

VAN TIJ, GERTRUD

000569

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD RECORDS

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February 9, 1945.

Miss Florence Hodel,  
Assistant Executive Director,  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington 25, D.C.

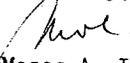
Dear Florence:

I am sending you herewith two copies of Mrs. van Tijn's report concerning the Jews of Holland during the period May 1940 through June 1944.

Mrs. van Tijn, as you know, was very active in the Refugee Committee in Holland and was eventually deported to Bergen-Belsen.

This report as you will see is highly confidential and I am sure you will treat it accordingly.

Sincerely,

  
Moses A. Leavitt  
Secretary

MAL:rl

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THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

Jerusalem

23.XI.44

Mr. Paul Baerwald  
Chairman, Joint Distribution Committee  
270 Madison Avenue  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Baerwald,

I am sending you herewith through the courtesy of Mr. Pinkerton a report by Mrs. Gertrud Van Tijn concerning the Jews of Holland during the past few years.

You will recall that Mrs. Van Tijn was one of the 284 inmates of Bergenbelsen and other camps in Germany who were exchanged for a number of German internees in Allied countries.

The report makes terrible reading. This is a somewhat abridged version, Mrs. Van Tijn having eliminated a few of her judgements on some of the leaders of the Jewish community, thinking that perhaps they might not be altogether objective. If an opportunity comes I shall try to send you the full report, as she requests.

As you are doubtless aware Mrs. Van Tijn is to enter the services of the Dutch Government in connection with problems of rehabilitation, and she is about to leave Palestine for London. She is expecting to go to America to visit her daughter before entering upon her duties with the Dutch Government. She will, so I think, ask permission of the Dutch Government to give special attention to Jewish refugees and their problems. I have not the slightest doubt that she would be very glad to help the JDC in every possible way.

With best regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

J.L. Magnes

PS: I need hardly add that the Report is strictly confidential and not for publication.

JLM/lj  
enc.

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C O N T R I B U T I O N

towards the

HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN HOLLAND

FROM

May 10th, 1940 to June 1944.

by

GERTRUDE VAN TIJN

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## INTRODUCTION

When I promised Dr. Schwartz, the European Director of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, to write a report for them on the happenings in Holland, we agreed that this would be a tremendous job. I suggested starting on it after a thorough rest, and after I would have got a certain mental 'distance' to all I personally went through; would have acquired, as it were, to some degree a 'sur la branche' attitude. I thought I might start some time in October and that the job would take me about three months.

As it happened, there is some work for me to do, and I fervently hope that in three months' time I shall be back once more in Jewish camps, trying to help in the work of repatriation. But I had promised to write the report, and therefore did it now - still in the throes of remembrance - and in less than three weeks.

Dutch Jewry has practically been liquidated and therefore this report covering only 4 years out of the proud history extending over 300 years is a heartbreaking document. The day has not come when judgment can be passed on the manner in which this liquidation took place. As was the case with the Dutch higher civil servants who remained at their posts under German occupation, so it was - to an intensified degree - with the Jews who directed the Jewish policy under the command and the constant threats of the S.S. There was for them an eternal conflict: for worse than anything else the Germans did was perhaps the fact that they forced Jews to send away Jews - and how many human beings, having not only themselves but also their children and their children's children to think of, can find the strength to sacrifice their own life and the lives of those dearest to them in order to save their souls? Let those who have not lived under such terrible stress beware before they lightly judge those whose hands were forced to act against their own people and therefore - I am afraid when the real reckoning comes - against themselves.

I have in this report endeavoured to avoid passing judgment but I could and would not avoid recounting plain facts. And sometimes these happenings are in themselves an indictment against those who represented Dutch Jewry in those terrible years. But I could not - should this report have any value at all - tamper with the truth. It may be that the truth will bear another face when - after the war - more documents are available and more people will be able to state their case.

If in this story I personally play too heroic a part, that, too, cannot be helped; it is simply true that for a few of us the daily life was a kind of mental flag-waving which, when it had to be given physical expression, resulted in some simple deeds which perhaps now, on paper, sound heroic. The decisions I was called upon to take day after day, whether to go 'under' or remain in the services of an organization with whose policy I did not agree, was in itself a drama - and the resolve to stay perhaps a deed of heroism, perhaps an error in judgment. - Maybe some day I shall know.

I write all this not because of a desire on my part to be autobiographic, but as an excuse and an explanation. The Report which I am submitting here is a draft; it is not the finished and polished piece of work I should have wished it to be. It is against all my principles to submit such a "raw" document, but under the circumstances it cannot be helped.

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No publicity must be given to this Report; it is for the few only, and I expressly request that neither the whole nor a part of it shall be used without my previous consent.

I want to express my sincere thanks to those who have helped me accomplish this task in so short a time; to Mrs. Mendes da Costa who checked up on my notes; to Mrs. Van Vriesland who translated the "Calendar of Events" into English; to Miss Jerusalem who has been most helpful; but most of all to Miss Gertrude Carnovsky without whose efficient, devoted and unstinting cooperation I would never have been able to finish this job.

Gertrude van Tijn.

Naharia, Palestine  
October 2nd, 1944.

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GENERAL REPORT.

On the 10th of May the German Army crossed the Dutch frontier. Many German Jewish refugees\*) had already left Holland when the trend of events made it more and more clear that Europe was certain to be involved in a second World War, but about 26,000 non-Dutch Jews were still, at that time, residing in Holland. On the 11th of May, 1940 the German refugees received an order from the Dutch alien police authorities to remain in their houses. On the 14th of May - a Tuesday - Professor Cohen (as the recognized head of the Jewish Community and not in his capacity of president of the Jewish Refugee Committee (Vluchtelingen-Comite) was notified that a boat would be available in Ymuiden to bring those Jews who wished to leave Holland to England. At about 9:30 in the morning Prof. Cohen gave me this news over the telephone (one of the few telephones still connected). I had a meeting with the heads of departments of the Refugee Committee and some of the employees of the Refugee Committee decided to leave. Most of them were ready to remain at their posts. It was decided to make known the opportunity to leave as widely as it was possible under existing difficult conditions. The order to alien Jews not to leave their houses had not been officially rescinded, but it was tacitly assumed that it was no longer binding. Mrs. Wismuller called at the Refugee Committee office; she had been, since the pogroms in 1938, connected with the children's work and was still on the Board of the Burger-Weeshuis (Department for refugee children) where about 75 refugee children were housed. We decided to evacuate the children. Mrs. Wismuller was to arrange everything at the orphanage and also try and hire as many autobusses as she could get to transport the children to Ymuiden. I was to drive round Amsterdam and spread as much as possible the news of the "escape chance", also, of course, amongst Dutch Jews. From 1 - 2:00 o'clock I was to be at the American Hotel for anybody who wished to speak to me. The busses were to start from the Refugee Committee Lijnbaansgracht at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. In those days there were no private telephone connections and all morning the alert was being given during which time driving was prohibited. This made progress slow. I called on the most diverse people, always requesting them to send messengers round to their Jewish friends, relatives and neighbours. In view of the official notification from Government quarters it was - to my mind rightly - assumed that people (whether in private cars, bicycles or any vehicle whatsoever) would be allowed to proceed to Ymuiden unhampered. With very few exceptions (for example, those who had near relatives still in the fighting forces or those in responsible positions) Jews tried to get away. Many resolved to start from the Refugee-Committee office at 4:00 o'clock following the busses in their own cars, but most had already made their arrangements and tried to proceed to Ymuiden, Scheveningen or some other coastal place individually. At 1:00 o'clock Mrs. Wismuller met me as arranged in the American Hotel. She had not only hired (as far as I remember) 4 (but there may have been only 3) autobusses, but had also asked for and received a sort of written permit from the Chief of the Police Alien Department (Mr. Stoett) for the busses to proceed to Ymuiden. When Mrs. W. showed me this permit I noticed that it was given for the vehicles and not for the children. I then told Mrs. W. to fill the busses as much as possible first with the refugee children and then with families who had no private cars. Miranda came too and I gave him (who chose to remain in Holland) some further instructions.

\* When the phrase "German Refugees" is used, it includes the former Austrian and Czech citizens or those Poles who came from Germany.

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When I wanted to leave the hotel, there was passport control. The Dutch police kept me 40 minutes because they thought my (Dutch) passport made out in J'burg - renewed in Mombassa with Palestine, Egyptian, many English, German and French visa - suspicious. I was frantic because every minute was valuable, but there was nothing to be done about it. While I waited the radio announced that the Queen and the Government had left Holland. The large restaurant was crowded. There was no sound and no comment. The "Verslagenheid" - the shock was indescribable. People realized the war was lost. When I finally left the hotel it was nearly a quarter to 3:00.

I had promised to call for my colleague, Dr. Rosenberg, and take him and his old and very sick mother with her nurse to Ymuiden. I had arranged to join the busses at the Lijnbaansgracht at 4:00 o'clock. From the hotel I went to the Lijnbaansgracht first to see how things were proceeding there. The scene was indescribable. The busses were there and there was practically a free fight to get in. We arranged as much as possible to take people with children and those who had special "Jewish" claims on us. I left Miranda in charge and went to fetch my passengers. On the way there were 3 long alerts. When I returned to the Lijnbaansgracht it was past 4:00 o'clock. The busses had left and the place was deserted. I proceeded to Ymuiden. The road was thronged with cars and bicycles - most of them coming back; many called out to me that it was no use to proceed as the police did not allow any but military authorities to get through to Ymuiden. I proceeded and every time I was stopped by the police I somehow hypnotized them to let me pass. They had allowed the busses to pass because of the special permit they held. I told them that I had the nurse in the car who was to look after the children on the boat. Somehow I got through to Ymuiden. About a quarter of an hour's drive from the quay where the large boat was anchored there were hundreds of cars with Dutch and German Jews who were not allowed to proceed. I knew many of them; some returned, discouraged; some waited and eventually got away - I do not yet know how. There was plenty of room on the boat; up to this day I do not know how it was possible that the Dutch civil authorities who had informed us of the chance to leave had not also seen to it that the military authorities were informed and the road was given free for the people to pass.

Dr. Rosenberg and I saw that everything was allright for our people on the boat. I left the boat in good time; Rosenberg, whose mother and brother with family were leaving on the boat, jumped off while she was already moving. The boat left at 8:00 o'clock exactly. We had to run hard because the English warned us that before leaving they would blow up the pier. We heard the detonation immediately behind us. We drove back to Amsterdam, passing the burning oil tanks of the Royal Dutch. The road was deserted. The Dutch military authorities who had stopped us every few hundred yards on our way to Ymuiden had left. The Germans had not yet arrived. Then we neared Amsterdam and saw the town blazing with lights. We knew then that Holland had capitulated. There was a terrible irony in the fact that this one night - at the blackest hour of its history - Amsterdam was ablaze with lights. (The next day already the Germans re-enforced the blackout regulations). We went to the houses of several of our friends who had all come back from Ymuiden discouraged. We told them that the road was now free and that we believed they still had a chance to get away. They were all too disheartened. Only one friend, whom I rightly believed to be in particular danger, resolved to leave; they left Amsterdam - a party of 11 people - at about 1:30 that night and arrived in England and eventually in America after, I believe, undergoing great hardships. That night many Jews (particularly Dutch Jews) tried to commit suicide; the

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hospitals for some days were full of suicide cases; some recovered, many died. In a number of cases some members of a family died while others recovered. It is impossible to give correct figures; I am told from various sources that far more than 100 died. After that fatal night when the heartbreak of the capitulation was added to the discouragement felt about the unsuccessful attempt to leave, there was never again a wave of suicides in Holland. Single cases, of course, took place through all the dreadful years of the occupation. It is my belief that these suicides would not have been attempted if the Jews had not gone through the nervous strain of an attempted and unsuccessful flight. Hundreds of people, of course, got away - all those in the Refugee busses (which naturally contained also many Dutch Jews) and many of those who had the patience to wait in Ymuiden. The official boat had left at 8:00 o'clock, but evidently small boats left Holland all that night and arrived in England.

Thus ended the German-Dutch war; the 15th of May saw the German armoured divisions marching through Amsterdam; the towns were plunged in darkness once again; and nothing dramatic happened to Jews for some time to come. For some time to come we were left in relative peace to continue our work.

In this work radical changes, of course, had to take place. Naturally the Jewish institutions - religious, cultural and charitable - in Holland had been functioning in the ordinary way; but the great influx of foreign Jewish refugees had put additional burdens on some existing institutions (orphanages, children's aliyah, hospitals, "hachscharah" institutions, etc.) and besides, had been responsible for the creation of new Jewish organizations, the most important of which were the Jewish Refugee Committee, the camp "Westerbork", which was to play such a tragic role later, the "Werkdorn" at Wieringen, the cultural centre "Huis Costeinde" and the (purely political anti-Hitler) "Joodsche Persbureau". The latter had, of course, been liquidated immediately at the beginning of the war. Its leader - Dr. Wiener - had gone to London some time ago, taking a great part of the archives. The rest was probably destroyed in good time by the remaining members of the staff. It is curious to note here that although this press office had been responsible for a great many violent anti-Hitler pamphlets, etc., and for the distribution of much valuable political information, none of the people connected with this work was ever persecuted nor was any enquiry made in connection with its work. This is the more surprising because there was, after all, a certain interest in existing Jewish papers, all of which, with the exception of the "Israëlitisch Weekblad", were prohibited soon after the occupation.

Since 1933, the work for refugees in Holland had really been carried on quite separately from existing Jewish organizations, although the President of the refugee work - Prof. David Cohen - was also one of the recognized leaders of Dutch Jewry. Since 1933 he had taken a very active part in the refugee work, and together with Mr. R.H. Eitje and the writer of this report, was really responsible for the vast machine into which the refugee work had developed. Of course more people had been co-opted and played leading parts since 1938. For the financial committee, Mr. S. Florsheim, Mr. Henry Gomperts and others; in the general work Dr. Erich Rosenberg had shared every responsibility; the children's department had been under the management of Dr. M. Slotemaker de Bruine, but of the original Board only Prof. Cohen, Mr. Eitje and myself were left.

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All of this is laid down in reports to the JDC, the Refugee Commission of the League of Nations, etc., so that I need not go into details here. Only when writing the chapter on "Westerbork" will it be necessary to show that, when the building of this camp was decided upon, it was probably the first time that Prof. Cohen actually experienced a conflict of interests between the Dutch authorities and the needs (and moral rights) of the refugees; in this conflict the former emerged victorious with W'ork as its direct result.

I dare not - from memory - quote the number of refugees who were actually drawing relief in May 1940; in W'ork there were 800 left, and about the same number was still in the few remaining camps and in children's homes. But, of course, by far the greatest number of refugees was living free in Holland. These figures are, however, likewise laid down in former reports to the JDC. Certain is it that very large amounts were needed to finance this work. Much of this money had hitherto come from abroad (mainly from the JDC and the Hicem) while Dutch Jewry had, since 1933, contributed handsomely.

I doubt whether the leading Dutch Jews realized in May 1940 that they were faced with the same ruthless will to exterminate Jewry (generally) as had been the determining factor in the handling of German and later Austrian and Czech Jews by the Nazi authorities. What Dutch Jews, however, did realize was the fact that of the 28,000 remaining foreign Jews, more and more would become dependent; that foreign money would no longer be sent to German-occupied territory and that, were the Jewish question to come to the notice of the German authorities because of lack of funds for the refugee work, such notice would, under existing circumstances, prove to be (to put it mildly) undesirable. I had been for years the Dutch representative of the JDC and I pointed out most forcefully that no commitments could be gone into on behalf of the Joint. I did this because I personally was convinced that the work could easily be financed by Dutch Jews; I did in no way have any illusions about the trend of events and it seemed to me - even then - that every penny contributed by Dutch Jews for Jewish work only meant that eventually less Jewish money would be confiscated by the Germans. Some of the prominent Dutch Jews, who from May 1940 onwards took an active part in Jewish relief work (many of them for the first time) were clear-sighted enough to realize that also an increasing number of Dutch Jews might - sooner or later - become dependent on the (Jewish) dole.

There were a number of meetings at which all these matters were discussed freely; unfortunately these meetings revealed the fact that the animosity on the part of Dutch Jews against German Jews, which had been latent, was apt to flare up under stress. Due to this animosity, latent or expressed, some people who had been prominently identified with the work (for example, Mr. Henry Gomperts and Mr. S. Florsheim, both, incidentally, Dutch citizens) withdrew from the committee. Certainly also Dr. Rosenberg would not have left in August 1941 if he had been given that share of responsibility which his former work and his capacities deserved. This, however, was denied to him because of his German nationality.

The German Jews had no proper political representation. This was created only after the deportations had started in July 1942 - particularly in view of the fact that the first transport consisted largely of German Jews. This representation, the so-called "Beirat",

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consisted first of about 10 people and was enlarged to some 20 people about October 1942; only then was the president, Prof. Max Brahn, invited to attend the meeting of the "J.R." without, however, having a vote in this assembly. For by then it was clear even to the most optimistic of Dutch Jews that the Germans did not intend to make any difference between Dutch and German Jews, so that all measures affected the communities equally disastrously.

In any case, in May 1940, after many deliberations, a new financial committee was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Krouwer (I believe Prof. Cohen was joint chairman also on this committee). Members were, amongst others, such well-known people as the banker Paul Hendrix, Mr. van Raalte (of van Perlstein Roeper Bosch), Dr. van Oss, the former efficiency engineer of Amsterdam, and, until his emigration in May 1941, the banker Mr. Andriess, and others. This committee at once instituted a kind of Jewish tax according to income and capital to which every Jew - no matter what his status - was supposed to contribute. There was, of course, no legal basis for this action and no means to enforce payment, but on the whole I believe that largely due to the really capable organization very few people managed to avoid payment. The contribution asked for was a fixed percentage on capital over 10,000 Guilders and on income and, like the Dutch Income Tax, highly progressive. In two years' time a sum of 6 Million Guilders was raised, about 70% being paid by 900 Jews. As since the creation of the Financial Committee I had nothing more to do with the raising of funds, I do not remember the details correctly: Later, when it was found that sooner or later practically every Jew needed the assistance of one or other department of the by then existing "Joodsche Raad", the heads of departments were instructed not to give any service unless enquirers showed the famous "grey card", the receipt given when payment of the tax was duly made or exemption granted. There was a good deal of criticism of this committee because the letters written and the methods used by the secretary of this committee (Mr. L. Frank - who was deported to Poland sometime in September 1942, but not in connection with his Jewish work) were sometimes very peremptory. But it remains a fact that until its liquidation by the Germans in the early months of 1943, this committee raised all the sums necessary for the financing of both the refugee work and the Dutch relief work, including the considerable costs of the very large "J.R." machinery which was built up to cope with its ever-increasing tasks.

The contributions received from abroad were negligible because practically no dollars for emigration were sold. Anyhow, such contributions were "black" and had to be handled with the greatest care. I continued to consider myself the representative of the Joint and in this capacity handled these "black" amounts as I thought best, though - in order to share the responsibility - I invariably discussed these questions with Prof. Brahn. The financial committee underwent some changes in its personnel; it was destined to play a very important role throughout the coming years.

In the summer of 1940 (I believe about July or August) a political body was formed, the so-called "Co-ordination Commission" in which all existing Dutch Jewish institutions were represented under the chairmanship of the late Mr. L.E. Visser, former president of the High Judicial Court of the Netherlands (Hooge Raad der Nederlanden). Prof. Cohen acted as secretary and members were Mr. I. Kirch, Mr.

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Henri Edersheim, Mr. Eduard Belinfante, the Chief Rabbi Dasberg, Albert Spanjaard and, I believe, one other. This committee was expected to become the representative of Dutch Jews in dealing with all questions in connection with the occupation. From the beginning it was clear that there was a violent conflict of ideas between the chairman, Mr. Visser, and Prof. Cohen, the former being dead against cooperation with the Germans and the latter believing a more conciliatory attitude to be the wiser course. It would lead too far here to trace the unhappy history of this committee and the violent clashes of opinion which almost from the day of its inauguration occurred between the two factions. When, in February 1941, Prof. Cohen as president of the "Joodsche Raad" assumed (together with Mr. A. Asscher) the responsibility for all future actions, the Co-ordination Committee ceased to function. Mr. Visser died in November 1941. The intimate history of this struggle will doubtless be written in due time by somebody more familiar with the details than I am. Personally, I believe it to be of the utmost significance for the trend of future events.

For a little time after the occupation no decisive anti-Jewish measures were taken. Probably the German occupation was then trying to create a friendly feeling amongst the Dutch. In this, however, they did not succeed. The general atmosphere everywhere in Holland remained extremely hostile to the occupation; it is possible that open anti-Jewish measures were only enforced after the Germans realized that the majority of the Dutch people were not to be won over anyhow. The fact that Holland was put under civil administration and did not, like Belgium (as far as I know right up to the last) remain under military authority, made it much worse for the Jews. In Holland, the government was in the hands of Seyss-Inquart, the well-known anti-Semite from Vienna; this civil administration was in every way much worse than a military administration would have been.

Of course, some anti-Jewish measures were enforced very soon. Already in June 1940 a decree was published to the effect that Dutch firms of any description could be put under a so-called "supervisor", most of those then or later appointed being Germans or Dutch Nazis. In the beginning, such supervisors were mainly appointed for such firms whose headquarters were abroad. Very soon, however, this was extended to firms where one or more of the managers was Jewish or which were under predominant Jewish management. This supervisor had all the rights of the ordinary owner.

During the summer of 1940, a few signs appeared on cafes, restaurants or shops with the well-known statement that "Jews were not desired." They were, however, at that time still so scarce that everybody used to go and have a look at them.

About September 1940 the Jewish Community in The Hague was fined because some English pilots had been given sanctuary in that town. This fine was promptly paid, but I cannot remember the exact amount.

Likewise, in about September or October 1940, all non-Dutch Jews were forced to evacuate a fairly wide region along the Dutch coast (curiously enough, Polish Jews were allowed to stay). This affected a large number of German refugees because Rotterdam, Haarlem, Ardenhout and such places fell within the evacuation line. I was extremely worried at the time that this would mean the end of Wieringen, but as it happened Wieringen was just a few yards on the right side of the evacuation line. At that time, those Jews were still allowed to take all their belongings and were free to find new homes where they

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liked, except that the alien police made it clear that they did not want any more foreign Jews in Amsterdam.

In October 1940, a decree was published ordering the registration of all Jewish firms, establishments, businesses and shops, in the widest sense of the word, including, for example, all institutions, all agricultural holdings, fishing enterprises, small workshops and even pedlars. All these undertakings were deemed as Jewish if only one of the partners was a Jew, or in a limited company if one of the Board members was Jewish or if one of the management was Jewish, or if a quarter of the capital was in Jewish hands. A Jew was considered to be anybody who had at least 3 Jewish grandparents, or two Jewish grandparents and who was registered as a member of the Jewish community, or 2 Jewish grandparents and was married to a Jew. Non-compliance with the decree was punishable by a fine of up to 100,000 Guilders or confiscation. In this decree the word "Jew" was for the first time clearly defined, and it was always referred to in later publications.

Whereas in Germany it was compulsory to register with one of the recognized churches (Catholic, Protestant or Jewish) or declare oneself an atheist, this was not the case in Holland where it very often happened that people were Jews without being on the community registers. Anyhow, the fact that grandparents had not been (or could not be proved to have been) members of a synagogue community made it eventually possible for a number of Jews not to register.

Shortly after that special registers of firms in Jewish hands were made. This decree of October 1940 naturally caused a great deal of excitement and anxiety because there was practically no large bank, limited company, etc. of which at least one of the members of the Board was not a Jew. As will be seen later on, these members were forced to resign anyhow and no measures out of the usual were taken against the firm in question.

In the early winter of 1940 a non-Jewish Union of Diamond Workers was created. The diamond industry had always been almost 100% in Jewish hands but now the Trade Union of the Diamond Workers (AWDB) was forced to employ 50% non-Jewish workers.

Already in July 1940 all Government and municipal officials had been forced to state whether or not they had Jewish parents or grandparents. Thereupon in November 1940 came one of the first measures that thoroughly aroused public opinion. All Jewish officials were forced to resign. This included all officials without exception from professors down to the smallest post office clerk. The number affected, as far as I know, was about 2,500. They were not deprived of their pension. There was a great deal of opposition but by that time any effective protest had become impossible. Thus, the Amsterdam Studenten Corps dissolved itself when Jews were no longer permitted to be members. The Christelyke Studenten Vereeniging and many other Christian students' associations followed this example, while protests from Protestants and Roman Catholics against anti-Jewish measures became increasingly frequent. All round the universities were voicing their protests in such a manner that some of them (Leyden) had to be closed altogether and others for long periods at the time.

Because of many individual actions against Jews, and because of

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the measures mentioned, there was a general feeling of apprehension amongst Jews. - How justified the fear was, became only too clear very soon. It was the NSB (Dutch Nazi Party) which was, in the beginning, instrumental in bringing about a definite change for the worse. In February 1941, the NSB chose by preference the Jewish quarters for their demonstrations; particularly members of the youth movement marched in formation through the purely Jewish quarters in the center of Amsterdam. The NSB insisted that these children had been interfered with, had been insulted and even hit. It is uncertain whether or not this was the case but certain it is that the provocation was enormous. Anyhow, immediately after this the NSB went to the Jewish quarters in force, demolished many shops there and indulged in Jew-baiting and molesting. At the same time they used every influence in their power to get the non-Jewish proletariat to assist them. They, however, to a man helped the Jews. The Dutch proletariat went to the markets armed with long iron rods and really defended Jewish pedlars, hucksters etc. In these days of unrest the NSB again organized a march through the Jewish quarter, some free fighting seems to have taken place and in any case one of the NSB members, a man named Koot, was killed. It was then that the first proper raid by the Germans on Jews took place. About 400 Jews from the ghetto, all members of the proletariat, were taken prisoner and sent to Mauthausen. In answer to this the Dutch workers called a general strike. This strike was really general - trams, postal service and everything being affected; it spread from Amsterdam to some of the provinces.

It was then that the German S.S., for the first time, felt the need to create a Jewish representation with whom they could deal in future. They first called the Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam, Mr. Saarlouis, who, however, did not want to accept the task; he mentioned the names of Abraham Asscher and Prof. David Cohen as being, in their capacities of president and secretary of the "Nederlandsch Israëlitisch Kerk-Genootschap", the two really representative Dutch Jews. - These two were thereupon called to the Gestapo and made joint presidents of the "Joodsche Raad" ("J.R."), the members of which were appointed by the president a few days later; in these as in all future appointments the Germans took no interest.

The first task the Germans put on Asscher and Cohen was to use their influence that the strike would cease and to see to it that the order from the German authorities to surrender arms of every description (including pieces of iron and such things which could be used as weapons) was strictly adhered to; everybody who would deliver arms within a given time to go unpunished. Cohen and Asscher thereupon called two mass meetings in the building of the Diamond Exchange, at which they asked the people to desist from violence and to deliver up any arms still in their possession. They also privately telephoned to several important factories, etc. explaining that the strike would only do harm to the Jews. I do not like to say in how far this action was influential in bringing about the cessation of the strike within 24 hours, nor would I like to sum up the reaction in non-Jewish quarters as to this first act on behalf of Asscher and Cohen in their new role. In some provincial towns the strike went on for some days longer but eventually it was stopped there too. The factories, etc. were forced to dismiss those workers who, after the general resumption of work, individually continued to strike. They were not allowed to pay them any wages, but for a long time secret collections were held everywhere in workshops, factories and amongst private persons out of which these people were paid. A day or two later Asscher and Cohen formed the "Joodsche Raad" - the "J.R."

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As far as I remember, this original Jewish Council consisted of about 15 people, perhaps a few more, chosen in an extraordinarily arbitrary manner. There was not one amongst them who could be regarded as representing the proletariat, although of the 80,000 Jews living in Amsterdam, about 40% belonged to that category. These people were in no way represented and enjoyed no protection. Although eventually the greater number of Jews in Holland were deported, again it was the proletariat who were most defenceless and who were amongst the first to suffer.

As mentioned before, the president of the Co-ordination Commission, Mr. E.L. Visser, and with him many Jews were against cooperation with the Germans and therefore against the formation of the "J.R.". It is difficult to say whether or not during the first year of its existence the "J.R." did not indeed delay the carrying out of certain orders, ameliorate conditions and fulfil many useful functions. It is certain that at the time of its inauguration, this body of men honestly believed this to be its *raison d'être*.

Very soon it became apparent that the Germans would deal only with Cohen and Asscher personally. Had these two wished to do so they could, no doubt, have made the existing Co-ordination Commission, possibly enlarged by some more prominent Amsterdam Jews, a real advisory body. Prof. Cohen, however, handled the matter in such a way that the Co-ordination Commission soon ceased to function altogether; neither was the "J.R." given a chance to become such an advisory body. It was really from the beginning, and became to an ever-increasing degree, simply an assembly of people who were informed that the Germans had insisted on such and such a measure, that there had been no opportunity either to resist or modify the decisions and that, unfortunately, whatever the measure was, it would have to be carried through. It is true that, particularly during the first year of its existence, violent discussions took place in the "J.R.", but all the orders the Germans gave to the presidents were invariably accompanied by such serious threats, not against them but against the Jewish community, that the opposition in the "J.R." never managed to obtain a modification of policy: the German orders were carried out.

As time went on, many members of the "J.R." dropped out either because they managed to become "aryanised" (meaning that they were declared to be of non-Jewish extraction), some of them were deported (but never in connection with their Jewish work) and others ceased to attend merely because they became tired of belonging to a body which simply came together to be told of decisions which had already irrevocably been taken. Except for two Zionist members who resigned by way of protest, no resignations, however, took place.

I had worked in close cooperation with Prof. Cohen on the refugee work since 1933. There had been grave differences of opinion over the building of Westerbork in the early months of 1939\*), but there had always been the greatest mutual respect between us. It was at the time when the "J.R." inaugurated its policy of cooperation that our points of view on vital matters differed so utterly that cooperation became difficult. I was, however, as will be explained later, in charge of a department which for a long time was not interfered with by the "J.R." in any way, and thus cooperation remained possible until

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\*) The history of the building of Westerbork as well as the points of difference are fully gone into in my report on Westerbork which forms a separate part of this report.

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after the deportations started in July 1943. Then my opposition became so violent that it was no longer possible to keep even an outward semblance of cooperation, and after that time there was practically also no more private contact between us. From that date on I ceased to be a salaried social worker in order to be entirely independent in my dealings with the "J.R.". All this, however, will be touched upon at some later stage.

There is no doubt in my mind that Asscher as well as Prof. Cohen, who had worked all his life for the Jewish cause, honestly believed that by carrying out the German orders they avoided worse things happening to the Jews. No doubt the few people who worked closely together with the presidents of the "J.R." and who had great influence thought the same. Doubtless for some time and in some ways up to the last, the "J.R." did grant help and assistance. Furthermore, I believe that Asscher and Cohen at first tried - and sometimes succeeded - to gain time by keeping all the executions of the anti-Jewish measures in their hands. It is possible that, had the war lasted only a short time (and Asscher in his criminal optimism promised the end of the war and the smashing of Germany daily for the next month or two), the very people whose wisdom in acting as they did is now open to doubt would have been hailed as well-doers.

I had to touch lightly on the history of the "J.R." because otherwise much of what follows would not have been clear. It must be understood that the policy was shaped by Prof. Cohen and Asscher with their intimate advisers, particularly Meyer de Vries. The members of the "J.R.", the Provincial Commission \*) and the heads of departments were consulted about manner of execution, etc., not about principle.

After the happenings early in February 1941, the pogrom, the raid, the strike and the formation of the "J.R.", the Jewish quarters in Amsterdam were surrounded by barbed wire which was taken away, except in some places, after a few months. At that time, however, in all the streets in the Jewish quarter large boards were erected bearing the words "Jewish Quarter", "Jewish Street", "Jewish Gracht".

After the formation of the "J.R.", the remaining Jewish newspaper was forbidden and in its place a Jewish paper was issued, likewise under the responsibility of Cohen. The "Joodsche Weekblad" was created mainly in order to make known to the Jews all the various prohibitions, decrees etc. etc. which followed quickly, one after the other, after the fateful February. This was done probably in order to avoid having to publish the anti-Jewish measures in the press. Only

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\*) The Provincial Commission was a body of men constituted of the representatives of the Amsterdam "J.R." living in the provinces. They received their orders from and were responsible to the presidents of the "J.R." (Cohen and Asscher). In cases where they received orders from the local German authorities they were expected fully to inform the presidents of the "J.R." and act only after having consulted with them. In practice, this was not always possible and thus the members of the Provincial Commission were fairly independent in their actions. They met at regular intervals in Amsterdam or whenever an emergency arose. They of course had their own local offices, some of them (f.i. The Hague, Rotterdam, Groningen etc.) were fairly large.

very few of the more important decrees appeared after that in the general press. For instance, a measure of such far-flung consequences as that prohibiting inter-marriage between Jews and non-Jews was never formulated in any official ordinance or decree or ever published in any of the general newspapers. It merely appeared in the Jewish weekly ("Joodsche Weekblad") in the form of a short notice signed by Cohen and Asscher. Yet, although only published in this way, the "mixed" couples whose marriage banns had been published when this "law" came into force, were arrested and the Jewish partners sent to concentration camps in Germany, although at the time the marriage date had been fixed no "law" prohibiting it had been in existence. Fortunately, many of those it concerned got notice of the impending action, and went "under" in time; about 30 men and women were caught.

Every Jew was supposed to know the contents of the "J.W." and to act according to the instructions. In the beginning, the "J.W." contained some articles on religion, holidays, a very great many advertisements etc. etc., but gradually it became smaller and smaller until when it finally ceased to exist in December 1943, it was mainly one sheet making known to the Jews the newest anti-Jewish measures, etc. When the paper first started, Abel Hertzberg was one of the editors, but very soon he resigned.

As will be seen from the Calendar of Events following this report, measures, each one of them restraining the liberty of the Jews, now followed quickly one after the other. Soon after the "J.R." had been established it had been made compulsory for every Jew to register and to receive proof of such registration. This proof was signed by Cohen and Asscher and the mayor of the town in which the registration took place. I am enclosing a photo-copy of my own registration card (Enclosure No. 1). I believe that only a very small number of Jews risked non-registration, the penalty being concentration camp.

A further measure (enforced sometime in January 1941), in itself not important, prohibiting the employment of Aryan servants in Jewish or partly Jewish households, interfered with the home life particularly since in Holland practically everybody had had German servants, often for many years.

Giving as an excuse the fact that demonstrations took place during the showing of the news in the cinemas, Jews were forbidden to visit the cinemas. When the City Cinema anticipating this restriction had first refused admission to Jews, there were protests on the part of non-Jews, but very soon such demonstrations stopped though it is true that the attendance at the cinemas fell off very much. - The Dutch did not want the German newsreels and films. -

Early in March 1941, it was made known in a speech over the wireless that no Jewish students would be enrolled in the universities and that those who already were studying could only sit for examination with the special consent of the Department of Education. This Department of Education was under Prof. Van Dam who was one of the notorious anti-Semites.

By April 1941 the practice to replace anti-Nazi mayors of towns by Dutch Nazis had already commenced. Such mayors had, for instance, been appointed for Hilversum and Haarlem and promptly proceeded to forbid Jews entrance to hotels, restaurants, swimming pools, etc.

About the same time, in April, 1941, Jews had to deliver all

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their radios without getting any compensation. I shall personally never forget the scene when, in a small street where the deliveries had to be made, thousands of people waited about with radios ranging from quite cheap to the most beautiful sets. Many Jews had exchanged with Aryan friends very expensive radios with cheap and broken machines so that on the whole those eventually surrendered were more or less a sorry looking collection. All these things had, however, by then become highly dangerous.

In this, as in all other measures, the Dutch population helped the Jews wherever they could. By way of illustration I want to mention a case which about that time came up before the German Court. Two prominent Dutchmen were summoned before the German Landesgericht because they had in the summer 1940 distributed pamphlets warning officials not to help in establishing the fact of whether or not someone was of Jewish origin. When their defending lawyer pleaded that their argument was that of the Christian faith and not an attempt to obstruct German measures, the judge answered that this was not a religious but a racial problem but that for this once he would inflict a very light punishment. They were given a prison sentence of 18 and 12 months respectively.

In May 1941 all Jews were dismissed from orchestras, bands, etc. Permission was given to found a purely Jewish orchestra which was not allowed to play anything but music of Jewish composers for a Jewish audience. A special theatre, the "Joodsche Schouwburg", was set aside for Jewish concerts, cabarets, etc. It was under the joint management of a Mrs. De Vries (I am not quite certain of this name) and the well-known Dr. Werner Levy, formerly of the Juedischer Kultur-Bund. For some time to come plays, concerts, chamber music and cabarets, all with Jewish artists and exclusively for a Jewish audience were given in that theatre. As far as I know, the performances were always crowded. I personally, because of lack of time, only once went to one of the concerts where they gave a Mendelssohn program. The performance was beautiful; hardened as I was it gave me a lump in the throat to see some of those violinists whom I had for many years seen playing prominently in the Concertgebouw Orchestra, back in such squalid surroundings. The Jewish Orchestra and general financial support given to Jewish artists was financed out of a special fund called the "Van Leer Stichting" because Mr. B. Van Leer, when he emigrated in May 1941, had left a very large amount earmarked for this purpose. The so-called cultural commission of the "J.R." did try to the very end to keep up a semblance of Jewish cultural life by lectures in the various offices of the "J.R.", etc.etc. But the difficulties were almost unsurmountable.

Likewise sometime in April 1941 Jews were no longer allowed to be members of the Amsterdam Exchange and forbidden to visit it. About the same time more and more Jews were forced to resign from prominent positions either in their own factories or in companies where they were managers or on the Board. In this way, for instance, the whole family Spanjaard - 7 in all - were forced to resign, two as managers and five on the Board, from the large textile factories bearing the family name.

Acts of violence had been few since the memorable pogrom in February 1941, but they happened occasionally. For instance, the synagogue in The Hague was attacked and damaged sometime in May or June 1941 and, as far as I remember, such occurrences had taken place in other towns - Zandvoort etc.

As mentioned before, most of the anti-Jewish measures and decrees

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were merely published in the Jewish paper and sometimes their wording was not at all clear. But at the end of May 1941 a decree was published, I believe also in the general press, which prohibited Jews from bathing anywhere - seaside places, swimming pools (either open or closed) as well as the use of public baths. It furthermore prohibited Jews from entering or even passing parks, squares, restaurants, cafes etc., the renting of rooms in hotels and private houses in all seaside places and other resorts, and attendance at races. It was after this that on innumerable trees and on every bench in the whole of Amsterdam and surroundings boards were placed with the words "Vefboten fuer Juden". This meant, for instance, that when I walked to my office I had deliberately to take a roundabout way in order to avoid crossing a public square which was planted with trees, each of them bearing the above inscription. Had I not done so, denunciation by anybody knowing me to be a Jew would have been sufficient to lead to imprisonment of at least six weeks, and - after July 1942 - to deportation. All this sounds, of course, very simple and not like a great hardship, but I can remember the hours and hours of deliberation which were spent by lawyers in order to make out whether or not a certain place was a "kurort" - a health resort. Not only this decree but all decrees were generally worded so clumsily that the mere interpretation of them was already a puzzle and many people were punished (after the deportations had begun even by being sent to Poland) because they had done one thing or the other which, according to the German interpretation, was prohibited under some decree or other - an interpretation which no ordinary person could have read into it.

Then, in June 1941, the dreadful second Mauthausen raid took place. But before giving details of it, I must insert here - to make happenings clear - a short history of what happened to the training centre at "Wieringen."

There had been all along steady attacks against Wieringen in the Dutch Nazi press inspired by the owner of the farm next to Wieringen, a man called Zaal, who was in time to become the peasant leader of the Dutch Nazi party. But all these attacks had not been followed by any measures. The director, Mr. M. Katznelson, had been interned in July 1940 as a Palestinian citizen and his place had been taken by Mr. Abel Hertzberg. No other changes had taken place, all the Dutch teachers and foremen as well as the Jewish staff continuing their work as before. On the 20th of March, 1941, I received a telephone message to the effect that the pupils of Wieringen were to be brought to Amsterdam and that we were allowed to find lodgings for them. It was arranged that they should first be brought to the diamond factory of Asscher and distributed from there. When I tried to inform Wieringen of this by telephone, the Werkdorp was already occupied by the Germans so that I could not give them any indication of what was about to happen. I was told later that 7 large busses had arrived there, all the pupils were told to assemble, the boys separated from the girls, and were given ten minutes to get ready to go to a destination unknown to them. At the same time the Christian teachers of the agricultural and dairy departments were told to select 60 of the best workers so that the work on the farm, in the garden and in the dairy could be carried on. The entire staff with the exception of the manager was permitted to remain. The others were marched into the busses and driven away. I am going to leave it to the imagination to realize what it meant to these young people to be sent into the unknown at a time when the name of Mauthausen and other concentration camps were already more than a name to Jews in Holland. I shall never forget the expression of thankfulness and relief on the faces of those boys and girls when they found themselves eventually at the Asscher factory in Amsterdam and saw me and others they knew ready to receive them.

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Most of these boys and girls were given hospitality with Jewish families in Amsterdam while some of the younger ones were brought to existing institutions.

Immediately after this happened, the higher German authorities in Amsterdam told us that the evacuation of Wieringen had been done by local men of which they had known nothing and that they would, as soon as possible, send the pupils back in order to have them continue the work there. These negotiations went on without, however, leading to the desired result until in June 1941 I was suddenly called to come to the Germans in order to discuss the practical arrangements of sending the pupils back. I did not go alone but Prof. Cohen, In. Jules Cahen (the then treasurer of Wieringen) and I went together. We were received by the S.S. Officer Barby and asked to give a list of the pupils then in Amsterdam. He told us that they would be collected the same way they had come and sent back to Wieringen. When I pointed out to him that all the names and addresses were known to the Gestapo, he said that was so but it would be simpler for them if we submit this list. We then left and all three of us agreed that it would be in the interest of the boys to furnish the names and addresses as desired. I told some of the boys that if they were picked up in the course of the next day or night they should not be upset because they would then be brought back to Wieringen.

During this very same week, however, there had been a bomb outrage in the Schubertstrasse in a house occupied by some German officers (the Schubertstrasse is one of the fashionable streets in the south of Amsterdam where many German Jews were living). Thereupon the highest Gestapo official in Holland (Rauter) ordered the arrest of 400 Jews, mainly Germans, to be sent to Mauthausen. This order was given on the very same day on which the Wieringen boys were to have gone back to the Werkdorp. I still believe that it had indeed been the intention of the Amsterdam Gestapo to send the boys back, but that this intention was crossed by the new order for arrests received from the higher officials in The Hague. However this may be, the result was that amongst the 400 young Jews who were arrested on that terrible day in June, there were about 60 Wieringen pupils. The police called at many of the addresses given in our lists and in some cases took all the young men they could find at those places, also, for instance, sons of those families who had given hospitality to the Wieringen boys. In some cases when the Wieringen boys happened to be out, only the Dutch boy was taken. Of course, the news of these arrests spread like wildfire and everywhere the young boys went into hiding. As arrests however were made on the streets wherever young men were found, they were taken anyhow. Eventually, those under 16, half-Jews, boys in bad health and some others were released but about 300 were sent to Mauthausen and death notices started to arrive very shortly afterwards. As a matter of fact within a very short time practically all the families of the 700 men who had in the two raids in February and now in June been sent to Mauthausen were officially notified of their deaths. Some very moving descriptions were written up by Wieringen boys and are in the archives of the Jewish Agency. I therefore refrain from giving here a more graphic description of the happenings during those tragic days. It may be easily imagined what I felt. It is true that anyhow the addresses of the boys had been known to the German authorities. It is likewise true that arrests were made in many houses where no Wieringen pupils lived as well as arbitrarily on the streets in the south of Amsterdam. All the same it was then that I determined never again to give the name of any Jews to any German authority and never again to trust the word of any German.

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Although it had nothing to do with the general happenings, I would like to mention here that Wieringen was eventually liquidated on the 1st of August, 1941, the remaining pupils and the Jewish members of the staff being brought to Amsterdam. The Dutch authorities who were made to take over the Werkdorp paid an indemnity for the buildings, equipment, livestock, etc., the amount of which I am sorry I cannot remember. It was, however, sufficient to allow us to rent two houses where a number of pupils were housed. One of the houses was a home for younger pupils run under the direction of Mrs. Laufer who had rendered such invaluable service as "mother" of the Werkdorp since 1935, and the other was in charge of Nurse de Vries and was used for offices, club rooms, etc. as well as for the housing of older pupils. We were allowed to take the greater part of the machinery from the carpenter shop and the smithy to Amsterdam where it was erected in one of the new Jewish training schools and eventually brought to W'ork. These houses were a great success particularly as the new director who had started his work in the early summer of 1941, Mr. Jules Gerzon, took a great interest in the fate of every single pupil. Until the homes were liquidated after the raids in 1942, he visited them practically every day. We had opened up a third home in Almele for boys who worked with peasants in this district. This too he visited regularly. It is thanks to his unflinching energy and resourcefulness that many pupils could go "under" and that all others - no matter where they were - continued to receive parcels until Gerzon too was put into camp in September 1943.

That was the end of Wieringen. Of the 300 inhabitants who were in Wieringen at the time of the German occupation, 210 were brought to Amsterdam on the 20th of March. About 60 of the pupils were sent to Mauthausen in the June 1941 raid, about 100 were later transported to Poland in the various raids, about 50 are, at the time of writing, in Bergen-Belsen or had been in W'ork (present whereabouts of the last W'ork people unknown), and about 60 are in hiding.

In August 1941, a very far-reaching decision was made to the effect that neither Jewish teachers nor Jewish pupils would be allowed to attend any schools or other educational institutions, with the exception of a very small number of students at the universities. Jews were also prohibited from giving to or receiving lessons from non-Jews in any way. The number of schoolchildren affected was between 7000 and 8000. It was permitted to open special Jewish schools and other educational institutions. There were protests by the Christian schools who did not dismiss the Jewish pupils attending them, but after some time the punitive measures taken were so severe that parents decided by themselves not to continue to send their Jewish children there. It then became one of the important tasks of the "J.R." to establish Jewish schools. The Municipal Councils were allowed to assist in the establishment of such special Jewish schools and in fact did so practically everywhere. The main difficulty was in the very small communities where there were very few Jewish children. The larger Municipalities continued to carry in their budgets an expense item for the Jewish schools and the usual subsidy was given for each pupil but there was a considerable deficit to be met out of the Jewish budget. Fortunately, amongst those dismissed were a few first-class experts and specialists who at once put themselves at the disposal of the "J.R." for this special task. On the whole, it can be said that in the large towns by the beginning of the autumn term, all children received adequate schooling. It was only in the very small places that for some time Jewish children went without lessons and that afterwards, when some emergency solution was found,

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the teaching they received was not up to standard. It would lead too far to give here an exact description of the various schools which were created. Suffice it to say that it was even arranged for the Jewish pupils to take their ordinary examination and it is to be hoped that, when times become normal again, these examinations will be recognized as entitling them to go straight to the universities, etc. The head of this department of the "J.R.", Mr. Van der Velde, really created an organization which would deserve a much fuller description than I can give here; it is to be hoped that, when the Dutch Jewish history of these times comes to be written full justice will be done to his work. He was a fine upright man who kept his department free from the nepotism which ruined so many other departments of the "J.R."

As has already been mentioned, a special identification card for Jews had been issued in the early spring of 1941. By July 1941 it was made compulsory for everybody living in Holland to carry identification papers. These were issued by the town officials in each town separately and people were called up in alphabetical order to get them. I do not have the original identification paper with me because it was taken away from us in W'ork. I have, however, an extract from that paper of which I enclose a photo copy (Enclosure No. 2). As the whole population had to get these identification cards it was a job extending over months and it will be seen that my own paper is dated the 5th November, 1941. The papers for Jews were stamped with a big "J" so that after that it was always possible everywhere to see whether or not a person was a Jew.

All these administrative or economic measures, cramping in an ever-increasing degree the life of every Jew, were punctuated by actions of frightfulness. Thus on the nights of 13th and 14th September, 1941, about 100 Jews were taken up in a raid in Enschede and brought to Mauthausen. Enschede lies in the heart of the industrial center of Holland and had a prosperous and large Jewish community. Many well-known Jews were amongst those who were sent away. A fortnight after already 10 death certificates were received and these were followed at regular intervals by others. By that time altogether about one thousand Jews from Holland had been sent to Mauthausen, none of whom lived longer than a few months. There are relatives of those unfortunates who still firmly believe that although death certificates were sent, the people themselves may have been transported to some other work camp and may still be alive.

Following this raid in Enschede in the whole of the east of Holland a raid on Jews took place but by that time the art of disappearing and going into hiding had been learned and many escaped.

As already mentioned, perfunctory notices here and there had been posted forbidding Jews to visit public places, etc. Some provincial towns like Zaandam, Hilversum, Haarlem and others had been particularly active in this respect because at an early date they had Nazi mayors, but in September 1941 a general order was published (as far as I remember even this important order was published only in the Jewish newspaper) forbidding Jews to show themselves in any public place whatsoever, i.e. parks, cafes, station restaurants, other restaurants, hotels, theatres, cinema houses, sports grounds, stadiums, seaside resorts, public baths, auctions and all exchanges, except those which were put aside for the exclusive use of Jews. As mentioned before, there was one Jewish theatre; after this a few Jewish restaurants were opened in the larger towns and the Diamond Exchange, because it was practically

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in Jewish hands was to the last open for Jews. This measure of course made the life of every Jew, and particularly of those who had to earn their living as travelling agents, etc., extremely hard. It simply meant that if you arrived at any place whatsoever and had to wait for a train or wanted to meet somebody for a discussion, you could go nowhere. No matter how bad the weather Jews were forced to wait for the arrival of the train on the platform. At any time everywhere there were controls and as soon as people were made to show their identification papers, the "J" on them identified them. Besides this inconvenience, numbers of Jews lost their livelihood as a direct result of this ordinance.

The personal liberty of Jews, which had already been so much restricted by the various prohibitions mentioned, received a further shock by the order that Jews were no longer allowed to move. These restrictions started to come into force early in the winter 1941. In order to move a special permit had to be given which could be obtained exclusively through the services of the "J.R.". This meant that the "J.R." had to create a new department, one that was to be extremely busy in future and which was to deal exclusively with the housing problem. In the beginning these permits were - albeit sometimes with some difficulty - still given for any part of the town whereas in future it became more and more apparent that certain districts were marked down for housing the Jewish population. At that time innumerable rumours were about that the Germans intended to establish a real ghetto, and I remember that Prof. Cohen had many conferences about this with the Germans. It was never clear whether or not this plan existed at that time. Certain is it that in 1943 the remaining Jews were forced to move to a restricted area in Amsterdam east. Increasingly permission to move had only been given on condition that the new residence was situated either in the center (the old Jewish quarter), a definite part of "Plan Zuid" or in Amsterdam east. Gradually Jews from the provinces were forbidden to remain living there and forced to come to Amsterdam where they were also allowed to take up residence only in those quarters, even if they had near relatives living in other quarters of the town who were willing to take them in. These Jews were not allowed to take more than hand-luggage with them. But here again the Aryan population helped greatly in contravening this stipulation.

As the housing problem was already a difficult one, the inconvenience that this caused may be easily imagined. Gradually the department of the "J.R." which handled all these questions had to be enlarged considerably because it became necessary to billet people on Jewish families and this made necessary a systematic investigation, street by street, into the housing conditions of the Jews. Towards the end of 1942, this work had become so involved, so far-reaching and so difficult, that a special bureau was opened by the Amsterdam Municipality called "The Jewish Billeting Office" in which Jews only were employed and which had as its only task the registration and assigning of empty residences or rooms in the quarters in which Jews were allowed to live; they had the right to billet single people or even families in Jewish homes and they generally gave advice on all questions affecting problems of housing. They worked in close cooperation with the Department of the "J.R." handling permits for moving and such like matters but they were not officials of the "J.R." but of the Municipality and for a long time enjoyed special protection. The head of this department was Mr. J. de Miranda, known so well to everybody connected with the refugee work from his work in the Emigration Department of the Refugee Committee ever since 1933. In September 1943, when the office became superfluous because by then all the Jews had been put into camps and when, therefore, the Municipality protection no longer existed, Mr. de Miranda went "under", but I was told in June 1944

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by people arriving in Bergen-Belsen from W'ork that he had been found. I am afraid that he has since been deported to Poland. Notwithstanding the fact that he was one of our oldest and most devoted workers, it had never been possible to get for him sufficient protection.

Some time in the winter of 1942, a certain number of people evidently chosen arbitrarily, were served daily with notices that they had to move to Amsterdam east. They were allowed to take as much of their belongings as they could out into the new residence. The remainder was supposed to stay in the original house. The streets reserved for Jews in that quarter contained only very small and simple flats so that naturally somebody moving from a very large house into one of those flats could not very well find room for all the furniture. However, the practice was developed to have furniture disappear from the vans into Aryan houses without evil consequences. As time went on, even people living in the original Jewish quarter in the center had to move to the east and by about April 1943 this action had become general. Even prominent Jews like Prof. Cohen and Asscher were served with removal notices. They, however, together with a few more families received permission to take up residence in streets situated in the east but not actually within the new ghetto.

This question of the removal of Mr. Asscher's family once more shows how the various German authorities were at loggerheads with each other. When Mr. Asscher's house was requisitioned by the military, being very large and situated in a quarter of the town which was increasingly used by German officials, he got permission to take a house anywhere he liked and had actually found a large modern flat in Amsterdam south. When the Gestapo officials heard of this they expressed themselves to Dr. Sluzker in an extremely forceful way, saying that they would compel Mr. Asscher to move into Amsterdam east, etc. etc. Although he pulled every possible wire, he could not take up residence in the new house he had found but had to move to Amsterdam east.

In actual daily life this forced moving, always at very short notice, from their old homes into new ones which were increasingly difficult to find (the better ones of course having been taken by those who had come first) added another harrassing note to daily existence; often a comparatively unimportant thing like this was enough to complete the nervous breakdown of people faced hourly with imprisonment or deportation. When the large raid on the 20th of June, 1943, emptied the whole of Amsterdam east of Jews, many of them had just moved into their new homes a few days before.

It was in the morning of the 30th April, 1942. I left the "Lijnbaansgracht" to attend an emergency meeting which had been called at short notice by Prof. Cohen and which, as always, was to be held in the head offices of the "J.R." at the Kaizersgracht. I met Prof. Brahn coming from the Kaizersgracht. He walked and looked all of a sudden like the old man he rally was. He seemed infinitely tired. I asked him what was the matter and he said: "The Germans have just informed Cohen that all Jews will have to wear a distinctive yellow badge in future. You will hear details at the meeting."

I was surprised at the evident impression this had made on him but I was late and left him. At the meeting we were informed of the impending measure which was to be published that night. As usual, there

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was the by then established opposition against the "J.R." having put their services at the disposal of the Germans for the organization of the distribution, etc. The meeting was even interrupted by a well-known Zionist who came to protest in the name of many against the "J.R." selling and distributing these stars. She said, and I think in this she was right, that if the Germans were to be left to do this they could not possibly enforce it before many weeks had elapsed. However, as was always the case, the order had been accepted by Prof. Cohen and could not be rescinded.

Max Bolle thereupon put his remarkable organization talent at the service of this particular job and within two days every Jew, no matter where he lived, was in possession of the requisite number of stars to be attached to all his outer garments. In the evening the newspaper published the following Regulation:-

" REGULATION of 30th April, 1942,  
from the Commissioner General for Public Security,  
in respect of the Identification of Jews in the Netherlands.

Under Par. 45 of Regulation No. 138/41 of the Rykscommissaris for the Occupied Netherlands Territory regarding Public Security, I hereby decree as follows:

Para. 1.1. A Jew, when appearing in public must wear a Jews' Star (Yellow Badge).

2. Jew, in the meaning of this regulation, is anyone defined as Jew or considered to be a Jew under Par. 4 of Regulation No. 189/40 regarding registration of business firms. Children under six are exempted from the identification.

3. The Jew's Star is a six-pointed star, printed in black on yellow textile, the size of the palm of the hand, with the inscription "Jood" printed in black. The star must be worn visibly and solidly fixed to the clothing on the left hand side at breasts' height.

4. Jews are not permitted to wear signs of rank or honour or any other insignia.

Para. 2.1. He who contravenes or evades the provisions of Par. 1 is liable - insofar as no heavier punishment has been provided for in other regulations - to imprisonment of not more than six months and a fine of not more than 1000 Florins or to either of these punishments. The same punishment is applicable to him who aids or abets or makes arrangements for the evasion of these provisions.

2. The provisions in regard to the Security Police remain in force.

Para. 3. These Police Regulations come into force 3 days after their promulgation.

The Hague, 29th April, 1942.  
The Comm. Gen. for Public Security,  
"Hoehere S.S. und Polizeifuehrer"  
(signed) RAUTER.

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In the beginning, the non-Jewish population demonstratively showed their sympathy with the Jews, people taking their hats off to those wearing the star; people in the trams invariably offering their seats to the "bestarred" ones, etc. Quite a number of people were then arrested because they wore stars exactly similar to those which had to be worn by the Jews but inscribed with the word "Christian". The sympathy with the Jews and the opposition against this measure shown by non-Jews were so pronounced that it was deemed necessary to publish an article in all the leading newspapers reading: "If a Dutchman continues to associate with Jews, that is with the enemies of Germany, notwithstanding the fact that the star now plainly establishes the dividing line between friend and foe, this must be deemed a disloyal action. It is a base attitude against the occupying forces and it must be considered to mean a definite siding with the enemy." The article continued to voice threats of concentration camp etc. to those who continued to show their Jewish sympathies.

I was alone in the evening of this day in the beautiful room which was still mine, full of books and flowers, when suddenly Prof. Brahn came to see me. We saw each other practically every day but he had never yet come in the evening without first having telephoned to ask whether I was in. We just talked and when he left I went with him for a little way. He said, "If I had not come here tonight I would have committed suicide." I looked at him and asked "Do you think it is as bad as all that?" He simply answered, "Yes. They will hunt us now wherever they can find us. It is the beginning of the end." I asked, "Are you all right now?" and he said, "Yes, now I am again willing and able to put up with everything barring, of course, Poland." A few of us, a small group of very close friends, were by then never without cyanali. As far as I am concerned, this tiny yellow box gave me throughout, no matter what happened, a sense of freedom.

I would like to say here that of all the people I ever met in my life, Prof. Brahn is certainly the greatest. He was sent to W'ork at the beginning of January 1944 and one week later to Theresienstadt. He was then 70 years of age. He is infinitely wise, gentle and resigned. If he should not come out alive the world will be definitely poorer for it. He was, of course, a famous man in Germany. If he should survive and would be willing to put his services at the disposal of the Jewish cause, I think his name might, notwithstanding his age, still become famous in Jewry.

How right Prof. Brahn had been in his forebodings was only too soon to become apparent. Already on the 30th of June new regulations were issued of which, in view of their importance and far-reaching consequences, I quote here the text in full:-

" Regulation of 30th June, 1942.

From the Rykscommissaris for the Occupied Netherlands Territory.  
Under Art. 45 of the regulation No. 138/1941 the following regulation in respect of Limitation of the Freedom of Movement has appeared:-

Art. 1. Jews must remain in-doors in their dwellings between the hours 20 - 6.

Art. 2. Jews may not be present in dwellings, gardens or other private institutions for health or recreation belonging to non-Jews unless their presence is required under existing contracts of lease or employment.

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Jews with a non-Jewish spouse are exempted from this provision.

- Art3. (1) Jews may enter shops, which are not marked as Jewish firms, only between 15 - 17 hours. Dispensing chemists are exempted.  
(2) No goods may be delivered to the house of a Jew.  
(3) This regulation does not interfere with any special provisions taken or to be taken by the representative (Gevol-machtigde) of the Rykscommissaris for the City of Amsterdam.
- Art4. Jews are not allowed to enter hairdressers and other shops and quasi-medical institutions or use the services thereof if these shops or institutions are not labelled "Jewish". Reference is made to Para. 2 of the instructions of the Ryks-commissaris for the Occupied Netherlands Territory regarding regulation No. 198/41 in respect of the carrying on of a pro-fession by Jews, dated 30th June 1942.
- Art.5.(1) Jews are not allowed to enter railway stations nor use public or private means of transport.  
(2) Exempted are:  
1. The use of ferries.  
2. Cycling within the borough of Amsterdam.  
3. The use of special cycles for transport of goods for business purposes, insofar as they may carry on busi-ness.  
4. The transport of serious patients in an ambulance and the transport of invalids in special vehicles.  
5. The use of town transport by the holder of a special licence issued by the Security Police on the recommen-dation of the Netherlands Armament Inspection.  
6. The use of railways with a travel permit issued by the Security Police.  
7. The use of means of transport by holders of a travel permit issued by the 'Centralstelle fuer Juedische Auswanderung', Amsterdam.  
8. Jews who are entitled in these cases to use public means of transport must take their seats in the low-est class (smoker). They may enter and take a seat only if there is sufficient room for non-Jewish travell-ers.
- Art. 6. Jews are not allowed to use public telephones.
- Art. 7. Jews in the meaning of this regulation is anyone who is a Jew or considered a Jew under Art. 4 of Regulation No. 189/1940 regarding registration of business firms.
- Art. 8. Provisions for the carrying out of these regulations and further exemptions to the provisions 1 - 6 will be publish-ed in the Jewish weekly journal ("Joodsche Weekblad").
- Art. 9. Anyone contravening or evading the provisions of Art. 1 - 6 will be punished - insofar as no heavier punishment is pro-vided for under other provisions - with imprisonment of not more than six months and a fine of not more than one thousand Florins or either of these punishments. The same punishment applies to anyone aiding or abetting or assisting in the evasion of these provisions. Measure to be taken by the Security Police remain unaffected.

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Art. 10. This regulation comes into force on the day of promulgation.

The Hague, 30th June, 1942.  
The Comm. Gen. For Public Security,  
'S.S. Gruppenführer und General-  
leutnant der Polizei'  
(signed) RAUTER " "

These regulations were so shattering to the few remaining liberties of Jews that they formed a fitting overture to the daily deportations which were to commence only a few days later. I can be brief in my comments on the single paragraphs:-

To Art.1.- Generally speaking, a few doctors and heads of departments in the "J.R." and a number of Jews working for the "Expositur" and the "Joodsche Schouwburg" and "H.a.V."\*) (because members of these 3 offices were generally working at night during the transportations) were given evening permits. I enclose a photo copy of mine (Enclosure No.3.).

Art.3.- Generally speaking, Aryan friends saw to it that Jews lacked nothing, the Aryan shops always keeping a secret store of goods for the Jewish customers who would come in at 3:00 o'clock only. Repeatedly articles in the Nazi press fulminated against Aryans who were still assisting Jews; while in the notorious concentration camp of Vught a number of Aryans were detained who had been arrested because in one way or another they had assisted Jews.

Art.3(2).- As far as I remember - officially only coal was exempt from this order, but unofficially both Jews and non-Jews continued to contravene it; thus, for instance, I always had flowers sent to my house by the florist who had been serving me for years and likewise flowers were always brought to me which were sent to me as gifts through other shops.

Art. 5.- This had, as will easily be imagined, the most far-reaching consequences for everybody. Actually, a large department of the "J.R." had to be created which did nothing but examine claims and submit them to German authorities for permits either temporary or permanent. Temporary permits were issued for one journey only, and permanent ones, I believe, for one month.

As regards the various exemptions, the following may be said:-

Art.5(2).- Very shortly after the publication of this ordinance Jews were ordered to give up their bicycles. Only someone who knows Holland will realize what this meant. There, as was the case with the travel and other permits, the "J.R." was allowed to keep bicycles for a number of their employees who received a special permit. As the Nazi press continued its agitation against Jews on bicycles, the number of permits was reduced from month to month until finally, late in the summer of 1943, the "J.R." informed the holders of permits that they were expected to bring their bicycles to the "Centralstelle" ostentatiously for the purpose of stamping the frame with a number, this stamp to take the place of the cumbersome permit. Although naturally there was a certain amount of distrust of this sudden consideration on the part of the Germans, the Jews could not very well but bring their bicycles,

\*) The functions of the department "Hulp aan Vertrekkenden" (H.A.V.) are fully explained on p. 49 of this report.

whereupon all of them were confiscated and sent to Germany. I think eventually only a handful got their bicycles back (mostly doctors) and some errand boys of the "Expositur" and the "Schouwburg" had their bicycles returned because the Germans considered these offices indispensable also to them. (Here again it caused a lot of ill-feeling that the whole family of Asscher remained in possession of bicycles.)

Art.5(5).- Permits were given to in all I think not more than 20 people. I was one of the first to get one because Sluzker procured one for me when I was working in the "Expositur" from 7 in the morning until 12 at night as described in another chapter. The few permits which were issued were never rescinded, neither were new ones ever issued so that they remained valid all the time. Photocopy of the permit is enclosed (Enclosure No. 4).

Art.5 (6, 7 & 8).- Travel permits were actually given only through the services of the "J.R.", except in cases where the armament inspection (the Wehrmacht or the Ruestungs-Inspection) procured permits of all descriptions for people working for them. In the beginning, travel permits were given fairly easily but after a short time conditions became more and more stringent until it was finally practically impossible to get a permit even for the most important business. Personally, I remember travelling during all this time twice to W'ork and once as late as September 1943, to Barneveld, all 3 times on urgent business in connection with the Palestine exchange. When I wanted a travel permit Sluzker, who was devoted to me, took no end of personal trouble to procure it and it was considered quite an event that I was actually enabled to make these trips. I remember that I personally felt thoroughly uncomfortable and conspicuous in the train.

Art.6.- This was particularly inconvenient because by that time only very few Jews were in possession of private telephones. Generally speaking, not even doctors had kept theirs but only all the offices of the "J.R." and a few "J.R." officials. I had my telephone up to the last because the "Expositur", the "Schouwburg" as well as the "H.a.V." officials had to be able to call me out at any time of the night on urgent cases. Those of us who had telephones were, after transports started, so deprived of sleep that finally we had to take the telephone service in turn, each one of us taking one, sometimes two, nights a week.

As already mentioned, it was only the "J.R." and the Wehrmacht or Ruestungs-Inspection which could apply for exemption permits.

In Holland, where, as in other countries before the war, there had been a great deal of unemployment, numerous emergency camps had at that time been established for the housing of unemployed out onto public works such as construction of roads, reclaiming of land, drainage, etc., etc., such work projects having been specially created for this purpose. The people then working in these camps were, of course, paid proper wages and entitled to every right (leave, sick insurance, etc.). I do not remember whether or not these working camps remained in existence after the German occupation. Anyhow, in the same measure as Dutch workers were at first induced and later on forced to go to Germany or occupied France to work there they naturally became superfluous,

This work for the unemployed had been done under the auspices of the Ministry of Sociale Zaken and Meyer de Vries especially had been prominently connected with it and had very good connections with the Dutch authorities, also those who had remained in office after the

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occupation. I believe that as early as about October 1941 the Germans, for the first time, indicated their intention to put unemployed Jews into special camps in Holland. I think it must be put to the credit side of the "J.R." that they managed by clever handling of this whole question, to delay the actual creation of these work camps for quite some time; finally, however, I believe some time around January 1942, it was no longer possible to obstruct this measure and purely Jewish work camps were actually created, the old pre-war work camps being used for this purpose.

The labour exchanges were used for the calling up of Jews for working camps. In the beginning, only unmarried men were called up to the age of, I believe, 40 or 45 years. (This caused a precipitate increase in marriages). Very soon, however, also married men were called up and after some time Jews up to the age of 60 and even 65 were sent. The medical examination was carried out by Jewish doctors. They at first objected to doing it, but at a meeting especially called for this purpose Prof. Cohen was able to convince them that it was in the interest of our people that this should be in the hands of Jewish doctors. After a while, when it was found that a great many people were testified to be unfit, the examination was effected by or in the presence of Nazi doctors and practically everybody, no matter what his physical condition, was sent. As economic measures had by then deprived more and more Jews of their employment, thousands of Jews were gradually drafted into these camps.

I think it is safe to estimate that in October 1942 about 8,000 Jews were by that time segregated in working camps. In the beginning, people were given occasional leave to visit their families and the "J.R." was allowed to send social workers into those camps and generally create some amenities there. At that time food parcels were permitted to be sent to the men. Very soon, however, the camps assumed more and more the character of closed camps - leave and visits were stopped and one facility after the other forbidden, while the incoming and outgoing mail was censored. I remember that one of the leading Nazi newspapers printed an original postcard or letter from one of the Jews in the work camp in which he described how easy a life they had because of food parcels, etc. etc. This immediately led to a violent press campaign and was, I believe, mainly instrumental in the rapid worsening of all conditions.

Generally speaking, about this question of the work camps there had been rousing hostility against the "J.R." and particularly against Meyer de Vries. As already mentioned before, I personally am sure that through clever manipulations on the part of the "J.R." the actual commencement of the Jewish work camps had been delayed for several months and I also believe it to be to the credit side of the "J.R." that they, at least in the beginning, managed to have the examination done by Jewish doctors. Once the work camps started, however, the public objected greatly to the way in which the directorate of the "J.R." encouraged (not to say forced) the Jews to go there. The promises made by the Germans to Cohen and Asscher to the effect that the work camps would be ordinary open camps with wages, leave facilities and most important of all, the promise that people from the work camps would remain in Holland, were passed on by Cohen and Asscher to the public although by that time they should have known that to rely on any promise made by the S.S. was merely criminal folly. Of course, none of these promises was kept as mentioned elsewhere in this report and finally all the people were deported with their families. As many people asserted, perhaps rightly, that they would have managed to go "under" instead of going into the camps but

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for the promises made by the "J.R.", the bitterness of feeling that resulted may easily be imagined.

Whereas generally speaking the treatment in these camps was humane, there were some in which this was not the case. The name of Ellecom will go down into history as the camp in which Dutch Nazis were trained in the treatment of Jews. In Ellecom was situated the so-called Palestine camp. Conditions there became so scandalous that finally even the Germans could not tolerate it any longer and liquidated the camp. I believe this was in August 1942. The people - I think about 300 - were sent to W'ork and arrived in such a terrible condition that many of them died and all the others had to be admitted into hospital suffering from hunger, oedema and wounds caused by ill-treatment. Their condition was such that the German commandant of W'ork refused to put these people on transport to Poland and they remained in the W'ork hospital for many months. Needless to say that after their recovery practically all of them were, after all, transported.

It appeared that in Ellecom a Jew had been forced to beat up his fellow workers and it again shows more than many words will do the dreadful animosity which existed between Dutch and German Jews when I say here that there was a violent scene at a meeting of the "J.R." when it was asserted by one of its members that, of course, a German Jew had done the beatings. Even in W'ork the dispute whether or not it had been a German or a Dutch Jew went on. Anyhow, it was finally established that it had been a Dutch Jew. I have forgotten his name: the German commandant of W'ork put him on transport to Poland immediately after his arrival in W'ork.

It must be remembered that they came, not out of a concentration camp, but out of an ordinary work camp, but their condition was worse than that of those who came through W'ork on their way to Poland from the notorious concentration camp in Amersfoort.

I visited W'ork about that time on some emigration business and saw these patients. I shall never, as long as I live, forget the expression on their faces as they lay there, many between life and death. I remember that, when I was ill myself in W'ork I refused to go to hospital for some weeks because I was afraid they would put me into one of the large barracks and I know that there, fewerish as I was, I would be haunted by the memory of those sights to such an extent that instead of recovering I would probably have become much worse. Only when I was assured that I would be put into one of the smaller rooms in the old hospital did I consent to go.

As has already been mentioned, in the early part of this report, several quite important measures vastly encroaching on the economic existence of Jews had been taken, as a result of which a great many Jews had become unemployed and were then - speaking in a general way - automatically drafted into work camps unless they were working for the "J.R.", the Wehrmacht or had some special protection.

Because it is constantly referred to later, I am repeating here Regulation 189/40 which was published some time in October 1940 and which reads as follows:-

" Regulation regarding registration of Jewish concerns, including all business, trust funds, agricultural, horticultural and fishing

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trade, down to hawkers. A concern is considered as Jewish if one owner is a Jew, if one of the partners with joint and several liability is a Jew, if one member of the Board of Directors is a Jew or if at least one-quarter of its capital is in Jewish hands.

A person is considered to be a Jew who has at least 3 Jewish grandparents or who has 2 Jewish grandparents and who, on 9.5.1940 was a member of a Jewish Congregation, or who has 2 Jewish grandparents and is married to a Jew.

Non-registration will be punished with a fine up to Fl.100,000 or with confiscation."

Then, in the Official Gazette of the 25th October, 1941, appeared an ordinance which I think is important enough to be quoted in full:-

- " 1. The carrying on by Jews of work as a trade or profession can be made dependent on their obtaining a license or on specified conditions, or it can be wholly interdicted.
2. An employer may terminate a contract with a Jew by 3 months' notice as from the first day of any month even if the contract would in itself, legally or by mutual consent, have lapsed on any day after 31st January, 1942.
3. It is forbidden for non-Jews to do any work in families of which a Jew is the head or of which a Jew is a member permanently or temporarily (more than 4 successive weeks). In case of contravention the Jew will be punished.
4. It is forbidden for Jews to establish an association of persons without economic aim, or to be a member of such association. The same holds good for trust funds unless they are specially established for Jews or Jews are the only persons to benefit from them.

This ordinance to come into force as from January 1, 1942."

Under this new decree it was virtually possible to close any and every avenue of occupation to Jews without further ado. Furthermore, it gave employers the right to discharge a Jew on the first of any month with 3 months' notice even if contracts to the contrary existed. The measure concerning servants, which seemed innocent enough, was, in actual fact, the cause of many imprisonments. Aryans were still permitted to clean or work in offices also if the premises were located in the living quarters. This led to innumerable denunciations, etc. Thus, two friends of mine were imprisoned through denunciations because the charwoman who cleaned their office also cleaned the passage leading to the living quarters. They were both imprisoned for six weeks, but, fortunately, released after that.

In November 1941, special Jewish markets were opened in three districts in Amsterdam where only Jews were allowed to sell and buy, the use of all other markets, therefore, being forbidden to them.

In August 1941, the firm of Lippmann-Rosenthal was reorganized by the Germans to become the Central Bank for all Jewish property. This first "Lippmann-Rosenthal" edict dated August 1941 was to contain the first regulations towards a complete confiscation of Jewish property.

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The leading people in the management of the bank were all Germans or Nazis, a very important part being played by a certain Mr. Flesche (a former partner of the first class banking firm of Rhodius Koenigs & Co. - the other partners of which firm were above suspicion).

Unfortunately, this first Lippmann-Rosenthal edict which appeared in August 1941 is not in my possession. If I remember rightly, it required the registration of all real estate and the depositing of cash exceeding 1,000 Guilders. At that time, Lippmann-Rosenthal had opened accounts for all the people who had made deposits and they gave to these people monthly varying amounts for living expenses to a maximum of 1,000 Guilders and also additional amounts for rent, doctors' accounts, taxes, etc.

For quite some time after the first Lippmann-Rosenthal ordinance the pretence of an ordinary banking account was kept up for the various "clients". People were informed of the fact that their shares were sold. Thus, for instance, Royal Dutch, and American and East Indian shares were sold even without a "kettling verklaring" so that even the nominal proceeds were only about 3/4 of the value or even less. These shares were replaced by Dutch loans which had been issued after the occupation.

In many cases when a firm or business was sold the account was credited with the amounts realized (always ridiculous amounts) and before the edict of May 23, 1942, people were paid 4% yearly of the amount realized for living expenses so that in 25 years the whole capital would have been paid out without any interest or anything. Thus, for instance, if, say, a cottage was sold - of course without the owner's permission - for 10,000 Guilders, he would be paid 400 Gl. and his account would be debited accordingly. The charges made by L.-R. for administrative expenses were simply ridiculous but anyhow nobody took any notice of their account with L.-R., rightly considering this to be a mere travesty of a banking account.

The right to rent safe deposit boxes had for some time been taken away from the Jews and they were no longer able to have them. Existing safes were confiscated, Jews being forced to hand over the contents as far as they fell under the above-mentioned L.-R. regulation to that firm.

On May 23, 1942, an even more shattering blow was aimed at all Jewish property, the measures being embodied in a regulation which, in view of its importance I quote fully hereunder. This was the famous second Lippmann-Rosenthal decree, and read:-

"Decree dated 23rd May, 1942,  
from the Rykscommissaris for the Occupied Netherlands Territory,  
in respect of the Treatment of Jewish Assets  
containing, among others, the following stipulations:-

Claims of any kind must be notified in writing to the banking firm of Lippmann-Rosenthal & Co., Amsterdam, if at the time at which this regulation comes into operation, or at any time thereafter, these claims belong wholly or in part, whether legally or economically, to a person who is a Jew, or considered a Jew within the meaning of the provisions of Art.4 of Regulation No. 189/1940 regarding registration of business firms.

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The above provisions are not applicable to claims of a firm which had already had to register under Regulation No. 189/40.

The registrations of claims existing at the moment at which this regulation comes into operation shall be effected not later than 30th June, 1942. Claims arising after the coming into operation of this regulation, or the arising of which comes at a later date to the knowledge of the person who must register shall be notified within one week.

CASH, SECURITIES ETC. of over Fl. 250 must be handed over.

Assets of a total value exceeding Fl. 250 which were not liable so far must be paid in, deposited or transferred without delay not later than 30th June, 1942, in accordance with the provisions of Art. 1 of Regulation No. 148/1941. This regulation does not apply if the total value of cash, cheques, securities, bank balances and deposits to which the members of one household are entitled at the moment at which this regulation comes into force does not exceed two hundred fifty florins.

Claims and other rights to which the members of one household are entitled may be realized up to a total of two hundred fifty florins per month.

ART TREASURES, ETC. must be handed over.

Collections of all sorts of objects of art, and all objects of gold, platina, silver, also jewellery, pearls and precious stones, cut or uncut, must be handed over to Messrs. Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co., bankers, if they belong legally or economically to one of the persons enumerated in Art. 1.

Excepted are:

1. Personal wedding rings or those of a deceased spouse.
2. Silver wrist or pocket watches in personal use.
3. Used cutlery, it being understood that each member of the household of the owner keeps four pieces, viz. knife, fork, spoon and dessert spoon.
4. Dental fillings of precious metal in personal use.

The handing over must take place without delay, not later than 30th June, 1942. If the goods are acquired at a later date, they must be handed over without delay, within a week of their acquisition. Each person must give full and true information in reply to any enquiry made by Messrs. Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co. in the course of the exercise of their functions under this regulation or Regulation No. 148/1941. Books, proofs or other documents must be delivered at the request of the Bankers. If horses, vehicles or vessels belong legally or economically to any person mentioned in this regulation they must be registered in writing with the "Centralstelle fuer Juedische Auswanderung" at Amsterdam, not later than 30th June, 1942.

He who contravenes or evades the provisions of this regulation or who intentionally withholds from registration assets falling under this regulation or under regulation No. 148/41 will be punished with imprisonment of not more than 5 years and an unlimited fine or either of the punishments. If the contravention took place as a result of negligence, imprisonment of not more than one year or a fine of not more than one hundred thousand florins may be imposed.

The regulations contained in this ordinance come into force as from May 23, 1942."

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This second dict allowed a maximum of 250 Guilders per family per month, all extra allowances for rent, doctors's fees etc. being stopped. Jews were at that time no longer expected to pay taxes. Employers of Jews were expected to take measures not to pay out more than 250 Guilders a month for a family, excessive amounts had to be deposited by the employers with Lippmann-Rosenthal.

Curiously enough, while everybody expected that a control action of how a household (which perhaps paid 150 Guilders monthly for rent only) managed with 250 Guilders would be started and while it was then foreseen that many people who could not give a satisfactory explanation would be trapped through this ordinance, in practice that never happened, probably because soon after the second L.-R. ordinance the deportations set in, so that anyhow all Jewish property was, to an ever-increasing measure, confiscated, Jews being robbed of all they possessed.

It was between the first and second Lippmann-Rosenthal ordinance, I believe some time in January 1943, that the "J.R.", which had up to then financed its activities by contributions from Jews, as explained in another chapter, was prohibited from making any collections and was then financed by Lippmann-Rosenthal. I remember that it was Prof. Cohen who used to go and conduct the negotiations about the amounts which were to be paid monthly to the great disgust of the heads of the Financial Department who probably thought that they understood these financial matters better than Prof. Cohen. At any rate I believe they managed finally to join in the negotiations. The lump sum given was then allotted by the Financial Committee of the "J.R." to the various departments and generally speaking it was possible to pay for the "J.R." administrative machine until the last. Some cuts had to be made in the already very small salaries; but I, for one, had a small secret fund out of which I was able to help employees in my department who were in need. As far as I know, more or less all the heads of departments did the same.

As already explained, after the 23rd of May, 1942, people were expected to live on 250 Guilders a month. Now it goes without saying that this was impossible and every Jew had "black" money, many of them selling such valuables as carpets, antiques, etc. to get the cash needed for their daily life. As all Jewish belongings from the cup Jews were using down to the bed they were sleeping in and the blankets which covered them were supposed to belong to the German State, only having been lent to them for use, every sale of anything whatsoever was punishable. Moreover, to an ever-increasing degree Jews placed valuable furniture and belongings with Arvan friends who were quite commonly called the "Bewariers" a word which has probably come to stay in the Dutch language. Ever so many people got into trouble over these transactions because frequently, either through stupidity or informants, such acts became known to the Germans and no matter what the value of the things taken out of the Jewish house would be, the Jews were immediately brought to W'ork with their families, practically always with an "S" which generally, of course, meant deportation.

A great blow was struck at the Jews when quite suddenly, in the winter of 1943, without any preliminary warning, the 1000 Guilder notes were declared to be invalid. They could only be used to pay taxes and could only be changed in the post office or in the offices of the tax collectors, the right being given, if a large number of them was presented for change, to enquire into their origin. As many of the Jews who were "under" lived on "black" money which they actually had in cash and often in 1000 Guilder notes, it may be easily imagined what a terrible predicament these people were in. They could not come out of their hiding place.

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to make the necessary arrangements; they very often were in hiding with quite simple people, peasants or working people, whom they could not very well entrust with such transactions and who could not anyhow present a large amount without arousing suspicion, so that through this simple measure not only was a great deal of Jewish money lost but also again a great many Jews got into trouble. (Incidentally, many people in the "black market" were hit).

There was very soon a black market for 1000 Guilder notes and gradually their value decreased from 700 to later 200 or 300 Guilders. I thought myself lucky that I was able to change the money I had, partly my own partly belonging to the JDC, at the rate of 700 Guilders. An amount of 40,000 Guilders of JDC money which I had put aside for use in emergencies and which had been given to a Christian firm with the understanding that I would not use it until after the war and which firm could not, without getting into trouble at that time, change this amount which did not appear anywhere in their books, is still lying in Holland at his moment.

In the beginning of 1942, all property belonging to Jewish trust funds, organizations etc., had been confiscated and the money had been given to Lippmann-Rosenthal. It is difficult to give an exact figure, but I have been told by various people who ought to be able to know this that the total capital of those organizations, trust funds, orphanages, old age homes, etc. etc., was 300 Million Guilders. Frankly speaking, this seems to me to be a very high amount as compared with the amount of Jewish property, but it is the amount which was generally mentioned.

While it is not possible to give an exact idea of the amount of property owned by Jews in Holland, it is safe to say that, roughly speaking, it amounted to about half a milliard Guilders (as compared with the total Dutch "Vermogen" of 20 milliards). This estimate does not include the value of paintings, antiques and such like possessions. It was never possible to get a statement of how much exactly was deposited with L.-R., but most people who may be considered experts on these questions believe that between 300 and 400 million Guilders had been deposited with them in actual cash, shares and house property.

A Nazi banker gave, as early as May 1941, the number of Jewish businesses which he thought would be eligible for Aryanization as being between 20,000 and 25,000. And Van Masdyk, the secretary for the organization of economic life in the Netherlands, gave, in the spring of 1942, the following figures regarding the liquidation of Jewish property and the handing over of Jewish businesses; He wrote that of the 21,000 Jewish enterprises which had been registered about 10,000 had better disappear altogether as this would be of great advantage to the remaining Aryan trade. About 8,000 Jewish enterprises had been Aryanized on their own accord and many members of Boards etc. had already resigned. Whether or not such Aryanizations were not only according to the wording but also to the spirit of the law would have to be checked. He mentioned an amount of 150 millions as representing the value of Jewish real estate and land and believed the capital in Jewish hands to be about another 150 million Guilders.

In September 1942 the insurance companies were expected to enquire from their clients whether or not they were Jews. This was probably done in order to check up whether all the various insurance policies had been deposited with L.-R. in accordance with the instructions.

At any rate, soon after this last ordinance was published, the deportations started and the general disorganization of Jewish life with deportations, forced movings, going "under", etc. etc. assumed such pro-

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portions that very few Jews could continue to go on at their business in a regular way except perhaps those working for the "J.R.", and those working in the few remaining Jewish shops.

While thus Jewish property was confiscated all round, the chances to earn a living became more and more restricted. I am giving hereunder the working of a decree dated the 30th June, 1942, which, after many dilatory measures finally barred Jews from all trade, business, practice, etc. etc. This important ordinance read as follows:-

" INSTRUCTIONS dated 30th June, 1942.

From the Rykscommissaris for Netherlands Occupied Territory.  
re Prohibition of the Exercise of Various Professions by Jews.

Under Art. 2 of Regulation No. 198/1941 regarding restrictions on the exercise of various professions by Jews I hereby decree:-

- Art.1. Jews are not allowed to work as auction master, pawnbroker, employment agent for labour or professional jobs, financial and tax adviser, druggist, marriage broker or guide to foreigners.
- Art.2. Jews are not allowed to work as accountant, in the field of denominational education or in the para-therapeutical professions unless the work be performed on behalf of Jews only. Para-therapeutical profession in the sense of the previous section means the profession of teacher of hygienic gymnastics, of natural healer, oculist, chiropodist (manicure and pedicure, trussmaker, masseur, beauty specialist and hairdresser.
- Art.3(1) Jews are not allowed to be hawkers apart from the trade in old metals, rags and waste.
- (2) In the area of Amsterdam or in certain parts thereof Jews may be exempted from the restrictions of the first section at the request of the representative of the Rykscommissaris for the Municipality of Amsterdam. Fees are payable for the exemption.
- Art.4. Work in the meaning of Articles 1 and 2 and work for which no exemption under Art. 3 exists or is obtained may be carried on till the 31st July, 1942, insofar as this be done under a contract existing at the time this regulation comes into force.
- Art.5(1) Jew in the meaning of this instruction is anyone who is a Jew or considered a Jew under Art.4 of Regulation No.189/1940 regarding the registration of business firms.
- (2) Acts in contravention of the provisions of these instructions will be punished in accordance with punishments laid down in Art. 6 of Regulation No. 138/1941 regarding Public Security as amended by Regulation No. 182/1941.
- Art.6. These instructions come into force on the day of their promulgation.

The Hague, 30th June, 1942.

For the Rykscommissaris of Netherlands  
Occupied Territory.

Dr. Hans Fischbock

Commissioner General for Financial and Economic Affairs

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Curiously enough, as mentioned in other parts of this report, a fairly large group of Jews in the metal trade continued all the time to buy metal on the black market for a German called Capt. Schuster.

On the 1st of January, 1943, the firm of Lippmann-Rosenthal stopped all payments to Jews, the respective department of the "J.R." being expected to take over each and every payment to Jewish households. Out of the lump sum which the "J.R." used to get monthly from L.-R., the maximum of 250 Guilders to households had to be met, a certain amount always being earmarked for this purpose. It may easily be imagined what utter confusion this caused; as the "J.R." was not allowed to see the books of L.-R., it was completely impossible to check up whether or not anybody had any account at L.-R. or to verify the amounts deposited there. Although naturally many people complained about the treatment they received at the hands of the "J.R.", I think it is a fact that the organization of a tremendously important and difficult task which had to be taken over at extremely short notice was really a very remarkable piece of work. Mr. Krouwer was at that time still head of the Financial Department and I think a great deal of the credit for this work is due to him. As mentioned before, a few months later he became Aryanized and handed over the work to his colleagues Paul Hendrix and Mr. van Raalte. These two were eventually entrusted with the liquidation of the financial transactions of the "J.R.", always receiving leave from W'ork for that purpose. In which way the Financial Committee did finally settle with the Germans I do not know, as I had to leave Holland at a time when the aforementioned members of the Financial Committee were actually in Amsterdam still occupied with the liquidation.

Before that time Lippman-Rosenthal had practically ceased to exist; nobody knows what happened to the documents and shares deposited there. As to the cash, valuables, collections etc. it is of course to be surmised that these went the way of all Jewish property into the pockets of some individual Germans or Nazis, or east into the fatherland.

In order to make what follows quite clear I have to go right back to a time soon after the occupation and more or less give the history of the Emigration Department. The Emigration Department, of which I had been the head ever since 1933, was extremely busy after the German occupation because in ever increasing numbers Jews tried to get visa for the then neutral countries and in the hope of still being able to emigrate via Spain or Portugal. Brisk trade was going on, particularly in visa for Cuba and Chile. People were encouraged to get visa because the official attitude of the Germans seemed to indicate that it was their desire to encourage the emigration of Jews from Holland in the same way as had formerly been done from Germany, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. Our emigration office as well as the offices of such firms as Hooyman & Schuurman, the travel bureau with which we had done business for many years, and the offices of the (German) firm Brasch & Rothenstein were all over-run by Jews wishing to emigrate. In the German Visa Department there was actually a large advertisement of B. & R. hanging on the wall, advising Jews to go there in emigration questions. The man in charge of this department at B. & R. was a young Dutch fellow by the name of Westerning. Naturally we had to do a great deal with him and I mention his name because from the very first day on Westerning used his considerable business astuteness and energy for the advancing of Jewish emigration schemes. After I had spoken to him a few times I made up my mind that I could trust him. I did so unreservedly and never regretted it because,

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as will be shown later, this cooperation was instrumental eventually in saving a great many Jews from deportation. He was quite young, very fair, of simple extraction and very little schooling, but his abilities were such that he made very rapid advance in his firm so that he could take even quite far-reaching decisions without our having to fear that his firm would go back on him. The Germans had taken a distinct liking to him, but I knew that he used the fact that he could and did mix freely with them only to our advantage. The firm of Brasch & Rothenstein had naturally very influential business relations amongst the Germans.

In the beginning it had not been clearly defined which of the German departments would eventually be responsible for Jewish affairs. At that time not so much the S.S., as certain people sitting in the general visa department in the Van Eeghen Street as well as some military people in The Hague were entitled to and actually did issue exit visa for Jews. Particularly with the military section Westerning was very friendly and it was with their connivance that as late as August 1941 the last group of legal Jewish emigrants got away.

When Jewish affairs came definitely into the hands of a special S.S. department which started work about July 1941, Westerning, although he knew and had access to the S.S. people, continued to work with the military authorities. I never enquired too much into the background but believe that the high connections his important German firm had in Germany helped him greatly. As with everything else, the military lost in its struggle with the S.S. regarding Jewish questions and thus it came about that Westerning was not able later any more actually to put through his emigration schemes. His German connections were, however, as will be told later on, sufficiently powerful at least to procure for the Jewish group he was interested in the much coveted safety stamp 120,000\*), thus saving them from deportation.

Anyhow, in the summer of 1940 the Emigration Department was excessively busy with preparations for emigration which, in most cases, led to nothing. For, generally speaking, the exit visum was not granted and it was clear that the Germans had not had definite instructions as to the way in which they were to handle the property questions of those Jews wishing to emigrate. The above-mentioned office in The Hague some times managed to get an exit visum for a few individuals or small groups who then got away but this was negligible compared to the problem as a whole.

Then in March 1941 we received a visit of two Jews from Prague - Edelstein and Friedman - who told us that they had been delegated to visit us by the "Centralstelle fuer Juedische Auswanderung" in Prague which was dealing with the whole Jewish problem in Czecho-Slovakia. They told us that a similar S.S. office would be opened in Amsterdam, that the emigration forms which were to be used in Holland would be modelled on those in use in Czecho-Slovakia and that their orders were to make us acquainted with the contents of these questionnaires as well as with the general procedure. By that time, as has been explained elsewhere in the report, the "J.R." had come into existence in Holland. Edelstein was in fact the president of the "J.R." of Czecho-Slovakia, while Friedman's position may be compared with that subsequently held in Holland by Dr.

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\*) What exactly the 120,000 stamp as well as the nature of the office called "Expositur" and the personality of its director, Dr. Sluzker, were, is fully gone into later on in the report.

Sluzker. The Emigration Department had become automatically a part of the "J.R." (Incidentally, it was one of the abnormalities of the Jewish position in Holland but one indicating the lay of the land that right up to the last the relief department for German Jews was run quite separately from that handling the relief for Dutch Jews, although both were departments of the "J.R.").

Any feelings of misgivings I might at first have had against Edelstein and Friedman- Jews visiting us at the orders of the Gestapo - soon gave place to a feeling of appreciation, particularly for Edelstein. I do not know what estimation Czecho-Slovakian Jewry has of him and his activities but I can only say that when he initiated me into this new work he mainly taught me how to obstruct and delay. I was already appalled and amused at the number of forms he showed me and which had to be filled in for each case separately, but later it appeared that in Holland the number was vastly augmented by the so-called Lipmann-Rosenthal (L.-R.) forms so that with us for each case something like 30 and later 40 separate forms had to be filled in. Whereas my dealings with Edelstein and Friedman concerned mainly the future emigration of Jews, they had many talks with Prof. Cohen in his capacity as president of the "J.R.", warning him as to the task which lay ahead of him. In Czecho-Slovakia the notorious Eichman was in charge of handling the Jewish question and he, a close associate of Himmler and at the same time a good connoisseur of the Jewish question, was a particularly vicious specimen of the S.S. Although it was probable that those who would be put in charge in Holland might not be quite as bad, still Edelstein did not seem to have many illusions on this subject. I think it was he who told Prof. Cohen that he would probably be made the mouthpiece of such dreadful news concerning the Jews that he would become hated and despised by his own people. This was said at a time, it must be remembered, when actual deportations had not taken place.

A few weeks later, I think about the middle of April 1941, I was called to see a high S.S. official, a man called Zoepf, who questioned me about the possibilities of emigration. I told him that I thought quite a number of Jews either were already in possession of valid visas for countries overseas or could still procure them but that emigration had, since the occupation, not been possible because of the withholding of exit permits. Zoepf thereupon asked me how I thought the difficulty of passage money could be overcome and I told him that that question too might be able to be settled with the aid of the JRC. I explained to him that such dollar amounts as might possibly be made available for Jewish emigration from Holland would, however, be held in a neutral country to be used exclusively for passages after the Jews had actually left Germany and that on no account would any dollars be available for work in occupied Holland. It was thereupon arranged that I should go to Lisbon and try to get as large a credit as possible for the above-mentioned purpose. If I was successful, Zoepf asserted emigration could commence. He also told me, I believe for the first time officially, that a special office, the "Centralstelle fuer Juedische Auswanderung", would be established for that purpose and would start work shortly. He told me that the necessary emigration forms had already been printed.

I left soon, travelling to Berlin by train and flying from there to Madrid and Lisbon where I had exactly one week, going back in the same way.

The last time I had been in Berlin was immediately after the beginning of the war in September 1939. Although I had vaguely heard from contact people who used to go to Berlin for me occasionally that things

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had become very much worse there, I was appalled when I saw the actual change. The above-mentioned notorious Eichman was actually in Berlin at that time. Hirsch, Seligsohn and Brasch were in a concentration camp and Paul Epstein, who was in charge, was so harrassed that he was only a shadow of his former self. Continuing the work in the same spirit as the German Jews had done it through all those difficult years, he felt certain that he would, not for the first time, be soon put again into a concentration camp.

I went to the Emigration Department to speak to Cora Berliner, Hanna Kaminsky (both since deported to Poland) and Loewenstein, who was killed soon after by a bomb. All round it was bad news which I brought to Mr. Troper, the then European Director of the J.D.C. in Lisbon.

In Lisbon, Mr. Troper and I soon came to a satisfactory arrangement regarding the dollar credit for Holland and thereafter this week in Lisbon was a wonderful holiday particularly in view of the fact that many of my friends, who had only recently left Holland, were still there waiting for passage. I also spoke there once more to Mr. and Mrs. Trone who had been in Holland as recently as January 1941, choosing candidates for the Domingo Settlement Scheme. Believing then the prospect of actual emigration from Holland to be very bright, he promised me to send as many Domingo visa as he possibly could. All round I had the feeling that organizations as well as individuals would grant us the utmost assistance and do what they could to alleviate our position.

When I returned to Berlin Brasch had died and the prospect for release of Hirsch and Seligsohn had become very much worse. Their ultimate deaths in the camps is known history but I should like once more to salute them here because they died true heroes in the Jewish cause.

When I came back to Amsterdam, I was immediately called to the S.S. to report fully not only on the results of my visit but also on every movement I had made while abroad. It appears that I had been closely watched, but as I had been expecting something like that, I had been very careful about the places I went to, not calling on the Dutch Consulate or any other Dutch official, even privately. Zoepf said that he did not think the credit I had procured would be anywhere sufficient to meet the demand, but I made it clear that it would not be difficult to get replenishments once the emigration was taking place.

By now it was May 1941 and preparations for the establishment of the "Centralstelle" were under way. It appeared that it necessitated the establishment of a new office called the "Expositur". The meaning of this word has never been clear to any of us but evidently this was the name such an office had been called by in Vienna as well as in Prague. It was therefore familiar to the Germans and they introduced it - the name and the institution - into Holland.

When the creation of the new office was discussed, it was believed that its main function would be in connection with emigration. I suggested to put at its head Dr. Sluzker, an Austrian of considerable intelligence and a born diplomat. Originally he had been interned in one of the camps as an illegal refugee. Soon the camp inhabitants had chosen him to act for them in all matters concerning their emigration and in this capacity he had regularly received leave to visit the Amsterdam head office and discuss emigration problems with us there. Finally we had found him so useful that we had kept him in the office, always succeeding in getting his leave extended. Until the German occupation his position was therefore such

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that he was really a camp inhabitant on leave and I remember that every time when his leave expired we had a new struggle to get it extended. After the German occupation, however, this was forgotten and he remained permanently in Amsterdam. He married in May 1940 the secretary of Dr. Moser, a Mrs. Rappaport, quite a young woman who had by her natural intelligence managed to work her way up and who held by then a good position in our office. I mention this because the couple Sluzker-Rapaport were to play such an important part later on that it is almost certain that after the war their names will be mentioned in case the activities of Jews who played prominent parts during the occupation will be gone into.

The "J.R.", whose members took an interest in appointments, wanted a Dutch citizen to be head of this department. I therefore mentioned Mr. Leo de Wolff, a young lawyer, likewise from my office, and these two were put in charge of the "Expositur". As soon as the German "Centralstelle" started to function and the "Expositur" was called upon to fulfil its task of go-between, it appeared that Leo de Wolff was quite unequal to be the manager and automatically Dr. Sluzker became responsible. For, as it was soon apparent that the "Expositur" was destined to be the go-between for all "J.R." questions, and not for emigration only, it was likewise necessary to have at its head a German or even preferably an Austrian like Sluzker who understood the language and the mentality.

Some time in July 1942 the "Centralstelle" started to function and although it had been at the beginning supposed that it would deal with emigration only, it very soon appeared that practically all Jewish measures either found their origin there or, if they had been ordered from higher up, the execution or control was entrusted to them.

After a few early changes both as to buildings and personnel, the "Centralstelle" finally requisitioned a large school in Amsterdam Zuid and the Gestapo officer in charge was Hauptsturmfuehrer Aus der Fuenten (A.D.F.) who, as far as I know, is still there.

The first big job this office did was to order the registration of Jews for emigration purposes. Whereas in the beginning this was taken to mean that those were supposed to register who could and intended to emigrate (i.e. people with valid visa or expecting them shortly) the order was soon given that, while the Dutch Jews were allowed to register as a first step to emigration, non-Dutch Jews were forced to do so. The assertion was made from various quarters that Asscher and Cohen had inspired this decision to make the non-Dutch Jews register first. I do not know whether this is true. Furthermore, I think that, from the Dutch point of view, there was perhaps some justification even if they had done so. After all, although many of the foreign Jews had settled down in Holland considering it to be their permanent home, many of them had always intended to go overseas eventually, whereas at that time the majority of the Dutch Jews, particularly the proletariat, considered the idea of leaving Holland of their own free will, fantastic. It was only a few thousand well-to-do Dutch Jews who had, after their frustrated hopes on the day of capitulation, continued to try to emigrate.

It must be said for Cohen and Asscher that never for one moment during the whole time of the occupation did they entertain ideas of either emigrating or "going under".

To the emigration office fell the task of organizing this work. Very soon it appeared that it was a tremendous undertaking. Whereas the Emigration Department, had up to now, only occupied a certain number of

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rooms in the "Lijnbaansgracht", very soon all the other departments had to move out and the entire huge building was given over exclusively to the Emigration Department, which popularly became known simply as "Lijnbaansgracht" in the same way as the "Expositur", having been forced by the Germans to choose offices at a stone's throw from the "Centralstelle" was soon to be called everywhere after its domicile, "Jan van Eijkstraat".

Gradually nearly 300 people worked in the "Lijnbaansgracht", about 50% of whom had Dutch nationality. It is important to remember this because it was going to play a certain role later on.

The registration consisted in the meticulous filling out of the incredibly large number of 30 to 40 forms. About half of them referred to personal questions as to ancestry, former occupations and residences, etc. etc., whereas the other half were the notorious Lippmann-Rosenthal forms. The pretence of emigration was carried through so far that one of the lists to be completed was the so-called "luggage list" on which the people had to fill in exactly what they were intending to take along on the lines of an allowed minimum. Curiously enough, it was this list which very often seemed to be the greatest stumbling block. Some people took hours, hesitating whether to take a blue or grey costume, etc. etc.

The economic measures, about which I have already spoken, in another part of this report, had been enacted before this time. Therefore the Lippmann-Rosenthal(L-R) forms had to be strictly in accordance with the amount of deposits, information, etc. given to L.-R. Moreover, the tax returns for the last six years had to be added; last but not least it was, particularly for the Germans, often an extremely difficult thing to explain the financial transactions at the time of their leaving Germany (f.i. the capital they had taken out of Germany, the capital they had used for establishing businesses in Holland, the money they had lived on since, etc. etc.) Considering all this the completion of these forms, particularly for people with some means, was an exceedingly difficult and complex business.

I had in the "Lijnbaansgracht" a group of 40 employees - lawyers, banking specialists, accountants - called the "Referenten". The practice was for people to call for a set of forms. They took these home and did the best they could with them and brought them back to us. Here a lawyer from Berlin, who was almost a genius at the job, saw almost at a glance what were the particular difficulties of the particular case and distributed them amongst the "Referenten" accordingly. Young lawyers or men who had not a great deal of experience handled the simple cases in which little property was involved whereas the complicated cases were assigned to the more experienced amongst the "Referenten". Besides financial difficulties there were, of course, sometimes complications of a more personal nature; thus, for instance, the contraction of a non-Jewish marriage even abroad remained a punishable offence for people holding German, Austrian or Czech passports, in accordance with the Nuremberg laws of 1935. Amongst the "Referenten" was one man who specialized in "Rassenschande" and it was his pride that none of the cases which had gone through his hands had afterwards been prosecuted by the Germans.

When, with the aid of the "Referenten", the forms had been filled in they were typed in the "Lijnbaansgracht", more than 100 typists being needed for this task only. The forms were then once more controlled as to their accuracy. This group of "controllers" consisted of about 50 people, all of them also with business, legal or accountancy experience, because it was of the utmost importance that there should not be the slightest discrepancy or doubts about the statements. This last control,

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which was always carried out in the presence of the applicant, was done with meticulous care and generally took hours. When this was finished the applicant went to a room where he was told on what day and time he had to go with his papers all neatly arranged in a special folder to the "Expositur", from where he was conducted by one of the people working there to the "Centralstelle". It was expected that the head of the family together with all adult members of the family should appear personally. Whether or not this last act at the "Centralstelle" was a painful one depended more or less on the German whom one happened to strike or on the mood he happened to be in. Sometimes they glanced through the papers and allowed the applicants to go without further comment, whereas at other times they were subjected to the most searching enquiries. Applicants naturally had to stand, no sitting accommodation being available. They used to get, in their own interest, exact instructions from the "Expositur" what or what not to do at the "Centralstelle" and if they followed them there was generally no unpleasantness. If they behaved, according to the German idea, in a disrespectful manner - putting their hands into their pocket or leaning against the wall - they were sometimes made to stand for an additional couple of hours. Brutalities of any kind never occurred and it was the pride of the "Referenten" and the controllers at the "Lijnbaansgracht" that of the about 25,000 people who were eventually registered, not a single case was arrested or prosecuted as a sequel to the statements submitted.

When the "Centralstelle" started its work about 20 cases were expected to be submitted daily. This number was quickly raised to 50, 100, 150, 200 to a maximum of 250 daily. Now my whole intention was to prolong the registration and it was a daily battle with the "Centralstelle" to wrangle about the number of applicants we would send that day. If I remember rightly, the maximum we ever did send was about 220 on 3 successive days after the Christmas holidays. The number of 250 was never reached and instead of having this registration finished in about 4 months, which had been the intention of the Germans, it was not finished until June 1942 and not quite finished even by then. Of course, it became soon more and more apparent that the registration was only a way to check up on Jewish property and that it had nothing to do with emigration. As a matter of fact, the group of Jews who had got away in August 1941 through the offices of Westerning (Brasch & Rothenstein) was to be the last "real" emigration. After that, right up to the end, only single persons or families got away, always after some "Devisen" transaction in a neutral country, the nature of which they naturally did not disclose.

As has already been said, during all this time it was one constant struggle between the "Centralstelle", which wanted as many as possible, and our office, which wanted to give as few as possible cases a day. I used to ring up Dr. Sluzker every morning, telling him how many cases he could expect the next day. He, who was by then anyhow in hourly touch with Aus der Fuenten (A.D.F.) would then try to drive a bargain and telephone me back the least number he thought A.D.F. would accept. Now and then there would be a great blow-up and I would have to appear before A.D.F. personally. A couple of times he also came to the office but on the whole, Dr. Sluzker acted as go-between and handled this matter beautifully.

We naturally also had a struggle with the public. People were not over-anxious to register, often objected to the way in which they were required to do so by letters from the "Lijnbaansgracht" or the publications in the "Joodsche Weekblad".

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As we had to deal almost exclusively with German Jews I had, soon after the commencement of the work, asked three prominent German Jews, Prof. Brahn, Dr. Luss and Dr. Landsberger, to act as a sort of advisory committee to me and they saw, in a general way, all the publications which were sent out and with them I discussed difficulties that sometimes arose out of the attitude of the public. On the whole, however, the work ran smoothly enough. Once the people had been to our office they were delighted with the way in which the services of really prominent advisers were at their disposal and when after a few months it appeared that nothing happened, once they had been through the "paper war", they were not so reluctant to come. We charged a fee for the advice given and the typing done, commencing only at a certain level of income and capital and highly progressive. This was, as a rule, paid gladly enough but sometimes was likewise the cause of friction.

Anyhow, by about May 1942, when practically all non-Dutch Jews had registered, it appeared that a certain number of them (perhaps 2,000) would remain adamant and would continue to refuse to register. I was about that time called to A.D.F. and he requested me to give him a list of those German Jews who had not yet registered. I refused this, was told that he could not accept such refusal and was sent home. The next day I was called again; he was not then alone but a secretary was sitting there taking a protocol of everything that was being said, and another S.S. man was also in the room. He repeated his request and I once more refused. He asked me why I did not want to give the list as nothing was going to happen to the people, and I then told him that, after the Wieringen incident described earlier in this report I had made a vow never to give the names of any Jews to any S.S. official. He repeated that he had to have the list, I was then again sent home and made some arrangements in the office and some private arrangements, fully expecting to be arrested soon. When I got a third call to see A.D.F. a few days later, none of the few people who knew about this, nor I myself, expected that I would come back. The conversation was much as it had been the first time. A.D.F. was alone, asked me to give him the list, I refused and he then sent me home and that was the last I heard of the whole matter and the last time I ever spoke to him in any official capacity.

As already mentioned, the registration of the foreign Jews was nearing its end and there was a great deal of speculation what the next step would be. Sluzker (who had by then become a very good barometer) as well as Cohen and Asscher, judging from some conversations they had had with the Gestapo, all believed that the registration of the Dutch Jews would follow immediately. It was only then that the "J.R." began to take an active interest in the organization of the "Lijnbaansgracht". I was asked to come to one of the meetings which Cohen had every morning with his secretaries and his adviser and I was told that they wanted me to discharge the greater number of my German employees and replace them by Dutch ones in order to be ready for the registration of Dutch Jews. I said right away that I would certainly not be willing to do this but that I would think the matter over. I submitted a compromise suggestion to the effect that all the people in the "Lijnbaansgracht" who would have to deal with the public were to be either Dutch Jews or Jews who spoke Dutch fluently, the test to be made by them; the others to remain in the "Lijnbaansgracht" in internal services. This compromise was not accepted and there were a lot of very heated discussions. It came up before the "J.R." and although I do not know exactly what happened, I believe that a small number of "die-hards" in the "J.R." also objected to my remaining at the head of this department. It is true that I had come to Holland 25 years before and had held a Dutch passport for more than

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20 years, but as the "Lijnbaansgracht", with its great measure of independence had always been rather a thorn in their side, they took this opportunity to try to reorganize this department (which, incidentally, notwithstanding the fee charged, happened to be a very expensive department) according to their wishes and I was not only not 100% Dutch but also far too independent.

One of the worst things about all the meetings of the "J.R." was that everything discussed there invariably leaked out and that the public was, without exception, aware of whatever was said almost before the meetings had ended. Thus, the "Lijnbaansgracht" knew what was afoot and among the German employees there was a considerable measure of anxiety. It was one of the few bright spots in the history of those years that at that time the Dutch "Referenten" and "Controllers" together with some of the higher officials made it known that if any of their German colleagues were made to resign because of their passport, they would also resign en bloc.

Prof. Cohen, who would have liked to accept my compromise proposal mentioned above, was, on the other hand, not strong enough to get it accepted. In all internal Jewish questions where the Germans did not interfere, without exception his policy was one of vacillation. He did, however, oppose in the most violent terms the suggestion made by a few members of the "J.R." that I was not Dutch enough to remain at the head of this department.

After thinking the position over for a few days I submitted my resignation to Prof. Cohen. I had reasoned that, if I were to handle the matter in this way, and if a Dutch Jew (preferably one of the opposing "J.R." group) were to be made head of the department, this new chief could not, if the work were to go on smoothly, make great alterations as to staff. Also I realized that I would probably be successful in convincing them that if only they would put a well-known Dutchman at the head, everybody would probably be satisfied. At first, Prof. Cohen objected violently. He went even so far as to say that if I would go he would go also, but I managed to make him understand that the course proposed by me was by far the best in the interests of all concerned. He finally gave in on condition that I would accept another responsible post. He spoke of some financial controller he needed for all the various departments but neither he nor I was quite clear about this at the time.

At any rate, in the "Lijnbaansgracht", when this decision became known, there was considerable consternation. I held one of the very few complete staff meetings and in a short speech made the employees understand that the step taken by me would be the best in their interests, begging them to refrain from demonstrations, deputations, etc.

I made the following arrangements: the Emigration Department to be separated from the Registration Department and to remain under my management. As practically nobody emigrated anywhere, the department had shrunk to almost nothing. It gave me, however, the chance to keep an office, a secretary and a very small nucleus of a department in case emigration should at any moment start again. The whole change was carried out without any ill-feeling and it was arranged that I should keep my own private office and one adjoining office in the "Lijnbaansgracht" as well as the girl who had been my private secretary for years.

It was about the beginning of June when Mr. de Hoop took over and it soon appeared that my assumption had been right. I came to the office every day in order to finish off with the German cases and in

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order to be there in case he needed me, but the whole machinery was running beautifully without me, and Mr. de Hoop did not make any changes as to staff whatsoever. When the registration of the Dutch Jews had been envisaged, I had already sent over to the "Expositur" a few of the German employees whom I considered to be particularly efficient. The "Expositur" was always short of people and they managed to do very useful work there and made very good positions for themselves.

Curiously enough I felt no personal resentment. Prof. Cohen had behaved really well over this whole question and certainly would have liked me to come to the Kaizersgracht (the "J.R." Headquarters). On the other hand, I knew that in view of my criticism of many of the activities of the "J.R.", as well as my attitude towards Meyer de Vries and all the secretaries, it would be difficult for him to find work for me which was not of a political character and would leave me sufficiently free from "J.R." interferences. However, the prospect of a period of inactivity was rather attractive. During these difficult weeks I had once more seen that I had many good friends; those who had worked with me for years had shown me the greatest devotion. All of them had remained at their jobs. Only Mrs. Rapaport (Mrs. Sluzker) refused to continue working there under a new "chief".

It soon became apparent how wise the decision to separate the Emigration from the Registration Department had been, and how useful it was that I had remained at the head of the former. For, as it turned out, the Emigration Department was not destined to remain dormant for very long. At the end of October 1942 we had to submit for repatriation to the "Centralstelle" the papers of a number of Palestinians who were repatriated a few weeks later. Altogether there were, I believe, 14 people, two families having been freed from W'ork for the purpose of repatriation. A former Jewish banker who also worked for the "J.R." part of his time had worked at the office of the Swiss Consulate regularly with regard to cases of double nationality. At the Swiss Consulate he saw the passports of those about to be repatriated to Palestine and noticed that one of the women held a Stateless passport. He had enough imagination to see that this might be a very interesting precedent and came to me in order to discuss further possibilities along these lines.

After some discussion and after I had personally spoken to the Acting Swiss Consul in Holland, Mr. Prodillet, whom I knew, we decided to launch upon a scheme which at that time seemed crazy enough but in which the Swiss Consul promised to give us all assistance. We were to submit to him lists of people whom we thought might be eligible for Palestinian exchange, the names to be forwarded through the offices of the Swiss Embassy to both the German and the English Governments. In the beginning we submitted only the names of those who had either husband, wife, children or parents in Palestine. These people received from me a confirmation on paper of the Emigration Department of the "J.R." reading "We confirm herewith that your name has been sent to the Swiss Government to be forwarded to both the German and English Governments and that a Palestine certificate is expected to arrive for you shortly."

When we saw that these statements were accepted by the Germans and protected the people from deportation, I had a long discussion with some of my Zionist friends and we decided to extend this action to cover all those for whom, in pre-war times, certificates might have been available. (This means for groups like Watikim, students, YoathAliyah, Agudah, and later when we saw that the Germans made no restrictions as to age, also ordinary "Hachscharah" certificates).

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As already mentioned, the possession of such a statement was enough to keep the people in W'brk and therefore often a matter of life and death.

I thought that this was extending the responsibility I wished to carry alone in my capacity as head of the Emigration Department and therefore co-opted a few well-known Zionists to form with me a commission which was to decide to whom to give these statements. In the beginning the lists had been compiled of those who had near relatives in Palestine and were therefore automatic, whereas now we had to choose. This committee consisted of Mr. I. Cohen-Hzn (who was, to our infinite regret, to die in Bergen-Belsen just before he was to have been exchanged), Marinus Kan (former President of the N.Z.B.), Jerome Hartogh (Poale Zion), Eli Dasberg (Mizrachi), Dr. Alfred Rabau (German) and myself. This committee considered every single case, sometimes for hours, sometimes 3 or 4 times, before deciding about the statement. Although, naturally, we had to disappoint many people in not being able to consider the whole N.Z.B. as "Watikim", it was generally recognized that the committee's decisions were honest and not influenced by nepotism.

When we had first started to submit names to the Swiss Consulate, I had also got into contact with the Red Cross, the Amsterdam branch of which was always extremely helpful. Without their active cooperation, we would never have been able to do what we did. Through the good offices of the Red Cross we sent a number of telegrams to Palestine asking for exchange certificates. When these telegrams started to arrive in Palestine, they evidently understood immediately what was required and happily the first list giving the names of those who had been given exchange certificates arrived early in the spring of 1943 and increased the value of our statements tremendously.

Soon after that the second list arrived to be followed at short intervals by many more. As mentioned in the W'brk part of this report, on several occasions the holders of Palestine declarations or even certificates were sent away but on the whole it was one of the best papers people could have. In October 1943 or thereabouts a letter arrived from the German Foreign Department in Berlin to the effect that the names mentioned on the first and second Palestine exchange lists were accepted for exchange. After this the W'brk commandant did not have the right to send these people away. Gradually all the people holding Palestine papers were sent to Bergen-Belsen which was considered to be the exchange camp. Inexplicably, when the first exchange of 225 people from Bergen-Belsen actually took place, amongst those exchanged were people whose names appeared on the 7th or 8th lists while some who were quite eligible, according to the German standard, old people or single women, and whose names were on the 1st and 2nd lists, were left behind. Up to this day I do not know how this exchange list was compiled and who had any influence on it. I still believe the people to have been selected haphazardly. It goes without saying that if it had not been for the splendid help Palestine gave us in this work and the energy of Mrs. de Leeuw-Gerzon, who had already worked on some scheme for help ever since the beginning of the war, it would have come to nothing for if the declarations the Emigration Department gave had not, after some time, actually resulted in bona fide certificates, the Germans would have sent the holders away en bloc. The greatest credit is also due to Mr. Helmuth Mainz for his initiative in this matter.

It might be interesting to know that when I arrived in Bergen-Belsen on March 15, 1944, of the 2500 Palestine family certificates which had by that time been given, about 710 had been deported, 550 were

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then in Bergen-Belsen and 675 were "under" - the rest being in the hands of Barneveld or other people still in W'ork or in Amsterdam. As many certificates were given to children separately, the 550 Bergen-Belsen certificates covered about 1200 people.

Since then a sort of myth has arisen about this whole Palestine exchange business but the facts as stated here give the plain story.

Probably because of the things which had recently happened, my room was full of flowers on the 4th of July, 1942 - my birthday. It was a beautiful room and I had loved arranging the flowers in it. In the evening of that day I got a telephone message from Prof. Cohen to attend an emergency meeting of the heads of all departments. When I pointed out that I had guests and that moreover I was no longer a head of any real department, he asked me to be good enough to attend. I went.

The Germans had informed Prof. Cohen and Mr. Asscher that afternoon that Jews would be called upon to go abroad and work in Germany. Something was said of Jews between 16 and 50 years of age but also something had been said about sending the whole family in order to avoid hardships. When we asked Prof. Cohen if the people were going to be sent to Germany, he assured us that this was the case.

The meeting became heated, for somehow we all of us in our minds saw it as "deportations" different somehow from the way in which Dutch workers were sent to Germany to work (which was bad enough).

The whole question was raised again whether or not the "J.R." should assist also in this work of deportation, but it was clear from the answers given that Asscher and Cohen had already committed themselves to organize this work also. The use of the word "Mauthausen" by the Germans, where in the meantime all the 700 people who had been brought there in February and June 1941 respectively had died, was sufficient to get Asscher and Cohen to agree to everything.

A very long and heated discussion took place but the result was that the "J.R." decided to cooperate. It was after this meeting that I told Prof. Cohen that in view of this decision I had definitely made up my mind never to accept any new responsible post with the "J.R." I felt deeply thankful that circumstances had so shaped themselves that I was actually free at that moment.

I came back that night into my room, full of flowers, and could hardly bear the incongruity of it all. I think that I, more than anybody else who had been present at that meeting - because of the former experience I had from Vienna, Prague and Germany, realized at that early stage what this "Arbeitseinsatz" would mean.

On the 7th of July the first "Aufrufe fuer Polizeilichen Arbeitseinsatz in Deutschland" were sent out at the rate of about 800 daily. The first recipients were mostly young people and many of them were Germans. These people were ordered to report at the Central Station of Amsterdam on the 14th of July, in work clothes, with a rucksack and victuals for 8 days. As already mentioned, there were not only young people but also many families amongst those who received this order.

As we had foreseen, the excitement amongst the people was indescribable. Nobody really knew what to do about it, but practically everybody who received such an order first of all went to one or other

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of the offices of the "J.R.", mainly, however, to the "Expositur" in order to discuss their chances of staying behind. The "Expositur" was, of course, not in the least equipped to deal with such a stream of people. As I was free I thereupon simply went there taking Mrs. Rapaport with me and the two of us with two others of the "Expositur" staff who could be spared (both of whom had gone there recently from the "Lijnbaansgracht" and were therefore used to my method of working) simply sat down and held consulting hours for those seeking advice.

Dr. Sluzker had been told that those working for the "J.R." did not need to go. Furthermore it appeared that sick people could be retained on medical certificate. Furthermore, we found out that people in certain industries or trades like that of diamond workers or junk dealers in metal, or those running shops necessary for the Jewish Community, could be retained. It was then, for the first time, that a terrible struggle started to get a job in the "J.R." and it was then that the practice of nepotism became so very bad. I really think that the "Expositur" was at that time the only office where people from the proletariat were taken on. For when people from the ghetto came to me, laying sometimes as many as 8 "Aufrufe" on my table, the parents and six children having all been called up to go to work under the police in Germany, I felt something had to be done about it. At that time it was still possible, if one of a family worked for the "J.R." to save the whole family so that if we took on, say, the oldest boy as errand boy, all the rest of the family was saved. We just took the "Aufrufe", put "J.R." on them and Dr. Sluzker took them back to the "Centralstelle" later on in the evening. The same was done with those who were testified by doctors as suffering from some disease or other. Now, a position in the "J.R." was only valid if a letter confirming the appointment had been signed by Max Bolle. This bit of paper, which was to become famous as the "Bolle Letter", was at that time the most precious thing to have. If I took on an employee, I had therefore always to send him to the Kaizersgracht (the head office of the "J.R.") to get the appointment confirmed by Bolle. In those days it was of the utmost value that, particularly after what had recently happened, Bolle and others were anxious to fall in as much as possible with my wishes and in that way my 3 helpers and I were able to save, at least for some time, a great many people of the ghetto from deportation.

Since all other departments were equally creating new jobs, it may be easily imagined how top-heavy the whole organization became, although, of course, this new task of helping with the deportations added a considerable amount of work to the "J.R.". As will be shown later, new large departments had actually to be created to cope with it while some of the existing ones, like the "Expositur" and the "Lijnbaansgracht", had to be vastly enlarged.

As already mentioned, the first "Aufrufe" gave the people about a week to get ready. About 800 were sent out daily; this was done in such a way that the Germans used to give Sluzker the list of names which he transmitted to the "Lijnbaansgracht". Here, in a secret department, the names were gone through to see whether or not they contained members of the Asscher tribe, members of the Cohen tribe or "J.R." workers. These were scrapped, the addresses for the "Aufrufe" written in the "Lijnbaansgracht" and the original lists with the addressed envelopes returned via Sluzker to the Germans. The "Aufrufe" themselves were then sent by registered post. Before the people were leaving they were supposed to fill in the same registration papers which had been filled

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in previously by the non-Dutch Jews, the usual pass photos having to be submitted, etc.; they were supposed to leave all their belongings behind, giving the key to their room, flat or house to the police authorities at the Central Station.

For the first transport (which left on the night of the 14th-15th July) not nearly the number of those who had received "Aufrufe" showed up and the transport was augmented in W'ork by about 400 of the younger "Alte Kampinsassen". After taking on the W'ork people, the transport immediately continued on its way. As mentioned in the W'ork chapter, this was the only time a number of "A.K.I.'s" were ever sent on transport. After that, except for individual punishment cases, they enjoyed complete security and if any of them had to leave W'ork at all they were sent to Theresienstadt.

The first transport consisted mainly of German Jews, mostly young unmarried people - boys and girls. Many people went because none of the dodges that soon were to be used had been thought of by them. The whole matter had come too suddenly.

When it was apparent that for the second transport even fewer people were likely to turn up, the Germans made a street raid on the 15th of July; about 1500 people were taken, half of them being discharged within a few hours. The other half were held as hostages with the threat to send them to Mauthausen if not enough people would turn up for the transports. These hostages were kept for two days and then suddenly dismissed. It is very likely that the talks Cohen and Asscher had with the Germans and in which they once more promised to give their fullest cooperation in trying to get the desired number of people for the "Arbeitseinsatz" had something to do with this.

After the first transport the practice was changed insofar as the people were no longer required to come to the station immediately before the train was to leave but were collected nightly in the gymnasium of the school which housed the "Centralstelle". Soon after that, however, the "Joodsche Schouwburg" was cleared for this purpose and after that used exclusively for the detention of Jews about to be deported. As no other building was allowed to be used for concerts etc. this ended once and for all Jewish cultural life; except for the efforts made by the Cultural Commission of the "J.R." mentioned elsewhere. For a little time both the "Centralstelle" and the "Schouwburg" were used, but soon all the people were invariably brought to the "Schouwburg" from where, for many months to come, transports for "W'ork" were to leave twice a week.

As I have already mentioned, I had improvised an advisory office in the "Expositur" and we sat there from 7:00 o'clock in the morning until half past 7 at night. By 8:00 o'clock all Jews had to be in their houses so that by about 7:00 the stream would end and only Aryan friends of Jews continued to come to see us until late at night. We had night permits and could stay out until 12:00 o'clock. It was at that time that Dr. Sluzker secured for me one of the very few tram permits for Jews and as this was never rescinded I was able to use it right up to the end.

In the beginning, it was particularly the proletariat who came to see us and I had never realized to what degree a large part of the Amsterdam Jewry were paupers. Many families came with 7 or even 8 children, all of them feeble-minded. Numbers of families came of whom 2, 3 or more were suffering from trachoma. Since my work made it necessary

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for me to shake hands with them, I used to keep - although I am not by nature squeamish - a bowl of Lysol water under my desk and I don't know how many times a day I dipped my hands into it, feeling absolutely contaminated.

I remember an incident that happened soon after the "Aufrufe" started. It was not certain whether all junk dealers or only those who collected metals were free from transport. We believed only the metal collectors to be free whereas the people themselves asserted that all of them who were in possession of a certain badge confirming them to be members of the Hawkers' Association did not need to go. One morning I had at least 40 of them around me, all clamouring for me to take in their "Aufrufe". Finally I came to an agreement with them; I arranged for them to choose a spokesman whom they trusted and send this spokesman to the Germans with one of our people in order to clear up this point. After a long time he came back with the news that only the metal hawkers were exempt. The people listened to the explanations of their spokesman and quietly dispersed. I had, of course, made it clear to them that being in possession of an "Aufruf" did not mean that they were bound to appear at the meeting place. As a matter of fact, much of our work at that time consisted of giving people tips how to stay away. Soon the Dutch Jews anyhow adopted a method of their own. They simply stayed in their houses. The German organization was far too confused to prosecute those who did not appear individually, but as fewer and fewer people appeared they adjusted their methods. Instead of sending out the "Aufrufe" they sent, night after night, Dutch and German police to the houses of Jews and simply fetched all the inhabitants they found and brought them to the "Schouwburg".

Soon it became clear that the "Polizeilicher Arbeitseinsatz in Deutschland" really meant deportation of all Jews to Poland. Babies, sick and old people - as a matter of fact any and all Jews from the age of a few months to more than 80, were deported to Auschwitz, Birkenau, Lublin, Riga or places even deeper into Poland. Thus was the "work under police supervision in Germany".

In the meantime, I, with my 3 faithful colleagues, was working at the "Expositur". On transport nights we did not go home at all but worked in the gymnasium hall where the people were assembled. The "J.R." employees who were allowed to work there wore white armlets with "J.R." stamped on them. A few of us had drawers full of these armlets and whenever we saw somebody we knew or believed to be trustworthy and young enough to pass as such, we would quietly furnish him with an armlet, telling him where to return it and he would leave, pass the German guard, supposed to be on some errand in connection with "J.R." work. Needless to say the Germans soon noticed all these tricks and after a short time the armlets were stamped with numbers, names and respective numbers being registered in a book so that this method of escape was barred. These nights at the "Centralstelle" were like scenes of Dante's Inferno. Never as long as I live shall I be able to forget them.

I did not intend to go on working at the "Expositur". Officially I had severed all connection with the "J.R.". Also I could not for long have borne this work, the physical and mental stress of which was terrific. I selected from the people newly engaged for the "J.R." suitable candidates and initiated them into the work of an adviser at the "Expositur". At the same time I volunteered to go to Germany on condition that I was allowed to work amongst our people as a social worker. Sluzker discussed this with A.D.F. several times and finally told me that A.D.F. had plainly told him that this would not be allowed.

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and that if I would go it would simply mean that I would be sent like everybody else.

In August it was generally felt that some department would have to be created to attend to the needs of those about to be deported. It appeared that they often lacked the most necessary equipment, moreover some of them remained at the "Schouwburg" for quite some time and anyhow there were always hundreds of people collected there who had to be looked after as regards food, chances of procuring their luggage, possibilities of sending messages, etc.

One day while I was working at the "Expositur", I was asked to come across to the main building for a meeting. I found there Prof. Cohen, R.H.Eitje, Dr. Sluzker, Blueth and several members of the "J.R.". They asked me pointblank whether I would be willing to take charge of this new department. I asked for 24 hours to think this over and finally consented on condition that this department, although naturally formally coming under the "J.R.", as all Jewish activities did, would yet be independent; that it would be understood that I was to do charitable work only and in no way to be held responsible for any of the political decisions which might or might not be taken by the "J.R.". This was agreed to and I thereupon left the "Expositur" and went back to the "Lijnbaansgracht", where I was given accommodation for the headquarters of the new organization which I called "Hulp aan Vertrekkenden".

I wanted Mrs. Zapaport to go over with me to the new organization but unfortunately she decided to stay on and continue to work at the "Expositur" under her husband. Although, I generally could get Sluzker to agree to my proposals and although I already then pointed out to him that it was unwise to have both husband and wife working together in this particular department, his wife, who was determined to stay, prevailed and this was later on a source of a great deal of hostility directed against the "Expositur", for as time went on Sluzker's power grew. He was practically the only man who was constantly in touch with A.D.F. and he moreover was such a good barometer that his advice was extremely valuable in all matters. Sluzker was invariably courteous to everybody, simple in his habits, firmly refusing, even after he had become a very important person indeed, to leave his small and simple flat in one of the poor quarters of Amsterdam. His wife, however, who was of very humble origin but had, through extreme intelligence, worked herself up until she finally contracted this marriage, was, through a mixture of inferiority complex, insane ambition, overwork, too much alcohol and tobacco and, for the first time in her life, too much money, slowly losing all sense of proportion, treating her colleagues as well as the public in such an offhand manner that she was soon thoroughly detested for only very few saw that behind her aggressiveness etc. was a really warmhearted personality. I personally think that she did magnificent work, both in the "Expositur" as well as in her nightly visits with her husband to the "Schouwburg", yet there is no doubt that she was the weak spot in the armour of Dr. Sluzker. Sluzker had become by that time far more important than Cohen and Asscher. He had to be at the beck and call of A.D.F. who constantly required his presence. A.D.F., for instance, never went to W'ork without taking Sluzker with him in his car. The fact that he was in close touch with the Germans, coupled with his extreme intelligence and diplomatic qualities, made him as said before the barometer of the time and soon the most important business men and professional people would take no decisions before first consulting Sluzker.

He was a typical product of the time - a man never before interested in Jewish affairs and probably, if he comes out alive, never

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likely to remain in Jewish work. He was the best known figure in Jewry during all these years. Probably if such a thing as an enquiry will take place after the war he is sure to be called upon for examination and I think that with very few exceptions he will find only defenders.

My personal attitude was this: although no doubt Sluzker co-operated with the Germans he, after all, did this in the execution of a policy which was not framed by him but by the presidents of the "J.R.". The execution could not have been done more circumspectly than he did it. His wife, as mentioned before, became his first assistant.

The organization of the "H.a.V." was a big job. Soon between 400 and 500 people were working for it. I opened up district offices in all the various parts of the town; the managers of these district offices were business men of high standing who were capable of organizing their difficult work according to the general lines laid down by the headquarters and soon there was not a street in Amsterdam where Jews were living where this organization did not function - either helping those who wished to prepare their luggage for a possible departure or those who had actually been fetched and for whom their luggage had to be obtained. "H.a.V." workers had their own identification cards because they often had to enter houses whose inhabitants had been taken away, and where they were likely to encounter Germans. Furthermore, "H.a.V." looked after those detained at the "Schouwburg" and although our representatives were not allowed actually to work in the "Schouwburg" (this being done exclusively by members of the "Expositur"), we worked so closely together with them that the organization of food, messenger service, etc. functioned beautifully. I have never once spoken to anybody who had gone through the "Schouwburg" or who had, in one way or another, required the services of "H.a.V.", who did not speak highly of the help they had received.

In the "Schouwburg" one of my former close co-operators of "Lijnbaansgracht" days, Hans Heilbut, had taken charge and not only was everything possible done for those who had to await transportation there (medical service, children service, even dental service, etc.) but the number of people who were helped to escape by those Jews working in the "Schouwburg" and also by members of "H.a.V." is enormous; particularly people who still wanted to send their children into hiding were practically always enabled to do so. From the "Expositur" the names of Heilbut, Suesskind and Mrs. Freudenberg must be mentioned in this respect. At great personal risk they helped innumerable children to reach organizations which looked after their further escape.

A very important branch of the "H.a.V." organization was the collection of clothing of every description for W'ork because as transports left from there regularly now, in the beginning practically all of them consisting of the proletariat, it became more and more apparent that a constant replenishment of stocks in W'ork would have to be made. It is a matter of great heartbreak to me that practically all the people who so valiantly and devotedly worked, often at great personal risk, were sent to Poland; even those who had worked a long time in the organization, except for Herbert Oettinger, who had the EK-1 <sup>1</sup>), and was therefore sent to Theresienstadt, and Mr. and Mrs.

<sup>1</sup>) EK.1 = Eisernes Kreuz I, which was given also to Jews during the first world war. The E.K.II was deemed insufficient.

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Querido whom, after a great deal of trouble, I finally succeeded in having sent to Theresienstadt instead of to Poland, all of them were deported.

In the meantime, as already mentioned, Jews were fetched out of their houses, night after night. Sometimes they used to fetch them according to alphabet, sometimes according to streets, sometimes they seemed to have old lists of those who had been exempted because of sickness and only those addresses were used; at other times old-age homes or orphanages or hospitals were cleared, but at whatever house they called, whoever happened to be present - old, young, sick - was taken to the "Schouwburg" for deportation. I leave it to the imagination to picture the tension under which Jews lived at that time when curfew obliging them to be in their houses at 8:00 o'clock, a ring of the bell after that time meant that they were being fetched to the "Schouwburg". For Aryan visitors had everywhere their own special ring in order to spare our nerves.

In the "Schouwburg" it was then with the help of Sluzker possible to get released if one could prove to be working either for the Wehrmacht, diamond industry, "J.R." or was in some way connected with the metal trade. At that time the families were still released together; the remaining Jews were sent to W'ork at 3:00 o'clock in the morning every Tuesday and Thursday, week after week. If people had the bad luck to be brought in late on these two days there was no chance for their cases to be looked into and they were carted off without further ado.

Thus it happened in November 1942 that the inhabitants of the whole large boarding house in which I was living were taken away. They were mostly old people of good family who had never in their lives known what it was to live otherwise than in luxury. It was about 12:30 on Tuesday night (transport night) when the bell rang and two Dutch policemen with one S.S. man came to fetch the inhabitants. The S.S. man came right up to the top floor where I had two rooms. The first thing he got mad about was the fact that I still had a radio. I did not, of course, have a radio but the gramophone pick-up I had was an American one and looked, because of its various gadgets, exactly like a radio. After he had knocked it about a bit he seemed satisfied that it was indeed only a gramophone. Then he became greatly upset that I still had a telephone. When I showed him the permit for it he still pulled out the wires and disconnected it. I had not been very well that day and had been lying down on the couch in the sitting room. In the meantime the German had been counting the number of beds in the house, comparing them with the number of people and came to the conclusion that there was one missing. I explained to him how it happened that I had been using two beds but he did not believe me. Like all the others I had got the order to get ready in ten minutes and had gone back to my bedroom proceeding to dress. He in the meantime was looking for the missing person. When he had completed his search in the sitting room, which in consequence was in great disorder, he came into my bedroom where I was still in a state of undress, without knocking, and started to search there. This was a very small room and when he found nothing he got thoroughly annoyed. Then, as always, I found that my way of dealing with the Germans - one of absolute indifference - somehow "did" something to them. While it seemed to infuriate them, yet on the other hand it also compelled them to desist from whatever they had been wanting to do. It was the same in this case; when I repeated once more with complete indifference that he could believe me or not but there was nobody here in hiding, he suddenly turned round on his heels and left.

By that time, all the people in the house were more or less ready.

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Like everyone else, by then all of us had had a rucksack packed against such emergencies but it soon appeared that these old ladies were not able to carry anything themselves. Those of us, therefore, who were physically fit, did not only have to carry our own rucksack, but to assist the others as best we could. It was a pitchblack night, extremely cold and the walk to the "Centralstelle" (where people from that district of the town where I was living were always collected) took, instead of the usual 20 minutes, at least double that time. All that time the German was threatening with his revolver, cursing that it was our fault that the Germans were freezing to death at the Eastern front, etc. Incidentally, it would have been very easy to get away in that extreme darkness, but somehow or other I had made up my mind to see the thing through.

When we arrived at the "Centralstelle" we were amongst the very last so that as usual we were put into the trams to be taken straight to the central station for transport to W'ork. While I was standing there waiting for the queue to line up, the door opened and A.D.F. came out. He saw me and said: "Frau van Tijn, was tun Sie hier?" (Mrs. van Tijn, what are you doing here?) I simply answered: "Man hat mich geholt." (They fetched me), whereupon he opened the door to the doctor's room and said, "Kommen Sie hier herein." (Come in here), pushed me in and closed the door. I managed to get hold of the housekeeper of the boarding house, who was standing next to me - a perfect saint of a woman - and the next thing we knew was that the two of us could go home. All the others were sent to W'ork. Now it must be remembered that in my dealings with A.D.F. between July or August 1940 and June 1941, I had never once spoken one word more than was strictly necessary, never smiled, and the last conversation was the one when he had requested me to give him the list. I had never seen him since and he not only recognized me immediately when he saw me but also really saved me because once in W'ork, it would have been very difficult to get me back.

I don't want to describe here the feelings I had when Miss Asser and I came into the empty house. We remained there only a few days and with the good help of my old friend, de Miranda, from the billeting office, I found a lovely flat right in the ghetto at the Waterlooplein where I lived until I was finally put into camp in September 1943. All this, however is really later history. I only mentioned it here because in the same way I was taken all people were, night after night, fetched from their houses, the accompanying circumstances being always more or less harrasing.

This system was followed all through August. Then a kind of short pause came in Amsterdam and it was from the provinces that the people were sent to W'ork for transportation.

The interval of comparative quietness in Amsterdam was used to introduce that, which was to become the nightmare of every Jew in years to come - "the stamp".

If much of what I have written so far and what I am going to write now is confused, I am sorry to say that I am afraid that this is unavoidable. As a matter of fact, looking back on those years, I almost think that the more confused the picture I draw, the more realistic it is. For Jews were robbed of their livelihood; robbed of their freedom of movement; robbed of their liberty (if one can use this word at all in occupied territory); robbed of their property; and finally deported - all in accordance with "legal" edicts, ordinances, etc. etc. But all these measures were taken by different German authorities - some-

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times by the Reichskommissar, sometimes by the highest of the Gestapo chiefs, Rauter, sometimes by the highest Gestapo chief of Amsterdam, Lages; sometimes when it concerned economic measures, the Economic Director Fishboeck; sometimes military authorities would intervene either for better or worse; and throughout all this the executive organ, the "Centralstelle", with A.D.F. and many other officials were not only carrying out orders but would also issue new ones on their own behalf. Of the hundreds of people who were brought into the "Schouwburg" night after night, many had to be released again. Finally even the Germans felt that it was necessary to give some kind of "identification stamp" to those who - for the above-mentioned reasons - were not to be sent to Work just then. This was finally given in the form of a rubber stamp on the identification card. I am quoting from memory but I think that on the whole it will be found that what I am giving here is correct.

The stamps issued all through the month of September were, roughly speaking, the following (divided into special series):-

Starting with Serial No.80,000 - "J.R." employees (including wife or husband and children under 16 years of age): 17,000 "J.R." stamps were given - 15,000 in Amsterdam and 2,000 in the provinces.

" " " 60,000 - People working for the Wehrmacht. (I am unable to say how many these were).

" " " 100,000 - Baptized Jews

" " " 110,000 - Mixed Marriages

" " " 10,000 - Portuguese Jews

When the stamping was started, the scenes at the "J.R." offices were indescribable. Doors were smashed, "J.R." officials assaulted, and frequently police had to be called in to keep order. I must here confess to an act of cowardice on my own part. I used the fact that I was really badly overworked and had had a couple of heart attacks as an excuse and went to bed for two weeks. I felt reasonably certain that amongst the many thousands of stamps given, those who were genuine workers in my two departments (Emigration Department and "Hulp aan Vertrekenden") would certainly get their stamps and I wanted to have nothing to do with the selection of those stamps which were given to people not really connected with the work. I don't want to be too hard on those who, through a "J.R." stamp, tried to save their parents or their older children or their friends from deportation, but as, after all, the number of stamps, although high, was yet limited by necessity, hardships and injustices could hardly be avoided.

This whole question of stamps and other means of security was to become of such all - prevailing importance that I must enlarge on it a little further. The "collection of stamps" became almost an idee fixe with every Jew. With the exception of the Wehrmacht stamps which were given to girls who worked in the clothing factories and the relatively few men who worked as furriers and those who collected old metal, the proletariat did not, on the whole, procure stamps.

I feel I must give here some details regarding some of the stamps' serials in order to make the picture clearer.

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The "Wehrmacht" stamps, Serial No.60,000, remained valid only for a short time. When they became invalid, or at any rate greatly reduced, the card system at the "Centralstelle" which had been used for issuing the stamps, was then used for the compilation of the lists according to which people were taken from their houses or even from the factories and very little could be done for the holders by way of release.

From the beginning, the Portuguese (Serial Stamps No.10,000) were considered by the Germans to be in a different class from the ordinary Jews. As a matter of fact, at some time soon a scheme was afoot to consider them not Dutch but Portuguese citizens and repatriate them to Portugal. This naturally came to nothing, but people with four Portuguese grandparents and preferably a long Portuguese pedigree, not only got the 10,000 stamp but a number of them were later Aryanized. The others had certain privileges; viz. they were allowed to continue living in the provinces. Then suddenly in January 1944 they were rounded up and sent to W'ork and in February 1944 they were, as a group, sent to Theresienstadt. This group consisted of about 1200 to 1400 individuals (not families).

When the stamping went on, Jews of mixed marriages were given the Serial Stamp No.110,000; this stamp retained its validity until the last, but I would like to continue here the story of the Jews of mixed marriages.

They enjoyed certain privileges. If I remember rightly, they were neither put into work camps nor deported. They were, however, subjected to all other restrictions, economic as well as otherwise. On the other hand, they could remain in their homes and were not forced to move to the ghetto or leave the provincial towns. On the whole, they did therefore enjoy a certain measure of security compared to that of other Jews, until the dreaded work of "sterilization" was mentioned in respect of them.

In April 1943 when quite a number of the Jewish partners of mixed marriages were in W'ork waiting to be allowed to return to their home town, they were suddenly called together by the commandant and were told by him pointblank to choose either to be sterilized or sent to Poland. Most of the approximately 150 people who were given this choice in W'ork chose sterilization. They were soon after that allowed to return to Amsterdam; as a matter of fact eventually probably only a few of them were actually sterilized.

The sterilization treatment had by that time commenced in Amsterdam, women being treated in the Centraal Israëlitisch Ziekenhuis (C.I.Z.) and men in the Portugesish Israëlitisch Ziekenhuis (P.I.Z.).

Jewish doctors were asked to do this sterilization, amongst others the director of the P.I.Z., Dr. Poliakoff. He refused pointblank and thereupon quite expected to be deported with his family. However, nothing happened to him at all after this refusal. He even remained in charge of the hospital.

I think it is a chapter the Dutch medical profession may be proud of that all Dutch doctors, except of course the Nazis, refused to have anything to do with the sterilization. Altogether the medical profession showed more courage than any other group of Dutchmen in protesting by word and deed against German orders. As I am writing the Jewish history of those times, it is not here the place to go into this, but

I did feel it my duty to mention it.

Finally, a few doctors were found to do the sterilization. Amongst other, Prof. Salomon with his wife, Paula Lindberg (the well-known singer) was released from W'ork and sent to Amsterdam in order to take over the sterilization work in the P.I.Z. He left W'ork and managed to "go under" on the way, never arriving in Amsterdam at all.

Although sterilization took place daily the number actually done was not very large, the German military official, Stabsarzt Meyer, being evidently anxious to help in delaying this action. In many cases, particularly with women, his department accepted some declaration or other from a non-Jewish doctor to the effect that the person was sterile. Women above 45 were given this declaration anyhow, whereas no age limit was fixed for men.

Once a man or woman was sterilized he was allowed to take off the yellow star. He could make over his capital to his non-Jewish spouse who was then able to dispose of it and the large "J" on his identification paper was changed into a very small "J". Although as to numbers the action was probably negligible, still it went on all the time. After the two hospitals mentioned above had been cleared in the various actions, patients were admitted to the "Joodsche Invalide".

The story of the "Joodsche Invalide" is worth recalling here. While at first one floor was reserved for the sterilization and other Jewish patients, suddenly the other floors were occupied by non-Jewish women who had contracted venereal diseases in their intercourse with German soldiers. The Jewish doctors and nurses were forced to treat and attend to these patients, this being "inflicted" on the women as a sort of punishment. Some time, I believe, at the beginning of 1944, the rest of the Jewish patients, doctors and staff of the "Joodsche Invalide" was also brought to W'ork and this chapter then ended.

I do not know to what degree sterilization went on after that or by whom it was done. Anyhow rumours reached us in W'ork in the spring of 1944 that special actions had again been taken against Jews in mixed marriages, also those who had submitted to sterilization. The rumours were to the effect that special work camps had been created for those Jews. I have had no opportunity, however, to check up on the accuracy of those statements.

To come back to the stamping. - It was not, of course, possible for all Jews of the middle and upper classes to procure for themselves or their families either of the above-mentioned stamps; new avenues of safety were therefore explored with the connivance of some prominent lawyers (a few of them German).

I believe as early as in the autumn of 1942 or the beginning of 1943 a new stamp made its appearance. This was the 120,000 series which was to become the most coveted of all stamps, because it "held" in W'ork where the commandant, without instructions from The Hague, could not declare it invalid. This stamp - particularly in the beginning - was so much shrouded in mystery (people who had got it keeping it dark even from their best friends), that I am not sure when exactly the first of these stamps were given.

There were several possibilities of procuring it. It was possible

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to buy it against the handing over of a certain number of carats in diamonds. As by that time, as is shown in another chapter, no Jew was allowed to possess any valuables whatsoever, the diamonds had to be put at the disposal of the Jews by Aryan friends (in reality they were, of course, in 99% of the cases, taken out of the black hoardings of the Jews). It may be imagined that this was not an easy transaction because one had always to expect some searching enquiry being made into these transactions in which case naturally the Aryans, who were supposed to have given the diamonds, had to be safe. Notwithstanding the fact that these transactions therefore were difficult and not without a certain amount of risk, quite a large number of people managed to buy the 120,000 in this way. There were several agents who acted as go-betweens for the Jews and the Germans but the most important of them was von Puttkamer and the purchased 120,000 stamp was always called the "Puttkamer stamp". This stamp was also stamped at the "Centralstelle" onto the identification paper.

Then the 120,000 stamps could be got without payment by people who had excellent relations in foreign countries. In the beginning, this stamp was difficult to obtain and relatively few people got it that way. This was called the "foreign relations stamp" but was also the 120,000 series.

As in the course of time it became more and more apparent that the "J.R." stamps, having been given to too many people, were not respected and were bound to become valueless altogether in due time, and since anyhow the "J.R." stamp had no protective value whatsoever in W'ork, where the commandant could, and generally did, cancel it, it was felt that the genuine Jewish workers should also be given the protection of the 120,000. A number of "J.R." workers individually had been able to procure for themselves some special protection or other, but the majority of genuine Jewish workers had only their "J.R." stamps. As everything that happened invariably leaked out, it became, around March or April 1943, the leading topic amongst Jews that the families of Cohen, Asscher and Sluzker (meaning families in the widest sense of the word) had been given the 120,000 stamp.

To show the importance of this stamp, I must mention here the story of Marianne van Stedum who will never be forgotten as long as there are Jews alive who have been in any way connected with Jewish work in Holland. If I use the word "saint" for her, I am not using it lightly. She cannot be described in any other way. She had all her life been prominently associated with Jewish work but since 1933 she had been the leading woman in refugee case work in Holland. She had been a servant girl herself and worked her way up so that she knew how poor people live and what could and what could not be done with a small amount of money. She had an unusual amount of common sense while the warmth that emanated from her made even severe decisions acceptable to those to whom she had to give them.

During the first years when I did case work myself, I used to go often to Marianne with a case which I could not somehow manage to solve satisfactorily and which I knew she would be able to handle.

Now Marianne van Stedum, with many others, had only the "J.R." stamp and I remember talking to Sluzker about it. I told him that, after all, it must be possible for him to get one 120,000 stamp for the "J.R." and that this one stamp should go to her. It would then, as these stamps always did, automatically protect the unmarried sister, who kept house for her and who was not even in possession of a "J.R." stamp. Sluzker's answer was, word for word, "Mrs. van Tijn, if I were able to

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get one 120,000 stamp for the "J.R.", surely I would get it for you. (It must be remembered that I likewise was unprotected but for the "J.R." stamp). I left it at that, but what I had feared actually happened later. Marianne was brought to W'ork in one of the big raids with her sister; twice the people there managed to get her out of the train, but the third time she was deported. I was told later on that it might have been possible to keep her back but there was no chance to save her sister; Marianne had promised her mother on her deathbed never to leave this sister and went to Poland with her. A 120,000 stamp would have saved them both.

In the same way were deported, as already mentioned before, all the heads of the "H.a.V." and many more of the people who had spent practically their lives in the service of the Jewish community.

However, to come back to the 120,000 stamp, the "Putkamer", the "foreign relations" and the protected family groups had it. On July 26th five 120,000 stamps were given to the "J.R.", viz. to the Chief Rabbi Dasberg, Messrs. R.H.Eitje, van der Laan, J.Brandon and myself. A few days before I had, at the instigation of my friends Prof. Laqueur and Prof. Brahn, who were frantic that through all these times of raids I had only the "J.R." stamp which was of no value in W'ork, procured for myself a "foreign relations" 120,000 stamp. With the help of my friends I could have had the "Putkamer" stamp much earlier, but personally I never liked this though I never blamed anybody for taking it. Anyhow, as far as I am concerned, I did not need the "J.R." 120,000 any more, but could not, unfortunately, pass it on to anybody else.

As early as February 1943 Mr. Westerning of Brasch & Rothenstein, who had been busy for some time with an emigration project for about 300 people (250 of whom were from the Phillips Company of Eindhoven) managed to get for his group also the 120,000 stamp which proved really life-saving, particularly to those from the provinces. Besides this, there were one or two smaller emigration projects, one from the Kaufman group in Rotterdam and the other from a Tilburg combination which also got the 120,000 stamp. In both cases there were only a small number of people affected, and I do not know what counter-proposals were made to the Germans. In the case of the Westerning group no payment whatever was made. There may have been a few individual cases or small lists besides the ones mentioned, but they were unimportant as to numbers.

The 120,000 stamp was issued to in all about 1500 people. It was still being given in September 1943. As a matter of fact, friends of mine got their 120,000 on the 27th September and on the 29th September all holders of the 120,000 were brought to W'ork.

At about the same time, in the autumn of 1942, the first Paraguay and other South-American passports from Switzerland started to arrive. The number of families who finally got those runs probably into hundreds, not into thousands but still that too kept a number of people back in W'ork who eventually were sent to Bergen-Belsen. Once, if I remember rightly, early in the winter of 1942-43, a large number of people with double nationalities were sent from W'ork to Poland. This had been done on an order from The Hague but after that people with double nationalities, amongst whom I also count those holding Paraguay and other passports, were exempt from transportation and finally sent to Bergen-Belsen.

Shortly before we left Bergen-Belsen, it seemed that the papers had been gone through once more and that a list had arrived from Berlin with about 175 names of families whose South American passports were re-

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cognized to be valid. Naturally this caused some uneasiness amongst those who were not on the list, but nothing definite was known and anyhow from Bergen-Belsen until July 1944 no transports had left for Poland.

Another security that was very much sought after was the so-called "Barneveld". This had originated in the fact that the "Secretaris-Generaal van binnenlandsche zaken", Mr. Frederikse, had tried to protect some Jew who had had prominent positions in Government service. This had been extended to quite a number of former officials, musicians in the Concertgebouw Orchestra, teachers, professors, etc. Probably through particular influence certain people had got in who had never held a prominent position nor a government post before. However, on the whole, this group was considered to be constituted of prominent Dutch Jews. There were altogether 700 and in the early spring of 1943, 500 were concentrated in a beautiful old castle in Barneveld and when this was overcrowded the remaining 200 were accommodated in a large house an hour's walk from Barneveld - "De Bieze". A Dutch commandant was in charge of these places; these Jews were restricted in their movements, had to follow certain rules as to visitors, etc. but they had, on the whole, a very comfortable existence in both places, the lovely grounds in which the castle was standing being open for them to use freely. They had been promised in writing that they would not be used for work out of Holland. They had furthermore been allowed to take along all their possessions and Barneveld was really chock-full of the most beautiful furniture, marvellous libraries, etc. As will be told in the chapter on W'ork, all these belongings were lost when these two groups were, without previous warning, brought to W'ork on September 29, 1943. Here they did no longer enjoy any special privileges but remained in W'ork as a group up to the last.

At the same time, another stamp was created. I believe it was the series 30,000. This was given to people who claimed to be of Aryan descent and was already given while the investigation was proceeding. This was called the "Callmeyer" stamp after the German who examined these enquiries and finally decided on them. There were a few lawyers who specialized in such claims. The procedure was costly and in some ways risky; for while a number of claims resulted in Aryanization and many dragged on and protected the claimants during all that time, once a claim was rejected it was followed immediately by deportation and in such cases, since the order came from The Hague, nothing could be done. For people of Russian descent it was not difficult to get Aryanized, but even a number of Jews of purely Dutch or German descent managed to have themselves declared Aryan. On the whole, and I think, rightly so, this was not considered dishonourable except when a well-known rabbi, Dr. Neubauer, tried to do it. There were also some jibes at the fact that at least three of the original members of the "J.R." were Aryanized, but the "J.R." having deteriorated anyhow into a body of no importance, it did not really matter very much one way or the other what individual members did.

Another project that was to give for some time a certain measure of security to those taking part in it was the so-called "Weinreb" emigration scheme. This was such a mad scheme that I have no doubt that eventually books will be written on it which will take their place in Jewish literature along with those written about Shabbatai Zvi with whom in some ways there were points of resemblance.

Weinreb was a Polish Jew with a Dutch passport who had held some office in the Ministry of Economics and who had, I believe, been very instrumental in the food distribution scheme in Holland. Later, he became involved in Jewish affairs. For obvious reasons I always avoided

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meeting him but I was told that he was an extremely intelligent man, young - in the early 40's - very orthodox, whose followers, for some time anyhow, believed in him and whose story certainly is amazing even in these amazing times.

His scheme was to bring thousands of Jews to German-occupied France and from there, in batches of several hundreds at a time, to Portugal and Switzerland. What services he had rendered the Germans I do not know but it is a fact that very high military authorities (not the S.S.) were helping him. He was in possession of letters; amongst others from General Schuhmann, in connection with this scheme and he was able to travel freely in Germany and in the whole of the occupied territories. His scheme was so far advanced that the dates when the trains were to leave for France were actually fixed. I remember that the first of them with about 400 Jews was to leave on Christmas Eve 1942; the second and third transports were to leave on the 2nd and 9th of January, 1943, respectively.

The people who were admitted to participate did not have to pay any very large sum of money. If I remember rightly, I believe 500 Guilders per family. They were allowed to take a certain amount of luggage but had to leave the rest of their belongings behind. The Jews who were to leave with the first transport were actually sitting on their packed boxes waiting to be taken to the train when quite suddenly the scheme collapsed. Fortunately, none of them had given up their houses because they were supposed to hand them over intact. Weinreb was arrested by the S.S., his family sent to W'ork, where he too followed several weeks after. In W'ork they were detained; suddenly Weinreb was again allowed to travel freely to The Hague and everywhere all over Germany, France etc. and in about October 1943 the scheme was suddenly revived. This time everybody could register for participation, a registration fee of 100 Guilders being required, but in many cases people who registered in W'ork did not even pay this. Then, as had been the case in the first instance, Weinreb was in possession of all sorts of imposing looking documents from the Germans. As I was, after all, considered an emigration expert in Holland, the first and second schemes were repeatedly submitted to me for advice by people who wanted to participate. I remember always giving the same answer - I would meet Weinreb and look into his scheme as soon as I was sure he could first prove that he was in touch with any authority whatsoever beyond German occupied territory. In W'ork I then said that if they showed me as much as a Swiss visum proving that Weinreb had actually, as he claimed, been to Switzerland several times, I would reconsider my attitude. Until then, the advice I gave was that I personally would have nothing to do with it but that I would certainly advise people who had no protection whatsoever in W'ork to register since as "vinegar cannot become sour anyhow", they had nothing to lose. Whatever happened it might and did actually save those who did register and were accepted from one or two transports and in the history of W'ork it had often been the case that even through a short respite people had been saved indefinitely.

While I was giving my opinion freely that I thought the whole thing a hoax if not worse a non-Jewish friend of mine had actually travelled to The Hague and, I believe at the cost of a great deal of money, got Weinreb to put my name on the first list. I was informed of this in W'ork by a representative of Weinreb, where, of course, the fact that Mrs. van Tijn, while advising everybody not to get on to the list was on it herself, became immediately known and was made much of. I got into touch with my friend with some difficulty and I am sorry to

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say that the unfortunate man had to go once more to The Hague where, I believe, it cost him more trouble to get me off the list than to get me on. Whether or not the people in W'ork believed me when I said this had been done against my wish and knowledge, I do not know.

Most of the people who had been originally connected with the Weinreb scheme, amongst whom were well-known lawyers, well-known Zionists, large business people, etc. would have nothing to do with the second scheme. However, those on the Weinreb list in W'ork were actually kept back from one transport; after that the scheme suddenly collapsed and Weinreb, whose family had, in the meantime, been allowed to return to The Hague, disappeared and up to this day nobody knows whether he was once more arrested by the Germans or managed to get away.

Although a few people claimed that Weinreb was certainly a sort of saint, obsessed by the idea how to help his people, while others said he was a crook, I personally think that the whole thing was a grandiose swindle in which eventually he and probably some German or other divided the spoils. It was rumoured that he had sold some extremely valuable invention of a military character for use on the Eastern front to the Germans, but whether this is true or not, it remains a fact that he must have done considerable service for the Germans to enjoy, be it even only for a time, the privileges he did. Possibly, not having let the S.S. into his scheme, but working exclusively with military men, it was the former who actually brought about his downfall.

What amazed me in this whole affair was that people of real astute business sense had the courage to entrust themselves to a scheme which was in the first instance to bring them only as far as occupied France. While I had not the right actually to stop them from going, still I always pointed out to them that in occupied France they were still in German hands and nobody would be the wiser if from there they were quietly sent off to Poland. It shows perhaps the degree of despair that had got hold of people at that time that any chance to get away from Holland was clutched at.

We must, however, after all these digressions which were, I think, necessary, to give the "background", go back to the month of September 1942. During this whole month the serial stamps 80,000 etc. ("J.R."), 60,000 (Wehrmacht), 100,000 (baptized), 110,000 (mixed marriages) and 10,000 (Portuguese) were given - the 120,000 and 30,000 (Callmeyer) stamps continued to be given up to the last.

Practically no people were sent to W'ork from Amsterdam during that month of September 1942 and W'ork got its "material" from the provinces. Moreover, on the second of October all the work camps were emptied and the Jews, about 8,000 were sent to W'ork. During that same night their families were taken from their houses and likewise deported to W'ork where on that single night between 12,000 and 13,000 arrived. From then on until January 1943, about twice weekly a transport left W'ork each with about 700 or 800 people. After that there was one transport of 1,000 leaving every Tuesday and in May 1943 three times a transport of 2400 each left after which there were again the usual weekly transports of 1000. Whenever transports left for Theresienstadt or Bergen-Belsen, they were sent instead of the Poland transport. Now and then it happened that for a few weeks no transport left (at the time when the camp was supposed to be in quarantine because of infantile paralysis) but even during that period twice the quarantine was lifted for one day in order to allow a Poland transport to leave. Once or twice it happened that, for unknown reasons, the train did not arrive and the transport was then deferred and

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at Christmas 1942 and 1943 there was a pause of 3 weeks in Amsterdam, the provinces and W'ork when no transports were sent.

After the stamping had been finished from October on, night after night, in the manner described before, Jews were taken from their houses. The methods became more and more brutal; thus, if a door was not opened quickly enough the police would immediately proceed to batter it down. This battering down of doors became so much a habit that, for instance, one morning in June 1943, when the police were ringing at my door early in the morning while I was having my bath, they had, by the time I dried myself and slipped on a dressing gown to open the door (I was by then quite alone at night in the house, everybody else having already been taken away), already proceeded to break down the door, being accompanied by a man with a big tool chest specially for this purpose. It had become a habit to use a squad of O.D. from W'ork to assist in this work. They used to help carry the sick and old out of the houses, assisted with the luggage, etc. They then travelled to W'ork on the transport train, returning the next day for the same job. (The O.D. was - as explained in the W'ork report, the Jewish police (Orde-Dienst) ). In the beginning, animosity against these Jews was very great, but gradually, particularly after some bad elements had been eliminated, it appeared that they were actually doing much to alleviate the suffering of those fetched. This went on until the above-mentioned pause around Christmas. By the end of the year 1942 about 40,000 Jews had been deported while about 12,000 were then collected in W'ork. By that time it had, of course, become clear that although the "Aufrufe" the police always had with them when they fetched the Jews had printed on them the words "Fuer Polizeilichen Arbeitseinsatz in Deutschland" it was a plain deportation to Poland and nothing else.

Soon after the deportations began, a telegram signed by the representatives of both the Netherland Christian denominations had been sent to the Rykscommissaris Seyss-Inquart, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army General Christiansen, and to the two leading S.S. officials Rauter and Schmit protesting against the deportations. This protest had been of no avail. I do not believe that the churches ever got an official answer to this telegram. A violent speech by Schmit given about a month later was probably the only answer they got. In this he reviled the Christian churches because they had protested against the Jewish deportations. He said in this speech that the families were sent in order not to break up the family unit. He further mentioned that people would be used in the East to clear debris and for general repair work.

At the beginning of 1945 again representatives of the churches had asked for and been granted an audience with Seyss-Inquart when, amongst other things, they protested against the treatment meted out to Jews. This verbal protest also was of no avail. The relationship of the Catholic Church to the Nazis and the Germans had become so strained that Jews who were baptized in the Catholic faith were no longer protected by that and deported. Those baptized in the Protestant faith were sent to W'ork (where they lived in one separate barrack) treated there as everybody else, but were not deported. All the time the ministers of the Protestant Churches went on baptizing Jews and many a falsified pre-dated certificate of baptism kept their holders in Holland, baptism being recognized only if dated before May 1940.

All through the years I believe prayers were said for the Jews in the Churches and on several occasions messages were read out in the churches which were not allowed to be printed except surreptitiously. Generally speaking, the attitude of the non-Jewish population was helpful and sympathetic. There was, however, no active resistance and when night after night the lorries stood in front of the Jewish houses, gradu-

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ally filling up with the unfortunate victims of that particular street people used to look on sullenly without, however, protesting by word or deed. Those raids generally started soon after 8:00 but were carried on more or less all through the night. It goes without saying, however, that only the friendly attitude of the non-Jewish population made it possible in a country like Holland which has no "natural" hiding places like mountains, for so many thousands of Jews to go into hiding.

On the 2nd of January, 1943, the whole of the Jewish lunatic asylum, "Het Apeldoornsche Bosch" near Apeldoorn was emptied. All the patients and a certain number of the doctors and the staff were taken, altogether more than 1000 people. Aus der Fuenten, Fischer, (the A.D.F. from The Hague) and other high S.S. officials had come over for the purpose. Moreover, the W'ork commandant Gemmeke was present as well as Dr. Spanier and a great contingent from the O.D. from W'ork were told off to help.

Some time later perhaps I shall be willing to give a verbal account of the way in which this evacuation took place. The details were too perfectly gruesome and the brutality which was used was incredible. I don't think Dr. Spanier for one has ever been quite the same after he witnessed that particular transport, although by that time he had certainly got used to quite a lot from his W'ork experience.

We later got reliable information to the effect that the train was sighted on its way to Berlin not far from the Dutch frontier, empty except for a few doctors and nurses. Evidently, these lunatics were not brought as far as Poland for extermination.

The dreadful thing was that in the asylum "Het Apeldoornsche Bosch" there were many patients who could by no means be classified under the term of "lunatic"; as a matter of fact a number of people had used it as a "hiding place". Furthermore, there was a large sanatorium attached to the place and a large special home for children with a department for difficult children who were under observation. All of these, without any discrimination, were carted off.

In the same way on March 3, 1943, the largest Jewish hospital, the "Nederlandsch Israelietisch Ziekenhuis" as well as the Jewish Invalid Home "Joodsche Invalide", which was a large modern home for aged and invalids, were emptied of their patients, all of whom were brought to W'ork. The staff of the hospital was, except for a few nurses, allowed to remain in Amsterdam whereas the staff of the "Joodsche Invalide" was likewise sent away, some of them - amongst whom was the medical director - to Vught. After that the hospital was again used, but between March 1943 and August 1943 this hospital (N.I.Z.) was raided three times.

At about the same time, all the remaining orphanages, old age homes and hospitals in the provinces were raided and the inhabitants sent to W'ork, generally accompanied by the staff. The Jewish orphanages were by that time all crowded because in many cases where parents were deported and for some reason or other children stayed behind, the "J.R." was wont to put them into the orphanages. Furthermore, as early as the beginning of 1943, all foundlings were declared to be Jewish and sometimes the "J.R." was able to get them into an orphanage instead of having them sent to W'ork for transport.

At the beginning of April 1943 a big raid took place on the Jews in the provinces of Friesland, Groningen, Drente, Overysel, Gelderland, Limburg, N. Brabant and Zeeland, all of them being brought to Vught,

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these provinces thus being made "Judenfrei". On the 23rd of April, 1943 Jews were forbidden to remain in the provinces of Utrecht, Noord and Zuid Holland with the exception of Amsterdam. This order was followed again by big raids, the Jews likewise being brought to Vught. A certain number of Jews, I think, generally speaking, those in possession of "J.R." and other stamps, got permission to come to Amsterdam while only very few, perhaps all told not more than 40 in the whole of Holland, were allowed to remain in their home towns. In the few large places like The Hague and Rotterdam, a few representatives of the "J.R." still needed for the tasks connected with the Jewish mixed marriages, etc., as well as issuing of permits, were allowed to stay, and in some smaller places also keepers of Jewish cemeteries.

In every case, wherever Jews were either brought into camps or allowed to come to Amsterdam they had to leave all their belongings behind, only being allowed to take what they could carry.

In Amsterdam, generally speaking (as has been explained before) "J.R." employees had not been brought to W'ork but from September 1942 to May 1943 of the about 17,000 Jews who had originally got the "J.R." stamp, about 5,000 (roughly speaking) had after all been sent away in one way or the other so that the number of employees was reduced to about 12,000. Some of the leading Jews who had been deported were Max Bolle and the Chief Rabbi Saarlouis in October 1942; somewhat earlier Mr. L. Frank from the Financial Committee; early in the winter of 1943 Mr. de Hoop, - none, however, in connection with their Jewish activities. A few others like van Lier, Notaris van den Bergh, and Krouwer (who had played such an important role both in the Financial Committee and in the "J.R.") were no longer able to do Jewish work because they had become Aryanized. A few others like, for instance, Dr. Speyer, who had been head of the Medical Department of the "J.R." and Prof. Fryda, who had played a leading role both in the Financial Committee and in the Juridical Department of the "J.R." had "gone under". Chief Rabbi Frank, a very young and courageous man of whom I personally had had the greatest expectations, had been shot as hostage in Haarlem together with two other Jews, Mr. Drilsma and Mr. Chapon, in February 1943. Mr. Bolle had not been replaced so that Meyer de Vries was now practically the only one who had a really influential position with Cohen.

Thus, the number of "J.R." employees had been reduced to roughly 12,000, counting the families, of whom a very large but unknown number had, of course, "gone under".

We come now to one of the worst chapters in the history of the "J.R."

About the 10th of May, 1943, Asscher and Cohen were told that they would have to send to 7,000 of their employees notices of deportation, the selection as well as the whole of the execution being put into their hands. It was then that Cohen and Asscher, in a combined emergency meeting of the "J.R." and the heads of the departments, required us to hand over to them lists on which each head of the department was to mark down those he thought he could not do without and those he thought could be missed in the work: the famous "A,B,C" lists. The "A" list was to give the names of those functionaries absolutely indispensable, the "B", those who were essential and the "C", the unessential ones.

This may sound a very simple request but I, for one, refused pointblank to comply with it. I did not feel that I was justified to say of any man that he was to go to Poland because he was perhaps

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only a typist but possibly a very valuable human being and perhaps the father of a large family. To my mind the only answer would have been to the Germans to say, "You are in possession of the cards of the "J.R." employees and if you want 7000 people you must just get them". However, Cohen and Asscher had already agreed to fulfil the order because they feared that - if left to the Germans - the raid or whatever it would be might have even worse consequences than compliance on their part. There was very real opposition; for instance people like Freddy Bolle, head of the Cultural Department of the "J.R.", Mr. van de Velde, head of the School Department, the heads of the Financial Department, and several others, joining in the protest. Moreover, Prof. Cohen was warned repeatedly that even if he wanted to do this he would not be able to organize this job efficiently in the short time at his disposal and that moreover he would have no means of forcing the people actually to turn up for their deportation. The experience which the Germans had in the early days of the transports clearly showed that only a small percentage of people would more or less voluntarily obey a deportation "Aufruf" (order).

I had a long argument with Henri Edersheim from The Hague. Henri Edersheim had been at the head of The Hague office which he had managed fairly independently of Amsterdam headquarters, keeping them, however, always fully acquainted of what was going on. By that time (except for mixed marriages) there were practically no Jews left in The Hague so that Edersheim had gradually got an important position in the "J.R." head office in Amsterdam and took part in all important deliberations. Henri Edersheim was, as always, in full accord with the policy of cooperation. He honestly believed this to be the only practicable way. Edersheim used his position not blindly to obey the orders of the Germans but to try and get them modified. I am sorry to say that he was deported with his family in July 1943. Probably because of the way he worked he could not but eventually come into conflict with the German authorities. I think I am right when I say that he was definitely the only one of the leading Jews in Holland who was deported because of the way in which he carried out his duties, except for Rabbi Duenner who, with his family, was deported as early as August 1942 because he showed too much spirit. Although I was, as mentioned, politically opposed to Henri Edersheim, we were, up to the end, close friends and I had the deepest respect for him.

To show how deeply this affected people I would like here to make a digression. As early as the summer of 1940 all the existing "Hachscharah" institutions had been organized under one roof, the so-called "Beroeps-Centrale". There were in all six - Wieringen, Deventer (with Elden as subsidiary), Daath Haaretz, Agudah, Youth Aliyah, Farn Gouda, all of which retained their complete independence but formed a unit in budgetary matters, etc. A 7th institution was created for the purpose of instituting training courses in all manner of subjects and with varying duration, a former Jewish school and several other places being used for this purpose. The Board of the "Beroeps-Centrale" called the "Hachscharah-Raad" consisted of representatives of all these institutions and met regularly. The 7th institution was managed by the director and the executive of the "Hachscharah-Raad". In the course of time this institution became quite important as it helped many Jews, who were thrown out of employment, to learn a different trade. Naturally, the constant drain for work camps and deportations gave this work too a highly transitory character but still, in one way or other, a great deal of good work was achieved and the "Beroeps-Centrale" had somehow survived.

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Originally Max Bolle had been its president but after his deportation his place was taken by Ru Cohen (formerly Deventer), a brother of Prof. Cohen. Although these institutions, one after the other, either were liquidated completely or greatly reduced in size, the "Hachscharah-Raad" retained its original composition.

After the decision to make the "A,B,C" lists, an emergency meeting was called of the Executive of the "Beroeps-Centrale" at which the majority decided not to cooperate. Notwithstanding this decision, the director Alex Cohen (no relative of Prof. Cohen) and the president, Ru Cohen, decided that, being affiliated with the "J.R.", the orders of the presidents were to be followed even against the decision of their own Board, so these two proceeded on their own to make and submit the lists for the whole "Beroeps-Centrale". A meeting was thereupon called of the "Hachscharah-Raad" which had to be prolonged twice and finally led to the dissolution of the "Hachscharah-Raad", the majority severely censuring the action of the president and the director. These two thereupon carried on whatever work there was on their own until the end. Some of the oldest personal friendships were abruptly ended by this action.

After the above-mentioned meeting of the "J.R." and the heads of the departments I rang up Prof. Cohen, saying that notwithstanding the order given at the end of the meeting to proceed with the "A,B,C" lists, I stuck to my decision and that I was therefore tendering my resignation, as I understood that he could not possibly tolerate such insubordination. Prof. Cohen did not accept it but said that it did not matter greatly anyhow and that it was sufficient if I were to submit the names of the employees of the Emigration Department and the "H.a.V." alphabetically, which I did.

The greatest secrecy prevailed about these decisions and I am therefore unable to say whether or not other departments which were in opposition, like, for example, the Financial or School Departments, did or did not submit the "A,B,C" lists. However, this may be, in the Kaizersgracht the greatest confusion prevailed. The work proceeded day and night: the right to serve exemption notes on people who had formerly received deportation orders was freely used. Within 48 hours, according to the graphic description I received later, the place looked like a battle-field, all card indexes having been pulled to bits, cards lying on the floor everywhere and people dropping with fatigue and excitement writing "Aufrufe" and exemption notices more or less indiscriminately. Many workers who had up to then refused to go "under" out of a sense of duty, did so now.

All during these two days the "Aufrufe" which were completed were served on people by errand boys from the "J.R."; quite a number of those also had refused to do this work. If I remember rightly, the "J.R." finally had to make use of the service of a Jewish messenger organization which had sprung up when Jews no longer had telephones, bicycles etc., in order to distribute these "Aufrufe". How many people eventually got the "Aufrufe" with or without exemption letters it is difficult to say. In any case instead of 7,000 people, 2,600 showed up at the appointed meeting place for deportation on the appointed day, the 25th of May. Many hundreds of people "went under" during these days.

The Germans, when they did not get the 7,000 people they needed, did what they probably might have done in the beginning if the "J.R." had refused to deliver them up - they made a big raid on the center of Amsterdam in which 3,000 people were taken. Of this raid I can give a first hand description, for since November 1942 I had been living

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right in the heart of the Jewish ghetto and I therefore saw what happened on the 26th of May from its very commencement. Evidently the preparations for this raid had been kept secret even from Sluzker with so much success on the part of the Germans that the first warning I had that something was afoot was, when round about 12:00 o'clock that night I began to hear the by then familiar noise of the battering of doors. Only then the telephone started to give me warning that something more spectacular than the nightly fetching out of the houses was afoot and soon after that I heard cars with loudspeakers rushing through the streets giving the order for non-Jews to remain in their houses and for all Jews indiscriminately to get themselves ready to leave. The faithful Lucy Asser, who had been saved together with me in November 1942 and who had kept house for me since then, was also awakened and we both proceeded to get ready. We looked out of the window and saw by the bright light of the searchlights that the Blue Bridge across the Amstel as well as the Waterloo Plein were crammed with police and soldiers in S.S. uniform, with steel helmets, mounted bayonets, heavily armed, not as if they were going to proceed to take Jews from their houses but as if they were to meet the enemy in battle; machine guns were mounted on the houses commanding the Amstel and the Waterloo Plein and that part of the town looked like a place where a battle was about to commence.

At 3:00 o'clock in the morning there was a knock at my door and when I opened it, immediately two S.S. soldiers, armed to their teeth with pistols drawn, entered my flat. The spokesman immediately asked me how it was that I still had a radio and I patiently gave the usual explanation of it being a gramophone pick-up and not a radio. When he still expressed doubts I even offered to play a record for him. He then made the usual remarks about my still having a telephone. When I showed him the permit for it he joined his colleague in searching the flat, being very unwilling to believe that this flat of six rooms was inhabited only by two women. After they found nobody and nothing more suspicious they ordered us to follow them and we took our rucksack, breadsacks and roll of blankets and proceeded to the Waterloo Plein where all the people in that part of the town were being collected. Later on I heard that there had been another collecting place near the Diamond Exchange where amongst many others all the children and the staff from our Wieringen Home "Franschelaan" as well as my family who lived in the Sarphatistraat, had been brought to.

After some hours when hundreds of people were collected, we were marched to the Great Synagogue which was used as a registration office and where already people from the "Expositur" were sitting behind tables registering those who entered. We were supposed to give up the keys of our dwellings there but I managed to retain mine. After that we were again made to wait outside on the big square in front of the synagogue. Fortunately it had been a beautiful night. At about 8:00 o'clock in the morning my name was called by an S.S. man and I was told to come to the synagogue. I left my luggage behind and said to Miss Asser, "I will be back in a few minutes". I was then still pretty confident that as usual a number of people would get free and I also felt sure that I would succeed in getting Lucy Asser off, who, besides looking after me, had been running very efficiently the branch office of "H.a.V." which we had established in my flat. When I came to the synagogue Aus der Fuenten was there, looked at me and said, "Go at once to the 'Expositur' and don't show up anymore today otherwise you might be taken again". I was literally shunted into a lorry and driven off at an extraordinary speed to the "Expositur". I remember this because the lorry being empty I was thrown from one side to the other continually and bruised all over

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when I finally got out. At the 'Expositur' Mrs. Vordemberge, for years one of my most devoted and intelligent employees of the "Lijnbaansgracht" and afterwards private secretary to Dr. Sluzker, and others received me with a great deal of emotion, the reason for which I somehow failed to understand. It was, however, soon apparent that I was to be definitely the only one who came out of that raid. About 5 minutes after A.D.F. had sent me home, Rauter, Lages and other high S.S. officials from The Hague appeared and this being a punitive raid, not a single person was liberated.

Although I had promised to stay at the 'Expositur' all day I felt that I could not possibly do that. Far too many of our leading people were involved in this raid and I knew it might be a matter of life or death to have to see to it that their Palestine papers, which by then had become a fairly good security in W'ork, were in their hands the moment they arrived there.

After Mrs. Vordemberge made me some strong coffee I took the tram and went to the "Lijnbaansgracht" where soon the colleagues showed up who had not been affected by the raid because they lived in a different part of the town. Fortunately, the Palestine commission was there almost in its entirety and we immediately set about to go through those cases which we had left undecided until then and which, in view of what was happening, we felt had to be reconsidered. Fortunately my secretary, Mrs. Tal, also soon came to the office; we managed to get a few more typists and started to work for 24 hours without a break. Twice, with the aid of Dr. Sluzker, a special courier was sent to W'ork with the completed statements and lists. In this way it happened that those who had the right to them actually got their Palestine papers practically at the time they were entering the barracks in W'ork and fortunately many of them, anyhow for some weeks, were saved from transport.

After many interviews with the Germans Prof. Cohen succeeded in getting permission to have ten people come back from W'ork, more or less each department having the right to select one. Besides these, Mrs. Eitje was also allowed to return. Her husband had escaped deportation because he had had the telephone service in the Kaizersgracht all through that night. I asked for the return of I. Querido, who had been my right hand man at the "H.a.V." and who was to have been married the next day to his secretary. Others who were called back were Mr. van Raalte for the Financial Department and the Chief Rabbis Levisohn and Dasberg. Marianne van Stedum, however, remained and was, because she had not then received the 120,000 stamp, deported in the manner described before. Lucy Asser, who, never having been a Zionist, could not be given a declaration, was sent to Poland likewise although Blueth had arranged for her to stay, I was told afterwards that there had been some misunderstanding. Both these women belonged to the category which is very rare in this world - at all times and under all circumstances they had served others, never considering their own safety or interest.

All this happened on the 26th of May. It cleared the original ghetto of its Jewish inhabitants; when I came home after my work, into my empty flat, it was as if I was living in a graveyard. There were, of course, non-Jews scattered about in that district, but practically every house was battered or shuttered, staring at me through their uncurtained broken window panes. For soon, as was the case always after Jews had been fetched away, the well-known furniture vans of the firm of "Puls" appeared in the streets and cleared the houses, carting away the belongings. These furniture vans had become such a familiar sight in the streets of Amsterdam that a new word had been coined - people asking whether or not a certain house had already been "pulsed" (gepulst).

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meaning whether or not the Nazi firm of Puls, which was the one entrusted with this work, had already cleared the place. 4) For all "H.a.V." workers, who often used to go into the house trying still to collect some personal belongings for those who had been taken away, it was always of the greatest importance to be there sooner than the "Puls" people, our workers being able to go in often with the help of duplicate keys which the people in the "Schouwburg" still had in their possession; in some instances the "Expositur" was able to be allowed to make use of the keys which were deposited in the "Centralstelle". Often our workers had disagreeable encounters with either the police, the Nazis or the Puls people, but very often they succeeded still in getting a few things out and sending them to the "Schouwburg".

After this memorable raid on May 26, 1943, the nightly business of fetching Jews went on. Cohen and Asscher had been given the usual assurances that now that punitive measures were over nothing very drastic was about to happen. As was to be expected after such a promise something very drastic did happen: again without any previous warning in the same way as had been done on May 26, both Amsterdam Zuid and Amsterdam East were raided on the 20th and 21st of June 1943, the cordon of police, the heavy guard in all the streets, the loudspeakers making the announcements-- all were repeated, the only difference being that this time the military show was somewhat less there being no machine guns in evidence.

Whereas on May 26th about 3,000 people had been taken, on June 20th and 21st about 5,000 were sent to W'ork. Those who had the 120,000 stamp, the serial 10,000 (Portuguese) and the 110,000 (mixed marriage) were released. All the others were sent to W'ork. Two days after this raid the "J.R." stamp was officially declared to be no longer valid (which, of course, really had been the case in practice) but the "J.R." was told that 70 people were to be given an "Ausnahmebescheinigung" (of which I enclose a photo copy, Enclosure No.5), the holders of which were allowed to stay in Amsterdam for the time being. Ten people were given this "Ausnahmebescheinigung" automatically, amongst whom my name appeared. When I protested that I did not want to have it I was told that the "Centralstelle" had already issued these 10 documents and that whether or not I took it it would not affect the number in any way.

It must be remembered that if it had not been for the extraordinary action of A.D.F. on the 26th of May, I would have been in W'ork by then. Of course during all these days any number of people "went under", many of them doing it with so little preparation that they were found after a few days. I was put under the strongest pressure on the part of my Aryan friends to "go under"; they considered this to be by now high time because, as mentioned before, I did not even have the 120,000 stamp; I refused because by that time the work on the Palestine exchange action had become vital and I did not therefore feel justified in leaving my post.

This selection of 70 people who were to receive the "Ausnahme-

4) The firm of "Puls" was working for the German "Hausratserfassungsstelle". This department had started to make an inventory of Jewish apartments, houses, etc. on a fairly large scale (probably to frighten people into not selling or storing valuable furniture, etc. elsewhere). After the deportations, this practice was carried on on a much smaller scale because instead the belongings of the deported Jews were simply carried off by "Puls" (gepulst) and sent to Germany as "Liebesgaben des holl. Volkes". Inferior stuff was sold from barques anchored in the quieter canals in Amsterdam,

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bescheinigung" was only a repetition of the scenes that had been enacted on like occasions before. It was, however, soon possible vastly to extend the number. Thus, "H.a.V." was given the right to submit an additional list of about 100 people who had as their task the preparation of food for those detained in the "Schouwburg". This food was prepared in two Jewish restaurants but the work of the peeling of potatoes, cleaning of vegetables, distribution, etc. was done by volunteer workers whom I now could protect. In a like way Dr. van der Laan got for his department hundreds of such "Ausnahmebescheinigungen" because he pleaded that unless he retained a minimum of employees he could not provide the necessary victuals for the remaining Jews. As mentioned before, he was in charge of the department of Jewish shops, markets, etc. Moreover, the "Expositur" got the right, in addition to the 70 mentioned, to submit a list of its people, so that in all instead of 70, perhaps 500 of these documents were given. With few exceptions they were respected until on September 29th, 1943, on the Eve of Rosh Hashanah, the last big raid took place in which all remaining Jews, no matter what their protection or standing, with the exception of the Portuguese and those of mixed marriages, were taken from their houses and sent to W'ork.

I was by then quite used to "S.S." visits. On that night of the 29th of September, 1943, two people came to get me, made the usual business about radio, telephone, the assumption that more people were living in such a big flat, and finally requested me to find a non-Jew who would be required to take over the flat and sign an undertaking that he would see to it that nothing was stolen. I told them that as far as I knew there was nobody living anywhere near me - which was a fact - whereupon one of the S.S. men went out in search of such an Aryan and the other man was left to guard me. He was an S.S. man around the age of 40 and he allowed me - certainly against his orders - to telephone to my friends to say goodbye and make last minute arrangements. He never followed me when I went upstairs or downstairs so that I probably could easily have got away. As a matter of fact I had the feeling that he almost wished me to do so. I had, however, made up my mind to see the thing through and did not avail myself of this last opportunity.

As a matter of fact, Prof. Brahn, Prof. Laqueur and I had received warning the day before that this action would take place, Prof. Brahn even having been offered by the German who warned him false papers in case he wanted to go into hiding. The three of us, who had been very close, had however, decided not to "go under". Moreover, false warnings had been given so often that this last raid was impending that we did not know whether or not to believe it. As it turned out, Prof. Brahn, who shared a flat with a couple of the "mixed marriage" category, was, through some oversight or other, not fetched until the 24th of December, whereas Prof. Laqueur was one of ten people who, with his wife and unmarried daughter, was allowed to go home from the station, his married children, however, being sent away. This raid definitely cleared Amsterdam of Jews, in all 5,000 being sent away that day.

It was pitchdark when we left the flat. I had a rucksack which was really far too heavy for me to carry and when my guard brought me to the meeting place, about 10 minutes' walk from my house, without saying anything he took the rucksack from me and carried it for me, giving it back to me only when we came into the lights of the station. Neither he nor I said anything about it. The second man had come back without any Aryan but left again immediately afterwards and I heard later on that my flat was completely plundered of everything within two hours after my having left, because when friends entered it soon after with a duplicate

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key in order to get out a few more clothes, it was quite empty except for some of the heavier pieces of furniture which were left for Puls.

The pandemonium at the Amstel Station from where we left was indescribable. I had left my luggage with the Queridos and had gone to talk to Prof. Laquer who was standing at the entrance to the station. While I was doing this, people were ordered to go upstairs on to the platform and naturally the Queridos, having as much as they could carry themselves, could not take my luggage as well. When, in answer to shouts to hurry up, I went back to the place, there was A.D.F. all by himself, standing next to my luggage. He said, "Mrs. Van Tijn, everybody has already been asking for you". I did not say anything to him and took my luggage and somehow or other managed to struggle up the stairs, almost collapsing under the weight. Of course, W'ork was in a turmoil when they saw people like Cohen, Asscher, Sluzker, Blueth, all arrive in the usual way.

This last raid cleared Amsterdam of all but a handful of Jews and was the end of this chapter. The transportations naturally went on from W'ork but this I have described in the chapter on W'ork.

All the offices of the "J.R." were raided and closed, all the documents, money and furniture being taken away. After that a number of Jews (but only those who left their families behind in W'ork as hostages) got leave to liquidate the affairs of some of the departments like the Financial Department, the Jewish Community etc. Blueth got more or less permanent leave because his department was used for the clearing of the synagogues and the offices and also, as described in the chapter on W'ork, for the continuous buying of material, etc., for W'ork. So to some extent his premises which had been situated for a long time in a big old warehouse in the "Oude Schans" remained open. Besides that the "Expositur" kept on working, Dr. Sluzker having been given permanent leave from W'ork to continue his attendance on A.D.F.; Mrs. Vordemberge, who had for years played an important part in the running of this office, being married to a non-Jew could also continue her work. On the whole, the "Expositur" continued to work with people who had contracted mixed marriages. After a while all those who were on leave in Amsterdam were forced to sleep in a Jewish "hotel" which was improvised in a house adjoining the "Expositur" in the Jan van Eyckstraat. I managed to procure leave for Gerzon for Wieringen and for Querido for "H.a.V". I personally never could get leave because I had no near relations in W'ork who could be considered as hostages, so that I was never able properly to liquidate the important work of the Palestine Exchange, and the Emigration Department. As a matter of fact, when the "Lijnbaansgracht" was raided, I lost some "black" money and some manuscripts which to me were of importance, and also the interesting statistical material I had prepared during the latter years and which I had not been able to send the JDC. I am sorry to say that I know nothing about the way in which the other departments were finally liquidated but I hope that a comprehensive account of the whole Jewish history during these years and particularly one covering all the activities of the "J.R.", many of whose departments did magnificent work, will be written in due course.

As far as I know, by July 1944, Dutch Jewry had, generally speaking, been liquidated in the following way:-

- 111,000 had been sent to Poland;
- 4,000 were in Bergen-Belsen;
- 2,500 were in Westerbork (I know from an original letter received from Amsterdam dated July 30, 1944 that on that date W'ork was intact and unchanged)
- 2,500 (approx.) in Theresienstadt.

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The approximate 20,000 not accounted for included those who died, those still in hiding and Jewish spouses in mixed marriages. It is difficult to give figures for these 3 categories. In the spring of 1944 it was generally assumed that about 15,000 Jews were by then in hiding but particularly since early in 1944 the Germans had created a special organization to look for Jews who had "gone under", many of them, I am afraid, have been found in the course of time. The figures given here vary a little from those given to the JDC shortly after my arrival in Palestine. This is due to the fact that I have since learned that one more Theresienstadt and one more Poland transport left in June.

This, to the best of my knowledge, is the story of the 140,000 Jews in Holland during the years of occupation.

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C O N C L U S I O N S

This draft report deals with tragedies we know. But the curtain has only just been rung up on the fifth act. What are we going to find when we shall be able once more to go into Bergen-Belsen, Theresienstadt, not to speak of Poland?...

In what condition will we find those who "went under"? Many of the children brought to Westerbork who were found in hiding were in a very bad physical and mental condition. Only we never knew how long they may have been detained in prisons by the Germans; for after September 29, 1943, there was no longer a collecting place under Jewish management. The prisons were used for the purpose. In many of the hiding places the Jews had to stay indoors in one room for years. Facilities for reading, hearing of radio, etc. varied. Altogether accommodation, food and recreation for those in hiding ranged from good to very bad. Only those whose personal appearance coupled with the possession of extremely good faked papers and general "safe" surroundings allowed them to go about freely, lived (at least to some extent) a normal life.

But the others? Two cases of women who had been "under" and who were murdered because of their helpless position and because they possessed "cash" were reported in the papers.

Friends of mine - a couple with one boy of 16 - had to change their hiding place because the old one was no longer considered "safe". The man who was to help them arranged it in such a way that the parents were to go on alone and he was to follow with the boy and the luggage. Neither the boy nor the luggage arrived. A mutual Aryan friend of ours - a woman of exceptional qualities both as to character and intelligence - who possessed a German passport, found the man, whose address, of course, was known. He simply owned up to having murdered the boy and stolen the luggage. He buried the body on the heath near Blaricum... Three people - besides the parents - know of this: my German friend, Prof. Brahn and I... What could we do? Prosecution would have meant endangering the parents and probably a number of other people who were in contact with this "special organization for the hiding of Jews". The parents are still "under" or were on July 30, 1944 when I had the last news from my friend. They were in Brabant near "s'Hertogenbosch". The whole of Brabant, with its Catholic population of peasants and smallholders, is crowded with Jews in hiding. It is there where the heaviest fighting is taking place at present.

It is all this that I think of at night when I cannot sleep. What and whom are we going to find when we shall come back into a liberated Holland? - Into an occupied Germany?...

How many of those who were human beings - ordinary human beings - when the Germans came, will be alive, and - if alive - what will be their condition when the curtain rings down on the final act?

Whatever we may find - let it be soon.

Sgd. Gertrude van Tijn.

Nahariah, Palestine,  
October 2nd, 1944

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CAMP "VUGHT"

Around December 1942 - January 1943, after innumerable rumours had already been spread about, it became known that the Germans had built an entirely new camp at Vught which camp was always to be called after the village near which it was situated. According to the information given by the Germans to Cohen and Asscher, this camp was to house certain industries like diamond cutting, clothing industry, certain branches of the Eindhoven Phillips factories and possibly others. Cohen and Asscher were informed that no deportations would take place from Vught to Poland, that the people there would be decently treated, that people would be allowed to take not only the usual personal belongings which they could carry but also any possible valuables they might still possess, and, generally speaking, the picture given of this camp was a very attractive one; the greatest advantage naturally being the promise made that the people from Vught would remain in Holland.

All these promises Cohen and Asscher unfortunately believe. Right at the beginning when the "J.R." was actually advocating the camp and encouraging people to go there, some of us had the most terrible rows about it at the Friday meetings of the heads of departments, because we were of the opinion that there was no reason to think that the promises in this case were likely to be kept any more than they had been in others, and furthermore, it seemed to us that no Jew had the right to encourage any other Jew to go into any camp whatsoever.

As it turned out, Vught was very soon to become one of the worst concentration camps there were; no "J.R." man was allowed to enter it; Blueth was allowed to visit it and speak to the commandant about the requirements for the inhabitants but on the rare occasions when he was allowed to enter the camp at all, he was invariably so closely guarded by the S.S. officials that he could not speak to any Jews freely. On one occasion, but much later, Cohen and Asscher were allowed to visit the camp. That was at a time when already it became apparent that conditions there were appalling.

The families were separated, husband and wife allowed to see each other only once a week and whenever there was punishment not even then; children were taken away from their parents and segregated in a children's part where they soon were to die like flies. Even when they were practically dying the mother was not allowed to visit her child. I cannot give any first hand information about it, but one of my close friends who had been to Vught, then to W'ork and finally with me to Bergen-Belsen, when I asked her if Vught was as bad as Bergen-Belsen, always answered "Much worse".

Anyhow it soon became apparent that none of the promises was kept. Because it was possible to send food parcels, which was done very generously privately as well as by the "J.R." Blueth Department, there was no starvation; but what exactly happened to the children I do not know. Perhaps because even the smallest ones did not get a drop of milk or perhaps for some other reason there was such a high mortality that you could really use the words "death camp" in relation to the children.

When the provinces were made "Judenfrei", the Jews were sent to Vught and not to W'ork but from there all the old and sick people were, after a very short time, transported to W'ork and then to Poland.

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The commandant really wanted Vught to become a work camp and could not be bothered with either old or sick people or children. Therefore, at the end of May 1943, finally all the children were sent away from Vught to W'ork, one of the parents, generally the mother, being allowed to accompany them. The husbands who remained behind were promised that their families would be detained in W'ork, a promise which was, of course, promptly broken. This transport of over 1000 people consisted mainly of sick children and women. About 100 children were brought into hospital and they and their mothers kept back for some time, whereas others with their mothers were almost immediately put on transport. People in W'ork who witnessed the arrival as well as the transportation of the Vught people always said that of all the things they saw in W'ork, the Vught transports generally, but particularly this children's transport, were the worst.

All the people who came from Vught invariably arrived in W'ork in a very bad physical condition, without any luggage and often clad only in an overall or an old coat or some rag or other, frequently without any underclothing. These facts I know, of course, to be true because they were checked in W'ork and some of the people from Vught I saw with my own eyes, but whether the stories they told about Vught may or may not have been exaggerated, I do not know. According to them, in the beginning the treatment at Vught had been comparable perhaps to Bergen-Belsen, except for the more severe separations of families; gradually the treatment became worse, beatings being frequent and I was told that gallows were erected in the middle of the men's section so that the men could see them, and that hangings took place frequently. The Jewish camp at Vught was only a small part of the general Vught concentration camp for non-Jews. The same commandant who was responsible for the Jewish camp which, it must be remembered, had been promised to be a work camp, was also in charge of the non-Jewish concentration camp; probably he did not, in the end, bother to make much difference in the treatment. I have no doubt that reports about Vught will be written in due time by those who have gone through the camp.

Actually, the firm Asscher and possibly others sent diamond cutting machinery to Vught. Curiously enough, this very same machinery was later sent to Bergen-Belsen where our men had to unload it and erect it in a special barrack reserved for a diamond industry in Bergen-Belsen. Furthermore, a number of people were busy collecting sewing and other machines for clothing factories and sent them to Vught. I remember that I was approached several times by a friend of mine who believed he was doing a good thing by furnishing Vught with machinery and thus saving as many Jews as he could from being deported. I always told him that I personally would have nothing to do with this and that in my opinion it was a shame that any Jews should lend themselves to assist in this work.

Altogether, it soon became apparent that none of the promises that had been made were kept. Not only did Vught regularly supply transport "material" for W'ork but a transport of about 1000 people was sent directly from Vught to Poland some time in the summer of 1943. Whereas originally about 3000 people had been in Vught, by about April 1944 there were only a few hundred left who worked for the Phillips factory, amongst them practically all of the "Westerning emigration group" from Eindhoven who had not previously "gone under". There again it seems that the special protection this group enjoyed through Westerning saved them from transport to Poland. This "Phillips" group had all along been treated well and had enjoyed special privileges - probably through the influence of the Phillips factories in Eindhoven.

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Anyhow, by the spring of 1944, the Jewish section of the Vught camp had practically been liquidated, most of the Jews having been sent to Poland contrary to all promises given, and thus ended a short but particularly sad and ignominious chapter in the Jewish history of those times.

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CAMP "WESTERBORK".

Full reports about the origin of W'bork are in the archives of the JDC. I amongst others had been most violently opposed to its erection because I believed then, and still believe, that the 1½ Million Guilders - all Jewish money - which had gone into the building and equipment of the camp and the large sums which were monthly needed to pay the salaries of the (non-Jewish) Dutch officials there as well as the maintenance of the refugees would have been amply sufficient to emigrate all but a very small number of its inhabitants. - However, those opposing the scheme (also in Parliament) had lost in the struggle - W'bork was built - close to the German frontier - and in May 1940 housed about 800 Jewish refugees. During the few days of the war the refugees were evacuated to Leeuwarden - but the Dutch authorities insisted on all of them returning to W'bork after the capitulation. Some of them had by then been there since November 1939; from that date on and in the same measure as W'bork was nearing completion and as other camps were needed by military authorities the refugees (also those who had "illegally" entered Holland) were increasingly concentrated in W'bork so that in February 1940 nearly all other camps (except children's homes) had been liquidated. Once in W'bork, no difference was made between "legal" and "illegal" refugees.

It is perhaps interesting to record here a particularly tragic incident which took place when the Germans came to the camp situated in "Hoek van Holland" in May 1940. This camp housed a number of German deserters and 60 "illegal" Jewish refugees. It was in charge of Lieutenant de Haan who later for some time became second commandant in W'bork under Captain Schol. Lieutenant de Haan, when delivering the deserters to the Germans, did not make it clear that amongst them were German Jews, so that these unfortunate ones were taken to Germany with the deserters. This had been a camp for men only and some of them had families elsewhere in Holland. Naturally the excitement and subsequent anxiety were intense. Eventually however, after many months, miraculously these German Jews returned to Holland and were interned in W'bork. (As far as I know, Lt. de Haan was later on suspect politically).

The Dutch camp commandant was Captain Schol - a man of uncertain temperament but, as far as I can judge, no friend of the Germans nor of the N.S.B. His wife who (until the German occupation) took an active interest in the children's work in W'bork, was definitely anti-Nazi; his brother, however, who came to W'bork from time to time, later became pro-Nazi; I mention this because Schol - who was not a strong man - was subjected to both these influences; moreover he suffered from malaria and there were times when his treatment of the German refugees was almost unpardonable, whereas at other times he showed every consideration.

It has been laid down in old reports how and why it was that the Government and not the Refugee Committee was responsible for the food; granting of leave; assigning of work, etc. But it is necessary to stress this point once more because much that happened later was due to the fact that the "original" camp inhabitants (who came to be generally known as "die Alten Kampinsassen") were embittered to an incredible degree against members of the old refugee committee and - later - the "Joodsche Raad". I too believe that probably W'bork would not have been built if Prof. Cohen and General Praag (Medical Officer) had fought against it instead of for it. But I personally later often asked myself whether it was not, after all, a good thing that W'bork existed as it did when the deportations started. For by then it was run by Jews, a practice which was never

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altered, whereas, for instance, the camp which the Germans established in Vught was put immediately under the S.S. and was terrible. And the fact that all those about to be deported generally had at least a week respite in W'ork made it, after all, possible to do some things for them in the way of equipment, parcels of food for the voyage, etc. As it was also possible to retain Jews in W'ork (which, however, did not interfere with the number which had to be delivered per transport) it was, unfortunately, also the source of much of the corruption there.

After May 1940 a German commandant took charge of W'ork. In the beginning there were several changes in the appointments but from (I believe) about October 1942 and certainly until July 30th, 1944 (after which date the camp was, I am told, liquidated) Obersturmfuehrer Gemmeke was commandant. Next to him Captain Schol continued to work until, I believe, November or December 1942. (About this date I am uncertain). His position was very difficult. He was not the man to handle it and unfortunately it was Captain Schol (and not the Germans) who was guilty of actually beating Jews on a few occasions. To my mind it is necessary to remember this as the chances are that the Dutch Government, after the war, may again try to entrust to him the management of some camp or other, anyhow, Captain Schol has been known to express this wish.

Whereas until May 1940 the "Alte Kampinsassen" ("A.K.I.") were free to walk about, got leave to go to Assen frequently and also from time to time to Amsterdam, after May the camp was immediately closed with barbed wire, watchtowers were built and manned, and the "village atmosphere" which the Dutch Minister responsible for the building of W'ork had aimed at (and which unfortunately never had or could have been achieved with inhabitants who were there against their free will) was definitely changed into a "camp atmosphere". The camp was run entirely by the "A.K.I."; later even a Jewish police force was recruited mainly from amongst them (the "O.D." - "Orde Dienst"). This point cannot be sufficiently stressed because this was the root of much of the trouble - hatred, corruption and indefinable dangerous undercurrents which later made W'ork, when it housed for a short time as many as 17,000 but for a long time never less than 10,000 (mainly Dutch) Jews, and when it became the centre of the deportations, the hell it was.

To my mind, though I fully shared and realized the physical hardships & the filth, the indescribably bad hygienic conditions of W'ork - it was the lack of "morale" (in every way) and -of course - the weekly recurring tragedies of the transports which made W'ork so terrible.

The "A.K.I." became, through the circumstances described above, to some extent the commandant's "own Jews". They were housed decently in the original buildings - private rooms with water, W.C. and central heating; young unmarried people sometimes in large square rooms accommodating about 20 with 2-bed tiers but still with all the above conveniences, with plenty of room for luggage and the possibility of cooking on electric plates, etc. etc.

Whereas in May 1940 800 people had been in W'ork, this number was slowly increased to about 1500 as the remaining camps and children's homes were forced to send the refugee inhabitants to W'ork. As this camp had originally been designed to house about 2,000 people with ample room for school, synagogue and a small hospital, there still, at that time, was no overcrowding. The camp food, which had been bad under Dutch management, actually improved after the German occupation; no restrictions were enforced regarding the receipt of mail, parcels, etc.

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At about this time, Mr. Curt Blueth commenced his work as representative of the Amsterdam committee in W'ork, and put his whole considerable energy and resourcefulness at the service of those interned there. He spent a great deal of his time in W'ork and both he and the Chief Rabbi Levisohn did much for the internees.

The representative of the Amsterdam committee was allowed to go to W'ork freely and I personally continued to visit the camp from time to time although I had handed over the camp department to Blueth. Pressure of work never had in the past - and certainly did not then - allow me to give the camp inhabitants the personal attention to each single "case" which they had a right to expect. Blueth did this in a manner unparalleled before. Until January 1942 the camp remained thus the place in which German refugees were interned - a community kept fairly closely together against their wish but in a comparative security and comfort. Although later this group of "Alte Kampinsassen" enjoyed by far the greatest measure of that feeling of "security" which all other Jews had completely lost (excepting the "protected families" of Asscher, Prof. Cohen and Sluzker and a few other protected groups described at some length in the general report) and although they lived in a comfort which we - housed in the dreadful large barracks - could only envy - the animosity of this group towards Dutch Jews generally and members of the former refugee committee and to a still greater degree members of the "Joodsche Raad" was intense. We had been free at a time when - before the war - they had already (to their mind wrongfully) been interned. Although the longest period of internment under Dutch rule was 17 months, in most cases very much less, to them it appeared that the Dutch Jews (not the Dutch Government but the Jews) were responsible for the internment extending now, due to the war, over many years. It was difficult to make them understand that all Governments had created refugee camps and had determined the way in which they should be managed; that at the time of their entering Holland the "legal refugees" had, when still in Germany, signed an undertaking to go into a camp; that the illegal ones and the San Louis passengers had gladly accepted camp rather than a return to Germany - they did not wish to recognize this. Moreover, all of them had wished to emigrate, and while this had been possible for many, they, the remaining "A.K.I." had not succeeded. They had not got away while others had and this was, so they asserted, the fault of the Jews. For me, of course, the trouble was that, although I could not but share their views as to the original foundation of W'ork, to some extent I also saw the point of view of the Dutch Government. However, whether they were right or wrong, the "Alte Kampinsassen" had been interned for 4 years and longer by the time the first Dutch Jews arrived; were then in possession of all the good jobs in W'ork; had practically the unchecked right to send people to Poland or to keep them in W'ork; were, because of the unparalleled corruption, living in real luxury; suffered from camp psychosis and proceeded to use their power. To show how sometimes they used this power to "revenge" themselves against members of the "J.R.", I should like to mention the following happenings:-

When, on September 29th, Prof. Cohen and Abraham Asscher with their families were also brought to W'ork they were accommodated in the large barracks the same way as everyone else. Notwithstanding the fact that I was their political opponent, this made me (and I know with me many others) most indignant. After all, Prof. Cohen and Asscher had been for many years before the war at the head of the Dutch Jewish Community. Prof. Cohen had from 1933 on put every moment of his spare time at the service of the refugee cause. Both of them were no longer young men. To my mind the only possible behaviour would have been for the influential

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Jews in W'ork to point out to the commandant that these two people had to be given a room. It is true that the commandant, when Prof. Cohen had visited the camp previously, had always treated him badly; it is true that the commandant had appointed 4 young men of no consequence at all to be the representatives of the "J.R.", when dealing with him, but I feel certain that, if the position had been properly presented to the commandant he would not have objected to their being more comfortably accommodated. It was certain that the group of "A.K.I." enjoyed subjecting these heads of the "J.R." to this indignity. After a short time, on account of an order from the German S.S. in Amsterdam, Prof. Cohen and Abr. Asscher were each given a room. Dr. Sluzker and his family had, in a like way, been given a two-room accommodation almost immediately after their arrival. If this shows the pettiness of the "A.K.I.'s", the following episode serves to show how dangerous they could be.

In the big raid on June 20th, 1942, amongst many others, Bruno Imbach and his family consisting of wife and two very small children had been brought to W'ork. Imbach had for many years worked in the Emigration Department and had been the connecting link with the American and other Consulates regarding the obtaining or verification of visa. Personally I think that due to his good relationship with these functionaries and his general ability he many times succeeded in procuring a visum where others might have failed. Evidently, however, a small group of "A.K.I.'s" believed that it was through some fault of Imbach that their overseas visum had not been given and that they had not got away in time. When he arrived in W'ork, Imbach was immediately put on outside work like digging, etc., whereas generally speaking it was usually managed that officials who had been so long connected with the Jewish work as Imbach did not work in the beginning and were then given an administration job. Imbach, however, was made to turn out for work the morning after his arrival and the next thing I heard was that he was on the transport list. I was then in Amsterdam and I and many of us immediately approached Prof. Cohen about this, pointing out that Imbach was one of our oldest and most capable officials. Prof. Cohen promised to do all he could but the next we heard was that Imbach and his family had been sent away with the very next transport. The only thing that his old friends and colleagues like Gruenberg and others who now had influential positions in W'ork managed to obtain for him was to have him made transport leader so that he could travel in a compartment instead of in a cattle truck. They did not dare really oppose the "A.K.I." who were responsible for this. They must have been very influential indeed. They were by then except for the above-mentioned reservations practically the only ones who were, as a group, protected against deportation. Until quite late - the autumn of 1943 - even the parents and other near relatives of the "A.K.I." could be, and were in fact, detailed in W'ork and eventually - when this was no longer possible for all of them - they were sent to Theresienstadt in ordinary trains ( and not in Poland in cattle trucks). Only once in July 1942 were about 300 young men from the "A.K.I." sent away with the very first transport.

When the deportations started in July 1942, the character of W'ork changed radically. Dutch Jews and others poured into W'ork by the thousands; were herded into big barracks which had been built for the purpose and deported from there to Poland. These barracks were, in the beginning, not at all (and later, insufficiently) lighted and heated. These barracks, accommodating normally from 400 to 500 people, were divided into two parts, separated by a small square room which served for the distribution of bread, etc.; one-half was reserved for men; the other half for women; people were freely allowed to go into each other's section until 9:30 at night when men were supposed to leave

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the women's barrack and vice versa. There was no special dining room; the food was either consumed on the beds or on long wooden frames put up on both sides of the barracks between the beds at regular intervals. The beds were iron frames, 3 tiers high, with thin straw mattresses, always 12 in one block, the beds being twinbeds. If one of these 12 turned over, all the frames shook. People sleeping in the lowest or middle beds could not sit up properly; there were no cupboards of any kind. As everybody could have as many possessions as they liked (parcels with food and clothing being allowed) the state of the barracks may easily be imagined: everything hanging on the walls, standing on the beams, dangling from lines, being piled onto the beds etc. Cooking was not permitted but was, all the same, freely done on small portable camp-stoves which most of us had with us. Cooking on the two wall stoves (when lighted in winter) was allowed: this was invariably the place where fighting occurred. At both ends of the barracks was a washroom with taps and cold running water and one - one - W.C. This was separated from the washroom by a straw mat only. As the other lavatories were a little walk from the barracks (24 in rows without partitions) this one W.C. was used all day by the sick people, children and after dark as well as in the early morning by all the people sleeping in a barrack room. At 6:00 o'clock in the morning invariably a long queue would wait their turn. The stench and condition was by then, of course, already unbearable. No wonder the dreaded camp sickness resembling dysentery was spreading and attacked in turn practically everybody living in those barracks. Other infectious diseases - particularly jaundice, diphtheria, scarlet fever - were prevalent. Once admitted to hospital the patients were fairly well cared for as there were enough good doctors (also eminent specialists). By the end of 1942, the W'bork hospital contained the largest number of beds of any hospital in Holland. When for the first time on October 2nd 10,000 Jews arrived in W'bork within 24 hours (W'bork housed in those weeks 17,000 ! Jews), several large barracks were converted into hospital barracks; there were then times when everything the patients needed (but never drugs or medicines) were lacking so that special drives had to be made for sheets, blankets, basins, thermometers, etc. etc. Due primarily to the really superhuman efforts made by Blueth and the Department "Hulp aan Vertrekkenden", an organization newly created after the deportations began, as well as the great organizational powers of the manager of the hospitals, Dr. Fritz Spainier, all these difficulties were overcome in a very short time; and although the hospital (beds practically everywhere 2 tiers high) was comparable only to a field lazaret, the treatment the patients could and did receive was adequate.

When it was no longer allowed to bring Jewish patients to Groninger for operations, a well-equipped, modern operating theatre was built in W'bork; the treatment of surgical cases was excellent.

The mortality in W'bork was fairly high; particularly old people who were brought to W'bork after many emotional and physical hardships often did not survive the arrival for long. I was told reliably that the children's mortality was also higher than in the rest of Holland but figures are not available. Ear infections among children were very prevalent. Many children who had never known a day's illness before coming to W'bork were always sick there. There was a special children's hospital with good specialists; milk and special diet for the children were available. Yet this hospital, always with some small nameless children (found by the police and brought to W'bork for deportation) was one of the most depressing sights. To me, who through living there intimately knew life in the big barracks with its unspeakably filthy conditions, it seemed a marvel that there were children (and grown-ups) who were actually well.

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The work was not too heavy; but branches of the work which had been started in W'bork in special industry barracks protected the workers against deportation and there the work was done fairly steadily; in most other jobs, "lijatrekking" (idling) was the order of the day. In the offices (particularly a few days before transports) the employees worked very hard, often all through the night. Particularly in the "Antragstelle" of which Dr. Ottenstein was the head, they realized that the life of a person depended on whether or not his papers were handled quickly and efficiently; the work there was done with the utmost devotion. Generally speaking, there was an 8 hours' work-day, with Saturday a half day and a free Sunday. In some branches, like kitchen, laundry, sorting of peas, etc. the work was done in 2 or even 3 shifts. It was the desire of the German commandant to make the camp self-supporting. After several visits by an S.S. officer from Berlin, conditions became much more stringent (also work hours) but that was not until much later.

By the time I left in March 1944 most people were working hard from 7 in the morning until 7 at night with one and a half hours for the midday recess; it had become difficult by then to receive exemption from work; all extra allowances on food had been cut down or stopped; parcels which could and did arrive in unlimited numbers until about November 1943 were rationed to 2 kilos in 4 weeks for each member of a family and to 2 kilos in 6 weeks for unmarried people. Letters could only be sent from W'bork one each in 4 weeks and replies received only on special answer-forms attached thereto - so that, by the time I left, W'bork was assuming in an ever-increasing degree the form of a "concentration camp". Only the fact that a number of people were still allowed to go to Amsterdam (Blueth, Sluzker and perhaps 2 or 3 others), while returning for a visit to their families in W'bork fairly regularly, constituted a link between W'bork and the outer world. By that time control of luggage, etc. even of those privileged people had become so stringent that practically none of them dared take clandestine letters or parcels. Still, we received newspapers regularly and there always was, up to the last, a chance to send and receive urgent clandestine messages while the contents of the English broadcast were known daily more or less correctly. Also right up to the last there was a black market in commodities like butter, bread, sausage, eggs; the victuals destined for the camp inhabitants were stolen, "organized" and sold at a profit, thus for instance the patients in the hospital never got the milk allocated to them nor the other rations they were entitled to. Small groups of people continued to be highly privileged and to live in luxury and, generally speaking, since by that time all the "unprotected" had really been transported, the living conditions in W'bork were - even at the beginning of 1944 - fairly good for those that remained; they belonged to the better situated ones who still received parcels; the "A.K.I."; or to those who "organized" victuals really belonging to the whole camp.

However, all this is really later history. As mentioned before, W'bork until July 1942, was a Jewish refugee camp - inhabited by about 2000 people with complete self-government, the German and Dutch commanders as well as the guarding Dutch Marechausse (rural police) being very little in evidence. In July 1942 however, the deportations started and W'bork was the centre from which they took place. Until October the transports went to and left from Hooghalen and the Jews had to walk over an hour to and from the camp, the road being often strewn with luggage which proved too heavy to carry. By October 1942 the narrow gauge branch railway constructed by camp inhabitants was ready and the transports were brought to and left from the centre of the camp. By that time W'bork had been extended. Eighteen large barracks as described above had been constructed for general purposes and 5 for additional hospital accommodation. One

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barrack was always used for the so-called "S" ("Strafe" - punishment) cases. People were sometimes sent there with an "S" who never even knew what their offense had been. Or they were sent there for buying fruit or for buying at the wrong hours or for walking in some places prohibited to Jews or, as a matter of fact, for any of the hundreds of offences a Jew could hardly avoid committing in the general course of just living. Mainly, however, the population in the "S" barrack consisted of those found with false papers in hiding. It was always possible to get a few of those released into the general camp and thus save them from transport for a more or less long period. This was done with the help of some of the influential Jews in the camp either because of some special service for the industries in the camp (delivery of machinery), etc. or other payments, but generally speaking, these "S" cases were always sent to Poland and provided the first and most stable "material" for the transports. The treatment in the "S" barrack was quite humane but it was not easy to shirk work. After repeated and successful flights had taken place from the "S" barrack they had to wear special blue overalls marked conspicuously in red and their own clothes were taken away until such time as they left for Poland. The men's heads were shaved. They were allowed to receive parcels both from the general camp and from outside. Visitors from the camp were allowed. As a matter of fact, it was easy to communicate with the "S" people. The number of its inhabitants of course changed. In January 1944 there were more than 1000 in that one barrack and conditions were insupportable. A second barrack was prepared but before it was taken into use a Poland transport had already emptied the "S".

The use the large barracks were put to varied constantly in accordance with the number of people then in W'ork, the exigencies of the "industries", etc. All this necessitated a constant changing from one barrack to another, invariably a matter of great concern to those who had then to move into other already crowded barracks and, naturally, got the worst accommodation. By the end of 1943 this changing had assumed such proportions that I, for example, had to move three times in two weeks until I was finally (without my asking for it) by way of a great favour on the part of a few influential "Alte Kampinsassen" accommodated in the Old Age Home, also just a large barrack, but still with beds of 8 tiers only and, generally speaking, cleaner, quieter and less crowded. There I remained from February 1944 until I left on March 15, 1944.

From August 1942 the registration of Jews who were sent to W'ork was done by officials of the "Joodsche Raad" in W'ork and therefore necessitated a large number of employees living there permanently. The so-called "Advisory Department", which later developed into the before-mentioned "Antragstelle", of the "Joodsche Raad" also opened in W'ork. The registration department was then under the management of Mr. de Hoop and the advisory department under that of Mr. Eduard Spier; until Mr. de Hoop was sent to Poland (I believe in the beginning of 1943) in connection with some trouble resulting from his former film business and Mr. Spier left for Barneveld in the spring of 1943, these two together with Dr. Sluzker formed a kind of Board for W'ork. This, of course, complicated matters there further as the "A.K.I." were very jealous not to lose their "power". Moreover, the employees of the "J.R." had to be housed properly (at some sacrifice on the part of the "A.K.I."), office accommodation had to be found and, greatest provocation of all, these employees enjoyed, amongst others, the very much envied privilege of "regular leave" which was, with the few exceptions of business trips, entirely denied even to "A.K.I.".

From August 1942 the practice was that Jews arriving in W'ork

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were registered by employees of the "J.R." in the former synagogue which had been converted into a registration hall; they then passed on into another office where Lippmann-Rosenthal took their last money, valuables, etc. and subjected them to a sometimes very searching interrogation. (Lippmann-Rosenthal, the former well-known Jewish bank, had been reorganized by the Germans into the official organ for the confiscation of Jewish property; this bank had also sent a few German and Nazi employees to W'ork).

The Jews who were able to remain in W'ork for a shorter or longer period used the always crowded office of the advisory department for assistance in the collection of papers which might be deemed sufficient to keep them in W'ork. The Dutch commandant, whose influence until he finally left was, however, negligible, much preferred, of course, to deal with the original camp inhabitants whom he knew; the German commandant never became reconciled to the presence of a group of people not directly subjected to his jurisdiction and refused to have more than the most necessary contact with them, always preferring, and in conflicts helping, the "A.K.I.". Some modus of cooperation was finally found between the various Jewish sections but until the last, when the "J.R." was greatly reduced in the summer of 1943, relations were difficult between the various sections of the Jewish "ruling" classes. The only person whom it did not affect at all was Blueth. He continued to be a favourite with the "A.K.I." and the camp commandant and one of the few persons who practically always had access to him. Blueth continued to buy material both for the Jews and the commandant. After the German occupation W'ork was financed directly either by one of the former Dutch governmental departments or by the Germans. This I do not know; the money may later also have been taken from Jewish funds deposited with Lippmann-Rosenthal. In any case the things ordered by the commandant and procured by Blueth were not paid for by the Jewish Financial Commission. On the other hand, expenditure in connection with W'ork remained, right up to the end, one of the heaviest items on the "J.R." budget because when people were brought there by the thousands, often without more than they happened to be wearing at the time, it devolved upon those still free, as one of the most urgent duties, to see to it that these people left well-equipped and furthermore each furnished, on leaving, with a food parcel. The "Hulp aan Vertrekkenden" (which I directed) gave personal assistance and collected worn clothing only, whereas Blueth's department bought new outfits and food. The distribution was made in W'ork by the so-called "V" department, likewise nominally under Blueth's responsibility but practically run by W'ork inhabitants. The usual charges of corruption and preferential treatment were made against this department. I do not know to what extent they were true; it is a fact, however, that "A.K.I." could and did get freely all sorts of things from the "V".

On the 29th September the whole Barneveld group, about 700 people, were likewise brought to W'ork. Some of them came without any luggage and some with just a few suitcases. They had been given very little time to pack and had been told that their belongings would follow. They did follow. A number of O.D. (with - I believe - a few Germans) were sent out to Barneveld to clear up and load everything into special trucks. After some time these arrived in W'ork. The victuals had practically all been stolen. Of their own personal belongings like underwear, linen, clothes, etc. only a very small portion was given back to the Barneveld people. Most of it was sent to the "V" for general use in W'ork. It happened that a friend of mine went to the "V" for a dress because she had nothing to wear and saw her own dresses hanging there, but had to be satisfied with an old rag because her own dresses were refused to her. The furniture - some of it beautiful antique - was handled in such a way that pract-

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ically everything was damaged. It was loaded into a barrack which was specially emptied for this purpose. After that the houses of the Germans and Nazis as well as of those influential "A.K.I.'s" who wished to avail themselves of this opportunity were furnished with Barneveld stuff.

The collection of books which had been in Barneveld, where a great number of prominent intellectuals had been interned, had been magnificent. Part of this library containing very valuable collections on special subjects remained in Barneveld and somehow got lost. A large part was sent to W'ork and unpacked there and arranged into a library which, according to the commandant, was to be used for the W'ork inhabitants afterwards. It contained many thousands of precious books. Some of the people working in this library were from the Barneveld group and thus allowed to handle but not to extract their own books. Then suddenly when the arranging of the library was nearly complete, some high S.S. officials from The Hague saw it and ordered all the books to be sent to The Hague. The people who had been employed there - all intellectuals - were just put on to outside jobs.

To show how low the morale had sunk in W'ork I would like to mention the following incident: One of the O.D. boys who had been sent to Barneveld was engaged to one of the Wieringen pupils. She came to me and showed me a pair of beautiful shoes and a leather belt which her fiancée had "organized" for her in Barneveld and asked me how I liked them. I just looked at her and said, "Do you realize that what you call "organizing" is really theft and do you realize that many of the Barneveld people are without shoes at present? If I were you I would go straight to the Barneveld barrack and give these up" - which she did. Neither the boy nor the girl had stopped to realize what they were doing. The general idea was that if Jews don't take it the Germans will and it is better that we should have it. Quite small children used to come back into the barrack with something or other and proudly tell their parents that they had "organized" it. When a friend of mine was given a broken watch by somebody to take home to his little boy to play with, his son asked, when he handed it to him: "Father, where did you "organize" it?" The child was three years old. I often used to wonder how are we ever going again to instill into our children even the most elementary idea of right or wrong. The "V" department employed, however, quite a number of Dutch Jews, and also of German Jews, who were not "A.K.I.". Blueth, as time wore on, made many - also influential - enemies. He was amongst other reasons violently attacked from many quarters because he continued to procure things for the commandant personally, which were difficult to obtain in the free market. But I personally am of the opinion that he did so against privileges for the Jews in W'ork and not for personal gain or privileges. (That he was given a good flat when his family was brought to W'ork on September 29, 1943, was only fair, seeing the enormous amount of work he had done for W'ork). Yet I am afraid that Blueth - who is a naturalized Dutch citizen - will belong to the group of people who will probably be called upon to defend their conduct during the occupation. If so, I hope I shall be there to defend him.

By far the most influential man in W'ork was Curt Schlesinger - a German refugee. His wife had been secretary to Dr. Wachtel, who directed the Emigration Department in W'ork before the war. Mr. Schlesinger very soon helped Wachtel; he was an excellent organizer and as far as the organization of the various departments was concerned, it would have been difficult to improve upon them. The "machine" in W'ork never broke down, no matter how heavy the strain. The German commandant very soon put him at the head of all the Jewish work (with the title of "Oberster Dienst-

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leiter"). Dr. Schlesinger looked and behaved like an S.S. man. He had, of course, his friends; he always respected the privileges of the "A.K.I." He was corrupt and used the influence he had to enrich himself and to protect those with whom it seemed to him advisable to keep on good terms. If a girl was pretty and Schlesinger happened to come into contact with her, there was a way for her to be saved from transport. If she remained unwilling to give in to him, she was sent to Poland. His vanity was excessive; he wanted to be asked and to distribute favours. To illustrate this my own story may be told. Many people in W'ork, even from amongst the "A.K.I.", thought it nothing short of scandalous that I, who had worked for German refugees since 1933 was accommodated all the time in a big barrack and often Schlesinger was approached about a room for me. He invariably refused because he wanted me to ask him myself; now I did not want either to ask or to receive a favour from Schlesinger, and thus remained in one of the big barracks during the entire period. (For accommodation in the Old Age Home - it being also an ordinary big barrack - the consent of Schlesinger was not necessary). When I was sent away from Holland I did not ask Schlesinger to try and retain me, nor did I say goodbye to him. He denounced this violently and it was the only time that Schlesinger did not - when a transport was leaving - go along the train to say goodbye to some people or for a last "inspection".

In the early days of the transports Schlesinger took the most prominent part in the making up of the transport lists and was manifestly responsible for many of the crimes that were committed. Later, when he saw what a dangerous job this was in view of a future in which the Germans after all seemed to be the losing party, he did not take such an active part in this special work but remained the most potent and the most dangerous influence behind the scene. The lists were then actually made up by a Dutch Jew, Bromet (formerly with the Byenkorp), Fried, and Aschkenes, the two latter "A.K.I.'s". Later, from about the end of 1943, the commandant and even The Hague controlled the making up of the transport lists in an ever-increasing degree so that it became more and more difficult for even the most influential Jews in the camp to retain people who wither individually or as belonging to a certain group were marked down for transport to Poland, Theresienstadt or Bergen-Belsen.

The second man in command was a baptized German Jew - a former journalist - Heins Totman. He was not as dangerous as Schlesinger, because he was more frequently kindhearted, was less clever, but quite as corrupt and very susceptible to feminine charms.

I have already mentioned Dr. Frits Spanier (a refugee from the San Louis - an "A.K.I.") who was at the head of the whole Health Department and the hospitals in W'ork. An exceptionally capable organizer; a kindhearted man, an old Zionist; - he did what he could for people. He saved often for many months people by taking them into hospital and keeping them there virtually in hiding. His influence with the commandant was great and I personally know that he often used it in order to save from deportation people whose past Jewish activities made it seem "just" that they should be saved. He will certainly be accused by many of accepting gifts (and there is no doubt that he did so), but he was not corrupt; if he saw the merit of a case he would go to any length to help - uninfluenced by the possibility of personal gain. He lived well but not excessively so. He did all in his power to help bring about a better understanding between German and Dutch Jews and the Dutch doctors who worked under him invariably spoke highly of him. Up to February 1944 when the hospital was almost liquidated he could and did put his vast department to help where he could; he often even managed to get girls or women out of the "S" barrack by saying that he was short of nurses and using them as such in his hospital. Once admitted into hospital, either as a

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patient or a worker, he generally managed to save them. Sometimes this was impossible. Thus, for instance, in the summer of 1943, 50 patients who had had an "S" originally were sent away from hospital as a reprisal for the flight of one or two people from the "S" barrack. Then again in January 1944 an organization was detected which used to get clandestine letters out of the camp; the hospital was largely implicated and it was impossible for him to save those involved; but even then he managed to save from deportation to Poland two Dutch doctors who had been sent to the "S" barrack in connection with this letter business. One of them was eventually sent to Theresienstadt and the other to Bergen-Belsen.

In February 1944, after the already mentioned visits of a high S.S. official from Berlin, the order came to reduce the hospital to a very small nucleus of the existing complex and to send away practically all patients and a large number of the employees, irrespective of the manner in which they were protected, with the exception of the holders of Palestine certificates mentioned on list 1 or 2, baptized (non-Catholics) and Barneveld people. It was possible - again with Dr. Spanier's connivance - to save a few people but generally speaking, the hospital was cleared of patients that night. It was probably one of the worst transports, consisting of many hundreds of sick with a large sprinkling of sufferers from such infectious diseases as diphtheria, scarlet fever, open t.b.c. Dr. Spanier had been uneasy about the fate of his hospital for some time and when, at the end of January, a Theresienstadt transport was leaving, he had already seen to it that many of the patients and some of the nurses and other staff with a long record of service were included in this transport.

When speaking of influential people in W'ork whose conduct will probably come up after the war before some court or other, the names of four people must be mentioned who had come to W'ork with the employees of the "J.R.", namely Gruenberg, Hanauer, Heineman and Eckman. Although having held quite unimportant jobs they had been selected by the commandant to act as representatives of this organization in all dealings connected with "J.R." business, and somehow they remained, forming the so-called contact commission. The commandant had evidently come to accept them as part of his own machinery and they became quite influential. There is no doubt that they enriched themselves vastly by accepting payment for keeping people out of transports and by other methods. The four of them had worked with me for years until July 1942 when I resigned. Frits Gruenberg - a good worker - had for years been secretary to Dr. Moser. He had been a nice boy. He, as well as Hanauer, had been absolutely penniless, yet they lived like princes in W'ork. I know from a reliable source that the food parcels they used to send to their families from Amsterdam cost around 1000 Guilders weekly. Eckman perhaps and Heineman certainly had had means of their own. I think it possible that Heineman was the only one of the four whose conduct can bear looking into. Hanauer was a naturalized Dutch citizen; the other three were Germans.

Other "Dienstleiter" (heads of departments) were Samson, who managed the labour exchange, and both Mr. and Mrs. Stein who were in charge of the barracks and the housing department respectively. Favouritism reigned supreme also in these departments, but I cannot say whether or in what degree they were "buyable". Very influential but for some reason evidently undischageable was "brother Gottschalk" who was the head of the nursing staff; a baptized Jew - homosexual - he played a sorry role.

Very prominent was Dr. Bial, who had come voluntarily to W'ork when the camp was first opened in order to work as a doctor. He was absolutely incorruptible and everywhere commanded the highest respect.

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The same holds good for his son who held quite an important post in the information department, being chiefly responsible, together with Mr. Izaak de Vries, for the work in connection with the Palestine certificates. Neither the young Bial nor de Vries had much influence but they did their work with a high degree of efficiency and without the slightest attempt to obtain personal gain of any kind.

Very influential - also with the commandant - was Dr. Hans Ottenstein who had come to W'ork in February 1942 from Hilversum and therefore was counted amongst the "A.K.I.". He was at the head of the already mentioned "Antragstelle", a very important information department; this was constituted of some remnants of the former "J.R." Information Office but had since been put under the jurisdiction of the commandant; it had become important in connection with the verification of the various stamps, papers proving Aryan descent, mixed marriages, baptism etc.; as well as Palestine certificates which gave exemption from transport. Dr. Ottenstein's position was such that he might easily have become a second Schlesinger or Totman; but his integrity was beyond any doubt and I think that literally not one single person will be found who has gone through W'ork who would not be willing to testify to this. He, Dr. Bial and Dr. Wachtel (the camp "uncle" who was eventually sent to Theresienstadt in January 1944) were the exceptions to the rule.

Dr. Ottenstein, Dr. Bial and Dr. Wachtel used such influence they had - and in the case of Dr. Ottenstein it was considerable - entirely for the good of the community. Dr. Bial as head of the Polyclinic was responsible for procuring exemption from work, part time jobs and extra food, in which capacity he might have made any amount of money or received presents; he used to live almost too frugally. Each in his own sphere did much to promote goodwill between Dutch and German Jews, because - all of them being German - they were highly valued and respected by the Dutch Jews in W'ork.

I have spoken of people at some length. But in doing so I feel that I have given incidentally a very good picture of W'ork life. If I now try to describe the commandant and his way of living this will practically complete the picture. I have never spoken to him, but I know from Blueth and others who had regular contact with him as well as from observation that he was invariably courteous and did not allow his subordinates (whose names I have forgotten) to ill-treat Jews in any way. It was said of him that he sent people on transport with a "smile". He lived like a minor potentate. He had his court physician (Dr. Spanier), his own barber, his own manicurist, his own masseur, his own chauffeur. Two jewellers worked for him and his friends, being allowed leave to Amsterdam to buy (on the black market) gold, etc. The workshops in the camp made for the commandant and his friends the most beautiful leather wares, furniture, etc. The dresses of his woman friend were made by one of the leading dressmakers who got leave for the purpose of buying dress materials in Amsterdam and who eventually was sent to Theresienstadt when the "friend" had been transferred to The Hague. (Incidentally, for a little while her place was taken by a girl who had come to W'ork with her mother married again to a Jew. This girl of a first Aryan marriage had been "Aryanized" but continued to live in W'ork. After her "promotion" the (Jewish) stepfather became a very important and very unpleasant figure, until he too was sent to Theresienstadt. I am mentioning this only to show how involved were the conditions).

The commandant founded an orchestra and commanded performances and programmes obliging certain "Dienstleiter", other prominent Jews

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and their ladies to be present. He had his court jester (Max Ehrlich) who had, together with other stars (Rosen) to create a revue (the first revue cost about 25,000 Guilders to produce; the money being paid as all camp expenses; either directly from The Hague or from the Jewish funds deposited at Lippmann-Rosenthal).

A second revue was produced but did not run long because about that time in the winter of 1943 all gatherings were prohibited for about 6 weeks on account of an epidemic of infantile paralysis.

The first nights of any performances were always attended by the commandant, the other German officials and many guests as well as by those Jews in power in W'ork who were requested to attend; after that the performances were visited by all the other camp inhabitants but the commandant usually came at least twice a week. After these performances he generally ordered a few "A.K.I." (generally Schlesinger, Totman, Dr. Spanier, Max Ehrlich) to continue in his company and amuse him.

I never saw these revues or other cabaret performances but the whole camp was always singing the most popular tunes, one of them,

"Immer langsam, immer langsam  
Immer mit Genuetlichkeit  
Wir sind noch nicht soweit"

(referring to a love scene in the revue) always being interpreted in W'ork to hint at political developments. In the first revue such well-known artists as Camilla Spira (who afterwards left because she was declared Aryan) and Chaya Goldstein (who left because she was married to an Aryan) and Rosen, Auritsch and Lisl Frank were given parts.

Later, when visits from the S.S. in Berlin had made W'ork less "genuetlich", also for the commandant, he refrained from having other than business contact with Jews.

On Monday nights and on nights when transports arrived from Amsterdam or Vught, there were no performances because the room was needed for registration and the typing out of transport lists. Vught transports generally arrived Monday night and those Jews were generally sent through en bloc, efforts being made in W'ork to procure for them at least a minimum of clothes, underwear and food; for they generally arrived without anything. Sometimes it was possible to detain a few sick people, a few holders of special papers which had been deposited in W'ork, but generally speaking, Vught delivered "transport material" for immediate use. Amsterdam "Material" was sorted out. The "S" barrack was generally emptied completely - those that had been able to get rid of the "S" and disappear in the general camp generally had been given a chance to do so between transports. If neither Vught nor the "S" barrack nor what Amsterdam sent as "unprotected material" was sufficient to deliver the ominous thousand on the ominous Tuesday, people from W'ork, either individuals whom it had been possible to retain so far or some group or other which up to now had been protected and for which the commandant had the authority to annul the "safety stamp" had to go. (In May 1943, after the big raids in Amsterdam when W'ork housed 17,000 people at one time, 2400 were sent away weekly for a few weeks).

As explained in the general report, a very large number of people were held back in W'ork on declarations signed by me to the effect that their names had been sent to the Swiss Government on a Palestine exchange list and that they were expecting a certificate shortly. This declara-

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tion had been sufficient to keep the holders in W'ork, particularly after the arrival of the first and second certificate lists from Palestine showed to the German authorities that this exchange business was serious and that Palestine was actually sending certificates. However, some time, I believe in August 1942, when in W'ork the proportion of those holding my declaration to those actually being in possession of certificates was about 900 to 300, there was a transport shortage in W'ork so that at the last minute some group or other hitherto protected had to be sacrificed. It was at such times that the underground struggle began, the "A.K.I.'s" fighting for their, their families' and friends' rights, others again for certain groups etc. Anyhow at that time the commandant still had the right to rescind the protection to those Palestine holders who were not actually in possession of a certificate and that night about 400 people with Palestine papers - many of them old good Zionists - were sent away. After that, in November 1942, those Palestine certificate lists which had not been confirmed for exchange from Berlin (that is, all except the first and second lists) were affected and about 100 holders of Palestine papers were sent away; and the third time these papers did not hold good when all the patients from the hospital were sent. Then again only those on the first and second lists were exempted. Quite frequently when there was such a shortage of transport material the orphanage was sent because these children, many of them found in hiding and with unknown parentage, offered the least line of resistance.

On Monday night no revue for in the same hall typewriters were busy writing out for each barrack the transport list. At 3:00 o'clock in the morning from Monday to Tuesday each barrack leader was in possession of his list. The names of those who were to go on transport were called out (in some barracks - and when there were not too many - the barrack leader used to call the victims individually and softly), and then a feverish activity would begin, the barrack management collecting food and articles of clothing; friends and acquaintances of those to leave helping to pack. Tears and sometimes hysterics - invariably on the part of those who stayed behind. A wave of generosity swept the barracks; anything asked for was given immediately and given gladly; people who yesterday had, and a few hours later would again, quarrel for the sake of half a potato would give away half a pound of butter. The lights were on; nobody slept; practically everyone helped in one way or the other; many tried at the last minute still to rouse influential friends on their own or others' behalf. If they succeeded, people from the "reserve", who were always called up, had to go; if the "reserve" was not needed they came back and only then generally broke down. As a rule, people left with an almost incredible degree of docility and, even for Dutch Jews, an incredible amount of optimism. Invariably the last words one heard were: "Denk er aan jullie halen ons terug" (Remember to fetch us back quickly). When the people had gone, a wave of despair swept over the barrack. Half an hour later people were quarrelling over the possessions left behind - "He promised me...", "she told me that...", I gave them...". Most people tried still to get a little sleep, for until the train left with a shrill whistle at 10:30 nobody was allowed to leave the barracks.

When a transport was leaving it was the habit of the commandant with his German second in command and Schlesinger, Totman and Dr. Spanier to walk along the length of the train for a last inspection. It was then sometimes possible still to get somebody released and this was indeed a saying because if somebody was allowed to leave the train at the last minute nobody else was put in his stead. In one transport

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there was, out of the "S" barrack, an ex-Wieringen girl who had been working for some time as a nurse but whom it had no longer been possible to save. She was very attractive and we told her to try, at the last minute, seeing that she had nothing to risk, to talk to the commandant personally and see what could be done. The scheme succeeded and on the plea that she belonged to the "Hachscharah" and had only gone into hiding out of childishness, on the strength of her personality she managed to get free and to leave the train. The commandant proceeded on his inspection trip and came to the kitchen (which was alongside the train) where a girl was sitting whom it had been possible to get out of the transport because she was a niece of Prof. Cohen. When asked by the commandant what she was doing there, she said that she had come to W'ork that night with an "S" transport from Scheveningen because she had been in hiding but had as the only one been allowed to stay behind. The commandant got furious when he heard this and ordered the girl to get into the train, and at the same time that the one girl was crying from relief at having been saved at the last minute, the other was breaking her heart because while thinking she was free she was once more put into the train and carried off.

Tuesday night - revue or bridge or may be a gramophone concert of classical music in one of the "houses" or - anyhow an ordinary evening with nerves relaxed. Wednesday the same. Thursday the camp atmosphere started to become tense once more and the transport list of next Tuesday was the general topic. Would enough "material" come from outside? If not, which "safety stamp" would no longer hold? One of the industries? One of the groups (i.e. parents of "A.K.I.")? The Palestine list? The air was thick with rumours. Leakages were numerous and it was easy to find out who was on the first draft transport list. Then, strings were pulled, visits paid, secret transactions made, etc. etc. I learned my lesson soon after I came to W'ork. With me had come all the heads of the department of "Hulp aan Vertrekkenden"; three of them, all men with families, who had done a tremendous lot of work for W'ork, had no special stamp and were on the transport list. These district managers of the "Hulp aan Vertrekkenden" had, night after night, worked amongst those taken out of their houses for transport, helping them pack, doing last minute messages for them, often seeing that their children were still able to "go under" etc. Furthermore, W'ork had always turned to "H.a.V." when they badly needed clothes or other things and had never been disappointed. This we had been able to achieve to a great extent only because of the great courage and devotion of those in charge of the various districts. And W'ork knew this - yet they were on the transport list. Some very prominent workers of this department had already been sent to Poland in July 1943, before I came to W'ork, and I was determined this should not happen again. I went to the above-mentioned Frits Gruenberg who had - after all - formerly worked for me for years and who knew how I valued devotion to work. We discussed it; he assured me they would not go. On Monday night I went once more to the offices of the "J.R." and was assured I need not worry; F.G. showed me their names on the "exemption list". It was a pitch-black night. I remember because I fell onto the rails from the embankment; the train was already in the camp. I thought now that I am probably dead nobody will tell them that they are safe. After a while, when I found that I was neither dead nor hurt I went into the 3 different barracks and told them. I remember adding: "This is W'ork; I can't say it's 100% sure, but I think it is 99%". During these last 14 months of work exclusively on behalf of those about to be deported, I had shared with my co-workers many a moment of despair - rarely a moment of pride at something difficult achieved; now I shared their feeling of relief. I went into my own barrack - underwent

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the not yet familiar agony of a "transport night", always at the back of my head the thought: "At least W'ork is keeping them" -- and in the morning found that all three had been deported...

I went to Gruenberg - livid. They said, "It was a question of the 'protected' list or some children who came from Vught that night ill." I did not answer - I don't know whether it was true. I know I did not believe them; I thought "business, not children" - but I could prove nothing. I went away only determined never to ask again - never to believe again.

Transports continued to leave W'ork; sometimes to Theresienstadt in ordinary trains, and although that too meant often parting from those dearest and nearest, still it was not so bad. In January and in the beginning of February large transports left for Bergen-Belsen; also in ordinary trains and - particularly the first one - full of hope and expectation as to a possible exchange; in between, cattle trucks to Poland - W'ork was getting empty. And yet a new shop was opened where one could buy almost anything; many things which had long ago disappeared from the open market. Those buying for the shop were given leave to go to Amsterdam if they left family behind to serve as "guarantee" for their safe return. The shop was run by "experts" - those prominently connected with the shop were "safe". A new revue was "on". Curt Gerron had a number; it did not please the commandant. It was scrapped but Gerron of "Beggar's Opera" fame was sent to Theresienstadt and not to Poland. W'ork was getting emptier; and more nervous; the commandant was more in evidence; at one time it would be the Barneveld group which enjoyed his special attention, the men being thereupon made to work much harder. Then again some other group. Parcels and post were restricted; the black market more careful; more expensive and not as well provided. (When I left in March I bought with difficulty 4 pounds of butter at 32 Guilders a pound and cigarettes (rubbish) at 15 Gl. a packet of 20). It was more and more definitely asserted that only Barneveld (70<sup>0</sup>), the baptized barrack (about 300) and about 1000 people necessary to run the camp would eventually remain. A new "thousand" list was being made. Business was brisk. People were on and off the list quite irrespective of their jobs.

I had been promised exemption from B.B. transport until after the 15th of February because of my work in connection with the Palestine exchange.

When a transport was leaving on March 15, Amsterdam did not extend the exemption because by then nearly all holders of Palestine papers had been sent or were leaving in March with which was supposed to be the last Palestine transport to Bergen-Belsen. In W'ork nobody believed I was going; but I did not want to pull any strings in W'ork. The Amsterdam final refusal came so late that I had barely time to pack and take leave of the many friends I left behind. I knew I would find good friends too in Bergen-Belsen who would be glad of my coming. But I hated to leave Holland. I thought the invasion could not be far off in the spring of 1944 and I had made all my preparations for a get-away in case W'ork should be liquidated - as we expected it would be - after an Allied invasion in the West. I thought I could do it then without fear of it causing reprisals... and now I had to leave Holland. I had always believed in an exchange for a very limited number of people only. (Up to the summer of 1943 a secret agent of mine had visited the Swiss Consulate in Berlin and always came back with the same answer. The exchange is not off but there are very few exchangeable Germans). But in the spring of 1944 I believed in an impending invasion in the West and thereupon a "technical"

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CAMP "BERGEN - BELSEN".

I arrived in Bergen-Belsen on the 16th of March, 1944, after travelling for 36 hours in a crowded third-class compartment containing 8 people and an indescribable amount of luggage. To this day it is a marvel to me how old people in our transport - for instance an old uncle of mine with whom I was travelling, 87 years of age - survived this trip. We were given no water nor any food on this journey and only once was the Jewish leader of the transport permitted to leave the train to procure some water for the babies. Fortunately however most people had sufficient food and flasks of water with them so that the hardship in this respect was not too great. We travelled in a very roundabout way via Oldenzaal - Osnabrueck - Hannover, both of which towns seemed to be nothing more than a mass of ruins - a gruesome sight and to us - to such a pass has mankind come - a source of rejoicing.

We arrived in Bergen-Belsen and were met by S.S. people with drawn bayonets and large police dogs. We had to march for about two hours to the camp in pouring rain, very old and sick people as well as the luggage being taken there on lorries.

The camp was the most dismal place I have ever seen. It was a picture of barbed wire, S.S. guards, watchtowers every few yards and again barbed wire. The most awful thing, however, was the change I noticed in those who had left W'ork only a few weeks earlier in good physical and mental condition. The first transport from W'ork to Bergen-Belsen had left on the 11th of January, 1944 - about 1000 people; the second on the 1st of February, 1944 and the third on the 15th of February, 1944, each consisting roughly of about 1000 people, so that none of them by the time we arrived had been there longer than two months and others as short a time as four weeks; but already the men looked emaciated, ill-kept, cowed - a shadow of their former selves. The change in the women was not so great but they too looked very different from what they had been.

We were not allowed to speak to anybody but we could see our friends from a distance, always of course through barbed wires.

Our transport was put into quarantine and because it appeared that we had 3, fortunately very light, cases of infantile paralysis, we were kept in quarantine for 5 weeks. This was regarded as a bit of luck, because during that time we were not forced to work.

I arrived in Bergen-Belsen suffering from 'flu and I remember that after I had been standing there for several hours in the pouring rain looking at the dismal surroundings and through barbed wire at our friends busy at some job or other, I clutched very tightly my most precious possession - the small box containing the cyanali. I don't think I was as near to taking it at any time as I was on that day.

As we had several invalids and sick people in our transport one of the barracks had to be fitted up as a temporary hospital. Because after a few days I developed a temperature of nearly 39, I was put into this hospital but after 3 days suddenly we had to change to other barracks and the occupants of the emergency hospital who could as much as stand on their feet were made to walk across to the new quarters. As always in Bergen-Belsen, this meant standing about for hours as we had to be counted at least six times, always in rows of five. It was again pouring with

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rain and when I finally got into my bed I was very ill indeed, the doctor afterwards telling me that he was sure I was in for pneumonia. These new barracks were very much worse than the first ones, being old horse stables which had been converted somehow for the accommodation of 300 Jews each. The hospital had one W.C. which was for the first ten days out of order. It had one bedpan, perhaps 3 basins to be used for washing the patients in the morning, and generally speaking, there was no equipment whatsoever. Men and women were lying in the same room without any partitions. I must confess that, despite my illness and the depressing aspect of the whole thing, when I woke one morning and found that my immediate neighbour in the top bed across the passage was the Chief Rabbi Levisohn, I could not but laugh, I asked him whether he had ever imagined that he would sleep with me and he had to confess that it was as startling an experience for him as it was for me.

As I have already said, in this same emergency hospital men, women and children were all put together, the six children of the one family, 3 of whom had infantile paralysis and the 3 others being admitted for observation, being isolated by leaving one row of beds free between them and the rest of us. A diphtheria case was, until it was finally admitted into the isolation barrack in the big camp, lying amongst us for several days.

I spent most of these quarantine weeks in hospital because I made a very slow recovery, but on the whole these weeks were bearable. People had still a certain good reserve of food they had brought from W'bo'rk to supplement the very poor Bergen-Belsen fare; they arranged language courses or sports etc. The Germans were, of course, very much in evidence and it was then that we were initiated into the secret of "Bettenbau" which was to become such an important part of our lives for the whole time we lived in Bergen-Belsen. Also we were counted every morning in rows of 5, but we did not have to stand as long as was the case with every roll call in the big camp, where on two occasions, when the counting had not been right, the whole camp had been made to stand for 9 and 10 hours respectively, without a break, in the bitter cold. However, the daily routine of Bergen-Belsen is so well described in a report which was recently sent to me by Helmuth Mainz, that I think I can save myself the trouble of giving a description here. With his permission I am enclosing an extract of this report in the hope that opportunity will be found to have it translated. I should like, however, to say that this report exaggerates nothing. As a matter of fact, the "douching" described in it, was, if anything, worse in reality and the many hours of standing we had to do daily was for women much harder to bear than Mainz makes it appear to be.

Mainz describes the food etc., but I should like to be a little more exact: as a matter of fact, the rations the inmates were entitled to consisted of:-

350 grammes bread of doubtful and varying quality, daily;  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  litres of soup daily (in reality the quantity given varied because of unavoidable waste, theft, etc. from 1 litre to 1 1/10 litre);  
This constituted the midday meal.  
60-75 grammes margarine weekly;  
Furthermore, at night a spoonful of skimmed milk cheese, or jam, or herring salad or thin gruel soup or rhubarb;  
every morning either 'coffee' (!) or thin gruel soup.

Until May 1944 children under 3 years of age were given daily rations

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of white bread, milk, some sugar and - I think - porridge. Nursing mothers likewise received extra food. In May 1944 - quite suddenly - all extra rations were stopped so that even babies - in cases where the mother could not feed them - only received the above-mentioned general camp rations. These represented a calory amount of about 1500, the calory deficiency daily being therefore about 1000 for people who did no or light work; and, of course, much more for the men and women who worked hard physically.

There was a great deal of illness, and the mortality was high. Children were in better health than they had been in Westerbork, because for children up to about 12 or 13 years the food was sufficient, and the air was rich in ozone, the camp being surrounded by large forests. In the summer, when the deficiency in vitamins was not so serious, children had, generally speaking, more or less all they needed. Also during the summer months the food given was richer in vitamins, the midday soup consisting frequently of 'spinach', only half cooked and therefore the richer in vitamins, and in the evenings sometimes a spoonful of rhubarb was given instead of salad etc. Also at some time onions were used to such an extent that the whole camp for weeks reeked of them - but though repulsive they were nevertheless healthy.

If the war should last through this winter I am afraid that both grown-ups as well as children will be in a very bad state of health; because of the before-mentioned deficiency in calories, vitamins, drugs, and the very primitive hospital arrangements the mortality would be bound to be appalling.

When I worked in the "shoes" I used to marvel how the really indescribably filthy latrines we had to use became for some women a kind of social club; I shall never forget how a few French women who were there because their husbands had been interned as prisoners of war since 1940 but who - some of them - arrived with quite small babies, used to do a good trade there, exchanging bread and other eatables against lipsticks, rouge and perfumes. Most of these girls were really of Polish extraction, and nothing better than 'tarts'. The few really French girls were charming. One of the French "ladies" used to dance and sing during the douching performance, both she and her audience not wearing more than a wedding ring at the utmost - and one or two S.S. men in uniform going in and out yelling or blowing their whistles. Altogether there were not many French women and children, but they certainly added a good deal of 'colour'. So did the group of Jews from Benghazi who had come from Italy. About forty of them worked in the same barrack as I did in the shoes; I remember once weeping with laughter at the scene which ensued when the Jewish overseer wanted two of them to help clean the latrines; they refused. Then the higher Jewish 'boss' came and reasoned with them; they refused; then the much feared Greek "Secretary of State for Labour", 'Beppo' came; they refused. Finally one volunteered but was not allowed to go because he 'working' anyhow, two of the lazy ones were supposed to go. They said if they had to do this work the Germans would have to tell them... until finally really the German, being attracted by all the noise of the argument, turned up, and they went. All this in 'Spaniolit' or Hebrew with a great deal of flourishing of knives (our work instruments) etc.

When it comes to a Jewish 'reckoning' the two Greek Jews who sort of acted as 'minister' and 'secretary of state' for labour, will have to be dealt with under the category of Jewish criminals. Their conduct was absolutely disgraceful, and because of them the life of the Jews in

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Bergen-Belsen was much harder than it would have been if these two had not acted as they did. I really mean what I say; that they were criminals. In a camp like Bergen-Belsen the attitude of one single Jew in a responsible job could make a world of difference to all of us. Thus, the fact that a man like Eli Dasberg (brother of the Chief Rabbi), because the Germans had somehow taken a liking to him, was put into a very responsible job (barrack control etc.) made life in many ways more bearable. He showed understanding and courage in his dealings with the Greek "Judenaelteste" - Albala - and the Germans, and was, of course, of an unassailable integrity. His name deserves being mentioned in the annals of this chapter of Jewish history, and I hope that he will survive to accept some really important post in Jewish work, his capacities as well as his character being an assurance that he would go far.

Albala, of course, is altogether beyond the pale. The only one who might really have done some good work, being 'Judenaelterster' and in constant attendance on the Germans whom he alone of all the inmates of the camp was allowed to address without their having asked him a question - Albala never used his position to better conditions for us; he was worse than a German satellite. I have seen with my own eyes that on two mornings when there was control at the morning roll call as to the stars being properly sewn on, he pulled out a few Jews whom the Germans had overlooked -- all those who were found to have untidy stars were of course punished in the usual way (standing for hours, and/or deprivation of bread rations etc.).

The name of Albala will for all who have been under his sway arouse feelings of contempt, hatred, or impotent rage - according to temperament. He was assisted by a so-called 'Judenrat', a few men, amongst them Marinus Kan, the former president of the Netherlands Zionist Federation, and a few other Dutch or Greek Jews; but they had very little influence when compared to Albala and the before-mentioned "Beppo" (whose family name I cannot remember) and Edgar Cunho, "Edgar" being the worst of all - unscrupulous, corrupt, really a "bad egg". Most of this Greek group were men of doubtful past as to their activities in Saloniki. But of this, of course, I have no first hand information. A Greek called 'Sion' was supposed to have been a German informer in Saloniki. The head of the hospital, Dr. Bromberg, a baptized Dutch Jew, likewise did not make the use of his position which he might have made had he possessed more courage and less selfishness.

Definitely, however, a first rate man in every respect was the surgeon, Ahaluf. The former representative of the Hicem, Alphonse Levy, had a good reputation, while the judgment on Koretz, the Chief Rabbi, was divided.

As regards the actual numbers in Bergen-Belsen, I am repeating here part of the report I gave to Mr. Viteles when he left for New York:

In Bergen-Belsen there were three Jewish camps: the so-called "Albala-Camp", where I had been interned; the "Schneebaum-Camp", and the Barrack 10 complex. The names "Albala" and "Schneebaum" being those of the "Judenaelteste" of the respective camps; Barrack 10 was not always in use; it often served as quarantine, and I was there for the first four weeks after our arrival and then again for about five weeks when the Palestine candidates were segregated from the others. When we left there were about 300 to 400 people in Barrack 10, but I have no reliable information about them. In the "Schneebaum-Lager" there were

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about 1000 Jews, mostly Poles with either South American passports and/or possibly Palestinian papers. This information is not reliable. On June 30, 1944, there were certainly about 250 Jews who had arrived from Yugoslavia and who held other papers in Barrack 10. They were in a very bad condition. All the data given below refer to the "Albala-Lager" only:-

Inmates with Dutch nationality.....	1380
Stateless.....	1320
Double nationality (Dutch-English).....	600
Paraguay (either Dutch or stateless).....	180
English.....	270
Ecuador (either Dutch or stateless).....	150
Honduras ( do. ).....	80
Haiti, San Salvador, Peru etc.(either Dutch or stateless)....	50
	<u>4030</u>
Greeks.....	70
French women and children.....	<u>100</u>
	<u>4200</u>

These figures may be taken to be fairly accurate. About 1200 of the 4200 inmates held Palestinian papers. There was, moreover, a small group whose Aryan descent had not been definitely established, a group who held the so-called 120,000 stamp (either bought or given because of good foreign relations), people connected with the diamond industry (about 170 including women and children †), people holding Paraguay etc. passports etc. The 270 'English' were Jews from North Africa (Benghazi) who had been interned in Italy and who had now been evacuated to Bergen-Belsen; all these groups are, of course, included in the above nationality statistics and are not additional.

As is known, my stay at Bergen-Belsen came to an end when the first group of 220 people were exchanged, leaving Bergen - Belsen on July 1, 1944. As regards the trip to Palestine, I am attaching a copy of the report which was submitted by the transport leader to the official of the Swiss Government who accompanied our transport and which report I had helped to draw up in English.

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†) The diamond people only came to Bergen-Belsen as a group in June 1944. They were housed in a special barrack. They were subjected to the general camp discipline but did not have to do outside work. Some time after their arrival the husbands and wives were called to the commandant and severely cross-examined separately. After that they were sent back to their barrack. A few days later some of the men only - most of them representing former big diamond interests - were called again to the commandant collectively. They were not allowed to discuss the nature of either the first or the second proceedings. A little, however, leaked out. Apparently they were told that it was intended to open a diamond industry in Bergen-Belsen and they were expected to deliver the raw material. It seems that they were promised all kinds of facilities (for instance, special barracks in the woods near the camp outside the barbed wire proper etc.), whereas on the other hand they were threatened with deportation in case of non-compliance. As raw diamonds could naturally only be found out of black hoardings, it may be easily imagined in what a

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terrible dilemma these people were. They had endless conferences with each other and finally submitted a memorandum, the contents of which none of the outsiders knew. When we left the whole question was still undecided. The diamond people were still in their special barrack and no changes had been made.

Among the 170 people were a number of diamond workers. Of the big diamond interests the family of Asscher was not represented. This may be due to the fact that the Asscher factory continued to work in Amsterdam. I only know that certainly until the end of May 1944 the eldest son of Abraham Asscher was actually in Amsterdam in connection with the work. I do not, however, want to suggest that this necessarily meant cooperation of the Asscher concern with the Germans. As a matter of fact, I know nothing at all about the terms, etc. Whether or not the Asscher factory continued to work under the management of the family or whether this was discontinued I do not know. In Bergen-Belsen rumours were current that the last Jews still working in the factory had also been brought to W'ork, but I had no means of verifying this.

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TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

Extract from a report on the  
"AUFENTHALTS - VORZUGSLAGER (Privileged Camp)  
BERGEN - BELSEN"

(written by Helmuth Mainz)

Our departure for Bergen-Belsen was set for January 11th. The train, consisting of 11 passenger cars, arrived at the camp a day before. We were allowed to carry with us an unlimited amount of luggage and Hfl. 250.00, or the equivalent in Reichsmark, per family, which was an advantage over those leaving for Poland on transports. The camp did not provide us with extra rations for the trip and we had to feed ourselves as best as we could. Since our supply from Amsterdam had been rather sparse during the past weeks, unfortunately we had to leave without any provisions worth mentioning, whereas a part of our fellow travellers took with them whole suitcases full of foodstuffs. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the loading of the train began. The Jewish camp police called for us at the barrack, our luggage was loaded on wheelbarrows, and we proceeded for the street from which the train had to be boarded. There was a tremendous crowd because more than 1,000 persons departed with us. My mother was brought to the train in the so-called "ambulance" which, however, was not especially equipped for that purpose.

We were scarcely able to secure seats as in addition to 10 passengers, a huge amount of baggage was stuffed into our compartment. In the corridors the baggage was piled up yards high so that in order to reach the toilet we had to undertake veritable mountain climbs. As a farewell number of SS officers, among them being the camp commandant, and the Jewish officials of the camp appeared on the platform. Around 6 o'clock - night had already set in - the train began to move. Our feelings were mixed. Although we were glad to be getting out of Camp Westerbork, parting from Holland was rather hard on us, particularly since we were stateless and feared that re-entry into the country after the war might involve great difficulties. I personally was glad to leave. Apart from my conviction that our exchange would actually materialize, I did not consider it unwise to get out of reach of the authorities in Amsterdam and the Hague because my conscience was not too clear in regard to the case still pending before the Foreign Currency Control Commission.

Occupied with such thoughts we finally crossed the German border, which I had passed in the opposite direction nearly 10 years before. During the night - I did not sleep one wink - we passed through Leer, Emden, and Oldenburg. It was full moon and we were able to see the countryside clearly. We were on the lookout for bomb destruction, but were not able to discover anything at that time. We approached Bremen around midnight. The suburbs were already severely afflicted, and in entering the harbor districts we passed through veritable heaps of ruins. We found whole blocks reduced to ashes, ruined houses lining the railroad tracks, and wherever we turned our eyes we found destruction. Thus we had visible proof that not only a cow, a church or a cemetery had been hit, as we had been told in the Dutch papers, but on the contrary, a large part of Bremen had apparently been turned into a cemetery!

Slowly we rolled through the relatively undamaged central railroad station of Bremen; our journey into the unknown continuing. Around 2 o'clock we stopped at a large freight railroad yard where we remained until dawn.

When dawn approached, our train was shunted off to a branch line, and we then proceeded slowly through the glittering winter landscape.

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Finally around 8:30 we were in Bergen - an isolated station with a wide platform. To receive us a large number of SS men had appeared with rifles, some of them accompanied by likewise not very friendly looking shepherd dogs. The doors were flung open and following the "Friendly" command "out with you", we climbed out of the cars, rather tired and sleepy. We were then ordered to fall into rows of five, a command which we were given more often than daily bread during the following months.

Our column, surrounded by armed SS men slowly set into motion. Old and sick people - my mother among them - were loaded together with our baggage onto trucks covered with canvas. Our escorts were taciturn and it was impossible to obtain any information out of them concerning our future residence. On our way we passed one large modern barrack after another. The whole area seemed to have been transformed into one huge military camp and training ground. Large factories and workshops seemed to be concealed in the woods where we saw a number of smoking chimneys and heard the noise of machines.

After a trip of nearly two hours our procession left the main road. We passed high watchtowers, low military barracks, grey buildings and sheds, and then entered the camp. We were fenced in by rows and rows of barbed wire. It was our impression that we were herded into a zoological garden with many cages, and we soon were to discover that our life in the camp indeed resembled life in an animal cage. We passed a turnpike, a guardhouse, barracks, sheds, and more barbed wire fences. Suddenly, behind a high barbed wire fence we saw familiar faces, - people from Westerbork who had left there with a transport destined for Theresienstadt a few months before and which apparently had stopped here. An exchange of greetings was harshly interrupted by our guards. (Note: These "Theresienstadt people" left Bergen-Belsen for Theresienstadt a few weeks later. GvT).

Finally we stopped in an open space; we had to line ourselves up in five long rows, one behind the other, and then we were counted again and again. Of course, that did not go smoothly because the count did not tally, which caused the SS men to become very furious and excited. The lowly SS men, in the meantime, had been joined by a number of officers, some of them looking smart, others martial, who regarded the "Children of Israel" with unfriendly and critical faces. The officers themselves remained rather passive and had the roll call taken by the non-commissioned officers, called "squad leader" and "first squad leader" in SS language. After having stood for hours our names were finally called and a detailed file card was then filled out for each of us. We could then look for a bed in one of the barracks. There were separate barracks for men and women. They were smaller than those in Westerbork, and contained wooden double-decker beds shaped like boxes which were filled with sacks stuffed with paper and wood shavings. In every barrack there was one day room equipped with tables, benches, small cupboards and also with a cylindrical iron stove in the center of the room. My wife and the children were accommodated in a barrack similar to mine, with the exception that it did not have a washroom. They had to use the washroom of an adjoining barrack, which procedure was very disagreeable in cold, rainy weather. In the meantime our luggage had arrived and was piled up on the mustering ground in neat rows in true Prussian military fashion. We had to select our own luggage from the pile, which was rather a cumbersome and time-consuming job. Fortunately, our fears that our meager possessions would be taken away from us were unjustified. We were allowed to keep everything, but for lack of room we had to store large pieces of luggage in a large baggage room, which we could enter any time. We had to deposit all money we carried with us

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to be credited to the canteen account, but since there was no control, I preferred to surrender only a small part of my cash.

Our appetites and fatigue had increased considerably in the meantime. At 6 o'clock in the evening large wash tubs, called "Kamellen", were carried in at last and each of us received a bowl full of thin cabbage soup and some bread. We were rather depressed. Although we had not expected too much of Bergen-Belsen, we did not think that we would be transferred to a place closely resembling a concentration camp and which was under direct SS supervision. The many barbed wire fences and the numerous watch towers manned by SS men gave a considerably more unfriendly impression than did the Westerbork camp, not to speak of the many SS men roaming around in the camp, which we never saw in Westerbork. The food was also a great disappointment. In the evening some acquaintances in the Theresienstadt transport visited us in our barrack. They told us that their transport had unexpectedly stopped here in October, supposedly because of overcrowding in Theresienstadt. They had to work 11 hours a day, but found the treatment bearable. In addition to this Theresienstadt group there were in the camp 75 Greek Jews from Saloniki who because of their advanced age, were accorded preferred treatment by the Germans. A little more reassured but dead tired we went to sleep. The next morning began with reveille at 7 o'clock, washing in the primitive and badly illuminated washroom which had broken window panes and a broken door, then breakfast consisting of watery soup and bread, followed by the roll call which involved hours of waiting and yelling. Despite the icy weather everybody, including women, children and old men, had to wait until the arithmetical problem of tallying the number of persons present with the figures on the lists was solved. A few sick people, among them my mother, were permitted to remain in the barracks and were counted there. Under the impact of depressing impressions my mother suffered a nervous and physical collapse and only with great difficulty was I able to have her admitted into the so-called "hospital" which lacked even the most primitive equipment, to say nothing of medicines and dressings. The physicians and nurses who had come with us did everything they could to the extent that they were given the opportunity, but it took weeks until the hospital was furnished even with the most necessary equipment. (Note: the hospital remained more than primitive to the last, drugs, etc. being practically unobtainable - G.v.T.). For the time being all medicines, dressings, nursing and other equipment had to be collected from camp inmates. As a matter of principle the patients received the same food as the other camp inmates and an additional ration of milk cereal or soup was granted only for a few. It is no wonder then that my mother's physical and nervous state became worse every day, especially since our small food provisions were exhausted within a short time and we were no longer able to prepare supplementary food for her.

Working Day in Bergen-Belsen: I am on "Kamellendienst" i.e. together with other people of my barrack, I must get the morning soup from the kitchen which means getting up at 4:30 a.m. It is pitch dark in the barrack, because the poor electric lighting is switched off during the night as a defense measure against enemy planes, and is turned on again only between 5-6 a.m. Still completely drowsy, I reach for a box of matches to light a candle - a great luxury - with the help of which I grope through the narrow corridors to the washroom. The barrack is overcrowded, since new transports have meanwhile arrived from Westerbork. Clothes swing ghostlike from bars across the ceiling of the barrack; the air is stuffy and stale, snoring and all other kinds of human sounds coming from above and from below. I wash myself as well as possible in a place where broken windows and a smashed door let in the ice cold wind.

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I dress somehow, donning overalls and windjacket, and an automobile cap which had seen better days. I race to the camp gate as fast as the darkness permits. The ground is soaked because it has been raining and snowing for weeks. After running 200 meters I reach the inner camp gate. I can make out the ghostlike figures of about 100 comrades who are illuminated by the searchlights of a nearby watch tower. These comrades were assigned to the same work as I, and we now have to wait at the barbed wire fence until the group leader on duty appears to open the gate and to accompany us to the kitchen located on the other side where the "delicious" morning soup is being prepared. From our waiting place, we can peek through the open door of kitchen No. II where the soup is being stirred. The kitchen personnel consists of a chef who is assisted by Jewish men and women internees. The waiting people start a lively discussion on the quality of today's soup and of the lunch. Will it be thick or thin, barley soup or porridge, made of turnips with potatoes, or will we be very very lucky and perhaps even get pea soup? In spite of the excited discussion we do not forget to look out for the group leader, the coming of whom is signaled by red lights. Finally a bicycle approaches, a man in uniform gets off. We stand in rows of five, caps off, silent, and rigid. The gate opens, we hurry to the kitchen which we enter in groups of five, "encouraged" by the shouting of the chef and by occasional light kicks we take 4 "Kamellen" large soup pots and out we go into the darkness, over the uneven ground, through pools and holes, dragging the containers across the street behind the barbed fence. There the containers are put down four in a row, like Prussian grenadiers. When all have arrived, they are distributed to the various barracks. First comes the women's barracks. I succeed in being assigned to the group supplying my wife's barrack - (my wife has meanwhile become leader of barrack 20). Five of us take the four "Kamellen" and hurry through the dark. The precious soup spills over during the trip, and we feel it hot on our hands and legs. Gasping and swearing, we finally reach the barrack's door. One last effort is needed to carry the container up the few steps and put it on a bench which serves as a bar. Now we are in the women's quarters. Most of the women, old, young, fat and thin, have just gotten out of their beds and are trying to dress in the gray dawn. The children cry, the women grumble, the air is stale intensified with the smell of the soup. I greet my wife who is already completely dressed in her blue skiing suit, and who, a big ladle in her hand is trying to calm the excited women and children, who are yearning for the morning soup, and to get them into line. She has hardly any time for me, but as the happy husband of a barrack leader I enjoy the exceptional privilege of receiving a tumbler full of soup. I gulp it down, hurry to the dormitory to the beds of my children and then rush back to my own barrack. There things have become lively in the meantime. Everybody is getting up, the washroom is terribly crowded with half-dressed, sweating and cursing men. In the day room, the soup is being dishd out, the men sip it with smacking noises, there is much talking and yelling. In one corner of the room, men clad in talis and phylacteris have assembled to pray and listen to the reading of the Torah. The voice of the cantor is hardly audible in the general clamour. The persons who have claimson the seats presently occupied by the devout men are impatiently awaiting the end of the services. Finally the morning prayers are finished; a hurried last Kaddish and the Torah, Talessim and Tefillim disappear, the synagogue is again transformed into a refectory. I settle down to eat my soup and my carefully divided bread ration. Since I had been on "Kamellen" duty, I do not have to await my turn in the long line of people waiting for the morning soup which extends through the whole room.

After a few minutes I have finished my meal, wash out the bowl in the washroom, where some men, most of them old, and the children, who do

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not have to appear for work call, are still dressing. Hurriedly I go to the latrine situated at the farthest end of the mustering ground. This place which has a capacity of 40, is already well attended at this hour of the morning. There is animated discussion, of course, on the subject of food, the morning soup, the dinner, jam and cottage cheese; politics play only a minor role. I am happy to leave and rush in the direction of the mustering ground.

In the gray light of morning, I discern already from the distance throngs of people increasing from all sides. Coming closer, individual shapes become visible - unshaven, emaciated faces, badly fitting dirty clothes, wooden shoes or heavy boots. There are very few men in this crowd who still have the semblance of gentlemen. The women generally take better care of their appearance, their faces are not as haggard, powder and lipstick do not seem to be used up yet, multi-colored shawls and kerchiefs give a more cheerful impression. Here again topics of conversation are mainly the morning soup, dinner, bread ration, jam and cottage cheese, intermingled with some politics and camp gossip. Suddenly there is the sound of the whistle and accompanied by his aides, the oldest camp inmate appears, Mr. Albala. He is a chubby but agile Greek Jew, born in Belgrade, brought up in Vienna, educated in Holland and who resided in Saloniki. "Attention" - the order is heard from all directions, and slowly and reluctantly the human mass falls into rows of five in the prescribed manner forming a huge rectangle which is open on the side facing the camp gate. Mr. Albala with his aides scurries back and forth, counting, recounting, because, of course, the count is inaccurate. They yell and argue. Then suddenly another signal - everything quiets down, the SS marches in. First appear small formations totalling about 20 men, with rifles and dogs who take positions at the outer side of the barbed wire fence facing the road. Then the higher dignitaries appear, part of them on bicycles, part on foot - the "Hauptscharfuehrer", a Bavarian who shouts much and does no work; then the very unpopular work leader who has the rank of group leader, a fanatical Nazi, vicious and cruel, who as a war invalid is entrusted with the distribution and supervision of the work, and who is a special favorite of the "almighty" camp commandant. Two of the dignitaries get their bicycles and approach our formations. Mr. Albala and his aides unctuously hurry to meet them as we stand silently and bare-headed. The "Ober group leaders" Heinz and Fritz make the roll-call; Heinz, in his middle fifties, a veteran soldier from the last war and a party member since 1923, resembles the characters pictured in the Simplizissimus of the period of the reign of Queen Wilhelmina. He is scraggy, has glassy eyes, his figure is a little deformed, he is clad in an ancient uniform with large patches on the seat. He reviews the formations, not forgetting to direct a few words of an anti-Semitic or obscene nature to anyone who is not exactly in formation or who committed the crime of forgetting to remove his cap. Fritz, also a party member of long standing, is chubby and looks kindhearted, goes through the same routine with another group. In the meantime, Heinz approaches the women. He criticizes their line-up, and their chattering and yells at some of the women who, for various reasons, try to shirk work. Mr. Albala also receives his share because of the insufficient attendance. Finally we are ready to march off. The commands "right face" and "forward march" are given and we start in the prescribed order. First comes the staff of the Jewish canteens, then the women who have the desirable assignment of working in the SS canteens, then the artisans - shoemakers, tailors, bricklayers, locksmiths and carpenters, - then the outdoor detachments, such as road construction workers, lumber workers, railroad

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yard workers and freight loaders, and finally the large mass of "foot commandoes". The main group leader, Hauptscharfuhrer, with his staff of Ober- and Unterscharfuhrers Block and Rottenfuhrers - the whole scale of ranks of the Third Reich's black guard - await us at the gate.

For every one of these gentlemen we have a nickname; "the red miller", a vicious sadist whom it is best to avoid, "Wilhelm Tell", the "Zaehl" (Tell in the Dutch language), in charge of roll call, "Luebbe" and "Fammer", specialists in the field of bunk construction, "Herzog", the ruler over all latrines, and some other prominent personages. While marching past, we are again counted by the SS Zaehlmeister as well as by the Jewish elder and his aides. "Friendly admonitions" to keep our mouths shut, etc. which the group of SS dignitaries at the gate gave us are silently acknowledged. Marching in irregular step (how could we, men and women, march in Prussian goose-step?) we are led by the camp ~~side~~ by Heinz and Fritz between barbed wire fences to our place of work. We pass by our kitchen, and our speculations as to the next dinner are prematurely ended. Already 50 yards against the wind, the unmistakable sweetish smell of turnips is still perceptible. Thus the dinner no longer holds out any temptation. Meanwhile we reach the fence separating the work and clothes distribution barracks from the rest of the camp. Heinz and Fritz take position at the passage, and while slowly filing through, (we are in no hurry to get to work) we are counted once more like a precious herd whose shepherd is fully aware of his responsibilities. Finally we arrive at the work barrack of the shoe detachment. It is a shed of about 150 meters long with 10 compartments resembling stalls. Its walls are painted a dirty green for camouflage. Everybody hurries to the assigned compartment because Heinz stands behind us ready to accelerate our pace with a few kicks. We are in a still sparsely lit room measuring about 15 meters in width and 20 meters in length. Our coats are hung up against the whitewashed walls. We climb over the low roughly built tables to our places. Hardly recognizable in the dim light of dawn are heaps of old dirty shoes. It is our task to rip the uppers and to remove and separate such valuables as sweat-spoiled linings, shoe laces, etc. The youth of the Third Reich had gathered these mounds of shoes with great devotion.

We, the working slaves, are to produce precious material for the manufacture of new shoes. Heinz and Fritz explain to us again and again the importance of our work and watch us very closely, so that we do not cut or waste this valuable leather. Threats and occasional face-slapping, with holding of bread ration, kicks, standing enforced for hours at the wire fence during the lunch hour or after work, are the punishments meted out by our guard to drive us to work. We are about 100 men in the hall; nobody is working yet because we have to wait until it gets light. However, everyone takes an old shoe or a piece of leather in his hand so as to create the impression that something is being done, which is just as important as the actual work. We converse in low voices, while Heinz and Fritz, who also supervise the other halls, are out of our room. During this time, the foremen, mostly Greeks who have been in the camp for a long time, have to see to it that there is silence and order.

Before sitting at the working tables for ten minutes, we discuss food in all its variations and from all angles; what we eat, what we will eat for lunch, for dinner, to-morrow, etc. Will we get butter, jam or cottage cheese, or maybe even today? What is the bread situation, why was there no meat in our soup, etc. etc. Such a conversation continues all morning, all afternoon, tomorrow, the day after, next week and next month, because we are all hungry and therefore constantly thinking of food.

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I finally succeeded in starting a discussion on the military situation, on the latest bombing of Germany, the Palestine exchange, etc. But the discussion lags, we soon speak about food again, about the food which we used to eat in peace time, and which we shall eat again after the war. Meanwhile, it is getting day, grey, pale light creeps in through the windows. Dust and dirt cover tables and stools and every ripped shoe adds new particles of dust. Soon our hands and faces are grey and sticky, our clothes colorless because of its dust colored cover. From time to time cases full of old shoes are emptied on to our table. Everyone complains about the dirt and about the material which today seems to be particularly bad.

We cut mechanically with our knives, we pluck, we break up the various parts and put the pieces of leather into large cases. Old firemen's helmets, turned upside down, on our tables serve as containers for textile waste to be salvaged. To get some fresh air and also get away from the workshop for a little while, during working hours, we take a nice walk to the latrine which is situated about 200 meters from the shop. On our way we glance into the other rooms where our comrades are occupied with similar work, we meet friends and acquaintances; some had arranged dates with their wives, whom they now meet secretly at the latrine shed.

The latrine of the working camps is much more primitive and dirty than that of the housing barracks. In spite of that people stay there as long as possible, they smoke, discuss, read an old but not less precious newspaper collectively, sometimes they even cut each others hair, etc. etc. Suddenly a warning signal is heard. Heinz approaches to drive us as well as the women who are separated from us only by a thin wooden wall, back to work. We go back, rip old shoes, speak about food and wait until 11:30 when the whistle blows. In the work barrack there is no place where we can wash our hands, and dirty as we are we get into our coats, and rush out to line up in rows of five. We are counted again before leaving but fortunately the number is correct and our column of 600 men and 700 women, escorted by Heinz and Fratz starts moving. "Wilhelm Tell" and his helpers are already waiting to welcome us at the gate. Our caps off, we march by, are counted again and since the number is correct, the order "dismissed" is given and we race furiously to our barracks. In the washroom we wash our hands and faces, as well as this can be done, with war soap and Ersatz soap powder, and then hurry to the eating place, full of the delicious smell of turnips, where people already fight for unpeeled potatoes. There is a long line in front of me, everybody is hungry, impatient and irritable. Finally my turn comes. The ladle disappears in the deep container and reappears filled only half with a yellowish substance which is poured into my tin container. From the barrack leader, personally, I receive 4 middle seized potatoes. People before me complain because one potato was rotten; somebody else, it seems, had received 4 potatoes which are much bigger and in addition a piece of meat... everybody feels cheated. Voraciously we swallow our food. Ten of us sit at one table and people exchange turnips for potatoes, potatoes for the soup we will get for dinner. Orthodox Jews try to exchange their ration for cottage cheese or potatoes. They do not find many clients and face grave conflicts since no one can afford to renounce the small quantities of food distributed, without getting their equivalent in return.

I do not waste time but wash my food container and rush to the barrack of my wife and children. There I find great excitement. The soup in one of the pots was thick, the contents of the other was just like water. My wife, the barrack leader, and her assistant are violently attacked. I try to calm the women but do not succeed and therefore retire to a bench

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where I exchange a few words with my family. It is very hard to speak or hear in this noise, but I see that they are well, although Eva has lost a stocking and Marianne a boot which I think they will eventually recover. My wife has saved some food for me and I gratefully eat the extra portions. We discuss the latest camp gossip and then I have to leave. (Note: because of the roll calls this midday pause was never longer than 20 to 25 minutes. G.v.T.)

At the roll call place the same spectacle as in the morning takes place, with the only difference that the work leader selects a dozen people from the shoe commando for a particularly disagreeable task. There is a lot of shouting about the sloppy manners of the women. There are always stragglers, all sorts of threats are being thrown at them and the representatives of the Judenrat, who are responsible for good order. Heinz threatens that he will hang or imprison them.

We are marched again to our working barracks and sit for hours over our stupid work. The conversation is always the same; favorable information on the military situation has reached us through those who work in the SS work shops. Our spirits rise but subside with the increasing hunger - turnips are not nourishing food -. The menu of the SS canteen is discussed enviously. Heinz, Fritz and their comrades had pea soup, sausages and chocolate pudding for lunch. Mrs. Rosenthal who works in the SS kitchen has risked her life to bring her husband some pea soup, and there is no doubt that she is telling us the truth. For hours we speak about this subject. Suddenly I am called by the foreman. A few strong men are needed for the unloading of trucks full of old shoes. Together with a few comrades I hurry through the rain to the tent where all stocks are piled up. An old case, which has two handles is put on the truck and filled with shoes and then brought back by two men to the tent where it is emptied. Fritz is the supervisor and "encourages" us to hurry by shouting and kicking us. Today he is in a very bad mood. He is in the company of the prison guard of the Celle penitentiary, who brought the shoes on the truck and Fritz, the SS man, wants to put on a show for his colleague. I soon realize that it would be better to get on the truck and fill the cases instead of dragging them to the tent, because up there I am safe from the "encouraging" kicks of Fritz's heel. Finally the truck is empty. I jump down but soon find out that in the tent there are always a few hundred thousand old shoes kept ready to provide work for several months. I take leave from my comrades in the tent and arrive in hall III of the shoe commando just in time to receive a delicious cup of coffee, brought from the kitchen in large containers. This liquid made of dried chestnut leaves tastes to us almost like real mocha. The people who brought the coffee from the kitchen announce that today we will certainly get thick barley soup and our morale runs high again.

Once more we discuss food and finally the 11 hour working day draws to a close. We are dejected. My neighbor and another man at the neighboring table have fallen asleep. Behind a case full of waste leather, I discover a boy of about 18 who is also asleep. Our foreman runs around nervously to keep us awake because Heinz is in the adjoining room. To pass time, I decide to visit the rooms 4-9.

Room IV and V: Here girls and women are doing the same "useful" work as in our rooms. Grey dust covers the badly lighted working tables. The women are tired, they talk relatively little and work even less. They discuss lunch, dinner, morning soup, pot cheese, jam, etc. in all details and from all angles. I discover small pads on the tables in which notes are made regarding finest recipes of things that these people once used to eat, and which they intend to cook again when.... They want to be

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ready for peacetime and are meanwhile exciting their palate at the thought of all these delicious things. At another table, some women work diligently. They manufacture belts, dolls, and other toys, bandanas, artificial flowers, broaches and even gloves from the abundant collection of multicolored pieces of leather. Even the "Oberscharfuhrer" Luebbe and "Masenscharte" placed orders for their loved ones at home. Thus these nice articles are manufactured half secretly. Mr. Cohn furnished the glue from the S.S. shoemaker's shop and that is about all that is needed. It might even be possible to exchange a belt for half a bread ration or a small piece of toilet paper, or maybe a wonderful plaited belt for some sugar. Mrs. Rosenberg still has about two pounds, and Mrs. Van der Bergh possesses 3 pounds of Quaker Oats. Before I know it, we are again engaged in a food discussion.

In the adjoining three rooms military underwear and uniforms are cut. I am shown the ragged uniforms which were torn to pieces by shell splinters, etc. and were taken from the wounded and dead. They are now ripped with scissors, razor blades, knives, etc. put into sacks to be sent to factories from where they will emerge soon as new uniforms and underwear only to be torn again by grenade shells.

The Elite Division of the shoe work unit is accommodated in hall VIII. Under the special supervision of Fritz who is assisted by a foreman assigned by the Wehrmacht, used military boots are carefully gripped up. Every boot furnishes us a body for a new low shoe and if one cuts into the edge the whole piece becomes useless. Since we are not trained shoemakers or shoe grippers, it often happens that the knife slips, spoiling the precious leather. Therefore, we sit there in constant fear lest such mishaps be discovered. If Fritz is in a good mood he only yells at us but if he feels low because of a previous night's air alarm he inflicts on us all sorts of punishments, as for instance, standing at the barbed wire fence, withholding of food and bread rations, jail (for sabotage) face slaps, kicks and sometimes even strokes with the rubber club. Physical mistreatment is strictly prohibited, but who would dare complain? Today nothing has happened as yet, although we have already been threatened with all sorts of punishments, but soon the day will be over and we shall get our barley soup.

On a heap of ripped leather, I discover the stretched out figure of a friend who had collapsed. This happens quite often in the men's as well as in the women's workshops. This man, a former bank director is not strong enough for the shoe workshop. (Note: In one barrack "silk cocoons" were cleaned by young girls and women. This work was cleaner than the shoes but they had to deliver a given quantity a day, and some could not stand the nauseating smell of the "cocoons", G.v.T.)

I take leave, go to the latrine and return to my working place. The last hour seems endless. We are not permitted to leave the room, it is getting dark, guards with dogs are standing in front of the door, to give an unpleasant welcome to anyone who would dare go out without permission. Finally, we hear Heinz's signal. We run to the camp street and form rows by the light of the searchlights. The white light is playing phantom like on our heads and dirty faces. Heinz approaches; we are counted and recounted, something seems to be wrong, but in the end everything turns out to be alright. Some women had obtained permission to leave their work at 5:00 p.m. to go to the dentist at the hospital, and we had simply forgotten to include them in our calculations.

Our column which consists of 10000 persons starts marching under the beams of the searchlights. We pass through the gate of the "rollcall".

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square", a few additional insults are thrown at us by the "Red Miller", and then we finally go to our barracks. There the hot barley soup is waiting for us. Unfortunately it is not as hot as we had been promised. We are very disappointed because all our plans must be changed. We have to eat the slice of bread which we wanted to save because we are hungry, and because there will be no soup tomorrow. These are grave, painful problems which each one of us has to solve in his own way. As soon as I finish my meal I hurry through the gate which separates the women from the men's camp - and which will close in half an hour - to see my family. In their barrack the soup had been thick and everybody seems to be satisfied. All barrack inmates eye me friendly-like and gratefully, as if it had been I who had cooked and offered them the soup, but I am only the husband of the barrack leader and am now honored with a tin can full of thick soup. Slowly, I begin to feel better and am entirely satisfied when my wife gives me the rest of a real cigarette that she has saved for me. My wife makes a little speech to her barrack mates: "Red Mueller, has inspected the beds, he has cursed and yelled, and threatens to withhold the bread rations from all "Sarahs" if the "Bettenbau" (bed making) does not improve". Upon return to my barrack, I find a group of men gathered for the evening prayer. At other tables people sit and play cards, eat, sew, shave, discuss, and also quarrel.

The Oven is a real center of unrest. Mr. Colmas quarrels with Mr. Kaufmann, and both of them quarrel with the ventriloquist Santihano to obtain a little space on the oven to make some toast, and warm some carrots which they saved from lunch. Over the oven, clothing and boots are hung up to dry. In another corner, people study the Talmud and zealously discuss the problems of the Jewel year.

It is almost 9 p.m. and I am dead tired. I go outside again. The weak moonlight vainly tries to compete with the bright illumination of the searchlight. It is drizzling as usual. From the woods behind the barbed wire fence, in the direction of the latrine I hear the screams of an owl. I exchange a few words with a passing friend and then I go to sleep on my coarse mattress as though it were a luxurious bed.

Thus one day passes like the other. The only variations that sometimes occur are disagreeable ones. The SS tries to teach us Prussian discipline, and since they treat us - men and women - like young recruits they find reason for continuous cursing and punishment. A special chapter is the so-called, "Bettenbau" (bed making) i.e. the making of the beds in a certain fashion. Since there is very little space in the barracks, and a narrow chest just big enough for one person, which has to be used by 5 or 6, the internees have to keep their things in the beds, which of course do not look as flat and even as they should. But the commander is very meticulous and wants them to be very even, thus the daily inspection often results in the withholding of bread for the entire barrack. As we are always hungry, the withholding of the minimum ration is a grave punishment which, nevertheless is pronounced very often. Bad work is punished in the same way, and when Heinz or Fritz are in a bad mood, which occurs, especially when, due to the air alarms they have spent their nights in shelters instead of in their beds, they collectively punish all people who work in the same room. It happens often that, during lunchtime, people are ordered to stand silently at the barbed wire fence of the "roll call square" where, regardless of the weather, they must remain until work is resumed. Often such "convicts", men and women, can be seen standing on the "roll call square" at such late hours as 9 p.m. or on Sunday afternoon when there is no work to do at the camp. Some have to stand there from 12 a.m. to 7 p.m., but there are also other kinds of punishment. On Sunday afternoon, which is supposed to be our only free time, we are taken out for special drill because we did not

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march to work in good order. There are also special roll calls when, half dead, we return from work at 7:30 P.M. These roll calls last until 8 or 9 o'clock, and occasional hail, rain or storms are considered by the SS as a good retribution for us. These punishments are generally inflicted when the roll call did not tally, a thing which is easily apt to happen with 4,000 internees. My wife, as barrack leader was imprisoned in an unheated cell for three days and nights, with bread and water as the only food. She had to sleep on a wooden bench without blankets. The crime she committed was that in counting the persons in the barrack she had overlooked a child who had hidden in bed under the blanket. Since she indicated an incorrect number, the final roll call number was not accurate. It was a miracle that my wife did not get pneumonia in her unheated cell. It was in April and still very cold. Fortunately, my wife was well prepared for her prison sentence; under her ski suit she had put on all the warm clothing she possessed, and some she had borrowed from her colleagues; she had also hidden in her ski suit a small bread reserve and an English novel, and moreover had adopted an attitude of indifference. The main group leader had originally cancelled the sentence but when the commander inquired whether the two barrack leaders who had miscounted the internees had served their prison term, they then had to atone for this misdemeanor.

The work of a barrack leader is responsible and risky because he or she is responsible for all offences committed by the barrack inmates. A few days after our arrival at the camp the women had obstructed the latrine drain by throwing cardboard and tins into it. This provoked the indignation of the "latrine general", Hertzog. The four female barrack leaders were ordered to climb down into the latrines, stand in the dirt up to their ankles and clean the latrine with shovels. The gentlemen from the SS watched the spectacle laughing heartily. When my wife gaily climbed out, after the work was done, she was received with friendly acclamations and was even given a cigarette by one of the officers. In so doing, he murmured to her that he had not wished this to happen, but had been ordered by the commander to designate the barrack leaders for the cleaning of the latrines. When my wife arrived in the barrack she was received triumphantly. The barrack inmates put her into a container full of hot water and washed her thoroughly.

I, too, became well acquainted with the prison cell. One day, helping in the department for old military underwear, the idea occurred to me that a pair of old torn shorts could well be used for the cleaning of our food containers, since there were no towels left. Unfortunately, I was caught by the inspecting "Ober group leader", just as I was about to execute my idea. I was not used to doing such things. I was sentenced to six days in jail, with only water and bread. Since the prison was overcrowded - other camp inmates were sitting there for similar offenses. I was put in a cell occupied by one of my colleagues and had to share the narrow wooden bench with him. In spite of that, I slept very well, covered only with a jacket. I appreciated the silence here and thought of the restless nights in the barrack where there was constant coming and going to and from the washroom, all night. During the day I was brought to my regular work place, since my bosses were apparently not willing to forfeit my precious work. Secretly my working colleagues brought me my lunch from the barrack which lunch consisted as always of turnips, boiled potatoes or sandy spinach. They smuggled it out in jam glasses, so that I did not eat less than usual. I hardly had occasion to wash during all that time. I washed as well as possible at my working place - in an old container of jam.

Finally these bad times passed, and after an encouraging speech by the "Ober group leader", Luebbe, - a particularly mean individual, in which

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he advised me not to let myself be caught again, as from now on he would watch me very closely, - I was permitted to return to my barrack.

Meanwhile, I had been transferred to the department of military boots where Ober group leader Fritz, the butcher boy, was supervisor. There every worker was compelled to do a certain amount of work. It was not difficult for me to accomplish this, but some of my colleagues were unable to produce the requested amount. This, of course, led to continuous threats and punishments, often to slaps and kicks. Except for a "friendly and encouraging" kick which I received once while leading a truck, nothing ever happened to me personally. I had recognized the mentality of these old military barrack bosses and was very careful. I remembered the stories told me by many friends who had experiences in the last world war, and especially the wonderful descriptions by Arnold Zweig in his book "Kampf um den Sergeanten Grischa", and I acted accordingly. I did not let myself be intimidated by the yelling, I always had an answer for Fritz, I did not work more than the others, but always did "as if" I kept moving and was never caught idle. I had become much thinner, later finding out that I had lost 45 pounds. I did not mind the work at all since after all it helped time to pass. Fritz always called me the "long Jesus" which was probably a special favor, and he always assigned me to the loading and unloading of trucks. This work was quite strenuous, since we were always rushed and occasionally beaten with clubs. Often we had to work over time, but at least we were outdoors and did not have to sit in the dusty workroom. In the high military boots, we sometimes found precious articles, as for instance, well preserved military socks, food rags, boot brushes, pocket knives, leather straps which were a welcome supplement to our rapidly deteriorating equipment. One day a neighbor made a strange discovery during the course of his work; in a boot leg in the so-called "Gleitriemen" which is generally made of pirskin, he found a parchment strip which came from a Sephar Torah roll. The Hebrew letters could be distinctly seen and experts immediately found the chapter from which the efficient masters of the German war industry had cut the Ersatz for their military boots.

A pleasure of a special kind was the so-called "bath" in Camp Bergen-Belsen. We are led in groups of 300 to the bath-house situated at the entrance of the camp. Since the bath-house is much too small for such a large number of persons, they can hardly undress. The dirty clothing is thrown on the floor upon which hundreds of dirty feet had walked. Hundreds of naked male bodies, many of which look like skeletons, stand closely together. The room is insufficiently heated and we have to wait for half an hour until the supervising soldiers call us into the shower room. One hundred men are pushed under twenty showers. We are so close together that it is almost impossible to bend down to wash our feet and legs. We have only a few minutes within which to wash. My hands are so sticky from the work in the shoe shop that it takes too long to thoroughly clean them and also to wash the other parts of my body. Through the steam of the 20 showers I see the phantom-like bodies of my comrades. Everybody tries to get as much water on his body as possible during the few available moments, and there are frequent quarrels for better space under the shower. When the whistle blows, which chases us from the paradise of the shower-room to make space for another group, everybody pushes into the cold dressing room, and after drying ourselves superficially, we don our dirty clothes again. Outside, we have to form rows of five. We are counted and recounted. Our teeth chatter from cold, it snows and rains at the same time and in this weather, we walk back to our work. We walk along the camp street, pass the kitchen where we inquire about the menu for the day, and are very happy to learn that today we will get noodles and potatoes cooked together. Three minutes later, we sit on our stools ripping up shoes.

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Bathing day for women and children is no different from ours. The same rush, the same crowd and the same SS men supervisors. Since there is no female personnel in the camp, and since the bathers must be watched, the SS men act as guards and give the signal for the women to dress. Women and girls who under these circumstances try to stay away from the bath house are punished. They do not get their bread ration or have to stand at the barbed wire fence.

Hospital. "For us people are either dead or alive" is the motto of the sanitary officer and the other SS personnel. The dead are taken care of in the crematorium situated outside of the camp. It is a miserable wooden shed with a high chimney that can be seen from the camp. During the first part of 1944, about 80 persons - out of 4,000 internees - died; most of them were elderly people. (Note: This figure is definitely wrong. The mortality was much higher. I checked the figure with somebody from the hospital morque where the bodies were always deposited. G.v.T.) The personnel of the crematorium consists of two young Jewish boys, who were separated from us ever since their arrival, and with whom we are strictly forbidden to converse. They live in a small cottage near the exit of the camp, on the way to the crematorium; they receive double food portions which are delivered to them directly from the kitchen, and they never meet us. They are led to the bath house separately, and even their hair is cut under the supervision of an SS man, in order to prevent the Jewish camp barber from an opportunity to talk to them. In their free time, the two must make brooms out of brush-wood. Some secret surrounds them; we suppose that in addition to the Jewish dead, they also have to cremate those who died in the neighboring concentration camp, the inmates of which are mostly foreign workers who allegedly have committed some misdemeanor. The SS personnel does not wish the cremating personnel to tell us in our camp of their gruesome activities, the actual causes of death, etc.

The care given to the living who are unfortunate enough to become sick, is very poor indeed. Sick people cannot work and are, therefore, quite uninteresting. If somebody reports sick before the beginning of work he must appear at the roll-call even if he has a temperature of 104°. Jews with less than 101° are not considered sick and must report to work. From 7:00 a.m. the sick are crowding the unheated corridor of the hospital, which consists of two wooden barracks. They suffer from all sorts of diseases, pneumonia, grip, diphtheria, dysentery, hand and feet wounds, frost bite, etc.; and it happens often that people catch contagious diseases in the hall of the hospital. At 7:30 the sanitary officer finally arrives, a stuffed shirt, who believes himself high above the Jewish physicians, although he has gone through only half of medical school. It depends on him whether the sick are admitted in the hospital or not. If the sick person is lucky enough to be admitted to the hospital, he or she is sent to a big hall where there are two rows of bunks like in the large barracks. The food is about the same as in the camp, gravely ill people receive - in exceptional cases - some milk-soup or cereals. There is a great lack of sanitary equipment. Only one chamber pot is available for 80 patients and the "toilet" consists of a container, with cover, which is being used night and day by 50 women and men. There is no regular toilet in the hospital. In the beginning there were no medicines at all, later some drugs as well as bandages were received. It often happens that people cut their hands during work, and their wounds are very poorly dressed, in most cases, with some old rags, etc. A friend of mine who needed an urgent operation could not be operated on because at the last moment the SS men came to take away the wound dressing material which they had previously made available. They needed the bandages themselves. The Jewish physicians who were permitted to work in the hospital do their best but due to prevailing conditions, they can accomplish very little, especially since the chief physician, as

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well as the commander do not accept any complaints. It is a miracle that gravely sick people are sometimes cured in this hospital; they do never recover completely. Old people who are placed in the so-called old age home die a slow death, and are not given the slightest care. The only advantage of this old age home is the fact that its inmates do not have to go to work and must not be present at the roll call. Moreover, some Jewish nurses work there and do their utmost to help the sick people. My mother was first in the hospital and then in the old age home. She lost her physical and mental strength gradually and we were unable to alleviate her sufferings.

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February 29, 1944. Black clouds hang over the roll call square. A cold wind blows from the east and whirls snow flurries over the vast space. Almost no human beings are visible. From the barbed wire fence surrounding the hospital, a cart moves slowly through the sand. A soldier, a pipe in his mouth walks beside it hoisting the horses, on the vehicle, which is generally used to transport the garbage is a black coffin, made of raw planks. Accompanied by only one friend, the old Rabbi de Vriess from Harlem (Holland) I follow this sad procession. I accompany my mother on her last journey.

A few hours later I carry the heavy soup containers from the kitchen to our barracks. Life goes on.

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It was quite understandable that many internees in Bergen-Belsen should have found it very hard to adapt themselves to the conditions of this camp which was entirely different from Camp Westerbork. Here we were always hungry and lost all interest in other things. The inmates of my barrack #12 consisted of workmen who came from the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam. (Note: curiously enough, the group of 600 Dutch Jews with double nationality, generally English/Dutch, consisted largely of Jews from the ghetto, former hawkers, etc. We used to call them "The Tommies from the Waterlooplein" G.v.T.) a considerable number of prominent intellectuals, such as rabbis, teachers, scientists, and also merchants, physicians and professional people. Only very few people succeeded in resisting the will of our tyrants who wished to lower us to the level of slaves and proletarians. During the first weeks of our stay in Bergen-Belsen lectures on the most varied subjects were organized in the barrack in the evenings; they were very well attended. But soon these lectures were discontinued, because we were too exhausted to follow the speaker. The religious services which were held regularly were also well attended. But unfortunately, those who professed religion so devotedly did neither serve as a model to their fellow internees by their conduct in daily life, nor did they lend them any moral support. I gratefully remember the venerable, old Rabbi de Vriess from Harlem, whose bier I accompanied a few weeks after the death of my mother. He always lent me courage and support and he was an example of a fine character for all of us. Pneumonia caused by standing around for hours on the call roll square, in the icy wind, brought about the untimely death of this wonderful man. Often, at night, when we were already lying in our beds in the dark barracks, he told us of Palestine and of his hopeful longing to return to the land of our Fathers. He perceived the holy land from the distance, but like Moses, he should never enter it. There were others who tried to lighten the monotony of our daily life with their spirit, but only few actually succeeded in influencing the dulled minds. Nevertheless, some people gathered regularly to study the Torah and I remember a barrack inmate who spent every free minute to study Jewish books.

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News from the front, as well as the regular visits of large airplane formations give us hope and confidence. In Westerbork we had rarely seen these planes but here in Bergen-Belsen they came almost daily by day and night. Neighboring Hannover, with its large industrial installations was the target; moreover the planes often passed our camp when going to Berlin. After a night alarm we knew that the mood of our guards would be bad because for them air raid alarms meant spending the night in cold shelters. During a day light air raid alarm, we had to remain in our barracks, i.e. on our working place. Fritz and Heinz tried to explain to us that anti-aircraft defense was quite useless here in the Lueneburger Heide, but that Goering's fighters would, of course, finish off the "mean air pirates" before they could reach their target. We realized that the German defense was wholly insufficient, that the Germans did not actually have anything to oppose the Allied air might. Fortunately, our camp was never attacked. During an attack on the neighboring SS clothing camp, two women were killed (Note: we were still in quarantine when this happened and some of us - I amongst them - had a very narrow escape at this "diving attack". The loss in the SS camp was supposed to have been heavy and of the (non-Jewish) prisoners in a neighboring camp, 30 were killed, G.v.T.)

#### D E P A R T U R E

During our first months in Bergen-Belsen nothing was heard of our exchange to Palestine, therefore, only few still believed that it would ever take place. I was one of the few optimists.

Roll call on a rainy day: We stand in rank on the roll call square waiting for Fritz and Heinz who, once again, will drive us to our work. They arrive accompanied by the Ober group leader Luebbe, who is in charge of the records. Suddenly, instead of the expected order "im Gleichschritt, March": we are told all persons with Palestine certificates step out". Puzzled about 100 persons step out of their ranks, while the others go to work. (Note: This is not quite right, nobody went to work, all 4,000 being made to witness the calling up of the few hundred names, G.v.T.) Then the names of 320 people are called, everyone of us waits there in suspense. Finally, almost at the end, our names are called too. Next day, during lunch time, the procedure is repeated. Again names are called, but while there were 320 yesterday, there are only 270 today, and we are not among them. Great disappointment reigns among those who were omitted. I hurry back to work, my wife remains with the crying children. Eva, who is not yet 14 years old tries to convince my wife to approach the commandant and ask him why our names were taken from the list. It is not so easy to just talk to the "Almighty". Finally the Jewish elder asks the commandant whether he would be willing to listen to the barrack leader Mainz who would like to submit a request. The commandant is willing to receive her and he informs my wife that yesterday the reserve list was called together with the main transport list, but that for the moment only the 275 persons of the main transport would be considered. There is a chance for us, however, to be included if the transport should be enlarged or if persons of the main list would be prevented from leaving for reasons of sickness, etc. The commandant notes our names and promises to remember my wife and her family. The next day she is called to the Kommandantur, and asked to furnish personal data, and is questioned about her connections in Palestine. Nothing further happens. The 275 persons who were selected for the exchange to Palestine are brought to a barrack which is strictly separated from our camp. In a "dolce far niente" they await the day of their departure which is tentatively scheduled for the middle of May.

In our camp, there are endless discussions on the exchange prospects; even the food subject is pushed in the background. But most people are skeptical.

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Even now they cannot believe that an exchange will actually take place; they simply suspect the transfer to another camp. Thus pass weeks of the same dreary life. I am serving my prison term because of the shorts incident I mentioned before. On the second day of my stay in prison, a Sunday afternoon, when I was just sewing a new Jewish star on my sweater, I heard voices from the luggage room situated next to my cell. The luggage of those selected for exchange is taken out. They are now only 222, about 50 were taken off the list and returned to the general camp. I am terribly upset because I am sure that the fact I am sitting in jail will prevent me from leaving. In the workshop, I am told that the transport will leave the next day. I cannot see my wife. On the day scheduled for the departure, the transport is postponed for unknown reasons for an indefinite period of time. Everybody returns to our camp, and must go to work again. They are terribly disappointed. The pessimist triumphs. Nobody believes in the exchange. We talk food again and go on ripping shoes. Thus the month of June goes by.

Meanwhile I am transferred from the shoework shop to the Judenrat (Jewish Council) where a man is needed for work at the Kommandantur, i.e. a case worker for nationality problems, and card files. It is routine work, but at least I hear and see something new. The employees of the Kommandantur are reserved but "correct". Little is spoken outside of the work, but in the room next to my office is a radio and we are delighted to hear the official German communique and the first reports on the Allied landing in Normandy. We also see German papers. Between the lines we read that the landing was successful. Back in the camp, I am besieged by requests for information, because officially we do not get any newspapers or news of any kind.

In the afternoon of June 29th, while I am sitting in the Judenrats' office, an uncommissioned officer of the cantin appears and asks for the statements of accounts of all 222 people who are to be exchanged to Palestine. The list must be ready by tomorrow. An hour later, the officer returns informing me that he needs the list right away. While I am certain that they will leave now, the pessimists think that Germans only want to steal the money. The next morning at 6:00, Ober group leader Luebbe of the Palestine people appears, orders them to pack their belongings and get ready for the luggage inspection. Now the matter is serious. I am thinking hard, trying to figure out what could be done in order to be included in the transport. The prospects are bad indeed. 40 persons were crossed from the transport list but they still do not take anybody from the reserve list. At the suggestion of Ober group leader Luebbe whom I consult regarding this matter, my wife decided to approach the Kommandant again. Meanwhile there is an air raid alarm and we are not allowed to leave our barracks. New difficulties. I am sitting in the office of the Judenrat before my card files, racking my brains. My wife does not find an opportunity to speak to the Kommandant. It is 11:00 A.M.; the Palestine people are packing, and their luggage is all ready and inspected. Suddenly I start up, my name was called. The Jewish elder precipitously enters the room shouting; "Mainz, Mainz pack your things, report to the Kommandant, you are leaving". - I hardly say good-by, and run as fast as I can to the barrack in front of which the luggage of those who are to leave is controlled on long tables. The Kommandant is standing in the midst of suit cases and bundles. I approach him, pale with excitement. "You are leaving with this transport, your wife has been informed, pack your things, and be back here within ten minutes." I rush to my barrack where I am surrounded by my comrades, and questioned, but I have no time. I tear my blankets from the bed, stuff my clothes, shoes, underwear and toilet articles into my suitcase and rucksack, say good-by to my friends. Who give me a lot of messages which I am to deliver if I should reach freedom. Heavily packed and breathing hard, I rush

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back to the meeting place. I could have taken my time. "Mainz, you long Jesus, you will help with the luggage inspection", shouts Ober group leader Luebbe. I can hardly embrace my wife and children, who pale and excited have also arrived at the meeting place. Everybody congratulates us, people are glad that we are the lucky ones to replace four persons who at the last minute were unable to leave.

I drag suitcases to the inspection tables, then empty them, because everything is thoroughly searched by the SS men. They look mostly for written material, such as notes, letters, etc. Heaps of paper are already on the tables and on the floor. They fear that we might have made some notes of military secrets. We are not permitted to take any piece of paper along. Every piece of clothing, every box is being searched thoroughly; medicines and soap powder ~~are~~ taken away from us; medicines are badly-needed in Germany, and the soap powder boxes might conceal something. I work hard because old and weak people will leave with us, and they cannot carry their luggage themselves. The sun shines brightly and warm, she has come out today to bid us farewell. At 12:00 a.m. our comrades return from work. Meanwhile the meeting place has been closed by two rows of guards, and I have great difficulties to say good-bye to my sister and brother who unfortunately cannot come with us. Silently we shake hands through the barbed wire, which separates the place from the street that leads to the barracks; I try to embrace my sister, but the gaps in the fence are not big enough. Luebbe's voice orders me back.

I go on dragging valises, I unpack and repack, mostly junk, old pieces of clothing, broken combs, worn out shoes, prayer books and prayer shawls, empty bottles, shawls, boxes, etc. The group leader and also the officers are in a gracious farewell mood, there is relatively little shouting and yelling.

For the last time, we are served turnips and potatoes which I swallow with good appetite, like always. My children and wife are too excited to eat and give me their food. At 12:30 our comrades have to go back to work, and the long column marches by near the barbed wire fence, there are cordial farewell greetings and suppressed cheers, which the SS guards immediately break up.

At 2:00 P.M. women and children, whose luggage was already inspected, are led to the SS garage at the entrance of the camp, which today will serve as a waiting room for the travellers, as well as the office where they will be searched. I still help with the luggage revision which seems endless.

Big trucks arrive on which the luggage is to be loaded. Every individual is permitted to take 40 kg. (about 100 pounds). At 8:00 P.M. we are finally through with the search and the unloading. I am completely exhausted, but my job is so great that I do not really feel it. I am terribly dirty and in an unguarded moment, I sneak back to my barrack to wash myself for the last time in our washroom. My barrack inmates lend me their toilet articles, and they also help me get rid of all that dirt. Back at the meeting place, I am ordered to put all the papers on a big heap and set it afire. We take our places in rows of five and acclained by those who now return from work, march to the SS garage, where our families are waiting. We shall be kept apart until we are searched. Our wives have already complied with this procedure, this time they were searched by female Nazis. They watch us from the distance. I must empty all my pockets, take off my vest and coat, one of my comrades had to take his shoes off. Everything is thoroughly examined. Every piece of paper with the exception of official documents is

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taken away. An old man who had put on two suits must undress completely and the group leaders take a pleasure in ordering him to put on the worst pieces. In front of the barrack is the cashier. After the bodily search (Leibesvisitation) we have to present ourselves at the cashier's table and each of us receives his canteen account, a maximum of RM 100 per person.

It is getting dark. The sick and the weak are lying in the dusk of the garage on the stone floor. Heaps of Commiss breads are brought in and there are rumors that every traveller will receive an entire kommissbread, 1/2 pound of margarine and that there will be a 1 Kg can of liverwurst for five persons. The atmosphere is tense, we are waiting. Meanwhile, we are seated in the sand in front of the barrack. It is a clear summer night, the stars are glittering. A guard is sneaking around us, his gun at his side. Suddenly from the darkness emerges the giant figure of the Kommandant. With the look of a master, he examines us and then suddenly addresses my wife; "You wretched woman, you are certainly glad to go away". We jump to our feet, stand rigidly. "I have chosen you" the Kommandant continues, "because you have always done your duty, and because you also worked diligently for others". Turning to me he says "I have known you less" (Thank God, I think if he should remember the men's shorts now) "but I have seen more of your wife". Bewildered, I mutter something that sounds like thanks, and am glad that the "Almighty" turns to another group. We are called again into the barrack and are given instructions for the trip. Dr. Taubes is appointed transport leader and six car leaders are chosen for the trip to Vienna, I am one of them and am in charge of 40 persons. Finally the food supplies are distributed, in unbelievable abundance; every traveller receives an entire kommissbread, half a pound of margarine and 1/5 Kg of liverwurst. This is the climax, and there is really an atmosphere of joy. I have difficulties in preventing my proteges to start eating immediately.

It is 1:00 P.M. now. In two hours we shall march to the freight yard, Dergen situated at a two hours distance, while the sick and weak, shall be brought there on trucks together with the luggage. I obtain permission to put my children on the trucks because they have no shoes left to walk such a long distance. The people of my group are seated dog tired on the floor of the barrack or outdoors. I draw up the lists for the accommodation of the travellers in the cars. Finally I fall down on the foot-board of a truck and fall asleep. I wake up when the engine of a heavy tractor is started and makes a terrible noise in the hall. It is almost 3:00 P.M. Together with the other group leaders, I rush to get our men ready for the march in rows of five. Today there are no errors in the counting. Ober group leader Luebbe equipped with a big flashlight, heads the group. The garage gate opens and slowly, almost hesitantly the column starts moving. It is still dark; the chimney of the crematorium (Kesselhaus) rises black to the star-glittered sky. We pass the bath house. To our right the barrack of the Kommandantur stands out against the skyline. After a few hurried steps we stop; we try to see what is in front of us. Suddenly, a white-black bar rises over our heads, as if moved by a rapid hand. It is the semaphore which separates the camp from the outer world. We are walking through it, my knees are shaking and I feel my wife's hand in mine. At the guard house stands Ober group leader Heinz. His glassy criminal eyes view us sullenly for the last time. I turn away, and silently press my wife's hand. We understand each other. An order is given, the barbed wire gate closes behind us. We are free.

(End of quotation from Helmith Mainz's report)

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Report concerning the German-  
Palestinian Exchange Transport - July 1944.

This transport consisted of 282 persons. Of those 221 came from the Jewish Camp Westerbork in Holland, viz "Aufenthaltslager" Bergen-Belsen near Celle (Hannover), and 61 from Vitel (France). The Jews from Vitel only joined the transport in Vienna, and the following details concern the Holland transport only, as we do not possess the figures for the Vitel group.

Of the 221 people mentioned above are:

men	73	
women	<u>148</u>	<u>221</u>
<u>Age:</u> 0 - 10 years	19	
11 - 20 "	24	
21 - 30 "	21	
31 - 40 "	14	
41 - 50 "	33	
51 - 60 "	50	
61 - 70 "	50	
71 - 80 "	8	
over 80 "	<u>2</u>	<u>221</u>
<u>Nationality:</u> Dutch	99	
Stateless (former German)	77	
Palestinian	4	
undry nationalities (former Polish etc.)	<u>41</u>	<u>221</u>

In the middle of April 1944 about 1100 Jews out of the total Jewish population in Bergen-Belsen were in the possession of papers, entitling them to German-Palestinian exchange or to entry into Palestine. They all had arrived from Westerbork in Bergen-Belsen in 5 transports between 11th January and 6th April 1944.

On the 25th of April the total Jewish population of Bergen-Belsen was concentrated in the open space of the camp where the roll-calls used to take place. The names of about 275 candidates for the Palestinian exchange were called. These 275 people were within a quarter of an hour segregated from the rest of the population, and put into separate barracks, divided from the rest of the camp by barbed wire. From this day onwards this group was exempted from work, except the usual domestic work.

Five weeks later, at the end of May, they were told that the transport was supposed to leave on the 1st of June. On the same day 50 candidates were rejected and sent back immediately to the general camp. Neither the reason for the reduction nor for the selection of the rejected were known to the group. As a matter of fact this holds good regarding the selection of the group generally.

On the 31st of May, after all luggage had been packed and weighed, the group was suddenly told that the transport had to be delayed indefinitely. No reasons for this decision were given. About ten days later the group was re-transferred to the general barrack, with the order to keep the luggage ready for eventual sudden

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departure. Three days later the complete group was again called upon to work in the usual way, exactly like the rest of the camp inhabitants. Suddenly, on the 29th of June, the group was told that the departure would take place within 24 hours. The luggage was again weighed and closely examined. The group was segregated from the rest, and left the camp during the night from 29 to 30 June.

They travelled from Celle via Fulda-Wuerzburg-Nuremberg to Vienna, where they arrived the morning of Saturday, the 1st of July. The train from Celle to Vienna consisted of 2nd and 3rd class compartments and had neither sleeping nor dining accommodation. Sufficient food however, had been distributed in Celle. Arrived in Vienna, the people were driven in cars to an Asylum (Obdachlosenheim), where they stayed until the next day. The sleeping accommodation was scrupulously clean and the food sufficient.

The transport from Celle to Istanbul was accompanied by German officials as well as two German Red Cross nurses. An official of the Swiss Embassy likewise accompanied the transport from Vienna to Istanbul.

After Vienna the train consisted of sleeping accommodation for about 30 ill and/or elderly people. The sanitary arrangements in this train were poor. The route taken from Vienna was: Budapest, Belgrade, Sofia, Istanbul.

In the morning of the 6th of July the transport arrived in Istanbul spent the whole day on a steamer and left again at night. The arrangements made by the Jewish organizations as regards food accommodation and a chance for sightseeing were admirable and greatly appreciated after the many crowded and tiring days in the train. Unfortunately we had to leave behind in Istanbul one woman who had been in a serious condition from the beginning.

The train from Istanbul consisted of 5-1st and 2nd class cars, 4 sleeping cars for sick and elderly people and two dining cars. This part of the trip was in every way more comfortable than the beginning of the journey, thanks mainly to the better accommodation, better sanitary arrangements and better service.

A transport leader assisted by a commission, all chosen from amongst the members of the transport, were responsible for all technical and other questions during the whole trip. Moreover two Jewish doctors and four nurses were entrusted with the care of the sick people.

We are glad to say that during the whole trip no incidents whatsoever took place, and that particularly from Istanbul onwards the journey was extremely comfortable and in every way satisfactory.

There only remains for us to express our sincere thanks to all those responsible for the organization of this trip and for the generous reception given to us.

Meydanekbes, the 8th of July, 1944. (Signed) Dr. I. Taubes, Transport leader  
Mr. H.G. Kaufmann, Secretary.

From Meydanekbes new train consisting of 1st and 2nd class cars, accompanied by Palestinian Police.

Stop for breakfast and supper at Aleppo, Homs, Tripoli, Beyrouth, Arrival at Haifa the 10th of July at 5 o'clock p.m. Bus to Athlit, stay at Athlit camp till Thursday, the 13th of July.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1940.

- June Ordinance according to which managers (generally speaking Germans) may be appointed for Dutch firms and businesses. Originally such managers were appointed for businesses, the seat of which had been transferred abroad; soon this measure was extended to firms, one or more managers of whom were Jews, or which were under preponderantly Jewish influence. The new manager enters into all the rights of the original managers.
- July A number of shops voluntarily place a notice in their shop-windows: "Jews not desired here".
- All civil servants have to state whether they have any Jewish grandparents, and if so how many. Soon after an anonymous pamphlet appeared called "Almost too late", sharply attacking the officials because by stating they had no Jewish grandparents they played into the hands of the Nazis. The author warns the Dutch people against a repetition of such cooperation with the Germans.
- Aug./ A "commission of Coordination" is set up by both Jewish Religious  
Sept. Communities in cooperation with some of the big organizations, as, for instance, the Netherlands' Zionist Organization and the Agudah. The task of this Commission will be to represent the Jewish Community in all emergencies and problems in connection with the occupation.
- Sept. Evacuation of foreign Jews (not the Polish Jews), from the coastal region.
- A fine is imposed upon the Jewish Community of The Hague on account of British pilots having been hidden in that place.
- Oct. Definition of "Jew" - "A person is considered to be a Jew who has at least 3 Jewish grandparents and who, on 9.5.1940, was a member of a Jewish Congregation, or who has 2 Jewish grandparents and is married to a Jew". "A concern is considered as Jewish if one owner is a Jew, if one of the partners with joint and several liability is a Jew, if one member of the Board of Directors is a Jew or if at least one-quarter of its capital is in Jewish hands."
- Nov. An organization of Aryan diamond manufacturers is founded. The "Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerders Bond" is forced to employ 50% Aryans.
- Dec. All Jewish officials are dismissed and put on "pension pay".

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1941

Jan. Regulation dated 8.1.41: Jews are forbidden to enter cinemas, having repeatedly caused disturbances.

It is forbidden to employ persons of German nationality or of blood of the same racial affinity for work in a family of which a Jew is the head or of which a Jew has been a member for more than four weeks successively. Dutch personnel is not included in this regulation.

Feb. Prof. van Dam, acting Minister of Education, announces that the interests of future Jewish students will have for the present to be sacrificed to those who are already registered as students. Non-registered Jewish students are allowed to sit for their examinations only with the permission of the Department of Education.

Provocation by Nazis in Jewish quarter, smashing of shops etc. free fights; pogroms resisted by Jews and non-Jews; during these fights one Dutch Nazi killed and several wounded; thereupon first raid by German S.S., 400 young Jews arrested, ill-treated, then sent to Mauthausen.

Formation of "Joodsche Raad" (Jewish Council), the joint presidents of which, Prof. Dr. David Cohen and Abraham Asscher, to serve in future as representatives of Jewry in Holland in all dealings with the Germans. Coordination Commission eliminated, although officially liquidated only much later.

Mar. By order of the newly appointed Mayors of Hilversum and Haarlem, Jews are forbidden to enter hotels, restaurants and bathing establishments in those towns.

Apr. Persons with 3 or 4 Jewish grandparents have to notify this fact through the Jewish Communities. A Jewish grandparent is any person who has been a member of a Jewish Religious Community. Persons with 2 Jewish grandparents who are married to a Jew or are members of a Jewish Religious Community must register as Jews.

Jews have to surrender their radio sets.

May As from 1.5.41 Jews are no more admitted to the Amsterdam Stock Exchange.

As from 1.5.41 Jews in the free professions: doctors, lawyers, dentists, dispensers (i.e. all free professions requiring a professional oath) are allowed to practise on or for Jews only (for help, advice and treatment).

As from 15.5.41 Jews are dismissed from all orchestras. Formation of Jewish orchestra, permitted to perform only music composed by Jews for Jews only.

In Zaandam it is forbidden for Jews to enter public places, also to establish themselves within the municipal area.

June Raid in Amsterdam South, mainly on German Jews, because of a bomb outrage in one of the streets there, inhabited mostly by Jews from Germany. 300 young Jews (also many Dutch) arrested and sent to Mauthausen.

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1941

June Ordinance coming into force as from 4.6.41:  
Forbidden for Jews:

- (a) publicly to bathe in sea, beach and swimming establishments and in covered bathing establishments;
- (b) to enter public gardens and localities, to rent rooms in public hotels and lodging establishments, in sea and health resorts and similar places (Kuurorte).
- (c) to attend races as spectators.

The Chief of the Press Department declares that the press in Holland will soon have no more Jewish editors etc.

Attack on synagogue in The Hague.

Aug. Jews who have not yet registered must do so before 15.8.41 under penalty of being sent to a labour camp.

First Lippman-Rosenthal Ordinance regarding the confiscation of Jewish property. (See general report).

As from 1.9.41 no Jewish teachers nor Jewish pupils are allowed in any educational institutions except a limited number of students at the Universities. Also, lessons of any kind given by Jews to Aryans and vice versa are forbidden. Jews are allowed to establish their own schools.

Sept. In the night of 13th-14th September 95 persons are deported from Enschede to Mauthausen. In connection therewith a Jewish hunt is started in the eastern provinces of Holland.

Jews prohibited from showing themselves in any public place. This includes: parks, cafes, restaurants or railway stations, railway dining cars and sleepers, theatres, cinemas, sports fields, health resorts, bathing establishments (except those specially for Jews, auctions and stock exchanges).

Oct. From the Official Gazette (Verordeningen blad) 25.10.1941.

1. The carrying on by Jews of work as a trade or profession can be made dependent on their obtaining a license or on specified conditions, or it can be wholly interdicted.
2. An employer may terminate a contract with a Jew by 3 months' notice as from the first day of any month even if the contract would in itself, legally or by mutual consent, have lapsed on any day after the 31st January, 1942.
3. It is forbidden for non-Jews to do any work in families of which a Jew is the head or of which a Jew is a member permanently or temporarily (more than 4 successive weeks). In case of contravention the Jew will be punished.
4. It is forbidden for Jews to establish an association of persons without economic aim, or to be a member of such association. The same holds good for trust funds unless they are specially established for Jews or Jews are the only persons to benefit from them.

This ordinance comes into force as from January 1, 1942.

Nov. Jewish markets established in Gaapstraat, Joubertstraat and Waterlooplein in Amsterdam; they are open to Jews only, the other markets being forbidden to them.

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1941

- Nov.
1. Every person living in Holland above 14 years of age receives an identification card.
  2. The identification cards of Jews are marked with a large black "J".
  3. After 1.1.1942 every person is forced to always carry this identification paper.

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1942

Jan. Zaandam the first town in Holland to be made "Judenrein". The Dutch Jews must move to Amsterdam; the German Jews are brought to Westerbork.

All unemployed Jews will be put to work in labour camps after medical examination. By cancelling hawkers' licences and by forced dismissals thousands have, on short notice, been rendered unemployed. Age-limit originally 40 years - Very soon not adhered to. (See general report).

Mar. Streets named after living members of the Royal House or after Jews are re-named.

Apr. Mixed marriages are forbidden. Those who have the bans already published are not allowed to go on with the marriage. Sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews is punishable, the Jewish partner getting the heavier punishment.  
(Published in the Jewish weekly paper only)

Jews not allowed to use taxis.

Regulation dated 30.4.1942 introduces the yellow star.

- Par. 1. 1. A Jew, when appearing in public must wear a Jews' star (Yellow Badge).  
2. A Jew, in the meaning of this regulation, is anyone defined as Jew or considered to be a Jew under Par. 4 of Regulation No. 189/40 regarding registration of business firms. Children under six are exempted from the identification.  
3. The Jews' star is a sixpointed star, printed in black on yellow textile, the size of the palm of the hand, with the inscription "Jood" printed in black. The star must be worn visibly and solidly fixed to the clothing on the left hand side at 'breasts' height.  
4. Jews are not permitted to wear signs of rank or honour or any other insignia.

Par. 2. He who contravenes or evades the provisions of Par. 1 is liable - insofar as no heavier punishment has been provided for in other regulations - to imprisonment of not more than six months and a fine of not more than 1000 florins or to either of these punishments. The same punishment is applicable to him who aids or abets or makes arrangements for the evasion of these provisions.  
2. The provisions in regard to the Security Police remain in force.

Par. 3. These Police Regulations come into force 3 days after their promulgation.  
(Printed in all Dutch daily papers of 30.4.1942)

May If a Jew is punished by a Court of Justice with imprisonment of more than six weeks, he is automatically deported to Mauthausen afterwards.

Stringent economic measures practically confiscating all Jewish property and restricting the income of a Jewish family to Fl. 250 a month (Decree dated 23.5.1942 signed by the Rykscommissaris (Seyss-Inquart) for the Occupied Netherlands Territory.)

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Decree dated 23.5.1942 in respect of the Treatment of Jewish Assets.

Claims of any kind must be notified in writing to the banking firm of Lippmann-Rosenthal & Co., Amsterdam, if at the time at which this regulation comes into operation, or at any time thereafter, these claims belong wholly or in part, whether legally or economically to a person who is a Jew, or considered a Jew within the meaning of the provisions of Art. 4 of Regulation No. 189/1940 regarding registration of business firms.

The above provisions are not applicable to claims of a firm which had already had to register under Regulation No.189/40.

The registration of claims existing at the moment at which this regulation comes into operation shall be effected not later than 30th June, 1942. Claims arising after the coming into operation of this regulation, or the arising of which comes at a later date to the knowledge of the person who must register, shall be notified within one week.

Cash, securities, etc. of over fl. 250 must be handed over.

Assets of a total value exceeding fl. 250 which were not liable so far must be paid in, deposited or transferred without delay not later than 30th June, 1942 in accordance with the provisions of Art. 1 of regulation No. 148/1941. This regulation does not apply if the total value of cash, cheques, securities, bank balances and deposits to which the members of one household are entitled at the moment on which this regulation comes into force does not exceed two hundred fifty florins. Claims and other rights to which the members of one household are entitled may be realized up to a total of two hundred and fifty florins per month.

Art treasures etc. must be handed over.

Collections of all sorts of objects of art, and all objects of gold, platinum, silver, also jewellery, pearls and precious stones, cut or uncut, must be handed over to Messrs. Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co., bankers, if they belong legally or economically to one of the persons enumerated in Art. 1.

Excepted are:

1. Personal wedding rings or those of a deceased spouse.
2. Silver wrist or pocket watches in personal use.
3. Used cutlery, it being understood that each member of the household of the owner keeps four pieces, viz. knife, fork, spoon and dessert spoon.
4. Dental fillings of precious metal in personal use.

The handing over must take place without delay, not later than 30th June, 1942. If the goods are acquired at a later date, they must be handed over without delay, within a week of their acquisition. Each person must give full and true information in reply to any enquiry made by Messrs. Lippmann Rosenthal & Co. in the course of the exercise of their functions under this regulation or regulation No.148/1941. Books, proofs or other documents must be delivered at the request of the Bankers. If horses, vehicles or vessels belong legally or economically to any person mentioned in this regulation they must be registered in writing with the "Centralstelle fuer Juedische Auswanderung" at Amsterdam, not later than 30th June, 1942.

He who contravenes or evades the provisions of this regulation or who

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intentionally withholds from registration assets falling under this regulation or under regulation No. 148/41 will be punished with imprisonment of not more than 5 years and an unlimited fine or either of these punishments. If the contravention took place as a result of negligence, imprisonment of not more than one year or a fine of not more than one hundred thousand florins may be imposed.

The regulations contained in this ordinance come into force as from May 23rd, 1942.

June Decree dated 30.6.1942 issued by S.S.Gruppenleiter Rauter in his capacity as Commissaris-General of Public Security for Occupied Netherlands Territory. Under Art. 45 of the regulation No.138/1941 the following Regulation in respect of Limitation of the Freedom of Movement has appeared:

- Art. 1. Jews must remain indoors in their dwellings between the hours 20 - 6.
- Art. 2. Jews may not be present in dwellings, gardens or other private institutions for health or recreation belonging to non-Jews, unless their presence is required under existing contracts of lease or employment. Jews with a non-Jewish spouse are exempted from this provision.
- Art. 3. (1) Jews may enter shops, which are not marked as Jewish firms, only between 15 - 17 hours. Dispensing chemists are not exempted.  
(2) No goods may be delivered to the house of a Jew.  
(3) This regulation does not interfere with any special provisions taken or to be taken by the representative (Gevolmachtigde) of the Rijkscommissaris for the City of Amsterdam.
- Art. 4. Jews are not allowed to enter hairdressers and other shops and quasi-medical institutions or use the services thereof if these shops or institutions are not labelled "Jewish". Reference is made to para.3 of the instructions of the Commissioner of State for Occupied Netherlands Territory regarding regulation No.198/41 in respect of the carrying on of a profession by Jews, dated 30.6/1942.
- Art. 5. (1) Jews are not allowed to enter railway stations nor use public or private means of transport.  
(2) Exempted are:  
1. The use of ferries.  
2. Cycling within the borough of Amsterdam.  
3. The use of special cycles for transport of goods for business purposes, insofar as they may carry on business.  
4. The transport of serious patients in an ambulance and the transport of invalids in special vehicles.  
5. The use of town transport by the holder of a special license issued by the Security Police on the recommendation of the Netherlands Armament Inspection.  
6. The use of railways with a travel permit issued by the Security Police.  
7. The use of means of transport by holders of a travel permit issued by the "Centralstelle fuer Juedische Auswanderung".  
8. Jews who are entitled in these cases to use public means of transport must take their seats in the lowest class (smoking). They may enter and take a seat

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only if there is sufficient room for non-Jewish travellers.

- Art. 6. Jews are not allowed to use public telephones.
- Art. 7. Jews in the meaning of this regulation is anyone who is a Jew or considered a Jew under Art. 4 of Regulation No.189/1940 regarding registration of business firms.
- Art. 8. Provisions for the carrying out of these regulations and further exemptions to the provisions 1 - 6 will be published in the Jewish weekly journal ("Joodsche Weekblad").
- Art. 9. Anyone contravening or evading the provisions of Art.1-6 will be punished - insofar as no heavier punishment is provided for under other provisions - with imprisonment of not more than six months and a fine of not more than one thousand florins or either of these punishments. The same punishment applies to anyone aiding or abetting or assisting in the evasion of these provisions. Measures to be taken by the Security Policy remain unaffected.
- Art.10. This regulation comes into force on the day of promulgation.

June Economic measures excluding Jews from many professions.  
Instruction dated 30.6.1942 from the Rijkscmissaris for Netherlands Occupied Territory re Prohibition of the Exercise of Various Professions by Jews.

Under Art. 2 of Regulation No.198/41 regarding restrictions on the exercise of various professions by Jews I hereby decree:-

- Art.1. Jews are not allowed to work as auction master, pawnbroker, employment agent for labour or professional jobs, financial and tax adviser, druggists, marriage broker or guide to foreigners.
- Art.2. Jews are not allowed to work as accountant, in the field of denominational education or in the para-therapeutical professions unless the work be performed on behalf of Jews only. Para-therapeutical profession in the sense of the previous section means the profession of teacher of hygienic gymnastics, of natural healer, oculist, chiropodist (manicure and pedicure), trussmaker, masseur, beauty specialist and hairdresser.
- Art.3. (1) Jews are not allowed to be hawkers apart from the trade in old metals, rags and waste.  
(2) In the area of Amsterdam or in certain parts thereof Jews may be exempted from the restrictions of the first section at the request of the representative of the Rijkscmissaris for the Municipality of Amsterdam. Fees are payable for the exemption.
- Art. 4. Work in the meaning of Articles 1 and 2 and work for which no exemption under Art.3 exists or is obtained may be carried on till the 31st July, 1942, insofar as this be done under a contract existing at the time this regulation comes into force.
- Art.5. (1) Jew in the meaning of this instruction is anyone who is a Jew or considered a Jew under Art.4 of Regulation No. 189/1940 regarding the registration of business firms.  
(2) Acts in contravention of the provisions of these instructions will be punished in accordance with punishments laid down in Art.6 of Regulation No.138/1941 regarding Public Security as amended by Regulation No.182/1941.
- Art.6. These instructions come into force on the day of their promulgation.

The Hague, 30th June, 1942.

000701

For the Rijkscommissaris of Netherlands Occupied Territory, Dr. Hans Fischboeck, Commissioner General for Financial and Economic Affairs.

July On July 15th first transport of Jews from Holland. (In the beginning it was asserted that only young Jews would be sent to Germany for work in special camps; it soon appeared that Jews were sent indiscriminately to Poland) (See general report)

In Amsterdam Jews have to give up their bicycles. A number of licenses for bicycles is still granted to persons who, according to S.S.' opinion, are in need of a bicycle for the proper functioning of the Jewish Community. Bicycles belonging to Jews in the provinces had already been confiscated a few months ago.

Age limit for labour camps officially raised to 60 years.

On 11.7.42 all the Dutch Churches (Protestant and Catholic) send a cable to Seyss-Inquart to protest against the deportations, a special plea being made for baptized Jews. Copy of this cable was sent to General Christiansen, the head of the military officials in Holland, and to two of the leading S.S.officials (Rauter and Schmit).

Three raids are made as a punitive measure, because only a small percentage have reported for "Work in Germany" of those that were summoned. (See general report on Deportation).

Oct. On October 3rd, all the Jews from the labour camps are sent to Westerbork; their families are likewise deported to Westerbork. On that day Westerbork held the maximum number of inhabitants of 17,000. (See general report and report on Westerbork).

Insurance companies must send all their clients a questionnaire to ascertain whether they are Jews in the sense of Regulation 189/1940.

000702

1943.

Jan. As from 1.1.1943 the bank of Lippmann-Rosenthal makes no payments to Jews any more; they must get their money through the medium of the Jewish Council.

On 21.1.43 the whole Lunatic Asylum "Het Apeldornsche Bosch" is deported. The patients with part of the staff, together over 1000 persons, are deported in cattle trucks.

Feb. As a reprisal for an attempt on the life of a German H.C. Officer, ten residents of Haarlem are shot. Three Jews were amongst them: Chief Rabbi Frank, Mr. Chapon and Mr. Drilsma.

All Christian Churches, at an audience with Seyss-Inquart granted at their request, protested against the fact that the German administration undermines the very foundations of the Dutch nation, which Seyss-Inquart in his inaugural speech had explicitly promised to respect. They quoted as instances:-

1. The general disregard of elementary rights (arrest and imprisonment without interrogation, deprivation of personal liberty through detention in camps, etc.)
2. The treatment of persons of Jewish origin.
3. The imposing from above of national-socialist principles.

This means an attack on the very foundations of our society: Justice, Charity and Mercy, Liberty which have their roots in Faith. Seyss-Inquart refuted these protests, saying a.o. that as regards the Jews, there could be no question of mercy, at the very best they might expect justice.

All foundlings are henceforth declared to be Jewish.

Mar. On 3.3.43 the Nederlandsch Israelitisch Ziekenhuis (the largest Jewish Hospital in Holland) is raided most of the patients being brought to Westerbork. Practically the whole staff is left. The patients from the "Joodsche Invalide" taken to Westerbork. The staff partly deported to Westerbork, partly to Vught (a.o. the head of the institution).

At the recommendation of Mr. Frederikse, "Secretaris-Generaal van binnenlandsche zaken", 2 homes are opened in Arneveld for Jews who will be allowed to go there as a reward for services rendered the Dutch State. An assurance in writing is given to these Jews that they will not be "abgeschoben nach dem Osten" (deported to Eastern Europe) and that they will not be put to work outside Netherland. They are allowed to take all their possessions. (See general report).

Apr. On 10.4.43 the Jews from the provinces of Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel, Gelderland, Limburg, Noord-Brabant and Zeeland are brought to Vught. (See general report and report on Vught).

As from 23.4.43 it is forbidden for Jews to stay in the provinces Utrecht, North and South Holland (except Amsterdam). These Jews were brought to Vught, only a very limited number being permitted to stay in their place of residence. (See general report and report on Vught).

000703

1943.

Apr. Order for sterilization of persons living in mixed marriage. A few Jewish doctors found willing to collaborate in the sterilization. (See general report).

May Some 150 Jewish partners of mixed marriages who were temporarily in Westerbork given the option between sterilization or deportation. Almost all chose sterilization but not all of them were sterilized. (see general report).

On 22.5.43 the Jewish Council ordered to make a list of 7000 of its own collaborators for deportation and to organize the mailing of the deportation orders.

On 25/26 May, 1943, a large raid takes place in Amsterdam Centrum, in which some 3000 persons are collected and sent to Westerbork. This raid is said to be a punitive measure because the Jewish Council had failed to deliver 7000 people from amongst its personnel the day before. (See report).

June. On 20.6.1943 big raid in South and East Amsterdam - 5000 persons brought to Westerbork.

Aug. In August 1943 the "Nederlandsch Israelitisch Ziekenhuis" is emptied for the third time and now definitely closed. Most of the patients and some of the staff are brought to Westerbork. The rest of patients and staff are transferred to the building of the "Joodsche Invalide".

Sept. On 29.9.43, the last Jews (about 5000) brought from Amsterdam to Westerbork. Only the Portuguese Jews and those married to non-Jews remain free in the Netherlands. At the same time the Jews from both Jewish Homes in Barneveld (700) are transported to Westerbork.

Autumn The "Joodsche Invalide" is now used for Aryan women affected with venereal disease after having intercourse with soldiers. At the order of the "Wehrmacht" (military) but against the wish of the S.S. they are treated by Jewish doctors and nurses. At the end of 1943, this controversy between S.S. and Wehrmacht is solved by reporting these Jewish doctors and nurses to Westerbork.

Nov. 15.11.43 All Jews also those married to non-Jews who were in Vught, a total of some 1200 persons, are deported to Poland. Only a few hundred Jews working for the Phillips factories in Eindhoven remain in Vught.

Restriction in Westerbork regarding parcels; families are allowed one 2 kg parcel in 4 weeks per member of the family; bachelors are allowed one 2 kg parcel once in 6 weeks.

000704

ENCLOSURES.

1. Jewish registration card (called "The Yellow Card")
2. General identification paper (extract) showing the "J".
3. Evening permit.
4. Tram permit.
5. "Ausnahmebescheinigung".
6. "Star".
7. "J.R." Identification Card.
8. "H.a.V." Identification Card.
9. Work identification card "Westerbork".

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