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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

PSF

November 9, 1944

MEMORANDUM

TO: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: MR. LUBIN *LS*

I have just finished reading the secret Weekly Intelligence Review of the British General Staff for October 4, 1944. The attached, which appears in this Intelligence Review, is based on reports submitted to the British General Staff from interviews with prisoners of war.

The report states that the prisoners of war from whom this information was received "have shown themselves to be accurate on other matters upon which they were questioned. There is no reason to doubt their statements."

Please do not attempt to read the attached report after eating a meal. I have never run across anything was was more conducive to turning one's stomach.

DECLASSIFIED
By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.
By W. J. Stewart Date MAR 26 1980

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JCS MEMO. 117-73
BY RT, DATE MAR 26 1985



★ **Life in a Concentration Camp** ★
Will this Leopard change his spots?

The following summary of a few of the many reports of atrocities committed by the Germans speaks for itself. The PW from whom the reports have been taken have shown themselves to be accurate on other matters on which they were questioned. There is no reason to doubt their statements.

P.W. "A," who had been a member of the Social Democratic Party, was taken away by the Gestapo in March, 1938. After 24 hours' starvation in a dark cell he was "interrogated" on a subject of which he knew nothing. As a result of the prolonged enquiry, in which rubber truncheons played the main role, PW had to be artificially fed in a hospital for some time. He was then sent to a concentration camp with a batch of others. On their arrival, as a warning and foretaste of what to expect, one man was selected haphazardly and whipped to death in front of the newcomers. Soon after his arrival PW saw five men buried with only their heads above ground, face towards the sun. Some ants' nests were brought near their faces and they were left there all day. Three died and the other two became insane. Fear of this type of punishment leads to prisoners threatened with it running through the guards so as to be shot. On another occasion PW saw a man, who had fallen asleep while employed in cleaning part of the latrines, bound and thrown headfirst into the latrine ditch. PW helped to dig him out half an hour later, but he had died of asphyxiation. A common punishment undergone by PW himself was "one hour on the pole." Prisoners were suspended on poles, their arms bound behind their backs. Nails were fixed in the poles, so that as the arms of the victims tired the nails were driven into their posteriors. The guards amused themselves by pulling the victims away from the poles, so that, on letting go, the nails made a "satisfactory" penetration. The scars of the wounds thus inflicted are still visible on PW's body. PW was released in March, 1944, for service in the German Army.

P.W. "B," who was "suspected of subversive activities," was interned in concentration camps from December, 1938, till he escaped in October, 1943. The following were camp punishments imposed on the slightest pretext:—

- (1) Light punishment consisted of standing 12-48 hours at attention at the main gate without food. Any SS man passing asked the reason for the punishment and accompanied the question by blows on the face.

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in action by the wrists tied on his back

- (3) Prisoners were ordered to receive 25 strokes with a plaited cowhide, each blow being counted by the victim. About the fifteenth blow the supervising official would contradict the count and the whole procedure started afresh from "one." Three days' solitary confinement without food followed this punishment.
- (4) Major punishment consisted of 50 double blows, inflicted by two officials, followed by 42 days' solitary confinement in a dark room, during which time the only food given was vegetable soup every third day.
- (5) Prisoners were selected as "guinea pigs" for experiments, Russian PW, on one occasion, being detailed to see what degree of high pressure they could stand.

P.W. "C," who had also committed the crime of belonging to the Social Democratic Party, was imprisoned from 1938 to 1943. He was subjected to the usual "treatment" by rubber truncheons, forced to stand motionless from 7-12 and 1-5 every day, etc. Requests for medical treatment received the answer "There are no sick here, only living or dead." The officials in charge thought of some new "special treatment" every day, including drenching with fire hoses and parades for meals which either were not forthcoming, or which they were allowed only to smell. PW was a member of a party which had to bury three Jews in sand with only their heads above ground. One of the leading SS officials then jumped on their heads till they died. Another "entertainment" in which all the camp officials took part was the baptism of some Jews, which took the form of throwing them into the sewage canal and forcing them to swim round for a while.

P.W. "D" gives the following account of an asphyxiation van which he saw in action in RUSSIA. "Russian Jews, men, women and children, in all about 70, were hustled into the van, quite willingly as they were told they were being transferred to another locality. The double doors were then closed and a rubber tube from the interior of the lorry was connected to the exhaust pipe and the engine run for about ten minutes. The lorry appeared to be soundproof as one could not hear the victims knocking more than about 10 yards away."

The same PW witnessed the shooting of some thousands of Russian Jews near KHERSON. They were shot in batches of ten and the bodies were thrown into an anti-tank ditch nearby. PW estimated some 5,000 people were murdered here.

P.W. "E" served with an SS Regiment which was sent into the Jewish Ghetto in WARSAW in April, 1943. They remained there a month and during this time they shot some 45,000 men, women and children.

Four P.W. took part in a punitive action on a French village. The commander of their battalion "disappeared" and in retaliation the men of the village were assembled in a large barn and shot with MG's. The women and children were then herded into the church where they were the object of MG practice. The church was set on fire and all those inside were burned, alive or dead. The entire population of 900 was wiped out.

P.W. "F" told of an artist, of mixed German and English origin, who was employed by the Germans as an interpreter in ITALY. The Germans regarded him as too softhearted, and delighted in making him witness their outrages and seeing him be sick. To teach him a lesson an Italian prisoner was stripped and his back burnt with a red-hot poker. The Italian died. The artist's nerves gave way and he was later sent to a lunatic asylum.

P.W. "G" states: "We've shot terrorists in the hills, too, sick and wounded included, particularly my company. The Italians had to carry the ammunition up the hills and then they were shot, after they'd dug their own graves."

An escaped American officer saw a French girl whom the Germans had questioned. They had pulled her finger nails out and put vices on her knees and crushed her legs.

