it had to remain theoretical because at that time

we lacked the *military might that we possess today*. At that time the Jews might have succeeded in inciting the nations into a war of revenge against us; today the loudest of the democratic screechers will be the ones to hesitate the longest.

Because it is necessary, because we no longer hear the world's screaming, and finally because no power in the world can stop us, we shall therefore now take the Jewish Question towards its total solution. The program is clear.

It is:

total elimination, complete separation!

What does that mean?

It means *not only* the elimination of the Jews from the German national economy, a position which they brought upon themselves following their murderous attack and their incitement to war and murder.

It means much more!

It can no longer be asked of any German that he should continue to live under one roof with Jews, a race stamped with the mark of murderers and criminals, and deadly enemies of the German people.

The Jews must therefore be driven out of our apartment houses and residential areas and put into series of streets or blocks of houses where they will be together and have as little contact as possible with Germans. They must be marked and the right must be taken from them to own houses or land or a share in either, because it cannot be expected of a German that he should submit to the power of a Jewish landlord and maintain him by the work of his hands.

Into a Criminal Existence

But once this nation of parasites is in every way dependent on itself and isolated, it will become impoverished because it is unwilling and incapable of doing work itself. Even if the Jews still call billions their own today, and even if there are still many hundreds of millionaires among them, and even if the individual so-called "poor" Jew has disguised and hidden enough, they will still very soon have eaten up their capital, once the vital artery of these parasites has been blocked.

And if we force the rich Jews to support the "poor" comrades of their race, which may prove necessary, they will still all sink down into a criminal existence, in accordance with their deepest blood-conditioned nature.

But let nobody believe that we will calmly watch such a development. The German People has not the least wish to put up with hundreds of thousands of criminals in its

1134 Report on the “Situation in War-Time Germany”

territory, who will seek not only to secure their existence by means of crime, *but also to take revenge!*

Least of all do we wish to see a breeding-ground for Bolshevism and a roof-organization for the political and criminal sub-humans who crumble away from the edge of our nation as the result of a process of natural elimination. . . .

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalio, eds., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*, translated by Lea Ben Dor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 118–121. Used by permission of Yad Vashem.

57. REPORT ON THE “SITUATION IN WAR-TIME GERMANY,” MARCH 6, 1940

This report from Alexander Kirk, chargé d'affaires in the U.S. embassy in Berlin, to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, provides an on-the-ground, real-time assessment of the plight of the Jews in the Third Reich some six months after Germany invaded Poland to begin World War II. Its focus is on the “Old Reich,” meaning the Reich prior to its expansion into Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. It addresses such matters as the Jews’ elimination from the German economy; the significant reduction in the Jewish population in various areas of the Reich; the increased difficulties of Jewish emigration as a result of the war; the problems the Jews encounter in purchasing food and receiving coal deliveries; the inconsistent treatment of Mischlinge, meaning persons who are considered Jews but not “full Jews”; the forced relocation of Jews; and other matters. It also explains the Jewish communities’ fear that a large-scale deportation of Jews to eastern Poland may be in the making.

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. [unclear]
Berlin, March 6, 1940

Subject: Situation of the Jews in War-Time Germany

Confidential
The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington

With reference to the Embassy’s telegram No. 529 of March 1, 2 p.m., and previous recent telegrams dealing with developments affecting the Jews in Germany, I have the honor to submit herewith, for the possible convenience of the Department, a recapitulation of the situation of the Jews in Germany in war-time. This survey is based on information obtained in Berlin and while it touches upon conditions in Austria, in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and in Poland, it relates particularly to the status of the Jews in the territory formerly comprising the “Old Reich”.

As a result of the anti-Jewish legislation enacted late in 1938, the German Jews, i.e., those persons legally defined as Jews on the basis of having three or more Jewish grandparents or of belonging to the Jewish faith, have been virtually eliminated from commerce, trade and the professions, except medicine, which they may practice among themselves. Many Jews consequently live upon savings or upon the charity of the central Reich Association of Jews in Germany, which is the body authorized by the German Government to administer the public affairs of the Jews and to levy contributions upon them for Jewish relief. During the late summer months of last year, and particularly since the outbreak of the war, some twenty thousand Jews have been re-employed as day laborers in industry and have been put to work on land improvement and outdoor construction projects. Jews are not accepted for army service.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war the German Government authorities instructed the various Jewish agencies that they should continue to promote emigration by every means possible. This has proved, however, to be more difficult than formerly, owing to the closing of enemy countries as direct areas of reception, as well as owing to new obstacles arising from complications regarding transportation and the acquisition of foreign exchange.

With respect to the emigration of German national Jews from the territory of the Old Reich, the Government has as yet imposed no restrictions based upon age or profession or other considerations.

There is presented below a table indicating the number of Jews (i.e., Jews in the sense of the definition mentioned above), still left in various German territories, following reductions brought about by emigration or flight. These statistics, which have been obtained from the central Jewish Association in Berlin, are more or less exact as regards the Old Reich, while with respect to the other districts they represent approximate estimates.

Jewish Population in the German Reich (Old Reich)		
Number beginning of 1933		522,700
in the census of June 16, 1933	499,682	
plus in the Saarland	5,000	504,700
Number End of 1939		202,400
Emigration from the beginning of 1933 to the end of 1939		281,900
Emigration since the beginning of the war:		
a. to the end of 1939		6,000
b. January and February 1940 together		2,000
Excess of deaths over births from the beginning of 1933 to the end of 1939		38,400
Jewish Population in the Ostmark		
Number in 1933		191,481
Before incorporation in the German Reich		170,000
Present number		56,000
In particular in the City of Vienna:		
Number in 1933		176,034
Before incorporation in the German Reich		160,000
Present number		55,000
Jewish Population In the Protectorate		
Before affiliation with the German Reich	250–270,000	
Present number		160,000
Jewish Population in Danzig		
Former number		3–10,000
Present number		1,400

In general the treatment of the Jews in the Old Reich has not changed to any great extent since the beginning of the war. As a rule they receive the same food rations as the rest of the population, although they are subjected to petty discriminations in being compelled to call at the Government Food Offices for their ration cards and in being forced to make their purchases at specified hours. The Jews, moreover, do not receive supplementary rations for comestibles such as chocolate, honey and cakes, and extra meat rations, and furthermore they have for the time being been refused clothing ration cards. In certain sections of Berlin coal deliveries have not been made to Jewish families nor apartment houses predominantly occupied by Jews. During the recent severe weather several thousand Jews in Berlin were enlisted

for forced work for the cleaning of snow and for the loading and unloading of coal trucks.

The situation of the so-called "crossbreeds" and half-Jews, of whom there are perhaps a million in the Old Reich alone, would appear to vary locally. On the whole they are treated somewhat better than the full-blooded Jews, but in certain districts they are understood to suffer unofficially imposed disabilities.

With respect to Austria, the legal status of the Jews there is now practically assimilated to that prevailing in the Old Reich, and the same process is apparently under way in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Reich Association of Jews in Germany is not permitted to concern itself with the welfare of the Jews in either Austria or in the Protectorate, and it is understood that, owing to the still comparatively unsettled state of National Socialist Party discipline in these areas, and particularly in Austria, the Jews are subjected to considerably severer extra-legal persecution and restrictions than in the Old Reich.

Shortly after the conquest of Poland reports circulated that plans had been made for a general deportation of the Jews in Germany to the new Jewish "reservation" established in Eastern Poland in the district around Lublin. A detailed statistical survey carried out by the police of Jewish families in the Old Reich was thought to portend such a development. With the exception of Stettin, however, the Jewish population of the various Reich German cities have so far been permitted to remain in Germany.

In Stettin the entire Jewish population of some 1,200, including casual Jewish visitors to the city and Jews who had completed preparations to emigrate abroad, were assembled on seven hours' notice during the night of February 12 and were shipped off by special train to Poland. They were permitted to take with them only small quantities of baggage and, following their departure, their houses were sealed and it was officially stated that their belongings in Stettin would be liquidated and the funds thereby realized would be placed in a blocked account. It is learned that the Stettin Jews have arrived in Eastern Poland, with at least one death occurring en route, and that they are now settled in the towns of Piaska, Biala and Terespol in the Lublin district. They are being cared for by already existing Jewish communities in these cities and it is said that they are experiencing considerable hardship and distress.

The central Jewish Association in Berlin was officially informed that this action had been initiated by the Gauleiter of the Stettin district, Herr Schwede-Coburg, and that although the Reich authorities were not "responsible"

therefor, they could not rescind the action already taken. It was furthermore stated that the Stettin Jews would have to remain in Poland and that for the time being permission to leave could not be given to those who had completed their preparations for emigration abroad.

On or about February 15 an order was issued in Schneidemühl, which is also within Herr Schwede-Coburg's district, that the Jews in that city should prepare for deportation within a week's time, presumably also for Eastern Poland. The Jewish authorities learned after inquiring in Berlin that Herr Schwede-Coburg planned that all Jews should be evacuated from the Grenzmark, the region lying on the former Polish frontier and including Schneidemühl, and that their place here, as well as in Stettin, should be taken by returning Baltic Germans. The central Jewish authorities have apparently succeeded in obtaining a modification of the original plan to send the Jews from Schneidemühl to Poland and arrangements are now being considered whereby these Jews should be sent farther back into the Reich, where they will be settled in small towns and on Jewish-owned farms.

Information is not available as to how many Jews in all have been sent to the Lublin reservation. It is known that approximately 4,500 have been despatched from Vienna and 1,000 from Mährisch-Ostrau in the Protectorate. There have also been heavy deportations of Jews from the former Polish territories, in particular the Corridor and Posen areas, including Lodz, now formally annexed to the Reich; the Jews, together with a large number of Poles, are being removed from these districts to make room for Baltic Germans. Official intimations have also been given that some 1,400 Jews from Danzig, as well as the Jews in East Prussia, will be moved to Poland in the early spring.

According to German official estimates there are some two million Jews within the former Polish territory now comprising the Government General. As far as can be ascertained there has as yet been no large scale transfer of Jews within the Government General to the Lublin reservation which, in addition to the Jews sent from Stettin, Austria and the Protectorate, comprises many Jewish communities which have been settled there for a long period of time. The Jews in the Government General are compelled to wear arm bands and are subject to a forced labor obligation, as well as many restrictions. Although they have been forced out of leading positions in commerce and industry, they apparently still continue to be active in trade.

Those Polish Jews who were caught in Germany at the outbreak of the Polish war were immediately imprisoned, some of them being confined in work camps from which they have been subsequently released to be sent back to Poland, and some of them being detained in concentration camps, where a number estimated between one and two thousand still remain.

Although government officials in Berlin have assured the central Jewish Association that no plan is being entertained at present to deport Jews from the Old Reich to Eastern Poland, the Jewish authorities are apprehensive that steps along these lines may be taken in the course of this year. Among the factors which encourage such an apprehension are the following; 1) the recent completion of the already-mentioned statistical survey of Jewish families in the Reich, the exact purpose of which, although undefined, would appear to be adapted to just such an aim as mass deportation; 2) the possibility that other Gauleiter may be tempted to rival each other in following the precedent set in the district of Stettin; 3) reports concerning the construction of barracks in small towns in Poland which are reputedly for the reception of Jews, who would be put to work on land improvement projects in the surrounding countryside; 4) the fact that an example for the removal and transfer of populations has been set in the case of the Baltic Germans and the Germans from Russian Poland, and the fact furthermore that the organization and equipment which would be necessary for the deportation of Jews has thus, so to speak, been tested and tried and would be ready for use. Although it is learned that pressure from radical Party circles is increasing in favor of a mass removal of the German Jews to Poland particularly in view of the slackened rate of emigration resulting from the war, no definite decision in the matter is known so far to have been taken, and it is thought likely that further consideration of possible action along this line may be postponed at least until the spring when a change in the weather would be conducive to further transfers of populations.

Respectfully yours,
Alexander Kirk,
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
840.1
JDB/mhg

Source: State CDF 862.4016/2161: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

58. MEMORANDUM REGARDING FOOD SUPPLY AND SHOPPING TIME FOR JEWS, SEPTEMBER 18, 1942

This memorandum sent under the authority of Hans-Joachim Riecke, Reich minister for nutrition and agriculture, to various state authorities severely curtails foodstuffs available to Jews, such as meat, eggs, wheat products, and milk. No relief is provided for Jews who are sick, in hospitals, pregnant, or nursing. Times when Jews are allowed to shop for food are to be restricted so as "to avoid inconveniences in the supply of the Aryan population." Furthermore, any food received by Jews as gifts sent from abroad must be counted against an individual's rations. To make sure that ration cards make it clear that the bearer is a Jew, the memorandum requires that those cards be overprinted with the word "Jew." These and other directions make it abundantly clear that matters regarding the nutritional health of the Jewish population were of little concern to the governing Nazis.

The Reich Minister for Nutrition and Agriculture
Berlin W 8, Wilhelmstr. 72
18 September 1942.

To the State Governments [Landesregierungen] (State Nutrition offices) the Prussian Provincial Presidents (provincial nutrition offices) with the exception of the Eastern territories not incorporated into Upper Silesia.

For information of the district presidents [Regierungspraesidenten] and respective authorities

Re: food supply for Jews.

2. Rations.

Jews will no longer receive the following foods, beginning with the 42nd distribution period (19 October 1942): meat, meat products, eggs, wheat products (cake, white bread, wheat rolls, wheat flour, etc) whole milk fresh skimmed milk, as well as such foods are distributed not on food ration cards issued uniformly throughout the Reich but on local supply certificates or by special announcement of the nutrition offices on extra coupons of the food cards. Jewish children and young people over 10 years of age will receive the bread ration of the normal consumer. Jewish children and young people over 6 years of age will receive the fat ration of the normal consumer, no honey substitute and no

cocoa powder, and they will not receive the supplement of marmalade accorded the age classes of 6 to 14 years. Jewish children up to 6 years receive 1/2 liter of fresh skimmed milk daily.

Accordingly no meat, egg or milk cards and no local supply certificates shall be issued to Jews. Jewish children and young people over 10 years of age will receive the bread cards and those over 6 years of age the fat cards of the normal consumer. The bread cards issued to Jews will entitle them to rye flour products only. Jewish children under 6 years of age shall be issued the supply certificate for fresh skimmed milk. "Good for 1/2 liter daily" shall be noted on it.

Jews cannot be self-providers in the sense of any decrees.

1. Regulation for sick persons, etc.

The regulations for sick and infirm persons, expectant and nursing mothers and women in childbed do not apply to Jews.

The regulations of this decree apply also to Jewish inmates of hospitals.

4. Special allotments.

Jews are excluded from special allotments.

1. Exchange of food cards for travel and restaurant coupons.

The exchange of food cards for travel and restaurant coupons may be allowed to Jews only in urgent exceptional cases.

2. Ration-free food.

For the purchase of non-rationed food the Jews are not subject to restrictions as long as these products are available to the Aryan population in sufficient quantities. Ration-free foods which are distributed only from time to time and in limited quantities, such as vegetable and herring salad, fish paste, etc., are not to be given to Jews. The nutrition offices are authorized to permit Jews to purchase turnips, plain kind of cabbage etc.

3. Marking of ration cards.

Ration cards issued to Jews shall be printed over diagonally (i.e. over all individual coupons) with the repeated over-print "Jew". A color in contrast to the basic color of the cards shall be chosen for this. Cards and coupons over-printed "Jew" do not entitle the bearer to special allotments. Cancellation of these coupons before issue of the cards is therefore not necessary.

4. Special shopping time for Jews.

In order to avoid inconveniences in the supply of the Aryan population, it is recommended that the nutrition authorities establish special shopping times for Jews.

5. Food gift parcels for Jews.

The nutrition offices have to charge in full against the rations of the received all gift food parcels from abroad addressed to Jews. Should it be products which are rationed but not regularly distributed (such as coffee, cocoa, tea, etc.) the entire shipment or in case of a delayed report on the receipt of the package, the still unused part—will be made available to big consumers, such as hospitals and will be charged against their rations.

In the decree of 29 April 1941, of which a copy is enclosed, the Reich Minister of Finance instructed the Customs Offices to report weekly to the competent nutrition offices all gift packages, regardless of the quantity of the incoming merchandise, when it is known or can suspect that the receiver is a Jew. In case the report of the Customs Office to the nutrition office is delayed until the food received in the gift package is consumed, it can still be charged against their rations. Insofar as the State Police Offices are informed of these food parcels from abroad addressed to Jews, they will secure the packages and put them at the disposal of the nutrition offices [Ernaehrungs-Aemter].

For the Secretary of State Reicke

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 914–915, Doc. 1347-PS.

II. The Nazi Assault

59. MOVEMENT OF POLISH JEWS FROM GERMANY TO POLAND: TELEGRAM 1, OCTOBER 28, 1938, 5:00 P.M.

The telegrams that follow (documents 59 through 65) from members of the U.S. diplomatic staff in Leipzig, Berlin, and

Warsaw to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, concern a policy by the Polish government that spurred a response by the German government, all with ramifications neither government had anticipated. The Polish government issued a decree intended to prevent Polish Jews living in Germany from returning to Poland after October 30, 1938. The German government then instituted a mass expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany in order that they enter Poland before the deadline. As a result, some 18,000 Jews found themselves in no man's land at the German/Polish border, held in terrible conditions pending negotiations between the two governments. Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old Jew studying in Paris at the time, whose family was among the Jews held at the border, entered the Germany embassy in Paris on November 7, 1938, and, as an act of revenge, shot and killed Ernst vom Rath, a low-level German functionary at the embassy. This murder was used by the Nazis as an excuse for what became known as Kristallnacht, the Nazi government-sponsored and organized pogrom against the Jews of Germany and Austria.

REB

From Leipzig

Dated October 28, 1938

Secretary of State,

Washington.

October 28, 5 p.m.

I have the honor to report that a forced [unclear] of Polish Jews from Leipzig to Poland is now in progress. Without any warning whatsoever radical measures have been applied, since 5 a.m. three train loads are said to have departed already. Schools, shops, homes, even [unclear] home being combed and occupants marched to railroad irrespective of age, health, sex, or property. [unclear] are roughly 6,000 Polish Jews in Leipzig most of whom are identified with the fur trade. American interests as yet only indirectly involved. One American fur merchant reports that all of his employees as Polish Jews have been arrested. Chaotic aftermath fur business expected here.

Bufful

CSB

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1798: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

**60. MOVEMENT OF POLISH JEWS
FROM GERMANY TO POLAND:
TELEGRAM 2, OCTOBER 28, 1938,
8:00 P.M.**

See the introduction to document 59.

GRAY
From Berlin
Dated October 28, 1938
Rec'd 5:22 p.m.
Secretary of State,
Washington
578, October 28, 8 p.m.

During the course of the day the German police authorities have rounded up a large number of Polish Jews and are issuing orders for their expulsion to Poland. This has taken place in Berlin and we understand in other big cities in the Reich. As far as we can ascertain only male Polish Jews have been arrested and none up to this time have actually been sent over the Polish border. We understand that the grounds for the action are a recent Polish decree to the effect that no Polish citizen may reenter Poland after October 30th unless his passport has previously been validated by a Polish consulate or diplomatic mission.

The Polish Embassy states that it is negotiating with the Germans in an endeavor to get them to rescind the expulsion orders. American correspondents report the explanation of the German officials is that the Polish decree produced the probability of Germany having several [Heading on page two of the telegram: 2-#578, From Berlin, Oct. 28, 8 p.m.] thousand foreigners without nationality (staatenlos) who after October 30th could not (repeat not) be deported. The Polish Embassy sometime ago informally estimated that there were 50,000 Polish Jews in Germany proper and 5,000 in Austria.

More specific information should be available tomorrow.
Repeated to Warsaw and London for Rublee.

Wilson
NPL
EMB

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1799: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

**61. MOVEMENT OF POLISH JEWS
FROM GERMANY TO POLAND:
TELEGRAM 3, OCTOBER 29, 1938,
NOON**

See the introduction to document 59.

From Warsaw
Dated October 29, 1938
Rec'd 4:25 p.m.
Secretary of State,
Washington
242, October, noon. (GRAY)

As a result of the promulgation by Polish Government of recent decree ordering inspection of all Polish passports abroad with a view to application of the citizenship law of March 31, 1938 (Embassy's despatches 412 and 757 April 1 and October 22, 1938) and which appears to have been designed primarily to prevent wholesale expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany and Austria the German Government yesterday began expulsion of Polish Jews. According to aforementioned decree holders of Polish passports not (repeat not) examined and validated by consuls abroad will be refused admission into Poland after midnight tonight. A prominent official of the Foreign Office today informed me 7,000 Jews have already entered Poland from Germany and 15,000 more are expected today. This of course will create a grave problem for Poland especially since the refugees mainly male Jews were [Heading on page two of the telegram: LMS 2-No, 242, October 29, noon, from Warsaw] allowed to take only 10 marks each from Germany. The Polish Government protested when news of the expulsion order became known and proposed a 15 day extension of the time limit of the aforementioned decree to permit negotiations regarding restoration of refugees' property but this proposal was refused by Germany. (END GRAY) The Polish Government considers the German action brutal and it is intimated at the Foreign Office that certain retaliatory measures may be taken against Germans residing in Poland. Poland will continue to take measures to obtain satisfaction with regard to restoration of refugees' property.

Repeated to Berlin and London for Rublee.

BIDDLE
NPL:JRL

1140 Movement of Polish Jews from Germany to Poland: Telegram 4

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1800: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

62. MOVEMENT OF POLISH JEWS FROM GERMANY TO POLAND: TELEGRAM 4, OCTOBER 29, 1938, 3:00 P.M.

See the introduction to document 59.

GRAY
From Berlin
Dated October 29, 1938
Rec'd 11:10 a.m.
Secretary of State,
Washington
582, October 29, 3 p.m.

Referring to the Embassy's 577, October 28, 8 p.m., Geist was officially informed today at German police headquarters that on October 6 the Polish Government issued a decree by virtue of which all passports of Polish Jews abroad became invalid on October 29. German authorities state they are convinced this decree was shortly to be followed by another expatriating all such persons. To prevent these thousands of Polish Jews from becoming stateless and undeportable the German authorities are expelling all Polish male Jews and expect to finish the deportations by tonight. Women and children are not included, it being assumed they will follow voluntarily their male relatives. Police have assured us that they are not deporting Polish Jews holders American immigration visas.

Repeated to Warsaw and London for Rublee.

RR Wilson

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1802: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

63. MOVEMENT OF POLISH JEWS FROM GERMANY TO POLAND: TELEGRAM 5, OCTOBER 29, 1938, 7:00 P.M.

See the introduction to document 59.

GRAY
From Warsaw
Dated October 29, 1938
Rec'd. 5:25 p.m.
Secretary of State,
Washington
243, October 29, 7 p.m.

Supplementing my 242, October 29, noon, condition of Jewish refugees arriving via Silesian frontier is characterized as appalling by members of Jewish relief committee for refugees from Germany. Many of these are reported to have been forced to make the journey on foot; many are said to have been beaten and have arrived in miserable condition. Polish doctors and Red Cross nurses have been rushed to the frontier. For want of better accommodations Polish authorities have assigned refugees to quarters in the mines of the district. Joint relief committee aforementioned and Jewish joint distribution committee are also giving aid and the head of the former states that the Polish Government is rendering full assistance. All those whose documents are in order are permitted to proceed to the interior. It should be emphasized that only [Heading on page two of the telegram: LMS 2-No. 243, October 29, 7 p.m., from Warsaw.] passports issued abroad are affected by the Polish decree cited in my telegram 242; documents issued here continue to be valid for entry into the country without special consular validation.

Repeated to Berlin and London for Rublee,

BIDDLE.-
NPL:JRL

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1801: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

64. MOVEMENT OF POLISH JEWS FROM GERMANY TO POLAND: TELEGRAM 6, OCTOBER 30, 1938, 9:00 A.M.

See the introduction to document 59.

From Warsaw
Dated October 30, 1938
Rec'd 8:50 p.m.
Secretary of State,

Washington

244, October 30, 9 a.m.

(GRAY) My 243, October 29, 7 p.m.

Polish Government has issued communique stating that as result of conversations negotiations with Germany will be recommenced early this week looking to a solution of the present problem and to a return of the refugees to their homes in Germany. According to a communique further expulsion from Germany has ceased and the Polish Government will not carry out the retaliatory measures it had contemplated. (END GRAY).

Journalistic circles inform me that approximately 1000 Germans in Poland chiefly in Lodz were quietly placed under arrest yesterday for deportation but have since been released. (GRAY) Jewish relief committee reports that about 13,000 refugees have now entered Poland and are being gradually sent to the interior. [Heading on page two of the telegram: #244, October 30, 9 a.m. from Warsaw.] According to the committee the Government has been very lenient in this respect, Polish press has been significantly silent through this affair and only official communiques have appeared.

Repeated to Berlin and London for Rublee. (END GRAY)

BIDDLE

RR

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1803: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

65. MOVEMENT OF POLISH JEWS FROM GERMANY TO POLAND: TELEGRAM 7, OCTOBER 31, 1938, 5:00 P.M.

See the introduction to document 59.

GRAY

From Berlin

Dated October 31, 1938

Rec'd 2:48 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

583, October 31, 5 p.m.

Reference my 582, October 29, 3 p.m.

It is learned from American press and other sources that a sort of "armistice" has been reached between Germany and Poland with regard to the banishment from Germany of Polish Jews whose passports were allegedly invalidated by decree of the Polish Government. Negotiations for a final settlement of the matter are to be begun in Warsaw tomorrow. It is stated that Polish Jews now in German jails have been released and that those who were in the process of being deported but had not yet crossed the border are being returned to their homes. The Polish Government is said to have agreed to permit the Jews already sent to Poland from Germany to remain for the time being.

By mail to Warsaw and London for Rublee,

WILSON

CSB

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1804: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

66. MEMORANDUM FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY IN POLAND TO THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE REGARDING PLIGHT OF, AND NEGOTIATIONS OVER, POLISH JEWS EXPELLED FROM GERMANY, JANUARY 5, 1939

Sent by A. J. Drexel Biddle Jr., U.S. ambassador to Poland, to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, this memorandum addresses renewed negotiations between the governments of Germany and Poland over the status of Polish Jews expelled by Germany in October 1938, who were not allowed entrance into Poland and were being held at a camp at the Polish/German border. It would appear that an impasse between the two countries has been resolved, thereby allowing entrance into Poland, although only due to threats by the Polish government that Germans residing in Poland would suffer retaliatory acts. Some of the concerns of the Polish government include the disposition of property and assets that the Polish Jews had to leave in Germany upon their expulsion. In addition, it wanted to be certain that the 60,000 Polish Jews still in Germany were not also expelled in an effort to return them to Poland. Biddle frames this information as part of the bigger issue of the refugee problem already building in Europe.

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 880

Warsaw, January 5, 1939

Subject: Expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany; Refugee Camp containing approximately 5,000 established October 29 still maintained at Zbaszyn; negotiations in course between Polish-German authorities with respect to refugees; Polish authorities and Jewish organizations appeal to British Government for assistance in transferring Zbaszyn refugees abroad. Special significance of the negotiations to the general refugee question.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington

Sir:

Supplementing my dispatch No. 784 of November 5, 1938, and other reports from this Mission treating of the expulsion on October 28, 1938 of Polish Jews from Germany, I have the honor to set forth below certain observations with respect to the status of these refugees and the several aspects of the situation created by their expulsion from Germany.

It will be recalled that the German authorities deported without advance warning on October 28 some 13,000 Polish Jews to Poland on the grounds that the Polish Government was preparing to prevent their eventual return to Poland by withdrawing their Polish citizenship and thus to leave them permanently on the hands of the Reich. These deportees were forced across the Polish frontier suddenly and left on the hands of the surprised border officials. Most of them were permitted by the Polish authorities to establish themselves with the aid of local relatives at interior points and to take up at least semi-permanent residence in Poland. However, the largest single group, composed of some 5,000 refugees, forced across the frontier on the main Berlin-Warsaw railway at Zbaszyn, have not been permitted "to enter Poland for residence" but are still being maintained under close police supervision at that border point in barracks and other temporary accommodations.

The Polish authorities immediately after these deportations took place entered into conversations with the German Government with a view to (1) stopping additional deportations from among the 60,000 Polish Jews still residing in the Reich, (2) obtaining, if possible, the return to Germany of the

deportees maintained at Zbaszyn, and (3) persuading the German Government to enter into some arrangement whereby Polish Jews forced to leave Germany would be able to take with them at least a fair amount of their property in that country. These conversations, which were accompanied by a threat of retaliatory action against Germans residing in Poland, were successful in bringing about a cessation of the deportations by Germany but were completely broken off in a few days when Germany, possessing the whip hand, refused to take back the deportees at Zbaszyn or to make any acceptable property provision for Polish Jews leaving Germany. The von Rath affair and the ensuing "Black Thursday", which arose directly out of these deportations, made it impossible for conversations to be renewed until just recently and the deportees, with the exception of some half dozen or so who have been granted immigration visas by Latin American countries, have continued to live miserably in the concentration camp at Zbaszyn mainly on charitable contributions from Polish and foreign Jews.

It now appears that preliminary discussions in this matter between the Polish and German Governments have reached a stage where formal negotiations can be resumed and the Polish Foreign Office sent on January 3 a delegation to Berlin to participate therein. An announcement of the negotiations in the Warsaw *Kurjer Polski* of January 3, 1939, ran as follows:

"The object of the negotiations will be the liquidation of the Camp at Zbaszyn where the Jews—Polish citizens expelled from Germany—are kept.

"The concrete object is to enable them to return to Germany so that they may attend to the property left there and to settle their financial affairs.

"The negotiations will also cover the question of the settlement of Jewish property questions in respect to Jews of Polish origin, who have been expelled from Poland and either returned to Poland or departed for other countries.

"The Polish delegation is said to have ample material available pertaining to the value of the status of property belonging to Polish Jews who have been expelled from Germany."

It would appear that the Polish authorities, in bringing about a resumption of the conversations, have been able to force a concession from Germany. This concession most likely had its origin in the general discussion on matter of political importance now in course between the two

Governments. The following factors appear, according to the Embassy's information, in the background of the negotiations:

1. The insistence of the Polish authorities that the question of the property of Polish citizens, including Jews, in Germany, is bound up directly with property in Poland of German citizens and Polish-German trade and financial relations.
2. The determination of the Polish authorities to maintain the concentration camp at Zbaszyn in order to (a) stop further unilateral expulsions by Germany, (b) dissuade Polish Jews domiciled abroad from returning voluntarily to Poland or Polish relatives of such Jews from endeavoring to bring them back to Poland, and (c) to force foreign countries, particularly Great Britain and the United States, to include Polish Jews residing in Germany (and those at Zbaszyn) in any and all plans for caring for refugees from Germany. In other words, to ensure that 60,000 Polish Jews residing in Germany do not return to Poland but that they receive the same consideration from the Western powers as Jews of German citizenship.
3. The contention of the German authorities that Polish citizens domiciled in Germany cannot be expatriated without Germany first having an opportunity to return them to Poland.

The Polish Government has already made known to the Western Powers interested in the refugee situation its views with respect to the status as refugees of Polish Jews formerly or at present domiciled in Germany. The concentration camp at Zbaszyn has, I understand, been used as an example in presenting these views. At the same time organizations of Polish Jews in Poland have made earnest efforts to obtain some place of refuge outside of Poland for racial compatriots in Germany. Count Edward Raczyński, Polish Ambassador at London, informed me during the course of his recent visit to Warsaw that he had little hope of being successful in his efforts to persuade the British Government to give special consideration to the refugees at Zbaszyn. It is, however, reported that the Jewish organizations in Poland, evidently working in direct contact with organizations of British Jews, have arranged that a certain number, said to be several hundred, of Jewish children now at Zbaszyn will shortly be admitted into Great Britain in much the same manner in which groups of Jewish children have recently been allowed to enter England from Germany and former Austria. It does not appear likely at this writing, however, that Poland will be

able to obtain foreign destinations for many of the inmates of the Zbaszyn Camp.

I have gone into this matter somewhat at length in view of the significance which it possesses in the general refugee situation. The mere fact that conversations with respect to Jewish deportees from Germany and their property in that country have been resumed between the Polish and German authorities leads me to believe that some sort of a compromise between the two Governments on the problem is not only feasible but even imminent. Such a compromise, which apparently would limit German freedom of action *vis-à-vis* Polish citizens, including Jews, domiciled in Germany could, in my belief, be reached only on the basis of Polish threats and willingness to invoke sanctions against German citizens domiciled in Poland and German trade and financial interests in this country. The outcome of the negotiations now in course at Berlin should, consequently, be of genuine interest in connection with the consideration being given by the Western countries to the refugee problem.

Respectfully yours,
A.J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

840.1

AJDB/LMH.fh

(In quintuplicate)

Copies sent to:

Mr. Rublee, London.

Embassy, Berlin

Source: State CDF 862.4016/2069: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

67. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REICH CENTRAL OFFICE FOR JEWISH EMIGRATION, JANUARY 24, 1939

In August 1938, the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung) was established in Vienna, under the leadership of Adolf Eichmann, to expedite the ponderous process by which Jews were approved to emigrate from Austria. The success of that office led to the establishment by Herman Göring of a similar organization in

1144 Circular on “The Jewish Question as a Factor in German Foreign Policy in the Year 1938”

Germany in January 1939, the Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration (Reichszentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung), headed by Reinhard Heydrich. It was responsible for the facilitation of emigration of Jews from throughout the Reich. Heydrich appointed Heinrich Müller, chief of the Gestapo, to direct the office.

GOERING DIRECTIVE TO THE REICH MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. 24 JANUARY 1939, CONCERNING THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE EMIGRATION OF JEWS FROM GERMANY AND THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF OF THE SECURITY POLICE, HEYDRICH, AS CHIEF OF THE REICH CENTRAL OFFICE FOR JEWISH EMIGRATION

Berlin, 24 January 1939

The Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan
Field Marshal Goering
To the Reich Minister of the Interior
Berlin

The emigration from Germany of Jews is to be advanced by all means.

A Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration [Reichszentrale fuer die juedische Auswanderung] is established within the Reich Ministry of the Interior from the representatives of the agencies concerned. The Reich Central Office has the mission to uniformly within the whole territory of the Reich—

1. Take all measures for the preparation of an increased emigration of the Jews, among other things to create a Jewish organization which is qualified to prepare all steps to make available and utilize the internal and foreign funds, and to determine, in collaboration with the Reich Bureau for Emigrant Matters, countries suitable for emigration.

2. Direct the emigration; and to favor among other things, particularly, the emigration of the poorer Jews.

3. Expedite emigration in individual cases by central coordinated processing of the necessary applications, State certificates and vouchers needed by the individual emigrant and by the controlling of the course of the emigration.

The Chief of the Security Police [Heydrich] is in charge of the Reich Central Office. He appoints the manager and regulates the management of the Reich Central Office.

I will be currently informed of the work of the Reich Central Office. My decision must be requested before measures of fundamental importance are taken.

In addition to the other agencies concerned, Ambassador Eisenlohr as Delegate for Official International Negotiations and Ministerial Director Wohlthat as Delegate for the Nego-

tiations on the Rublee Plan, are to be members of the executive committee.

Signed: GOERING

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 129–130, Doc. NG-2586-A.

68. CIRCULAR ON “THE JEWISH QUESTION AS A FACTOR IN GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE YEAR 1938,” JANUARY 25, 1939

The year 1938 was one of great significance to pre-World War II Nazi Germany. In that year, Germany annexed Austria (thereby greatly increasing the number of Jews in the Reich), was handed the Sudetenland, took Bohemia and Moravia as a German protectorate, and initiated Kristallnacht, the pogrom in Germany and Austria organized by the Nazi regime. In addition, the Evian Conference was held at which not a single country—including the United States and the United Kingdom—other than the Dominican Republic expressed willingness to take in additional Jewish refugees. This document provides an overview of the 1938 German foreign policy as it was impacted by the Reich’s desire to force the emigration of Jews to countries outside the Reich. Much of the circular focuses on the disposition of Jewish property upon emigration, arguing that Jews who previously immigrated to Germany made money at the same time that German citizens suffered economically under the reparations requirement of the Treaty of Versailles. The question of a Jewish state in Palestine is also referenced and found to be unacceptable. Finally, the circular notes the rise of antisemitism wherever Jewish immigrants have relocated outside of the Reich.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 83-26 19/1 Ang. II

Berlin, 31st January 1939.

Enclosed please find for your attention a circular which has been sent to the German authorities abroad on the subject of “The Jewish Question as a factor in German Foreign Policy in the year 1938”.

By Order

Signed: Hinrichs.

To All Senior Reich Authorities and NSDAP Bureau for Foreign Affairs.

to No. 611-39 secret, Foreign

Secret

Foreign 6.2.39
No. 611 39 Secret. Foreign If.

Copy to:

Abw. I (Counter Intelligence I)
W.Stab.
Chief Dept. 3
Att. Gr. of the Army General Staff
OKM. Dept. 3. SKL
Ob.d.L. (Z A)
Ob.d.L. Dept. 5. General Staff.
Ausl. III
[Pencil note] Chief W Wi.

attention is requested.

By Order

I Enclosure

Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Berlin, 25th January 1939.
83-26 19/1

Contents:

The Jewish Question as a factor in German Foreign policy in the year 1938.

1. The German Jewish Policy as basis and consequence of the decisions for the foreign policy of the year 1938.
2. Aim of German Jewish Policy: Emigration.
3. Means, ways and aim of the Jewish Emigration.
4. The emigrated Jew as the best propaganda for the German Jewish Policy.

It is certainly no co-incidence that the fateful year 1938 has brought nearer the solution of the Jewish question simultaneously with the realization of the "idea of Greater Germany", since the Jewish policy was both the basis and consequence of the events of the year 1938. The advance made by Jewish influence and the destructive Jewish spirit in politics, economy and culture paralyzed the power and will of the German people to rise again more perhaps even than the power-policy opposition of the former enemy allied powers of the World War. The healing of this sickness among the people was therefore certainly one of the most important requirements for exerting the force which in the year 1938

resulted in the joining together of Greater Germany, in defiance of the world.

To All diplomatic and qualified consular representatives abroad.

The necessity for a radical solution of the Jewish question arose however also as a consequence of the foreign political development, which resulted in a further 200,000 Jews in Austria in addition to the 500,000 of the Jewish Faith living in the Old Reich. The influence of Jewry on Austrian economy which had grown to enormous proportions under the Schuschnigg Regime, made immediate measures necessary, with the aim of excluding Jewry from German economy and utilizing Jewish property in the interests of the community. The action carried out as reprisal for the murder of Legation Councillor von Rath accelerated this process to such an extent that Jewish shops—till then with the exception of foreign business—disappeared from the streets completely. The liquidation of the Jewish wholesale trade, manufacturing trade, and of houses and real estate in the hands of Jews, will gradually reach a point where in a conceivable time there will no longer be any talk of Jewish property in Germany. Nevertheless it must be emphasized that this is no seizure of Jewish property without compensation, as for instance the confiscation of Church Property during the French revolution. On the contrary the dispossessed Jew receives Reich Bonds for his goods, and the interest is credited to him.

The final goal of German Jewish Policy is the emigration of all the Jews living in Reich territory. It is foreseen that already the thorough measures in the economic sphere, which have prevented the Jew from earning and made him live on his dividends, will further the desire to emigrate. Looking back on the last 5 years since the assumption of power, it is, however, obvious that neither the Law for the Reestablishing of the Professional Character of the Civil Service nor the Nurnberg Jewish laws with their executive regulations, which prevented any tendency of Jewry being assimilated, contributed to any extent to the emigration of German Jews. On the contrary every period of domestic political tranquility has resulted in such a stream of Jewish immigrants returning, that the Gestapo has been obliged to put Jewish immigrants with German passports into a training camp for political supervision.

The Jew was excluded from politics and culture. But until 1938 his powerful economic position in Germany was unbroken, and thereby his obstinate resolve to hold out until "better times" came. Indicative of the tactics of this "delaying" resistance is the programme of a Jewish Party recently

formed in Poland, to fight against all Polish measures aimed at Jewish emigration. As long as the Jew can earn money in Germany, then in the opinion of World Jewry the Jewish bastion in Germany need not be given UP.

But the Jew has underestimated the consequences and the strength of the National Socialist purpose. The powerful Jewish positions in Vienna and Prague collapsed in 1938 at the same time as the system of states in Central Europe created at Versailles to keep Germany down. Italy stood at Germany's side, with her racial Laws in the fight against Jewry. An expert on the Jewish question, Prof. Goga took over the Government in Bukarest with a programme aimed against Jewry, without however being able to carry it out because of overwhelming international pressure from Paris and London. Jewry in Hungary and Poland was subjected to special laws. Everywhere the success of German foreign policy now begins to shake Jewish strongholds which have been established for hundreds of years from Munich and in far off States, like the tremours of an earthquake.

It is also understandable that World Jewry, "which has selected America as its Headquarters" regards as its own downfall the Munich Agreement, which in American opinion signifies the collapse of the democratic front in Europe. For the system of parliamentary democracy has always, as experience proves, helped the Jews to wealth and political power at the expense of the people in whose country they live. It is certainly the first time in history that Jewry must evacuate a secure position.

This resolution was first formed in 1938. It showed itself in the efforts of the western democracies particularly those of the United States of America, to put the now finally determined Jewish withdrawal from Germany, in other words Jewish emigration, under international control and protection. The American President Roosevelt "who it is well known is surrounded by a whole row of exponents of Jewry among his closest confidants" called a State Conference as early as the middle of 1938 to discuss the refugee questions, which was held in Evian without any particular results. Both of the questions, the answering of which is the first essential for organized Jewish emigration remained unanswered: firstly the question of how this emigration should be organized and financed and secondly the question: *emigrate to where?*

In answer to the first question, International Jewry in particular did not appear willing to contribute. On the contrary the Conference—and later the Committee formed by it in London under the direction of Rublee, an American—regarded its main task as that of forcing Germany by

international pressure to release Jewish property to the greatest possible extent. In other words Germany was to pay for the emigration of her 700,000 Jews with German national property. It is at the same time to be doubted whether International Jewry ever seriously desired the mass emigration of their fellow Jews from Germany and other states at all, unless there was an equivalent of a Jewish State. The tactics hitherto employed in Jewish proposals, were in every case aimed less at mass emigration of Jews than at the transfer of Jewish property.

It goes without saying, that the transfer of even a fraction of Jewish property, would be impossible from the point of view of foreign exchange. The financing of a mass emigration of German Jews is therefore still obscure. Questions could be answered casually thus, that Germany for her part reckoned that International Jewry—particularly relatives of Jews who have emigrated—would support this emigration as vigorously as it made it possible for its destitute fellow Jews to immigrate to Germany, at a time when Germany was so weak that she could not stop the stream of Jews from the East. It should be emphasized, however, that according to police and taxation records, the greater proportion of Jews immigrated to Germany without means and made money in a few years or decades, while the German people lost their possessions as a result of the reparations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles or joined the ranks of the unemployed. Consequently Germany for her part had no sympathy for the compassion, with which an ostensibly humanitarian world accuses Germany of illegally appropriating property which was taken away from the German people by Jewish business methods.

The second question, to what country should an organized Jewish emigration be directed, could similarly not be answered by the Evian Conference, as each of the countries taking part having announced that they were fundamentally concerned with the refugee problem, declared that they were not in a position to take large numbers of Jewish emigrants into their territory. After over 100,000 Jews even in 1933/34 had succeeded either legally or illegally in escaping abroad and establishing themselves in someone else's country either with the help of their Jewish relatives living abroad or circles sympathetically disposed from a humanitarian point of view, almost every State in the World has in the meantime hermetically sealed its borders against these parasitical Jewish intruders. The problem of Jewish emigration is therefore for all practical purposes at a standstill. Many States have already become so cautious, that they demand a permit made out by German authorities from Jews travelling in the

ordinary way with German passports, saying that there is nothing against them returning.

The emigration movement of only about 100,000 Jews has already sufficed to awaken the interest if not the understanding of many countries in the Jewish danger. We can estimate that here the Jewish question will extend to a problem of international politics when large numbers of Jews from Germany, Poland, Hungary and Rumania are put on the move as a result of increasing pressure from the people of the countries where they are living. Even for Germany the Jewish problem will not be solved when the last Jew has left German soil.

It is even today an important duty of German policy to control and when possible direct the flow of Jewish emigration to be sure there is no incentive to cooperate with other countries such as Poland, Hungary and Rumania, who themselves are striving for the emigration of the Jewish sections of their population, in an attempt to solve this problem. From experience with this procedure interests clash, although directed towards the same goal, and retard the realization of Germany's urgent claim for German Jews to be admitted into other particular countries.

It is true that the Rumanian Government sent an official appeal to the Reich Government in the name of human ethics and justice, to join with them in an international action to solve the Jewish question. On the other hand, Poland at the end of October last year issued a decree, the execution of which has made it practically impossible for 60,000 Jews of Polish Nationality residing in Germany to return to Poland. As is well known, the Reich Government had then to decide to deport to Poland 60,000 Jews of Polish Nationality who will be followed by their families, shortly before the Polish Decree came into force. The Hungarian Government, it is true, appreciates the German Jewish policy in so far as they themselves have in mind the "Aryanization" of Hungarian-Jewish businesses in Germany, that is, Jewish owners of firms will be replaced by Hungarians. In general, however, it is apparent that the States concerned are more egotistically interested in deporting their own Jewish elements than in any international solution. Germany will therefore take the initiative herself, in order next of all to find ways, means and destination for Jewish emigration from Germany.

Palestine—which has already become the slogan of world opinion, as the land for the emigrants—cannot be considered as the target for Jewish emigration, because it is incapable of absorbing a mass influx of Jews. Under the pressure of Arab resistance, the British Mandatory Government has restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine to the

minimum. For the time being Jewish emigration to Palestine was helped to a great extent, as far as Germany was concerned, by the signing of an agreement with the representatives of Jewry in Palestine, which made it possible to transfer Jewish property in the form of additional exports (Haavara-Agreement). Apart from the fact that emigration was made possible by this method for a small number of wealthy Jews only, but not for the mass of Jews without means, [Pencil note: Are there such people?] there were fundamental considerations of foreign policy against this type of emigration: the transfer of Jewish property out of Germany, contributed to no small extent to the building of a Jewish State in Palestine. Germany must regard the forming of a Jewish State, as dangerous, which even in miniature would form just such an operational base as the Vatican for political Catholicism. The realization that World Jewry will always be the irreconcilable enemy of the Third Reich, forces the decision to prevent any strengthening of the Jewish position. A Jewish State however would bring an international increase in power to World Jewry. Alfred Rosenberg expressed this idea in his speech in Detmold on 15 January this year as follows:

"Jewry is striving today for a Jewish State in Palestine. Not to give Jews all over the world a homeland but for other reasons: World Jewry must have a miniature State, from which to send exterritorial ambassadors and representatives to all countries of the world and through these be able to further their lust for power. But more than anything else they want a Jewish centre, a Jewish State in which they can house the Jewish swindlers from all parts of the world, who are hunted by the Police of other countries, issue them new passports and then send them to other parts of the world. It is to be desired, that those people who are friendly disposed to Jews, above all the Western Democracies who have so much space in all parts of the world at their disposal, place an area outside Palestine for the Jews, *of course in order to establish a Jewish Reserve and not a Jewish State.*"

That is the programme expressing the foreign policy attitude of Germany towards the Jewish question. Germany is very interested in maintaining the dispersal of Jewry. The calculation, that as a consequence boycott groups and anti-German centres would be formed all over the world, disregards the following fact which is already apparent, the influx of Jews in all parts of the world invokes the opposition of the native population and thereby forms the best propaganda for the German Jewish policy.

In North America, in South America, in France, in Holland, Scandinavia and Greece, everywhere, wherever the flood of Jewish immigrants reaches, there is today already a

visible increase in anti-semitism. A task of the German foreign policy must be to further this wave of anti-semitism. This will be achieved less by German propaganda abroad, than by the propaganda which the Jew is forced to circulate in his defense. In the end, its effects will recoil on themselves. The reports from German authorities abroad, emphasize the correctness of this interpretation:

The press and official correspondents continually report antisemitic demonstrations by the population of North America. It is perhaps indicative of the domestic political development in USA, that the listening-audience of the "Radio Priest" Coughlin, who is well known to be Anti-Jewish, has grown to over 20 millions. The Embassy in Montevideo reported on 12 December last year "that the Jewish influx continues for months, week by week. It goes without saying, that anti-semitism is growing"—Salonica reported on 30 November 1938: "that forces are at work to stir up the hate against the Jews" and that at the same time Greek Freemasonry is endeavoring to stem the anti-semitic movement. In France, the Paris Town Council (Stadtversammlung) was in April of this year to discuss a proposal, by which the naturalization of Jews was in future to be refused. The meeting on the Jewish question ended with the speaker being beaten up—Lyon reported on 20 December last year: "The immigration of Jewish refugees has lately led to undesirable occurrences. The antipathy towards the new intruders based on business and competitive grounds, which is general throughout France, is unmistakable." This aversion has grown to such an extent meantime that a Jewish defense has already been organized against the anti-semitism in France (Report Paris dated 19 November last year).—The Embassy at the Hague reported on 30 December last year: "Under the pressure of countless immigrants from Germany, who make themselves objectionable particularly in Amsterdam antisemitism is growing very much in Holland. And if this continues, it can easily come to pass that Dutchmen will not only appreciate Germany's action against the Jews but will also find themselves wishing to do the same as we."—The embassy at Oslo reported on 8th April last year: "While only a few years ago, the streets of Oslo were hardly marred by Jews at all, lately a great change has come about here. On the streets, in restaurants and above all in the coffee houses, Jews sit around in hideous cluster. The Norwegians are being crowded out, more and more. The Norwegian Press, which formerly did not understand the Jewish question at all, suddenly realized what it meant to have the Children of Israel invade the country like a swarm of locusts. It will be

a very salutary lesson, which is being meted out to the Norwegians".

These examples from reports from authorities abroad, can, if desired, be amplified. They confirm the correctness of the expectation, that criticism of the measures for excluding Jews from German Lebensraum which were misunderstood in many countries for lack of evidence would only be temporary and would swing in the other direction the moment the population saw with its own eyes and thus learned, what the Jewish danger was to them. The poorer and therefore the more burdensome the immigrant Jew is to the country absorbing him, the stronger this country will react and the more desirable is this effect in the interests of German propaganda. The object of this German action is to be the future international solution of the Jewish question, dictated not by false compassion for the "United Religious Jewish minority" but by the full consciousness of all peoples of the danger which it represents to the racial composition of the nations.

By Order

Schaumburg

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VI, pp. 87–95, Doc. 3358-PS.

69. CONFERENCE MINUTES ON DEPORTATION OF POLES, JEWS, AND GYPSIES, JANUARY 30, 1940

On the seventh anniversary of Hitler's ascension to power, a meeting, led by Reinhard Heydrich, Heinrich Himmler's second-in-command, was held to discuss evacuation of Poles and Jews from the Warthegau, the westernmost section of Poland that was absorbed into the Reich, to the General Government (Generalgouvernement), the central part of German-occupied Poland that was governed by the Nazis as a separate administrative unit. Specifically, three large-scale evacuations were discussed: 40,000 Jews and Poles from the Warthegau to the General Government to allow Baltic Germans to be resettled in the Warthegau; 120,000 Poles to allow the Volhynia Germans to be resettled in the Warthegau; and then the deportation of all Jews in "the new eastern provinces and of 30,000 Gypsies from the Reich territory to the General Government." In addition, it was anticipated that another 100,000 to 120,000 persons in the General Government would

need to be resettled in other areas of the General Government to meet the needs for training grounds for various branches of the German military. Concern was expressed about the difficulties of the General Government to absorb so many people. The matters discussed at this meeting include what today would be called "ethnic cleansing."

MEMORANDUM OF A CONFERENCE ON 30 JANUARY 1940, CONCERNING THE EVACUATION OF POLES AND JEWS FROM THE WARTHEGAU

Copy

Berlin, 30 January 1940

-IV D 4-III ES

Subject: Conference on 30 January 1940.

Memorandum

1. SS Major General [SS Gruppenfuehrer] Heydrich stated that today's meeting was called by order of the Reich Leader SS for the purpose of achieving uniformity in carrying out the resettlement tasks ordered by the Fuehrer. The evacuations carried out up to now included approximately 87,000 Poles and Jews; this was done to provide space for the Baltic Germans to be resettled there. In addition, an uncontrolled so-called illegal emigration took place.

On the basis of statements of Reich Minister SS Major General Seyss-Inquart and Lieutenant General [SS Obergruppenfuehrer] Krueger, SS Major General Heydrich stated that no objections in principle were voiced against the evacuations into the General Government by the competent authorities of the Governor General. The complaints lodged up to now were only directed against the fact that in the evacuation accomplished up to now, the designated figures were not complied with but were exceeded. Since [Section] Referat IV D 4 has been organized for the central regulation of all evacuation measures, the objections voiced do not hold any more.

It is of the utmost importance that 40,000 Jews and Poles be deported from the Warthegau into the General Government in order to make space for Baltic Germans. The order of the Reich Leader SS, namely, that no people of German extraction are to be deported, regardless of their past behavior, will serve as a guiding principle for the selection.

After this operation is finished, an additional, improvised evacuation is to be carried out for the benefit of the Volhynia Germans who are to be settled in the eastern provinces [Ostgaue]. On the assumption that the Volhynia German

families have 6 to 7 children on an average, we have a figure of about 20,000 families to be settled. The number of the Poles to be evacuated for this purpose is to be set for the time being at 120,000; a certain decrease in this figure can be expected, since some of the evacuated Polish landowners will be used as farm laborers either in the eastern Gauen themselves or in Germany proper. In this connection, congress Poles are to be used as far as possible. Using this number as a basis, the General Government should state before 15 February 1940, what distribution to the various unloading terminals is contemplated. The actual time when this operation is to start will be designated later and all agencies involved will be informed in time.

The Warthegau, West Prussia-Danzig, Zichenau and eastern Upper Silesia have to determine the number of the Volhynia Germans to be resettled and the number of Polish landowners whose evacuation is thereby necessitated and submit them to Referat IV D 4 by the same time (15 February 1940).

Referat IV D 4 has to collect this statistical material and to formulate the evacuation plans. Whereas the persons to be evacuated on account of the resettlement of the Volhynia Germans consist almost exclusively of rural population, those persons evacuated on account of the Baltic Germans are almost exclusively city dwellers.

SS Major General Koppe states that the evacuation to be carried out for the benefit of the Volhynia Germans must be accomplished in such a manner that the operation of the farms is not interrupted. The Volhynia Germans are to be brought by truck to the selected places of settlement and are to be exchanged against the previous Polish owners. The Poles are to be collected 856 in camps and then subjected to a selection. The part not usable in the eastern provinces or in Germany proper is contemplated for deportation into the General Government. Therefore, the exact number of persons to be sent to the government can only be determined after this selection.

Furthermore, there are already 4 to 5,000 Poles and Jews collected in camps in the Warthegau, who have already been evicted for the benefit of the Baltic Germans, but it has been impossible to deport them up till now.

SS Lieutenant General Krueger mentions that 60,000 refugees from Russia are to be expected in the General Government who also have to be accommodated there.

2. SS Major General Heydrich announces the following basic orders issued by the Reich Leader SS. No ethnic Germans nor people of German extraction are to be deported, also no Kashubes, Masurs, and similar races; the reason for

the latter is that these groups have shown a pro-German attitude and have intermingled racially with the German people. But the Reich Leader SS does not desire a Kashube or Masur problem be created in this respect. In connection with the deportation, it is only to be stated that the German provinces are to be cleansed of the alien population. Thereby, a way is left open for the future to deport inferior Kashubes, etc., after a racial examination.

Concerning the general Polish question, it has been ordered that a racial examination is not to be carried out at present in connection with the allocation of the farm laborers. If any differentiations were to be made among good and bad Poles among the multitude coming into Germany proper, the German population might get some erroneous impression. In connection with the labor allocation of the Poles in Germany, it should be seen that men and women are assigned in the proper ratio. According to the last figures, 800,000 to 1 million Poles will be allocated in Germany in addition to the prisoners of war. The assignment will be carried out via the labor offices. To a certain extent Poles from the eastern provinces will also be taken into Germany. When preparations were made, it was found that the local agencies in the eastern provinces declared that these Poles could not be spared, since they would be needed there. For example, the Warthegau declared that only 20,000 could be spared and West Prussia-Danzig could only make 8,000 available. For these reasons, it is necessary to take without any compromise all the Poles from the eastern provinces who could possibly be used as farm laborers.

An exception among the general prohibition of a racial selection in the course of the allocation of agricultural laborers could possibly be made in the case of the Polish agricultural families to be settled. Elements with higher racial qualifications could be retained in the Reich territory.

3. After the two large-scale operations, i.e., (a) the removal of approximately 40,000 Poles and Jews in the interest of the Baltic Germans, and (b) of approximately 120,000 Poles in the interest of the Volhynia Germans, the deportation of all Jews within the new eastern provinces, and of 30,000 gypsies from the Reich territory to the General Government shall be executed as a last large-scale operation. Since it has been found that the deportation of 120,000 Poles will start about the beginning of March, the deportation of Jews and gypsies must wait for the termination of the above operations. In any case, the distribution figures should be given by the General Government, so that the planning for those operations may be initiated.

SS Lieutenant General Krueger informs the participants that rather extensive troop training grounds for the Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, and SS must be provided within the General Government, an operation which will necessitate the resettlement of approximately 100,000 to 120,000 persons within the General Government. It seems, therefore, desirable to take that fact into consideration when deporting people into the General Government, in order to avoid a repetition of resettlement operations. SS Major General Heydrich remarked in this connection that the construction of the East Wall and of other projects in the East would probably offer an opportunity to concentrate several hundred thousand in forced labor camps, in which case, the family of those Jews would be distributed to the other Jewish families already living in the General Government, a procedure which probably would solve the problem mentioned. SS Obergruppenfuehrer Krueger also mentioned that ethnic Germans (mainly rural elements) should be evacuated from the General Government and transferred to the Reich. SS Brigadefuehrer Greifelt answered that that question was considered by the Reich Leader SS as a long-range problem.

SS Major General Heydrich announced that, after the termination of the three large-scale operations which had been mentioned, a racial selection in the eastern provinces should be made by the resettlement offices. Some of the Poles and their families would be dispersed in Germany proper. In the middle of February 1940, 1,000 Stettin Jews whose apartments are urgently needed for war purposes are scheduled to be evacuated and also deported to the General Government. SS Major General Seyss-Inquart repeated the figures which the General Government would have to absorb in the near future. i.e.,

40,000 Jews and Poles

120,000 Poles as well as all the Jews from the new eastern provinces, and 30,000 gypsies from Germany proper and Austria.

He mentioned the transportation difficulties arising for the Reichsbahn by that task and, finally, the bad food situation in the General Government, which would not improve before the next harvest. That situation necessitated further subsidies from the Reich. Reich Minister Seyss-Inquart requested SS Major General Heydrich to support them in this matter if it should turn out imperative for the General Government to obtain further food subsidies. SS Brigadier General (SS Brigadefuehrer) Waechter requests that the deportees, coming from regions where the food situation is very much better than that of the General Government, be provided with adequate quantities of food.

SS Major General Heydrich remarks as regards the possibility of transportation difficulties mentioned by Reich Minister Seyss-Inquart, that that possibility would be taken into consideration, inasmuch as all transportation movements would be centrally coordinated in the Reich Ministry of Transportation, a procedure which should make it possible to avoid wasteful utilization of rolling stock.

Finally, SS Major General Heydrich draws the attention of the participants to the necessity of giving lists of the deportees, especially the urban residents, to the competent trustee agencies in time, so that securing of their assets can be affected.

After this conference, which lasted from 1130 to 1315 hours, the experts [Sachbearbeiter] of the inspectors of the new eastern provinces and of the commander of the security police and the SD in the General Government, convened with III ES and IV D 4 in order to discuss details.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. IV, pp. 855–859, Doc. NO-5322.

70. MEMORANDUM TO HIMMLER REGARDING CONDITIONS OF DEPORTATION MARCHES, MARCH 28, 1940

Hans Lammers, head of the Reich Chancellery, forwarded this memorandum—which he received from an unknown source—to Heinrich Himmler, Reich leader (Reichsführer) of the SS (the Schutzstaffel), discussing the continuing deportations of German Jews into the General Government (Generalgouvernement), the central part of German-occupied Poland that was governed by the Nazis as a separate administrative unit. It is a protest against these deportations, making an urgent appeal, not to the Nazis, but to “the conscience of mankind” that these deportations be halted. It describes and decries the terrible conditions these deportees experienced, both during the deportation march and upon arrival in Jewish communities in the General Government. Given that they were not allowed to bring with them anything other than the clothes on their back, they were totally unable to provide for themselves, resulting in deaths due to starvation, illness, and exposure to the elements as well as resentment by the already settled Jews who were deported earlier and who themselves were suffering dearly.

MEMORANDUM FROM DEFENDANT LAMMERS TO HIMMLER, 28 MARCH 1940, TRANSMITTING A REPORT SENT TO LAMMERS ANONYMOUSLY, ENTITLED “DEPORTATION IS BEING CONTINUED—THE DEATH MARCH FROM LUBLIN—DEATHS FROM FREEZING—GOERING’S DECISION APPEALED TO”

Berlin, 28 March 1940
now at Berchtesgaden

The Reich Minister and Chief of the Reich Chancellery
Rk. 4797 B

1. To the Reich Leader SS and Chief of the German Police in the Reich Ministry of the Interior

Berlin SW 11, Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse 8

Written: Ko

Read: Le./Bru

Dispatched: 29/3 Ma
with 1 encl.

Dear Mr. Himmler:

In accordance with the wish expressed in your letter of 14 January 1940—1 185/40 Ads.—I am pleased to send you herewith a photostatic copy of a memorandum (Eingabe), “The Deportation is Being Continued,” which was sent to me anonymously. [Handwritten] blue

Photostat of RK 4797 encl.

Heil Hitler!

Very respectfully yours
(name of the Reich Minister
[Initial] L [LAMMERS])

2. To the files

[Illegible initials] 20 March

Bt.

[Enclosure]

*Deportation is Being Continued
The Death March from Lublin—Deaths from Freezing—
Goering’s Decision Appealed to*

The following report is based on the findings of the mixed Polish Jewish Relief Committee in the Government General which is cooperating with the American Quaker Organization (The Society of Friends) as well as with delegates of the Red Cross and the district authorities of the Governor

General for the Occupied Polish Territory. [Handwritten] (1) Received anonymously (2) Herr Kritzinger [Illegible initials] [Initial] L [Lammers].

The contents represent an urgent appeal to the conscience of mankind and the sense of responsibility of the entire world.

Krakow, 14 March 1940

In spite of the objections of the Government General to a hasty and unplanned continuation of the deportation of Jewish German nationals to eastern Poland this is being continued at the order of the Reich Leader SS.

On 12 March 1940, 160 more Jews were evacuated from *Schneidemuehl* in a freight car to the Lublin district. Additional transports are reported in Lublin. The deported persons had to leave their entire property behind. *They were not allowed to take even a suitcase with them.* The women had to give up their handbags before the trips. Some persons had their overcoats taken away from them, these being men and women who had tried to put on several coats or suits of underwear over each other as a protection against the cold. They were not allowed to take one cent in cash with them, not even the 20 zloty which those deported from Stettin were allowed. Nor were they permitted to take food, beds, household articles (cooking pots, etc.) with them. Upon their arrival in Lublin the deportees only had with them what they wore on their bodies.

The deportees are divided up among the villages of *Piaski*, *Glusk*, and *Belcyca* at a distance of about 26–30 kilometers from Lublin. The deportees from Stettin are also living there, as many of them as are still alive.

Men, women, and children had to march from Lublin to these villages on foot in a temperature of 22° [centigrade] below zero, along country roads deeply covered with snow. Shocking things occurred during this march. Of the approximately 1,200 persons deported from Stettin, 72 persons, including men and women up to 86 years old, were left lying on the march, which lasted more than 14 hours. The greater part of these people froze to death. Among them was a mother who was carrying her 3 year old child in her arms, tried to protect it from the cold with her clothes and was left lying in this position after inhuman hardships. Furthermore, the body of a child about 5 years old was found in a half frozen condition. It carried a cardboard sign around its neck with the name “Renate Alexander from Hammerstein in Pomerania.” It appeared that this child was deported with the others while visiting relatives in Stettin, while its parents are still living in Germany. This child had to have its hands

and feet amputated in the Lublin hospital. After the transport the corpses were collected on sleds along the country road and brought to the Jewish cemeteries in Piaski and Lublin.

Upon their arrival in the three villages the deportees were left to seek lodgings in the overcrowded houses and huts of the local Jews. Since there were no additional quarters available anywhere, the greater part of the deportees had to be lodged in stables, sheds, etc.; and since, besides this, there is no food except black bread, and the sanitary conditions are desperate, numerous persons are dying every day, especially old people and children. Up to 12 March the death rate among the Jews deported from Stettin alone increased to a total of 230. The Relief Committee is doing everything in its power. But it cannot procure any quarters and can also improve the food situation only to an insignificant degree. Medicine, ointment against chilblains, etc. are completely lacking. There is a lack of clothing, underwear, in short, everything. In view of the almost indescribable misery, some of the local Jews are on bad terms with the ones deported from Germany which is primarily caused by the diversity of languages and educational background. In addition to this the deportees arrive completely without means, have no cooking facilities, and in this way are slowly perishing. The Government General for the Occupied Polish Territories (District Chief Governor Zoerner) has disclaimed any responsibility for these occurrences and consequences resulting therefrom. Field Marshal Goering has been informed of these occurrences.

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 144–146, Doc. NG-2490.

71. THE MADAGASCAR PLAN, IN “THE JEWISH QUESTION IN THE PEACE TREATY,” JULY 3, 1940

Franz Rademacher had recently been appointed to head the Jewish Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Judenreferat, or Referat D III) when he wrote this memorandum suggesting that the Jewish question in Europe (die Judenfrage in Europa) could be solved by deporting all Jews to the island of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean off the southwest coast of Africa. Although not a new idea, it became a matter of particular interest for the Nazi regime after the defeat of

France in May 1940 made this French colony available to the Germans. The idea was positively received by the highest levels of the Nazi government, including Hans Frank, Reinhard Heydrich, and even Hitler. Rademacher envisioned the island as a German mandate, to be administered by the Jews themselves, subject, of course, to the authority of a German police governor. The idea was abandoned when Germany lost the Battle of Britain, meaning that the ability to transport millions of Jews over the tremendous distance from Europe to the island could not be assured. Serious consideration of the plan suggests the Nazis had not yet made a decision to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

MEMORANDUM BY RADEMACHER, 3 JULY 1940, ENTITLED “THE JEWISH QUESTION IN THE PEACE TREATY,” NOTING THAT THE DESIRABLE SOLUTION IS TO “GET ALL THE JEWS OUT OF EUROPE,” PROPOSING THAT MADAGASCAR BECOME A GERMAN MANDATE TO WHICH EUROPEAN JEWS BE SENT, AND RELATED MATTERS

The Jewish question in the peace treaty

The imminent victory gives Germany the possibility and, according to my opinion, also the obligation to solve the Jewish question in Europe [die Judenfrage in Europa]. The desirable solution—Get all the Jews out of Europe. The task of the Foreign Office in this respect is—

a. To lay the foundation for this demand in the peace treaty and to carry the same demand into effect by individual negotiations with the countries in Europe that are affected by the peace treaty

b. To secure in the peace treaty the territory, necessary for the settlement of the Jews and to establish the principle for the collaboration of the enemy countries on this problem

c. To determine the position in public law of the new overseas territory for Jewish settlement

d. As preliminary work—

(1) Clarification of the wishes and plans of the Party, State, and scientific bureaus interested and the coordination of these plans with wishes of the Reich Foreign Minister. Part of this is also

(2) The creation of a survey on factual basic dates which are to be found at the individual bureaus (number of the Jews in the individual countries), utilization of their property by an international bank

(3) Negotiations with Italy, our friend

The Referat D III has already approached the Reich Foreign Minister through Department Germany about initiating

preliminary work and was commissioned by him to start this preliminary work immediately. Conferences with the bureau of the Reich Leader SS, with the Ministry of the Interior, and with some Party offices have already taken place. These offices approved of the following plan of office (Referat) D III.

Referat D III suggests the following for the solution of the Jewish question: The peace treaty with France contains a clause whereby France has to put the isle of Madagascar at our disposal for the solution of the Jewish question, and its approximate 25,000 Frenchmen domiciled there are to be evacuated and compensated. The island will be transferred to Germany as a mandate. The bay of Diego-Suarez, important for reasons of naval strategy, as well as the harbor of Antsirana become German naval bases (there will perhaps also be the possibility for the further extension of these naval bases to the harbors—open landing places—Tamatave, Andevorante, Mananjary, etc., if the Navy so desires). Apart from these naval bases merely parts of the country which are suitable for establishing air bases are cut out from the territory of the Jews. The part of the island that is not required for military reasons is put under the administration of a German Police Governor, who in turn is subordinated to the administration of the Reich Leader SS. Otherwise the Jews will get autonomy in the territory; their own mayors, their own police, their own post and railway administration, etc. The Jews are responsible as joint debtors for the value of the island. The whole European property, owned by them so far, is transferred for this purpose to an European bank which is to be founded. As far as this property is not sufficient for the payment of the real estate values which change into their hands and for the purchase in Europe of goods, necessary for the reconstruction of the island, they will receive at their disposal bank credits from this source.

As Madagascar becomes only a mandate, the Jews settling there do not acquire German citizenship. However, all Jews who are deported to Madagascar are deprived of their citizenship of the individual European countries, effective from the time of deportation. Instead they become members of the Mandate Madagascar. This regulation removes the chance that the Jews establish a Vatican state of their own in Palestine and thus exploit for their own aims the symbolic value which Jerusalem has for the Christian and Mohammedan world. Besides, the Jews remain under German domination as a pawn for the future good conduct of their racial comrades in America. The generosity shown to the Jews by Germany in granting the cultural, economic, administrative, and judicial autonomy, can be exploited from the point of

view of propaganda. It can be emphasized in this respect that our German sense of responsibility toward the world forbids to offer immediately the gift of an independent state to a race which knew no national independence for thousands of years; national independence must of necessity stand the trial of history.

Berlin, 3 July 1940

[Signed] RADEMACHER

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 154–156, Doc. NG-2586-B.

72. REPORT FROM ALFRED ROSENBERG TO HITLER ON CONFISCATED JEWISH ART COLLECTIONS, MARCH 10, 1941

Alfred Rosenberg played several roles in the Nazi Party. He was one of the earliest members of the German Workers' Party (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), the predecessor to the Nazi Party; participated in the failed Beer Hall Putsch with Hitler in 1923; and was an important contributor to Nazi ideology. It was, however, in a different capacity that he wrote this document: as a leader in the field of expropriation of Jewish-owned art. Here he is informing Hitler of the plunder he was sending from France to Germany, amounting to some 4,000 pieces of art. In this respect, Rosenberg exemplifies the Nazis' broader policy dedicated to the theft of important pieces of art from throughout Europe, including, as in this case, collections owned by Jewish families.

Report to the Fuehrer

I report the arrival of the principal shipment of ownerless Jewish "cultural property" [Kulturgut] in the salvage location Neuschwanstein by special train on Saturday the 15th of this month. It was secured by my staff for Special Purposes [Einsatzstab] in Paris. The especial train, arranged for by Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering, comprised 25 express baggage cars filled with the most valuable paintings, furniture, Gobelins, works of artistic craftsmanship and ornaments. The shipment consisted chiefly of the most important parts of the collections Rothschild, Seligmann, Bernheim-

Jeune, Halphen, Kann, Weil-Picard, Wildenstein, David-Weill, Levy-Benzion.

My Staff for Special Purposes started the confiscatory action in Paris during October 1940 on the basis of your order, my Fuehrer. With the help of the Security Service (SD) and the Secret Field Police [Geheime Feldpolizei] all storage—and hiding-places of art possessions belonging to the fugitive Jewish emigrants were systematically ascertained. These possessions were then collected in the locations provided for by the Louvre in Paris. The art historians of my staff have itemized scientifically the complete art-material and have photographed all works of value. Thus, after completion, I shall be able to submit to you shortly a conclusive catalogue of all confiscated works with exact data about origin plus scientific evaluation and description. At this time the inventory includes more than 4000 individual pieces of art, partly of the highest artistic value. Besides this special train the masterpieces selected by the Reichsmarschall—mainly from the Rothschild collection—have been forwarded in two special cars to Munich already some time ago. They have been deposited there in the air raid shelters of the Fuehrer-building.

According to instruction the chief special train has been unloaded in Fussen. The cases containing pictures, furniture etc. have been stored in the castle Neuschwanstein. My deputies accompanied the special train and took care of the unloading in Neuschwanstein too.

First of all the paintings have to be unpacked to determine any possible damage suffered during the transport. Furthermore, the observation of climatic influences upon the paintings and their future careful maintenance necessitate their unpacking as well as their skillful setting-up. Due to lack of time a part of the shipment has not yet been fully inventoried in Paris. This has to be taken care of by my co-workers on the spot in Neuschwanstein to supplement the inventory in full. I have detached for Neuschwanstein the necessary technical and scientific personnel of my staff for the execution of this work. The required time for the unpacking and arranging in Neuschwanstein as well as the preparing of the exhibition rooms will take approximately 4 weeks. I shall report the completion of the work to you then, and request you, my Fuehrer, to let me show you the salvaged works of art at the spot. This will give you a survey over the work accomplished by my staff for Special Purposes.

Over and above the chief shipment there are secured in Paris a mass of additional abandoned Jewish art possessions. These are being processed in the same sense and prepared for shipment to Germany. Exact accounts about the extent of this remaining shipment are at the moment not available.

However, it is estimated that the work in the Western areas will be finished entirely within two to three months. Then a second transport can be brought to Germany.

Berlin, 20 March 1941

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 40–41, Doc. 014-PS.

73. TELETYPE EXCHANGE REGARDING TREATMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONAL JEWS, OCTOBER 30, 1941

One of Nazi Germany's ongoing concerns was the treatment of Jewish foreign nationals in Europe during the Nazi occupation. This exchange of teletypes deals with the arrest of a considerable number of such Jews in France. The German embassy in Paris is seeking guidance on their treatment from Ernst von Weizsaecker, chief of state secretary in the Foreign Office in Berlin. Specifically, the question is whether the military commander who made these arrests in France is correct in his position that it would create an unwanted precedent to release any of those Jews. The draft of Weizsaecker's response makes a sharp distinction between American Jewish nationals and those of other countries, directing that the former should be released, while the general rule regarding the latter should be that they be treated like all other Jews. The special treatment to be accorded to Jewish foreign nationals from America is an effort to avoid reprisals against Reich Germans living in America.

TELETYPE FROM THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN PARIS AND DRAFT REPLY ORIGINATING WITH DEFENDANT VON WEIZSAECKER, OCTOBER 1941, CONCERNING THE ARREST IN FRANCE OF JEWS WHO ARE NOT NATIONALS OF FRANCE

I. Teletype from Schleier in Paris, 30 October 1941
TELEGRAM
(Teletype, secret)

Paris, 30 October 1941, 1030 hours
Received 30 October 1941, 1100 hours

Urgent

No. 3382 of 30 October

Military Commander France has arrested a considerable number of Jews including foreign nationals, in the course of the big round-up on 20 August 1941 of French and foreign Jews involved in Communist and de Gaullist activities and in attempts against members of the Wehrmacht in the occupied zone of France. Foreign consuls in Paris have requested assistance of Embassy for the release of Jewish nationals of their respective countries. [The last sentence is underlined by hand.] [Handwritten] Submit to me 31 October. [Initial] W [Weizsaecker]

Military Commander and Security Service take the view that the fact that arrested Jews are foreign nationals, can in no way influence the measures taken. Release of individual Jews would create precedents.

Also, the French law of 4 October 1940 creates a basis to put French and foreign Jews into the concentration camps. The French Government has already put more than 20,000 Jews into concentration camps in the unoccupied part of France due to this law. Jews of foreign countries had the opportunity of leaving the occupied zone as late as end of last year, if they wanted to escape anti-Jewish measures. All interventions by representatives of foreign countries have been unsuccessful.

Request basic directive as to what attitude should be taken by the Embassy. [Handwritten] Competence? [Initial] F [Freytag]

SCHLEIER

In ten copies distributed to:

1. Pol I g
2. Reich Foreign Minister
3. State Secretary [defendant Weizsaecker]
4. Office of Foreign Minister
Ambassador Ritter
Chief Political Division [defendant Woermann]
Chief Commercial Policy Division
Chief Press Division Deputy Chief Political Division
No. 5, 3

2. Draft Teletype from defendant von Weizsaecker to von Ribbentrop, with handwritten changes, stating that the arrests of foreign Jews generally gives rise to no objection, but that the arrest of Jews of American nationality creates a special problem

to Pol IX 7751/41 g

1156 Teletype Exchange Regarding Treatment of Foreign National Jews

Carbon Copy

Berlin, October 1941

Referent: Senior Counsellor of Legation Freytag

[Initialed] E [Erdmannsdorf] 3 November

Dg.Pol

U.St.S.Pol [Woermann]

St.S [Weizsaecker]

[Handwritten] To the files State Secretary
[Illegible initial] 5 November.

[Handwritten on margin] *Urgent!* To Under State Secretary
Pol. Div. on account of the alternations made in the draft by
the State Secretary [Illegible] S [Siegfried] 3 November

Teletype

(Teletype, Secret) [G-Schreiben]

Through Office Reich Foreign Minister to *Special Train*

For the Reich Foreign Minister

Concerning telegram from Paris No. 3382 of 30 October, the
following is stated:

[Handwritten note] H. [Illegible] Please alter our copy.
F [Freytag] 4 November

1. With respect to the arrest [*Note.*—Changed to “arrests”
in handwriting] of Jews of foreign nationality, the measures
of the Military Commander France give rise to no
objections.

2. The arrest of Jews of American nationality on the other
hand create a more difficult [*Note.*—“More difficult”
changed to “difficult” in handwriting] situation. It must be
anticipated with certainty that the North American Govern-
ment as well as all Ibero-American States concerned, will
take action on these arrests and will make them the subject
of diplomatic interventions. The Ambassador of Chile has
already Undertaken [*Note.*—the capitalization of the first
letter of the verb is corrected in handwriting] steps following
the arrest of two Jewish Chileans and suggested that they be
released from arrest and expelled. The Mexican Charge
d’Affaires, a few days ago, lodged a protest on account of the
arrest of a Mexican Jew. Embassy Paris [*Note.*—“has”
inserted in handwriting] in telegram No. 3882 reported also
that “foreign consuls in Paris” [*Note.*—“have” inserted in
handwriting] requested assistance of the Embassy for the

release of Jewish nationals of their respective countries.
Embassy has been instructed to send a supplementary report
giving the names of those countries.

3. In the meantime, following the steps taken by the Chil-
ean Ambassador, Germany Division (D III) has got in touch
with the Reich Security Main Office in order to procure the
release of the Chilean Jews arrested in the occupied zone of
France. The Reich Security Main Office has promised exami-
nation of the matter in concurrence with the Paris Bureaus
of the Security Service [Sicherheitsdienst].

[The following sentence was stricken out by hand.]

4. The following has to be borne in mind for the evalua-
tion of this matter. [Handwritten] F. We would get the worst
of it. It * * *.

[Numeral handwritten.]

4. In case we decline the release of Jewish nationals of
American countries, we must anticipate reprisals by the gov-
ernments concerned against Reich nationals. [*Note.*—The
balance of this paragraph was stricken by hand. Originally
the stricken part read: “In this respect we are at a consider-
able disadvantage (sitzen wir am kuerzeren Hebel) since the
number of Reich Germans in America is many times in
excess of the number of nationals of American countries
in territory under our control. In addition we must expect
strong propagandist reaction in the Jewish press, which
would even further impair our already strained relations
with several Ibero-American States. Any anticipated favor-
able results in domestic politics would therefore be strongly
outweighed by the disadvantages likely to result in our for-
eign relations.”]

It is therefore planned to instruct our Paris Embassy to
make a request, stating all relevant political reasons, to the
Military Commander France and the Chief of the Security
Service (Sicherheitsdienst), to release the arrested Jews who
possess an American nationality, as far as their arrest is
not justified by any criminal act. In addition it might be
worth considering whether all Jewish nationals of American
countries should not be expelled from the occupied territo-
ries with a view to removing the causes of friction created
hereby [*Note.*—“hereby” changed to “by their residence” in
handwriting].

WEIZSAECKER

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribu-
nals Under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government
Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 174–177, Doc.
NG-5095.

74. REGARDING RIBBENTROP'S INSTRUCTIONS ON SPEEDING UP EVACUATION OF JEWS FROM EUROPE, SEPTEMBER 24, 1942

Martin Luther, undersecretary (Unterstaatssekretär) of the Foreign Ministry, is conveying in this document to Ernst von Weizsaecker, chief of state secretary in the Foreign Office in Berlin, a decision made by Joachim von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister, to expedite evacuation of Jews from various occupied countries in Europe. At this time, mass murders were occurring at extermination camps in Poland, including Auschwitz, where only two months earlier more than 4,000 children deported from Paris were exterminated. The reason given for the need to increase evacuations is that the Jews "stir up" others against the Nazi regime. In fact, the increased evacuations were part of the overall Nazi plan to deport as many Jews as possible "to the East," meaning to their deaths in the extermination camps.

NOTE FROM LUTHER TO DEFENDANT VON WEIZSAECKER, WITH COPIES TO DEFENDANT WOERMANN AND OTHERS, 24 SEPTEMBER 1942, CONCERNING VON RIBBENTROP'S INSTRUCTIONS ON SPEEDING UP EVACUATION OF JEWS FROM EUROPE AND NOTING THAT ALL STEPS TAKEN BY DEPARTMENT GERMANY WILL BE SUBMITTED TO VON WEIZSAECKER FOR APPROVAL

Under State Secretary, D.-No. 6062

[Handwritten] Instructions received
Berlin, 24 September 1942

Secret!
Memorandum

The Reich Foreign Minister has given me instructions today over the telephone to hurry as much as possible the evacuation of Jews from the various countries of Europe, because it is a known fact that the Jews stir up people against us everywhere and that they must be made responsible for attempts of murder and acts of sabotage. Upon a brief report concerning the present stage of evacuation of the Jews from Slovakia, Croatia, Rumania, and the occupied territories, the Reich Foreign Minister has given instructions now to start contacting the governments of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Denmark with the object of starting the evacuation of the Jews from these countries.

With regard to the settlement of the Jewish question in Italy, the Reich Foreign Minister has reserved for himself all steps to be taken. This question shall be discussed personally either between the Fuehrer and the Duce or between the Reich Foreign Minister and Count Ciano.

Herewith to the State Secretary v. Weizsaecker with the request to take notice. All steps taken by us will be submitted to you at the time for your approval.

Original returned.

[Signed] LUTHER

Copies:

Under State Secretary
Political Division [Initial] W [Woermann].
Under State Secretary
Legal Division [Handwritten initials and illegible notes].
Dirigent Trade Policy
D II
D III
Dirigent Pol [Illegible initials] 26/9
Pol IV
Pol X
[Illegible initial] 29/9 [Initial] W 26/9

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 255–256, Doc. NG-1517.

75. REGARDING DEPORTATION OF JEWS FROM HUNGARY, JUNE 17, 1944

Hungary had a Jewish population of over 800,000 in 1941. It was a German ally but refused to allow the mass deportations of its Jews despite Berlin's directions. When in February 1943 it suffered significant casualties in the failed effort by Germany and its allies to defeat Russia, Hungary's prime minister, Miklos Kallay, sought to negotiate an armistice directly with the Allied forces, prompting Germany to invade and occupy the country. Mass deportations to Auschwitz began in May 1944, and within two months 440,000 Jews were gone. In this document, Edmund Veesenmayer, Reich plenipotentiary to Hungary, provided an interim report to Karl Ritter, senior official in the Foreign Ministry and close associate to Joachim von Ribbentrop, German foreign minister, that cites some

1158 Regulation Banning Jewish Emigration from the *Generalgouvernement*

326,000 Jews who had been deported to date. It is a harsh reminder of the speed with which the last major Jewish community in Europe was decimated.

TELEGRAM FROM DEFENDANT VEESENMAYER TO DEFENDANT RITTER, 17 JUNE 1944, REPORTING THAT 326,009 JEWS HAVE BEEN DE.PORTEED FROM HUNGARY

[Stamp] Foreign Office
Inland II 1213 g
Received: 20 June 1944
encl.

[Stamp] To be treated as sealed matter only.

Telegram from Budapest No. 1820 of 17 June for
Ambassador Ritter

Addition to wire report No. 258 of 15 June. The Higher SS and Police Leader reported to me on 15 June:

Note—Telegram was sent by Budapest Embassy directly to FuschI. Telegram control.

1. *Communism*.—KDS [Commander of Security Police] Budapest arrested the Jew Deutsch and his wife because he is suspected of being a Bolshevik agent. Deutsch was in Moscow from 1932 to 1936 and was visited there a number of times by his wife. After her return from Moscow she frequently stated that she worked there as a tailor for GPU commissars.

[Handwritten] (1) . . . Inland II . . . (2) Pol VI for information (3) to the files—S—Hungary . . . [initials] v. Th. [von Thadden] 20/6

2. *Jews*.—Total number of Jews deported to the Reich, 326,009. From circles of the Rumanian Consul General in Cluj we found out that the Hungarian Jews who have fled to Rumania are treated there like political refugees and that the Rumanian Government intends to make it possible for them to emigrate to Palestine.

[Stamp] Working copy to be registered with Inland II
[Handwritten] Jews Hungary
VEESENMAYER

Distribution list:

Reich Foreign Minister 2x
State Secretary 3x
Under State Secretary Pol. Div 1x

Deputy Chief, Pol. Div. 1x
Pol. I M 1x
Pol. IV b 1x
Inland II (working copy) 1x
Minister Frohwein 1x

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 358–359, Doc. NG-5567.

76. REGULATION BANNING JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE *GENERALGOUVERNEMENT*, NOVEMBER 23, 1940

This document was sent on behalf of SS Sturmbannführer Karl August Eckhardt to district governors in the General Government (Generalgouvernement), that part of German-occupied Poland that was not incorporated into the Reich. It transmits a decree from the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt) that bans the emigration of Jews from the General Government. A ban on Jewish emigration would seem to be inconsistent with the German government's efforts to encourage Jewish emigration. However, according to the decree, Jews in the General Government are primarily from Eastern Europe, are more likely to be orthodox in their beliefs and practices, and are well educated in Jewish law and tradition. If they emigrate to the United States, they will be in great demand, could strengthen and unify the Jewish community, and perhaps will be in a position to build U.S. opposition to the Nazi regime. Further, if they are allowed to emigrate they will use up some of the very few opportunities to emigrate that are available to Jews in other areas of the Reich from which the Nazi government would like to see more emigration.

In a Decree of October 25, 1940, the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) has informed me of the following:

“Owing to the fact that the emigration of Jews from the Government-General still further considerably reduced the already shrinking opportunities for emigration for Jews from the *Altreich*, the *Ostmark* [Austria] and the Protectorate of

Bohemia and Moravia, contrary to the wish of the Reich Marshal, I request that no such emigration be considered.

“The continued emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe [to the West] spells a continued spiritual regeneration of world Jewry, as it is mainly the Eastern Jews who supply a large proportion of the rabbis, Talmud teachers, etc., owing to their orthodox-religious beliefs, and they are urgently needed by Jewish organizations active in the United States, according to their own statements. Further, every orthodox Jew from Eastern Europe spells a valuable addition for these Jewish organizations in the United States in their constant efforts for the spiritual renewal of United States Jewry and its unification. It is United States Jewry in particular, which is endeavoring, with the help of newly immigrated Jews, especially from Eastern Europe, to create a new basis from which it intends to force ahead its struggle, particularly against Germany.

“For these reasons it can be assumed that after a certain number of emigration permits have been issued, creating a precedent for Jews from the Government-General, so to speak, a large part of the entry visas, [which are] mainly for the United States, will in future only be made available for Jews from Eastern Europe.”

I fully accept the point of view of the Reich Security Main Office and request that you will not pass on to the office here for decision any more applications by Jews to emigrate. Such applications would of course have to be rejected here.

I empower you to reject without further investigation any applications by Jews from the Government-General for permission to emigrate. It is requested that applications to emigrate shall be forwarded here only if they involve Jews holding foreign citizenship. As there is no further question of emigration by Jews from the Government-General as a matter of principle, there is also no need for a Jew to receive a permit to visit the Reich for the purpose of obtaining a visa from a foreign consulate in the German Reich. It is requested that even applications by Jews for the issuing of a permit for the purpose of obtaining a visa from a foreign consulate in the Reich should also be rejected.

(for) Eckhardt

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalot, eds., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*, translated by Lea Ben Dor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 219–220. Used by permission of Yad Vashem.

77. KRISTALLNACHT: TELEGRAM ON GERMAN PRESS COVERAGE OF VOM RATH SHOOTING, NOVEMBER 8, 1938, 4:00 P.M.

Hugh R. Wilson was U.S. ambassador to Germany for just ten months, but during his last week in that capacity the Nazis initiated and organized Kristallnacht, the first mass violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria. This telegram and the next are from Wilson to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, informing him of the German press coverage of the shooting of Ernst vom Rath, secretary of legation in the German embassy in Paris, by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old Polish Jew who was seeking revenge for the way his family was being treated in Germany. This event, reported by the German press to inflame antisemitism, was used by the Nazi leadership as the excuse to unleash Kristallnacht and its vast destruction of Jewish businesses, the loss of some 90 Jewish lives, complete destruction or desecration of synagogues throughout all of Germany and Austria, and the arrest of 30,000 Jewish males.

GRAY

From Berlin

Dated November 8, 1938

Rec'd 1:25 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington

600, November 8, 4 p.m.

The shooting of Secretary of Legation Rath in the German Embassy in Paris by one Grynszpan, a Polish Jew, is featured in the morning press here.

The tenor of extensive German press comment is exemplified by the following quotation for the DEUTSCH ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

“The Jewish crime in the German Embassy in Paris, nobody should be in doubt, will have the severest consequences for the Jews in Germany and for the foreign Jews in Germany as well (* * *) the suspicion is obvious that it was the intention of the possible inciters of the crime to cause difficulties between Germany and France in an era of commencing rapprochement * * * (as in the case of Gustlof Indavas) the entire people and the entire Reich stands by the victim not only in mourning and complaint but doubtless also with acts of state power.”

Text to London for Rublee.

Wilson
WWC-PEG

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1808: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

78. KRISTALLNACHT: TELEGRAM ON ADDITIONAL OBSERVATION ABOUT GERMAN PRESS COVERAGE OF VOM RATH SHOOTING, NOVEMBER 9, 1938, 12:30 P.M.

See the introduction to document 77.

GRAY
Berlin
Dated November 9, 1938
Rec'd 12:30 p.m.
Secretary of State,
Washington
603, November 9, 5 p.m.

Further to my No. 600 of 4 p.m., yesterday, German press continues to feature Grynspan case insisting he must have had instigators "in Paris, Geneva, Moscow or New York" and demanding reprisals against Jews in Germany both German and foreign.

Wilson
CSB

Source: State CDF 862.4016/1810: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

79. ORDER BANNING JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE REICH, OCTOBER 23, 1941

This order came just months after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union—Operation Barbarossa—in June 1941. It was during the spring or summer of 1941 that Hitler made the decision to exterminate the Jews of Europe. Accordingly, it

should come as no surprise that Jewish emigration was being terminated because it was no longer seen as a solution to the Jewish question (Judenfrage). It was only a year earlier—in November 1940—that a decree banned the emigration of Jews from the General Government (Generalgouvernement), that part of German-occupied Poland that was not incorporated into the Reich, but rather than being a precursor to this order that banned emigration from the Reich, that earlier decree was made in part in order to allow for greater emigration from other parts of the Reich. Now, with the decision made to kill all Jews in Europe, emigration—whether from the General Government or elsewhere in German-occupied Europe—was viewed as inadequate to the task of making Europe free of Jews (Judenfrei).

Reich Security Main Office
Berlin, October 23, 1941
IV B 4 b(Rz) 2920/41 g (984)

To. . .

The Officer appointed by the Chief of the Security Police and the SD for Belgium and France

SS *Brigadeführer* Thomas
Brussels

Secret

Re: Emigration of Jews
Reference: none

The *Reichsführer* SS and Chief of the German Police has decreed that the *emigration* of Jews is to be prevented, taking effect immediately. (Evacuation *Aktionen* will remain unaffected.)

I request that the internal German Authorities concerned in the area of service there may be informed of this order.

Permission for the emigration of individual Jews can only be approved *in single very special cases*; for instance, in the event of a genuine interest on the part of the Reich, and then only after a prior decision has been obtained from the Reich Security Main Office.

signed Müller

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalio, eds., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*, translated by Lea Ben Dor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 153–154. Used by permission of Yad Vashem.

80. KRISTALLNACHT: HEYDRICH'S INSTRUCTIONS, NOVEMBER 10, 1938

Issued by SS Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942) during the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, this document contained the following explicit instructions: German citizens or property were not to be destroyed, Jewish businesses and apartments were not to be looted, foreign nationals (including Jews) were to be left alone, Jewish archives were to be seized, and as many Jews as possible were to be imprisoned. As a result of this event, 90 Jews were killed in the attacks, and 30,000 were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps. Jewish homes, hospitals, and schools were ransacked, as the attackers destroyed such buildings while avoiding German-owned ones. Over 1,000 synagogues were burned and over 7,000 Jewish businesses damaged or destroyed.

Copy

Teletype Message Munich 47 767 10 November 1938—
0120—

To all State Police Main Offices and Field Offices

To all SD—Main Sectors and to SD—Sub-sectors

SECRET

Flash Urgent to be submitted at once. Urgent—to be submitted immediately to the Chief or his deputy.

Regards: Measures against Jews to-night.

Because of the attempt on the life of von Rath, Legation Secretary in Paris, demonstrations against the Jews are to be expected in the entire Reich in the course of this night—from the 9th to the 10th of November 1938. For the handling of these actions the following directions are issued:

1. The chiefs of the State Police Offices or their deputies will immediately after receipt of this teletype message establish telephone contact with the political leadership offices—Gau Directorate or Kreis Directorate—within their region and arrange a conference about the handling of the demonstrations. The respective inspectors and commanders of the Order Police are to participate in the conference. In this conference the political leadership offices are to be informed that the German police have received the following directives from the Reichsfuehrer of the SS and Chief of the German Police, which directives are to be conformed to by the political leadership offices in an appropriate manner:

a. Only such measures may be taken which do not jeopardize German life or property (for instance, burning of synagogues only if there is no danger of fires for the neighborhood).

b. Business establishments and homes of Jews may be destroyed but not looted. The police have been instructed to supervise the execution of these directives and to arrest looters.

c. In business streets special case is to be taken that non-Jewish establishments will be safeguarded at all cost against damage.

d. Subjects of foreign countries may not be molested even if they are Jews.

2. Under the provision that the directives given under No. 1 are being complied with, the demonstrations are not to be prevented but merely supervised regarding compliance with the directives.

3. Immediately after receipt of this teletype the archives of the Jewish communities are to be confiscated by the police, so that they will not be destroyed in the course of the demonstrations. Important in this respect is historically valuable material, not recent tax lists, etc. The archives are to be delivered to the respective SD Office.

4. The direction of the measures of the Safety Police regarding the demonstrations against Jews is in the hands of the State Police Offices, in as much as the inspectors of the Safety Police do not issue different directives. For the performance of the measures of the Safety Police, officers of the criminal police as well as members of the SD, the special troops and the SS, may be used.

5. As soon as the events of this night permit the use of the designated officers, as many Jews, particularly wealthy ones, as the local jails will hold, are to be arrested in all districts. Initially only healthy male Jews, not too old, are to be arrested. After the arrests have been carried out the appropriate concentration camp is to be contacted immediately with a view to a quick transfer of the Jews to the camps. Special care is to be taken that Jews arrested on the basis of this directive will not be mistreated.

6. The content of this order is to be communicated to the respective inspectors and commanders of the Order Police and to the SD Chief Sectors and the SD Sub-sectors with the notification that these police measures have been issued by the Reichsfuehrer of the SS and the Chief of the German Police. The Chief of the Order Police issues appropriate orders to the Fire Department Police. The Safety Police and the Order Police are to work in closest coordination in the execution of these measures.

1162 Kristallnacht: Telegram to United States Secretary of State Announcing Outbreak of Destruction

The receipt of this teletype is to be confirmed by the State Police Director or a deputy via teletype to the Secret State Police Office into the hands of SS Colonel [Standartenfuehrer] Muller.

Signed : HEYDRICH
SS General [Gruppenfuehrer]

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 545–547, Doc. 765-PS.

In the early hours of this morning systematic breaking of Jewish owned shop windows throughout the Reich and the burning of the principal synagogues in Berlin was carried out. * * *

WILSON
WWC: CSB

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 311, Doc. 2602-PS.

81. KRISTALLNACHT: TELEGRAM TO UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE ANNOUNCING OUTBREAK OF DESTRUCTION, NOVEMBER 10, 1938

This telegram and the next are reports from U.S. diplomats in Germany to the U.S. secretary of state, Cordell Hull, about the demonstrations and destruction in Berlin and Bremen as a result of Kristallnacht, the first mass violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria. The first is from Hugh R. Wilson, U.S. ambassador to Germany, with a brief statement to the effect that anti-Jewish violence has broken out in Berlin. The second is from Edwin C. Kemp, U.S. consul general in Bremen, with a slightly more detailed description of the destruction in Bremen and the arrest there of Jewish men. Of significance is Kemp's observation that what happened in Bremen was not the result of a spontaneous outburst by a mob, but a planned and coordinated action.

CONFIDENTIAL
TELEGRAM RECEIVED
—————GRAY

FROM Berlin
Dated November 10, 1938
Rec'd 10:35 a. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington
605, November 10, 2 p. m.
My 600, November 8, 4 p. m. and 603, November 9, 5 p. m.

82. KRISTALLNACHT: TELEGRAM TO UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE REGARDING ANTI-JEWISH DEMONSTRATIONS IN BREMEN, NOVEMBER 10, 1938

See the introduction to document 81.

Report by: Edwin C. Kemp
U. S. Consul General in Breme

To the Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.
Date: 10 November 1938

Subject: Anti-Jewish Demonstrations in Bremen

I have the honor to report that on the night of November 9th the Jewish synagogue and cemetery chapel in Bremen were burned, and the show windows of all the Jewish shops were smashed to pieces. Large notices written in red and black reading "Revenge for the murder of vom Rath", "Death of international Jewry" and similar phrases were left conspicuously in sight.

During the early hours of the 10th a number of arrests of Jews were made, and about nine o'clock in the morning about fifty Jewish men, some of decrepit age or health, were paraded along the main street under guard of about six S.A. men.

The attitude of the population, the presence of the many written notices which were done by the same hand

and must have required some time to prepare are sufficient evidence that the destruction was not the work of a spontaneous mob enthusiasm, as claimed by some official authorities.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 312, Doc. 2603-PS.

83. KRISTALLNACHT: SA REPORT ON DESTRUCTION, NOVEMBER 11, 1938

This report of damage committed during Kristallnacht, the first mass violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria, is explicit in its intent. The Fuehrer of Brigade 50 in Starkenburg in Rhineland-Palatinate (in western Germany), having received an order to immediately blow up or set on fire the synagogues in the area, notified the leader of the paramilitary Standartenführer (SA) unit to begin the process, noting, however, that it must be done without damage to non-Jewish property, and with the men dressed in civilian clothes, in keeping with Nazi propaganda that the destruction was a spontaneous expression of the anger of German citizens at the murder by a Jewish teenager, Herschel Grynszpan, of a functionary in the German embassy in Paris. The list then follows of synagogues that were destroyed by fire, had their interior and furnishings destroyed, or were blown up. This document is one of many such reports from throughout Germany and Austria that recorded and catalogued the destruction not only of synagogues, but also of Jewish homes and businesses.

CONFIDENTIAL

SA der NSDAP

50th Brigade (Starkenburg)

Division F Reference No 4309

DARMSTADT, 2 Moosbergstrasse 11 November 1938

Tel. 7042 and 7043 Postal checking account: Frankfurt on the Main 234-38 Bankaccount City Savings Bank 155

To: SA Group Electoral Palatinate [Kurpfalz] Mannheim

The following order reached me at 3 o'clock on 10 November 1938.

“On the order of the Gruppenfuehrer, all the Jewish synagogues within the 50th Brigade are to be blown up or set on fire immediately.”

“Neighboring houses occupied by Aryans are not to be damaged. The action is to be carried out in civilian clothes. Rioting and plundering are to be prevented. Report of execution of orders to reach Brigade Fuehrer or office by 8:30.”

I immediately alerted the Standartenfuehrer and gave them the most exact instructions; the execution of the order began at once.

I hereby report that the following were destroyed in the area of:

Standarte 115

1. Synagogue at Darmstadt, Bleichstrasse destroyed by fire.
2. Synagogue at Darmstadt, Fuchsstrasse destroyed by fire.
3. Synagogue at Ober/Ramstadt interior and furnishings wrecked.
4. Synagogue at Graefenhausen interior and furnishings wrecked.
5. Synagogue at Griesheim interior and furnishings wrecked
6. Synagogue at Pfungstadt interior and furnishings wrecked.
7. Synagogue at Eberstadt destroyed by fire.

Standarte 145

1. Synagogue at Bensheim destroyed by fire.
2. Synagogue at Lorsch in Hessen destroyed by fire.
2. Synagogue at Heppenheim destroyed by fire and blown-up.
3. Synagogue at Birkenau destroyed by fire.
4. Prayer House Alsbach destroyed by fire.
5. Meeting room Alsbach destroyed by fire.
6. Synagogue at Rimbach furnishings completely destroyed.

Standarte 168

1. Synagogue in Seligenstadt destroyed by fire.
2. Synagogue in Offenbach destroyed by fire.
3. Synagogue in Klein-Krotzenburg destroyed by fire.
4. Synagogue in Steinheim on the Main destroyed by fire.
5. Synagogue in Muehlheim on the Main destroyed by fire.
6. Synagogue in Sprendlingen destroyed by fire.
7. Synagogue in Langen destroyed by fire.
8. Synagogue in Egelsbach destroyed by fire.

Standarte 186

1. Synagogue in Beerfelden blown up
2. Synagogue in Michelstadt furnishings wrecked.
3. Synagogue in Koenig furnishings wrecked.
4. Synagogue in Hoechst i/Odenwald furnishings wrecked.
5. Synagogue in Gross-Umstadt furnishings wrecked.
6. Synagogue in Dieburg furnishings wrecked.
7. Synagogue in Babenhausen furnishings wrecked.
8. Synagogue in Gross-Bieberau destroyed by fire.
9. Synagogue in Fraenk. Crumbach furnishings destroyed.
10. Synagogue in Reichelsheim furnishings destroyed.

Standarte 221

1. Synagogue and Chapel in Gross Gerau destroyed by fire.
2. Synagogue in Ruesselheim torn down and furnishings destroyed.
3. Synagogue in Dornheim furnishings destroyed.
4. Synagogue in Wolfskehlen furnishings destroyed.

The Fuehrer of Brigade 50 (Starkenburg)
/s/ [Illegible]
Brigadefuehrer

Stamped: SA Group Electoral Palatinate (Kurpfalz)
11 Nov 1938

/s/ [Illegible]

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 215–216, Doc. 1721-PS.

84. KRISTALLNACHT: TELEGRAM TO UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR HUGH R. WILSON REGARDING ANTISEMITIC PERSECUTION IN THE STUTTGART CONSULAR DISTRICT, NOVEMBER 12, 1938

This report by Samuel W. Honaker, American consul general in Stuttgart, Germany, to Hugh R. Wilson, U.S. ambassador in Berlin, confirms the execution of the directions given by SS Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich to all state police offices

throughout Germany and Austria on November 10, namely, that they were to destroy synagogues while assuring that non-Jewish buildings did not suffer any damage. This report speaks about what occurred in the Stuttgart Consular District in southwest Germany. While most of his report is couched in diplomatic objectivity, it is noticeable that Honaker begins his report with a highly emotional statement of the suffering of the Jews during Kristallnacht, a level of suffering that would have been unthinkable in “an enlightened country during the twentieth century.” His incredulity conveys to the reader of his report the dramatic impact of the destruction that occurred.

Report by Samuel W. Honaker, American Consul General to U. S. Ambassador Hugh R. Wilson, Berlin

Date: 12 November 1938

Subject: Antisemitic Persecution in the Stuttgart Consular District.

I have the honor to report that the Jews of Southwest Germany have suffered vicissitudes during the last three days which would seem unreal to one living in an enlightened country during the twentieth century if one had not actually been a witness of their dreadful experiences, or if one had not had them corroborated by more than one person of undoubted integrity.

Early on the morning of November 10th practically every synagogue—at least twelve in number—in Wuerttemberg, Baden and Hohenzollern was set on fire by well disciplined and apparently well equipped young men in civilian clothes. The procedure was practically the same in all cities of this district, namely, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Freiburg, Heidelberg, Heilbronn, et cetera. The doors of the synagogues were forced open. Certain sections of the building and furnishings were drenched with petrol and set on fire. Bibles, prayer books, and other sacred things were thrown into the flames. Then the local fire brigades were notified. In Stuttgart, the city officials ordered the fire brigades to save the archives and other written material having a bearing on vital statistics. Otherwise, the fire brigades confined their activities to preventing the flames from spreading. In a few hours the synagogues were, in general, heaps of smoking ruins.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 312–313, Doc. 2604-PS.

85. KRISTALLNACHT: PAYMENT OF FINE BY JEWS OF GERMAN NATIONALITY, NOVEMBER 12, 1938

In what can only be described as a stunning demand, this decree by Hermann Göring, plenipotentiary of the Four-Year Plan, requires that the Jewish community must pay for the damage inflicted on them—on their synagogues, homes, and businesses—during Kristallnacht, the first mass government-organized violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria. The explanation for the decree is equally illogical, namely that the demand for payment is due to the “hostile attitude” of the Jews, an attitude that gave rise to the commission of murder, this despite the fact that the only deaths to occur during Kristallnacht were those of some 90 Jews.

1938 REICHSGESETZBLATT, PART I, PAGE 1579

Decree relating to the payment of a fine by the Jews of German nationality of 12 Nov. 1938.

The hostile attitude of the Jewry towards the German people and Reich, which does not even shrink back from committing cowardly murder, makes a decisive defense and a harsh punishment (expiation) necessary. I order, therefore, by virtue of the decree concerning the execution of the 4-year Plan of 18 Oct. 1936 (RGBl. I, page 887) as follows:

Section 1

On the Jews of German nationality as a whole has been imposed the payment of a contribution of 1,000,000,000 Reichsmark to the German Reich.

Section 2

Provisions for the implementation are issued by the Reich-Minister of Finance in agreement with the Reich-Ministers concerned.

Berlin, 12 November 1938.

The Commissioner for the Four Year Plan

Goering
General Field-Marshal.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, p. 6, Doc. 1412-PS.

86. KRISTALLNACHT AND ARYANIZATION: EXCERPTS FROM A CONFERENCE ON “THE JEWISH QUESTION,” CHAIRED BY GOERING, NOVEMBER 12, 1938

In a three-and-a-half-hour conference led by Hermann Göring, plenipotentiary of the Four-Year Plan, discussion was held in response to Hitler’s request that “the Jewish question be now, once and for all, coordinated and solved one way or another.” These words would become far more chilling in the years to come, but at this point in the Nazi “continuum of evil,” the intent was to further burden and isolate the Jewish community economically in an effort to ensure Jewish emigration from the Reich. One of the principal concerns of the meeting was to ensure that German insurance companies would not pay members of the Jewish community for the extensive destruction done to their homes, businesses, and synagogues during Kristallnacht, the first mass government-organized violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria. Another area of significant discussion was the “aryanizing” of Jewish stores, as well as Jewish-owned factories and large industrial concerns. The conference also considered various restrictions to be imposed on Jews in public life, such as in theaters and trains. Further, attention was paid to the issue of Jewish emigration from the Reich, as well as the establishment of ghettos.

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF THE MEETING ON “THE JEWISH QUESTION” UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF FIELD MARSHALL GOERING IN THE REICHS AIR FORCE (12 November 1938-11 o’clock)

Part I

Goering: Gentlemen! Today’s meeting is of a decisive nature. I have received a letter written on the Fuehrer’s orders by the Stabsleiter of the Fuehrer’s deputy Bormann, requesting that the Jewish question be now, once and for all, coordinated and solved one way or another. And yesterday once again did the Fuehrer request by phone for me to take coordinated action in the matter.

Since the problem is mainly an economic one, it is from the economic angle that it shall have to be tackled. Naturally a number of legal measures shall have to be taken which fall into the sphere of the Minister for Justice and into that of the Minister of the Interior; and certain propaganda measures shall be taken care of by the Minister for Propaganda. The

Minister for Finance and the Minister for Economic Affairs shall take care of problems falling in their respective resorts.

In the meeting, in which we first talked about this question and came to the decision to aryanize German economy, to take the Jew out of it, and put him into our debit ledger, was one in which, to our shame, we only made pretty plans, which were executed very slowly. We then had a demonstration, right here in Berlin, we told the people that something decisive would be done, but again nothing happened. We have had this affair in Paris now, more demonstrations followed and this time something decisive must be done!

Because, gentlemen, I have enough of these demonstrations! They don't harm the Jew but me, who is the last authority for coordinating the German economy.

If today, a Jewish shop is destroyed, if goods are thrown into the street, the insurance company will pay for the damages, which the Jew does not even have; and furthermore goods of the consumer goods belonging to the people, are destroyed. If in the future, demonstrations which are necessary, occur, then, I pray, that they be directed, so as not to hurt us.

Because it's insane to clean out and burn a Jewish warehouse then have a German insurance company make good the loss. And the goods which I need desperately, whole bales of clothing and what-not, are being burned; and I miss them everywhere.

I may as well burn the raw materials before they arrive. The people of course, do not understand that; therefore we must make laws which will show the people once and for all, that something is being done.

I should appreciate it very much if for once, our propaganda would make it clear that it is unfortunately not the Jew who has to suffer in all this, but the German insurance companies.

I am not going to tolerate a situation in which the insurance companies are the ones who suffer. Under the authority invested in me, I shall issue a decree, and I am, of course, requesting the support of the competent Government agencies, so that everything shall be processed through the right channels and the insurance companies will not be the ones who suffer.

It may be, though, that these insurance companies may have insurance in foreign countries. If that is the case, foreign bills of exchange would be available which I would not want to lose. That shall have to be checked. For that reason, I have asked Mr. Hilgard of the insurance company, to attend, since he is best qualified to tell us to what extent the

insurance companies are protected against damage, by having taken out insurance with other companies. I would not want to miss this, under any circumstances.

I should not want to leave any doubt, gentlemen, as to the aim of today's meeting. We have not come together merely to talk again, but to make decisions, and I implore the competent agencies to take all measures for the elimination of the Jew from German economy and to submit them to me, as far as it is necessary.

The fundamental idea in this program of elimination of the Jew from German economy is first, the Jew being ejected from the Economy transfers his property to the State. He will be compensated. The compensation is to be listed in the debit ledger and shall bring a certain percentage of interest. The Jew shall have to live out of this interest. It is a foregone conclusion, that this aryanizing, if it is to be done quickly, cannot be made in the Ministry for Economy in Berlin. That way, we would never finish.

On the other hand, it is very necessary to have safety precautions so that the lower echelons, Statthalter, and Gauleiter will not do things unreasonably. One must issue correction directives, immediately.

The aryanizing of all the larger establishments, naturally, is to be my lot—the Ministry for Economy will designate, which and how many there are—it must not be done by a Statthalter or his lower echelons, since these things reach into the export trade, and cause great problems, which the Statthalter can neither observe, nor solve from his place.

It is my lot, so that the damage will not be greater than the profit, which we are striving for.

It is obvious gentlemen, that the Jewish stores are for the people, and not the stores. Therefore, we must begin here, according to the rules previously' laid down.

The Minister for Economic Affairs shall announce which stores he'll want to close altogether. These stores are excluded from aryanizing at once. Their stocks are to be made available for sale in other stores; what cannot be sold, shall be processed through the “Winterhilfe” or taken care of otherwise. However, the sales values of these articles shall always be considered, since the State is not to suffer but should profit through this transformation. For the chain and department stores—I speak now only of that, what can be seen, certain categories have to be established, according to the importance of the various branches.

The trustee of the State will estimate the value of the property and decide what amount the Jew shall receive. Naturally, this amount is to be set as low as possible. The representative

of the State shall then turn the establishment over to the “Aryan” proprietor, that is, the property shall be sold according to its real value.

There begins the difficulties. It is easily understood that strong attempts will be made to get all these stores to party-members and to let them have some kind of compensations. I have witnessed terrible things in the past; little chauffeurs of Gauleiters have profited so much by these transactions that they have now about half a million. You, gentlemen, know it. Is that correct?

(Assent)

Of course, things like that are impossible. I shall not hesitate to act ruthlessly in any case where such a trick is played. If the individual involved is prominent, I shall see the Fuehrer within two hours and report to him.

We shall have to insist upon it, that the Aryan taking over the establishment is of the branch and knows his job. Generally speaking he is the one who must pay for the store with his own money. In other words, an ordinary business transaction is to be sought—one merchant selling, the other one buying a business. If there are party members among the contenders, they are to be preferred, that is if they have the same qualifications: first shall come the one who had the most damage, and secondly, selection should be according to length of Party membership.

Of course, there may be exceptions. There are party-members who, as may be proven, lost their business concessions by action of the Schuschnigg or Prague Government, and so went bankrupt. Such a man has naturally first option on a store for sale, and he shall receive help if he does not have the means to help himself. The trustee of the State can justify this help, if he is more business like in the transfer. This party-member should have the chance to buy the store for as cheap a price as possible. In such a case the State will not receive the full price, but only the amount the Jew received. Such a buyer may even receive a loan besides, so that he will get off to a good start.

I wish to make it clear that such a proceeding shall only be legal if the party-member has once owned such a store. For example, a party-member was the owner of a stationery store, and Schuschnigg took away the concession to operate it so that the man lost the store and went bankrupt. Now, if a Jewish stationery store is being aryanized, this party-member should get the store on conditions which he'll be able to fulfill. Such a case shall be the only exception though, in all other cases the procedure shall be of a strictly business-like nature whereby the party-member, like I said before,

shall have the preference, if he has the same qualifications as any other candidate, who is not a member of the party.

When selling for the actual value we shall find only about 60 Aryans ready to take over 100 Jewish stores. I don't think that we have a German for every Jewish store. You must not forget that the Jew sees his main activity in the field of trade, and that he owns 90% of it. I doubt that we'd have a demand big enough. I even doubt that we'd have enough people, particularly now since everybody has found his field of work.

Therefore, I ask the Minister for Economy to go beyond what we think ought to be done for the sake of the principle, in liquidating the establishments. I ask him to go further, even though there won't be any candidates. That'll be perfectly alright.

The transfer of stores and establishments shall have to be executed by the lower echelons, not through Berlin but through the Gaue and through the Reichstatthalterschaft. Therein shall be the seat of the members of the Board of Trustees, even if it consists of a few people only. The Statthalter and his people cannot do this job; the trustees will have to tackle it. But the Statthalter shall be the authority which supervises, according to the regulations given him, the trustees, particularly in dealings such as the transfer to party-members.

Naturally, these establishments cannot disappear all at once but we'll have to start by Monday, in a manner that shall make it obvious that a change has begun to materialize. Besides that, certain stores could be closed which will make things here easier.

Another point! I have noticed that Aryans took over a Jewish store and were then so clever to keep the name of the Jewish store as “formerly,” or kept it altogether. That must not be; I cannot permit it. Because it may happen—what has just happened—stores were looted because their signboards bore Jewish names—because they had once been Jewish, but had been “aryanized” a long time ago. Names of former Jewish firms shall have to disappear completely, and the German shall have to come forward with his or his firm's name. I ask you to carry this out quite definitely. That much then regarding aryanizing of stores and wholesale establishments, particularly in regard to signboards and of all that is obvious!

Of the consequences resulting from this for the Jew, I shall speak later, because this is connected with other things.

Now for the factories. As for the smaller and medium ones, two things shall have to be made clear.

1. Which factories do I not need at all—which are the ones where productions could be suspended? Could they not

be put to another use? If not, the factories will be razed immediately.

2. In case the factory should be needed, it will be turned over to Aryans in the same manner as the stores. All these measures have to be taken quickly, since Aryan employees are concerned everywhere. I'd like to say right now that Aryan employees shall have to be given employment immediately after the Jewish factory is closed. Considering the amount of labor we need these days, it should be a trifle to keep these people, even in their own branches. As I have just said; if the factory is necessary, it will be aryanized. If there is no need for it, it being abandoned shall be part of the procedure of transforming establishments not essential, for our national welfare into one that is essential for it—a procedure that shall take place within the next few weeks. For it, I shall still need very much space and very many factories.

If such a factory is to be transformed or razed, the first thing to be done is check the equipment. The questions arising will be: Where can this equipment be used? Could it be used after the place is transformed? Where else might it be needed badly? Where could the machinery be set up again? It follows that aryanizing factories will be an even more difficult task than the aryanizing of stores.

Take now the larger factories which are run solely by a Jewish owner, without control by a Board of Directors; or take corporations where the Jews might be in the Supervisory Council or Board of Directors. There the solution is very simple: the factory can be compensated in the same manner as in the sale of stores and factories; that is, at a rate which we shall determine, and the trustee shall take over the Jew's interest as well as his shares, which he in turn may sell or transfer to the State, which will then dispose of them. So, if I have a big factory, which belonged to a Jew or a Jewish corporation, and the Jew leaves, perhaps with his sons who were employed there, the factory will still continue to operate. Maybe a director will have to be appointed because the Jew has run the factory himself. But otherwise, particularly if the maintenance of the establishment is very essential everything will run smoothly.

Everything is very simple. I now have his shares. I may give them to some Aryan or to another group or I may keep them. The State takes them over and offers them at the stock market, if they are acceptable there and if it so desires, or it makes use of them in some other way.

Now, I shall talk of the very big establishments, those in which the Jew is in the Board of Directors, in which he holds shares etc., and so is either the owner or one of the coowners; in any case in which he is greatly interested. There too, things

are comparatively simple; he delivers all of his shares which shall be bought at a price fixed by the trustee. So the Jew gets into the account book. The shares shall be handled like I've just explained. These cases cannot be taken care of by the Gaue and Reichsstatthalter, but only by us here on top; because we are the only ones to decide where these factories are to be transferred to, how they may be affiliated with other establishments or to what an extent the State shall keep them or hand them over to another establishment belonging to the State. All this can only be decided here. Of course, the Gauleiter and Statthalter will be glad to get hold of the shares, and they'll make great promises to beautify our capital cities, etc. I know it all! It won't go! We must agree on a clear action that shall be profitable to the Reich.

The same procedure shall be applied where the Jew has a share in, or owns property of German economy. I am not competent enough to tell off hand in what forms that might be the case, and to what an extent he'll have to lose it. Anyway, the Jew must be evicted pretty fast from German economy.

Now, the foreign Jews. There we'll have to make distinctions between the Jews who have always been foreigners—and who shall have to be treated according to the laws we arranged with their respective countries. But regarding those Jews who were Germans, have always lived in Germany and have acquired foreign citizenship during the last year, only because they wanted to play safe. I ask you not to give them any consideration. We'll finish with these. Or have you any misgivings? We shall try to induce them through slight, and then through stronger pressure, and through clever maneuvering—to let themselves be pushed out voluntarily.

Woermann: I'd like the Foreign Office to be included, since a generally valid decision could hardly be made.

Goering: We cannot consult you in every case, but on the whole we will.

Woermann: Anyway, I'd like to make known the claim of the Foreign Office to participate. One never knows what steps may become necessary.

Goering: Only for important cases! I do not like to take this category under special consideration. I have learned only now to what extent that has been done, particularly in Austria and Czechoslovakia. If somebody was a Czech in Sudetenland, we do not have to consider him at all, and the Foreign Office doesn't have to be consulted because that person now belongs to us. And in Austria and also in Sudetenland, too many become all of a sudden Englishmen or Americans or what-not—and speaking we cannot consider that a great deal. Generally

[Part II is missing]

Part III

Funk: That is quite a decisive question for us: should the Jewish stores be reopened?

Goebbels: If they will be reopened is another question. The question is will they be restored? I have set the deadline for Monday.

Goering: You don't have to ask whether they'll be reopened. That is up to us to decide.

Goebbels: *Number 2.* In almost all German cities synagogues are burned. New, various possibilities exist to utilize the space where the synagogues stood. Some cities want to build parks in their place, others want to put up new buildings.

Goering: How many synagogues were actually burned?

Heydrich: Altogether there are 101 synagogues destroyed by fire; 76 synagogues demolished; and 7,500 stores ruined in the Reich.

Goering: What do you mean “destroyed by fire?”

Heydrich: Partly, they are razed, and partly gutted.

Goebbels: I am of the opinion that this is our chance to dissolve the synagogues. All these not completely intact, shall be razed by the Jews. The Jews shall pay for it. There in Berlin, the Jews are ready to do that. The synagogues which burned in Berlin are being leveled by the Jews themselves. We shall build parking lots in their places or new buildings. That ought to be the criterion for the whole country, the Jews shall have to remove the damaged or burned synagogues, and shall have to provide us with ready free space.

Number 3: I deem it necessary to issue a decree forbidding the Jews to enter German theaters, moving houses, and circuses. I have already issued such a decree under the authority of the law of the chamber for culture. Considering the present situation of the theaters, I believe we can afford that. Our theaters are overcrowded, we have hardly any room. I am of the opinion that it is not possible to have Jews sitting next to Germans in movies and theaters. One might consider, later on, to let the Jews have one or two movie houses here in Berlin, where they may see Jewish movies. But in German theaters they have no business anymore.

Furthermore, I advocate that the Jews be eliminated from all positions in public life in which they may prove to be provocative. It is still possible today that a Jew shares a compartment in a sleeping car with a German. Therefore, we need a decree by the Reich Ministry for Communications stating that separate compartments for Jews shall be available; in case where compartments are filled up, Jews cannot claim a seat. They shall be given a separate compartment only after

all Germans have secured seats. They shall not mix with Germans, and if there is no more room, they shall have to stand in the corridor.

Goering: In that case, I think it would make more sense to give them separate compartments.

Goebbels: Not if the train is overcrowded!

Goering: Just a moment. There'll be only one Jewish coach. If that is filled up, the other Jews will have to stay at home.

Goebbels: Suppose, though, there won't be many Jews going on the express train to Munich, suppose there would be two Jews in the train and the other compartments would be overcrowded. These two Jews would then have a compartment all themselves. Therefore, Jews may claim a seat only after all Germans have secured a seat.

Goering: I'd give the Jews one coach or one compartment. And should a case like you mention arise and the train be overcrowded, believe me, we won't need a law. We'll kick him out and he'll have to sit all alone in the toilet all the way!

Goebbels: I don't agree. I don't believe in this. There ought to be a law. Furthermore, there ought to be a decree barring Jews from German beaches and resorts. Last summer * * *

Goering: Particularly here in the Admiralspalast very disgusting things have happened lately.

Goebbels: Also at the Wannsee beach. A law which definitely forbids the Jews to visit German resorts!

Goering: We could give them their own.

Goebbels: It would have to be considered whether we'd give them their own or whether we should turn a few German resorts over to them, but not the finest and best, so we cannot say the Jews go there for recreation.

It'll also have to be considered if it might not become necessary to forbid the Jews to enter the German forests. In the Grunewald, whole herds of them are running around. It is a constant provocation and we are having incidents all the time. The behavior of the Jews is so inciting and provocative that brawls are a daily routine.

Goering: We shall give the Jews a certain part of the forest, and the Alpers shall take care of it that various animals that look damned much like Jews,—the Elk has such a crooked nose,—get there also and become acclimated.

Goebbels: I think this behavior is provocative. Furthermore, Jews should not be allowed to sit around in German parks. I am thinking of the whispering campaign on the part of Jewish women in the public gardens at Fehrbelliner Platz. They go and sit with German mothers and their children and begin to gossip and incite.

Goebbels: I see in this a particularly grave danger. I think it is imperative to give the Jews certain public parks, not the best ones—and tell them: “You may sit on these benches” these benches shall be marked “For Jews only.” Besides that they have no business in German parks. Furthermore, Jewish children are still allowed in German schools. That’s impossible. It is out of the question that any boy should sit beside a Jewish boy in a German gymnasium and receive lessons in German history. Jews ought to be eliminated completely from German schools; they may take care of their own education in their own communities.

Goering: I suggest that Mr. Hilgard from the insurance company be called in; he is waiting outside. As soon as he’ll be finished with his report, he may go, and we can continue to talk. At the time Gustloff died, a compensation for the damage Germany had suffered, was prepared. But I believe that at present we should not work it through raised taxes but with a contribution paid only once. That serves my purpose, better.

(Hilgard appears)

Mr. Hilgard, the following is our case. Because of the justified anger of the people against the Jew, the Reich has suffered a certain amount of damage. Windows were broken, goods were damaged and people hurt, synagogues burned, etc. I suppose that the Jews, many of them are also insured against damage committed by public disorder, etc.

(Hilgard: “Yes”)

If that is so, the following situation arises; the people, in their justified anger, meant to harm the Jew; but it is the German insurance companies that will compensate the Jew for damage. This situation is simple enough; I’d only have to issue a decree to that effect that damage, resulting from these risks, shall not have to be paid by the insurance companies. But the question that interests me primarily, and because of which I have asked you to come here, is this one: In case of reinsurance policies in foreign countries, I should not like to lose these, and that is why I’d like to discuss with you ways and means by which profit from reinsurance, possibly in foreign currency will go to the German economy, instead of the Jew. I’d like to hear from you, and that is the first question I want to ask: In your opinion, are the Jews insured against such damage to a large extent?

Hilgard: Permit me to answer right away. We are concerned with three kinds of insurances. Not with the insurance against damage resulting from revolt or from risks. But with the ordinary fire insurance, the ordinary glass

insurance, and the ordinary insurance against theft. The people, because of their contracts, who have a right to claim compensation are partly Jews, partly Aryans. As for the fire insurance, they are practically all Jewish, I suppose. As for the department stores, the victim is identical with the Jew, the owner and that applies more to the synagogues, except for neighbors to whose places the fire may have spread. Although the damage done to the latter’s property seems to be rather slight, according to the inquiries I made late last night. As for the glass insurance which plays a very important part in this, the situation is completely different. The majority of the victims, mostly the owners of the buildings are Aryans. The Jew has usually rented the store, a procedure which you may observe all over, for example on Kurfuerstendamm.

Goering: That is what we’ve said.

Goebbels: In these cases, the Jew will have to pay.

Goering: It doesn’t make sense, we have no raw materials. It is all glass imported from foreign countries and has to be paid for in foreign currency! One could go nuts.

Hilgard: May I draw your attention to the following facts: the glass for the shop windows is not being manufactured by the Bohemian, but by the Belgian glass industry. In my estimation, the approximate money-value to which these damages amount is \$6,000,000—that includes the broken glass, glass which we shall have to replace, mainly to Aryans because they have the insurance policies. Of course I have to reserve final judgment in all this, Your Excellency, because I have had only one day to make my inquiries. Even counting on about half of the \$6,000,000 being spent in transacting the business-specialists from the industry itself are more confident in this matter than I am, we might well have to import glass for approximately \$3,000,000. Incidentally, the amount of the damage equals about half a whole year’s production of the Belgian glass industry. We believe that half a year will be necessary for the manufacturers to deliver the glass. *Goering:* The people will have to be enlightened on this

Goebbels: We cannot do this right now.

Goering: This cannot continue! We won’t be able to last with all this. Impossible! Go on then! You suggest that the Aryan is the one who suffers the damage; is that right?

Hilgard: Yes, to a large extent, as far as the glass insurance goes.

Goering: Which would have to replace the glass.

Hilgard: Yes. Of course there are cases in which the Aryan, the owner of the store is identical with the owner of the building. That is so with all department stores. In the case of the department store Israel, the owner is the Jew.

Goering: And now the third category.

Hilgard: Under this fall the victims of thievery.

Goering: I have to ask you a question. When all kinds of goods were taken from the stores and burned in the streets, would that also be thievery?

Hilgard: I don't think so.

Goering: Could that be termed as “Riot”?

Hilgard: That is just the question which we are unable to decide at this moment. Is it ordinary theft if entry into a dwelling or a container of any kind is forced and something is taken away?

Goering: That is a case of “Riot.”

Hilgard: Riot does not mean much since we have very little insurance against damage caused by riots—these were discarded by us long ago.

Goering: But this here is “Rioting.” That is the legal term. There was no theft, and no individual broke into any place. But a mob rushes in and knocks everything to pieces, or “Public Disturbances.”

Hilgard: Public disturbance. It is no riot.

Goering: Are they insured against damages caused by public disturbances?

Hilgard: No, no more. May I show this by an example. The most remarkable of these cases is the case Margraf Unter Den Linden. The Jewelry store of Margraf, is insured with us through a so-called combined policy. That covers practically any damage that may occur. This damage was reported to us as amounting to \$1,700,000 because the store was completely stripped.

Goering: Daluege and Heydrich, you'll have to get me this jewelry through raids, staged on a tremendous scale!

Daluege: The order has already been given. The people are being controlled all the time. According to reports, 150 were arrested by yesterday afternoon.

Goering: These things will otherwise be hidden. If somebody comes to a store with jewels and claims that he has bought them, they'll be confiscated at once. He has stolen them or traded them in all right.

Heydrich: Besides that, looting was going on in the Reich in more than 800 cases, contrary to what we supposed; but we have already several hundred people who were plundering, and we are trying to get the loot back.

Goering: And the jewels?

Heydrich: That is very difficult to say. They were partly thrown into the street and picked up there. Similar things happened with furriers, for example, in Friedrichstrasse, district C, there the crowd was naturally rushing to pick up minks, skunks, etc. It'll be very difficult to recover that. Even

children have filled their pockets, just for fun. It is suggested that the Hitler Youth is not to be employed and to participate in such actions without the Party's consent. Such things are very easily destroyed.

Daluege: The Party should issue an order to the effect that the police will immediately receive a report in case the neighbor's wife, (everybody knows his neighbor) has a fur coat altered or in case somebody appears wearing new rings or bracelets. We'd like the Party to support us here.

Hilgard: These damages are not covered by the policy, I believe. May I say a word in general about our liabilities and a “Petidum” of the Versicherungswirtschaft report. We'd like to make it our point, Mr. General Field Marshall, that we shall not be hindered in fulfilling the obligations for which our contracts call.

Goering: But I have to. That is important for me.

Hilgard: If I may give reasons for this request, I'd like to say that it simply has to do with the fact that we carry out, to a large extent, quite a number of international transactions. We have a very good international basis for our business transactions, and in the interest of the equilibrium of the Foreign exchange in Germany, we have to make sure that the confidence in the German insurance shall not be ruined. If we now refuse to honor clearcut obligations, imposed upon us through lawful contract, it would be a black spot on the shield of honor of the German insurance.

Goering: It wouldn't the minute I issue a decree—a law sanctioned by the State.

Hilgard: I was leading up to that.

Heydrich: The insurance may be granted, but as soon as it is to be paid, it'll be confiscated. That way we'll have saved face.

Hilgard: I am inclined to agree with what General Heydrich has just said. First of all, use the mechanism of the insurance company to check on the damage, to regulate it and even pay, but give the insurance company the chance to * * *

Goering: One moment! You'll have to pay in any case because it is the Germans who suffered the damage. But there'll be a lawful order forbidding you to make any direct payments to the Jews. You shall also have to make payment for the damage the Jews have suffered, but not to the Jews, but to the Minister of Finance.

(Hilgard: Aha!)

What he does with the money is his business.

Schmer: Your Excellency, I should like to make a proposal. A certain rate should be fixed, say 15% or maybe a little higher, of all the registered wealth, I understand one

billion is to be confiscated so that all Jews shall pay equally, and from the money raised this way, the insurance companies shall be refunded.

Goering: No. I don't even dream of refunding the insurance companies the money. The companies are liable. No, the money belongs to the State. That's quite clear. That would indeed be a present for the insurance companies. You make a wonderful Petidum there. You'll fulfill your obligations, you may count on that.

Kerl: It seems that in one respect, we'll have to arrange this somewhat differently. As far as the glass insurance goes, the fact of the matter is that the owners of the buildings will definitely have to be paid for the damage, as stipulated. The majority of these companies, with the exception of one Joint Stock Company in Cologne, are all very small reciprocity companies [Gegenseitsvereine]. They won't be able to make up for the damage. We'll have to find out how far they are covered by reinsurance which I cannot tell at the moment.

Hilgard: In this connection, the reinsurance plays a relatively small role, except for the large fire-insurance policies taken out by department stores. There is not reinsurance in the glass insurances, for the simple reason that, under normal conditions glass insurance is one of our best branches in the insurance business; and therefore does not need reinsurance. I have to add, though, that the amount of this damage is approximately twice as high as the amount of damage for an average year. It makes all our calculations wrong and completely wipes out our chance for profit.

(Interrupted by Kerl)

No, sir, that is the way it is. The whole premium of the German glass insurance amounts to \$14,000,000, if I am not wrong. Under normal conditions it amounted to 4 or 5 million. The glass insurance is our greatest asset. So far, the greatest profits were made in it. But now, the amount of this damage is alone twice as high as the amount for one ordinary year. With the various special glass insurances, it is altogether different.

Goering: One moment! 4 to 5 millions normally. Twice as much would be about 10 million. You suggested 14 million. There are still 4 million left.

Hilgard: We'll also have to pay for the expenses. No, it is a very great catastrophe for us. Let me point out that the damage in the whole of Germany, in my estimation, shall amount to approximately 25 million mark. I wanted to be careful.

Heydrich: We estimate that the damage to property, to furniture and to consumer-goods amounts to several

hundred million; although that includes the damage the Reich shall suffer from loss of taxes—sales taxes, taxes on property, and on income. I assume that the Minister for Finance too, has been informed of all this.

V. Krosigk: I have no idea about the extent.

Heydrich: 7,500 destroyed stores in the Reich.

Daluege: One more question ought to be cleared up. Most of the goods in the stores were not the property of the owner but were kept on the books of other firms, which had delivered them. Then there are the unpaid for deliveries by other firms, which definitely are not all Jewish but Aryan, those goods that were delivered on the basis of commission.

Hilgard: We'll have to pay for them, too.

Goering: I wished you had killed 200 Jews, and not destroyed such values.

Heydrich: There were 35 killed.

Kerl: I think we could do the following: Jews we don't pay anyhow. As for Aryans, payment shall have to be made. The insurance company may contact us through the “Reichsgruppe” and we shall investigate each case. I am thinking of the small reciprocity companies; it should be easy to find out whether they are capable of paying or not. In their cases, the amounts involved are not too large. We may find an arrangement for this later on; I am thinking of one in which the insurance companies arrange for recompensation exclusively to Aryan, and once they know the results of their inquiries, contact us. We shall then find a way out for these small companies. Of course only in cases where it is absolutely necessary.

Funk: That is not necessary. I'd like to refer to what I've said before about the decree. That seems to be the easiest solution.

Goering: We cannot do that. These people make a point of their ability to pay.

Funk: If the Jews pay for it, the insurance companies don't have to pay.

Goering: Right, well, gentlemen, this is all very clear. We'll stick to it. At this moment every insurance company, except Mr. Hilgard who is here, counts on having to pay for the damage. They want to pay too, and I understand this very well. They'll have to want that, so they cannot be reproached for not being secure enough to pay. The glass insurance, and a point was made of that, has brought the highest profits so far. That means they'd have enough surplus money, and if they haven't divided it all up in dividends, they'll have savings enough for the compensation. Such an insurance company will have to be in a position to pay for a damage of 10, 12, 15 million, that is three times the amount paid in the

normal year. If they are unable to do that, then we’ll have to wonder whether we should let small companies live at all. It would be insane to keep insurance companies which would be unable to pay for such a damage. To permit an insurance company like that to exist would simply mean to cheat the people. I suggest now the following. The damage shall be determined in each case. And for the time being, the insurance companies shall have to honor their contract in every respect and shall have to pay.

[Part IV is missing]

Part V

Goering: Now for the damage the Jew has had. At Margraf’s the jewels disappeared, etc. Well, they are gone, and he won’t get them refunded. He is the one who has to suffer the damage. As far as the jewels may be returned again by the police, they belong to the State. Now for the consumer foods which were thrown into the street, stolen, or burned. There too, the Jew will be the one who has the damage.

As for the goods that were kept on the basis of commissions, the Jew shall have to make good for the damage.

Goebbels: That doesn’t have to be put in the decree, though. This decree is quite sufficient the way it is.

Hilgard: I wonder to what an extent insurance companies in foreign countries might be involved in this.

Goering: Well, they’ll have to pay. And we’ll confiscate that.

Hilgard: As for this merchandise sold on the basis of commissions, I can imagine that the American supplier of fur coats, shipping them from England or from America would in many cases insure it with English or American insurance companies!

Goering: Then they’ll pay him for the damage. The question merely is the following: do you think there are reinsurances for all this damage in foreign countries?

Hilgard: Very few, amounting to very little.

Goering: Of course, the Aryan cannot report any damage because he hasn’t had any. The Jew will make good.

The Jew shall have to report the damage. He’ll get the refund from the insurance company but the refund will be confiscated. After it’s all said and done, there will remain some profit for the insurance companies since they can’t have to make good for all the damage. Mr. Hilgard, you may enjoy yourself.

Hilgard: I have no reason for that—the fact that we won’t have to pay for all the damage is called profit!

Goering: Just a moment! If you are compelled under the law to pay 5 million and all of a sudden there appears an

angel in my somewhat corpulent form before you, and tells you: you may keep 1 million—why, cannot that be called making a profit? I should actually split with you, or whatever you’d call it. I can see it, looking at you. Your whole body grins. You made a big profit.

(Remark: Let’s initiate a tax for damages, resulting from public disturbance, to be paid by the insurance companies)

Hilgard: For me it goes without saying that the honorable German merchant cannot be the one who suffers. I have discussed this matter with the enterprises and I have spoken for it that the Aryan must not be the one who has the damage. But it is decidedly he who has it, because all the insurance companies, not one insurance company, are the ones that shall have to pay higher rates and at the same time shall receive lower dividends. Therefore, all the insurance companies are the losers. That is so, and that’ll remain so, and nobody can tell me differently.

Goering: Then why don’t you take care of it that a few windows less are being smashed! You belong to the people too! Send your representatives out. Let them instruct the people. If there should be any more questions speak to Mr. Lange.

(Reichsgruppenleiter Hilgard leaves the meeting)

* * * *

Funk: The decisive question is: Are the Jewish stores to be reopened or not?

Goering: That depends on how big a turnover these Jewish stores have. If it is big, it is an indication that the German people are compelled to buy there, in spite of its being a Jewish store, because a need exists. If we’d close all Jewish stores which are not open right now, altogether before Christmas, we’d be in a nice mess.

Fishboeck: Your Excellency, in this matter we have already a very complete plan for Austria. There are 12,000 Jewish artisan and 5,000 Jewish retail shops in Vienna. Before the National Revolution, we had already a definite plan for tradesmen, regarding this total of 17,000 stores. Of the shops of the 12,000 artisans, about 10,000 were to be closed definitely and 2,000 were to be kept open. 4,000 of the 5,000 retail stores should be closed and 1,000 should be kept open, that is, were to be aryanized. According to this plan, between 3,000 and 3,500 of the total of 17,000 stores would be kept open, all others closed. This was decided following investigations in every single branch and according to local needs, in agreement with all competent authorities, and is ready for

publication as soon as we shall receive the law which we requested in September; this law shall empower us to withdraw licenses from artisans, quite independently from the Jewish question.

Goering: I shall have this decree issued today.

* * * *

Fischboeck: Out of 17,000 stores 12,000 or 14,000 would be shut down and the remainder aryanized or handed over to the bureau of trustees which is operated by the State.

Goering: I have to say that this proposal is grand. This way, the whole affair would be wound up in Vienna, one of the Jewish capitals, so to speak, by Christmas or by the end of the year.

Funk: We can do the same thing over here. I have prepared a law elaborating that, effective 1 January 1939, Jews shall be prohibited to operate retail stores and wholesale establishments as well as independent artisan shops. They shall be further prohibited from keeping employees or offer any ready products on the market. Wherever a Jewish shop is operated, the police shall shut it down. From 1 January 1939, a Jew can no longer be employed as an enterpriser as stipulated in the law for the Organization of National Labor from 20 January 1934. If a Jew holds a leading position in an establishment without being the enterpriser, his contract may be declared void within 6 weeks by the enterpriser. With the expiration of the contract all claims of the employee, including all claims to maintenance, become obliterated. That is always very disagreeable and a great danger. A Jew cannot be a member of a corporation; Jewish members of corporations shall have to be retired by 31 December 1938. A special authorization is unnecessary. The competent Ministers of the Reich are being authorized to issue the provision necessary for the execution of this law.

Goering: I believe that we can agree with this law.

(Remark : Yes)

* * * *

Fischboeck: . . . I'd like to make a few more remarks. What we are very much concerned with, is the situation regarding the Jewish apartment houses which contribute a large percentage of Jewish wealth. Surprisingly enough, the Jewish national wealth in Austria is reported to amount to 320 million marks only; the value of the apartment houses alone amounts to 500 million. We should appreciate it very much

if the regulation which makes it possible to requisition Jewish property would be made to be valid also for the apartment buildings; thus we would be enabled to have these houses administered by a board of trustees and to give the Jews the right to have a claim on the debit ledger of the Reich.

* * * *

Fischboeck: I should also like to have a decision made on the following question. In Austria, individuals, not institutions, owe the Jews 184 billion Reichsmarks. This way the Jews certainly have invested money in a way we don't like. That is money which they have loaned out to other Jews, oftener enough to an Aryan. This way, a dependency of the Aryan artisan from the Jewish creditor is created which we do not want. Now the question arises, and I would answer yes. Should trustees not be created to administer these debts and then pay with claims on the debit-ledger, according to demand coming in. The goal of this procedure would be to make the debtor independent from the Jewish creditor, to insert Aryan trusteeship and pay the Jew, as far as his demands could actually be met. Therefore it does not have to be paid. So we should have to insert trusteeship in this case also, but the difference to that in the case of the bonds would be that we won't simply pay but leave the decision for payment up to the trusteeship.

Funk: If word of this debate should reach the public, we'd have a run on the capital market tomorrow.

Fischboeck: That's why we have postponed these ideas all the time. We have examples for it that the Jews have sold, head over heel, bonds of internal loans, shares and everything they had.

Goering: I could stop that with a single decree, ordering the immediate stoppage of traffic of Jewish capital. He is punishable who buys from Jews, and his purchase shall be confiscated. I would not do it any other way.

[Part VI is missing]

Part VII

* * * *

Heydrich: In spite of the elimination of the Jew from the economic life, the main problem, namely to kick the Jew out of Germany, remains. May I make a few proposals to that effect?

Following a suggestion by the Commissioner of the Reich, we have set up a center for the Emigration of Jews in

Vienna, and that way we have eliminated 50,000 Jews from Austria while from the Reich only 19,000 Jews were eliminated during the same period of time; we were so successful because of the cooperation on the part of the competent Ministry for Economic Affairs and of the foreign charitable organizations.

Goering: The main thing is, you cooperated with the local leaders of the “Green Frontier.”

Heydrich: That amounted to a very small number, your excellency. Illegal * * *

Goering: This story has gone through the whole world press. During the first night the Jews were expelled into Czechoslovakia. The next morning, the Czechs grabbed them and pushed them into Hungary. From Hungary, they were returned to Germany and from there into Czechoslovakia. They traveled around and around that way. They landed finally on an old Barge in the Danube. There they lived, and wherever they tried to go ashore, they were barred.

Heydrich: That was the report. There weren’t even 100 Jews.

Goering: For practically two weeks, a number of Jews left every midnight. That was in the Burgenland.

Heydrich: At least 45,000 Jews were made to leave the country by legal measures.

Goering: How was that possible?

Heydrich: Through the Jewish Kulturgemeinde, we extracted a certain amount of money from the rich Jews who wanted to emigrate. By paying this amount, and an additional sum in foreign currency, they made it possible for a number of poor Jews to leave. The problem was not to make the rich Jew leave but to get rid of the Jewish mob.

Goering: But children, did you ever think this through? It doesn’t help us to extract hundreds of thousands from the Jewish mob. Have you ever thought of it that this procedure may cost us so much foreign currency that in the end we won’t be able to hold out.

Heydrich: Only what the Jew has had in foreign currency.

(Goering: agreed)

This way. May I propose that we set up a similar procedure for the Reich, with the cooperation of the competent government agencies, and that we then find a solution for the Reich, based on our experiences, after having corrected the mistakes, the General Field Marshall has so rightly pointed out to us.

(Goering: agreed)

As another means of getting the Jews out, measures for Emigration ought to be taken in the rest of the Reich for the next

8 to 10 years. The highest number of Jews we can possibly get out during one year is 8,000 to 10,000. Therefore, a great number of Jews will remain. Because of the aryanizing and other restrictions, Jewry will become unemployed. The remaining Jews gradually become proletarians. Therefore, I shall have to take steps to isolate the Jew so he won’t enter into the German normal routine of life. On the other hand, I shall have to restrict the Jew to a small circle of consumers, but I shall have to permit certain activities within professions; lawyers, doctors, barbers, etc. This question shall also have to be examined. As for the isolation, I’d like to make a few proposals regarding police measures which are important also because of their psychological effect on public opinion. For example, who is Jewish according to the Nurnberg laws shall have to wear a certain insignia. That is a possibility which shall facilitate many other things. I don’t see any danger of excuses, and it shall make our relationship with the foreign Jew easier.

Goering: A uniform?

Heydrich: An insignia. This way we could also put an end to it that the foreign Jews who don’t look different from ours, are being molested.

Goering: But, my dear Heydrich, you won’t be able to avoid the creation of ghettos on a very large scale, in all the cities. They shall have to be created.

Heydrich: As for the question of ghettos, I’d like to make my position clear right away. From the point of view of the police, I don’t think a ghetto in the form of completely segregated districts where only Jews would live, can be put up. We could not control a ghetto where the Jews congregate amidst the whole Jewish people. It would remain the permanent hideout for criminals and also for epidemics and the like. We don’t want to let the Jew live in the same house with the German population; but today the German population, their blocks or houses, force the Jew to behave himself. The control of the Jew through the watchful eye of the whole population is better than having him by the thousands in a district where I cannot properly establish a control over his daily life through uniformed agents.

Goering: We’d only have to forbid long-distance calls.

Heydrich: Still I could not completely stop the Jews from communicating out of their districts.

Goering: And in towns all of their own?

Heydrich: If I could put them into towns entirely their own, yes. But then these towns would be such a heaven for criminals of all sorts that they would be a terrific danger. I’d take different steps. I’d restrict the movement of the Jews

and would say; in Munich, the governmental district and the district * * *

Goering: Wait a minute! I don't care so much for it that the Jews don't appear in spots where I don't want them. My point is this one; if one Jew won't have any more work, he'll have to live modestly. He won't be able to go far on his 31/2%—to restaurants, etc. He'll have to work more. That'll bring about a concentration of Jewry which may even facilitate control. You will know that in a particular house only Jews are living. We shall also have concentrated Jewish butchers, barbers, grocers, etc., in certain streets. The question is of course whether we want to go on tolerating that. If not, the Jew shall have to buy from the Aryan.

Heydrich: No, I'd say that for the necessities in daily life, the German won't serve the Jew anymore.

Goering: One moment. You cannot let him starve. But there'll be the following difficulty. If you say that the Jews will be able to have so and so many retail stores, then they'll again be in business, and they'll continually have to sell for the wholesaler.

Schmer: In a small town that wouldn't work at all.

Goering: It could only be worked out if you'd reserve in advance whole districts or whole towns for the Jews. Otherwise, you'll have to have only Germans do business, and the Jew shall have to buy from them. You cannot set up a Jewish barbershop. The Jew will have to buy food and stockings.

Heydrich: We'll have to decide whether we want that or not.

Goering: I'd like to make a decision on that right now. We cannot make another subdivision here. We cannot argue: so and so many stores will remain for the Jew because then again no control will be possible since these stores in turn would have to work with wholesale stores. I'd say, all stores should be Aryan stores, and the Jew may buy there. One may go one step further and say that these and these stores will probably be frequented mostly by Jews. You may set up certain barbershops operated by Jews. You may make concessions in order to channel certain professions into certain streets for certain tasks. But not stores.

Heydrich: What about the ghetto? Would the Jew have to go to an Aryan district to buy.

Goering: No. I'd say that enough German storekeepers would love to dwell in the ghetto if they could do some business there. I wouldn't alter the principle that the Jew shall have no more say in German economy.

Heydrich: I shouldn't like to comment on that. Now a few things which are important also from a psychological angle.

Goering: Once we'd have a ghetto, we'd find out what stores ought to be in there, and we'd be able to say; you, the Jew so and so, together with so and so, shall take care of the delivery of goods. And a German wholesale firm will be ordered to deliver the goods for this Jewish store. This store would then not be a retail shop but a cooperative store, a cooperative one for Jews.

Heydrich: All these measures would eventually lead to the institution of the ghetto. I'd say one shouldn't want to build a ghetto. But these measures, if carried through as outlined here, shall automatically drive the Jews into a ghetto.

Funk: The Jews will have to move quite close together. What are 3 million? Everyone will have to stand up for the next fellow. The individual alone will starve.

Goering: Now, as to what Minister Goebbels has said before, namely compulsory renting. Now, the Jewish tenants will be together.

Heydrich: As an additional measure, I'd propose to withdraw from the Jews all personal papers such as permits and drivers licenses. No Jew should be allowed to own a car, neither should he be permitted to drive because that way he'd endanger German life. By not being permitted to live in certain districts, he should be furthermore restricted to move about so freely. I'd say the Royal Square in Munich, the Reichsweihestatte, is not to be entered any more within a certain radius by Jews. The same would go for establishments of culture, border fences, military installations. Furthermore, like Minister Dr. Goebbels has said before, exclusion of the Jews from public theaters, movie houses, etc. As for cultural activities, I'd like to say this; cultural activities in holiday resorts may be considered an additional feature, not absolutely necessary for the individual. Many German Volksgenossen are unable to improve their health through a stay at a resort town. I don't see why the Jew should go to these places at all.

Goering: To health spas, no.

Heydrich: Well, then I'd like to propose the same thing for hospitals. A Jew shall not lie in a hospital together with Aryan Volkgenossen.

Goering: We'll have to manage that gradually.

Heydrich: The same applies to public conveyances.

Goering: Are there no Jewish Sanatoriums and Jewish hospitals?

(Remarks—Yes!)

We'll have to finagle all this. These things will have to be straightened out one right after another.

Heydrich: I only meant to secure your approval in principle so that we may start out on all this.

Goering: One more question, gentlemen: What would you think the situation would be if I'd announce today that Jewry should have to contribute this 1 billion as a punishment?

Buerckel: The Viennese would agree to this wholeheartedly.

* * *

V. Krosigk: . . . I don't imagine the prospect of the ghetto is very nice. The idea of the ghetto is not a very agreeable one. Therefore, the goal must be, like Heydrich said, to move out whatever we can!

Goering: The second point is this. If, in the near future, the German Reich should come into conflict with foreign powers, it goes without saying that we in Germany should first of all let it come to a showdown with the Jews. Besides that, the Fuehrer shall now make an attempt with those foreign powers which have brought the Jewish question up, in order to solve the Madagascar project. He has explained it all to me on 9 November. There is no other way. He'll tell the other countries. "What are you talking about the Jew for?—Take him!" Another proposal may be made. The Jews, gotten rid of may buy territory for their "coreligionists" in North America, Canada, or elsewhere.

I wish to summarize: The Minister of Economic Affairs shall direct the committee and he shall in one form or another, take all steps necessary within the next few days.

Blerning: I fear that during the next few days, beginning Monday, the Jews will start to sell bonds on internal loans for hundreds of thousands, in order to provide themselves with means. Since we control the course of the internal loan in order to sell more bonds, the Reich-Treasury, Loan-Committee or the Reich Minister for Finance should have to back this internal loan.

Goering: In what way could the Jew bring his bonds on the market?

(Remark: "Sell them")

To whom? (Remark: "on the stock market—he orders a bank to do it.") Well, I'll prohibit selling internal loan bonds for three days.

Blerning: That could be done only through a decree.

Goering: I can't see any advantage for the Jew. He won't know himself how and he'll have to pay. On the contrary, I believe he won't move.

Goebbels: For the time being he is small and ugly and stays at home.

Goering: I don't think it would be logical. Otherwise we'll have to do it. The reason why I want this decree in a hurry is that for the time being we have peace but who can guarantee that there won't be new trouble by Saturday or Sunday. Once and for all I want to eliminate individual acts. The Reich has taken the affairs in its own hand. The Jew can only sell. He can't do a thing. He'll have to pay. At this moment, the individual Jew won't think of throwing anything on the market. There'll be some chatter first, and then they will begin to run to us. They'll look for those great Aryans with whom, they'll think they may have some luck, the so-called various mail-boxes of the Reich with whom they can lodge their protests. These people will run my door in. All that takes some time, and by then we'll be ready.

Daluege: May we issue the order for confiscating the cars?

Goering: Also the Ministry of the Interior and the Police will have to think over, what measures will have to be taken. I thank you.

[Conference closed at 2.40 PM]

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 425–457, Doc. 1816-PS.

87. KRISTALLNACHT: CONDITIONS IN THE STUTTGART CONSULAR DISTRICT, NOVEMBER 15, 1938

Just five days after the destruction of Kristallnacht, the first mass government-organized violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria, this report was sent to George S. Messersmith, assistant secretary of state, in Washington, D.C., from the American Consulate in Stuttgart regarding the damage done to Jewish property and the harassment and abuse of individual Jews in the Stuttgart Consular District in southwest Germany. It references beatings, arrests, and destruction of home furnishings. It also describes Jews' access to non-Jewish doctors, which was prohibited unless it could be shown that no Jewish doctor was available. Automobiles owned by Jews were confiscated by the police. These various assaults were visited even upon Jews who had converted and been baptized as Christians. Despite the terror that ran rampant, this report

notes that there were instances of non-Jews secretly helping their Jewish neighbors.

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA

American Consulate

Stuttgart, Germany, November 15, 1938.

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

Appreciating your keen interest in German matters I believe that you will wish to have a first-hand account of the reprisals which have been taken against the Jews in this section of Germany during the last few days. Therefore, I am enclosing for ready reference a copy of my report no. 307, of November 12, 1938, entitled "Anti-Semitic Persecution in the Stuttgart Consular District." After careful investigation and personal knowledge this report was very hurriedly written so that it could reach the Embassy at Berlin at the earliest practicable date. You may wish to have additional information on the subject.

Of all the places in this section of Germany, the Jews in Rastatt, which is situated near Baden-Baden, have apparently been subjected to the most ruthless treatment.

The Honorable

George S. Messersmith,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

Many Jews in this section were cruelly attacked and beaten and the furnishing of their homes almost totally destroyed. Practically all male Jews in that city were arrested and transported either to prisons or to concentration camps. Those that escaped arrest are hiding in the woods or have sought refuge with friends. Similar developments occurred in other places, and there were doubtless many outrages of which I have not yet heard. Even Jews directing charitable organizations were seriously molested, although it must have been apparent to the authorities that these Jews could have rendered much necessary relief had they been allowed to remain at liberty and retain the use of funds which were immediately confiscated. In the meantime, Aryan doctors in Stuttgart have been refusing to render medical aid to Jews greatly needing their services, unless evidence is furnished that no Jewish doctor is available. An old Jew living in Bad Cannstatt, a suburb of Stuttgart, suffered a heart collapse on Friday

(November 11th) and, when a member of his family called a well-known heart specialist in Stuttgart, the latter is reported to have replied that "as long as there is a Jewish doctor still at liberty I cannot come." So far as I have been able to learn, all Jewish doctors in Stuttgart, except Dr. Einstein, a child specialist of over sixty-five years of age, have been arrested in spite of the overwhelming demand for medical treatment on account of ruthless action most apparently inspired by the German authorities.

All Jewish automobiles are systematically being confiscated. As a rule, two men in civilian clothes with police authority visit the homes of Jewish owners of automobiles and demand the keys of their garages and cars. Upon request receipts are usually given for the automobiles, and these receipts are signed "by the Criminal Police."

A few Aryan people have been arrested for giving too open expression to their disgust over the events of the last few days. Many persons secretly sympathizing with the Jews or discountenancing such ruthless treatment of helpless people are becoming more and more afraid to give expression to their feelings. However, I have heard of many instances where Aryans are rendering secret service to afflicted Jewish families and are even providing them with money and food.

Even consideration of religion has not prevented the arrest of persons of the Jewish race who were born and baptized as Christians. A typical example of this character is the arrest in Stuttgart of Dr. Gabriel, who until 1933 was the head of the Bureau of Academic Information at the University of Cologne. It is understood that Dr. Gabriel, who is said to have collaborated for some time with Professor Sprague of Columbia University, has been placed in a concentration camp at Welzheim, Württemberg.

So far as Stuttgart is concerned, I can state confidently that these so-called reprisals against the Jews were not a spontaneous movement originating from the people as a whole. In any event, the movement clearly seems to have been well organized and planned and carried out by persons having the confidence of the authorities. For instance, the fire brigade was stationed in the vicinity of the synagogue in Bad Cannstatt before the building was ever set on fire. Again, on Thursday morning (November 10th) while the demolition of Jewish shops was in full swing at Stuttgart, a new 12-cylinder Mercedes automobile carrying high S.S. officials drove up in front of the shops under devastation. These men made an inspection of what was going on, and apparently after giving their approval drove pompously away while the destruction continued.

Dr. Max Immanuel, a member of the board of the Berlin Credit Investment Company, who is said to have collaborated closely in the past with Herr Schacht, has informed me that all the interior furnishings of his sister's home in Nuremberg were completely destroyed. Nuremberg seems to have been the scene of much destruction and illtreatment.

Only yesterday (Sunday, the 13th of November) the wife of a prominent Jew in Nuremberg whom I have known well for several years, and who has been of much assistance to me in connection with certain reports, called at my home in the hope that I could render some assistance in obtaining the release of her husband who was arrested about 3.30 o'clock on the morning of November 10th. This lady told me that she had been awakened about 1 o'clock by rude knocking and ringing of her door bell. Men in S.A. uniform entered abruptly when the door was opened and immediately began to destroy the furnishings of the drawing room and dining room. Leather chairs were cut and stabbed with knives to such an extent that they are now practically worthless. China was thrown on the floor and broken. Not a piece of glassware was left unbroken in the apartment. When these men left, the interior of the building, except the bedrooms which they did not enter, were a mass of ruins.

This destruction did not satisfy the people responsible for it, for at approximately 4 A.M. two men dressed in civilian clothes and representing the police again called at her home and rudely demanded that her husband dress immediately. Her husband was placed under arrest and transported to prison. Although this lady is a person of some influence and has contact with the police at Nuremberg, she has not yet been able to ascertain to what prison or concentration camp her husband has been transported.

During the course of the day two people reported to me that the Jewish Old People's Home in Neustadt, Palatinate, had been burned to the ground and that about sixty inmates, all of whom were old people, and some of whom were ill and crippled and some just merely infirm from age, had been removed to the Jewish Old People's Home at Mannheim. There was really no accommodation for them in the latter institution and apparently they have been lying on the floor here and there in the building.

There are many similar stories, but I feel that you will be sufficiently informed to wish me now to turn to the immediate experiences which I have had during the past few days as the officer in charge of the Consulate at Stuttgart.

In a figurative sense, my home has been bombarded by visitors and telephone calls giving evidence of the distressing circumstances in which many people are finding themselves.

Hundreds are appealing for help and encouragement, and with husbands in concentration camps many are without funds. Late last night an American woman of over sixty years of age begged for assistance in ascertaining the whereabouts of her aged and sick husband who had been rounded up with the German Jews. I have strong hopes that he will be at her side again within a few hours. Many other Americans are appealing on behalf of their Jewish relatives.

The Consulate received almost one hundred telegrams yesterday and almost as many to-day. Many of these have been from the United States and have expressed the utmost interest in their relatives in Germany. In the majority of cases the male members of the families concerned were ascertained to be in concentration camps. Even up to this minute arrests have been made in Stuttgart and telegrams are constantly being received, although it is late at night.

For more than five days the office has been inundated with people. Each day a larger and larger crowd has besieged the Consulate, filling all the rooms and over-flowing into the corridor of a building six stories high. To-day there were several thousand. Each person has been handled with the greatest possible consideration and each person must have felt that he or she had been as courteously and sympathetically handled as the enormous crowd would permit.

The entire staff has responded most loyally and efficiently to the demands with which we have been faced. Of the officers, all of whom have worked well under trying conditions, I wish especially to mention, first, Consul L'Heureux, and secondly, Vice Consul Spalding. Of the clerks, Mr. Morton Bernath has been outstanding.

These situations are not entirely new to us at Stuttgart. While this one is on a much greater scale we have been experiencing similar but minor situations during the past three years, some of which appear retrospectively to have been much more difficult and to have required much more ingenuity. In reality, I have handled many protection cases, with the able assistance of Morton Bernath, which have involved arrests for political offences, exchange infractions, et cetera, and I am glad to report to you that we have been uniformly successful. At the present time matters involving the transfer of money on behalf of American citizens in the United States are proving unusually difficult features of our work on account of the attitude of the German Government. Only a few days ago, however, we were successful in prevailing upon the German Government to release its claim on the entire fortune of an aged Jewish woman of American nationality.

I trust that the foregoing description will, in addition to the political reports of this office, with which the Embassy

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seems to be very pleased, give you a concrete idea of the situation which has been confronting us from time to time over the last three years, and will especially depict the conditions which are immediately confronting us.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure:

Copy of report no. 307.

Source: State CDF 862.4016/2002: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

88. KRISTALLNACHT: ANTISEMITIC ONSLAUGHT IN GERMANY AS SEEN FROM LEIPZIG, NOVEMBER 21, 1938

This report was sent to George S. Messersmith, assistant secretary of state, in Washington, D.C., from the American Consulate in Leipzig, in east-central Germany. It details the events both before and during Kristallnacht, the first mass government-organized violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria. It describes the prelude to the violence of Kristallnacht as the gruesome commemoration on the night of November 9, 1938, of martyrs to the Nazi cause prior to Hitler's ascension to power in January 1933. The picture of exhumed corpses in extravagant coffins surrounded by flaming torches makes what happened in the early morning of November 10—the destruction of Kristallnacht—seem like a continuation, albeit on a much more violent level of the previous night's ceremony. The report makes clear that the destruction during the "spontaneous" eruption of anger was anything but spontaneous. It included destruction and looting of stores and Jewish houses, beatings and serious injuries to many Jews, and the bombing of synagogues. Desecration of Jewish graves and the arrest of Jewish males increased the level of turmoil such that many non-Jews were repelled by the actions, though unable or unwilling to protest what went on around them.

Voluntary; political

(Rubber Stamp)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
JAN. 4, 1939
MR. MESSERSMITH

ANTISEMITIC ONSLAUGHT IN GERMANY AS SEEN FROM LEIPZIG

From: /s/ David H. Buffum
David H. Buffum,
American Consul

Date of Preparation: November 21, 1938

Date of Forwarding: To be carried to Berlin by trusted messenger as soon as practicable.

Approved: Ralph C. Busser,
Ralph C. Busser,
American Consul General.

The following resume of the anti-Semitic onslaught in Germany so far as this consular district is concerned, constitutes a narration of Leipzig angles as to this flagitious attack upon a helpless minority that very probably has had no counterpart in the course of the civilized world. The macabre circumstances that form the subject matter of this report had a fittingly gruesome prelude in Leipzig a few hours before they occurred in the form of rites held on one of the principal squares of the city on the night of November 9, 1938 in commemoration of fallen martyrs to the Nazi cause prior to the political take-over in 1933. To such end apparently anything in the corpse category that could be remotely associated with Nazi martyrdom, had been exhumed. At least five year old remains of those who had been considered rowdyish violators of law and order at the time, had been placed in extravagant coffins; arranged around a colossal, flaming urn on the Altermarkt for purposes of display, and ultimately conveyed amid marching troops, flaring torches and funeral music to the "Ehrenhain", Leipzig's National Socialistic burial plot. For this propagandistic ceremony the entire market place had been surrounded with wooden lattice work about ten yards high. This was covered with white cloth to form the background for black swastikas at least five yards high and broad. Flame-spurting urns and gigantic banners completed a Wagnerian ensemble as to pomposity of stage setting; but it can not be truthfully reported that the ceremony aroused anything akin to awe among the crowds who witnessed it. Judging from a few very guardedly whispered comments, the populace was far more concerned over the wanton waste of materials in these days when textiles of any kind are exceedingly scarce and expensive, rather than being actuated by any particularly reverent emotions. On the other hand for obvious reasons, there were no open manifestations of

disapproval. The populace was destined to be much more perturbed the following morning during the course of the most violent debacle the city had probably ever witnessed.

The shattering of shop windows, looting of stores and dwellings of Jews which began in the early hours of November 10, 1938, was hailed subsequently in the Nazi press as "a spontaneous wave of righteous indignation throughout Germany, as a result of the cowardly Jewish murder of Third Secretary von Rath in the German Embassy at Paris." So far as a very high percentage of the German populace is concerned, a state of popular indignation that would spontaneously lead to such excesses, can be considered as nonexistent. On the contrary, in viewing the ruins and attendant measures employed, all of the local crowds observed were obviously benumbed over what had happened and aghast over the unprecedented fury of Nazi acts that had been or were taking place with bewildering rapidity throughout their city. The whole lamentable affair was organized in such a sinister fashion, as to lend credence to the theory that the execution of it had involved studied preparation. It has been ascertained by this office that the plan of "spontaneous indignation" leaked out in Leipzig several hours before news of the death of Third Secretary von Rath had been broadcasted at 10 P.M. November 10, 1938. It is stated upon authority believed to be reliable, that most of the evening was employed in drawing up lists of fated victims. Several persons known to this office were aware at 9 P.M. on the evening of November 9, 1938 that the "spontaneous" outrage was scheduled for that night sometime after midnight and several of such persons interviewed, stayed up purposely in order to witness it.

At 3 a.m. November 10, 1938 was unleashed a barrage of Nazi ferocity as had had no equal hitherto in Germany, or very likely anywhere else in the world since savagery, if ever. Jewish dwellings were smashed into and contents demolished or looted. In one of the Jewish sections an eighteen year old boy was hurled from a three story window to land with both legs broken on a street littered with burning beds and other household furniture and effects from his family's and other apartments. This information was supplied by an attending physician. It is reported from another quarter that among domestic effects thrown out of a Jewish dwelling, a small dog descended four flights to a broken spine on a cluttered street. Although apparently centered in poor districts, the raid was not confined to the humble classes. One apartment of exceptionally refined occupants known to this office, was violently ransacked, presumably in a search for valuables that was not in vain, and one of the marauders thrust a

cane through a priceless medieval painting portraying a biblical scene. Another apartment of the same category is known to have been turned upside down in the frenzied course of whatever the invaders were after. Reported loss of looting of cash, silver, jewelry, and otherwise easily convertible articles, have been frequent.

Jewish shop windows by the hundreds were systematically and wantonly smashed throughout the entire city at a loss estimated at several millions of marks. There are reports that substantial losses have been sustained on the famous Leipzig "Bruhl", as many of the shop windows at the time of the demolition were filled with costly furs that were seized before the windows could be boarded up. In proportion to the general destruction of real estate, however, losses of goods are felt to have been relatively small. The spectators who viewed the wreckage when daylight had arrived were mostly in such a bewildered mood, that there was no danger of impulsive acts, and the perpetrators probably were too busy in carrying out their schedule to take off a whole lot of time for personal profit. At all events, the main streets of the city were a positive litter of shattered plate glass. According to reliable testimony, the debacle was executed by S. S. men and Storm Troopers not in uniform, each group having been provided with hammers, axes, crowbars and incendiary bombs.

Three synagogues in Leipzig were fired simultaneously by incendiary bombs and all sacred objects and records desecrated or destroyed, in most instances hurled through the windows and burned in the streets. No attempts whatsoever were made to quench the fires, functions of the fire brigade having been confined to playing water on adjoining buildings. All of the synagogues were irreparably gutted by flames, and the walls of the two that are in the close proximity of the consulate are now being razed. The blackened frames have been centers of attraction during the past week of terror for eloquently silent and bewildered crowds. One of the largest clothing stores in the heart of the city was destroyed by flames from incendiary bombs, only the charred walls and gutted roof having been left standing. As was the case with the synagogues, no attempts on the part of the fire brigade were made to extinguish the fire, although apparently there was a certain amount of apprehension for adjacent property, for the walls of a coffee house next door were covered with asbestos and sprayed by the doughty firemen. It is extremely difficult to believe, but the owners of the clothing store were actually charged with setting the fire and on that basis were dragged from their beds at 6 A. M. and clapped into prison.

Tactics which closely approached the ghoulish took place at the Jewish cemetery where the temple was fired together with a building occupied by caretakers, tombstones uprooted and graves violated. Eye witnesses considered reliable report that ten corpses were left unburied at this cemetery for a week's time because all grave diggers and cemetery attendants had been arrested.

Ferocious as was the violation of property, the most hideous phase of the so-called "spontaneous" action, has been the wholesale arrest and transportation to concentration camps of male German Jews between the ages of sixteen and sixty, as well as Jewish men without citizenship. This has been taking place daily since the night of horror. This office has no way of accurately checking the numbers of such arrests, but there is very little question that they have gone into several thousands in Leipzig alone. Having demolished dwellings and hurled most of the moveable effects to the streets, the insatiably sadistic perpetrators threw many of the trembling inmates into a small stream that flows through the Zoological Park, commanding horrified spectators to spit at them, defile them with mud and jeer at their plight. The latter incident has been repeatedly corrugated by German witnesses who were nauseated in telling the tale. The slightest manifestation of sympathy evoked a positive fury on the part of the perpetrators, and the crowd was powerless to do anything but turn horror-stricken eyes from the scene of abuse, or leave the vicinity. These tactics were carried out the entire morning of November 10th without police intervention and they were applied to men, women and children.

There is much evidence of physical violence, including several deaths. At least half a dozen cases have been personally observed, victims with bloody, badly bruised faces having fled to this office, believing that as refugees their desire to emigrate could be expedited here. As a matter of fact this consulate has been a bedlam of humanity for the past ten days, most of these visitors being desperate women, as their husbands and sons had been taken off to concentration camps.

Similarly violent procedure was applied throughout this consular district, the amount of havoc wrought depending upon the number of Jewish establishments or persons involved. It is understood that in many of the smaller communities even more relentless methods were employed than was the case in the cities. Reports have been received from Weissenfels to the effect that the few Jewish families there are experiencing great difficulty in purchasing food. It is reported that three Aryan professors of the University of Jena have been arrested and taken off to concentration

camps because they had voiced disapproval of this insidious drive against mankind. *Sources of information*

Personal observation and interviews.

800

DHB/dhb

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VII, pp. 1037–1041, Doc. L-202.

89. KRISTALLNACHT: AFFIDAVIT NOVEMBER 26, 1945, OF BENNO FRANZ T. MARTIN REGARDING DESTRUCTION IN NURNBERG, NOVEMBER 8–9, 1938

Benno Martin was a high-ranking officer of the SS (Schutzstaffel) in Nuremberg, Germany. As such, he brings a perspective to the event of Kristallnacht, the first mass government-organized violent assault on the Jews of Germany and Austria, that is different from those contained in other documents in this volume. However, despite his different perspective, his description of what he saw during that night of destruction confirms in every respect what has been observed by various U.S. diplomats in their reports to their superiors. In addition to his particular account, Martin states that Julius Streicher, publisher of the notoriously anti-Semitic tabloid-type newspaper Der Stürmer, and Gauleiter (leader of a region) of Franconia, Germany, which includes the city of Nuremberg, "was most active as a leader of the persecution of the Jews," and his "bloodguilt consisted in having been the pathmaker of anti-Semitism in Germany for twenty years."

AFFIDAVIT

Benno Franz T. Martin, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. My name is Benno Franz T. Martin. I was born in Kaiserslautern on 2/12/1893. I hold the degree of Doctor (lawyer) from the University of Erlangen. From 1934 until 1942 or 43 I was Chief of Police [Polizeipraesident] in Nurnberg, Germany. My former rank since 44 (fall) in the "Die Schutzstaffeln der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei" (known as the "SS") was Obergruppenfuhrer Lt. General. I give this affidavit with the knowledge, that it

may be used in the trial of persons accused of war crimes before the International Military Tribunal.

2. I personally have known the former Gauleiter of Franconia, Julius Streicher, since 1923, and during my time in office as Chief of Police in Nurnberg I frequently had official dealings with him. In addition, I initiated an investigation of his personal and official activities, which investigation was carried out over a period of two years, and which resulted in Streicher's conviction before a National Socialist Party Court in Muenchen.

I deem myself sufficiently familiar with his person, his activities and the general atmosphere in Franconia, in the Reich, and especially in Nurnberg for the last twenty years to express my conviction, that Streicher was most active as a leader of the persecution of the Jews in Germany, and that his actual bloodguilt consisted in having been the pathmaker of anti-Semitism in Germany for twenty years.

4. As to the events in Nurnberg during the night of 8–9 November, 1938, I distinctly remember the following: During said night I was informed by telephone, that the "Die Sturmabteilungen der NSDAP", known in short as the "SA", had begun excesses against Jewish Synagogues and Jewish stores. I dressed and went to the Synagogue in Essenweinstrasse, which Synagogue had been mentioned to me in the telephone conversation. Upon arriving there, I met there SA Obergruppenfuehrer Obernitz with several leading Nazi Party members. The Synagogue was already in flames. I inquired and was told that it had been set afire by the city fire department. I also saw that the Chief of the city fire department, Bethke, was there in person and was directing the burning down of the Synagogue.

I asked and was told by Obernitz, that this action was taken pursuant to an order from the Fuehrer, an order which was valid for the entire Reich. Upon further questioning, Obernitz told me, that he himself had received these orders from Lutze and Goebbels, and the Gauleiter Streicher had agreed, that the action should be carried out by Obernitz and the SA. According to his description he has visited Streicher in his bedroom, who was in bed on the night of November 8–9, and has asked him for his consent. Streicher is supposed to have said, that he has no objections, then he turned around and continued to sleep. Obernitz also ordered my deputy, Dr. Holz (who later reported this to me), to see to it, that the police should stand by idly when action against Synagogues and Jewish stores was taken, and Bethke, Chief of the fire department, according to Dr. Holz' report, was ordered by Obernitz to set the Synagogue afire and to protect non-Jewish buildings in the neighborhood in case the fire

should spread. I also recall, that during my time in office it was almost impossible to induce any district attorneys or other prosecuting authorities to institute procedure, or even investigations of Party members or other persons guilty of excesses against Jewish persons or property.

2. I affirm that this above declaration has been given by me voluntarily and that everything I have said is the truth and nothing but the truth.

Signed: Dr. Martin
BENNO F. T. MARTIN

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 26th day of November 1945 at Oberursel, Germany.

/s/ Dietrich Roetter
Dietrich ROETTER
Sgt, 36989387
/s/ Rudolf Urbach
Rudolf URBACH
Captain, AUS

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 959–961, Doc. 3253-PS.

90. AKTION T-4: "PERMITTING THE DESTRUCTION OF LIFE UNWORTHY OF LIFE," 1920

*"Aktion T-4" is the name that was given to a program in Nazi Germany that is most often described—inaccurately—as a euthanasia program. The name comes from the address of the program's headquarters: number 4, Tiergarten Street (Tiergartenstraße). It was a program to kill children and adults who, because of a mental or physical disability, could no longer contribute to German society. As such, it was anything but a program for the merciful killing of a person on the cusp of death or in severe and constant pain with no prospect for relief. The concept is consistent with Nazi ideology but was proposed years before the party came to power. In this early document, written by the co-authors of an influential book, *Allowing the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Living*, there is a legal and then a medical explanation given that seeks to justify the killing of these people. This was the first of Nazi*

Germany's programs for mass murder. It should be noted that this program was not directed toward Jews; instead, it applied to non-Jews throughout the Reich.

Karl Binding, "Legal Explanation"

. . . Are there human lives which have so completely lost the attribute of legal status that their continuation has permanently lost all value, both for the bearer of that life and for society?

Merely asking this question is enough to raise an uneasy feeling in anyone who is accustomed to assessing the value of individual life for the bearer and for the social whole. It hurts him to see how wastefully we handle the most valuable lives (filled with and sustained by the strongest will to live and the greatest vital power), and how much labor power, patience, and capital investment we squander (often totally uselessly) just to preserve lives not worth living—until nature, often pitilessly late, removes the last possibility of their continuation.

Reflect simultaneously on a battlefield strewn with thousands of dead youths, or a mine in which methane gas has trapped hundreds of energetic workers; compare this with our mental hospitals, with their caring for their living inmates. One will be deeply shaken by the strident clash between the sacrifice of the finest flower of humanity in its full measure on the one side, and by the meticulous care shown to existences which are not just absolutely worthless but even of negative value, on the other.

It is impossible to doubt that there are living people to whom death would be a release, and whose death would simultaneously free society and the state from carrying a burden which serves no conceivable purpose, except that of providing an example of the greatest unselfishness. And because there actually are human lives, in whose preservation no rational being could ever again take any interest, the legal order is now confronted by the fateful question: Is it our duty actively to advocate for this life's asocial continuance, (particularly by the fullest application of criminal law), or to permit its destruction under specific conditions? One could also state the question legislatively, like this: Does the energetic preservation of such life deserve preference, as an example of the general unassailability of life? Or does permitting its termination, which frees everyone involved, seem the lesser evil? . . .

So far as I can see, the people who are to be considered here fall into two primary groups with a third intervening in between.

1. *The first group is composed of those irretrievably lost as a result of illness or injury, who, fully understanding their situation, possess and have somehow expressed their urgent wish for release. . . .*

But I cannot find the least reason—legally, socially, ethically, or religiously—not to permit those requested to do so to kill such hopeless cases who urgently demand death; indeed I consider this permission to be simply a duty of legal mercy, a mercy which also asserts itself in many other forms). . . .

2. *The second group consists of incurable idiots, no matter whether they are so congenitally or have (like paralytics) become so in the final stage of suffering. They have the will neither to live nor to die. So, in their case, there is no valid consent to be killed; but, on the other hand, the act encounters no will to live which must be broken. Their life is completely without purpose, but they do not experience it as unbearable. They are a fearfully heavy burden both for their families and for society. Their death does not create the least loss, except perhaps in the feelings of the mother or a faithful nurse. Since they require extensive care, they occasion the development of a profession devoted to providing years and decades of care for absolutely valueless lives. It is undeniable that this is an incredible absurdity and a misuse, for unworthy ends, of life's powers.*

Again, I find no grounds—legally, socially, ethically, or religiously—for not permitting the killing of these people, who are the fearsome counter-image of true humanity, and who arouse horror in nearly everyone who meets them (naturally, not in everyone)! In times of higher morality—in our times all heroism has been lost—these poor souls would surely have been freed from themselves officially. But who today, in our enervated age, compels himself to acknowledge this necessity, and hence this justification? . . .

3. *I have mentioned a middle group, and I find it in those mentally sound people who, through some event like a very severe, doubtlessly fatal wound, have become unconscious and who, if they should ever again rouse from their comatose state, would waken to nameless suffering. . . .*

I do not believe that a standard procedure can be created for managing this group of killings. Cases will occur in which killing seems actually fully justified; but it can also happen that the agent, in the belief that he acted correctly, acted precipitously. Then he would never be

guilty of premeditated murder but rather of negligent manslaughter. The possibility must be left open of letting killings which are later recognized as having been unjustified go unpunished. . . .

Dr. Alfred Hoche, "Medical Explanation"

. . . Thus, economically speaking, these same *complete idiots*, who most perfectly fulfill all the criteria for complete mental death, are also the *ones whose existence weighs most heavily on the community*.

In part, this burden is financial and can be readily calculated by inventorying annual institutional budgets. I have allowed myself to take up the task of collecting materials bearing on this question by surveying all relevant German institutions, and thereby I have discovered that the average yearly (per head) cost for maintaining idiots has till now been thirteen hundred marks. If we calculate the total number of idiots presently cared for in German institutions, we arrive at a rough estimate of twenty to thirty thousand. If we assume an average life expectancy of fifty years for individual cases, it is easy to estimate what *incredible capital* is withdrawn from the nation's wealth for food, clothing, and heating—for an unproductive purpose.

And this still does not represent the real burden by any means.

The institutions which provide care for idiots are unavailable for other purposes. To the extent that private institutions are involved in such care, we must calculate the return on our investment. A caretaking staff of many thousands must be withdrawn from beneficial work for this totally fruitless endeavor. It is painful to think that whole generations of caretakers grow old next to these empty human shells, not a few of whom live seventy years or more.

In the prosperous times of the past, the question of whether one could justify making all necessary provision for such dead-weight existences was not pressing. But now things have changed, and we must take it up seriously. Our situation resembles that of participants in a difficult expedition: the greatest possible fitness of every one is the inescapable condition of the endeavor's success, and there is no room for half-strength, quarter-strength, or eighth-strength members. For a long time, the task for us Germans will be the most highly intensified integration of all possibilities—the liberation of every available power for productive ends. Fulfilling this task is opposed by the modern efforts to maintain (as much as possible) every kind of weakling and to devote care and protection to all those who (even if they are

certainly not mentally dead) are constitutionally less valuable elements. These efforts have their particular importance through the fact that, so far, preventing these defective people from *reproducing* has not been possible and has not even been seriously attempted. . . .

The next issue to explore is whether the selection of these lives, which have finally become worthless for the individual and for society, can be accomplished with such certainty that mistakes and errors can be *excluded*.

This concern can only arise among lay people. For physicians, there is not the slightest question that this selection can be carried out with one hundred percent certainty and, indeed, with a much higher degree of certainty than can be found in deciding about the mental health or illness of convicted criminals.

For physicians, there are many indisputable, scientifically established criteria by which the *impossibility of recovery* for mentally dead people can be recognized. This is even truer since the condition of mental death beginning in earliest youth is of the first importance for our discussion.

Naturally, no doctor would conclude with certainty that a two- or three-year-old was suffering permanent mental death. But, *even in childhood*, the moment comes when this prediction can be made without doubt. . . .

Goethe originated the model for how important human questions evolve. He saw them as spiral. The core of this model is the fact that at regular intervals a spiral line rising in a particular direction perpetually returns to the *same position* relative to the axis crossing it but *each time a step higher*.

Eventually, this image will be apparent; even in connection with the cultural question we have been discussing. There was a time, now considered barbaric, in which eliminating those who were born unfit for life, or who later became so, was taken for granted. Then came the phase, continuing into the present, in which, finally, preserving every existence, no matter how worthless, stood as the highest moral value. A new age will arrive—operating with a higher morality and with great sacrifice—which will actually give up the requirements of an exaggerated humanism and overvaluation of mere existence. I know that, in general, these opinions will not even be received with understanding, let alone agreement. But this prospect should not keep anyone from speaking out, particularly a person who, after more than an average lifetime of serving humanity's medical needs, has earned the right to be heard on the general problems of humanity.

Source: Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche, "Permitting the Destruction of Unworthy Life: Its Extent and Form," translated by Walter E. Wright and Patrick G. Derr, *Issues in Law and Medicine* 8, no. 2 (1992): 246–50, 260–261, 264–265. Used by permission of *Issues in Law & Medicine*, © 1992.

91. **AKTION T-4: HITLER'S AUTHORIZATION TO "EUTHANIZE" THE INCURABLY ILL, SEPTEMBER 1, 1939**

In order to protect doctors and other medical professionals from what they were about to do, Adolf Hitler signed a secret order in the fall of 1939, authorizing them to kill individuals determined to have "lives not worthy of living." The program—referred to as Aktion T-4 for the address of the program's headquarters: number 4, Tiergarten Street (Tiergartenstraße)—was the first of Nazi Germany's programs for mass murder. It was not directed toward Jews; instead, it applied to non-Jews throughout the Reich. Hitler's authorization, signed during the fall of 1939, was backdated to September 1—the date on which Hitler invaded Poland and started World War II—to suggest that it was undertaken in response to the war. From a Nazi racial perspective, the death of Germany's finest young men in that war eliminated the very best of the German gene pool, and therefore special measures were required to keep very poor genes—those of the mentally and physically disabled—from poisoning the German race.

[On letterhead A. Hitler]

Berlin 1 Sept 1939

Reichsleiter Bouhler and Dr. Brandt, M.D.

are charged with the responsibility of enlarging the authority of certain physicians to be designated by name in such a manner that persons who, according to human judgment, are incurable can, upon a most careful diagnosis of their condition of sickness, be accorded a mercy death.

signed: A. HITLER

[Handwritten note]

Given to me by Bouhler on 27 August 1940

signed: Dr. Guertner

III a 3/41 g Rs /

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, p. 451, Doc. 630-PS.

92. **AKTION T-4: NOTE DESCRIBING THE METHOD OF SELECTION FOR EUTHANASIA, DECEMBER 6, 1940**

This document describes a part of the process used to kill individuals determined to have "lives not worthy of living" under Aktion T-4 (or the Euthanasia Program). There are several points that should be noted. First, it is clear that the decision as to which person with a physical or mental disability would be killed was made solely on a review of the patient's medical records as well as a questionnaire that was completed by officials of the institution in which the patient was housed, not on the basis of a physical examination. Second, patients who were selected to be killed were moved from their primary institution and often sent to several others before arriving at the location where the killing would take place. This was intended to make it harder for family members to find their loved ones prior to execution. Third, all victims were cremated, and ashes (of anyone, not necessarily the patient) would be put in an urn and sent to the family with a letter expressing sorrow for the patient's death from one disease or another. Finally, the administrative errors referred to did in fact occur, thereby raising suspicion among many families of murdered patients.

NOTE BY SELLMER, 6 DECEMBER 1940, DESCRIBING
THE METHOD OF SELECTION FOR EUTHANASIA

Subject: Mental Institutions

The following is for your personal information. Please destroy this sheet afterwards.

For some time the inmates of mental institutions have been visited by a commission which functions on orders from some very high office. The commission's task is to find out which inmates should be selected for transport to certain other institutions. The commission bases its decision on the records of the institution. The patients who are then transferred are examined again in the institution designated by the commission and then the decision is made whether they should be released from their sufferings.

The body itself is cremated and the ashes are placed at the disposal of the relatives. Small mistakes in notifying are naturally always liable to occur, and in the future it will not be possible to avoid them. The commission itself is anxious to avoid all mistakes. I could give you further information but I would like to abstain from it and beg you to look me up when you visit the Gauleitung.

I believe that we National Socialists can welcome this action which is extraordinarily serious for the affected individual. I beg you, therefore, to oppose all rumors and grumblings with the necessary emphasis by representing our point of view in regard to these matters.

Nuernberg, 6 December 1940

Heil Hitler!

[Stamp]

[Signed] SELLMER
Gaustabsamtsleiter

National Socialist German Labor Party
Gau Franconia

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. I, pp. 855–856, Doc. NO-660.

93. AKTION T-4: EXTRACT FROM THE AFFIDAVIT OCTOBER 14, 1946, OF VIKTOR BRACK DESCRIBING ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES OF THE EUTHANASIA PROGRAM

On August 20, 1947, Victor Brack was sentenced to death in the so-called Doctors' Trial held in Nuremberg, Germany, for his role in the program established by the Nazi regime to kill individuals determined to have "lives not worthy of living" (Aktion T-4, or the Euthanasia Program). In this affidavit, as in other documents, it is clear that no physical examination of patients took place to determine their condition; instead, four doctors read a questionnaire that had been completed by officials of the institution in which the patient was housed. If it was decided that the patient should be killed, he was sent to one of several "Euthanasia Institutions" where he was killed by gas. Brack explained that Hitler considered these patients to be "useless eaters" and therefore an economic and racial burden to society that had to be eliminated. Particular note should be made of Brack's statement that after the program

was cancelled, the personnel involved assisted in the mass murder of Jews, confirming that the Aktion T-4 program served as a testing and training ground for experts in mass gassing, an expertise much in demand in the Nazi extermination camps.

EXTRACT FROM THE AFFIDAVIT OF DEFENDANT BRACK, 14 OCTOBER 1946, DESCRIBING ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS AND PROCEDURE OF THE EUTHANASIA PROGRAM

The Euthanasia Program

4. The Euthanasia Program was initiated in the summer of 1939. Hitler issued a secret order to Professor Dr. Karl Brandt, Reich Commissioner for Medical and Health Matters, and at that time personal physician to the Fuehrer, and to Philipp Bouhler, charging them with responsibility for the killing of human beings who were unable to live, that is, the according of a mercy death to incurably insane persons. Prior to the issuance of this secret order, Bouhler had a conference with Dr. Brandt and Dr. Leonardo Conti, the Reich Chief for Public Health and State Secretary in the Ministry of Interior. On the basis of this order of Hitler, Bouhler and Brandt were to select doctors to carry out this program. Inasmuch as the insane asylums and other institutions were functions of the Ministry of Interior, Dr. Herbert Linden became the representative of the Ministry of Interior. Dr. Karl Brandt and Philipp Bouhler appointed Professor Dr. Heyde and Professor Dr. Nietzsche along with several other medical men to aid in the execution of this Euthanasia Program.

5. Professor Dr. Karl Brandt was in charge of the medical section of the Euthanasia Program. In this capacity, as shown in the chart I have drawn, dated 12 September 1946, Dr. Karl Brandt appointed as his deputies Professor Heyde and Professor Nietzsche. In charge of the administrative office under Brandt was first Herr Bohne and later Herr Allers. Three different names were used by Brandt's section in order to disguise the activities of the organization. The names of the organization are as follows:

- Reich Association-Mental Institutions.
- Charitable Foundation for Institutional Care.
- General Patient Transport Company.

6. In the early stages of this program, Dr. Karl Brandt visited Philipp Bouhler and discussed with him many details of this program. As a matter of fact, after such meetings between Brandt and Bouhler, I received many orders, more often from Bouhler than from Brandt directly.

7. In my capacity as Chief of Office II of Bouhler's Chancellery, I was ordered to carry out the administrative details of the Euthanasia Program. My deputy was Werner Blankenburg, who eventually became my successor, that is, in the beginning of 1942 when I joined the Waffen SS. Von Hegener, Reinh, Vorberg, and Dr. Hevelmann were members of my staff.

8. In the Ministry of the Interior, Dr. Linden was in charge of the Euthanasia Program and his deputy was Ministerialrat Franke. The Department for Public Health in the Ministry of the Interior had authority over all insane asylums of the Reich, and in this position, my department as well as the office of Dr. Brandt maintained close liaison in order to operate this Euthanasia Program efficiently.

The Procedure

9. By order of Dr. Linden, the directors of all insane asylums in the Reich had to complete questionnaires for each patient in their institutions. These questionnaires were drafted by Bouhler, Heyde, Nietzsche, and others in several of their many conferences. The questionnaires were then forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior to be distributed to the various insane asylums and similar institutions. Theoretically, Dr. Linden's office had the questionnaires returned and then forwarded them to the administrative section of the office of Dr. Brandt. The program was so arranged that photostats of each questionnaire were to be sent to four experts consisting of about 10 to 15 doctors. I do not remember the names of all the members of this panel, but Dr. Pfannrnueller, Dr. Schumann, Dr. Falthausen, and Dr. Renaux are fresh in my memory in this connection. Each of these experts indicated by making a certain comment on the questionnaire whether or not the patient could be transferred to an observation institution and eventually killed. The questionnaire was then forwarded to a senior expert. According to the regulation, the senior expert was only entitled to order the transfer of the patient when all four experts voted for the transfer. This senior expert also marked the questionnaire and then submitted it to Dr. Linden who ordered the insane asylum to transfer the patient to one of the observation institutions. Offhand I can remember, among others, the names of the following observation institutions: Eglfing-Haar, Kempten, Jena, Buch, Arnsberg.

10. At these institutions the patients were under the observation of the doctor in charge for a period of 1 to 3 months. The physician had the right to exempt the patient from the

program if he decided that the patient was not incurable. If he agreed with the opinion of the senior expert, the patient was transferred to a so-called Euthanasia Institution. I can recall the names of the Euthanasia Institutions—

Grafeneck-under Dr. Schuman.

Brandenburg-under Dr. Hennecke.

Hartheim-under Dr. Renaux.

Sonnenstein-under Dr. Schmalenbach.

Hadamar-(I do not remember under whose leadership).

Bernburg-under Dr. Behnke or Dr. Becker.

In these institutions the patient was killed by means of gas by the doctor in charge. To the best of my knowledge, about fifty to sixty thousand persons were killed in this way from autumn 1939 to the summer of 1941.

11. The order issued by the Fuehrer to Brandt and Bouhler was secret and never published. The Euthanasia Program itself was kept as secret as possible, and for this reason, relatives of persons killed in the course of the program were never told the real cause of death. The death certificates issued to the relatives carried fictitious causes of death such as heart failure. All persons subjected to the Euthanasia Program did not have an opportunity to decide whether they wanted a mercy death, nor were their relatives contacted for approval or disapproval. The decision was purely within the discretion of the doctors. The program was not restricted to those cases in which the person was "in extremis".

12. Hitler's ultimate reason for the establishment of the Euthanasia Program in Germany was to eliminate those people confined to insane asylums and similar institutions who could no longer be of any use to the Reich. They were considered useless objects and Hitler felt that by exterminating these so-called useless eaters, it would be possible to relieve more doctors, male and female nurses, and other personnel, hospital beds and other facilities for the armed forces.

Reich Committee for Research on Hereditary Diseases and Constitutional Susceptibility to Severe Diseases

13. This committee, which was also a function of the Euthanasia Program, was an organization for the killing of children who were born mentally deficient or physically deformed. All physicians assisting at births, midwives, and maternity hospitals were ordered by the Ministry of Interior to report such cases to the office of Dr. Linden in the Ministry of Interior. Experts in the medical section of Dr. Brandt's office were then ordered to give their opinion in each case. As

a matter of fact, the complete file on each case was sent to the offices of Bouhler and Dr. Brandt in order to obtain their opinions and to decide the fate of each child involved. In many cases these children were to be operated upon in such a manner that the result was either complete recovery or death. Death resulted in a majority of these cases. The program was inaugurated in the summer of 1939. Bouhler told me that Dr. Linden had orders to obtain the consent of the parents of each child concerned. I do not know how long this program continued, since I joined the Waffen SS in 1942.

The Connection between the Euthanasia Program and SS
Brigadefuehrer Globocnik:

14. In 1941 I received an oral order to discontinue the Euthanasia Program. I received this order either from Bouhler or from Dr. Brandt. In order to preserve the personnel relieved of these duties and to have the opportunity of starting a new Euthanasia Program after the war, Bouhler requested, I think after a conference with Himmler, that I send this personnel to Lublin and put it at the disposal of SS Brigadefuehrer Globocnik. I then had the impression that these people were to be used in the extensive Jewish labor camps run by Globocnik. Later, however, at the end of 1942 or the beginning of 1943, I found out that they were used to assist in the mass extermination of the Jews, which was then already common knowledge in higher Party circles.

15. Among the doctors who assisted in the Jewish extermination program were Eberle and Schumann; Schumann performed medical experiments on prisoners in Auschwitz. It would have been impossible for these men to participate in such things without the personal knowledge and consent of Karl Brandt. The order to send these men to the East could have been given only by Himmler to Brandt, possibly through Bouhler.

* * * * *

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. I, pp. 842–846, Doc. NO-426.

94. CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY: HITLER DECREE, MARCH 1, 1942

This decree by Hitler authorizes the confiscation of written material of Jews, Freemasons, and “opponents of National

Socialism,” as well as “cultural treasures” owned by Jews. The order to confiscate property—including, in this case, cultural treasures such as jewelry and fine art—is expected in times of war, but it is not the material or treasures of the military enemy beaten in battle that is referred to here; it is, instead, the property of supposedly internal enemies that is to be taken. They are deemed to be the “authors of the present war against the Reich,” engaged in a “spiritual battle.” The term “Weltanschauung” is a reference to a person’s or group’s worldview. As used here, it is referring to a particular worldview, one that is not in keeping with that of National Socialism.

Jews, Free Masons and those opponents of National Socialism who are affiliated with them on the basis of “Weltanschauung”, are the authors of the present war against the Reich. The systematic spiritual battle against these forces is a task made necessary by the war effort.

I have therefore directed Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg to carry out this task in agreement with the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command. His staff for the occupied territories is authorized to search libraries, archives, lodges and other “Weltanschauung” and cultural establishments for the relevant material and to have this material requisitioned for the “Weltanschauung” tasks of the NSDAP, and for future scientific research by the higher educational institutions. The same regulation applies to cultural treasures which are the property or in the possession of Jews, which are ownerless, or the origin of which cannot be clearly established. Directions for carrying out this order in cooperation with the Wehrmacht will be issued by the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command in agreement with Reichsleiter Rosenberg.

The necessary measures within the Eastern Territories under German administration will be taken by Reichsleiter Rosenberg in his capacity of Reichsminister for Occupied Eastern Territories.

/s/ HITLER

Headquarters of the Führer, 1 March 1942.

To all Offices of
the Wehrmacht,
the Party and
the State.

Source: National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records. National Archives Identifier: 7582747.

95. CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY: LETTER FROM HERMANN GOERING TO ALFRED ROSENBERG REGARDING CONFISCATION OF FRENCH CULTURAL GOODS, NOVEMBER 21, 1940

This letter from Hermann Goering, plenipotentiary of the Four-Year Plan, to Alfred Rosenberg, a Hitler confidant and driver of Nazi ideology, reveals more than just the purported purpose of the letter, which has to do with the confiscation, cataloging, and securing of some of the finest works of art in Europe. It is also an insight into the ruthless backbiting and competition of the Nazi leadership, each vying for power. In this case, Goering mentions both the Reich foreign minister (Joachim von Ribbentrop) and the Reich propaganda minister (Joseph Goebbels) as claiming some of what Goering sees as his authority with regard to the extensive art collections Goering has obtained. Building his own case for primacy, Goering notes that through his own efforts he was able to bring out "a very large part of the art treasures," but for all his braggadocio he feels compelled to state that he can prove his assertion that the discovery was, in fact, due to his own efforts.

The Reichmarschall
of the Greater German Reich
Romieten
November 21, 1940

Dear Party Comrade ROSENBERG:

Hearty thanks for your letter and most of all for the wonderful book "Deutsche Grösse" ("German Greatness"). I have already heard much about the exhibition and have read something about it. It is not really necessary for me to assure you how particularly warmly I, for my part, greet this exhibition. As a matter of course, I will avail myself of the next opportunity to inspect it.

I should like to inform you briefly as follows, relative to the cultural goods seized in France. I have especially welcomed that, after much vacillation, an authority for the collection of the articles was finally decided upon although I must point out that other authorities also claim to possess power from the Führer first of all the Reich Foreign Minister, who several months ago sent a circular to all authorities, claiming among other things, power for occupied territory, and stating the safeguarding of art treasures was his responsibility.

Moreover, the Reich Propaganda Minister is still also delegated, I believe, to determine the data relative to these cultural goods, which ones were stolen from Germany and which should not be returned. This, however, pertains mainly to the articles that are found in the possession of enemy museums.

I have promised to support energetically the work of your staff and to place at its disposal that which it could not hitherto obtain, namely, means of transportation and guard personnel, and the Luftwaffe is hereby assigned to give the utmost assistance.

In addition, I should like to call to your attention that I have been able to obtain especially valuable cultural goods from Jewish owners. I obtained them from hiding places that were very difficult to find; I discovered these a long time ago, by means of bribery and the employment of French detectives and criminal agents. This activity continues, as does the activity of my foreign exchange investigation authorities in scrutinizing bank vaults. In both cases the results will be communicated to your staff, which will then be required to seize the articles and transport them. I consider the co-operation between your staff and Herr THURMER's office in PARIS as excellent and answering its purpose to the highest degree.

In order that no incorrect ideas arise regarding the articles that I want to claim for myself, and those I already have obtained through purchase and others which I should like to obtain, I wish to communicate to you the following:

- 1). I already possess today through purchase and barter perhaps the most important private collection, in Germany, if not in Europe. These are works that I include in the category of early-Nordic masters, that is, consequently, the early-German, the early Dutch and Flemish, the works of the French Gothic; that is, paintings as well as sculpture.
- 2). A very extensive and highly valuable collection of 17th century Dutch.
- 3). A relatively small but very good collection of 18th century French and finally a collection of Italian master.

This whole collection will be housed appropriately in CARI HALL and will come later into the possession of the State as my legacy, with the provision that the gallery remain in CARI HALL.

The Führer has welcomed my plan, as well as supported it.

In order to complete this collection I have considered the purchase also of some few pieces from confiscated Jewish cultural goods. This pertains chiefly to masters whose works

I did not hitherto possess or works necessary to supplement the collection. I submit these things from time to time the Führer. The purchase occurs as follows: the objects are examined by a French expert, the president appointed by the government (whose name I have forgotten for the moment). The purchase sum is paid out to the trustee whom the German state has appointed. Arrangements and discussion concerning its use as well as the use of other sums accumulating in the trust funds will be carried out later. In view of the hundreds and thousands of paintings, this is a very modest percentage. Up to now there have been about 15 paintings. By the way, I consider this percentage all the more justified, in that through my efforts, which can be proved, I brought out of their hiding-places a very large part of the art treasures. As a matter of course, the Führer has reserved for himself the right of decision over the most valuable part of the collection. An extraordinarily large number of objects remain, however, the total of which will apparently read into the thousands; these can be employed for the decoration of party and state buildings as well as for the filling of museums.

This, in short for your personal information, so that no false ideas can arise.

As for your letter addressed to Professor SPEER, I can only agree whole-heartedly and most warmly with your opinion. Your lines dedicated to the Theater-Gormantum please me particularly. In this matter my endeavors coincide with yours one hundred per cent. I should be grateful to you if at our next meeting we could discuss means leading to a quick and thorough success.

Sometimes it is almost horrible to see those theater clubs (Theatergormanem) dawdling around during the magnificent Wagnerian Operas. But also everything else you wrote in this letter agrees completely with the line I follow.

It would please me very much to be able to see you again as soon as possible.

The Führer has given me a several weeks' relaxation leave, which I urgently needed, since I found myself for the first time at the end of my strength. I first went to my hunting lodge at [illegible], in order to be able to recover, away from all cares. I shall be in BERLIN for several days around the 18th of December and shall not fail to inquire in due course at your office when it is convenient for you to hold a conference.

Thanking you again for the book, I am with

Heil HITLER!
Yours
/s/ GOERING

Source: National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records. National Archives Identifier: 7582747.

III. Genocide

96. AFFIDAVIT OF AUGUST 28, 1945, OF RAYMOND H. GEIST DESCRIBING NAZI ACTIVITIES IN GERMANY, 1933–1939

In 1945, Raymond H. Geist, former American consul in Berlin, gave a detailed affidavit regarding his activities and observations in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1939. Gleaned from his own experiences and from multiple conversations—including with Nazi officials—Geist's affidavit addresses several critical aspects of life in Germany during those years: (1) the vast military buildup in armaments and soldiers in uniform, all in view of the eyes of the world and geared to a war of aggression; (2) the programs such as the Hitler Youth and the Deutsche Jungvolk (for boys from ages 6 to 14) that sought to train the next generation of Nazis; (3) concentration camps, initially for political prisoners, and the Gestapo that created an environment of terror; (4) detainment and abuse of American Jews in Germany; (5) the violence directed against German Jews on Kristallnacht and the freely admitted goal of the Nazis to make Germany Judenrein, that is, "clean of Jews"; (6) the view that communists were a danger to the state and needed to be eliminated; and (7) the widespread confiscation of Jewish property for the personal enrichment of those in high positions in the Nazi Party.

AFFIDAVIT OF RAYMOND H. GEIST, FORMER AMERICAN CONSUL IN BERLIN, DESCRIBING NAZI ACTIVITIES IN GERMANY DURING THE PERIOD 1933 TO 1939: MILITARY PREPARATION, CONCENTRATION CAMPS, PERSECUTION OF JEWS, COMMUNISTS, AND OTHERS; ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS

United Mexican States)
Mexico, Federal District |
Embassy of the United -
States of America |
)

Mexico City, D. F.)
) ss.
 Mexico)

RAYMOND H. GEIST, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

I came to Berlin in December, 1929, as Consul and continued in that capacity, exercising my official functions until the end of 1939. In 1938 I was appointed First Secretary of the Embassy and continued in that office discharging at the same time my duties as consul. During the entire period of ten years my work was of such character that I frequently came into contact with many officials of the German Government. After the Nazis came to power in 1933, these contacts increased owing to the much more frequent occasions on which it was necessary to intervene with German officials in order to protect the rights of American citizens and their properties. During this period I not only had many official contacts but also friends and acquaintances, both in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany. My work permitted and occasionally required travel in Germany. It was my custom to make bicycle trips, as well as excursions by automobile to various points particularly in the environs of Berlin, often to the extent of fifty miles. Although I do not have the first-hand information with regard to developments under the National Socialists for all of Germany that I have regarding the neighborhood of Berlin, I saw enough during my excursions, and was told enough by friends and acquaintances to know that the activities hereafter described in and around Berlin were being substantially duplicated all over Germany.

There were indeed few military establishments in the neighborhood of Berlin in 1929 and until 1933 there were the Casernas at Potsdam and the military establishment at Döberitz. After the Nazis came to power, military establishments of all sorts grew up with enormous rapidity. Before the end of 1933, during my frequent excursions, I discovered outside of Berlin on nearly every road leaving from the City new large military establishments, including training fields, airports, barracks, proving grounds, antiaircraft stations and the like. For these establishments most of the ground was broken during the year 1933; there were probably fifty within the immediate vicinity of Berlin. Most of these establishments were being openly prepared; nevertheless they were under guard. It was apparent with respect to others that an attempt was made to preserve secrecy. I recall in particular that the large antiaircraft station near my house in the Gruenwald was built under secrecy, likewise a munitions dump burrowed in the hills of Wildpark near Potsdam was also

built under secrecy. Being disguised as a German and speaking the language, I was able on my bicycle trips to penetrate certain of these establishments where at various times I saw military exercises, including the use of tanks, in various maneuvers. I recall from my travels beyond Berlin and the information and reports which I had from friends and acquaintances that the same feverish preparations were in progress throughout the length and breadth of Germany, in fact, all establishments which could serve a military purpose were converted to military uses.

I also saw the preparations being made for building up the new army. I visited the camps of the compulsory labor service, the Arbeitsdienst, which was well under way by the end of 1933, with camps established all over Germany. Though this was ostensibly a labor service, it was essentially military in character, as is well known. I saw the men working on reclamation projects and was informed that they worked two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, the balance of the time being spent in military tactics and in instruction in Nazi ideology. So that when conscription went into effect in 1935, through the medium of these camps, it was possible for the Germans to put up a trained army of at least 3,500,000 men, which formed the nucleus of the future army of aggression.

Particularly through the years 1933 and 1934 the hordes of storm troopers (S. A.) were much in evidence practicing military exercises. They were being converted into a military organization. I frequently encountered the storm troopers deployed in fields and in forests engaged in military technical exercises. This was all the part of a general plan to prepare Germany's manpower for war.

I witnessed, too, scores of times, the training of the Hitler Youth, which included boys from 14 to 17, who, dressed in their uniforms, were likewise generally in evidence wherever I chose to travel. I frequently saw them in the woods near Berlin, deployed in ravines, in fields, woods and hillsides staging mock attacks, employing the technique of actual maneuvers. Frequently they were under the direction of uniformed leaders and at times under officers of the Reichswehr. This type of training of the youth extended everywhere in Germany. Frequently my route of travel had to be changed in order not to find myself in the midst of some maneuvers which required the use of roads or paths along which I was riding. It was not considered wise to get too close to these operations, particularly if they were on an extensive scale.

The Deutsche Jungvolk (boys from the ages 6 to 14) was also the vehicle for military training. They were also in

evidence throughout the country. I frequently met them marching. I saw them engaged in military exercises in the school yards during the school recesses, particularly throwing hand grenades usually under expert adult leadership. Often I have seen these children in large numbers engaged in what were obviously military maneuvers, and under the direction of adult uniformed officers.

I had occasion, at times, to witness the organizations which were created for the girls that were part of the Hitler Youth and were also incorporated in the so called Arbeitsdienst, usually located somewhere near the camps for men. The resultant illegitimate children were a definite planned result of the program; they were part of the manpower and the army for the next generation. The shame and the grief of parents over this program fostered and urged by the Nazis although it existed, was seldom openly expressed on account of dangers to which the parents might expose themselves.

So far as the youth were concerned, the entire program was carried on with lavish propaganda and enough benefits to the participants to make it extremely popular. The Nazis provided the youth with special trains, special trucks, special bathing beaches, food and other privileges. At the same time, the semi-hysteria which was maintained about the whole National Socialist program made it impossible for parents or anyone else to speak against it even if they had wished to do so. The German people were well acquainted with the going on in concentration camps and it was well known that the fate of anyone too actively opposed to any part of the Nazi program was liable to be one of great suffering. Indeed, before the Hitler regime was many months old almost every family in Germany had had first-hand accounts of the brutalities inflicted in the concentration camps from someone either in the relationship or in the circle of friends who had served a sentence there; consequently the fear of such camps was a very effective brake on any possible opposition.

In addition to what I saw during these many years with my own eyes regarding the preparation and the building of a huge armed force, I received reliable information from trustworthy sources as to its scope and strength. One of my close friends in Berlin was one George Graffenstein, who lived at 34 Altenauerstrasse, just across the street from me. He was a German, formerly a member of Meile Printing Company of Chicago and a man strongly opposed to the Nazis. He had been an officer in the German army in the First World War; therefore he knew a large number of the officers of Reichswehr. Occasionally he gave in his house beer-evenings which a number of Reichswehr officers attended, including certain Generals. To these parties I was occasionally invited.

One of these Generals was General Goettke, who was the head of the artillery on the General Staff and a very close friend of Graffenstein. In addition Graffenstein's nephew was on the General Staff and was at the same time the liaison between the Reichswehr and the S.A. Late in 1934, George Graffenstein told me that from the information which he had received from his friends, the armament program was already so complete, so far advanced, so gigantic and all-inclusive, that there was no doubt of Germany's winning the war on sheer weight of arms alone. That same information was given to me directly by certain of the high officers of the Reichswehr, whom I met at Graffenstein's house.

By the middle of 1934 it had become obvious that the rearmament program, though in its beginning, was being planned on a vast scale so that it could not possibly be considered as defensive armament but only as a weapon for offensive war. This was, however, not a conclusion of my own; but it was openly stated as such to me. Graffenstein told me in 1934, during the conversations to which I have already referred, that the purpose of the program was an aggressive war. He told me that he had been so informed by General Goettke in particular. This statement was borne out by other persons who were in the know in Germany at that time. I confirmed his statements by my own conversations with the Generals who gathered in his house. They intimated to me, not only that Germany was embarked upon an inevitable program toward war but even gave me indications of the general plan, namely, the drive to the East and the attack upon Russia, after Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Austria had been eliminated. This was as early as 1934 and I had many similar conversations along the same line at Graffenstein's house during the following years.

Similar information was constantly being confirmed from other sources at later dates. For instance, in December 1938, I had a conversation with General Franz Halder, who was then Chief of Staff, at the house of Dr. Etscheit, a prominent Berlin lawyer. Halder stated to me: "You must take into account the National Socialist program in the East. If you, the Western powers, oppose our program in the East, we shall have to go to war with you". During this conversation he made it clear to me that the program of the Nazis for expansion in the East was unalterably fixed and decided upon. It included the attack on Poland, the annexation of Austria, territorial expansion in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Russia, particularly in the Ukraine. The latter provinces would have to be German. When I replied to Halder that I was positive the Western powers would never tolerate any such aggressive program and that inevitably it

would not only mean war with England and France but with the United States as well, Halder replied: "That is a pity".

The same information as to the aggressive intention of the Nazis was given to me by a friend, Count von Bismarck, formerly Counselor of the German Embassy in London. He was violently anti-Nazi. In Germany, where I knew him, he held no official position, deriving his income from his estates in East Prussia; but he was a man with wide contacts in officialdom, particularly in the Foreign Office. He said that the Nazis were headed for war, for huge aggressive adventures, that conquest of the East was a major part of the vast plan and that conquest of the West would only follow, when complete victory in the East solidified Germany's strength and resources in those quarters. He made this statement to me in 1936 and we discussed it often in 1937 and 1938. He was extremely disturbed, not over the aggressive plans of the Nazis, but over their manner of converting Germany into a slave State, which he repudiated entirely. He considered that the course of the Nazis militarily could not be hindered and furthermore, no country was preparing to stop them

I also had the same information from another reliable source. After Hitler came to power in 1933, General von Hammerstein withdrew from public life. He had been head of the Reichswehr under Chancellor Bruening. Although he was then retired, he knew and associated intimately with the Generals of the German Army, as he was among them *primus inter pares*. He told me of the German program for aggressive war during a long conversation which we had during a musical recital in 1938 at Dr. Paul Kempner's home. The army, he said, was at a highly mechanized strength, extremely mobile and ready for anything. He was sure, in view of the preparations and the excellent character of the German equipment that the German Army was then an instrument of invincible striking power. He stated categorically that it was a superb instrument which had been formed to wage war and that it would not be much longer delayed. He did not know the plans and details but he confirmed the information that I had from all sources, that Germany intended to strike in the East and that the war in the West depended on whether or not the Western powers would endeavor to intervene when the German war machine started moving.

Of these aggressive designs I learned also from other sources. A personal friend, Dr. Hans Henniger, a veterinarian in Berlin, was an intimate friend of an officer by the name of Schlessicher (I believe that is the correct spelling), who was the responsible purveyor to the German Army, therefore a high member of the Quartermaster Corps. I do

not remember his exact title. Dr. Henniger received from this man information constantly with regard to the preparations being made by the Germans in 1939.) A month before March 15, 1939,) I was informed of the plans for marching into Prague on that date and that large stocks of food and other equipment were being accumulated near the border of Czechoslovakia. On March 15, 1939,) the German Army rolled into Prague.

I also had a good deal of personal experience with and firsthand knowledge of the internal policies from 1935 to 1939. Indeed, from the very outset of the regime, I had intimate and continuous contact with various officers of the German Government in the course of my duties as an American official protecting American citizens or protesting against their mistreatment. The acts of violence against American citizens were numerous, particularly during the early years of 1933 and 1934. In addition, I was constantly receiving information as regards other Nazi tactics and the nature and number of victims from a variety of sources; the victims themselves on many occasions, both American and German, told me their experiences and appealed for help; relatives and friends of victims, both those who came back and those who did not; the foreign newspaper correspondents and, to a very considerable degree, I received information from the Gestapo itself.)

For a period I dealt directly with Herr Heinrich Himmler, then subsequently with Herr Reinhard Heydrich and often with Dr. Werner Best.

My vigorous relations with the Gestapo began in March, 1933, in fact I knew the organization of the secret police and dealt with that organization before the Nazis came to power. It was then the Politische Abteilung des Polizeipräsident, i.e., the political division of the Polizeipräsidentium, which was charged with supervisory and preventive functions with regard to political matters, then chiefly investigating the terror of Communists. It was located in Berlin at the Polizeipräsidentium. On March 6, 1933, it was moved from the Polizeipräsidentium to No. 8 Prinzalbrechtstrasse and became the famous Gestapo (Geheimstaatspolizei), its first chief was Rudolf Diels, who was succeeded by Heinrich Himmler, in May, 1934. I knew well not only Diels but also Himmler, his second in command, Reinhard Heydrich and his administrative officer, Dr. Werner Best. The organization at No. 8 was huge with over 1,000 persons employed there. Besides, as rapidly as administrative measures permitted, Gestapo headquarters were established throughout Germany, not only in the cities but in provincial places to such an extent that the smallest hamlet and village fell under direct Gestapo

supervision. At the beginning of the Hitler regime, the only organization which had meeting places throughout the country was the S. A. (storm troopers). Until the Gestapo could be organized on a national scale the thousands of local S. A. meeting places became the "arrest points". There were at least fifty of these in Berlin. Communists, Jews, and other known enemies of the Nazi party were taken to these points and, if they were enemies of sufficient importance, they were immediately transferred to the Gestapo headquarters. During 1933 and 1934, when the Gestapo became universally organized, the S. A. were gradually eliminated as arresting agents and the S. S. (Schutzstaffel) were incorporated as administrative and executive officials into the Gestapo. By the end of 1934, the S. A. had been fairly well eliminated and the S. S., the members of which wore elegant black suits and were therefore called Elite Guards, became almost identical as functionaries with the Gestapo.

Immediately in 1933, the concentration camps, as soon as they were established, were put under the immediate charge of the Gestapo and they remained exclusively a Gestapo institution. Only "political" prisoners were held in the concentration camps. Ordinary criminals remained the responsibility of the regular police authorities and the established courts. On being sentenced, they were confined in the regular prisons. These confinements were always the result of duly carried out legal procedure. Incarceration in concentration camps was carried out without any legal procedure, neither indictment nor trial. Prisoners were, occasionally, released from the concentration camps and turned over to the prosecuting attorney for prosecution before the legal courts of justice. A prisoner accused of high treason, for example, whose offense might carry a death sentence, would be released to the prosecuting attorney for trial in the people's court. All felonies were tried by the regular courts.

As I have stated, my frequent contacts with this entire Gestapo organization began with the first wave of terrorist acts in the week of March 6-13, 1933. That wave was accompanied by universal mob violence. Since 1925, one of the cries of the Nazi party had been "Jude Verecke" (Death to the Jews) and when the Nazi party won the elections in March, 1933, on the morning of the sixth, the accumulated passion blew off in wholesale attacks on the Communists, Jews, and those who were suspected of being either. Mobs of S. A. men roamed the streets, beating up, looting, and even killing persons.

No American citizen, so far as I am aware, was killed, but a number of them were assaulted and injured and appealed to the Consulate General for aid and protection. For example,

Nathaniel Wolff, an American citizen, who resided in Rochester, New York, made an affidavit which stated:

"This morning, March 6, at 5 o'clock, there came into my room five or six Nazis with drawn revolvers. They abused me, called me a dirty Russian Jew and started going through my belongings. They asked me what remarks I had made. I replied that I had made none that I knew of and that I am not interested in politics. One of them shouted "Do you call throwing bombs not being interested in politics?" Another asked at the same time, "Are you the Wolff who lived in the Pension Stephanie?" Having left the Stephanie on account of difficulties with the Portier regarding the price of the room and his behavior, I whistled very softly, intimating that I understood the source of the denunciation. Thereupon one of the Nazis remarked: "Du Scheiss Jude, warum pfeiffst du?" and hit me in the jaw. They said that they would take me to the police station, whereupon I answered, "The quicker, the better, because my conscience is absolutely clear." One of them said, "Do you call throwing bombs having a clear conscience?" The intruders were not accompanied by an officer, nor did they carry "Hilfspolizei" armbands. They took me in an automobile to an address in the Knewebeck Strasse beyond the Kant Strasse (I believe No. 67 or 76, Gartenhaus left, I think three or four flights up the stairs). I was conducted to a bare room in which the shutters were closed and the windows boarded, evidently to prevent sounds from getting out, where, after my possessions were taken away including my keys, I was left with two guards who spent the time abusing the Jews. At five minutes before seven, the group who had arrested me returned with two or three members including one who was apparently a leader, when I was again abused, that is, they gave me to understand that they imagined I was implicated in communistic activities. I remarked that I should like to send a telegram to my cousin, Alan Steyne at the Hamburg American Consulate, and asked if I had the right to do so, whereupon the leader replied: "As a foreigner you have no right, and especially not as a Jew." One of the men then proceeded to bind my hands and feet as closely and as painfully as possible. I still bear the marks of the bruises on my wrists. I was questioned about various English and French letters which had been found in my room and taken along with them and then I was left about half an hour alone because they

evidently discussed my fate. After some time one of the group returned and advised me that every one had a right to his own political opinions as long as no attempt was made to mix into politics. He remarked that nothing was to be gained by brutality, undid the rope and freed my hands and feet and gave me a cup of coffee and said, "Probably the thing isn't so bad because women chatter a great deal" and that I was denounced by a girl. After a few minutes he elaborated the statement that the girl, Paula, of the Pension, had denounced me as having the intention of throwing bombs at the Nazi parade. I expressed my astonishment and told him the facts of the case. He appeared to laugh it off and asked me if I would be willing to sign a paper on the condition that they would release me. I said "yes." They then said I would have to go to the police to have my signature attested to and one of the men who had come in, in the meanwhile, went out to draft the paper I was to sign. He returned with the paper which read: (1) "I am a Jew." (2) "I will leave tonight for Paris," (3) "I promise never again to set my foot on German soil." "I attest that no physical violence was done to me and that none of my property was stolen." This paper I signed. They told me to put on my coat and come to the police. Instead of taking me to the police station they took me to Charlottenburg towards the Gruenwald. When I asked to which police station they were taking me, they replied "You'll get there soon enough." When we were near the Heer Strasse they pretended that the automobile was broken down and informed me that I would have to walk through the woods to get to the police station. We proceeded into the woods where three members drew their pistols and the other two brought straps out of their pockets and informed me that they were going to teach me a lesson and made as if they were about to tie me to a tree. They said that they intended to beat the life out of me and "You can walk back afterwards." I replied that I hoped I would be able to walk. This was probably about eight o'clock and we were entirely alone as nobody had followed us. I took off my coat myself and remarked "If one can't help oneself, one may as well make the best of it." One of them threw my coat to the ground and said "Get ready" and after making a threatening gesture, said "You can go home now." pointing to the wrong direction, whereupon they walked rapidly to the automobile and disappeared yelling after me, "Keep your mouth shut," I was also threatened that if they ever

caught me in Germany again, they would know how to get me out of the way. . ."

Another American, Herman I. Raseman, made an affidavit which stated:

"Yesterday, March 10, 1933, in the afternoon at about 4:30, I came out of "KDW" with my fiancee, Fraeulein Else Schwarzlose, residing in Wilmersdorf, Kaiser-Allee 172, and proceeded to walk along Tauentzien Strasse. A man in S. A. uniform stepped on my toe purposely, obviously offended me and said 'Pardon.' I said "Bitte," and walked ahead. He followed me and kicked me saying: "Na und?" A policeman saw this and walked ahead, paying no attention to attacks made on me. Then I took my passport out of my pocket, showed it to the second policeman, and said that I was an American citizen, but he walked ahead, obviously not able to afford me protection, or at least being unwilling. The S. A. man continued to attack me, struck me in the face, wounded me over the eye and continued to do me bodily harm. During this attack, all the time my walking along, we reached another policeman, and I applied to him, showing my passport and said: "I am an American and am entitled to protection." He shrugged his shoulder and said "What can I do?" By this time the S. A. man had obviously inflicted enough attack upon me and walked away.

Upon my appeal the policeman brought my fiancee and me to the station house at 13 Bayreuther Strasse. My fiancee and I reported to the officer in charge. He heard the story and said that he was sorry, but that there was nothing to do. My face was bleeding. The policeman said that he had had orders not to interfere in any affair in which an S. A. man took part. I then asked him what I could do to protect myself. He said that there was nothing to do but to wait until the situation was better. He added that the police were absolutely powerless, and were under the direction of the S. A., and that there were S. A. Sturm-Abteilung in the police itself. Thereupon I departed. . ."

Another American, Mrs. Jean Klauber, made an affidavit which stated:

"That on the night of Friday, March 10, 1933, she and her husband had retired for the night when they were awakened by a prolonged ringing of their apartment bell.

They heard pounding upon the street door and a demand for immediate entry, and a concurrent threat to break the door down. The street door was opened by the janitor's wife, and a party of four or five men entered and went at once to the apartment of the deponent where they again rang and pounded on the door. Mr. Klauber asked who was there, and was answered—"The police". He opened the door and a party of four or five men in brown uniforms, one wearing a dark overcoat and carrying a rifle, pushed in, jostling Mr. and Mrs. Klauber aside. One asked Mrs. Klauber where the telephone was and she indicated the room where it was to be found, and started to go there. Thereupon, she was knocked down by one of them. They went on to the bedroom where Mr. and Mrs. Klauber followed them, and there they demanded their passports. Mr. Klauber went to the wardrobe to get his, and was stopped, being asked by the intruders whether he was carrying any weapons. Being clothed only in pajamas, his denial was accompanied by a gesture indicating his garb. He then turned to the wardrobe, opened it, and reached for one of his four suits hanging therein where he thought the passport was, and was immediately attacked from behind by all but one of the intruders, who beat him severely with police clubs, the one with the overcoat and rifle standing by. Remarks were shouted such as "Look. Four suits, while for fourteen years we have been starving." Mrs. Klauber tried to inquire the reason for their actions, and was answered—"Jews. We hate you. For fourteen years we have been waiting for this, and tonight we'll hang many of you."

When the intruders stopped beating Mr. Klauber he was unconscious, and they demanded the passports again of Mrs. Klauber. Mrs. Klauber found her American passport and her German passport (required by local authorities as the wife of a German citizen, and issued by the police at Munich after her arrival here), and the intruders took both in spite of Mrs. Klauber's protests that she was American. She then searched for her husband's passport, laid hold of his pocket-book, and in her excitement offered it to them. Though full of money they refused it, and again demanded the passport. Mrs. Klauber then found it and handed it over.

Then the intruders returned to the unconscious Mr. Klauber, saying "He hasn't had enough yet", and beat him further. Then they left, saying "We are not yet finished", and just as they departed, one of them said to

Mrs. Klauber "Why did you marry a Jew? I hate them" and struck her on the jaw with his police club. . . ."

I personally can verify that the police had been instructed not to interfere; that is that there was official sanction for these activities. Affidavits taken from numerous victims attest this fact. I had become acquainted with the two police officers stationed at the corner of Bellevuestrasse and Tiergartenstrasse near where the Consulate General was located; these officers told me that they and all the other police officers had received definite instructions not to interfere with the S.A., the S.S. or the Hitler Youth.

For the Germans who were taken into custody by the Gestapo, chiefly Communists at that time, there was, from my experience and from the information that I had from all sources, a regular pattern of brutality and terror. Upon arrest, the victims would be systematically subjected to indignities and brutalities such as beatings, kicking, pushing downstairs, deprivation of food and all comforts, and threats of much worse. After the victims had been imprisoned—usually in cellars, since both the headquarters at No. 8 Albrechtstrasse and the S.A. meeting places usually had them—they would be beaten with various degrees of severity. If the Gestapo believed that the victim—particularly Communist leaders—had information as to other alleged accomplices they would give systematic beatings, usually when stripped and tied on a table. This would go on often for many days until they had extracted the information they wanted or killed the victim.

Based on all of the reports which I had from many sources, my judgment is that the victims were numbered in the hundreds of thousands all over Germany. Many of them were ultimately released. I can state with certainty that the contemporaneous accounts in foreign newspapers, such as the London Times and the American newspapers which I have seen, are accurate.

The second wave of terror was not so systematic nor so concentrated as to point of time. It was directed chiefly against the Jews, and was chiefly the result of the ruthless and occasionally violent enforcement of numerous decrees and orders, such as the Nürnberg Decrees. After the initial outbreak in March, 1933, and all through that year and the next, the Jews still in Germany had, in many cases, come to believe that things might become a little better and that they could live in some sort of peaceable relationship with the Nazis, even though they were reduced to the status of second or third class citizens. In 1935, however, the pressure on them began to increase and they began to be excluded

completely from certain civil activities. The terrorism was continued all the time to some degree; but the enforcement of the new decrees in 1935 was characterized by such brutality and ruthlessness that it warrants special attention. Inadvertent violators were dealt with, for example, with great severity.

The 1938 wave of terror was a very pronounced and definite one. Again the object was the Jews, particularly the wealthy ones. The ostensible occasion was the murder of the German diplomat, von Rieth, by a French Jew, but the violence was in no sense spontaneous. Dr. Best, the Administrative Officer of the Gestapo, told me that the terror had been decided upon and ordered by Hitler himself, and that he, Dr. Best, could, therefore, do nothing about it. Actually, that statement corroborated what everyone knew. Innumerable persons with whom I talked and who witnessed the violence told me that at all of the synagogues, which had been set on fire by the Nazis, the fire departments were always present, but never acted except to prevent the fires from spreading to neighboring non-Jewish properties. Nor did the police interfere with any of these acts of vandalism and incendiarism.

I personally did not see any of the violence nor the burning of the synagogues while the acts were being perpetrated, as the mobs throughout Germany commenced to work at midnight on November 8, 1938, and carried through their activities during the early morning hours of November 9. At that time I was on my way to the Wartburg Castle, and on the day of November 9 I saw the burned synagogues and the looted and smashed shops in Eisennach, and later in Berlin. I also know that at this time many of the wealthy Jews, who had previously escaped attack, were arrested, among whom were relatives of American citizens. Pursuant to requests from the United States, some of which were transmitted through the Department of State, I personally intervened with the Gestapo through Dr. Best, and secured the return of nearly twenty victims from the Saxonhausen Concentration Camp. Among these victims were Fritz Warburg and Eugene Garbaty. I think that many, perhaps most of these people, were released in the space of ten days or two weeks with the warning that if they remained in Germany they would have cause to regret it. In all cases the victims were subjected to rough treatment. Those who returned from the concentration camp and whom I saw in my office had their hair closely clipped, a common outward sign that they had been at Saxonhausen.

The Gestapo authorities with whom I spoke on my frequent, and often daily visits to the Gestapo headquarters did

not hesitate to state that they regarded Communists in particular as subversive and as an element dangerous to the State, and that it was necessary to wipe them out. Diehls, the first chief of the Gestapo, in particular, whom I saw nearly every day of the March wave of terror in 1933, made no attempt to conceal the systematic character of the roundups of what he called "subversive persons"; though he did attempt to justify it to me as necessary to the safety of the State. While denying that any violence against American citizens was contemplated, he admitted that it was being undertaken against Germans. Terroristic tactics, however, in all their various forms, were so completely and thoroughly the actuating policy, that it would have been wholly redundant to discuss it. They and I both understood that it was the mainspring of all Gestapo activity—indeed of all Nazi activity—and that it was beyond discussion.

On one occasion I received a clear and definite admission of the Nazi terroristic policy with respect to many of their victims. In 1938 I was making strenuous efforts to free a young man from a concentration camp. He had been arrested in March, 1933, for aiding certain of his comrades to escape Germany, and had been sentenced by regular courts to a sentence of 2 1/2 years. When he was released from the Brandenburg Prison at the end of that time, he was taken into custody by the Gestapo and sent to Dachau, the notorious concentration camp, and from there to Buchenwald. I had tried over a long period of time to secure his release by appeals personally to Himmler, Heydrich and Best, and had failed. In 1938, however, I was told by Ministerialrat Krohne, in the Ministry of Justice, that if I could reach Grupenfuehrer Eiche of the Totenkopfverbaende (Death's Head Regiments) I might be successful. Eiche was then the head of all German concentration camps. After having first been told officially by the Gestapo that no such person existed, I was finally able by a ruse to secure his telephone number whereupon, through the recommendation of Krohne, I was able to make an appointment with Eiche at the Saxonhausen Concentration Camp near Berlin. He told me that with respect to Communists and any other persons who were suspected of holding views contrary to the Nazi conception of the State, such persons were "Asociale", that is, impossible of social assimilation and, therefore, they must be physically eliminated from society, or destined to perpetual confinement. Thaelnman, the leader of the Communists in the Reichstag, was, as is well known, kept during the Hitler regime in perpetual confinement. His ultimate fate has never been revealed.

On another occasion I was given considerable information by a high official of the Gestapo as to the policy of the

Nazis with respect to the Jews. I had had considerable contact with the head of the Jewish section of the Gestapo, known as the "Judischeabteilung des Gestapos", one Dr. Hasselbacher, in connection with making arrangements for official representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee to visit certain Jewish centers throughout Germany, for which visits, of course, the permission of the Gestapo was necessary. These negotiations brought me frequently in touch with Dr. Hasselbacher, whom I came to know very well. He told me that Germany will be made "Judenrein", that is, clean of Jews. He said that all the Jews who failed to leave Germany would be exterminated. That statement was made in 1938 before the extermination camps were established, but the statement of Hasselbacher clearly indicated the eventual emergence of extermination camps in accordance with the general Nazi plan; for certainly the Jews were unable to leave Germany, even if they had been permitted to do so by the Nazis, as no world-wide arrangement had been made to receive them in other countries.

I had a great deal of experience with the systematic measures which were taken to confiscate property of non-Nazis, particularly Jews. Force of circumstance and a settled governmental policy made this campaign, a more gradual one. Drestic and sudden action would have lead to the alienation of a great deal of ready assets owned by the Jews and would have tended to destroy the economic value of Jewish-owned property. It would also have resulted in the physical destruction or hiding by Jews of things of value, as indeed did happen to a great extent. Consequently, the Nazis permitted many Jews, particularly those of wealth and position, to remain unmolested for many years, giving the Jews the faithless and false assurance that they were exempted from the general repressive program for various reasons. For example, I knew well the leading German cigarette manufacturer, Eugene Garbaty. Until September, 1938, he was in complete control of his fortune. During that month, however, he was compelled to sell his factory, worth between seven million and ten million marks, for the sum of one million marks. In October, 1938, his country estate near Dresden, valued probably over two million marks, was simply confiscated with no payment at all. It was to be used, as the authorities stated, for a welfare center for German Youth. After his experience in the Pogrom of November 8, 1938, Garbaty applied for a passport and received one only after paying a bribe of 500,000 marks to the corrupt Count Heldorf, Chief of Police in Berlin, and enough other fines to equal the million marks that he had received for his factory. He left Germany with nothing, except that earlier, by bribing the customs officials with

approximately 250,000 marks, he had been able to get valuable art treasures out of Germany. Garbaty is now a citizen of the United States and is living in Connecticut.

Another instance of the same nature occurred with respect to my landlord, Mr. Franz Rinkel, who told me the entire story of his persecutions at the hands of the Nazis. He had a fine house at No. 2 Bruckenalle in Berlin, in which I lived. Rinkel was one of the victims sent to Saxonhausen and whom, after the space of a week, I was able to rescue. One Dr. Lilienthal, a fanatical Nazi lawyer practicing in Berlin, coveted Rinkel's house. The general system of expropriating the property of the Jews was illustrated in this particular case. My landlord was approached by Dr. Lilienthal and told the price the latter desired to pay, a mere fraction of the value of the estate. He was given a few days to make up his mind to sell at that price. He sold because he knew that if he did not, he would be accused of some trumped-up crime and taken away to the concentration camp. Dr. Lilienthal took possession of Rinkel's house. I know that on many occasions where it was thought necessary to increase the pressure, the prospective purchaser or his agent would be accompanied by a uniformed S.A. or S.S. man. I know because I lived in the immediate neighborhood and knew the individuals concerned, that Baron von Neurath, one time Foreign Minister of Germany, got his house from a Jew in this manner. Indeed, he was my next door neighbor in Dahlem. Von Neurath's house was worth approximately 250,000 dollars. I know too that Alfred Rosenburg, who lived in the same street with me, purloined a house from a Jew in similar fashion. There were, of course, innumerable instances in which Nazis used their positions in the Party to void debts and the like. An illustration of this were the cases of the persons who came to the Consulate in Berlin and informed us of the circumstances. For example, Max Schussler, an American citizen, made an affidavit which states:

"... I own several apartment houses in Berlin, one situated at Ring Strasse 11, Berlin-Steglitz. On the property at Ring Strasse 11 resides a tenant by the name of Hans Zink, who owns and operates a restaurant in those premises. He has been in arrears in his rent for about a year. Since the first of February of this year, that is, since the new Government came into power, he has refused to pay his rent. I gave instructions to the Sheriff to have him put out. Yesterday two uniformed men came to my office and spoke to my secretary and said that if I do not recall the order to the Sheriff to have Zink evicted, something will happen to me. I did not see these men. My secretary received them. She stated they wore black trousers and brown shirts. She referred them to my

attorney, Felix Szkolny, Charlottenstrasse 17, Berlin S. W. 68. They went to the attorney, but he refused to give the order. They came to my office again and said to my secretary that if I did not give the order in writing and hand it over to a certain address within an hour's time, something would happen. I then called the police station at Alexandrinenstrasse 134, Revier No. 113, and a police officer came to my office and accompanied me to a taxi, when I went home.

About a week before, it may be noted, Zink had come to my office and insisted on my rescinding the order of eviction, and said, "I care nothing about law; we are now in power, remember that. Do anything you please, I am not going out of the office until you cancel the order". I called the police, and an officer came. Zink said, "I do not care what you say". After about ten minutes the officer put him out.

At two o'clock Tuesday morning, March 7, I was awakened and faced by two men with pistols, who had come into the house. They were allowed to enter by the janitress, as they claimed to be "Hilfspolizei", and also by my maid. These two men were accompanied by two others in civilian clothes, the former wearing the brown. National Socialist uniforms. They said, "Here, dress yourselves, quick too". My wife asked them to turn about while she dressed, but they refused. She was compelled to remove her night gown at the point of a revolver and stand naked before the intruders. When she protested they said, "Don't be theatrical". My wife then wanted to telephone, but they said, "No, sit down. Do not touch the telephone", while they kept their pistols pointed at us all the time. I sat down. One of them said, "Have you got a fountain pen? You sign that". I had to sign the order to the Sheriff cancelling the order of eviction, and had to sign another letter to the tenant Zink, stating that the order of eviction was called off. I hesitated to sign and they drew their revolvers on me, and my wife in terror fell to her knees, and then I signed. I asked if they had credentials, and they pointed to the "Hakenkreuz" on their sleeves and said that was their credentials. They then said, "If you recall that order tomorrow, you will be dead". After I signed, they left . . ."

Actually, all Nazis used their positions in the Party as a means of enriching themselves. I have already spoken of the bribe to the customs officials and the Foreign Office officials, which Mr. Garbaty was compelled to pay. Another instance of the venality of the Nazi officials was illustrated in the case of Mendelssohn Bartholdy, who owned a house near me and whom I knew well. He was told by Count Heldorf, Chief of Police in Berlin, through his stooge, one Herr Schmidt, that his passport would cost him 250,000 marks. Bartholdy told

me the facts and asked me if he should pay. Knowing the Nazi practices and the danger which he ran as a Jew in Germany, I advised him to pay. He did, got his passport and visa, and left Germany. This happened in November, 1938.

I was informed by a personal friend, a Jewish banker in Berlin, Herr Kempner, whom I believed to be qualified to make an accurate estimate, that the total confiscations from Jews in Germany was between seven and eight billion marks.

I had less experience with the manner in which the Nazis operated in industrial firms. However, from the accounts of numerous American businessmen with manufacturing plants in Germany, accounts which agreed with the information which I had with respect to similar activities in German factories, I know that the Nazis used their Party position to obtain authority and power. Many American businessmen told me that they had serious troubles operating their factories because the Nazi officials in the establishment, usually recruited from the workmen, attempted to take over the management themselves, and engaged consistently and ruthlessly in acts of persecution against non-Nazi workmen. Many German firms were actually dominated by fanatical Nazis, usually persons who had had no previous position of importance, such as janitors, timekeepers and the like. Their position in the Nazi hierarchy gave them importance in the enterprise out of all proportion to their standing and position.

Raymond H. Geist

Subscribed and sworn to
before me William L. Brewster,
Vice Consul of the United States
of America, duly commissioned
and qualified,
in Mexico, D. F., Mexico,
this 28th day of August 1945.

William L. Brewster
William L. Brewster
Vice Consul of the United
States of America
Service No. 6684
Tariff No. 38
No fee prescribed.

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. XXVIII, pp. 234–254, Doc. 1759-PS.

97. MEMO FROM ALFRED ROSENBERG: DIRECTIONS FOR THE HANDLING OF THE JEWISH QUESTION, N.D.

This memorandum regarding handling of the Jews in the Eastern occupied provinces, meaning the occupied territory in Russia, was written by Alfred Rosenberg, a Hitler confidant and driver of Nazi ideology. Of note is the very broad definition of the term "Jew" that is to be used: a person who belongs to the Jewish religion, has been "recognized as Jewish by other circumstances" (neither "recognized" nor "other circumstances" is explained), or has a parent who is deemed to be Jewish according to either of those requirements. As in Germany, Austria, and other occupied territory, Rosenberg requires that they must be registered, separated from the rest of the population, marked by a yellow Jewish star on their clothing, and put into ghettos. They must be eliminated from cultural, political, and economic activities, and removed from government and all of the professions. Jews are to be used for heavy slave labor to rebuild the occupied Eastern provinces, although whatever work they are assigned must be such that it will be able to continue unimpeded if there is a "rapid withdrawal" of the Jewish laborers.

COPY

Directions for the handling of the Jewish question

1. *In General.* The competency of the Chief of the Security Police and Security Service, who is charged with the mission of solving the European Jewish question, extends even to the occupied eastern provinces. Accordingly, the offices under the Security Police for the purpose of handling the Jewish question in the occupied eastern provinces are qualified for their present sphere of activity.

In the individual Reichs commissariats, and within these, in the General commissariats, Jewry represents a portion of the population which is very varied in strength. For example, millions of Jews live in White Russia and in the Ukraine who have lived here for generations. In the central province of the USSR however, the Jews have moved in, for by far the greatest part, during Bolshevistic times. Those Russian Jews who followed in the wake of the invading Red Army of 1939 and 1940 to East Poland, West Ukraine, West White Russia, the Baltic lands, Bessarabia, and Buchenland are one particular group.

All measures for the Jewish question in the occupied eastern provinces must be met with the point of view that the

whole Jewish question will be solved in general for all of Europe after the war at the latest. They are therefore to be instituted as preparatory partial measures and must be in agreement with those decisions which may otherwise be met in this field. This is especially true for the preparation of at least temporary reception centers for Jews from the Reich province.

An eventual act by the civilian population against the Jews is not to be prevented as long as this is compatible with the maintenance of order and security in the rear of the fighting troops. Namely retaliatory measures are to be allowed against the Jews who come into the provinces which were newly occupied by the Red Army in the last few years. However, strict measures are to be taken against street mobs and other evil elements for whom it concerns only plunder of Jewish stores and stealing Jewish property for their own personal gain.

2. *Definition of the term "Jew".* The peaceful settlement of the Jewish question requires the previous determining as to who is to be considered a Jew in the occupied Eastern provinces. In reference to the solving of the European Jewish question and to the strong influence which Jewry had upon the remaining Russian population until the invasion of German troops, and which it still exercises at present, it appears necessary from a political, as well as from a popular point of view, for the purpose of avoiding a later regaining of strength of the Jews, to grasp the term "Jew" in the most far-reaching sense.

Therefore, he is a Jew, who belongs to the Jewish religion, or has been recognized as Jewish by other circumstances; he who has a parent who is a Jew in accordance with the above sentence is also a Jew.

3. *Comprehension, mark of recognition, suspension of the rights of freedom and segregation.* The first main goal of the German measures must be strict segregation of Jewry from the rest of the population. In the execution of this, first of all is the seizing of the Jewish populace by the introduction of a registration order and similar appropriate measures. Soviet Jewry has, constantly, attempted, since the Bolshevistic Revolution, to disguise itself in order to unobtrusively move into leading positions, especially in the grain regions of the USSR. For this purpose many Jews have dropped their Jewish names and have taken Russian family names and Russian surnames. It is to be decreed, that the person who must register must report all changes of name by Jews during his lifetime, or as far as he knows during the time of his

forefathers, to his superior and to make them retrogressive. The same goes for previous departure from the religious congregation and acceptance of other faiths (other manifold). The erasure of the Jewish deception will be easier in the Reich commissariat Eastland and Ukraine, where the larger part of the Jews have been living for generations than in the other Reichs commissariats. The Soviet archive material, in so far as it is preserved, is to be brought to use for this.

Then immediately, the wearing of the recognition sign consisting of a yellow Jewish star is to be brought about and all rights of freedom for Jews are to be withdrawn. They are to be placed in Ghettos and at the same time are to be separated according to sexes. The presence of many more or less closed Jewish settlements in White Ruthenia and in the Ukraine makes this mission easier. Moreover, places are to be chosen which make possible the full use of the Jewish manpower in case labor needs are present. These Ghettos can be placed under the supervision of a Jewish self-government with Jewish officials. The guarding of the boundaries between the Ghettos and the outer world is, however, the duty of the police.

Also in the cases in which a Ghetto could not yet be established, care is to be taken through strict prohibitions and similar suitable measures that a further intermingling of blood of the Jews and the rest of the populace does not continue.

4. *Removal of the Jewish influence in political, economical cultural and social fields.* Relative with the measures to segregate the Jews physically from the rest of the populace, everything necessary is to be used in order to eliminate every influence of the Jewry upon the Russian people. This is to happen immediately in political and cultural fields, whereas in all other cases consideration is to be taken that the common interests are not impaired. This is especially true for the economic missions which are important due to the demands of the war and those which concern the national economy.

An entire reconversion of Jewish professional life must be brought about insofar as it does not deal with manual laborers. The group of State employees in the Russian government along with the strongest Jewish professional groups shall vanish entirely. Likewise, similar professional groups are to be divorced from the public life, whereby, however, the tempo of these measures must correspond with the general economical and social need.

The entire Jewish property is to be seized and confiscated with exception of that which is necessary for a bare existence.

As far as the economical situation permits, the power of disposal of their property is to be taken from the Jews as soon as possible through orders and other measures given by the commissariat, so that the moving of property will quickly cease.

Any cultural activity will be completely forbidden to the Jew. This includes the outlawing of the Jewish press, the Jewish theatres and schools.

The slaughtering of animals according to Jewish rites is also to be prohibited.

5. *Forced Labor.* The present manpower shortage in the occupied eastern territories as well as ideological-political considerations make the demand appear of basic significance to introduce forced labor commitment in the strictest form. This will have to take place move by move by the elimination of the Jews from their professional life although they are to be permitted to work in their own occupations if they fall within the scope of the labor commitment. Moreover, the Jewish manpower is to be used for heavy manual labor.

The standing rule for the Jewish labor employment is the complete and unyielding use of Jewish manpower regardless of age in the reconstruction of the occupied eastern territories. The missions, which are to be given to the Jews in their labor employment, are especially the highway, railroad and canal construction, as far as the ameliorations, etc. are considered. Also, it seems that agricultural employment above all, will be brought about under strict supervision. Nothing is to be done against the employment of the Jews in cutting of wood, production of straw shoes, brooms and brushes within the Ghettos.

In the employment of the Jews, care is to be taken that Jewish labor is only so used in those productions which will later suffer no noticeable interruption in case of a rapid withdrawal of these labor forces, and which excludes a specialization of Jewish workers. It is to be avoided in every case that Jewish workers become indispensable in essential production.

6. *Violations.* Violations against German measures, especially against the forced labor regulations, are to be punishable by death to the Jews. All violations are to be dealt with by courtmartial.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 222–225, Doc. 212-PS.

98. REINHARD HEYDRICH'S INSTRUCTIONS ON JEWS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, INCLUDING GHETTOIZATION, SEPTEMBER 21, 1939

Shortly after Germany's invasion of Poland and the start of World War II, Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Security Police, issued these instructions to the heads of the Einsatzgruppen, mobile killing units that followed behind the German army as it moved east. Their primary role was to kill all Jews and communists they encountered. Heydrich's instructions call for the movement of Jews into "concentration centers," each to be administered by a Council of Jewish Elders (Judenrat) which is to be made "fully responsible (in the literal sense of the word) for the exact execution . . . of all instructions." In evacuating Jews into the concentration centers, care must be taken that doing so does not disrupt critical economic needs, such as the needs of the army. Heydrich also speaks of the "Aryanization" of Jewish factories, meaning they are to be expropriated for the use of the Reich. Further, the leaders of each Einsatzgruppe must provide certain information to Heydrich, such as a census of the Jews in each concentration center, and a survey of Jewish industries in their territory.

COPY

Berlin, 21 September 1939

The Chief of the Security Police
PP (II)—288/39 secret
Special Delivery Letter

To The Chiefs of all detail groups [Einsatzgruppen] of the Security Police.

Concerning: The Jewish problem in the occupied zone.

I refer to the conference held in Berlin today, and again point out that the *planned joint measures* (i.e. the ultimate goal) are to be kept *strictly secret*.

Distinction must be made between

- (1) the ultimate goal (which requires a prolonged period of time) and
- (2) the sectors leading to fulfillment of the ultimate goal, (each of which will be carried out in a short term).

The planned measures require thorough preparation both in technique and in the economic aspect.

Obviously the tasks at hand cannot be laid down in detail from here. The following instructions and directives serve at the same time for the purpose of urging chiefs of the detail groups to practical consideration of problems.

I

The first prerequisite for the ultimate goal is first of all, the concentration of the Jews from the country to the larger cities.

This is to be carried out speedily. In doing so distinction must be made:

- (1) between the zones of Danzig and West Prussia. Poznan, Eastern Upper Silesia; and
- (2) the other occupied zone.

If possible, the zone mentioned under item 1 shall be cleared completely of Jews, or at least the aim should be to form as few concentration centers as possible.

In the zones mentioned under item 2, there shall be established as few concentration points as possible so that future measures may be accomplished more easily. One must keep in mind that only such cities are chosen as concentration points which are located either at railroad junctions or at least along a railroad.

On principle, all Jewish communities under 500 heads are to be dissolved and to be transferred to the nearest concentration center.

This decree does not count for the zone of detail group I, which is located East of Cracow and bounded by Bolanico, Jaroskaw, the new demarcation line and the previous Polish-Slovakian border. Within this zone merely an improvised census of Jews should be carried out. Furthermore, Councils of Jewish Elders as discussed below are to be set up.

II

Councils of Jewish Elders

(1) In each Jewish community, a Council of Jewish Elders is to be set up which, as far as possible, is to be composed of the remaining influential personalities and rabbis. The Council is to be composed of 24 male Jews (depending on the size of the Jewish community).

It is to be made *fully responsible* (in the literal sense of the word) for the exact execution according to terms of all instructions released or yet to be released.

(2) In case of sabotage of such instructions, the Councils are to be warned of severest measures.

(3) The Jewish Councils are to take an improvised census of the Jews of their area, possibly divided into generations (according to age)

- a. up to 16 years of age,
- b. from 16 to 20 years of age,
- c. and those above and also according to the principal vocations—and they are to report the results in the shortest possible time.

(4) The Councils of Elders are to be made acquainted with the time and date of the evacuation, the evacuation possibilities and finally the evacuation routes. They are, then, to be made personally responsible for the evacuation of the Jews from the country.

The reason to be given for the concentration of the Jews to the cities is that Jews have most decisively participated in sniper attacks and plundering.

(5) The Councils of Elders of the concentration centers are to be made responsible for the proper housing of the Jews to be brought in from the country. The concentration of Jews in the cities for general reasons of security will probably bring about orders to forbid Jews to enter certain wards of that city altogether, and that in consideration of economic necessity they cannot for instance leave the ghetto, they cannot go out after a designated evening hour, etc.

(6) The Council of Elders is also to be made responsible for the adequate maintenance of the Jews on the transport to the cities.

No scruples are to be voiced, if the migrating Jews take with them all their movable possessions, as far as that is technically at all possible.

(7) Jews who do not comply with the order to move into cities are to be given a short additional period of grace when there is good reason. They are to be warned of strictest penalty if they should not comply by the appointed time.

III

All necessary measures, on principle, are always to be taken up in closest agreement and collaboration with the German civil administration and the competent local authorities.

In the execution of this plan, care must be taken that economic security suffer no harm in the occupied zones.

(1) The needs of the army, should particularly be kept in mind e.g. it will not be possible to avoid leaving behind here and there some Jews engaged in trade who absolutely must be left behind for the maintenance of the troops, for lack of any other way out. In such cases, the immediate aryization

of these plants is to be planned for and the emigration of the Jews is to be completed later in agreement with the competent local German administrative authorities.

(2) For the preservation of German economic interests in the occupied territories it is self understood that Jewish war and ordinary industries and factories and those important to the 4-Year Plan must be kept going for the time being.

In these cases also, immediate Aryization must be planned for and the emigration of the Jews must be completed later.

(3) Finally, the food situation in the occupied territories must be taken into consideration. For instance, as far as possible, real estate of Jewish settlers should be provisionally entrusted to the care of neighboring German or even Polish peasants to be worked by them in order to insure harvesting of the crops still in the fields, or cultivation.

In regard to this important question contact should be made with the agricultural experts of the (C.d.Z.).

(4) In all cases in which a conformity of interests of the Security Police [Sicherheitspolizei] on the one hand, and the German civil administration on the other hand, can be reached,

I am to be informed of the individual measures in question as quickly as possible before their execution and my decision is to be awaited.

IV

The Chiefs of the detail groups [Einsatzgruppen] are to report to me continuously on the following matters:

(1) Numerical survey on the Jews present in their territories (if possible according to the above mentioned classification).

The number of Jews who are evacuated from the country and those who are already in cities are to be listed separately.

(2) Names of cities which have been designated as concentration points.

(3) The time set for the Jews to be evacuated to the cities.

(4) Survey of all Jewish war and ordinary industries and factories or those important to the 4-Year Plan in their territory.

If possible the following should be specified:

- a. Kind of factory (also statement on possible reconversion of factory to really vital or war-important factories or those important to the 4-Year Plan);

- b. which factories should be most urgently Aryanized (in order to avoid loss); what kind of Aryanization is suggested? Germans or Poles, (the decision depends on the importance of the factory);
- c. number of Jews working in these factories (include leading positions).

Will it be possible to keep the factory going after the Jews have been removed or will German or Polish workers respectively have to be assigned for that purpose? To what extent?

If Polish workers have to be used, care should be taken that they are mainly taken from the former German provinces in order to somewhat ease the problem there. These questions can only be solved by incorporation and participation of the labor offices [Arbeitsämter] which have been set up.

V

For the fulfillment of the goal set, I expect the full cooperation of all forces of the Security Police [Sicherheitspolizei] and the Security Service [Sicherheitsdienst].

The Chiefs of the neighboring detail groups shall immediately establish contact with each other in order to be able to cover completely the territories in question.

VI

The High Command of the Army [OKH]; the commissioner for the 4-Year Plan, (c/o State Secretary Neumann) (Staatssekretär); the Reich Minister of the interior (c/o State Secretary Stuckart); the Reich Ministry for Food and Economy [für Ernährung und Wirtschaft] (c/o State Secretary Landfried); as well as the Chief of the civil administration of the occupied territories have received copies of this decree.

Signed: Heydrich
 Certified:
 signed: Schmidt
 Office employe.

Responsible for
 correct copy
 signed: signature

Major on the General Staff (Major i. G.)

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VI, pp. 97–101, Doc. 3363-PS.1222.

99. AKTION T-4: SERMON BY BISHOP CLEMENS AUGUST GRAF VON GALEN, AUGUST 3, 1941

Although the Nazis tried to keep it secret, it was almost inevitable that the program established by them to kill individuals determined to have “lives not worthy of living” (Aktion T-4, or the Euthanasia Program) would become known: too many families were receiving the same notices that their loved ones—patients with a physical or mental handicap—had suddenly died of, for example, the measles for there not to be concern about what had happened to them. Clemens August Graf von Galen, at the time the Bishop of Münster, and later to become a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, had heard the same stories from his parishioners. On August 3, 1941, he gave a sermon that took on the Aktion T-4 program with blunt terms that called what the Nazis were doing a violation of the most basic commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.” He denounced the program in such strong terms that Nazi leadership considered having him arrested, but did not do so for fear that the people of Münster would no longer support the regime. For his courageous stand against the Nazi program and other acts, von Galen was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.

Dearly beloved Christians! The joint pastoral letter of the German bishops, which was read in all Catholic churches in Germany on 26 June 1941, includes the following words.

“It is true that in Catholic ethics there are certain positive commandments which cease to be obligatory if their observance would be attended by unduly great difficulties; but there are also sacred obligations of conscience from which no one can release us; which we must carry out even if it should cost us our life. Never, under any circumstances, may a man, save in war or in legitimate self-defence, kill an innocent person.”

I had occasion on 6th July to add the followings comments on this passage in the joint pastoral letter:

“For some months we have been hearing reports that inmates of establishments for the care of the mentally ill who have been ill for a long period and perhaps appear incurable have been forcibly removed from these establishments on orders from Berlin. Regularly the relatives receive soon afterwards an intimation that the patient is dead, that the patient’s body has been cremated and that they can collect the ashes. There is a general suspicion, verging on certainty that these

numerous unexpected deaths of the mentally ill do not occur naturally but are intentionally brought about in accordance with the doctrine that it is legitimate to destroy a so-called “worthless life”—in other words to kill innocent men and women, if it is thought that their lives are of no further value to the people and the state. A terrible doctrine which seeks to justify the murder of innocent people, which legitimises the violent killing of disabled persons who are no longer capable of work, of cripples, the incurably ill and the aged and infirm!”

I am reliably informed that in hospitals and homes in the province of Westphalia lists are being prepared of inmates who are classified as “unproductive members of the national community” and are to be removed from these establishments and shortly thereafter killed. The first party of patients left the mental hospital at Marienthal, near Münster, in the course of this week.

German men and women! Article 211 of the German Penal Code is still in force, in these terms: “Whoever kills a man of deliberate intent is guilty of murder and punishable with death”. No doubt in order to protect those who kill with intent these poor men and women, members of our families, from this punishment laid down by law, the patients who have been selected for killing are removed from their home area to some distant place. Some illness or other is then given as the cause of death. Since the body is immediately cremated, the relatives and the criminal police are unable to establish whether the patient had in fact been ill or what the cause of death actually was. I have been assured, however, that in the Ministry of the Interior and the office of the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Conti, no secret is made of the fact that indeed a large number of mentally ill persons in Germany have already been killed with intent and that this will continue.

Article 139 of the Penal Code provides that “anyone who has knowledge of an intention to commit a crime against the life of any person . . . and fails to inform the authorities or the person whose life is threatened in due time . . . commits a punishable offence”. When I learned of the intention to remove patients from Marienthal I reported the matter on 28th July to the State Prosecutor of Münster Provincial Court and to the Münster chief of police by registered letter, in the following terms:

“According to information I have received it is planned in the course of this week (the date has been mentioned as 31st July) to move a large number of inmates of the provincial hospital at Marienthal, classified as ‘unproductive members of the national community’, to the mental hospital at

Eichberg, where, as is generally believed to have happened in the case of patients removed from other establishments, they are to be killed with intent. Since such action is not only contrary to the divine and the natural moral law but under article 211 of the German Penal Code ranks as murder and attracts the death penalty, I hereby report the matter in accordance with my obligation under article 139 of the Penal Code and request that steps should at once be taken to protect the patients concerned by proceedings against the authorities planning their removal and murder, and that I may be informed of the action taken”.

I have received no information of any action by the State Prosecutor or the police.

. . .

We must expect, therefore, that the poor defenceless patients are, sooner or later, going to be killed. Why? Not because they have committed any offence justifying their death, not because, for example, they have attacked a nurse or attendant, who would be entitled in legitimate self-defence to meet violence with violence. In such a case the use of violence leading to death is permitted and may be called for, as it is in the case of killing an armed enemy.

No: these unfortunate patients are to die, not for some such reason as this but because in the judgment of some official body, on the decision of some committee, they have become “unworthy to live,” because they are classed as “unproductive members of the national community”.

The judgment is that they can no longer produce any goods: they are like an old piece of machinery which no longer works, like an old horse which has become incurably lame, like a cow which no longer gives any milk. What happens to an old piece of machinery? It is thrown on the scrap heap. What happens to a lame horse, an unproductive cow?

I will not pursue the comparison to the end—so fearful is its appropriateness and its illuminating power.

But we are not here concerned with pieces of machinery; we are not dealing with horses and cows, whose sole function is to serve mankind, to produce goods for mankind. They may be broken up; they may be slaughtered when they no longer perform this function.

No: We are concerned with men and women, our fellow creatures, our brothers and sisters! Poor human beings, ill human beings, they are unproductive, if you will. But does that mean that they have lost the right to live? Have you, have I, the right to live only so long as we are productive, so long as we are recognised by others as productive?

If the principle that men is entitled to kill his unproductive fellow-man is established and applied, then woe betide all of us when we become aged and infirm! If it is legitimate to kill unproductive members of the community, woe betide the disabled who have sacrificed their health or their limbs in the productive process! If unproductive men and women can be disposed of by violent means, woe betide our brave soldiers who return home with major disabilities as cripples, as invalids! If it is once admitted that men have the right to kill “unproductive” fellow-men—even though it is at present applied only to poor and defenceless mentally ill patients—then the way is open for the murder of all unproductive men and women: the incurably ill, the handicapped who are unable to work, those disabled in industry or war. The way is open, indeed, for the murder of all of us when we become old and infirm and therefore unproductive. Then it will require only a secret order to be issued that the procedure which has been tried and tested with the mentally ill should be extended to other “unproductive” persons, that it should also be applied to those suffering from incurable tuberculosis, the aged and infirm, persons disabled in industry, soldiers with disabling injuries!

Then no man will be safe: some committee or other will be able to put him on the list of “unproductive” persons, who in their judgment have become “unworthy to live”. And there will be no police to protect him, no court to avenge his murder and bring his murderers to justice.

Who could then have any confidence in a doctor? He might report a patient as unproductive and then be given instructions to kill him! It does not bear thinking of, the moral depravity, the universal mistrust which will spread even in the bosom of the family, if this terrible doctrine is tolerated, accepted and put into practice. Woe betide mankind, woe betide our German people, if the divine commandment, “Thou shalt not kill”, which the Lord proclaimed on Sinai amid thunder and lightning, which God our Creator wrote into man’s conscience from the beginning, if this commandment is not merely violated but the violation is tolerated and remains unpunished!

I will give you an example of what is happening. One of the patients in Marienthal was a man of 55, a farmer from a country parish in the Münster region—I could give you his name—who has suffered for some years from mental disturbance and was therefore admitted to Marienthal hospital. He was not mentally ill in the full sense: he could receive visits and was always happy, when his relatives came to see him. Only a fortnight ago he was visited by his wife and one of his sons, a soldier on home leave from the front. The son is

much attached to his father, and the parting was a sad one: no one can tell, whether the soldier will return and see his father again, since he may fall in battle for his country. The son, the soldier, will certainly never again see his father on earth, for he has since then been put on the list of the “unproductive”. A relative, who wanted to visit the father this week in Marienthal, was turned away with the information that the patient had been transferred elsewhere on the instructions of the Council of State for National Defence. No information could be given about where he had been sent, but the relatives would be informed within a few days. What information will they be given? The same as in other cases of the kind? That the man has died, that his body has been cremated, that the ashes will be handed over on payment of a fee? Then the soldier, risking his life in the field for his fellow-countrymen, will not see his father again on earth, because fellow-countrymen at home have killed him.

...

Source: Bishop von Galen, “Three Sermons in Defiance of the Nazis,” The Church in History Information Centre, [http://www.churchinhistory.org/pages/booklets/vongalen\(n\).htm](http://www.churchinhistory.org/pages/booklets/vongalen(n).htm). Used by permission.

100. THE BLACK BOOK OF POLAND, REGARDING GHETTOS AND DECREE ON COMPULSORY LABOR, OCTOBER 26, 1939

The Black Book of Poland is an unusual resource. It lists and describes Nazi actions against the Poles from October 1939 to June 1941. It was published in English by G. P. Putnam’s Sons of New York in 1942. Thus, it was a virtually contemporaneous record of arrests, deportations, and killings of Poles, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Its publication makes clear that the Allied countries had a detailed and compelling look at the reality of Nazi oppression and atrocities in the opening years of World War II. This excerpt describes several aspects of life under Nazi control: the conditions in the “Lublin Reservation,” a section of the Generalgouvernement in Poland, as part of a plan to remove Jews from the Reich and resettle Germans in their place; the establishment of the Warsaw, Łódź, and Cracow ghettos; and the terrible health conditions in those ghettos. The excerpt concludes with two decrees addressing the introduction of compulsory labor in the “Government

General," one for the Polish population, and one for the Jewish population.

THE BLACK BOOK OF POLAND

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The Lublin Reservation

In a speech on 10 October 1939, Hitler hinted at a general solution of the Jewish problem as one of his war aims, but he did not go into details. Soon afterwards, the establishment of a so-called "Jewish reservation" in the Lublin area was begun. It is significant that the Nazis themselves have written almost nothing about this "reservation." Only through neutral sources did it leak out that large numbers of Jews were being transferred from Western Poland, Bohemia, and Austria to the Lublin area.

"The haste with which the reservation has been established out of nothing is leading to desperate situations. Sometimes trains drive on for 40 kilometers beyond Lublin and halt in the open country, where the Jews alight with their luggage and have to find themselves primitive accommodations in the surrounding villages. Up to November 10 about 45,000 Jewish men, women, and children from Cieszyn, Bogumin, Moravska Ostrava, Prague, Pilsno, other towns of the Protectorate, and from Vienna and the new Reich provinces, Danzig-Westpreussen and Posen-Warthegeau, have been sent to the reservation. Under the supervision of men of the SS-Death's-head Corps, the Jews are compelled to work at road-building, draining marshes, and rebuilding the damaged villages. There is compulsory labour service for men up to seventy years and for women up to fifty-five." (Luxemburger Wort, 21 November 1939.)

"Up to now some 8,000 persons, one-third of them women and children, have been transported to the resettlement camps in the Jewish reservation. These camps are about 15-20 km. from Niske, a Polish town on the San which suffered severely in the war. These camps are completely isolated behind high barbed wire fences and the Gestapo maintains a strict control over them." (National-Zeitung, Basle, 7 November 1939.)

The methods adopted when Jews are transported to this reservation can be gathered from a letter sent by the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien to those of the Viennese Jews who were chosen by the authorities to be transported to Lublin. It runs:

"By order of the authorities a large transport of Jews, fit to work, up to fifty years of age, will go to Poland on October 18, 1939, to start colonizing work. You have been chosen by the

authorities to go with this transport and you have to appear on October 17, 1939, at 6 AM in * * *. Every person in this transport is permitted to take with him clothes and equipment up to 50 kg in weight. Every person is allowed to take money up to 300 marks. It is of the greatest importance that all concerned should take builders' tools with them, such as mallets, saws, planes, hammers, and nails, and when reporting, an exact statement must be made as to which of these tools you can provide. Should you disobey this summons, which has been issued by the State authorities, you will have to face the consequences." (See photograph No. 54.)

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The Ghetto in Warsaw

When the ghetto idea was adopted finally, it was carried out with German thoroughness. At first, a few weeks after the occupation, the German authorities had tried to drive all the Jews in Warsaw into a ghetto.

The Warsaw Jews, by payment of a heavy fine, were able to avoid the overhasty establishment of the ghetto, which would have created very difficult problems. This fine, however, did not achieve anything more than postponement.

Already in April 1940, the area destined for the ghetto was called "the closed, contaminated area" and was surrounded by walls. In October last the Governor of Warsaw, Fischer, and his delegate, Leist, issued a series of orders defining the limits of the ghetto, ordering the concentration of Jews from all over Warsaw within these limits, and the expulsion from the newly formed ghetto of all Aryans. These migrations had to take place before 31 October 1940. Thus 110,000 Jews and 80,000 Poles were given 12 days in which to move. Both Poles and Jews hurried to migrate, although the removals were very difficult and expensive in view of the many houses destroyed and of the lack of means of transport. The time limit had to be postponed until 15 November 1940. Meanwhile the limits of the ghetto were twice changed, on one occasion being reduced, on the other enlarged. For various reasons the most fantastic enclaves were made. For instance, the market halls, the Law Courts in Leszne Street, and many works under German direction were not included in the ghetto, although they are in the heart of the old Jewish district. As a result, both Poles and Jews had to move several times. The Jews who were removed to the ghetto were forbidden to take anything with them with the exception of hand luggage.

On 16 November, the ghetto was closed without any warning. An 8-foot high concrete wall was built to enclose

the district. The supplies of food to the ghetto were stopped. The German police confiscated the food carried to the ghetto by Poles, and also the food, transported by Poles in tramcars, passing through the ghetto. Food prices in the ghetto soared. When the ghetto was closed the German police started practicing endless chicanery towards the Jews. The Jews had to take off their hats to German policemen. They were ordered to exercise with bricks or concrete slabs in their hands, to climb telephone poles, to wash in the gutters, etc. The police shot at sight Poles or Jews who tried to get food into the ghetto (about 20 Jews and Poles were killed). Germans in uniform rob the homes of the richer Jews (in the Leszne and Ogradowa Street), taking away furniture, money, and even food.

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The Ghetto in Lodz

Warsaw is by no means the only place where the Jews have been herded into a ghetto. The same process took place in many other towns with large Jewish populations, although it was not tackled everywhere with the same thoroughness as in Warsaw. A very similar position to that in Warsaw has developed at Lodz. This big industrial town of Central Poland was formally annexed by Germany and even given a new name "Litzmannstadt."

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On 30 April the Jewish quarter in the northern part of Lodz was finally barred off. Here all the Jews of the town were compelled to live. Again, of course, hygienic reasons were given for this step. But it is admitted that economic reasons too had influenced the Germans to introduce this measure. Jews had played an important part in the economic life of Lodz and had contributed to the importance of this town as an industrial center.

In order to get hold of businesses founded by Jews and to rob them of the raw material in their possession, the ghetto plan proved very convenient. This is openly admitted in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 13 October 1940.

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The Ghetto of Cracow

At the beginning of 1941 the German authorities decided to organize a ghetto in Cracow. Originally, as already said, the Germans intended to expel the Jews from Cracow altogether, and in fact a large number were so expelled. Later a

decision was taken to leave same 20,000 Jews in the city. Part of a suburb of Cracow, Podgozre, situated on the right bank of the river Vistula, has been assigned as the ghetto area. The Poles living in this area have been ordered to shift to other parts of the city. The general order issued by Dr. Frank was applied to Cracow in a decree issued by the Chief of the Cracow district on 3 March and published in the *Krakauer Zeitung* of 6 March 1941. This decree provides for the creation of a special closed ghetto district in Cracow.

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Health in the Ghetto

No official figures have been published relating to the hygienic conditions in occupied Poland, but occasionally notes and articles in the German press reveal that health conditions, particularly in the Jewish quarters, are anything but good. Considering that the Jews are all but starving, this is hardly surprising. According to the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* of 29 October 1940, 98 percent of the cases of typhoid and spotted fever in Warsaw were in the ghetto. The delegation of the American Joint Distribution Committee reported that all but 8 percent of the typhoid cases in Warsaw were among the Jewish population. Diseases due to malnutrition and overcrowding are used by the Nazis as a pretext for slandering the Jews and for further restrictions. The head of the Health Department in the "Government General," for instance, issued an order in March 1940, to the effect that in future Jews could only be attended by Jewish doctors.

The catastrophic condition of food supplies and terrible housing and sanitary conditions in the ghetto are causing a very high mortality, which is increasing with every month. In May 1941, the figure was 5,000, which is equal to 120 per thousand per annum. This is a twelvefold increase over the prewar rate. As the birthrate has fallen to a minimum, there is not only no annual increase, but even a decline in the population. But this is more than offset by the continual influx of Jews compulsorily deported from the provincial towns, where the Germans do not propose to set up separate Jewish quarters.

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Decree Concerning the Introduction of Compulsory Labor for the Polish Population of the "Government General"

Dated October 26, 1939

1210 Establishing Jewish Councils (*Judenrat*)

Section 1

(1) All Polish inhabitants of the “Government General” between the ages of 18 and 60 years are subject to compulsory public labor with immediate effect.

Section 3

(2) Compulsory public labor comprises, in particular, work in agricultural concerns, the building and maintenance of public buildings, the construction of roads, waterways and railways, the regulation of rivers and land work.

[Page 572]

Section 4

(1) The payment of persons subject to compulsory labor shall be effected at rates that may be fair.

(2) The welfare of persons subject to compulsory labor and their families shall be secured as far as possible.

Section 5

The regulations required for the execution of the present Decree shall be issued by the Director of the Department of Labor in the office of the “Government General.”

Warsaw, October 28, 1939.

[Page 573]

Decree Concerning the Introduction of Compulsory Labor for the Jewish Population of the “Government General”

Dated October 26, 1939

Section 1

Compulsory labor for the Jews domiciled in the “Government General” shall be introduced with immediate effect. The Jews shall for this purpose be formed into forced labor groups.

Section 2

The prescriptions required for the execution of the present Decree shall be issued by the higher SS and police leader. He may define territories east of the Vistula in which the execution of the present Decree shall be waived.

Warsaw, October 26, 1939.

The Governor-General for the Occupied Polish Territories
Frank

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 332–337, Doc. 2613-PS.

101. ESTABLISHING JEWISH COUNCILS (*JUDENRAT*), NOVEMBER 28, 1939

In September 1939, shortly after the German invasion of Poland, Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Security Police, issued instructions for the movement of Jews into “concentration centers,” with a Council of Jewish Elders (Judenrat) responsible for the administration of those centers and the execution of orders from the Germans. The ordinance that follows was issued five weeks later, this time by Hans Frank, governor-general of the Generalgouvernement, the section of German-occupied Poland that was not incorporated into Germany. It mirrors Heydrich’s earlier instructions, requiring the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) representing each Jewish community. It stipulates that in communities of 10,000 Jews or less, the council will consist of 12 Jews, but for larger communities, the number is doubled to 24. It warns, as did Heydrich’s earlier instructions, that the Judenrat is responsible for the execution of orders from the Germans.

Pursuant to § 5, Section 1, of the Decree of the Führer and Reich Chancellor on the Administration of the Occupied Polish Territories, of October 12, 1939 (*Reichgesetzblatt I*, p. 2077), I issue this ordinance:

Section 1

In each municipality a body representing the Jews will be formed.

Section 2

This body representing the Jews will be known as the Jewish Council. In communities with up to 10,000 inhabitants, it will consist of 12 Jews, and in communities with more than 10,000 inhabitants, of 24 Jews, drawn from the resident population. The *Judenrat* will be elected by the Jews of the community. If a member of the *Judenrat* ceases to serve, a new member is to be elected immediately.

Section 3

The *Judenrat* will elect a chairman and a deputy from among its members.

Section 4

1. After these elections, which must be completed no later than December 31, 1939, the *Judenrat* roster is to be reported to the appropriate senior district official, in urban districts to the senior subdivisional district official.
2. The *Kreishauptmann* (*Stadthauptmann*) will decide whether the *Judenrat* roster reported to him should be approved. He may direct changes in the roster.

Section 5

The *Judenrat* is obliged to accept the orders of German agencies, through its chairman or his deputy. It is answerable for conscientious execution of orders to their full extent. The directives it issues to implement these German decrees must be obeyed by all Jewish men and women.

Cracow; November 28, 1939

Governor-General for the Occupied Polish Territories
Frank

Source: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader* (Springfield, NJ: Behrman House, 1976), pp. 66–67. Copyright © Behrman House, Inc. www.behrmanhouse.com. Used by permission.

102. KAUNAS GHETTO: AFFIDAVIT AUGUST 10, 1946, OF KHAIM KAGAN, AUGUST–OCTOBER 1941

This affidavit by Khaim Kagan, a member of the Judenrat of the Kaunas ghetto, reveals several important aspects of ghetto life under the Nazis. (The ghetto is better known as the Kovno ghetto; Kovno was the capital of Lithuania at the time.) Kagan's description of Nazi abuses and murders in the ghetto in 1941 is fully consistent with other accounts of treatment by the Nazis in other ghettos in Europe. In this relatively short document, Kagan speaks of numerous acts: Nazi plunder of Jewish assets, the mass killing of Soviet POWs, the forced labor that had no other purpose than to amuse the guards as men who faltered were shot and killed, the systematic killing of more than 10,000 Jews in a short period of time, and other indiscriminant murders of Jews. The cumulative effect on the reader of all of these actions is to realize how brutal and unrestrained was the violence inflicted on innocent Jews. Those who survived, like Kagan, did so as much by sheer luck as by any special skills or fortitude.

AFFIDAVIT OF KHAIM KAGAN

I, KHAIM KAGAN, declare as follows:

1. I am a Jew and lived in the Ghetto of Kaunas (Lithuania) during the German occupation. I was on the Jewish Council of the Ghetto dealing with statistics and supplies. As representative of the Jews for rations, etc., I had to deal directly with the Town Governor's Office (Hauptsturmfuehrer SA Jordan's section). The Town Governor's Office was exclusively staffed by SA: even the girls in the office wore brown SA uniform.

2. The German Town Governor (Stadtkommissar) was called KRAMER, and he was a Brigadefuehrer SA. Jordan was the Advisor on Jewish Affairs to Kramer. I know their ranks and that they were in the SA, because they signed the orders which were posted in the Ghetto.

3. About 10 to 15 September 1941 a plundering operation was conducted throughout the Ghetto. It was done exclusively by SA men, Jordan was with them. They all wore brown uniform. They took gold, silver, valuables, furniture, etc. In order to scare people and to induce them to give up their property more easily they shot people indiscriminately in different parts of the Ghetto: they shot twenty-seven in all.

4. After the plundering was over Jews were employed to sort the plunder and pack it into parcels to send to private addresses in Germany.

5. On the 13th September 1941 Jordan and Sturmfuehrer SA KEPEN (with Brigadefuehrer LENZEN, who was Commissioner for the Rural District (Landkommissar) of Kaunas, standing by) shot three men in my presence. One of these men they first pulled out of bed.

6. On the 21st or 22nd September 1941 I was in a labor detachment. I saw about thirty SA men in uniform conducting a group of some 300 Russian prisoners of war. The Russians were quite exhausted, they could barely walk. Two collapsed and the SA shot them. The SA were beating them all the time. My labor detachment had to bury these Russians.

7. In October 1941 300 Jews including myself were taken by the SA from the Ghetto and forced to carry two chairs each, on their shoulders, for a distance of 5 kilometres and then back again, for no object whatsoever. Those who could not carry on were shot. Jordan was following the procession in his car. There were about 100 SA men guarding us: they were armed with automatic pistols.

8. On the 28th October 1941 there was a big "action" on in which 10,500 people from the Ghetto were shot. The Ghetto population was first divided into two groups, those for execution and those who were allowed to stay. The sorting was

1212 Telegram from Leland B. Morris to the U.S. Secretary of State Regarding the Death Penalty

supervised in the morning by a man called RAUKA (who was I think in the Gestapo or the SD) and later in the day three prominent SA men, Jordan, Kepen and Poeschl came to help him. All these SA men were in uniform. I know the number of those who were shot because my job on the Jewish Council included the rationing for which we had taken a census of the Jews. A new census was taken after these executions.

9. On the 15th August 1941 the SA shut the Ghetto gates. A number of people had gone out of the Ghetto on the 11th August to try to get food. On the 15th after the gates had been shut Jordan came to me and said: "Go and get 20 bodies which I have just shot as a warning to you all not to have dealings with the outside population."

10. On the same day (15th August) Jordan announced that he wanted 530 intellectuals to work on archives. He was told there were not that number available. Thereupon the SA (assisted by others in German uniform which I cannot identify for certain but I think it was SD) seized 530 people at random. The SA personnel present included Jordan, Poeschl and Lenzen.

I declare the above to be correct:

[signed]:

KHAIM KAGAN

10 August, 1946

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. Supplement A, pp. 1167–69 Doc. D-968.

103. TELEGRAM FROM LELAND B. MORRIS TO THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE REGARDING THE DEATH PENALTY FOR JEWS LEAVING GHETTOS, NOVEMBER 1, 1941

Leland B. Morris, chargé d'affaires in the U.S. embassy in Berlin, sent this telegram to Cordell Hull, the U.S. secretary of state, to report that Hans Frank, the governor-general of the Generalgouvernement, that portion of German-occupied Poland that was not incorporated into Germany, changed the punishment for anyone leaving the ghettos in his territory without permission as well as for individuals who harbored them. The punishment had been imprisonment, a fine, or penal servitude. Now the punishment was the death penalty.

Morris observes that this change is consistent with increasing pressure being brought to bear on Jews throughout occupied Europe. He also notes that as Jews are increasingly being transported into the Generalgouvernement, the severity of this punishment will surely be factored into decisions made regarding escape and, perhaps to a greater degree, will cause those non-Jews who might otherwise be inclined to help an escapee to think more carefully when making that decision. Clearly, that was Frank's intent.

GRAY

Berlin

Dated November 1, 1941

Secretary of State,

Washington

3958, November 1, 10 a.m.

By decree of Governor General Frank Effective October 25 the death penalty is made mandatory for Jews leaving the Ghettoes in the Government General without permission and for persons who harbor them. Hitherto, these offenses were punished by imprisonment or a fine and in severe cases by penal servitude.

The new measure is in accord with the stiffening of anti-Jewish regulations and actions which have been evident throughout German controlled Europe for some weeks. It will presumably affect many of the Jews who are at present being deported to various parts of Poland.

MORRIS

WWC

Source: State CDF 862.4016/2209: Central Decimal File: Records of the Department of State in National Archives Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.

104. SCHAULEN GHETTO: AFFIDAVIT OF AUGUST 10, 1946, OF LEIB KIBART, 1941–1943

Leib Kibart, a survivor of the Schaulen ghetto, gave this brief affidavit regarding his observations in and around the Schaulen ghetto, near Riga, the capital of Latvia. It describes the role of the SA (Sturmabteilung, or Storm Detachment, also known as Storm Troopers or Brown Shirts) in abusing ghetto residents and taking them away for the purpose of mass murder. It also shows the SA coercing Jews to manufacture goods

as ordered. Perhaps the most chilling statement comes at the end when Kibart recounts how the SA officer in charge of the ghetto, a man identified as Sturmfuehrer Bub, decided to hang a ghetto resident who tried to smuggle cigarettes into the ghetto. Bub explained that he chose to do so in order to show that "he too could hang Jews." This appears to be an effort by Bub to show that he could be as ruthless as the Sturmfuehrer whom he replaced as head of the ghetto.

AFFIDAVIT OF LEIB KIBART

I, LEIB KIBART, declare as follows:

1. I am a Jew and lived during the German occupation in the Ghetto of Schaulen, about 130 kilometres of Riga. I am a leather worker by trade.

2. I was arrested in the street and forced to work for the Germans for three years making mostly women's handbags. I lived in the Ghetto but I was taken daily by SA men to the Courtyard of the District Commissioner where I and other Jews worked on various jobs.

3. While at work we were often cursed and beaten by the SA. Sturmfuehrer SA Bub one day ordered a lady's handbag from me, to be ready by the same evening. I said that was impossible, so he gave me many strokes with a whip. In the evening he thrashed me again because the bag was not ready.

4. The SA came to Schaulen soon after the occupation by the Germans in the summer of 1941 and they took over the administration of the Ghetto. The first SA Chief was SCHROEPFER, a Sturmfuehrer SA. He was either from Bromberg or Bamberg but I cannot remember which. I know it was one or the other because Jews were employed to make trunks for SA officers and I remember his name and address being painted on one. His successor was Sturmfuehrer Bub.

5. It is hard to judge, but I estimate that there must have been 700 to 800 SA men there at the beginning, but they decreased in numbers later. I knew them as SA because they wore brown uniform with Swastika armlets. Later on they often used other Germans in the locality as auxiliaries.

6. There were 4,500 Jews in the Ghetto, which was very overcrowded. In August 1941 the SA therefore surrounded the whole Ghetto, and numbers of them went into the houses and took out women, children and old men, and put them into lorries and drove them away. I saw all this myself. It was done exclusively by SA. I saw them take children by the hair and throw them into the lorries. I did not see what happened to them but a Lithuanian told me afterwards that they had been driven 20 kilometres away and shot: he said he had seen

the SA make them undress and then shoot them with automatic pistols.

7. In 1943 working parties were sent out from the Ghetto into the country and they sometimes brought back food such as potatoes. The SA searched them and if they found food on them they beat them in the streets. In June 1943 a man called MAZAWETZKI, a master baker, was caught by Bub with four or five cigarettes and some sausage.

He was beaten and brought to the District Commissioner's office. I was working in the Courtyard with other Jews and Bub said to the working party that the man must be hanged because he wanted to show that he too could hang Jews. Next Sunday we were all kept in the Courtyard and Bub had Mazawetzki hanged in front of us by Jews.

8. The District Commissioner in whose Courtyard I worked was called GEWECKE. I saw him every day. He was in the SA.

9. The SS took over from the SA in September 1943, and the Ghetto then became a working commando.

I declare the above to be true.

[signed]:

10 August 1946

LEIB KIBART

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. Supplement A, pp. 1169–1170 Doc. D-969.

105. ROWNO GHETTO: AFFIDAVIT OF NOVEMBER 10, 1945, OF HERMANN GRAEBE REGARDING LIQUIDATION OF THE ROWNO GHETTO, JULY 1942

Hermann Graebe, a non-Jewish German manager and engineer-in-charge of a building firm in the Ukraine, describes in this affidavit the process by which the Rowno ghetto was liquidated as well as his efforts to protect as many of his Jewish employees as possible. His response when hearing that liquidation was imminent was to order his foreman to remove his Jewish employees to another town. He was forced to have them returned to Rowno lest other employees be arrested. A high-ranking German with whom Graebe then met confirmed that a pogrom was about to take place and authorized that his Jewish employees were not to be included in the

liquidation proceedings. Although some were taken away despite the authorization, Graebe was able to protect the others. His success at saving most of his Jewish employees resulted in Graebe being honored as Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem. Graebe's affidavit also tells of the abuse and killings he witnessed during the liquidation of the ghetto.

Before me, Homer B. Crawford, being authorized to administer oaths, personally appeared Hermann Friedrich Graebe, who, being by me duly sworn through the interpreter Elisabeth Radziejewska, made and subscribed the following statement:

I, Hermann Friedrich Graebe, declare under oath:

From September 1941 until January 1944 I was manager and engineer-in-charge of a branch office in Sdolbunow, Ukraine, of the Solingen building firm of Josef Jung. In this capacity it was my job to visit the building sites of the firm. The firm had, among others, a site in Rowno, Ukraine.

During the night of 13th July 1942 all inhabitants of the Rowno Ghetto, where there were still about 5000 Jews, were liquidated.

I would describe the circumstances of my being a witness of the dissolution of the Ghetto, and the carrying out of the pogrom [Aktion] during the night and the morning, as follows:

I employed for the firm, in Rowno, in addition to Poles, Germans, and Ukrainians about 100 Jews from Sdolbunow, Ostrog, and Mysotch. The men were quartered in a building,—5 Bahnhofstrasse, inside the Ghetto, and the women in a house at the corner of Deutsche Strasse,—98.

On Saturday, 11 July 1942, my foreman, Fritz Einsporn, told me of a rumor that on Monday all Jews in Rowno were to be liquidated. Although the vast majority of the Jews employed by my firm in Rowno were not natives of this town, I still feared that they might be included in this pogrom which had been reported. I therefore ordered Einsporn at noon of the same day to march all the Jews employed by us—men as well as women—in the direction of Sdolbunow, about 12 km from Rowno. This was done.

The Senior Jew [Judenrat] had learned of the departure of the Jewish workers of my firm. He went to see the Commanding Officer of the Rowno SIP0 and SD, SS Major [SS Sturmbannfuehrer] Dr. Puetz, as early as the Saturday afternoon to find out whether the rumor of a forthcoming Jewish pogrom—which had gained further credence by reason of the departure of Jews of my firm—was true. Dr. Puetz dismissed the rumor as a clumsy lie, and for the rest had the

Polish personnel of my firm in Rowno arrested. Einsporn avoided arrest by escaping from Sdolbunow. When I learned of this incident I gave orders that all Jews who had left Rowno were to report back to work in Rowno on Monday, 13 July 1942. On Monday morning I myself went to see the Commanding Officer, Dr. Puetz, in order to learn, for one thing, the truth about the rumored Jewish pogrom and secondly to obtain information on the arrest of the Polish office personnel. SS Major [SS-Sturmbannfuehrer] Puetz stated to me that no pogrom (Aktion) whatever was planned. Moreover such a pogrom would be stupid because the firms and the Reichsbahn would lose valuable workers.

An hour later I received a summons to appear before the Area Commissioner of Rowno. His deputy, Stableiter and Cadet Officer [Ordensjunker] Beck, subjected me to the same questioning as I had undergone at the SD. My explanation that I had sent the Jews home for urgent delousing appeared plausible to him. He then told me—making me promise to keep it a secret—that a pogrom would in fact take place on the evening of Monday 13 July 1942. After lengthy negotiation I managed to persuade him to give me permission to take my Jewish workers to Sdolbunow—but only after the pogrom had been carried out. During the night it would be up to me to protect the house in the Ghetto against the entry of Ukrainian militia and SS. As confirmation of the discussion he gave me a document, which stated that the Jewish employees of Messrs. Jung were not affected by the pogrom [Original attached.]

On the evening of this day I drove to Rowno and posted myself with Fritz Einsporn in front of the house in the Bahnhofstrasse in which the Jewish workers of my firm slept. Shortly after 22:00 the Ghetto was encircled by a large SS detachment and about three times as many members of the Ukrainian militia. Then the electric arclights which had been erected in and around the Ghetto were switched on. SS and militia squads of 4 to 6 men entered or at least tried to enter the houses. Where the doors and windows were closed and the inhabitant did not open at the knocking, the SS men and militia broke the windows, forced the doors with beams and crowbars and entered the houses. The people living there were driven on to the street just as they were, regardless of whether they were dressed or in bed. Since the Jews in most cases refused to leave their houses and resisted, the SS and militia applied force. They finally succeeded, with strokes of the whip, kicks and blows with rifle butts in clearing the houses. The people were driven out of their houses in such haste that small children in bed had been left behind in

several instances. In the street women cried out for their children and children for their parents. That did not prevent the SS from driving the people along the road, at running pace, and hitting them, until they reached a waiting freight train. Car after car was filled, and the screaming of women and children, and the cracking of whips and rifle shots resounded unceasingly. Since several families or groups had barricaded themselves in especially strong buildings, and the doors could not be forced with crowbars or beams, these houses were now blown open with hand grenades. Since the Ghetto was near the railroad tracks in Rowno, the younger people tried to get across the tracks and over a small river to get away from the Ghetto area. As this stretch of country was beyond the range of the electric lights, it was illuminated by signal rockets. All through the night these beaten, hounded and wounded people moved along the lighted streets. Women carried their dead children in their arms, children pulled and dragged their dead parents by their arms and legs down the road toward the train. Again and again the cries "Open the door!" "Open the door!" echoed through the Ghetto.

About 6 o'clock in the morning I went away for a moment, leaving behind Einsporn and several other German workers who had returned in the meantime. I thought the greatest danger was past and that I could risk it. Shortly after I left, Ukrainian militia men forced their way into 5 Bahnhofstrasse and brought 7 Jews out and took them to a collecting point inside the Ghetto. On my return I was able to prevent further Jews from being taken out. I went to the collecting point to save these 7 men. I saw dozens of corpses of all ages and both sexes in the streets I had to walk along. The doors of the houses stood open, windows were smashed. Pieces of clothing, shoes, stockings, jackets, caps, hats, coats, etc., were lying in the street. At the corner of a house lay a baby, less than a year old with his skull crushed. Blood and brains were splattered over the house wall and covered the area immediately around the child. The child was dressed only in a little shirt. The commander, SS Major Puetz, was walking up and down a row of about 80–100 male Jews who were crouching on the ground. He had a heavy dog whip in his hand. I walked up to him, showed him the written permit of Stabsleiter Beck and demanded the seven men whom I recognized among those who were crouching on the ground. Dr. Puetz was very furious about Beck's concession and nothing could persuade him to release the seven men. He made a motion with his hand encircling the square and said that anyone who was once here would not get away.

Although he was very angry with Beck, he ordered me to take the people from 5 Bahnhofstrasse out of Rowno by 8 o'clock at the latest. When I left Dr. Puetz, I noticed a Ukrainian farm cart, with two horses. Dead people with stiff limbs were lying on the cart. Legs and arms projected over the side boards. The cart was making for the freight train. I took the remaining 74 Jews who had been locked in the house to Sdolbunow.

Several days after the 13th of July 1942 the Area Commissioner of Sdolbunow, Georg Marschall, called a meeting of all firm managers, railroad superintendents, and leaders of the Organization Todt and informed them that the firms, etc., should prepare themselves for the "resettlement" of the Jews which was to take place almost immediately. He referred to the pogrom in Rowno where all the Jews had been liquidated, i.e. had been shot near Kostopol.

I make the above statement in Wiesbaden, Germany, on 10 November 1945. I swear by God that this is the absolute truth.

Hermann Friedrich Graebe

Subscribed and sworn to before me at Wiesbaden, Germany this 10 day of November 1945.

Homer B. Crawford
Major, AC
Investigator Examiner,
War Crimes Branch

I, Elisabeth Radziejewska, being first duly sworn, state; That I truly translated the oath administered by Major Homer B. Crawford to Hermann Friedrich Graebe and that thereupon he made and subscribed the foregoing statement in my presence.

Elisabeth Radziejewska
Interpreter

Subscribed and sworn before me at Wiesbaden, Germany, this 10th day of November 1945.

Homer B. Crawford
Major, AC
Investigator Examiner
War Crimes Branch, US Army

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 700–703, Doc. 2992-PS.71222.

106. COUNTERACTING RUMORS REGARDING TREATMENT OF THE JEWS, OCTOBER 9, 1942

Dated October 1942, by which time the Nazi death camps were exterminating Jews and others at an extraordinary rate, this statement by an unknown Nazi seeks to explain away what he refers to as rumors but in fact were accurate reports of what was happening at these camps. The author expresses concern that not all Germans will understand the reasons for such extreme measures, and he sets forth how the “rumors” should be addressed. In doing so, this document refers to a 2,000-year battle against the Jews that is only now proceeding as it should, noting that elimination of Jews from German society and efforts to have the Jews emigrate have been unsuccessful, making the current actions necessary. Jews are being deported to forced labor camps or, if unable to work, to extermination camps (here referred to by an often-used euphemism, “transported to the East”). The rationale set forth for these actions concludes with the statement that the Jewish question “can be solved only with ruthless severity.”

DECREES, REGULATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS
[Verfügungen, Anordnungen, Bekanntgaben]
Vol. 2, Pages 131–132.

Preparatory Measures for the Solution of the Jewish Problem
in Europe—Rumors About the Position of the Jews in the East.

V.I. 66/881 of the 9 Oct., 1942

In the course of the work on the final solution of the Jewish problem discussions about “very strict measures” against the Jews, especially in the Eastern territories, have lately been taking place within the population of the various areas of the Reich. Investigations showed that such discussions—mostly in a distorted and exaggerated form—were passed on by soldiers on leave from various units committed in the East, who had the opportunity to eye-witness these measures.

It is conceivable that not all “Blood Germans” are capable of demonstrating sufficient understanding for the necessity of such measures, especially not those parts of the population which do not have the opportunity of visualizing bolshevik atrocities on the basis of their own observations.

In order to be able to counter-act any formation of rumors in this connection, which frequently are of an intentional,

prejudiced character, the following statements are issued for information about the present state of affairs:

For approx. 2000 years, a so-far unsuccessful battle has been waged against Judaism. Only since 1933 have we started to find ways and means in order to enable a complete separation of Judaism from the German masses.

The work toward a solution which has previously been accomplished can in the main be divided as follows:

1. The repulsion of Jews from the individual spheres of living of the German people. The laws issued by the lawmakers are hereby to be the basis, which guarantees that future generations will also be protected from a possible new overflooding by the enemy.

2. The attempt to completely drive out the enemy from the area of the Reich. In view of the only very limited living space [Lebensraum] at the disposal of the German people it was hoped this problem could be solved in the main by speeding up the Jewish emigration.

Since the outbreak of war in 1939 these possibilities of emigration decreased to an ever greater extent. On the other hand, in addition to the living space [Lebensraum] of the German people, their economic space [Wirtschaftsraum] grew steadily, so that in view of the large numbers of Jews residing in these territories a complete repulsion of the Jews by emigration is no longer possible.

Since even our next generation will not be so close to this problem and will no longer see it clearly enough on the basis of past experiences and since this matter which has now started rolling demands clearing up, the whole problem must still be solved by the present generation.

A complete removal or withdrawal of the millions of Jews residing in the European economic space [Wirtschaftsraum] is therefore an urgent need in the fight for the security of existence of the German people.

Starting with the territory of the Reich and proceeding to the remaining European countries included in the final solution, the Jews are currently being deported to large camps which have already been established or which are to be established in the East, where they will either be used for work or else transported still farther to the East. The old Jews as well as Jews with high military decorations [Kriegsauszeichnungen] (Iron Cross 1st Class, (E.K.I.) Golden Medal for Valor [Goldene Tapferkeitsmedaille], etc.), are currently being resettled in the city of Theresienstadt which is located in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

It lies in the very nature of the matter that these problems which in part are very difficult, can be solved only with

ruthless severity in the interest of the final security of our people.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 945–946, Doc. 3244-PS.

107. WARSAW GHETTO: JEWISH FOOD SITUATION, DECEMBER 15, 1942

The Polish Fortnightly Review, by the Polish Ministry of Information, included this examination of the “Jewish food situation” in Jewish ghettos established by the Nazis throughout Poland in its issue of December 15, 1942. It describes the insufficiency of vegetables and potatoes for ghetto residents and observes that the ever-changing quantities of food in the ration are continuously going down. This document also shows the severely limited amount of bread, meat, sugar, and fats provided to each Jewish ghetto resident. These near-starvation conditions have given rise to a robust black market and an increasing mortality rate. The document ends with the ominous statement that in July 1942 “the German authorities started a process of wholesale extermination of the Jewish population of the ghettos.”

POLISH
FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW,
Polish Ministry of Information

No. 58 London, Tuesday, December 15th, 1942, Page 7.

THE JEWISH FOOD SITUATION

The Jewish section of the population, as we know, is subjected to general living conditions which are still worse than those of the Poles, and the uncertainty of life for them is increased by the continually changing orders and regulations affecting their day- to-day existence. In regard to food supplies, they are brought under a completely separate system, which is obviously aimed at depriving them of the most elemental necessities of life.

The separate and isolated quarters of towns which the German authorities have assigned as ghettos for the Jewish inhabitants are theoretically autonomously administered and are completely cut off from the outside world. They are

under the supervision of special German commissaries, who have unrestricted powers. Economic life inside the ghetto, and in particular the question of food supplies for its inhabitants, is in the hands of the Jewish Council [Judenrat]. All trade and commodity exchange, including the supply of foodstuffs, goes on through a special German organ known as the Transferstelle. This department is responsible for allocating and selling to the ghetto all kinds of goods, including food, as the respective German food or other departments allow at any moment. The goods thus obtained by the ghetto are distributed to the shops by the “Supplies Establishment,” which is a special department under the Jewish Council.

As a rule, the ghetto receives foodstuffs of two main categories. The first group consists of rationed goods, which are allocated in accordance with the number of inhabitants and on a ration unit basis. It includes the main food articles such as bread, meat, sugar, fats, etc. The second category consists of goods which are not rationed in the strict sense of the word, but of which the sale to Jews is controlled and for which permission has to be given on each occasion by the German authorities. No article of food not included in either of these two categories can be sold to Jews, either outside or inside the ghettos. In May, 1941, the German authorities gave permission for barely 154 tons of vegetables to be taken into the Warsaw ghetto, this amount working out at about two-thirds of a pound per person per month. And this was a comparatively high quota, for in the previous month only 48 tons had been allowed to come on to the ghetto market. In June, 1941, the quota of potatoes assigned to the ghetto was 67 tons and other vegetables 189.5 tons. In August there was some improvement in the situation, for the German authorities permitted the import of 100 tons of vegetables weekly into the ghetto, this working out at nine ounces per person.

The quantity allowed in the ration is continually changed, the tendency being to reduce the allotted quantities. The possession of a ration card is by no means a guarantee that a ration will be obtainable. From information received through neutral sources, the weekly rations of the most important articles of food in the Warsaw ghetto during a certain unspecified period of 1941 were as follows:

	Bread	Meat	Sugar	Fats
In grammes.....	420	125	45	25
In ounces (app.)	14 6/7	4 1/2	1 3/5	9/10

Conditions were somewhat better in Cracow, where in March, 1941, the weekly ration for Jews was:

	Bread	Meat	Sugar	Fats
In grammes	1,000–1,090	None.	50	30
In ounces (app.)	36–39 1/5	14/5	1

The above figures call for no comment.

In such conditions the starving Jewish population has to resort to the purchase of food on the ghetto black market, which is supplied by smuggling over the walls at the danger of life, and by the extensive bribery of the German guards. Naturally, prices on the ghetto black market are considerably higher even by comparison with those on the Polish black market. The following figures relating to the autumn of 1941 (in Warsaw) illustrate this disparity:

	Per kilo. (2 1/4 lbs.)	
	Polish black market	Ghetto black market
Bread.....	15 zlotys.	32 zlotys.
Potatoes.....	4.31 zlotys.	8.50 zlotys.
Fats.....	45 zlotys.	90 zlotys.

(Pre-war exchange rate was about 25 zlotys to the pound.)

Thus, while the rations for Jews are only a half or a third of the rations for Poles, the prices on the black market are twice as high. A Jewish worker employed on forced labor, and receiving four zlotys a day (about 3s. 4d.) could at that time (autumn, 1941) buy for that amount only half a kilo (1 1/8 lb.) of potatoes; a Jewish tailor earning 50 zlotys weekly could buy only half a kilo of fats.

Therefore the only hope of survival for the great majority of the Jews was in the communal assistance provided by the Jewish Council and various charitable organizations. In the summer of 1941 soup kitchens in the Warsaw ghetto were providing some 120,000 portions daily. This represented assistance to barely 25 percent of the total number of inhabitants, and only half the number actually needing help.

The terrible shortage of food, coupled with the serious overcrowding and insanitary conditions of the ghettos, has led to a fearful increase in the mortality rate from month to month. In August, 1941, there were 5,620 deaths in the Warsaw ghetto, while in June, 1941 (the latest month for which figures have been available), there were only 396 births. The inevitable decline in ghetto population thus resulting was compensated for by the continual influx of Jews driven into the ghettos by the German authorities, who rounded them up not only from all over Poland, but from almost all Europe.

In July, 1942, the German authorities started a process of wholesale extermination of the Jewish population of the ghettos.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VII, pp. 908–911, Doc. L-165.

108. EXTRACTS FROM “DER STÜRMER” REGARDING HITLER’S PROMISE TO FREE THE WORLD OF JEWS, JANUARY 28, 1943

Der Stürmer, the Nazi Party tabloid published by Julius Streicher, was one of the primary means by which the party disseminated its antisemitic propaganda. These two excerpts from late January 1943—the first by Ernst Hiemer, a German author who often expressed his antisemitism in Der Stürmer, and the second from Streicher himself—reflect the obsession of both men with the total destruction of the Jews. According to Hiemer, the ghettos are only an interim step for the Jews along the road to their disappearance. Streicher looks back to a speech that Hitler made to the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, in which he stated that the Jews would be annihilated in the event of another world war (which, if such a war occurred, would be the fault of the Jews). He then characterized what was happening to the Jews in January 1943—the extermination of two-thirds of all Jews in Europe as well on its way by then—as a fulfillment of Hitler’s promise.

Extracts from “DER STURMER”
No. 5. 28 January 1943

But the ghetto, too, which has today been re-established in nearly all European countries, is only an interim solution. For humanity, once awakened, will not merely solve the ghetto question, but the Jewish question in its totality. A time will come when the present demands of the Jews will be fulfilled: *The ghetto will have disappeared.* And with it Jewry!

[Signed] Ernst Hiemer

When, with the outbreak of the second World War, world Jewry again began to manifest themselves as warmongers, Adolf Hitler announced to the world, from the platform of the German Reichstag, that the World War conjured up by world Jewry would result in the self-destruction of Jewry.

This prophecy was the first big warning. It was met with derision by the Jews, as were also the subsequent warnings. But now, in the fourth year of this war, world Jewry is beginning, in its retrospective reflections, to understand that the destiny of Jewry is finding its fulfillment at the hands of German National Socialism. That which the Fuehrer of the German people announced to the world as a prophecy, at the beginning of this second World War, is now being fulfilled with unrelenting inevitability. World Jewry which wanted to make big international business out of the blood of the warring nations, is rushing with gigantic steps towards its extirpation!

When Adolf Hitler stepped before the German people 20 years ago to submit to them the National Socialist demands which pointed into the future, he also made the promise which was to have the greatest effects in its results—that of freeing the world from its Jewish tormentor. How wonderful it is to know that this great man and leader is making action follow this promise also! It will be the greatest ever to take place amongst mankind. As yet we are too close to the events of the present time to be able to applaud in pious devotion the action that has been commenced. But the day will come when the whole of humanity will enjoy an international peace such as it has longed for for thousands of years.

[Signed] Julius Streicher

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. Supp. A, pp. 1210–1211, Doc. M-136.

109. WARSAW GHETTO: HIMMLER ORDERS ITS DESTRUCTION, FEBRUARY 16, 1943

This letter from Heinrich Himmler, Reich leader (Reichsführer) of the SS (the Schutzstaffel), to Friedrich-Wilhelm Krueger, higher SS and police leader East, ordered Krueger to tear down the Warsaw ghetto. Although not mentioned in Himmler's order, the ghetto was not yet liquidated of all its Jews. In fact, it was two months later that the few Jews still remaining in the ghetto began their uprising that held off the Nazis for a month before they were able to control and destroy it. Himmler explains the need to destroy the ghetto as a necessary measure to quell criminal disorder in the city of Warsaw. He also tells Krueger that once cleared, the area that

contained the ghetto will not be used at all, thereby diminishing the size of the city, which Himmler calls "a dangerous center of decomposition and of rebellion."

LETTER OF HIMMLER TO THE HIGHER SS AND POLICE LEADER EAST, KRUEGER (KRAKOW), 16 FEBRUARY 1943, ORDERING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WARSAW GHETTO

The Reich Leader SS
Journal No. 38/33/43 g.

Field Command Post, 16 February 1943
[Stamp]

Personal Staff Reich Leader SS
Archives
File No. Secret/343

To the Higher SS and Police Leader East
SS Obergruppenfuehrer Krueger
Krakow

Secret!

For security reasons, I give the order to tear down the ghetto of Warsaw after the concentration camp has been removed [Herausverlegung]; all utilizable building material or material of any kind is to be recovered beforehand.

The tearing down of the ghetto and the installation of the concentration camp is necessary, because otherwise we never will quiet down Warsaw, and criminal disorder will never be rooted out as long as the ghetto remains.

A master plan for the pulling down of the ghetto has to be submitted to me. It has to be accomplished in any case that the living space which accommodated 500,000 sub-humans [Untermenschen] and never was suitable for Germans will completely disappear, and that the city of Warsaw with its one million inhabitants will be reduced in size, having always been a dangerous center of decomposition and of rebellion.

[Signed] H. HIMMLER

(2) To the Chief of the Security Police and SD.

Copy transmitted for information.

BY ORDER

[Initialed] BR[andt]
SS Obersturmbannfuehrer

Chief "P" also received copy.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. V, pp. 621–622, Doc. NO-2494.

110. INDOCTRINATION OF INDIGENOUS SECURITY UNITS, MARCH 15, 1943

This document is an agreement between Georg Leibbrandt and Gottlob Berger, both responsible for the Occupied Eastern Territories, regarding the need to indoctrinate members of Nazi security units who are indigenous to the country in which security action is taking place. Leibbrandt and Berger believe that the local security men need to become “convinced cofighters against bolshevism.” The text that follows sets forth, in effect, a list of the key Nazi beliefs and goals, and the rationale for the killing of Jews, who are considered to be one and the same as Bolsheviks. The many Nazi principles included in this document provide an excellent insight into Nazi ideology.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REICH LEADER SS AND CHIEF OF THE GERMAN POLICE AND THE REICH MINISTER FOR THE OCCUPIED EASTERN TERRITORIES CONCERNING THE POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION OF NATIONALS OF EASTERN NATIONS ASSIGNED TO THE INDIGENOUS SECURITY UNITS (SCHUTZMANNSCHAFTEN)

It has become evident that military-political training, economic improvements, and rigid disciplinary supervision alone are not sufficient to bring to full and reliable assignment the members of the eastern nations enrolled in the indigenous security units. It is necessary, over and above this, that they will be won over spiritually for their particular task and be convinced of it. This has to be achieved through a planned political schooling, adapted to the time and the conditions prevailing.

The political schooling of the non-German members of the indigenous security units is a matter for the Reich Leader SS, who issues implementing instructions to the Chief of the SS Main Office or, as the case may be, the local Higher SS and Police Leader. It will be carried out within the framework of and in conformity with the over-all political line pursued by the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories.

The aim of this indoctrination is to convert the non-German members of the indigenous security units to convinced

cofighters against bolshevism and for the All-European New Order. Special attention is to be paid to the following points:

1. Effective and quick warding off of Bolshevikist propaganda.

2. Tying up with the strong instinctive anti-Semitism of the eastern nations; the Jewish face of bolshevism; Jewry as motive power behind bolshevism as well as the capitalism of the Western Powers; the Jewish aims for world domination and the various ways toward it (world revolution and capitalism); the nationalist disguises of Jewish bolshevism; Stalin’s army as a power instrument to gain Jewish world domination with the blood of the other peoples. Bolshevik aims and methods (question of land, deportation, GPU., church question, etc.).

3. The Reich’s and its Fuehrer’s fight against world Jewry. The differences between national socialism and bolshevism; national socialism’s positive attitude toward folkdom and racial distinctions, its respect of and care for national culture, homeland, family, property. Germany safeguards life and folkdom, national culture, and order for the European nations. Germany’s social achievements. Personality and life of the German Fuehrer. Everybody fighting on Germany’s side, also fights for his or her folkdom, homeland, and family.

4. Realization of the new European community of nations under the Reich as the leading, protecting, and marshaling power. The common work and fight of the European nations against the Jewish aims for world domination. Causes, meaning, and underlying reasons of the war. (Jewry as instigator of the First and Second World War.) Germany’s and Europe’s allies in a common front in fight against the Jewish-Capitalist and the Jewish-Bolshevist powers. The hard necessities of the war; common work, common sacrifices, and common fight for the New Europe. The joint economic, political, and cultural interests of Germany, the eastern nations, and all Europe’s.

5. Avoidance of any utterance liable to violate self-esteem, honor and self-pride both in words and illustrations. Linking with the ethnological national culture and history, their connections with Europe and the Nordic-Germanic sources must be particularly stressed.

Berlin, 15 March 1943

[Signed] LEIBBRANDT

[Signed] G. BERGER

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 289–290, Doc. NO-1818.

111. GHETTOS OF OSTLAND: HIMMLER ORDER FOR LIQUIDATION, JUNE 21, 1943

This order from Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer (Reich leader) of the SS (the Schutzstaffel), to Oswald Pohl, whose title, among others, was chief of the SS Economic and Administrative Main Office, required that all Jews in ghettos in the Ostland (Eastland), a reference to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Belarus, be moved to concentration camps. Himmler provides more specific instructions regarding where Jewish male laborers should be assigned, and reminds Pohl that nothing done pursuant to this order is to result in the reduction of production for the Wehrmacht. As is so often the case, Himmler makes it clear that any Jews not able to serve the Nazis' needs were to be "evacuated to the East," the euphemism for deportation to the death camps in Poland.

LETTER OF HIMMLER TO POHL, 21 JUNE 1943. ORDERING, AMONG OTHER MEASURES, "EVACUATION" OF "NOT REQUIRED" JEWS FROM THE GHETTOS

The Reich Leader SS
RF/Bn. 38195143 g

(1) To the Higher SS and Police Leader Ostland [added in shorthand]: By courier by way of the command staff

(2) To the Chief of the SS Economic and Administrative Main Office.

Field Command Headquarters, 21 June 1943

[Stamp]

Personal Staff Reich Leader SS

Archives

File No. Secret 343

[Stamp] Secret

[Pencil note] 1. By courier by way of the command staff

1. I order that all the Jews still remaining in ghettos in the Ostland area have to be collected in concentration camps.

2. I prohibit any taking out of Jews from concentration camps for [outside] work projects beginning 1 August 1943.

3. There has to be erected a concentration camp in the vicinity of Riga, to which has to be transferred all the manufacturing of clothing and equipment in outlying works maintained by the Wehrmacht. All private firms have to be cut out. The workshops are to become plain concentration camp

workshops. The chief of the SS Economic and Administrative Main Office is requested to take care, that this reorganization does not cause any reduction in the necessary production for the Wehrmacht.

4. The biggest possible part of the male Jews has to be brought to the concentration camp in the oilshale area for the mining of oilshale.

5. Members of the Jewish ghettos not required are to be evacuated to the East.

6. Fixed day for the reorganization of the concentration camps is 1 August 1943.

[Signed] H. HIMMLER

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. V, p. 626, Doc. NO-2403.

112. EXCERPTS FROM A SPEECH BY HIMMLER DURING POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION COURSE FOR WEHRMACHT SOLDIERS, JANUARY 15-23, 1937

Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer of the SS (Schutzstaffel), made this speech as part of a course of political indoctrination of Wehrmacht soldiers. It was presented in January 1937, four years after Hitler's rise to power, and more than two and a half years prior to the beginning of World War II. In it, he discusses the beginning and evolution of the SS, as well as the prerequisites he instituted for membership, such as purity of blood, height, facial characteristics, perseverance, and loyalty. He describes the organization of the SS in some detail, including age requirements and the training regimen as SS men get older. Himmler also discusses the "Death Head Units," the need to expand the Nazi concentration camp system, the Security Service (the SD, Sicherheitsdienst), and special restrictions applicable to members of the SS. He concludes with warnings about the Jews and Bolshevism and declares the luck of the German people "to be alive just at the time when once in 2,000 years an Adolf Hitler has been born."

National Political Course for the Armed Forces, from 15 to 23 Jan. 1937.

[National-Politischer Lehrgang der Wehrmacht, vom 15.-23. Januar 1937]

Restricted for the Armed Forces.

HIMMLER: Organization and Obligations of the SS and the Police.

[Pages 141–161]

I shall speak first of all about the origin, organization, and the spheres of activity of the SS; secondly, about the organization and obligations of the Police; and thirdly, about the combined efforts of the SS and the Police, and about the important and vitally necessary question on the internal security of the Reich.

The SS originated in 1923, very early in the history of the movement, as shock troop [Stosstrupp] Hitler, was prohibited and disbanded on November 9, 1923. When the party was reestablished in 1925, the SA as a protective organization for the meetings was at first prohibited. The Fuehrer was also denied the right of speech and assembly in Prussia as well as in Bavaria. Assembly was permitted only in Saxony and Thuringia which at that time were entirely red.

In order to insure the success of these meetings, it was necessary to protect them from dispersal. Therefore in 1925 the Fuehrer ordered a small organization to be formed in order to protect these meetings, namely the SS [Schutzstaffeln, protective squadrons]—literally Staffeln at that time, namely small formations with the effective strength of one leader and 10 men in each location. Even as large a city as Berlin had a squadron of only 2 leaders and 20 men at that time. Throughout 1925 and 1926 we succeeded in carrying out and carrying through the meetings of the Fuehrer and also of other party speakers in Saxony and Thuringia with these squadrons.

In 1926 the SA was again permitted to exist, and for a few years the SS withdrew more into the background.

In the year 1929, eight years ago, I was ordered by the Fuehrer to take over the leadership of all SS units in the entire Reich, then totaling 280 men, and to change them according to the order, into a reliable elite organization of the Party.

I decided to tackle this problem—which I should like to discuss here to some extent—because I was a National Socialist, of course. I want to tell you also how this is to be interpreted. I am a strong believer in the doctrine that, in the end, only good blood can achieve the greatest, enduring things in the world. Strengthened by this conviction of mine, I began to work on this problem.

Accordingly only good blood, blood which history has proved to be leading and creative and the foundation of every

state and all military activities, only Nordic blood, can be considered. I said to myself that should I succeed to select from the German people for this organization as many people as possible a majority of whom possess this desired blood, to teach them military discipline and, in time, the understanding of the value of blood and the entire ideology which results from it, then it will be possible actually to create such an elite organization which would successfully hold its own in all cases of emergency.

This form of selection of good blood has been very often theoretically recognized. Many books have been written on it from Chamberlain to Guenther of the years 1926/27, and many others which I shall not mention here. Now came the difficult question of the method of selecting these people. There are two kinds of selection procedures: first, the most severe selection procedure brought about by war, the struggle for life and death. In this procedure the value of blood is shown through achievement. In the year 1929, a great number of former soldiers still existed whose worth could be determined by their record during the war. Wars however, are exceptional circumstances, and a way had to be found to make selections in peace time as well, when courage could not be given this test. Thus, I could only draw conclusions from the appearance of the people in question. Of course, many will argue immediately: that is all very well but if you judge by height, blond hair and blue eyes and the dimensions of the skull then the matter is very problematical. That is known to me very well, too. One could never judge by that alone.

I then went on to require a certain height. I did not accept people under 1,7 m—and here I ask you to understand the exact meaning to my words—because I know that people who have reached a certain height must possess the desired blood to some degree. Of course it is impossible to be too discriminating here as it cannot be said that people who are smaller should not possess the same blood. That is natural but by choosing from this pool of people having the desired height there exists a greater probability of obtaining satisfactory results.

But we went further. It was not enough to go by height, but we began to obtain photographs at that time. That amounted to a hundred to two hundred people annually who were eligible for admission. I have personally seen each photograph and asked myself: Does the face of this man have distinct traits of foreign blood, excessive cheek bones, or as is the common way of asking: Does this one appear Mongolic or that one Slavic? Slavic, incidentally, is a faulty expression. It is merely a popular expression.

Why have I done all this? I should like to call to your attention here the types of soldier councils of the years 1918 and 1919. Everyone of you who was an officer at that time knows a number of such people by personal experience. You will have to admit that on the whole they were people whose appearance affected our German eye as rather peculiar, whose features looked strange and who had some foreign blood in them. They were the type of people who could be disciplined, who are orderly in normal times, who would even be brave, bold and daring in time of war but who, because of their blood, would fail to pass the final great test of character and nerves.

Since I knew these things I said to myself: I shall not accept people whom I expect to quit, to complain, to become disloyal and traitors, to have bad soldierly manners and the like at the moment of political tests, because of the nature of the composition of their blood. We had to be all the more careful because we had only voluntary discipline in the SS during the years of struggle, and therefore we were unable to compel a man to do something.

It was only possible to deprive the man of his arm band for a period of three or four weeks or impose on him penal drills, and that only if he voluntarily accepted the punishment. If he was unwilling he could always say: "I resign, I don't like it any longer." We therefore have followed the above-mentioned principle of selection and been able to remove the principal causes of defect.

With this outward screening however, no final selection had been attained, since it was always the performance of the person during the following months and years which was of importance. It was my point of view that we should always require difficult tasks and more than any other organization. Valuable personnel is never trained by means of easy service and conveniences, but by difficulties and added burdens. We therefore began by exacting from our men higher dues in spite of the widespread poverty of the times. At a time when no uniforms were issued to party organizations, we asked our people to acquire black trousers and boots from their own means—a tremendous expense for an unemployed person who had to pay the 40 marks of his own purse. If he failed to do so and declared: I cannot do that, then we explained to him: please go away, for you somehow failed to understand the matter for you do not possess the instinctive willingness to a sacrifice of your own accord, for we cannot use you. Thus we gradually arrived at our intended and desired picture.

This briefly-mentioned theory of selection of people may be criticised, today after eight years I believe I can say with

sincerity that its practical application has justified its existence, and that it has really been possible to effect a certain selection of people in the SS already during the time of fighting.

I shall skip the next few periods and shall now occupy myself with the year 1933. This year was for the SS the hardest trial; for it was a time when all organizations flourished, a time of great assault and tidal waves of those who desired membership in the party and its organizations. A very difficult question confronted us at that time. It was a question of deciding whether to close the party and its organizations to further membership and thus remaining pure in quality but small in volume, or of opening them to further membership to increase their volume. This resulted in a dangerous situation, as was shown as a number of people poured in who were not entirely loyal and idealists, so that to a certain degree it became a menace of numbers, of the masses.

The SS too was endangered by this menace. Therefore I closed it in April 1933 while some of the other organizations still accepted as great a number of people as possible. This way I had the SS again under my control in April and said: We shall accept no more people. From the end of 1933 to the end of 1935 we expelled all those of the newly accepted members who proved unsuitable. In these years I have expelled approximately 60,000 men. Today the strength of the SS consists of approximately 210,000 men. This has been of great benefit to the SS and all of its units as its quality has greatly improved whereas it would have suffered considerably through quantity.

I shall close the question of selection by stating that today we accept young men of 18 years of age. We know them already from the Hitler Youth, have studied them already a few years, so that we are sure to get only the best. With 18 years they come to us as candidates.

They are extremely thoroughly examined and checked. Of 100 men we can use on the average 10 or 15, no more. We ask for the political reputation record of his parents, brothers and sisters, the record of his ancestry as far back as 1750 and naturally the physical examination and his records of the Hitler youth. Further we ask for a record of hereditary health showing that no hereditary diseases exist in his parents and in his family. Last, but perhaps most important, is a certification of the race commission. This examining commission is composed of SS leaders, anthropologists and physicians.

The behavior of this young man in front of this commission is now what is decisive: Not only the way he stands at attention but also his manly disciplined bearing, the ease and composition with which he answers the questions posed to

him in the course of conversation, his gait, his hands, in fact all that which we have come to regard in the course of our eight years of experience as ideal. This is the way we determine whether to accept the man or not. The first years the company has been very unhappy in many cases. It asked: Why is this man refused us? We have just located in this or that village a man who has in every respect an orderly appearance and now when this man confronts the race commission he is being refused at a time when it is so difficult to obtain people. In such cases we have always remained and still remain severe and that is the right thing. That is the proper way to conduct a veritable selection.

I now come to the organization of the SS. It is necessary to distinguish among the following organizations of the SS. First the General SS which consists of about 190,000 men. This General SS is entirely civilian in nature except for the higher officer corps, which performs its duties on the higher levels, that is from Sturmbannfuhrer up. I am very proud of the fact that only 0.4 percent of the General SS are unemployed. These 0.4 percent come from Upper Silesia where it is really very difficult to obtain work. We have almost only professionals, and it is my opinion that it should be so. For a really capable man is of little value to me if he only excels in arts, he must also be otherwise honest and of good character, and accomplish something in his field, in his profession. A man who changes his position three times without satisfactory reason is expelled as we have no further interest in him. People who stand around idle are of no use to us. The General SS, therefore, is entirely professional in its nature and character and performs its duties nights and Sundays just like in war time. Besides the General SS there is the Verfuegungstruppe; also the Death Head Units, the SD, and the race and population system. I shall now discuss individual units in some detail.

* * * * *

A great many SS men live very far apart. Of course, it would be much more convenient to set up a Sturmabanne in some town and in this way have all the people always together. That would facilitate considerably the exercises which always take place in the evening hours, instruction and sport, and require much less effort. However, that would inevitably result in a decreasing quality because not enough people possessing the desired qualities could be obtained in a town of approximately 20 to 25 thousand inhabitants. We have, therefore, extended our organization considerably and have many platoons in the country side. These platoons are

then divided up between the villages, so that in a typical village only the two best young men are SS members. We have meetings over the week ends when the farmer is not too occupied, or one entire afternoon in the winter, while in summer we only have monthly roll calls. That is the outline of the organization of the General SS.

The age groups in the SS are as follows: With 18 years the young man enters the SS. He is first an applicant, after three months he takes the oath on the Fuehrer and thus becomes a candidate [Anwaerter]. As a candidate during the first year he takes examinations for his SA sport insignia and his bronze sport insignia. At the age of 19 or 19 1/2, according to the time of his acceptance, he is conscripted for the labor service and subsequently for the Wehrmacht. After two more years he comes back from the Wehrmacht unless he remains there as a prospective noncommissioned officer or reenlists. If he returns to us he is still candidate. In these weeks he is especially thoroughly instructed in ideology. The first year is for him a period of elementary ideological indoctrination. In these weeks following his return from the Wehrmacht he receives special instruction about the marriage law and all other laws pertaining to the family, and the honor laws. On the 9th of November, following his return from the Wehrmacht, he becomes an SS man in the true sense. The Reichsfuehrer of the SS is just as much an SS man in the sense of the SS organization as the common man at the front. On this 9th of November he is being awarded the dagger, and at this occasion he promises to abide by the marriage law and the disciplinary laws of the SS, since the family is also subject to these laws. From this day on he has the right and the duty to defend his honor with a weapon as laid down by the honor laws of the SS. The applicants and candidates do not yet have this right. The SS man remains in the so called active general SS until his 35th year. From his 35th to his 45th year he is in the SS reserve, and after his 45th year in the Stammabteilung of the SS, identified by the grey color patch. Between the ages of 21 and 35 the SS man has to perform a great many duties, especially up to his 25th year. In these first four years there are a lot of marches, tournaments, i.e., sports of all kinds which take the form of contests that take place each year between Easter and Summer solstice so that we are able to select the best men of every company by these demonstrations of physical ability. Every SS man is being asked to pass some kind of annual test, until his 50th year. And the reason for that? These men are for the most part professionals. In the SS perhaps anywhere from 1/2 to 3/5 live in cities. The workman in the cities is often engaged in occupations requiring him to stand or the intellectual worker to sit for a

considerable amount of time. To that is added the misery of big cities which in my opinion is also a very serious military question.

People of the 20th Century no longer walk but travel in the subway, railroad or cars. Nobody is accustomed to marching in all the years of his civilian life. Or take those who hold leading positions as an example, all the professional State and Ministry leaders. These people are condemned to sit. Everybody is so pressed for time he has to take an automobile because there is no other way to keep up with the rush. The result of this is that people grow pale and fat and in some cases phlegmatic which is never good for the State. If we desire to remain young we have to be sportsmen. But all that would remain on paper if I did not hold annual checkups or arouse to a certain degree the ambition of the men so that they really become sportsmen and pass their annual tests. * * *

The performance insignia of the SA have the following meaning: every form of sport which requires the use of arms is being executed with both arms. Shot put is done with both arms; the same holds true for stone putting. Pistols and rifles are fired left and right. That appears terribly awkward and unaccustomed in the beginning, but it is an excellent form of exercise and very successful. Hand grenades and clubs are hurled left and right. In the beginning no record performances can be expected of course of people past their twentieth year, since the left arm or in the case of a left-handed person the right arm, are completely untrained, so that at a distance of 10 m the target is often missed by three or five meters. It will be, however, a very good development and application of all physical strength if we require such performances of youths in the ages of 13 to 14 from the very beginning. I believe that in this way we shall be very successful. Every year the performance insignia differ. Of course, I do not expect the conditions and time from a 40 year old for a 100 meter race as I do expect them from a man of 21, but I do require of the man of 40 greater endurance in marching than I do of the man of 21. I expect a 30 year old man to shoot calmer and better than a 19 or 20 year old with few examples. They are also graded to the extent that a wounded war veteran who e.g. cannot swim need not, for that reason, refuse every sport. But I want to help him by grading the conditions so that one who lost an arm can perform the exercise with the other arm. Such are the sport activities of the SS from the ages of 18 to 50. Aside from the sport activity, those between the ages of 21 and 35 receive complete training in street patrolling and barricading for cases of internal security.

Hand in hand with physical exercise is mental and ideological training. Weekly periods of instruction are held during which pages from Hitler's "Mein Kampf" are read. The older a person, the more steadfast must he be in his ideology and the more training must he get in ideology.

* * * * *

I now come to the Death Head Units. The employment and obligations of the *Verfuegungstruppe I* shall discuss later in connection with the police. The Death Head Units originated from the guard units of the concentration camps. In connection with these concentration camps, I should like to give a few data. We have in Germany today the following concentration camps which, in my opinion, should not decrease but increase in number for certain reasons:

(1) Dachau near Munich; (2) Sachsenhausen near Berlin, which is the former camp Esterwege in Emsland. I have dissolved this camp in Emsland upon the suggestion of Reich Labor Leader, Hierl, and the judiciary, who declared it was wrong to tell one person that the service in the swamps to make land arable is an honor, and another, by sending him there as a prisoner: "I'll teach you people what it means to get sent to the swamps." This indeed is illogical, and after half or three quarters of a year, I dissolved the camp in Esterwege and transferred it to Sachsenhausen near Oranienburg. Then there is a camp in Lichtenburg near Torgau, one in Sachsenburg near Chemnitz and besides a few smaller ones. The number of prisoners is about 8000. I shall explain to you why we must have so many and still more. We once had a very efficiently organized German Communist Party [KPD]. This KPD has been crushed in the year 1933. A part of the functionaries went to foreign countries. Another part was comprised in the very high number of protective custody prisoners in the year 1933. Because of my extensive knowledge of Bolshevism, I have always opposed the release of these people from the camps. It must be clear to us that the great mass of workmen are absolutely susceptible to National Socialism and the contemporary form of state as long as their way of thought has not been changed by the specifically indoctrinated, trained and financially backed functionaries. * * *

It would be extremely instructive for everyone—some members of the Wehrmacht were already able to do so—to inspect such a concentration camp. Once they have seen it, they are convinced of the fact that no one had been sent there unjustly; that it is the offal of criminals and freaks. No better demonstration of the laws of inheritance and race, as set

forth by Doctor Guett, exists than such a concentration camp. There you can find people with hydrocephalus, people who are cross-eyed, deformed, half-Jewish, and a number of racially inferior products. All that is assembled there. Of course we distinguish between those inmates who are only there for a few months for the purpose of education, and those who are to stay for a very long time. On the whole, education consists of discipline, never of any kind of instruction on an ideological basis, for the prisoners have, for the most part, slave-like souls; and only very few people of real character can be found there. They would pretend to do all that would be asked of them, repeat all that is said in the “Voelkischer Beobachter” but in reality, stay the same. The discipline thus preens order. The order begins with these people living in clean barracks. Such a thing can really only be accomplished by us Germans, hardly another nation would be as humane as we are. The laundry is frequently changed. The people are taught to wash themselves twice daily, and the use of a toothbrush with which most of them have been unfamiliar. * * *

The concentration camps are guarded by these Death Head Units. It is impossible to use exclusively married people for guard duty as has been suggested once, for no state can afford to do so. It is further necessary to keep the number of such guards for concentration camps—there are 3,500 men in Germany—at a relatively high level, for no form of service is as exacting and strenuous for troops as the guarding of crooks and criminals. * * *

In case of war, it must become clear to us that a considerable number of unreliable persons will have to be put here if we are to assure ourselves of the absence of highly disagreeable developments in case of war.

The prisoner guards were formerly members of the general SS. We gradually collected them into the so-called Death Head Units. They are not arranged in companies, but in centuries (groups of 100) and have naturally also machine guns. In such camps there are two or three control towers, manned day and night with fully loaded machine guns, so that any attempt of a general uprising—a possibility for which we must always be prepared—can be immediately suppressed. The entire camp can be strafed from three towers.

* * * *

I now come to the Security Service [SD]; it is the great ideological intelligence service of the party and, in the long

run, also that of the state. During the time of struggle for power it was only the intelligence service of the SS. At that time we had, for quite natural reasons, an intelligence service with the regiments, battalions and companies. We had to know what was going on on the opponent’s side, whether the Communists intended to hold a meeting today or not, whether our people were to be suddenly attacked or not and similar things. I separated this service already in 1941 from the troops, from the units of the general SS, because I considered it to be wrong. For one thing, the secrecy is endangered, then the individual men or even the companies are too likely to discuss every day problems.

That was indeed the principle of the SS from the beginning. Every day problems do not interest us; every leader appointed by the Fuehrer will be backed by us, every leader dismissed by the Fuehrer will be removed by us, if necessary by force, because only the command of the Fuehrer counts. Besides that we are only interested in ideological questions of importance for decades or centuries, so that the man is really above the concern of every day and knows that he is working for a great task, which occurs but once in 2000 years.

* * * *

. . . The spheres which it handles are above all Communism, Judaism, Freemasonry, ultra mundane activities, the activity of political religion, and reaction. . . . The security service is only interested in the great ideological problems.

* * * *

What economic influence do the Jews exercise—again considered on a large scale—to suffocate business, to commit sabotage and to transfer foreign currency illegally? These are things which are being studied there scientifically and—in this case the word really fits—by a general staff, which may sometimes last for years, tasks which in many or in most cases are only in the beginning stage.

After the Security Service follows the last pillar, the race-and settlement organization. We thus have the general SS, which represents the majority of the SS, of the order, the Verfuengungs troops with a certain task in the country for the protection of the interior, the Death Head Units, also for the protection of the interior, the Security Service, the intelligence service of the party and the state, and finally the race-and settlement organization whose task of ideological

training is of a positive nature, as contracted with the Security Service which has the negative task to seek information about the opponent. In this race-and settlement office the marriage applications are being handled. In the last 4 or 5 years we have the order concerning marriages: No SS men can get married without the approval of the SS Reich leader. A physical examination of the bride and guarantees for the bride's ideological and human character are required. We are not interested whether the woman has a fortune or not. We request only a statement whether or not she has defects. We prefer it if the rich girls take along only what they have earned themselves, or their dowry. In addition, the genealogical table up to 1750 is required, the hereditary physical report of both, and several police and other reports. This results in tremendous work, especially now that people are getting married in an unusually great number; because it is our concern, that our men get married. We desire that they get married at 26 years, if possible, so that there will be really young marriages which are also able to have children. * * *

* * * *

We must clearly recognize that an opponent in war is an opponent not only in a military but also in an ideological sense. When I speak here of opponents, I obviously mean our natural opponent, international Bolshevism, under Jewish-Masonic leadership. This Bolshevism, of course, has its supreme citadel in Russia. But this does not mean that there is danger of Bolshevist attack from Russia only. One must always reckon with this danger from wherever this Jewish Bolshevism has gained decisive influence for itself. The states or people under Jewish-Masonic-Bolshevist leadership, or at least strong influence, will of necessity be unfriendly toward Germany and will constitute a danger.

Thus we must constantly ask ourselves, "Who is, or would be an opponent in case of war? Who is an ideological opponent, that is, who is under Jewish-Masonic-Bolshevist influence"? We must clearly realize, that Bolshevism is the organization of the subhumans, it is the absolute foundation of Jewish sovereignty, it is the exact contrary of all that is dear to an Aryan people. It is a diabolical teaching, for it appeals to the meanest and lowest instincts of mankind and makes a religion of this. Do not be deceived: Bolshevism, with its Lenin entombed in the Kremlin, will take only a few decades to become the diabolical religion of destruction, a religion native to Asia for the destruction of the whole world.

(Furthermore, remember that this Bolshevism is working according to plan for the Bolshevization of other peoples, and the destruction is aimed at the white race. One of the first institutions founded under Jewish leadership, as early as 1918, was an Asiatic university as I shall call it. It has a kind of department for each Asiatic population, whether numerous or not. The functionaries for these populations are instructed not only in their language, but also as to the customs, as to the religious and class quarrels, and the economic circumstances, etc. They are instructed whether these people are mostly rich or poor, whether the poorer class is particularly oppressed, etc. All of this is studied down to the smallest sects. The people who have finished their education there, then go out in a constant stream to all of these people and exploit their wishes and longings as their religious differences and their fanaticism, taking advantage of social misery, to draw them into a whirlpool and thus gradually convince them that the only ones who can really help them are the people in Moscow.

This general movement is also directed against the white race, and is today directed primarily against resurrected Germany, which was generally considered to have been ruined, because of having been subdued. If we wish to be immune to the poison of destruction in our people, our lives must again be founded on social well-being, order and cleanliness. We are in the process of creating both. The first four years have passed; unemployment has almost vanished, much has been accomplished, much more remains to be done by us. But the most important thing is the thorough ideological permeation of all our people with the profound realization that our people, a minority of 70 million in the heart of Europe, could stand only because we are qualitatively more valuable than the others.

And this brings me back to what I said about the race question at the beginning.

We are more valuable than the others who do now and always will surpass us in numbers. We are more valuable because our blood enables us to invent more than others, to lead our people better than the others; because it enables us to have better soldiers, better statesmen, higher culture, better characters. We also have better quality, speaking of your profession, because the German soldier is more devoted to duty, more decent, and more intelligent than the soldiers of other countries. And we shall maintain this quality as long as we keep our blood and people healthy, so long as this people recognizes and obeys the ancient laws for preservation of a people which National Socialism, thanks to Adolf Hitler,

restored to it. We shall remain healthy and immune as long as we do not slide back into democracy, into a hereditary or legitimate imperialism which did not develop from the people. Let us realize clearly that we shall weather the next decades only if we are a people that has a profound conviction of itself, believes in its own strength, and proves this strength.

I spoke of the ideological permeation of the whole people in case of war. If this war should come sooner than any of us believe or wish, that is, if war will come at all, we must clearly realize that there will always be a residue among the German people who will form a nucleus for the Comintern. The Comintern have an easy time of it, for they have a political agitator and at the same time a military spy who sells. Every communist is also a military spy who reveals any military and industrial secret out of loyalty to his imaginary fatherland, Moscow, the native land of the proletarians. Because of his conviction, he engages in political agitation and sedition in exactly the same way in order to start the revolution. The sooner war would come, the greater would be the danger. The later it comes, the more generations of youth have grown up, year after year, the less is the danger. The danger would arise again only if the German people would deviate from today's path. In any case, we must prepare for this danger, for this internal theater of war, and always realize clearly that any war brought about by neglect of this internal theater of war would lead to damage.

* * * *

Let us all clearly realize, the next decades do not signify any foreign political argument which Germany either can or cannot overcome, but they signify a fight of extermination of the abovementioned subhuman opponents in the whole world who fight Germany, as the nuclear people of the Northern race, Germany as nucleus of the German people, Germany as bearer of the culture of mankind; they signify the existence or nonexistence of the white race of which we are the leading people. We have, of course, one conviction: we are lucky enough to be alive just at the time when once in 2,000 years an Adolf Hitler has been born, and we are convinced that we shall survive every danger in both good and bad times because we all hold together and because each one approaches his work with his conviction.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 616–634, Doc. 1992-A-PS.

113. EXCERPT FROM A SPEECH BY HITLER TO THE REICHSTAG, JANUARY 30, 1939

On the sixth anniversary of his rise to power, Adolf Hitler delivered a speech to the Reichstag that ran some 64 type-set single-spaced pages. It was primarily concerned with the economic, political, military, and diplomatic recovery of Germany in the aftermath of the devastating Versailles Treaty of 1919 after World War I. Although there were numerous instances of Hitler's virulent antisemitism, it is the following excerpt from his speech that is most often noted. It reflects his worldview (Weltanschauung) about the role "international Jewish financiers" play in global actions. More specifically, it is a warning that if there should be a new world war, it will result in "the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe." The speech was given just seven months before Hitler would begin World War II by invading Poland on September 1, 1939.

VOELKISCHER BEOBACHTER, Munich Edition,
1 February 1939
Hitler speech to Reichstag of 30 January 1939

Once more I will assume the part of a prophet:

If the international Jewish financiers within and without Europe, succeeded in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will be not the Bolshevisation of the world and thereby the victory of Jewry—but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe. * * *

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, p. 367, Doc. 2663-PS.

114. COMMISSAR ORDER, JUNE 6, 1941

This high-level order, known as the Commissar's Order (Kommissarbefehl)—to be read only by commanders in chief of armies or of air commands—effectively gave license to German soldiers who would be invading the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 (as part of Operation Barbarossa), to summarily shoot and kill all "political commissars" that they encounter. Issued by the German High Command, the rationale given for this order—which the Nazis knew was in contravention of international law—was that in the upcoming fight against

Bolshevism, all captured German soldiers would no doubt be treated in a "cruel, inhuman" manner that would be "dictated by hate." The one exception—and this was only temporary—were "political commissars who are not guilty of any hostile act or are not suspected of such." While the order specifically speaks of "political commissars," it should be remembered that communists and Bolsheviks had long been tied by Hitler to the Jews (e.g., the term "Judeo-Bolsheviks"). In response to opposition to the order by some military commanders, the order was rescinded on March 6, 1942, not, however, before thousands of so-called political commissars were killed, and not before setting the tone for Germany's treatment of communists and Jews going forward.

High Command of the Armed Forces
WFSt. (Armed Forces Operational
Staff) Department L (IV Q) Fuehrer Headquarters,
6 June 1941

("Intelligence")
No 44822/41 Top Secret for general
officers only

In addition to the Fuehrer's decree of 14 May regarding Military jurisdiction in the "Barbarossa" zone (Supreme Command of the Armed Forces/Armed Forces Operational Staff/Department L (IV Q) (Intelligence) No 44718/41, (Top Secret, for General Officers only), the enclosed "directives for the treatment of political commissars" are being transmitted herewith:

You are requested to limit the distribution to Commanders in Chief of Armies or of Air Commands, respectively, and to inform the Junior commanders by word of mouth.

The Chief of the Supreme Command
Of the Armed Forces
By Order.

Signed: Warlimont

Enclosure to Supreme Command of the Armed Forces/
Department L IV Q (Intelligence)
No. 44822/41 Top Secret
For General Officers only.

Directives for the treatment of political commissars.

When fighting Bolshevism one can not count on the enemy acting in accordance with the principles of humanity or

International Law. In particular it must be expected that the treatment of our prisoners by the political commissars of all types who are the true pillars of resistance, will be cruel, inhuman and dictated by hate.

The troops must realize:

- 1.) That in this fight it is wrong to trust such elements with clemency and consideration in accordance with International Law. They are a menace to our own safety and to the rapid pacification of the conquered territories.
- 2.) That the originators of the asiatic-barbaric methods of fighting are the political commissars. They must be dealt with promptly and with the utmost severity.

Therefore, if taken while fighting or offering resistance they must, on principle, be shot immediately.

For the rest, the following instructions will apply:

I. Theatre of Operations.

- 1) Political commissars who oppose our troops will be dealt with in accordance with the "decree concerning jurisdiction in the "Barbarossa" area". This applies to commissars of any type and position, even if they are only suspected of resistance, sabotage or instigation thereto.
Reference is made to "Directives on the behavior of troops in Russia."
- 2) Political commissars in their capacity of officials attached to the enemy troops are recognizable by their special insignia—red star with an inwoven golden hammer and sickle on the sleeves—[. . .]. They are to be segregated at once, i.e. while still on the battlefield, from the prisoners of war. This is necessary in order to deprive them of any possibility of influencing the captured soldiers. Those commissars will not be recognized as soldiers; the protection granted to prisoners of war in accordance with International Law will not apply to them. After having been segregated they are to be dealt with.
- 3) Political commissars who are not guilty of any hostile act or are not suspected of such will remain unmolested for the time being. Only in the course of a deeper penetration into the country will it be possible to decide whether they are, or should be handed over to the "Sonderkommandos". The latter should preferably scrutinize these cases themselves.

1230 Goering's Order to Heydrich to Make Preparations for a General Solution of the Jewish Problem

As a matter of principle, when deliberating the question of "guilty or not guilty", the personal impression received of the commissar's outlook and attitude should be considered of greater importance than the facts of the case which may not be decisive.

- 4) In cases 1) and 2) a brief report (report form) on the incident is to be submitted:
 - a) to the Division (Ic) (Field Intelligence Officer) by troops subordinated to a Division.
 - b) to the Corps Command or other respective Commands, as follows (Ic) by troops directly subordinated to a Corps Command, an Army High Command or the Command or an Army group, or Armored Group.
- 5) None of the above mentioned measures must delay the progress of operations. Combat troops should therefore refrain from systematic rounding-up and cleansing measures.

II. In the Rear Areas.

Commissars arrested in the rear area on account of doubtful behavior are to be handed over to the "Einsatzgruppe" or the "Einsatzkommandos" of the SS Security Service (SD) respectively.

III. Restriction with regard to Court Martials and Summary Courts.

The Court Martials and Summary Courts of regimental and other commanders must not be entrusted with the carrying out of the measures as under I and II.

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Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Nuremberg Trial, National Archives Record Group 238m, Entry 175, Box 27, NOKW-1076.

115. GOERING'S ORDER TO HEYDRICH TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR A GENERAL SOLUTION OF THE JEWISH PROBLEM, JULY 31, 1941

In this letter by Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring (1893–1946) to the chief of the Security Police, Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942), the latter is tasked with "bringing about a complete solution of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe." This letter was cited by Heydrich as proof of his authority when, on January 20, 1942, he held a conference at a mansion in Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin, to discuss the implementation of Hitler's order to exterminate the Jews.

LETTER FROM GOERING TO HEYDRICH CONCERNING SOLUTION OF JEWISH QUESTION, 31 JULY 1941

The Reich Marshal of the Greater German Reich
Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan
Chairman of the Ministerial Council for National Defense
Berlin, 31 July 1941
To The Chief of the Security Police and the Security Service
SS Gruppenfuehrer Heydrich

Complementing the task that was assigned to you on 24 January 1939, which dealt with arriving at—through furtherance of emigration and evacuation—a solution of the Jewish problem, as advantageously as possible, I hereby

charge you with making all necessary preparations in regard to organizational and financial matters for bringing about a complete solution of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe.

Whenever other governmental agencies are involved, these are to cooperate with you.

I charge you furthermore to send me, before long, an over-all plan concerning the organizational, factual, and material measures necessary for the accomplishment of the desired solution of the Jewish question.

[Signed] GOERING

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. IV, pp. 132–133, Doc. 710-PS.

116. OPERATION BARBAROSSA: ORDER REGARDING CONDUCT IN THE EASTERN TERRITORIES, OCTOBER 10, 1941

Sometimes referred to as the "Severity Order" or the "Reichenau Order," this document represents one of the clearest statements of German intent in Russia. Issued by Field Marshal Walther von Reichenau, in command of the German Sixth Army that went into Russia as part of Operation Barbarossa, it is nothing less than a reprimand for any acts of kindness that may have been offered by German soldiers to Russians. It demands absolute commitment to the "complete annihilation of the false bolshevistic doctrine of the Soviet State and its armed forces," as well as "pitiless extermination of foreign treachery and cruelty." To ensure this, German soldiers must fully understand the "necessity of a severe but just revenge on subhuman Jewry."

Appendix to 12 Inf.Div. I.c/Adj. No. 607/41 Secret date 17.11. 1941.

Copy of a Copy
High Command of the Army Gen. Staff of the Army/Quarter Master

General Branch Admin.
(Qu.4/B) II. 7498/41 g.

H.Qu. Nigh Command of the Army
28.10.41.

SECRET!

Subject: Conduct of Troops in the Eastern Territories

By order of the C.in.C. Army, an enclosed copy of an order by GOC 6th Army on the conduct of the Troops in eastern territories which has been described by the Fuehrer as excellent, is being forwarded with the request to issue corresponding instructions on the same lines if this has not already been done.

By order.

(Signed) Wagner

SECRET!

Army H.Q., 10.10.41

Army Command 6., Sec. Ia-A.7

Subject: Conduct of Troops in Eastern Territories.

Regarding the conduct of troops towards the bolshevistic system, vague ideas are still prevalent in many cases. The most essential aim of war against the Jewish-bolshevistic system is a complete destruction of their means of power and the elimination of asiatic influence from the European culture. In this connection the troops are facing tasks which exceed the onesided routine of soldiering. The soldier in the eastern territories is not merely a fighter according to the rules of the art of war but also a bearer of ruthless national ideology and the avenger of bestialities which have been inflicted upon German and racially related nations.

Therefore the soldier must have full understanding for the necessity of a severe but just revenge on subhuman Jewry. The Army has to aim at another purpose, i.e., the annihilation of revolts in hinterland which, as experience proves, have always been caused by Jews.

The combating of the enemy behind the front line is still not being taken seriously enough. Treacherous, cruel partisans and unnatural women are still being made prisoners of war and guerilla fighters dressed partly in uniforms or plain clothes and vagabonds are still being treated as proper soldiers, and sent to prisoner of war camps. In fact, captured Russian officers talk even mockingly about Soviet agents moving openly about the roads and very often eating at German field kitchens. Such an attitude of the troops can only be explained by complete thoughtlessness, so it is now high time for the commanders to clarify the meaning of the present struggle.

The feeding of the natives and of prisoners of war who are not working for the Armed Forces from Army kitchens is an

equally misunderstood humanitarian act as is the giving of cigarettes and bread. Things which the people at home can spare under great sacrifices and things which are being brought by the Command to the front under great difficulties, should not be given to the enemy by the soldier not even if they originate from booty. It is an important part of our supply.

When retreating the Soviets have often set buildings on fire. The troops should be interested in extinguishing of fires only as far as it is necessary to secure sufficient numbers of billets. Otherwise the disappearance of symbols of the former bolshevistic rule even in the form of buildings is part of the struggle of destruction. Neither historic nor artistic considerations are of any importance in the eastern territories. The command issues the necessary directives for the securing of raw materials and plants, essential for war economy. The complete disarming of the civil population in the rear of the fighting troops is imperative considering the long and vulnerable lines of communications. Where possible, captured weapons and ammunition should be stored and guarded. Should this be impossible because of the situation of the battle so the weapons and ammunition will be rendered useless. If isolated partisans are found using firearms in the rear of the army drastic measures are to be taken. These measures will be extended to that part of the male population who were in a position to hinder or report the attacks. The indifference of numerous apparently anti-soviet elements which originates from a "wait and see" attitude, must give way to a clear decision for active collaboration. If not, no one can complain about being judged and treated a member of the Soviet System.

The fear of the German counter-measures must be stronger than the threats of the wandering bolshevistic remnants. Being far from all political considerations of the future the soldier has to fulfill two tasks:

1. *Complete annihilation of the false bolshevistic doctrine of the Soviet State and its armed forces.*
2. *The pitiless extermination of foreign treachery and cruelty and thus the protection of the lives of military personnel in Russia.*

This is the only way to fulfil our historic task to liberate the German people once forever from the Asiatic-Jewish danger.

Commander in Chief
(Signed) von Reichenau
Field Marshal.

Certified Copy:
[signature illegible]
Captain.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VIII, pp. 585-587, Doc. UK-81.

117. EINSATZGRUPPEN: EXTRACTS FROM THE OPERATIONAL SITUATION REPORT, U.S.S.R. NO. 94, SEPTEMBER 25, 1941

The ordinary tone of this report of the killing activities of several of the Einsatzgruppen (four mobile killing units of about 750 men each that followed the German armies into Russia with orders to kill all communists and Jews) reflects the Einsatzgruppen leaders' total absence of concern for the hundreds of thousands of innocent Jewish men, women, and children they have killed. Noting that the total number of kills per Einsatzkommando (a subunit of an Einsatzgruppe) differ only because of the number of Jews found in a particular location, this report tells of various actions, including the establishment of ghettos to confine Jews until they have been exterminated. Difficulties are noted in achieving the correct balance between the goal of extermination of the Jews and the need to avoid eliminating Jews whose special skills are needed to ensure that productivity important to the German military is not interrupted.

EXTRACTS FROM OPERATIONAL SITUATION REPORT U.S.S.R. NO 94, 25 SEPTEMBER 1941, CONCERNING ACTIVITIES OF THE EINSATZGRUPPEN

The Chief of the Security Police and Security Service (SD)
IVA 1/Journal No. 1/B41, Top Secret

Berlin, 25 September 1941
48 copies-36th copy

Operational Situation Report U.S.S.R., No. 94

Top Secret

I. *Political survey*

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II. *Reports from the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos*
Einsatzgruppe A.
Location Kikerino

I. Partisans

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Within the area of the civil administration, Einsatzkommandos 2 and 3 found at various places an intensified propaganda activity of the Jewish population for the Bolshevist cause. Wherever such propaganda activity appears the most severe measures are being taken and the places entirely purged of Jews as far as possible. This Jewish propaganda activity having been particularly intensive in Lithuania, the number of persons liquidated within the area of Einsatzkommando 3 has increased to approximately 75,000.

For specific tasks special Kommandos had repeatedly to be sent into the rural districts and were assigned to certain places for several days. Thus, for example, one Kommando had to be sent to Pljussa, since reports about large-scale looting had been received from there. Forty-seven persons were arrested and questioned. Seven persons were shot for looting, two more were publicly escorted through the streets of the place, while the inhabitants were told that these persons had been looting food to the detriment of the population. Another Sonderkommando had to be sent to Mugotova where 87 insane persons had armed themselves and roamed the countryside looting. It could be ascertained that these insane had been incited by 11 Communists, part of whom presumably belonged to a partisan group. The 11 agitators, among them 6 Jews, and the insane were liquidated.

In the vicinity of the headquarters of group staff Pesje, Ikerine and Neshne, the whole male population was regularly screened immediately on arrival of the units, resulting repeatedly in the arrest of partisans, Jewish and Communist agitators, looters, etc. Since the locations of the Einsatzgruppe are always near the headquarters of the 4th Armored Group, appreciation for this systematic and successful screening of the neighborhood area was repeatedly voiced by the 4th Armored Group.

II. *The Jewish problem in the Eastland Territory*

[*Gebiet Ostland*]

The first actions against the Jews in the Reich Commissariat Eastland, also in the field of the administrative police, were undertaken by the Security Police. After the civil administration had taken over, the Einsatzkommandos transferred all anti-Jewish actions in the administrative police field whether completed or only initiated, to the civil administration agencies. The establishment of ghettos had already been prepared everywhere and is being continued by the

civil administration. Only at Wilno [Vylna] which was taken over by Einsatzgruppe A at a later date, preparations for the confinement in a ghetto of the 60,000 Jews living there had not yet been made. Einsatzkommando 3 has now suggested the establishment of a ghetto and will at the same time initiate the necessary pacification actions against the political activity of the Jews.

At Riga, the so-called Moscow quarter of the town had been provided as a ghetto, even before the civil administration took over and a council of Jewish elders had been nominated. The removal of the Jews into the ghetto is being continued.

The Jews in the cities are being employed by all German agencies as unpaid manpower. Difficulties with such employing agencies are everyday occurrences, if and when the Security Police must take steps against working Jews. Economic agencies have repeatedly even filed applications for exempting Jews from the obligation to wear the Star of David and for authorizing them to patronize public inns. This concerns mostly Jews who are designated as key personnel for certain economic enterprises. Such efforts are of course suppressed by the agencies of the Security Police.

In the old Soviet Russian territory, Jews were found only sporadically, even in the cities. Most of the Jews who had been living there had fled. At present, and since old Soviet Russian territories have been occupied, the Wehrmacht itself usually issues orders for the marking of the Jews. Thus, the commander in chief of the 18th Army has ordered, for example, that Jews must be distinguished by white brassards to be worn on both arms and showing the Star of David.

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IV. *Situation in occupied area of Old Soviet Russia*

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No reports from Einsatzgruppe B.
Einsatzgruppe C.
Location Smolensk.

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II. *Measures taken and observations made by the Security Police*

During the preparation period for the military offensive now under way, the operations of the Einsatzkommandos could be continued intensively and on a broad basis.

In the southern region of the operational area, because of the sparseness of the Jewish population, the main effort had to be directed toward individual investigations and search actions, while particularly in the region of Zhitomir and Berdichev there was an opportunity for actions on a larger scale.

This explains also the difference in the number of executions reported by the individual Kommandos.

Sonderkommando 4a has now surpassed the number of 15,000 executions. Einsatzkommando 5, for the period between 31 August and 6 September 1941, reports the liquidation of 90 political officials, 72 saboteurs and looters, and 161 Jews. Sonderkommando 4b, in the period between 6–12 September 1941, shot 13 political officials and 290 Jews, primarily of the intelligentsia, whereas Einsatzkommando 6, in the period between 1–13 September 1941, executed 60 persons. Group staff was able to liquidate during the last days four political officials and informers of the NKVD, six asocial elements (gypsies) and 55 Jews. The units of the Higher SS and Police Leader during the month of August shot a total of 44,125 persons, mostly Jews.

* * * * *

As already mentioned, the procedure against the Jews is necessarily different in the individual sectors, according to the density of their settlement. Especially in the northern sector of Einsatzgruppe C, a great many Jewish refugees have returned to the villages and, present now a heavy burden in regard to the food situation. The population neither houses nor feeds them. They live partly in caverns, partly in overcrowded old huts. The danger of epidemics has thus increased considerably, so that for that reason alone a thorough cleanup of the respective places became necessary.

The insolence of the Jews has not yet diminished even now. Apart from the fact that, on the occasion of raids, they like to pass themselves off for Russians, Ukrainians, even ethnic Germans, they often are in the possession of passports which, though showing their names correctly, give a false nationality. Concealment of their Jewish descent has been made easier for them by the Russianization of the names which has taken place to an ever-increasing degree during the last years.

At Kirovograd it became known that Jews tried to obtain all the register's office identity papers with a false nationality. Several Jews, on the basis of forged papers, even succeeded in obtaining various posts with the administration where they performed such acts of "re-baptism" in a system of patronage as practiced already previously. The Ukrainian

population, for fear of revenge by the Jews, often does not dare to report this situation to the authorities. The most severe measures are taken here in dealing with such cases.

Difficulties have arisen insofar as Jews are often the only skilled workers in certain trades. Thus, the only harness-makers and the only good tailors at Novo-Ukrainia are Jews. At other places also only Jews can be employed for carpentry and locksmith work. The cause of this shortage of skilled workers is to a large extent to be found in the unlimited compulsory evacuation of skilled Ukrainians by the Soviets. In order not to endanger reconstruction and the repair work also for the benefit of transient troop units, it has become necessary to exclude provisionally especially the older Jewish skilled workers from the executions.

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No reports from Einsatzgruppe D.

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Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. X, pp. 1220–1224, Doc. NO-3146.

118. REPORT ON THE EXECUTION OF JEWS IN BORRISOW, OCTOBER 24, 1941

This is an extensive report on the mass murder of some 8,000 Jews in the city of Borrisow, in Belarus, three months into Germany's invasion of Russia (Operation Barbarossa). It was sent by Oberwachtmeister Soenneken to General Erwin von Lauhausen of the Abwehr, a German intelligence unit. Of particular interest is the belief among the Jews—when they became aware of the pending action—that Hitler could not possibly know of these killings, thinking that if he did he would have ordered them stopped. It is also interesting to learn of the response of the non-Jewish neighbors of the victims. Initially they said of the Jews, "Let them perish; they did us a lot of harm," but when they actually saw the Jews being taken out to large pits and to their death, they seemed incredulous that such a thing could be happening to innocent, hardworking people, and they expressed concern for their own safety after the killing of the Jews was complete. Note that von Lauhausen was part of the resistance and involved in efforts to kill Hitler.

[Report received by General [editor's note: Erwin von] Lahousen in his official capacity as a German intelligence officer.]

Copy

24 October 1941

Report on the execution of Jews in Borrisow.

From Friday 17 October to Monday 20 October I had official business in Borrisow. Upon arrival there on Friday I was informed by the head of the Russian security police there, Ehof, who had been installed in this post some time ago by the SD, that on the night from Sunday to Monday all Jews of Borrisow were to be shot. To my astounded question, that it would be impossible to dispatch 8000 persons into Eternity in the course of a single night in a fairly orderly manner, he replied that it was not the first time that he did this and he would be able to finish the job with his men; he was no longer a layman at this. On this occasion I also learned, that about 1500 Jews were to be spared temporarily, since they were specialists, such as cobblers, tailors, blacksmiths, locksmiths, in other words artisans who were urgently needed for building up the country. The said Ehof at this time presented me with an invitation, signed by him, to the "Celebration of the German Police" which was to take place in a Borrisow restaurant on Sunday 19 October at two o'clock.

I had known Ehof in my Borrisow days. He was at one time made Komm. [Communist?] mayor of Zemin, a town about 25 kilometers from Borrisow, by some army high command. Before the outbreak of the war he was, as a Volga German, employed as a teacher for the German language in the Russian School in Zemin.

Although the shootings of Jews were to be kept secret, they were already known in the Ghetto early on Saturday. I gave my own boots for repair to a Jewish cobbler who lived on the street leading to the airport. There I learned that a delegation was on its way to the mayor, Dr. Stankewitsch, and the Chief of the Russian Security Police, Ehof, in order to obtain a temporary reprieve of these executions so that they might present a petition to the general. However, the cobbler could not tell me which general was meant.

He only told me that the Jews consider it altogether impossible that Adolf Hitler or the general could have given the order to shoot these 6500 Jews. I learned further that the mayor, Dr. Stankewitsch, had promised them to speak to the general about it and that he added that he himself could only say that the conduct of the Jews residing in his official district

had been exemplary in every respect. By "conduct" he meant the order in the Ghetto, the performing of the work imposed on the Jews, the raising of 300,000 Rubles in taxes imposed on them a few weeks ago, the turning in of gold, silver, etc., which they fulfilled completely.

On Saturday I visited the already mentioned "Celebration of the German Police", not so much in order to drink beer or liquor there, but because I know beforehand to what an unworthy extent this celebration would develop, in other words, to look the affair over.

Of the so-called prominent citizens there were present: a commissioner of the SD—a squire [Ordensjunker] Burg Vogelsang—with his wife, a lieutenant of the GFP, the mayor, Dr. Stankewitsch, the Chief of the Russian Security Police, Ehof.

In addition there were present the assistant chief of the Russian Security Police, Kowalewski, a large number of Security Policemen and their wives, fiancées, or girl friends, a number of German non-coms, and men, and a lot of people.

There was a lot of talk and still more drinking. I started a conversation with the above mentioned Russian—Kowalewski—an old policeman of the time of the Czars. He is a very sympathetic, quiet, and discreet man of 62, and he informed me among other things that this celebration was to be ended by 9 o'clock because a "welikoje deld", a big affair, was scheduled for tomorrow. K asked me to go home with him after the celebration because he had the urge to speak his mind. After reprimanding a few members of our Wehrmacht for disorderly conduct and because no one could expect me to witness these disgusting excesses any longer, I left this place at about 5 o'clock in the afternoon and returned about 8 o'clock in order to pick up K and to accompany him to his home. I spent two hours with K in lively conversation, we exchanged reminiscences of Czarist days, of the time of the White Russian battles against Bolshevism, and then we also talked of present conditions. The point of view of K, who is a great admirer of everything German, especially of Adolf Hitler and the German Wehrmacht, coincided wholly with mine; a man who really has his heart in it.

After leaving K, I returned to my quarters and talked to my Russian landlord until bedtime. Here I learned among other things that a few days previously "Buessing Hall" had burned down and the next night "Opel Hall", and in addition another hall in which the kitchen, etc., of a German Wehrmacht unit was stationed. Of course we also talked of the impending shooting of Jews, for this was also known to the civilian population. My hosts said verbatim, and this was

probably the attitude of all non-Jews living in Borrisow on that evening: “Pustj oni pogibajut: oni mnogo plochogo nam nadelali!” In German: “Let them perish; they did us a lot of harm!”

This is what happened on the following morning: The shootings were begun at 3 am. First the men were brought out. They were driven to the place of execution in Russian cars, escorted by men of the Russian Security police of Borrisow who were detailed for this purpose. Because there were not enough of these men, however, reinforcements were brought from the neighboring Russian Security Police offices, such as Zernbin, etc. They were provided with the well-known red and white armband and armed with rifles or automatic pistols. On the Polotzkaja Uliza road leading to the airport I saw these cars, at considerable intervals, loaded with women and children. These cars were guarded by men of the Russian Security Police. On the roof sat among others a Russian policeman with an automatic pistol in readiness. The women and children of all ages in these cars cried and whimpered and screamed for help as soon as they saw a German Wehrmacht member. In this manner one car followed the other during the whole day in the direction of the place of execution, which was located in the woods near the former staff headquarters of the army group “Center”. Besides, since there were apparently not sufficient cars and the time was drawing short, groups of women and children were constantly being herded down the already mentioned road, partly with iron rods. On the periphery of the Ghetto, that is on this same street, groups of Jewish women and children, even babies in their mother’s arms, were standing ready to be picked up. In the distance the noise of rifles could be heard all day, the women and children cried and screamed, cars raced through the streets and the Ghetto and kept bringing new victims—all before the eyes of the civilian population and the German military personnel that happened to come along.

A blockade may have been intended but could not be carried out because the other side of the street as well as the side streets were inhabited by non-Jews. The eyes of the latter expressed either complete apathy or horror, because the scenes which took place in the streets were ghastly! The non-Jews may have believed on the evening preceding the executions that the Jews deserved their fate, but on the following morning their sentiment was: “Who ordered such a thing? How is it possible to kill off 6500 Jews all at once? Now it is the Jews’ turn, when will it be ours? What did these poor Jews do? All they did was work! The really guilty ones are surely in safely!” The executions continued all day Monday! Late in

the evening the shooting could not only be heard from the woods but also spread to the Ghetto and nearly all the streets of the city since, in order to escape their fate, many Jews had broken out of the Ghetto and tried somehow to save themselves. On that evening and during that night it was not advisable even for a member of the Wehrmacht to venture on the streets, in order to avoid the danger of being killed or at least wounded by the Russian policemen, due to a generally prevalent nervousness. About 10 o’clock in the evening a fire was raging in the city and mild shooting was going on. A few houses were burning in the Ghetto and in the vicinity of the Ghetto—the cause is not known to me.

It must be added that German soldiers were summoned toward evening to blockade the Ghetto and to prevent the Jew’s escaping. As I learned from a noncommissioned officer, a few Jews were said to have been caught and turned over to the Russian Security Police for execution. The shooting continued throughout the night. On Tuesday, about 8 o’clock in the morning, I was again a witness of the same occurrences as on the previous day. By no means all the Jews had been shot. Many escorted Russian cars returned from the woods. Piled high on these cars was the clothing of the victims. Thus everybody could see what was going on. The clothing was brought to city warehouses. At many places in the Ghetto and along the street already described groups of Jews cowered, awaiting their executing.

As I heard, some Jews are said to have committed suicide in the nearby Beresina. The most gruesome scenes are said to have taken place in the Ghetto during this operation. According to report all specialists were shot, at least the majority of them. That may be so, for, escorted by two Russian policemen, I entered the homes of a tailor and a cobbler on the main street; the barbed wire had been torn down and I found the house abandoned. It is hard to describe the appearance of these homes! In order to obtain details of the executions, I struck up a conversation with these two Russian Security men, and I was told the following:

A few days earlier Russian prisoners of war had dug in the woods some huge mass graves about 100 meters long, 5 meters wide, and 3 meters deep. According to the reports of these eye-witnesses, the executions were performed as follows:

The first delinquents, about 20 men, were made to jump into the pits after taking off all but their underwear. They were then shot from above! Of course these dead and half-dead people were lying pell-mell. The next victims had to line them up so as to gain as much space as possible. Then it continued as above. When the bottom row of the mass grave was full, the Jews had to put a layer of sand over the bodies and

had to trample upon both sand and bodies. The most horrible scenes are said to have taken place in these two mass graves! Shortly before my departure for the front I met two German soldiers, a private first class and a corporal, who, for curiosity's sake, had witnessed these executions from very close by. They fully confirmed the information sought by me. They added that the Russian policemen were given a great deal of liquor, otherwise they would hardly have been able to perform their difficult task! The population of Borrisow is of the opinion that the Russian Security men would enrich themselves with the valuables left behind by the Jews, such as gold, silver, furs, cloth, leather, etc., as they were said to have done during previous executions. These security men, moreover, are said to consist largely of old Communists, but nobody dares to report them because they are feared. The population generally desires the occupation of all important posts by German nationals !

Signed : Soennecken
Master sergeant and interpreter for the
Russian language with
Intelligence Command B

Postscript: There is a rumor in Borrisow that the now vacant houses of the Jews shall be prepared for Jews from Germany, who in turn shall be liquidated in the same manner as were the Jews of Borrisow.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 772-776, Doc. 3047-PS.

119. MURDER OF JEWS IN BELORUSSIA: POLICE BATTALION REPORT, OCTOBER 30, 1941

The Nazi commissioner of the territory of Sluzk in Latvia wrote a report to the commissioner general of Minsk, Jerzy Osmolowski, complaining of the treatment of the Jews of Sluzk by an Einsatzkommando that was assigned responsibility for their liquidation. The commissioner was assured that the action against the Jews would not include certain tradesmen who were vital for maintaining the economic life of the city. Those assurances proved false, as all of the Jews were taken from the city to be executed. Although some were saved, the

commissioner expressed in this report his anger and frustration that his wishes were ignored. The concern seems to be twofold: the commissioner was ignored, his entreaties apparently worth little; and the loss of skilled Jews made it impossible for factories in Sluzk to continue to function.

Copy/T of the copy

The Commissioner of the Territory of Sluzk

Sluzk, 30 October 1941

SECRET

To the Commissioner General Minsk

Subject: Action against Jews

Referring to the report made by phone on 27 October 1941 I now beg to inform you in writing of the following:

On 27 October in the morning at about 8 o'clock a first lieutenant of the police battalion No 11 from Kauen (Lithuania) appeared and introduced himself as the adjutant of the battalion commander of the security police. The first lieutenant explained that the police battalion had received the assignment to effect the liquidation of all Jews here in the town of Sluzk, within two days. The battalion commander with his battalion in strength of four companies, two of which were made up of Lithuanian partisans, was on the march here and the action would have to begin instantly. I replied to the first lieutenant that I had to discuss the action in any case first with the commander. About half an hour later the police battalion arrived in Sluzk. Immediately after the arrival the conference with the battalion commander took place according to my request. I first explained to the commander that it would not very well be possible to effect the action without previous preparation, because everybody had been sent to work and that it would lead to terrible confusion. At least it would have been his duty to inform me a day ahead of time. Then I requested him to postpone the action one day. However, he rejected this with the remark that he had to carry out this action everywhere and in all towns and that only two days were allotted for Sluzk. Within these two days, the town of Sluzk had to be cleared of Jews by all means. I immediately protested violently against it, pointing out that a liquidation of Jews must not be allowed to take place in an arbitrary manner. I explained that a large part of the Jews still living in the towns were tradesmen and families of tradesmen respectively. But these Jewish tradesmen were not simply expendable because they were indispensable for maintaining the economic life. Furthermore, I pointed out

that White Ruthenian tradesmen are so to say non-existent, that therefore all vital plants had to be shut down all at once, if all Jews would be liquidated. At the end of our conference, I mentioned that all tradesmen and specialists, inasmuch as they were indispensable, had papers of identification and that these should not be pulled out of the factories. Furthermore, it was agreed that all Jews still living in the town should first be brought into the ghetto in order to segregate them, especially with regard to the families of tradesmen which I did not want to have liquidated either. Two of my officials should be assigned to segregate them. The commander did not in any way contradict my idea and I had therefore the firm belief that the action would be carried out accordingly. However, a few hours after the beginning of the action the greatest difficulties already developed. I noticed that the commander had not at all abided by our agreement. All Jews without exception were taken out of the factories and shops and deported in spite of our agreement. It is true that part of the Jews was moved by way of the ghetto where many of them were processed and still segregated by me, but a large part was loaded directly on trucks and liquidated without further delay outside of the town. Shortly after noon complaints came already from all sides that the factories could not function any more because all Jewish tradesmen had been removed. As the commander had proceeded on his way to Baranowitschi I got in touch with the deputy commander, a captain, after searching a long time, and demanded to stop the action immediately because my instructions had been disregarded and the damage done so far with respect to the economic life could not be repaired any more. The captain was greatly surprised at my idea and stated that he had received orders from the commander to clear the whole town of Jews without exception in the same manner as they had done in other towns. This mopping up had to be executed on political considerations and economic reasons had never played a role anywhere. However, due to my energetic intervention, he finally halted the action toward evening.

For the rest, as regards the execution of the action, I must point out to my deepest regret that the latter bordered already on sadism. The town itself offered a picture of horror during the action. With indescribable brutality on the part of both the German police officers and particularly the Lithuanian partisans, the Jewish people, but also among them White Ruthenians, were taken out of their dwellings and herded together. Everywhere in the town shots were to be heard and in different streets the corpses of shot Jews accumulated. The White Ruthenians were in greatest distress to free themselves from the encirclement. Regardless of the fact

that the Jewish people, among whom were also tradesmen, were mistreated in a terribly barbarous way in the face of the White Ruthenian people, the White Ruthenians themselves were also worked over with rubber clubs and rifle butts. There was no question of an action against the Jews any more. It rather looked like a revolution. I myself with all my officials have been in it without interruption all day long in order to save what could yet be saved. In several instances I literally had to expel with drawn pistol the German police officials as well as the Lithuanian partisans from the shops. My own police was employed for the same mission but had often to leave the streets on account of the wild shooting in order to avoid being shot themselves. The whole picture was generally more than ghastly. In the afternoon a great number of abandoned Panje carriages with horses were standing in the streets so that I had to instruct the municipal administration to take care of the vehicles immediately. Afterwards it was ascertained that they were Jewish vehicles ordered by the armed forces to move ammunition. The drivers had simply been taken off the carriages and led away, and nobody had worried in the least about the vehicles.

I was not present at the shooting before the town. Therefore I cannot make a statement on its brutality. But it should suffice, if I point out that persons shot have worked themselves out of their graves some time after they had been covered. Regarding the economic damage I want to state that the tannery has been affected worst of all. 26 experts worked there. Of them, fifteen of the best specialists alone have been shot. Four more jumped from the truck during the transport and escaped, while seven others were not apprehended after they fled. The plant barely continues to operate today. Five wheelwrights worked in the wheelwright shop. Four of them have been shot and the shop has to keep going now with one wheelwright. Additional tradesmen such as carpenters, blacksmiths, etc. are still missing. Up till now it was impossible for me to obtain an exact survey. I have mentioned already in the beginning, that the families of tradesmen should be spared too. But now it seems that almost in all families some persons are missing. Reports come in from all over, making it clear that in one family the tradesman himself, in another family the wife and in the next one again the children are missing. In that way, almost all families have been broken up. It seems to be very doubtful whether under these circumstances the remaining tradesmen will show any interest in their work and produce accordingly, particularly as even today they are running around with bloody and bruised faces due to the brutality. The White Ruthenian people who had full confidence in us, are dumbfounded.

Though they are intimidated and don't dare to utter their free opinion, one has already heard that they take the viewpoint that this day does not add to the glory of Germany and that it will not be forgotten. I am of the opinion that much has been destroyed through this action which we have achieved during the last months and that it will take a long time until we shall regain the confidence of the population which we have lost.

In conclusion I find myself obliged to point out that the police battalion has looted in an unheard of manner during the action, and that not only in Jewish houses but just the same in those of the White Ruthenians. Anything of use such as boots, leather, cloth, gold and other valuables, has been taken away. On the basis of statements of members of the armed forces, watches were torn off the arms of Jews in public, on the street, and rings were pulled off the fingers in the most brutal manner. A major of the finance department reported that a Jewish girl was asked by the police to obtain immediately 5,000 rubles to have her father released. This girl is said to have actually gone everywhere in order to obtain the money.

Also within the ghetto, the different barracks which had been nailed up by the civil administration and were furnished with Jewish furniture, have been broken open and robbed. Even from the barracks in which the unit was quartered, window frames and doors have been forcibly removed and used for campfires. Although I had a discussion with the adjutant of the commander on Tuesday morning concerning the looting and he promised in the course of the discussion that none of the policemen would enter the town any more, yet I was forced several hours later to arrest two fully armed Lithuanian partisans because they were apprehended looting. During the night from Tuesday to Wednesday the battalion left the town in the direction of Baranowitschi. Evidently, the people were only too glad when this report circulated in the town.

So far the report. I shall come to Minsk in the immediate future, in order to discuss the affair personally once again. At the present time, I am not in a position to continue with the action against the Jews. First, order has to be established again. I hope that I shall be able to restore order as soon as possible and also to revive the economic life despite the difficulties. Only, I beg you to grant me one request: "In the future, keep this police battalion away from me by all means."

signed: CARL

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 785–789, Doc. 1104-PS.

120. GERMAN ARMY REPORT ON SHOOTINGS OF JEWS AND GYPSIES IN YUGOSLAVIA, OCTOBER 27–30, 1941, NOVEMBER 1, 1941

Pancevo, a city in the Vojvodina region of Serbia, was the site of a mass murder of Jews on or about November 1, 1941. The document that follows is a report of the shooting, including several important insights. First, the Nazis were intent on keeping the action secret from the surrounding population. Second, care was given, at least at this shooting, as to the shooting site itself. Third, according to this report, the Jews were much more docile and unemotional than the Gypsies who were shot at the same time. While this might play into the stereotype that the Jews were incapable of resistance, it is much more likely that this was attributable to the importance of keeping family members calm, and the determination of the Jews to deprive their Nazi killers of seeing them panic and beg for mercy. Finally, the German shooters found it difficult to continue their task after having spent a night thinking about what they did.

Secret

REPORT FROM 734TH INFANTRY REGIMENT TO 704TH
INFANTRY DIVISION, 4 NOVEMBER 1941, ENCLOSING
REPORT OF THE SHOOTING OF JEWS
AND GYPSIES

[Stamp] Secret

734th Infantry Regiment
Diary No. 437/41 Secret la

4 November 1941
704th Infantry Division Iva

[Stamp]
704th Infantry Division
Received 10 November 1941
Branch Ia 598/41 Secret -1-

Received 8 November 1941 Ivb
Ivc
Diary No. Ivd
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Diary 1351/41 Secret 470a
[Illegible initials]
Ia

To 704th Infantry Division
Subject: Reprisal measures
1 Enclosure

For information, the regiment encloses the report of First Lieutenant Walther, 9th Company, 433d Infantry Regiment, concerning the shooting of Jews and gypsies on 27 and 30 October 1941.

[Illegible signature]

[Stamp] Secret

1st Lt. Walther
C.O. 9th Company, 433d Infantry Regiment

Local Headquarters, 1 November 1941

*Report concerning the shooting to death of
Jews and gypsies*

By agreement with the SS office, I picked up the selected Jews and gypsies from the prisoner camp Belgrade. The trucks of 599th Administrative Area Headquarters available to me for this purpose were impracticable for two reasons:

1. They have civilian drivers. Hence, secrecy is not assured.

2. All of them were without cover or tarpaulins so that the population of the city saw whom we had put in the vehicles and where we went. Wives of the Jews had assembled in front of the camp; they cried and screamed when we drove off.

The location where the shooting to death was carried out is very favorable. It is situated north of Pancevo immediately on the road of Pancevo-Jabuka where there is a grade high enough to make it difficult to climb. Opposite this grade is swamp terrain; behind it a river. When the water is high, as on 29 October, it almost comes up to the grade. Thus, an escape of the prisoners can be prevented with few troops. The sandy ground also is favorable which facilitates digging of the ditches and consequently shortens the time of labor.

After arrival, approximately 1 1/2 to 2 kilometers before the selected site, the prisoners got off, marched to the selected site, while the trucks with their civilian drivers were sent back immediately in order to afford them as little grounds for suspicion as possible. Then, I had the road blocked for all traffic for reasons of security and secrecy.

Place of execution was secured by three light machine guns and twelve riflemen—(1) against attempts to escape by the prisoners, and (2) to protect ourselves against possible attacks by Serbian bands.

The largest part of the time was consumed by the digging of the ditches, while the actual execution by shooting (100 men in 40 minutes) went very rapidly.

Luggage and valuables had been collected previously and taken along in my truck in order to turn them over later to the National Socialist Peoples' Welfare.

The shooting to death of Jews is simpler than that of gypsies. It must be admitted that the Jews accept death very calmly, they stand very quietly, while the gypsies cry, scream, and move continuously when they are already on the spot where they are to be shot to death. Some of them even jumped into the ditch before the firing and attempted to feign death.

In the beginning, my soldiers were not impressed. The second day, however, it had become noticeable that one or the other did not have the nerve to carry out shooting to death for a longer period of time. My personal impression is that one does not develop any psychological inhibitions during the shooting to death. However, these appear if one contemplates it quietly in the evening, after a few days.

[Signed] WALTHER
First Lieutenant

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XI, pp. 995–997, Doc. NOKW-905.

**121. EINSATZGRUPPEN: EXTRACTS
FROM THE OPERATIONAL SITUATION
REPORT U.S.S.R. NO. 128,
NOVEMBER 3, 1941**

This Operational Situation Report of the actions of Einsatzgruppe C in Kiev reflects the ease with which sentences were written that included words such as "approximately 80,000 persons were liquidated until now by the Kommandos of the Einsatzgruppe." Of that number, the report continues, 8,000 were killed because of "anti-German or Bolshevistic activities" and the remaining 72,000 as a retaliatory measure. No mention is made of what the victims—exclusively "Jews and their entire families"—did to warrant retaliation. Of note in this report is the observation that the Nazis in Kiev were able to lure the Jews to their death by requesting them to move from their current quarters. It took nothing more than wall posters to result in more than 30,000 Jews responding (five to six times the expected response), an indication of the desperation of the Jews and their hope—ill-placed as it was—that a change, any change, might lead to their freedom.

EXTRACTS FROM OPERATIONAL SITUATION
REPORT U.S.S.R. NO. 128
3 NOVEMBER 1941

Berlin, 3 Nov. 1941

To the Chief of the Security Police and the SD
B. No. IV A 1-1 B/41—Top Secret

[rubber stamp] Top Secret

55 copies
51st copy

Operational Situation Report U.S.S.R. No. 128

II. *Reports of the Einsatzgruppen and Kommandos*
Reports of the *Einsatzgruppen A and B* were not received.
Einsatzgruppen C
Station Kiev

A. *Agriculture*

B. *Executive Activities*

As to purely executive matters, approximately 80,000 persons were liquidated until now by the Kommandos of the *Einsatzgruppe*.

Among these are approximately 8,000 persons who through investigations, were convicted of anti-German or Bolshevistic activities.

The remainder was liquidated as a retaliatory measure.

Several retaliatory measures were carried out as large scale actions. The largest of these actions took place immediately after the occupation of Kiev, it was carried out exclusively against Jews with their entire families.

The difficulties resulting from such large scale action—in particular concerning the seizure—were overcome in Kiev by requesting the Jewish population through wall posters to move. Although only a participation of approximately 5–6,000 Jews had been expected at first, more than 30,000 Jews arrived who until the very moment of their execution still believed in their resettlement, thanks to an extremely clever organization.

Even though approximately 75,000 Jews have been liquidated in this manner, it is already at this time evident, that

this can not be a possible solution of the Jewish problem. Although we succeeded, in particular in smaller towns and also in villages in accomplishing a complete liquidation of the Jewish problem, again and again it is however observed in larger cities that after such an execution all Jews have indeed disappeared. But when after a certain period of time a Kommando returns again, the number of Jews still found in the city always considerably surpasses the number of the executed Jews.

Besides, the Kommandos have also carried out in numerous cases military actions. Separate platoons of the Kommandos have repeatedly combed the woods searching for partisans, on request of the army, and have there accomplished quite successful work.

Besides, prisoners of war moving on the highways were systematically overtaken and all these elements liquidated who did not possess identification papers and who were suspected of committing, when liberated, acts of sabotage against the German Army, the German authorities, or the population. In numerous cases there were also carried out systematic searches of parachutists with the result that approximately a total of 20 parachutists was captured, among them one Russian who at his interrogations also gave information extremely important to the army.

Finally is to be mentioned the taking charge of prisoners of war from the prisoner collecting point and the prisoner of war transit camps although on these occasions considerable disagreements with the camp commander occurred at times.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. IV, pp. 151–152, Doc. NO-3157.

122. “NIGHT AND FOG” DECREE, DECEMBER 7, 1941

Wilhelm Keitel, the chief of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, signed this decree that was issued by Hitler on the same day that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and approximately five and a half months after Germany’s invasion of Russia in Operation Barbarossa. The code name of the decree was Night and Fog (Nacht und Nebel), a phrase used

by a German poet for secretive actions. The decree calls for the killing of anyone in the German-occupied territories of Europe whose actions endanger "the German State or the occupying power." Under certain circumstances the offender was to be brought to Germany, where most would be dispatched by a court there, with only a few given the protection of military procedure. This secret order also required that if anyone inquired of the whereabouts of the offenders, no information was to be provided, a measure intended to increase fear and terror by the disappearance of loved ones.

SECRET
Copy of Copy

The Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces
[stamp] SECRET

Directives for the prosecution of offences committed within the occupied territories against the German State or the occupying power, of December 7th, 1941.

Within the occupied territories communistic elements and other circles hostile to Germany have increased their efforts against the German State and the occupying power since the Russian campaign started. The amount and the danger of these machinations oblige us to take severe measures as a deterrent. First of all the following directives are to be applied:

I. Within the occupied territories, the adequate punishment for offences committed against the German State or the occupying power which endanger their security or state of readiness is on principle the death penalty.

II. The offences listed in paragraph I as a rule are to be dealt with in the occupied countries only if it is probable that sentence of death will be passed upon the offender, at least the principal offender, and if the trial and the execution can be completed in a very short time. Otherwise the offenders, at least the principal offenders, are to be taken to Germany.

III. Prisoners taken to Germany are subjected to military procedure only if particular military interests require this. In case German or foreign authorities inquire about such prisoners, they are to be told that they were arrested, but that the proceedings do not allow any further information.

IV. The Commanders in the occupied territories and the Court authorities within the framework of their jurisdiction, are personally responsible for the observance of this decree.

V. The Chief of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces determines in which occupied territories this decree is to be applied. He is authorized to explain and to issue

executive orders and supplements. The Reich Minister of Justice will issue executive orders within his own jurisdiction.

By Order

The Chief of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces
[signed] Keitel

A true copy.

[signature illegible] Major

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VII, pp. 873-874, Doc. L-90.

123. EINSATZGRUPPEN: EXCERPTS FROM TESTIMONY JANUARY 3, 1946, OF OTTO OHLENDORF REGARDING THE EINSATZGRUPPEN, JUNE 1941- JUNE 1942

Einsatzgruppen were mobile killing units that followed the German armies into Russia, tasked with the job of killing Jews and communists. There were four such units (A through D), each with approximately 750 men. The commander of Einsatzgruppe D was Otto Ohlendorf. It was in that capacity that he and his unit were responsible for the murder of 90,000 Jews in the course of a single year, from June 1941 to June 1942, and it was in that capacity that he was tried in the "Einsatzgruppen Trial" held in Nuremberg from September 1947 through February 1948. Ohlendorf was the lead defendant. The following excerpts are from Ohlendorf's trial testimony. One of the areas of examination in this document is the close role that the Wehrmacht, the professional German military, played in support of the Einsatzgruppen, something the Wehrmacht long denied. Ohlendorf provides a detailed description of the manner by which the Jews were executed, including the use and construction of gas vans used to kill women and children.

COLONEL JOHN HARLAN AMEN (Associate Trial Counsel for the United States): May it please the Tribunal, I wish to call as a witness for the Prosecution, Mr. Otto Ohlendorf.

* * * * *

COL. AMEN: When did you become a member of the SA?

OHLENDORF: In the year 1925.

COL. AMEN: When, if ever, did you join the SD?

OHLENDORF: In 1936.

COL. AMEN: What was your last position in the SD?

OHLENDORF: Chief of Amt III in the RSHA.

* * * * *

COL. AMEN: Did you tell us for what period of time you continued to serve as Chief of Amt III?

OHLENDORF: I was part-time Chief of Amt III from 1939 to 1945.

COL. AMEN: Turning now to the designation "Mobile Units" with the Army shown in the lower right hand corner of the chart, please explain to the Tribunal the significance of the terms "Einsatzgruppe" and "Einsatzkommando."

OHLENDORF: The concept "Einsatzgruppe" was established after an agreement between the Chiefs of the RSHA, OKW, and OKH, on the separate use of Sipo units in the operational areas. The concept "Einsatzgruppe" first appeared during the Polish campaign.

* * * * *

COL. AMEN: To the best of your knowledge and recollection, please explain to the Tribunal the entire substance of this written agreement.

* * * * *

OHLENDORF: I said, this was the relationship between the Army and the Einsatzgruppen and the Einsatzkommandos. The agreement specified that the army groups or armies would be responsible for the movement and the supply of Einsatzgruppen, but that instructions for their activities would come from the Chief of the Sipo and SD.

COL. AMEN: Let us understand. Is it correct that an Einsatzgruppe was to be attached to each army group or army?

OHLENDORF: Every army group was to have an Einsatzgruppe attached to it. The army group in its turn would then attach the Einsatzkommandos to the armies of the army group.

COL. AMEN: And was the army command to determine the area within which the Einsatzgruppe was to operate?

OHLENDORF: The operational area of the Einsatzgruppe was already determined by the fact that it was attached

to a specific army group and therefore moved with it, whereas the operational areas of the Einsatzkommandos were then fixed by the army group or army.

COL. AMEN: Did the agreement also provide that the army command was to direct the time during which they were to operate?

OHLENDORF: That was included under the heading "movement."

COL. AMEN: And also to direct any additional tasks they were to perform?

OHLENDORF: Yes. Even though the Chiefs of the Sipo and SD had the right to issue instructions to them on their work, there existed a general agreement that the army was also entitled to issue orders to the Einsatzgruppen, if the operational situation made it necessary.

* * * * *

COL. AMEN: What position did you occupy with respect to this agreement?

OHLENDORF: From June 1941 to the death of Heydrich in June 1942, I led Einsatzgruppe D, and was the representative of the Chief of the Sipo and the SD with the 11th Army.

COL. AMEN: And when was Heydrich's death?

OHLENDORF: Heydrich was wounded at the end of May 1942, and died on 4 June 1942.

COL. AMEN: How much advance notice, if any, did you have of the campaign against Soviet Russia?

OHLENDORF: About 4 weeks.

COL. AMEN: How many Einsatzgruppen were there, and who were their respective leaders?

OHLENDORF: There were four Einsatzgruppen, Group A, B, C, and D. Chief of Einsatzgruppe A was Stahlecker; Chief of Einsatzgruppe B was Nebe; Chief of Einsatzgruppe C, Dr. Rasche, and later, Dr. Thomas; Chief of Einsatzgruppe D, I myself, and later Bierkamp.

COL. AMEN: To which army was Group D attached?

OHLENDORF: Group D was not attached to any army group, but was attached directly to the 11th Army.

COL. AMEN: Where did Group D operate?

OHLENDORF: Group D operated in the Southern Ukraine.

* * * * *

COL. AMEN: When did Group D commence its move into Soviet Russia?

OHLENDORF: Group D left Duegen on 21 June and reached Pietra Namsk in Romania in 3 days, There the first Einsatzkommandos were already being demanded by the Army, and they immediately set off for the destinations named by the Army. The entire Einsatzgruppe was put into operation at the beginning of July.

COL. AMEN: You are referring to the 11th Army?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL. AMEN: In what respects, if any, were the official duties of the Einsatz groups concerned with Jews and Communist commissars?

OHLENDORF: On the question of Jews and Communists, the Einsatzgruppen and the commanders of the Einsatzkommandos were orally instructed before their mission.

COL. AMEN: What were their instructions with respect to the Jews and the Communist functionaries?

OHLENDORF: The instructions were that in the Russian operational areas of the Einsatzgruppen the Jews, as well as the Soviet political commissars, were to be liquidated.

COL. AMEN: And when you say "liquidated" do you mean "killed?"

OHLENDORF: Yes, I mean "killed."

COL. AMEN: Prior to the opening of the Soviet campaign, did you attend a conference at Pretz?

OHLENDORF: Yes, it was a conference at which the Einsatzgruppen and the Einsatzkommandos were informed of their tasks and were given the necessary orders.

COL. AMEN: Who was present at that conference?

OHLENDORF: The chiefs of the Einsatzgruppen and the commanders of the Einsatzkommandos and Streckenbach of the RSHA who transmitted the orders of Heydrich and Hirnmler.

COL. AMEN: What were those orders?

OHLENDORF: Those were the general orders on the normal work of the Sipo and the SD, and in addition the liquidation order which I have already mentioned.

COL. AMEN: And that conference took place on approximately what date?

OHLENDORF: About 3 or 4 days before the mission.

COL. AMEN: So that before you commenced to march into Soviet Russia, you received orders at this conference to exterminate the Jews and Communist functionaries in addition to the regular professional work of the Security Police and SD; is that correct?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL. AMEN: Did you, personally, have any conversation with Himmler respecting any communication from Himmler to the chiefs of army groups and armies concerning this mission?

OHLENDORF: Yes. Himmler told me that before the beginning of the Russian campaign Hitler had spoken of this mission to a conference of the army groups and the army chiefs—no, not the army chiefs but the commanding generals—and had instructed the commanding generals to provide the necessary support.

COL. AMEN: So that you can testify that the chiefs of the army groups and the armies had been similarly informed of these orders for the liquidation of the Jews and Soviet functionaries?

OHLENDORF: I don't think it is quite correct to put it in that form. They had no orders for liquidation; the order for the liquidation was given to Himmler to carry out, but since this liquidation took place in the operational area of the army group or the armies, they had to be ordered to provide support. Moreover, without such instructions to the army, the activities of the Einsatzgruppen would not have been possible.

COL. AMEN: Did you have any other conversation with Himmler concerning this order?

OHLENDORF: Yes, in the late summer of 1941 Himmler was in Nikolaiev. He assembled the leaders and men of the Einsatzkommandos, repeated to them the liquidation order, and pointed out that the leaders and men who were taking part in the liquidation bore no personal responsibility for the execution of this order. The responsibility was his, alone, and the Führer's.

COL. AMEN: And you yourself heard that said?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL. AMEN: Do you know whether this mission of the Einsatz group was known to the army group commanders?

OHLENDORF: This order and the execution of these orders were known to the commanding general of the army.

COL. AMEN: How do you know that?

OHLENDORF: Through conferences with the army and through instructions which were given by the army on the execution of the order.

COL. AMEN: Was the mission of the Einsatz groups and the agreement between OKW, OKH, and RSHA known to the other leaders in the RSHA?

OHLENDORF: At least some of them knew of it, since some of the leaders were also active in the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos in the course of time. Furthermore,

the leaders who were dealing with the organization and the legal aspect of the Einsatzgruppen also knew of it.
COL. AMEN: Most of the leaders came from the RSHA, did they not?
OHLENDORF: Which leaders?
COL. AMEN: Of the Einsatz groups.
OHLENDORF: No, one can't say that. The leaders in the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos came from all over the Reich.

COL. AMEN: Who was the commanding officer of the 11th Army?
OHLENDORF: At first, Ritter von Schober; later, Von Manstein.
COL. AMEN: Will you tell the Tribunal in what way or ways the commanding officer of the 11th Army directed or supervised Einsatz Group D in carrying out its liquidation activities?
OHLENDORF: An order from the 11th Army was sent to Nikolaiev stating that liquidations were to take place only at a distance of not less than 200 kilometers from the headquarters of the commanding general.
COL. AMEN: Do you recall any other occasion?
OHLENDORF: In Simferopol the army command requested the Einsatzkommandos in its area to hasten the liquidations, because famine was threatening and there was a great housing shortage.
COL. AMEN: Do you know how many persons were liquidated by Einsatz Group D under your direction?
OHLENDORF: In the year between June 1941 to June 1942 the Einsatzkommandos reported 90,000 people liquidated.
COL. AMEN: Did that include men, women, and children?
OHLENDORF: Yes.
COL. AMEN: On what do you base those figures?
OHLENDORF: On reports sent by the Einsatzkommandos to the Einsatzgruppen.
COL. AMEN: Were those reports submitted to you?
OHLENDORF: Yes.
COL. AMEN: And you saw them and read them?
OHLENDORF: I beg your pardon?
COL. AMEN: And you saw and read those reports, personally?
OHLENDORF: Yes.
COL. AMEN: And it is on those reports that you base the figures you have given the Tribunal?

OHLENDORF: Yes.
COL. AMEN: Do you know how those figures compare with the number of persons liquidated by other Einsatz groups?
OHLENDORF: The figures which I saw of other Einsatzgruppen are considerably larger.
COL. AMEN: That was due to what factor?
OHLENDORF: I believe that to a large extent the figures submitted by the other Einsatzgruppen were exaggerated.
COL. AMEN: Did you see reports of liquidations from the other Einsatz groups from time to time?
OHLENDORF: Yes.
COL. AMEN: And those reports showed liquidations exceeding those of Group D; is that correct?
OHLENDORF: Yes.
COL. AMEN: Did you personally supervise mass executions of these individuals?
OHLENDORF: I was present at two mass executions for purposes of inspection.
COL. AMEN: Will you explain to the Tribunal in detail how an individual mass execution was carried out?
OHLENDORF: A local Einsatzkommando attempted to collect all the Jews in its area by registering them. This registration was performed by the Jews themselves.
COL. AMEN: On what pretext, if any, were they rounded up?
OHLENDORF: On the pretext that they were to be resettled.
COL. AMEN: Will you continue?
OHLENDORF: After the registration the Jews were collected at one place; and from there they were later transported to the place of execution, which was, as a rule an antitank ditch or a natural excavation. The executions were carried out in a military manner, by firing squads under command.
COL. AMEN: In what way were they transported to the place of execution?
OHLENDORF: They were transported to the place of execution in trucks, always only as many as could be executed immediately. In this way it was attempted to keep the span of time from the moment in which the victims knew what was about to happen to them until the time of their actual execution as short as possible.
COL. AMEN: Was that your idea?
OHLENDORF: Yes.
COL. AMEN: And after they were shot what was done with the bodies?

OHLENDORF: The bodies were buried in the antitank ditch or excavation.

COL. AMEN: What determination, if any, was made as to whether the persons were actually dead?

OHLENDORF: The unit leaders or the firing-squad commanders had orders to see to this and, if need be, finish them off themselves.

COL. AMEN: And who would do that?

OHLENDORF: Either the unit leader himself or somebody designated by him.

COL. AMEN: In what positions were the victims shot?

OHLENDORF: Standing or kneeling.

COL. AMEN: What was done with the personal property and clothing of the persons executed?

OHLENDORF: All valuables were confiscated at the time of the registration or the rounding up and handed over to the Finance Ministry, either through the RSHA or directly. At first the clothing was given to the population, but in the winter of 1941–42 it was collected and disposed of by the NSV.

COL. AMEN: All their personal property was registered at the time?

OHLENDORF: No, not all of it, only valuables were registered.

COL. AMEN: What happened to the garments which the victims were wearing when they went to the place of execution?

OHLENDORF: They were obliged to take off their outer garments immediately before the execution.

COL. AMEN: All of them?

OHLENDORF: The outer garments, yes.

COL. AMEN: How about the rest of the garments they were wearing?

OHLENDORF: The other garments remained on the bodies.

COL. AMEN: Was that true of not only your group but of the other Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: That was the order in my Einsatzgruppe. I don't know how it was done in other Einsatzgruppen.

COL. AMEN: In what way did they handle it?

OHLENDORF: Some of the unit leaders did not carry out the liquidation in the military manner, but killed the victims singly by shooting them in the back of the neck.

COL. AMEN: And you objected to that procedure?

OHLENDORF: I was against that procedure, yes.

COL. AMEN: For what reason?

OHLENDORF: Because both for the victims and for those who carried out the executions, it was, psychologically, an immense burden to bear.

COL. AMEN: Now, what was done with the property collected by the Einsatzkommandos from these victims?

OHLENDORF: All valuables were sent to Berlin, to the RSHA or to the Reich Ministry of Finance. The articles which could be used in the operational area, were disposed of there.

COL. AMEN: For example, what happened to gold and silver taken from the victims?

OHLENDORF: That was, as I have just said, turned over to Berlin, to the Reich Ministry of Finance.

COL. AMEN: How do you know that?

OHLENDORF: I can remember that it was actually handled in that way from Simferopol.

COL. AMEN: How about watches, for example, taken from the victims?

OHLENDORF: At the request of the Army, watches were made available to the forces at the front.

COL. AMEN: Were all victims, including the men, women, and children, executed in the same manner?

OHLENDORF: Until the spring of 1942, yes. Then an order came from Himmler that in the future women and children were to be killed only in gas vans.

COL. AMEN: How had the women and children been killed previously?

OHLENDORF: In the same way as the men—by shooting.

COL. AMEN: What, if anything, was done about burying the victims after they had been executed?

OHLENDORF: The Kommandos filled the graves to efface the signs of the execution, and then labor units of the population leveled them.

COL. AMEN: Referring to the gas vans which you said you received in the spring of 1942, what order did you receive with respect to the use of these vans?

OHLENDORF: These gas vans were in future to be used for the killing of women and children.

COL. AMEN: Will you explain to the Tribunal the construction of these vans and their appearance?

OHLENDORF: The actual purpose of these vans could not be seen from the outside. They looked like closed trucks, and were so constructed that at the start of the motor, gas was conducted into the van causing death in 10 to 15 minutes.

COL. AMEN: Explain in detail just how one of these vans was used for an execution.

OHLENDORF: The vans were loaded with the victims and driven to the place of burial, which was usually the same as that used for the mass executions. The time needed

for transportation was sufficient to insure the death of the victims.

COL. AMEN: How were the victims induced to enter the vans?

OHLENDORF: They were told that they were to be transported to another locality.

COL. AMEN: How was the gas turned on?

OHLENDORF: I am not familiar with the technical details.

COL. AMEN: How long did it take to kill the victims ordinarily?

OHLENDORF: About 10 to 15 minutes; the victims were not conscious of what was happening to them.

COL. AMEN: How many persons could be killed simultaneously in one such van?

OHLENDORF: About 15 to 25 persons. The vans varied in size.

COL. AMEN: Did you receive reports from those persons operating these vans from time to time?

OHLENDORF: I didn't understand the question.

COL. AMEN: Did you receive reports from those who were working on the vans?

OHLENDORF: I received the report that the Einsatzkommandos did not willingly use the vans.

COL. AMEN: Why not?

OHLENDORF: Because the burial of the victims was a great ordeal for the members of the Einsatzkommandos.

COL. AMEN: Now, will you tell the Tribunal who furnished these vans to the Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: The gas vans did not belong to the motor pool of the Einsatzgruppen but were assigned to the Einsatzgruppe as a special unit, headed by the man who had constructed the vans. The vans were assigned to the Einsatzgruppen by the RSHA.

COL. AMEN: Were the vans supplied to all of the different Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: I am not certain of that. I know only in the case of Einsatzgruppe D, and indirectly that Einsatzgruppe C also made use of these vans.

* * * * *

COL. AMEN: . . . will you explain to the Tribunal why you believe that the type of execution ordered by you, namely, military, was preferable to the shooting-in-the-neck procedure adopted by the other Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: On the one hand, the aim was that the individual leaders and men should be able to carry out the executions in a military manner acting on orders and

should not have to make a decision of their own; it was, to all intents and purposes, an order which they were to carry out. On the other hand, it was known to me that through the emotional excitement of the executions ill-treatment could not be avoided, since the victims discovered too soon that they were to be executed and could not therefore endure prolonged nervous strain. And it seemed intolerable to me that individual leaders and men should in consequence be forced to kill a large number of people on their own decision.

COL. AMEN: In what manner did you determine which were the Jews to be executed?

OHLENDORF: That was not part of my task; but the identification of the Jews was carried out by the Jews themselves, since the registration was handled by a Jewish Council of Elders.

COL. AMEN: Did the amount of Jewish blood have anything to do with it?

OHLENDORF: I can't remember the details, but I believe that half-Jews were also considered as Jews.

COL. AMEN: What organizations furnished most of the officer personnel of the Einsatz groups and Einsatzkommandos?

OHLENDORF: I did not understand the question.

COL. AMEN: What organizations furnished most of the officer personnel of the Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: The officer personnel was furnished by the State Police, the Kripo, and, to a lesser extent, by the SD.

COL. AMEN: Kripo?

OHLENDORF: Yes, the State Police, the Criminal Police and, to a lesser extent, the SD.

COL. AMEN: Were there any other sources of personnel?

OHLENDORF: Yes, most of the men employed were furnished by the Waffen-SS and the Ordnungspolizei. The State Police and the Kripo furnished most of the experts, and the troops were furnished by the Waffen-SS and the Ordnungspolizei.

COL. AMEN: How about the Waffen-SS?

OHLENDORF: The Waffen-SS and the Ordnungspolizei were each supposed to supply the Einsatzgruppen with one company.

COL. AMEN: How about the Order Police?

OHLENDORF: The Ordnungspolizei also furnished the Einsatzgruppen with one company.

COL. AMEN: What was the size of Einsatz Group D and its operating area as compared with the other Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: I estimate that Einsatzgruppe D was one-half or two-thirds as large as the other Einsatzgruppen. That changed in the course of time, since some of the Einsatzgruppen were greatly enlarged.

* * * * *

COL. AMEN: *[To the witness.]* Can you state whether the liquidation practices which you have described continued after 1942 and, if so, for how long a period of time thereafter?

OHLENDORF: I don't think that the basic order was ever revoked. But I cannot remember the details—at least not with regard to Russia—which would enable me to make concrete statements on this subject. The retreat began very shortly thereafter, so that the operational region of the Einsatzgruppen became ever smaller. I do know, however, that other Einsatzgruppen with similar orders had been envisaged for other areas.

COL. AMEN: Your personal knowledge extends up to what date?

OHLENDORF: I know that the liquidation of Jews was prohibited about six months before the end of the war. I also saw a document terminating the liquidation of Soviet commissars, but I cannot recall a specific date.

COL. AMEN: Do you know whether in fact it was so terminated?

OHLENDORF: Yes, I believe so.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal would like to know the number of men in your Einsatz group.

OHLENDORF: There were about 500 men in my Einsatzgruppe, excluding those who were added to the group as assistants from the country itself.

THE PRESIDENT: Including them, did you say?

OHLENDORF: Excluding those who were added to the group from the country itself.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you know how many there would be in other groups?

OHLENDORF: I estimate that at the beginning there were seven to eight hundred men; but, as I said, this number changed rapidly in the course of time, since the Einsatzgruppen themselves acquired new people or succeeded in getting additional personnel from the RSHA.

THE PRESIDENT: The numbers increased, did they?

OHLENDORF: Yes, the numbers increased.

* * * * *

COLONEL Y. V. POKROVSKY (Deputy Chief Prosecutor for the U.S.S.R.): . . . Witness, you said that you were present twice at the mass executions. On whose orders were you an inspector at the executions?

OHLENDORF: I was present at the executions on my own initiative.

COL. POKROVSKY: But you said that you attended as inspector.

OHLENDORF: I said that I attended for inspection purposes.

COL. POKROVSKY: On your initiative?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL. POKROVSKY: Did one of your chiefs always attend the executions for purposes of inspection?

OHLENDORF: Whenever possible I sent a member of the staff of the Einsatzgruppe to witness the executions, but this was not always feasible since the Einsatzgruppen had to operate over great distances.

COL. POKROVSKY: Why was some person sent for purposes of inspection?

OHLENDORF: Would you please repeat the question?

COL. POKROVSKY: For what purpose was an inspector sent?

OHLENDORF: To determine whether or not my instructions regarding the manner of the execution were actually being carried out.

COL. POKROVSKY: Am I to understand that the inspector was to make certain that the execution had actually been carried out?

OHLENDORF: No, it would not be correct to say that. He was to ascertain whether the conditions which I had set for the execution were actually being carried out.

COL. POKROVSKY: What manner of conditions had you in mind?

OHLENDORF: 1. Exclusion of the public; 2. Military execution by a firing-squad; 3. Arrival of the transports and carrying out of the liquidation in a smooth manner to avoid unnecessary excitement; 4. Supervision of the property to prevent looting. There may have been other details which I no longer remember. At any rate, all ill-treatment, whether physical or mental, was to be prevented through these measures.

* * * * *

COL. POKROVSKY: You spoke of ill-treatment. What did you mean by ill-treatment at the executions?

OHLENDORF: If, for instance, the manner in which the executions were carried out caused excitement and disobedience among the victims, so that the Kommandos were forced to restore order by means of violence.

COL. POKROVSKY: What do you mean by “restore order by means of violence”? What do you mean by suppression of the excitement amongst the victims by means of violence?

OHLENDORF: If, as I have already said, in order to carry out the liquidation in an orderly fashion it was necessary, for example, to resort to beating.

COL. POKROVSKY: Was it absolutely necessary to beat the victims?

OHLENDORF: I myself never witnessed it, but I heard of it.

COL. POKROVSKY: From whom?

OHLENDORF: In conversations with members of other Kommandos.

COL. POKROVSKY: You said that cars, autocars, were used for the executions?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL. POKROVSKY: Do you know where, and with whose assistance, the inventor, Becker, was able to put his invention into practice?

OHLENDORF: I remember only that it was done through Amt II of the RSHA; but I can no longer say that with certainty.

COL. POKROVSKY: How many were executed in these cars?

OHLENDORF: I did not understand the question.

COL. POKROVSKY: How many persons were executed by means of these cars?

OHLENDORF: I cannot give precise figures, but the number was comparatively very small—perhaps a few hundred.

COL. POKROVSKY: You said that mostly women and children were executed in these vans. For what reason?

OHLENDORF: That was a special order from Himmler to the effect that women and children were not to be exposed to the mental strain of the executions; and thus the men of the Kommandos, mostly married men, should not be compelled to aim at women and children.

COL. POKROVSKY: Did anybody observe the behavior of the persons executed in these vans?

OHLENDORF: Yes, the doctor.

COL. POKROVSKY: Did you know that Becker had reported that death in these vans was particularly agonizing?

OHLENDORF: No. I learned of Becker’s reports for the first time from the letter to Rauff, which was shown to me here. On the contrary, I know from the doctor’s reports that the victims were not conscious of their impending death.

COL. POKROVSKY: Did any military units—I mean, Army units—take part in these mass executions?

OHLENDORF: As a rule, no.

COL. POKROVSKY: And as an exception?

OHLENDORF: I think I remember that in Nikolaiev and in Simferopol a spectator from the Army High Command was present for a short time.

COL. POKROVSKY: For what purpose?

OHLENDORF: I don’t know, probably to obtain information personally.

COL. POKROVSKY: Were military units assigned to carry out the executions in these towns?

OHLENDORF: Officially, the Army did not assign any units for this purpose; the Army as such was actually opposed to the liquidation.

COL. POKROVSKY: But in practice?

OHLENDORF: Individual units occasionally volunteered. However, at the moment I know of no such case among the Army itself, but only among the units attached to the Army (Heeresgefølge).

COL. POKROVSKY: You were the man by whose orders people were sent to their death. Were Jews only handed over for the execution by the Einsatzgruppe or were Communists—“Communist officials” you call them in your instructions—handed over for execution along with the Jews?

OHLENDORF: Yes, activists and political commissars. Mere membership in the Communist Party was not sufficient to persecute or kill a man.

COL. POKROVSKY: Were any special investigations made concerning the part played by persons in the Communist Party?

OHLENDORF: No, I said on the contrary that mere membership of the Communist Party was not, in itself, a determining factor in persecuting or executing a man; he had to have a special political function.

COL. POKROVSKY: Did you have any discussions on the murder vans sent from Berlin and on their use?

OHLENDORF: I did not understand the question.

COL. POKROVSKY: Had you occasion to discuss, with your chiefs and your colleagues, the fact that motor vans had been sent to your own particular Einsatzgruppe from Berlin for carrying out the executions? Do you remember any such discussions?

OHLENDORF: I do not remember any specific discussion.

COL. POKROVSKY: Had you any information concerning the fact that members of the execution squad in charge of the executions were unwilling to use the vans?

OHLENDORF: I knew that the Einsatzkommandos were using these vans.

COL. POKROVSKY: No, I had something else in mind. I wanted to know whether you received reports that members of the execution squads were unwilling to use the vans and preferred other means of execution?

OHLENDORF: That they would rather kill by means of the gas vans than by shooting?

COL. POKROVSKY: On the contrary, that they preferred execution by shooting to killing by means of the gas vans.

OHLENDORF: Yes, I have already said that the gas van . . .

COL. POKROVSKY: And why did they prefer execution by shooting to killing in the gas vans?

OHLENDORF: Because, as I have already said, in the opinion of the leader of the Einsatzkommandos, the unloading of the corpses was an unnecessary mental strain.

COL. POKROVSKY: What do you mean by “an unnecessary mental strain”?

OHLENDORF: As far as I can remember the conditions at that time—the picture presented by the corpses and probably because certain functions of the body had taken place leaving the corpses lying in filth.

COL. POKROVSKY: You mean to say that the sufferings endured prior to death were clearly visible on the victims? Did I understand you correctly?

OHLENDORF: I don’t understand the question; do you mean during the killing in the van?

COL. POKROVSKY: Yes.

OHLENDORF: I can only repeat what the doctor told me, that the victims were not conscious of their death in the van.

COL. POKROVSKY: In that case your reply to my previous question, that the unloading of the bodies made a very terrible impression on the members of the execution squad, becomes entirely incomprehensible.

OHLENDORF: And, as I said, the terrible impression created by the position of corpses themselves, and by the state of the vans which had probably been dirtied and so on.

Source: Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. IV, pp. 311–334.

124. *EINSATZGRUPPEN*: EXCERPTS FROM AFFIDAVIT JUNE 6, 1947, OF PAUL BLOBEL REGARDING ACTIVITIES ON *SONDERKOMMANDO 4 A*, JUNE 1941–JANUARY 1942

Paul Blobel was in command of an Einsatzkommando (called in this affidavit a Sonderkommando) that was part of Einsatzgruppe C. Einsatzgruppen were mobile killing units that followed the German armies into Russia, tasked with the job of killing Jews and communists. There were four such units (A through D), each with approximately 750 men. An Einsatzkommando was a subunit of men within the larger Einsatzgruppe. In the affidavit that follows, Blobel estimates that his Einsatzkommando, namely, 4A, was responsible for the killing of 10,000 to 15,000 men, women, and children, most of whom were Jewish. In addition to describing the procedure by which the killings took place, Blobel states that in September 1941 his Einsatzkommando, along with others from Einsatzgruppe C, carried out the infamous execution that took place at Babi Yar, a huge natural ravine in the outskirts of Kiev that became the killing ground for 33,771 Jewish men, women, and children, executed over a two-day period.

5. During the period of my service as chief of the Sonderkommando 4 A, from the time of its organization in June 1941 until January 1942, I was assigned, at various occasions, with the execution of Communists, saboteurs, Jews, and other undesirable persons. I can no longer remember the exact number of the executed persons. According to a superficial estimate—the correctness of which I cannot guarantee—I presume that the number of executions in which the Sonderkommando 4 A took a part lies somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000.

6. I witnessed several mass executions, and in two cases I was ordered to direct the execution. In August or September 1941 an execution took place near Korosten. 700 to 1,000

men were shot, and Dr. Dr. RASCH was present at the execution. I had divided my unit into a number of execution squads of 30 men each. First, the subordinated police of the Ukrainian militia, the population and the members of the Sonderkommando seized the people, and mass graves were prepared. Out of the total number of the persons designated for the execution, 15 men were led in each case to the brink of the mass grave, where they had to kneel down, their faces turned toward the grave. At that time, clothes and valuables were not yet collected. Later on this was changed. The execution squads were composed of men of the Sonderkommando 4 A, the militia and the police. When the men were ready for the execution one of my leaders who was in charge of this execution squad gave the order to shoot. Since they were kneeling on the brink of the mass grave, the victims fell, as a rule, at once into the mass grave. I have always used rather large execution squads, since I declined to use men who were specialists for shots in the neck (Genickschusspezialisten). Each squad shot for about one hour, and was then replaced. The persons which still had to be shot, were assembled near the place of the execution, and were guarded by members of those squads, which at that moment did not take part in the executions. I supervised personally the execution which I have described here, and I saw to it that no encroachments took place.

7. The Sonderkommando 4 A has killed women and children, too. In September or October 1941 the Einsatzgruppe C under Dr. Dr. RASCH placed a gas van at my disposal, and one execution was carried out by means of that van. This was a 3 ton truck which could be sealed hermetically, and held about 30 to 40 people. After about 7 or 8 minutes all persons in this truck who were exposed to the poisonous gases, were dead. I personally saw the corpses, when they were unloaded from the gas van.

8. During the last days of September 1941 the Sonderkommando 4 A in cooperation with the group staff of the Einsatzgruppe C and two units of the police regiments stationed in Kiew, carried out the mass execution of Jews in Kiew. I think that the figure of 33771, mentioned to me as the number of persons executed in Kiew is too high. In my opinion not more than half of the mentioned figure were shot.

* * * * *

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. IV, pp. 211–213, Doc. NO-3824.

125. EINSATZGRUPPEN: AFFIDAVIT JULY 2, 1947, OF ERNST BIBERSTEIN REGARDING EINSATZKOMMANDO 6, SEPTEMBER 1942–JUNE 1943

Ernst Biberstein was in command of an Einsatzkommando that was part of Einsatzgruppe C. Einsatzgruppen were mobile killing units that followed the German armies into Russia, tasked with the job of killing Jews and communists. There were four such units (A through D), each with approximately 750 men. An Einsatzkommando was a subunit of men within the larger Einsatzgruppe. In the affidavit that follows, Biberstein attests to the killing actions of his unit, Einsatzkommando 6. The affidavit begins with a review of his earlier years, including his study in theology, and his rise through the military ranks. Then comes a statement that 2,000 to 3,000 people were killed by him and his men. Most of the executions took place in a specially configured truck that contained a sealed compartment which held 50 to 60 people. The exhaust from the truck was directed into the compartment. While the truck made its way to a large grave that had been dug by members of Biberstein's Einsatzkommando, the victims died of carbon monoxide asphyxiation. He also describes executions by firearms. Biberstein notes that at neither type of execution was a physician present to confirm that all victims were dead.

AFFIDAVIT OF ERNST BIBERSTEIN, 2 JULY 1947

I, Ernst Emil Heinrich Biberstein, swear, state, and declare—

1. I was born on 15 February 1899 in Hilchenbach in the district of Siegen-Westphalia. Originally my surname was Szymanowski. I attended the elementary school in Muehlheim on the Ruhr and in Neumuenster-Holstein, and afterwards a classical high school where I passed my final examination in 1917. From 1917 until March 1919 I served with the army as a private in the infantry. From March 1919 to 1921 I studied protestant theology. I passed my first theological examination in April 1921 and then went for 6 months to a preachers' seminary; after that I was a curate for 12 months. My first post as a pastor I got on 28 December 1924 in Kating Schleswig-Holstein, which I held until November 1927. From then on until November 1933 I was a pastor in Kaltenkirchen Schleswig-Holstein, in the district of Begeberg. From November 1933 until August 1935, I was "Kirchenprobst" or "Superintendent" [presiding minister of

the Provincial Protestant Church] in Bad Segeberg, Holstein. In August 1935 I was called to the Reich Ministry of Church Affairs in Berlin as a theological expert where I functioned until I was drafted in the army on 10 March 1940. In the army I took part in the Holland and France campaigns as a corporal. On 22 October 1940 I was draft deferred by the Reich Plenipotentiary of Internal Administration and was assigned to the Chief of the Security Police and of the SD. Taking effect 1 June 1941 and up to June 1942, I was head of the state police station of Oppeln. In June 1942 I was sent to Russia as leader of the Einsatzkommando 6 under Einsatzgruppe C in Kiev. However, my departure for Russia was delayed until September 1942. Between June 1943 and early 1944 I was unattached. From February 1944 until April 1945, I was working in the Economic Department of the Supreme Commissioner in Trieste. From there I returned to Neumuenster where I was arrested on 1 July 1945.

2. I have been a member of the NSDAP since 1926, my Party number being 40,718. I have been a member of the SS since 13 September 1936 with an SS member's number 272, 692. From 1934 until 1935 I was "Kreisschulungsleiter" [Party indoctrination director] in Bad Segeberg.

3. During my time of office as commander of Einsatzkommando 6, between September 1942 and June 1943 about 2,000 to 3,000 executions were performed in the area of my Einsatzkommando. I personally superintended an execution in Rostov which was performed by means of a gas truck. The persons destined for death—after their money and valuables, sometimes the clothes also, had been taken from them—were loaded into the gas truck which held between 50 and 60 people. The truck was then driven to a place outside the town where members of the Kommando had already dug a mass grave. I myself saw the unloading of the dead bodies, their faces were in no way distorted, death came to these people without any outward signs of spasms. There was no physician present at unloading to certify that the people were really dead. The gas truck was driven by the driver Sackenreuter of Nuernberg who had been most carefully instructed about the handling of the gas truck, having been through special training courses.

4. During my time of office as chief of Einsatzkommando 6, I had two officers for the administration, first, 1st Lieutenant Niegbur and afterwards 2d Lieutenant Homann. The latter told me one day that the Einsatzkommando had a surplus of 100,000 marks derived from people to be executed who had to hand over their money and valuables.

5. Since my Einsatzkommando was operating in various towns where there were sometimes only few persons up for

execution at a time, the gas truck was not used always. I also witnessed an execution carried out with firearms. The persons to be executed had to kneel down on the edge of a grave and members of my Kommando shot them in the back of the neck with an automatic pistol. The persons thus killed mostly dropped straight into the pit. I had no special expert for these shots in the neck. No physician was present either at this form of execution.

6. From my time of office as chief of the state police station in Oppeln I know that "top secret" orders had been issued to the effect that we had to detach men for searching for Bolshevik agitators in prisoner-of-war camps. These men selected by these Kommandos were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. I do not know what happened to them in Auschwitz.

I have made the foregoing deposition consisting of three (3) pages in the German language and declare that it is the full truth to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have had the opportunity to make alterations and corrections in the above statement, and I made this declaration voluntarily without any promise of reward and I was not subjected to any duress or threat whatever.

Nuernberg, 2 July 1947 [Signed] ERNST BIBERSTEIN

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. IV, pp. 209–211, Doc. NO-4314.

126. EINSATZGRUPPEN: AFFIDAVIT OF NOVEMBER 10, 1945, OF HERMANN GRAEBE REGARDING EINSATZGRUPPEN KILLINGS, OCTOBER 5, 1942

This affidavit given by Hermann Friedrich Graebe, an engineer in the Ukraine, is a detailed eyewitness account of the mass murder of Jews by an Einsatzgruppe unit. Einsatzgruppen were mobile killing units that followed the German armies into Russia, tasked with the job of killing Jews and communists. His account of the shooting of victims in a large pit, with layers of bodies stacked up one over another, compares with all such other accounts by eyewitnesses, perpetrators, and survivors. However, Graebe's description of the Jews

while they waited—stripped of all clothing and valuables—for their execution provides an insight that few other accounts offer. It confirms that for the most part the Jews went quietly to their death and also confirms the explanation given by the few survivors of these mass killings that the calm was a matter of maintaining dignity and providing comfort and support for family members facing the same fate.

Before me, Homer B. Crawford, being authorized to administer oaths, personally appeared Hermann Friedrich Graebe, who, being by me duly sworn through the interpreter Elisabeth Radziejewska, made and subscribed the following statement:

I, Hermann Friedrich Graebe, declare under oath:

From September 1941 until January 1944 I was manager and engineer-in-charge of a branch office in Sdolbunow, Ukraine, of the Solingen building firm of Josef Jung. In this capacity it was my job to visit the building sites of the firm. Under contract to an Army Construction Office, the firm had orders to erect grain storage buildings on the former airport of Dubno, Ukraine.

On 5 October 1942, when I visited the building office at Dubno, my foreman Hubert Moennikes of 21 Aussemuehlenweg, Hamburg-Haarburg, told me that in the vicinity of the site, Jews from Dubno had been shot in three large pits, each about 30 meters long and 3 meters deep. About 1500 persons had been killed daily. All of the 5000 Jews who had still been living in Dubno before the pogrom were to be liquidated. As the shootings had taken place in his presence he was still much upset.

Thereupon I drove to the site, accompanied by Moennikes and saw near it great mounds of earth, about 30 meters long and 2 meters high. Several trucks stood in front of the mounds. Armed Ukrainian militia drove the people off the trucks under the supervision of an SS-man. The militia men acted as guards on the trucks and drove them to and from the pit. All these people had the regulation yellow patches on the front and back of their clothes, and thus could be recognized as Jews.

Moennikes and I went directly to the pits. Nobody bothered us. Now I heard rifle shots in quick succession, from behind one of the earth mounds. The people who had got off the trucks—men, women, and children of all ages—had to undress upon the order of an SS-man, who carried a riding or dog whip. They had to put down their clothes in fixed places, sorted according to shoes, top clothing and underclothing. I saw a heap of shoes of about 800 to 1000 pairs, great piles of under-linen and clothing. Without screaming

or weeping these people undressed, stood around in family groups, kissed each other, said farewells and waited for a sign from another SS-man, who stood near the pit, also with a whip in his hand. During the 15 minutes that I stood near the pit I heard no complaint or plea for mercy. I watched a family of about 8 persons, a man and woman, both about 50 with their children of about 1, 8 and 10, and two grown-up daughters of about 20 to 24. An old woman with snow-white hair was holding the one-year old child in her arms and singing to it, and tickling it. The child was cooing with delight. The couple were looking on with tears in their eyes. The father was holding the hand of a boy about 10 years old and speaking to him softly; the boy was fighting his tears. The father pointed toward the sky, stroked his head, and seemed to explain something to him. At that moment the SS-man at the pit shouted something to his comrade. The latter counted off about 20 persons and instructed them to go behind the earth mound. Among them was the family, which I have mentioned. I well remember a girl, slim and with black hair, who, as she passed close to me, pointed to herself and said, "23". I walked around the mound, and found myself confronted by a tremendous grave. People were closely wedged together and lying on top of each other so that only their heads were visible. Nearly all had blood running over their shoulders from their heads. Some of the people shot were still moving. Some were lifting their arms and turning their heads to show that they were still alive. The pit was already 2/3 full. I estimated that it already contained about 1000 people. I looked for the man who did the shooting. He was an SS-man, who sat at the edge of the narrow end of the pit, his feet dangling into the pit. He had a tommy gun on his knees and was smoking a cigarette. The people, completely naked, went down some steps which were cut in the clay wall of the pit and clambered over the heads of the people lying there, to the place to which the SS-man directed them. They lay down in front of the dead or injured people; some caressed those who were still alive and spoke to them in a low voice. Then I heard a series of shots. I looked into the pit and saw that the bodies were twitching or the heads lying already motionless on top of the bodies that lay before them. Blood was running from their necks. I was surprised that I was not ordered away, but I saw that there were two or three postmen in uniform nearby. The next batch was approaching already. They went down into the pit, lined themselves up against the previous victims and were shot. When I walked back, round the mound I noticed another truckload of people which had just arrived. This time it included sick and infirm people. An old, very thin woman with terribly thin legs was undressed by

others who were already naked, while two people held her up. The woman appeared to be paralyzed. The naked people carried the woman around the mound. I left with Moennikes and drove in my car back to Dubno.

On the morning of the next day, when I again visited the site, I saw about 30 naked people lying near the pit—about 30 to 50 meters away from it. Some of them were still alive; they looked straight in front of them with a fixed stare and seemed to notice neither the chilliness of the morning nor the workers of my firm who stood around. A girl of about 20 spoke to me and asked me to give her clothes, and help her escape. At that moment we heard a fast car approach and I noticed that it was an SS-detail. I moved away to my site. 10 minutes later we hear shots from the vicinity of the pit. The Jews still alive had been ordered to throw the corpses into the pit—then they had themselves to lie down in this to be shot in the neck.

I make the above statement at Wiesbaden, Germany, on 10th November 1945. I swear before God that this is the absolute truth.

Hermann Friedrich Graebe

Subscribed and sworn to before me at Wiesbaden, Germany, this 10 day of November 1945.

Homer B. Crawford
Major, AC
Investigator Examiner, War Crimes Branch

I, Elisabeth Radziejewska, being first duly sworn, state: That I truly translated the oath administered by Major Homer B. Crawford to Hermann Friedrich Graebe and that thereupon he made and subscribed the foregoing statement in my presence.

Elisabeth Radziejewska
Interpreter

Subscribed and sworn to before me at Wiesbaden, Germany, this 10 day of November 1945.

Homer B. Crawford, Major, AC
Investigator Examiner, War Crimes Branch

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 696–699, Doc. 2992-PS.

127. SPEECH BY HANS FRANK TO HIS CABINET, KRAKOW, DECEMBER 16, 1941

Hans Frank was the governor-general of the Generalgouvernement, that portion of German-occupied Poland that was not incorporated into the Reich. Its Jewish population, as Frank observes in this excerpt from a speech he made, was in excess of 2.5 million Jews. This speech is particularly significant because it represents one of the first times the extermination—not just relocation or ghettoization—of the Jews is discussed in such straightforward language, making it absolutely clear that annihilation of the Jews is now the policy of the Reich. An interesting reference is made by Frank to an upcoming conference that will take place in Berlin to discuss the extermination process. That conference is the Wannsee Conference, which would be held in Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin, on January 20, 1942. This is made clear by Frank's statements that Dr. Bühler would attend and Reinhard Heydrich would chair the conference: both are true of the Wannsee Conference.

FRANK DIARY, 1941 Oct-Dec.

CABINET SESSION

Tuesday 16 December 1941 in the Government

Building at Krakow

Speech of the Governor General

Closing the Session

[page 76, line 10 to page 77 line 33]

As far as the Jews are concerned, I want to tell you quite frankly that they must be done away with in one way or another. The Führer said once: should united Jewry again succeed in provoking a world war, the blood of not only the nations, which have been forced into the war by them, will be shed, but the Jew will have found his end in Europe. I know that many of the measures carried out against the Jews in the Reich at present are being criticized. It is being tried intentionally, as is obvious from the reports on morale, to talk about cruelty, harshness, etc. Before I continue, I want to beg you to agree with me on the following formula: We will principally have pity on the German people only, and nobody else in the whole world. The others, too, had no pity on us. As an old National Socialist, I must say: This war would only be a partial success if the whole lot of Jewry should survive it, while we would have shed our best blood in order to save Europe. My attitude towards the Jews will, therefore, be based only on the expectation that they must disappear.

They must be done away with. I have entered negotiations to have them deported to the East. A great discussion concerning that question will take place in Berlin in January to which I am going to delegate the State-Secretary Dr. Bühler. That discussion is to take place in the Reich-Security Main-Office with SS-Lt. General Heydrich. A great Jewish migration will begin in any case.

But what should be done with the Jews? Do you think they will be settled down in the "Ostland," in villages? [Siedlungdoerfer]? This is what we were told in Berlin: Why all the bother? We can do nothing with them either in the "Ostland" nor in the "Reichkommissariat." So, liquidate them yourself.

Gentlemen, I must ask you to rid yourself of all feeling of pity. We must annihilate the Jews, wherever we find them and wherever it is possible, in order to maintain there the structure of the Reich as a whole. This will, naturally, be achieved by other methods, than those pointed out by Bureau Chief Dr. Hummel. Nor can the judges of the Special Courts be made responsible for it, because of the limitations of the framework of the legal procedure. Such outdated views cannot be applied to such gigantic and unique events. We must find at any rate a way which leads to the goal, and my thoughts are working in that direction.

The Jews represent for us also extra-ordinarily malignant gluttons. We have now approximately 2,500,000 of them in the General Government, perhaps with the Jewish mixtures and everything that goes with it, 3,500,000 Jews. We cannot shoot or poison those 3,500,000 Jews, but we shall nevertheless be able to take measures which will lead, somehow, to their annihilation, and this in connection with the gigantic measures to be determined in discussions in the Reich. The General Government must become free of Jews, the same as the Reich. Where and how this is to be achieved is a matter for the offices which we must appoint and create here. Their activities will be brought to your attention in due course.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. IV, pp. 891–892, Doc. 2233-D-PS.

128. THE WANNSEE PROTOCOL, JANUARY 20, 1942

This record of the meeting held at the Wannsee House in January 1942 after the July 1941 invasion of Soviet Russia

(Operation Barbarossa) is actually a summary of events already in place. Convened by SS-Obergruppenführer and Chief of the Security Police Reinhard Heydrich, the actual minute taker was SS Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, with 13 other lesser-level functionaries in attendance. Basing itself upon a presumption of 11,000,000 Jews still alive in Europe, discussion was focused on "preparations for the final solution of the Jewish question" regarding emigration and evacuation as well as "the problem of mixed marriages and persons of mixed blood" [sic] including sterilization. While discussions of murder were not specifically held (i.e., recorded) nor were any references made to the various extermination camps (Vernichtungslager) and death camps (Todeslager) already active, these is no doubt that these were also on the minds of the participants. The only copy extant of the 30 copies that were made of this record was found during preparation for the Nuremberg Trials.

Stamp: Top Secret
30 copies / 16th copy
Minutes of discussion.

I. The following persons took part in the discussion about the final solution of the Jewish question which took place in Berlin, am Grossen Wannsee No. 56/58 on 20 January 1942:

Gauleiter Dr. MEYER and Reichsamtsleiter Dr. LEIBBRANDT Under Secretary of State Dr. STUCKART Under Secretary of State NEUMANN Under Secretary of State Dr. FREISLER Under Secretary of State Dr. BUEHLER Unterstaatssakretaer LUTHER SS-Oberfuehrer KLOPFER Minsterialdirektor KRITZINGER	Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories Reich Ministry for the Interior Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan Reich Ministry of Justice Office of the General Government Foreign Office Party Chancellery Reich Chancellery
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(handwritten note):
D III. 29 Top Secret.

SS-Gruppenfuehrer HOFMANN SS-Gruppenführer MUELLER	Race and Settlement Main Office Reich Main Security Office
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SS-Obersturmbannführer
EICHMANN

SS-Oberführer Security Police and SD
Dr. SCHOENGARTH

Chief of the Security Police
and the

SD in the Government General

SS-Sturmbannführer Security Police and SD
Dr. LANGE

Commander of the Security
Police

and the SD for the General-
District Latvia,

Latvia, as deputy of the

Commander
of the Security Police and the SD

for the Reich Commissariat
“Eastland”.

II. At the beginning of the discussion SS-Obergruppenführer HEYDRICH gave information that the Reich Marshal had appointed him delegate for the preparations for the final solution of the Jewish problem in Europe and pointed out that this discussion had been called for the purpose of clarifying fundamental questions. The wish of the Reich Marshal to have a draft sent to him concerning organisational, factual and material interests in relation to the final solution of the Jewish problem in Europe, makes necessary an initial common action of all central offices immediately concerned with these questions in order to bring their general activities into line.

He said that the Reichs Führer-SS and the Chief of the German Police (Chief of the Security Police and the SD) was entrusted with the official central handling of the final solution of the Jewish problem without regard to geographic borders.

The Chief of the Security Police and the SD then gave a short report of the struggle which has been carried on against this enemy, the essential points being the following:

- a) the expulsion of the Jews from every sphere of life of the German people,
- b) the expulsion of the Jews from the Lebensraum of the German people.

In carrying out these efforts, an increased and planned acceleration of the emigration of Jews from the Reich territory was started, as the only possible present solution.

By order of the Reich Marshal, a Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration was set up in January 1939 and the Chief of the Security Police and SD was entrusted with the management. Its most important tasks were

- a) to make all necessary arrangements for the preparation for an increased emigration of the Jews,
- b) to direct the flow of immigration,
- c) to hurry up the procedure of emigration in each individual case.

The aim of all this being that of clearing the German Lebensraum of Jews in a legal way.

All the Offices realized the drawbacks of such enforced accelerated emigration. For the time being they had, however, tolerated it on account of the lack of other possible solutions of the problem.

The work concerned with emigration was, later on, not only a German problem, but also a problem with which the authorities of the countries to which the flow of emigrants was being directed would have to deal. Financial difficulties, such as the demand for increasing sums of money to be presented at the time of the landing on the part of various foreign governments, the lack of shipping space, increasing restriction of entry permits, or the cancelling of such, extraordinarily increased the difficulties of emigration. In spite of these difficulties 53, 000 Jews were sent out of the country between the day of the seizure of power and the deadline of 31 October 1941. Of these as from 30 January from

Germany proper approx.	360,000
from 15 March 1938 from Austria (Ostmark)	147,000
appr.	
from 15 1939 from the Protectorate, Bohemia and Moravia	appr. 30,000

The Jews themselves, or rather their Jewish political organizations financed the emigration. In order to avoid the possibility of the impoverished Jews staying behind, action was taken to make the wealthy Jews finance the evacuation of the needy Jews, this was arranged by imposing a suitable tax, i.e. an emigration-tax which was used for the financial arrangements in connection with the emigration of poor Jews, and was imposed according to a ladder system.

Apart from the necessary Reichmark-exchange, foreign currency had to be presented at the time of landing. In order to save foreign exchange held by Germany, the Jewish financial establishments in foreign countries were—with the help

of Jewish organizations in Germany—made responsible for arranging an adequate amount of foreign currency. Up to 30 October 1941, these foreign Jews donated approx. \$9,500,000 dollars.

In the meantime the Reich Fuehrer-SS and Chief of the German Police had prohibited emigration of Jews for reasons of the dangers of an emigration during war-time and consideration of the possibilities in the East.

III. Another possible solution of the problem has now taken the place of emigration, i.e. the evacuation of the Jews to the East, provided the Fuehrer agrees to this plan.

Such activities are, however, to be considered as provisional actions, but practical experience is already being collected which is of greatest importance in relation to the future final solution of the Jewish problem.

Approx. 11,000,000 Jews will be involved in the final solution of the European problem, they are distributed as follows among the individual countries:

Country	Number
A. Germany proper	131,800
Austria	43,700
Eastern territories	420,000
Government General	2,284,000
Bialystok	400,000
Protectorate Bohemia & Moravia	74,200
Estonia - no Jews -	
Latvia	3,500
Lithuania	34,000
Belgium	43,000
Denmark	5,600
France / Occupied France	165,000
Unoccupied France	700,000
Greece	69,600
Netherlands	160,800
Norway	1,300
B. Bulgaria	48,000
England	330,000
Finland	2,300
Ireland	4,000
Italy, incl. Sardinia	58,000
Albania	200
Croatia	40,000
Portugal	43,000
Roumania, incl. Bessarabia	342,000
Sweden	8,000

Switzerland	18,000
Serbia	10,000
Slovakia	88,000
Spain	6,000
Turkey (European Turkey)	55,500
Hungary	742,800
USSR	5,000,000
Ukraine	2,994,684
White Russia, with exception of Bialystok	446,484
Total over	11,000,000

The number of Jews given here for foreign countries includes, however, only those Jews who still adhere to the Jewish faith as the definition of the term “Jew” according to racial principles is still partially missing there. The handling of the problem in the individual countries will meet with difficulties due to the attitude and conception of the people there, especially in Hungary and Roumania. Thus, even today the Jew can buy documents in Hungary which will officially prove his foreign citizenship.

The influence of the Jews in all walks of life in the USSR is well known. Approximately 5 million Jews are living in the European Russia, and in Asiatic Russia scarcely 1/4 million.

The breakdown of Jews residing in the European part of the USSR, according to trades, was approximately as follows;

in agriculture	9.1%
communal workers	14.8%
in trade	20.0%
employed by the state	23.4%
in private occupations	
such as medical profession, newspapers, theater, etc.	32.7%

Under proper guidance the Jews are now to be allocated for labor to the East in the course of the final solution. Able-bodied Jews will be taken in large labor columns to these districts for work on roads, separated according to sexes, in the course of which action a great part will undoubtedly be eliminated by natural causes.

The possible final remnant will, as it must undoubtedly consist of the toughest, have to be treated accordingly, as it is the product of natural selection and would, if liberated, act as a bud cell of a new Jewish reconstruction (see historical experience.)

In the course of the practical execution of this final settlement of the problem, Europe will be cleaned up from West to East. Germany proper, including the protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, will have to be handled first because of reasons of housing and other social-political necessities.

The evacuated Jews will first be sent, group by group, to so-called transit-ghettos from which they will be taken to the East.

SS-Obergruppenfuehrer HEYDRICH went on to say that an important provision for the evacuation as such is the exact definition of the group of persons concerned in the matter.

It is intended not to evacuate Jews of more than 65 years of age but to send them to an old-age-ghetto—Theresienstadt is being considered for this purpose.

Next to these age-groups—of the 280,000 Jews still in Germany proper and Austria on 31 October 1941, approximately 30% are over 65; Jews disabled on active duty and Jews with war-decorations (Iron Cross I) will be accepted in Jewish old-age-ghettos.

Through such expedient solution the numerous interventions will be eliminated with one blow.

The carrying out of each single evacuation project of a larger extent will start at a time to be determined chiefly by the military development. Regarding the handling of the final solution in the European countries occupied and influenced by us it was suggested that the competent officials of the Foreign Office working on these questions confer with the competent “Referenten” from the Security Police and SD.

In Slovakia and Croatia the difficulties arising from this question have been considerably reduced, as the most essential problems in this field have already been brought to a near solution. In Roumania the Government in the meantime has also appointed a commissioner for Jewish questions. In order to settle the question in Hungary it is imperative that an adviser in Jewish questions be press upon the Hungarian government without too much delay.

As regards the taking of preparatory steps to settle the question in Italy SS-Obergruppenfuehrer HEYDRICH considers it opportune to contact the chief of the police with a view to these problems.

In the occupied and unoccupied parts of France the registration of the Jews for evacuation can in all probability be expected to take place without great difficulties.

Assistant Under Secretary of State LUTHER in this connection calls attention to the fact that in some countries, such as the Scandinavian states, difficulties will arise if these

problems are dealt with thoroughly and that it will be therefore advisable to defer actions in these countries.

Besides, considering the small numbers of Jews to be evacuated from these countries this deferment means no essential limitation.

On the other hand, the Foreign Office anticipates no great difficulties as far as the South-East and West of Europe are concerned.

SS-Gruppenfuehrer HOFMANN plans to send an official from the Race and Settlement Main Office to Hungary for general orientation at the time when the first active steps to bring up the question in this country will be taken by the Chief of the Security Police and SD. It was determined to detail this official, who is not supposed to work actively, temporarily from the Main Race and Settlement Office as assistant to the police attaché.

IV. The implementation of the final solution-problem is supposed to a certain extent to be based on the Nuremberg Laws, in which connection also the solution of the problems presented by the mixed-marriages and the persons of mixed blood is seen to be conditional to an absolutely final clarification of the question.

The Chief of the Security Police and the SD first discussed, with reference to a letter from the Chief of the Reich Chancellery, the following points theoretically:

1) Treatment of Persons of Mixed Blood of the first Degree.

Persons of mixed blood of the first degree will, as regards the final solution of the Jewish question, be treated as Jews. From this treatment the following persons will be exempt:

- a) Persons of mixed blood of the first degree married to persons of German blood if their marriage has resulted in children (persons of mixed blood of the second degree). Such persons of mixed blood of the second degree are to be treated essentially as Germans.
- b) Persons of mixed blood of the first degree to whom up till now in any sphere of life whatsoever exemption licenses have been issued by the highest Party or State authorities.

Each individual case must be examined, in which process it will still be possible that a decision unfavorable to the persons of mixed blood can be passed.

In any such case only personal essential merit of the person of mixed blood must be deemed a ground justifying the

granting of an exemption. (Not merits of the parent or of the partner of German blood.)

Any person of mixed blood of the first degree to whom exemption from the evacuation is granted will be sterilized—in order to eliminate the possibility of offspring and to secure a final solution of the problem presented by the persons of mixed blood. The sterilization will take place on a voluntary basis. But it will be conditional to a permission to stay in the Reich. Following the sterilizations the “person of mixed blood” liberated from all restrictive regulations which have so far been imposed upon him.

2) Treatment of Persons of Mixed Blood of the Second Degree

Persons of mixed blood of the second degree will fundamentally be treated as persons of German blood, with the exception of the following cases in which persons of mixed blood of the second degree will be treated as Jews:

- a) The person of mixed blood of the second degree is the result of a marriage where both parents are persons of mixed blood.
- b) The general appearance of the person of mixed blood of the second degree is racially particularly objectionable so that he already outwardly must be included among the Jews.
- c) The person of mixed blood of the second degree has a particularly bad police and political record sufficient to reveal that he feels and behaves like a Jew.

But also in these cases exceptions are not to be made if the person of mixed blood of the second degree is married to a person of German blood.

3) Marriages between Full Jews and Persons of German Blood.

Here it must be decided from one individual case to another whether the Jewish partner is to be evacuated, or whether in consideration of the effects produced by such measure upon the German relatives of the mixed marriage he is to be committed to a ghetto for aged Jews.

4) Marriages between Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree and Persons of German Blood.

a) Without Children.

If no children have resulted from the marriage the parents of mixed blood of the first degree will be evacuated

or committed to a ghetto for old Jews. (The same treatment as in the case of marriages between full Jews and persons of German blood, Point 3.)

b) With Children.

If the marriage has resulted in children (persons of mixed blood of the second degree) these children will be evacuated or committed to a ghetto together with the parents of mixed blood of the first degree, if they are to be treated as Jews. If the children are to be treated as Germans (regular cases) they will be exempt from evacuation and in that case the same applies to the parent of mixed blood of the first degree.

5) Marriages between Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree and Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree or Jews.

In the case of these marriages (including the children) all members of the family will be treated as Jews, therefore evacuated or committed to a ghetto for old Jews.

6) Marriages between Persons of Mixed Blood of the First Degree and Persons of Mixed Blood of the Second Degree.

Both partners will be evacuated, regardless of whether or not they have children, or committed to a ghetto for old Jews, since as a rule these children will racially reveal the ad-mixture of Jewish blood more strongly than person of mixed blood of the second degree.

SS-Gruppenfuehrer HOFMANN advocates the opinion that sterilization must be applied on a large scale; in particular as the person of mixed blood

Placed before the alternative as whether to be evacuated or to be sterilized would rather submit to the sterilization.

Under Secretary of State Dr. STUCKART maintains that the possible solutions enumerated above for a clarification of the problems presented by mixed marriages and by persons of mixed blood when translated into practice in this form would involve endless administrative work. In the second place, as the biological facts cannot be disregarded in any case, it was suggested by Dr. STUCKART to proceed to forced sterilization.

Further, for the purpose of simplifying the problem of mixed marriages it would be required to consider how it would be possible to attain the object that the legislator can declare: “This marriage has been dissolved.”

Regarding the question of the effects produced by the evacuation of the Jews on the economic life, Under Secretary

of State NEUMANN declared that the Jews assigned to work in plants of importance for the war could not be evacuated as long as no replacement was available.

SS-Obergruppenfuehrer HEYDRICH pointed out that besides, according to the directives approved by him governing the carrying out of the evacuation program in operation at that time, these Jews would not be evacuated.

(page 14a of original)

Under Secretary of State Dr. BUEHLER stated that it would be welcomed by the General Government if the implementation of the final solution of this question could start in the General Government, because the transportation problem there was of no predominant importance and the progress of this action would not be hampered by considerations connected with the supply of labor. The Jews had to be removed as quickly as possible from the territory of the Government General because especially there the Jews represented an immense danger as a carrier of epidemics, and on the other hand were permanently contribution to the disorganization of the economic system of the country through black market operations. Moreover, out of the two and a half million to be affected, the majority of cases was unfit for work.

Under Secretary of State BUEHLER further stated that the solution of the Jewish question in the General Government as far as the issuing of orders was concerned was dependent upon the chief of the Security Police and the SD, his work being supported by the administrative authorities of the General Government. He had this one request only, namely that the Jewish question in this territory be solved as quickly as possible.

Towards the end of the conference the various types of possible solutions were discussed; in the course of this discussion Gauleiter Dr. MEYER as well as Under Secretary of State Dr. BUEHLER advocated the view that certain preparatory measures incidental to the carrying out of the final solution ought to be initiated immediately in the very territories under discussion, in which process, however, alarming the population must be avoided.

With the request to the persons present from the Chief of the Security Police and the SD that they lend him appropriate assistance in the carrying out of the tasks involved in the solution, the conference was adjourned.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), vol. VIII, pp. 210–217, Doc. NG-2586.

129. DACHAU: AFFIDAVIT OF NOVEMBER 24, 1945, OF FRANZ BLAHA REGARDING MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS AND MASS MURDERS AT DACHAU, APRIL 1941–APRIL 1945

Franz Blaha was a physician born and practicing in Czechoslovakia until he was sent to the concentration camp at Dachau in April 1941. This affidavit focuses on Blaha's experiences beginning in June 1942, when he was brought on as a surgeon at the hospital in the camp. Required to perform autopsies—some 7,000 of them—Blaha was intimately aware of the medical experiments that were performed at Dachau. These experiments were done in certain areas of inquiry, including malaria; the effects of changing air pressure; the effects of cold water; diseases of the stomach; and the effects of drinking large amounts of saltwater. Blaha confirms that the skin of dead prisoners was used to make various things, such as gloves and handbags. He also saw evidence of cannibalism and confirms executions by injection, gas, and shootings occurring in the camp. Finally, he comments on the horrible conditions in which the prisoners were forced to live. Blaha survived in Dachau until it was liberated in April 1945.

This affidavit is substantially the same as the testimony given by Blaha on direct examination before the International Military Tribunal at Nurnberg, 13–14 January 1946.

Dachau, Germany
24 November, 1945

Affidavit of FRANZ BLAHA

I, Franz Blaha, being duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

1. I studied medicine in Prague, Vienna, Strassburg and Paris and received my diploma in 1920. From 1920 to 1926 I was a clinical assistant. In 1926 I became chief physician of the IgIau Hospital in Moravia, Czechoslovakia. I held this position until 1939 when the Germans entered Czechoslovakia and I was seized as a hostage and held a prisoner for cooperating with the Czech government. I was sent as a prisoner to the Dachau Concentration Camp in April 1941 and remained there until the liberation of the camp in April 1945. Until July 1941 I worked in a Punishment Company. After that I was sent to the hospital and subjected to the experiments in typhoid being conducted by Dr. Muermelstadt. After that I was to be made the subject of an experimental

operation and only succeeded in avoiding this by admitting that I was a physician. If this had been known before I would have suffered because intellectuals were treated very harshly in the Punishment Company. In October 1941 I was sent to work in the herb plantation and later in the laboratory for processing herbs. In June 1942 I was taken into the hospital as a surgeon. Shortly afterwards I was directed to conduct a stomach operation on 20 healthy prisoners. Because I would not do this I was put in the autopsy room where I stayed until April 1945. While there I performed approximately 7,000 autopsies. In all 12,000 autopsies were performed under my direction.

2. From mid 1941 to the end of 1942 some 500 operations on healthy prisoners were performed. These were for the instruction of the SS medical students and doctors and included operations on the stomach, gall bladder, spleen and throat. These were performed by students and doctors of only two years training although they were very dangerous and difficult. Ordinarily they would not have been done except by surgeons with at least four years surgical practice. Many prisoners died on the operating table and many others from later complications. I autopsied all these bodies. The doctors who supervised these operations were Lang, Muermelstadt, Wolter, Ramsauer and Nahr. Standartenfuehrer Dr. Lolling frequently witnessed these operations.

3. During my time at Dachau I was familiar with the many kinds of medical experiments carried on there with human victims. These persons were never volunteers but were forced to submit to such acts. Malaria experiments on about 1,200 people were conducted by Dr. Klaus Schilling between 1941 and 1945. Schilling was personally asked by Himmler to conduct these experiments. The victims were either bitten by mosquitoes or given injections of malaria Sporozoits taken from mosquitoes. Different kinds of treatment were applied including quinine, pyrififer, neosalvarsan, antipyrimin, pyramidon and a drug called 2516 Bohring. I autopsied bodies of people who died from these malaria experiments. 30 to 40 died from the malaria itself. 300 to 400 died later from diseases which were fatal because of the physical condition resulting from the malaria attacks. In addition there were deaths resulting from poisoning due to overdoses of neosalvarsan and pyramidon. Dr. Schilling was present at the time of my autopsies on the bodies of his patients.

4. In 1942 and 1943 experiments on human beings were conducted by Dr. Sigismund Rascher to determine the effects of changing air pressure. As many as 25 persons were put at one time into a specially constructed van in which pressure

could be increased or decreased as required. The purpose was to find out the effects of high altitude and of rapid descents by parachutists. I have seen the people lying unconscious on the floor of the van through a window in the van. Most of the prisoners used died from these experiments from internal hemorrhages of the lungs or brain. The rest coughed blood when taken out. It was my job to take the bodies out and to send the internal organs to Munich for study as soon as they were found to be dead. About 400 to 500 prisoners were experimented on. Those not dead were sent to invalid blocks and liquidated shortly afterwards. Only a few escaped.

5. Rascher also conducted experiments on the effect of cold water on humans. This was done to find a way for reviving aviators who had fallen into the ocean. The subject was placed in ice cold water and kept there until he was unconscious. Blood was taken from his neck and tested each time his body temperature dropped one degree. This drop was determined by a rectal thermometer. Urine was also periodically tested. Some men lasted as long as 24 to 38 hours. The lowest body temperature reached was 19 degrees C, but most men died at 25 degrees C or 26 degrees C. When the men were removed from the ice water attempts were made to revive them by artificial warmth from the sun, from hot water, from electro-therapy or by animal warmth. For this last experiment prostitutes were used and the body of the unconscious man was placed between the bodies of two women. Himmler was present at one such experiment. I could see him from one of the windows in the street between the blocks. I have personally been present at some of these cold water experiments when Rascher was absent and I have seen notes and diagrams on them in Rascher's laboratory. About 300 persons were used in these experiments. The majority died. Of those who lived many were mentally deranged. Those not killed were sent to invalid blocks and were killed just like the victims of the air pressure experiments. I only know two who survived—a Yugoslav and a Pole, both of whom are mental cases.

6. Liver puncture experiments were performed by Dr. Brachtl on healthy people and on people who had diseases of the stomach and gall bladder. For this purpose a needle was jabbed into the liver of a person and a small piece of the liver was extracted. No anaesthetic was used. The experiment is very painful and often had serious results as the stomach or large blood vessels were often punctured resulting in hemorrhage. Many persons died of these tests for which Polish, Russian, Czech and German prisoners were

employed. Altogether these experiments were conducted on about 175 people.

7. Phlegmone experiments were conducted by Dr. Schuetz, Dr. Babor, Dr. Nieselwetter and Professor Lauer. 40 healthy men were used at a time of which 20 were given intra-muscular and 20 intravenous injections of pus from diseased persons. All treatment was forbidden for three days by which time serious inflammation and in many cases general blood poisoning had occurred. Then each group was divided again into groups of 10. Half were given chemical treatment with liquid and special pills every 10 minutes for 24 hours. The rest were treated with sulfanamide and surgery. In some cases all of the limbs were amputated. My autopsy also showed that the chemical treatment had been harmful and had even caused perforations of the stomach wall. For these experiments Polish, Czech and Dutch priests were ordinarily used. Pain was intense in such experiments. Most of the 600 to 800 persons who were used finally died. Most of the others became permanent invalids and were later killed.

8. In the fall of 1944 there were 60 to 80 persons who were subjected to salt water experiments. They were locked in a room and for five days were given nothing to eat but salt water. During this time their urine, blood and excrements were tested. None of these prisoners died, possibly because they received smuggled food from other prisoners. Hungarians and Gypsies were used for these experiments.

9. It was common practice to remove the skin from dead prisoners. I was directed to do this on many occasions. Dr. Rascher and Dr. Wolter in particular asked for this human skin from human backs and chests. It was chemically treated and placed in the sun to dry. After that it was cut into shapes for use as saddles, riding breeches, gloves, house slippers and ladies' handbags. Tattooed skin was especially valued by SS men. Russians, Poles and other inmates were used in this way, but it was forbidden to cut out the skin of a German. This skin had to be from healthy prisoners and free from defects. Sometimes we did not have enough bodies with good skin and Rascher would say, "All right, you will get the bodies." The next day we would receive 20 or 30 bodies of young people. They would have been shot in the neck or struck on the head so that the skin would be uninjured. Also we frequently got requests for the skulls or skeletons of prisoners. In those cases we boiled the skull or the body. Then the soft parts were removed and the bones were bleached and dried and reassembled. In the case of skulls it was important to have a good set of teeth. When we got an order for skulls from Oranienburg the SS men would say, "We will

try to get you some with good teeth." So it was dangerous to have a good skin or good teeth.

10. Transports arrived frequently in Dachau from Studthof, Belsen, Auschwitz, Mauthausen and other camps. Many of these were 10 to 14 days on the way without water or food. On one transport which arrived in November 1942 I found evidence of cannibalism. The living persons had eaten the flesh from the dead bodies. Another transport arrived from Compiègne in France. Professor Limousin of Clermont Ferrand who was later my assistant told me that there had been 2,000 persons on this transport when it started. There was food available but no water. 800 died on the way and were thrown out. When it arrived after 12 days more than 500 persons were dead on the train. Of the remainder most died shortly after arrival. I investigated this transport because the International Red Cross complained and the SS men wanted a report that the deaths had been caused by fighting and rioting on the way. I dissected a number of bodies and found that they had died from suffocation and lack of water. It was mid summer and 120 people had been packed into each car.

11. In 1941 and 1942 we had in the camp what we called invalid transports. These were made up of people who were sick or for some reason incapable of working. We called them Himmelfahrt Commandos. About 100 or 120 were ordered each week to go to the shower baths. There four people gave injections of phenol evipan or benzine which soon caused death. After 1943 these invalids were sent to other camps for liquidation. I know that they were killed because I saw the records and they were marked with a cross and the date that they left which was the way that deaths were ordinarily recorded. This was shown on both the card index of the Camp Dachau and the records in the town of Dachau. 1,000 to 3,000 went away every three months so there were about 5,000 sent to death in 1945 and the same in 1944. In April 1945 a Jewish transport was loaded at Dachau and was left standing on the railroad siding. The railroad was destroyed by bombing and they could not leave. So they were just left there to die from starvation. They were not allowed to get off. When the camp was liberated they were all dead.

12. Many executions by gas or shooting or injections took place right in the camp. The gas chamber was completed in 1944 and I was called by Dr. Rascher to examine the first victims. Of the 8 or 9 persons in the chamber there were three still alive and the remainder appeared to be dead. Their eyes were red and their faces swollen. Many prisoners were later killed in this way. Afterwards they were removed to the

crematorium where I had to examine their teeth for gold. Teeth containing gold were extracted. Many prisoners who were sick were killed by injections while in hospital. Some prisoners killed in the hospital came through to the autopsy room with no name or number on the tag which was usually tied to their big toe. Instead the tag said "Do not dissect". I autopsied some of these and found that they were perfectly healthy but had died from injections. Sometimes prisoners were killed only because they had dysentery or vomited and gave the nurses too much trouble. Mental patients were liquidated by being led to the gas chamber and injected there or shot. Shooting was a common method of execution. Prisoners could be shot just outside the crematorium and carried in. I have seen people pushed into the ovens while they were still breathing and making sounds although if they were too much alive they were usually hit on the head first.

13. The principal executions about which I know from having examined the victims or supervised such examinations are as follows:

In 1942 there were 5,000 to 6,000 Russians held in a separate camp inside Dachau. They were taken on foot to the Military Rifle Range near the camp in groups of 500 or 600 and shot. These groups left the camp about three times a week. At night they would bring them back in carts drawn by prisoners and we would examine them.—In February 1944 about 40 Russian students arrived from Moosburg. I knew a few of the boys in the hospital. I examined them after they were shot outside the crematory.—In September 1944 a group of 94 high ranking Russians were shot including two military doctors who had been working with me in the hospital. I examined their bodies.—In April 1945 a number of prominent people were shot who had been kept in the bunker. They included two French generals whose names I cannot remember. But I recognized them from their uniform. I examined them after they were shot.—In 1944 and 1945 a number of women were killed by hanging, shooting and injections. I examined them and found that in certain cases they were pregnant.—In 1945 just before the camp was liberated all "Nacht und Nebel" prisoners were executed. These were prisoners who were forbidden to have any contact with the outside world. They were kept in a special inclosure and were allowed no mail. There were 30 or 40, some of whom were sick. These were carried to the crematory on stretchers. I examined them and found they had all been shot in the neck.

14. The rooms could not be cleaned because they were too crowded and there was no cleaning material. No baths were

available for months at a time. Latrine facilities were completely inadequate. Medicine was almost non-existent. But I found after the camp was liberated that there was plenty of medicine in the SS hospital for all the camp if it had been given to us for use. New arrivals at the camp were lined up out of doors entirely naked for hours at a time. Sometimes they stood there from morning until night. It did not matter whether this was in the winter or in the summer. This occurred all through 1943, 1944 and the first quarter of 1945. I could see these formations from the window of the autopsy room. Many of the people who had to stand in the cold in this way became ill from pneumonia and died. I had several acquaintances who were killed in this manner during 1944 and 1946. In October 1944 a transport of Hungarians brought spotted fever into the camp and an epidemic began. I examined many of the corpses from this transport and reported the situation to Dr. Hintermayer but was forbidden on penalty of being shot to mention that there was an epidemic in the camp. No preventive measures were taken at all. New healthy arrivals were put into blocks where an epidemic was already present. Also infected persons were put into these blocks. So the 30th Block for instance died out completely three times. Only at Christmas when the epidemic spread into the SS camp was a quarantine established. Nevertheless transports continued to arrive. We had 200 to 300 new typhus cases a day and 100 deaths caused by typhus a day. In all we had 28,000 cases and 15,000 deaths. In addition to those that died from the disease my autopsies showed that many deaths were caused solely by malnutrition. Such deaths occurred in all the years from 1941 to 1943. They were mostly Italians, Russians and Frenchmen. These people were just starved to death. At the time of death they weighed 50 to 60 pounds. Autopsies showed that their internal organs had often shrunk to one third of their normal size.

15. Visits from prominent people were common at Dachau. Among those who came I remember Himmler who came three times to see air pressure and cold water experiments, Dr. Grawitz who was Reichsarzt SS, Wilhelm Frick who came once in 1943 and visited the malaria station and Rascher's experimental station and Walter Funk who also came in 1943 and made a general tour of the camp.

The facts stated above are true: this declaration is made by me voluntarily and without compulsion: after reading over the statement I have signed and executed the same at Dachau Germany this 24th day of November 1945.

[signed] Dr. Blaha Franz*

DR. BLAHA FRANZ

*Note:

My first name is Franz.

My usual signature is as above.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 25th day of November 1945 at Dachau Germany.

s/ John B. Martin
JOHN B. MARTIN.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 949–955, Doc. 3249-PS.

130. BUCHENWALD: AFFIDAVIT OCTOBER 24, 1946, OF WALDEMAR HOVEN REGARDING MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS AT BUCHENWALD, LATE 1941–SEPTEMBER 1943

This affidavit provides details on a number of medical experiments performed at the Buchenwald concentration camp. It was given by Waldemar Hoven, a doctor and SS officer who held many medical positions in Buchenwald, including chief physician responsible for inmate patients in the camp hospital, from July 1942 until September 1943. The medical experiments described by Hoven include spotted fever and virus experiments; euthanasia program for “mentally and physically deficient” inmates at the camp; and methods of killing, including injections of phenol. Hoven was arrested by the SS Police Court in connection with a corruption investigation and remained under arrest until March 1945, at which time he resumed his position as chief physician.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Waldemar Hoven, being duly sworn, depose and state:

1. I was born in Freiburg, in Breisgau on the 10th of February 1903. I attended high school but did not complete my education until many years later. Between the years 1919 and 1933 I visited Denmark, Sweden, United States, and France. In 1939 I concluded my medical studies and joined the Waffen SS as a physician. The last rank I held in the Waffen SS was Hauptsturmfuehrer (Captain). In 1934 I had joined the Allgemeine SS.

2. In October 1939 I was assigned as an assistant medical officer in the SS Hospital in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp and held that position until 1941 when I was appointed the Medical Officer in charge of the SS troops stationed in the Camp. At the end of 1941 I was transferred to the Camp Hospital and became the Assistant Medical Officer therein. This Hospital was for the inmates of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp—In July 1942 I was elevated to the position of Chief Physician and thereby had the full responsibility for the inmate patients in the hospital. I held this position until September 1943, when I was arrested by the SS Police Court of Kassel and remained under arrest until [typed date is crossed out and the following date was handwritten; editor’s note] 15th of March 1945.
3. Due to my various positions in Buchenwald Concentration Camp during this period of nearly four years I became acquainted with all phases of the medical activities therein and am hereby able to make the following statement:

SPOTTED FEVER AND VIRUS EXPERIMENTS

4. In the latter part of 1941 an experimental station was established in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in order to determine the effectiveness of various Spotted Fever vaccines. This department was called the “Spotted Fever Experimental Station” (Fleckfieber Versuchsstation—Abt. Fuer Fleckfieber und Virus Forschung) and was under the direct supervision of Dr. DING, alias SCHULER. This experimental station was set up in Block 46 of the Camp. The Hygiene Institute of the Waffen SS in Berlin, under the command of Dr. Joachim MRUGOWSKY, received all the reports of these activities and Dr. DING took orders from MRUGOWSKY. In the early days, that is, between 1941 and the Summer of 1943, Dr. Ding had many meetings in Berlin with Dr. Karl Genzken concerning his work at Buchenwald in connection with the Spotted Fever experiments. Dr. Ding told me that Dr. Genzken had a special interest in these matters and that he sent him reports at various times. Dr. Ding also said that Dr. Karl Genzken was one of his superiors. From my association with Dr. Ding I understood that the chain of command in the supervision of the “Spotted Fever Experimental Station” was as follows: Reichsarzt SS Grawitz, Genzken, Mrugowsky, and Ding.
5. I can recollect that Dr. Genzken gave order to Dr. Ding in January 1943 to enlarge the experimental station. At this

time Block 50 was cleaned out and made into a station for the production of the various vaccines to be used in the experiments at Block 46. From this time on the experimental station was known as "Department for Spotted Fever and Virus Research of the Hygiene Institute of the Waffen SS" (Hygiene Institut der Waffen SS—Abteilung fuer Fleckfieber und Virus Forschung). Then in the summer of 1943 Dr. Genzken turned all his duties over to Dr. Mrugowsky and that time on Genzken no long actively participated in these matters. I can recall meeting Dr. Mrugowsky, in the home of Dr. Ding, on one of his [illegible word crossed out; editor's note] visits to Buchenwald.

6. Inasmuch as I was constantly associated with Dr. Ding at Buchenwald we became very friendly. I frequently discussed matters with Ding and visited his experimental station from time to time. As a matter of fact, Dr. Ding had to go to Berlin for discussions with Dr. Murgowsky and others, nearly 3 days out of every two weeks, and on such occasions I was in charge of the Spotted Fever Institute. However, when Ding went to Berlin the experiments were discontinued until he returned.
7. The experiments at Block 46 in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp were conducted as follows: One group of victims were first vaccinated with the spotted fever vaccine and then infected with the spotted fever virus. In order to contrast the effectiveness of the vaccine another group of inmates were merely infected with the spotted fever virus without any previous vaccination. Between the Autumn of 1942 and the Summer of 1943 about 500 inmates of the Buchenwald Concentration were used in these experiments. During my time about 10% of the total number of the inmates used died as a result. I heard that a larger number of the victims died after my time, that is about 20%.
8. The selection of inmates to be used for the purposes of medical experiments in Block 46 by the "Institute for Spotted Fever and Virus Research" was as follows: Whenever Dr. DING needed human being for his work a request was made to the office of the Camp Commandant and referred to me for action. Usually a man named SCHOBER, an SS Hauptsturnfuehrer, notified me to select the necessary number of prisoners for these purposes. In accordance with this request I selected various inmates, at random, from the roster of the camp. They were placed on a list over my signature and returned to SCHOBER, who often removed certain names from the list for political reasons. In the event that particular pris-

oners were removed from the list I was requested to select substitutes in order to provide Dr. Ding with the desired number of victims. After I returned the completed list to Schober it was given to Dr. Ding for approval. He made a final check to ascertain, from a medical point of view, the physical condition of the selected inmates and to determine whether or not they met with his requirements.

TRANSFER OF INMATES TO THE BERBURG EUTHANASIA STATION FOR EXTERMINATION

9. I became aware of the so-called "euthanasia" program for the extermination of the mentally and physically deficient was being carried out in Germany. At that time the Camp Commander, Koch, called all the important SS officials of the camp together and informed them that he had received a secret order from Himmler to the effect that all mentally and physically deficient inmates of the Camp should be killed. The Camp Commander stated that Higher Authorities from Berlin ordered that all the Jewish inmates of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp should be included in this extermination program. In accordance with these orders, 300 to 400 Jewish prisoners of different nationalities were sent to "Euthanasia Station" at Bernburg for extermination. A few days later I receive a list of the names of those Jews who were exterminated at Bernburg from the Camp Commander and was ordered to issue falsified statements of death. I obeyed this order. This particular action was executed under the code name "14 f 13". I visited Bernburg on one occasion to arrange for the cremation of two inmates who died in the Wernigerode Branch (Ausenkommando Wernigerode) of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

THE KILLING OF INMATES BY PHENOL AND OTHER MEANS

10. In the Camp we had a great many prisoners who were jealous of the positions held by a certain few of the inmates, that is, some of the political prisoners held key-positions and were able to get better living conditions than the average. Hence, many of the prisoners envied these positions and made every effort to discredit the men who held the key-positions. Such traitorous actions became known through the "grapevine" to the men in the key-positons and then such traitors were immediately killed. In each case I was later notified in order to make the death statements of the prisoners killed. These statements did not indicate the actual cause of death, but

were made out to indicate that the prisoner died of natural causes.

11. In some instances I supervised the killing of these unworthy inmates by injections of phenol [editor's note: hand-written language added as follows] at the request of the inmates. These killings took place in the camp hospital and I was assisted by several inmates. On one occasion Dr. Ding came to the hospital to witness such killings with phenol and said that I was not doing it correctly, therefore he performed some of the injections himself. At that time three inmates were killed with phenol injections and they died within a minute.
12. The total number of traitors killed was about 150, of whom 60 were killed by Phenol injections, either by myself or under my supervision in the camp hospital, and the rest were killed by various means, such as beatings, by the inmates

The above affidavit written in the English language, consisting of five (5) pages, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. This affidavit was given by me freely and voluntarily, without promise of reward and I was subjected to no duress or threat of any kind.

[signed]

Dr. Waldemar Hoven

Before me, IWAN DEVRIES, A 442938, U. S. Civilian, appeared Dr. Waldemar HOVEN, to me known, who in my presence signed the foregoing affidavit written in the English language consisting of five (5) pages and swore that the same was true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief. On the 24th day of October, 1946

[signed]

IWAN DEVRIES

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), Green Series, vol. I, pp. 685–686, Doc. NO-429.

131. USE OF GAS VANS IN THE UKRAINE, MAY 16, 1942

This report from August Becker to Walter Rauff, both involved in the creation and development of gas vans used by various groups to exterminate Jews, people with mental and physical

disabilities, and others, describes some problems that were encountered with the gas vans in use. For example, a certain type of gas van could not move in wet weather, and it proved impossible to prevent the civilian populations from recognizing the vans for what they were: "death vans." Becker observes the difficulty incurred by the men of several commands making use of the gas vans when they unloaded the bodies from the vans after the death of the victims. He was concerned with the psychological impact of the task as well as physical complaints arising from the men's exposure to any of the carbon monoxide still left in the vans after the procedure. Finally, Becker recommends that the gas pedal of the van should not be pushed to the floor and instead should be slowly applied. The former method results in agonizing asphyxiation, while the latter produces a slow and painless death.

Field Post Office
No 32704
B Nr 40/42

Kiev, 16 May 1942

TOP SECRET

To: SS-~bersturmbannfuehrer Rauff
Berlin, Prinz-Albrecht-Str. 8

[Handwritten:]
pers.
R/29/5 Pradel n.R
b/R

[Handwritten:] Sinkkel [?] b.R, p 16/6

The overhauling of vans by groups D and C is finished. While the vans of the first series can also be put into action if the weather is not too bad, the vans of the second series (*Saurer*) stop completely in rainy weather. If it has rained for instance for only one half hour, the van cannot be used because it simply skids away. It can only be used in absolutely dry weather. It is only a question now whether the van can only be used standing at the place of execution. First the van has to be brought to that place, which is possible only in good weather. The place of execution is usually 10–15 km away from the highways and is difficult to access because of its location; in damp or wet weather it is not accessible at all. If the persons to be executed are driven or led to that place, then they realize immediately what is going on and get restless, which is to be avoided as far as possible. There is only one way left; to load them at the collecting point and to drive them to the spot.

I ordered the vans of group D to be camouflaged as house-trailers by putting one set of window shutters on each side of the small van and two on each side of the larger vans, such as

one often sees on farm-houses in the country. The vans became so well-known, that not only the authorities, but also the civilian population called the van “death van”, as soon as one of these vehicles appeared. It is my opinion, the van cannot be kept secret for any length of time, not even camouflaged.

The Saurer-van which I transported from Simferopol to Taganrog suffered damage to the brakes on the way. The Security Command [SK] in Mariupol found the cuff of the combined oil-air brake broken at several points. By persuading and bribing the H.K.P. [?] we managed to have a form machined, on which the cuffs were cast. When I came to Stalino and Gorlowka a few days later, the drivers of the vans complained about the same faults. After having talked to the commandants of those commands I went once more to Mariupol to have some more cuffs made for those cars too. As agreed two cuffs will be made for each car, six cuffs will stay in Mariupol as replacements for group D and six cuffs will be sent to SS-Untersturmfuehrer Ernst in Kiev for the cars of group C. The cuffs for the groups B and A could be made available from Berlin, because transport from Mariupol to the north would be too complicated and would take too long. Smaller damages on the cars will be repaired by experts of the commands, that is of the groups in their own shops.

Because of the rough terrain and the indescribable road and highway conditions the caulking and rivets loosen in the course of time. I was asked if in such cases the vans should be brought to Berlin for repair. Transportation to Berlin would be much too expensive and would demand too much fuel. In order to save those expenses I ordered them to have smaller leaks soldered and if that should no longer be possible, to notify Berlin immediately by radio, that Pol. Nr. is out of order. Besides that I ordered that during application of gas all the men were to be kept as far away from the vans as possible, so they should not suffer damage to their health by the gas which eventually would escape. I should like to take this opportunity to bring the following to your attention: several commands have had the unloading after the application of gas done by their own men. I brought to the attention of the commanders of those S.K. concerned the immense psychological injuries and damages to their health which that work can have for those men, even if not immediately, at least later on. The men complained to me about head-aches which appeared after each unloading. Nevertheless they don't want to change the orders, because they are afraid prisoners called for that work, could use an opportune moment to flee. To

protect the men from these damages, I request orders be issued accordingly.

The application of gas usually is not undertaken correctly. In order to come to an end as fast as possible, the driver presses the accelerator to the fullest extent. By doing that the persons to be executed suffer death from suffocation and not death by dozing off as was planned. My directions now have proved that by correct adjustment of the levers death comes faster and the prisoners fall asleep peacefully. Distorted faces and excretions, such as could be seen before, are no longer noticed.

Today I shall continue my journey to group B, where I can be reached with further news.

Signed: Dr. Becker
SS Untersturmfuehrer

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 418–419, Doc. 501-PS.

132. PROPOSAL REGARDING STERILIZATION OF JEWS, JUNE 23, 1942

In June 1943 Vikton Brack, SS-Oberfuehrer, involved in the creation and development of gas vans used to exterminate victims, wrote to Heinrich Himmler, Reich leader SS and chief of the German police, to present a suggestion regarding the treatment of the millions of Jews expected to be exterminated throughout Europe. Brack agrees that the extermination process should proceed as quickly as possible, but he argues that the estimated 2 to 3 million who are capable of work should not be killed and instead should be used for forced labor. Brack acknowledges that these Jews cannot remain alive if they possess the ability to procreate. Accordingly, Brack recommends mass sterilization by X-ray of those Jews not immediately killed.

LETTER FROM BRACK TO HIMMLER, 23 JUNE 1942,
PROPOSING STERILIZATION OF TWO TO THREE
MILLION JEWS

Viktor Brack
SS Oberfuehrer

Berlin, W 8, Voss-Strasse 4, 23 June 1942
[Initial] HH

Top Secret

To the Reich Leader SS and Chief of the German Police
Heinrich Himmler,
Berlin SW 11, Prinz Albrecht Str. 8

Dear Reich Leader,

On the instructions of Reich Leader [Reichsleiter] Bouhler I placed some of my men—already some time ago—at the disposal of Brigadefuehrer Globocnik to execute his special mission. On his renewed request I have now transferred additional personnel. On this occasion Brigadefuehrer Globocnik stated his opinion that the whole Jewish action should be completed as quickly as possible so that one would not get caught in the middle of it one day if some difficulties should make a stoppage of the action necessary. You, yourself, Reich Leader, have already expressed your view, that work should progress quickly for reasons of camouflage alone. Both points which in principle arrive at the same result are more than justified as far as my own experience goes; nevertheless would you kindly allow me to submit the following argument:

Among 10 millions of Jews in Europe there are, I figure, at least 2–3 millions of men and women who are fit enough to work. Considering the extraordinary difficulties the labor problem presents us with, I hold the view that those 2–3 millions should be specially selected and preserved. This can, however, only be done if at the same time they are rendered incapable to propagate. About a year ago I reported to you that agents of mine had completed the experiments necessary for this purpose. I would like to recall these facts once more. Sterilization, as normally performed on persons with hereditary diseases, is here out of the question, because it takes too long and is too expensive. Castration by X-ray however is not only relatively cheap, but can also be performed on many thousands in the shortest time. I think, that at this time it is already irrelevant whether the people in question become aware of having been castrated after some weeks or months once they feel the effects.

Should you, Reich Fuehrer, decide to choose this way in the interest of the preservation of labor, then Reichsleiter Bouhler would be prepared to place all physicians and other personnel needed for this work at your disposal. Likewise he requested me to inform you that then I would have to order the apparatus so urgently needed with the .greatest speed.

Heil Hitler!

Yours,

[Signed] VIKTOR BRACK

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. I, pp. 721–722, Doc. NO-205.

133. CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING TRANSPORT OF JEWS TO AUSCHWITZ FROM FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, AND BELGIUM, JUNE 28–JULY 27, 1942

Set forth in this document is an exchange of telegrams and a letter in draft form. The subject is the requirement that for purposes of forced labor the occupied French territory, the Netherlands, and Belgium must make ready 40,000 Jews, 40,000 Jews, and 10,000 Jews, respectively, for deportation to Auschwitz. The first telegram, dated June 28, 1942, comes from Martin Luther, undersecretary of state, German Foreign Office, and Franz Rademacher, head of the Jewish Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Judenreferat, or Referat D III), ordering the deportations. It triggers a response from Otto Abetz, German ambassador to Vichy (that part of France not occupied by the Germans), agreeing to the deportation of 40,000 Jews from France but suggesting that foreign Jews in France be deported before French Jews to inflame French antisemitism. This is rejected by Luther in a return telegram dated July 10, 1942. The draft letter sent in late July 1942 addresses the same issue.

CORRESPONDENCE AND DRAFT CORRESPONDENCE OF
THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE, JUNE AND JULY 1942,
CONCERNING THE TRANSPORT OF JEWS FROM FRANCE,
THE NETHERLANDS. AND BELGIUM TO AUSCHWITZ

I. Telegram of 28 June 1942, with notes and initials

Berlin, 28 June 1942
[Stamp] Diplogerma
Consugerma

File reference: D III 516 g

[Stamp] Secret

[Stamp] Telegram (Secret Code)

1. To the Diplogerma—

a. German Embassy in Paris. [Handwritten] No. 2709.

b. Branch of the Foreign Office at Brussels. [Handwritten]
No. 788 Foreign Office.

c. The Representative of the Foreign Office to the staff of
the Reich Commissioner for the Occupied Netherland Ter-
ritories at The Hague, Plein 23 [Handwritten] Zc IIV 601 g

—each separately. [Handwritten] No. 207 [illegible initial].
State Secretary [initial] W [WEIZSAECKER] 28 [June]
Under State Secretary

Referent: Under State Secretary Luther
Legation Councillor Rademacher

2. Before Dispatch—
To Section Pol. II Ref. 1, with the request to take note and to
cosign.

[Handwritten on margin] Resubmit at once after dispatch
with respect to Hague (no code material, no secret teletype!)
30/6 [Illegible initials] 28/6 to: *a* and *b*.

The Chief of the Security Police and the SD issues the
following information:

“Provisions have been made to run daily special trains
with a capacity of 1,000 persons each, from the middle
of July and beginning of August on, respectively, by
means of which the deportation to the Auschwitz
camp for labor service of at first approx[imately]
40,000 Jews from Occupied French territory, 40,000
Jews from the Netherlands, and 10,000 Jews from
Belgium will be carried out.

“Persons at present coming within the scope of these
measures are able-bodied Jews, insofar as they do not
live in a mixed marriage and do not possess a citizen-
ship of the British Empire, the United States, Mexico,
or of the enemy states of Central and South America,
or of the neutral and allied states.” An early reply is
requested.

[Signed] LUTHER 25 June
[Initial] R [RADEMACHER] 25 June

2 Telegram from Ambassador Abetz in Paris, 2 July 1942,
with initials and distribution

[Stamp] Work-copy
Telegram, (by secret teletypewriter)
[Stamp] Foreign Office
D III 539 0
In: 3 July 1942

Paris, 2 July 1942, 2245 hours.
Arrival: 3 July 1942, 0200 hours.
No. 2784 dated 2 July

To decree by cable No. 2709 dated 28 June and in reply to
cable report No. 2783 dated 2 July

[Marginal note]
*D III 516 g.
* DIII.

[Distribution Stamp]

Fifteen copies of the above were produced, which were
distributed as follows:

- No. 1-D III (Working Staff).
- 2-Reich Foreign Minister
- 3-State Secretary [defendant von Weizsaecker].
- 5-Office of the Reich Foreign Minister.
- 6-Chief of the Political Division [defendant Woermann].
- 7-Chief of the Legal Division.
- 8-Chief of the Personnel Division.
- 9-Chief of the Trade Policy Division.
- 10-Chief of the Cultural Division.
- 11-Chief of the Press Division.
- 12-Chief of the Protocol Division.
- 13-Chief of the Division Germany.
- 14-Chief of the Radio Division.
- 15-Deputy Chief of the Political Division.

This is copy No. 1

The Embassy has no objections on principle against the
deportation of 40,000 Jews from France to be allocated for labor
to the Auschwitz camp. In carrying out these measures, how-
ever, the following points should be taken into consideration:

Whenever anti-Jewish measures were taken, the Embassy
took the view that they should be carried out in such a form
as to continuously add further to the anti-Semitic sentiment,
which has increased of late. Just as former influx of eastern
and other foreign Jews into Germany lent a special zest to the
anti-Semitic trend among the German people, so it can also
be observed in France that the increase of anti-Semitism is to
a large degree caused by the immigration of Jews of foreign
nationalities in the last few years. It will therefore have a psy-
chological effect on the broad masses of French people, if the
evacuation measures are at first applied to such foreign Jews,
and French Jews are at first only drawn upon to the extent
which foreign Jews do not fill the above mentioned quota.

Such a procedure would by no means establish a privi-
leged position for the French Jew, as in any case he must

1270 Letter to Himmler Regarding Sterilization

likewise disappear in the process of liberation of the European countries from Jewry. This already finds its expression in the fact that in any case a certain number of French Jews will be included in the stipulated quota.

ABETZ

3. Teletype from Luther to the German Embassy in Paris, 10 July 1942

Berlin, 10 July 1942 File reference: D III 539 g
[Stamp] Diplogerma

Consugerma Teletype, by secret teletypewriter No. 2964

To the German Embassy Paris

[Stamp] Dispatched 11 July, [Illegible number] hours

Concerning telegram 2 July, No. 2783 and No. 2784.

After dispatch—To Section Pol II for information. [Illegible initial].

At the time not yet possible to give priority in deportation to Jews of foreign nationality.

Further orders pending concerning the extension of expulsion measures to foreign Jews.

Evacuation now to be carried out without delay.

[Signed] LUTHER

[Stamp]

Leave Space for Telegram Control

4. Draft express letter from the Foreign Office to the Reich Main Security Office, with various initials, dated in late July 1942

Draft Regarding D III 558 g.

Express letter

1. To Reich Security Main Office—IV B 4—

Attention: SS Lieutenant Colonel Eichmann

Berlin W 62

Kurfuerstenstr. 116.

Concerning Express letter of 22 of last month

IV B 4a—3233/41 Secret (1085).

State Secretary [initial] W [WEIZSAECKER] 29

Under State Secretary [initial] W [WOERMANN]

Chief Political Division

Under State Secretary

Germany Div. [Illegible initials]

27 July

Ref.: Legation Counsellor Klingenfuss

In principle the Foreign Office has no objection to the planned deportation of the given number of Jews from the occupied territory in France, the Netherlands, and Belgium for labor at the Auschwitz camp. In view of the psychological effect, I should like to request that first of all the stateless Jews be deported, thus including to a large extent the number of foreign Jews who had emigrated to the West. There are nearly 25,000 of these Jews in the Netherlands alone. For the same reason the Military Administration in Brussels [crossed out: “intends”] select first only Polish, Czech, Russian, and other Jews [crossed out: “while it (the Brussels Military Administration) has doubts as to include Belgian Jews, the Foreign Office does not share these doubts”].

[Handwritten marginal note] Will, as far as known here.

Jews of Hungarian and Rumanian nationality can be deported; however, it is requested that care be taken to secure all property in each case.

By ORDER:

[Signed] LUTHER 26 July

2. WV.

[Initial] R [RADEMACHER] 27 July

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 233–236, Doc. NG-183.

134. LETTER TO HIMMLER REGARDING STERILIZATION, AUGUST 24, 1942

The issue of sterilizing millions of Jews and others considered of inferior races was seen as critical in the planning by the Nazis for the Final Solution. This letter, sent by SS-Oberführer Gund to Heinrich Himmler, Reich leader (Reichsführer) of the SS (the Schutzstaffel), suggests a means of sterilization that Gund thinks could prove to be far more effective and easier to administer than previously considered methods. His recommendation is injection of caladium extract. Gund makes two observations of note. First, the efficacy of this method of sterilization has been successful in animals but has not been proven in humans. To that end, Gund requests that human experiments be performed. Second, Gund observes that “old cults and . . . their priests . . . of primitive, primeval popula-

tions," may have extensive knowledge about this subject and suggests that this be researched as part of the ongoing effort to identify the best method of sterilization.

LETTER FROM GUND TO HIMMLER, CONCERNING RESEARCH IN MEDICAL STERILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF STERILIZATION DRUGS, 24 AUGUST 1942

Secret

The Deputy Gauleiter of Lower Danube [Lower Austria]

Vienna, 9, Wasagasse 10, 24 August 1942
Ge/Schd-310/42 g

To: The Reich Leader SS Pg. Heinrich Himmler
Berlin SW, Prinz Albrecht Strasse 8

Sir,

At the orders of Gauleiter Dr. Jury, his staff have hitherto busied themselves especially with the problems of population, racial policy, and antisocial elements. Since the prevention of reproduction by the congenitally unfit and racially inferior belongs to the duties of our National Socialist racial and demographic policy, the present Director of the District Office for Racial Policy, Gauhauptstellenleiter Dr. Fehringer, has examined the question of sterilization and found that the methods so far available, castration and sterilization, are not sufficient in themselves to meet expectations. Consequently, the obvious question occurred to him whether impotence and sterility could not be produced in both men and women by the administration of medicine or injections. So he came to the studies of the Biological Institute of Dr. Madaus, in Dresden-Radebeul, on animal experiments for medical sterilization, which became accessible to him through the Madaus Annual Report, IVth year, 1940, and are of the greatest interest for our demographic policy. Madaus and Koch found that caladium sequinum used in homeopathic doses, that is, administered in infinitesimal quantities, favorably affects impotence, sterility, and frigidity (sexual indifference), so that clinical and medical research should not proceed without regard to this fact. It was established by an extensive series of experiments on rats, rabbits, and dogs that, as the result of the administration or injection of caladium extract, male animals became impotent and females barren, and the differences in effect of the various methods of applying the drug could be seen. From the animal experiments, it seems that a permanent sterility is liable

to result in male animals and a more temporary one in females.

It is clear that these observations could be of tremendous importance if alterations of potency or fecundity could also be successfully brought about in human beings by the administration of a caladium extract. Research on human beings themselves would, of course, be necessary for this. The director of my race policy office points out that the necessary research and human experiments could be undertaken by an appropriately selected medical staff, basing their work on the Madaus animal experiments in cooperation with the pharmacological institute of the Faculty of Medicine of Vienna, on the persons of the inmates of the gypsy camp of Lackenbach in Lower Danube.

It is quite clear that such research must be handled as a nationally important secret matter of the most dangerous character, because enemy propaganda could work tremendous harm all over the world by the knowledge of such research, should it come by such knowledge.

Since these considerations are only a theory, the fundamental accuracy of which has already been established by animal experiments and the possibility of the application of which to human beings is highly probable, a mere indication only can be given of the prospects of the possibility of the sterilization of practically unlimited numbers of people in the shortest time and in the simplest way conceivable.

In this connection, I may perhaps point out that it would surely be worth while to study the old cults and the knowledge of their priests concerning the promotion and prevention of human potency and fecundity. Primitive, primeval populations which are close to nature had, and still have, a very extensive knowledge of this subject without these things being known to science. It is known, for instance, that the natives of South America attempted to destroy the potency of their enemies by administering caladium sequinum to them.

I should be particularly grateful to you if you would give me your opinion in this respect when the occasion arises, or even order a concrete working plan to be submitted to you. Gauleiter Dr. Jury would personally have approached you with this plan were he not at present away on a vacation.

Heil Hitler !
Yours faithfully,
[Signed] K. GUND
SS Oberfuehrer

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. I, pp. 717–719, Doc. NO-039.

135. DEPORTATIONS: AFFIDAVIT OF JULY 24, 1946, OF DR. DAVID WAJNAPEL DESCRIBING THE ROLE OF THE SS IN DEPORTATIONS AND EXTERMINATION CAMPS, AUGUST 1942–JULY 1944

Radom, in central Poland, was located in the General Government (Generalgouvernement), that portion of German-occupied Poland that was not incorporated into Germany. David Wajnapel, a Jewish doctor in Radom, gave this affidavit describing what happened when the Germans—specifically, the police and SS authorities—entered and occupied the city. He describes the beatings that he and other Jews suffered simply as a result of walking down a street. All Jewish children up to age 12, the elderly, the sick, and the hospitalized were shot. Wajnapel speaks of the deportations to Treblinka from two ghettos that were established in Radom and describes what happened to him and how he was able to escape from Auschwitz during a death march near the end of the war. However, the main theme that runs throughout Wajnapel's affidavit is the role of the SS (Schutzstaffel), the elite of the German security forces. That role was one of unremitting beatings, shootings, and the organization of the vicious roundups associated with various deportations. More than anything else, this affidavit is an indictment of the SS and their role in the Final Solution in Radom.

RECORD OF A STATEMENT OF THE WITNESS

Dr David Wajnapel taken down on the 24.7.1946 in Nurnburg by the Public Prosecutor and member of the Central Committee for the Examination of German Crimes in Poland, Dr Stanislaw Piotrowski

By virtue of the regulations of Polish Law, the witness was informed about the responsibility for untrue statements and was sworn in.

Christian name and Surname:	David Wajnapel
Age:	39 years.
Place of birth:	Radom (Poland)
Profession:	Physician
Religion:	Jewish
Address:	Stuttgart, Reinsburgstr. 193
Relationship to parties:	None

The witness states as follows:

A few weeks after the entry of the German troops into Radom, police and SS authorities arrived. At the very moment of their arrival, the conditions became immediately worse. The house in the Heromskist where their headquarters was, became a menace to the entire population. People who were walking in this street were dragged into the gateway, and illtreated by merciless beatings and by the staging of sadistic games. All members of the SS, officers as well as other ranks, took part in this. Being a physician, I often had the opportunity to give medical help to seriously injured victims of the SS.

After a short time, the SS uniform became a menace to the population. I myself was beaten up till I bled by four SS other ranks in the street in spite of my doctor's armet. Later on two ghettos were established in Radom. In August 1942 the so-called "deportation" took place. The ghettos were surrounded by many SS units who occupied all the street exits. People were driven out to the streets and those who ran were fired at. Sick people at home or in hospitals were shot on the spot, among others also the sick people who were in the hospital where I was working as a doctor. The total number of people killed amounted to about 4,000. About 3,000 people were spared and the rest—about 20,000 people—were sent to Treblinka. The whole action was directed and executed by the SS. I myself saw that the SS staff were on the spot forming a group and issuing orders. In the streets and in the houses SS men illtreated and killed people without waiting for orders. After the "deportation," the remaining group of people were massed in a few narrow lanes and we came under the exclusive rule of the SS and became the private property of the SS who used to hire us out for payment to various firms. I know that these payments were credited to a special SS account at the Radom Bank Emisyjny. We were visited by SS men only. Executions carried out by the SS in the Ghetto itself were a frequent occurrence. On 14 January 1943 another "deportation" to Treblinka took place. On 21 March 1943 in the whole district there took place the so-called action against the intelligentsia which action, as I know, was decided upon in an SS and Police Fuehrer's meeting in Radom. In Radom alone about 200 people were shot at that time; among others my parents, my brother and his 9 months old child met their death. On 9 November of the same year all Jewish children up to 12 years of age as well as the old and sick were gathered from Radom and from camps situated near Radom and shot in the Biala Street in Radom. Both SS officers and other ranks participated in this. From March 1943 I stayed 18 months in

Blizyn camp. The camp was entirely under the SS and the Radom Police Chief's control. Its commandant was Untersturmfuehrer Paul Nell, the guards were composed of SS privates and NCOs. The foremen were Waffen SS men who had been wounded at the front. Both behaved in an inhuman manner by beating and illtreating us. Shootings of people were frequent occurrences. Originally sentences were passed by the SS and Police Fuehrer, later on by the camp commandant. The SS other ranks knew very well about the bloody deeds which were committed by the SS in Poland, in particular they told me personally about mass murders of Jews on Maidanek (Nov. 1943). This fact was no secret; it was common knowledge among the civil population as well as among the lowest ranking SS men. When the camp was taken over by the Maidanek concentration camp, new guards were sent to our camp, but there was no difference between them and the previous ones. In July 1944 the whole camp including myself was sent to Auschwitz camp, which could be entered only by SS men. The conditions of this camp are well known. I escaped during the evacuation of this camp into Germany. On the way the SS escort machinegunned exhausted prisoners and later on the rest of the marching column (near Rybnik). Several hundred people were killed at that time. When I saw that the situation was hopeless, I fled under fire into a wood, where shortly I was liberated by the Soviet Army.

I emphasize that during the few years of war, being a Jew and a doctor, I met a great number of SS men from Waffen SS as well as other formations and of various ranks, but I must state that I noticed no difference between them as far as their inhuman attitude towards the civilian population was concerned.

Read to me.

[signed] Dr. David Wajnapel

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. Supp. A, pp. 1145–1147, Doc. D-953.

136. MINUTES OF CONFERENCE CONCERNING FURTHER HANDLING OF THE JEWS, OCTOBER 27, 1942

A conference was held in October 1942 to discuss the treatment of Mischlinge, meaning people with one or two Jewish

grandparents (those with three or four were considered to be full Jews). It was agreed that persons with two Jewish grandparents (Mischlinge of the first degree) are to be given a choice between deportation or sterilization. (Mischlinge of the second degree—with one Jewish grandparent—“are to be taken as of German blood.”) The way in which the choice was to be framed—that deportation is the more severe option; that sterilization should be viewed as a favor—is discussed, as is the advantage to the government of offering a choice. The second topic is that of the role of divorce in the case of mixed marriages, meaning, in this case, (1) marriages between full Jews and Mischlinge of the first degree; and (2) marriages between pure Germans and pure Jews. In the former, no divorce is to be mandated (they are both considered to be Jewish). As to the latter, divorce is to be made mandatory in the event the pure German does not voluntarily initiate divorce proceedings.

2. Extracts from the minutes of a conference at the Reich Security Main Office on 27 October 1942

To IV B 4—B No. 1456/41 Top Secret (1344)

Top Secret!
First copy

Minutes of Conference

The following persons attended the conference held on 27 October 1942 at the Reich Security Main Office, Referat IV B 4, at which the Final Solution of the Jewish problem was discussed:

Oberregierungsrat Dr. Boley	Reich Chancellery
SS Captain Preusch	Race and Settlement Main Office SS
SS First Lieutenant Harders	Race and Settlement Main Office SS
Referent Dr. Schmid-Burgh	Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda
Oberlandesgerichtsrat Massfelder	Reich Ministry of Justice
Reichsamtsleiter Kap	Party Chancellery
Regierungsrat Raudies	Party Chancellery
Bereichsleiter Leuschner	Office for Racial Politics of the NSDAP
Oberreg. Rat Dr. Wetzel	Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories

Legation Counsellor Dr. Klingenfuss	Foreign Office
Amtsgerichtsrat Liegener	Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan
Reg. Rat Dr. Feldscher	Department I of Reich Ministry of the Interior
Landesoberverwaltungsrat Weirauch	Government of Government General
SS Major Dr. Stier	Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism
SS Lieutenant Colonel OR. Dr. Bilfinger	Reich Security Main Office II A
SS Major Reg. Rat Neifeind	Reich Security Main Office II A 2
SS Major Dr. Rodemberg	Reich Security Main Office III A
SS Lieutenant Colonel Eichmann	Reich Security Main Office IV B 4
SS Major Guenther	Reich Security Main Office IV B 4
SS Major Reg. Rat. Suhr	Reich Security Main Office IV B 4
Reg. Rat Hunsche	Reich Security Main Office IV B 4

The discussion showed the following results:

I. Persons of Mixed Blood

a. *Persons of mixed blood of the first degree.*—At the beginning of the discussion it was said that owing to new knowledge and experience gained in the field of sterilization, it would probably be possible to carry out sterilizations, *already during the war*, in simpler form and with shorter procedure. In view of that, the suggestion to sterilize *all* reproductive persons of mixed blood of the first degree, was agreed upon. The sterilization should be on a voluntary basis. But it is the prerequisite for their remaining in the Reich territory, and therefore constitutes a voluntary return service of the person of mixed blood of the first degree for allowing him graciously to remain [gnadenweise Belassung] in Reich territory. Consequently, the person of mixed blood (first degree) is to be given the option to decide either to be deported which, should the occasion arise, would also mean the taking to a “person of mixed blood settlement,” according to results of discussion held on 6 March 1942, or to be sterilized. When giving this choice, it serves a better purpose to depict deportation as the more severe measure in

comparison to sterilization. Thus, the aim should be that in the few cases where an exception—generally not provided for—has to be made, the possibility of compulsory sterilization should still exist. For this reason, sterilization is to be considered a *gracious favor* [gnadenweise Verguenstigung] which will be recognized as such and will lead to the results that the number of applications for exemption from these prescribed measures is likely not be very large. As it can be assumed that almost all persons of mixed blood of the first degree will decide on the lesser evil of sterilization, the endeavored sterilization stands out clearly as the primary choice. Would, on the other hand, on giving the choice, sterilization be depicted as the greater evil, the person of mixed blood of the first degree, to whom the possibility of an exception must be left open after all, despite the directives, would not be subjected to any restrictions apart from those already in existence which, under no circumstances, can be tolerated because the intended sterilization would then be made impossible. Giving the possibility of choice also takes away to a certain degree the semblance of compulsion for the intended measures and, above all, offers the advantage that the creation of a legislative basis for the carrying out of sterilization can perhaps be abandoned, because the person of mixed blood of the first degree has voluntarily consented to be sterilized. In order to prevent serious psychological repercussions, sterilization measures should be carried out without much ado wherever possible and under application of a simplified procedure and code-mark [Tarnungsbezeichnung]. The persons of mixed blood of the first degree are subject with few modifications to restrictions in the Reich territory as before and as laid down previously. Should in single cases persons of mixed blood of the first degree decide on deportation, measures are to be taken to separate them from the opposite sex and to prevent any possibility of procreation.

b. *Persons of mixed blood of the second degree.*—As the persons of mixed blood of the second degree are to be taken as of German blood *without exception*, no particular measures are to be taken against them. Certain existing restrictions, in connection with their legal status, will still remain in force.

II. Mixed Marriages

For marriages between persons of mixed blood of the first degree or Jews, no additional divorce possibilities, except those already existing, will be created, because there is no interest for it.

1. *Divorce by compulsion.*—a. In the case of mixed marriages between pure Germans and pure Jews, a compulsory

divorce is to be effected as laid down previously, in case the German blooded marriage partner cannot make up his or her mind, within a given time, to apply for divorce. Compulsory divorce seems appropriate because in view of the Jew being deported a clear legal situation within this field must be created. Exceptions are also forbidden, contrary to the regulation intended up to now, in the case of persons considered as Jews who only possess two racially pure Jewish grandparents on either side or less, because to check such cases would entail too many difficulties and there is no reason to deviate from the legal classification as pure Jew in accordance with Articles 2 and 5 of the First Decree to the Reich Citizen Law dated 14 November 1935 (Reich Legal Gazette I, p. 1333). Unless there is no other decision within the meaning of Article 7 of the mentioned decree, no pure Jew can be exempted from this regulation, even if their legitimate children have already been recognized as equals to persons of German blood or if their recognition can be expected on account of being soldiers as members of the Wehrmacht.

b. At the same time, the possibility must exist for compulsory divorce, as laid down, between persons of mixed blood in the second degree and Jews.

2. *Simplified divorce on application.*

* * * * *

The above results of this discussion shall, as agreed upon, be forwarded to the appropriate offices for their final attitude which is to be given within 4 weeks *at the latest*.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 222–225, Doc. NG-2586.

137. AUSCHWITZ MONOWITZ: AFFIDAVIT OF JUNE 3, 1947, OF NORBERT WOLLHEIM CONCERNING AUSCHWITZ MONOWITZ, MARCH 1943–SEPTEMBER 1944

This affidavit, given by Norbert Wollheim, a Jew deported from Berlin to Auschwitz, provides insight into the workings of Auschwitz III, also called Auschwitz Monowitz, the factory camp built by I.G. Farben. There, as a new inmate of the camp, Woll-

heim was assigned to heavy labor but soon began work as a welder. He observed that “the German IG foremen tried to surpass the SS in brutalities.” Wollheim describes his interaction with approximately 1,200 British prisoners of war who were brought to “I. G. Auschwitz to a special camp next to ours.” He recounts his efforts to make contact with the POWs, and how he and they exchanged information: the English POWs conveyed news from the BBC that came to them by way of a secret receiver; Wollheim translated German Army news bulletins. It was through the English prisoners that he was able to convey information to Switzerland about the conditions that the Jews faced in Auschwitz Monowitz. Finally, Wollheim notes the presence of the plant manager—a man named Duerrfeld—who knew, without a doubt, of the terrible conditions in the plant for the Jews but did nothing to alleviate them.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Norbert Wollheim, presently living at Wakenitzerstrasse 34 b, Luebeck, having been informed that I shall be subject to punishment if I make a false statement, herewith testify under oath voluntarily and without duress:

1. On 8 March 1943, my wife, myself, and my son, age 3, were arrested by the SS in Berlin during the last big anti-Jewish drive. After spending several days in the collecting camp Grasse Hamburgerstrasse I was transported to the concentration camp Auschwitz, together with my family. On arriving at the station at Auschwitz, I was separated from my wife and child and have not seen them since.

The whole transport from Berlin consisted of about 1,000 people; about 220 men, mostly young men capable of working, were sorted out and sent to concentration camp Monowitz in trucks from the station in Auschwitz.

2. In camp Monowitz we were met by the SS, the camp elder [Lageraelteste] and several block elders, and taken to a washing hut. In front of the washing hut we were lined up in fives and then allowed to enter in groups. On entering the hut, all valuables had to be thrown into a suitcase standing there and guarded by the SS. After that we were forced to hand in all our civilian clothes, except the shoes, and our personal papers. Our heads were shaved then. After that we were taken to the collective bath and disinfected. Only during that process did we hear from other inmates who had been there longer that we were in the concentration camp Auschwitz, which was part of an IG plant. If we wanted to survive we would have to be prepared to do the heavy work required from us by the I.G. Farben.

3. Concentration camp Monowitz consisted of approximately 20 barracks at the time when I arrived there in March

1943. As I found later, they were all quite full. Hardly any inmate had a bed of his own. The total of inmates at that time was about 3,000 prisoners. We went to work for the first time in the IG plant already the day after we arrived, having all been registered and tattooed. My own prison number is 107,984.

The plant, at that time, was still in the stage of construction. There were scarcely any streets. The building, except for those in which the directors and senior foremen worked, were mostly unfinished. As initiation, as was the general rule, we were given only the hardest and most strenuous work, such as transportation and excavating work. I came to the dreaded "murder detail 4," whose task it was to unload cement bags or constructional steel. We had to unload the cement from the arriving freight cars all day long at a running pace. Prisoners who broke down were beaten by the German IG foremen as well as by the kapos until they either resumed their work or were left there dead. I saw such cases myself. I also remember seeing a Dutch prisoner commit suicide by throwing himself in front of a moving train before the eyes of the German IG foremen during the first day there.

I also noticed repeatedly, particularly during the time when the SS accompanied our labor unit themselves, that the German IG foremen tried to surpass the SS in brutalities. It also happened that German IG foremen incited the kapos to take the good shoes from the new arrivals and keep them for themselves. It was also a rule that the inmates had no working safeguards, for example iron had to be moved without the proper leather for the purpose, bricks had to be loaded without any suitable protection for the hands, et cetera.

I also remember well that German IG foremen, even on days when it froze, made the kapos order the prisoners to take off their coats (if they had any) in order to speed up the work.

I myself was sent to a skilled labor unit as a welder in the summer, 1943. It was a common practice to give the prisoners the dirtiest and most dangerous tasks, although all the time we worked there we had hardly any protective equipment.

Examples: As welder I had to work for months without any welding goggles, until I finally managed to "organize" a pair for myself. The prisoners who were E-welders did not get any milk while the German E-welders were given milk. The German IG foremen who were the immediate supervisors knew perfectly well about all these things. The IG inspectors, who made regular inspections of the entire site of the I. G. Farben, knew these things. We were particularly afraid of these inspectors because we knew them to be

fanatical Nazis who used every occasion of unsatisfactory work to make a report to the office of the SS command post (SS Scharfuhrer [Staff Sergeant] Rackers).

4. In September 1943, after the armistice was signed between Badoglio and the Allies, approximately 1,200 British PWs, who had been (in captivity) in Italy before, were brought to the I. G. Auschwitz to a special camp next to ours via the Stalag [base camp] Lambsdorff and were assigned to work in the buna plant. The prisoners had taken part in the African campaign and most of them had been captured at the capitulation of Tobruk. During the days of Italy's capitulation, a few had managed to get through to the Allies: the rest was taken to Germany by the German Wehrmacht. We were strictly forbidden to have any contact with the English PWs. At the beginning of October 1943, I managed for the first time to contact a group of English PWs, thanks to my knowledge of the English language. In spite of the strict regulations against it, this was possible—with the exercise of sufficient caution—because at that time the SS guards were only stationed around the plant itself. The PWs openly confessed their sympathy for us. I later found from the conversation that most of them were skilled workers by trade and had been assigned to the armament plant buna against their will and therefore in violation of the Geneva Convention. They worked on assembly, production of methanol, et cetera. The contact between the PWs and myself became closer in time and towards the end it was a personal friendship. When for technical reasons, it became necessary for the PWs and concentration-camp prisoners to work together in technical departments, it was possible to exchange news and information regularly. That way the PWs were able to keep me informed daily of the BBC news from London, for they had a secret receiving set in their barracks, and I, on my part, translated for them the German Army news bulletins [Wehrmacht communiques] I heard. I received newspapers from several German foremen of the Mannesmann tube factory in Berlin, who were favorably disposed toward me. Their views leaned mostly towards socialism and democracy, as I noticed when working with them. With these foremen and the English PWs I also constantly exchanged all the news which I myself was able to report about the life in the camp, such as our poor living conditions, our poor clothes, selections which had been made, or individual executions.

I knew from my relations with the English PWs that illegal connections existed between their main camp Lambsdorff and Switzerland, and it was the objective of my circle of friends, which included, for example, the chief of the political department in Monowitz, the present Oberlandespraesident

Unikower, to report all news to other countries which might inform them about our position. One of the main reasons for this was because most of us did not expect to survive the end of the war.

The English PWs purposely showed passive resistance in their work, although the German foremen often tried to drive them to work faster. They offered such resistance, although they knew that nearly all German foremen carried weapons. I know that during an argument between a German foreman and a PW, the prisoner was shot after a short argument.

5. The name Duerrfeld was well known to the concentration camp prisoners as the name of the plant manager. He was seen occasionally during inspection visits in the IG plant, sometimes also when we marched into the camp. I myself saw him at least three times next to SS 1st Lieutenant [Obersturmfuehrer] Schoettl at the block leader's house watching the marching. On such occasions, he had the best opportunity to see the state of health in which we were and the obviously dilapidated condition of our clothing. On almost every occasion when we marched in, people who had fallen ill and those who had broken down during work, as well as people who had died, were carried into the camp on primitive stretchers, so he must have become aware of this situation.

Duerrfeld is the man who caused orders to be given to the German foremen to drive the concentration camp prisoners to the greatest possible work output. Through my friend Paul Simon from Bruenn [Brno] (prisoner's number 135,322) who, as manager of the chemical works camp had connections with Duerrfeld's secretariate (central building 820) through a woman of German race [Volksdeutsche] from Czechoslovakia, I learned that such orders were issued in two cases. The first time was in the summer 1943; the second time was at the beginning of September 1944 in connection with the psychological results of military operations in the Vistula River area. In these orders, the German foremen were directly asked to make a report at once to the SS headquarters if they observed any case of idleness, or negligence of work. Duerrfeld knew that such reports would mean the severest punishment, even death, for the prisoner concerned.

I have carefully read every one of the four pages of this affidavit and signed them myself. I have made the necessary corrections in my own handwriting and signed them with my initials and herewith testify under oath that I have told the full truth in this affidavit to the best of my knowledge and belief.

[Signed] NORBERT WOLLHEIM

Sworn to and signed before me this 3d day of June 1947 at Hamburg by Norbert Wollheim, Luebeck, Wakenitzerstr. 34 b, known to me to be the person making the above affidavit.

[Signed] BENVENUTO VON HALLE

U.S. Civilian AGO No. 432532

Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes, U.S. War Department.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. VIII, pp. 589–592, Doc. NI-9807.

138. EXCERPTS FROM HIMMLER'S SUMMATION, OCTOBER 4, 1943

In October 1943, Heinrich Himmler, Reich leader (Reichsfuehrer) of the SS (the Schutzstaffel), delivered a three-hour speech to SS officers. The excerpts below include Himmler's comments on the situation in the fifth year of the war, the Russian leadership, foreigners in the Reich, the evacuation of the Jews, the principle of selection, and the future. While each section provides insights, a common theme throughout Himmler's words is that the only people who matter are Germans. He says that the SS men must be honest, decent, and loyal, but only "to members of our own blood." Elsewhere: "it is a crime against our own blood to worry about" others. Himmler also speaks of "the extermination of the Jewish race" without resort to euphemisms to hide Nazi intent. He affirms the law of social Darwinism, explaining that "whatever wins through in the battle of life . . . that is what is good." The speech ends with these words: "We want to be worthy of being permitted to be the first SS men of the Fuehrer Adolf Hitler. . . . Now let us remember the Fuehrer Adolf Hitler who will create the Germanic Reich and will lead us into the Germanic future."

EXTRACTS FROM THE SPEECH OF HIMMLER AT A POZNAN MEETING OF SS MAJOR GENERALS, 4 OCTOBER 1943, CONCERNING THE ROLE OF GERMANY AND GERMAN BLOOD IN HISTORY, UTILIZATION OF OTHER NATIONALITIES FOR GERMANY'S PURPOSES, EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWISH RACE, ROLE OF THE SS, AND RELATED MATTER

Speech of the Reich Leader SS at the meeting of the SS Major Generals at Poznan, 4 October 1943

The Situation in the Fifth Year of War

I have considered it necessary, now at the beginning of the fifth year of war, to call you, the high leader corps of the SS and Police together. Sober as we always were, truthful toward ourselves, we will discuss several matters in this troop leader meeting [Truppenfuehrerbesprechung]. Just as I was accustomed to do during long years of peace, I will give you my opinion of the situation, as I see it, about our tasks, about what we have done and achieved, as well as about what the future holds for us, as briefly as possible.

The Russian Leadership

The 1941 attack.—In 1941 the Fuehrer attacked Russia. That was, as we can well see now, shortly—perhaps 3 to 6 months—before Stalin prepared to embark on his great penetration into central and western Europe. I can give a picture of this first year in a few words. The attacking forces cut their way through. The Russian Army was herded together in great pockets, ground down, taken prisoner. At that time we did not value the mass of humanity as we value it today, as raw material, as labor. What after all, thinking in terms of generations, is not to be regretted but is now deplorable by reason of the loss of labor, is that the prisoners died, in tens and hundreds of thousands, of exhaustion and hunger.

One basic principle must be the absolute rule for the SS men—we must be honest, decent, loyal, and comradely to members of our own blood and, to nobody else. What happens to a Russian, or to a Czech does not interest me in the slightest. What the nations can offer in the way of good blood of our type we will take, if necessary by kidnapping their children and raising them here with us. Whether nations live in prosperity or starve to death interests me only so far as we need them as slaves for our culture; otherwise, it is of no interest to me. Whether 10,000 Russian females fall down from exhaustion while digging an antitank ditch interests me only so far as the antitank ditch for Germany is finished. We shall never be rough and heartless when it is not necessary,

that is clear. We Germans, who are the only people in the world who have a decent attitude toward animals, will also assume a decent attitude toward these human animals. But it is a crime against our own blood to worry about them and give them ideals, thus causing our sons and grandsons to have a more difficult time with them. When somebody comes to me and says: “I cannot dig the antitank ditch with women and children, it is inhuman, for it would kill them,” then I have to say, “You are a murderer of your own blood because if the antitank ditch is not dug, German soldiers will die, and they are sons of German mothers. They are our own blood.” That is what I want to instill into this SS—and what I believe have instilled into them—as one of the most sacred laws of the future. Our concern, our duty is our people and our blood. It is for them that we must provide and plan, work and fight, nothing else. We can be indifferent to everything else. I wish the SS to adopt this attitude to the problem of all foreign, non-Germanic peoples, especially Russians. All else is vain, fraud against our own nation, and an obstacle to the early winning of the war.

Foreigners in the Reich

We must also realize that we have 6 to 7 million foreigners in Germany. Perhaps it is even 8 million now. We have prisoners in Germany. None of them are dangerous so long as we take severe measures at the merest trifles. It is a mere nothing today to shoot 10 Poles, compared with the fact that we might later have to shoot tens of thousands in their place and compared to the fact that the shooting of these tens of thousands would then be carried out even at the cost of German blood. Every little fire will immediately be stamped out and quenched, and extinguished—otherwise—as in the case of a real fire—a political and psychological surface fire may spring up among the people.

The Evacuation of the Jews

I also want to talk to you, quite frankly, on a very grave matter. Among ourselves it should be mentioned quite frankly, and yet we will never speak of it publicly. Just as we did not hesitate on 30 June 1934 to do the duty we were bidden and stand comrades who had lapsed up against the wall and shoot them, so we have never spoken about it and will never speak of it. It was that tact which is a matter of course and which I am glad to say, is inherent in us, that made us

never discuss it among ourselves, never speak of it. It appalled everyone, and yet everyone was certain that he would do it the next time if such orders are issued and if it is necessary.

I mean the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish race. It's one of those things it is easy to talk about, "The Jewish race is being exterminated," says one Party Member, "that's quite clear, it's in our program—elimination of the Jews and we're doing it, exterminating them." And then they come, 80 million worthy Germans, and each one has his decent Jew. Of course the others are vermin, but this one is an A-1 Jew. Not one of all those who talk this way has watched it, not one of them has gone through it. Most of *you* must know what it means when 100 corpses are lying side by side, or 500, or 1,000. To have stuck it out and at the same time—apart from exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history which has never been written and is never to be written, for we know how difficult we should have made it for ourselves, if with the bombing raids, the burdens and the deprivations of war we still had Jews today in every town as secret saboteurs, agitators, and troublemongers. We would now probably have reached the 1916–1917 stage when the Jews were still in the German national body.

We have taken from them what wealth they had. I have issued a strict order, which SS Lieutenant General Pohl has carried out, that this wealth should, as a matter of course, be handed over to the Reich without reserve. We have taken none of it for ourselves. Individual men who have lapsed will be punished in accordance with an order I issued at the beginning which gave this warning; whoever takes so much as a mark of it is a dead man. A number of SS men—there are not very many of them—have fallen short, and they will die without mercy. We had the moral right, we had the duty to our people, to destroy this people which wanted to destroy us. But we have not the right to enrich ourselves with so much as a fur, a watch, a mark, or a cigarette, or anything else. Because we have exterminated a germ, we do not want in the end to be infected by the germ and die of it. I will not see so much as a small area of sepsis appear here or gain a hold. Wherever it may form, we will cauterize it. Altogether however, we can say that we have fulfilled this most difficult duty for the love of our people. And our spirit, our soul, our character has not suffered injury from it.

The Principle of Selection

We are a product of the law of selection. We have made our choice from a cross-section of our people. This people came into being aeons ago, through generations, and centuries, by the throw of the dice of fate and of history. Alien peoples have swept over this people and left their heritage behind them. Alien blood streams have flowed into this people, but it has, nevertheless in spite of horrible hardships and terrible blows of fate, still had strength in the very essence of its blood to win through. Thus, this whole people is saturated with and held together by Nordic—Phalial—Germanic blood, so that after all one could and can still speak of a German people. From this people of such varied hereditary tendencies as it emerged from the collapse after the years of the battle of liberation, we have now consciously tried to select the Nordo-Germanic blood, for we could best expect this section of our blood to contain the creative, heroic, and life preserving qualities of our people. We have gone partly by outward appearances and for the rest have kept these outward appearances in review by making constantly new demands, and by repeated tests both physical and mental, both of the character and the soul. Again and again we have sifted out and cast aside what was worthless, what did not suit us. Just as long as we have strength to do, thus will this organization [Orden] remain healthy. The moment we forget the law which is the foundation of our race and the law of selection and austerity toward ourselves, we shall have the germ of death in us and will perish, just as every human organization, every blossom in this world, does some time perish. It must be our endeavor, our inner law, to make this blossoming and fructifying last for our people as long as possible, bringing as much prosperity as possible and—don't be alarmed—if possible for thousands of years. That is why, wherever we meet and whatever we do, we must be mindful of our principle—blood, selection, and austerity. The law of nature is just this—What is hard is good, what is vigorous is good; whatever wins through in the battle of life, physically, purposefully, and spiritually, that is what is good—always taking the long view. Of course sometime—and this has happened often in history—someone can get to the top by deceit and cheating. That makes no difference to nature, to the fate of the earth, or to the fate of the world. Really, that is nature. Fate removes the impostor after a time—time not reckoned in generations of man but in historical periods. It must be our endeavor never to deceive ourselves but always to remain genuine, that is what we must continually preach and instill into ourselves, and into every boy and each one of our subordinates.

The Future

When the war is won—then, as I have already told you, our work will start. We do not know when the war will end. It may be sudden, or it may be long delayed. We shall see. But I say to you now, if an armistice and peace comes suddenly, let no one think that he can then sleep the sleep of the just. Get all your commanders, chiefs, and SS Fuehrers attuned to this; only then, gentlemen, shall we be awake, for then, so many others will fall into this sleep. I am going so to rouse the whole SS, and keep it so wide awake that we can tackle reconstruction in Germany immediately. Then Germanic work will be begun immediately in the General SS, for then the harvest will be ripe to be taken into the granary. We shall then call up age groups there by law. We shall then immediately put all our Waffen SS units into excellent form, both as regards equipment and training. We shall go on working in this first 6 months after the war, as though the big offensive were starting on the next day. It will make all the difference, if Germany has an operative reserve, an operative backing, at the peace or armistice negotiations, of 20, 25, or 30 SS divisions intact.

If the peace is a final one, we shall be able to tackle our great work of the future. We shall colonize. We shall indoctrinate our boys with the laws of the SS organization. I consider it to be absolutely necessary to the life of our peoples, that we should not only impart the meaning of ancestry, grandchildren, and future, but feel these to be a part of our being. Without there being any talk about it, without our needing to make use of rewards and similar material things, it must be a matter of course that we have children. It must be a matter of course that the most copious breeding should be from this racial superstratum of the Germanic people. In 20 to 30 years we must really be able to present the whole of Europe with its leading class. If the SS, together with the farmers—we *together with our friend Backe*, then run the colony in the East on a grand scale, without any restraint, without any question about any kind of tradition, but with nerve and revolutionary impetus, we shall in 20 years push the national boundary [Volkstumsgrenze] 500 kilometers eastward.

I requested of the Fuehrer already today, that the SS—if we have fulfilled our task and our duty by the end of the war—should have the privilege of holding Germany's eastern-most frontier as a defense frontier. I believe this is the only privilege for which we have no competitors. I believe

not one person will dispute our claim to this privilege. We shall be in a position there to train every young age group in the use of arms. We shall impose our laws on the East. We will charge ahead and push our way forward little by little to the Urals. I hope that our generation will successfully bring it about that every age group has fought in the East, and that every one of our divisions spends a winter in the East every second or third year. Then we shall never grow soft, then we shall never get SS members who only come to us because it is distinguished or because the black coat will naturally be very attractive in peacetime. Everyone will know that “if I join the SS, there is the possibility that I might be killed.” He has contracted in writing that every second year he will not dance in Berlin, attend the carnival in Munich, but that he will be posted to the Eastern Frontier in an ice-cold winter. Then we will have a healthy elite for all time. Thus, we will create the necessary conditions for the whole Germanic people and the whole of Europe: controlled, ordered, and led by us, the Germanic people, to be able in generations to stand the test in her battles of destiny against Asia which will certainly break out again. We do not know when that will be.

Then, when the mass of humanity of one to one and one-half billions line up against us, the Germanic people numbering, I hope, 250 to 300 millions and the other European peoples making a total of 600 to 700 millions (and with an outpost area stretching as far as the Urals or a hundred miles beyond the Urals) must stand the test in its vital struggle against Asia. It would be an evil day if the Germanic people did not survive it. It would be the end of beauty and culture, of the creative power of this earth. That is the distant future. It is for that we are fighting, pledged to hand down the heritage of our ancestors.

We see into the distant future because we know what it will be. That is why we are doing our duty more fanatically than ever, more devoutly than ever, more bravely, more obediently, and more thoroughly than ever. We want to be worthy of being permitted to be the first SS men of the Fuehrer Adolf Hitler in the long history of the Germanic people which stretches before us.

Now let us remember the Fuehrer Adolf Hitler who will create the Germanic Reich and will lead us into the Germanic future.

Our Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 318–327, Doc. 1919-PS.

139. AUSCHWITZ: AFFIDAVIT OF JULY 24, 1947, OF CHARLES J. COWARD REGARDING TREATMENT OF BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR, TREATMENT OF INMATES, AND I.G. FARBEN AT AUSCHWITZ, DECEMBER 1943

The affidavit given here by Charles J. Coward, a British prisoner of war, provides insights into British POWs, Auschwitz III, also called Auschwitz Monowitz, the factory camp built by I.G. Farben, and the treatment of Jews in that camp. Learning of a British ship's doctor who was Jewish and being held in the Monowitz camp with other Jews, not with the British POWs, Coward snuck into the Jewish camp, where he saw the terrible conditions that prevailed there. He recognized that the conditions under which the British POWs lived "could not be considered even in the same class with the treatment of the other groups, particularly the concentration camp inmates and the Russians." He learned that gas chambers were killing thousands of Jews a day and soon realized that the civilian population at Auschwitz as well as I.G. Farben employees knew of the gassing. Admitting that "British prisoners of war were treated better than any other nationality working at IG Auschwitz," Coward notes several instances where even they were subject to abuse and shootings. Not just the Nazis but "civilian employees of the Farben firm beat six inmates while they were working in the factory while three or four other civilians looked on."

a. AFFIDAVIT

I, Charles Joseph Coward, 133 Chichester Road, Lower Edmonton, London, herewith declare under oath the following facts:

1. I entered the British Army on 16 June 1937. I was captured on 25 May 1940, serving at that time with the 8th Reserve Regimental Royal Artillery. My rank was that of Battery Sergeant. After having gone through different Stalag camps, I arrived in Auschwitz in December 1943. Auschwitz was under the supervision of Stalag No. VIII B. The camp at Auschwitz at which we lived was E 715. It was one of the camps grouped around the I. G. Farben plant at Auschwitz.

At the time when I came to Auschwitz, about 1,200 British prisoners of war were working for I. G. Farben. Toward the end of 1943, our camp held 1,400 British prisoners of war. At the beginning of 1944, British prisoners were sent to Heydebreck and Blochhammer and about 600 British prisoners of war remained at Auschwitz.

2. The concentration camp was on IG grounds just across the road from us—not 320 yards. I could look into the camp; I could hear screams as I walked past. However, although I could see the camp, I very rarely saw anybody walking around in it. We could hear shootings taking place, sometimes 5 or 6 a week. The shots coming from the camp sounded as close as if they had come from our own camp and would wake us up.

Often the British lads would throw cigarettes or other things over to the inmates. The inmates knew that if they attempted to leave their work and pick up what was thrown, they would get at the very least a good hiding. On one occasion I recall seeing one of our boys toss something over to one of the inmates and as the inmates stooped to pick it up, a big, stout foreman pulled his revolver and shot him.

3. Having been selected by the Chief Red Cross Trustee, Regimental Major Lowe, for the position of Red Cross Trustee for our group, I was able to move about without too much difficulty. My functions as trustee included all matters relating to the welfare of the British prisoners of war such as the issue of clothing for the International Red Cross, British and American Red Cross, and the distribution of food parcels.

One day one of the inmates told me that there was a British ship's doctor among the inmates in the IG concentration camp. He said that the ship on which the doctor had been was torpedoed and the doctor, being a Jew, was separated from the others who were captured by the Germans and brought to the concentration camp. The doctor was not permitted out on work details, but he had managed through this inmate to get a note to me, asking me to write to his sister or daughter in Sunderland, England, and to notify the authorities. I wanted to get in touch with this ship's doctor and arranged with one of the guards, for some cigarettes, to let me swap clothing with one of the inmates and to march into the camp with the inmates. At 6: 00 in the evening I dirtied myself and fell in with the inmates and marched into the concentration camp itself. We went straight away to a sort of a wash room and from there into the barracks. We were not allowed to walk around. There I found wooden beds, three tiers high. These beds, which would not have been comfortable even for one person, had to accommodate two or three inmates. As a result, it was practically impossible to sleep since, if one man was in a reclining position, the others would have to sit up or lie over him. I remained in a sitting position the whole night and was dead tired. Each one could get a little sleep if they changed positions; but if the slightest noise was made, the

guards would come in. The tiers of beds were lined up and down the whole room. In the middle there were about three tables where they would fight to get their bit of soup. They got their soup in the evening and nothing else. This particular night it was potato soup. We had been counted when we marched out of the factory but were also counted when we came into the camp. When the inmates were counted, the other chaps would hold up the dead for counting purposes. Some were held up the night I was there. One of the reasons they stood the dead men up for roll call was to draw their rations. In the morning the kapos would come around to see that everybody was up and would kick or beat anybody who had not gotten up. Those who could not get up were just carted away.

When we got back to the factory, I swapped back the clothing with the chap whom I had made the exchange and gave him a few cigarettes. I had not succeeded in contacting the ship's doctor who was in a different part of the camp.

4. On the pretext of writing to my father (who was dead), in care of William Orange, I could get out about a half dozen letters a week to let the people in England know what was going on. I figured that I could pass the censors that way, and at the same time get the information to the War Office. In my letters I sent information that I thought had military value and I also wrote about the conditions of work for the civilians and the inmates, as well as the British prisoners of war. I wrote giving the particular dates on which I had witnessed thousands arriving and marched to the concentration camp, I used to inquire of the people in Auschwitz where the next batch was coming from. In my letters I would say that 600 arrived from Czechoslovakia, so many from Poland, et cetera. The turnover was in the hundreds of thousands. You could not count them. The majority of them went into the camp next to us.

5. My work as liaison man and trustee gave me access to surrounding towns, including Auschwitz. Also I came into contact with Farben officials. For example, during the first 10 days I was there, I received complaints from our men about the food and conditions of work. The majority of them were laying cables and their clothing was not really good enough for the work they were doing. Particularly since this was the middle of the winter. I investigated the complaints myself and saw they were justified. I got back to the camp and explained to my chief the necessity for extra supplies, and I also spoke to the Germans and asked to see the directors of I. G. Farben regarding clothing. I was always put off, saying I should see the contractors, and the

contractors would say that material had already been ordered.

6. Of course the treatment of the British prisoners could not be considered even in the same class with the treatment of the other groups, particularly the concentration camp inmates and the Russians. With respect to clothing, for example, the concentration camp inmates wore a striped pair of pajamas and wooden shoes; that was all the clothing they had. They would sleep in it, work in it, eat in it; there was no change of clothing. Whatever clothing of value they had when they came to the camp was taken away from them in exchange for the striped pajamas. Although I had heard that conditions were bad, I at first did not believe it. I made it a point to get one of the guards to take me to town under the pretence of buying new razor blades and stuff for our boys. For a few cigarettes he pointed out to me the various places where they had the gas chambers and the places where they took them down to be cremated. Everyone to whom I spoke gave the same story—the people in the city of Auschwitz, the SS men, concentration camp inmates, foreign workers—everyone said that thousands of people were being gassed and cremated at Auschwitz, and that the inmates who worked with us and who were unable to continue working because of their physical condition and were suddenly missing, had been sent to the gas chambers. The inmates who were selected to be gassed went through the procedure of preparing for a bath, they stripped their clothes off, and walked into the bathing room. Instead of showers, there was gas. All the camp knew it. All the civilian population knew it. I mixed with the civilian population at Auschwitz. I was at Auschwitz nearly every day. The population at Auschwitz was fully aware that people were being gassed and burned. On one occasion they complained about the stench of the burning bodies. Of course all of the Farben people knew what was going on. Nobody could live in Auschwitz and work in the plant, or even come down to the plant without knowing what was common knowledge to everybody.

Even among the Farben employees to whom I spoke, a lot of them would admit they knew about the gassing. Others who were pretty scared to say anything would admit that they heard about the gassing but then would say it was all propaganda. I am sure that Duerrfeld who was always walking around the factory knew about the gassings and the burnings. It would be utterly impossible not to know. Everybody knew from the civilians to the top dogs. It was common talk. Even while still at Auschwitz we got radio broadcasts from the outside speaking about the gassings and

burnings at Auschwitz. I recall one of these broadcasts was by Anthony Eden himself. Also, there were pamphlets dropped in Auschwitz and the surrounding territory, one of which I personally read, which related what was going on in the camp at Auschwitz. These leaflets were scattered all over the countryside and must have been dropped from planes. They were in Polish and German. Under those circumstances, nobody could be at or near Auschwitz without knowing what was going on.

7. The British prisoners of war were treated better than any other nationality working at IG Auschwitz. Still many incidents occurred which cost the lives of our prisoners of war. One German noncommissioned officer used to threaten to shoot all of us. He would beat British prisoners of war at the I. G. Farben plant or at the camp. At times it happened that IG civilian workers used to beat some of our prisoners.

In the winter of 1943–44, a civilian foreman of I. G. Farben ordered five prisoners of war to climb an ice-covered iron girder. Under the circumstances it was almost impossible to climb the girder, especially since the men did not have the proper boots. The men refused to obey the order. Thereupon the German guard shot and killed one of the five British prisoners of war. Even though, as I mentioned before, the British prisoners of war were treated far better than any of the other groups, nevertheless even the British boys did not have too easy a time. A number of our lads were sent to Sosnovitz to the Straflager [penal camp] for not working hard enough or for refusing to do the work ordered. One British prisoner of war dropped dead from exhaustion while working in the IG factory. On one occasion one of our boys was beaten by a civilian. I went out to work with that group in order to see how they were treated. It was then that I witnessed how the civilians were treating the other inmates. Unlike the British prisoners who were mistreated only occasionally, the inmates were mistreated all the time. They were beaten on the slightest provocation and often without any provocation at all. One time I saw several civilian employees of the Farben firm beat six inmates while they were working in the factory while three or four other civilians looked on. They beat them with pieces of iron and wood for not doing their work properly. They were beaten badly and left to lay on the ground. I complained to the German officer who visited the camp and told him that it was upsetting the morale of the British prisoners of war. He said that the inmates deserved it and that if they did not get beaten, they would be hard to control.

The food distributed to the British prisoners of war at IG Auschwitz would not have been sufficient if it were not for

the fact that we consistently received British and American Red Cross parcels.

Another thing I want to mention is that the British prisoners of war were not permitted to use the air raid shelters in the IG plant. I complained to Duerrfeld about this. He was very abrupt and said that a place was being allotted. The place we could use instead of an air-raid shelter was locked so that we would have to get the guard to get us a key before we could get even that protection. The inmates had no air-raid shelters of any kind, and the foreign workers were marched out into the fields.

8. The inmates had to work at everything—refinery, loading railway trucks, acetylene welding, bricklaying and concrete work. I saw them carry 100 wt. cement sacks. The men were in very poor condition but nevertheless they tried to do the work even though it required more strength than they had. They could not slow down because the foreman and the kapo were always around. I saw dozens of occasions on which a civilian foreman kept hitting and hitting an inmate until he just fell down and could not get up. On many, many occasions I saw civilians and kapos strike an inmate down with a piece of wood and then kick him. They would just let him lie there—sometimes all day. At night some other inmate would pick him up and carry him. On a bad winter day, it was not unusual to see 5 or 6 inmates being carried in on the shoulders of other inmates, or being supported under their arms. I saw one inmate knocked out in the morning, and when I came back in the afternoon he was still lying there. I should say he was dead.

9. Farben was responsible for its inmates and could not help knowing what was happening to them. One day I asked the Farben people if it were possible for me to make a collection of castoff clothing such as socks and old boots and send them into the camp. They said “No. The IG people are looking after the inmates. They are our responsibility.” I tried to explain that it would not involve any contact, that I would give the things to their man who, in turn, could distribute them among the other inmates. My suggestion was turned down flatly with the answer that it would look bad if Farben could not supply the necessities.

I have carefully read each of the five pages of this statement and have placed my initials at the bottom of each page thereof. I have made all corrections in my own handwriting and have initialed each such correction. I do hereby declare under oath that the foregoing statement is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

[Signed] C. J. COWARD

1284 War Refugee Board Estimate of Jews Gassed in Auschwitz and Birkenau

Sworn to and signed before me this 24th day of July 1947 at London, England

[Signed] Benvenuto von Halle
U.S. Civilian AGO 432532
Interrogator

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. VIII, pp. 603–608, Doc. NI-11696.

140. WAR REFUGEE BOARD ESTIMATE OF JEWS GASSED IN AUSCHWITZ AND BIRKENAU FROM APRIL 1942 TO APRIL 1944, DATED NOVEMBER 1944

The War Refugee Board, tasked with helping victims of Nazi terror, was not established until January 1944. It was created in response to a scathing report sent to President Franklin D. Roosevelt by the U.S. Treasury Department that showed incontrovertibly that the U.S. State Department had intentionally slowed down the rate at which Jewish refugees from Europe were allowed into the United States. In this report, an estimate is given by the board that 1.765 million Jews had been gassed in Auschwitz Birkenau from April 1942 through April 1944. Auschwitz Birkenau, sometimes called Auschwitz II, was the extermination camp within the Auschwitz system of camps and subcamps. Of the total number of people killed, fully 51% (900,000) were from Poland.

EXCERPT FROM A REPORT OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD, WASHINGTON, D. C., NOVEMBER 1944, ON GERMAN EXTERMINATION CAMPS—AUSCHWITZ AND BIRKENAU—GIVING AN ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF JEWS GASSED IN BIRKENAU BETWEEN APRIL 1942 AND APRIL 1944

Executive Office of the President
War Refugee Board
Washington, D. C.

German Extermination Camps—
Auschwitz and Birkenau.
(page 33)

Careful estimate of the number of Jews gassed in BIRKENAU between April, 1942 and April, 1944 (according to countries of origin).

Poland (transported by truck)	approximately	300,000
“ “ “ train)	“	600,000
Holland	“	100,000
Greece	“	45,000
France	“	150,000
Belgium	“	50,000
Germany	“	60,000
Yugoslavia, Italy and Norway	“	50,000
Lithuania	“	50,000
Bohemia, Moravia and Austria	“	30,000
Slovakia	“	30,000
Various camps for foreign Jews in Poland	—	<u>300,000</u>
		<u>approximately 1,765,000</u>

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. XXXVII, p. 433, Doc. 022-L.

141. ORDER BY HIMMLER FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE FINAL SOLUTION, JULY 19, 1942

By this single order, Heinrich Himmler, Reich leader SS and chief of the German police, mandated the “resettlement of the entire Jewish population of the Government-General [that portion of German-occupied Poland not incorporated into the Reich] to be carried out and completed by December 31, 1942.” Specifically, this called for the Jews to be gathered in “collections camps in Warsaw, Cracow, Czestochowa, Radom, and Lublin.” Referring to the need for a “total cleansing,” Himmler explains that this is necessary to achieve “ethnic division of races,” which if not attained threatens the “entire sphere of German interest” to exposure to “a source of moral and physical pestilence.”

I herewith order that the resettlement of the entire Jewish population of the Government-General be carried out and completed by December 31, 1942.

From December 31, 1942, no persons of Jewish origin may remain within the Government-General, unless they

are in collection camps in Warsaw, Cracow, Czestochowa, Radom, and Lublin. All other work on which Jewish labor is employed must be finished by that date, or, in the event that this is not possible, it must be transferred to one of the collection camps.

These measures are required with a view to the necessary ethnic division of races and peoples for the New Order in Europe, and also in the interests of the security and cleanliness of the German Reich and its sphere of interest. Every breach of this regulation spells a danger to quiet and order in the entire German sphere of interest, a point of application for the resistance movement and a source of moral and physical pestilence.

For all these reasons a total cleansing is necessary and therefore to be carried out. Cases in which the date set can not be observed will be reported to me in time, so that I can see to corrective action at an early date. All requests by other offices for changes or permits for exceptions to be made must be presented to me personally.

Heil Hitler!
H. Himmler

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, Abraham Margalio, eds., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), Document no. 124, pp. 275–276. Reproduced by permission of Yad Vashem Publications.

142. AUSCHWITZ: LETTER REGARDING CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS, INCLUDING CREMATORIA, JUNE, 13, 1943

In dealing with the horrors that took place in Auschwitz, it is easy to forget that the camp consisted of buildings that, like all other buildings, require architects' blueprints, general management, subcontractors, delivery of materials, and so forth. This letter from the construction management at Auschwitz to one of the companies working on the structures required for the camp to fulfill its task is like any other demand for work to be done on schedule, lest the winter require the suspension of construction. Although the letter focuses on the contractor's failure to finish carpentry work, the delivery of greatest concern is "the doors . . . for the crematorium I in the prisoner of

war camp, which is urgently needed for the execution of the special measures." Companies, knowing full well how and for what purpose their materials and work would be used, nonetheless participated in the process.

LETTER FROM CENTRAL SS CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT AUSCHWITZ TO GERMAN EQUIPMENT WORKS (DAW), 13 JUNE 1943, URGING COMPLETION OF CREMATORIUMS I, II, III, IV AND OTHER CARPENTRY WORK

Copy

13 June 1943

21242/43/Er/L.

To the Deutsche Ausruestungswerke G.m.b.H. [DAW German Equipment Works, Ltd.] Auschwitz

Subject: Carrying out of carpentry work for local construction projects.

Reference: Letter of the Central Construction Management of 4

November 1942, Bftgb., 17450/42/Er/L, and repeated personal meetings with SS Ostuf. Wagner and Z. A. Lochner

In our above-quoted letter (copy forwarded to the office W IV) we asked you, following a meeting with SS Obersturmfuehrer Wagner, to complete the carpentry work for the below-mentioned construction as soon as possible, as otherwise the building operations would have to be suspended in winter; in particular—

1. 15 new constructions for prisoners quarters.
2. 4 build-up constructions for prisoners quarters by adding storeys.
3. Temporary Kommandantur [Headquarters].
4. Laundry bunding with reception, delousing plant, and bath for prisoners.
5. Laboratory at Raisko.
6. Grass drying plant at Raisko.
7. Greenhouse plant at Raisko.
8. Crematoriums I and II, prisoner of war camp Auschwitz.
9. Crematoriums III and IV, prisoner of war camp Auschwitz.

The carpentry work, however, had in no case been done proportionate to the completion of the other parts of the construction despite the repeated verbal promises by the management of the Deutsche Ausruestungswerke, Auschwitz

plant. In the first place, delivery without delay is requested for the doors (ordered by letter of 26 October 1942 Bftgb. Nr.: 17010/42/Ky/ Pa.) for the crematorium I in the prisoner of war camp, which is urgently needed for the execution of the special measures; otherwise the progress of the construction work would be jeopardized.

Likewise, the completion of windows for the reception building and the doors for 5 huts for the accommodation of prisoners is urgently required for the same reasons. Due to the lack of windows and doors in some of the constructions in progress the building operations had, on account of the now prevailing severe frost, to be suspended thereby causing a delay in the completion of the urgently needed construction for considerable time. Since the central construction management, having transferred its own shop to the Deutsche Ausruestungswerke G.m.b.H., Auschwitz Plant, is no longer in a position to have carpentry work done of their own accord, the Auschwitz plant of the DAW must on its own part, do its best in order to assist the progress of the construction work being done in this place by delivering the carpentry work in time.

Thus, we renew our request to complete and deliver in the first place the carpentry work mentioned above without delay.

Furthermore, the supplementary terms of the agreement for the tender for the prisoners quarters and the laundry building asked for by letter of the Central Construction Department of 9 December 1942, Bftgb. No.: 19708/42/Tei/Lm, are still missing.

The Chief of the Central Construction Management
of the Waffen SS and Police Auschwitz
SS Hauptsturmfuehrer

Distribution:

- 1—SS Ustuf. Ertl
- 1—SS Ustuf. Jarisch
- 1—SS Ustuf. Kirschneck
- 1—SS Ustuf. Kywitz
- 1—Filing department (shop orders DAW)

Certified true copy.

[Signed] F. A. TUCHMANN

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. V, pp. 624–625, Doc. NO-4466.

143. AUSCHWITZ: TELEGRAM ON TRANSPORTING JEWS FROM GHETTOS TO AUSCHWITZ, APRIL 23, 1944, 1:30 A.M.

In this telegram to the German Foreign Office, Edmund Veesenmayer, the Reich plenipotentiary in Hungary, reports on the progress made in concentrating Jews from the Romanian/Hungarian areas in ghettos for purposes of their ultimate deportation to Auschwitz. The telegram is dated just one month after Germany's invasion and occupation of Hungary, where the last major Jewish community in Europe not yet deported to extermination camps could be found. Apart from noting the number of Jews being assembled in various locations, Veesenmayer expresses concern about the availability and adequacy of transportation services to complete the movement of the Jews to their death. Of interest is Veesenmayer's assurance that this action will be executed with sensitivity to "war economy requirements."

TELEGRAM FROM DEFENDANT VEESENMAYER TO FOREIGN OFFICE, 23 APRIL 1944, CONCERNING THE CONFINEMENT OF HUNGARIAN JEWS IN GHETTOS AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE DEPORTATION TO AUSCHWITZ OF 3,000 JEWS DAILY

[Stamp] Foreign Office
INL II 764 g
Received 24 April 1944

Telegram
(Teletype, Secret)

Budapest, 23 April 1944, 0130 hours

Received: 23 April 1944, 0800 hours

No. 1022 of 23 April. Secret!

Also for Ambassador Ritter

Reference: Telegraphic report No. (X) 117, of 19 April.

[Handwritten] (X) Inl II 220 top secret

In connection with telegraphic report No. 117, and after having spoken with the competent specialists, I inform you of the following:

The work of putting Jews into ghettos began in the Carpathian area on 16 April. Thus far 150,000 Jews have been affected. The action will probably be completed by the end of next week, approximately 300,000 Jews. The same is already in preparation and is planned to follow immediately in

Transylvania and in a number of counties bordering on Rumania. An additional 250,000 to 300,000 Jews are to be dealt with. Subsequently it will be the turn of the counties bordering on Serbia and Croatia, with the final ghetto work to be done in the interior of the country, and its conclusion in Budapest.

Negotiations about transportation have been started. They call for a daily shipment of 3,000 Jews, mainly from the Carpathian area, beginning on 15 May. If transportation facilities permit, there will be later on also simultaneous shipments from other ghettos. Auschwitz is designated as receiving station. Provisions have been made that far reaching consideration will be taken for war economy requirements in the execution of this action. In order not to jeopardize the execution of this action, it appears advisable to delay somewhat the transport of the 50,000 Jewish workers from the Budapest area, whose shipment has been demanded by me and has been agreed on by the government; this will be necessary anyway in view of the existing transportation difficulties. Transport by marching is not practicable, since it entails great difficulties in the questions of feeding, shoes, and guarding. Since the Jewish action is an entity, I deem the above sketched plan correct, and I request wired orders if you have any doubts or special requests.

VEESENMAYER

[Distribution Form]

State Secretary Keppler
 Under State Secretary Political Division
 Ambassador Ritter
 Ambassador Gaus
 Chief Personnel
 Chief Trade Policy Division
 Chief Legal Division
 Chief Cultural Policy Division
 Chief Press Division
 Chief Radio Division
 Chief Protocol
 Dirigent Political Division
 Chief Inland I
 Chief Inland II
 Work copy to
 Minister Schnurre
 Minister Benzler
 Minister Frohwein
 Minister v. Grundherr
 Senior Legation Counsellor Melcher
 Dr. Megerle

[Stamp]

Work copy!

Register with Inland II

[Handwritten] S. Hungary

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 348–349, Doc. NG-2233.

144. AUSCHWITZ: AFFIDAVIT OF APRIL 5, 1946, OF RUDOLF HOESS REGARDING EXTERMINATION AT AUSCHWITZ, MAY 1940–DECEMBER 1943

Rudolf Hoess (or Höss), who gave this affidavit, was the longest-serving commander of Auschwitz. He is easily confused with Rudolf Hess, who was deputy führer to Adolf Hitler. Hoess is candid beyond all expectations in this affidavit, admitting his role and estimating that approximately 3 million people, mostly Jews, were killed at Auschwitz during his three and a half years of command. He boasted of the improvements he made when constructing and running Auschwitz as compared to the way things were done at Treblinka, another extermination camp. The objective and nonchalant manner of his statement is startling considering that he discusses here, among other things, the selection process, the way the victims were kept unaware that they were headed for a gas chamber, and the fact that medical experiments were performed on prisoners who, as he explained, “had been already condemned to death by the Gestapo.” Hoess was tried for murder by the Supreme National Tribunal in Poland, where a sentence of death was executed on April 16, 1947.

AFFIDAVIT OF RUDOLF FRANZ FERDINAND HOESS, 5 APRIL 1946: HE WAS COMMANDANT OF AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP FROM 1 MAY 1940 TO 1 DECEMBER 1943, DURING WHICH TIME 3,000,000 PERSONS PERISHED THERE; METHODS OF KILLINGS DESCRIBED; NAMES OF SOME PERSONS RESPONSIBLE; “FINAL SOLUTION” MEANT EXTERMINATION OF ALL JEWS IN EUROPE; POPULATION IN AREA SURROUNDING AUSCHWITZ AWARE OF KILLINGS (EXHIBIT USA-819)

 OFFICE OF US CHIEF OF COUNSEL
 FOR THE PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY
 APO 124A, US ARMY
 INTERROGATION DIVISION
AFFIDAVIT

I, RUDOLF FRANZ FERDINAND HOESS, being first duly sworn, depose and say as follows:

1. I am forty-six years old, and have been a member of the NSDAP since 1922; a member of the SS since 1934; a member of the Waffen-SS since 1939. I was a member from 1 December 1934 of the SS Guard Unit, the so-called Deathhead Formation (Totenkopf Verband)

2. I have been constantly associated with the administration of concentration camps since 1934, serving at Dachau until 1938; then as Adjutant in Sachsenhausen from 1938 to May 1, 1940, when I was appointed Commandant of Auschwitz. I commanded Auschwitz until 1 December, 1943, and estimate that at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated there by gassing and burning, and at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease, making a total dead of about 3,000,000. This figure represents about 70% or 80% of all persons sent to Auschwitz as prisoners, the remainder having been selected and used for slave labor in the concentration camp industries. Included among the executed and burnt were approximately 20,000 Russian prisoners of war (previously screened out of Prisoner of War cages by the Gestapo) who were delivered at Auschwitz in Wehrmacht transports operated by regular Wehrmacht officers and men. The remainder of the total number of victims included about 100,000 German Jews, and great numbers of citizens, *mostly* Jewish) from Holland, France, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Greece, or other countries. We executed about 400,000 Hungarian Jews alone at Auschwitz in the summer of 1944.

3. WVHA (Main Economic and Administration Office), headed by Obergruppenfuehrer Oswald Pohl, was responsible for all administrative matters such as billeting, feeding and medical care, in the concentration camps. Prior to establishment of the RSHA, Secret State Police Office (Gestapo) and the Reich Office of Criminal Police were responsible for arrests, commitments to concentration camps, punishments and executions therein. After organization of the RSHA, all of these functions were carried on as before, but, pursuant to orders signed by Heydrich as Chief of the RSHA. While Kaltenbrunner was Chief of RSHA, orders for protective custody, commitments, punishment and, individual executions were signed by Kaltenbrunner or by Mueller, Chief of the Gestapo, as Kaltenbrunner's deputy.

4. Mass executions by gassing commenced during the summer 1941 and continued until Fall 1944. I personally supervised executions at Auschwitz until the first of December 1943 and know by reason of my continued duties in the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps WVHA that these

mass executions continued as stated above. All mass executions by gassing took place under the direct order, supervision and responsibility of RSHA. I received all orders for carrying out these mass executions directly from RSHA.

5. On 1 December 1943 I became Chief of AMT I in AMT Group D of the WVHA and in that office was responsible for coordinating all matters arising between RSHA and concentration camps under the administration of WVHA. I held this position until the end of the war. Pohl, as Chief of WVHA, and Kaltenbrunner, as Chief of RSHA, often conferred personally and frequently communicated orally and in writing concerning concentration camps. On 5 October 1944, I brought a lengthy report regarding Mauthausen Concentration Camp to Kaltenbrunner at his office at RSHA, Berlin. Kaltenbrunner asked me to give him a short oral digest of this report and said he would reserve any decision until he had had

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Affidavit of Rudolf Franz Ferdinand Hoess, cont'd.

an opportunity to study it in complete detail. This report dealt with the assignment to labor of several hundred prisoners who had been condemned to death—so-called "nameless prisoners".

6. The "final solution" of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe. I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941. At that time there were already in the general government three other extermination camps; BELZEK, TREBLINKA and WOLZEK. These camps were under the Einsatzkommando of the Security Police and SD. I visited Treblinka to find out how they carried out their exterminations. The Camp Commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year. He was principally concerned with liquidating all the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. He used monoxide gas and I did not think that his methods were very efficient. So when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz, I used Cyclon B, which was a crystallized Prussic Acid which we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took from 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about one-half hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special commandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses.

7. Another improvement we made over Treblinka was that we built our gas chambers to accommodate 2,000 people at one time, whereas at Treblinka their 10 gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each. The way we selected our victims was as follows: we had two SS doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming transports of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the Camp. Others were sent immediately to the extermination plants. Children of tender years were invariably exterminated since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Still another improvement we made over Treblinka was that at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated and at Auschwitz we endeavored to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process. Of course, frequently they realized our true intentions and we sometimes had riots and difficulties due to that fact. Very frequently women would hide their children under the clothes but of course when we found them we would send the children in to be exterminated. We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz.

8. We received from time to time special prisoners from the local Gestapo office. The SS doctors killed such prisoners by injections of benzine. Doctors had orders to write ordinary death certificates and could put down any reason at all for the cause of death.

9. From time to time we conducted medical experiments on women inmates, including sterilization and experiments relating to cancer. Most of the people who died under these experiments had been already condemned to death by the Gestapo.

10. Rudolf Mildner was the chief of the Gestapo at Kattowicz and as such was head of the political department at Auschwitz which conducted third degree methods of interrogation from approximately March 1941 until September 1943. As such, he frequently sent prisoners to Auschwitz for incarceration or execution. He visited Auschwitz on several occasions. The Gestapo Court, the SS Standgericht, which tried persons accused of various crimes, such as escaping Prisoners of War, etc., frequently met within Auschwitz, and Mildner often attended the trial of such persons, who usually were executed in Auschwitz following their sentence. I showed Mildner throughout the extermination

plant at Auschwitz and he was directly interested in it since he had to send the Jews from his territory for execution at Auschwitz.)

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Affidavit of Rodulf Franz Ferdinand Hoess, continued

I understand English as it is written above. The above statements are true; this declaration is made by me voluntarily and without compulsion; after reading over the statement, I have signed and executed the same at Nurnberg, Germany on the fifth day of April 1946.

Rudolf Hoess

RUDOLF FRANZ FERDINAND HOESS.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this
5th day of April, 1946, at Nurnberg,
Germany.
Smith W. Brookhardt, Jr.

SMITH W. BROOKHARDT, JR.,
LT COLONEL. IGD.

Source: Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. XXXIII, pp. 275–279, Doc. 3868-PS.

145. THE AUSCHWITZ PROTOCOL: THE VRBA–WETZLER REPORT

Originally from Slovakia, Rudolf Vrba was a Jewish prisoner in Auschwitz who, with fellow prisoner Alfred Wetzler, managed to escape from the camp on April 10, 1944. Eventually making it back to Slovakia, they produced a report on conditions in the camp that provided some of the most detailed information about the Nazi annihilation of the Jews there. Much of what was exposed related to the destruction of the Jews of Hungary, but the detail in the report uncovered atrocities beyond this one huge case. The lengthy report, part of which is produced here, was passed to Slovakia's Jewish community, who held onto the information they received and did not circulate it through the general Jewish community. Over time, the account became known as the Vrba–Wetzler report.

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
 Research and Analysis Branch

FIELD MEMORANDUM 257 (FR-425) 10 May 1945
 Bari, 20 April 1945

TESTIMONY OF TWO ESCAPEES FROM
 AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU
 EXTERMINATION CAMPS AT OSWIECIM, POLAND

The accompanying text is the translation of a document brought to Italy by Dr. G. Soos, secretary of the Hungarian underground movement MFM, in microfilm form. The film is a reproduction of the original document hidden by Dr. Soos with other papers deposited with trustees of the Hungarian underground and remains in his possession at Rome. The original, written in Hungarian, was transmitted to him by Dr. Jozsef Elias, a protestant pastor of Jewish ancestry who is the head of “Jo’Pasztor Bizettsag and an organizer of Jewish resistance in Hungary.

Two young Slovak Jews escaped from the Birkenau-Auschwitz concentration camps at Oswiecim, Poland, on 7 April 1944 and reached Hungary, Dr. Soos believes, at the end of June or July. They were interrogated by Dr. Elias and this document is the result of the interrogation. The identity of the two men was not revealed to Dr. Soos, in order not to endanger their personal security. He heard, however, that the Jewish underground made arrangements to send them to a neutral country, presumably to Switzerland, in order to preserve them for ultimate testimony. Dr. Soos believes that the first escapee originates from Sered u/V., Slovakia, while the second escapee comes from Nagyszombat, Slovakia.

[Each page in the original English translation of this document is marked “SECRET”. Editor’s note.]

[This memorandum contains information forwarded by R&A personnel in the field. Because of its timely interest it is distributed prior to analysis and processing.]

The first escapee was sent from the collecting camp of Sered u/V. to the Auschwitz camp on 13 April 1942 and from there to the adjoining Birkenau camp the same day; the other was sent from the camp at Novaky on 14 June 1942 to the Maidanek concentration camp at Lublin; then to Auschwitz camp on 27 June 1942; and finally to the Birkenau camp in September or October 1942, where he joined his fellow escapee.

The original report, translated without alteration here, is compiled in three parts; the first describes the experiences of the first escapee from the time of his deportation from Sered until January 1943, mostly spent at Birkenau. Part II describes chiefly the experiences of the first escapee but also contains testimony and data given by the second escapee, who arrived at Auschwitz 30 June 1942 but did not meet his companion at Birkenau until September or October 1942. This part covers the period from early 1942 until their escape in April 1942. The third part describes the experiences of the second escapee from the time he left Novaky on 14 June 1942 until he was transferred from Auschwitz to Birkenau in September or October 1942.

Within each part the story is told in rough chronological order; owing to the disorganization of the text, titles have been added by the editors to facilitate reading.

TESTIMONY OF TWO ESCAPEES FROM
 AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU EXTERMINATION CAMPS,
 OSWIECIM, POLAND

Part I. Testimony of the First Escapee.

1. Arrival of 640 Slovak Jews at Auschwitz Camp (Oswiecim, Poland), mid-April 1942.
2. Description of Auschwitz Camp.
3. Arrival at Birkenau Camp, mid-April 1942.
4. Description of Birkenau Camp.
5. Arrival of 12,000 Russian POWs and 1300 French Jews previous to April 1942.
6. Experiences at Birkenau April–May 1942
7. Experiences at Birkenau May 1942–January 1943

Part II. Testimony of Both the First and Second Escapees.

8. Transport arrivals at Auschwitz-Birkenau, early 1942–December 1942.
9. Description of the extermination crew.
10. Transport arrivals at Auschwitz-Birkenau, January–February 1943.
11. Description of the new Birkenau crematoria and gas chambers, February 1943.
12. Transport arrivals at Auschwitz-Birkenau, March–September 1943.
13. Treatment of the Theresienstadt Czechs, September 1943–March 1944.
14. Transport arrivals, September 1943–April 1944

15. Organization and population of the Birkenau camp, April 1944.

Part III. Testimony of the Second Escapee.

16. Internment at Maidenek camp at Lublin, June 1942.
17. Internment at Auschwitz, 30 June 1942–September or October 1942.

Part IV. Estimate of Jews Exterminated at Birkenau, April 1942–1944.

TESTIMONY OF THE FIRST ESCAPEE

1. Arrival at Auschwitz Camp (Oswiecim, Poland)

On 13 April 1942, some one thousand of us were loaded into closed freight cars at the reception center at Sered. The doors of the car were sealed so that we could not learn the route taken. When the doors were opened after a long journey, we were astonished to see that we had left Slovakia and were at the railway station of Zward, in Poland. The guard, which heretofore had consisted of members of the Slovak Hlinka Guard, was replaced by German Waffen-SS personnel. After some cars were left behind, we proceeded to Auschwitz, where we arrived at night and were shunted onto a siding. The cars left behind had supposedly been dropped because of difficulties in billeting; they followed us in a few days. When we arrived, we were lined up in rows of five and counted. The number of arrivals was 640. We reached the Auschwitz camp after 20 minutes' march, carrying our heavy luggage—we had left Slovakia well equipped.

In Auschwitz we were brought at once into a large barracks. We had to deposit our parcels on one side of the building; on the other side we had to strip naked and to hand in our clothes and valuables. We went naked into a neighboring barracks where our heads and bodies were shaved and disinfected with Lysol. As we left this barracks everyone was given a number. The numbers began at 28,600¹. Holding our numbers in our hands, we were driven into a third barracks where the admission proper was made. This consisted of our numbers being tattooed on the left breast in an extremely brutal

manner. Many of us passed out during the process. Our personal data were also taken. We were sent from here to a cellar in groups of 100, then into a barracks where we were issued prison uniforms and wooden shoes. The whole procedure lasted until about 10 a.m. That same afternoon our uniforms were taken away and in their place we received second-hand Russian uniforms, or rather rags. Thus equipped, we were led to Birkenau.

2. Description of the Auschwitz Camp

Auschwitz is actually a reception center for political prisoners, for those “in protective custody.”² In April, 1942, at the time of my assignment there, there were about 15,000 prisoners, mostly Poles, German nationals³, and Russian civilians.⁴ A few of the inmates were criminals or hoboes.

The Birkenau labor camp, as well as the agricultural settlement at Harmansee, are subordinate to the Auschwitz camp command. All prisoners come first to Auschwitz, where they are provided with appropriate numbers; they are either kept there or are sent to Birkenau; only a few go to Harmansee. Prisoners are allotted numbers in the order of their admittance. Numbers are used only once, so that the last number shows the total number of prisoners admitted up to that date. At the time of our escape from Birkenau at the beginning of April 1944, this highest number was about 180,000. Numbers were at first tattooed on the left breast, but later, as these numbers became illegible, on the left arm above the wrist.

All categories of prisoners receive the same treatment, regardless of nationality. But for ease of control they are distinguished by different-colored triangles located on the left side of the upper garment, under the prison number. The nationality of the prisoner is indicated by initial letter (i.e., P for Pole, etc.) placed inside the triangle. The colors of the triangle indicating the various categories are:

- red — political protective custody
- green — incorrigible criminal
- black — work derelict (mostly Russians)
- pink — homosexuals
- purple — member of the sect of Bible Researchers

1 Note the statement on page 9 that women were designated by a separate numbering system. The summary of 1942 transport arrivals is given on page 13ff. Some prisoners were exterminated on arrival, without being numbered.

2 Schutzhaeftlinge

3 Reichsdeutsche

4 Schutzrussen

The markings of Jewish prisoners differ from the insignia described above only in that the triangle, which is red in most cases, is converted into a Star of David by the addition of a small yellow triangle.

There are several factories and workshops in the vicinity of the Auschwitz camp, among others a DAW⁵, one Krupp, one Siemens plant, and a complex called “Buna,” several kilometers long, in process of construction, which is outside the camp area proper. These plants are manned by prisoners.

The dwelling-area of the camp, that is, the actual concentration camp, covers an area approximately 500 by 500 meters in size. This zone is fenced off by two rows of concrete columns about 3 meters high. The columns are connected with each other by high-tension wires supported by insulators. Between these two fences, about 150 meters apart, there are watch towers about 5 meters high, equipped with machine guns and searchlights. In front of the inner row of high-tension columns there is a barbed-wire fence. Touching this ordinary fence is answered by machine gun fire from the watch towers.

The camp itself consists of 3 rows of buildings. The camp road runs between the first and second row of buildings. There was previously a wall between the second and third rows of buildings, and until August 1942 Jewish girls from Slovakia, who had been deported in March and April 1942, were billeted in the structures behind this wall. There were about 7,000 of these girls. After they were taken to Birkenau, the wall was pulled down. At the entrance of the camp was the following sign in big letters: “Arbeit macht frei.”⁶

Within a radius of about 2,000 meters the whole camp is surrounded by watch towers at a distance of 150 meters from each other. In contrast to the guard installations called Kleine Postenkette, which are described above, this system is called the Grosse Postenkette.⁷ The various factories and shops are located

* * * * *

between these two guard belts.

Watch towers of the small (inner) belt are manned only at night, at which time the double fence is also charged with electric current. Sentries of the small belt are relieved in the

morning and the towers of the large belt are manned. Escape through these two sentry belts is nearly impossible. To get through the inner belt during the night is out of the question, since the towers of the large belt are so close to one another (only 150 m., with each tower guarding a radius of 75 meters) that one cannot approach the belt without being observed. Anyone approaching is shot without warning. Relief of the guards in the big belt takes place at night only after the roster has been checked in the small belt zone, and it is ascertained that all prisoners are within that area. If, at the roll call, any prisoner is found missing, an alarm is given by sirens.

When a prisoner is missing, the guards of the outer belt remain in their towers and the guards of the inner belt also take up their posts. Hundreds of SS men with bloodhounds search the area between the two guard belts. The sirens alert the whole region, so that even after miraculously breaking through the two guard belts the escaping prisoner faces the danger of falling into the hands of numerous German police and SS patrols. Escaping prisoners are greatly handicapped by their shaved heads and marked clothes (rags painted red). The population of the area is so intimidated that, at best, it is passive to escaping prisoners. Death is immediately meted out to all those giving any aid to an escaped prisoner, even to those who fail to report instantly the location of such a person.

If a prisoner is not caught after three days, the guards of the outer belt leave their post, since it is assumed that the prisoner was successful in breaking through both guard belts. If the escaped prisoner is caught alive, he is hanged in the presence of the entire camp. If he is found dead, his body is exposed at the gates of the camp. In its hands is placed a sign which reads: “Hier bin ich.”⁸

During our two years imprisonment many attempted to escape, but with the exception of two or three all were brought back dead or alive. We do not know if those not brought back succeeded in escaping, but we do know that we are the only Jews brought from Slovakia to Auschwitz or Birkenau who did escape.

3. Arrival of the First Escapee at Birkenau

As I said before, we were sent to Birkenau on the first day of our arrival in Auschwitz mid-April 1947. There is in reality

5 Deutsche Aufrüstungswerke, or German Armament Works

6 “Work liberates.”

7 Respectively, small and large guard belts.

8 “Here I am.”

no community called Birkenau; this is a new name probably originating from the near-by beechwood “Birke.” The area known as Birkenau is called “Rajska” by the local population. The center of the Birkenau camp is four kilometers from Auschwitz, the outer guard belts of the two camps being separated by a railroad track only. At that time we knew nothing about Neuberau, a town about 30 to 40 kilometers from Birkenau which for unknown reasons was given as our mailing address.

4. Description of Birkenau Camp

When we arrived at Birkenau, one large kitchen, capable of handling 15,000 people, and two other buildings had already been completed and one additional house was under construction. All these buildings were enclosed by ordinary wire fence. The last-mentioned buildings were used for the reception of prisoners and were built according to the same plan. Each was about thirty meters long and eight to ten meters wide. The walls were scarcely more than two meters high, the roof reaching the disproportionate height of five meters. Such a building resembles a stable with a hayloft perched on top. Since there is no ceiling, the inside height is about seven meters. An inside wall, with a door in the center, divides each house lengthwise into two parts. The house-walls and the dividing wall support balconies running lengthwise at a height of 80 centimeters above each other. These balconies are divided into small cells with three persons to each cell. There are layers of cells on each wall. The dimensions given sic. show that the cell is not long enough to permit a person to lie down stretched out and is just high enough to enable him to sit up. Since the height of a cell is 80 centimeters, it is impossible to stand up in it. Approximately 400 to 500 persons are billeted in each house or, as they call it, block.

The Birkenau camp at this time covered an area of 850x1600 meters. Like Auschwitz, a small or inner guard belt surrounds it. Beyond this inner belt a new, much larger camp was under construction. Upon completion, it was to be incorporated in the camp already functioning. We do not know the purpose of these large-scale preparations. As at Auschwitz, the Birkenau camp is surrounded at a distance of 2 kilometers by an outer belt of guard-posts. The guard system is similar to that of Auschwitz.

5. Arrival of 12,000 Russian POWs and 1300 French Jews Previous to April 1942.

The building that we found in Birkenau upon our arrival had been built by 12,000 Russian POWs who were brought there in December 1941. They worked under such inhuman conditions during the extraordinarily cold weather that nearly all had died by the time we arrived. They had been given numbers from 1–12,000, but this was outside the numbering system for other inmates. When additional Russian POWs arrived, they did not receive subsequent numbers like other prisoners, but were allotted numbers between 1 and 12,000 vacated by deceased Russian POWs. It was impossible, therefore, to estimate by means of this numbering system the total number of Russian POWs received at the camp. Russian POWs were assigned to Auschwitz and Birkenau for punishment only.

We found the surviving Russians in a terrible state of degradation and neglect. They were billeted in the unfinished buildings, were exposed to the weather, and died in great numbers. Their corpses were superficially buried by hundreds and thousands. Later we had to dig up these corpses and bury [burns] them.

The first French male transport also reached Auschwitz before ourselves. It contained 1,300 naturalized French Jews. The numbering of these French Jews began at about 27,500. As I mentioned before, our numbers⁹ began with 28,600, therefore, no male transport had arrived in Auschwitz between the French and ourselves. (Women were processed separately and were numbered parallel with men; the girls from Slovakia who arrived before us were given numbers 1000–8000). We found the survivors of the French Jewish transport in Birkenau, about 700 men in a state of total exhaustion. The remainder died within one week.

6. Experiences at Birkenau April–May 1942

The following were billeted in the 3 blocks:

- (a) The so-called ‘prominents,’ i.e., professional criminals and older Polish political prisoners who were entrusted with the leadership of the camp;
- (b) Survivors of the French Jew (about 700);
- (c) Jews from Slovakia, 634 at first,¹⁰ to which were added a few days later those who had stayed in Zward;

9 See page 13 for list of transport arrivals from early 1942 to December 1942.

10 640? See description of the author’s own transport on page 1.

(d) Surviving Russians who were living in the half-completed houses or had no shelter at all, and whose numbers diminished so rapidly that they did not constitute a group to accounted for.

We Jews from Slovakia had to work with the Russian survivors. French Jews worked separately. After three days I was sent with 200 Slovak Jews to work in the Auschwitz Deutsche Aufrüstungswerke. We were billeted a Birkenau and went out to work early in the morning. Food was given us twice daily, one liter of carrot soup at noon and thirty dekagrams of bad bread in the evening. Working conditions were hard beyond imagination, so that most of us could not stand it. Weakened as we were from starvation and the inedible food, the death-rate took on frightening proportions; in our working group of 200, from 30–35 died each day. Many were simply beaten to death by the work supervisors and the so-called “capos.” The daily shortage caused by deaths was made good from the groups staying in Birkenau.

Returning from work at night was difficult and dangerous for us. We had to carry home, a distance of 5 kilometers, our tools, firewood, heavy cooking bowls, and the corpses of our comrades who had died or had been beaten to death during the day. We had to march in military formation with this heavy load. The capo punished what he considered unmilitary marching with cruel beatings or even by beating the culprits to death. By the time the second transport arrived, 14 days later, only about 150 of us were alive. We were counted off every night. Corpses were loaded on small carts and taken to the near-by birchwood, where they were burned in holes several meters deep and 15 meters long.

Every morning on our way to work we met 300 Jewish girls from Slovakia who were in a labor gang known as a Kommando, and worked in the vicinity at some kind of digging. These girls were dressed in old rags of Russian uniforms and wore wooden clogs. Their heads were shaven. Unfortunately we could never talk to them.

7. Experiences at Birkenau May 1942–January 1943.

By the middle of May 1942 a total of four Jewish male transports had reached Birkenau from Slovakia. All received the same treatment as ourselves. From the first and second transports, 120 of were sent to Auschwitz on orders of the Auschwitz camp command, which had asked for doctors, dentists, university students, and professional administrators

and clerks. After one week at Auschwitz 18 doctors and nurses, as well as three clerks, were selected from the 120 professionals. The doctors were assigned to the Auschwitz hospital and the three clerks, including myself, were sent back to Birkenau. Two of my companions, Laszlo Braun from Nagyszombat and Grosz from Verbo, both of whom have since died, went to the Slovak block. I went to the French block, where we were given administrative work. The remaining 99 persons were sent to work in the Auschwitz quarry where they perished within a short time.

Shortly afterwards a so-called hospital (Krankenbau) was established in one of the buildings. This was the notorious Block No. 7. I was assigned there as head-nurse at first; later I became the manager. The head of the hospital was Victor Mordarki, No. 3550, a Polish political. The hospital was nothing other than an assembly point for those awaiting death. All prisoners unable to work were sent here. Naturally, there could be no question of medical treatment or nursing. Every day about 150 people died and their corpses were sent to the Auschwitz crematorium.

At the same time, the so-called “selection” was started. The number of prisoners who were to be gassed and their bodies burned was determined twice weekly, on Monday and Thursday, by the camp doctor (Standortarzt). Selectees were loaded on a truck and taken to the birchwood. Those who reached there alive were gassed in the big barrack built for the purpose and located next to the hole for burning bodies, and they were cremated in that hole. Approximately 2000 from Block No. 7 died each week, of which about 1200 deaths resulted from “natural causes” and about 800 from “selection.” Death reports on those dying from natural causes were made out and sent to camp HQ at Oranienburg. Selectees were marked up in a book labelled SB.¹¹ I was manager of Block No. 7 until 15 January 1943, during which time I could observe what was going on. About 50,000 prisoners were destroyed during that period, either from “natural causes” or through “selections.”

II. TESTIMONY OF BOTH THE FIRST AND SECOND ESCAPEES

8. Transport Arrivals at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Early 1942–December 1942.

In view of the fact that prisoners were given consecutive numbers, as we said before, we are in a position to determine

¹¹ Sonderbehandlung, or “special treatment.”

with considerable exactness the order of arrival and fate of the various transports. The order of arrival ran as follows:

<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Transports</u>
c. 27,400–28,600	First transport of naturalized French Jews.
c. 28,600–29,600	First Jews from Slovakia, our own transport. [arrived mid-April 1942 – ed.]
c. 29,600–29,700	100 Gentile men from various transit camps.
c. 29,700–32,700	Three complete Slovak Jewish transport, 3000 men.
c. 32,700–33,100	400 habitual criminals (Gentiles) from Warsaw.
c. 33,100–35,000	Approximately 2000 Jews from Cracow.
c. 35,000–36,000	Gentile Poles, political prisoners in protective custody.
c. 36,000–37,300	1330 Slovak Jews arriving from Lublin-Maidenek in May 1942
c. 37,300–37,900	600 Gentile Poles, with few Jews, coming from Radom.
c. 37,900–38,000	100 Gentile Poles arriving from the Dachau reception center.
c. 38,000–38,400	400 naturalized French Jews with their families, the entire transport numbering about 1600 people. Of these, only about 400 men and 200 women were assigned to the camp. The remaining thousand, including women and older men, were sent directly to the birchwood, where they were gassed and cremated without being entered on the records and assigned numbers.

After this time, all incoming Jewish transports were handled like the French transport. About ten percent of the men and five percent of the women were assigned to the camp, the remaining being immediately exterminated. Polish Jews had been handled this way even earlier. Trucks from the various Polish ghettos arrived continually for months, going

directly to the birchwood, where these Jews were gassed and cremated by the thousands.

c. 38,400–39,200	800 naturalized French Jews, a great many of whom were destroyed in the way described above.
c. 39,200–40,000	800 Gentile Poles, political prisoners in protective custody.
c. 40,000–40,150	150 Slovak Jews with their families. With the exception of 50 women, who were sent to the women’s camp, the majority of the transport was gassed in the birchwood. Among the 150 men were Zucker and Vilmos Sonnenschein, both from Eastern Slovakia.
c. 40,150–43,800	Almost 4000 naturalized French Jews, mostly intellectuals. About 1000 women of this transport went to the camp and 3000 persons were gassed in the birchwood.
c. 43,800–44,200	400 Slovak Jews from the Lublin camp, including Matyas Klein and Meilech Laüfer, both from Eastern Slovakia. ¹² This transport arrived on 30 June 1942.
c. 44,200–45,000	This transport contained 1000 persons. A few women were sent to the women’s camp and all others went to the birchwood. Among the men sent to the camp were Jozsef Zelmanovics, from Snina; Adolf Kahan, from Bratislava; Walter Reichmann, from Sucany; and Eszter Kahan from Bratislava. I had occasion to speak with the latter on 1 April 1944. She is block-inspector in the women’s camp.
c. 45,000–47,000	2000 French Gentiles, including communists and other political prisoners, among them the brothers of Thorez and Leon Blum. The latter were specially tortured, and then gassed and cremated.

¹² This is evidently the transport of the second escapee, see page 38.

c. 47,000–47,500	500 Dutch Jews, among them many German emigres. About 250 persons from this transport went to the birchwood.	c. 65,000–68,000	Naturalized French, Belgian, and Dutch Jews. About 1000 women were sent to the women’s camp and a minimum of 3000 persons were gassed.
c. 47,500–47,800	About 300 Russian civilians (<u>Schutzrussen</u>).	c. 68,000–70,500	2500 German Jews from the Sachsenhaus reception-center.
c. 48,300 (sic) –48,620	320 Slovak Jews. About 70 women went to the camp and the remainder of the transport of 650 persons were sent to the birchwood. This transport contained 80 persons who were deported to Sered n/V. by the Hungarian police. In this group were: Dr. Zoltan Mandel of Presov, who later died; Holz (first name unknown), a butcher from Pistany who was later sent to Warsaw; Miklos Engel of Zilina; Chaim Katz of Snina, whose wife and six children have been gassed, and who at the present time works in the morgue.	c. 71,000–80,000	Naturalized French, Belgian and Dutch Jews. Not more than ten percent of those arriving were sent to the camp. The number exterminated is conservatively estimated at 65,000–70,000.
c. 49,000–64,800	15,000 naturalized French, Belgian, and Dutch Jews. This number accounts for no more than ten percent of the transports arriving between 1 June and 15 September 1942. Most of these were large family transports, many of their members being sent directly to the birchwood. The <u>Sonderkommando</u> ¹³ which did the gassing and cremating worked day and night shifts. At this time Jews were gassed and burned by hundreds of thousands.	<p>9. <u>Description of the Extermination Camp</u></p> <p>On 17 December 1942, 200 young Slovak Jews were executed in Birkenau. They had been engaged as <u>Sonderkommandos</u> in the gassing and cremating crews. Their plan to revolt and escape was betrayed and the executions followed. Among those executed were:</p> <p>Sandor Weisz Oszkar Steiner Aladar Spitzer Ferenc Wagner Dezso Wetzler Bela Weisz</p> <p>All these men came from Nagyzombat. Two hundred Polish Jews, who had just arrived from Makow, replaced the executed <u>Sonderkommandos</u>.</p> <p>We lost our direct contact with this “working place” after the elimination of the Slovak Jewish <u>Sonderkommandos</u>, and this brought a deterioration in our supply situation. Transports arriving at the birchwood brought with them, although they had to leave their luggage in Auschwitz, large amounts of foreign currency, mostly dollars in banknotes or gold, tremendous quantities of gold and precious stones, and even foodstuffs. Although these valuables had to be handed in, it was unavoidable that a great deal, especially gold dollars, went into the pockets of the boys who were working in the extermination crews and had to go through the clothes of those who had been gassed.</p> <p>In this way a considerable amount of wealth and foodstuffs got into the camp. One could buy nothing for money in the camp officially, of course. But one could make a deal with the SS men and with civilian workers who were employed in</p>	
c. 64,800–65,000	About 200 Slovak Jews. Some 100 women were sent to the women’s camp, the others going to the birchwoods. Among those coming to the camp were: Lajos Katz from Zilina; Avri Burger (his wife died) from Bratislava-Poprad; Miklos Steiner, from Bystrica n/V.; Gyorgy Fried, from Trencin; Buchwald (?); Jozsef Rosenwasser, from Eastern Slovia; Gyula Neumann, from Bardejov; Sandor and Mihaly Wertheimer, from Verbo; and Bela Blau, from Zilina.		

¹³ Labor gangs with special assignments. See below.

the camp at various skilled jobs and so could smuggle in some food and cigarettes. Prices were naturally abnormal; a few hundred cigarettes cost twenty dollars in gold. Barter also flourished. But the high prices did not disturb us since we had more than enough money. We obtained clothing from the Sonderkommandos and so were able to change our rags for good clothes which had belonged to those gassed. For instance, the coat I am now wearing belonged to a Dutch Jew.¹⁴

The Sonderkommandos were segregated. We did not associate with them because of the horrid smell they spread. They were always filthy, in rags, totally brutalized, and became violent savages. It was no rarity for one to club another to death. Such an occurrence was nothing sensational among other prisoners as well, since the murder of a prisoner is not considered a crime. It is simply recorded that the prisoner number so and so died; the cause of death is immaterial. I was present when a young Polish Jew named Jossel explained the fine art of “expert murder” to an SS man and, to demonstrate his point, killed another Jew with his bare hands, without using any weapon.

10. Transport Arrival at Auschwitz-Bireknau, January–February 1943.

At about the number 80,000 the systematic extermination of those from the Polish ghettos began.

<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Transports</u>
c. 80,000–85,000	About 5000 Jews from various Polish ghettos, including Mljawa, Makow, Zichenow, Lomzsa, Grodno, Byalistok. Tranports arrived continuously for thirty days. Only 5000 persons were assigned to the camp; the remainder was gassed immediately. The <u>Sonderkommandos</u> worked feverishly in two shifts twenty-four hours a day, but they could hardly cope with the task of gassing and burning. It can be estimated without exaggeration that between 80,000 and 90,000 persons were exterminated. These transports brought with them particularly large sums of Polish? money, foreign currency, and precious stones.

c. 85,000–92,000	6000 Jews from Grodno, Byalistok, and Cracow, and an additional 1000 Gentile Poles. The large majority of the Jews went to the birchwood directly. An average of 4000 Jews were driven into the gas chamber daily. In the middle of January 1943, three transports of 2000 persons each arrived from Teresin Theresienstadt Czechoslovakia. The markings of these transports were “CU”, “CR”, and “R”, which were incomprehensible to us. All parcels belonging to these transports were similarly marked. Of these 6000 persons, only 600 men and 300 women were sent to the camp, the remainder being gassed.
c. 99,000 (sic) –100,000	Large Dutch and French Jewish transports arrived at the end of January 1943. Only a fraction went to the camp, the remainder being gassed.
c. 100,000–102,000	2000 Gentile Poles, mostly intellectuals, arrived in February 1943.
c. 102,000–103,000	700 Gentile Czechs, the survivors of whom were later sent to Buchenwald.
c. 103,000–108,000	3000 French and Dutch Jews and 2000 Gentile Poles.

An average of two transports of Polish, French, and Dutch Jews arrived daily during February 1943. In most cases entire transports were gassed. The number of those gassed in this month alone can be estimated at 90,000.

11. The New Birkenau Crematoria and Gas Chambers.

At the end of February 1943 the newly-built crematoria and gas chambers were opened in Birkenau.¹⁵ The practice of gassing and burning corpses in the birchwood was stopped and bodies were taken to the four new crematoria built for the purpose. Ashes had been utilized as fertilizer previously on the Harmansee Estate, so that it is difficult to find traces of the mass murders.

14 Apparently the interrogator examined the coat at this point, since the original text notes that the coat carried the trade-mark of an Amsterdam tailor.

15 This confirms information as to the date the Birkenau crematorium and gas chamber complex went into operation, obtained in POW interrogation, PWB Report No. _____.

There are four crematoria at work in Birkenau at the present time, two larger ones (models I and II) and two smaller (models III and IV). Models I and II consist of a waiting hall, which is equipped to resemble the hall of a bath, can accommodate 2000 persons. There is reported to be another waiting hall, equally large, below this one. A few steps lead from the big hall (on the ground level) into a very long and narrow gas chamber. False showers are built into the walls of the gas chamber so as to give the impression of a very large washroom. Three skylights in the ceiling of the chamber can be hermetically sealed by valves. A narrow-gauge track runs from the gas chambers through the waiting hall to the incinerators.

There is a high smoke-stack in the center of the hall where the incinerators are located. Nine incinerators are built around it, each having four doors. Each door will admit three average corpses at one time. Each incinerator will burn twelve bodies in one and a half hours, giving a total capacity of approximately 2000 corpses each twenty-four hours.

The victims are first led to the waiting hall, where they are told they will go to the bathhouse. They undress and, in order to support their delusion that they are going to bathe, two attendants clad in white distribute a towel and a piece of soap to each. Then they are squeezed into the gas chamber. Two thousand persons will pack the chamber to such an extent that all must stand up. The attendants often fire into the chamber to force those inside to make room for others. When everybody is in the chamber, the doors are sealed from the outside. There is a short wait, presumably to allow the temperature to rise to a certain degree. Then SS men with gasmasks go up on the roof, open the valves on the windows, and pour a powderlike substance into the chamber. The cans containing this substance carry the inscription: “Cyklon zur Schaedlingsbekaempfung”¹⁶ and the trademark of a Hamburg factory. These cans evidently contain a cyanide preparation that gassifies when the temperature rises to a certain degree. Everyone in the chamber dies within three minutes. Up to the present, there has been no case of anyone showing signs of life when the chamber was opened—a phenomenon not so rare in birchwood, where the procedure was more primitive. The chamber is ventilated after being opened and the Sonderkommandos move the corpses to the incinerators on flat cars. The crematoria designated models III and IV operate in about the same manner, but their turnover is only

half as large. The total capacity of the four crematoria, therefore, is 6000 corpses a day.

In principle only Jews are gassed. Gentiles are usually shot, being gassed on in exceptional cases. Before the establishment of the crematoria, Gentiles were executed in the birchwood and their bodies burned there. Later, however, such executions were carried out in the hall of the crematoria, which was especially equipped for the purpose, by shooting in the nape of the neck.

Inauguration of the first crematorium occurred in March 1943 and was celebrated by the gassing and cremation of 8000 Jews from Cracow. Prominent guests from Berlin, including high-ranking officers and civilian personalities, attended and expressed their highest satisfaction with the performance of the gas chamber. They diligently used the spyhole in the door of the gas chamber.

12. Transport Arrival March–September 1943.

<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Transport</u>
c. 109,000 (sic) –119,000	Early in March 1943, 45,000 Jews arrived from Salonika. Ten thousand men and a much smaller number of women were sent to the camp. The remainder, at least 30,000 people, were sent to the crematoria. Of the 10,000 men in camp, nearly everyone, perhaps all, died shortly afterwards. Most of them fell victims to an epidemic disease similar to malaria, many died of typhus, and others could not stand the hard conditions in the camp.

In view of the great mortality rate among the Greek Jews, resulting from malaria and typhus, selections were temporarily halted. Sick Greek Jews were told to report. We warned them not to do so, but many reported nevertheless. All were killed by intercardial injections of phenol. Such injections were administered by a medical noncommissioned officer who was assisted by two Czech doctors, Cespira Honza and Zdenek Stich, both of Prague. These doctors are at present in the Buchenwald reception center. Both doctors did everything they could to help the unfortunates, and when they could do nothing else, eased their pain.

¹⁶ Cyclon for exterminating criminals.

Approximately 1000 survivors of the 10,000 Greek Jews were sent with another 500 Jews to build fortifications in Warsaw. A few hundred of these returned several weeks later in a hopeless condition and were immediately gassed. Four hundred Greeks suffering from malaria were sent to Lublin for “further treatment,” following the suppression of the phenol injections. We received news of their arrival in Lublin, but we know nothing about their fate. It is certain that not one of the 10,000 remains in the camp.

Following suppression of the “selection” system, the murder of prisoners was also forbidden. The following Reichs-germans were flogged for multiple murder:

- Alexander Neumaann, professional criminal
- Zimmer, professional criminal
- Albert Haemmerle, “ “ “
- Rudolf Osteringer, “ “ “
- Alfred Klein, political prisoner
- Alois Stahler, “ “ “

These notorious murderers also had to sign a statement admitting the killing of a certain number of their fellow-prisoners.

Early in 1943, 50,000 discharge forms were received by the Auschwitz political department. This news caused great joy among us, as we hoped that some of us at least might be released. But these forms were filled in with the personal data of those gassed and were placed in the archives.

<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Transports</u>
c. 119,000–120,000	1000 Gentile Poles from the Pawiak prison in Warsaw
c. 120,000–123,000	3000 Greek Jews, part of whom were sent to Warsaw to replace their dead compatriots. Those who stayed behind died off quickly.
c. 123,000–124,000	1000 Gentile Poles from Radom and Tarnow.
c. 124,000–126,000	2000 men from various Gentile transports

In the meantime, Polish, Belgian, and French Jewish transports arrived continually, and their members were gassed without even a fraction going to the camp. One of these consisted on 1000 Polish Jews coming from Lublin-Maidenek. Among them were three Slovaks, including one name Spira from Stropok or Varanno.

At the end of July 1943, transports abruptly stopped coming. There was a short respite while the crematoria were thoroughly cleaned and prepared for further activities. The work started again on 3 August. Transports of Jews from Benzburg and Sosnowitz came first, and were followed by others without interruption during the whole month of August.

c. 132,000 (sic) –136,000	Jews from Benzburg and Sosnowitz. Only 4000 men and few women went to the camp. Over 35,000 were taken to the crematoria directly. Most of these died in the so-called quarantine camp from exceptionally inhuman treatment, starvation, various diseases, and last but not least, murders in their own ranks. Those chiefly responsible for the crimes committed against them are Tlyn, a professional criminal of German nationality who came here from the Sachsenhausen reception center, and Mieczyslaw Katerzinski, a Polish political prisoner from Warsaw.
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At this time, “selections” were started again on a particularly large scale in the women’s camp. The camp doctor, an SS Sturmfuehrer and son or nephew of the Berlin police director, acted with a brutality which stood out even in this camp. The practice of “selection” was carried out without respite from this time until our escape.

c. 137,000 (sic) –138,000	1000 Gentile Poles from the Pawiak prison in Warsaw and about 80 Greek Jews arrived at the end of August.
c. 138,000–142,000	3000 Gentiles from various transports.
c. 142,000–145,000	3000 Jews from various Polish labor camps and a group of Russian POWs arrived at the beginning of September 1943.
c. 148,000 (sic) –152,000	Family transports from Teresin (Theresienstadt), which arrived during the week following 7 September 1943.

13. Treatment of the Theresienstadt

Czechs, September 1943–March 1944.

For some reason unknown to us, the Theresienstadt transport enjoyed exceptional treatment. Nobody was gassed or even shaved, members kept their belongings and were billeted by families in a separate section of the camp. The men did not have to work, members were allowed to send mail to relatives, and a special school for the children was permitted under the leadership of Fredy Hirsch, at one time youth leader of the Makabi of Prague.¹⁷

However, members of these transports had to endure the sadistic tortures of a “camp inspector” named Arno Boehm, a professional criminal of German nationality who was, by the way, one of the abject individuals in the entire camp. Our astonishment increased when we had an occasion to see the official roster of the transport. This roster bore the peculiar title, “Specially treated Czech Jews for six months’ quarantine.”¹⁸ We knew very well what the “SB” marking meant, but we could not find an explanation for the exceptional treatment and the extraordinarily long quarantine. According to our experience up to that time, the quarantine never lasted longer than three weeks. We became suspicious as the end of the six months’ quarantine period approached, and were convinced that these Jews would also end up in the gas chamber. Looking for an opportunity to make contact with the leaders of the group, we explained their situation and did not leave them in any doubt as to their fate. A few of them, especially Fredy Hirsch, who obviously enjoyed the full confidence of his companions, told us that they would resist if our suspicions should materialize. Men of the Sonderkommandos promised that they would join immediately if the Czech Jews put up active resistance. Many hoped that a general uprising could be instigated in the camp.

We learned on 6 March 1944 that the crematoria had been put into condition for the Czech Jews. I went to see Fredy Hirsch without delay to inform him, and appealed to him to act immediately. He replied, “I know what my duty is.” I sneaked to the Czech camp again before dawn and heard that Fredy Hirsch was dying. He had poisoned himself with luminol. The following day, 7 March 1944, he was transferred in state of a coma, with 3791 of his companions with whom he arrived in Birkenau after 7 September 1943, to the

crematorium, on trucks where all were gassed.¹⁹ The youths went to their death singing. The resistance did not come off. Determined men of the Sonderkommando had waited in vain.

About 500 elderly Czechs died during the six months’ quarantine period. Of the whole group, the only ones left alive were eleven sets of twins taken to Auschwitz for biological experiments. When we left Birkenau these children were still alive. Rozsi Fuerst, a girl from Sered n/V., was among those executed. All were forced to inform their relatives that they were all right one week before their execution, that is, during the first days of March. The letters had to be dated 23 or 25 March. They were also told to ask for parcels from relatives abroad.

14. Transport Arrivals, September 1943–April 1944.

c. 153,000 (sic) – 154,000	100 Gentile Poles from the Warsaw Pawiak prison.
c. 155,000 (sic) – 159,000	4000 men from various prisons, Jews who had been in hiding and were captured around Benzburg, and a group of Russians (<u>Schutzrussen</u>) arrived in October 1943. At the same time, Russian POWs also came in and received numbers 1–12,000.
c. 160,000 (sic) – 165,000	About 5000 men, mostly Dutch and Belgian Jews, and the first transport of Italian Jews came from Fiume, Tiesto, and Rome. Not less than 30,000 persons from these transports were taken directly to the gas chamber.

Mortality among the Jews assigned to the camp was particularly high. The method of selection took its toll at an increased rate. Selection reached its peak between 10–24 January 1944, when the strongest and healthiest Jews were taken regardless of their labor assignment or profession. Only doctors were spared. Everyone had to line up for the “selection,” and a close check was made by the camp doctor

17 The largest Jewish sports club in Czechoslovakia.

18 “Sondere Behandlung—Transport tschechische Juden mit 6-monatlicher Quarantaene.”

19 March 7, the day chosen by the Germans for this execution, is an outstanding Czechoslovak national holiday, the birthday of President Masaryk.

(the son or nephew of the police chief of Berlin) and by the Birkenau camp commandant, SS Untersturmfuehrer Schwarzhuber. All Jews transferred from Block No. 7 to the “hospital” (Krankenbau), which was located in another part of the camp, were gassed without exception. In addition to these, another 2500 men and 6000 women were sent to the gas chamber through “selection.”

c. 165,000–168,000	3000 Jews arrived from Teresin on 20 December 1943. This roster had the same title as the one which had come in September. ²⁰ They were billeted with the September arrivals and enjoyed the same privileges. Twenty-four hours before the extermination of the first group the later arrivals were segregated in an adjoining part of the camp which happened to be empty. They are still living in this quarter. In view of their knowledge of the fate of the first group, they are already preparing to resist. Resistance has been organized by Ruzenka Laufer and Hugo Langsfeld, both of Prague. They are collecting easily inflammable material and want to set their blocks on fire. Their quarantine will be over on 20 June 1944.
c. 169,000 (sic) – 170,000	1000 persons, including Poles, Russians, and Jews in smaller groups.
c. 170,000–171,000	1000 Gentile Poles and Russians, and a smaller number of Yugoslavs.
c. 171,000–174,000	3000 Dutch, Belgian, and native French Jews arrived in late February and early March 1944. This was the first shipment of native as distinguished from naturalized French Jews. They came from the unoccupied zone. An overwhelming majority of these were immediately gassed.

In the middle of March 1944 a smaller group of Benzburg Jews, who had been found in hiding, arrived. We learned from them that many Polish Jews had escaped to Slovakia

and from there to Hungary, and that these had been helped by Jews still living in Slovakia.

After the extermination of the Teresin Jews, no reinforcements arrived until 15 March. As a consequence, the number at the camp was substantially reduced, for which reason all men arriving in later transports, mostly Dutch Jews, were assigned to the camp. We had just learned of the arrival of large Greek Jewish transports when we left the camp on 7 April 1944.²¹

15. Organization and Population of the Birkenau Camp, April 1944.

The Birkenau camp consists of three sections (see plan no. 3). At the present time, only sections I and II are surrounded by the inner guard belt, as section III is still in the process of building and is not inhabited.

When we left Birkenau at the beginning of April 1944, the number of inmates of the camp was as follows:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Slovak Jews</u>	<u>Other Jews</u>	<u>Gentiles</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>I Section</u> Women’s reception centers Ia and Ib	c. 300	c. 7000	c. 6000	In addition to 300 Slovak girls, 100 girls are caption employed in the staff building.
<u>II Section</u> a. Quarantine camp	2	c. 200	c. 800	Dr. Endre Mueller from Podolinec, one of the two Slovak Jews, is block-inspector.
b. Camp of the	c. 3500			With six months quarantine.
c. Not occupied at present				
d. Staff camp	c. 58	c. 4000	c. 6000	

20 See footnote 18.

21 A Reuter’s dispatch of 20 March 1945, date-lined Athens, tell of the return from the Oswiecim camp of a Greek Jew, Leon Vatis, whose story and prison number tallies with the information given herein.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Slovak Jews</u>	<u>Other Jews</u>	<u>Gentiles</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
e. Gypsie camp			c. 4500	Remnant of 16,000 Gypsies. They are not performing labor and are dying out quickly.
f. Hospital	6	c. 1000	c. 500	The six Slovak Jews are engaged in hospital administration.
g. Shown on plan, but not accounted for.				

* <u>Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Place of Origin</u>	<u>Duties</u>
36,832	Walter Spitzer	Nemsova	Block inspector
29,867	Josef Neumann	Snina	“Capo” of corpses
44,989	Josef Zelmanovics	Snina	Personnel
32,407	Lajos Eisenstaedter	Korompa	Tattooer
30,049	Lajos Solmann	Kezmarok	Clerk
	Chaim Katz	Snina	Personnel

* * * * *

The internal administration of the Birkenau camp is carried out by prisoner assigned to that work. Prisoners are not billeted by nationality, but by their labor assignment, that is, by Kommandos. Each block has five functionaries:

- 1 Block Inspector (Blockaeltester)
- 1 Block Clerk (Blockschreiber)
- 1 Block Nurse
- 2 Block Handymen

The block inspector wears on his left arm a white band showing the number of the block. He is responsible for order in his block, where he is, so to speak, master of life and death. Up to February 1944 almost half of all block inspectors were Jews. At that time an order from Berlin prohibited filling this office with Jews, following which the Jews were relieved from

duty. Three Slovak Jews, however, are carrying on to this day. They are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place of Origin</u>	<u>Duties</u>
Ernest Rosim	Zilina	Inspector, Block No. 25, (cleaning crews, plus artisans from Benzburg)
Dr. Endre Mueller	Podolinec	Inspector, Block No. 15, quarantine camp
Walter Spitzer	Nemsova	Inspector, Block No. 14, hospital area

The block clerk is the executive assistant of the block inspector. He does all clerical work, keeps the roster up to date, and is in charge of a large file. His work is loaded with great responsibility since the roster has to be kept in order in a painstaking manner. Prisoners are recorded by their numbers only, not by their names, and consequently an error is easily made. Mistakes of this kind may be fatal. If by mistake the clerk reports an individual number dead by mistake, which can easily occur in view of the high mortality rate—and has in fact happened—such a mistake is simply corrected by executing the wearer of the number later. Once a report is forwarded, it cannot be corrected, and the reported roll must agree with the actual roster. The post of clerk confers great power within the block. Unfortunately there are often abuses.

The nurse and handymen perform manual work around the block. Naturally there can be no question of any nursing.

The camp inspector (Lageraeltester) is over the whole camp. He is also a prisoner. The present camp inspector is Franz Danisch, No. 11,182, a political prisoner from Koenigshuette, Upper Silesia. The camp inspector is absolute master of the entire camp. He is entitled to appoint and remove block inspectors and clerks, and can also assign men to labor crews, etc. Banisch is fair even to Jews; he is objective and incorruptible.

The camp clerk, who actually has the greatest power in the camp, is assigned to the camp inspector. He is the only man in direct contact with the camp command, receiving orders and handing in reports. As a result, he has a certain amount of influence with the camp command. Block clerks are his direct subordinates and make their reports to him. The present camp clerk is Casimir Gork, No. 30,029, a Polish political prisoner who was formerly a bank clerk. Although Gork has anti-semitic views, he does not molest the Jews.

Principal supervision of the blocks is exercised by six to eight SS block leaders. They call the roll nightly and report to the commander, Untersturmfuehrer Schwarzhuber, a Tyrolean whose title is camp leader (Lagerfuehrer). Schwarzhuber is a drunkard and a sadist.

The camp commandant is the superior of camp leaders of the Birkenau and Auschwitz camps, as well as the leader of the Auschwitz reception center. The name of the present camp commandant is Hoess.

The capo heads each labor detachment (Arbeitskommando); larger detachments have several capos. A capo can dispose of the prisoners at will during working hours, and he often beats them to death. In the past, Jews were often capos, but this was forbidden by the order from Berlin already mentioned (February 1944). One Jew, a mechanic named Roth from Nagymihaly, still holds such an office.

Supreme control of the work is entrusted to German experts.

III. TESTIMONY OF THE SECOND ESCAPEE

16. Interment at Maidenek camp at Lublin, June 1942.

We left Novaky on 14 June 1942, passed through Zilina, and arrived at Zwardon at 5 p.m. Here we detrained and were counted. The transport was taken over by SS men, who expressed loudly their indignation at the fact that we were travelling without water. “Those Slovak barbarians would not even furnish water,” they said. We continued and arrived at Lublin in two days. As soon as the train stopped, the following order was given. “Those between 15–50 years old who are fit for work will leave the train; children and old people will stay in the cars.” We got out. The station was surrounded by Lithuanian SS men armed with machine pistols. The railroad cars containing the children and old people were sealed and the train started off. We do not know where the train went or what happened to the passengers.

An SS Scharfuehrer took command at the station and told us that we have a long trip ahead. Those who wished to take their parcels with them could do so; those who thought they could not carry them might load their parcels on a truck ready for the purpose. This truck would arrive without fail. Some of my companions took their luggage with them while others loaded theirs on the truck. We found a factory which bore the sign “Bekleidungswerke”²² just behind the town. There were about a thousand persons, dressed in dirty striped prisoners’ uniforms, lined up in the factory court. They were obviously waiting for dinner. This spectacle was

not very encouraging, as we recognized the people as Jews. When we reached the hill, we suddenly saw the very large camp of Maidenek, surrounded by a barbed wire fence three meters high.

As soon as I entered the gate of the camp, I saw Maco Winkler, who is from Nagyszombat (Trnava). He warned me that all my parcels and clothes would be taken away. Slovak Jews who had arrived earlier surrounded us. They were dressed in rags of prisoners’ uniforms, had shaven heads, were barefoot or in wooden clogs, and many had swollen legs. They begged for food or other small items. We distributed almost anything we had, since we knew that anything we kept would be taken away anyhow. We were then led to the warehouse where we had to hand in all our belongings. Then we were driven on the double to another barracks where we stripped, had our heads shaved, were put under shower, and finally received our underwear and prisoners’ uniforms, a pair of wooden shoes, and a cap.

I was attached to the so-called Labor Section II. The whole camp consisted of three such labor sections, separated from each other by wire fences. Slovak and Czech Jews billeted in Labor Section II. We were trained for two days how to lift our cam when we met a German, and were drilled for hours in the soaking rain. Barracks installations were very popular; our furniture consisted of three very long tables on top of another. Prisoners had to sleep under and on the tables.

We received soup in the morning. It was so thick that we had to eat it with our hands. A similar soup was served at noon, and in the evening we had so-called “tea” with 30 dekagrams of indigestible bread and two or three dekagrams of marmalade or synthetic fat, both of the worst quality.

In the early days we were taught to sing the camp hymn in an excellent manner, and had to stand around for hours and practice. The hymn is as follows:

Aus ganz Europa kamen	From all of Europe came
Wir Juden nach Lublin	We Jews to Lublin.
Viel Arbeit gibt’s zu leisten	There is much work to do,
Und dies ist der Beginn.	And this is only the beginning.
Um diese Pflicht zu	In order to master this duty
meistern	
Vergiss Vergangenheit	Forget the past,
Denn in der	
Pflichterfuellung	For in the fulfillment of duty
Liegt die Gemeinsamkeit.	Lies community feeling.

²² Clothing factory.

Drum ruestig an die Arbeit	So actively at work,
Ein jeder halt emit	Let each one hold his own,
Gemeinsam wollen wir schaffen	Together we want to labor
Im gleichen Arbeitsschritt.	At the same work-pace.
Nicht alle wollen begreifen	Not all want to understand
Wozu in Reihen wir stehen.	Why we stand in ranks.
Die muessen wir dann zwingen	We must then force them
Dies alles zu verstehen.	To understand all this.
Die neue Zeit muss alle	The new era must teach us –
Uns alle stets belehren	All of us—forever.
Dass wir schon nur die Arbeit	That we now only to labor,
Der Arbeit angehoren.	Only to labor belong.
Drum ruestig an die Arbeit	So actively at work,
Ein jeder halt emit	Let each one hold his own,
Gemeinsam wollen wir schaffen	Together we want to labor
Im gleichen Arbeitsschritt.	At the same work-pace.

Billeting was as follows: Labor Section I, Slovak Jews; Labor Section II, Slovak and Czech Jews; Labor Section III, partisans. Sections IV and V were being constructed by those billeted in sections I and II. Partisans billeted in section III were shut up in their barracks. They did not work and were not allowed to leave their quarters; their food was thrown down in front of the door and taken inside from there. The guards shot at them whenever possible.

The capos were Reichsgermans and Czechs. The former treated prisoners brutally, while the Czechs tried to assist them whenever possible. A gypsy named Galbavy from Holics, was camp inspector, and his substitute was a Jew named Mittler from Sereď n/V. Mittler evidently obtained his position as a result of his brutality, since he used his power to torture his fellow-Jews, who were already suffering enough indignities. He never missed an opportunity to commit some mean act.

We were mistreated by SS men every night when the Order of the Day was read. After the day's hard work, we had to stand for hours and sing the camp hymn. This singing was led by an old Jewish conductor from the roof of a near-by building, while the SS men had their fun using their sticks

and whips. Rabbi Eckstein of Sereď n/V. died in tragic circumstances. On one occasion he arrived a little late for the reading of the Order of the Day, as he was ill in the latrine. The Schaarfuehrer thereupon had him dipped into the latrine twice suspended by his feet, drenched him with cold water, and finally shot him.

The crematorium was located between the first and second labor section. Corpses were burned here. The mortality rate per section of 6000 to 8000 was about 30 daily, but this number increased five and sixfold shortly afterwards. Later ten to twelve sickmen were taken daily to the crematorium, from when they never returned. The crematorium had electric heating installations which were handled by Russian prisoners.

Bad nourishment and unbearable conditions caused various diseases among us. Grave stomach ailments were the most wide-spread, and an incurable disease that resulted in swollen feet also took its toll. People's legs were so swollen that they not move them at all. More and more of these were taken to the crematorium, where they were murdered by methods unknown to me. When on 26 June 1942 the number of these unfortunates had been reduced to 70, I decided to take the first opportunity and to volunteer for transfer to Auschwitz.

17. Internment at Auschwitz, 30 June 1942–September or October 1942.

I handed in my prisoner's uniform on 27 June 1942, received civilian clothes, and travelled in a transport to Auschwitz. We travelled forty-eight hours in sealed boxcars, without water or food, and arrived at Auschwitz half dead. There we were greeted by the sign over the gate, "Arbeit macht frei."²³ The court was clean and neat, and the brick buildings and the lawns made a good impression on us after the primitive and dirty barracks at Lublin-Maidenek. We thought that we had made a good change. First we were led to a cellar where we received tea and bread. Next day they took away our clothes, shaved us, tattooed our number on the left arm over the wrist and issued prisoners' uniforms similar to those we had had at Lublin. After our personal data were taken, we became regular political prisoners of the Auschwitz reception center.

We were billeted in Block No. 17, where we slept on the ground. Slovak girls were quartered in the next row of buildings, separated from us by a wall. They had been deported from Slovakia in March and April 1942. We were put to work

²³ See footnote No. 6.

on the construction of the enormous “Buna” plant. Work began at 3 a.m. Food consisted of potato or carrot soup at noon and 30 dekagrams of bread in the evening. We were cruelly beaten during work. Since our place of work was situated outside the outer guard belt, the area was divided into squared 10 meter by ten meters. Each square was guarded by one SS man, and anyone crossing the borders of his square during work was instantly shot as “attempting to escape.” It often happened that an SS man ordered a prisoner to fetch some object from outside his square. If the prisoner obeyed and stepped over the line, he was shot. The work was very hard. We were scarcely permitted to rest and had to march back to the camp in military order. Whoever did not keep in step or broke ranks was cruelly beaten or sometimes shot. When I joined this labor crew, about 3000 men were working, of whom 2000 were Slovak Jews. Very few of us could stand the hard work because of the poor food. Many attempted to escape, although they had no hope to success. We witnessed several hangings each week.

After a few weeks of painful labor, a typhus epidemic broke out in camp. The weak prisoners died off by the hundreds. Construction on the “Buna” plant stopped and the camp was closed. Those who remained alive at their place of work were sent to the quarry at the end of July 1942. Work here was even more difficult, if that was possible, than at the “Buna” plant. We could never accomplish as much as was wanted by our supervisors since we were too weak. Most of us had swollen legs. Our labor gang was reported for laziness and negligence, and a commission came to examine each one of us thoroughly. All those with swollen legs or whom the commission found to be unfit were segregated. Although my legs hurt badly, I mastered my pain and stepped out smartly when called before the commission. I was found fit. About 200 of the 300 persons were declared ill. They were immediately sent to Birkenau where they were gassed.

After this I was detailed to work at the DAW.²⁴ My job was painting ski boards. We had to finish a minimum of 110 pieces per day; anyone who could not complete that amount was flogged in the evening. We had to work very hard to avoid the evening punishment. Another group manufactured boxes for shells. One one occasion 15,000 such boxes were finished and were found to be a few centimeters shorter than ordered. Thereupon several Jewish prisoners, among them one Erdelyi (who was said to have relatives in Trencin-Ban), were shot for sabotage.

The Jewish girls from Slovakia who lived beyond our wall had been transferred to Birkenau in August 1942. I had occasion to talk to them briefly. They were starved, dressed in old rags of Russian uniforms, and were barefoot or wore wooden shoes. Their hair was shorn and they were completely neglected.

We underwent a very severe physical examination on the same day (sic). All those suspected of typhus were sent to the birchwood, while we who had been declared fit were sent stark naked into the evacuated and disinfected barracks. We were again shaved, bathed, and given new clothes. I learned by accident that there was a vacancy in the cleaning squad (Aufraumungskommando), volunteered, and received the assignment.

A hundred prisoners, all Jews, worked in this cleaning squad. We worked in a completely isolated part of the camp where mountains of luggage, consisting of rucksacks, suitcases, and other such pieces were stacked in warehouses. Our job was to open this luggage and to sort the objects found. We filled suitcases with combs, mirrors, sugar, cans of food, chocolate, drugs, and so forth. The suitcases were stored according to their contents. Clothes and underwear were taken to a large barrack where they were sorted and packed by the Slovak Jewish girls. These good were then loaded into railroad cars and shipped out. Unusable clothing was sent to a Berlin welfare association. Valuables, such as money, gold, foreign currency, and precious stones, were supposed to be handed in to the political division. SS supervisors stole a substantial part of these valuables, and much was also taken by the prisoners working there. The boss of this assortment detail, who is recognized as an expert in the field, is Albert Davidovics, Iglo (Jihlava?) He occupies the same post to this day.

SS Sturmfuehrer Wickleff, commander of this detachment, was a brute who often beat the girls. These girls came daily from Birkenau to work. They told us unbelievable stories about conditions prevailing there. They were beaten and tortured. Mortality was higher among them than it was among the men. “Selections” were made twice weekly, and there were new girls daily to replace those who had been “selected” or who had died in some other way.

On my first nightshift I had occasion to see how transports coming to Auschwitz were treated. A transport consisting of Polish Jews arrived. They had travelled without water and about a hundred were dead on their arrival. When the doors of the cars were opened, the Jews, completely weakened by

²⁴ See footnote No. 5.

the long journey and privations, were driven out wailing. Quick beating by SS men speeded up the unloading. Then the unfortunates were lined up in rows of five. Our task was to remove the corpses, those half dead, and parcels from the railroad cars. We placed the bodies at a collecting point. All those unable to stand on their feet were declared dead. Parcels were thrown into one stack. The cars had to be thoroughly cleaned so that no trace of the transport remained. A commission of the political division then selected ten percent of the men and five percent of the women, who were assigned to camp. The remainder was loaded on trucks and taken to the birchwood, where they were gassed. Corpses and those half dead were also loaded on trucks. These were burned in the birchwood without being gassed first. Small children were often thrown on the truck with the corpses. Parcels were moved by truck to the warehouses, where they were sorted as described above.

Typhus raged during July and September 1942 in the Birkenau and Auschwitz camps, especially among the women. Those who were ill were not treated at all. At first typhus suspects were killed by means of phenol injections, later they were gassed in large numbers. Within two months 15–20,000 prisoners perished, most of them Jew. The women's camp suffered particularly. They had no sanitary installations at all and the girls were full of lice. Big "selections" were held weekly. Regardless of the weather, the girls were forced to line up naked for these "selections," and to wait in deadly fear to see whether they would be "selected" on that occasion or would have a week's grace.

Many men and women committed suicide. They simply touched the high-tension wire of the inner guard belt. So many women perished that not more than five percent [sic] of the original number survived. There are 400 girls at Auschwitz and Birkenau at this time, the remainder of the original 7000. The majority of these have secured camp administration jobs for themselves. One of them named Kata (I do not know her family name), from Bystrica n/V., fills the high position of camp clerk. About a hundred Slovak girls are employed in the Auschwitz staff building. They do clerical work for both camps and interpret for interrogators who interview prisoners. Some of the girls work in the kitchen and laundry of the staff building. Lately the Slovak girls are better dressed, as they have been able to complete their wardrobe from the stocks of the Aufraumungskommando. Many even wear silk stockings. They are now letting their hair grow and altogether are much better off than in the past. This does not apply, of course, to the several thousand other prisoners in the women's camp. The Slovak Jewish girls are

the oldest inmates of the women's camp and thus have a somewhat privileged position.

I soon lost my comparatively comfortable job [October 1942?] with the Aufraumungskommando, and as punishment was transferred to Birkenau, where I spent one and a half years. On 7 April 1944 I succeeded in escaping with my companion.

A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF JEWS EXTERMINATED AT BIRKENAU FROM APRIL 1942 TO APRIL 1944, ACCORDING TO COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN (by the two escapees):

Poland (shipped by trucks)	c. 300,000
Poland (shipped by trains)	600,000
Holland	100,000
Greece	45,000
France	150,000
Belgium	50,000
Germany	60,000
Yugoslavia, Italy, Norway	50,000
Lithuania	50,000
Bohemia, Moravia, Austria	30,000
Slovakia	30,000
Various camps of foreign Jews in Poland	<u>300,000</u>
TOTAL	c. 1,765,000

Source: OSS Field Memo 257 (FR-425). Report by the Office of Strategic Services, National Archive Record Group 226.

146. EXCERPTS FROM REPORT BY KURT GERSTEIN REGARDING EXTERMINATION CAMPS, MAY 1945

Kurt Gerstein was an SS officer assigned to the Hygiene Institute of the Waffen SS. His duties included assisting in the enactment of the Nazis' Final Solution. He was responsible for the delivery of large quantities of Zyklon B to Auschwitz and other camps, and he witnessed a carbon monoxide gassing of Jews at the Belzec death camp. By April 1945, as defeat loomed for the Third Reich, Gerstein surrendered to French authorities in the town of Reutlingen. In his statement, he declared that he had surrendered to make available his knowledge to punish those responsible for the atrocities. Transferred to Paris, he wrote his final account, now known as the Gerstein Report. Here, he made a full disclosure of what he had

witnessed as an SS officer. The following excerpts form part of his otherwise lengthy and detailed report.

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENT NO. 1553-PS
OFFICE OF CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

(Page 1 of original.)
SECRET.

CIOS CONSOLIDATED ADVANCE FIELD TEAM (VII)
ASSESSMENT REPORT

Stamp:
Received
22 May 1945

... 5. DESCRIPTION: The assessors met Dr. [Editor's Note: Kurt] Gerstein by a chance encounter in a requisitioned hotel in Rottweil. He stated that we were the first British or Americans he had met and that he wanted to tell us of his experiences in German concentration camp. He informed us that he was a close personal friend of Monseigneur Niemoeller, and that working as a secret agent for him he had obtained a post of responsibility in the Nazi party. In this capacity he attended conferences at which the fate of the inmates of concentration camps was discussed. When asked if he knew of the use of gas chambers for killing the inmates he replied that as he was an engineer he had often been made to advise in the operation of these chambers. He stated that the two gases used were hydrocyanic acid and exhaust gases from internal combustion engines. He could not give any figures for the concentrations employed and implied that no particular attention was paid to this point. He stated, however, that in the case of HCN death was almost instantaneous, while a delay of 15 to 20 minutes occurred when exhaust gases were used.

Dr. Gerstein only escaped from the Nazis about three weeks ago; he is still visibly affected by his experiences and found difficulty in speaking of them. He was most anxious, however that the guilty parties should be brought to trial for their crimes and stated that he was fully prepared to act as a witness in any court. He hoped that his information would be passed as soon as possible to the appropriate authorities in London. ...

S E C R E T

9. DATE OF ASSESSMENT. 5 May 1943 [Editor's Note: the year should be 1945]

10. ASSESSOR'S NAMES. Major D. C. Evans
Mr. J. W. Haight
6th Army Group
CIOS Item 8 of Group 3. ...

SUMMARY

These are papers by and about Dr. Kurt GERSTEIN, certified engineer, an informant who discloses what he knows about concentration camp methods of extermination.

One of the documents is an "Assessment Report" from CIOS, Consolidated Advance Field Team (VII), discussing Dr. GERSTEIN. According to this report, Dr. GERSTEIN gave the impression that he was anxious to see the guilty parties brought to trial for their crimes. He handed over the assessors a note in English and a seven page typewritten statement in French, as well as some invoices from the firm of DEGESCH for the supply of ZYKLON "B" (Prussic Acid) to concentration camp (all attached hereto).

GERSTEIN'S statement in French warrants full-length translation. In it he relates his whole life history up to recently. He entered the Nazi party 2 May 33 but was excluded 2 October 36, for what he terms "activities against party and state". He was persecuted by the Gestapo from then on. In 1941, with the aid of 2 Gestapo members, he entered the SS Army (Waffen SS) because he wanted to "see this machinery and disclose it to the people".

Because of Medico-Technical training, he was ordered to SS Main Administrative Office, Section D-Hygiene. In 1942 he was appointed Chief of "Disinfectants" (prussic acid is one) and as such he was to provide concentration camps with prussic acid, which was used to exterminate people.

He describes in detail one of his visits to Concentration Camp, Lublin, where he was shown around by SS Major General GROBOCNKE, a man who received his orders from Hitler and Himmler directly, and who ordered GERSTEIN to change the extermination from "an ancient Diesel exhaust gas system to a thing of more toxic and faster-working properties—prussic acid".

He goes on to discuss his efforts to make the prussic acid disappear i.e., to have it used as a disinfectant.

To his statement, Dr. GERSTEIN attached a list of Anti-Nazis in Berlin who gathered around him in his apartment, W-35, Buelowstrasse 47. He also calls himself a friend of Pastor Niemoeller.

The other attached papers are invoices for prussic acid which he claims were never paid. There were two ways of making "ZYKLON B" disappear. One way was not to pay for it and blame it on non-delivery by the firm DEGESCH

(Frankfurt am Main) and the other way was to tell the officials that the acid had arrived in a dangerous state of decomposition. . . .

[Editor's note: What follows is from Gerstein's report]

. . . Hearing of the massacres of idiots and insane people at Grafeneck, Hadamar, etc., [Editor's note: This is a reference to the Nazi so-called "Euthanasia" Program] shocked and deeply wounded, having such a case in my own family, I had but one desire, to see, to gain an insight of this whole machine and then shout about it to the whole world! With the help of two references written by the two Gestapo employees who had dealt with my case, it was not difficult for me to enter the Waffen SS. March 10 to June 2, 1941, elementary instruction as a soldier at Hamburg-Langenhorn, Arnhem and Oranienburg, together with forty doctors. Because of my twin studies—technology and medicine—I was ordered to enter the medical-technology branch of the SS-Fuehrungshauptamt (SS operation Main Office)—Medical Branch of the Waffen SS—Amtsgruppe D (Division D), Hygiene Department. Within this branch, I chose for myself the job of immediately constructing disinfecting apparati and filters for drinking water for the troops, the prison camps and the concentration camps. My close knowledge of the industry caused me to succeed quickly where my predecessors had failed. Thus, it was possible to decrease considerably the death toll of prisoners.—On account of my successes, I very soon became a Lieutenant. In December 1941, the tribunal which had decreed my exclusion from the NSDAP obtained knowledge of my having entered the Waffen SS. Considerable efforts were made in order to remove and persecute me. But due to my successes. I was declared sincere and indispensable. In January 1942, I was appointed Chief of the Technical Branch of Disinfection, which also included the branch for strong poison gases for disinfection. On 8 June 1942, the SS Stermbahnfuhrer GUENTHER of the RSHA entered my office. He was in plain clothes and I did not know him. He ordered me to get a hundred kilograms of prussic acid and to accompany him to a place which was only known to the driver of the truck. We left for the potassium factory . . . Once the truck was loaded, we left for Lublin (Poland). We took with us Professor PFANNENSTIEL Md. . . . As Lublin, we were received by SS Gruppenfuhrer GLOBOCNIK. He told us: this is one of the most secret matters there are on, even the most secret. Whoever talks of this shall be shot immediately. Yesterday, two talkative ones died. Then he explained to us: at the present moment—August 17, 1942—there are three installations:

- 1.) Belzec, on the Lublin-Lemberg road, in the sector of the Russian demarcation line. Maximum 15,000 persons a day. (Seen!)
- 2.) Sobibor, I do not know exactly where it is located. Not seen. 20,000 persons per day.
- 3.) Treblinka, 120 km NNE of Warsaw. 25,000 persons per day. Seen!
- 4.) Maidanek, near Lublin. Seen in the state of preparation. Globocnik then said: You will have to handle the sterilization of very huge quantities of clothes, 10 or 20 times the result of the clothes and textiles collection (Spinnstoffsammlung) which is only arranged in order to conceal the source of those Jewish, Polish, Czech and other clothes. Your other duties will be to change the method of our gas chambers, (which are run on the present time with the exhaust gases of an old Diesel engine), employing more poisonous material, having a quicker effect, prussic acid. But the Fuehrer and HIMMLER, who were here on August 15—the day before yesterday—ordered that I accompany, personally all those who are to see the installations. Then Professor PFANNENSTIEL asked: "What does the Fuehrer say?" Then GLOBOCNIK, now Chief of Police and SS for the Adriatic Riviera to Trieste, answered: "Quicker, quicker, carry out the whole program!" he said. And then dr. Herbert LINDNER, Ministerialdirektor in the Ministry of the Interior said: "But would it not be better to burn the bodies instead of burying them? A coming generation might think differently of these matters!" .. And the GLOBOCNIK replied: "But, gentlemen, if ever, after us (handwritten notation:). . . . there should be) such a cowardly and rotten generation should arise that they do not understand our so good and necessary work, then, gentlemen, all National Socialism will have been for nothing.—On the contrary, bronze plates should be buried with the inscription that it was we, we who had the courage to achieve this gigantic task".—And Hitler said: "Yes, my good GLOBOCNIK, that is the word, that is my opinion, too."—The next day we left for Belzec. A small special station of two platforms leans against a hill of yellow sand, immediately to the north of the road and railway: Lublin-Lemberg. . . . GLOBOCNIK introduced me to SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer OVERMAYER from Pirmasens, who with great restraint showed me the installations. That day no dead were to be seen, but the smell of the whole region, even from the large road, was pestilential. Next to the small station there was a large barrack marked "Cloakroom" and a door marked "Valuables". Next a chamber with a

hundred “barber” chairs. Then came a corridor, 150 meters long, in the open air and with barbed wire on both sides. There was a sign-board: “To the bath and inhalations.” Before us we saw a house like a bath house with concrete troughs to the right and left containing geraniums or other flowers. After climbing a small staircase, 3 garage-like rooms on each side, 4 x 5 meters large and 1.90 meters high. At the back, invisible wooden doors. On the roof a Star of David made out of copper. At the entrance to the building, the inscription: Foundation Fackenholt. That was all I noticed on that particular afternoon. Next morning, a few minutes before 7, I was informed: In 10 minutes the first train will arrive.—And indeed, a few minutes later the first train came in from Lemberg. 45 cars, containing 6,700 persons; 1450 of whom were already dead on their arrival. Behind the little barbed-wire opening, children, yellow, scared half to death, women, men. The train arrives: 200 Ukrainians, forced to do this work, open the doors, and drive all the people out of the coaches with leather whips. Then, through a huge loudspeaker instructions are given: To undress completely, also to give up false teeth and glasses—some in the barracks, others right in the open air,—To tie one’s shoes together with a little piece of string handed everyone by a small Jewish boy of 4 years of age, hand in all valuables and money at the window marked “Valuables”, without bond, without receipt. Then the women and girls go to the hairdresser, who cuts off their hair in one or two strokes, after which it vanished into huge potato bags “to be used for special submarine equipment, door mats, etc.”, as the SS-Unterscharfuhrer on duty told me. Then, the march begins: Right and left, barbed wire, behind, two dozen Ukrainians with guns. Led by a young girl of striking beauty they approach. With police-Captain Wirth, I stand right before the death chambers. Completely naked by march by, men women, girls, babies, even one-legged person, all of them naked. In one corner, a strong SS-man tells the poor devils, in a strong deep voice: “Nothing whatever will happen to you. All you have to do is to breathe Deeply, it strengthens the lungs; this inhalation is a necessary measure against contagious diseases, it is very good disinfectant!” Asked what was to become of them, he answered: “Well, of course the men will have to work, building streets and houses. But the women do not have to. If they wish to, they can help in house or kitchen.” Once more, a little bit of hope for some of these poor people, enough to make them march

on without resistance to the death chambers. Most of them, though, know everything, the odor has given them a clear indication of their fate. And then they walk up the little staircase—and see the truth!

Mothers, nurse-maids, with babies at their breasts, naked, lots of children of all ages, naked too; they hesitate, but they enter the gas chambers, most of them without a word, pushed by the other behind them, chased by the whips of the SS men. A Jewess of about 40 years of age, with eyes like torches, calls down the blood of her children on the heads of their murderers. Five lashes into her face, dealt by the whip of Police Captain Wirth himself, chase her into the gas chamber. Many of them say their prayers, others ask: who will give us the water for our death? (Jewish rite?). Within the chamber, the SS press the people closely together, Captain Wirth had ordered: “Fill them up full.” Naked men stand on the feet of the others. 7–800 crushed together on 25 square meters, in 45 cubic meters! The doors are closed. Meanwhile the rest of the transport, all naked wait. Somebody says to me: Naked, in winter! But they can die that way!” The answer was: “Well, that’s just what they are here for!” And at that moment I understood why it was called “Foundation Hockenholt”. Hockenholt was the man in charge of the Diesel engine, the exhaust gasses of which were to kill those poor devils. SS-Unterscharfuhrer Hockenholt tries to set the Diesel engine moving. But it does not start! Captain Wirth comes along. It is plain that he is afraid because I am a witness to this breakdown. Yes, indeed, I see everything and wait. Everything is registered by my stopwatch. 50 minutes 70 minutes—the Diesel engine does not start! The people wait in their gas chambers. In vain. One can hear them cry. “Same as in a synagogue”, says SS-Sturmfuhrer Professor Dr. Pfannenstiel, Professor for Public Health at the university of Marburg/Lahn, holding his car close to the wooden door. Captin Wirth, furious deals the Ukrainian who is helping Heckenholt 11 or 12 lashes in the face with his whip.—After 2 hours and 49 minutes.—as registered by my stopwatch—the Diesel engine starts. Up to that moment the people in the four already filled chambers were alive, 4 time 750 persons in 4 times 45 cubic meters. Another 25 minutes go by. Many of the people it is true are dead at that point. One can see this through the little window through which the electric lamp reveals, for a moment, the inside of the chamber. After 28 minutes only a few are living. After 32 minutes, finally all are dead! From the other side, Jewish workers

open the wooden doors. In return for their terrible job, they have been promised their freedom and a small percentage of the valuables and the money found. Like stone statues, the dead are still standing, there having been no room to fall or bend over. Though dead, the families can still be recognized; their hands still clasped. It is difficult to separate them in order to clear the chamber for the next load. The bodies are thrown out, blue, wet with sweat and urine, the legs covered with excrement and menstrual blood. Everywhere among the others, the bodies of babies and children. But there is not time! Two dozen workers are engaged in checking the mouths, opening them by means of iron hooks. "Gold to the left without gold to the right!"—Others check anus and genitals to look for money, diamonds, gold etc. Dentists with chisels tear out the gold teeth bridges or caps. In the center of everything, Captain Wirth. He is on familiar ground here. He hands me a large tin full of teeth and says: "Estimate for yourself the weight of gold. This is only from yesterday and the day before yesterday! And you would not believe what we find here every day! dollars, diamonds, gold! But look for yourself!" . . . The bodies were then thrown into large ditches of about 100 x 20 x 12 meters, located near the gas chambers. After a few days the bodies would swell up and the whole contents of the ditch would rise 2–3 meters high because of the gases that developed in the bodies. After a few more days swelling would stop and the bodies would collapse. The next day the ditches were filled again, and covered with 10 centimeters of sand. A little later, I heard, they constructed grills out of rails and burned the bodies on them with Diesel oil and gasoline in order to make them disappear. At Belcek and Treblinka nobody bothered to take anything approaching an exact count of the persons killed. The figures announced by the BBC are inaccurate. Actually, about 25.000.000 persons were killed; not only Jews, however, but especially Poles and Czechoslovakians, too, who were, in the opinion of the Nazis, of bad stock. Most of them died anonymously. Commissions of so-called doctors, actually nothing but young SS-men in white coats, rode in limousines through the towns and villages of Poland and Czechoslovakia to select the old, tubercular and sick people and to cause them to disappear, shortly afterwards, in the gas chambers. They were the Poles and Czechs (category) NO. III, who did not deserve to live because they were unable to work. The Police-Captain, Wirth, asked me not to propose any other kind of gas chamber in Berlin, to leave everything the way it was. I lied—as I did in each

case all the time—that the prussic acid had already deteriorated in shipping and had become very dangerous, that I was therefore obliged to bury it. This was done right away. The next day, Captain Wirth's car took us to Treblinka, about 75 miles NNE of Warsaw. The installations of this death center differed scarcely from those at Belcek, but they were still larger. There were 8 gas chambers and whole mountains of clothes and underwear about 35–40 meters high. Then, in our "Honor" a banquet was given, attended by all of the employees of the institution. The Obersturmbannfuhrer, Professor Pfanzenstiel MD., Professor Hygiene at the University of Marburg/Lahn, made a speech: "Your task is a great duty, a duty so useful and so necessary." To me alone he talked of this institution in terms of "beauty of the task, humane cause", and to all of them: "Looking at the bodies of these Jews one understands the greatness of your good work!" . . . We left for Warsaw by car. While I waited in vain for a vacant berth I met Baron von Otter, Secretary of the Swedish Legation. As all the beds were occupied we spent the night in the corridor of the sleeper. There, with the facts still fresh in my memory, I told him everything, asking him to report it to his government and to all the Allies. . . . Some weeks later I met Baron von Otter twice again. He told me that he had sent a report to the Swedish Government, a report which, according to him, had a strong influence on the relations between Sweden and Germany. I was not very successful in my attempt to report everything to the chief of the Vatican Legation. I was asked whether I was a soldier, and then was refused an interview. I then sent a detailed report to Dr. Winter, secretary of the Berlin Episcopate, in order to have him pass it on to the bishop of Berlin and through him to the Vatican Legation. When I came out of the Vatican Legation in the Rauchstrasse in Berlin I had a very dangerous encounter with a police agent who followed me; however, after some very unpleasant moments I succeeded in giving him the slip. I have to add, furthermore, that in the beginning of 1944, SS-Sturmbannfuhrer Guenther of the RSHA asked me for very large supplies of prussic acid for obscure use. The acid was to be delivered to his business office in Berlin, Kurfuerstenstrasse. I succeeded in making him believe that this was impossible because there was too much danger involved. It was a question of several car-loads of poisonous acid, enough to kill a large number of persons, actually millions! He had told me he was not sure whether, when, for what kind of persons, how and where this poison was needed. I do not know exactly

what were the intentions of the RSHA and the SD. But later on, I thought of the words of Goebbels of "slamming the door behind them" should Nazism never succeed. Maybe they wanted to kill a large part of the German people, maybe the foreign workers, maybe the prisoners of war—I do not know! Anyhow, I caused the poison to disappear for disinfection purposes, as soon as it came in. There was some danger for me in this, but if I had been asked where the poisonous acid was, I would have answered that it was already in a state of dangerous deterioration and that therefore I had to use up as disinfectant! I am sure that Guenther, the son of the Guenther of the Racial Theory, had, according to his own words, orders to secure the acid for the—eventual—extermination of millions of human beings, perhaps also concentration camps. I have here bills for 2,175 kgs, but, actually about 8,500 kgs are involved; enough to kill 8 million people. I had the bills sent to me in my name; I said this was for reasons of secrecy; however, I did this in order to be somewhat free in my decisions and to have a better possibility of making the poisonous acid disappear. I never paid for these shipments in order to avoid refunding which would have reminded the SD of these stocks. The director of Logosch, who had made those shipments, told me that he had shipped prussic acid in ampules for the purpose of killing human beings. On another occasion Guenther consulted me about the possibility of killing a large number of Jews in the open air in the fortification trenches of Maria-Theresienstadt. In order to prevent the execution of this diabolic proposal, I declared that this method was impracticable. Some time later I heard that the SD had secured, through other channels, the prussic acid to kill these unfortunate people at Theresienstadt. The most disgusting camps were not Oranienburg, Dachau, or Belson, but Auschwitz (Oswice) and Mauthausen-Gusen near Linz/Danube. Those are the places in which millions of people disappeared in gas chambers or gas-chamber-like cars. The method of killing the children was to hold a tampon with prussic acid under their nose.

I myself witnessed experiments on living persons in concentration camps being continued until the victim died. Thus, in the concentration camp for women, Ravensbrueck near Fuerstenberg-Mecklenburg, SS-Hautsturmfuehrer Grundlach MD. made such experiments. In my office, I read many reports of experiments made at Buchenwald, such as the administration of up to 100 tablets of Pervitino per day. Other experiments—every time on about 100–200

persons—were made with serums and lymph, etc., till the death of the person. Himmler personally had reserved for himself the granting of permission to conduct these experiments.

At Oranienburg, I saw how all the prisoners who were there for being perverts (homosexuals) disappeared in one single day.

I avoided frequent visits to the concentration camps because it was customary—especially at Mauthausen-Gusen near Linz-Danube—to hang one or two prisoners in honor of the visitors. An Mauthausen it was customary to make Jewish workers work in a quarry at great altitude. After a while the SS on duty would say: "Pay attention, in a couple of minutes there will be an accident." And, indeed, one or two minutes later, some Jews were thrown from the cliff and fell dead at our feet. "Work accident" was written in the files of the dead.—Dr. Fritz Krantz, an anti-Nazi SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer, often told me of such events. He condemned them severely and often published facts about them. The crimes discovered at Belson, Oranienburg, etc., are not considerable in comparison with the other committed at Auschwitz and Mauthausen.

I plan to write a book about my adventures with the Nazis. I am ready to swear to the absolute truth of all my statements.

(signed in handwritten:) Kurt GERSTEIN

[Editor's Note: Gerstein's report continues with a list of anti-Nazis, and correspondence regarding, and copies of bills for Zyklon B.]

Source: Office of Chief Counsel for War Crimes, Document No. 1553-PS.

147. AFFIDAVIT OF NOVEMBER 26, 1945, OF WILHELM HÖTTL REGARDING EICHMANN'S ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF JEWS KILLED DURING THE HOLOCAUST, LATE 1944

Wilhelm Höttl, SS-Sturmbannfuehrer and part of the German Intelligence Service, gave this affidavit in which he recounts a conversation with Adolf Eichmann, SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer. During that conversation, Eichmann stated that approximately 6 million Jews had been killed: 4 million in the extermination camps and the remainder through other means, especially the

1312 Affidavit of November 26, 1945, of Wilhelm Höttl Regarding Eichmann's Estimate

actions of the Einsatzgruppen, mobile killing units that followed behind the German armies as they made their way into Russia, tasked with killing all Jews and communists who were still alive. Of interest here is that Himmler, to whom Eichmann had reported the total number of 6 million, rejected that number as being too low.

AFFIDAVIT OF DR. WILHELM HOETTL
26 November 1945

I, Wilhelm Hoettl, state herewith under oath:

My name is Dr. Wilhelm Hoettl, SS-Sturmbannführer (Major of the SS). My occupation until the German collapse was that of a reporter and deputy Gruppenleiter in Amt VI (Office VI) of the Reichs Security Office [Reichssicherheitshauptamt].

Amt VI of the RSHA was the so-called Foreign Section of the Security Service and it was engaged in the Intelligence Service in all countries in the world. It corresponded somewhat to the English Intelligence Service. The group to which I belonged was occupied in the Intelligence Service of South-eastern Europe (the Balkans).

At the end of August 1944 I was talking to SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, whom I had known since 1938. The conversation took place in my home in Budapest.

According to my knowledge Eichmann was, at that time, Abteilungsleiter in Amt IV (the Gestapo) of the Reich Security Office [Reichssicherheitshauptamt] and in addition to that he had been ordered by Himmler to get a hold of the Jews in all the European countries and to transport them to Germany. Eichmann was then very much impressed with the fact that Rumania had withdrawn from the war in those days. Therefore, he had come to me to get information about the military situation which I received daily from the Hungarian Ministry of War and from the Commander of the Waffen-SS in Hungary. He expressed his conviction that Germany had now lost the war and that he, personally, had no further chance. He knew that he would be considered one of the main war criminals by the United Nations since he had millions of Jewish lives on his conscience. I asked him how many that was, to which he answered that although the number was a great Reich secret, he would tell me since I, a historian, would be interested and that he would probably not return anyhow from his command in Rumania. He had, shortly before that, made a report to Himmler, as the latter wanted to know the exact number of Jews who had been killed. On the basis of his information he had obtained the following result:

Approximately four million Jews had been killed in the various extermination camps while an additional two million met death in other ways, the major part of which were shot by operational squads of the Security Police during the campaign against Russia.

Himmler was not satisfied with the report since, in his opinion, the number of Jews, who had been killed, must have been more than six million. Himmler had stated, that he would send a man from his Office of Statistics to Eichmann, so that he could make a new report on the basis of Eichmann's material, in which exact figures should be worked out.

I have to believe that this information, given to me by Eichmann, was correct, as he, among all the persons in question, certainly had the best survey of the figures of the Jews who had been murdered. In the first place, he "delivered" so to speak the Jews to the extermination camps through his special squads and knew, therefore, the exact figure and, in the second place, as Abteilungsleiter in Amt IV (the Gestapo) of the RSHA, who was also responsible for Jewish matters, he knew indeed better than anyone else the number of Jews who had died in other ways.

In addition to that, Eichmann was at that moment in such a state of mind as a result of the events, that he certainly had no intention of telling me something that was not true.

I, myself, know the details of this conversation so well because I was, naturally, very much affected and I had already, prior to the German collapse, given detailed data about it to American Quarters in a neutral foreign country with which I was in touch at that time.

I hereby swear, that the above statements have been made by me voluntarily and without duress or compulsion, and that the above statements are true according to my best knowledge and belief.

[signed]

Dr. Wilhelm Hoettl

Signed and sworn to before me in Nurnberg, Germany this
26th day of November 1945.

[signed]

Frederick L. Felton
Lieutenant USNR
#253345

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 380–382, Doc. 2738-PS.

148. AFFIDAVIT OF SEPTEMBER 13, 1945, OF DR. REZSOE (RUDOLF) KASTNER, ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE HUNGARIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY IN 1944

Rezsoe (Rudolf) Kastner was a controversial figure. A Jew, he entered into negotiations with Adolf Eichmann (referred to as "Aichmann" in this document) in an effort to save Hungarian Jews. Although some saw any kind of negotiations with the Germans as collaboration, Kastner continued talks with Eichmann, who proposed that the Nazis would exchange Jewish lives for supplies for the German war effort, a program called Blood for Goods (Blut für Ware). The proposal was not carried out, although Kastner was able to save some 1,368 Jews (including his family and a number of rich and prominent Jews, thus increasing the controversy surrounding him) on what became known as the "Kastner Train." The affidavit shown here is a detailed report on the fate of the Hungarian Jewish community before and after Germany invaded Hungary in March 1944. After settling in Israel after the war, Kastner sued the author of a pamphlet who accused him of collaboration. Although Kastner was eventually exonerated by the Supreme Court of Israel, he became a hated man in his adopted land, and he was assassinated in Tel Aviv in 1957.

Dr. Rezsoe (Rudolph) Kastner, being duly sworn deposes and says:

I was born in 1906 at Kolozsvár, (now Cluj, Rumania), solicitor and journalist, residing at Chemin Krieg, 16, Pension Sergey, Geneva, now temporarily at 109, Clarence Gate Gardens, London.

I was in Budapest until November 28, 1944; as one of the leaders of the Hungarian Zionist organization I not only witnessed closely the Jewish persecution, dealt with officials of the Hungarian puppet government and the Gestapo but also gained insight into the operation of the Gestapo, their organization and witnessed the various phases of Jewish persecution. The following biographical data of mine might be of interest:

Between 1925–1940: Political Editor of "Uj Kelet" Jewish daily newspaper published in Koloszvar; Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Group of the Jewish Party in Rumania.

Between 1929–1931: Worked in Bucharest; member of the Executive of the Palestine Office of the Jewish Agency.

In Dec. 1940: Being a Jew I was excluded from the Chamber of Lawyers; "Uj Kelet" the daily, was closed down by the Hungarian authorities: I moved to Budapest.

Between 1943–1945: Associate President of the Hungarian Zionist Organization.

July 1942: I have been called up for Labor Service: together with 440 other Jewish intellectuals and citizens we worked in South-Eastern Transylvania on fortifications along the Hungarian-Rumanian border.

In Dec. 1942: I was demobilized. Returned to Budapest. Some time before being drafted I have begun to organize relief work for refugee Slovakian Jews. After my demobilization I succeeded in establishing—through diplomatic couriers—contact with the Relief Committee of the Jewish Agency, working in Istanbul. On their instructions I have taken over the leadership of the Relief Committee in Budapest. Our task was—

1. To help to smuggle Jews from Slovakia and Poland into Hungary to save them from the threat of the gas chamber.

2. To feed and clothe them and to assist in their emigration to Palestine.

3. To forward the minutes based on the declaration of the refugees on the question of deportation and annihilation of Jews to Istanbul, later to Switzerland, to the hands of the representatives of the Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee.

4. To cooperate with the Relief Committee of Bratislava in matters concerning saving, hiding of refugee Jews and exchange of information. After German occupation of Hungary, on the 19th March 1944, the Relief Committee concentrated its efforts on the saving of Hungarian Jewry.

5. The Relief Committee of the Jewish agency of which I was a president was engaged in helping Allied prisoners of war. Moreover we sent confidential reports to the Allies through Istanbul and Switzerland about our connections with officials of the German government. We helped to hide and supported leaders of the Hungarian underground and gave a wealth of information to those Hungarian authorities which were working against the Germans. During the siege of Budapest, when I was already out of the country, other members of the Relief Committee participated in street fights against the Germans.

On 15 May 1944: One of my collaborators, Eugen Brand was sent by the Germans to Istanbul to pass on certain business proposals in connection with saving of the Hungarian Jews.

On 21 August 1944: I traveled from Budapest under German escort to the Swiss frontier and acted as intermediary for the first conversation between Kurt Becher and Saly

Mayer, Swiss representative of the Joint D. C. to discuss the price of abandoning the gassing. The conversation took place between St. Margareten and Hoechst on the bridge. From there I returned to Budapest.

On 14 October 1944: I traveled for the second time to St. Margarethen.

On 30 October 1944: I traveled to St. Gallen, accompanied by Kurt Becher and Kr. Wilhelm Billitz, director of the Manfred Weiss Works. On this occasion an interview took place between Becher and McClelland, Swiss representative of the War Refugee Board in the Savoy Hotel, at Zurich. I returned to Budapest.

On 28 November 1944: I left on German instructions to the Swiss border.

On 20 December 1944: I entered Switzerland.

On 27 December 1944: I started out to travel back to Budapest, but could only get to Vienna. The Red Army encircled Budapest.

On 29 December 44–28 March 1945: I remained in Vienna. Afterwards toured Bratislava-Spitz an der Donau—Berlin—Bergen Belsen Hamburg—Berlin—Theresianstadt.

On 19 April 1945 I crossed the Swiss border.

The Germans entered into discussion with leaders of the Jewish community for reasons of administrative efficiency. We conducted the discussion in the hope that we might be able to save some human lives. By holding the ax over our heads they made us responsible for financial contributions and other exactions imposed on the Jewish community. Ultimately the leaders of the “Jewish council” and other intermediaries were also scheduled for extermination. The SS and the Gestapo was particularly intent on liquidating those who had direct knowledge of their operations. I escaped the fate of the other Jewish leaders because the complete liquidation of the Hungarian Jews was a failure and also because SS Sturmbannführer Becher took me under his wings in order to establish an eventual alibi for himself. He was anxious to demonstrate after the fall of 1944 that he disapproved the deportations and exterminations and endeavored consistently to furnish me with evidence that he tried to save the Jews. SS Hauptsturmführer Wisliczeny repeatedly assured me that according to him Germany cannot win the war. He believed that by keeping me alive and by making some concessions in the campaign against the Jews he might have a defense witness when he and his organization will have to account for their atrocities. Strangely he came to Hungarian Jews with the letter of recommendation from leading Slovak Jews. The latter were not deported in 1942 and were saved over until the end of 1944.

Major phases in the persecution of Hungarian Jewry

Before the German occupation.

1. 17,000 Jews—mainly from Ruthenia—were deported to Poland in August 1941. There they were transferred to the German military authorities. These were executed during the succeeding 3 months. In Kamenetz-Podolsk alone 4,500 Hungarian Jews were shot dead. Responsible: Prime Minister Bordossy.

2. Between 23 and 25 January 1942 Hungarian military units “cleaned up” the southern region captured from the Yugoslavs. In Novisad they shot dead 1,500 Jews found at home or in the streets, or taken to the Serbian cemetery or to the beach. A further 2,000 Jews were only saved by an order from Admiral Horthy. Commanders of the Military force were General Feketealmi-Zeisler, General Bajor-Bayer and Captain Zoeldi.

3. The so-called Jewish Labor companies created within the framework of military pioneer services, were in fact concentration camps organized on the German model. Of the 130,000 Hungarian Jews recruited by this means, about 50,000 died from starvation, typhus and shooting, 30,000 were taken prisoners by the Russians, 20,000 were deported to Germany; about 30,000 remained in Hungary.

Organizers of the “Labor Service” were Bartha, Minister for War, Werth, Chief of the Military Staff.

After the German occupation.

19 March 1944: Together with the German military occupation arrived in Budapest “Special Section Commando” of the German Secret Police with the sole object of liquidating the Hungarian Jews. It was headed by Adolf Eichmann, SS Obersturmbannführer, Chief of Section IV.B of the Reich Security Head Office. His immediate collaborators were: SS Obersturmbannführer Hermann Krumej, Hauptsturmführer Wisliczeny, Hunsche, Novak, Dr. Seidl, later Danegger, Wrtok. They arrested, and later deported to Mauthausen, all the leaders of Jewish political and business life and journalists, together with the Hungarian democratic and anti-Fascist politicians; taking advantage of the “interregnum” following upon the German occupation lasting 4 days they have placed their Quislings into the Ministry of the Interior. These were Ladislav Endre and Ladislav Baky. Utilizing the Hungarian administrative organs they have:

- a. Arrested all Jews arriving or leaving Budapest (about 2,500 persons, who were interned at Kistarcsa).

- b. Excluded the Jews from using postal and telephone facilities.
- c. Took over for SS and German military purposes all Jewish public buildings, schools, and hospitals.

On 23 March 1944 the Quisling Cabinet was formed, the purpose of which was—according to the statement made by Wisliczeny (to use in June 1944 in Budapest)—solely the solution of the Jewish problem. During the deliberations preceding the formation of the Cabinet, Prime Minister Sztojaj undertook in the presence of SS Obergruppenfuehrer Winckelmann, Hungary's SS Commander, SS Standartenfuehrer Wesenmayer, new German Minister and Aichmann, that the Hungarian Government will do everything possible to help in the liquidation of the Hungarian Jewry. One anti-Jewish decree followed another after the Sztojaj Cabinet took over. At the same time Krumey and Wisliczeny appeared in the building of the Budapest Jewish Committee and informed Samuel Stern, President, that the matters concerning the Hungarian Jewish problem would be henceforth "dealt with" within the competence of the SS. They warned the Jews against creating panic and obliged the Jewish leaders to form a "Jewish Council." A gigantic levy was imposed (money and goods worth about 11,000,000 pengoes had to be handed over). When President Stern made an inquiry at the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior he was told: "You must fulfill the German demands"

On the 26 March 1944 the whole of Ruthenia, Upper Hungary and Northern Transylvania were declared operational territory at the request of the German General Staff. During the next days that followed Aichmann, Wisliczeny, and Hunsche had daily conferences with Ladislas Endre who received full authority from the Cabinet in matters concerning the Jews.

On 9 April 1944 the military authorities, with headquarters at Munkacs began the rounding-up of 320,000 Jews into Ghettos within the operational area. In order to prevent any armed resistance by the Jews, they were concentrated in brick factories (as at Kassa, Ungvar, Kolozsvar) or under the open sky (as at Nagybanyam, Marosvasarhely, Des), in a few cases they were allowed to retire into some sections of the cities (as in Nagyvarad, Maramorossziget), Food allocations: daily 1/5th of a pound of bread and two cups of soup. From the Jews sent into the Ghettos even matches were taken away.

While an agreement was arrived at between Wesenmayer, German Minister and a representative of Sauckel on the one hand, and Prime Minister Sztojaj, on the other, that

Hungary would place 300,000 Jewish workers at the disposal of the Reich (who were to be selected by a mixed Hungarian-German committee), total deportation of all Jews was decided by Endre, Baky and Aichmann at a meeting in the Ministry of the Interior on the 14 April 1944.

Novak and Lullay left on the next day for Vienna to discuss the question of transport facilities with the management of the German railways.

A levy of 2,000,000 pengoes each was imposed by the Gestapo on the Jews of Novisad and Ungvar. Jewish shops were looted by Germans. Despite a German protest, the Hungarian Government ordered the closing down of all Jewish shops. The Jews resisted in the Ghetto of Munkacs. The Gestapo shot 27 of them, including the entire executive of the Jewish Community.

On 28 April 1944 the first deportation takes place; 1,500 persons suitable as laborers were taken from the Kistarcsa internment camp to Oswiecim. There, they were compelled to write encouraging notes to their relatives with datelines from "Waldsee." The notes were brought by an SS Courier to Budapest and were distributed by the Jewish Council.

In the meantime the Budapest Relief Committee received two messages from the Bratislava Committee. One message said that there was feverish work going on in Oswiecim to restore the gas chambers and crematoriums there, which were not working for months and a remark made by a SS-NCO that "soon we will get fine Hungarian sausages" was reported. The other message was to the effect that an agreement was reached, between the Hungarian, Slovakian, and German railway managements that, for the time being, 120 trains would be directed, via Presov, towards Oswiecim. This information was passed on to the Bratislava Relief Committee by an anti-Nazi Slovakian railway official. It was obvious that it concerned deportation trains.

The delegate of the International Red Cross, to whom I have appealed for intervention, stated that in view of the Geneva Convention this was impossible for him. The Swedish and Swiss Legations promised that they would report to their Governments and ask for instructions. After repeated appeals the Primate of the Catholic Church promised an intervention on behalf of the converted Jews. But Sztojaj refused to listen.

After consulting with all Jewish leaders we turned to the Germans. At first Grumey, Wisliczeny, and Hunsche negotiated with us; later Aichmann took over the negotiations. Aichmann arrived at Budapest on the first day of the German occupation, 19 March, 1944. Wisliczeny arrived there on March 22. The first time we negotiated was 3 April. At first

the Germans demanded a compensation of 2,000,000 dollars and promised that in return for this sum they would not deport anyone. Later Aichmann declared: "I can only sell the Hungarian Jews as from Germany. Brand should leave at once for Istanbul and inform the Jews there and the Allies that I am prepared to sell 1,000,000 Hungarian Jews, for goods, primarily vehicles. I would transport them to Oswiecim and 'put them on ice.' If my generous offer is accepted I will release all of them. If not, they will all be gassed."

In the meantime the organization of the Ghettos had been directed by Wisliczeny, who had been traveling from town to town. The Hungarian police and gendarmerie was at his disposal everywhere. Officially he only acted as an "Advisor" to the Hungarian authorities; in reality everything took place on German orders.

15 May 1944 General and total deportation begins. One day before the evacuation all hospital cases, newly born babies, blind and deaf, all mental cases and prison inmates of Jewish origin were transferred to the Ghettos. About 80–100 Jews were placed in each cattle-car with one bucket of water; the car was then sealed down. At Kassa the deportation trains were taken over from the escorting Hungarian gendarmerie by the SS. While searching for "hidden valuables" the gendarmerie squads tortured the inmates with electric current and beat them mercilessly. Hundreds committed suicide. Those who protested or resisted were shot at once (as for instance Dr. Rosenfeld, solicitor of Marosvasarhely).

The Hungarian press and radio kept quiet about the deportations. The Hungarian government denied in the foreign press that Jews were tortured.

Between 5 June and 8 June 1944 Aichmann told me: "We accepted the obligation toward the Hungarians that not a single deported Jew will return alive!"

Up to 27 June 1944 475,000 Jews were deported.

The Pope and the King of Sweden intervened with Horthy. Then followed the ultimatum like appeal of President Roosevelt to stop the brutal anti-Jewish persecutions. Thereupon Horthy has forbidden the deportation of the Jews from the capital which was already fixed to take place on July 5.

Endre, Baky, and the Germans protested against this decision and a further 30,000 Jews were deported from Transdanubia; the outer suburbs of Budapest were also emptied. Horthy dismissed Endre. But Aichmann, Endre, and Baky continued to try to liquidate the Jews of the capital with the collaboration of the gendarmerie. Liberators bombed Budapest and the railway junctions which were to be used by

the deportation trains. Horthy has ordered the mobilization of the Army against an attempted coup d'etat (8 July). The gendarmerie thereupon went over to Horthy's side. But Aichmann emptied the camp of Kistarcsa by secretly collaborating with the Camp Commander and another 1,700 Jews were transported off in the direction of Oswiecim. On Horthy's orders the train was stopped at the frontier and the people were brought back. But Aichmann repeated his coup after 3 days and prevented any information reaching Horthy in time.

On 15 July 1944 an ultimatum was handed over by Wesenmayer, German Minister to the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs demanding the deportation of the Budapest Jews. The Hungarian Government replied in a note to the effect that it was prepared to transfer the Budapest Jews to satisfy demands of military security, but only within the borders of the country. (27 July).

Allied successes have strengthened the position of the Hungarian Government against the Germans. Lakatos, new Hungarian Prime Minister sent a note to the German Government demanding the recall of Aichmann and his staff from Hungary, the transfer of the German-controlled internment camps to Hungarian authorities and the handing over of Hungarian politicians and high-ranking officers in German captivity to the Hungarians.

On 25 August 1944 the following instructions received from Himmler, Wesenmayer informed the Hungarian Government that its demands would be fulfilled by the Germans.

But on 15 October 1944 a German coup ended the Horthy regime and Szalasy took over power. On 17 October Aichmann returns to Budapest by air. On his order the Arrow-Cross Party and the police began the deportation of all Jews locked into the houses marked by yellow stars; 25,000 Jewish people, mostly women were made to walk over 100 miles in rain and snow without food to the Austrian border; hundreds died on the way, more died in Austria through exhaustion and dysentery. On the border the transports were taken over by Wisliczeny; 20,000 Labor Service men shared the same fate.

The German authorities were the same as before; the most active Hungarian collaborators were: Minister Emil Kovarcz, Solymosi, Under-Secretary of State, and Ladislas Ferenczi, Lt. Col. of the gendarmerie.

On 8 December the deportations from Budapest stopped. According to Wisliczeny Aichmann refused to carry out Himmler's order to stop deportations until he received written instructions from Himmler himself. Until 11 February 1945 the Arrow-Cross party-men did not stop to hunt down

Jews in hiding, living on false papers; 10–15,000 Jews were shot on the shores of the Danube or in the streets during these 2 months. Thousands have died in the Ghettos, as well as in the “protected houses” of the Swedish and Swiss Legations, as a result of enemy action, sickness or starvation.

The losses of Hungarian Jewry

The 1940–41 census found 762,000 persons of Jewish persuasion within what was then Hungarian territory. But the persecution was extended to the Converted Jews, as well as to mixed marriages, of whom there were no official figures. Their numbers were estimated generally at 60,000.

According to figures estimated in August 1945:

There are at present in Budapest	150,000 Jews
In the provinces	40,000 Jews
In Transylvania (returned to Rumania), in Ruthenia (attached to Russia), in Upper Hungary (attached to Slovakia), and in the Backa (returned to Yugoslavia), there are estimated to be	50,000 Jews -----
Total	240,000 Jews
In territory occupied by the Allies and in Russia, Sweden and Switzerland approx.	50,000 Jews -----
Total	290,000 Jews

Of the 10,000 or so Slovakian, Polish, Yugoslav, and German Jews who were in Hungary at the time of the German occupation only about 750 are still alive, according to a reliable estimate.

Therefore, a total of 540,000 Hungarians and 10,000 refugee Jews perished, of them—

The Germans were responsible for the death of.....	450,000
The Hungarians were responsible for the death of....	80,000
Suicides, sickness, enemy (allied) action	20,000 -----

The figures concerning the deported Jews originate from Wisliczeny, who directed the deportations and was fully competent to give these figures

It may be added that the objective of the new wave of deportations which started at the end of October 1944 was no

longer Oswiecim. On this occasion older people, children, and the sick were not deported. Those who remained alive after the long journey on foot were—in the majority—employed on fortifications works along the Austro-Hungarian border; a lesser number were sent to Oranienburg, Dachau, and Bergen-Belsen.

General History of the Annihilation of the Jews Section
IV.B. and the Annihilation of the Jews

Pogroms and the creation of the Ghettos organized in various centers in Poland during 1939–40 represented a period of hesitation. At that time the extinction of all European Jews was planned, but it was not finally decided upon. The Lublin “reservation,” the playing of the Nazis with the idea of a Jewish center were expressions of this period of hesitation. The decision to exterminate the Jews was probably reached in 1941. In the occupied Baltic countries and in the Ukraine the SS formation working jointly with the Wehrmacht annihilated nearly all Jews (in the Baltic countries they were helped by the Latvians and Lithuanians). The mass-murder was carried out with the aid of bullets. The victims often dug their own tombs. Frequently they were buried alive. Then began the use of gas. The victims were killed by gas bursting out inside hermetically sealed lorries.

In the fall of 1941—according to a statement of Wisliczeny—made to me in January 1945 in Vienna—Kaltenbrunner commissioned SS Standartenfuehrer Blobl to work out the plan of the gas chambers. In the opinion of Wisliczeny the initiative came from Aichmann. Hitler approved of the plan at once. The execution was entrusted to the Aichmann-Himmler-Kaltenbrunner trio.

In December 1941 the first tests were carried out in Belzec. According to a statement of Wisliczeny made to me in Vienna in February '45 it was a complete success. Thereupon three more death-camps were set up in Treblinka, Majdanek and Oswiecim. (Later a smaller camp was set up in Kalkini.)

According to statements of Krumej and Wisliczeny in February or March 1945 a conference of the officers of IV.B. was called to Berlin by Aichmann in the spring of 1942. He then informed them that the Government decided in favor of the complete annihilation of the European Jews and that this will be carried out silently in the gas chambers. “Victory is ours” declared Aichmann. “The end of the war is near. We must hurry as this is the last chance to free Europe of the Jews. After the war it will not be possible to utilize such methods.”

Wisliczeny claims that he interjected the following remark to Aichmann's statement: "God help us that this method should never be possible against us."

Krumey confirmed this statement of Wisliczeny. He maintained that until the secret—which had to be kept strictly—was revealed by Aichmann, none of the officers of iV.B. knew anything about it.

The entire machinery of the German State supported Section IV.B. in this work. In occupied countries the Commanders of the Wehrmacht and the Gauleiters (Seyss-Inquart, Frank, Heydrich, etc), in countries allied to Germany the German diplomats (Killinger in Bucharest, Wesenmayer in Zagreb, later in Budapest) supported the work.

The plan of operation was almost identical in all countries; at first Jews were marked, then separated, divested of all property, deported and gassed.

The Officers of IV.B. traveled from country to country. Wisliczeny—according to his own admission—directed the deportation in Slovakia and Greece.

Brunner II, in Poland and Slovakia.

Krumey, Seidl directed the work in Hungary, Austria, and Poland.

Seidl was the first commander of Theresienstadt.

Guenther directed deportations in Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Danegger, Brunner in France.

Almost everywhere the local Quisling authorities and even part of the civilian populations assisted them.

Commanders of the death-camps gassed only on direct or indirect instructions of Aichmann. The particular Officer of IV.B. who directed the deportations from some particular country had the authority to indicate whether the train should go to a death camp or not, and what should happen to the passengers. The instructions were usually carried by the SS-NCO escorting the train. The letters "A" or "M" on the escorting instruction documents indicated Auschwitz (Oswiecim) or Majdanek; it meant that the passengers were to be gassed.

In case of doubt instructions by wire were asked from Aichmann in Berlin.

Regarding Hungarian Jews the following general ruling was laid down in Oswiecim: children up to the age of 12 or 14, older people above 50, as well as the sick, or people with criminal records (who were transported in specially marked wagons) were taken immediately on their arrival to the gas chambers.

The others passed before an SS doctor who, on sight, indicated who was fit for work, and who was not. Those unfit

were sent to the gas chambers, while the others were distributed in various labor camps.

In September 1944 Slovakian partisans engineered the revolt in Banska-Bystricza. The Jewish youth joined the revolution enthusiastically. Aichmann thereupon sent SS Hauptsturmfuehrer Brunner to Bratislava with instructions to deport all the 17,000-odd Jews still left behind after the deportations of 1942. They were to go to Oswiecim.

SS and Hlinka-Guards arrested the Jews. They were transported from Sered. About 13,500 Jews were caught, the rest were in hiding. Following my appeal the A.D.C. of Becher Capt. Grueson journeyed to Bratislava and tried to intervene with SS Obersturmbannfuehrer Vitezka, Slovakian Gestapo Chief to stop the deportations. Vitezka's reply was: "As far as I am concerned I will agree readily if I get telegraphic authority from Kaltenbrunner to this effect." Becher said on 2 November 1944, in the Hotel Walhalla, St. Gallen, Switzerland, in the presence of the representative of the Joint D.C.: "We have militarily annihilated the Slovakian Jews."

In the first half of November 1944 about 20,000 Jews were taken from Theresienstadt to Oswiecim and were gassed, on instructions from Aichmann. As far as I could ascertain this was the last gassing process.

According to Becher, Himmler issued instructions—on his advice—on 25 November 1944 to dynamite all the gas-chambers and crematoria of Oswiecim. He also issued a ban on further murdering of Jews.

Wisliczeny confirmed the existence of such an order. But he maintained that Aichmann sabotaged this order and was supported in this by Mueller and Kaltenbrunner.

Following the advance of the Russian Army it was necessary to evacuate the Polish and Silesian camps. Some of the Jewish prisoners were sent to Bergen-Belsen or other camps. Most of the Jews found in these camps by the Allies arrived there either at the end of 1944 or at the beginning of 1945. Other Jews in the extermination camps were shot, or were frozen dead on the way.

There were no mass-murders in the months preceding the German surrender but owing to starvation—due partly to the collapse of the German transport system and the general lack of food—the sick and weakened Jews died by the thousands.

After the fall of 1944 Himmler granted several concessions. Thus he permitted the departure for Switzerland of 1,700 Hungarian Jews deported to Bergen-Belsen and also agreed to suspend the annihilation of the Jews of the Budapest Ghetto. Himmler permitted the handing over to the Allies the Jews of Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt without

a shot being fired, which in his eyes and eyes of his colleagues was such a generous and colossal concession that he certainly hoped some political concession in return. In the hope of establishing contact with the Allies Himmler made some concessions even without expecting economic returns. To this desire of Himmler may be ascribed the general prohibition dated 25 November 1944, concerning the further killing of Jews. On 27 November 1944 Becher showed me a copy of Himmler's order on this subject. Aichmann at first did not obey this order.

In accordance with my above described activities I had dealings among others with the following individuals:

Germans: Special Section Commando (for the Liquidation of Jews):

Adolf Aichmann, SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer, head of section IV.B. in the Reich Security

Head Office and the following officers of his staff:

SS Obersturmbannfuehrer Guenther; Danegger; Hermann Krumey.

SS Hauptsturmfuehrer Dieter Wisliczeny; Dr. Seidl; Novak; Hunsche; Schmiedsieffen.

Several NCO's, among them:

Hauptsturmfuehrer Richter
Oberscharfuehrer Nuemann.

Special Staff (Economic Staff):

SS Standartenfuehrer Kurt Becher, and some officers of his staff.

SS Standartenfuehrer Wesenmayer, German Minister in Budapest (after 19 March 1945).

Hungarians:

Nicholas Mester, Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Education.

Ladislav Vitez Ferenczy, Lt. Col. of the Gendarmerie.

Leo Lullay, Captain of the Gendarmerie.

Dr. Stephen Olah, Counselor of the Ministry.

Ladislav Baký, Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Interior.

Hungarian Resistance Workers:

Henry Lazar, present Hungarian Under-Secretary of State to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Nicholas Kertesz, former Social-democratic member of Parliament.

Bela Zsolt, journalist.

A. Bereczky, Trustee of the Calvinist Church.

Neutrals:

Prof. Waldemar Langlet, Cultural Counselor of the Swedish Legation.

Count Tolstov Representatives of the Swedish Red Cross;

Paul Wallenberg Head of the protection of foreign interests

Consul Lutz Section of the Swiss Legation.

Freidrich Born, delegate of the International Red Cross.

The Charge d'Affaires of the Swiss Legation.

The Charge d'Affaires of the Spanish Legation.

Jews:

All members of the Jewish Council, especially Samuel Stern (Court Counselor), Chairman of the Pest Jewish Community.

Dr. Charles Wilhelm; Dr. Ernest Petoe, Dr. Boda (Chief Government Counselor), Vice-chairman.

Philip Freudiger, President of the Orthodox Jewish Community and members of the council of that Community.

Otto Komoly, President of the Zionist Organization.

Nicholas Krausz, head of the Palestine Office of the Jewish Agency.

[signed] DR. KASTNER REZSOE
DR. REZSOE (RUDOLF) KASTNER

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 13th day of September 1945 at the Office of the United States Chief of Counsel, 49 Mount Street, London W.1, England.

[signed] WARREN F. FARR
WARREN F. FARR
Major, Judge Advocate General's Dept.,
Office U. S. Chief of Counsel

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. V, pp. 313-326, Doc. 2605-PS.

149. AFFIDAVIT OF JULY 16, 1947, OF DOUGLAS TILBROOK FROST CONCERNING I.G. FARBEN'S AUSCHWITZ PLANT

This affidavit given by Douglas Tilbrook Frost, a British POW working at the I.G. Farben Auschwitz factory camp (Auschwitz III), focuses entirely on the treatment of Jews also working there. The description he gives of the conditions in which the Jews worked makes clear that the intent of the Nazis was to work the Jews to death. Frost comments on the inadequate clothing and diet given to the Jewish prisoners. He notes that they could not declare themselves sick or ill lest they be sent to the gas chambers as a result. He observed Jews falling down from exhaustion and starvation and being beaten for the slightest infraction. Frost concludes with the statement that he has no doubt that it would be impossible for executives or other employees of Farben who came to the camp on business not to know that the Jews were being worked to death in their factory.

AFFIDAVIT, 16 JULY 1947, OF DOUGLAS TILBROOK FROST, BRITISH PRISONER OF WAR IN GERMANY, CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF CONCENTRATION CAMP INMATES AT FARBEN'S AUSCHWITZ PLANT, AND RELATED MATTERS

I, Douglas Tilbrook Frost, 43, Ash Grove, Stapleford, Nr. Nottingham, England, do hereby declare under oath the following facts:

1. I was born 15 April 1912 at Nr. Nottingham, England. I entered the Army in November 1939, and was captured on 9 April 1941 near Tobruk. At the time I was signaller in the 5th Battalion Tanks. I was brought first to Italy, then to Germany and finally to Auschwitz. After about a week I, together with about 30 or 40 others, was assigned to swamp work gathering reeds. Shortly thereafter, I started working in the I. G. Farben factory at Auschwitz. I continued working there until I was injured, in January 1944, and was sent to Lamsdorf. I was later freed by the Americans.

2. The IG plant at Auschwitz covered approximately 6 sq. kilometers and was built entirely by slave labor. The Germans who were there were in a supervisory capacity. There were 10,000 to 15,000 Jews, about 22,000 others of all nationalities, particularly Russians and Poles.

3. Of all the persons working at IG Auschwitz, the Jewish inmates had the worst time of it. I was very friendly with them and often spoke to them. The impression I got was that at least half of the inmates would never again be fit to go back to civilization because of the deteriorated mental and physical condition they had reached. Their clothing consisted of striped pajamas and for shoes they had wooden clogs. The food was very poor. They would ask us for our soup. This soup which we gave them was so bad that we couldn't drink it ourselves.

In spite of their poor condition, which was obvious from just looking at them since their skin was a dirty gray and body was purely skin and bones, they nevertheless were given hard jobs to do, such as carrying rails around and pieces of machinery.

4. No inmate was allowed in the camp who was sick. The weak and the sick would be destroyed. The inmates in the camp always told us about this and personally I recall many cases where inmates whom I had known just disappeared and didn't show up again. As a matter of fact, the inmates were so frightened of being sent to the gas chambers because of illness or injury that they would often come to work hiding their cuts and sores rather than report sick.

The German civilians often threatened the inmates that they would be gassed and made into soap. We were told that quite a few times by the inmates and I personally heard the German civilians make those threats many times. Also I heard the Germans joking among themselves about the same thing. I didn't take it seriously at first but later I wondered whether it might not be true after all. Though I have no personal knowledge, I got the impression that the manufacture of soap from inmates was being done at Auschwitz by rendering the fat from the gassed bodies.

5. As a result of the starvation diet of the inmates, their living conditions and the hard work they had to do, I often saw them collapse and fall down while working in the factory. On other occasions I would see two or three inmates being carried by. They looked very bad. My impression was that their chances of recovery would be pretty thin. Apart from the work, the Jews received various forms of corporal punishment. I recall one case where one was hit over the head with a pick by a kapo. One of the usual punishments was to make the inmates carry bricks wherever they went, for each slight infraction. Sometimes an inmate would carry as many as 5 or 6 bricks. These he would have to take wherever he went, to eat, to sleep, everywhere. Also, just to amuse

themselves, the Germans would ride their bicycles and have inmates trot behind them wherever they went, as dogs.

6. In addition to the I. G. Farben foremen and other officials at Auschwitz, every once in a while big-shots from the main firm would come down to the plant. In my opinion nobody who worked at the plant or who came into the plant on business or inspections, could avoid discovering the fact that the inmates were literally being worked to death. They had no color in their faces whatsoever. They were practically living corpses, covered with skin and bone, and completely broken in spirit. Everyone who was there knew that the inmates were kept there as long as they turn out work and that when they were physically unable to continue, they were disposed of.

I have carefully read each of the two pages of this statement and have placed my initials at the bottom of each page thereof. I have made all corrections in my own handwriting and have initialed each such correction. I do hereby declare under oath that the foregoing statement is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

[Signed] D. T. FROST

Sworn to and signed before me this 16th day of July 1947 at Nottingham, England.

[signed] Benvenuto von Halle
U. S. Civilian, AGO 532432
Interrogator

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. VIII, pp. 623–625, Doc. NI-11692.

IV. Responses and Other Victims

150. REPRISAL ACTION AGAINST JEWISH RESISTANCE IN BELGRADE, JULY 29, 1941

This excerpt from the report of the Einsatzgruppe (one of four groups—each with approximately 750 men—that followed behind the German armies, tasked with killing Jews and

others) that was in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, reflects one of the Nazis' most effective means of controlling large groups of people: in the event of any effort to harm Germans or damage their equipment, a significant number of innocent people having no connection to the action would be killed in reprisal. The method of reprisal was used in ghettos and camps to great effect. The knowledge that tens or hundreds of innocent people would be killed if one person tried to escape or if one German soldier was killed or wounded forestalled many an escape attempt or act of violence against a Nazi guard.

EXTRACT FROM SITUATION REPORT U.S.S.R. NO. 37, 29 JULY 1941, CONCERNING REPRISAL ACTION AGAINST JEWS IN BELGRADE

Berlin, 29 July 1941

The Chief of the Security Police and SD-IV A 1 - B. No.1 B/41

Top Secret

45 copies—23d copy

Situation Report U.S.S.R. No. 37

I. Political Review—

Yugoslavia—

The Chief of the Einsatzgruppe of the Security Police and SD in Belgrade reports—

On 25 July [19] 41 at 1520 hours in Belgrade an unidentified Jew, wearing the yellow brassard, threw a bottle of gasoline at a German motor vehicle in an attempt to set fire to the automobile. He was prevented from doing so and escaped. On the same day in three more incidents unidentified culprits threw bottles of gasoline at German motor vehicles. In an identical incident a 16-year-old Serbian girl was arrested. She admitted that she was incited to the deed by a Jew. In reprisal 100 Jews were shot to death in Belgrade on 29 July 1941.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XI, p. 938, Doc. NO-2952.

151. “THE WARSAW GHETTO IS NO MORE”: REPORT OF GENERAL JÜRGEN STROOP, MAY 16, 1943

SS general Jürgen Stroop had an impressive record of service on behalf of Germany in both world wars, but it was his role in suppressing the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and his book-length account of that operation that make him one of the better-known Nazi officers. The uprising began in January 1943 when, for the first time, Germans who entered the Warsaw Ghetto to continue the many deportations from the ghetto that had reduced the population to some 55,000 Jews were met with small-arms fire. They were forced to withdraw, but on April 19, 1943, they returned in force, this time under Stroop’s command. Although outmanned and outgunned, the Jewish fighters were able to repel Stroop’s forces. It was not until May 16, 1943, that the uprising was completely ended, an extraordinary feat of resistance. Stroop’s report, excerpted here, is the best description of the fighting from the perspective of the Nazis. It also includes an overview of the establishment of the ghetto.

THE WARSAW GHETTO IS NO MORE

For the Fuehrer and their country the following fell in the battle for the destruction of Jews and bandits in the former Ghetto of Warsaw:

[follow 15 names]

Furthermore, the Polish Police Sergeant Julian Zielinski, born 13 November 1891, 8th Commissariat * * * fell on 19 April 1943 while fulfilling his duty. * * * They gave their utmost, their life. We shall never forget them. The following were wounded

[follow the names of—

- 60 Waffen SS personnel.
 - 11 “Watchmen” from Training Camps, probably Lithuanians, to judge by their names.
 - 12 Security Police Officers in SS Units.
 - 5 men of the Polish Police
 - 2 regular Army personnel engineers]
- Average number of personnel used per day*

Units used in the action

SS Staff & Police Leader 6/5

Waffen SS:

SS Panzer Grenadier Training and Reserve Battalion
3, Warsaw 4/440

SS Cav. Training and Res Bat. Warsaw 5/381

Police:

SS Police Regiment 22 I. Bat. 3/94

III. Bat. 3/134

Engineering Emergency Service 1/6

Polish Police 4/363

Polish Fire Brigade 166

Security Police:

Wehrmacht

Light AA Alarm Battery III/8 Warsaw 2/22

Engineers Det. of Railway Armored Trains Res. Bat.
Rembertow 2/42

Res. Eng. 14 Gora-Kalwaria 1/34

Foreign Racial Watchmen:

1 Bat. “Trawniki” men 2/335

Total: 36/2054

[Translator’s note: This obviously means; 36 officers, 2054 men]

The creation of special areas to be inhabited by Jews, and the restriction of the Jews with regard to residence and trading is nothing new in the history of the East. Such measures were first taken far back in the Middle Ages; they could be observed as recently as during the last few centuries. These restrictions were imposed with the intention of protecting the aryan population against the Jews.

Identical considerations led us as early as February, 1940 to conceive the project of creating a Jewish residential district in Warsaw. The initial intention was to establish as the Ghetto that part of the City of Warsaw which has the Vistula as its Eastern frontier. The particular situation on prevailing in Warsaw seemed at first to frustrate this plan. It was moreover opposed by several authorities particularly by the City Administration. They pointed in particular that disturbances in industry and trade would ensue if a Ghetto were founded

in Warsaw, and that it would be impossible to provide the Jews with food if they were assembled in a closed area.

At a conference held in March 1940, it was decided to postpone the plan of creating a Ghetto for the time being, owing to the above objections. At the same time a plan was considered to declare the District of Lublin the collecting area for all Jews within the Government General, especially for the evacuated or fugitive Jews arriving from the Reich. But as early as April 1940, the Higher SS and Police Leader, East, Cracow, issued a declaration that there was no intention of assembling the Jews within the Lubin District. In the meantime, the Jews had increasingly taken to crossing the frontiers without permission and illegally. This noted especially at the limits of the Districts of Lowicz and Skierniewice. Conditions in the town of Lowicz became dangerous from the point of view of hygiene as well as from that of the Security Police, owing to these illegal migrations of Jews. The District President of Lowicz therefore, began to install Ghettos in his district in order to avoid these dangers.

The experiences in the district of Lowicz, after Ghettos had been installed, showed that this method is the only one suitable for dispelling the dangers which emanate repeatedly from the Jews.

The necessity of erecting a Ghetto in the City of Warsaw as well became more and more urgent in the summer of 1940, since more and more troops were being assembled in the district of Warsaw after termination of the French campaign. At that time the Department for Hygiene urged the speedy erection of a Ghetto in the interest of preserving the health of the German Forces and of the native population as well. The original plan of establishing the Ghetto in the suburb of Praga as intended in February 1940, would have taken at least 4 to 5 months, since almost 600,000 persons had to be moved. But since experience showed that greater outbreaks of epidemics might be expected in the winter months and since for this reason the District Medical Officer urged that the resettling action ought to be completed by 15 November 1940 at the latest, the plan of establishing a suburban ghetto in Praga was dropped; and instead, the area which hitherto had been used as a quarantine area for epidemics was selected for use as a Jewish residential area. In October 1940, the Governor ordered the Commissioner of the District, President for the City of Warsaw, to complete the resettlement necessary for establishing the Ghetto within the City of Warsaw by 15 November 1940.

The Ghetto thus established in Warsaw was inhabited by about 400,000 Jews. It contained 27,000 apartments with an average of 2½ rooms each. It was separated from the rest

of the city by partition and other walls and by walling-up of thoroughfares, windows, doors, open spaces, etc.

It was administered by the Jewish Board of Elders, who received their instructions from the Commissioner for the Ghetto, who was immediately subordinated to the Governor. The Jews were granted self-administration in which the German supervising authorities intervened only where German interests were touched. In order to enable the Jewish Board of Elders to execute its orders, a Jewish Police force was set up, identified by special armbands and a special beret and armed with rubber truncheons. This Jewish Police force was charged with maintaining order and security within the Ghetto and was subordinated to the German and Polish Police.

II

It soon became clear, however, that not all dangers had been removed by this confining the Jews to one place. Security considerations required removing the Jews from the city of Warsaw altogether. The first large resettlement action took place in the period from 22 July to 3 October 1942. In this action 310,322 Jews were removed. In January 1943 a second resettlement action was carried out by which altogether 6,500 Jews were affected.

When the Reichsfuehrer SS visited Warsaw in January 1943 he ordered the SS and Police Leader for the District of Warsaw to transfer to Lublin the armament factories and other enterprises of military importance which were installed within the Ghetto including their personnel and machines. The execution of this transfer order proved to be very difficult, since the managers as well as the Jews resisted in every possible way. The SS and Police Leader thereupon decided to enforce the transfer of the enterprises in a large-scale action which he intended to carry out in three days. The necessary preparations had been taken by my predecessor, who also had given the order to start the large-scale action. I myself arrived in Warsaw on 17 April 1943 and took over the command of the action on 19 April 1943, 0800 hours, the action itself having started the same day at 0600 hours.

Before the large-scale action began, the limits of the former Ghetto had been blocked by an external barricade in order to prevent the Jews from breaking out. This barricade was maintained from the start to the end of the action and was especially reinforced at night.

When we invaded the Ghetto for the first time, the Jews and the Polish bandits succeeded in repelling the participating units, including tanks and armored cars, by a well-prepared concentration of fire. When I ordered a second

attack, about 0800 hours, I distributed the units, separated from each other by indicated lines, and charged them with combing out the whole of the Ghetto, each unit for a certain part. Although firing commenced again, we now succeeded in combing out the blocks according to plan. The enemy was forced to retire from the roofs and elevated bases to the basements, dug-outs, and sewers. In order to prevent their escaping into the sewers, the sewerage system was dammed up below the Ghetto and filled with water, but the Jews frustrated this plan to a great extent by blowing up the turning off valves. Late the first day we encountered rather heavy resistance, but it was quickly broken by a special raiding party. In the course of further operations we succeeded in expelling the Jews from their prepared resistance bases, sniper holes, and the like, and in occupying during the 20 and 21 April the greater part of the so-called remainder of the Ghetto to such a degree that the resistance continued within these blocks could no longer be called considerable.

The main Jewish battle group, mixed with Polish bandits, had already retired during the first and second day to the so-called Muranowski Square. There, it was reinforced by a considerable number of Polish bandits. Its plan was to hold the Ghetto by every means in order to prevent us from invading it. The Jewish and Polish standards were hoisted at the top of a concrete building as a challenge to us. These two standards, however, were captured on the second day of the action by a special raiding party. SS Untersturmfuehrer Dehmke fell in this skirmish with the bandits; he was holding in his hand a hand-grenade which was hit by the enemy and exploded, injuring him fatally. After only a few days I realized that the original plan had no prospect of success, unless the armament factories and other enterprises of military importance distributed throughout the Ghetto were dissolved. It was therefore necessary to approach these firms and to give them appropriate time for being evacuated and immediately transferred. Thus one of these firms after the other was dealt with, and we very soon deprived the Jews and bandits of their chance to take refuge time and again in these enterprises, which were under the supervision of the Armed Forces. In order to decide how much time was necessary to evacuate these enterprises thorough inspections were necessary. The conditions discovered there are indescribable. I cannot imagine a greater chaos than in the Ghetto of Warsaw. The Jews had control of everything, from the chemical substances used in manufacturing explosives to clothing and equipment for the Armed Forces. The managers knew so little of their own shops that the Jews were in a position to produce inside these shops arms

of every kind, especially hand grenades, Molotov cocktails, and the like.

Moreover, the Jews had succeeded in fortifying some of these factories as centers of resistance. Such a center of resistance in an Army accommodation office had to be attacked as early as the second day of the action by an Engineer's Unit equipped with flame throwers and by artillery. The Jews were so firmly established in this shop that it proved to be impossible to induce them to leave it voluntarily; I therefore resolved to destroy this shop the next day by fire.

The managers of these enterprises, which were generally also supervised by an officer of the Armed Forces, could in most cases make no specified statements on their stocks and the whereabouts of these stocks. The statements which they made on the number of Jews employed by them were in every case incorrect. Over and over again we discovered that these labyrinths of edifices belonging to the armament concerns as residential blocks, contained rich Jews who had succeeded in finding accommodations for themselves and their families under the name of "armament workers" and were leading marvelous lives there. Despite all our orders to the managers to make the Jews leave those enterprises, we found out in several cases that managers simply concealed the Jews by shutting them in, because they expected that the action would be finished within a few days and that they then would be able to continue working with the remaining Jews. According to the statements of arrested Jews, women also seem to have played a prominent part. The Jews are said to have endeavored to keep up good relations with officers and men of the armed forces. Carousing is said to have been frequent, during the course of which business deals are said to have been concluded between Jews and Germans.

The number of Jews forcibly taken out of the buildings and arrested was relatively small during the first few days. It transpired that the Jews had taken to hiding in the sewers and in specially erected dug-outs. Whereas we had assumed during the first days that there were only scattered dug-outs, we learned in the course of the large-scale action that the whole Ghetto was systematically equipped with cellars, dug-outs, and passages. In every case these passages and dug-outs were connected with the sewer system. Thus, the Jews were able to maintain undisturbed subterranean traffic. They also used this sewer network for escaping subterraneously into the Aryan part of the city of Warsaw. Continuously, we received reports of attempts of Jews to escape through the sewer holes. While pretending to build air-raid shelters they had been erecting dug-outs within the former

Ghetto ever since the autumn of 1942. These were intended to conceal every Jew during the new evacuation action, which they had expected for quite a time, and to enable them to resist the invaders in a concerted action. Through posters, handbills, and whisper propaganda, the communistic resistance movement actually brought it about that the Jews entered the dug-outs as soon as the new large-scale operation started. How far their precautions went can be seen from the fact that many of the dug-outs had been skilfully equipped with furnishings sufficient for entire families, washing and bathing facilities, toilets, arms and munition supplies, and food supplies sufficient for several months. There were differently equipped dug-outs for rich and for poor Jews. To discover the individual dug-outs was difficult for the units, as they had been efficiently camouflaged. In many cases, it was possible only through betrayal on the part of the Jews.

When only a few days had passed, it became apparent that the Jews no longer had any intention to resettle voluntarily, but were determined to resist evacuation with all their force and by using all the weapons at their disposal. So-called battle groups had been formed, led by Polish-Bolshevists; they were armed and paid any price asked for available arms.

During the large-scale action we succeeded in catching some Jews who had already been evacuated and resettled in Lublin or Troolinka, but had broken out from there and returned to the Ghetto, equipped with arms and ammunition. Time and again Polish bandits found refuge in the Ghetto and remained there undisturbed, since we had no forces at our disposal to comb out this maze. Whereas it had been possible during the first days to catch considerable numbers of Jews, who are cowards by nature, it became more and more difficult during the second half of the action to capture the bandits and Jews. Over and over again new battle groups consisting of 20 to 30 or more Jewish fellows, 18 to 25 years of age, accompanied by a corresponding number of women kindled new resistance. These battle groups were under orders to put up armed resistance to the last and if necessary to escape arrest by committing suicide. One such battle group succeeded in mounting a truck by ascending from a sewer in the so-called Prosta, and in escaping with it (about 30 to 35 bandits). One bandit who had arrived with this truck exploded 2 hand grenades, which was the agreed signal for the bandits waiting in the sewer to climb out of it. The bandits and Jews—there were Polish bandits among these gangs armed with carbines, small arms, and in one case a light machine gun, mounted the truck and drove away in an unknown direction. The last member of this gang, who

was on guard in the sewer and was detailed to close the lid of the sewer hole, was captured. It was he who gave the above information. The search for the truck was unfortunately without result.

During this armed resistance the women belonging to the battle groups were equipped the same as the men; some were members of the Chaluzim movement. Not infrequently, these women fired pistols with both hands. It happened time and again that these women had pistols or hand grenades (Polish “pineapple” hand grenades) concealed in their bloomers up to the last moment to use against the men of the Waffen SS, Police, or Wehrmacht.

The resistance put up by the Jews and bandits could be broken only by relentlessly using all our force and energy by day and night. On 23 April 1943 the Reichs Fuehrer SS issued through the higher SS and Police Fuehrer East at Cracow his order to complete the combing out of the Warsaw Ghetto with the greatest severity and relentless tenacity. I therefore decided to destroy the entire Jewish residential area by setting every block on fire, including the blocks of residential buildings near the armament works. One concern after the other was systematically evacuated and subsequently destroyed by fire. The Jews then emerged from their hiding places and dug-outs in almost every case. Not infrequently, the Jews stayed in the burning buildings until, because of the heat and the fear of being burned alive they preferred to jump down from the upper stories after having thrown mattresses and other upholstered articles into the street from the burning buildings. With their bones broken, they still tried to crawl across the street into blocks of buildings which had not yet been set on fire or were only partly in flames. Often Jews changed their hiding places during the night, by moving into the ruins of burnt-out buildings, taking refuge there until they were found by our patrols. Their stay in the sewers also ceased to be pleasant after the first week. Frequently from the street, we could hear loud voices coming through the sewer shafts. Then the men of the Waffen SS, the Police or the Wehrmacht Engineers courageously climbed down the shafts to bring out the Jews and not infrequently they then stumbled over Jews already dead, or were shot at. It was always necessary to use smoke candles to drive out the Jews. Thus one day we opened 183 sewer entrance holes and at a fixed time lowered smoke candles into them, with the result that the bandits fled from what they believed to be gas to the center of the former Ghetto, where they could then be pulled out of the sewer holes there. A great number of Jews, who could not be counted, were exterminated by blowing up sewers and dug-outs.

The longer the resistance lasted, the tougher the men of the Waffen SS, Police, and Wehrmacht became; they fulfilled their duty indefatigably in faithful comradeship and stood together as models and examples of soldiers. Their duty hours often lasted from early morning until late at night. At night, search patrols with rags wound round their feet remained at the heels of the Jews and gave them no respite. Not infrequently they caught and killed Jews who used the night hours for supplementing their stores from abandoned dug-outs and for contacting neighboring groups or exchanging news with them.

Considering that the greater part of the men of the Waffen-SS had only been trained for three to four weeks before being assigned to this action, high credit should be given for the pluck, courage, and devotion to duty which they showed. It must be stated that the Wehrmacht Engineers, too, executed the blowing up of dug-outs, sewers, and concrete buildings with indefatigability and great devotion to duty. Officers and men of the Police, a large part of whom had already been at the front, again excelled by their dashing spirit.

Only through the continuous and untiring work of all involved did we succeed in catching a total of 56,065 Jews whose extermination can be proved. To this should be added the number of Jews who lost their lives in explosions or fires but whose numbers could not be ascertained.

During the large-scale operation the Aryan population was informed by posters that it was strictly forbidden to enter the former Jewish Ghetto and that anybody caught within the former Ghetto without valid pass would be shot. At the same time these posters informed the Aryan population again that the death penalty would be imposed in anybody who intentionally gave refuge to a Jew, especially lodged, supported, or concealed a Jew outside the Jewish residential area.

Permission was granted to the Polish police to pay to any Polish policeman who arrested a Jew within the Aryan part of Warsaw one third of the cash in the Jew's possession. This measure has already produced results.

The Polish population for the most part approved the measures taken against the Jews. Shortly before the end of the large-scale operation, the Governor issued a special proclamation which he submitted to the undersigned for approval before publication, to the Polish population; in it he informed them of the reasons for destroying the former Jewish Ghetto by mentioning the assassinations carried out lately in the Warsaw area and the mass graves found in Catyn; at the same time they were asked to assist us in our fight against Communist agents and Jews (see enclosed poster).

The large-scale action was terminated on 16 May 1943 with the blowing up of the Warsaw synagogue at 2015 hours.

Now, there are no more factories in the former Ghetto. All the goods, raw materials, and machines there have been moved and stored somewhere else. All buildings etc., have been destroyed. The only exception is the so-called Dzielna Prison of the Security Police, which was exempted from destruction.

III

Although the large-scale operation has been completed, we have to reckon with the possibility that a few Jews are still living in the ruins of the former Ghetto; therefore, this area must be firmly shut off from the Aryan residential area and be guarded. Police Battalion III/23 has been charged with this duty. This Police Battalion has instructions to watch the former Ghetto, particularly to prevent anybody from entering the former Ghetto, and to shoot immediately anybody found inside the Ghetto without authority. The Commander of the Police Battalion will continue to receive further direct orders from the SS and Police Fuehrer. In this way, it should be possible to keep the small remainder of Jews there, if any, under constant pressure and to exterminate them eventually. The remaining Jews and bandits must be deprived of any chance of survival by destroying all remaining buildings and refuges and cutting off the water supply.

It is proposed to change the Dzielna Prison into a concentration camp and to use the inmates to remove, collect and hand over for reuse the millions of bricks, the scrap-iron, and other materials.

IV

Of the total of 56,065 Jews caught, about 7,000 were exterminated within the former Ghetto in the course of the large-scale action, and 6,929 by transporting them to T.II, which means 14,000 Jews were exterminated altogether. Beyond the number of 56,065 Jews an estimated number of 5,000 to 6,000 were killed by explosions or in fires.

The number of destroyed dug-outs amounts to 631.

Booty:

7 Polish rifles, 1 Russian rifle, 1 German rifle
59 pistols of various calibers

Several hundred hand grenades, including Polish and home-made ones

Several hundred incendiary bottles
 Home-made explosives
 Infernal machines with fuses
 A large amount of explosives, ammunition for weapons of all calibers, including some machine-gun ammunition.

Regarding the booty of arms, it must be taken into consideration that the arms themselves could in most cases not be captured, as the bandits and Jews would, before being arrested, throw them into hiding places or holes which could not be ascertained or discovered. The smoking out of the dug-out by our men, also often made the search for arms impossible. As the dug-outs had to be blown up at once, a search later on was out of the question.

The captured hand grenades, ammunition, and incendiary bottles were at once reused by us against the bandits.

Further booty:

1,240 used military tunics (part of them with medal ribbons—Iron Cross and East Medal)
 600 pairs of used trousers
 Other equipment and German steel helmets
 108 horses, 4 of them still in the former Ghetto (hearse)

Up to 23 May 1943 we had counted

4.4 million Zloty; furthermore about 5 to 6 million Zloty not yet counted, a great amount of foreign currency, e.g. \$14,300 in paper and \$9,200 in gold, moreover valuables (rings, chains, watches, etc.) in great quantities.

State of the Ghetto at the termination of the large-scale operation:

Apart from 8 buildings (Police Barracks, hospital, and accommodations for housing working-parties) the former Ghetto is completely destroyed. Only the dividing walls are left standing where no explosions were carried out. But the ruins still contain a vast amount of stones and scrap material which could be used.

Warsaw, 16 May, 1943.

The SS and Police Fuehrer in the
 District of Warsaw.
 SS Brigadefuehrer and Majorgeneral of Police.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. III, pp. 718–728, Doc. 1061-PS.

152. TREBLINKA: REVOLT ON AUGUST 2, 1943

Shalom (Stanislaw) Kohn (also spelled Kon), the author of this description of a revolt of prisoners at the Treblinka extermination camp on August 2, 1943, was an organizer and participant in the revolt and a survivor of the camp. Here he describes the preparation for the revolt and the battle itself. It is a straightforward account, ending as was expected from the start, but the very fact that a small group of undernourished and poorly armed men were able to rise up, for however long, and do significant damage to the killing apparatus of Treblinka, where approximately 900,000 Jews were killed, and whose defeat came only after an overwhelming number of reinforcements came to the camp's rescue is a significant accomplishment in the records of Jewish resistance.

Even before I arrived at Treblinka, i.e., before October 1, 1942, cases of individual revenge on the part of Jews had been reported. Thus, for example, a Jewish man from Warsaw who worked in one of the death details and had seen his wife and child taken away to the gas chambers, attacked the SS man Max Biel[as] with a knife and killed him on the spot. From that day on, the SS barracks bore the name of this Hitlerite “martyr.” But neither the plaque on the wall of the barracks nor the massacre of Jews that followed this attack deterred us. On the contrary: this episode encouraged us to fight and take our revenge. The young man from Warsaw became our ideal.

As we witnessed Hitler’s horrible methods of extermination, a desire for revenge burned within us and grew each day, starting to concretize into something precise, particularly from the moment when the 50-year-old doctor, Chorzycycki of Warsaw, began to be active. This doctor worked in the camp as a “medical counsellor,” a position invented by the Germans to mock the hapless victims even more cruelly before dispatching them to the gas chamber. He was a calm, prudent man who on the surface, appeared rather cold. He went around in his white apron with the Red Cross emblem on his arm as he had in the old days at his Warsaw office, and he seemed completely detached from what was going on around him. But beneath his apron beat a warm Jewish heart, aflame with a desire for revenge.

After the gruesome experiences of the day, the four plotters of the revolt met by night around his plank bed and discussed the plans. Their first problem was how to get hold of the weapons and explosives which were needed. These four

men were the above-mentioned Dr. Chorazycki, the Czech army officer Zelo—a Jew, of course—Kurland from Warsaw and Lubling from Silesia. After a short time, when it was considered necessary to enlarge the organization committee, we were joined by Leon Haberman, an artisan from Warsaw; Salzberg, a furrier from Kielce; a 22-year-old youth from Warsaw named Marcus, and the Warsaw agronomist Sudowicz. We could procure arms either from the outside or else we could steal them from the Germans and Ukrainians inside the camp itself. We tried both ways. We began to make a study of the camp arsenal and the headquarters barrack. But they were guarded by Germans and there was no way for us to get in. At first, we thought of digging a subterranean passage, but we felt this would be difficult, because of the constant danger of discovery. Then we decided at all costs to manufacture a duplicate key to the arsenal. This could only be done, however, if one of us could somehow gain access to the iron door of the arsenal. We had no alternative but to wait for a propitious moment.

An opportunity soon presented itself. Somehow the lock of the arsenal got jammed and the Germans had to call in one of the Jewish mechanics to fix it.

The Germans were extremely cautious. They had the door taken off its hinges and taken to the workshop. However, the mechanic managed to distract the attention of the German guard for just one moment, and managed to make an impression of the key in cobbler's wax. A few days later, our group received a key to the arsenal. We guarded it like a precious relic, waiting for the proper opportunity to use it. Dr. Chorazycki himself assumed the task of acquiring weapons from outside the camp. He managed to get in touch with a Ukrainian guard who agreed, for a large sum of money, of course, to buy some light weapons for us. A few of our purchases were safely smuggled in, but then something happened which put an end to our equipment and cost the life of Dr. Chorazycki. One day, while the doctor had with him a large amount of money intended for the guard, the camp's vice-commandant, SS Untersturmführer Franz, a bloody murderer notorious for his sadist methods, entered the room, accompanied by his dog, Barry. By pure chance, Franz spotted the packet of banknotes peeping out of the doctor's apron pocket.

"Give me that money!" the SS man roared. He suspected that the doctor was planning to escape from the camp. Chorazycki attacked him with a surgical lancet, stabbing him in the neck. Franz was able to jump out of the window and call for help. Well aware of the tortures which would await him, and realizing the threat to the entire conspiracy,

Chorazycki swiftly swallowed a large dose of poison which the conspirators always carried on their persons. The SS men rushed up and tried to revive him in order to take their revenge, but to no avail.

In this way the initiator of the revolt died, but his death did not put an end to the matter. On the contrary, it encouraged the others to continue.

If Dr. Chorazycki was the initiator and the leader of the Treblinka revolt, then the title of chief of staff must be given to Captain Zelo. The participation of this military expert greatly facilitated the fulfilment of a mission which was both difficult and complicated. At difficult moments, when many of us fell prey to resignation and abandoned all hope of a revolt, Captain Zelo continued to encourage us to carry on. When he was transferred to another part of the camp, all the plans and decisions were submitted to him for his approval despite the danger involved in such contacts.

The engineer Galewski of Lodz was chosen to replace Dr. Chorazycki. He, too, dedicated himself to the cause with all his heart. He was a very cautious, reserved man, and this proved useful to our cause.

The date of the revolt was postponed several times for various reasons. The first date was fixed in April, 1943, while Dr. Chorazycki was still alive. And then the last transports of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto were brought to Treblinka. From them we first learned about the Warsaw ghetto revolt. The Germans treated them with particular savagery; most of the railroad cars were full of the corpses of ghetto fighters who had refused to leave the ghetto alive. Those who now arrived were no longer resigned and indifferent creatures like those who had come before them.

The leaders decided that the hour for the revolt had arrived. In the camp there were a number of so-called "Court Jews," boys who rendered personal services to the Germans, like cleaning their quarters, etc. These individuals enjoyed a certain freedom of movement within the camp. At times they even able to get close to the arsenal. The leadership decided to entrust to these boys the task of expropriating 100 hand grenades from the arsenal on the day of the revolt.

They proved to be equal to the task. Haberman, who worked in the German laundry, the shoemaker Marcus, and Jacek, a Hungarian boy of 17, managed to get his hands on a certain number of hand grenades. Exceptionally lithe and skillful, the boy Salzberg, age 14, son of the leader we have already mentioned, took a huge pile of SS uniforms as though he were taking them to the tailor's for pressing, but in fact the pockets of these uniforms were filled with hand grenades. Unfortunately these hand grenades lacked detonators, and

for this reason the revolt had to be postponed at the very last moment.

Meanwhile, we were joined by other activists. Dr. Leichert, of Wengrow, whom the Nazis had selected from a new transport to replace Dr. Chorazycki, soon became a member of the committee. We were also joined by a Czech, Rudolf Masaryk, a relative of the late President of Czechoslovakia. He had refused to leave his Jewish wife and had accompanied her to Treblinka. Here, he became one of the privileged characters and was attached to a labor detail. With his own eyes he had seen his pregnant wife being taken to the gas chamber. Masaryk became one of the most active members of the committee. We must also mention Rudek, the driver-mechanic from Plotzk, who worked in the garage. His job was very important for our operation because it was there that we stored our weapons.

Months of waiting and tension passed in this way. Every day we looked death in the face and witnessed German atrocities. Every day hundreds of thousands of men and women, stark naked, arrived in long lines at the "Jewish State"—this was the name the Germans had cynically given to the building that housed 12 gas chambers. Untersturmführer Franz kept giving us speeches: "The gas chambers will continue to operate as long as so much as one Jew is left in the world."

The desire for revenge increased all the time. The terror-stricken eyes of the Jews who were led to their death and were thrust into the gas chambers cried out for revenge.

At last the leader, Galewski, gave the signal for the revolt. The date had been set for Monday, August 2, 1943, at 5 p.m. This was the plan of action: to lay an ambush for the chief murderers and to liquidate them: to disarm the guards; to cut the telephone wires; to burn and destroy all the extermination plants so that they would never function again; to free the Poles from the Treblinka detention camp a mile away, and, together with them, flee into the woods to organize a partisan unit.

An atmosphere of great tension lay upon the camp that Monday morning. The leaders needed all their energies to calm the people down. Finally, special inspectors came to see that the normal quota of work was carried out as usual in order not to arouse suspicion. All the details of the plan were known only to the 60 people who constituted the nucleus of the fighting organization. The activists were divided into three groups and, as soon as the signal would be given, each group was to occupy the position assigned to it.

At one o'clock in the afternoon we lined up as we had been doing every day, for the roll call, the last roll call in this camp because there was never to be another. But when

Galewski, the head of a group of workers, told us that work that day would end an hour earlier than usual because Scharführer Rotner was going to Malkinia to bathe in the river Bug, he gave us a little wink as though alluding to the "bath" we had prepared for the Nazis.

At two o'clock in the afternoon the distribution of weapons began. Young Salzberg and the other looked for weapons in their masters' barracks. They managed to steal about a score of rifles and one machine gun and took them to the garage. It was very difficult to steal the hand grenades from the arsenal. That day a pile of garbage was being removed from near the arsenal. This was very convenient but it disturbed the camp administrator, SS man Miller, who had just arrived and wanted to sleep. The agronomist, Sudowicz, who was in charge of the garden, called on him with the excuse of wanting to talk over some problems relating to the plants. At the same time Marcus and Salzberg picked up the rugs and beat them in front of the arsenal, so that the guards had to move out of the way for a while. At that moment the door of the arsenal was opened with our key and Jacek, the Hungarian boy, slipped inside, climbed onto the window sill at the end of the room, used a diamond to cut a small square in the glass and handed the bombs and other weapons to Jacob Miller from Wlodzimierz-Wolynski, who was waiting outside and put them on his garbage cart. The arms were taken to the garage. This time the hand grenades had their detonators all right and acted as a spur to flagging spirits.

Spirits grew agitated and it seemed that no one would be able to keep the secret. The leaders therefore decided to start the revolt an hour before the time originally agreed upon.

At four o'clock sharp that afternoon, messages were sent to all the groups with orders to assemble immediately at the garage to pick up their weapons. Rudek from Plotzk was responsible for the distribution. Anyone who came to fetch weapons had to give the password "Death!" to which the proper reply was "Life!" "Death! Life! Death! Life!" Cries of enthusiasm arose as the long-awaited rifles, revolvers and hand grenades were handed out. At the same time the chief murderers of the camp were attacked. Telephone wires were cut and the watchtowers were set on fire with gasoline. Captain Zelo attacked two SS guards with an ax and joined us to take over the command.

Near the garage stood a German armored car, but Rudek swiftly put the motor out of commission. Now the car served as an ambush from which to fire at the Germans. Our gunfire felled Sturmführer Kurt Seidler and other Nazi dogs. The arsenal was taken by assault and the captured weapons

handed out to the insurgents. We already had 200 armed men. The others attacked the Germans with axes and spades.

We set fire to the gas chambers, to the “bathhouse,” burned the simulated railroad station with all the fake signs: “Białystok-Wolkowysk,” “Office,” “Tickets,” “Waiting Room,” etc. The barracks who bore the name of the Nazi hangman Max Biel[as] were ablaze too.

Captain Zelo gave commands and encouraged the men to fight. Nobody cared about his own life. A fiery spirit of revenge had taken hold of us. We had acquired more weapons; we even had a machine gun now. Rudolf Masaryk took care of it. He stationed himself on the roof of the pigeon coop and poured fire on the confused Germans. Through the exchange of fire we can hear his voice shouting, “Take that for my wife, and take that for my child who did not even have a chance to come into the world! And take that, you murderers, for the humanity which you have insulted and degraded!”

Roused to action by the flames and the firing, the Germans began to arrive from all sides. SS and police arrived from Kosów soldiers from the nearby airfield and finally a special squad of the Warsaw SS. A full-scale battle developed. Captain Zelo was darting in and out among the flames, giving us courage and urging us to fight on. He gave orders, concise, warlike—until a Nazi bullet put an end to his life.

Night fell. The battle had already been going on for six hours. The Germans were getting reinforcements, and our ranks had become thinner. Our ammunition was running out.

We had been ordered to make for the nearby woods. Most of our fighters fell but there were many German casualties. Very few of us survived.

[Shalom Kohn]

Source: Steve Hochstadt, ed., *Sources of the Holocaust* (Houndsmill, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 235–240. Used by permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

153. ALEXANDER PECHERSKY ON THE SOBIBÓR REVOLT OF OCTOBER 14, 1943

Alexander (Sasha) Pechersky, a Russian Jew who was conscripted into the Russian army and captured by the Germans, found himself in the Sobibór extermination camp in Septem-

ber 1943. His military experience made him an obvious leader of a planned revolt and escape. In this document, Pechersky gives a detailed account of the preparation for and execution of the plan to kill the guards of the camp, obtain arms, and flee into the forest. He also relates how the group that survived the revolt sought help from locals and managed to join a partisan group. This revolt, despite the many prisoners who lost their lives in the initial battle to overwhelm the guards and in the mine fields that surrounded the camp, was the most successful revolt of prisoners in any of the extermination camps.

I was born in Kremenchug in 1919, but spent my childhood in Rostov. After I finished my secondary studies I entered a music school. Music and theatre were the most important things in my life. I directed amateur dramatic circles and took a great interest in the arts.

In 1941 I joined the army with the rank of second lieutenant, and was soon promoted to first lieutenant. Taken prisoner in October 1941, I caught typhus, but concealed the disease, fearing to be killed.

In May 1942, I tried to escape with four other prisoners, but we were caught and were sent first to the disciplinary camp of Borysov and then to Minsk. During a medical examination it was discovered that I was Jewish. I was locked up with other Jews in a place nicknamed “the Jewish cellar,” where we spent ten days in complete darkness.

We were allowed 100 grams of bread a day and a jug of water. Then on September 20 1942 we were transferred to the labour camp of Sheroka Street in Minsk, where I lived until my deportation to Sobibor.

In September 1943 we were told that Jews would be transferred to Germany, but that families would not be separated. At 4 am a silent crowd left Minsk, the men on foot, women and children in trucks.

We gathered at the railway station where a freight train awaited us. Seventy people were crowded into a box-car, and after four days we reached Sobibor. We stopped during the night and were given water. The doors opened, and facing us, was a poster Sonderkommando Sobibor.

Tired and hungry, we left the car. Armed SS officers stood there and Oberscharfuhrer Gomerski shouted “Cabinet makers and carpenters with no families forward.”

Eighty men were led into the camp and locked in a barrack. Older prisoners informed us about Sobibor. We had all fought in the war and suffered in labour camps but we were so horrified about Sobibor that we could not sleep that night.

Shlomo Leitman, a Polish Jew from Sheroka, was lying at my side. "What will become of us?" he asked. I didn't answer pretending to sleep. I couldn't get over my reaction and was thinking of Nelly, a little girl who travelled in my boxcar and who was, no doubt, dead already. I thought of my own daughter Elochka.

On September 24, I wrote in my diary: "We are in the camp of Sobibor, we rise at 5.00 am, get a litre of warm water, but no bread, at 5.30 we are counted, at 6.00 we leave for work, in columns of threes, Russian Jews are in front, then Poles, Czech and Dutch."

I remember when the SS man Frenzel ordered us to sing, Cybulski was walking at my side, "What shall we sing?" he asked and I answered, "We only know one song: *Yesli Zavtra Voyna*." It was a patriotic Russian song and it gave us hope for freedom.

Soldiers led us to the Nordlager, a new section of the camp. Nine barracks were already built there and others were under construction. Our group was split in two, one part was sent to build, the other to cut wood. On our first day of work, fifteen people got twenty-five lashes each for incompetence.

On September 25, we unloaded coal all day and were given only twenty minutes for lunch. The cook was unable to feed us all in such a short time. Frenzel was furious and ordered the cook to sit down. Then he whipped him while whistling a marching tune. The soup tasted as though it had been mixed with blood and although we were very hungry, many of us were unable to eat.

Our arrival at the camp made a great impression on the older prisoners: they knew well that the war was going on, but had never seen the men who fought in it. And these newcomers could handle arms!

We were approached by men and women who made us understand that their wish was to get out of hell. I couldn't speak Yiddish so Shlomo Leitman who was born in Warsaw, acted as interpreter. We could understand some Polish as it resembles Russian.

I wanted to know the topography of Sobibor. Camp Number 1 where we lived, included workshops and kitchens. Camp Number 2 the reception centre of the new arrivals, had storage for the belongings stolen from the prisoners, a corridor led to Camp Number 3 and its gas chambers.

On September 26, twenty-five prisoners were whipped, a young Dutchman tall and lean, was chopping wood, but was not strong enough for the task. The SS guard hit him on the head. Astonished I stopped working. Furious, the guard shouted, "I give you five minutes to chop this wood, if you fail, you will get twenty-five lashes."

I hit the wood as though it were his head. "You did it in four and a half minutes," said the Nazi looking at his watch. He offered me a cigarette. "Thanks, I don't smoke," I replied.

27 September. We were still working at the Nordlager. At 9 a.m. Kali-Mali, from Sheroka, whose real name was Shubayev, told me, "All the Germans have left, only the Kapo is here, why?"

I answered, "I don't know, but let us see where we are." A prisoner informed us, "If they are not here, it means that a convoy has just arrived, look over there at the Camp Number 3." We heard a terrible scream from a woman, followed by children wailing, "Mother, mother." And, as if to add to the horror, the bawling of geese joined the human wailing.

A farmyard was established in the camp to enrich the menus of the SS men, and the bawling of the geese covered the shrieks of the victims.

My helplessness at these crimes horrified me, Shlomo Leitman and Boris Cybulski were livid, "Sasha, let us escape, we are only 200 metres from the forest, we can cut the barbed wire with our axes and run," said Boris. "We must escape all together and soon: winter is near and snow is not our friend," he added.

On September 28, one week after I arrived at the camp, I knew everything about the hell of Sobibor. Camp Number 4 was on a hill: each section was surrounded with barbed wire and was mined. I was informed of the exact place occupied by the personnel, the guards and the arsenal.

Next day, the 600 prisoners, men and women were taken to the station to unload eight cars of bricks. Each of us was forced to run and fetch eight bricks; the one who failed was whipped twenty-five times. We finished our work in less than an hour and we returned to our commandos. The reason for the haste, a new convoy was just entering the station.

Our group of eighty men was finally led to Camp Number 4, I was working near Shlomo; another prisoner from Sheroka approached me and whispered, "We have decided to escape; there are only five SS officers, and we can wipe them out. The forest is near."

I replied, "Easier said than done, the five guards are not together. When you finish with one, the second shoots at us; and how shall we cross the minefields? Wait the time is near."

At night, Baruch (Leon Feldhendler) told me, "It is not the first time that we have planned to finish with Sobibor, but very few of us know how to use arms. Lead us, and we shall follow you." His intelligent face inspired trust and gave me courage. I asked him to form a group of the most reliable prisoners.

On October 7, I gave to Baruch (Feldhendler) my first instructions on how to dig a tunnel. "The carpenters' workshop is at the end of the camp, five metres from the barbed wire; the net of three rows of barbed wire occupies four metres to fifteen metres; let us add seven metres, the length of the barrack.

We shall start digging under the stove and the tunnel will be no more than thirty-five metres long and eighty centimetres deep, because of the danger of mines. We shall have at least twenty cubic metres of earth to hide, and shall leave that earth under the floorboards. The job must be done only at night."

We all agreed to start working: the digging of the tunnel would take us fifteen to twenty days. But the plan presented weak spots: between 11 pm and 5 am six hundred persons had to pass in Indian file the thirty-five meters of the tunnel and run a good distance from the camp in order to avoid the posse of the SS.

I said, "I also have other ideas, meanwhile, let us prepare our first arms: seventy well whetted knives or razor blades." Baruch (Feldhendler) said that the Kapos were interested in our plans and could be very helpful, since they walked freely in the camp. I thought that their help was vital, "All right, I accept," I said.

October 8 1943. A new transport arrived. Janek, the carpenters' supervisor, needed three prisoners to help him. Shlomo, another prisoner and I were chosen and sent to Camp Number 1. That same evening, Baruch (Feldhendler) brought Shlomo seventy well whetted knives.

October 9: Grisha, who was caught sitting while cleaning wood, got twenty-five lashes. It was a bad day, thirty of our people had been flogged for various transgressions and we were exhausted. In the evening Kali-Mali came to the barracks, out of breath.

He informed me that Grisha and seven of our men were ready to escape and asked us to join them. "Come with us, the site near the barbed wire is badly lit, we will kill the guard with an axe and then we will run to the forest." We went to find Grisha, and I explained to him that reprisals would be terrible even if his plan succeeded. I had to use threats before I persuaded him to plan only a collective escape.

October 10: I saw an SS officer with his arm in a sling. I was told that it was Greischutz back from his leave. He had been wounded in a Russian air raid. Later, Shlomo and I met the Kapo Brzecki who knew that we were preparing something. "Take me with you; together we shall accomplish more. I know the end awaits us all," he said, and he also asked us to include the Kapo Geniek. I answered, "Could you

kill a Nazi?" He thought for a moment, and replied, "Yes, if it is necessary for our cause."

October 11: That morning, we heard screams followed by shots. We were locked up in the barracks and guards stood around us. The shooting lasted a long time and seemed to be coming from the Nordlager. We feared the prisoners had tried to escape before we were ready. Soon we learned the cause of the fusillade, a group of new prisoners already undressed, had revolted and had tried to run in the direction of the barbed wire.

The guards began to shoot and killed many of them instantly. The others were dragged to Camp Number 3. That day, the crematorium burned longer than usual. Huge flames rose up in the grey autumn sky and the camp was lit with strange colours. Helpless and distressed, we looked at the bodies of our brothers and sisters.

October 12: It was a terrible day: eighteen of our friends, many from Sheroka, were sick. Several SS men, under the direction of Frenzel, entered our barrack and asked the patients to follow them. Among them was a young Dutch prisoner with his wife, and the unfortunate man could hardly walk. The woman was running after the group screaming, "Murderers, I know where you are taking my husband. I can't live without him! Assassins, murderers." She died with the group.

Shlomo and I ordered a meeting for 9.00 pm, at the carpenters' workshop. Baruch (Feldhendler), Shlomo, Janek, the tailors Joseph and Jacob, Moniek and others were present. We posted a sentry at the entrance. Moniek went to fetch Brzecki and, when both returned, I asked Brzecki again if he had thought over the consequences of his decision; if the plan failed, he would be the first to die.

He said, "I know it, but we must get rid of the SS officers and this should take one hour, if we could do it in less time, so much the better. For that purpose, we need efficient and determined men, since one moment's hesitation would be fatal, and I know some capable people, who can do the job."

At 3.00 pm Brzecki was to lead three of his men to Camp Number 2 under any pretext that he would find himself. Their task would consist of liquidating the four officers present. Baruch (Feldhendler) would lead the SS men to a place where the prisoners would be waiting, and would prevent anyone from leaving Camp Number 2 once the action had begun.

At exactly 4 o'clock, another team would cut the telephone wires from Camp Number 2 to the guards' quarters. The same team would hide those wires in such a way as to

make it impossible to reconnect the telephone on the same day. At the same time, we were to start killing SS officers, they would be invited, one by one, into the workshops where two of our men would execute them. At 4.30 pm everything would be finished.

At the same time Brzecki and Geniek would assemble the prisoners for the usual evening roll call. In front would be the Soviet prisoners who were to take over the arsenal and the rest of us would cover them. Once the arsenal was open, armed men would head the group and kill the guards at the gate. If they resisted we would fight with the arms taken from the officers.

Near the workshops and the officers' villas was a mesh of barbed wire. There the ground was mined, but less dangerous. Stones were to be thrown in order to destroy the mines.

These were the details of the plan: I added that I had long discussions with Shlomo and I couldn't think of anything better. I asked everybody to think it over again, and a new meeting was planned for the next day, under the strictest secrecy.

Just before the revolt, an idea occurred to me and I wanted to check if it was right. Having observed the behaviour of the guards for a long time, I knew that every morning each of them got five bullets for his rifle. I also noticed that, with the changing of each guard, the bullets were handed over to the next guard. This meant that the guards who were not on duty had no bullets.

In order to check my findings, I asked Brzecki to find an excuse to send me to the guards' barracks. On October 13 at 10.00 am, the carpentry workshop got an order to send a man to the barracks in order to repair the doors. Janek sent me there and, while I was visiting the rooms, I was glad to see that my idea was correct.

October 14: "On the night of October 13 we distributed knives and hatchets, as well as warm clothes." I was to remain in the carpentry workshop where, from the window, I could watch what was happening in Camp Number 3. In the next barrack, Shlomo and a team of twenty men were repairing our wooden beds.

According to our plan, at 4.00 and at 4.15 pm, two SS men were to appear at the tailors' workshop. At the same time, two officers, Greischutz and Getzinger, were in another workshop. Frenzel was supervising the building of some cupboards.

Rosenfeld's job was to kill him. Friedrich Gaulstich would enter the carpentry workshop where Shlomo would be waiting. Other SS officers of Camp Number 2 were to be enticed into different workshops.

Each of us had his task: Shubayev, aged twenty-five, a railway engineer from Rostov, a good and simple buddy, would go to the tailors' workshop with Moniek. Cybulski, a thirty-five year old driver, a former truck driver from Donbass, and accompanied by Michael and Bunio. Guided by Brzecki, they were to go to Camp Number 2 to meet Baruch (Feldhendler).

At 2 pm, SS Unterscharfuhrer Walter Ryba came to Brzecki, he had a machine gun, and that worried me. That morning Frenzel noticed that Janek was better dressed than usual, but Geniek reassured us. Brzecki had to go to Camp Number 4 with other prisoners in order to stack wood. The guard took his machine gun only because he was the sole supervisor.

Geniek was to lead the four men to Camp Number 2. At first he asked us to postpone it to the next day, but that was impossible. Although the details of our plan were known only to the committee and a small group, the other prisoners felt that something was going to happen and kept asking: "Well, when will it be?"

On the eve of October 14th, the older people said prayers, it was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Some inmates told them, "Better pray for Sasha to help you." They answered, "We are praying to God to help Sasha."

We had another reason for not postponing our plan: On October 14 Gomerski was on vacation. The Lagerfuhrer Frenzel was a bastard but, compared to Gomerski, he seemed a choirboy. "Tomorrow may be too late," I said to Geniek, "we have to do what we decided, and you must obey."

At 3.20 pm Geniek came to Cybulski's barrack with Shlomo and the two others. Two officers were killed by Wajspapier in the shoemakers' barrack while Jacob was giving them their boots. At 4.15 I heard that Cybulski, Michael and Baruch (Feldhendler) had accomplished their mission at Camp Number 2. At 4pm I had met Luka, the Dutch girl and told her, "The officers will soon be dead, be ready to escape." As she trembled, I added, "What we are doing is the only way to survive, we have no right to give up living, we must avenge ourselves."

At 4.30pm, Brzecki returned from Camp Number 4 with the commando and Unterscharfuhrer Gaulstich arrived soon afterwards. Shlomo told him, "We have done the repairs in the barracks, now the workers do not know what to do." The SS man went in: Shlomo's hatchet awaited him.

Frenzel didn't come, and later we learned that SS officer Ryba had been killed in the garage. Now it was vital to leave, Brzecki whistled and prisoners were directed to Camp Number 1 in a disorderly way. This infuriated the

guard, a Volksdeutsch from the Volga region, he was killed with an axe.

A new group coming from Camp Number 2, entered Camp Number 1 where prisoners were just learning what was happening. A Ukrainian guard began to shoot, a mighty “Hurrah” was heard. “Forward, Forward” shouted the prisoners.

They were running towards the gate, shooting with rifles, cutting barbed wire with pliers. We crossed a minefield and many lost their lives. My group marched towards the quarter where the SS lived, and several of us were killed. Between the camp and the forest there was an immense clearing and here, too, many fell.

At last, we got to the forest, but Shlomo and Luka were missing. We walked all night in a column, one by one. I was up front, followed by Cybulski, while Arkady brought up the rear. We were all silent, from time to time, a light was visible in the sky.

After walking three kilometres we reached a canal, that was five or six metres wide and quite deep. Suddenly we saw a group of men. Arkady went crawling off to investigate. He found Shubayev and many other friends. Together we built a bridge with tree trunks, and then I learned that Shlomo had been wounded while escaping. Unable to run, he asked to be put to death. Of course nobody listened to him and he stayed behind with other prisoners.

Our group numbered fifty-seven people. After walking another five kilometres, we heard the noise of a train. We were on the edge of a wood, an area of bushes in front of us. Dawn was approaching and we needed a safe place to hide. I knew the Nazis were after us and we thought that a group of trees near a railway wouldn’t attract the attention of our enemy. We decided to remain there during the day, camouflaged by branches.

At dawn, it was raining. Arkady and Cybulski left to explore the terrain on one side, Shubayev and I on the other. We found an abandoned site near the forest. Cybulski and Arkady reached the railway line. Poles were working there, but without a guard. We hid and posted two sentries nearby; these sentries were to be changed every three hours. All day, planes were flying over our heads. We heard the voices of the Polish workers.

At night, we saw two men looking for something, we understood that they were fugitives who had returned from the direction of Bug, “Why haven’t you crossed the river?” I asked. They told us that they had been near a village where they learned that soldiers were sent along the Bug River to check all points.

I asked if they had met Luka, and they assured me that they had seen her in the forest, leaving for Chelm with Polish Jews. We formed a new column, Cybulski and I leading, Arkady and Shubayev in the rear. After five kilometres we reached the forest, but we couldn’t find enough food so we decided to split into small groups, each taking a different direction. My unit included, Shubayev, Cybulski, Arkady, Michael Itzkovich and Simon Mazurkewich.

We set off eastwards, guided by the stars. We walked at night, and hid during the day. Our objective was to cross the Bug River. We approached little villages to beg for food and to ask our way. We were often told, “Prisoners escaped from Sobibor where people are being burned, they are looking for fugitives.”

We reached the village of Stawki, a kilometre and a half from the Bug River. We had spent the day in the forest and, at sunset, three of us entered a hut. A thirty-year old peasant was cutting and gathering tobacco leaves, an old man was near a stove. In a corner, a baby’s cradle was hanging from the ceiling, and a young woman was rocking it. “Good evening, may we come in?”

“Come in, come in,” answered the young man. “Draw the curtains,” said Cybulski. We sat down, everyone was quiet. “Could you tell us where to cross the Bug?” asked Shubayev. “I don’t know,” said the young man. “You must know, you have been living here long enough. We know that there are places where the water is low, and the crossing easy,” I said. “If you are so sure, then go. We know nothing, and we have no right to go near rivers.”

We talked a little longer, and told them that we were escaped war prisoners and wished to return home. At last the young man said, “I shall show you the direction, but I won’t go to the river. Find it yourselves, be careful, it is guarded everywhere since prisoners escaped from a camp where soap is made with human fat. The fugitives are being chased everywhere, even underground. If you are lucky, you will get to the other side. I wish you luck.”

“Let’s go before the moon rises.” “Wait,” said the young woman, “take some bread for the way.” We thanked them and the old man blessed us with the sign of the cross. The same night, October 19 we crossed the Bug. On the 22nd, eight days after the uprising, we met a unit of partisans of the Voroshilov detachment.

A new chapter began.

Source: “Alexander Pechersky, Leader of the Sobibor Revolt: Testimony,” Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/revolt/pechersky.html>. Used by permission.

154. JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES’ DECLARATION OF RENUNCIATION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, 1936

The Jews were not the only victim group of the Nazis targeted because of religion (although according to Nazi ideology, the Jews were targeted because of their race). Jehovah’s Witnesses were long considered outside of mainstream Christianity. Among their tenets are refusal of military service; insistence that the only oath of allegiance they will swear is to Jehovah, their name for God; and refusal to salute any flag, including the Nazi swastika, or to give the Nazi salute. These doctrines made them highly suspect in Nazi Germany society, leading to an increase in arrests and incarceration in camps. This document is a form presented to Jehovah’s Witnesses in the camps. If it was signed, the person was released. Very few, if any, Jehovah’s Witnesses, however, signed the form; they would not violate their own beliefs even if it meant the possibility of dying in a Nazi camp. Their courage and willingness to offer comfort to others earned them a position of respect among other camp prisoners.

Concentration camp _____

Department II

Declaration

I, _____

born on _____ in _____

herewith make the following declaration:

1. I have recognized that the International Bible Students Association is spreading erroneous teachings and under the cloak of religious activity follows subversive purposes.
2. I therefore turned away from this organization entirely and also made myself mentally free from this sect.
3. I herewith give assurance that I will never again take any part in the activity of the International Bible Students Association. Any persons approaching me with the teaching of the Bible Students, or who in any manner reveal their connections with them, I will denounce immediately. All literature from the Bible Students that should be sent to my address I will deliver at once to the nearest police station.

4. I will in the future respect the laws of the State, especially in the event of war, will defend my fatherland with weapon in hand, and fully join the community of the people.
5. I have been notified that I can expect renewed arrest if I should act against the Declaration given today.

_____, Dated _____

Signature _____

KL/47/4.43 5000

Source: Steve Hochstadt, ed., *Sources of the Holocaust* (Houndsmill, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 47. Used by permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

155. “REFLECTIONS ON THE TREATMENT OF PEOPLES OF ALIEN RACES IN THE EAST”: A SECRET MEMORANDUM HANDED TO HITLER BY HIMMLER, MAY 25, 1940

In this secret memorandum from Heinrich Himmler, Reich leader SS, to Adolf Hitler, Himmler discusses how small, individual ethnic groups in or near Poland should be treated by the Nazi regime. His overall recommendation regarding these groups is that they should be split “into as many parts and fragments as possible.” The ethnic groups he references are generally found in parts of Poland, Ukraine, and the Carpathian Mountains. The goal is to extinguish these peoples as separate groups with their own culture. By way of diminishing their uniqueness, Himmler suggests that their children be provided with a very limited level of education but one that includes inculcating in them the belief in the “divine law to obey the Germans.” Those children who are “racially perfect and conforming to our conditions” can be considered for additional schooling in Germany. Himmler also proposes an “annual sifting of all children in the General Government between the ages of 6 to 10 years in order to separate the racially valuable and nonvaluable ones.” By moving the racially valuable children to Germany, the General Government will be composed of an “inferior population.”

[Handwritten] Dr. Gross of the Racial Policy Office has been informed 28 November 40

Wolff

For the files
[stamp] Top Secret

Reflections on the Treatment of Peoples of Alien Races in the East

Concerning the treatment of peoples of alien races in the East we have to see to it that we acknowledge and cultivate as many individual ethnic groups as possible, that is, outside of the Poles and the Jews, also the Ukrainians, the White Russians, the Gorals [Goralen], the Lemcos [Lemken] and the Cashubos [Kaschuben]. If other small and isolated national groups can be found in other places, they should be treated the same way.

What I want to say is that we are not only most interested in not unifying the population of the East, but, on the contrary, in splitting them up into as many parts and fragments as possible.

But even within the ethnic groups themselves we have one interest in leading these to unity and greatness, or perhaps arouse in them gradually a national consciousness and national culture, but we want to dissolve them into innumerable small fragments and particles.

We naturally want to use the members of all these ethnic groups, especially of the small ones, in positions of police officials and mayors. Only the mayors and local police authorities will be allowed to head those ethnic groups. As far as the Gorals are concerned the individual chieftains and elders of the tribes, who live in continuous feud with each other anyhow, should fill these positions. There must be no centralization toward the top, because only by dissolving this whole conglomeration of peoples of the Government General, amounting to 15 million, and of the 8 million of the eastern provinces, will it be possible for us to carry out the racial sifting which must be the basis for our considerations: namely selecting out of this conglomeration the racially valuable and bringing them to Germany and assimilating them there.

Within a very few years—I should think about 4 to 5 years—the name of the Cashubes, for instance, must be unknown, because at that time there won't be a Cashubian people any more (this also goes especially for the West Prussians). I hope that the concepts of Jews will be completely extinguished through the possibility of a large emigration of all Jews to Africa or some other colony. Within

a somewhat longer period, it should also be possible to make the ethnic concepts of Ukrainians, Gorals and Lemcos disappear in our area. What has been said for those fragments of peoples is also meant on a correspondingly larger scale for the Poles.

A basic issue in the solution of all these problems is the question of schooling and thus the question of sifting and selecting the young. For the non-German population of the East there must be no higher school than the four-grade elementary school. The sole goal of this school is to be—

Simple arithmetic up to 500 at the most; writing of one's name; the doctrine that it is a divine law to obey the Germans and to be honest, industrious, and good. I don't think that reading is necessary.

Apart from this school there are to be no schools at all in the East. Parents, who from the beginning want to give their children better schooling in the elementary school as well as later on in a higher school, must take an application to the Higher SS and Police Leaders. The first consideration in dealing with this application will be whether the child is racially perfect and conforming to our conditions. If we acknowledge such a child to be as of our blood, the parents will be notified that the child will be sent to a school in Germany and that it will permanently remain in Germany.

Cruel and tragic as every individual case may be, this method is still the mildest and best one if, out of inner conviction, one rejects as unGerman and impossible the Bolshevik method of physical extermination of a people.

The parents of such children of good blood will be given the choice to either give away their child; they will then probably produce no more children so that the danger of this subhuman people of the East [Untermenschenvolk des Ostens] obtaining a class of leaders which, since it would be equal to us, would also be dangerous for us, will disappear—or else the parents pledge themselves to go to Germany and to become loyal citizens there. The love toward their child, whose future and education depends on the loyalty of the parents, will be a strong weapon in dealing with them.

Apart from examining the applications made by parents for better schooling of their children, there will be an annual sifting of all children of the Government General between the ages of 6 to 10 years in order to separate the racially valuable and nonvaluable ones. The ones considered racially valuable will be treated in the same way as the children who are admitted on the basis of the approved application of their parents.

I consider it as a matter of course from an emotional as well as from a rational viewpoint that the moment children and parents come to Germany they are not treated like lepers in the schools and in everyday life, but, after having changed their names, they should, in full confidence, be incorporated into the German life, although attention and vigilance must be exercised with regard to them. It must not happen that the children be made to feel as outcasts, because, after all, we believe in this, our own blood, which, through the errors of German history has flowed into an alien nationality and we are convinced that our ideology and our ideals will strike a chord of resonance in the racially equal soul of these children. Here teachers and Hitler Youth leaders especially must do an out-and-out job, and the mistake that has been made in the past with the people from Alsace Lorraine must never be repeated; namely, that on one side one wants to win the people as Germans, and on the other side one constantly hurts and repudiates their human value, their pride and honor through distrust and insults. Insults like "Polack" and "Ukrainian" or something like that must be made impossible.

The children will have to be educated in an elementary school and after those four grades it can be decided whether the children should continue to go to the German grammar school or should be transferred to a national political institution of education.

The population of the Government General during the next 10 years, by necessity and after a consistent carrying out of these measures, will be composed of the remaining inferior population supplemented by the population of the eastern provinces deported there, and of all those parts of the German Reich which have the same racial and human qualities for instance, parts of the Sorbs [Sorben] and Wends [Wenden].

This population will, as a people of laborers without leaders, be at our disposal and will furnish Germany annually with migrant workers and with workers for special tasks (roads, quarries, buildings): they themselves will have more to eat and more to live on than under the Polish regime; and, though they have no culture of their own, they will, under the strict, consistent, and just leadership of the German people, be called upon to help work on its everlasting cultural tasks and its buildings and perhaps, as far as the amount of heavy work is concerned, will be the ones who make the realization of these tasks possible.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. XIII, pp. 147–150, Doc. NO-1880.

156. LETTER TO BORMANN ON "ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AGAINST POLES, RUSSIANS, JEWS, AND GYPSIES," OCTOBER 13, 1942

This letter was sent by Otto Georg Thierack, the Reich minister of justice, to Martin Bormann, head of the Nazi Party Chancellery and private secretary to Adolf Hitler. In it, Thierack proposes "to turn over criminal proceedings against Poles, Russians, Jews, and Gypsies to the Reich Leader SS," Heinrich Himmler. By allowing these people to be dealt with outside of the German legal system, their extermination will proceed faster than the legal system would otherwise allow. Thierack recommends that they be surrendered to the police, "who can then take the necessary measures unhampered by any legal criminal evidence," and asserts that this procedure is "entirely justified in wartime." He suggests certain exemptions to this for Poles and Russians but not for Jews and gypsies. Finally, Thierack asks Bormann to submit this proposal to Hitler for his approval. There are two matters of particular note revealed in this document. First, the Reich legal system was completely co-opted by the Nazi regime. Second, it was not just Jews who were subjected to extralegal proceedings.

LETTER FROM REICH MINISTER OF JUSTICE THIERACK TO BORMANN, 13 OCTOBER 1942, CONCERNING THE "ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AGAINST POLES, RUSSIANS, JEWS, AND GYPSIES"

T 459

The Reich Minister of Justice

Berlin, 13 October 1942

[Handwritten] Dispatched 13/10.

[Initials] KUE [Kuemmerlein]

To Reichsleiter Bormann
Fuehrer Headquarters

Subject: Administration of criminal justice against Poles, Russians, Jews, and gypsies Dear Reichsleiter:

With a view to freeing the German people of Poles, Russians, Jews, and gypsies, and with a view to making the eastern territories incorporated into the Reich available

for settlements of German nationals, I intend to turn over criminal proceedings against Poles, Russians, Jews, and gypsies to the Reich Leader SS. In so doing I work on the principle that the administration of justice can only make a small contribution to the extermination of members of these peoples [Angehörige dieses Volkstums auszurotten]. Undoubtedly the administration of justice pronounces very severe sentences on such persons, but that is not enough to constitute a material contribution toward the realization of the above-mentioned aim. Nor is any useful purpose served by keeping such persons in German prisons and penitentiaries for years, even if they are utilized as labor for war purposes as is done today on a large scale.

I am, on the other hand, of the opinion that considerably better results can be accomplished by surrendering such persons to the police, who can then take the necessary measures unhampered by any legal criminal evidence. I start from the principle that such measures seem entirely justified in wartime, and that certain conditions which I consider essential are fulfilled. These conditions consist in the prosecution of Poles and Russians by the police only if they resided until 1 September 1939 in the former state territory of Poland or the Soviet Union; and secondly, that Poles who were registered as being of German descent will continue to be subjected to prosecution by the administration of justice as before.

On the other hand, the police may prosecute Jews and gypsies irrespective of these conditions.

But no changes whatsoever are to be made in regard to the prosecution of other foreign nationals by the administration of justice.

The Reich Leader SS, with whom I discussed these views, agrees with them. I also informed Dr. Lammers.

I submit this matter to you, dear Reichsleiter, with the request to let me know whether the Fuehrer approves this view. If so, I would then make my official recommendations through Reich Minister Dr. Lammers.

[Handwritten] After one week.

[Initial] Kue [Kuemmerlein] 10/19, 10/26

Heil Hitler!
yours

[Initial] TH [Thierack]

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 674–675, Doc. NG-558.

157. CRIMINAL PROCEDURES AGAINST POLES AND MEMBERS OF THE EASTERN PEOPLES, NOVEMBER 5, 1942

By letter dated October 13, 1942, from Otto Georg Thierack, the Reich minister of justice, to Martin Bormann, head of the Nazi Party Chancellery and private secretary to Adolf Hitler, Thierack requested that Bormann attain Hitler's approval of a plan that would move the consideration of criminal proceedings against Poles, Russians, Jews, and Gypsies from the court system to the police "who can then take the necessary measures unhampered by any legal criminal evidence." In the letter that follows it is announced to appropriate chiefs of various criminal justice departments that Hitler has approved the plan and it is now being instituted. This letter refers to Jews, gypsies, "Poles and members of Eastern peoples," categorized collectively as "members of the Eastern peoples." It emphasizes that these people must be treated "under a criminal law different from the one concerning people of German-blood" and explains that this is required because offenses committed by them endanger "the order of the German community and that therefore measures must be taken to prevent further dangers."

Reichs Security Main Office [RSHA]

II A 2 No. 567/42-176

Berlin, 5 November 1942

EXPRESS LETTER

To:

- a. The Higher SS and Police Fuehrer
- b. The Commanders and Inspectors of the Security Police and Security Service SD
- c. The Chiefs of the State Police (chief offices)
- d. The Supreme Commanders of the Security Police and the SD
- e. The Chiefs of the Criminal Police (Chief offices)
- f. The Chiefs of the SD-Sections (Chief Detachments)

Information to (Sections I, III, IV and V—5. copies each)

Subject: Criminal procedure against Poles and members of the Eastern peoples.

I. The Reichsfuehrer-SS has come to an agreement with the Reich Minister of Justice Thierack that the courts will

forego the carrying out of regular criminal procedures against Poles and members of the Eastern peoples. These people of foreign extraction henceforth shall be turned over to the police. Jews and gypsies are to be treated likewise. This agreement was approved by the Fuehrer.

In pursuance of this agreement regulations are at present being worked out by the RSHA and the Reich Ministry of Justice to take effect possibly by 1 January 1943.

II. This agreement is based on the following considerations:

Poles and members of the Eastern peoples are persons of foreign extraction and racially of a lower value, residing in German Reich territory. This situation creates serious dangers for the German community which by necessity result in placing persons of foreign extraction under a criminal law different from the one concerning people of German-blood.

This necessity has not been fully taken into account so far. Only for Poles has there been a special regulation in the sphere of criminal law through the Ordinance concerning the Criminal Procedure against Poles and Jews in the incorporated Eastern territories of 4 December 1941 (Reich Law Gazette, "RGL."—I page 759). But this special regulation also contains no basic solution of the questions which arise from the co-habitation of Germans with persons of foreign extraction. It only creates more severe penal regulations and a partly simplified criminal procedure for Poles. But the real question that persons of foreign extraction for reasons of national policy are to be treated entirely different from people of German blood is disregarded because basically, in spite of all aggravations, it applies to Poles the characteristics of the German criminal procedure.

In principle, therefore, the punishment of an offense committed by a Pole is still based on the same considerations which apply to the punishment of a German; this means the judge considers the personality of the offender and tries to find through a far-reaching appraisal of the personal motives of the offender a retribution for the crime which would do justice to the interests of the national community.

These considerations which may be right for the punishment of an offense committed by a German, are wrong with regard to the punishment of an offense committed by a person of foreign extraction. With regard to offenses committed by a person of foreign extraction the personal motives of the offender are to be disregarded entirely. Important is only that this offense endangers the order of the German community and that therefore measures must be

taken to prevent further dangers. In other words the offense committed by a person of foreign extraction is not to be judged from the point of view of legal retribution by way of Justice, but from the point of view of preventing danger through police-action.

From this follows that the criminal procedure against persons of foreign extraction must be transferred from the courts to the Police.

III. The preceding statement serves for personal information. However, there are no objections to inform the Gauleiters accordingly should the need arise.

The Deputy

Signed : Streckenbach

Stamp of the Reich Fuehrer SS and Chief of the German Police in the Reich Ministry of Interior.

Certified: [signed] Kausch Clerk.

Source: Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. VII, pp. 976-977, Doc. L-179.

158. CIRCULAR LETTER REGARDING DECREE AGAINST JEWS AND GYPSIES NO LONGER NEEDED, MARCH 10, 1944

This letter from Heinrich Himmler, Reich SS leader, is dated deep into the war, just nine days before Germany's invasion and occupation of Hungary, where the last large Jewish community was still intact. It is, in effect, an administrative order about the publication of future rules and decrees applicable to Poles, Jews, and Gypsies. It states that there will be no change going forward regarding Poles. However, for Jews and Gypsies, directives prohibiting members of those groups to participate in certain livelihoods are no longer necessary and will be discontinued. The reason is that those two groups have been subjected to such an effective degree to evacuation and isolation that issuing decrees prohibiting certain livelihoods would be superfluous.

CIRCULAR LETTER OF HIMMLER TO THE SUPREME REICH AUTHORITIES, 10 MARCH 1944, NOTING THAT

1340 Evian Conference: Decisions on Jewish Refugees

“THE ACCOMPLISHED EVACUATION AND ISOLATION”
OF JEWS AND GYPSIES HAD MADE MEANINGLESS THE
PREVIOUS MANNER OF PUBLISHING SPECIAL DIREC-
TIVES CONCERNING THEM

Berlin, 10 March 1944

The Reich Leader SS
Minister of Interior Affairs
S. Pol. IV D 2 c—927/44 g—24

[Initial] TH [Thierack]
[Stamp] Reich Ministry of Justice
17 March 1944
Dept. VII

SECRET

To the Supreme Reich Authorities

Subject: Posted prohibitions concerning Poles, Jews, and
gypsies

The separately published decrees and rules governing the
livelihood of Poles, Jews, and gypsies within the jurisdiction
of the Reich, have frequently led to a summary equalization
of these groups in the public eye as far as sale-and-utilization
prohibitions, public announcements in the press, etc., are
concerned. This attitude does not correspond with the dif-
ferentiated political position to be granted to these groups
now, and in the future.

As far as Jews and gypsies are concerned the accom-
plished evacuation and isolation of these groups by the Chief
of the Security Police and the SD has made the publication of
special directives (concerning the all inclusive prohibition of
participation in many livelihoods) in the previous manner
meaningless. Therefore, corresponding public directives
may be eliminated.

The decrees and regulations which have been decided
upon to govern the livelihood of the Poles will remain as
before. For political practical reasons it is hereby recom-
mended to maintain a certain amount of restraint in the pub-
lic directives of these regulations, be it in posters, signboards,
on press releases, etc.

I wish that the subordinate officers be informed of the
necessary directives.

[Typed] Signed: H. HIMMLER
Certified : [Illegible signature]
SS Sturmbannführer

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribu-
nals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government
Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, p. 713, Doc. 664-PS.

159. EVIAN CONFERENCE: DECISIONS ON JEWISH REFUGEES, JULY 14, 1938

*In March 1938, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt of the
United States invited 30 European and Latin American na-
tions as well as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South
Africa to meet and consider the resettlement of Jewish refu-
gees from Germany and Austria. Some nations refused; others
sent low-level bureaucrats with little or no authority to act. In
July 1938, the representatives of these nations met in Evian,
France, to discuss the issue. Attitudes were mixed, though al-
most all of those present went to great lengths to explain why
their governments could not assist the refugees. At the end
of the 90-day meeting, no resolution was reached. With the
exception of the Dominican Republic, no country agreed to
accept refugees. Thus, the conference itself has been viewed,
with hindsight, as little more than a public relations ploy for
the United States in its own relationship with a concerned
Jewish constituency with a modicum of non-Jewish support.
More perversely, it affirmed for Hitler and the Nazis the un-
willingness of Western democracies to extend themselves on
behalf of the Jews.*

Having met at Evian, France, from July 6th to July 13th,
1938:

1. Considering that the question of involuntary emigration
has assumed major proportions and that the fate of the
unfortunate people affected has become a problem for
intergovernmental deliberation;
2. Aware that the involuntary emigration of large numbers
of people, of different creeds, economic conditions, pro-
fessions and trades, from the country or countries where
they have been established, is disturbing to the general
economy, since these persons are obliged to seek refuge,
either temporarily or permanently, in other countries at a
time when there is serious unemployment; that, in conse-
quence, countries of refuge and settlement are faced with
problems, not only of an economic and social nature, but
also of public order, and that there is a severe strain on
the administrative facilities and absorptive capacities of
the receiving countries;

3. Aware, moreover, that the involuntary emigration of people in large numbers has become so great that it renders racial and religious problems more acute, increases international unrest, and may hinder seriously the processes of appeasement in international relations;
4. Believing that it is essential that a long-range program should be envisaged, whereby assistance to involuntary emigrants, actual and potential, may be coordinated within the framework of existing migration laws and practices of Governments;
5. Considering that if countries of refuge or settlement are to cooperate in finding an orderly solution of the problem before the Committee they should have the collaboration of the country of origin and are therefore persuaded that it will make its contribution by enabling involuntary emigrants to take with them their property and possessions and emigrate in an orderly manner;
6. Welcoming heartily the initiative taken by the President of the United States of America in calling the Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian for the primary purpose of facilitating involuntary emigration from Germany (including Austria), and expressing profound appreciation to the French Government for its courtesy in receiving the Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian;
7. Bearing in mind the resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Nations on May 14th, 1938, concerning international assistance to refugees:
8. Recommends:
 - a. That the persons coming within the scope of the activity of the Intergovernmental Committee shall be 1) persons who have not already left their country of origin (Germany, including Austria), but who must emigrate on account of their political opinion, religious beliefs or racial origin, and 2) persons as defined in 1) who have already left their country of origin and who have not yet established themselves permanently elsewhere;
 - b. That the Governments participating in the Intergovernmental Committee shall continue to furnish the Committee for its strictly confidential information, with 1) details regarding such immigrants as each Government may be prepared to receive under its existing laws and practices and 2) details of these laws and practices;
 - c. That in view of the fact that the countries of refuge and settlement are entitled to take into account the economic and social adaptability of immigrants, these should in many cases be required to accept, at least for a time, changed conditions of living in the countries of settlement;
 - d. That the Governments of the countries of refuge and settlement should not assume any obligations for the financing of involuntary emigration;
 - e. That, with regard to the documents required by the countries of refuge and settlement, the Governments represented on the Intergovernmental Committee should consider the adoption of the following provision:

In those individual immigration cases in which the usually required documents emanating from foreign official sources are found not to be available, there should be accepted such other documents serving the purpose of the requirements of law as maybe available to the immigrant, and that, as regards the document which may be issued to an involuntary emigrant by the country of his foreign residence to serve the purpose of a passport, note be taken of the several international agreements providing for the issue of a travel document serving the purpose of a passport and of the advantage of their wide application;
 - f. That there should meet at London an Intergovernmental Committee consisting of such representatives as the Governments participating in the Evian Meeting may desire to designate. This Committee shall continue and develop the work of the Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian and shall be constituted and shall function in the following manner: There shall be a Chairman of this Committee and four Vice-Chairmen; there shall be a director of authority, appointed by the Intergovernmental Committee, who shall be guided by it in his actions. He shall undertake negotiations to improve the present conditions of exodus and to replace them by conditions of orderly emigration. He shall approach the Governments of the countries of refuge and settlement with a view to developing opportunities for permanent settlement. The Intergovernmental Committee, recognizing the value of the work of the existing refugee services of the League of Nations and of the studies of migration made by the International Labor Office, shall cooperate fully with these organizations, and the Intergovernmental Committee at London shall consider the means by which the cooperation of the Committee and the director with these organizations shall be established. The Intergovernmental Committee, at its forthcoming meeting at London, will consider the scale on which its

1342 Letter from Rabbi Stephen Wise to President Roosevelt Regarding the Plight of the Jews of Europe

expenses shall be apportioned among the participating Governments;

9. That the Intergovernmental Committee in its continued form shall hold a first meeting at London on August 3rd, 1938.

Source: Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, July 6th to 15th, 1938 . . . , Record of the Plenary Meetings of the Committee, Resolutions and Reports, London, July 1938.

160. LETTER FROM RABBI STEPHEN WISE TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT REGARDING THE PLIGHT OF THE JEWS OF EUROPE, DECEMBER 2, 1942

Stephen Samuel Wise, an American Reform rabbi, was one of the best-known leaders of the U.S. Jewish community during the Holocaust. He was a founder and leader of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress and, as this letter indicates, had the ear of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Wise refers to the mass murder of Jews occurring in Europe—some 2 million to date—and asks two things of the president. First, that he publicly deliver a message of support to the Jews around the world who are mourning these deaths. Second, that he might do so when he receives a small delegation of representatives of several Jewish organizations. Wise’s reference to Roosevelt as “boss” and to himself as Roosevelt’s “old friend” suggests a comfortable relationship between the two men.

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS
330 WEST 42nd STREET NEW YORK CITY

Office of Dr. Wise
40 West 68th Street
December 2, 1942

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Boss:

I do not wish to add an atom to the awful burden which you are bearing with magic and, as I believe, heaven-inspired strength at this time. But you do know that the most overwhelming disaster of Jewish history has befallen Jews in the

form of the Hitler mass-massacres. Hitler’s decision was to exterminate the Jewish people in all Hitler-ruled lands, and it is indisputable that as many as two million civilian Jews have been slain.

I have had cables and underground advices for some months, telling of these things. I succeeded, together with the heads of other Jewish organizations, in keeping these out of the press and have been in constant communication with the State Department, particularly Under Secretary Wells. The State Department has now received what it believes to be confirmation of these unspeakable horrors and has approved of my giving the facts to the press. The organizations banded together in the Conference of which I am Chairman, feel that they wish to present to you a memorandum on this situation, so terrible that this day is being observed as a day of mourning and fasting throughout the Jewish world. We hope above all that you will speak a word which may bring solace and hope to millions of Jews who mourn, and be an expression of the conscience of the American people

I had gathered from the State Department that you were prepared to receive a small delegation, which would include representatives of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the B’nai B’rith. It would be gravely misunderstood if, despite your overwhelming pre-occupation, you did not make it possible to receive our delegation and to utter what I am sure will be your heartening and consoling reply.

As your old friend, I beg you will somehow arrange to do this.

Ever yours,
[signed] Stephen Wise
President

Source: Collection FDR-FDRPOF: President’s Official Files (Roosevelt Administration), National Archive Identifier: 7694130.

161. “TO THE 5,000,000 JEWS IN THE NAZI DEATH CAMPS BERMUDA WAS A CRUEL MOCKERY,” MAY 4, 1943

This full-page advertisement by an American Palestinian revisionist right-wing group—the “Bergson Group”—was an

attempt to stir the conscience of the American people regarding the plight of the Jews under the Nazis and the insincere attempt by Western nations, including the United States and Great Britain, regarding the plight of the refugees. They met and expressed their concern, but other than smaller nations (i.e., the Dominican Republic), no nation of any size was willing to provide a home for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution and under threat of death. It should also be noted that the leadership of the major American Jewish organizations was not in favor of such a tactic, preferring to work through so-called normal channels (i.e., meeting with governmental officials and representatives), fearing that such an approach would falsely indicate to Americans that World War II was a “Jewish war,” given the already high number of Americans disposed toward antisemitism.

When Will The United Nations Establish An Agency To Deal With The Problem of Hitler’s Extermination of a Whole People? Somehow, through invisible, underground channels, one ray of shining hope might have penetrated the ghettos of Europe. A rumor might have spread and grown into a whisper among the agonized Jews of Hitler’s hell. A whisper of telling of deliverance from torture, death, starvation, and agony in slaughter-houses. This ray of hope and this whisper were expressed in one word: Bermuda!

The rumor told of representatives of the United States and Great Britain, the leading champions of the United Nations, the protagonists of the Four Freedoms, assembling to save the hunted and tortured Jews of Europe. On the deliberations of this small convention on an Island in the Atlantic were focused all the hopes of the doomed Jews of Europe; those, too, of the free well-meaning people the world over. Men and women of good will everywhere at last believed that the United Nations had decided to do something about the unprecedented disaster of a people put to death.

Wretched, doomed victims of Hitler’s tyranny! Poor men and women of good faith the world over! You have cherished an illusion. Your hopes have been in vain. Bermuda was not the dawn of a new era, of an era of humanity and compassion, of translating pity into deed. Bermuda was a mockery, and a cruel jest.

This is not our definition. It is the definition of the London Sunday “Observer”—one of the most influential and important newspapers in Great Britain.

Not only were ways and means to save the remaining four million Jews in Europe not devised, but their problem was not even touched upon, put on the agenda, or discussed. More than that—the name “Jews” was banished from the

vocabulary of this convention, as PM’s foreign editor, Alexander Uhl, reports: “It was regarded as almost improper to mention even the word Jew.”

But not only the attention of the victims of Nazi atrocities and of their friends the world over was concentrated on the meeting at Bermuda: Hitler, too, was concerned with the United Nations’ reply to his challenge to the extermination of the Jewish population in Europe. Alas! To him Bermuda was again convincing proof that the United Nations were neither ready nor willing to answer his threat with action. They were continuing to give him “carte blanche” in his extermination process, exactly as in the pre-war days they permitted him to deal with Jews in Germany, with Austria and Czechoslovakia, thus paving the way for aggression, invasion, and war.

Can it be possible that the United Nations do not understand that should Hitler succeed in exterminating the Jews as a people, they by their silence will pave the way to the extermination of the Czechoslovak, Polish, Greek, or even the French peoples?

Now we are witnessing a variety of attempts to justify the Bermuda failure, to wrap it in secret formulae, such as “no dealing with Hitler,” or “not to interfere with the prosecution of the war,” or “not to undertake anything which should prolong the war,” etc. All this is just throwing sand into the eyes of public opinion. All this has nothing to do with the real facts and the harrowing truth.

The facts, plain and simple, are the following:

- a. This is a specific problem of Jewish disaster. Hitler did not (as yet) decree the extermination of all the peoples of Europe, he decreed the extermination of the Jewish people in Europe and this process of extermination is unabated and steady. Two million or more have been put to death already!
- b. Five million Jews in Europe still live. The governments of Roumania, Hungary and Bulgaria, all satellites of Germany, are willing to release their Jews any time the United Nations are willing to take part in the deliverance. By doing so, they hope to find grace and pardon in the eyes of the United Nations whom they consider as the inevitable victors in this world struggle.
- c. The United Nations have taken no advantage of these offers. They have not done so for one reason: the British government has prevented them, fearing that public opinion will demand that those refugees be admitted into Palestine—a practical place of salvation only a few days

away from the Axis countries by short water route, train, or even bus, where the new Hebrew Nation awaits them with open arms.

The Jewish Problem Is Not a Refugee Problem

With the Bermuda Conference a thing of the past, not having even discussed the problem of the extermination of the Jewish people in Europe, now, more than ever, it is clear that we are dealing not only with a **refugee problem**, but with **the Jewish problem** of Europe. These two problems should not be confused. They are entirely distinct. Democracy cannot connive with the slaughter of millions of innocent civilian people—the Jews in Europe. There are ways and means to stop Hitler's wholesale murder and to evacuate those who can be evacuated. **But no one has been assigned to deal with this tremendous problem.** What is necessary is that the machinery for action be created. The United Nations, which have uttered so many words of pity must now do something if the words of pity are to be more than empty lies. They must create a United Nations Agency composed of military and diplomatic experts which should have full authority to define and effectuate a realistic and stern policy of action, to save the remaining millions of Jewish people. This Agency or Commission will deal, not with refugees outside Hitler's reach, but with the Jewish people under his yoke today.

A Program of Action (. . . Not Pity!)

There are two broad areas in which this Agency can begin to operate without delay or procrastination.

1. Immediate utilization of all existing possibilities of transfer of Jews from Hitler-dominated countries to Palestine or to any temporary refuge and the initiation of all further possibilities in this program.
2. The immediate creation of a Jewish army of stateless and Palestinian Jews, including "suicide" Commando squads, and Air Squadrons for retaliatory bombing, which will raid deep into Germany, thus participating as an entity in the war and bringing their message of hope to Hitler's victims.

Join the Crusade for Decency

The crime of Europe calls for the mobilization of every shred of righteousness and spiritual power left in the world. On the field of battle soldiers die. On the field of massacre civilization dies. The thunder of civilization against the swamp-like armies of the German government is alone capable of stopping the German crime against life. Such a thunder unleashed

by our own representatives and by all the notions that serve the cause of God would strike terror into the souls of the German people.

Therefore we dedicate ourselves to this fight and we call upon every American to join hands with us in this crusade for humanity and decency.

Source: "To 5,000,000 Jews in the Nazi Death-Trap Bermuda was a Cruel Mockery," *New York Times*, May 4, 1943, p. 17.

162. REPORT TO THE SECRETARY ON THE ACQUIESCENCE OF THIS GOVERNMENT IN THE MURDER OF THE JEWS, JANUARY 13, 1944

This extraordinary document was written by U.S. Treasury officials John Pehle, Randolph Paul, and Josiah DuBois, and submitted to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. on January 13, 1944. It is a scathing attack on the State Department's efforts to obstruct Jewish immigration to the United States when it was well known that to do so was to allow the continuing extermination of the Jews of Europe. Of those the report accused, Breckinridge Long, assistant secretary in charge of the Visa Division, was cited most often. No better sentence can capture the focus and explosive nature of the report than this: "I am convinced on the basis of the information which is available to me that certain officials in our State Department, which is charged with carrying out this policy [of rescue of Jews], have been guilty not only of gross procrastination and willful failure to act, but even of willful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler." On January 16, 1944, Morgenthal, Pehle, and Paul presented the report to Roosevelt. On January 22, 1944, he established the War Refugee Board to effectuate the "immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe."

One of the greatest crimes in history, the slaughter of the Jewish people in Europe, is continuing unabated.

This Government has for a long time maintained that its policy is to work out programs to save those Jews of Europe who could be saved.

I am convinced on the basis of the information which is available to me that certain officials in our State Department, which is charged with carrying out this policy, have been

guilty not only of gross procrastination and willful failure to act, but even of willful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler.

I fully recognize the graveness of this statement and I make it only after having most carefully weighed the shocking facts which have come to my attention during the last several months.

Unless remedial steps of a drastic nature are taken, and taken immediately, I am certain that no effective action will be taken by this Government to prevent the complete extermination of the Jews in German controlled Europe, and that this Government will have to share for all time responsibility for this extermination.

The tragic history of this Government's handling of this matter reveals that certain State Department officials are guilty of the following:

1. They have not only failed to use the Governmental machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Government machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.
2. They have not only failed to cooperate with private organizations in the efforts of those organizations to work out individual programs of their own, but have taken steps designed to prevent these programs from being put into effect.
3. They not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe.
4. They have tried to cover up their guilt by:
 - (a) concealment and misrepresentation;
 - (b) the giving of false and misleading explanations for their failures to act and their attempts to prevent action; and
 - (c) the issuance of false and misleading statements concerning the "action" which they have taken to date.

Although only part of the facts relating to the activities of the State Department in this field are available to us, sufficient facts have come to my attention from various sources during the last several months to fully support the conclusions at which I have arrived.

1. State Department officials have not only failed to use the Governmental machinery at their disposal to rescue the Jews

from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Governmental machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.

The public record, let alone the facts which have not as yet been made public, reveals the gross procrastination and willful failure to act of those officials actively representing this Government in this field.

- (a) A long time has passed since it became clear that Hitler was determined to carry out a policy of exterminating the Jews in Europe.
- (b) Over a year has elapsed since this Government and other members of the United Nations publicly acknowledged and denounced this policy of extermination; and since the President gave assurances that the United States would make every effort together with the United Nations to save those who could be saved.
- (c) Despite the fact that time is most precious in this matter, State Department officials have been kicking the matter around for over a year without producing results; giving all sorts of excuses for delays upon delays; advancing no specific proposals designed to rescue Jews, at the same time proposing that the whole refugee problem be "explored" by this Government and Intergovernmental Committees. While the State Department has been thus "exploring" the whole refugee problem, without distinguishing between those who are in imminent danger of death and those who are not, hundreds of thousands of Jews have been allowed to perish.

As early as August 1942 a message from the Secretary of the World Jewish Congress in Switzerland (Riegner), transmitted through the British Foreign Office, reported that Hitler had under consideration a plan to exterminate all Jews in German controlled Europe. By November 1942 sufficient evidence had been received, including substantial documentary evidence transmitted through our Legation in Switzerland, to confirm that Hitler had actually adopted and was carrying out his plan to exterminate the Jews. Sumner Welles accordingly authorized the Jewish organizations to make the facts public.

Thereupon, the Jewish organizations took the necessary steps to bring the shocking facts to the attention of the public through mass meetings, etc., and to elicit public support for governmental action. On December 17, 1942, a joint statement of the United States and the European members of the United Nations was issued calling attention to and denouncing the fact that Hitler was carrying into effect his oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe.

Since the time when this Government knew that the Jews were being murdered, our State Department has failed to take any positive steps reasonably calculated to save any of these people. Although State has used the devices of setting up intergovernmental organizations to survey the whole refugee problem, and calling conferences such as the Bermuda Conference to explore the whole refugee problem, making it appear that positive action could be expected, in fact nothing has been accomplished.

Before the outcome of the Bermuda conference, which was held in April 1943, was made public, Senator Langer prophetically stated in an address in the Senate on October 6, 1943:

“As yet we have had no report from the Bermuda Refugee Conference. With the best good will in the world and with all latitude that could and should be accorded to diplomatic negotiations in time of war, I may be permitted to voice the bitter suspicion that the absence of a report indicates only one thing—the lack of action.

“Probably in all 5703 years, Jews have hardly had a time as tragic and hopeless as the one which they are undergoing now. One of the most tragic factors about the situation is that while singled out for suffering and martyrdom by their enemies, they seem to have been forgotten by the nations which claim to fight for the cause of humanity. We should remember the Jewish slaughterhouse of Europe and ask what is being done—and I emphasize the word ‘done’—to get some of these suffering human beings out of the slaughter while yet alive.

“ * * * Perhaps it would be necessary to introduce a formal resolution to ask the Secretary of State to report to an appropriate congressional committee on the steps being taken in this connection. Normally it would have been the job of the Government to show itself alert to this tragedy; but when a government neglects a duty it is the job of the legislature in a democracy to remind it of that duty. * * * It is not important who voices a call for action, and it is not important what procedure is being used in order to get action. It is important that action be undertaken.”

Similar fears were voiced by Representatives Celler, Dickstein, and Klein, Senator Wagner and Representative Sadowski also issued calls for action.

The widespread fears concerning the failure of the Bermuda Conference were fully confirmed when Breckinridge Long finally revealed some of the things that had happened at that Conference in his statement before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House on November 26, 1943.

After Long’s “disclosure” Representative Celler stated in the House on December 20, 1943:

“He discloses some of the things that happened at the so-called Bermuda Conference. He thought he was telling us something heretofore unknown and secret. What happened at the Bermuda Conference could not be kept executive. All the recommendations and findings of the Bermuda Conference were made known to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in existence since the Evian Conference on Refugees in 1938 and which has been functioning all this time in London. How much has that committee accomplished in the years of its being. It will be remembered that the Intergovernmental Committee functions through an executive committee composed of six countries, the United States, the United Kingdoms, the Netherlands, France, Brazil, and Argentina. True, no report of the Bermuda Conference was made public. But a strangely ironical fact will be noted in the presence of Argentina on this most trusted of committees, Argentina that provoked the official reprimand of President Roosevelt by its banning of the Jewish Press, and within whose borders Nazi propagandists and falangists now enjoy a Roman holiday. I contend that by the very nature of its composition the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees cannot function successfully as the instrumentality to rescue the Jewish people of Europe. The benefits to be d[e]rived from the Bermuda Conference like those of the previous Evian Conference can fit into a tiny capsule.”

One of the best summaries of the whole situation is contained in one sentence of a report submitted on December 30, 1943, by the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, recommending the passage of a Resolution (S.R.203) favoring the appointment of a commission to formulate plans to save the Jews of Europe from extinction by Nazi Germany. The Committee stated:

“We have talked: we have sympathized: we have expressed our horror: the time to act is long past due.”

The Senate Resolution had been introduced by Senator Guy M. Gillette in behalf of himself and eleven colleagues. Senators Taft, Thomas, Radcliffe, Murray, Johnson, Guffey, Ferguson, Clark, Van Nuys, Downey, and Ellender.

The House Resolutions (H.R.’s 350 and 352), identical with the Senate Resolution, were introduced by Representatives Baldwin and Rogers.

The most glaring example of the use of the machinery of this Government to actually prevent the rescue of Jews is the administrative restrictions which have been placed upon the granting of visas to the United States. In the note which

the State Department sent to the British on February 26, 1943 it was stated:

“Since the entry of the United States into the war there have been no new restrictions placed by the Government of the United States upon the number of aliens of any nationality permitted to proceed to this country under existing laws, except for the more intensive examination of aliens required for security reasons.” (Underscoring supplied)

The exception for “security reasons” mentioned in this note is the joker. Under the pretext of security reasons so many difficulties have been placed in the way of refugees obtaining visas that it is no wonder that the admission of refugees to this country does not come anywhere near the quota, despite Long’s statement designed to create the impression to the contrary. The following administrative restrictions which have been applied to the issuance of visas since the beginning of the war are typical.

- (a) Many applications for visas have been denied on the grounds that the applicants have close relatives in Axis controlled Europe. The theory of this is that the enemy would be able to put pressure on the applicant as a result of the fact that the enemy has the power of life or death over his immediate family.
- (b) Another restriction greatly increases the red tape and delay involved in getting the visa furnished with each application for a visa. To each affidavit of support and sponsorship there must be attached two letters of reference from two reputable American citizens.

If anyone were to attempt to work out a set of restrictions specifically designed to prevent Jewish refugees from entering this country it is difficult to conceive of how more effective restrictions could have been imposed than have already been imposed on grounds of “security”.

It is obvious of course that these restrictions are not essential for security reasons. Thus refugees upon arriving in this country could be placed in internment camps similar to those used for the Japanese on the West Coast and released only after a satisfactory investigation. Furthermore, even if we took these refugees and treated them as prisoners of war it would be better than letting them die.

Representative Dickstein stated in the House on December 15:

“If we consider the fact that the average admission would then be at the rate of less than 58,000 per year, it is clear that the organs of our Government have not done their duty. The existing quotas call for the admission of more than 150,000

every year, so that if the quotas themselves had been filled there would have been a total of one-half million and not 580,000 during the period mentioned.

“But that is not the whole story. There was no effort of any kind made to save from death many of the refugees who could have been saved during the time that transportation lines were available and there was no obstacle to their admission to the United States. But the obstructive policy of our organs of Government, particularly the State Department, which saw fit to hedge itself about with rules and regulations, instead of lifting rules and regulations, brought about a condition so that not even the existing immigration quotas are filled.”

Representative Celler stated in the House on June 30:

“Mr. Speaker, nations have declared war on Germany, and their high-ranking officials have issued pious protestations against the Nazi massacre of Jewish victims, but not one of those countries thus far has said they would be willing to accept these refugees either permanently or as visitors, or any of the minority peoples trying to escape the Hitler prison and slaughterhouse.

“Goebbels says: ‘The United Nations won’t take any Jews. We don’t want them. Let’s kill them.’ And so he and Hitler are making Europe Judentun.

“Without any change in our immigration statutes we could receive a reasonable number of those who are fortunate enough to escape the Nazi hellhole, receive them as visitors, the immigration quotas notwithstanding. They could be placed in camps or cantonments and held there in such havens until after the war. Private charitable agencies would be willing to pay the entire cost thereof. They would be no expense to the Government whatsoever. These agencies would even pay for transportation by ships to and from this country.

“We house and maintain Nazi prisoners, many of them undoubtedly responsible for Nazi atrocities. We should do no less for the victims of the rage of the Huns.”

Again, on December 20, he stated:

“According to Earl G. Harrison, Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, not since 1862 have there been fewer aliens entering the country.

“Frankly, Breckinridge Long, in my humble opinion, is least sympathetic to refugees in all the State Department. I attribute to him the tragic bottleneck in the granting of visas.

“The Interdepartmental Review Committees which review the applications for visas are composed of one official, respectively, from each of the following Departments: War, Navy, F.B.I., State, and Immigration. That committee

has been glacierlike in its slowness and coldbloodedness. It take[s] months and months to grant the visas and then it usually applies to a corpse.

“I brought this difficulty to the attention of the President. He asked Long to investigate at once. No, there has been no change in conditions. The gruesome bottleneck still exists.”

2. State Department officials have not only failed to cooperate with private organizations in the efforts of these organizations to work out individual programs of their own, but have taken steps designed to prevent these programs from being put into effect.

The best evidence in support of this charge are the facts relating to the proposal of the World Jewish Congress to evacuate thousands of Jews from Rumania and France. The highlights relating to the efforts of State Department officials to prevent this proposal from being put into effect are the following:

- (a) On March 13, 1943, a cable was received from the World Jewish Congress representative in London stating that information reaching London indicated the possibility of rescuing Jews provided funds were put at the disposal of the World Jewish Congress representation in Switzerland.
- (b) On April 10, 1943, Sumner Welles cabled our Legation in Bern and requested them to get in touch with the World Jewish Congress representative in Switzerland, whom Welles had been informed was in possession of important information regarding the situation of the Jews.
- (c) On April 20, 1943, a cable was received from Bern relating to the proposed financial arrangements in connection with the evacuation of the Jews from Rumania and France.
- (d) On May 25, 1943, State Department cabled for a clarification of these proposed financial arrangements. This matter was not called to the attention of the Treasury Department at this time.
- (e) This whole question of financing the evacuation of the Jews from Rumania and France was first called to the attention of the Treasury Department on June 25, 1943.
- (f) A conference was held with the State Department relating to this matter on July 15, 1943.
- (g) One day after this conference, on July 16, 1943, the Treasury Department advised the State Department that it was prepared to issue a license in this matter.
- (h) The license was not issued until December 18, 1943.

During this five months period between the time that the Treasury stated that it was prepared to issue a license and the time when the license was actually issued delays and objections of all sorts were forthcoming from officials in the State Department, our Legation in Bern, and finally the British. The real significance of these delays and objections was brought home to the State Department in letters which you sent to Secretary Hull on November 24, 1943, and December 17, 1943, which completely devastated the “excuses” which State Department officials had been advancing. On December 10 you made an appointment to discuss the matter with Secretary Hull on December 20. And then an amazing but understandable thing happened. On December 13, the day after you sent your letter and the day on which you requested an appointment with Secretary Hull, the State Department sent a telegram to the British Foreign Office expressing astonishment with the British point of view and stating that the Department was unable to agree with that point of view (in simple terms, the British point of view referred to by the State Department is that they are apparently prepared to accept the possible—even probable—death of thousands of Jews in enemy territory because of “the difficulties of disposing of any considerable number of Jews should they be rescued”). On the same day, the State Department issued a license notwithstanding the fact that the objections of our Legation in Bern were still outstanding and that British disapproval had already been expressed. State Department officials were in such a hurry to issue this license that they not only did not ask the Treasury to draft the license (which would have been the normal procedure) but they drafted the license themselves and issued it without even consulting the Treasury as to its terms. Informal discussions with certain State Department officials have confirmed what is obvious from the above mentioned facts.

Breckinridge Long knew that his position was so indefensible that he was unwilling to even try to defend it at your pending conference with Secretary Hull on December 20. Accordingly, he took such action as he felt was necessary to “cover up” his previous position in this matter. It is, of course, clear that if we had not made the record against the State Department followed by your request to see Secretary Hull, the action which the State Department officials took on December 10 would either never have been taken at all or would have been delayed so long that any benefits which it might have had would have been lost.

(3) State Department officials not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler’s plans

to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population in Europe.

The evidence supporting this conclusion is so shocking and so tragic that it is difficult to believe.

The facts are as follows:

- (a) Sumner Welles as Acting Secretary of State requests confirmation of Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews. Having already received various reports on the plight of the Jews, on October 5, 1942 Sumner Welles as Acting Secretary of State sent a cable (2314) for the personal attention of Minister Harrison in Bern stating that leaders of the Jewish Congress had received reports from their representatives in Geneva and London to the effect that many thousands of Jews in Eastern Europe were being slaughtered pursuant to a policy embarked upon by the German Government for the complete extermination of the Jews in Europe. Welles added that he was trying to obtain further information from the Vatican but that other than this he was unable to secure confirmation of these stories. We stated that Rabbi Wise believed that information was available to his representatives in Switzerland but that they were in all likelihood fearful of dispatching any such reports through open cables or mail. He then stated that Riegner and Lichtheim were being requested by Wise to call upon Minister Harrison; and Welles requested Minister Harrison to advise him by telegram of all the evidence and facts which he might secure as a result of conferences with Riegner and Lichtheim.
- (b) State Department receives confirmation and shocking evidence that extermination was being rapidly and effectively carried out. Pursuant to Welles' cable of October 5 Minister Harrison forwarded documents from Riegner confirming the fact of extermination of the Jews (in November 1942), and in a cable of January 21, 1943 (482) relayed a message from Riegner and Lichtheim which Harrison stated was for the information of the Under Secretary of State (and was to be transmitted to Rabbi Stephen Wise if the Under Secretary should so determine). This message described a horrible situation concerning the plight of the Jews in Europe. It reported mass executions of Jews in Poland; according to one source 6,000 Jews were being killed daily; the Jews were required before execution to strip themselves of all their

clothing which was then sent to Germany; the remaining Jews in Poland were confined to ghettos, etc.; in Germany deportations were continuing; many Jews were in hiding and there had been many cases of suicide; Jews were being deprived of rationed foodstuffs; no Jews would be left in Prague or Berlin by the end of March, etc.; and in Rumania 130,000 Jews were deported to Transnistria; about 60,000 had already died and the remaining 70,000 were starving; living conditions were indescribable; Jews were deprived of all their money, foodstuffs and possessions; they were housed in deserted cellars, and occasionally twenty to thirty people slept on the floor of one unheated room; disease was prevalent, particularly fever; urgent assistance was needed.

- (c) Sumner Welles furnishes this information to the Jewish organizations. Sumner Welles furnished the documents received in November to the Jewish organizations in the United States and authorized them to make the facts public. On February 9, 1943 Welles forwarded the horrible message contained in cable 432 of January 21 to Rabbi Stephen Wise. In his letter of February 9 Welles stated that he was pleased to be of assistance in this matter.

Immediately upon the receipt of this message, the Jewish organizations arranged for a public mass meeting in Madison Square Garden in a further effort to obtain effective action.

- (d) Certain State Department officials surreptitiously attempt to stop this Government from obtaining further information from the very source from which the above evidence was received. On February 10, the day after Welles forwarded the message contained in cable 482 of January 21 to Rabbi Wise, and in direct response to this cable, a most highly significant cable was dispatched. This cable, 354 of February 10, read as follows:
 "Your 482, January 21

"In the future we would suggest that you do not accept reports submitted to you to be transmitted to private persons in the United States unless such action is advisable because of extraordinary circumstances. Such private messages circumvent neutral countries' censorship and it is felt that by sending them we risk the possibility that steps would necessarily be taken by the neutral countries to curtail or forbid our means of communication for confidential official matter.

Hull (SW)"

1350 Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews

Although this cable on its face is most innocent and innocuous, when read together with the previous cables I am forced to conclude it is nothing less than an attempted suppression of information requested by this Government concerning the murder of Jews by Hitler.

Although this cable was signed for Hull by "SW" (Sumner Welles) it is significant that there is not a word in the cable that would even suggest to the person signing it that it was designed to countermand the Department's specific requests for information on Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews. The cable appeared to be a normal routine message which a busy official would sign without question.

I have been informed that the initialled file copy of the cable bears the initials of Atherton and Dunn as well as of Durbrow and Hickerson.

(e) Thereafter Sumner Welles again requested our legation on April 19, 1943 (cable 877) for information, apparently not realizing that in cable 354 (to which he did not refer) Harrison had been instructed to cease forwarding reports of this character. Harrison replied on April 20 (cable 2460) and indicated that he was in a most confused state of mind as a result of the conflicting instructions he had received. Among other things he stated: "May I suggest that messages of this character should not (repeat not) be subjected to the restriction imposed by your 354, February 10, and that I be permitted to transmit messages from R more particularly in view of the helpful information which they may frequently contain?"

The fact that cable 354 is not the innocent and routine cable that it appears to be on its face is further highlighted by the efforts of State Department officials to prevent this Department from obtaining the cable and learning its true significance.

The facts relating to this attempted concealment are as follows:

i. Several men in our Department had requested State Department officials for a copy of the cable of February 10 (354). We had been advised that it was a Department communication; a strictly political communication, which had nothing to do with economic matters; that it had only had a very limited distribution within the Department, the only ones having anything to do with it being the European Division, the Political Adviser and Sumner Welles; and that a copy could not be furnished to the Treasury.

- ii. At the conference in Secretary Hull's office on December 20 in the presence of Breckinridge Long, you asked Secretary Hull for a copy of cable 354, which you were told would be furnished to you.
- iii. By note to you of December 20, Breckinridge Long enclosed a paraphrase of cable 354. This paraphrase of cable 354 specifically omitted any reference to cable 482 of January 21—thus destroying the only tangible clue to the true meaning of the message.
- iv. You would never have learned the true meaning of cable 354 had it not been for the fact that one of the men in my office whom I had asked to obtain all the facts on this matter for me had previously called one of the men in another Division of the State Department and requested permission to see the cable. In view of the Treasury interest in this matter this State Department representative obtained cable 354 and the cable of January 21 to which it referred and showed these cables to my man.

(4) The State Department officials have tried to cover up their guilt by:

a. concealment and misrepresentation

In addition to concealing the true facts from and misrepresenting these facts to the public, State Department officials have even attempted concealment and misrepresentation within the Government. The most striking example of this is the above mentioned action taken by State Department officials to prevent this Department from obtaining a copy of cable 354 of February 10 (which stopped the obtaining of information concerning the murder of Jews); and the fact that after you had requested a copy of this cable, State Department officials forwarded the cable to us with its most significant part omitted, thus destroying the whole meaning of the cable.

b. the giving of false and misleading explanations for their failures to act and their attempts to prevent action.

The outstanding explanation of a false and misleading nature which the State Department officials have given for their failures to work out programs to rescue Jews, and their attempts to prevent action, are the following:

- i. The nice sounding but vicious theory that the whole refugee problem must be explored and consideration given to working out programs for the relief of all refugees whose lives are in imminent danger and those whose lives are not in imminent danger.
- ii. The argument that various proposals cannot be acted upon promptly by this Government but must be submitted to

the Executive Committee of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. This Committee has taken no effective action to actually evacuate refugees from enemy territory and it is at least open to doubt whether it has the necessary authority to deal with the matter.

- iii. The argument that the extreme restrictions which the State Department has placed on the granting of visas to refugees is necessary for "security reasons." The falsity of this argument has already been dealt with in this memorandum.

The false and misleading explanations, which the State Department officials gave for delaying for over six months the program of the World Jewish Congress for the evacuation of thousands of Jews from Rumania and France, are dealt with in your letter to Secretary Hull of December 17, 1943.

A striking example is the argument of the State Department officials that the proposed financial arrangement might benefit the enemy. It is of course not surprising that the same State Department officials who usually argue that economic warfare considerations are not important should in this particular case attempt to rely on economic warfare considerations to kill the proposed program.

In this particular case, the State Department officials attempted to argue that the relief plan might benefit the enemy by facilitating the acquisition of funds by the enemy. In addition to the fact that this contention had no merit whatsoever by virtue of the conditions under which the local funds were to be acquired, it is significant that this consideration had not been regarded as controlling in the past by the State Department officials, even where no such conditions had been imposed.

Thus, in cases involving the purchase, by branches of United States' concerns in Switzerland, of substantial amounts of material in enemy territory, State Department officials have argued that in view of the generous credit supplied by the Swiss to the Germans "transactions of this type cannot be regarded as actually increasing the enemy's purchasing power in Switzerland which is already believed to be at a maximum". It is only when these State Department officials really desire to prevent a transaction that they advance economic warfare considerations as a bar.

c. the issuance of false and misleading statements concerning the "action" which they have taken to date.

It is unnecessary to go beyond Long's testimony to find many examples of misstatements. His general pious remarks concerning what this Government has done for the Jews of

Europe; his statement concerning the powers and functions of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees; his reference to the "screening process" set up to insure wartime security, etc., have already been publicly criticized as misrepresentations.

A statement which is typical of the way Long twists facts is his remarks concerning the plan of a Jewish agency to send money to Switzerland to be used through the International Red Cross to buy food to take care of Jews in parts of Czechoslovakia and Poland. Long indicates that the Jewish agency requested that the money be sent through the instrumentality of the Intergovernmental Committee. I am informed that the Jewish agency wished to send the money immediately to the International Red Cross and it was Long who took the position that the matter would have to go through the Intergovernmental Committee, thereby delaying the matter indefinitely. Long speaks of an application having been filed with the Treasury to send some of this money and that the State Department was supporting this application to the Treasury. The facts are that no application has ever been filed with the Treasury and the State Department has at no time indicated to the Treasury that it would support any such application.

The most patent instance of a false and misleading statement is that part of Breckinridge Long's testimony before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House (November 26, 1943) relating to the admittance of refugees into this country. Thus, he stated:

"* * * We have taken into this country since the beginning of the Hitler regime and the persecution of the Jews, until today, approximately 580,000 refugees. The whole thing has been under the quota, during the period of 10 years—all under the quota—except the generous gesture we made with visitors' and transit visas during an awful period."

Congressman Emanuel Celler in commenting upon Long's statement in the House on December 20, 1943, stated:

"* * * In the first place these 580,000 refugees were in the main ordinary quota immigrants coming in from all countries. The majority were not Jews. His statement drips with sympathy for the persecuted Jews, but the tears he sheds are crocodile. I would like to ask him how many Jews were admitted during the last 3 years in comparison with the number seeking entrance to preserve life and dignity. . . . One gets the impression from Long's statement that the United States has gone out of its way to help refugees fleeing death at the hands of the Nazis. I deny this. On the contrary, the State Department has turned its back on the time-honored

principle of granting havens to refugees. The tempest-tossed get little comfort from men like Breckinridge Long. . . . Long says that the door to the oppressed is open but that it 'has been carefully screened.' What he should have said is 'bar-locked and bolted.' By the act of 1924, we are permitted to admit approximately 150,000 immigrants each year. During the last fiscal year only 23,725 came as immigrants. Of these only 4,705 were Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.

* * *

"If men of the temperament and philosophy of Long continue in control of immigration administration, we may as well take down that plaque from the Statue of Liberty and black out the 'lamp beside the golden door.'"

RP

Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Diaries of Henry Morgenthau Jr., April 27, 1933–July 27, 1945, Vol. 693, January 11–January 13, 1944, pp. 212–229.

163. TO THEATER COMMANDERS ON RESCUE AND RELIEF TO JEWS AND OTHER VICTIMS, JANUARY 28, 1944

Twelve days after Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to share a report that showed the U.S. State Department had obstructed efforts to rescue the Jews of Europe and six days after the establishment of the War Refugee Board (WRB) to correct that obstruction, this memorandum was sent by Morgenthau to John J. McCloy, assistant secretary of war, asking that he issue instructions to the theater commanders. Those instructions reference Roosevelt's executive order that established the WRB to fulfill the government's policy "to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief." Theater commanders were then told to do as much as possible to effectuate the government's policy. The new sense of urgency was a critical change in the policy that had been operating for the prior several years during which millions of Jews throughout Europe were killed.

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY WASHINGTON

January 28, 1944

TO: Assistant Secretary McCloy

FROM: Secretary Morgenthau

In accordance with your timely suggestion it would be very helpful if instructions along the following lines were sent to the appropriate Theater Commanders:

"The President has instructed the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War to take action for the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution. In an Executive Order issued January 22, 1944, the President declared 'it is the policy of the Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war.' The order establishes special governmental machinery for executing this policy. It creates a War Refugee Board consisting of the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War. The Board is charged with direct responsibility to the President in seeing that the announced policy is carried out. The President indicated that while he would look directly to the Board for the execution of this policy, the Board would cooperate with the Inter-governmental Committee, UNRRA, and other interested international organizations. The President stated that he expected the cooperation of all members of the United Nations and other governments in carrying out this difficult but important task. He stated that the existing facilities of the State, Treasury and War Departments would be employed to furnish aid to Axis Victims to the fullest extent possible. He stressed that it was urgent that action be taken to forestall the plot of the Nazis to exterminate the Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe.

You should do everything possible, consistent with the successful prosecution of the war in your theater, to effectuate this policy of this Government. You should cooperate as closely as possible with all public and established private agencies who are active in your theater in this field in this matter. Consistent with your needs and military security considerations, you should make communication facilities available to these private agencies for appropriate messages for carrying out the policy of this Government herein stated, keeping the War Refugee Board advised through the Department. You should report to the Department any recommendations which you may have as to what you feel this

Department can do to effectuate with possible speed the rescue and relief of the victims of enemy oppression.

Foreign representatives of the Department of State and of other Government Departments are being similarly instructed and you should give them any possible assistance.”

I would appreciate your bringing this to the attention of Secretary Stimson.

/s/

Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

January 28, 1944

Source: Records of the Assistant Secretary of War, Record Group 107, ASW 400.38 Jews.

V. Post-Holocaust Developments

164. EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT ON THE LIBERATION OF DACHAU, PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES SECTION, SEVENTH ARMY, MAY 1945

The U.S. Seventh Army entered the Dachau concentration camp on April 29, 1945. The Office of Strategic Services, Seventh Army, prepared a report of the Americans' experience: "There our troops found sights, sounds and stenches horrible beyond belief, cruelties so enormous as to be incomprehensible to the normal mind. DACHAU and death were synonymous." This excerpt from that report begins with a sociological view of the camp, focusing on organization, power groups, and the like. The description of the terrible scene the Americans faced began: "There are no words in English which can adequately describe the Konzentrations-Lager at Dachau." Then follows an account of the leadup to the day and the moment when the word spread throughout the camp, now without its German overlords, "Americans!"

FOREWORD

DACHAU, 1933–1945, will stand for all time as one of history's most gruesome symbols of inhumanity. There our troops found sights, sounds and stenches horrible beyond belief, cruelties so enormous as to be incomprehensible to the normal mind. DACHAU and death were synonymous.

No words or pictures can carry the full impact of these unbelievable scenes but this report presents some of the outstanding facts and photographs in order to emphasize the type of crime which elements of the SS committed thousands of times a day, to remind us of the ghastly capabilities of certain classes of men, to strengthen our determination that they and their works shall vanish from the earth.

The sections comprising this report were prepared by the agencies indicated. They remain substantially as they were originally submitted in the belief that to consolidate this material in a single literary style would seriously weaken its realism.

[signed] William W. Quinn
Colonel, G.S.C.
A C of S, G-2
7th U.S. Army

OSS Section, Seventh Army

SUMMARY

At Dachau the only objective of the inmates was to survive under the most primitive and cruel conditions which constantly threatened their sanity and physical existence. Little more than this was humanly possible. As a result of these abnormal conditions, this camp of 30,000 men cannot be compared to the structure of any normal society differentiated by social classes, political, religious, or professional affiliations. Hence, neither normal moral standards nor normal political or sociological criteria are applicable to the Dachau situation.

The inmates of the camp did not act as members of their former social class or as representatives of political or religious groups—whether they were professional men, workers, intellectuals, Communists, nationalists, Catholics or Protestants—, but only as human beings in a struggle for survival against starvation and mass murders. This was true as much of the minority of those who took charge of the internal organization of the camp under the SS as of the majority of those who did not.

Living under these abnormal conditions, the inmates, especially those who had gained a position of some power and security, were frequently degraded and degenerated to a criminal level copying the methods and practices of the SS for their own protection and benefit. Because so many of the administrative positions were held by German prisoners, rather strong anti-German sentiments developed among the non-German inmates of the camp.

The only form of self-organization among the prisoners took place within the framework of the internal organization of the camp. The "Labor Allocation Office" (Arbeitseinsatz) and its subsidiary branches was the key agency which was successively in the hands of different cliques who frequently abuse their position of power for the sake of personal advantages. These groups were composed largely of Germans until the last six months.

Otherwise, the level of existence in the camp together with the insidious system of internal controls, whereby prisoners themselves were placed in the service of the SS, did not permit the emergence of any organizational form. There was no underground organization or political activity in the accepted sense of the word. Even expressions of mutual help and solidarity among members of the same national group never transcended the level of personal relations between people bound by friendships, common background, and language. They never took the form of organized action.

Only during the last phase of the camp, an organizational network was set up between leading representatives of various nationalities which led to the formation of the "International Prisoners Committee"—today the highest authority in the camp. This Committee was concerned entirely with matters of self-help in preparation of the eventual liberation of the camp. It has never been dominated by any political program or orientation.

This report is based on two days' investigation of conditions in the Dachau Concentration Camp. It does not intend to give either an exhaustive history of the camp or a comprehensive survey of all aspects of camp life. Numerous reports are in the process of being written which, when completed, will give a full picture of the Dachau Concentration Camp. This report is concerned primarily with one aspect of life in Dachau: the internal organization of the camp, the evidence of self-administration among the prisoners and the emergence of special control and pressure groups, as well as the position of the various social, political, and national groups within this organizational framework.

HISTORY

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Shortly before the camp was liberated, the Nazis sent out a large transport of special prisoners, consisting chiefly of Russians, Poles, Germans, and Jews. The Nazis also evacuated the so-called "honorary prisoners" (Ehrenhaeftlinge), i.e., the famous political and religious hostages they held in

Dachau (Niemoeller, Schauschnigg, Daladier, Blum, etc.). Plans to destroy the entire camp were apparently foiled at the last moment. At the time of liberation there were about 32,000 prisoners left in Dachau. The daily rate of people dying of exhaustion, starvation, and typhus was about 200. It is now between 50 to 80.

COMPOSITION

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As far as the prisoners themselves are concerned, the camp was divided sharply only between two groups: the "reds" or political prisoners and the "greens" or criminal prisoners. The SS tried to break down this distinction by an ingenious system of creating a "prisoners' elite", composed of both the "reds" and "greens", which assumed power over the internal organization of Dachau, controlled and frequently terrorized the camp in the name of the SS, but formally independent of the SS. This system of internal organization will be discussed in the following section. However, despite this organization of internal corruption and terror, by which the SS exercised its control indirectly, the mass of political prisoners continued to live in sharp separation from and opposition to the "criminals" and most of the prisoner bosses whom they despised, feared and hated.

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DACHAU, CONCENTRATION CAMP AND TOWN PWB Section, Seventh Army

INTRODUCTION

There are no words in English which can adequately describe the Konzentrations-Lager at Dachau.

In spite of the fact that one had known of its existence for years, has even spoken to people who had spent some time there, the first impression comes as a complete, stunning shock. One had always had—in the back of one's mind—the reservation "But surely it is impossible for human beings to do this to other people."

The first thing that was seen outside of the Camp was a train of some forty railway cars of all types—mostly flat cars, a few box cars and two or three ancient third class railway carriages. In each of the cars horribly thin corpses were lying in all postures, each clad in the pyjama-like uniform of the concentration camps. They lay in their own refuse. Some

corpses lay on the gravel road-bed, exactly where they fell when they were ordered out of the cars. There were two or three in almost every car door or gate. These were the few who were left alive when this weird train with its ghastly cargo arrived outside the gate to the camp in the afternoon of 28 April; for these unfortunates were alive when they were loaded on. They were expected to be dead by the time they reached Dachau, so that their corpses could be done away with in the famous crematory.

On the spur going directly into the Camp was another train that had recently been unloaded. Human refuse was still caked on the floors of the boxcars that had been the death chambers of unknown human beings.

American troops had arrived before the unloading of the train on the main line had been completed. At this writing proof positive of one of the greatest crimes against humanity still lies in the rickety cars and along the road bed leading into the Camp at Dachau. It lies in the shape of the broken, starved-out corpses of what once had been strong men. Men consigned to a horrible death with a cynicism brutal beyond words or belief.

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DACHAU, CONCENTRATION CAMP
CIC Detachment, Seventh Army

MEMORANDUM

On 29 April 1945, the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp, Dachau Germany, presented to the Allied Armies a gruesome spectacle of wholesaled bestiality and barbarism. . . .

LIBERATION

The Americans came Sunday, 29th of April. The arrival of the Americans was preceded by several days of frenzy. Wednesday was the last day of work and there was no more going out of the compound. Scattered labor details living outside of camp returned suddenly. Radios were taken away and there was no more communication with the outside.

On Thursday, orders to evacuate the entire camp were given. Transports began to be organized on large scales, but the organization was poor and uncoordinated. The prisoners having jobs in the administrative department mislaid orders, suddenly did not understand commands, and generally seemed quite indifferent to the mounting nervousness of the few camp officials that were left. Only one transport got

under way. It consisted of about 4,000 men, and they hiked with heavy guard in the direction of the Tyrol.

Then began the time of tense waiting. Rumors swept through the barracks of regiments and tanks just over the hill, of plans of mass annihilation of the prisoners by the remaining SS men, of parachutists, and of armistice. The prisoners organized a secret police force to keep order after the liberation they knew was coming. They build barricades to keep their own comrades from getting in the way of jumpy guards. And all time was at a standstill for three days while the prisoners waited and the guards paced nervously, furiously, in their towers.

Sunday, just after the noon meal, the air was unusually still. The big field outside the compound was deserted. Suddenly someone began running toward the gate at the other side of the field. Others followed. The word was shouted through the mass of gray, tired prisoners. Americans! That word repeated, yelled over the shoulders in throaty Polish, in Italian, in Russian, and in Dutch and in the familiar ring of French. The first internee was shot down as he rushed toward the gate by the guard. Yet they kept running and shouting through eager lips and unbelieving eyes. Americans! And at the gate in front of the hysterical mob of men were not the regiments or the tanks they had expected, but one dark-complexioned, calm American soldier, an American Pole, pistol in hand, looking casually about him; up at the towers where the SS guards watched apparently frozen; behind him two or three other American boys about a hundred yards away; and into the flushed wet faces of those thousands surging about in front of him.

A few shots were fired from behind the wall, the guards in the first tower came down, hands over their heads. A white blanket was hung out from another tower, and they came down, but one of them had a pistol in his hand which he held behind his back, and the dark-complexioned soldier shot him down. At the far side of the compound, the guards were taken care of from the outside.

Then a jeep arrived. Where were the regiments and the tanks? The first American was hoisted into the air and two others, a 19-year old farmer from the West, and a 19-year old university student, were dragged out of the jeep and carried around the grounds on the internees' shoulders. A blond journalist in uniform was also in the jeep, and she climbed the tower by the gate with a young officer.

Suddenly, the prisoners produced flags and colors which had been buried under the barracks or hidden in rafters. These flags and colors were improvised from sheets and scraps of colored cloth. It was a mardi-gras. Over the loud

speaker system the blond journalist said “We are just as glad to see you as you are to see us.” And then a chaplain in broken German asked them to join him in the Lord’s Prayer. And for a few minutes in power earnest unison and with bowed reverent heads and clasped hands, they prayed. The words echoed through the compound and through the hearts of the thousands still incredulous at the dark-complexioned American Pole, the 19-year old farm boy from the West, and the student, and at the regiments and tanks that never came.

Source: Report, “Dachau,” prepared by the Office of Strategic Services Section, Seventh Army, World War II Participants and Contemporaries Papers, Hoffman Steve: Dachau, and Porter Harold: Dachau; NAID #12009126. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

165. REPORT BY EARL G. HARRISON TO PRESIDENT TRUMAN ON LIVING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS OF DISPLACED PERSONS, AUGUST 1945

Earl G. Harrison, dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and commissioner for immigration and naturalization under President Franklin Roosevelt, was asked by the U.S. government to report on the conditions facing displaced persons, especially Jews, in camps run by the Allies in Europe. This document was prepared by Harrison and submitted to President Harry S. Truman in August 1945. It presents a scene so disturbing that it prompted Truman to issue orders to General Eisenhower to immediately correct the situation. What Harrison reported was that Jews in liberated camps were being treated in many ways as they had been when under Nazi rule. Although no longer subject to execution, of course, Harrison reported that the Jews “are living under guard behind barbed-wire fences in camps . . . amid crowded, frequently unsanitary and generally grim conditions,” with little effort being made to determine if loved ones were alive and if they could be reunited. He continued in detail to describe the terrible conditions these people were facing in the hands of the Allied liberators.

Text of Report by Earl G. Harrison

London, England
The White House,
Washington.

Dear Mr. President:

Pursuant to your letter of June 22, 1945, I have the honor to present to you a partial report upon my recent mission to Europe to inquire into (1) the conditions under which displaced persons, and particularly those who may be stateless or non-repatriable, are at present living, especially in Germany and Austria, (2) the needs of such persons, (3) how those needs are being met at present by the military authorities, the governments of residence, and international and private relief bodies, and (4) the views of the possibly non-repatriable persons as to their future destinations.

My instructions were to give particular attention to the problems, needs and views of the Jewish refugees among the displaced people, especially in Germany and Austria. The report, particularly this partial report, accordingly deals in the main with that group.

On numerous occasions appreciation was expressed by the victims of Nazi persecution for the interest of the United States government in them. As my report shows, they are in need of attention and help. Up to this point, they have been “liberated” more in a military sense than actually.

For the reasons explained in the report their particular problems to this time have not been given attention to any appreciable extent; consequently, they feel that they, who were in so many ways the first and worst victims of Nazism, are being neglected by their liberators.

Upon my request the Department of State authorized Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz to join me in the mission. Dr. Schwartz, European director of the American Joint Distribution Committee, was granted a leave of absence from that organization for the purpose of accompanying me. His long and varied experience in refugee problems, as well as his familiarity with the Continent and the people, made Dr. Schwartz a most valuable associate: this report represents our joint views, conclusions and recommendations.

During various portions of the trip I had, also, the assistance of Mr. Patrick M. Malin, vice-director of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees and Mr. Herbert Katzski of the War Refugee Board. These gentlemen, likewise, have had considerable experience in refugee matters. Their assistance and cooperation were most helpful in the course of the survey.

I. GERMANY AND AUSTRIA Conditions

1. Generally speaking, three months after V-E Day, and even longer after the liberation of individual groups,

many Jewish displaced persons and other possibly non-repatriables are living under guard behind barbed-wire fences in camps of several descriptions (built by the Germans for slave laborers and Jews), including some of the most notorious of the concentration camps, amid crowded, frequently unsanitary and generally grim conditions, in complete idleness, with no opportunity, except surreptitiously, to communicate with the outside world, waiting, hoping, for some word of encouragement and action on their behalf.

2. While there has been marked improvement in the health of survivors of the Nazi starvation and persecution program, there are many pathetic malnutrition cases both among the hospitalized and in the general population of the camps. The death rate has been high since liberation, as was to be expected. One army chaplain, a rabbi, personally attended, since liberation, twenty-three thousand burials at Bergen-Belsen alone, one of the largest and most vicious of the concentration camps, where, incidentally, despite persistent reports to the contrary, fourteen thousand displaced persons are still living, including over seven thousand Jews. At many of the camps and centers, including those where serious starvation cases are, there is a marked and serious lack of needed medical supplies.
3. Although some camp commandants have managed, in spite of the many obvious difficulties, to find clothing of one kind or another for their charges, many of the Jewish displaced persons, late in July, had no clothing other than their concentration camp garb—a rather hideous striped pajama effect—while others, to their chagrin, were obliged to wear German SS uniforms. It is questionable which clothing they hate the more.
4. With a few notable exceptions, nothing in the way of a program of activity or organized effort toward rehabilitation has been inaugurated, and the internees, for they are literally such, have little to do except to dwell upon their plight, the uncertainty of their future and, what is more unfortunate, to draw comparisons between their treatment “under the Germans” and “in liberation.”

Beyond knowing that they are no longer in danger of the gas chambers, torture and other forms of violent death, they see—and there is—little change; the morale of those who are either stateless or who do not wish to return to their countries of nationality is very low. They have witnessed great activity and efficiency in returning people to their homes, but they hear or see nothing in the

way of plans for them and consequently they wonder and frequently ask what “liberation” means.

This situation is considerably accentuated where, as in so many cases, they are able to look from their crowded and bare quarters and see the German civilian population, particularly in the rural areas, to all appearances living normal lives in their own homes.

5. The most absorbing worry of these Nazi and war victims concerns relatives, wives, husbands, parents, children. Most of them have been separated for three, four or five years and they cannot understand why the liberators should not have undertaken immediately the organized effort to reunite family groups. Most of the very little which has been done in this direction has been informal action by the displaced persons themselves with the aid of devoted army chaplains, frequently rabbis, and the American Joint Distribution Committee.

Broadcasts of names and locations by the Psychological Warfare Division at Luxembourg have been helpful, although the lack of receiving sets has handicapped the effectiveness of the program. Even where, as has been happening, information has been received as to relatives living in other camps in Germany, it depends on the personal attitude and disposition of the camp commandant whether permission can be obtained or assistance received to follow up on the information. Some camp commandants are quite rigid in this particular while others lend every effort to join family groups.

6. It is difficult to evaluate the food situation fairly because one must be mindful of the fact that quite generally food is scarce and is likely to be more so during the winter ahead. On the other hand, in presenting the factual situation, one must raise the question as to how much longer many of these people, particularly those who have over such a long period felt persecution and near starvation, can survive on a diet composed principally of bread and coffee, irrespective of the caloric content.

In many camps, the 2,000 calories included 1,250 calories of a black, wet and extremely unappetizing bread. I received the distinct impression and considerable substantiating information that large numbers of the German population—again principally in the rural areas—have a more varied and palatable diet in their requisitions with the German burgomaster, and many seemed to accept whatever he turned over as being the best that was available.

7. Many of the buildings in which displaced persons are housed are clearly unfit for winter use and everywhere

there is great concern about the prospect of a complete lack of fuel. There is every likelihood that close to a million displaced persons will be in Germany and Austria when winter sets in. The outlook in many areas so far as shelter, food and fuel are concerned is anything but bright.

II. NEEDS OF THE JEWS

While it is impossible to state accurately the number of Jews now in that part of Germany not under Russian occupation, all indications point to the fact that the number is small, with one hundred thousand probably the top figure; some informed persons contend the number is considerably smaller. The principal nationality groups are Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Germans and Austrians.

The first and plainest need of these people is a recognition of their actual status and by this I mean their status as Jews. Most of them have spent years in the worst of the concentration camps. In many cases, although the full extent is not yet known, they are the sole survivors of their families and many have been through the agony of witnessing the destruction of their loved ones. Understandably, therefore, their present condition, physical and mental, is far worse than that of other groups.

While SHAEF (now Combined Displaced Persons Executive) policy directives have recognized formerly persecuted persons, including enemy and ex-enemy nationals, as one of the special categories of displaced persons, the general practice thus far has been to follow only nationality lines. While admittedly it is not normally desirable to set aside particular racial or religious groups from their nationality categories, the plain truth is that this was done for so long by the Nazis that a group has been created which has special needs. Jews as Jews (not members of their nationality groups) have been more severely victimized than the non-Jewish members of the same or other nationalities.

When they are now considered only as members of nationality groups, the result is that special attention cannot be given to their admittedly greater needs because, it is contended, doing so would constitute preferential treatment and lead to trouble with the non-Jewish portion of the particular nationality group.

Thus there is a distinctly unrealistic approach to the problem. Refusal to recognize the Jews as such has the effect, in this situation, of closing one's eyes to their former and more barbaric persecution, which has already made them a separate group with greater needs.

Their second great need can be presented only by discussing what I found to be their wishes as to future destinations.

1. For reasons that are obvious and need not be labored, most Jews want to leave Germany and Austria as soon as possible. That is their first and great expressed wish, and while this report necessarily deals with other needs present in the situation, many of the people themselves fear other suggestions or plans for their benefit because of the possibility that attention might thereby be diverted from the all-important matter of evacuation from Germany.

Their desire to leave Germany is an urgent one. The life which they have led for the past ten years, a life of fear and wandering and physical torture, has made them impatient of delay. They want to be evacuated to Palestine now, just as other national groups are being repatriated to their homes. They do not look kindly on the idea of waiting around in idleness and in discomfort in a German camp for many months until a leisurely solution is found for them.

2. Some wish to return to their countries of nationality, but as to this there is considerable nationality variation. Very few Polish or Baltic Jews wish to return to their countries; higher percentages of the Hungarian and Romanian groups want to return, although some hasten to add that it may be only temporarily, in order to look for relatives. Some of the German Jews, especially those who have intermarried, prefer to stay in Germany.
3. With respect to possible place of resettlement for those who may be stateless or who do not wish to return to their homes, Palestine is definitely and preeminently the first choice. Many now have relatives there while others, having experienced intolerance and persecution in their homelands for years, feel that only in Palestine will they be welcomed and find peace and quiet and be given an opportunity to live and work. In the case of the Polish and Baltic Jews, the desire to go to Palestine is based in a great majority of the cases on a love for the country and devotion to the Zionist ideal. It is also true, however, that there are many who wish to go to Palestine because they realize that their opportunity to be admitted into the United States or into other countries in the western hemisphere is limited, if not impossible. Whatever the motive which causes them to turn to Palestine, it is undoubtedly true that the great majority of the Jews now in Germany do not wish to return to those countries from which they came.

4. Palestine, while clearly the choice of most, is not the only named place of possible emigration. Some, but the number is not large, wish to emigrate to the United States, where they have relatives, others to England, the British Dominions, or to South America.

Thus, the second great need is the prompt development of a plan to get out of Germany and Austria as many as possible of those who wish it.

Otherwise the needs and wishes of the Jewish groups among the displaced persons can be simply stated: among their physical needs are clothing and shoes (most sorely needed), more varied and palatable diet, medicine, beds and mattresses, reading materials. The clothing for the camps, too, is requisitioned from the German population, and whether there is not sufficient quantity to be had or the German population has not been willing or has not been compelled to give up sufficient quantity, the internees feel particularly bitter about the state of their clothing when they see how well the German population is still dressed. The German population today is still the best dressed population in all of Europe.

III. MANNER IN WHICH NEEDS ARE BEING MET

Aside from having brought relief from the fear of extermination, hospitalization for the serious starvation cases and some general improvement in conditions under which the remaining displaced persons are compelled to live, relatively little beyond the planning stage has been done, during the period of mass repatriation, to meet the special needs of the formerly persecuted groups.

UNRRA, being neither sufficiently organized or equipped or authorized to operate displaced persons camps or centers on any large scale, has not been in a position to make any substantial contribution to the situation. Regrettably there has been a disinclination on the part of many camp commandants to utilize UNRRA personnel even to the extent available, though it must be admitted that in many situations this resulted from unfortunate experiences army officers had with UNRRA personnel who were unqualified and inadequate for the responsibility involved. Then, too, in the American and British Zones, it too frequently occurred that UNRRA personnel did not include English-speaking members and this hampered proper working relationships.

Under these circumstances UNRRA, to which has been assigned the responsibility for coordinating activities of private social welfare agencies, has been in an awkward position

when it came to considering and acting upon proposals of one kind or another submitted by well-qualified agencies which would aid and supplement military and UNRRA responsibilities. The result has been that, up to this point, very few private social agencies are working with displaced persons, including the Jews, although the situation cries out for their services in many different ways.

It must be said, too, that because of their preoccupation with mass repatriation and because of housing, personnel and transport difficulties, the military authorities have shown considerable resistance to the entrance of voluntary agency representatives, no matter how qualified they might be to help meet existing needs of displaced persons.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. Now that the worst of the pressure of mass repatriation is over, it is not unreasonable to suggest that in the next and perhaps more difficult period those who have suffered most and longest be given first and last attention.

Specifically, in the days immediately ahead, the Jews in Germany and Austria should have the first claim upon the conscience of the people of the United States and Great Britain and the military and other personnel who represent them in work being done in Germany and Austria.

- II. Evacuation from Germany should be the emphasized theme, policy and practice.

A. Recognizing that repatriation is most desirable from the standpoint of all concerned, the Jews who wish to return to their own countries, should be aided to do so without further delay. Whatever special action is needed to accomplish this, with respect to countries of reception or consent of military or other authorities, should be undertaken with energy and determination. Unless this and other action, about to be suggested, is taken, substantial unofficial and unauthorized movements of people must be expected, and these will require considerable force to prevent, for the patience of many of the persons involved is, and in my opinion with justification, nearing the breaking point. It cannot be overemphasized that many of these people are now desperate, that they have become accustomed under German rule to employ every possible means to reach their end, and that the fear of death does not restrain them.

B. With respect to those who do not, for good reason, wish to return to their homes, prompt planning should likewise be undertaken. In this connection, the issue of Palestine must be faced. Now that such, large numbers are no longer involved and if there is any genuine sympathy for what these survivors have endured, some reasonable extension or modification of the British White Paper of 1939 ought to be possible without too serious repercussions. For some of the European Jews, there is no acceptable or even decent solution for their future other than Palestine. This is said on a purely humanitarian basis with no reference to ideological or political considerations so far as Palestine is concerned.

It is my understanding, based upon reliable information, that certificates for immigration to Palestine will be practically exhausted by the end of the current month (August, 1945). What is the future to be? To anyone who has visited the concentration camps and who has talked with the despairing survivors, it is nothing short of calamitous to contemplate that the gates of Palestine should be soon closed.

The Jewish Agency of Palestine has submitted to the British government a petition that one hundred thousand additional immigration certificates be made available. A memorandum accompanying the petition makes a persuasive showing with respect to the immediate absorptive capacity of Palestine and the current, actual manpower shortages there.

While there may be room for difference of opinion as to the precise number of such certificates which might under the circumstances be considered reasonable, there is no question but that the request thus made would, if granted, contribute much to the sound solution for the future of Jews still in Germany and Austria and even other displaced Jews, who do not wish either to remain there or to return to their countries of nationality.

No other single matter is, therefore, so important from the viewpoint of Jews in Germany and Austria and those elsewhere, who have known the horrors of the concentration camps, as is the disposition of the Palestine question.

Dr. Hugh Dalton, a prominent member of the new British government, is reported as having said at the Labour Party conference in May, 1945:

This party has laid it down and repeated it so recently as last April . . . that this time, having regard to the unspeakable horrors that have been perpetrated upon the Jews of Germany and other occupied countries in Europe, it is morally wrong and politically indefensible to impose obstacles to the entry into Palestine now of any Jews who desire to go there. . . .

We have also stated clearly that this is not a matter which should be regarded as one for which the British government alone should take responsibility, but as it comes, as do many others, in the international field, it is indispensable that there should be close agreement and cooperation among the British, American and Soviet governments, particularly if we are going to get a sure settlement in Palestine and the surrounding countries. . . .

If this can be said to represent the viewpoint of the new government in Great Britain, it certainly would not be inappropriate for the United States government to express its interest in and support of some equitable solution of the question, which would make it possible for some reasonable number of Europe's persecuted Jews, now homeless under any fair view, to resettle in Palestine. That is their wish and it is rendered desirable by the generally accepted policy of permitting family groups to unite or reunite.

C. The United States should, under existing immigration laws, permit reasonable numbers of such persons to come here, again particularly those who have family ties in this country. As indicated earlier, the number who desire emigration to the United States is not large.

If Great Britain and the United States were to take the actions recited, it might the more readily be that other countries would likewise be willing to keep their doors reasonably open for such humanitarian considerations and to demonstrate in a practical manner their disapproval of Nazi policy which unfortunately has poisoned so much of Europe.

III. To the extent that such emigration from Germany and Austria is delayed, some immediate temporary solution must be found. In any event there will be a substantial number of persecuted persons who are not

physically fit or otherwise presently prepared for emigration.

Here I feel strongly that greater and more extensive effort should be made to get them out of camps, for they are sick of living in camps. In the first place, there is real need for such specialized places as (a) tuberculosis sanatoria and (b) rest homes for those who are mentally ill or who need a period of readjustment before living again in the world at large—anywhere. Some will require at least short periods of training or retraining before they can be really useful citizens.

But speaking more broadly, there is an opportunity here to give some real meaning to the policy agreed upon at Potsdam. If it be true, as seems to be widely conceded, that the German people at large do not have any sense of guilt with respect to the war and its causes and results, and if the policy is to be “to convince the German people that they have suffered a total military defeat and that they cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves,” it is difficult to understand why so many displaced persons, particularly those who have so long been persecuted and whose repatriation or resettlement is likely to be delayed, should be compelled to live in crude, overcrowded camps while the German people, in rural areas, continue undisturbed in their homes.

As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them, except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of SS troops. One is led to wonder whether the German people, seeing this, are not supposing that we are following or at least condoning Nazi policy.

It seems much more equitable, and as it should be, to witness the very few places where fearless and uncompromising military officers have either requisitioned an entire village for the benefit of displaced persons, compelling the German population to find housing where they can, or have required the local population to billet a reasonable number of them.

Thus the displaced persons, including the persecuted, live more like normal people and less like prisoners or criminals or herded sheep. They are in Germany, most of them and certainly the Jews, through no fault or wish of their own. This fact is, in this fashion, being brought home to the German people, but it is being done on too small a scale.

At many places, however, the military government officers manifest the utmost reluctance or indisposition, if not timidity, about inconveniencing the German population. They even say that their job is to get communities working properly and soundly again, that they must “live with the Germans while the DPs (displaced persons) are a more temporary problem.”

Thus (and I am ready to cite the example) if a group of Jews are ordered to vacate their temporary quarters, needed for military purposes, and there are two possible sites, one a block of flats (model apartments) with conveniences and the other a series of shabby buildings with outside toilet and washing facilities, the Burgomaster readily succeeds in persuading the town mayor to allot the latter to the displaced persons and to save the former for returning German civilians.

This tendency reflects itself in other ways, namely, in the employment of German civilians in the offices of Military Government when equally qualified personnel could easily be found among the displaced persons whose repatriation is not imminent. Actually, there have been situations where displaced persons, especially Jews, have found it difficult to obtain audiences with military government authorities because ironically they have been obliged to go through German employers who have not facilitated matters.

Quite generally, insufficient use is made of the services of displaced persons. Many of them are able and eager to work, but apparently they are not considered in this regard. While appreciating that language difficulties are sometimes involved, I am convinced that, both within and outside camps, greater use those displaced persons who in all likelihood will be on hand for some time. Happily, in some camps every effort is made to utilize the services of the displaced persons and these are apt to be the best camps in all respects.

- IV. To the extent that (a) evacuation from Germany and Austria is not immediately possible and (b) the formerly persecuted groups cannot be housed in villages or billeted with the German population, I recommend urgently that separate camps be set up for Jews, or at least for those who wish, in the absence of a better solution, to be in such camps. There are several reasons for this; (1) A great majority want it; (2) it is the only way in which administratively their special needs and problems can be met without charges of preferential treatment or (oddly enough) charges of

“discrimination” with respect to Jewish agencies now prepared and ready to give them assistance.

In this connection, I wish to emphasize that it is not a case of singling out a particular group for special privileges. It is a matter of raising to a more normal level the position of a group which has been depressed to the lowest depths conceivable by years of organized and inhuman oppression. The measures necessary for their restitution do not come within any reasonable interpretation of privileged treatment and are required by considerations of justice and humanity.

There has been some tendency at spots in the direction of separate camps for those who might be found to be stateless or non-repatriable or whose repatriation is likely to be deferred some time. Actually, too, this was announced some time ago as SHAEF policy, but in practice it has not been taken to mean much, for there is (understandably if not carried too far) a refusal to contemplate possible statelessness and an insistence, in the interests of the large repatriation program, to consider all as repatriable. This results in a resistance to anything in the way of special planning for the “hard core,” although all admit it is there and will inevitably appear.

While speaking of camps, this should be pointed out: While it may be that conditions in Germany and Austria are still such that certain control measures are required, there seems little justification for the continuance of barbed-wire fences, armed guards and prohibition against leaving camp except by passes, which at some places are illiberally granted. Prevention of looting is given as the reason for these stern measures, but it is interesting that in portions of the Seventh Army area, where greater liberty of movement in and out of camps is given, there is actually much less plundering than in other areas where people, wishing to leave camp temporarily, do so by stealth.

- V. As quickly as possible the actual operation of such camps should be turned over to a civilian agency—UNRRA. That organization is aware of weaknesses in its present structure and is pressing to remedy them. In that connection, it is believed that greater assistance could be given by the military authorities, upon whom any civilian agency in Germany and Austria today is necessarily dependent, so far as housing, transport and other items are concerned. While it is true the military have been urging UNRRA to get ready to assume responsibility, it is also the fact that

insufficient cooperation of an active nature has been given to accomplish the desired end.

- VI. Since, in any event, the military authorities must necessarily continue to participate in the program for all displaced persons, especially with respect to housing, transport, security and certain supplies, it is recommended that there be a review of the military personnel elected for camp commandant positions. Some serving at present, while perhaps adequate for the mass repatriation job, are manifestly unsuited for the longer-term job of working in a camp composed of people whose repatriation or resettlement is likely to be delayed. Officers who have had some background or experience in social welfare work are to be preferred, and it is believed there are some who are available. It is most important that the officers selected be sympathetic with the program and that they be temperamentally able to work and to cooperate with UNRRA and other relief and welfare agencies.
- VII. Pending the assumption of responsibility for operations by UNRRA, it would be desirable if a more extensive plan of field visitation by appropriate army group headquarters be instituted. It is believed that many of the conditions now existing in the camps would not be tolerated if more intimately known by supervisory officers through inspection tours.
- VIII. It is urgently recommended that plans for tracing services, if on open postal card only, be made available to displaced persons within Germany and Austria as soon as possible. The difficulties are appreciated but it is believed that, if the anxiety of the people, so long abused and harassed, were fully understood, ways and means could be found within the near future to make such communication and tracing of relatives possible. I believe also that some of the private agencies could be helpful in this direction if given an opportunity to function.

V. “THE MAIN SOLUTION—PALESTINE”

While I was instructed to report conditions as I found them, the following should be added to make the picture complete:

1. A gigantic task confronted the occupying armies in Germany and Austria in getting back to their homes as many as possible of the more than six million displaced persons found in those countries. Less than three months after V-E Day, more than four million of such persons have been repatriated—a phenomenal performance. One’s

first impression, in surveying the situation, is that of complete admiration for what has been accomplished by the military authorities in so materially reducing the time as predicted to be required for this stupendous task. Praise of the highest order is due all military units with respect to this phase of post-fighting jobs. In directing attention to existing conditions which unquestionably require remedying, there is no intention or wish to detract one particle from the preceding statements.

2. While I did not actually see conditions as they existed immediately after liberation, I had them described in detail sufficient to make entirely clear that there had been, during the intervening period, some improvement in the conditions under which most of the remaining displaced persons are living. Reports which have come out of Germany informally from refugees themselves and from persons interested in refugee groups indicate something of a tendency not to take into account the full scope of the overwhelming tasks and responsibilities facing the military authorities. While it is understandable that those who have been persecuted and otherwise mistreated over such a long period should be impatient at what appears to them to be undue delay in meeting their special needs, fairness dictates that, in evaluating the progress made, the entire problem and all its ramifications be kept in mind. My effort has been, therefore, to weigh quite carefully the many complaints made to me in the course of my survey, both by displaced persons themselves and in their behalf, in the light of the many responsibilities which confronted the military authorities.
3. While for the sake of brevity this report necessarily consisted largely of general statements, it should be recognized that exceptions exist with respect to practically all such generalizations. One high-ranking military authority predicted, in advance of my trip through Germany and Austria, that I would find, with respect to camps containing displaced persons, "some that are quite good, some that are very bad, with the average something under satisfactory." My subsequent trip confirmed that prediction in all respects.

In order to file this report promptly so that possibly some remedial steps might be considered at as early a date as possible, I have not taken time to analyze all of the notes made in the course of the trip or to comment on the situation in France, Belgium, Holland or Switzerland, also visited. Accordingly, I respectfully request that this report be considered as partial in nature. The problems present in Germany and

Austria are much more serious and difficult than in any of the other countries named and this fact, too, seemed to make desirable the filing of a partial report immediately upon completion of the mission.

In conclusion, I wish to repeat that the main solution, in many ways the only real solution, of the problem lies in the quick evacuation of all non-repatriable Jews in Germany and Austria, who wish it, to Palestine. In order to be effective, this plan must not be long delayed. The urgency of the situation should be recognized. It is inhuman to ask people to continue to live for any length of time under their present conditions. The evacuation of the Jews of Germany and Austria to Palestine will solve the problem of the individuals involved and will also remove a problem from the military authorities who have had to deal with it.

The army's ability to move millions of people quickly and efficiently has been amply demonstrated. The evacuation of a relatively small number of Jews from Germany and Austria will present no great problem to the military. With the end of the Japanese war, the shipping situation should also become sufficiently improved to make such a move feasible.

The civilized world owes it to this handful of survivors to provide them with a home where they can again settle down and begin to live as human beings.

Source: Report, Earl G. Harrison's "Mission to Europe to inquire into the condition and needs of those among the displaced persons in the liberated countries of Western Europe and in the SHAEF area of Germany—with particular reference to the Jewish refugees—who may possibly be stateless or non-repatriable," undated [ca. August 1945], Dwight D. Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 116, Truman Harry S. (4); NAID #12007695. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

166. LETTER FROM PRESIDENT TRUMAN TO GENERAL EISENHOWER IN RESPONSE TO THE HARRISON REPORT, AUGUST 31, 1945

Shortly after receipt of a report prepared by Earl G. Harrison, commissioner for immigration and naturalization under President Franklin Roosevelt on the conditions facing displaced persons (DPs), especially Jews, in camps run by the Allies in Europe, President Harry S. Truman wrote this letter to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme Allied commander, Europe, telling him of Harrison's findings. Truman notes that

it seems to "have been taken for granted that all displaced persons, irrespective of their former persecution or the likelihood that their repatriation or resettlement will be delayed, must remain in camps—many of which are overcrowded and heavily guarded. Some of these camps are the very ones where these people were herded together, starved, tortured and made to witness the death of their fellow-inmates and friends and relatives." Truman states that efforts must be intensified to move these DPs from the camps and into "decent houses until they can be repatriated or evacuated." Truman writes to Eisenhower: "I know you will agree with me that we have a particular responsibility toward these victims of persecution and tyranny who are in our zone."

My dear General Eisenhower:

I have received and considered the report of Mr. Earl G. Harrison, our representative on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, upon his mission to inquire into the condition and needs of displaced persons in Germany who may be stateless or non-repatriable, particularly Jews. I am sending you a copy of that report. I have also had a long conference with him on the same subject.

While Mr. Harrison makes due allowance for the fact that during the early days of liberation the huge task of mass repatriation required main attention, he reports conditions which now exist and which require prompt remedy. Those conditions, I know, are not in conformity with policies promulgated by SHARF, now Combined Displaced Persons Executive. But they are what actually exists in the field. In other words, the policies are not being carried out by some of your subordinate officers.

For example, military government officers have been authorized and even directed to requisition billeting facilities from the German population for the benefit of displaced persons. Yet, from this report, this has not been done on any wide scale. Apparently it is being taken for granted that all displaced persons, irrespective of their former persecution or the likelihood that their repatriation or resettlement will be delayed, must remain in camps—many of which are overcrowded and heavily guarded. Some of these camps are the very ones where these people were herded together, starved, tortured and made to witness the death of their fellow-inmates and friends and relatives. The announced policy has been to give such persons preference over the German civilian population in housing. But the practice seems to be quite another thing.

We must intensify our efforts to get these people out of camps and into decent houses until they can be repatriated

or evacuated. These houses should be requisitioned from the German civilian population. That is one way to implement the Potsdam policy that the German people "cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves."

I quote this paragraph with particular reference to the Jews among the displaced persons:

"As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of S.S. troops. One is led to wonder whether the German people, seeing this, are not supposing that we are following or at least condoning Nazi policy."

You will find in the report other illustrations of what I mean.

I hope you will adopt the suggestion that a more extensive plan of field visitation by appropriate Army Group Headquarters be instituted, so that the humane policies which have been enunciated are not permitted to be ignored in the field. Most of the conditions now existing in displaced persons camps would quickly be remedied if through inspection tours they came to your attention or to the attention of your supervisory officers.

I know you will agree with me that we have a particular responsibility toward these victims of persecution and tyranny who are in our zone. We must make clear to the German people that we thoroughly abhor the Nazi policies of hatred and persecution. We have no better opportunity to demonstrate this than by the manner in which we ourselves actually treat the survivors remaining in Germany.

I hope you will report to me as soon as possible the steps you have been able to take to clean up the conditions mentioned in the report.

I am communicating directly with the British Government in an effort to have the doors of Palestine opened to such of these displaced persons as wish to go there.

Very sincerely yours,
(Sgd) Harry S. Truman

General of the Army D. D. Eisenhower
G.Hq. USFET

Source: Collection HST-OFF: Official Files (Truman Administration),
National Archive Identifier: 201125.

167. LONDON AGREEMENT AMONG ALLIES TO ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL, AUGUST 8, 1945

In October 1943 at a conference that was held in Moscow, a declaration of atrocities was signed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, "speaking in the interest of the thirty-two United Nations." It pledged that Germans "responsible for or [who] have taken a consenting part" in Nazi atrocities will be brought to justice. That declaration became a reality with the London Agreement of August 8, 1945, signed on behalf of the Government of the United States, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Government of the Soviet Union. The agreement established an International Military Tribunal for "war criminals whose offenses have no particular geographical location," and set forth the Charter of the International Military Tribunal that would provide the tribunal's constitution and define its jurisdiction and functions. The London Agreement also pledged cooperation among the four signatories to make available to the tribunal any of the major war criminals who are to be tried by the tribunal.

AGREEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS FOR THE PROSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE MAJOR WAR CRIMINALS OF THE EUROPEAN AXIS.

WHEREAS the United Nations have from time to time made declarations of their intention that War Criminals shall be brought to justice;

AND WHEREAS the Moscow Declaration of the 30th October 1943 on German atrocities in Occupied Europe stated that those German Officers and men and members of the Nazi Party who have been responsible for or have taken a consenting part in atrocities and crimes will be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the free Governments that will be created therein;

AND WHEREAS this Declaration was stated to be without prejudice to the case of major criminals whose offenses have no particular geographic location and who will be punished by the joint decision of the Governments of the Allies;

NOW THEREFORE the Government of the United States of America, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereinafter called "the Signatories") acting in the interests of all the United Nations and by their representatives duly authorized thereto have concluded this Agreement.

Article 1. There shall be established after consultation with the Control Council for Germany an International Military Tribunal for the trial of war criminals whose offenses have no particular geographical location whether they be accused individually or in their capacity as members of organizations or groups or in both capacities.

Article 2. The constitution, jurisdiction and functions of the International Military Tribunal shall be those set out in the Charter annexed to this Agreement, which Charter shall form an integral part of this Agreement.

Article 3. Each of the Signatories shall take the necessary steps to make available for the investigation of the charges and trial the major war criminals detained by them who are to be tried by the International Military Tribunal. The Signatories shall also use their best endeavors to make available for investigation of the charges against and the trial before the International Military Tribunal such of the major war criminals as are not in the territories of any of the Signatories.

Article 4. Nothing in this Agreement shall prejudice the provisions established by the Moscow Declaration concerning the return of war criminals to the countries where they committed their crimes.

Article 5. Any Government of the United Nations may adhere to this Agreement by notice given through the diplomatic channel to the Government of the United Kingdom, who shall inform the other signatory and adhering Governments of each such adherence.

Article 6. Nothing in this Agreement shall prejudice the jurisdiction or the powers of any national or occupation

court established or to be established in any allied territory or in Germany for the trial of war criminals.

Article 7. This Agreement shall come into force on the day of signature and shall remain in force for the period of one year and shall continue thereafter, subject to the right of any Signatory to give, through the diplomatic channel, one month's notice of intention to terminate it. Such termination shall not prejudice any proceedings already taken or any findings already made in pursuance of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Undersigned have signed the present Agreement.

DONE in quadruplicate in London this 8th day of August 1945 each in English, French and Russian, and each text to have equal authenticity.

For the Government of the United States of America

[signed] ROBERT H. JACKSON

For the Provisional Government of the French Republic

[signed] ROBERT FALCO

For the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

[signed] JOWITT C.

For the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

[signed] I. T. NIKITCHENKO

[signed] A. N. TRAININ

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. I, pp. 1–3.

168. CHARTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL, AUGUST 8, 1945

The 30 articles of the International Military Tribunal charter laid out the prosecutorial agenda for the trial of major war criminals and, if convicted, the punishments of the leadership of Nazi Germany, responsible for the death and destruction of World War II. It is divided into the following sections: I. Constitution of the International Military Tribunal (1–5), II. Jurisdiction and General Principles (6–13), III. Committee

for the Investigation and Prosecution of Major War Criminals (14–15), IV. Fair Trial for Defendants (16), V. Powers of the Tribunal and Conduct of the Trial (17–25), VI. Judgment and Sentence (26–29), and VII. Expenses (30). Signatories to the charter were the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. The “heart” of the charter was found in Article 6 and addressed the crimes with which the Nazi leadership was charged: crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity (Jews, as such, not specifically mentioned). The charter provided the foundation for the later International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for (the former) Yugoslavia, and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

CHARTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL

I. CONSTITUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL

Article 1. In pursuance of the Agreement signed on the 8th day of August 1945 by the Government of the United States of America, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, there shall be established an International Military Tribunal (hereinafter called “the Tribunal”) for the just and prompt trial and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis.

Article 2. The Tribunal shall consist of four members, each with an alternate. One member and one alternate shall be appointed by each of the Signatories. The alternates shall, so far as they are able, be present at all sessions of the Tribunal. In case of illness of any member of the Tribunal or his incapacity for some other reason to fulfill his functions, his alternate shall take his place.

Article 3. Neither the Tribunal, its members nor their alternates can be challenged by the prosecution, or by the Defendants or their Counsel. Each Signatory may replace its member of the Tribunal or his alternate for reasons of health or for other good reasons, except that no replacement may take place during a Trial, other than by an alternate.

Article 4.

- (a) The presence of all four members of the Tribunal or the alternate for any absent member shall be necessary to constitute the quorum.

- (b) The members of the Tribunal shall, before any trial begins, agree among themselves upon the selection from their number of a President, and the President shall hold office during that trial, or as may otherwise be agreed by a vote of not less than three members. The principle of rotation of presidency for successive trials is agreed. If, however, a session of the Tribunal takes place on the territory of one of the four Signatories, the representative of that Signatory on the Tribunal shall preside.
- (c) Save as aforesaid the Tribunal shall take decisions by a majority vote and in case the votes are evenly divided, the vote of the President shall be decisive: provided always that convictions and sentences shall only be imposed by affirmative votes of at least three members of the Tribunal.

Article 5. In case of need and depending on the number of the matters to be tried, other Tribunals may be set up; and the establishment, functions, and procedure of each Tribunal shall be identical, and shall be governed by this Charter.

II. JURISDICTION AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Article 6. The Tribunal established by the Agreement referred to in Article 1 hereof for the trial and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis countries shall have the power to try and punish persons who, acting in the interests of the European Axis countries, whether as individuals or as members of organizations, committed any of the following crimes.

The following acts, or any of them, are crimes coming within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal for which there shall be individual responsibility:

- (a) CRIMES AGAINST PEACE: namely, planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing;
- (b) WAR CRIMES: namely, violations of the laws or customs of war. Such violations shall include, but not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity;
- (c) CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war; or persecution on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of domestic law of the country where perpetrated.

Leaders, organizers, instigators and accomplices participating in the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such plan.

Article 7. The official position of defendants, whether as Heads of State or responsible officials in Government Departments, shall not be considered as freeing them from responsibility or mitigating punishment.

Article 8. The fact that the Defendant acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior shall not free him from responsibility, but may be considered in mitigation of punishment if the Tribunal determine that justice so requires.

Article 9. At the trial of any individual member of any group or organization the Tribunal may declare (in connection with any act of which the individual may be convicted) that the group or organization of which the individual was a member was a criminal organization.

After receipt of the Indictment the Tribunal shall give such notice as it thinks fit that the prosecution intends to ask the Tribunal to make such declaration and any member of the organization will be entitled to apply to the Tribunal for leave to be heard by the Tribunal upon the question of the criminal character of the organization. The Tribunal shall have power to allow or reject the application. If the application is allowed, the Tribunal may direct in what manner the applicants shall be represented and heard.

Article 10. In cases where a group or organization is declared criminal by the Tribunal, the competent national authority of any Signatory shall have the right to bring individuals to trial for membership therein before national, military or occupation courts. In any such case the criminal nature of the group or organization is considered proved and shall not be questioned.

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Article 11. Any person convicted by the Tribunal may be charged before a national, military or occupation court, referred to in Article 10 of this Charter, with a crime other than of membership in a criminal group or organization and such court may, after convicting him, impose upon him punishment independent of and additional to the punishment imposed by the Tribunal for participation in the criminal activities of such group or organization.

Article 12. The Tribunal shall have the right to take proceedings against a person charged with crimes set out in Article 6 of this Charter in his absence, if he has not been found or if the Tribunal, for any reason, finds it necessary, in the interests of justice, to conduct the hearing in his absence.

Article 13. The Tribunal shall draw up rules for its procedure. These rules shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this Charter.

III. COMMITTEE FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF MAJOR WAR CRIMINALS

Article 14. Each Signatory shall appoint a Chief Prosecutor for the investigation of the charges against and the prosecution of major war criminals. The Chief Prosecutors shall act as a committee for the following purposes:

- (a) to agree upon a plan of the individual work of each of the Chief Prosecutors and his staff,
- (b) to settle the final designation of major war criminals to be tried by the Tribunal,
- (c) to approve the Indictment and the documents to be submitted therewith,
- (d) to lodge the Indictment and the accompanying documents with the Tribunal,
- (e) to draw up and recommend to the Tribunal for its approval draft rules of procedure, contemplated by Article 13 of this Charter. The Tribunal shall have power to accept, with or without amendments, or to reject, the rules so recommended.

The Committee shall act in all the above matters by a majority vote and shall appoint a Chairman as may be convenient and in accordance with the principle of rotation: provided that if there is an equal division of vote concerning the designation of a Defendant to be tried by the Tribunal, or the crimes with which he shall be charged, that proposal will be adopted which was made by the party which proposed

that the particular Defendant be tried, or the particular charges be preferred against him.

Article 15. The Chief Prosecutors shall individually, and acting in collaboration with one another, also undertake the following duties:

- (a) investigation, collection and production before or at the Trial of all necessary evidence,
- (b) the preparation of the Indictment for approval by the Committee in accordance with paragraph (c) of Article 14 hereof,
- (c) the preliminary examination of all necessary witnesses and of the Defendants,
- (d) to act as prosecutor at the Trial,
- (e) to appoint representatives to carry out such duties as may be assigned to them,
- (f) to undertake such other matters as may appear necessary to them for the purposes of the preparation for and conduct of the Trial.

It is understood that no witness or Defendant detained by any Signatory shall be taken out of the possession of that Signatory without its assent.

IV. FAIR TRIAL FOR DEFENDANTS

Article 16. In order to ensure fair trial for the Defendants, the following procedure shall be followed:

- (a) The Indictment shall include full particulars specifying in detail the charges against the Defendants. A copy of the Indictment and of all the documents lodged with the Indictment, translated into a language which he understands, shall be furnished to the Defendant at a reasonable time before the Trial.
- (b) During any preliminary examination or trial of a Defendant he shall have the right to give any explanation relevant to the charges made against him.
- (c) A preliminary examination of a defendant and his Trial shall be conducted in or translated into, a language which the Defendant understands.
- (d) A defendant shall have the right to conduct his own defense before the Tribunal or to have the assistance of Counsel.
- (e) A defendant shall have the right through himself or through his counsel to present evidence at the Trial in support of his defense, and to cross-examine any witness called by the Prosecution.

V. POWERS OF THE TRIBUNAL AND CONDUCT OF THE TRIAL

Article 17. The Tribunal shall have the power

- (a) to summon witnesses to the Trial and to require their attendance and testimony and to put questions to them,
- (b) to interrogate any Defendant,
- (c) to require the production of documents and other evidentiary material,
- (d) to administer oaths to witnesses,
- (e) to appoint officers for the carrying out of any task designated by the Tribunal including the power to have evidence taken on commission.

Article 18. The Tribunal shall

- (a) confine the Trial strictly to an expeditious hearing of the issues raised by the charges,
- (b) take strict measures to prevent any action which will cause unreasonable delay, and rule out irrelevant issues and statements of any kind whatsoever,
- (c) deal summarily with any contumacy, imposing appropriate punishment, including exclusion of any Defendant or his Counsel from some or all further proceedings, but without prejudice to the determination of the charges.

Article 19. The Tribunal shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence. It shall adopt and apply to the greatest possible extent expeditious and non-technical procedure, and shall admit any evidence which it deems to have probative value.

Article 20. The Tribunal may require to be informed of the nature of any evidence before it is offered so that it may rule upon the relevance thereof.

Article 21. The Tribunal shall not require proof of facts of common knowledge but shall take judicial notice thereof. It shall also take judicial notice of official governmental documents and reports of the United Nations, including the acts and documents of the committees set up in the various allied countries for the investigation of war crimes, and the records and findings of military or other Tribunals of any of the United Nations.

Article 22. The permanent seat of the Tribunal shall be in Berlin. The first meetings of the members of the Tribunal and of the Chief Prosecutors shall be held at Berlin in a place

to be designated by the Control Council for Germany. The first trial shall be held at Nurnberg, and any subsequent trials shall be held at such places as the Tribunal may decide.

Article 23. One or more of the Chief Prosecutors may take part in the prosecution at each Trial. The function of any Chief Prosecutor may be discharged by him personally, or by any person or persons authorized by him.

The function of Counsel for a Defendant may be discharged at the Defendant's request by any Counsel professionally qualified to conduct cases before the Courts of his own country, or by any other person who may be specially authorized thereto by the Tribunal.

Article 24. The proceedings at the Trial shall take the following course:

- (a) The Indictment shall be read in court.
- (b) The Tribunal shall ask each Defendant whether he pleads "guilty" or "not guilty".
- (c) The prosecution shall make an opening statement.
- (d) The Tribunal shall ask the prosecution and the defense what evidence (if any) they wish to submit to the Tribunal, and the Tribunal shall rule upon the admissibility of any such evidence.
- (e) The witnesses for the Prosecution shall be examined and after that the witnesses for the Defense. Thereafter such rebutting evidence as may be held by the Tribunal to be admissible shall be called by either the Prosecution or the Defense.
- (f) The Tribunal may put any question to any witness and to any Defendant, at any time.
- (g) The Prosecution and the Defense shall interrogate and may cross-examine any witnesses and any Defendant who gives testimony.
- (h) The Defense shall address the court.
- (i) The Prosecution shall address the court.
- (j) Each Defendant may make a statement to the Tribunal.
- (k) The Tribunal shall deliver judgment and pronounce sentence.

Article 25. All official documents shall be produced, and all court proceedings conducted, in English, French, and Russian, and in the language of the Defendant. So much of the record and of the proceedings may also be translated into the language of any country in which the Tribunal is sitting, as the Tribunal considers desirable in the interests of justice and public opinion.

VI. JUDGMENT AND SENTENCE

Article 26. The judgment of the Tribunal as to the guilt or the innocence of any Defendant shall give the reasons on which it is based, and shall be final and not subject to review.

Article 27. The Tribunal shall have the right to impose upon a Defendant on conviction, death or such other punishment as shall be determined by it to be just.

Article 28. In addition to any punishment imposed by it, the Tribunal shall have the right to deprive the convicted person of any stolen property and order its delivery to the Control Council for Germany.

Article 29. In case of guilt, sentences shall be carried out in accordance with the orders of the Control Council for Germany, which may at any time reduce or otherwise alter the sentences, but may not increase the severity thereof. If the Control Council for Germany, after any Defendant has been convicted and sentenced, discovers fresh evidence which, in its opinion, would found a fresh charge against him, the Council shall report accordingly to the Committee established under Article 14 hereof, for such action as they may consider proper, having regard to the interests of justice.

VII. EXPENSES

Article 30. The expenses of the Tribunal and of the Trials, shall be charged by the Signatories against the funds allotted for maintenance of the Control Council for Germany.

Source: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Red Series, vol. I, pp. 4–11.

169. OPENING STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL, NOVEMBER 20, 1945

Four judges presided at the International Military Tribunal's trial of major war criminals in Nuremberg, Germany. They represented the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union. The British judge, Geoffrey Lawrence,

was elected president of the judges. It was he who opened the proceedings with the statement set forth in this document. He lays out the establishment of the tribunal in the London Agreement of August 8, 1945, and references its charter that was a part of the agreement. Confirming that each of the defendants of the trial was given a copy of the indictment brought against him and had same for more than 30 days, Lawrence emphasized the importance of conducting the trial "in accordance with the sacred principles of law and justice" and admonished the public attending the trial to conduct themselves with "order and decorum." He explains that the responsibility for all parties to act pursuant to "those principles and traditions which alone give justice its authority" derives from the fact that the "Trial which is now about to begin is unique in the history of jurisprudence of the world and is of supreme importance to millions of people around the globe."

FIRST DAY

Tuesday, 20 November 1945

THE PRESIDENT: Before the defendants in this case are called upon to make their pleas to the Indictment which has been lodged against them, and in which they are charged with Crimes against Peace, War Crimes, and Crimes against Humanity, and with a Common Plan or Conspiracy to commit those crimes, it is the wish of the Tribunal that I should make a very brief statement on behalf of the Tribunal.

This International Military Tribunal has been established pursuant to the Agreement of London, dated the 8th of August 1945, and the Charter of the Tribunal as annexed thereto, and the purpose for which the Tribunal has been established is stated in Article 1 of the Charter to be the just and prompt trial and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis.

The Signatories to the Agreement and Charter are the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of the United States of America, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The Committee of the Chief Prosecutors, appointed by the four Signatories, have settled the final designation of the war criminals to be tried by the Tribunal, and have approved the Indictment on which the present defendants stand charged here today.

On Thursday, the 18th of October 1945, in Berlin, the Indictment was lodged with the Tribunal and a copy of that Indictment in the German language has been furnished to

each defendant, and has been in his possession for more than 30 days.

All the defendants are represented by counsel. In almost all cases the counsel appearing for the defendants have been chosen by the defendants themselves, but in cases where counsel could not be obtained the Tribunal has itself selected suitable counsel agreeable to the defendant.

The Tribunal has heard with great satisfaction of the steps which have been taken by the Chief Prosecutors to make available to defending counsel the numerous documents upon which the Prosecution rely, with the aim of giving to the defendants every possibility for a just defense.

The Trial which is now about to begin is unique in the history of the jurisprudence of the world and it is of supreme importance to millions of people all over the globe. For these reasons, there is laid upon everybody who takes any part in this Trial a solemn responsibility to discharge their duties without fear or favor, in accordance with the sacred principles of law and justice.

The four Signatories having invoked the judicial process, it is the duty of all concerned to see that the Trial in no way departs from those principles and traditions which alone give justice its authority and the place it ought to occupy in the affairs of all civilized states.

This Trial is a public Trial in the fullest sense of those words, and I must, therefore, remind the public that the Tribunal will insist upon the complete maintenance of order and decorum, and will take the strictest measures to enforce it. It only remains for me to direct, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, that the Indictment shall now be read.

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. II, pp. 29–30.

170. NUREMBERG TRIAL: EXCERPTS FROM THE OPENING STATEMENT OF MR. JUSTICE ROBERT H. JACKSON, NOVEMBER 21, 1945

In what is considered to be one of the finest opening statements in modern jurisprudence, Robert H. Jackson, associate justice of the U. S. Supreme Court and chief counsel for the United States at the International Military Tribunal trial of major

war criminals held in Nuremberg, Germany, stood before the presiding judges at this international trial and implored them to “put the forces of international law, its precepts, its prohibitions and, most of all, its sanctions on the side of peace.” In words now well known, Jackson stated: “The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated.” Elsewhere: “We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow.” In extending a hand to the vanquished: “We would also make clear that we have no purpose to incriminate the whole German people.” Jackson also warns: “The refuge of the defendants can be only their hope that international law will lag so far behind the moral sense of mankind that conduct which is crime in the moral sense must be regarded as innocent in law.”

MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: May it please Your Honors:

The privilege of opening the first trial in history for crimes against the peace of the world imposes a grave responsibility. The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated. That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that Power has ever paid to Reason.

This Tribunal, while it is novel and experimental, is not the product of abstract speculations nor is it created to vindicate legalistic theories. This inquest represents the practical effort of four of the most mighty of nations, with the support of 17 more, to utilize international law to meet the greatest menace of our times—aggressive war. The common sense of mankind demands that law shall not stop with the punishment of petty crimes by little people. It must also reach men who possess themselves of great power and make deliberate and concerted use of it to set in motion evils which leave no home in the world untouched. It is a cause of that magnitude that the United Nations will lay before Your Honors.

In the prisoners' dock sit twenty-odd broken men. Reproached by the humiliation of those they have led almost as bitterly as by the desolation of those they have attacked, their personal capacity for evil is forever past. It is hard now to perceive in these men as captives the power by which as Nazi leaders they once dominated much of the world and

terrified most of it. Merely as individuals their fate is of little consequence to the world.

What makes this inquest significant is that these prisoners represent sinister influences that will lurk in the world long after their bodies have returned to dust. We will show them to be living symbols of racial hatreds, of terrorism and violence, and of the arrogance and cruelty of power. They are symbols of fierce nationalisms and of militarism, of intrigue and war-making which have embroiled Europe generation after generation, crushing its manhood, destroying its homes, and impoverishing its life. They have so identified themselves with the philosophies they conceived and with the forces they directed that any tenderness to them is a victory and an encouragement to all the evils which are attached to their names. Civilization can afford no compromise with the social forces which would gain renewed strength if we deal ambiguously or indecisively with the men in whom those forces now precariously survive.

What these men stand for we will patiently and temperately disclose. We will give you undeniable proofs of incredible events. The catalog of crimes will omit nothing that could be conceived by a pathological pride, cruelty, and lust for power. These men created in Germany, under the "Führerprinzip", a National Socialist despotism equalled only by the dynasties of the ancient East. They took from the German people all those dignities and freedoms that we hold natural and inalienable rights in every human being. The people were compensated by inflaming and gratifying hatreds towards those who were marked as "scapegoats". Against their opponents, including Jews, Catholics, and free labor, the Nazis directed such a campaign of arrogance, brutality, and annihilation as the world has not witnessed since the pre-Christian ages. They excited the German ambition to be a "master race", which of course implies serfdom for others. They led their people on a mad gamble for domination. They diverted social energies and resources to the creation of what they thought to be an invincible war machine. They overran their neighbors. To sustain the "master race" in its war-making, they enslaved millions of human beings and brought them into Germany, where these hapless creatures now wander as "displaced persons". At length bestiality and bad faith reached such excess that they aroused the sleeping strength of imperiled Civilization. Its united efforts have ground the German war machine to fragments. But the struggle has left Europe a liberated yet prostrate land where a demoralized society struggles to survive. These are the fruits of the sinister forces that sit with these defendants in the prisoners' dock.

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Before I discuss particulars of evidence, some general considerations which may affect the credit of this trial in the eyes of the world should be candidly faced. There is a dramatic disparity between the circumstances of the accusers and of the accused that might discredit our work if we should falter, in even minor matters, in being fair and temperate.

Unfortunately, the nature of these crimes is such that both prosecution and judgment must be by victor nations over vanquished foes. The worldwide scope of the aggressions carried out by these men has left but few real neutrals. Either the victors must judge the vanquished or we must leave the defeated to judge themselves. After the first World War, we learned the futility of the latter course. The former high station of these defendants, the notoriety of their acts, and the adaptability of their conduct to provoke retaliation make it hard to distinguish between the demand for a just and measured retribution, and the unthinking cry for vengeance which arises from the anguish of war. It is our task, so far as humanly possible, to draw the line between the two. We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our own lips as well. We must summon such detachment and intellectual integrity to our task that this Trial will commend itself to posterity as fulfilling humanity's aspirations to do justice.

At the very outset, let us dispose of the contention that to put these men to trial is to do them an injustice entitling them to some special consideration. These defendants may be hard pressed but they are not ill used. Let us see what alternative they would have to being tried.

More than a majority of these prisoners surrendered to or were tracked down by the forces of the United States. Could they expect us to make American custody a shelter for our enemies against the just wrath of our Allies? Did we spend American lives to capture them only to save them from punishment? Under the principles of the Moscow Declaration, those suspected war criminals who are not to be tried internationally must be turned over to individual governments for trial at the scene of their outrages. Many less responsible and less culpable American-held prisoners have been and will continue to be turned over to other United Nations for local trial. If these defendants should succeed, for any reason, in escaping the condemnation of this Tribunal, or if they obstruct or abort this trial, those who are American-held

prisoners will be delivered up to our continental Allies. For these defendants, however, we have set up an International Tribunal and have undertaken the burden of participating in a complicated effort to give them fair and dispassionate hearings. That is the best-known protection to any man with a defense worthy of being heard.

If these men are the first war leaders of a defeated nation to be prosecuted in the name of the law, they are also the first to be given a chance to plead for their lives in the name of the law. Realistically, the Charter of this Tribunal, which gives them a hearing, is also the source of their only hope. It may be that these men of troubled conscience, whose only wish is that the world forget them, do not regard a trial as a favor. But they do have a fair opportunity to defend themselves—a favor which these men, when in power, rarely extended to their fellow countrymen. Despite the fact that public opinion already condemns their acts, we agree that here they must be given a presumption of innocence, and we accept the burden of proving criminal acts and the responsibility of these defendants for their commission.

When I say that we do not ask for convictions unless we prove crime, I do not mean mere technical or incidental transgression of international conventions. We charge guilt on planned and intended conduct that involves moral as well as legal wrong. And we do not mean conduct that is a natural and human, even if illegal, cutting of corners, such as many of us might well have committed had we been in the defendants' positions. It is not because they yielded to the normal frailties of human beings that we accuse them. It is their abnormal and inhuman conduct which brings them to this bar.

We will not ask you to convict these men on the testimony of their foes. There is no count in the Indictment that cannot be proved by books and records. The Germans were always meticulous record keepers, and these defendants had their share of the Teutonic passion for thoroughness in putting things on paper. Nor were they without vanity. They arranged frequently to be photographed in action. We will show you their own films. You will see their own conduct and hear their own voices as these defendants re-enact for you, from the screen, some of the events in the course of the conspiracy.

We would also make clear that we have no purpose to incriminate the whole German people. We know that the Nazi Party was not put in power by a majority of the German vote. We know it came to power by an evil alliance between the most extreme of the Nazi revolutionists, the most unrestrained of the German reactionaries, and the most

aggressive of the German militarists. If the German populace had willingly accepted the Nazi program, no Storm-troopers would have been needed in the early days of the Party and there would have been no need for concentration camps or the Gestapo, both of which institutions were inaugurated as soon as the Nazis gained control of the German State. Only after these lawless innovations proved successful at home were they taken abroad.

The German people should know by now that the people of the United States hold them in no fear, and in no hate. It is true that the Germans have taught us the horrors of modern warfare, but the ruin that lies from the Rhine to the Danube shows that we, like our Allies, have not been dull pupils. If we are not awed by German fortitude and proficiency in war, and if we are not persuaded of their political maturity, we do respect their skill in the arts of peace, their technical competence, and the sober, industrious, and self-disciplined character of the masses of the German people. In 1933 we saw the German people recovering prestige in the commercial, industrial, and artistic world after the set-back of the last war. We beheld their progress neither with envy nor malice. The Nazi regime interrupted this advance. The recoil of the Nazi aggression has left Germany in ruins. The Nazi readiness to pledge the German word without hesitation and to break it without shame has fastened upon German diplomacy a reputation for duplicity that will handicap it for years. Nazi arrogance has made the boast of the "master race" a taunt that will be thrown at Germans the world over for generations. The Nazi nightmare has given the German name a new and sinister significance throughout the world which will retard Germany a century. The German, no less than the non-German world, has accounts to settle with these defendants.

The fact of the war and the course of the war, which is the central theme of our case, is history. From September 1st, 1939, when the German armies crossed the Polish frontier, until September 1942, when they met epic resistance at Stalingrad, German arms seemed invincible. Denmark and Norway, the Netherlands and France, Belgium and Luxembourg, the Balkans and Africa, Poland and the Baltic States, and parts of Russia, all had been overrun and conquered by swift, powerful, well-aimed blows. That attack on the peace of the world is the crime against international society which brings into international cognizance crimes in its aid and preparation which otherwise might be only internal concerns. It was aggressive war, which the nations of the world had renounced. It was war in violation of treaties, by which the peace of the world was sought to be safe-guarded.

This war did not just happen—it was planned and prepared for over a long period of time and with no small skill and cunning. The world has perhaps never seen such a concentration and stimulation of the energies of any people as that which enabled Germany 20 years after it was defeated, disarmed, and dismembered to come so near carrying out its plan to dominate Europe. Whatever else we may say of those who were the authors of this war, they did achieve a stupendous work in organization, and our first task is to examine the means by which these defendants and their fellow conspirators prepared and incited Germany to go to war.

In general, our case will disclose these defendants all uniting at some time with the Nazi Party in a plan which they well knew could be accomplished only by an outbreak of war in Europe. Their seizure of the German State, their subjugation of the German people, their terrorism and extermination of dissident elements, their planning and waging of war, their calculated and planned ruthlessness in the conduct of warfare, their deliberate and planned criminality toward conquered peoples,—all these are ends for which they acted in concert; and all these are phases of the conspiracy, a conspiracy which reached one goal only to set out for another and more ambitious one. We shall also trace for you the intricate web of organizations which these men formed and utilized to accomplish these ends. We will show how the entire structure of offices and officials was dedicated to the criminal purposes and committed to the use of the criminal methods planned by these defendants and their co-conspirators, many of whom war and suicide have put beyond reach.

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No greater mistake could be made than to think of the Nazi Party in terms of the loose organizations which we of the western world call “political parties”. In discipline, structure, and method the Nazi Party was not adapted to the democratic process of persuasion. It was an instrument of conspiracy and of coercion. The Party was not organized to take over power in the German State by winning support of a majority of the German people; it was organized to seize power in defiance of the will of the people.

The Nazi Party, under the “Führerprinzip,” was bound by an iron discipline into a pyramid, with the Führer, Adolf Hitler, at the top and broadening into a numerous Leadership Corps, composed of overlords of a very extensive Party membership at the base. By no means all of those who may

have supported the movement in one way or another were actual Party members. The membership took the Party oath which in effect amounted to an abdication of personal intelligence and moral responsibility. This was the oath: “I vow inviolable fidelity to Adolf Hitler; I vow absolute obedience to him and to the leaders he designates for me.” The membership in daily practice followed its leaders with an idolatry and self-surrender more Oriental than Western.

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A glance at a chart of the Party organization is enough to show how completely it differed from the political parties we know. It had its own source of law in the Führer and sub-Führer. It had its own courts and its own police. The conspirators set up a government within the Party to exercise outside the law every sanction that any legitimate state could exercise and many that it could not. Its chain of command was military, and its formations were martial in name as well as in function. They were composed of battalions set up to bear arms under military discipline, motorized corps, flying corps, and the infamous “Death Head Corps”, which was not misnamed. The Party had its own secret police, its security units, its intelligence and espionage division, its raiding forces, and its youth forces. It established elaborate administrative mechanisms to identify and liquidate spies and informers, to manage concentration camps, to operate death vans, and to finance the whole movement. Through concentric circles of authority, the Nazi Party, as its leadership later boasted, eventually organized and dominated every phase of German life—but not until they had waged a bitter internal struggle characterized by brutal criminality we charge here. In preparation for this phase of their struggle, they created a Party police system. This became the pattern and the instrument of the police state, which was the first goal in their plan.

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On January 30, 1933 Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the German Republic. An evil combination, represented in the prisoners’ dock by its most eminent survivors, had succeeded in possessing itself of the machinery of the German Government, a facade behind which they thenceforth would operate to make a reality of the war of conquest they so long had plotted. The conspiracy had passed into its second phase.

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3. *Crimes against the Jews:*

The most savage and numerous crimes planned and committed by the Nazis were those against the Jews. Those in Germany in 1933 numbered about 500,000. In the aggregate, they had made for themselves positions which excited envy, and had accumulated properties which excited the avarice of the Nazis. They were few enough to be helpless and numerous enough to be held up as a menace.

Let there be no misunderstanding about the charge of persecuting Jews. What we charge against these defendants is not those arrogances and pretensions which frequently accompany the intermingling of different peoples and which are likely, despite the honest efforts of government, to produce regrettable crimes and convulsions. It is my purpose to show a plan and design, to which all Nazis were fanatically committed, to annihilate all Jewish people. These crimes were organized and promoted by the Party leadership, executed and protected by the Nazi officials, as we shall convince you by written orders of the Secret State Police itself.

The persecution of the Jews was a continuous and deliberate policy. It was a policy directed against other nations as well as against the Jews themselves. Anti-Semitism was promoted to divide and embitter the democratic peoples and to soften their resistance to the Nazi aggression. As Robert Ley declared in *Der Angriff* on 14 May 1944: "The second German secret weapon is Anti-Semitism because if it is constantly pursued by Germany, it will become a universal problem which all nations will be forced to consider."

Anti-Semitism also has been aptly credited with being a "spearhead of terror." The ghetto was the laboratory for testing repressive measures. Jewish property was the first to be expropriated, but the custom grew and included similar measures against anti-Nazi Germans, Poles, Czechs, Frenchmen, and Belgians. Extermination of the Jews enabled the Nazis to bring a practiced hand to similar measures against Poles, Serbs, and Greeks. The plight of the Jew was a constant threat to opposition or discontent among other elements of Europe's population—pacifists, conservatives, Communists, Catholics, Protestants, Socialists. It was in fact, a threat to every dissenting opinion and to every non-Nazi's life.

The persecution policy against the Jews commenced with nonviolent measures, such as disfranchisement and discriminations against their religion, and the placing of impediments in the way of success in economic life. It moved rapidly to organized mass violence against them, physical isolation in ghettos, deportation, forced labor, mass starvation, and extermination. The Government, the Party formations indicted before you as criminal organizations, the

Secret State Police, the Army, private and semi-public associations, and "spontaneous" mobs that were carefully inspired from official sources, were all agencies that were concerned in this persecution. Nor was it directed against individual Jews for personal bad citizenship or unpopularity. The avowed purpose was the destruction of the Jewish people as a whole, as an end in itself, as a measure of preparation for war, and as a discipline of conquered peoples.

The conspiracy or common plan to exterminate the Jew was so methodically and thoroughly pursued, that despite the German defeat and Nazi prostration this Nazi aim largely has succeeded. Only remnants of the European Jewish population remain in Germany, in the countries which Germany occupied, and in those which were her satellites or collaborators. Of the 9,600,000 Jews who lived in Nazi-dominated Europe, 60 percent are authoritatively estimated to have perished. Five million seven hundred thousand Jews are missing from the countries in which they formerly lived, and over 4,500,000 cannot be accounted for by the normal death rate nor by immigration; nor are they included among displaced persons. History does not record a crime ever perpetrated against so many victims or one ever carried out with such calculated cruelty.

You will have difficulty, as I have, to look into the faces of these defendants and believe that in this twentieth century human beings could inflict such sufferings as will be proved here on their own countrymen as well as upon their so-called "inferior" enemies. Particular crimes, and the responsibility of defendants for them, are to be dealt with by the Soviet Government's counsel, when committed in the East, and by counsel for the Republic of France when committed in the West. I advert to them only to show their magnitude as evidence of a purpose and a knowledge common to all defendants, of an official plan rather than of a capricious policy of some individual commander, and to show such a continuity of Jewish persecution from the rise of Nazi conspiracy to its collapse as forbids us to believe that any person could be identified with any part of Nazi action without approving this most conspicuous item in their program.

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The most serious of the actions against Jews were outside of any law, but the law itself was employed to some extent. There were the infamous Nuremberg decrees of September 15, 1935 (*Reichsgesetzblatt* 1935, Part. I, P. 1146). The Jews were segregated into ghettos and put into forced labor; they were expelled from their professions; their property was

expropriated; all cultural life, the press, the theater, and schools were prohibited them; and the SD was made responsible for them (212-PS, 069-PS). This was an ominous guardianship. . . .

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As the German frontiers were expanded by war, so the campaign against the Jews expanded. The Nazi plan never was limited to extermination in Germany; always it contemplated extinguishing the Jew in Europe and often in the world. In the West, the Jews were killed and their property taken over. But the campaign achieved its zenith of savagery in the East. The eastern Jew has suffered as no people ever suffered. Their sufferings were carefully reported to the Nazi authorities to show faithful adherence to the Nazi design. I shall refer only to enough of the evidence of these to show the extent of the Nazi design for killing Jews.

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Determination to destroy the Jews was a binding force which at all times cemented the elements of this conspiracy. On many internal policies there were differences among the defendants. But there is not one of them who has not echoed the rallying cry of nazism: "Deutschland erwache, Juda verrecke!" (Germany awake, Jewry perish!).

* * * * *

Germany became one vast torture chamber. Cries of its victims were heard round the world and brought shudders to civilized people everywhere. I am one who received during this war most atrocity tales with suspicion and scepticism. But the proof here will be so overwhelming that I venture to predict not one word I have spoken will be denied. These defendants will only deny personal responsibility or knowledge.

Under the clutch of the most intricate web of espionage and intrigue that any modern state has endured, and persecution and torture of a kind that has not been visited upon the world in many centuries, the elements of the German population which were both decent and courageous were annihilated. Those which were decent but weak were intimidated. Open resistance, which had never been more than feeble and irresolute, disappeared. But resistance, I am happy to say, always remained, although it was manifest in only such events as the abortive effort to assassinate Hitler

on July 20, 1944. With resistance driven underground, the Nazi had the German State in his own hands.

But the Nazis not only silenced discordant voices. They created positive controls as effective as their negative ones. Propaganda organs, on a scale never before known, stimulated the Party and Party formations with a permanent enthusiasm and abandon such as we, democratic people, can work up only for a few days before a general election. They inculcated and practiced the Führerprinzip which centralized control of the Party and of the Party-controlled State over the lives and thought of the German people, who are accustomed to look upon the German State, by whomever controlled, with a mysticism that is incomprehensible to my people.

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MR. JUSTICE JACKSON: May it please you Honor, I will now take up the subject of "Crimes in the Conduct of War".

Even the most warlike of peoples have recognized in the name of humanity some limitations on the savagery of warfare. Rules to that end have been embodied in international conventions to which Germany became a party. This code had prescribed certain restraints as to the treatment of belligerents. The enemy was entitled to surrender and to receive quarter and good treatment as a prisoner of war. We will show by German documents that these rights were denied, that prisoners of war were given brutal treatment and often murdered.

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Civilized usage and conventions to which Germany was a party had prescribed certain immunities for civilian populations unfortunate enough to dwell in lands overrun by hostile armies. The German occupation forces, controlled or commanded by men on trial before you, committed a long series of outrages against the inhabitants of occupied territory that would be incredible except for captured orders and captured reports which show the fidelity with which those orders were executed.

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The Law of the Case:

The end of the war and capture of these prisoners presented the victorious Allies with the question whether there is any legal responsibility on high-ranking men for acts

which I have described. Must such wrongs either be ignored or redressed in hot blood? Is there no standard in the law for a deliberate and reasoned judgment on such conduct?

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The Charter by which this Tribunal has its being, embodies certain legal concepts which are inseparable from its jurisdiction and which must govern its decision. These, as I have said, also are conditions attached to the grant of any hearing to defendants. The validity of the provisions of the Charter is conclusive upon us all, whether we have accepted the duty of judging or of prosecuting under it, as well as upon the defendants, who can point to no other law which gives them a right to be heard at all. My able and experienced colleagues believe, as do I, that it will contribute to the expedition and clarity of this Trial if I expound briefly the application of the legal philosophy of the Charter to the facts I have recited.

While this declaration of the law by the Charter is final, it may be contended that the prisoners on trial are entitled to have it applied to their conduct only most charitably if at all. It may be said that this is new law, not authoritatively declared at the time they did the acts it condemns, and that this declaration of the law has taken them by surprise.

I cannot, of course, deny that these men are surprised that this is the law; they really are surprised that there is any such thing as law. These defendants did not rely on any law at all. Their program ignored and defied all law.

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Any resort to war—to any kind of a war—is a resort to means that are inherently criminal. War inevitably is a course of killings, assaults, deprivations of liberty, and destruction of property. An honestly defensive war is, of course, legal and saves those lawfully conducting it from criminality. But inherently criminal acts cannot be defended by showing that those who committed them were engaged in a war, when war itself is illegal. The very minimum legal consequence of the treaties making aggressive wars illegal is to strip those who incite or wage them of every defense the law ever gave, and to leave war-makers subject to judgment by the usually accepted principles of the law of crimes.

But if it be thought that the Charter, whose declarations concededly bind us all, does contain new law I still do not shrink from demanding its strict application by this Tribunal. The rule of law in the world, flouted by the lawlessness

incited by these defendants, had to be restored at the cost to my country of over a million casualties, not to mention those of other nations. I cannot subscribe to the perverted reasoning that society may advance and strengthen the rule of law by the expenditure of morally innocent lives but that progress in the law may never be made at the price of morally guilty lives.

It is true of course, that we have no judicial precedent for the Charter. But international law is more than a scholarly collection of abstract and immutable principles. It is an outgrowth of treaties and agreements between nations and of accepted customs. Yet every custom has its origin in some single act, and every agreement has to be initiated by the action of some state. Unless we are prepared to abandon every principle of growth for international law, we cannot deny that our own day has the right to institute customs and to conclude agreements that will themselves become sources of a newer and strengthened international law. International law is not capable of development by the normal processes of legislation, for there is no continuing international legislative authority. Innovations and revisions in international law are brought about by the action of governments such as those I have cited, designed to meet a change in circumstances. It grows, as did the common law, through decisions reached from time to time in adapting settled principles to new situations. The fact is that when the law evolves by the case method, as did the common law and as international law must do if it is to advance at all, it advances at the expense of those who wrongly guessed the law and learned too late their error. The law, so far as international law can be decreed, had been clearly pronounced when these acts took place. Hence, I am not disturbed by the lack of judicial precedent for the inquiry it is proposed to conduct.

The events I have earlier recited clearly fall within the standards of crimes, set out in the Charter, whose perpetrators this Tribunal is convened to judge and punish fittingly. The standards for War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity are too familiar to need comment.

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The Charter recognizes that one who has committed criminal acts may not take refuge in superior orders nor in the doctrine that his crimes were acts of states. These twin principles working together have heretofore resulted in immunity for practically everyone concerned in the really great crimes against peace and mankind. Those in lower ranks were protected against liability by the orders of their

superiors. The superiors were protected because their orders were called acts of state. Under the Charter, no defense based on either of these doctrines can be entertained. Modern civilization puts unlimited weapons of destruction in the hands of men. It cannot tolerate so vast an area of legal irresponsibility.

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The responsibility of this Tribunal:

To apply the sanctions of the law to those whose conduct is found criminal by the standards I have outlined, is the responsibility committed to this Tribunal. It is the first court ever to undertake the difficult task of overcoming the confusion of many tongues and the conflicting concepts of just procedure among diverse systems of law, so as to reach a common judgment. The tasks of all of us are such as to make heavy demands on patience and good will. Although the need for prompt action has admittedly resulted in imperfect work on the part of the Prosecution, four great nations bring you their hurriedly assembled contributions of evidence. What remains undiscovered we can only guess. We could, with witnesses' testimony, prolong the recitals of crime for years—but to what avail. We shall rest the case when we have offered what seems convincing and adequate proof of the crimes charged without unnecessary cumulation of evidence. We doubt very much whether it will be seriously denied that the crimes I have outlined took place. The effort will undoubtedly be to mitigate or escape personal responsibility.

Among the nations which unite in accusing these defendants the United States is perhaps in a position to be the most dispassionate, for, having sustained the least injury, it is perhaps the least animated by vengeance. Our American cities have not been bombed by day and by night, by humans, and by robots. It is not our temples that had been laid in ruins. Our countrymen have not had their homes destroyed over their heads. The menace of Nazi aggression, except to those in actual service, has seemed less personal and immediate to us than to European peoples. But while the United States is not first in rancor, it is not second in determination that the forces of law and order be made equal to the task of dealing with such international lawlessness as I have recited here.

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I am too well aware of the weaknesses of juridical action alone to contend that in itself your decision under this

Charter can prevent future wars. Judicial action always comes after the event. Wars are started only on the theory and in the confidence that they can be won. Personal punishment, to be suffered only in the event the war is lost, will probably not be a sufficient deterrent to prevent a war where the warmakers feel the chances of defeat to be negligible.

But the ultimate step in avoiding periodic wars, which are inevitable in a system of international lawlessness, is to make statesmen responsible to law. And let me make clear that while this law is first applied against German aggressors, the law includes, and if it is to serve a useful purpose it must condemn aggression by any other nations, including those which sit here now in judgment. We are able to do away with domestic tyranny and violence and aggression by those in power against the rights of their own people only when we make all men answerable to the law. This trial represents mankind's desperate effort to apply the discipline of the law to statesmen who have used their powers of state to attack the foundations of the world's peace and to commit aggressions against the rights of their neighbors.

The usefulness of this effort to do justice is not to be measured by considering the law or your judgment in isolation. This trial is part of the great effort to make the peace more secure. One step in this direction is the United Nations organization, which may take joint political action to prevent war if possible, and joint military action to insure that any nation which starts a war will lose it. This Charter and this Trial, implementing the Kellogg-Briand Pact, constitute another step in the same direction—juridical action of a kind to ensure that those who start a war will pay for it personally.

While the defendants and the prosecutors stand before you as individuals, it is not the triumph of either group alone that is committed to your judgment. Above all personalities there are anonymous and impersonal forces whose conflict makes up much of human history. It is yours to throw the strength of the law back of either the one or the other of these forces for at least another generation. What are the real forces that are contending before you?

No charity can disguise the fact that the forces which these defendants represent, the forces that would advantage and delight in their acquittal, are the darkest and most sinister forces in society—dictatorship and oppression, malevolence and passion, militarism and lawlessness. By their fruits we best know them. Their acts have bathed the world in blood and set civilization back a century. They have subjected their European neighbors to every outrage and torture, every spoliation and deprivation that insolence, cruelty, and greed could inflict. They have brought the German

people to the lowest pitch of wretchedness, from which they can entertain no hope of early deliverance. They have stirred hatreds and incited domestic violence on every continent. These are the things that stand in the dock shoulder to shoulder with these prisoners.

The real complaining party at your bar is Civilization. In all our countries it is still a struggling and imperfect thing. It does not plead that the United States, or any other country, has been blameless of the conditions which made the German people easy victims to the blandishments and intimidations of the Nazi conspirators.

But it points to the dreadful sequence of aggressions and crimes I have recited, it points to the weariness of flesh, the exhaustion of resources, and the destruction of all that was beautiful or useful in so much of the world, and to greater potentialities for destruction in the day to come. It is not necessary among the ruins of this ancient and beautiful city with untold members of its civilian inhabitants still buried in its rubble, to argue the proposition that to start or wage an aggressive war has the moral qualities of the worst of crimes. The refuge of the defendants can be only their hope that international law will lag so far behind the moral sense of mankind that conduct which is crime in the moral sense must be regarded as innocent in law.

Civilization asks whether law is so laggard as to be utterly helpless to deal with crimes of this magnitude by criminals of this order of importance. It does not expect that you can make war impossible. It does expect that your juridical action will put the forces of international law, its precepts, its prohibitions and, most of all, its sanctions, on the side of peace, so that men and women of good will, in all countries, may have “leave to live by no man’s leave, underneath the law.”

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. II, pp. 98–155.

171. NUREMBERG TRIAL: EXCERPT FROM TESTIMONY BY FRANZ VON PAPEN, JUNE 19, 1946

Franz von Papen, who was instrumental in the decision by Paul von Hindenburg to make Adolf Hitler chancellor of Germany, served as Hitler’s vice chancellor when he came to power in 1933. Although Papen was not in Hitler’s inner circle

from 1934 to the end of the war, he makes an argument in this document that was and would be made by many Nazis when asked why they went along with what they knew was morally reprehensible. Here this question is asked of him by Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, deputy prosecutor for the United Kingdom at the International Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals held in Nuremberg, Germany. Papen explains his actions as those of a patriot, one who like many on the Allied side knew what was happening but continued on in whatever task was asked of them in the service of their country. He makes the argument that “even up to the Polish campaign, even the major powers tried, although they knew everything that was going on in Germany, to work with Germany. Why do you wish to reproach a patriotic German with acting likewise . . . ?”

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: . . . Why didn’t you after this series of murders which had gone on over a period of 4 years, why didn’t you break with these people and stand up like General Yorck or any other people that you may think of from history, stand up for your own views and oppose these murderers? Why didn’t you do it?

Now you can give your explanation.

VON PAPEN: Very well. You can see that I submitted Von Tschirschsky’s report on these murders to Hitler, in all its details, but what you do not know is the fact that I myself frequently told Hitler that such a regime could not possibly last; and if you ask me, Sir David, why despite everything I remained in the service of the Reich, then I can say only that on 30 June I personally broke off the relations into which we had entered on 30 January. From that day onward I did my duty—my duty to Germany, if you wish to know. I can understand very well, Sir David, that after all the things we know today, after the millions of murders which have taken place, you consider the German people a nation of criminals, and that you cannot understand that this nation has its patriots as well. I did these things in order to serve my country, and I should like to add, Sir David, that up to the time of the Munich Agreement, and even up to the time of the Polish campaign, even the major powers tried, although they knew everything that was going on in Germany, to work with this Germany. Why do you wish to reproach a patriotic German with acting likewise, and with hoping likewise, for the same thing for which all the major powers hoped?

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. XVI, pp. 415–416.

172. NUREMBERG TRIAL: EXCERPTS FROM THE CLOSING STATEMENT OF JUSTICE ROBERT H. JACKSON, JULY 26, 1946

Robert H. Jackson, associate justice of the U. S. Supreme Court and chief counsel for the United States at the International Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals held in Nuremberg, Germany, presented his closing statement on July 26, 1946. He observes that the defendants were given every opportunity to say anything in their own favor. He traces the movement from discriminatory laws that separated Jews from German society, to the camps that had as their only purpose their extermination. He condemns the Nazi regime: "Everything of consequence that took place in this regimented society was but a manifestation of a premeditated and unfolding purpose to secure the Nazi State a place in the sun by casting all others into darkness." On a broader level, Jackson places the twentieth century in historical perspective: "It is common to think of our own time as standing at the apex of civilization, from which the deficiencies of preceding ages may patronizingly be viewed in the light of what is assumed to be 'progress.' The reality is that in the long perspective of history the present century will not hold an admirable position, unless its second half is to redeem its first."

MR. JUSTICE ROBERT H. JACKSON (Chief of Counsel for the United States): Mr. President and Members of the Tribunal: An advocate can be confronted with few more formidable tasks than to select his closing arguments where there is great disparity between his appropriate time and his available material. In 8 months—a short time as state trials go—we have introduced evidence which embraces as vast and varied a panorama of events as has ever been compressed within the framework of a litigation. It is impossible in summation to do more than outline with bold strokes the vitals of this Trial's mad and melancholy record, which will live as the historical text of the twentieth century's shame and depravity.

It is common to think of our own time as standing at the apex of civilization, from which the deficiencies of preceding ages may patronizingly be viewed in the light of what is assumed to be "progress." The reality is that in the long perspective of history the present century will not hold an admirable position, unless its second half is to redeem its first. These two-score years in the twentieth century will be recorded in the book of years as one of the most bloody in all

annals. Two World Wars have left a legacy of dead which number more than all the armies engaged in any way that made ancient or medieval history. No half-century ever witnessed slaughter on such a scale, such cruelties and inhumanities, such wholesale deportations of peoples into slavery, such annihilations of minorities. The terror of Torquemada pales before the Nazi Inquisition. These deeds are the overshadowing historical facts by which generations to come will remember this decade. If we cannot eliminate the causes and prevent the repetition of these barbaric events, it is not an irresponsible prophecy to say that this twentieth century may yet succeed in bringing the doom of civilization.

Goaded by these facts, we were moved to redress the blight on the record of our era. The defendants complain that our pace is too fast. In drawing the Charter of this Tribunal, we thought we were recording an accomplished advance in international law. But they say we have outrun our times, that we have anticipated an advance that should be, but has not yet been made. The Agreement of London, whether it originates or merely records, at all events marks a transition in international law which roughly corresponds to that in the evolution of local law when men ceased to punish crime by "hue and cry" and began to let reason and inquiry govern punishment. The society of nations has emerged from the primitive "hue and cry," the law of "catch and kill." It seeks to apply sanctions to enforce international law, but to guide their application by evidence, law, and reason instead of outcry. The defendants denounce the law under which their accounting is asked. Their dislike for the law which condemns them is not original. It has been remarked before that: "No thief e'er felt the halter draw with good opinion of the law."

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Of one thing we may be sure. The future will never have to ask, with misgiving, what could the Nazis have said in their favor. History will know that whatever could be said, they were allowed to say. They have been given the kind of a Trial which they, in the days of their pomp and power, never gave to any man.

But fairness is not weakness. The extraordinary fairness of these hearings is an attribute of our strength. The Prosecution's case, at its close, seemed inherently unassailable because it rested so heavily on German documents of unquestioned authenticity. But it was the weeks upon weeks of pecking at this case, by one after another of the

defendants, that has demonstrated its true strength. The fact is that the testimony of the defendants has removed any doubt of guilt which, because of the extraordinary nature and magnitude of these crimes, may have existed before they spoke. They have helped write their own judgment of condemnation.

But justice in this case has nothing to do with some of the arguments put forth by the defendants or their counsel. We have not previously and we need not now discuss the merits of all their obscure and tortuous philosophy. We are not trying them for the possession of obnoxious ideas. It is their right, if they choose, to renounce the Hebraic heritage in the civilization of which Germany was once a part. Nor is it our affair that they repudiated the Hellenic influence as well. The intellectual bankruptcy and moral perversion of the Nazi regime might have been no concern of international law had it not been utilized to gosestep the Herrenvolk across international frontiers. It is not their thoughts, it is their overt acts which we charge to be crimes. Their creed and teachings are important only as evidence of motive, purpose, knowledge, and intent.

We charge unlawful aggression but we are not trying the motives, hopes, or frustrations which may have led Germany to resort to aggressive war as an instrument of policy. The law, unlike politics, does not concern itself with the good or evil in the status quo, nor with the merits of the grievances against it. It merely requires that the status quo be not attacked by violent means and that policies be not advanced by war. We may admit that overlapping ethnological and cultural groups, economic barriers, and conflicting national ambitions created in the 1930's, as they will continue to create, grave problems for Germany as well as for the other peoples of Europe. We may admit too that the world had failed to provide political or legal remedies which would be honorable and acceptable alternatives to war. We do not underwrite either the ethics or the wisdom of any country, including my own, in the face of these problems. But we do say that it is now, as it was for sometime prior to 1939, illegal and criminal for Germany or any other nation to redress grievances or seek expansion by resort to aggressive war.

Let me emphasize one cardinal point. The United States has no interest which would be advanced by the conviction of any defendant if we have not proved him guilty on at least one of the Counts charged against him in the Indictment. Any result that the calm and critical judgment of posterity would pronounce unjust would not be a victory for any of the countries associated in this Prosecution. But in summation

we now have before us the tested evidences of criminality and have heard the flimsy excuses and paltry evasions of the defendants. The suspended judgment with which we opened this case is no longer appropriate. The time has come for final judgment and if the case I present seems hard and uncompromising, it is because the evidence makes it so.

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The Nazi movement will be of evil memory in history because of its persecution of the Jews, the most far-flung and terrible racial persecution of all time. Although the Nazi Party neither invented nor monopolized anti-Semitism, its leaders from the very beginning embraced it, incited it, and exploited it. They used it as "the psychological spark that ignites the mob." After the seizure of power, it became an official state policy. The persecution began in a series of discriminatory laws eliminating the Jews from the civil service, the professions, and economic life. As it became more intense it included segregation of Jews in ghettos, and exile. Riots were organized by Party leaders to loot Jewish business places and to burn synagogues. Jewish property was confiscated and a collective fine of a billion marks was imposed upon German Jewry. The program progressed in fury and irresponsibility to the "final solution." This consisted of sending all Jews who were fit to work to concentration camps as slave laborers, and all who were not fit, which included children under 12 and people over 50, as well as any others judged unfit by an SS doctor, to concentration camps for extermination (2605-PS).

Adolf Eichmann, the sinister figure who had charge of the extermination program, has estimated that the anti-Jewish activities resulted in the killing of 6 million Jews. Of these, 4 million were killed in extermination institutions, and 2 million were killed by Einsatzgruppen, mobile units of the Security Police and SD which pursued Jews in the ghettos and in their homes and slaughtered them by gas wagons, by mass shooting in antitank ditches and by every device which Nazi ingenuity could conceive. So thorough and uncompromising was this program that the Jews of Europe as a race no longer exist, thus fulfilling the diabolic "prophecy" of Adolf Hitler at the beginning of the war (2738-PS).

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The dominant fact which stands out from all the thousands of pages of the record of this Trial is that the central crime of the whole group of Nazi crimes—the attack on the

peace of the world—was clearly and deliberately planned. The beginning of these wars of aggression was not an unprepared and spontaneous springing to arms by a population excited by some current indignation.

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Nor were the war crimes and the crimes against humanity unplanned, isolated, or spontaneous offenses. Aside from our undeniable evidence of their plotting, it is sufficient to ask whether 6 million people could be separated from the population of several nations on the basis of their blood and birth, could be destroyed and their bodies disposed of, except that the operation fitted into the general scheme of government. Could the enslavement of 5 millions of laborers, their impressment into service, their transportation to Germany, their allocation to work where they would be most useful, their maintenance, if slow starvation can be called maintenance, and their guarding have been accomplished if it did not fit into the common plan? Could hundreds of concentration camps located throughout Germany, built to accommodate hundreds of thousands of victims, and each requiring labor and materials for construction, manpower to operate and supervise, and close gearing into the economy—could such efforts have been expended under German autocracy if they had not suited the plan? Has the Teutonic passion for organization suddenly become famous for its toleration of nonconforming activity? Each part of the plan fitted into every other. The slave-labor program meshed with the needs of industry and agriculture, and these in turn synchronized with the military machine. The elaborate propaganda apparatus geared with the program to dominate the people and incite them to a war their sons would have to fight. The armament industries were fed by the concentration camps. The concentration camps were fed by the Gestapo. The Gestapo was fed by the spy system of the Nazi Party. Nothing was permitted under the Nazi iron rule that was not in accordance with the program. Everything of consequence that took place in this regimented society was but a manifestation of a premeditated and unfolding purpose to secure the Nazi State a place in the sun by casting all others into darkness.

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In opening this case I ventured to predict that there would be no serious denial that the crimes charged were committed, and that the issue would concern the responsibility of

particular defendants. The defendants have fulfilled that prophecy. Generally, they do not deny that these things happened, but it is contended that they “just happened,” and that they were not the result of a common plan or conspiracy.

One of the chief reasons the defendants say there was no conspiracy is the argument that conspiracy was impossible with a dictator. The argument runs that they all had to obey Hitler’s orders, which had the force of law in the German State, and hence obedience could not be made the basis of an original charge. In this way it is explained that while there have been wholesale killings, there have been no murderers.

This argument is an effort to evade Article 8 of the Charter, which provides that the order of the Government or of a superior shall not free a defendant from responsibility but can only be considered in mitigation.

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. . . the defendants are almost unanimous in one defense. The refrain is heard time and again: These men were without authority, without knowledge, without influence, without importance. Funk summed up the general self-abasement of the dock in his plaintive lament that: “I always, so to speak, came up to the door, but I was not permitted to enter.”

In the testimony of each defendant, at some point there was reached the familiar blank wall: Nobody knew anything about what was going on. Time after time we have heard the chorus from the dock: “I only heard about these things here for the first time.”

These men saw no evil, spoke none, and none was uttered in their presence. This claim might sound very plausible if made by one defendant. But when we put all their stories together, the impression which emerges of the Third Reich, which was to last a thousand years, is ludicrous.

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The chief villain on whom blame is placed—some of the defendants vie with each other in producing appropriate epithets—is Hitler. He is the man at whom nearly every defendant has pointed an accusing finger.

I shall not dissent from this consensus, nor do I deny that all these dead and missing men shared the guilt. In crimes so reprehensible that degrees of guilt have lost their significance they may have played the most evil parts. But their guilt cannot exculpate the defendants. Hitler did not carry all

responsibility to the grave with him. All the guilt is not wrapped in Himmler's shroud. It was these dead men whom these living chose to be their partners in this great conspiratorial brotherhood, and the crimes that they did together they must pay for one by one.

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But let me for a moment turn devil's advocate. I admit that Hitler was the chief villain. But for the defendants to put all blame on him is neither manly nor true. We know that even the head of the state has the same limits to his senses and to the hours of his days as do lesser men. He must rely on others to be his eyes and ears as to most that goes on in a great empire. Other legs must run his errands; other hands must execute his plans. On whom did Hitler rely for such things more than upon these men in the dock?

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It is against such a background that these defendants now ask this Tribunal to say that they are not guilty of planning, executing, or conspiring to commit this long list of crimes and wrongs. They stand before the record of this Trial as bloodstained Gloucester stood by the body of his slain king. He begged of the widow, as they beg of you: "Say I slew them not." And the Queen replied, "Then say they were not slain. But dead they are . . ." If you were to say of these men that they are not guilty, it would be as true to say that there has been no war, there are no slain, there has been no crime.

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. XIX, pp. 397–432.

173. NUREMBERG TRIAL: EXCERPTS FROM JUDGMENT, "THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS," SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 1, 1946

The judgment that was handed down at the International Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals, held in Nuremberg, Germany, included a section on the persecution of the Jews. The judgment begins that section with "The persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Nazi Government has

been proved in the greatest detail before the Tribunal. It is a record of consistent and systematic inhumanity on the greatest scale." After noting the early treatment of the Jews, the judgment continues: "The Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany before the war, severe and repressive as it was, cannot compare, however, with the policy pursued during the war in the occupied territories." That policy was called the Final Solution: the extermination of the Jews. Einsatzgruppen killings were not enough. Extermination camps were created and became all too efficient in their work. The judgment describes the selection made at the camps of who would go immediately to their death and who would die more slowly through the oppression of slave labor. It speaks of the medical experiments conducted on the Jews, their deaths in the gas chambers, and the total number of Jews killed by the Nazis.

Persecution of the Jews

The persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Nazi Government has been proved in the greatest detail before the Tribunal. It is a record of consistent and systematic inhumanity on the greatest scale. Ohlendorf, Chief of Amt III in the RSHA from 1939 to 1943, and, who was in command of one of the Einsatz groups in the campaign against the Soviet Union testified as to the methods employed in the extermination of the Jews. He said that he employed firing squads to shoot the victims in order to lessen the sense of individual guilt on the part of his men; and the 90,000 men, women, and children who were murdered in one year by his particular group were mostly Jews.

When the witness Bach Zelewski was asked how Ohlendorf could admit the murder of 90,000 people, he replied: "I am of the opinion that when, for years, for decades, the doctrine is preached that the Slav race is an inferior race, and Jews not even human, then such an outcome is inevitable."

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The anti-Jewish policy was formulated in Point 4 of the Party Program which declared "Only a member of the race can be a citizen. A member of the race can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently, no Jew can be a member of the race." Other points of the program declared that Jews should be treated as foreigners, that they should not be permitted to hold public office, that they should be expelled from the Reich if it were impossible to nourish the entire population of the State, that they should be denied any further immigration

into Germany, and that they should be prohibited from publishing German newspapers. The Nazi Party preached these doctrines throughout its history. *Der Stürmer* and other publications were allowed to disseminate hatred of the Jews, and in the speeches and public declarations of the Nazi leaders, the Jews were held up to public ridicule and contempt.

With the seizure of power, the persecution of the Jews was intensified. A series of discriminatory laws was passed, which limited the offices and professions permitted to Jews; and restrictions were placed on their family life and their rights of citizenship. By the autumn of 1938, the Nazi policy towards the Jews had reached the stage where it was directed towards the complete exclusion of Jews from German life. Pogroms were organized, which included the burning and demolishing of synagogues, the looting of Jewish businesses, and the arrest of prominent Jewish business men. A collective fine of 1 billion marks was imposed on the Jews, the seizure of Jewish assets was authorized, and the movement of Jews was restricted by regulations to certain specified districts and hours. The creation of ghettos was carried out on an extensive scale, and by an order of the Security Police Jews were compelled to wear a yellow star to be worn on the breast and back.

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The Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany before the war, severe and repressive as it was, cannot compare, however, with the policy pursued during the war in the occupied territories. Originally the policy was similar to that which had been in force inside Germany. Jews were required to register, were forced to live in ghettos, to wear the yellow star, and were used as slave laborers. In the summer of 1941, however, plans were made for the “final solution” of the Jewish question in Europe. This “final solution” meant the extermination of the Jews, which early in 1939 Hitler had threatened would be one of the consequences of an outbreak of war, and a special section in the Gestapo under Adolf Eichmann, as head of Section B 4 of the Gestapo, was formed to carry out the policy.

The plan for exterminating the Jews was developed shortly after the attack on the Soviet Union. Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and SD, formed for the purpose of breaking the resistance of the population of the areas lying behind the German armies in the East, were given the duty of exterminating the Jews in those areas. The effectiveness of

the work of the Einsatzgruppen is shown by the fact that in February 1942 Heydrich was able to report that Estonia had already been cleared of Jews and that in Riga the number of Jews had been reduced from 29,500 to 2,500. Altogether the Einsatzgruppen operating in the occupied Baltic States killed over 135,000 Jews in three months.

Nor did these special units operate completely independently of the German Armed Forces. There is clear evidence that leaders of the Einsatzgruppen obtained the co-operation of Army commanders.

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. . . Part of the “final Solution” was the gathering of Jews from all German-occupied Europe in concentration camps. Their physical condition was the test of life or death. All who were fit to work were used as slave laborers in the concentration camps; all who were not fit to work were destroyed in gas chambers and their bodies burnt. Certain concentration camps such as Treblinka and Auschwitz were set aside for this main purpose. With regard to Auschwitz, the Tribunal heard the evidence of Höss, the commandant of the camp from 1 May 1940 to 1 December 1943. He estimated that in the camp of Auschwitz alone in that time 2,500,000 persons were exterminated, and that a further 500,000 died from disease and starvation. Höss described the screening for extermination by stating in evidence:

“We had two SS doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming transports of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the camp. Others were sent immediately to the extermination plants. Children of tender years were invariably exterminated since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Still another improvement we made over Treblinka was that at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated and at Auschwitz we endeavored to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process. Of course, frequently they realized our true intentions and we sometimes had riots and difficulties due to that fact. Very frequently women would hide their children under their clothes, but of course ‘when we found them- we would’ send the children in to be exterminated.”

He described the actual killing by stating:

“It took from three to fifteen minutes to kill the people in the death chamber, depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about one half-hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special commandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses.”

Beating, starvation, torture, and killing were general. The inmates were subjected to cruel experiments at Dachau in August 1942, victims were immersed in cold water until their body temperature was reduced to 28° Centigrade, when they died immediately. Other experiments included high altitude experiments in pressure chambers, experiments to determine how long human beings could survive in freezing water, experiments with poison bullets, experiments with contagious diseases, and experiments dealing with sterilization of men and women by X-rays and other methods.

Evidence was given of the treatment of the inmates before and after their extermination. There was testimony that the hair of women victims was cut off before they were killed, and shipped to Germany, there to be used in the manufacture of mattresses. The clothes, money, and valuables of the inmates were also salvaged and sent to the appropriate agencies for disposition. After the extermination the gold teeth and fillings were taken from the heads of the corpses and sent to the Reichsbank.

After cremation the ashes were used for fertilizer, and in some instances attempts were made to utilize the fat from the bodies of the victims in the commercial manufacture of soap. Special groups traveled through Europe to find Jews and subject them to the “final solution”. German missions were sent to such satellite countries as Hungary and Bulgaria, to arrange for the shipment of Jews to extermination camps and it is known that by the end of 1944, 400,000 Jews from Hungary had been murdered at Auschwitz. Evidence has also been given of the evacuation of 110,000 Jews from part of Rumania for “liquidation”. Adolf Eichmann, who had been put in charge of this program by Hitler, has estimated that the policy pursued resulted in the killing of 6 million Jews, of which 4 million were killed in the extermination institutions.

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Blue Series, vol. I, pp. 247–253.

174. FROM “THE JUSTICE CASE”: DIRECT EXAMINATION OF DEFENDANT [DR. FRANZ] SCHLEGELBERGER

Franz Schlegelberger was the Reich justice minister. In this document he is being examined by his defense lawyer in the so-called Judges’ Trial (more formally, The United States of America v. Josef Altstötter, et al.). It was among 12 trials held in Nuremberg, all conducted by the United States, subsequent to the Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals. Schlegelberger strongly argued that he tried as best he could under the circumstances to be fair to Jews in judicial proceedings, and he positions himself in this part of his testimony as undertaking unpopular positions (i.e., positions in support of the Jews) at great personal risk. Despite his efforts, Schlegelberger was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity on the grounds of “instituting and supporting procedures for the wholesale persecution of Jews and Poles.” He was sentenced to life in prison in 1947 but was released in 1950 due to ill health.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

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DR. KUBUSCHOK (counsel for defendant Schlegelberger): Since the Jewish question is of particular importance for several points in the indictment, I would ask you first of all to tell us what your personal attitude to the Jewish question was.

DEFENDANTSCHLEGELBERGER: As far as I am concerned, there is and there was no Jewish question. This is my attitude: all races were created by God. It is arrogant for one race to place itself above another race and try to have that race exterminated. If a state deems it necessary to defend itself against being inundated and does so within the frame of a social problem, then it can and must be done by applying normal, decent means.

During the Goebbels campaign in 1938 I was abroad. When I heard about those events I said to my family: “We must be ashamed of being Germans.” That was my view at that time and that is my view today. The only person with whom I am united in faithful friendship until today because we went to school together is a full Jew. I succeeded in saving his life all through that era. He again holds his former office as a judge. My physician too is half-Jewish. That attitude of

mine naturally meant that on many occasions I was faced with inner conflicts. I ask you to consider that the Jewish problem was regarded as the central problem of the National Socialist State and the entire life in Germany was to be placed in line with that. Concerning that question Hitler and his followers worked in an entirely uncompromising manner; that an expert administrator could not bypass that basic attitude is a matter of fact. I shall have an opportunity to demonstrate what my personal attitude was toward those questions and how it always evidenced itself in an effort to put a check on the wishes of party policy, to make improvements and to exercise as far as possible a moderating influence on the practical application of those matters.

Q. What were the manifestations of your attitude to the Jewish question in your office?

A. The prosecution charges me with having cooperated in taking measures against the Jews. That the ordinance of 4 December 1941 against Jews in the eastern territories must be evaluated under particular points of view, I shall show in connection with the Polish question. For the rest, I ask you to consider that in view of the strength of the powers with which I was engaged in a struggle, a hundred percent victory of the Ministry of Justice was entirely out of the question. In that sphere, too, faithful to my basic attitude, I did work to make justice prevail; but frequently I had to content myself with making a compromise and I had to be pleased when at least I had achieved some amelioration. To use a customary phrase, if I had drawn the consequences from every defeat, I would have deprived myself of all possibility to aid the Jews. Quite apart from the fact that the resignation from office, before the war would have been a factual impossibility, and during the war a legal impossibility until a new minister was appointed.

With the permission of the Tribunal I will prove how difficult it was by citing an example. When the Party started a campaign against Jewish lawyers, I went to see Hitler and told him that it was untenable to remove from their profession Jewish lawyers among whom research people of repute were included, and with whom I myself had worked. I was pleased when I succeeded in persuading Hitler that that was correct and in achieving his agreement that he would reject the wishes of the Party. To inform the agencies concerned, I called a meeting of Ministers of Justice of the Laender who were still in office in those days and informed them about Hitler's decision. The result was surprising. I encountered bitter resistance, and the meeting bore no result. Hitler asked for Guertner to come to see him and asked him for information as to whether I was not perhaps a Jew myself. Then the

Party began to exercise pressure on Hitler. He abandoned his decision, and the Jewish lawyers were removed from office. So as to make it possible at least for the Jews to preserve their rights, I proposed to set up the institute of the so-called Jewish consultants where former lawyers worked as consultants.

As to my own attitude toward these problems, that I could show properly only where I, myself, had to make the decisions. In this connection, I attach importance to the fact in saying here that nothing is more removed from me than here to play the part of the friend of the Jews. I am not a friend of the Jews; I am not a friend of the Aryans as such; but I am a friend of justice. And anybody who saw me at work and wishes to give a just opinion can confirm that with regard to all those who in my opinion were unjustly persecuted; no matter what their race or what their class, I tried to help them with all my strength.

Roosevelt, the former President of the United States of America, in 1944, in an address to the United Nations said, "Hitler asserts that he had committed the crimes against the Jews in the name of the German people. May every German show that his own heart is free of such crimes by protecting the persecuted with all his might." I can claim for myself that I acted accordingly. Concerning the members of the Ministry who were not fully Aryan, I kept them in office; and as has been established at this trial concerning judges who were not fully Aryan, I left large numbers of them in their offices irrespective of the Party purge. I looked after those who had been dismissed from their posts, and who were non-Aryans, and who had Jewish relatives. As far as possible, I protected them against being driven out of their homes and being deported.

Source: Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 717-719.

175. EXCERPTS FROM THE CROSS-EXAMINATION OF DEFENSE WITNESS [HERMANN] JAHREISS, JUNE 24/25, 1947

Professor Hermann Jahrreiss, who was associate defense counsel for Alfred Jodl at the Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals in Nuremberg, Germany, is here serving as an expert defense witness on a number of legal issues at

the so-called Judges' Trial (more formally The United States of America v. Josef Altstötter, et al.). It was among 12 trials held in Nuremberg, all conducted by the United States, subsequent to the Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals. Jahrreiss, in response to questioning by Charles M. LaFollette, U.S. deputy chief of counsel, observes that the crimes committed by the Nazis did not have "anything to do anymore with legal considerations," because they exceeded "normal conditions." When questioned by the presiding judge of the trial, James T. Brand, Jahrreiss agreed with the judge's statement that "judges [in Nazi Germany] were obliged to obey the law of their State of Germany even though in doing so they violated a principle of international law." Further, he stated that he "never heard that a German court did not apply a Reich law because in the opinion of the court it was contrary to international law."

Expert Opinion by Defense Witness Professor [Hermann] Jahrreiss concerning the Development of German Law

Cross Examination [by Charles M. LaFollette, United States Deputy Chief of Counsel; [editor's note]

MR. LAFOLLETTE: * * * I do want to ask you, Dr. Jahrreiss, a hypothetical question. You may not agree with the hypothesis which I hypothesize or the implications perhaps inherent in them, but just for my own purpose and for orderly procedure I ask you to consider my question and answer it on the basis of the facts which I hypothesize, purely. Let us assume that I was subject to the complete power of an individual we will call "A" to force me to obey his orders implicitly; and, under those circumstances, I saw "A" procuring a strong rope, strong enough to bind a man completely and securely. Secondly, that I saw him preparing a strong wooden frame upon the ground, with iron rings through which he could pass the rope; and, so placed, that they could bind the legs and arms of a man securely. Third—a wooden block so shaped that a man's neck could be placed on it with his head extended beyond it. And four, that I saw this man "A" sharpening an axe large enough and strong enough to cut through the neck of a man. And suppose at this same time I also saw, standing always in view, from one to six men, each of whom I know that this man "A" has a violent hatred for and has threatened to kill; and each of whom I know that this man "A" has the power to capture if he chooses. Now then, let us assume that this man "A" captures one or more of these men that he hates, and that I know he hates; and binds this man with the rope that I saw him prepare, upon the frame that I saw him build; and places his

neck on the block that I saw him prepare; and that then "A" hands me the axe which I saw him sharpen and orders me to cut off the head of this captured, bound man. Would you say that under those circumstances I would be guilty or not guilty of killing the man whose head I severed at the direct order of "A" who had the full power to order me to do so.

DR. JAHREISS: I understand it this way—that guilty or not guilty is to be considered as guilt under criminal laws.

Q. On the assumed facts, yes.

A. I just want to ask you a question. Do you mean it as a legal question or as a question of morality?

Q. As a question of law.

A. Of law, yes. And according to what criminal law, and in what state?

Q. You can name the state; I don't care.

A. Well, is that supposed to be a question in Utopia?

Q. Let's put it in Germany.

A. In Germany?

Q. In Germany, yes, after 1933.

A. Yes, all right. Here then, we would be faced with terrible problems with which all of us since last year have been torturing ourselves so terribly, and I confess that in spite of having thought about it a great deal, that I have not yet found my way out of the dilemma into which we have been brought. Perhaps I can answer this hypothetical question by saying, by stating first, the points of view which in a conflicting manner make the answer more difficult. Perhaps first of all I should say, so that this should be clear, Mr. Prosecutor, how I, myself would behave.—I don't know. No matter how horrible the whole thing is, I don't believe that I—well, the Charter of the International Military Tribunal anticipates that an appeal to higher orders should not be admissible. It is not my task to criticize those regulations. However, perhaps I may be allowed to say that this regulation, if it should really be valid law in any state whatsoever, would have very dangerous consequences for order in general. One of the four judges of the IMT, the French judge, Donnedieu De Vabres, in a lecture which he gave this last April expressly stated that this regulation brings with it many difficulties for the idea of the discipline imposed by the state. I have the text of his lecture here. It is a lecture which Professor Donnedieu De Vabres gave before the Association des etudes, Internationales Criminologiques. May I quote a short passage from it? May I read it in French?

THE INTERPRETER: Yes, you may.

WITNESS JAHREISS: "Since the statute was interpreted this way under the rules imposed by the IMT, it has in a sense

of individualism gone beyond regulations of international law and domestic law, this regulation is open to the objection that it will endanger the necessary discipline for the preservation of the state. Such a regulation can be applied in the future only with prudence and circumspection.” I am quoting this here only in order to demonstrate that if any rules exist at all, a certain harshness is absolutely necessary, unavoidably necessary. I always told my young students who started out on a study of law that they would have to devote themselves to perhaps the most bitter fact in life of man, and that is the rule, because by nature man hates the rulership, at least if he is subjected to it, but if this is the case every state basically has to require that its laws are executed, even if the person concerned, for moral or religious reasons, or other reasons, is of a different opinion. On the other hand, Mr. LaFollette, every state knows that there is some limitation somewhere. For example, the German Reich had a military penal law. In it there was the quoted article 47. In the jurisdiction of the Reich court, however, this paragraph was applied more and more in a restricting sense because discipline had to be above all.

Now, Mr. Prosecutor, before the IMT, I, in the expert opinion which I gave, which you were kind enough to quote here, stated expressly and emphatically, I believe, what the limit of humaneness or humanity is, but at the same time I pointed out that this limit is frequently not sharply drawn; and I believe, and this comes closer to your question, that perhaps after all the problem with which we are concerned here cannot quite be done justice to, if a case is described quite as drastic as you just said.

Last year during the first 4 months of the trial I experienced it, and those were the most difficult times of my entire life. I experienced and saw what terrible things happened under Hitler’s regime, and I have no way to express my horror and to describe this sufficiently in any language, but I believe that you will agree with me if I say that those are occurrences which are outside of legal discussion entirely, for, Mr. Prosecutor, even about injustice one can, if one is exact, speak with legal reasons only in cases where—excuse me—the injustice is within normal limits.

I myself was a criminal judge. One single murder frequently, in the court of assize, occupied our time for 2 to 3 weeks, and it was a terrible thing. Two murders by one person—that was horrifying. If someone had eight to ten murders on his conscience, then he was described as a mass murderer in the press of Europe, and people asked themselves whether this was something that could be handled by means of the penal code at all.

When, last year, in the courtroom of the big trial I listened to the witness, Hoess, of Auschwitz, when he answered the question of the prosecutor as to how many people he had killed, if I remember correctly, he answered he didn’t remember exactly whether two and a half or three million. At that time it was quite obvious to me that neither positively nor negatively this had anything to do anymore with legal considerations because, Mr. Prosecutor, no matter what a state regulates concerning the question of review of a law the state has to think of normal conditions. These occurrences and matters cannot be measured by any order of the world at all. Therefore, I believe that these things that happened in Germany behind a complicated system of secrecy, a system of mutual delimitation, and if then one adds the pressure of conscience of millions of people who felt themselves hemmed in between patriotism and hatred of the system, then the question which you put to me attains a very bitter human weight, and I can only say I don’t know any way out.

* * * * *

PRESIDING JUDGE BRAND: In order to better understand your views which you have ably expressed, I would like to ask you a few questions. I understand your view to be that judges were obliged to obey the law of their State of Germany even though in doing so they violated a principle of international law. That is a fair brief statement, is it not, of the matter?

WITNESS JAHRRRIESS: Yes. During the Weimar republic this was already uncontestedly applicable, and with the permission of the Tribunal, I read the commentary of Anschuetz to article 102.

Q. And you would apply the same principle after 1933, would you not?

A. After 1933? There was much less the question whether this was different than before.

Q. What court or tribunal ordinarily enforced the rule that judges must obey the law of their State under such circumstances? I assume the answer is obvious.

A. Excuse me. I didn’t understand your question, sir.

Q. What tribunal ordinarily enforced against the judges or upon the judges this obligation to obey the law of the State even though they in doing so, violated international law?

A. I never heard that a court violated this principle so that there was no need to force the judges to conform to it. Mr. President, I never heard that a German court did not apply a Reich law because in the opinion of the court it was contrary to international law. I never heard of such a case.

You see, it was entirely uncontested. The court, just in such a case, couldn't do anything but through official channels call the attention of the government to this contradiction so that the government, in accordance with its obligation under international law, would see to it that the laws were changed. Let us assume the case that the Reich Supreme Court, for example, in deciding a case had come to the conclusion that a German Reich law was contrary to an obligation of the Reich under international law. Then the Reich Supreme Court was not able to say—the indictment is refused because the Reich law which supports the indictment is contrary to international law. The Reich Supreme Court could do nothing but either to postpone the trial and to report to the government so that perhaps changes would be made in time, but it was not even obliged to do that. It was obliged only if it did make a decision to decide in accordance with national law if it was contrary to the international law. That was the legal situation during the Weimar republic.

Q. That answers my question. * * * The Reich Supreme Court would in proper cases lay down the rule that the lower court judge should enforce the German law even though it violated some principle of international law for which Germany as a state might be diplomatically held responsible, is that true?

A. No, that is not quite correct. I said that the Reich Supreme Court, just the same as the other German courts, in regard to this question, did not have any doubts at all, and therefore, it did not make any rules with which the lower courts had to comply. That was not necessary at all.

Q. Then the lower courts themselves recognized this rule of which you speak that they must enforce the law of the State even though it violates a principle of international law?

A. Yes, and they only had to look at the Anschuetz commentary; that said so expressly.

Q. Well, at least prior to 1918, was there any tribunal other than the court of the state which could punish the public officer or a judge, for making a decision which was contrary to international law, if it was made in compliance with the law of the state?

A. No.

Q. If the principle enunciated among other bodies by the first tribunal, the IMT Tribunal, namely, the principle of the penal responsibility of an individual officer for violations of international law, should be applied, then you have, do you not, a modification of your principle which you have stated with reference to the necessity that judges must obey the law of the state. In other words, if that principle of penal

responsibility of the individual has become a part of international law, then the anomalous situation would arise where the officer, perhaps the judge, may have been required by his state law to make a decision, but may, nevertheless, be responsible if any tribunal has jurisdiction to try him, for a decision contrary to international law. Isn't that true?

A. If I understood your question correctly, Your Honor, the general validity of the principles of the charter as international law could, in regard to judges of those states which require that their officials apply the law of the state as the final will, bring about tragic conflicts of conscience, for which, in my opinion, there is no indubitable legal solution at all. But, Mr. President, I do not know whether I quite understand your question correctly.

Q. I do not think I will attempt to repeat it further. I understood your position. It is true, is it not, that there was no tribunal in Germany, perhaps anywhere else, which had statutory jurisdiction to apply international law in a penal proceeding against a public officer of the state who had complied with the state law?

A. Yes, that is correct.

Q. Then, if there were a tribunal that had jurisdiction to apply that law, might it not perhaps, arrive at a different decision, legally, from the decision which this court of the state itself, would arrive at; might not an international tribunal, having jurisdiction to pass upon the question, arrive at a different answer as to criminality of an individual officer who had violated international law, but had not violated the law of the state?

A. Yes, that would be so, but, Mr. President, if I may say so, that is the very thing which I call the tragic situation of the official concerned.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. III, pp. 279–284.

176. NUREMBERG CODE, AUGUST 19, 1947

The Nuremberg Code is an internationally applied convention of medical ethics that controls medical experimentation. The code was the result of the so-called Doctors' Trial (more formally The United States of America v. Karl Brandt, et al.). It was among 12 trials held in Nuremberg, all conducted by the United States, subsequent to the Military Tribunal

Trial of Major War Criminals. Twenty-three defendants—most of them medical doctors—were charged with Nazi human experimentation, euthanasia, and mass murder. A set of six principles to govern future medical experimentation was drawn up during the trial by Dr. Leo Alexander, an American physician who was an adviser to the prosecution. The judges of the trial added four principles to the list and incorporated them into their verdict. The Nuremberg Code has since been adopted by various states and, of international significance, was the basis for the Helsinki Declaration of 1964.

1. The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.

This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent; should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, over-reaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved, as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision. This latter element requires that, before the acceptance of an affirmative decision by the experimental subject, there should be made known to him the nature, duration, and purpose of the experiment; the method and means by which it is to be conducted; all inconveniences and hazards reasonably to be expected; and the effects upon his health or person, which may possibly come from his participation in the experiment.

The duty and responsibility for ascertaining the quality of the consent rests upon each individual who initiates, directs or engages in the experiment. It is a personal duty and responsibility which may not be delegated to another with impunity.

2. The experiment should be such as to yield fruitful results for the good of society, unprocurable by other methods or means of study, and not random and unnecessary in nature.

3. The experiment should be so designed and based on the results of animal experimentation and a knowledge of the natural history of the disease or other problem under study, that the anticipated results will justify the performance of the experiment.

4. The experiment should be so conducted as to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury.

5. No experiment should be conducted, where there is an *a priori* reason to believe that death or disabling injury will occur; except, perhaps, in those experiments where the experimental physicians also serve as subjects.

6. The degree of risk to be taken should never exceed that determined by the humanitarian importance of the problem to be solved by the experiment.

7. Proper preparations should be made and adequate facilities provided to protect the experimental subject against even remote possibilities of injury, disability, or death.

8. The experiment should be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons. The highest degree of skill and care should be required through all stages of the experiment of those who conduct or engage in the experiment.

9. During the course of the experiment, the human subject should be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end, if he has reached the physical or mental state, where continuation of the experiment seemed to him to be impossible.

10. During the course of the experiment, the scientist in charge must be prepared to terminate the experiment at any stage, if he has probable cause to believe, in the exercise of the good faith, superior skill and careful judgement required of him, that a continuation of the experiment is likely to result in injury, disability, or death to the experimental subject.

Source: *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council No. 10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), Green Series, vol. II, pp. 181–182.

177. NUREMBERG PRINCIPLES AND UNITED NATIONS COMMENTARY PER GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 177, NOVEMBER 21, 1947

The Nuremberg Principles are the result of the Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals in Nuremberg, Germany. The United Nations International Law Commission drafted the Nuremberg Principles and made them part of international law in 1946. The document that follows sets forth the seven principles in the context of commentary by the United Nations. For example, Principle I (“Any person who commits an act which constitutes a crime under international law is responsible therefor and liable to punishment”) is immediately followed by commentary regarding the principle’s origins and an analysis of the text. It should be noted that Principle VI defines what is meant by the terms “crimes against peace,” “war crimes,” and “crimes against humanity,” each with its own set of United Nations commentary. The Nuremberg Principles

have been incorporated into a number of international treaties and form the basis for criminal tribunals established to prosecute crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as the International Criminal Court.

Part III. FORMULATION OF THE NÜRNBERG PRINCIPLES

95. Under General Assembly resolution 177 (II), paragraph (a), the International Law Commission was directed to “formulate the principles of international law recognized in the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal and in the judgment of the Tribunal”.

96. In pursuance of this resolution of the General Assembly, the Commission undertook a preliminary consideration of the subject at its first session. In the course of this consideration the question arose as to whether or not the Commission should ascertain to what extent the principles contained in the Charter and judgment constituted principles of international law. The conclusion was that since the Nürnberg principles had been affirmed by the General Assembly, the task entrusted to the Commission by paragraph (a) of resolution 177 (II) was not to express any appreciation of these principles as principles of international law but merely to formulate them. This conclusion was set forth in paragraph 26 of the report of the Commission on its first session, which report was approved by the General Assembly in 1949. Mr. Jean Spiropoulos was appointed special rapporteur to continue the work of the Commission on the subject and to present a report at its second session.

97. At the session under review, Mr. Spiropoulos presented his report (A/CN.4/22) which the Commission considered at its 44th to 49th and 54th meetings. On the basis of this report, the Commission adopted a formulation of the principles of international law which were recognized in the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal and in the judgment of the Tribunal. The formulation by the Commission, together with comments thereon, is set out below.

PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW RECOGNIZED IN THE CHARTER OF THE NÜRNBERG TRIBUNAL AND IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE TRIBUNAL

PRINCIPLE I

Any person who commits an act which constitutes a crime under international law is responsible therefor and liable to punishment.

98. This principle is based on the first paragraph of article 6 of the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal which established

the competence of the Tribunal to try and punish persons who, acting in the interests of the European Axis countries, whether as individuals or as members of organizations, committed any of the crimes defined in sub-paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of article 6. The text of the Charter declared punishable only persons “acting in the interests of the European Axis countries” but, as a matter of course, Principle I is now formulated in general terms.

99. The general rule underlying Principle I is that international law may impose duties on individuals directly without any interposition of internal law. The findings of the Tribunal were very definite on the question whether rules of international law may apply to individuals. “That international law imposes duties and liabilities upon individuals as well as upon States”, said the judgment of the Tribunal, “has long been recognized”. It added: “Crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provision of international law be enforced.”

PRINCIPLE II

The fact that internal law does not impose a penalty for an act which constitutes a crime under international law does not relieve the person who committed the act from responsibility under international law.

100. This principle is a corollary to Principle I. Once it is admitted that individuals are responsible for crimes under international law, it is obvious that they are not relieved from their international responsibility by the fact that their acts are not held to be crimes under the law of any particular country.

101. The Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal referred, in express terms, to this relation between international and national responsibility only with respect to crimes against humanity. Sub-paragraph (c) of article 6 of the Charter defined as crimes against humanity certain acts “whether or not [committed] in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated”. The Commission has formulated Principle II in general terms.

102. The principle that a person who has committed an international crime is responsible therefor and liable to punishment under international law, independently of the provisions of internal law, implies what is commonly called the “supremacy” of international law over national law. The Tribunal considered that international law can bind individuals even if national law does not direct them to observe the rules of international law, as shown by the following statement of the judgment: “. . . the very essence of the

Charter is that individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience imposed by the individual State”.

PRINCIPLE III

The fact that a person who committed an act which constitutes a crime under international law acted as Head of State or responsible Government official does not relieve him from responsibility under international law.

103. This principle is based on article 7 of the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal. According to the Charter and the judgment, the fact that an individual acted as Head of State or responsible government official did not relieve him from international responsibility. “The principle of international law which, under certain circumstances, protects the representatives of a State”, said the Tribunal, “cannot be applied to acts which are condemned as criminal by international law. The authors of these acts cannot shelter themselves behind their official position in order to be freed from punishment. . . .” The same idea was also expressed in the following passage of the findings: “He who violates the laws of war cannot obtain immunity while acting in pursuance of the authority of the State if the State in authorizing action moves outside its competence under international law.”

104. The last phrase of article 7 of the Charter, “or mitigating punishment”, has not been retained in the formulation of Principle III. The Commission considers that the question of mitigating punishment is a matter for the competent Court to decide.

PRINCIPLE IV

The fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him.

105. This text is based on the principle contained in article 8 of the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal as interpreted in the judgment. The idea expressed in Principle IV is that superior orders are not a defence provided a moral choice was possible to the accused. In conformity with this conception, the Tribunal rejected the argument of the defence that there could not be any responsibility since most of the defendants acted under the orders of Hitler. The Tribunal declared: “The provisions of this article [article 8] are in conformity with the law of all nations. That a soldier was ordered to kill or torture in violation of the international law of war has never been recognized as a defence to such acts of brutality, though, as the Charter here provides, the order may be urged

in mitigation of the punishment. The true test, which is found in varying degrees in the criminal law of most nations, is not the existence of the order, but whether moral choice was in fact possible.”

106. The last phrase of article 8 of the Charter “but may be considered in mitigation of punishment, if the Tribunal determines that justice so requires”, has not been retained for the reason stated under Principle III, in paragraph 104 above.

PRINCIPLE V

Any person charged with a crime under international law has the right to a fair trial on the facts and law.

107. The principle that a defendant charged with a crime under international law must have the right to a fair trial was expressly recognized and carefully developed by the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal. The Charter contained a chapter entitled: “Fair Trial for Defendants”, which for the purpose of ensuring such fair trial provided the following procedure:

- “a. The indictment shall include full particulars specifying in detail the charges against the defendants. A copy of the indictment and of all the documents lodged with the indictment, translated into a language which he understands, shall be furnished to the defendant at a reasonable time before the trial.
- “b. During any preliminary examination or trial of a defendant he shall have the right to give any explanation relevant to the charges made against him.
- “c. A preliminary examination of a defendant and his trial shall be conducted in, or translated into, a language which the defendant understands.
- “d. A defendant shall have the right to conduct his own defence before the Tribunal or to have the assistance of counsel.
- “e. A defendant shall have the right through himself or through his counsel to present evidence at the trial in support of his defence, and to cross-examine any witness called by the prosecution.”

108. The right to a fair trial was also referred to in the judgment itself. The Tribunal said in this respect: “With regard to the constitution of the Court all that the defendants are entitled to ask is to receive a fair trial on the facts and law.”

109. In the view of the Commission, the expression “fair trial” should be understood in the light of the above-quoted provisions of the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal.

PRINCIPLE VI

The crimes hereinafter set out are punishable as crimes under international law:

a. Crimes against peace:

(i) Planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances;

(ii) Participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the acts mentioned under (i).

110. Both categories of crimes are characterized by the fact that they are connected with “war of aggression or war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances”.

111. The Tribunal made a general statement to the effect that its Charter was “the expression of international law existing at the time of its creation”. It, in particular, refuted the argument of the defence that aggressive war was not an international crime. For this refutation the Tribunal relied primarily on the General Treaty for the Renunciation of War of 27 August 1928 (Kellogg-Briand Pact) which in 1939 was in force between sixty-three States. “The nations who signed the Pact or adhered to it unconditionally”, said the Tribunal, “condemned recourse to war for the future as an instrument of policy, and expressly renounced it. After the signing of the Pact, any nation resorting to war as an instrument of national policy breaks the Pact. In the opinion of the Tribunal, the solemn renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy necessarily involves the proposition that such a war is illegal in international law; and that those who planned and waged such a war, with its inevitable and terrible consequences, are committing a crime in so doing. War for the solution of international controversies undertaken as an instrument of national policy certainly includes a war of aggression, and such a war is therefore outlawed by the Pact”

112. In support of its interpretation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the Tribunal cited some other international instruments which condemned war of aggression as an international crime. The draft of a Treaty of Mutual Assistance sponsored by the League of Nations in 1923 declared, in its article 1, “that aggressive war is an international crime”. The Preamble to the League of Nations Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International disputes (Geneva Protocol), of 1924, “recognizing the solidarity of the members of the International Community”, stated that “a war of aggression constitutes a violation of this solidarity, and is an

international crime”, and that the contracting parties were “desirous of facilitating the complete application of the system provided in the Covenant of the League of Nations for the pacific settlement of disputes between the States and of ensuring the repression of international crimes”. The declaration concerning wars of aggression adopted on 24 September 1927 by the Assembly of the League of Nations declared, in its preamble, that war was an “international crime”. The resolution unanimously adopted on 18 February 1928 by twenty-one American Republics at the Sixth (Havana) International Conference of American States, provided that “war of aggression constitutes an international crime against the human species”.

113. The Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal did not contain any definition of “war of aggression”, nor was there any such definition in the judgment of the Tribunal. It was by reviewing the historical events before and during the war that it found that certain of the defendants planned and waged aggressive wars against twelve nations and were therefore guilty of a series of crimes.

114. According to the Tribunal, this made it unnecessary to discuss the subject in further detail, or to consider at any length the extent to which these aggressive wars were also “wars in violation of international treaties, agreements, or assurances”.

115. The term “assurances” is understood by the Commission as including any pledge or guarantee of peace given by a State, even unilaterally.

116. The terms “planning” and “preparation” of a war of aggression were considered by the Tribunal as comprising all the stages in the bringing about of a war of aggression from the planning to the actual initiation of the war. In view of that, the Tribunal did not make any clear distinction between planning and preparation. As stated in the judgment, “planning and preparation are essential to the making of war”.

117. The meaning of the expression “waging of a war of aggression” was discussed in the Commission during the consideration of the definition of “crimes against peace”. Some members of the Commission feared that everyone in uniform who fought in a war of aggression might be charged with the “waging” of such a war. The Commission understands the expression to refer only to high-ranking military personnel and high State officials, and believes that this was also the view of the Tribunal.

118. A legal notion of the Charter to which the defence objected was the one concerning “conspiracy”. The Tribunal recognized that “conspiracy is not defined in the Charter”. However, it stated the meaning of the term, though only in a

restricted way. “But in the opinion of the Tribunal”, it was said in the judgment, “the conspiracy must be clearly outlined in its criminal purpose. It must not be too far removed from the time of decision and of action. The planning, to be criminal, must not rest merely on the declarations of a party programme such as are found in the twenty-five points of the Nazi Party, announced in 1920, or the political affirmations expressed in *Mein Kampf* in later years. The Tribunal must examine whether a concrete plan to wage war existed, and determine the participants in that concrete plan”.

b. *War crimes:*

Violations of the laws or customs of war which include, but are not limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave-labour or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war, of persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.

119. The Tribunal emphasized that before the last war the crimes defined by article 6 (b) of its Charter were already recognized as crimes under international law. The Tribunal stated that such crimes were covered by specific provisions of the Regulations annexed to The Hague Convention of 1907 respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and of the Geneva Convention of 1929 on the Treatment of Prisoners of War. After enumerating the said provisions, the Tribunal stated: “That violation of these provisions constituted crimes for which the guilty individuals were punishable is too well settled to admit or argument.”

c. *Crimes against humanity:*

Murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhuman acts done against any civilian population, or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds, when such acts are done or such persecutions are carried on in execution of or in connexion with any crime against peace or any war crime.

120. Article 6 (c) of the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal distinguished two categories of punishable acts, to wit: first, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhuman acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war, and second, persecution on political,

racial or religious grounds. Acts within these categories, according to the Charter, constituted international crimes only when committed “in execution of or in connexion with any crimes within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal”. The crimes referred to as falling within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal were crimes against peace and war crimes.

121. Though it found that “political opponents were murdered in Germany before the war, and that many of them were kept in concentration camps in circumstances of great horror and cruelty”, that “the policy of persecution, repression and murder of civilians in Germany before the war of 1939, who were likely to be hostile to the Government, was most ruthlessly carried out”, and that “the persecution of Jews during the same period is established beyond all doubt”, the Tribunal considered that it had not been satisfactorily proved that before the outbreak of war these acts had been committed in execution of, or in connexion with, any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal. For this reason the Tribunal declared itself unable to “make a general declaration that the acts before 1939 were crimes against humanity within the meaning of the Charter”.

122. The Tribunal did not, however, thereby exclude the possibility that crimes against humanity might be committed also before a war.

123. In its definition of crimes against humanity the Commission has omitted the phrase “before or during the war” contained in article 6 (c) of the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal because this phrase referred to a particular war, the war of 1939. The omission of the phrase does not mean that the Commission considers that crimes against humanity can be committed only during a war. On the contrary, the Commission is of the opinion that such crimes may take place also before a war in connexion with crimes against peace.

124. In accordance with article 6 (c) of the Charter, the above formulation characterizes as crimes against humanity murder, extermination, enslavement, etc., committed against “any” civilian population. This means that these acts may be crimes against humanity even if they are committed by the perpetrator against his own population.

PRINCIPLE VII

Complicity in the commission of a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity as set forth in Principle VI is a crime under international law.

125. The only provision in the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal regarding responsibility for complicity was that of the last paragraph of article 6 which reads as follows: “Leaders, organizers, instigators and accomplices participating in

the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such a plan.”

126. The Tribunal, commenting on this provision in connexion with its discussion of count one of the indictment, which charged certain defendants with conspiracy to commit aggressive war, war crimes and crimes against humanity, said that, in its opinion, the provision did not “add a new and separate crime to those already listed”. In the view of the Tribunal, the provision was designed to “establish the responsibility of persons participating in a common plan” to prepare, initiate and wage aggressive war. Interpreted literally, this statement would seem to imply that the complicity rule did not apply to crimes perpetrated by individual action.

127. On the other hand, the Tribunal convicted several of the defendants of war crimes and crimes against humanity because they gave orders resulting in atrocious and criminal acts which they did not commit themselves. In practice, therefore, the Tribunal seems to have applied general principles of criminal law regarding complicity. This view is corroborated by expressions used by the Tribunal in assessing the guilt of particular defendants.

Source: “Principles of International Law Recognized in the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal and in the Judgment of the Tribunal, with Commentaries,” United Nations, http://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/7_1_1950.pdf. Copyright (c) 1950 United Nations. Reprinted by permission of the United Nations.

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