

HISTORY OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD WITH SELECTED DOCUMENTS,  
Volume III, Pages 1313 - 1433

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HISTORY OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD WITH SELECTED DOCUMENTS

VOLUME III

DOCUMENTS

PAGES 1313 - 1433

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



COPY

OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MAR 6 1944

Gentlemen:

You have advised us that certain persons have asserted that the provisions of Executive Order 9417 exempt persons and agencies concerned with refugee relief from complying with requirements made by The President's War Relief Control Board under the provisions of Executive Order 9205.

As we understand them, there is no overlapping between the two Executive Orders. However, in order to resolve any doubts in the minds of third parties, the War Refugee Board hereby delegates to The President's War Relief Control Board such authority, if any, as may have been transferred by Executive Order 9417 from The President's War Relief Control Board to the War Refugee Board.

You are at liberty to show this letter to any person or agency in your discretion.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)  
J. W. PEHLE

J. W. Pehle  
Acting Executive Director

The President's War Relief Control Board  
Washington Building  
Washington, D. C.

COPY

March 4, 1944

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

It is mutually understood by the War Refugee Board and the President's War Relief Control Board that:

1 - The provisions of Executive Order 9417 dated January 22, 1944, establishing the War Refugee Board, do not exempt persons or agencies concerned with refugee relief from complying with requirements made by The President's War Relief Control Board under the provisions of Executive Order 9205, dated July 25, 1942;

2 - The War Refugee Board may call upon The President's War Relief Control Board to assist in carrying out the purposes of Executive Order 9417 by securing appropriate action in the field of refugee relief by persons and agencies to the extent authorized by Executive Order 9205.

War Refugee Board:

CORDELL HULL  
Secretary of State

H. MORGENTHAU JR.  
Secretary of the Treasury

HENRY L. STIMSON  
Secretary of War

JOSEPH E. DAVIES,  
Chairman, P.W.R.C.B.

CHARLES P. TAFT

CHARLES WARREN

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WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

3 March 1944

The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Treasury.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As I informed you previously, the proposal contained in your letter of January 28, 1944, regarding War Department cooperation with the War Refugee Board, was referred to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their consideration.

As a result of their study on this matter, a message similar to that proposed by you has been dispatched to the appropriate U. S. Army Commanders. I have been informed that the Navy Department has taken the necessary action to inform the U. S. Navy Commander concerned.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)  
JOHN J. McCLOY  
Assistant Secretary of War

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DOCUMENT  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



COPY

OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 8, 1944

Gentlemen:

The War Refugee Board, consisting of the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War, was created by President Roosevelt on January 22, 1944. The President's purpose in creating the Board, as well as the Board's duties and authority are set out in Executive Order No. 9417, a copy of which is enclosed for your information.

The Board is not unmindful of the fact that private agencies, including yourselves, have for some time been active in seeking means to effect the relief and rescue of Jews and other minority groups threatened with extermination by the enemy. Nor is the Board unmindful of the fact that such agencies have actually brought relief to and effected the rescue of a number of such victims of enemy persecution.

The Board is presently preparing programs for action and earnestly solicits the advice and cooperation of every agency concerned with the problem. Consequently, the Board would appreciate it if you would submit to it, at your earliest possible convenience, a detailed statement in writing of such specific action as you believe the Board should take to effectuate the policy announced in the Executive Order, and of the measures that you are equipped to take to lend assistance to such program. While your statement may be informal, it should contain all available information necessary or incidental to the effectuation of any project you suggest. In this connection, you should bear in mind that the Board must, of necessity, confine itself to projects involving the relief or rescue of groups of persons and cannot deal with proposals limited to any specific individual.

The Board is fully cognizant of the difficulties involved in the preparation of any such statement, but nevertheless believes that the effort thus expended will have its compensation in achievement.

I think that you can understand our desire for having the suggestions of all agencies submitted to the Board in writing and at the earliest possible moment. On the other hand, I want you to know that

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the staff of the Board is always available for discussions with your representatives and the consideration of such further proposals or suggestions as you may be prepared to make.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)  
J. W. PEHLE

J. W. Pehle  
Acting Executive Director

Advisory Council on European Jewish Affairs  
of the World Jewish Congress  
330 West 42nd Street, Room 819  
New York, New York

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## DOCUMENT

PRIVATE AGENCY REMITTANCES AUTHORIZED BY  
UNITED STATES TREASURY FOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD PURPOSES

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	TOTAL
Switzerland	American Christian Committee for Refugees - - - - -	149,500	
	American Friends Service Committee - - - - -	25,000	
	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	13,679,000	
	Belgian War Relief, Inc. - - - - -	115,000	
	Friends of Luxembourg, Inc. - - - - -	45,000	
	International Rescue and Relief Committee - - - - -	225,000	
	Jewish Labor Committee - - - - -	55,000	
	Poale Zion Organization and Jewish National Workers Alliance - - - - -	18,000	
	The Queen Wilhelmina Fund, Inc. - - - - -	215,000	
	Self-Help of Emigres from Central Europe - - - - -	40,000	
	Unitarian Service Committee - - - - -	111,000	
	Union of Orthodox Rabbis - - - - -	700,000	
	Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee - - - - -	1,231,100	
	World Jewish Congress - - - - -	237,010	
Portugal	American Friends Service Committee - - - - -	25,000	
	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	102,000	
	Jewish Labor Committee - - - - -	10,000	
	World Jewish Congress - - - - -	50,000	
			137,000

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	TOTAL
Sweden	American Friends Service Committee - - \$	1,600	
	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	106,000	
	American Relief for Norway, Inc. - - -	520,000	
	Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church - - - - -	15,000	
	International Rescue and Relief Committee - - - - -	24,000	
	Polish War Relief, Inc. - - - - -	25,000	
	Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee - -	10,000	
	World Jewish Congress - - - - -	10,000	
			\$ 711,600
Italy	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	341,000	
			341,000
Turkey	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	150,000	
	Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, Inc. - - -	5,000	
	International Rescue and Relief Committee - - - - -	35,000	
	Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee - -	25,000	
			215,000

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COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	TOTAL
Albania	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	\$ 10,000	
			\$ 10,000
Spain	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	150,000	
			150,000
Great Britain	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	20,000	
	American Relief for Czechoslovakia - - - - -	350,000	
	French Relief Fund, Inc. - - - - -	150,000	
	Polish War Relief, Inc. - - - - -	400,000	
			920,000
Palestine	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - - - - -	761,353	
	Poale Zion Organization and Jewish National Workers Alliance - - - - -	33,000	
			794,353
Morocco	Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee - - - - -	19,000	
			19,000
Russia	Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee - - - - -	5,200	
			5,200
TOTAL AMOUNT OF ALL PRIVATE AGENCY REMITTANCES AUTHORIZED			\$ 20,198,763

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE, MORNING NEWSPAPERS,  
Friday, January 28, 1944.

No. 1

The War Refugee Board held its first meeting on Wednesday, January 26. The meeting was attended by Secretaries Hull, Morgenthau, and Stimson.

The Board announced that all United States diplomatic and consular offices throughout the world have been instructed to do everything possible to effectuate this Government's war refugee policy as announced by the President, bearing in mind the urgency of the problem.

The instructions issued covered the following points:

All missions were advised that instructions had been issued by the President to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of War to endeavor to effect immediately the rescue and relief of Jews in Europe and of other victims of Nazi terror. The President's Executive Order, issued on January 23, 1944, contained the following declaration:

"It is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."

For the purpose of carrying out this policy, the Order sets up a War Refugee Board composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of War. This Board is responsible to the President, and to it is assigned the responsibility for carrying out the policy above announced. While the Board is responsible directly for giving effect to the Policy, it is directed to work with UNRRA, the International Committee, and other appropriate international organizations. The President made it clear that in dealing with this important and difficult problem he expected to have full cooperation from the governments of the United Nations and other foreign governments. The facilities of the Department of State, the Treasury

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Department, and the War Department were direct to be employed to lend the fullest aid possible to victims of Axis persecution. The President emphasized the urgent necessity of frustrating the Nazi design to exterminate Jewish and other minority groups in Europe.

Cooperation was directed with all public agencies and established private organizations in the rescue areas of those officers who are dealing with this problem, to the end that effective programs and measures for relief, rescue, maintenance, and transportation of persecuted victims may be developed and carried out. Immediate reports relating to the situation existing in the countries of the respective officers have been requested, which should include information as to the permission granted to war refugees to enter each country, the encouragement and cooperation given to such entry, and the extent to which each country does not cooperate in permitting entry. Where refugees are refused entry at frontiers, the facts and reasons for such action have been requested.

Recommendations as to possible lines of action have been asked, with notation of special obstacles which may handicap rescue operations and methods of overcoming such obstacles.

Foreign governments are being approached to ascertain the extent to which they are prepared to cooperate.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE,  
Friday, February 4, 1944.

RELEASE NO. 2

The War Refugee Board met today and designated John W. Pehle as Acting Executive Director.

Mr. Pehle is Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury, and Director of Foreign Funds Control. The Secretary of the Treasury has given him leave of absence to serve as Acting Executive Director of the War Refugee Board.

Pehle's work as Director of Foreign Funds Control has afforded him wide experience in negotiating with representatives of foreign governments as well as with the various departments and agencies of this government that will be called on to participate in the work of the War Refugee Board. His work in these fields also has brought him into close touch with the problems now before the Board, and he is well known to the private agencies interested in relief work and the rescue of refugees.

Pehle is a career man in the Government, having entered the Office of the General Counsel of the Treasury Department upon his graduation from the Yale Law School in 1934. He was named Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury and Director of Foreign Funds Control in 1940.

Members of the War Refugee Board are the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of War.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

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Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, February 9, 1944.

RELEASE NO. 3

The War Refugee Board announced today that it is soliciting the written suggestions of all interested private agencies as to the measures that they believe the Board can take to rescue and otherwise bring relief to Jews and other victims of enemy persecution.

The Board also asked that private agencies advise it promptly of such measures as they are equipped to take to lend assistance in its work. In this connection, the Board has advised the private agencies concerned that it will have to confine itself to projects involving the relief or rescue of groups of persons. The Board stated that it will not be able to deal with proposals limited to seeking out and rescuing any individual.

In writing to the private organizations concerned with the problem, the Board stated that it was not unmindful of the fact that private agencies have for some time been seeking means to effect the relief and rescue of Jews and other minority groups threatened with extermination by the enemy. A number of victims of enemy persecution have been rescued or brought relief through the efforts of such private agencies.

It was stated at the Board's offices today that although it was believed that all interested private agencies had been solicited, it was possible that a few were omitted by inadvertence. A Board spokesman stated that any interested private organization that does not receive, within the next few days, a letter from the Board soliciting its views and cooperation, should communicate with the Board promptly.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE,  
Monday, February 21, 1944.

RELEASE NO. 4

John W. Pehle, Acting Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, today announced that Ira Hirschmann, vice-president of Bloomingdale Brothers, Inc., New York City, has been designated as the Board's special representative in Ankara, Turkey, assigned as Special Attache to the Embassy in connection with war refugee matters.

Mr. Hirschmann arrived in Ankara February 14, and is now engaged in the development of programs and the implementation of measures for the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe.

Mr. Hirschmann has spent considerable time in western and central Europe. In 1938 he attended the Evian Conference as an observer for the United States Government. Later he went to Austria where with the cooperation of friends he arranged for several hundred refugees to leave the country.

Mr. Hirschmann's most recent government service was as special assistant to William Davis of the War Labor Board. He is interested in civic activities and serves as a member of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE, MORNING NEWSPAPERS,  
Tuesday, March 28, 1944.

RELEASE NO. 5

In a news dispatch from Stockholm, dated March 25, the Associated Press reported that Sweden had turned down an American Government request that some Swedish shipping be used to evacuate Jewish refugees from Rumanian and Black Sea ports to Palestine. The reason given for the Swedish attitude was said to be lack of available shipping. The War Refugee Board confirms that the matter has been under discussion. The fact that no arrangement for Swedish shipping has as yet proved possible does not reflect any negative attitude on the part of the Swedish Government which has continually shown a sympathetic interest in humanitarian efforts of this kind. The Swedish Minister has assured the War Refugee Board that the Swedish Government is prepared to do everything possible to aid the efforts of the Board.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, March 30, 1944

RELEASE NO. 6

A Colorado farmer today sent the War Refugee Board a donation of \$100 "to help finance your program" and an offer to take in five Jewish refugee families "when the opportunity arrives."

In a letter to John W. Pehle, The Board's executive director, Harry C. Rogers of Dove Creek, Colorado, expressed his own and his neighbors' gratification over the establishment of the Board and its "humane undertaking" of rescuing the Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution.

"I have been talking to some of my neighbors about the rehabilitation of the Jews as a personal responsibility and am finding fast response," he wrote. "Our Bible teaches us 'We are our brothers' keeper' and this call from the persecuted Jews of Europe is the clearest and most appealing to Christianity that has been heard in 2,000 years."

"Enclosed is my check for \$100 to help finance your program. I want to offer you my personal assistance when the opportunity arrives and homes are sought for these people. I will take five families on my own farm and will see that they are sheltered under the principles of the Four Freedoms and tutored to love our constitutional government."

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE MORNING NEWSPAPERS  
Monday, April 3, 1944

RELEASE NO. 7

The War Refugee Board is using all the power and prestige of the United States Government to save the victims of Nazi persecution who can still be rescued, John W. Pehle, the Board's executive director, told 600 Midwest leaders of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee meeting at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago yesterday. He said the diplomatic, fiscal and military agencies of the Government as well as the facilities of the Office of War Information, War Shipping Administration, and other agencies have been marshaled for the job.

"The present military situation in the Balkans presents the greatest challenge to the Board in changing the attitude of the enemy," Mr. Pehle declared. "President Roosevelt's recent warning to Germany and her satellites of the consequences of further persecutions in their territories, and the subsequent British endorsement of that warning have provided heavy ammunition on the psychological warfare front. Cooperating with the War Refugee Board, the Office of War Information and the British Broadcasting Company have carried and will continue to carry that message in every language to every land."

Mr. Pehle emphasized that the Board was using all methods in its rescue work - formal and informal, direct and indirect, conventional and unconventional. All of these methods, he said, have as their goal the rescue of human beings, particularly Jews, from the barbarism of the enemy.

Stressing the importance of collaboration between the War Refugee Board and private agencies operating in the refugee field, Mr. Pehle asserted that the War Refugee Board offers new opportunities for private philanthropies to operate. Such collaboration, he said, is "the best method of obtaining quick results in a desperate period."

Paying tribute to the work of the J.D.C., he said: "It has done a magnificent job. Its experience, its personnel, its know-how, and its funds have been of invaluable assistance to the work of the War Refugee Board in rescuing the helpless, homeless and stateless refugees of Europe." He added that the War Refugee Board had received excellent suggestions from the chairman of the J.D.C.'s European committee "who knows the problems first hand."

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE MORNING NEWSPAPERS  
April 12, 1944

RELEASE NO. 8

John W. Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, today announced the appointment of Iver C. Olsen as the Board's special representative in Stockholm, Sweden, assigned as special attache to the Legation on War Refugee matters.

The new appointee was named by the Board to develop programs and implement measures for the rescue, maintenance and relief of Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe. Ira Hirschmann of New York City, who was designated in February as the Board's representative in Turkey is due in Washington this month for "urgent consultation" with the Board.

Mr. Olsen, a native of Norway, has been a financial attache of the Treasury's Division of Monetary Research since October, 1943. Prior to that time he was special assistant to the director of Foreign Funds Control.

A resident of Gilford, New Hampshire, he received his education at Boston University; the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University; and Crawford's Diplomatic School of Washington. He is the author of numerous articles on banking, investments and economic problems.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE MORNING NEWSPAPERS  
Monday April 17, 1944

RELEASE NO. 9

John W. Pehle, executive director of the War Refugee Board, today announced the appointment of Dr. Robert C. Dexter, executive director and acting commissioner for Europe of the Unitarian Service Committee, as the Board's special representative in Lisbon, Portugal.

Dr. Dexter has been in Lisbon since the fall of 1942. In his new post, as special attache to the Legation on war refugee matters, he will work with public and private agencies in developing programs and implementing measures for the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of refugees.

He has spent much of his life abroad. For seven months in the winter of 1941 and 1942 he directed the Unitarian Service activities in Portugal and England. In 1940 he spent three months in Europe surveying refugee needs. At that time he visited 13 countries and was instrumental in securing the release of 1,500 prisoners in Hungary. In 1938 he was head of the Commission for Service in Czechoslovakia and was decorated by the Czech Government-in-Exile for his work with Czech refugees. Before the war he traveled in Hungary and Rumania and attended many sessions of the Assembly and Council of the League of Nations in Geneva. In 1926 he was one of 50 university professors sent to the Hague and Germany by the Carnegie Endowment.

A graduate of Brown University, Dr. Dexter was for 10 years a social worker in the United States and Canada and taught social and political science at Skidmore College and Clark University.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE MORNING PAPERS  
Saturday, April 22, 1944

RELEASE NO. 10

John W. Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, today announced the appointment of Roswell McClelland as the Board's special representative in Bern, Switzerland, assigned as special attache to the Legation on war refugee matters.

Mr. McClelland has been identified with the American Friends Service Committee's refugee work in Europe for the last four years. In 1940 he was in charge of the Committee's office in Rome, working with Jewish and Catholic groups who were aiding refugees in leaving the country. In 1941 he worked with the Quaker Center in Marseille, France. In 1942, he was placed in charge of the Committee's work in Geneva, Switzerland.

In his new post as War Refugee Board appointee he will develop programs and inaugurate measures to rescue Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe who are in imminent danger of death.

A native of California, Mr. McClelland received his early education in Switzerland. He is a graduate of Duke University and received a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University. He is the son of Ross St. John McClelland of Los Angeles, international banker and engineer.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
Executive Office of the President  
Washington

RELEASE NO. 11

(The following radio broadcast by Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, and Baukhage, Blue Network guest commentator, on the program of the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees, Overseas Needs and Palestine is scheduled for presentation from Washington by the National Broadcasting Company between 12m. and 12:30 p.m., Eastern War Time, Sunday, May 14, and is for release at that time.)

BAUKHAGE: Baukhage talking! From Washington where on January 22 of this year by executive order the President set up the War Refugee Board consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War, quote "to take action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe - racial, religious and political - all civilian victims of enemy savagery," end quote. Those were the words of the official statement.

A full-time executive director of that Board was appointed. He is John Pehle, assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury, and on leave as director of Foreign Funds Control. Mr. Pehle is sitting right here with me now.

The driving force in every successful effort is a personality - a human being - and I want to bring that personality before you. Mr. Pehle, I want you to tell me in your own words something about the motives behind the formation of the War Refugee Board.

PEHLE: Well, in the first place, Mr. Baukhage, let me say that there is more than a personality behind this effort. A nation is behind it and I think that the effort is typically American. The fact that in the midst of a great war the President saw fit to assign to his three top cabinet officers the task of rescuing the refugees from the clutches of the enemy is significant. It brings home with great force the urgency of the problem.

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BAUKHAGE: Yes, I can understand that urgency. We know that thousands of persons are being rounded up every day and shipped to execution centers like those in Poland. We hear about these things, but they seem rather vague.

PEHLE: Let me tell you, Mr. Baukhage, one typical story - a story that began in Poland but, thank heaven, didn't end there. There is nothing vague about David, a little boy, a Polish Jew, 8 years old when he saw his parents killed in Warsaw by a Nazi firing squad. He ran away to the woods. For weeks he wandered alone until a kindly Christian farmer and his wife hid him in their home. Later the underground helped him across the border to Roumania. There he was caught in the general roundup of foreign Jews and sent to exile in Transnistria which, you know, was German-occupied Russia.

BAUKHAGE: It was in that particular exile, wasn't it, that over half of 200,000 refugees died of mistreatment and starvation.

PEHLE: That's right. Several months ago - along with 40,000 fellow exiles - David was brought back to Bucharest, Roumania, when pressure was put on the Roumanians to save the surviving refugees from annihilation by the retreating Germany army.

A few weeks ago, with the help of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, David obtained passage on a ship which sailed from Constanza across the Black Sea to Istanbul. The Joint Distribution Committee provided funds for the voyage. David had no documents - none of the exit and entrance permits required of travelers. But thanks to the efforts of Ambassador Steinhardt and the War Refugee Board representative in Turkey he got through Turkey and on to Palestine. David has been through fire. But now he's safe. He faces life instead of death.

BAUKHAGE: That brings it home. But just how, Mr. Pehle, does your Board function at this end? Where does Washington come in?

PEHLE: Much of the work is done through diplomatic channels, with the assistance of the State Department and its foreign representatives. Today the United States, as one of the recognized leaders among nations, is in a position to bring home to other countries - allies, neutrals, and Axis satellites alike - what the American people want done about refugees. After all, the job of the War Refugee Board is to carry out the desires of the American people on this subject.

BAUKHAGE: What about diplomatic pressure on the satellite countries, Mr. Pehle? Can that actually be used to save lives?

PEHLE: It certainly can.

BAUKHAGE: How?

PEHLE: The satellites no longer have any illusions about the outcome of the war.

BAUKHAGE: They certainly shouldn't have.

PEHLE: They know that Germany will be defeated. We can bring about a more liberal attitude toward the refugees by making it crystal-clear to these countries that the United States and the United Nations will bear in mind their treatment of minorities when the time for final settlement comes.

BAUKHAGE: Let's see, it was only a few weeks ago, wasn't it, that the President warned Germany and the satellites of the consequences of further persecution of the Jews.

PEHLE: That's right. And he called upon all the free peoples of Europe and Asia "to open their frontiers to all victims of oppression."

BAUKHAGE: Have you any way of knowing that such warnings have had any effect?

PEHLE: We are sure that they do, although it is obviously difficult to measure their effectiveness exactly. The fact that Roumania permitted the refugees to return from Transnistria to Roumania proper may well be an example of the success of this technique. We have evidence that these warnings have injected new life and hope into thousands of downtrodden, tormented people - have been "booster shots" to sinking hearts.

BAUKHAGE: Is the work which the War Refugee Board is doing in any way duplicating the activities of private agencies such as those which are represented in the United Jewish Appeal?

PEHLE: Definitely not, Mr. Baukhage. Private agencies and the Board work as a team. Through the Board things are done that only Government can do. Private agencies meet the principal costs and assist in functional ways. We need them and they need us.

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BAUKHAGE: Well, Mr. Pehle, can you tell us a little more concretely how this works out?

PEHLE: Let me tell you about Leon and Ruth, a Jewish couple whose martyrdom began when the Germans took France. For a time they hid in the outskirts of Paris and then in the surrounding country. Last winter they made their way to Spain. Their only possessions were the clothes on their backs. After making this treacherous journey they were held in custody until provision could be made for them. The Joint Distribution Committee - one of the agencies in the United Jewish Appeal - secured their freedom by guaranteeing their maintenance. Leon and Ruth are in Barcelona now. They are candidates for evacuation to a camp which the United States and Great Britain have set up near Casablanca in North Africa. The War-Refugee Board is going to see that they get there - soon.

BAUKHAGE: That's fine!

PEHLE: You see, Mr. Baukhage, the agencies in the United Jewish Appeal - the Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal, and the National Refugee Service - have a very distinguished record of achievement. We want to supplement and reinforce their activities. We want to cooperate with them wherever it is appropriate. We hope that those who wish to further the program of the War Refugee Board will do it by responding generously to the campaigns of effective private agencies such as those in the United Jewish Appeal. As President Roosevelt said, through them "the American people can make their contribution to the fight for decency, human dignity, and freedom for all to live in peace."

BAUKHAGE: Now there's one more question I want to ask you, Mr. Pehle. How is the present military situation - the invasion we're all waiting for - affecting your work?

PEHLE: Mr. Baukhage, we realize that the exigencies of war may suddenly reverse or delay some of our plans. We realize that the very nature of our problem may change. But let me assure you that we are determined to save as many lives as we can, as fast as we can. We are prepared to use this Nation's growing power and our coming victory for the humane purposes for which we fight.

BAUKHAGE: Thank you very much, Mr. Pehle, for giving us this clear picture of the part the War Refugee Board is playing in helping the refugees.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

RELEASE NO. 12

(The following address by John W. Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, before the Rededication Day Rally of the United Jewish Appeal at the Hotel Astor, New York, is scheduled for delivery at 8:30 p.m., Eastern War Time, Monday, June 5, 1944, and is for release at that time.)

I am very happy to be here tonight to join in the Rededication Day Rally of the United Jewish Appeal. As the conflagration in Europe blazes with new fury, it is fitting that the officers and workers in the agencies of the United Jewish Appeal should consecrate themselves anew to the task of rescuing the refugees from the clutches of the enemy.

We who are here tonight have pledged our minds and our hearts to the salvation of human lives. We are concerned with this task first as civilized men and women and second as citizens of a country which is dedicated to this task. It is one purpose in which I am convinced that all Americans, regardless of race, creed or political affiliation, join hearts and hands.

I am here tonight as a representative of the Government. Your invitation is a profession of faith in the work of the War Refugee Board. Together we are interested in getting the best possible results in our life-saving mission. You are well aware of the magnitude of that mission.

Last January President Roosevelt by executive order set up the War Refugee Board, consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War "to take action for the immediate rescue of as many as possible for the persecuted minorities of Europe - racial, religious and political." By creating the Board the President promised the hunted and oppressed that the United States would do everything in its power to help them. I think the establishment of this Board is a striking example of the American spirit. Some other nation might have fashioned such an instrument. But America did.

At the time the Board was created and, I am sorry to say, even today many millions of refugees were wandering homeless and unwanted,

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hiding wherever they could, over the map of Europe. By far the greatest part of them were Jews.- for Hitler has singled out the Jews for destruction. In the past four years millions of them have suffered desolation and death.

Even before the war a great many Jews were uprooted. Many thousands left Germany and Austria to escape Nazi persecution. When Hitler occupied Czechoslovakia great numbers of Czechs sought refuge in Hungary, Roumania and more distant lands. In 1939 the Nazi invasion of Poland forced another exodus. Some of the Poles went to Hungary and Roumania. More than a million are now in Russia.

In 1940 the invasion of the Low Countries and the fall of France sent more refugees on their endless march. Dutch, Belgians, and French fled before the advancing German armies into central and southwestern France. A relatively small number made their way across the Spanish border. In 1941 when the Germans went into the Balkans, a number of Yugoslavs and Greeks escaped by way of Turkey.

These movements were but a few strokes in the background of the tangled picture of helpless, homeless, stateless refugees who are scattered over Europe today - a picture painted with more shadows than light - a picture which changes with every military action.

The agencies in the United Jewish Appeal and the War Refugee Board are determined to move these desperate, hunted people to places of safety. We are determined to get as many of them out of occupied Europe as we can, as fast as we can. But until we can get them out we must use every possible means to keep them alive. We must not let the Gestapo or starvation get to them first.

I am sure you were heartened last Friday, as I was, when President Roosevelt told his press and radio conference that some of these people are coming to this country. He confirmed that consideration was being given to using an army camp no longer needed for military purposes as a temporary haven for these refugees. Tonight I am glad to tell you that plans for such a camp are going forward at full speed.

I should like to point out to you a few of the very black spots upon which our attention is focussed. One is Hungary. Since March 19 of this year Hungary has been the prey of terrorist Nazi rule. Today the situation is desperate. You have a right to know the facts, and they are terrifying facts. Altogether 800,000 Jews in Hungary face annihilation. Hungary, which had been a temporary sanctuary for many refugees from Poland and other countries before the Nazi took over, has become a murder chamber overnight. There is no use to gloss over the cold-blooded massacre that is taking place there. We are reliably informed that negotiations are already being concluded for deportation to Poland and to death.

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500,000 Jews who have been in concentration camps in Hungary since the German occupation. A sudden military development is the only possible way all of these people could be saved. There is little that we can do, but we are determined to do everything we can - and each small bit represents hundreds of human lives.

Reports had reached us that efforts were afoot in German-occupied Italy to raise the anti-Jewish campaign there to the same level of intensity as in Hungary. We can all thank God that the liberation of Rome by our gallant troops has signaled the end of Nazi oppression in that great city of Europe.

There are at least 5,000 children who must be rescued from occupied France and an equal number of children whose future depends upon our getting them out of Bulgaria.

These are but a random sample of our problems. There are many others in Yugoslavia, Slovakia and elsewhere - equally pressing.

What we must understand is that the immediate rescue job is up to us. That means it is up to effective private agencies and the War Refugee Board - to you and me and what we stand for. Upon us rests the responsibility for carrying out the desires of the American people to preserve human decency, human dignity and human lives.

Much of the War Refugee Board's work is done through diplomatic channels, with the assistance of the State Department and its foreign representatives. In this connection I cannot praise too highly the unremitting and wholehearted efforts not only of Ira Hirschmann, our able representative who is returning to Ankara, but also of Ambassador Steinhardt in Turkey. Mr. Steinhardt's active and resourceful cooperation has made us all grateful that he is our Ambassador in Turkey at this crucial time.

Back in January the little trickle of refugees who had been coming to Turkey from the Balkans had virtually ceased. However, the possibility of rescuing larger and larger numbers of persons existed although a hundred obstacles stood in the way. We have made real progress in overcoming these obstacles and more than a thousand lives were saved during the month of April alone. There is good reason to hope that the way is now paved for further success in saving lives in this area.

I have said we must do our utmost to keep those whose lives are in danger alive. In this connection I want to give you an idea of what is being done on the psychological front. I want to tell you, for example, what our Government is doing in an attempt to thwart the Gestapo in Hungary.

Through the radio facilities of the Office of War Information,

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the British Broadcasting Company and Radio Algiers the Voice of America has been beamed steadily at Hungary since March 24 in Hungarian language short wave broadcasts. March 24, you will remember, was the day of the President's warning to Germany and the satellites of the consequences of further persecution of the Jews and other minorities. That statement calling upon the free peoples of Europe and Asia "to open their frontiers to all victims of oppression" was the keynote of countless radio programs. It was followed up by messages from Secretary Hull, various Senators and leading Catholic churchmen of Hungarian extraction.

The Hungarian people have been called upon to save their Jewish brothers, to hide them, to nourish them, to help them reach Yugoslav territory where American military commissions are functioning. They have been reminded of the Declaration of Moscow - warned that those who have been responsible for or have taken part in atrocities, massacres or executions will be punished.

They have been told specifically how the French underground has aided Jewish refugees in France. They have been urged to emulate the Greeks who in their humanity spontaneously assisted 15,000 of their neighbors - Jews - to hide and remain hidden.

The Hungarians have been told exactly how to preserve evidence against the war criminals - to note the names of all who take part in the persecution and crimes of the Nazis, to take photographs of what they can, and to take care to preserve these incriminating documents.

And, finally, they have had drilled into their ears that the Nazi star is sinking - that it is now clear to everyone, even to the Nazis themselves, that they are losing the war on the sea, in the air, in the South, in Russia, and that they will soon be defeated finally and irrevocably.

I have been asked if the work of the War Refugee Board in any way duplicates the activities of private agencies such as those which are represented in the United Jewish Appeal. The answer is definitely - NO. Our rescue work in Turkey is an example of the way private agencies and the Board supplement each other's work. Through the Board things are done that only Government can do. Private agencies have met the principal costs of transporting the refugees from Roumania to Palestine and in many other ways. The Board and private agencies also have teamed up effectively on the relief and rescue programs which are now in operation in Switzerland, Spain and Portugal. The neutral countries contiguous to enemy-held territory will be in a position to receive larger numbers of refugees if facilities for additional imports of clothing and foodstuffs are granted. The Board is working to obtain those definitive assurances which will make it possible for private agencies to step up their relief work.

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I should like to cite just one more example of cooperative endeavor. Upon the Board's recommendation the Treasury Department has issued licenses which permit the JDC and other agencies to send money to representatives abroad to purchase food for individual parcels to be distributed to internees in enemy territory, and for other purposes.

We want to expand and accelerate the helpfulness of private agencies such as those in the United Jewish Appeal. We need them and they need us. We have not and we do not intend to set up a large governmental organization. On our staff are twenty-five professional employees, vitally concerned with the work they are doing.

The agencies in the United Jewish Appeal - and the Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal, and the National Refugee Service - have been in business a long time. They have a distinguished record of humanitarian achievement. They have developed well-tested machinery for rescuing and maintaining refugees. It is for us to supplement and reinforce their activities through diplomatic and other channels available to the Government.

The War Refugee Board is an emergency organization set up to do an emergency job. We can do that job best by working fully through private agencies. Together we have made only a beginning. Much more must be done. As long as one life is sacrificed that might have been spared, whatever we do is not enough.

As I have indicated, one of the voluntary agencies which has been of immense value to the Board is the Joint Distribution Committee - the largest wholly private agency operating overseas. Its experience is invaluable and its personnel and financial assistance have contributed greatly to the progress of our work. Just as we have been happy to help enlarge the opportunities for rescue through the JDC, we are also interested in cooperating wherever it is appropriate with the other agencies in the United Jewish Appeal, namely, the United Palestine Appeal and the National Refugee Service. Their record of concrete achievement is encouraging to everyone interested in winning reprieves for those people who are under the Nazi yoke.

You who are here tonight are the workers in the New York City and Metropolitan Area for the War Emergency Campaign of the United Jewish Appeal. You have set your sights high. You are taking time from your families, your businesses and your private affairs to raise your share of the \$52 million which the United Jewish Appeal needs to do its work. You would be more than human if you did not have moments of doubt - moments when you wondered what was happening to the money you have obtained, moments when you wondered if the personal sacrifices you are making are worth while. From my vantage point let me assure you that they are. Let me also assure you that no time is being lost in converting your dollars into

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programs of relief and rescue. Those dollars are making the difference between life and death, between hope and despair to countless human beings.

In creating a War Refugee Board President Roosevelt paved the way for a great service to the cause of freedom and humanity. To millions of tormented people whose lives were in peril he gave hope. It is for us to justify that hope. I am not satisfied with what we have done. I don't ever expect to be. Nor do I think you will be satisfied with even the most you can do. Our only satisfaction must be derived from judging ourselves in terms of how much has been done that could be done.

Tonight we have met to rededicate ourselves to the great task remaining before us. Tonight we highly resolve that those millions who died in the ghettos and in the boxcars and on the highways shall not have died in vain. Tonight we pledge ourselves and our resources to those who yet live. With this determination we face the task ahead.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

RELEASE NO. 13

(Statement by John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
of the War Refugee Board, to be released on ar-  
rival of the refugees.)

The arrival of almost 1,000 refugees from Italy today demon-  
strates this Nation's willingness to participate in an inter-  
national program to find havens for the survivors of Nazi persecu-  
tion.

In accordance with the terms laid down by President Roosevelt  
they will be housed and cared for at Fort Ontario, under adequate  
security precautions, until the war is over and they can return to  
their homes.

The sanctuary America offers this small group is but one as-  
pect of the War Refugee Board's program to rescue and protect the  
persecuted peoples of Europe.

The refugees who landed here today are safe and they are  
welcome.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE MORNING NEWSPAPERS  
Tuesday, August 22, 1944.

RELEASE NO. 13A

Details of the midnight attack and subsequent sinking in the Black Sea of the S. S. Mefkura, 200-ton Turkish motor ship carrying refugees from Constanza, Roumania, to Turkey were revealed today by John W. Pehle, executive director of the War Refugee Board.

Reports from the five survivors indicate that the ill-fated Mefkura went down under German shell fire. More than 250 passengers perished.

"If anyone had any doubts about the German attitude toward refugee rescue operations, or anticipated a lessening in the Nazi program of extermination, he now knows the ugly truth," Mr. Pehle declared.

According to a cable received by Mr. Pehle from Ira Hirschmann, War Refugee Board representative in Turkey, survivors of the Mefkura stated that the ship was approached by three surface craft near midnight August 5. The boats were barges, about the length of two railroad cars, and armed with machine guns and cannons. The boats fired both cannons and machine guns at the Mefkura. One of the first shots exploded the machinery in the machine room and the ship was set aflame by incendiary bullets.

The survivors said that many of their number were wounded by shell fire; others were caught in the flames or injured by flying machinery. The machine guns continued to fire upon many of the passengers after they had donned life preservers and jumped into the water.

The five Mefkura survivors and 395 passengers from the S. S. Bulbul, which made the trip a few hours behind the Mefkura, are now en route to Palestine by rail, Mr. Pehle said. The Bulbul passengers reported that their ship was not on the scene during the attack on the Mefkura. Later the armed boats approached the Bulbul and its engines were shut down. At daylight it picked up the five Mefkura survivors, who were all that could be found. A storm was raging, otherwise it was thought that more might have been rescued. For some reason, the armed boats did not fire upon the Bulbul, which continued its voyage carrying the Mefkura survivors to Ignaeda, Turkey.

Mr. Pehle stated that the emergency rescue operation which included bringing both the Mefkura survivors and the Bulbul passengers by concert from Ignaeda to Vize, by truck to Cherkaskoy, and by train to Istanbul, was conducted under the supervision of the Turkish Red Crescent.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

RELEASE NO. 14

(The following address by SECRETARY MORGENTHAU, a member of the War Refugee Board, before a mass meeting of the Jewish Welfare Fund to inaugurate the campaign of the Community and War Fund of Metropolitan Chicago, at the Stevens Hotel, is scheduled for delivery at 9:00 P.M., Central War Time, Thursday, September 21, 1944, and is for release at that time.)

A readiness to help one's fellow-men has always been a hallmark of the kind of civilization which we are now waging war to preserve. Never has there been more urgent need for it than now when the end of the war is approaching. For we shall be able to make our victory real only if we succeed in binding up the world's wounds, only if we can relieve and heal the terrible suffering which the war has caused.

This special meeting of the Jewish Welfare Fund is designed to encourage the Jewish community of Chicago to give its generous support to the Community and War Fund of the Metropolitan area. The Jews of Europe, who have suffered so terribly from Nazi savagery have special need of your help. It will be heartening to them to know that in this community, far away from the turmoil and destruction of the war, Jews and non-Jews together are striving to assist them.

All of you who share in this great effort have cause for gratification. There is something lost, I think, if men are deprived of the privilege of lending, voluntarily, a helping hand to their fellow-men and to the causes in which they believe. In a democracy there must always be room for the voluntary participation of individuals banding together to meet the problems of society. Charity, like mercy, is twice blessed. "It bleaseth him that gives and him that takes."

Fund raising efforts such as the one which you are now undertaking do more than anything else to give us a sense of human solidarity. Their benefits, when they are directed to needs at home, do much to improve the morale and physical well-being of our people and thus make our country stronger - in peace as well as in war. When these benefits are directed overseas, they help to preserve the concepts for which we are fighting - human decency and dignity. They keep alive the values of our civilization.

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Private agencies, such as those that make up the United Jewish Appeal, administering funds voluntarily contributed, have for many years been carrying on important programs overseas, furnishing rescue, relief and encouragement to millions of persecuted and impoverished people in Europe. We know that these activities have done much to bolster their will to live and to carry on. Refugees coming out of Nazi-dominated territory have testified that it has been a source of great strength to them to know that America cares about what happens to them - and cares enough to do something constructive in their behalf.

My conviction in this regard has been strengthened by the whole of my experience with the War Refugee Board, established eight months ago through the vision and humanitarianism of President Roosevelt. It is my privilege to share membership on the Board with Secretary Hull and Secretary Stimson, and to serve with its Executive Director, John W. Pehle.

In creating the War Refugee Board, the President declared: "It is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."

With a small staff in Washington, with a handful of able representatives in strategic neutral countries, the Board has carried on a host of activities in relief, in rescue, and in psychological warfare - all designed to save the lives of persecuted peoples.

Life-saving in an occupied country during a war is not a simple matter. All over Europe the Board has carried on its work with the great care necessary in such complex operations. It has participated in the rescue of thousands from the Balkans across the Black Sea to Palestine - in the rescue of many over the Pyrenees to and through Spain and Portugal - in the relief of many weary victims of Hitler's persecution who had found sanctuary in Sweden and Switzerland. It has cooperated in establishing many refugee camps in Africa and, through the President's leadership, an Emergency Refugee Shelter at Oswego, in the United States. It has taken the lead in sending food packages from this country to helpless internees in European camps. In the Hungarian crisis it took many steps which undoubtedly helped stay the deportation of Jews and relieve their condition. It has used all the old techniques and invented some new ones. It has applied them all to the saving of human life.

In all its operations, the Board has worked in the closest cooperation with private agencies. Many of its programs in relief and rescue work have utilized the personnel, the funds and the ex-

perience of those private agencies in which you are particularly interested and which you are supporting. In addition, it has had the warmest sort of support and assistance from numerous non-Jewish organizations - the American Friends' Service Committee, the Unitarian Service Committee, the International Committee of the Red Cross and many others.

The rescue operations from the Balkans were actually carried on by the Jewish Agency of Palestine and the Joint Distribution Committee. Part of the expense of feeding persons in Hungary and other occupied countries has been met by JDC. Without the help of such agencies these activities might have been "too little and too late."

Some of you may wonder why the work of the War Refugee Board has not been carried on and financed exclusively by the Government. Let me explain why I think it better that it was done jointly by both private agencies and the Government.

When the Board was first established, it was obvious that speed was essential. Millions of unfortunate people were in danger of sudden violent death or deportation. The pace of the war indicated that sudden military and diplomatic moves were impending. There was the terrible prospect that in the last days of his control, Hitler would suddenly undertake new measures of persecution and extermination. It was imperative that speedy machinery be employed.

In the light of this situation, the Board decided to rule out, wherever possible, all plans and devices that involved undue delay. It was quickly apparent that there were honorable, seasoned private organizations in this field who were equipped with everything except the kind of support which could come only from the Government of the United States. The main ingredient that was lacking was a vigorous statement of policy by this Government, and its application in all possible ways.

It seemed perfectly logical that a relationship should be established between the private agencies and the Government in order that the maximum number of lives should be saved in the minimum time. For its part the Government could contribute the weight of its prestige, its diplomacy, its communication channels, its licensing and transportation facilities - wherever these did not interfere with the winning of the war. For their part the private agencies could give detailed knowledge, seasoned personnel, long experience, and quickly available funds.

A partnership was speedily arranged. War Refugee Board originated, expedited, negotiated and enabled; private agencies did most of the financing and operating, and attended to those practical matters in which they were experienced.

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It is impossible, in my judgment, to pay too high a tribute to the work done by the organizations represented here this evening. There has been no call made upon them by the War Refugee Board which they did not answer with ardor and generosity. There has been no appeal from the beleaguered humans in Hitler's European dungeon to which they did not respond with zeal and vigor and compassion. They operated under terrible handicaps and against terrible odds. Yet they managed to pluck condemned men from the hands of executioners. They managed to bring children - youngsters whose whole lives had been spent in the shadow of persecution - into the light of freedom and opportunity and hope. They did more than save lives. They upheld the faith of mankind in the essential values upon which our civilization is founded.

With the liberation of Europe, there will be an even more compelling need for these services. The activities of the War Refugee Board are war-related and are confined primarily to the rescue of refugees from enemy countries. When the oppressors have been overthrown, the liberated peoples will be in desperate need of sustenance and encouragement. Beyond the help which will be given to them by the military authorities, UNRRA and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees there will be a great need for the kind of care which only voluntary agencies can provide.

In Rome today, for example, the JDC is ministering to the needs of desperate and broken remnants of the Jewish population. There is special need of food and medical care for these persecuted people. And the situation there will unquestionably be duplicated in France, in Belgium, in Holland, in Poland, in Hungary, in all the lands where the oppressor's heel has trod. Liberation will simply multiply your opportunities to be of service. It would be tragic to desert the great cause now. For the task which you are called upon to support is indispensable to the creation of the kind of world in which we hope to live.

All of you, I know, have read with shame and anger and heart-break the tales of Nazi savagery which have been unfolded as the liberation of Europe has progressed. No human being, least of all an American who has been brought up to respect freedom and the sanctity of the individual, could learn of these acts without a shuddering anguish. They are, to most of us, in a real sense incredible; and it is incredible that they should have been perpetrated by creatures shaped like men. Yet the record of what took place at Warsaw and Lublin and Kharkov, the bestial cruelty of the Gestapo in Germany and in all the lands which Germans overran, is real past all denying. I shall not try to tell you any of these tales. I know that your minds and hearts already have been seared by them.

We who have been spared these horrors have a solemn obligation to those who experienced them - an obligation imposed upon us by our

common humanity. We have an obligation to those millions whom the war will have left homeless and hungry, uprooted and driven to distant places, bereft of any means to start their lives anew. We cannot turn our heads aside and look the other way. The basic tenet of the civilization we cherish is that a kinship exists among all men.

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

RELEASE NO. 15

(The following address by John W. Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, before a dinner meeting of the Combined Jewish Appeal, at the Statler Hotel, Boston, is scheduled for delivery at 8 p.m., Eastern War Time, Sunday, October 15, 1944, and is for release at that time.)

Tonight I want to tell you something about the rescue program which the War Refugee Board has been carrying on for the past eight months with the help of the voluntary philanthropic agencies of America, the governments of the neutral countries, the underground of Europe, and men of good will everywhere. I cannot blueprint all the details of that program, but I can give you some examples taken from the files of the War Refugee Board of the work that has gone ahead. And those illustrations bear witness to the practical and ingenious humanitarianism of the American people during the grimmest war in all history.

In Gothenburg, Sweden, 15,000 food parcels from America were recently unloaded -- destined for helpless inmates of internment camps . . . 235,000 more parcels are now on their way.

In a Balkan country a humanitarian volunteer arrives equipped with sufficient status, prestige and funds to aid the victims of enemy persecution . . . His first act is to furnish a shelter for Jewish refugees . . . He is currently using private funds that originated in America to provide food - especially for children.

Of many couriers who have entered the Baltic countries to rescue refugees, some have been reported missing immediately after their arrival and other have even lost their lives in the effort.

Over the Pyrenees groups of children tortuously made their escape from France, prior to its liberation, to Spain, with the blessing of the Maquis, and with the aid of guides paid by funds from America . . . A few weeks later some are on their way to Palestine.

Along the Black Sea coast of Rumania small ships gather groups of refugees for a hazardous trip to Turkey . . . In Turkey, two Americans persuade local authorities to cut red tape and to permit

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refugees arriving on foot and in small boats to cross the country on their way from the Balkans to Palestine.

In a neutral country a prominent personage writes a personal letter in longhand for delivery to Horthy, asking that there be a stop to the deportation and extermination of Jews from Hungary . . . As a result of this and other protests, the British and American governments accepted the offer of the Hungarian government to release Jews and agreed to care for those reaching United Nations or neutral territories.

All over Europe listeners to secret radios hear statements of protest and warning against persecution of Jews issued by President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Hull, and two Congressional committees of the United States . . . Pamphlets drop over Hungary warning of retribution for her inhuman conduct.

In Southern Italy an American helps arrange for the escape in fragile ships of the downtrodden from Yugoslavia across the Adriatic to Italy . . . Some of those escaping later appear in African refugee camps and in an American Refugee Shelter.

In a camp at Casablanca several hundred wandering Sephardics at last find a temporary haven . . .

In upper New York State an American soldier visits his parents who, with almost 1,000 others have been brought to Oswego.

In Lisbon a committee meets to facilitate the departure of refugees who have come from France . . . Some arrive in Palestine . . . Some in Canada.

In London high government officials, American and British, join officers of an international organization to expedite the rescue of refugees.

In Poland, as in other occupied countries in Europe, underground groups protect exposed refugees by hiding them, by disguising them, by moving them from place to place.

These items constitute part of the story of the current war effort. America has been using every imaginable device to contest the enemy's barbaric determination to wipe out complete sections of the world's non-combatant population.

This is not idle rhetoric. There can be no doubt that Hitler and his partners in barbarism have a deliberate plan to exterminate entire segments of the population of Europe, including particularly the Jews.

This effort, as we know from the evidence at Lublin and Khar'kov

and from much unpublished material, has not been confined to the Jews. In obvious preparation for another war, the Germans have killed large numbers of non-Jewish intellectual and cultural leaders of Poland. Huge segments of the Russian civilian population have been slaughtered. Entire groups in all the other occupied countries have fallen under the crushing heel of Hitler and his followers.

And there have been tens of thousands of individuals who have been selected for death simply because they kept on being themselves - which meant being an anti-Nazi preacher, a true democrat, a courageous patriot, an honest journalist, or a humane citizen.

We have been shocked to the extreme by this war of extermination. The barbarity of the enemy has aroused the conscience of America. It has mobilized our sympathies, and it has inspired the Government of the United States to do all that can be done to rescue the intended victims of enemy slaughter.

Specifically, this revulsion in America has expressed itself in the creation of the War Refugee Board by President Roosevelt. It has been my privilege to serve as Executive Director of this Board, the members of which are Secretary Hull, Secretary Morgenthau, and Secretary Stimson.

In creating the War Refugee Board the President declared: "It is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."

The creation of the Board and the statement of this goal are landmarks in the humanitarian history of America. The Government of the United States issued a solemn statement of policy in behalf of refugees, and it asked three members of the Cabinet to take all feasible steps to implement that policy.

As a result of my service with the Board, I have come to appreciate more than ever some typically American qualities in their true magnificence. I have learned that Americans are capable of heartfelt indignation when barbarities are committed during the course of a war. And I have learned that our American way permits indignation to be translated into action - in time of war no less than in times of peace.

Without the widespread and insistent public interest in the perilous condition of European refugees, it would have been most difficult to establish the Board and to carry on its operations. Many of those who have been saved from Europe's deathtraps owe their lives to American sympathy and American effort.

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There is evidence that the oppressed and endangered peoples of Europe are keenly aware of America's interest and America's activities. Ira A. Hirschmann, War Refugee Board representative in Ankara, has told us of a recent incident that illustrates this awareness.

Following the recent break in relations between Turkey and Germany, a number of individual Germans, Austrians and Czechs, known to be anti-Nazi, found themselves under a threat of expulsion from Turkey because they were technically Germans in the eyes of the Turkish authorities. Some approached the War Refugee Board representative for aid. They received it and I am happy to say that the Turkish Government has dealt sympathetically with these cases. One of them was a woman who had lived in Turkey for 12 years and who was accompanied by a one-year old child. When asked why she had come to the United States officials, she replied: "Where else should I go? It seemed only natural to come here. Who else really cares?"

Another typically American institution whose importance has emerged clearer than ever is the voluntary philanthropic agency. A quick and effective program of the War Refugee Board was made possible by generous contributions of suggestions, personnel, and funds by private agencies that had already existed in the field of international rescue and relief work.

I want to pay my unqualified respects to these agencies for their generous support. As matters have developed, the War Refugee Board has served as a central enabling and expediting body for all agencies - Jewish and non-Jewish, new and old, reform and orthodox, soft-spoken and outspoken.

To catalog these agencies would be impossible. But I want to mention a few. The constituent agencies of the United Jewish Appeal - the United Palestine Appeal, the National Refugee Service, and particularly the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - have contributed most of the funds that have carried on rescue and relief programs. Funds, ideas and unstinted cooperation have also come in varying amounts from other agencies, such as the World Jewish Congress and HIAS.

It is the purpose of the War Refugee Board to strengthen agencies like these by giving them the support of a clear-cut statement of sympathetic policy by this government and by using the diplomatic, licensing and communication facilities of the government to help them achieve their welfare ends.

I also want to pay tribute to many non-Jewish groups and individuals who have shown a true Christian spirit in their quick and friendly reaction in support of the helpless of Europe. This help has come from both Protestant and Catholic organizations. The

American Friends Service Committee and the Unitarian Service Committee have made important contributions, as have other Protestant groups.

The record of the Catholic Church in this regard has been inspiring. All over Europe, Catholic priests have furnished hiding places and protection to the persecuted. His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, has interceded on many occasions in behalf of refugees in danger.

In this country, too, we have received help from Catholic leaders. At a most critical point in the Hungarian situation, Archbishop Spellman wrote a truly impressive supplication to the Catholics of that country to protect and help the Jews. This moving statement was broadcast in Hungarian, and reprints of it were dropped over Hungary.

Of great assistance, too, was a statement of protest against Hungarian atrocities prepared by the late Alfred E. Smith in conjunction with over 100 other non-Jewish leaders.

The net result of all the efforts I have mentioned has been a significant contribution in the rescue of helpless human beings. It is difficult to measure the results of the Board's efforts in figures. Actually thousands of persons were rescued from enemy territory. There is reason to believe that several hundreds of thousands escaped death in the occupied countries as the result of the psychological and diplomatic efforts of the Board.

Thus, in the American tradition, as the result of a partnership between private groups and a government agency, there has been affirmed - in word and in action - the principle of human fellowship.

In the matter of philanthropic effort, there is danger in confining ourselves to the recent past or to the present. The instruments of humanitarianism must be plastic. They must be fashioned for use in the challenging new days that lie ahead - days of liberation, days of peace, days of reconstruction.

We know from recent experience in Italy, in France, and in Belgium that there is a prodigious task ahead in the field of post-liberation relief and rehabilitation. We know, also, that UNRRA and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees have staked out certain areas of activity, and are hard at work. But we also know that important functions are even today being performed by voluntary agencies. And we have reason to believe that private groups will continue to play an important role. It is most important that voluntary agencies be supported fully during the period that lies before us.

This war has brought untold suffering and sorrow to the people of the world. It has been particularly severe on the Jewish population, which has been reduced nearly one-third by the atrocities of Hitler. Jews and Christians alike have shed dry, bitter tears at the unspeakable atrocities committed on the body and mind of man. The time for tears is almost over. The time for constructive action is near. Determined men and women must soon pick up the pieces of our civilization, reassemble them, and move forward into a world of peace, where human dignity and the brotherhood of man may once more prevail.

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DOCUMENT

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

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Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE MORNING PAPERS  
Wednesday, October 25, 1944

RELEASE NO. 16

On Monday, October 23, in a speech at Denver, Colorado, Governor Bricker of Ohio assailed the action of President Roosevelt in providing temporary haven in the United States for the duration of the war for approximately 1,000 refugees from Italy. These are the refugees who were brought to the United States in August, 1944, and are located at the Emergency Refugee Shelter, Oswego, New York. The majority are women and children.

Following Governor Bricker's statement, the War Refugee Board has received numerous inquiries from the press as to whether Governor Bricker joined in the appeal to the President in May, 1944, by the late Alfred E. Smith urging the establishment of temporary refugee havens in the United States. There follows the full text of the appeal and a complete list of its signers, as transmitted to the Board on May 26, 1944, by Governor Smith:

"The civilized world is appalled by the news of new criminal plans of Hitler and his puppets to exterminate the innocent and helpless minorities that have lately fallen into their hands. In Hungary alone nearly a million lives hang in the balance. Men, women and children, who have committed no recognized crime but whose only offense is an ancient lineage and a high moral code hated by the Nazis, are being herded into concentration camps. There, in defiance of all the laws of Christian civilization, they are about to be exterminated.

"As citizens of a free nation and as believers in the doctrine of the sanctity of human life, we cannot remain silent while these shocking crimes are being committed, but are forced by our deepest convictions to protest against the Nazi barbarities.

"We call upon the Governments of the United States and all the Allied Nations to repeat their warnings to the Nazis and their satellites that no person who participates in crimes against the Jews and other minorities shall escape punishment. We urge the Allied Governments to speak directly to the people of the satellite countries through all the broadcasting facilities owned by the United Nations

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and to warn their puppet officials and other collaborators through neutral diplomatic channels that the end of the war will bring swift retribution upon all those guilty of atrocities.

"Furthermore, it is our belief that the people marked for death must be informed that they have friends among the free nations of the world. By word and by concrete act, the American people and their allies must let them know that there are hearts that understand their sufferings and hands that are eager to help them. If they are convinced that the free and democratic peoples recognize them as brothers under God, it will give them hope and the courage to use every means within reach to escape Hitler's torture chambers and death traps.

"For those reasons we endorse the idea of establishing in this country temporary havens of refuge for those who are brought out of Europe by the War Refugee Board. It is a moral obligation of the United States and all other freedom-loving nations to erect temporary havens where the refugees may find sanctuary until conditions in their native lands enable them to return and take up their lives in the atmosphere of respect and decency and charity that our certain victory will create.

(Signed)

Alfred E. Smith  
Chauncey Sparks, Governor of Alabama  
Sidney P. Osborn, Governor of Arizona  
John C. Vivian, Governor of Colorado  
Spessard L. Holland, Governor of Florida  
C. A. Bottolfsen, Governor of Idaho  
Henry F. Schricker, Governor of Indiana  
Simeon Willis, Governor of Kentucky  
Herbert R. O'Connor, Governor of Maryland  
Thomas L. Bailey, Governor of Mississippi  
Robert O. Blood, Governor of New Hampshire  
Walter E. Edge, Governor of New Jersey  
J. M. Broughton, Governor of North Carolina  
John W. Bricker, Governor of Ohio  
J. Howard McGrath, Governor of Rhode Island  
Olin D. Johnston, Governor of South Carolina  
H. G. Shurpe, Governor of South Dakota  
Matthew M. Neely, Governor of West Virginia  
L. C. Hunt, Governor of Wyoming  
Charles G. Dawes, former Vice-President of the United States  
Frank Murphy, Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court  
Robert F. Wagner, U. S. Senator from New York

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James A. Farley, former U. S. Postmaster General  
Owen D. Young, chairman of the General Electric Company  
Judge John P. McGorty, of Chicago, Illinois  
Frank S. Hogan, District Attorney of New York County  
Basil O'Connor, of New York City, former law partner of  
President Roosevelt  
Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University  
and co-winner of the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize  
Dr. Irving Langmuir, of Schenectady, N. Y., winner of the  
1932 Nobel Prize in Chemistry  
Dr. Robert A. Millikan, of Pasadena, Calif., winner of the  
1923 Nobel Prize in Physics  
Dr. George R. Minot, of Brookline, Mass., co-winner of the  
1934 Nobel Prize in Medicine  
Dr. Harry Woodburn Chase, Chancellor of New York University  
George N. Shuster, President of Hunter College  
Harry N. Wright, President of the College of the City of  
New York  
Frank P. Graham, President of the University of North  
Carolina  
Robert G. Sproul, President of the University of  
California  
William P. Tolley, Chancellor of Syracuse University  
Raymond R. Paty, President of the University of Alabama  
Homer P. Rainey, President of the University of Texas  
R. B. Von Kleinsaid, President of the University of  
Southern California  
Very Rev. M. J. O'Connell, President of De Paul University  
F. C. Bolton, President of Agricultural and Mechanical  
College of Texas  
L. N. Duncan, President of Alabama Polytechnic Institute  
John L. McMahon, President of Our Lady of Lake College,  
San Antonio, Texas  
Prof. Eugene H. Byrne, of Columbia University  
Prof. Harry J. Carman, of Columbia University  
Prof. Helen C. White, of the University of Wisconsin  
Thomas H. McInnerney, Chairman of the National Dairy Products  
Corp.  
Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary, Federal Council  
of the Churches of Christ in America  
James S. Adams, President of Standard Brands  
Robert Gaylord, President of the National Association of  
Manufacturers  
A. T. Mercier, of Chicago, Ill., President of the Southern  
Pacific Railroad Company  
J. C. Huppenny, of Tulsa, Okla., President of the Oklahoma  
Power & Water Company  
P. C. Lauinger, of Tulsa, Okla., publisher  
William Green, President, American Federation of Labor  
James B. Carey, Secretary of the CIO

Samuel Seabury, New York  
Edward Skillin, Jr., New York, Editor of the Commonweal  
Quentin Reynolds, war correspondent and author  
William Rose Benet, New York, poet and editor  
Edna St. Vincent Millay, Poet  
Margaret Cushman Banning, Duluth, Minn., novelist  
John B. Collins, editor of The Pittsburgh Catholic  
Maurice F. Donegan, former Chief Justice of the Supreme  
Court of Iowa  
Martin Quigley, New York City, editor  
Daniel Mahoney, Miami, Fla.  
Leo Considine, Oklahoma City, Okla.  
Andrew T. Healy, Miami, Fla.  
Thomas F. McDonald, St. Louis, Mo., attorney  
James J. Moore, New York City  
Andrew F. Burke, San Francisco, Calif.  
George W. Strake, Houston, Texas"

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

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Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE, MORNING NEWSPAPERS,  
Sunday, January 28, 1945.

Release No. 17

The War Refugee Board announced today that John W. Pehle has resigned as Executive Director of the Board. The Board made public Mr. Pehle's letter of resignation and the Board's acceptance (copies attached).

Mr. Pehle was designated Acting Executive Director of the Board shortly after its creation on January 22, 1944. Later, on March 24, 1944, the Board, with the approval of the President, designated him permanent Executive Director.

As explained in the letter of resignation, Mr. Pehle resigned because of the increasing burden of new duties which have been assigned to him as Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury.

At the same time the Board announced the selection of Brigadier-General William O'Dwyer as the new Executive Director. General O'Dwyer is being returned to inactive status by the War Department to handle this assignment. General O'Dwyer is District Attorney for Kings County, New York, on leave, and recently returned to the United States from Italy where he served as Vice President of the Economic Section of the Allied Control Commission for Italy, with the personal rank of Minister.

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January 27, 1945

MEMORANDUM TO THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD

I hereby submit to you my resignation as Executive Director of the War Refugee Board effective immediately. As Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury there has recently been assigned to me the supervision of the operations of the Treasury Procurement Division, which includes the difficult task of disposing of the surplus consumer goods turned over to the Treasury Department by the Army and the Navy. In view of the increasingly heavy burdens imposed on me by this new assignment, I have found it necessary to resign as Executive Director.

It has given me deep personal satisfaction to have been a part of the vital work undertaken by this Government to save and protect the innocent victims of Nazi persecution. While many lives have been saved as the result of our efforts, we have not, of course, met with complete success. However, I am proud of our achievements in the face of the difficulties encountered.

I have been reluctant to take this action and leave the Board because of the important work which remains to be done. I no longer have this reluctance, however, in view of Brigadier-General William O'Dwyer's willingness to assume the responsibilities of Executive Director.

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

Executive Director

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January 27, 1945

MEMORANDUM TO JOHN W. PEHLE

We have received your letter of resignation dated January 27, 1945.

In view of your request and the pressure of your other duties, your resignation is hereby accepted. The Board appreciates the services you have rendered and your devotion to the great and important task assigned to this Board by the President.

(s) Joseph C. Grew  
Acting Secretary of State

(s) H. Morgenthau, Jr.  
Secretary of the Treasury

(s) Henry L. Stimson  
Secretary of War

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MEMORANDUM TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL WILLIAM O'DWYER

You are hereby appointed Executive Director of the War Refugee Board effective immediately.

We are sure we can rely on you to carry on the important task assigned to this Board by the President.

(s) Joseph C. Grew  
Acting Secretary of State

(s) H. Morgenthau, Jr.  
Secretary of the Treasury

(s) Henry L. Stimson  
Secretary of War

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

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Executive Office of the President

Washington

RELEASE NO. 18

(The following address by William O'Dwyer, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, before the opening meeting of the 1945 campaign of the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Los Angeles, at the Hotel Ambassador, Los Angeles, is scheduled for delivery at 9 p.m. Pacific War Time, Tuesday, May 1, 1945, and is for release at that time.)

It is a high privilege for me to be here tonight to help the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Los Angeles raise the funds required for its 1945 programs. I hesitated before accepting your invitation, because of the great responsibility that it entailed, but I felt that it was my duty to present to you, no matter how inadequate my words may be for this occasion, the immensity of the needs of the 1,000,000 Jews saved from the enemy since 1939. I am in a position to know that it is largely through your generosity, and of the Jews throughout America, that so many were saved.

I am deeply appreciative of the fact that funds are needed for the relief of Jews now in countries other than Europe. When the war actually began in 1939, more than 800,000 Jews had already been rescued from the grip of the Nazis and removed to safety. They have had time to take root in the countries of their adoption and today do not present problems of emergency proportions. It was a good thing that Palestine absorbed more than 300,000 of these people and provided them with the opportunity to become self-respecting human beings.

The emergency for 1945 is created by the million Jews saved since 1939 and now in Europe, broken down in body and spirit who are in dire need of special and immediate care.

During the last several war years, the emphasis, in the appeals that have been made to you, has been placed on the work of rescue from enemy control. The time has come when, thanks to our armies and thanks to everyone who has aided in the complete victory over the enemy, this work of rescue is coming to an end. The emphasis tonight must be directed to the task of keeping alive and rehabilitating the saved people.

In order for us to realize the emergency character and immediate need of the one million Jews in Europe saved since 1939, we must fully understand what they have gone through. Twelve years ago there were 6 million

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Jews in Europe, outside of Russia, living with their families in reasonable security and happiness. They had their work and family problems just as you and I. Then suddenly out of the depths of human depravity an evil force struck with unprecedented ferocity at these 6 million defenseless men, women and children. The greatest military force the world had heretofore seen, a vast scientific knowledge, and the methodical German mind were directed towards the complete extermination of these people. At least 5 million Jews were destroyed and turned into fertilizer for enemy soil, and there remain today one million Jews in Europe, alive.

For years, these survivors have lived through torments and agonies that our minds cannot comprehend. Some of them were born in cages and do not yet know that there are in this world people of great hearts and generosity, who are ready to bring to them oil for their wounds, food and clothing for their bodies, shelter from the cold, solace for their souls, and hope for the future.

These helpless ones who, up to now have attracted the sympathy of the humane world, must not be forgotten in the joy of our imminent complete victory over the common enemy in Europe.

Let us go back to that evil day, 12 years ago, when Hitler and his gang pinpointed their attack on the Jews within Germany. That attack, it is now recognized by all, was deliberately planned and executed and the beginning of the more general attack against the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

In the first phase, the Nazis successively took away the property of their Jewish victims, denationalized them and forced them into slave labor. In the second phase, coming to a peak in 1943, they used the process of extermination camps, gas chambers and crematoria.

You must remember that during all these 12 years, the survivors of this holocaust have lived through every bit of that Nazi program, down to the days when they saw their friends walk into the gas chambers and their ashes taken out of the crematoria in buckets. There was never a day in the last 3 or 4 years when these agonized people did not feel that each day was their last on this earth, alive.

The agencies that are asking for your support tonight saw the impending doom of the Jews of Europe years ago and they arose to the occasion. The steps they took to save these people can not be told in the short time at my disposal.

As country after country in Europe was overrun by the German military machine, private agencies brought out as many as possible to safety. Up to October, 1941, it was still possible, in some cases, to obtain legal exit from German-occupied countries but in that month, legal exit was stopped by express German command. From that time on no Jew within the

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German lines had any hope of escape, except through the underground and resistance movements.

These underground and resistance groups had to be financed and your agencies took care of that. Heroic men and women of the underground accepted their dangerous mission with outstanding stoicism and energy. The leaders were tracked down by the Gestapo, as they well knew they would be. They were tortured and executed and they foresaw that too. And when they were gone, new leaders, well knowing the fate in store for them, arose to carry on.

At this point, I want to pay humble tribute to the heroic leaders of Jewry within enemy lines. Many had visas in their pockets and could have gone out to safety but refused to abandon their unfortunate brothers. Just think of it, many of them actually came through the lines to Portugal and other neutral countries to consult with representatives of your agencies. They were begged not to go back to certain death, but they returned to their posts in German territory to bring aid and comfort to their people. Some of the martyrs who died at their posts were Hirsch, Meyerheim and Seligson of Germany; Raol Lambert of France; Friedman of Czechoslovakia; Neustadt and Gilterman of Poland and innumerable others. I bow in reverent memory to these heroes who went to their deaths in defense of humanity.

In developing underground rescue, private agencies had to guard against any activity that might impede or endanger the war effort and the war aims. I can say for them that their first concern has always been the winning of the war.

You know how, for example, when the soup kitchens in German-occupied Poland were established, your agencies devised a method to do this without allowing the Germans to obtain any American dollars from them. You know how German marks were accepted from Jews in Germany in return for dollar credits which they would receive when they left Germany, and how these German marks were used to purchase Polish currency with which to buy the food for the soup kitchens.

The establishment of the War Refugee Board on January 22, 1944, by our late President was an important event in the work to save oppressed people from the hands of the enemy. The directive which President Roosevelt gave in setting up the Board was to carry out the policy of this government "to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war." Thus, it became the expressed policy of the government of the United States to save the lives of civilian victims from the enemy and to utilize its full force and prestige to that end. It was a unilateral action, and therefore unique in this war which is a combined operation of many nations. For President Roosevelt, it was a symbol of our high purposes in entering the world war,

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and history will understand the heart, the mind, and the humanity that was Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Immediately after its establishment, the War Refugee Board called in the private agencies. The Board thereafter coordinated and directed all programs for rescue and relief. The War Refugee Board enlisted all governmental agencies, including United States diplomatic missions, that could help to carry out this government's policy to save the oppressed minorities under German control. It now became possible for the agencies, under special licenses, to communicate with persons in enemy countries, to transmit funds through underground channels, to facilitate the passage of refugees through neutral countries, and to ship food purchased in neutral countries into the concentration camps.

This partnership of the War Refugee Board and the private agencies was responsible for the rescue from the enemy of many thousands of lives. I have time to mention only a few of the outstanding projects. We have here thrilling stories of courage, tenacity, hardship and tragedy. Seven thousand Jews were brought out from the German-controlled Balkans to safety and a new life in Palestine. To rescue these people, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, in cooperation with the Joint Distribution Committee, chartered tiny boats in Turkey which sailed the Black Sea without the protection of safe conducts and overloaded with people willing to face any hazard to attain a safe haven. Tragically, one of these small vessels was sunk by enemy fire just off the Turkish shores, and over 300 Balkan refugees were lost.

Many thousands of persecuted anti-Nazis were brought across the Norwegian forests to safety in Sweden. This program was organized and sponsored by labor groups in the United States. Several hundred persons in Baltic countries under German control were brought out to Sweden by small fishing vessels and motor launches clandestinely plying the Baltic Seas.

Thousands of Jews were brought from German-occupied France and Czechoslovakia, and from Austria and Hungary to safety in Switzerland and Spain. Their rescue was effected by many American relief agencies, Christian and Jewish alike, including the American Friends Service Committee, the Unitarian Service Committee, the International Rescue and Relief Committee, the World Jewish Congress, and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. The Joint Distribution Committee poured millions into these hazardous operations.

Several thousand orphaned Jewish children in France were kept alive by means of funds sent from Switzerland under special licenses of this Government. The funds were used to maintain these children in convents, schools and private homes by compassionate Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike.

Many thousands more of the one million surviving Jews in Europe owe their lives in large part to the extraordinary measures taken by the Board

to safeguard and protect them while they remained under enemy control. The full story of these measures cannot yet be told.

I now want to tell you of a striking example of the democratic workings of our government that fell within my own personal experience. When I came to the War Refugee Board around February 1st of this year, the Allies were closing in on the enemy, and the distance between the eastern and western fronts was daily getting shorter and shorter. It became obvious that the continuous success of the Allied armies was rapidly decreasing the housing facilities and food supply available to the enemy, disrupting his transportation, and causing a huge concentration of people in his remaining territory. We considered it certain that, under these conditions, the Nazis would decide that it was easier and more expedient to let their victims die of exposure and starvation, instead of exterminating them directly. These victims now included all those whom the Nazis no longer could use as slave labor, as well as those already in various stages of illness. Fearing that that would happen, I as Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, on the 20th of February of this year, presented the following to the Board:

"MEMORANDUM to: Secretary Stettinius  
Secretary Morgenthau  
Secretary Stimson

"Our best information indicates that, while the enemy has abandoned wholesale extermination of detainees, large numbers of the physically unfit are now in imminent danger of death due to starvation, exposure and deliberate neglect. The actual numbers are unknown and are believed to be changing daily.

"Food, medicines and clothing must be distributed to such detainees at once if their lives are to be saved. They should be removed, if possible, to safety in Switzerland without unnecessary delay.

"The International Red Cross is our only means of direct contact with the camps. Operations can best be conducted from Switzerland.

"The War Refugee Board is requested to authorize its representative to obtain the necessary cooperation of the International Red Cross and of the Swiss Government.

"The War Refugee Board is further requested to approve that the necessary food, medicines and transportation equipment be made available to the International Red Cross by the Swiss Government against our promise of repayment or replenishment after the war. It is understood that private funds are available for the necessary financing."

Then and there on that date, the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War, the members of the Board, approved this proposal. We found that in order to get food into the enemy's territory we had to have trucks, gasoline,

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fuel, oil and tires, and on March 21st our War Department recommended to General Eisenhower that he provide the Board with 2,000 gallons of gasoline weekly and oil and some tires. This General Eisenhower did. Shortly thereafter, trucks were rolling out of Switzerland for German concentration camps with many tons of War Refugee Board food parcels.

Early last month, the Board was faced with the exhaustion of the 1,000 tons of food it had sent to Sweden and Switzerland. Soon it would have trucks, but no food. Once again the United States Army saved the situation. On request of the Board, the Army sold the Board 1,130 tons of food already in Switzerland.

This food is now going forward through the International Red Cross to the concentration camps in the south of Germany. The International Red Cross now has representatives stationed in the major concentration camps for the purpose of supervising and distributing this food.

I suggest and strongly contend that humanity will not forget the America of our day which, despite the demands made upon its human and material resources by this greatest of all wars, still had the interest and the will to bring aid to those who would otherwise have been forgotten and have had no hope of survival.

A great part of this evening, I have talked about the efforts of your agencies and your government to save victims of Nazi oppression. We are coming to the end of the war in Europe which will terminate the work of the War Refugee Board.

It is true that even now the governments of the United Nations are giving consideration to the final relocation of the people displaced by the war. We have no doubt that sooner or later an orderly solution will result. We must remember, however, that combined operations among nations are complex and require time. It is most fortunate that there exist private agencies which are ready immediately to step into the breach.

We must not for a moment forget that the million Jewish survivors while living are barely alive. Too many of these first victims have lived so long and suffered so much under Nazi cruelties and starvation that they need immediate and extraordinary care to have even a chance to attain normal physical or mental health. Reports of eyewitnesses dispel any doubt that may exist as to the condition of all who survived the Nazi concentration camps. I will read you one report by an American war correspondent who actually saw and spoke to those found at Bergen Belsen as late as April 21st:

"I saw Belsen -- its piles of lifeless dead and its aimless swarms of living dead. Their great eyes were just animal lights in skin-covered skulls of famine.

"Some were dying of typhus, some of typhoid, some of tuberculosis, but most were just dying of starvation. Starvation -- the flesh on their bodies had fed on itself until here was no flesh left, just skin covering bones and the end of all hope, and nothing left to feed on."

General Eisenhower with his usual wisdom invited representatives of the Congress of the United States to view these horror camps and extermination centers in Germany. The reason is simple. Neither oratory nor the written word, nor the motion picture can tell the story in quite the same way as actually seeing it with one's own eyes. I know that from having seen and smelled the 350 bodies of civilian men, women and children, machine-gunned and sealed in a catacomb in Italy. I was there the day the tomb was discovered.

I wish all of us in this room could be shown the camps through which these people have passed so that we might better understand their terror of yesterday and their hopelessness of today and tomorrow. But since this cannot be done, I wish that each one of you had in your own home, at your own fireside, one of these agonized survivors. His presence, his very appearance, would tell the story of his sufferings and his needs far better than can be done by words. You could then see how sick he is in his mind and in his body. You could see his terror of the past and his dread of the darkness of his unknown future. No words of mine could match that appeal.

These people are only half alive. It will take everything that you can give to bring them back to normal health. Your agencies, particularly the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Palestine Appeal, have the experience and the trained personnel to do a good job. They need money with which to do it and you must see them through.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WASHINGTON, D. C.

GERMAN EXTERMINATION CAMPS — AUSCHWITZ AND BIRKENAU

It is a fact beyond denial that the Germans have deliberately and systematically murdered millions of innocent civilians — Jews and Christians alike — all over Europe. This campaign of terror and brutality, which is unprecedented in all history and which even now continues unabated, is part of the German plan to subjugate the free peoples of the world.

So revolting and diabolical are the German atrocities that the minds of civilized people find it difficult to believe that they have actually taken place. But the governments of the United States and of other countries have evidence which clearly substantiates the facts.

The War Refugee Board is engaged in a desperate effort to save as many as possible of Hitler's intended victims. To facilitate its work the Board has representatives in key spots in Europe. These representatives have tested contacts throughout Europe and keep the Board fully advised concerning the German campaign of extermination and torture.

Recently the Board received from a representative close to the scene two eye-witness accounts of events which occurred in notorious extermination camps established by the Germans. The first report is based upon the experiences of two young Slovakian Jews who escaped in April, 1944 after spending two years in the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau in southwestern Poland. The second report is made by a non-Jewish Polish major, the only survivor of one group imprisoned at Auschwitz.

The two reports were prepared independently and are reproduced exactly in the form they were received by the War Refugee Board, except for a few deletions necessary for the protection of persons who may still be alive. The figures concerning the size of the Jewish convoys and the numbers of men and women admitted to the two camps cannot be taken as mathematically exact; and, in fact, are declared by the authors to be no more than reliable approximations. They are accepted as such by the Board.

The Board has every reason to believe that these reports present a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps. It is making the reports public in the firm conviction that they should be read and understood by all Americans.

November, 1944

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No. 1

THE EXTERMINATION CAMPS OF AUSCHWITZ (Oswiecim)

and BIRKENAU

in Upper Silesia.

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FOREWORD

Two young Slovak Jews - whose names will not be disclosed for the time being in the interest of their own safety - have been fortunate enough to escape after spending two years in the concentration camps of BIRKENAU, AUSCHWITZ and LUBLIN-MAJDANEK, where they had been deported in 1942 from SLOVAKIA.

One of them was sent on April 13, 1942 from the assembly camp of SERED directly to AUSCHWITZ and then to BIRKENAU, while the other was sent from the camp of NOVAKY to LUBLIN on June 14, 1942 and, after a short stay there, transferred to AUSCHWITZ and, later, to BIRKENAU.

The following report does not contain everything these two men experienced during their captivity, but only what one or both together underwent, heard, or experienced at first hand. No individual impressions or judgments are recorded and nothing passed on from hearsay.

The report starts with the story of the young Jew who was removed from SERED. The account of his experiences in BIRKENAU begins at the time the second Jew arrived there and is, therefore, based on the statements of both. Then follows the individual narrative of the second Jew who was sent from NOVAKY to LUBLIN and from there to AUSCHWITZ.

The declarations tally with all the trustworthy yet fragmentary reports hitherto received, and the dates given with regard to transports to various camps agree with the official records. These statements can, therefore, be considered as entirely credible.

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AUSCHWITZ AND BIRKENAU

On the 13th April, 1942 our group, consisting of 1,000 men, was loaded into railroad cars at the assembly camp of SERED. The doors were shut so that nothing would reveal the direction of the journey, and when they were opened after a long while we realized that we had crossed the Slovak frontier and were in ZWARDON. The train had until then been guarded by Hlinka men, but was now taken over by SS guards. After a few of the cars had been uncoupled from our convoy, we continued on our way arriving at night at AUSCHWITZ, where we stopped on a sidetrack. The reason the other cars were left behind was apparently the lack of room at AUSCHWITZ. They joined us, however, a few days later. Upon arrival we were placed in rows of five and counted. There were 643 of us. After a walk of about 20 minutes with our heavy packs (we had left Slovakia well equipped), we reached the concentration camp of AUSCHWITZ.

We were at once led into a huge barrack where on the one side we had to deposit all our luggage and on the other side completely undress, leaving our clothes and valuables behind. Naked, we then proceeded to an adjoining barrack where our heads and bodies were shaved and disinfected with lysol. At the exit every man was given a number which began with 28,600 in consecutive order. With this number in hand we were then herded to a third barrack where so-called registration took place. This consisted of tattooing the numbers we had received in the second barrack on the left side of our chests. The extreme brutality with which this was effected made many of us faint. The particulars of our identity were also recorded. Then we were led in groups of a hundred into a cellar, and later to a barrack where we were issued striped prisoners' clothes and wooden clogs. This lasted until 10 a.m. In the afternoon our prisoners' outfits were taken away from us again and replaced by the ragged and dirty remains of Russian uniforms. Thus equipped we were marched off to BIRKENAU.

AUSCHWITZ is a concentration camp for political prisoners under so-called "protective custody." At the time of my arrival, that is in April of 1942, there were about 15,000 prisoners in the camp, the majority of whom were Poles, Germans, and civilian Russians under protective custody. A small number of prisoners came under the categories of criminals and "work-shirkers."

AUSCHWITZ camp headquarters controls at the same time the work-camp of BIRKENAU as well as the farm-labor camp of HARMENSE. All the prisoners arrive first at AUSCHWITZ where they are provided with prisoners' immatriculation numbers and then are either kept there, sent to BIRKENAU or, in very small numbers, to HARMENSE. The prisoners receive consecutive numbers upon arrival. Every number is only used once so that the last number

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always corresponds to the number of prisoners actually in the camp. At the time of our escape, that is to say at the beginning of April, 1944, the number had risen up to 130,000. At the outset the numbers were tattooed on the left breast, but later, due to their becoming blurred, on the left forearm.

All prisoners, irrespective of category or nationality, are treated the same. However, to facilitate identification, they are distinguished by various coloured triangles sewed on the clothing on the left breast under the immatriculation number. The first letter indicates the nationality of the prisoner. This letter (for instance "P" for Poles) appears in the middle of the triangle. The coloured triangles have the following meaning:

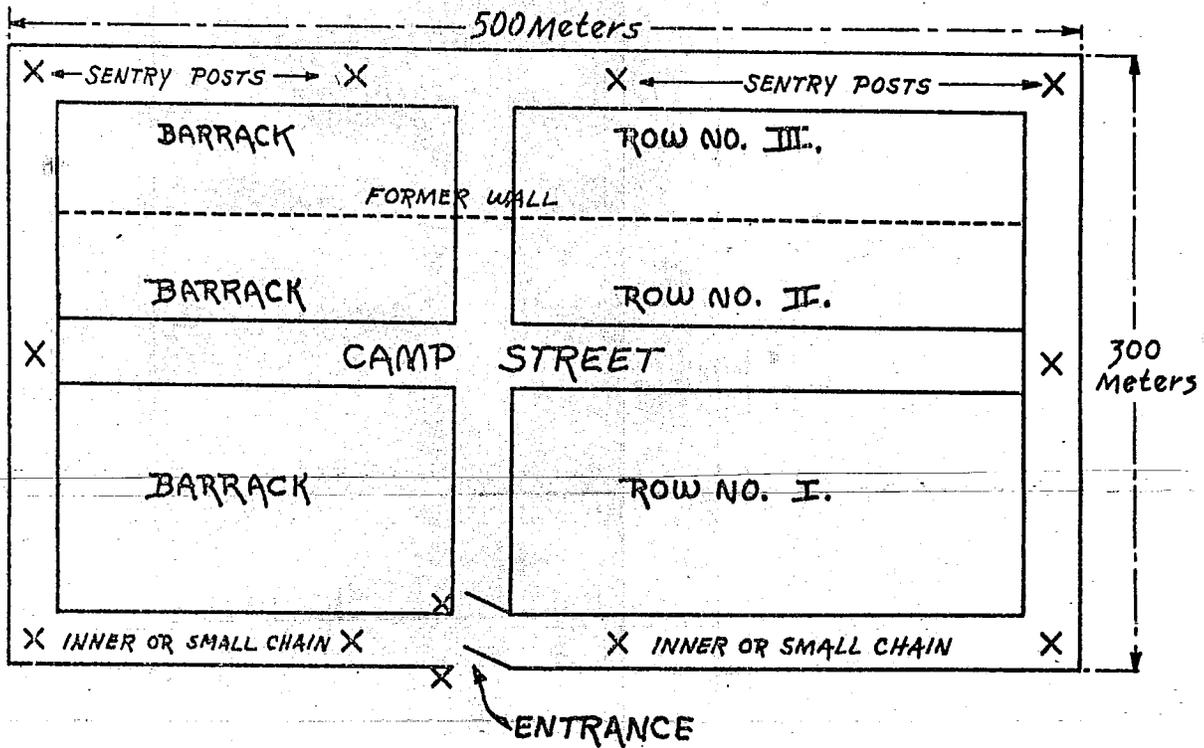
red triangle	political prisoners under protective custody
green "	professional criminals
black "	"dodgers" (labor slackers), "anti-socials" (mostly Russians)
pink "	homosexuals
violet "	members of the religious sect of "Bibelforscher"

The Jewish prisoners differ from the Aryan prisoners in that their triangle (which in the majority of cases is red) is turned into a David's star by adding yellow points.

Within the enclosure of the camp of AUSCHWITZ there are several factories: a war production plant, Deutscher Aufrüstungswerk (DAW), a factory belonging to the KRUPP works and one to the SIEMENS concern. Outside the boundary of the camp is a tremendous plant covering several square kilometers named "BUNA." The prisoners work in all the aforementioned factories.

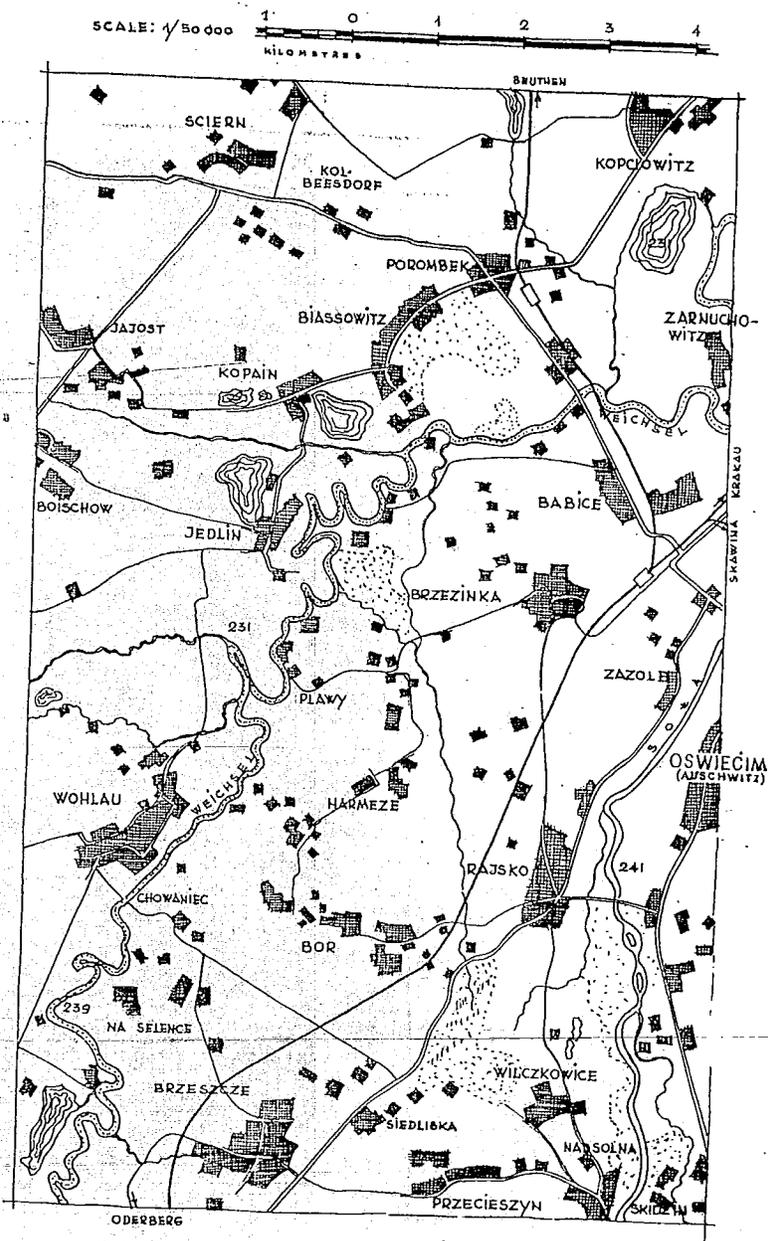
The prisoners' actual living quarters, if such a term may at all be used, inside the camp proper cover an area of approximately 500 by 300 meters surrounded by a double row of concrete posts about 3 meters high which are connected (both inside and outside) with one another by a dense netting of high-tension wires fixed into the posts by insulators. Between these two rows of posts, at intervals of 150 meters, there are 5 meters high watchtowers, equipped with machine guns and searchlights. In front of the inner high-tension circle there is further an ordinary wire fence. Merely touching this fence is answered by a stream of bullets from the watchtowers. This system is called "the small or inner chain of sentry posts." The camp itself is composed of three rows of houses. Between the first and second

# ROUGH GROUND PLAN OF AUSCHWITZ



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row is the camp street, and between the second and third there used to be a wall. The Jewish girls deported from Slovakia in March and April, 1942, over 7,000 of them, lived in the houses separated by this wall up to the middle of August, 1942. After these girls had been removed to BIRKENAU, the wall between the second and third row of houses was removed. The camp entry road cuts across the row of houses, while over the entrance gate, which is of course always heavily guarded, stands the ironic inscription: "Work brings freedom."

At a radius of some 2,000 meters the whole camp is encircled by a second line called "the big or outer chain of sentry posts" also with watchtowers every 150 meters. Between the inner and outer chain of sentry posts are the factories and other workshops. The towers of the inner chain are only manned at night when the high-tension current is switched into the double row of wires. During daytime the garrison of the inner chain of sentry posts is withdrawn, and the men take up duty in the outer chain. Escape through these sentry posts - and many attempts have been made - is practically impossible. Getting through the inner circle of posts at night is completely impossible, and the towers of the outer chain are so close to one another (one every 150 meters, i.e. giving each tower a sector with a 75-meter radius to watch) that approaching unnoticed is out of the question. The guards shoot without warning. The garrison of the outer chain is withdrawn at twilight, but only after it has been ascertained that all the prisoners are within the inner circle. If the roll call reveals that a prisoner is missing, sirens immediately sound the alarm.

The men in the outer chain remain in their towers on the lookout, the inner chain is manned, and a systematic search is begun by hundreds of SS guards and bloodhounds. The siren brings the whole surrounding countryside to a state of alarm, so that if by miracle the escapee has been successful in getting through the outer chain he is nearly certain to be caught by one of the numerous German police and SS patrols. The escapee is furthermore handicapped by his clean-shaven head, his striped prisoner's outfit or red patches sewn on his clothing, and the passiveness of the thoroughly intimidated inhabitants. The mere fact of neglecting to give information on the whereabouts of a prisoner, not to speak of extending help, is punished by death. Provided that the prisoner has not been caught sooner, the garrison of the outer chain of sentry posts remains on the watch for three days and nights after which delay it is presumed that the escapee has succeeded in breaking through the double circle. The following night the outer guard is withdrawn. If the escapee is caught alive, he is hanged in the presence of the whole camp; but if he is found dead, his body - wherever it may have been located - is

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brought back to camp (it is easy to identify the corpse by means of the tattooed number) and seated at the entrance gate, a small notice clasped in his hands, reading: "Here I am." During our two years' imprisonment many attempts to escape were made by prisoners but, with the exception of two or three, all were brought back dead or alive. It is not known whether the two or three escapees who were not caught actually managed to get away. It can, however, be asserted that among the Jews who were deported from SLOVAKIA to AUSCHWITZ or BIRKENAU we are the only two who were lucky enough to save ourselves.

As stated previously, we were transferred from AUSCHWITZ to BIRKENAU on the day of our arrival.

Actually there is no such district as BIRKENAU. Even the word BIRKENAU is new in that it has been "adopted" from the nearby Birch Forest (BREZINSKY). The district now called BIRKENAU was, and is still, called "RAJSKA" by the local population. The existing camp center of BIRKENAU lies 4 kilometers distant from AUSCHWITZ. The outer control zones of both BIRKENAU and AUSCHWITZ meet and are merely separated by a railway track. We never found anything out about NEW-BERUN, probably about 30 to 40 kilometers away which, oddly enough, we had to indicate as postal district for BIRKENAU.

At the time of our arrival in BIRKENAU we found there only one huge kitchen for 15,000 people and three stone buildings, two of which were completed and one under construction. The buildings were surrounded by an ordinary barbed wire fence. The prisoners were housed in these buildings and in others later constructed. All are built according to a standard model. Each house is about 30 meters long and 8 to 10 meters wide. Whereas the height of the walls hardly exceeds 2 meters, the roof is disproportionately high - about 5 meters - so that the house gives the impression of a stable surmounted by a large hayloft. There is no inner ceiling, so that the room reaches a height of 7 meters in the center; in other words the pointed roofing rests directly on the four walls. The room is divided in two by a partition running its whole length down the middle and fitted with an opening to enable communication between the two parts thus separated. Along both side walls, as well as along the middle partition, two parallel floors, some 80 centimeters apart, have been built which are in turn divided into small cells by vertical partitions. Thus there are three floors: the ground floor and the two built in the side walls. Normally three people live in each cubicle. As can be judged from the dimensions indicated, these cubicles are too narrow for a man to lie stretched out and not high enough for him to sit upright.

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There is no question of having enough space to stand upright. In this way some 400 to 500 people are accommodated in one house or "block," as they are also called.

The present camp of BIRKENAU covers an area of some 1,600 by 500 meters which is surrounded - similar to AUSCHWITZ - by a so-called small or inner chain of sentry posts. Work is now proceeding on a still larger compound which is to be added later on to the already existing camp. The purpose of this extensive planning is not known to us.

Within a radius of 2 kilometers, as with AUSCHWITZ, BIRKENAU is also surrounded by an outer chain of sentry posts with the same type of watch system as at AUSCHWITZ.

The buildings we found on our arrival had been erected by 12,000 Russian prisoners of war brought there in December, 1941. In severe winter weather they had to work under inhuman conditions as a result of which most of them, with the exception of a small number employed in the kitchen, died of exposure. They were numbered from 1 to 12,000 in a series which had no connection with the ordinary camp numbering system previously described. Whenever fresh convoys of Russian prisoners arrived, they were not issued the current AUSCHWITZ prisoner numbers, but received those of deceased Russians in the 1 to 12,000 series. It is, therefore, difficult to estimate how many prisoners of this category passed through the camp. Apparently Russians were transferred to AUSCHWITZ or BIRKENAU on disciplinary grounds from regular prisoner-of-war camps. We found what remained of the Russians in a terrible state of destitution and neglect living in the unfinished building without the slightest protection against cold or rain. They died "en masse." Hundreds and thousands of their bodies were buried superficially, spreading a stench of pestilence. Later we had to exhume and burn the corpses.

A week before our arrival in AUSCHWITZ the first group of Jews reached the camp: (the women were dealt with separately and received numbers parallel to those of the men; the Slovak women received serial numbers from 1 to 8,000) 1,320 naturalized French Jews from Paris. They were numbered from 27,500 onwards. It is clear, therefore, that between this French group and our convoy no other men arrived in AUSCHWITZ, since we have already pointed out that our numbers started with 28,600. We found the 700 French Jews who were still alive in terrible condition, the missing 600 having died within a week after their arrival.

The following categories were housed in the three completed buildings:

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I. The so-called "prominencia": professional criminals and older Polish political prisoners who were in charge of the administration of the camp.

II. The remainder of the French Jews, namely some 700.

III. The 643 original Slovak Jews to whom were added a few days later those who had been left at ZWARDON.

IV. Those Russians who were still alive and housed in the unfinished building as well as in the open air and whose numbers diminished so rapidly that as a group they are scarcely worth mentioning.

Together with the remaining Russian prisoners the Slovak Jews worked at the construction of buildings, whereas the French Jews had to do spade work. After three days I was ordered, together with 200 other Slovak Jews, to work in the German armament factories at AUSCHWITZ, but we continued to be housed in BIRKENAU. We left early in the morning returning at night and worked in the carpentry shop as well as on road construction. Our food consisted of one litre of turnip soup at midday and 300 grams of bad bread in the evening. Working conditions were inconceivably hard, so that the majority of us, weakened by starvation and the inedible food, could not stand it. The mortality was so high that every day our group of 200 had 30 to 35 dead. Many were simply beaten to death by the overseers - the "Capos" - during work, without the slightest provocation. The gaps in our ranks caused by these deaths were replaced daily by prisoners from BIRKENAU. Our return at night was extremely painful and dangerous, as we had to drag along over a distance of 5 kilometers our tools, fire wood, heavy caldrons, and the bodies of those who had died or had been killed during the working day. With these heavy loads we were forced to maintain a brisk pace, and anyone incurring the displeasure of one of the "Capos" was cruelly knocked down, if not beaten to death. Until the arrival of the second group of Slovak men some 14 days later, our original number had dwindled to 150. At night we were counted, the bodies of the dead were piled up on flat, narrow-gauge cars or in a truck and brought to the Birch Forest (BREZINSKY) where they were burned in a trench several meters deep and about 15 meters long. Every day on our way to work we met a working party of 300 Jewish girls from Slovakia who were employed on ground work in the vicinity. They were dressed in old Russian uniform rags and wore wooden clogs. Their heads were shaven and, unfortunately, we could not speak to them.

Until the middle of May, 1942, a total of four convoys of male Jews from Slovakia arrived at BIRKENAU and all received similar treatment to ours.

From the first and second transports 120 men were chosen (including myself) and placed at the disposal of the administration of the camp of AUSCHWITZ, which was in need of doctors, dentists, intellectuals, and clerks. This group consisted of 90 Slovak and 30 French Jews. As I had in the meantime managed to work my way up to a good position in BIRKENAU - being in command of a group of 50 men, which had brought me considerable advantage - I at first felt reluctant to leave for AUSCHWITZ. However, I was finally persuaded to go and left. After eight days, 18 doctors and attendants as well as three further persons were selected from this group of 120 intellectuals. The doctors were used in the "sick building" or "hospital" at AUSCHWITZ, while we three were sent back to BIRKENAU. My two comrades, Ladislav Braun from Trnava and Gross from Vrbové (?), both of whom have since died, were sent to the Slovak block while I was ordered to the French section where we were employed at collecting "personal data" and at "nursing the sick." The remaining 99 persons were sent to work in the gravel pit where they all died within a short time.

Shortly thereafter a so-called "sick-building" (Krankenbau) was set up. It was destined to become the much dreaded "Block 7" where at first I was chief attendant and later administrator. The chief of this "infirmary" was a Pole. Actually this building was nothing else than an assembly centre for death candidates. All prisoners incapable of working were sent there. There was no question of any medical attention or care. We had some 150 dead daily and their bodies were sent for cremation to AUSCHWITZ.

At the same time the so-called "selections" were introduced. Twice weekly, Mondays and Thursdays, the camp doctor indicated the number of prisoners who were to be gassed and then burned. These "selectees" were loaded into trucks and brought to the Birch Forest. Those still alive upon arrival were gassed in a big barrack erected near the trench used for burning the bodies. The weekly "draft" in dead from "Block 7" was about 2,000, of whom 1,200 died of "natural death" and about 800 through "selection." For those who had not been "selected" a death certificate was issued and sent to the central administration at ORANIENBURG, whereas for the "selectees" a special register was kept with the indication "S.B." ("Sonderbehandelt" - special treatment). Until January 15, 1943, up to which time I was administrator of "Block 7" and therefore in a position to directly observe happenings, some 50,000 prisoners died of "natural death" or by "selection."

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As previously described, the prisoners were numbered consecutively so that we are able to reconstruct fairly clearly their order of succession and the fate which befell each separate convoy on arrival.

The first male Jewish transport reaching AUSCHWITZ for BIRKENAU was composed, as mentioned, of 1,320 naturalized French Jews bearing approximately the following numbers:

- 27,400 - 28,600  
28,600 - 29,600 In April, 1942 the first convoy of Slovak Jews (our convoy).  
29,600 - 29,700 100 men (Aryans) from various concentration camps.  
29,700 - 32,700 3 complete convoys of Slovak Jews.  
32,700 - 33,100 400 professional criminals (Aryans) from Warsaw prisons.  
33,100 - 35,000 1,900 Jews from Cracow.  
35,000 - 36,000 1,000 Poles (Aryans) - political prisoners.  
36,000 - 37,300 In May, 1942 - 1,300 Slovak Jews from LUBLIN-MAJDANEK.  
37,300 - 37,900 600 Poles (Aryans) from RADOM, amongst them a few Jews.  
37,900 - 38,000 100 Poles from the concentration camp of DACHAU.  
38,000 - 38,400 400 French naturalized Jews who arrived with their families.

This whole convoy consisted of about 1,600 individuals of whom approximately 200 girls and 400 men were admitted to the camp, while the remaining 1,000 persons (women, old people, children as well as men) were sent without further procedure from the railroad siding directly to the Birch Forest, and there gassed and burned. From this moment on all Jewish convoys were dealt with in the same manner. Approximately 10 percent of the men and 5 percent of the women were allotted to the camps and the remaining members were immediately gassed. This process of extermination had already been applied earlier to the Polish Jews. During long months, without interruption, trucks brought thousands of Jews from the various "ghettos" direct to the pit in the "Birkenwald."

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- 38,400 - 39,200 800 naturalized French Jews, the remainder of the convoy was - as previously described - gassed.
- 39,200 - 40,000 800 Poles (Aryans), political prisoners.
- 40,000 - 40,150 150 Slovak Jews with their families.
- Outside of a group of 50 girls sent to the women's camp, all other members were gassed in the Birch Forest. Among the 150 men who came to camp there were a certain Zucker (Christian name unknown) and Sonnenschein, Viliam, both from Eastern Slovakia.
- 40,150 - 43,800 Approximately 4,000 French naturalized Jews, almost all intellectuals; 1,000 women were directed to the women's camp, while the balance of about 3,000 persons were gassed in the usual manner.
- 43,800 - 44,200 400 Slovak Jews from LUBLIN, including Matej Klein and No. 43820, Meiloch Laufer from Eastern Slovakia. This convoy arrived on June 30, 1942.
- 44,200 - 45,000 200 Slovak Jews. The convoy consisted of 1,000 persons. A number of women were sent to the women's camp, the rest gassed in the Birch Wood. Among the prisoners sent to camp were: Jozef Zelmanovic, Snina - Adolf Kahan, Bratislava - Walter Reichmann, Sucany - Esther Kahan, Bratislava.
- 45,000 - 47,000 2,000 Frenchmen (Aryans), communists and other political prisoners, among whom were the brother of Thorez and the young brother of Léon Blum. The latter was atrociously tortured, then gassed and burned.
- 47,000 - 47,500 500 Jews from Holland, in the majority German emigrants. The rest of the convoy, about 2,500 persons, gassed.
- 47,500 - 47,800 About 300 so-called Russians under protective custody.

- 48,300 - 48,620 320 Jews from Slovakia. About 70 girls were transferred to the women's camp, the remainder, some 650 people, gassed in the Birch Wood. This convoy included about 80 people who had been handed over by the Hungarian police to the camp of SERED. Others from this convoy were: Dr. Zoltan Mandel (since deceased) - Holz (Christian name unknown), butcher from Piestany, Miklos Engel, Zilina - Chaim Katz, Snina, (his wife and 6 children were gassed).
- 49,000 - 64,800 15,000 naturalized French, Belgian, and Dutch Jews. This figure certainly represents less than 10 percent of the total convoy. This was between July 1 and September 15, 1942. Large family convoys arrived from various European countries and were at once directed to the Birch Wood. The special squad ("Sonderkommando") employed for gassing and burning worked in day and night shifts. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were gassed during this period.
- 64,800 - 65,000 200 Slovak Jews. Out of this transport about 100 women were admitted to the camp, the rest of them gassed and burned. Among the newly arrived were: Ludwig Katz, Zilina - Avri Burger, Bratislava - Poprad (wife dead) - Mikulas Steiner, Povazska Bystrica - Juraaj Fried, Trencin - Buchwald - Josef Rosenwasser, Eastern Slovakia - Julius Neuman, Bardejov - Sandor Wertheimer, Vrbove - Misi Wertheimer, Vrbove - Bela Blau, Zilina.
- 65,000 - 68,000 Naturalized French, Belgian, and Dutch Jews. Not more than 1,000 women were "selected" and sent to the camp. The others, at the lowest estimate 30,000, were gassed.
- 71,000 - 80,000 Naturalized French, Belgian, and Dutch Jews. The prisoners brought to the camp hardly represent 10 percent of the total transport. A conservative estimate would be that approximately 65,000 to 70,000 persons were gassed.

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On December 17, 1942, the 200 young Slovak Jews, the so-called "special squad" employed in gassing and burning the condemned, were in turn executed at BIRKENAU. They were executed for having planned to mutiny and escape. A Jew betrayed their preparations. This frightful job had to be taken over by a group of 200 Polish Jews who had just arrived at camp from MAKOW.

The men belonging to the "special squad" lived separately. On account of the dreadful smell spread by them, people had but little contact with them. Besides they were always filthy, destitute, half wild and extraordinarily brutal and ruthless. It was not uncommon to see one of them kill another. This was considered by the others a sensation, a change. One simply recorded that number so-and-so had died.

Once I was an eye-witness when a young Polish Jew named Jossel demonstrated "scientific" murder on a Jew in the presence of an SS guard. He used no weapon, merely his bare hands, to kill his victim.

No. 80,000 marks the beginning of the systematic extermination of the Polish ghettos.

80,000 - 85,000 Approximately 5,000 Jews from various ghettos in MJAZA - MAKOW - ZICHENOW - LOMZA - GRODNO - BIALOSTOK.

For fully 30 days truck-convoys arrived without interruption. Only 5,000 persons were sent to the concentration camp; all the others were gassed at once. The "special squad" worked in two shifts, 24 hours daily and was scarcely able to cope with the gassing and burning. Without exaggerating it may be said that out of these convoys some 80,000 to 90,000 received "special treatment." These transports also brought in a considerable amount of money, valuables, and precious stones.

85,000 - 92,000 6,000 Jews from GRODNO, BIALOSTOK and CRACOW as well as 1,000 Aryan Poles. The majority of the Jewish convoys were directly gassed and daily about 4,000 Jews were driven into the gas chambers.

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During mid-January, 1943 three convoys of 2,000 persons each from THIESENSTADT arrived. They bore the designations "CU" "CK" and "K." (The meaning of these signs is unknown to us). These markings were also stamped on their luggage. Out of these 6,000 persons only 600 men and 300 women were admitted to the camp. The remainder were gassed.

99,000 - 100,000 End of January, 1943 large convoys of French and Dutch Jews arrived; only a small proportion of them reached the camp.

100,000 - 102,000 In February, 1943, 2,000 Aryan Poles, mostly intellectuals.

102,000 - 103,000 700 Czech Aryans. Later, those still alive were sent to BUCHENWALD.

103,000 - 108,000 3,000 French and Dutch Jews and 2,000 Poles (Aryans).

During the month of February, 1943, two contingents arrived daily. They included Polish, French, and Dutch Jews who, in the main, were sent to the gas chambers. The number gassed during this month can well be estimated at 90,000.

At the end of February, 1943 a new modern crematorium and gassing plant was inaugurated at BIRKENAU. The gassing and burning of the bodies in the Birch Forest was discontinued, the whole job being taken over by the four specially built crematoria. The large ditch was filled in, the ground levelled, and the ashes used as before for fertilizer at the farm labour camp of HELMENSE, so that today it is almost impossible to find traces of the dreadful mass murder which took place here.

At present there are four crematoria in operation at BIRKENAU, two large ones, I and II, and two smaller ones, III and IV. Those of type I and II consist of 3 parts, i.e.: (A) the furnace room; (B) the large hall; and (C) the gas chamber. A huge chimney rises from the furnace room around which are grouped nine furnaces, each having four openings. Each opening can take three normal corpses at once and after an hour and a half the bodies are completely burned. This corresponds to a daily capacity of about 2,000 bodies. Next to this is a large "reception hall" which is arranged so as to give the impression of the antechamber of a bathing establishment. It holds 2,000 people and apparently there is a similar

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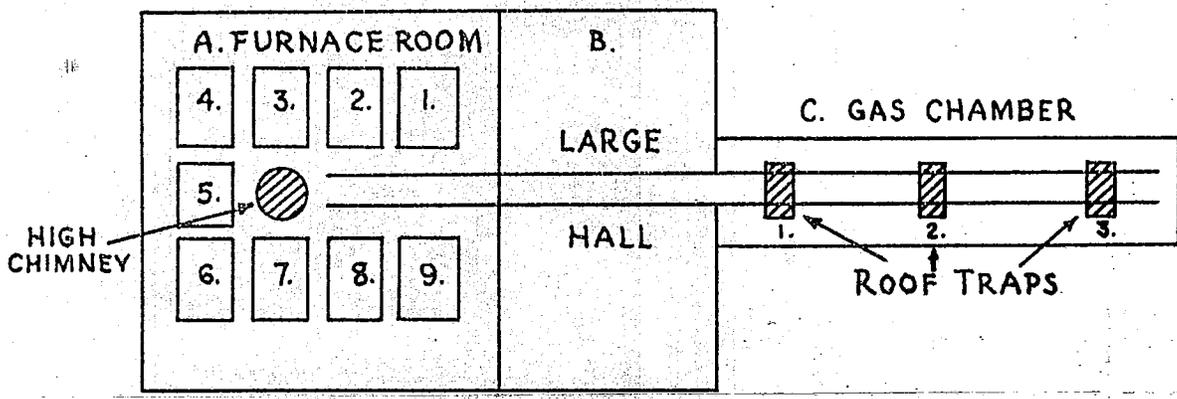
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ROUGH GROUND PLAN OF  
 CREMATORIA: TYPES I & II IN BIRKENAU

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waiting room on the floor below. From there a door and a few steps lead down into the very long and narrow gas chamber. The walls of this chamber are also camouflaged with simulated entries to shower rooms in order to mislead the victims. The roof is fitted with three traps which can be hermetically closed from the outside. A track leads from the gas chamber towards the furnace room. The gassing takes place as follows: the unfortunate victims are brought into hall (B) where they are told to undress. To complete the fiction that they are going to bathe, each person receives a towel and a small piece of soap issued by two men clad in white coats. Then they are crowded into the gas chamber (C) in such numbers that there is, of course, only standing room. To compress this crowd into the narrow space, shots are often fired to induce those already at the far end to huddle still closer together. When everybody is inside, the heavy doors are closed. Then there is a short pause, presumably to allow the room temperature to rise to a certain level, after which SS men with gas masks climb on the roof, open the traps, and shake down a preparation in powder form out of tin cans labelled "CYKLON" "For use against vermin," which is manufactured by a Hamburg concern. It is presumed that this is a "CYANIDE" mixture of some sort which turns into gas at a certain temperature. After three minutes everyone in the chamber is dead. No one is known to have survived this ordeal, although it was not uncommon to discover signs of life after the primitive measures employed in the Birch Wood. The chamber is then opened, aired, and the "special squad" carts the bodies on flat trucks to the furnace rooms where the burning takes place. Crematoria III and IV work on nearly the same principle, but their capacity is only half as large. Thus the total capacity of the four cremating and gassing plants at BIRKENAU amounts to about 6,000 daily.

On principle only Jews are gassed; Aryans very seldom, as they are usually given "special treatment" by shooting. Before the crematoria were put into service, the shooting took place in the Birch Wood and the bodies were burned in the long trench; later, however, executions took place in the large hall of one of the crematoria which has been provided with a special installation for this purpose.

Prominent guests from BERLIN were present at the inauguration of the first crematorium in March, 1943. The "program" consisted of the gassing and burning of 8,000 Cracow Jews. The guests, both officers and civilians, were extremely satisfied with the results and the special peephole fitted into the door of the gas chamber was in constant use. They were lavish in their praise of this newly erected installation.

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109,000 - 119,000 At the beginning of March, 1943, 45,000 Jews arrived from Saloniki. 10,000 of them came to the camp, including a small percentage of the women; some 30,000 however went straight to the cremating establishment. Of the 10,000 nearly all died a short time later from a contagious illness resembling malaria. They also died of typhus due to the general conditions prevailing in the camp.

Malaria among the Jews and typhus took such toll among the prisoners in general that the "selections" were temporarily suspended. The contaminated Greek Jews were ordered to present themselves and in spite of our repeated warnings many of them did. They were all killed by intracardial phenol injections administered by a lance-corporal of the medical corps.

Out of the 10,000 Greek Jews, some 1,000 men remained alive and were later sent, together with 500 other Jews, to do fortification work in Warsaw. A few weeks later several hundred came back in a pitiful state and were immediately gassed. The remainder presumably died in Warsaw. Four hundred Greek Jews suffering from malaria were sent for "further treatment" to LWBLIN after the phenol injections had been stopped, and it appears that they actually arrived. Their fate is not known to us, but it can be taken for granted that out of the original number of 10,000 Jews not one eventually remained in the camp.

Simultaneously with the stopping of the "selections" the murdering of prisoners was forbidden. Prominent murderers such as: the Reich German professional criminals Alexander Neumann, Zimmer, Albert Haemmarle, Rudi Osteringer, Rudi Bechert, and the political prisoners Alfred Kien and Alois Stahler, were punished for repeated murder and had to make written declaration that they had killed so and so many prisoners.

At the beginning of 1943 the political section of AUSCHWITZ received 500,000 discharge certificates and we thought with ill-concealed joy, that at least a few of us would be liberated. But the forms were simply filled out with the names of those gassed and filed away in the archives.

119,000 - 120,000 1,000 Poles (Aryans) from the PAWIAK penitentiary in Warsaw.

120,000 - 123,000 3,000 Greek Jews, part of whom were sent to replace their comrades in Warsaw. The remainder quickly died off.

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123,000 - 124,000 1,000 Poles (Aryans) from RADOM and TARNOW.

124,000 - 126,000 2,000 from mixed Aryan convoys.

In the meantime, ceaseless convoys of Polish and a few French and Belgian Jews arrived and, without exception, were dispatched to the gas chambers. Among them was a transport of 1,000 Polish Jews from MAJDANEK which included three Slovaks, one of whom was a certain Spira from Stropkow or Vranov.

The flow of convoys abruptly ceased at the end of July, 1943 and there was a short breathing space. The crematoria were thoroughly cleaned, the installations repaired and prepared for further use. On August 3 the killing machine again went into operation. The first convoys consisted of Jews from BENZBURG and SOSNOWITZ and others followed during the whole month of August.

132,000 - 136,000 Only 4,000 men and a very small number of women were brought to the camp. Over 35,000 were gassed. Of the aforementioned 4,000 men, many died as a result of bad treatment, hunger or illness; some were even murdered. The main responsibility for these tragedies lies with the criminal TYN (a Reich German) from the concentration camp of SACHSENHAUSEN and the Polish political prisoner No. 8516, Mieczislav KATERZINSKI, from Warsaw.

The "selections" were introduced again and this time to a murderous extent, especially in the women's camp. The camp doctor, an SS "Hauptsturmführer" and the son or nephew of the police president of Berlin (we forget his name) outdid all the others in brutality. The selection system has been continued ever since, until our escape.

137,000 - 138,000 At the end of August 1,000 Poles came from the PAWIAK prison and 80 Jews from Greece.

138,000 - 141,000 3,000 men from various Aryan transports.

142,000 - 145,000 At the beginning of September, 1943, 3,000 Jews arrived from Polish working camps and Russian prisoners of war.

143,000 - 152,000 During the week following September 7, 1943 family transports of Jews arrived from THERESIENSTADT. They enjoyed quite an exceptional status which was incomprehensible to us. The families were not separated and not a single one of them received the customary and "normal" gas treatment. Their heads were not even shaven, they were able to keep their luggage, and were lodged in a separate section of the camp, men, women and children together. The men were not forced to work and a school was even set up for the children under the direction of Fredy HIRSCH (Makabi, Prague). They were allowed to correspond freely. The worst they had to undergo was mistreatment at the hands of their "camp eldest," a certain professional criminal by the name of Arno DOM, prisoner No. 8. Our astonishment increased when we learned of the official indication given to this special transport:

"SB" - transport of Czech Jews with six months' quarantine -

We very well knew what "SB" meant ("Sonderbehandlung"), but could not understand the long period of six months' quarantine and the generally clement treatment this group received. The longest quarantine period we had witnessed so far was only three weeks. Towards the end of the six months' period, however, we became convinced that the fate of these Jews would be the same as that of most of the others - the gas chamber. We tried to get in touch with the leader of this group and explain their lot and what they had to expect. Some of them declared (especially Fredy HIRSCH who seemed to enjoy the full confidence of his companions) that if our fears took shape they would organize resistance. Thus, some of them hoped to instigate a general revolt in the camp. On March 6, 1944 we heard that the crematoria were being prepared to receive the Czech Jews.

I hastened to inform Fredy HIRSCH and begged him to take immediate action as they had nothing to lose. He replied that he recognized his duty. Before nightfall I again crept over to the Czech camp where I learned that Fredy HIRSCH was dying; he had poisoned himself with luminol. The next day, March 7, 1944, he was taken, unconscious, along with his 3,791 comrades who had arrived at BIRKENAU on September 7, 1943 on trucks, to the crematoria and gassed. The young people went to their death singing, but to our great disappointment nobody revolted. Some 500 elderly people had died during quarantine. Of all these Jews only 11 twins were left alive. They are being subjected to various medical tests at AUSCHWITZ, and when we left BIRKENAU they were still alive. Among the gassed was Rozsi FURST, from SERED. A week before the gassing, that is to say on March 1, 1944, everyone in the Czech group in the camp had been asked to inform his relatives about his well being. The letters had to be dated March 23 to 25, 1944 and they were requested to ask for food parcels.

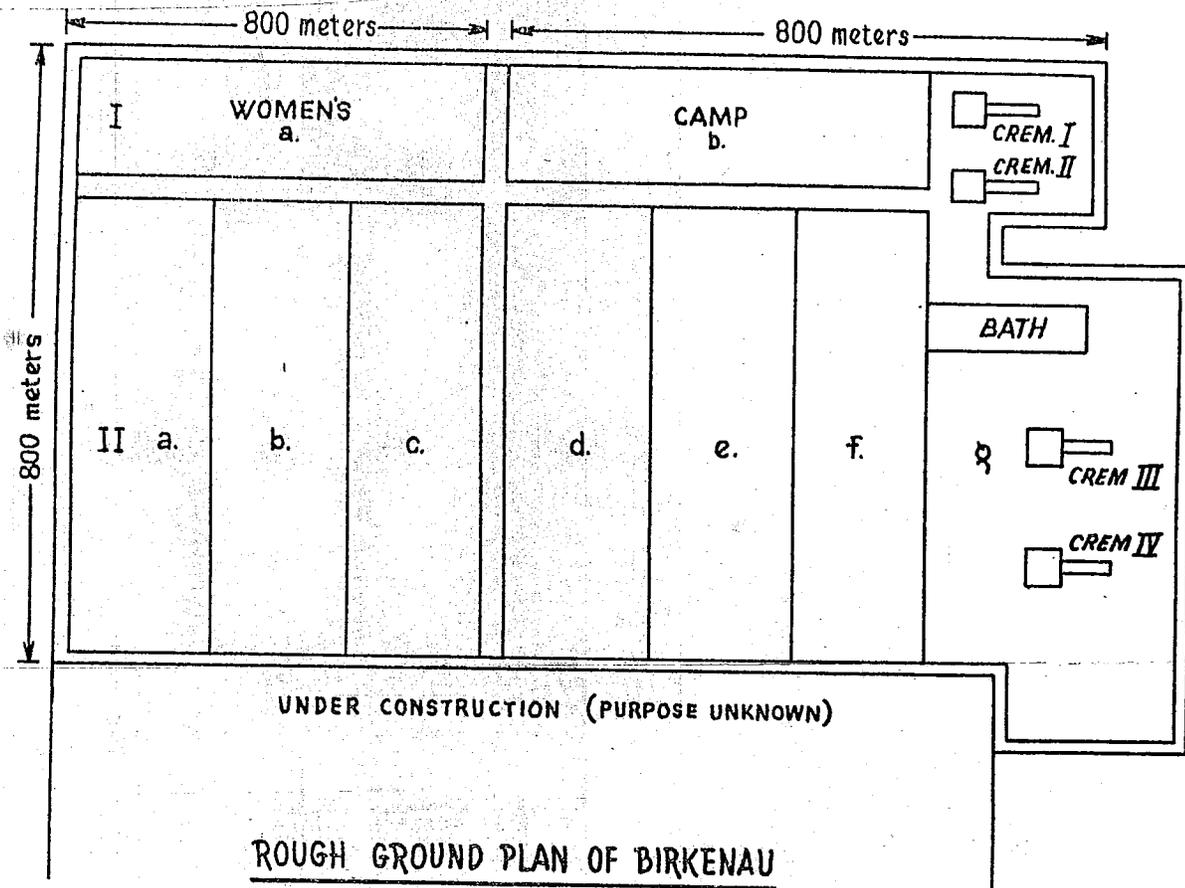
- 153,000 - 154,000 1,000 Polish Aryans from the PAVIAK penitentiary.
- 155,000 - 159,000 During October and November, 1943, 4,000 persons from various prisons and smaller transports of Jews from BENZBURG and vicinity, who had been driven out of their hiding places; also a group of Russians under protective custody from the MINSK and VITEBSK regions. Some more Russian prisoners of war arrived and, as stated, they as usual received numbers between 1 and 12,000.
- 160,000 - 165,000 In December, 1943, 5,000 men originating from Dutch, French, Belgian transports and, for the first time, Italian Jews from FIUME, TRIESTE and ROME. Of these at least 30,000 were immediately gassed. The mortality among these Jews was very high and, in addition, the "selection" system was still decimating all ranks. The bestiality of the whole procedure reached its

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culminating point between January 10 and 24, 1944 when even young and healthy persons irrespective of profession or working classification - with the exception of doctors - were ruthlessly "selected".

Every single prisoner was called up, a strict control was established to see that all were present, and the "selection" proceeded under the supervision of the same camp doctor (son or nephew of the Police President of Berlin) and of the Commandant of BIRKENAU, SS "Untersturmführer" SCHWARZHUBER. The "infirmary" had in the meantime been transferred from "Block 7" to a separate section of the camp where conditions had become quite bearable. Its inmates, nevertheless, were gassed to the last man. Apart from this group, this general action cost some 2,500 men and over 6,000 women their lives.

- 165,000 - 168,000 On December 20, 1943 a further group of 3,000 Jews arrived from THERESIENSTADT. The convoy was listed under the same category as the one which had reached the camp on September 7, i.e. "SB" - transport, Czech Jews with six months' quarantine." On their arrival, men, women and children all joined the September group. They enjoyed the same privileges as their predecessors. Twenty-four hours before the gassing of the first group took place, the latest arrivals were separated from the rest and placed in another part of the camp where they still are at present. Their quarantine ends on June 20, 1944.
- 169,000 - 170,000 1,000 people in small groups, Jews, Poles, and Russians under protective custody.
- 170,000 - 171,000 1,000 Poles and Russians and a number of Yugoslavs.
- 171,000 - 174,000 At the end of February and beginning of March, 3,000 Jews from Holland, Belgium, and for the first time long-established French Jews (not naturalized) from VICHY, in France. The greater part of this transport was gassed immediately upon arrival.



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Small groups of BENZBURGER and SOSNOWITZER Jews, who had been dragged from hiding, arrived in the middle of March. One of them told me that many Polish Jews were crossing over to Slovakia and from there to Hungary and that the Slovak Jews helped them on their way through.

After the gassing of the THERESIENSTADT transport there were no further arrivals until March 15, 1944. The effective strength of the camp rapidly diminished and men of later incoming transports, especially Dutch Jews, were directed to the camp. When we left on April 7, 1944 we heard that large convoys of Greek Jews were expected.

The camp of BERKENAU consists of three building areas. At present only sections I and II are guarded by the inner chain of sentry posts, whereas section III is still under construction and uninhabited. At the time of our departure from the camp (the beginning of April, 1944), the following categories of prisoners were in BERKENAU:

Section I (Women's concentration camp)

	Slov. Jews	Other Jews	Aryans	Remarks
Ia and Ib	app. 300	app. 7,000	app. 6,000	In addition to the 300 Slovak Jewish girls, app. 100 are employed in the administration building of AUSCHWITZ.

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Section II (Women's Concentration Camp)

	Slov. Jews	Other Jews	Aryans	Remarks
IIa Quarantine camp	2	app. 200	app. 800	One of the two Slovak Jews is Dr. Andreas MULLER from Podolinec (block eldest).
IIb Jews from THERESIENSTADT	-	" 3,500	-	With a six months' quarantine.
IIc At present uninhabited	-	-	-	
IId "Stammlager"	58	" 4,000	" 6,000	
IIE Gypsy camp	-	-	" 4,500	This is the remainder of some 16,000 gypsies. They are not used for work and die off rapidly.
IIIf Infirmary	6	" 1,000	" 500	The six Slovak Jews are all employees of the building, namely:

- No. 36,832 Walter SPITZER, block eldest from NEMSOVA, came to LUBLIN from BERKENAU.
- " 29,867 Jozef NEUMANN, ("overseer" of the "corpse crew") from SNINA.
- " 44,989 Josef ZEIMANOVIC, "staff" from SNINA.  
- Cham KATZ, "staff" from SNINA.
- " 30,049 Ludwig SOLMANN, "clerk" from KESMAREK.
- " 32,407 Ludwig EISENSTADTER, tattooist from KHEMPACHY.

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The internal administration of the camp of BIRKENAU is run by specially selected prisoners. The "blocks" are not inhabited according to nationalities but rather according to working categories. Each block is supervised by a staff of five, i.e., a block eldest, a block recorder, a male nurse, and two attendants.

The block eldest

He wears an arm band with the number of his block, and is responsible for order there. He has power over life and death. Until February, 1944 nearly 50 percent of the block eldests were Jews but this was stopped by order of BEALIN. They all had to resign with the exception of three Jews who, in spite of this order, were able to keep their posts.

The block recorder

He is the block eldest's right hand, does all the clerical work, keeping the index cards and records. His work is of great responsibility and he has to keep his ledgers with painful exactitude as the index cards only indicate the number and not the name of the prisoners; errors are fatal. For instance, if the recorder has noted down a death by mistake - and this often occurs with the unusually high mortality - the discrepancy is simply straightened out by killing the bearer of the corresponding number. Corrections are not admitted. The block recorder occupies a key post which is often misused.

Nursing and "room" duties

They consist in keeping the inside of the barracks clean and carrying out small manual jobs in and around the block. Of course there is no question of really taking care of the sick.

The camp eldest supervises the whole camp; he is also a prisoner. This post is at present held by:

Franz DANISCH, No. 11,182, a political prisoner, from KONIGSHUTTE, Upper Silesia. He is undisputed master of the whole camp and has power to nominate or dismiss block eldests and block-recorders, hand out jobs, etc.

Further we have a "chief recorder" whose position is undoubtedly one of the most powerful in the camp. He is in direct contact with camp headquarters, receiving their orders and reporting on all matters. All camp recorders are directly subordinated to him and have to submit all their reports to him. The chief recorder of BIRKENAU is:

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Kasimir GORK, No. 31,029, a Pole from WARSAW, a former bank clerk.

The supreme control over the blocks lies in the hands of six to eight "block leaders," all SS men. Every night they hold roll call, the result of which is communicated to:

The Camp Leader, "Untersturmführer" SCHWARZHUBER, from the Tyrol. This individual is an alcoholic and a sadist. Over him is the camp commander who also controls AUSCHWITZ where there is a second subordinate camp leader. The camp commander's name is: HOESS.

The Chief of a work squad or group is called the "Capo."

During work the "Capo" has full authority over his group of prisoners and not infrequently one of these "Capos" kills a man working under him. In larger squads there may be several "Capos" who are then under the orders of a "Capo-in-chief." At first there were many Jewish "Capos," but an order from BERLIN prohibited their being employed.

Supreme control over work is carried out by German specialists.

## II. MAJDANEK

On June 14, 1942 we left NOVAKY, passed through ZILINA and arrived at ZWARDON toward 5 o'clock in the evening. We were assembled, counted, and SS men took over our convoy. One of these guards voiced his surprise at the fact we had made the journey without water by shouting: "Those Slovak barbarians, give them no water!" The journey continued and we reached LUBLIN two days later. Here the following order was issued: "Those fit for work aged between 15 and 50 are to leave the cars. Children and old people remain." We struggled out of the freight car and discovered that the station was surrounded by Lithuanians in SS uniforms, all armed with automatic pistols. The cars containing the children and old people were immediately closed and the train moved on. We do not know where they went and what happened to them.

The SS troop leader in command informed us that we had a long way ahead of us, but that whoever wanted to take his luggage with him could do so. Those who preferred to put it on a truck would certainly receive it later. So some of us dragged along our luggage, whereas others loaded it on the truck.

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Behind the town stood a clothing factory called the "Bekleidungswerke." In the courtyard waiting for their noon meal some 1,000 prisoners in dirty striped clothing, obviously Jews, were lined up and the sight of them was none too encouraging. Arriving on a small hill we suddenly sighted the vast barrack camp of MAJDANEK surrounded by a 3-meter-high barbed-wire fence. No sooner had we gone through the entrance gate than I met a prisoner who warned me that all our personal belongings would be taken away. Around us stood Slovak Jews in a wretched condition, their heads shaven, in dirty prison clothes and wooden clogs or simply bare-footed, many of them having swollen feet. They begged us for food and we gave them what we could spare, knowing very well that everything would be confiscated anyway. We were then conducted to the stock room where we had to leave everything we possessed. At double time we were herded into another barrack where we had to undress, were shaved, and given a shower. After this we were issued convict outfits, wooden clogs and caps.

I was assigned to "working section No. 2" as the whole camp was divided into three such sections separated by wire fences. Section No. 2 was occupied by a number of Slovak and Czech Jews. For two full days we were taught how to remove and put on our caps when we met a German. Then in the pouring rain we practiced roll calling for hours.

The barrack accommodations were quite original to say the least. Three long tables (nearly as long as the barrack itself) had been placed one on top of the other. These comprised our "bunks" (4 floors of them, that is ground floor plus the three tables). A small passage was kept open along the walls.

Our food consisted of a fairly thick "soup" early in the morning which had to be eaten with the hands. We got the same soup again at lunch. The evening meal consisted of a brew called "tea," 300 grams of bad bread and some 20 to 30 grams of marmalade or artificial fat of the worst quality.

Great importance was attributed during the first few days to the learning of the "camp song." For hours we stood singing:

From the whole of Europe came  
We Jews to Lublin  
Much work has to be done  
And this is the beginning.

To manage this duty  
Forget all about the past  
For in fulfillment of duty  
There is community.

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Therefore on to work with vigour  
Let everyone play his part  
Together we want to work  
At the same pace and rhythm.

Not all will understand  
Why we stand here in rows  
Those must we soon force  
To understand its meaning.

Modern times must teach us  
Teach us all along  
That it is to work  
And only to work we belong.

Therefore on to work with vigour  
Let everyone play his part  
Together we want to work  
At the same pace and rhythm.

(This is a literal translation of the song).

Working section No.	I	was	occupied	by	Slovak	Jews
"	"	"	II	"	"	"
"	"	"	III	"	"	"
"	"	"	IV & V	"	"	"
						was being built by the Jews of Sectors I & II

The Partisans in section III were locked up in their barracks without having to work and their food was thrown at them as if they had been dogs. They died in great numbers in their overcrowded barracks and were shot at the slightest excuse by the guards who did not dare venture too near them.

The "Capos" were Reich Germans and Czechs; whereas the Germans were brutal, the Czechs helped wherever they could. The camp eldest was a gypsy from HOLIC by the name of GALBAVY. His adjutant, a Jew from SERED called MITTLER, certainly owed his post to his brutal actions. He took full advantage of the power conferred upon him to torment the Jews who, as it was, already had their full share of hardships. The evening roll call brought us more brutal treatment from the SS men and for hours we had to stand in the open after a hard day's work and sing the "camp song." A Jewish orchestra leader was forced to conduct from the roof of one of the barracks. This was the occasion of much hilarity among the SS men.

During these "concert parties" the SS guards were very generous with blows and physical punishment. A tragic end befell Rabbi ECKSTEIN from SERED who was suffering from dysentery and once came a few minutes too late for the roll call. The group leader had him seized and dipped head first into one of the latrines, then poured cold water over him, drew his revolver and shot him.

The crematorium was located between working sections I and II and all the bodies were burned there. With an effective strength of 6,000 to 8,000 men per working section, the mortality was about 30 a day. This figure later increased five and sixfold. In other instances 10 to 20 inmates were removed from the sick room, brought to the crematorium and burned, after having been put to death in a manner which I have not been able to find out. This crematorium was electrically heated and the attendants were Russians.

Illnesses increased as a result of the bad food and intolerable living conditions. Serious stomach troubles and a seemingly incurable foot disease spread throughout the camp. The feet of the victims swelled up to the point where they could not walk. More and more of the sick were now being taken to the crematorium and when on June 26, 1942 the number thus treated rose to 70, I decided to take an opportunity which was offered to me and applied for a transfer to AUSCHWITZ.

On June 27, 1942 I discarded my prisoner's outfit and travelled to AUSCHWITZ in civilian clothes.

After a journey of 48 hours during which we were couped up in freight cars without food or water, we arrived at AUSCHWITZ half dead. At the entrance gate the huge poster, "Work brings freedom," greeted us. As the courtyard was clean and well kept, and the brick buildings made a good impression after the dirty and primitive barracks of LUBLIN, we thought that the change was for the best. We were taken to a cellar and received tea and bread. Next day, however, our civilian clothes were taken away, our heads were shaved, and our numbers were tattooed on our forearms in the usual way. Finally, we were issued a set of prisoner's clothes similar to those we had worn in LUBLIN and were enrolled as "political prisoners" in the concentration camp of AUSCHWITZ.

We were billeted in "Block 17" and slept on the floor. In an adjoining row of buildings separated from ours by a high wall, the Jewish girls from Slovakia, who had been brought there in March and April of 1942, were quartered. We worked in the huge "BUNA" plant to which we were herded every morning about 3 a.m. At midday our food consisted of potato or turnip soup and in the evening we received some bread. During work we were terribly mistreated. As our working place was situated outside the large chain of sentry posts, it was divided into small sectors of 10 x 10 meters, each guarded by an SS man. Whoever stepped outside these squares during working hours was immediately shot without warning for having "attempted to escape." Often it happened that out of pure spite an SS man would order a prisoner to fetch some given object outside his square. If he followed the order, he was shot for having left his assigned place. The work was extremely hard and there were no rest periods. The way to and from work had to be covered at a brisk military trot; anyone falling out of line was shot. On my arrival about 3,000 people, of whom 2,000 were Slovak Jews, were working on this emplacement. Very few could bear the strain and although escape seemed hopeless, attempts were made every day. The result was several hangings a week.

After a number of weeks of painful work at the "BUNA" plant a terrible typhus epidemic broke out. The weaker prisoners died in hundreds. An immediate quarantine was ordered and work at the "BUNA" stopped. Those still alive were sent, at the end of July, 1942, to the gravel pit but there work was even still more strenuous. We were in such a state of weakness that, even in trying to do our best, we could not satisfy the overseers. Most of us got swollen feet. Due to our inability to perform the heavy work demanded of us our squad was accused of being lazy and disorderly. Soon after a medical commission inspected all of us; they carried out their job very thoroughly. Anyone with swollen feet or particularly weak was separated from the rest. Although I was in great pain, I controlled myself and stood erect in front of the commission who passed me as physically fit. Out of 300 persons examined, 200 were found to be unfit and immediately sent to BIRKENAU and gassed. I was then detailed for work at the DAW (Deutsche Aufrüstungswerke) where we had to paint skis. The prescribed minimum to be painted each day was 120. Anyone unable to paint this many was thoroughly flogged in the evening. It meant working very hard to avoid this punishment. Another group was employed at making cases for hand grenades. At one time 15,000 had been completed but it was found that they were a few centimeters too small. As punishment several Jews were shot for sabotage.

Somewhere around the middle of August, 1942 all the Jewish girls from Slovakia who lived next to our quarters, on the other side of the wall, were transferred to BIRKENAU. I had the opportunity to talk to them and was able to see how weak and half-starved

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all of them were. They were dressed in old Russian uniform rags and wore wooden clogs. Their heads were shaven clean. The same day we again had to undergo a strict examination and those suspected of having typhus were removed to the Birch Wood. The remainder were shaved afresh, bathed, issued a new set of clothes and finally billeted in the barracks the girls had just left. By chance I learned that there was an opening in the "clearance squad" and I handed in my application. I was detailed to this task.

This squad consisted of about a hundred Jewish prisoners. We were sent to a far corner of the camp, away from all our comrades. Here we found huge sheds full of knapsacks, suitcases, and other luggage. We had to open each piece of baggage and sort the contents into large cases specially prepared for each category of goods, i.e. combs, mirrors, sugar, canned food, chocolate, medicines, etc. The cases were then stored away. Underwear, shirts and clothes of all kinds went to a special barrack, where they were sorted out and packed by Jewish girls. Old and worn clothes were addressed to the "TEXTILE FACTORY" at MEMEL, whereas the usable garments were dispatched to a collecting center in BERLIN. Gold, money, bank notes, and precious stones had to be handed over to the political section. Many of these objects were, however, stolen by the SS guards or by prisoners. A brutal and vile individual who often struck the women is commander of this squad. He is SS "Scharführer" WYKLEFF.

Every day the girls who came to their work from BIRKENAU described to us the terrible conditions prevailing there. They were beaten and brutalized and their mortality was much higher than among the men. Twice a week "selections" took place, and every day new girls replaced those who had disappeared.

During a night shift I was able to witness for the first time how incoming convoys were handled. The transport I saw contained Polish Jews. They had received no water for days and when the doors of the freight cars were open we were ordered to chase them out with loud shouts. They were utterly exhausted and about a hundred of them had died during the journey. The living were lined up in rows of five. Our job was to remove the dead, dying, and the luggage from the cars. The dead, and this included anyone unable to stand on his feet, were piled in a heap. Luggage and parcels were collected and stacked up. Then the railroad cars had to be thoroughly cleaned so that no trace of their frightful load was left behind. A commission from the political department proceeded with the "selection" of approximately 10 percent of the men and 5 percent of the women and had them transferred to the camps. The remainder were loaded on trucks, sent to BIRKENAU,

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and gassed while the dead and dying were taken directly to the furnaces. It often happened that small children were thrown alive into the trucks along with the dead. Parcels and luggage were taken to the warehouses and sorted out in the previously described manner.

Between July and September, 1942 a typhus epidemic had raged in AUSCHWITZ, especially in the women's camp of BIRKENAU. None of the sick received medical attention and in the first stages of the epidemic a great many were killed by phenol injections, and later on others were gassed wholesale. Some 15,000 to 20,000, mostly Jews, died during these two months. The girls' camp suffered the most, as it was not fitted with sanitary installations, and the poor wretches were covered with lice. Every week large "selections" took place and the girls had to present themselves naked to the "selection committee," regardless of weather conditions. They waited in deadly fear whether they would be chosen or given another week's grace. Suicides were frequent and were mostly committed by throwing one's self against the high tension wires of the inner fence. This went on until they had dwindled to 5 percent of their original number. Now there are only 400 of these girls left and most of them have been able to secure some sort of clerical post in the women's camp. About 100 girls hold jobs at the staff building in AUSCHWITZ where they do all the clerical work connected with the administration of the two camps. Thanks to their knowledge of languages they are also used as interpreters. Others are employed in the main kitchen and laundry. Of late these girls have been able to dress themselves quite well as they have had opportunities to complete their wardrobes which, in some cases, even include silk stockings. Generally speaking they are reasonably well off and are even allowed to let their hair grow. Of course this cannot be said of the other Jewish inmates of the women's camp. It just so happens that these Slovak Jewish girls have been in the camp the longest of all. But if today they enjoy certain privileges, they have previously undergone frightful sufferings.

I was not to hold this comparatively good job with the "clearance squad" for long. Shortly afterwards I was transferred to BIRKENAU on disciplinary grounds and remained there over a year and a half. On April 7, 1944 I managed to escape with my companion.

Careful estimate of the number of Jews gassed  
in BIRKENAU between April, 1942 and April, 1944  
(according to countries of origin).

Poland (transported by truck) .....	approximately 300,000
"          "          "  train .....	"          600,000
Holland .....	"          100,000
Greece .....	"          45,000
France .....	"          150,000
Belgium .....	"          50,000
Germany .....	"          60,000
Yugoslavia, Italy and Norway .....	"          50,000
Lithuania .....	"          50,000
Bohemia, Moravia and Austria .....	"          30,000
Slovakia .....	"          30,000
Various camps for foreign Jews in Poland ..	"          300,000
	<hr/>
	approximately 1,765,000
	<hr/>

III.

On August 6, 1944 a report was received in Switzerland covering the happenings in BIRKENAU during the period between April 7 and May 27. This second report was drawn up by two other young Jews who succeeded in escaping from this camp and reaching Slovakia.

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Their declarations complete the first report, particularly in regard to the arrival of the Hungarian Jews in BIRKENAU. They also add certain new details not contained in the previous accounts. It has not been possible, however, to check the origin of this "second report" as closely as it was the first.

After the flight of the two Slovak Jews from BIRKENAU on April 7, 1944 great excitement reigned in the camp. The "Political Division" of the Gestapo instituted a thoroughgoing investigation, and the friends and superiors of the two escapees were closely questioned, although in vain. Since the two had held posts as "block recorders," all Jews exercising such functions, by way of punishment and also as a precautionary measure, were removed and, as the Gestapo suspected that they had succeeded in escaping through Building No. 3, the outer chain of sentry posts was considerably shortened so that now it cuts through the middle of Building No. 3.

At the beginning of the month of April, a transport of Greek Jews arrived, of whom about 200 were admitted to the camp. The remainder of circa 1,500 were immediately gassed.

Between the 10th and 15th of April some 5,000 "Aryans" arrived in BIRKENAU, mainly Poles, some 2,000 to 3,000 women among them being from the abandoned camp of LUBLIN-MAJDANEK. They were given numbers running from approximately:

176,000 to 181,000 Among the women were about 300 Jewish girls from Poland. The greater part of the new arrivals were ill, weak, and very run down. According to their information the healthy ones had been sent from LUBLIN to German concentration camps. Concerning the fate of the Jews held in the camp of LUBLIN-MAJDANEK, we learned from them, especially from the Jewish girls, that on November 3, 1943 all Jews in this camp, that is some 11,000 men and 6,000 women, were killed.

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We recalled that about this time the SS in BIRKENAU had reported that LUBLIN had been attacked by partisans and, in order to fight against the latter, a number of the SS personnel from BIRKENAU had been temporarily transferred to LUBLIN. It was now clear to us for what purpose our SS had gone to LUBLIN.

Apparently the Jews had been compelled to dig a long, deep grave in Field V of the camp of MAJDANEK and on November 3 they were brought out in groups of 200 to 300, shot and thrown into the grave. Within 24 hours everything was over. During the execution loud music was played to drown out the shots.

Three hundred girls who were active in LUBLIN on the "Clearing-up Commando" and as recorders were left alive. Three days after their arrival in BIRKENAU they were all gassed and burned on special order of BERLIN. Through an error on the part of the "recorder" two of the girls were not sent to the gas chamber. This was discovered, however, the next day, and the girls were immediately shot and the recorder replaced.

The fate of the LUBLIN Jews caused great depression among the Jews in the camp of BIRKENAU who became afraid that one day the whole of BIRKENAU would suddenly be "liquidated" in the same way.

Approximately  
No. 182,000

Toward the end of April more Greek Jews were brought to BIRKENAU. Some 200 were admitted to the camp and about 3,000 exterminated.

183,000 to 185,000

At the beginning of May, 1944 smaller transports of Dutch, French, Belgian, and Greek Jews arrived, as well as Polish "Aryans." Most of them were put to work in the Buna plant.

On May 10, 1944 the first transport of Hungarian Jews arrived in BIRKENAU. They were principally from the prisons of Budapest, including those who had been arrested in the streets and railroad stations of the city. Among the women were:

Ruth Lorant  
Mici Lorant  
Ruth Quasztler  
Irene Roth  
Barna Fuchs

The transport was received in AUSCHWITZ and BIRKENAU according to the well-known procedure (heads shaved, numbers tattooed, etc.) The men were given numbers beginning with 186,000 and the women were placed in the women's camp. About 600 men, of whom some 150 were between the ages of 45 and 60, were brought to BIRKENAU where they were divided up among various work detachments. The remainder stayed in AUSCHWITZ where they worked in the Buna plant.

The members of the transport were all left alive and none of them, as had been customary, were sent directly to the crematoria. In the postcards which they were allowed to write, they had to give "Waldsee" as return address.

On May 15 mass transports from Hungary began to arrive in BIRKENAU. Some 14,000 to 15,000 Jews arrived daily. The spur railroad track which ran into the camp to the crematoria was completed in great haste, the crews working night and day, so that the transports could be brought directly to the crematoria. Only about 10 percent of these transports were admitted to the camp; the balance were immediately gassed and burned. Never had so many Jews been gassed since the establishment of BIRKENAU. The "Special Commando" had to be increased to 600 men and, after two or three days, to 800 (people being recruited from among the Hungarian Jews who had arrived first). The size of the "Clearing Commando" was stepped up from 150 to 700 men. Three crematoria worked day and night (the 4th was being repaired at that time) and, since the capacity of the crematoria was not enough, great pits 30 meters long and 15 meters wide were once more dug in the "Birkenwald" (as in the time before the crematoria) where corpses were burned day and night. Thus the "exterminating capacity" became almost unlimited.

The Hungarian Jews who were left alive (about 10 percent) were not included in the normal camp "enrollment." Although they were shaved and shorn and received convict's clothing, they were not tattooed. They were housed in a separate section of the camp, section "C", and were later transferred to various concentration camps in the German Reich: Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Grossrosen,

000100

Gusen, Flossenburg, Sachsenhausen, etc. The women were temporarily quartered in the "gypsy camp" in separate blocks and then also transferred elsewhere. Jewish girls from Slovakia were "block eldests" there.

The first Hungarian transports came from: Munkacs, Nagyszöllös, Nyiregyhaza, Ungvar, Huszt, Kassau, Beregszasz, Marmarossziget, Nagyberezna. Among those remaining alive were:

Robert and Ervin Waizen  
Stark  
Ehrenreich  
Katz, Chaim

The last two have already been transferred. The parents of the Waizen brothers were gassed.

The transports of Hungarian Jews were under the particular control of the former Camp Commander "Hauptsturmbannführer" HOSS, who travelled continually between AUSCHWITZ and Budapest. The Commandant of Birkenau at this time was HOSS' former adjutant, "Hauptsturmführer" KRAMER.

187,000 to 189,000 1,600 French "Aryans," almost exclusively intellectuals and prominent persons, including a small number of Polish "emigrés." Among the French were high officers, members of leading French financial circles, well-known journalists and politicians, and even, it was said, former ministers. On their arrival some of them rebelled but were put down in an exceedingly brutal fashion by the SS, some of them being shot on the spot. The French were very courageous and self-possessed. They were strictly isolated in BIRKENAU and no one was allowed to have any contact with them. After two weeks, on orders from Berlin, they were sent to Mauthausen (near Linz, in Austria.).

Since the middle of May the newly arrived Jews no longer received consecutive numbers, as formerly. A new numbering system was inaugurated beginning with No. 1 preceded by the tattooed letter "A." We do not know the reason for this measure. At the time of our flight on May 27, 1944 about 4,000 Jews had received these new numbers. The 4,000 were composed of 1,000 Dutch, French, and Italian Jews and 3,000 Jews from THERESIENSTADT who reached BIRKENAU on May 23, 1944. These were treated exactly as the previous two transports from THERESIENSTADT. They were quartered

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(unshorn) with the members of the previous convoy from THERESIENSTADT (who have been in BIRKENAU since December 20, 1943 and whose "quarantine" is due to be up on June 20, 1944) in Section IIB.

According to the statement of a Jew from the "Special Commando," "Reichsführer" Himmler was said to have visited BIRKENAU on the 15th or 16th of May. On one of these days I myself saw three automobiles and five men in civilian clothing drive toward the crematoria. The Jew who made this statement declared that he, as well as others, recognized Himmler, who had visited crematorium No. 1 and after a stay of about half an hour had again driven off with those accompanying him. On the day after there was an account in the Silesian newspapers of Himmler's visit to Cracow, so that this report could be true.

One other happening should not be forgotten which was told to us by the men of the "Special Commando." In the late summer of 1943 a commission of four Dutch Jews - distinguished looking men - came to AUSCHWITZ. Their visit had already apparently been announced to the Camp Commander, for the Dutch Jews in AUSCHWITZ received better clothes, as well as regular eating equipment (plates, spoons, etc.) and better food. The commission of four were very politely received and were shown over the camp buildings and particularly those portions which were clean and made a good impression. Dutch Jews from the camp were brought to them who reported that only a portion of the Dutch Jews were in this camp, the others being in other similar camps. In this manner the four men were satisfied and signed a statement according to which the commission had found everything in good order in AUSCHWITZ. After the signing the four Dutch Jews expressed a desire to see the camp of BIRKENAU and particularly the crematoria about which they had heard some stories. The camp authorities declared themselves quite willing to show them both BIRKENAU and the crematoria, the latter being used, they said, to cremate those who die in the camp. The commission was then taken to BIRKENAU, accompanied by the camp leader, Aumayer, and immediately to crematorium No. 1. Here they were shot from behind. A telegram was supposedly sent to Holland reporting that after leaving AUSCHWITZ the four men had been victims of an unfortunate automobile accident.

There is a biological laboratory in AUSCHWITZ where SS, civilian, and internee doctors are occupied. The women and girls on whom experiments are performed are housed in Block 10. For a long time the "block eldest" there was Magda Hellinger from Michalovec and a girl named Rozsi (family name unknown) from Hummené. Experiments were carried out only on Jewish girls and women, although to date no Slovakian girls have been used.

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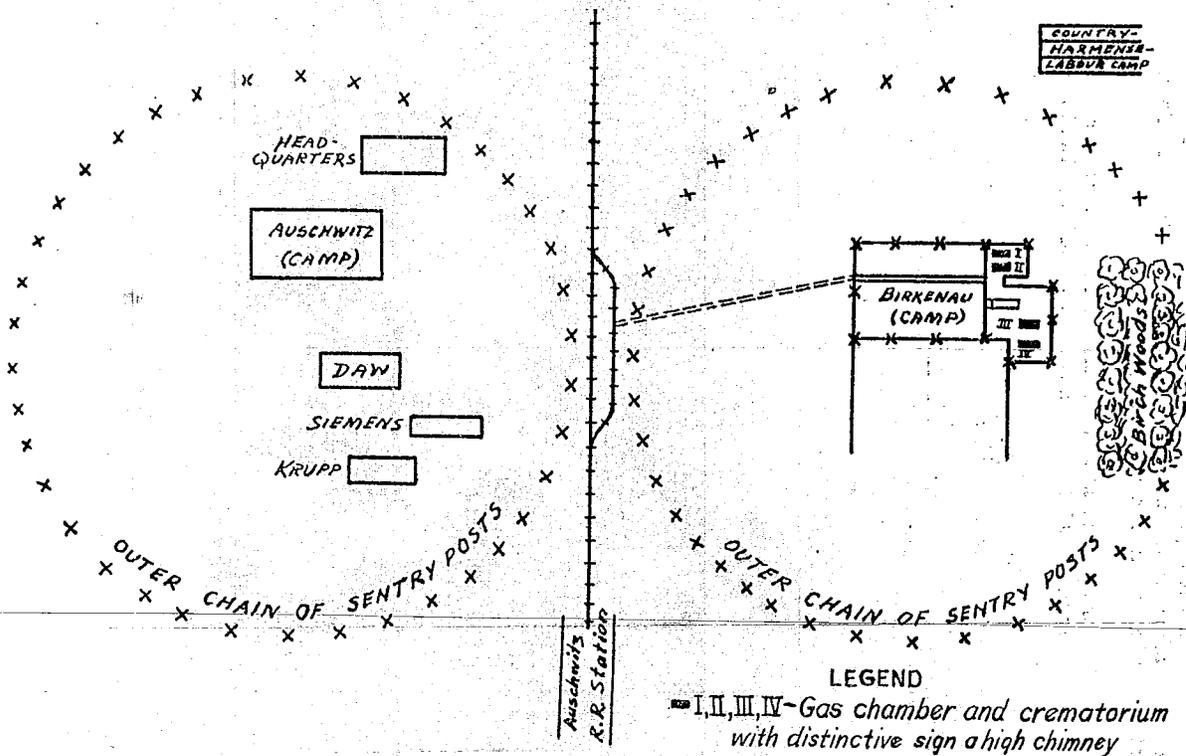
Experiments were also performed on men but the latter were not housed separately. A great many died as a result of these experiments. Often gypsies were used. Block 10, where the "subjects" of the experiments are housed, is completely isolated, and even the window openings are walled up. No one whatsoever had admission to it.

The Commandants of AUSCHWITZ and BERGENSEN have been to date the following: AUMAYER, SCHWARZHUBER, WEISS, HARTENSTEIN, ROSS, and KRALER.

000103

APPROXIMATE SITUATION SKETCH  
OF AUSCHWITZ AND BIRKENAU

CAMP DISTRICTS



LEGEND  
 I, II, III, IV - Gas chamber and crematorium  
 with distinctive sign a high chimney

-1412-

000104

No. 2

TRANSPORT

(The Polish Major's Report)

000105

000106

TRANSPORT

On March 24, 1942 we were gathered together in special "assembling cell" No. 2 of the Montelupich prison in Cracow. We knew that our group consisting of 60 men was to be sent to the concentration camp of OSWIECIM (AUSCHWITZ). At 8 o'clock the next morning, two SS guards appeared with lists and started counting those present. We had to undress and wait. Finally the doors were opened and we caught sight of two columns of SS guards and policemen with fixed bayonets. In the courtyard two trucks were parked in each of which 30 men had to take their places. These trucks were quite small and the space on the inside was divided in two by a chain running across the middle. The first to enter had to stand with bent heads, whereas the others crouched down between the legs of the standing men. In this way it was possible to fill up the very small space with 30 men. We were loaded in with blows from rifle-butts, shouts and kicks. In the second separated section of the truck, two SS men stood guard with machine guns. We departed. Behind us, at a certain distance, followed motor-cyclists with machine guns. Our trucks were hermetically closed so that there was no possibility of seeing where we were going. Our journey lasted 1 1/2 hours with several short stops. Our limbs grew stiff as there was no possibility of changing one's position, and one of our men who was up against the chain became unconscious. He was brought back to his senses by blows from the guards. At last we arrived, staggered to the ground, and found ourselves standing in front of a gate over which we could read: "Work brings freedom." Inside, an orchestra was playing. This was AUSCHWITZ and it appeared that we were expected.

We were lined up in columns of five (a system applied on every conceivable occasion in the camp) and the names of the "newcomers" were once more read out. The man called up had immediately to run over to the one reading the roll and place himself in a line with those already summoned, after having received his number from the hands of an assistant. From this moment on, names were replaced by numbers. This system of "reception" was maintained until the summer of 1943. Later, all the prisoners (with the exception of Germans) had their numbers tattooed on their upper forearms, which had been the practice in the case of the Jews from the beginning. This whole numbering system was apparently applied to lessen the possibility of escape and to make it easier to identify the bodies. These numbers were handed to us by the "block leader" named STUBA, after which we went bareheaded and accompanied by the orchestra into the camp itself. The clock stood at 11 a.m. After a short visit to the "stock" room, we were shut

up in a barrack until 5 p.m. There we were visited by a number of old inmates who earnestly begged us to give them our watches, rings, lighters, and cigarettes to avoid their being confiscated. Any food brought with us should be eaten at once, as it would be taken away as well. In return, the prisoners promised us bread, soup, etc., once we were officially incorporated into their ranks. At last the Capo (a sort of camp overseer) arrived and delivered a short talk in which he stressed that a prisoner could not exist in this camp for more than two months without the help of his comrades; and this was to be confirmed later on by numerous examples. Out of the 60 originally in my group I was to be the only survivor.

At 5 p.m. we were herded into the corridor. There we had to undress and pack our clothes into bundles provided with our respective numbers. We stood there naked. All we were allowed to keep were a belt and two handkerchiefs. I wanted to keep a small holy picture, but one of the prisoners who acted as assistant in these operations dissuaded me, saying: "It isn't worth while; you will merely be laughed at and it will finally be taken anyway." First, our hair was cut short and then our heads shaved, after which we were given a bath. The water was very warm. All these preparations prior to being admitted as an inmate to the camp took place in "Block 27." Next, although it was snowing, we had to run to "Block 26" where the clothing room was located. There we were issued our prisoner's outfits which consisted of a shirt, underpants, shoes, socks, a warm jacket, trousers, vest, cap, and blanket. Everything was filthy, patched, and practically worn out. My jacket, for instance, could be buttoned up in front, but the back and sleeves merely consisted of black strips of cloth patched together. Finally this operation came to an end and we were again lined up in rows of five and taken to one of the "blocks." There we were awaited by the "block leader" (most of them were Poles from Upper Silesia) who initiated us into the mysteries of barrack duties. We were instructed in sweeping and cleaning the dormitories, in taking off our caps when commanded, and how to keep in line and step. Orders were given in German and when badly carried out the block leader grew furious and struck people right and left. The evening roll call finally put an end to these exercises. The block leader then assembled his people in front of their respective blocks and, in turn, all the block leaders presented their figures to the chief recorder or clerk. If the number of prisoners tallied with the records, the roll call was over; actually the whole tiring ceremony was nothing else but one of the numerous ways in which the prisoners were mistreated. During 1940, 1941, and 1942 the roll call was usually expected to last at least an hour in all weather conditions - frost, rain, or snow - the prisoners having to wait patiently with bare heads. If an escape was reported,

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which resulted in a "manco" at evening roll call, all those assembled had to wait outside until the result of the search was known. The search parties usually returned three or four hours later and with disastrous consequences for all the prisoners' health. In 1940, for example, one escape cost the lives of a hundred inmates. It was during severe winter weather and the prisoners were forced to stand out of doors from 3:30 in the afternoon until 11 o'clock the next morning, as a result of which a hundred totally or half-frozen men were counted.

After the roll call, we returned to our blocks where we were allotted "rooms;" we slept three to a bed. Old-timers told us that the best thing to do was to use our clothing as a pillow; otherwise something was bound to be stolen. So we lay down without having had the slightest bit of food the whole day. The "reception" had been so strenuous and exhausting that all of us immediately fell asleep.

At 4 a.m. we were awakened by a gong and frightful confusion ensued. About 100 people were compressed into the small hall space and in a wild stampede each one first tried to tidy up his bed (the block leader would not tolerate the smallest wrinkle in the bedding) and dress himself. There was no question of washing. Ten minutes after the gong had sounded the "room eldest" arrived and kicked everyone out into the corridor as the "rooms" had to be cleaned. The corridor was thronged with people who flocked together from all over the block. Most of them had managed to get dressed. There was really scarcely room to move in this crowd and we were pushed against walls and squashed into corners and often kicked or hit for no apparent reason. After having been in the camp for over 24 hours, we finally received some cold, unsweetened coffee, after which there was a further wait of one and one-half hours until roll call; then all the prisoners were taken to work. The newcomers were at first told to fill in questionnaires in which they had to indicate an address where they desired their letters to be sent. It was strictly forbidden not to give an address or not to write, as "they" obviously needed an address to which the death of a prisoner could be reported when the need arose.

Each of us was issued a piece of cloth with a triangle and his number painted on it, which we were instructed to sew on our tunics. Prisoners were numbered from No. 1 onwards, and in November, 1943 the last consecutive serial number had reached 170,000. The triangles in question were of different colors, each representing a category of criminal or prisoner. The "Aryan" triangle was red, the red corresponding to a political prisoner, green to professional criminals, black to "work-shirkers," pink to homosexuals (according to paragraph 175) and

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violet to members of the "Bibelforscher" religious sect. In addition, a large letter indicated the nationality of the prisoner, such as "P" for the Poles, etc. For Jews the insignia was composed of a yellow triangle on which was sewn a second triangle whose color corresponded to the "crime," the whole forming a Jewish star. From this marking system one could therefore rapidly pick out, for instance, a Polish Jewish political prisoner or a Jewish "work-slacker," etc.

When we had finished sewing on our triangles and numbers, we were herded over to the "infirmary" where we were to be "examined" by a German doctor regarding our physical aptness for work. Again we had to undress and stand in a chilly corridor for almost three hours, shivering, as the weather was still very cold even at the end of March. We met old acquaintances who were working in the infirmary and their first concern was to have news of their relatives. Upon the doctor's arrival we had to present ourselves in groups, standing stiffly at attention. All that was required of us was to stretch out an arm, move the fingers, turn around and march off. The examination consisted of nothing more and all of us were, of course, considered fit for work. Hadn't we come here for this very purpose and besides, didn't "Work bring freedom?" We knew only too well what it meant to be considered unfit for work: being taken away and condemned to "liquidation" by gas. At last we received our first warm nourishment in 36 hours. The camp food consisted of coffee or cold tea (made from acorn leaves, etc.) in the morning and soup, thick or thin as the case might be, at midday. From the time of our arrival at the camp we had soup made from water and turnips during fully five months. After evening roll call we received 300 grams of bread, although its weight was usually considerably diminished by the time it reached the prisoner. On Mondays and Saturdays, 300 to 400 grams of cheese were distributed. It was some sort of a crude home-made, peasant cheese which often contained more worms than cheese. Rations further included 1/2 kilo of margarine for twelve persons, distributed every Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday, and blood sausage or red sausage on Wednesdays and Mondays. These rations represented approximately 300 to 400 grams. In addition to margarine on Tuesdays and Fridays we also received a spoonful of marmelade per person. Since the barrel, however, bore a label stating that the marmelade was destined for the camp, its quality was correspondingly bad. Theoretically, the above are the rations each inmate received but, practically, a good part of them were stolen before they were actually distributed. In the evening, tea or coffee was distributed with the bread. The soup had to be licked up, as most of the prisoners did not possess spoons. I forgot to mention that we had to eat our food squatting on our haunches as a punishment by the room eldest to us newcomers for having crowded around the soup kettle during distribution.

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After our meal we were sent to the identification service where photographs from three different angles were taken. So on that day the camp picture gallery was increased by 60 more criminals! One by one we were called up, and I noticed that my comrades came out of the photographer's room looking frightened. Beware! It was my turn. I was seated on a chair and photographed. When I tried to get up, the floor started moving and, losing my balance, I was thrown against the wall. It was a practical joke played by the photographers, (all of whom are Poles) in setting the revolving platform in motion when one got up. It was not surprising that they sometimes had to have some kind of amusement even at the expense of their camp comrades. We then returned to our quarters and by that time the roll call was again due. So ended our second day in camp; and the next morning we were to be marched off to work with all the other inmates.

All the prisoners had to work except the sick, those in "quarantine," and those confined to their cells. The total camp strength was divided into camp commandos or squads which were each headed by a "Capo," or leader, and several foremen. At the head of large working units was a "Chief Capo" who was assisted by several "Capos" and foremen. The size of one of these squads varied from one to several hundred men. Although the Capo was really in charge, a foreman often took over a group of ten, twenty, or thirty workmen. The head of the labor administration chose the "Capos," with the consent of the "Chief Capo," the prisoners being assigned to squads by the central administration. Work started after the morning roll call, i.e. in summer from 5 a.m. to 12 m. and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., in winter from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. without interruption. There were workshops for craftsmen, farmers, industrial workers, and various technical trades. Many, particularly those in favor, worked in the camp administration. The camp was provided with an "infirmary," a "canteen," a laundry, a bakery, and a slaughter house. Thus prisoners with certain technical training could, in principle, work in their own trades. Intellectuals, liberal professional men, shop keepers, or office workers were the worst off and they represented fully 70 percent of the total number of prisoners. The latter were all employed as unskilled labor in the worst and hardest jobs, such as the coal and gravel pits. The mortality among them was frightfully high. But it seemed to be the aim of the camp administration to kill them off as rapidly as possible.

## II. MY FIRST DAYS IN CAMP - THE "INFIRMARY"

My first job was with a demolition squad. Since the area surrounding the camp of AUSCHWITZ had been evacuated for a radius of almost 100 kilometers, all buildings, unless taken over by the camp, had to be torn down. Even new buildings were demolished. Our work consisted in tearing down such houses and was exceedingly strenuous, particularly since we were expected to work at top speed. A squad consisting of 50 men was supposed to demolish a large building within three to four days; and we were instructed to salvage all building material. The roof of a house, for instance, had to be carefully taken down and all planks, beams, tiles, etc., stacked away. Nothing was to be broken; in fact, the slightest damage to anything resulted in an immediate and severe beating with a shovel or pick handle. The walls had to be broken down literally by hand, brick by brick, the cement sticking to each brick being afterwards removed and the bricks piled neatly up. Even the foundations had to be torn out and the ground afterwards levelled so that no trace of the house remained. Many men died at this work, not only from exposure and the strain, but from falling walls and beams - especially those who were elderly or slow. From the 50 who set out in the morning seldom more than 40 returned on their own legs. The remainder were either brought as corpses or in a state of complete collapse in wheelbarrows or on boards. These poor souls still were expected to appear at evening roll call, after which they were taken to the infirmary. From my working comrades who went there I never saw one alive again.

My work with this squad lasted over a month. I was then transferred to the ditch-digging squad. Trenches of from 2 1/2 to 3 meters deep had to be dug, and for the last 50 centimeters we worked standing in water. We were, of course, not allowed to leave the trench during work, and this job was considered as one of the hardest in the camp. Many died at it daily. Some time later I was shifted to the "concrete squad" where I had to heave heavy posts and sacks of cement; but after the arrival of new prisoners I was detailed to the making of concrete bricks. This had the advantage of at least being work under a roof, which was very important inasmuch as work went on regardless of the weather.

In addition, the prisoners were continually mistreated and struck by commando leaders, Capos, and foremen. In general, anyone holding a commanding position in the camp liked to give special emphasis to his position of superiority. Naturally, the character of the person concerned played a considerable role; but the fundamental rule was the direct responsibility of the superior

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for his inferiors, each individual being in turn responsible to the collectivity.

These circumstances fostered the "stool pigeon" system. For example, one day a working comrade discovered a few pieces of turnip which he carefully hid. He continued his work but, from time to time, took surreptitious bites off his treasure. Another prisoner having "squealed" on him, the Capo arrived a few minutes later. It must be remembered that the Capo is absolute master of his commando, and that everybody tries to get into his good graces. Unfortunately, this favor often had to be attained to the detriment of the well-being or sometimes even of the lives of other prisoners. The Capo proceeded to search our comrade and, finding the pieces of turnip, knocked the weakened man to the ground, hitting him brutally about the head and face and in the stomach. He then ordered him to sit up, hands outstretched in front of him on the ground with a weight of bricks on each hand; the pieces of turnip were stuck in his mouth. All the men were then assembled and informed that the unfortunate man was to stay in this position for a whole hour. We were warned that this punishment would befall any member of the commando who committed a similar "offense." The condemned man underwent this ordeal guarded by one of the foremen, very eager to fulfill his task to the satisfaction of the Capo, so that he hit our friend every time he tried to shift his position slightly. After 15 to 20 minutes the man became unconscious, but a bucket of water was poured over him and he was again forced into his original position. After he had slumped over senseless for a second time, his body was thrown aside and nobody was allowed to pay further attention to him. After roll call that evening he was taken to the "infirmary" where he died two days later.

Or another example: on Easter Monday, 1942 the weather was extremely bad with a heavy snowfall. We were sitting in the mud scraping cement off bricks, frozen half stiff. Suddenly the Commando Chief appeared and barked the following order: "Discard caps, coats and jackets!" Sick with fear for what might follow, we obeyed and continued working in our shirt sleeves. The Capo sneered at us: "You dirty Poles, now you can celebrate!" A young prisoner, not more than 16 years old, had hidden in a trench. He was terribly thin and so trembling with the cold that he evidently did not hear the order. Or perhaps he didn't care whether he heard it or not. The Capo, however, had meanwhile staggered off (he was half drunk) since he didn't intend to remain out-of-doors in this wretched weather. As a matter of fact, he cared very little about the prisoners; the sooner they died, the better. The snow had stopped falling, but in the cold wind we froze in our shirt sleeves; certain death awaited us. Nobody knew when the Capo might come back, perhaps in a moment,

perhaps in a week, or in a month. While we waited, the snow started to fall again. A few foremen came running in our direction from a stove around which they had been sitting, to see how we are getting on with our work. One of them discovered the hidden youngster and shouted: "All your clothes off, at once, you swine!" As the kid did not react, the foreman pounced on him and started beating him: "Undress or I will beat the life out of you or, better still, I will report you to the chief." At that moment the Capo arrived. A sharp blow of a whistle: "Fall in!" We formed our columns and knew that it meant "sticking together." We were led into an open space where we sank ankle-deep in mud. Now the "sport" started. "Down! Up! Quick march! etc." We literally rolled in the mud. "Flatten out! Jump! Run! Hands out front!" We were covered with mud from head to foot and scarcely able to stand. The "exercise" had now been going on for about half an hour. To finish we had to do "push up" exercises, alternately lying down flat and supporting our bodies on our hands. "Up, Down, Up, Down!" The Chief of the Commando inspected the rows and saw an old man who was unable to continue. Immediately an SS guard threw himself upon him and kicked him in the head and face with heavy hob-nailed boots. When at last the poor old man gave no further sign of life, he was left alone. We were then allowed to stand up and continue with our work. The badly injured man was carried over to a dry spot among piles of bricks. He opened his eyes, tried to say something but couldn't utter a word; and we had to leave him as in the meantime the order was given to resume work. The result was that at the end of the day we carried home another corpse. But we had grown used to it. We marched and sang jolly German songs, as the Capo wanted it to be so. The Commando Chief walked alongside the group; he grinned: "You do sing well!"

During my work in the "concrete squad" I caught pneumonia (as was found out later). At the beginning I avoided the "infirmary" and hoped I would get over it. I knew too well what happened there and that seldom one left the place alive. But I became so weak that I could hardly move, and finally had to give in. I became completely indifferent. In one way I was lucky that my friends in the "infirmary" took care of me so that I was then able to enjoy "privileged" conditions. When I entered the "Krankenbau" it was composed of three different buildings: Block 28 - internal illnesses -, Block 20 - infectious illnesses -, Block 21 - surgery. Later on three new "blocks" (Blocks 19, 9, and 10) were attached to the "infirmary." They composed the so-called "Hygiene Institute." Here, sterilizing by X-ray treatment, artificial insemination of women, as well as experiments on blood transfusions were carried on. Male and female prisoners, especially Jews, served as "guinea pigs" for these experiments. This "block" was completely isolated from the rest of the camp so that news from it reached us only very seldom.

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It was not easy to be admitted to the "infirmary," as the "minimum" symptom was a fever of from 38.6 to 39 degrees (C). Light cases of fever were not admitted. All applications for transfer to the "infirmary" had to be submitted to the chief of one's own "block," who had the right to reject any such request. Then the sick person had to wait for hours in the courtyard of the "infirmary" before being called in for preliminary examination. If the doctor (a prisoner) considered him worth treating, he had to undress and usually take a cold bath before being presented to the German doctor, after further long hours of waiting. The sick were classified into two groups, "Aryans" and Jews. These groups were again subdivided into further groups, of which the first included the sick who were to remain in hospital, being considered "curable." The second consisted of extremely run-down patients, chronic cases, and the half-starving or mutilated whose recovery could only be effected by a long stay in the hospital. This group was practically condemned to death by phenol injections in the heart region. Racial considerations played an important role. An "Aryan" really had to be seriously ill to be condemned to death by injection, whereas 80 to 90 percent of the Jews "hospitalized" there were "eliminated" in this manner. Many of them knew about this method and applied for admission as so-called "suicide candidates," not having the courage to throw themselves on to the high tension wires.

This situation lasted during the whole of 1942 until the time the mass extermination of interned Jews at AUSCHWITZ began. Danger of death by injection did not only threaten the newly-arrived hospital cases or casualties. From time to time (usually once a month) the German doctor used to effect a minute control of all the sick. In each ward an attendant (usually a doctor) had to "present" each patient and give full account of his illness. If the patient's stay happened to have exceeded a month, or if he were very weak, he was listed. The German doctor always kept the sick records of the condemned so as to avoid any attempt at interference on the part of the prisoners themselves. Each such special check-up by the German doctor usually resulted in a list of 200 to 400 men condemned to death, while the "normal" death list of the daily routine inspection varied from 20 to 80. The injections were given on the same day. The new patients who were booked for the "syringe" (as it was called in the camp jargon) received no clothes and had to remain waiting in the corridor - naked. They were then led from Block 28 to Block 20 where the "operation" took place in a special room. An SS man by the name of KLER, a shoemaker by profession, gave the injections. He had taken up this post in the hospital as a simple SS private, but was later promoted to SS "group leader," although practically a moron. He also

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received supplementary food rations and was awarded the Iron Cross. There were days when this psychopath picked out victims from the wards on his own initiative, without instructions from the German doctor, on whom to practice his "technique." He was a complete sadist, torturing his victims with animal-like brutality before putting them to death. Later it was decided that his nerves had been strained by "overwork" so an "assistant" was recruited, a Polish volunteer, by the name of PANSZCZYK, No. 607 from Cracow, who was transferred to Germany during the winter of 1942 where he presumably died. The injections were then sporadically administered by "Sanitätsdienstgehilfen," or given by the chief of the "infirmary." For a certain time, another Pole named JERZY SZYMOWIAK, No. 15490, "functioned" voluntarily; he died in the summer of 1943.

The injections were not only administered to the weak and ill, but also to prisoners in the political section who were condemned to death. Apart from this, on one occasion, two groups (the first composed of 40, the second of 80 prisoners) of young and strong youths between the ages of 13 and 16 years were put to death, on the ground that they were "orphans" and could not be considered in the camp as full-fledged workers.

In the autumn of 1942 came the massacre of the LUBLIN transports which caused great unrest in the camp. One of the sanitary service attendants refused to administer injections, stating that he was an SS man and not a murderer of children. Another attendant had to be summoned to carry out the job. This affair caused a lot of talk and stir as at least 15,000 to 20,000 people lost their lives and even BERLIN asked for an explanation of the high mortality rate in the hospital. The head-doctor, WIRTZ, disclaimed all knowledge of such events and laid the blame on the camp doctor whose name was ENTREST, a German from the POSEN district. A mock inquiry was held at which witnesses from the hospital administration had to testify and the lists of the "deceased" were checked. As "punishment" the camp doctor was simply transferred in the same capacity to the "BUNA." As a result of all this, murdering by means of injections stopped for a while, although it was resumed on a smaller scale soon afterwards for hopelessly sick cases. Many of those condemned to the "syringes" were used as experimental material in the "Hygiene Institute" (Block 10). The injections doubtlessly frightened the prisoners from asking to be admitted to the hospital.

Another major danger in the camp was "delousing," as it was euphemistically called. The whole camp obviously was covered with lice and fleas and large disinfection programs were carried out. However, the results were never apparent and our "washing" always came back almost as full of lice. Actually, the "delousing" was

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designed to combat typhus epidemics which had become a real plague at the camp. During these actions everybody was examined and those with bad complexions or in weakened bodily condition were, according to the camp doctor's mood, destined to be gassed. They were simply led to the "infirmary" from where 40 to 50 percent were "evacuated." A "delousing" action which took a particularly large toll in victims was conducted in July, 1942. During the course of this "purge" the weak, those ill with typhus or in post-typhus quarantine, were all sent to BRZINSKI without exception. This method was considered the most radical for eliminating typhus. The way in which those condemned to the gas chambers were transferred to their doom was exceptionally brutal and inhuman. Serious cases from the surgical ward who still had their bandages on, and a procession of exhausted and horribly emaciated patients, even convalescents on the road to recovery, were loaded on to trucks. They were all naked and the spectacle was dreadful in the extreme. The trucks pulled up at the entrance of the block and the unfortunate victims were simply thrown or piled on by the attendants (I frequently witnessed such tragic transports). A hundred people were often jammed into a small truck. They all knew exactly what their fate was to be. The large majority remained completely apathetic while others, mostly patients from the surgery with bloody and gaping wounds or frightful sores, struggled frantically. All around the trucks SS men milled about like madmen, beating back the howling crowd trying to lean out. Every time it was a terrible experience to have to drag our friends to the truck. Most of them were quiet and bid us farewell, but never forgot to remind us: "Do not forget revenge." Under such conditions men's hearts turn to stone. Imagine a prisoner's killing his brother in one of the wards so as to avoid his having to undergo the dreadful trip by truck. (I happen to know the names and immatriculation numbers of these two particular prisoners). It can well be imagined that we just shrugged our shoulders when told the German fairy tales regarding the KATYN incident.

### III. THE JEWS

Originally, the camp of AUSCHWITZ was intended only for Poles. It was guarded by a group of Germans (no more than 30 at the beginning) who had been transferred from a German concentration camp. They were prisoners as well but "camp veterans," if such an expression may be used. Most of them had been imprisoned as far back as 1934 and were all more or less professional criminals. But as time went on AUSCHWITZ became more and more of an international camp and the first Jews started to arrive in 1941. They were immediately separated from the "Aryans" and quartered in special "blocks." Although at the time systematic executions were

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not an established rule, it can be stated that as a result of bad treatment by SS men, Capos and foremen (the majority of German origin but often Poles who were enlisted by force), a Jew - irrespective of his physical condition - could not last more than two weeks. A young Jew, for instance, who was robust enough to be able to do his work "on the double" (for example pushing a heavily laden wheelbarrow) would most probably be unable to keep it up in the long run. If he should show signs of holding out, he would inevitably be killed sooner or later by such mistreatment as being beaten with a shovel or pick handle.

In those days all the Jews had to work in the "quarry squad." At a trot they had to bring gravel on wheelbarrows from a pit about 15 to 20 meters deep up a steep slope. At the top, SS men and Capos checked their work and the speed at which it was carried out, and anyone considered as "loafing" was simply pushed over backwards when he arrived at the top so that he crashed back down the incline with his fully laden barrow. This was one of the guards' favourite pastimes. Such treatment of Jewish prisoners prevailed from the time the first Jews arrived at the camp until the spring of 1942, when the first large transports of Jews (tens of thousands) began to arrive and the extermination campaign was getting underway. At first there were few Jews at the camp, most of them of Polish origin, who had been sent there along with other Poles. They were immediately separated from the latter. They had been arrested not as a consequence of their being Jewish, but for offenses directed against "the security of the German State." Only from the spring of 1942 on were they rounded up and exterminated "en masse" on racial grounds. Certain large scale preparations had to be made to receive these mass transports and a special concentration camp was opened at BIRKENAU (the Polish name of the village is RAJSKO). Administered by Germans and Poles, the camp was guarded by SS detachments. Conditions were appalling. The camp had no water, no drainage system, and not even the most elementary hygienic installations. The Jews remained in civilian clothes which were marked with red paint. Food was supposed to be distributed to them on a basis similar to that prevailing in AUSCHWITZ, but abuse was flagrant. It often happened that the inmates received nothing to eat for days and then only a small part of the rations they should have had. Altogether they were inhumanly treated. The slightest complaint was punishable by death.

The first large convoys arrived from France and Slovakia. Physically able men and women - those without children or the mothers of grownup children - were sent to the camp of BIRKENAU. The remainder, i.e. old or weak men, women with

small children, and all those unfit for labour, were taken to the Birch Wood (BRZEZINKI) and killed by means of hydrocyanic gas. For this purpose special gassing barracks had been built there. These consisted of large halls, airtight, and provided with ventilators which could be opened or closed according to the need. Inside they were equipped so as to create the impression of bathing establishments. This was done to deceive the victims and make them more manageable. The executions took place as follows: each death convoy consisted of some 8 to 10 trucks packed with the "selectees;" the convoy was unguarded as the whole frightful drama took place on camp territory. A private car containing the camp doctor followed each truck convoy since it was compulsory for him to be present at these mass executions. On their arrival at the gassing establishment, which was surrounded by a double barbed wire fence, men, women, and children had to completely undress. Each of them was given a towel and a piece of soap. Then they were driven into the barrack until it was completely filled up. Everything was hermetically closed, and specially trained SS units threw hydrocyanic bombs through the ventilation openings. After about ten minutes the doors were opened, and a special squad composed exclusively of Jews had to clear away the bodies and prepare for a new group of "selectees." The crematoria had not yet been constructed, although there was a small one at AUSCHWITZ which, however, was not employed for burning these bodies. Mass graves were dug at that time into which the corpses were simply thrown. This continued into the autumn of 1942. By this time extermination by gas was being intensified and there was no more time even for such summary burial. Row upon row of bodies of murdered Jews, covered only by a thin layer of earth, were widely dispersed in the surrounding fields, causing the soil to become almost marshy through the putrefaction of the bodies. The smell emanating from these fields became intolerable. In the autumn of 1942 all that remained of the bodies had to be exhumed and the bones collected and burned in the crematoria (by that time four had been completed). An alternative was to gather the remains of the unfortunate victims into heaps, pour gasoline over them, and leave it to the flames to finish the tragedy. The immense quantity of human ashes thus collected was carted away in every direction to be scattered over the fields where these martyrs had found their last rest.

In the meantime, the crematoria had been finished and the number of arrivals was steadily increasing. Gassing and burning were carried out at record speed but the supply of corpses became so large that occasionally they had to resort to the old method of open air cremation. It is estimated that approximately 1 1/2 million Jews were exterminated in this manner. With the exception of the Polish Jews, the other Jews had no idea what was in store for them at AUSCHWITZ. We were told by Dutch and

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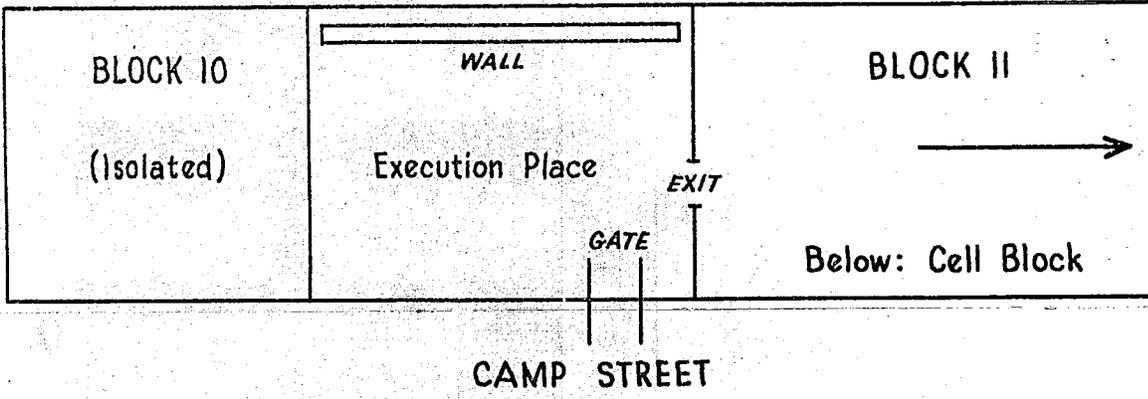
French Jews that the Germans had informed them that they were leaving their country to be transferred to Poland where everyone would be able to continue work in his own profession or, still better, where for each shop, concern, or factory seized by the Germans an equivalent source of livelihood would be put at their disposal. They were to take their whole fortunes with them and liquid cash for at least six weeks. This resulted in considerable amounts of money and valuables being brought to AUSCHWITZ (most of them by Dutch bankers and diamond merchants), most of which was stolen by the camp staff, SS men, and prisoners. The condemned Jews generally faced their fate calmly, although those arriving in 1943 had a clearer idea of what awaited them. The sporadic attempts at rebellion and mass escape, when the freight cars were unloaded upon arrival, were bloodily repelled. The special railway siding reserved for the convoys was surrounded by searchlight and machine gun posts. On one occasion these unfortunate people scored a small success. It must have been during September or October, 1943 after a transport of women had arrived. The accompanying SS men had ordered them to undress and were about to drive them into the gas chamber. This moment was always used by the guards as a good opportunity for looting, and rings and wrist watches were torn off women's fingers and arms. In the confusion resulting from one such attack, one woman managed to snatch the pistol of SS Groupleader SCHILLINGER and fire three shots at him. He was seriously wounded and died the next day. This gave the signal for the others to attack the executioners and their henchmen. One SS man had his nose torn off, another was scalped, but unfortunately none of the women was able to escape. Although an attempt was made to keep this incident secret, it resulted in an order's being issued whereby SS men were not allowed to remain in camp after 8 p.m.

The extermination of Jews continued relentlessly, although in the camp tension relaxed to a certain extent. The fate of those Jews admitted to the camp has been described in the sections of my report dealing with the gassing and killing of the ill by means of injections.

#### IV. EXECUTIONS

Until the summer of 1941 AUSCHWITZ was mainly a concentration camp in which no executions had taken place so far. The first executions came as a surprise for the majority of the camp's inmates. They began in the summer of 1941 when one evening after roll call, various numbers were called up (I well remember there were 18 men from Cracow alone). The men whose numbers had been called were ordered to the stock room, where they had to give up

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their clothes and were given old rags (a shirt and pants) in exchange. Then they were taken to the gravel pit and shot with pistols at point blank range. The other prisoners were not allowed to be present at the shooting, but the execution was so arranged that practically the whole camp could witness the proceedings. After the execution a special commando was designated to bury the bodies. This incident caused a great deal of unrest within the camp, as we had assumed until then that deportation to a concentration camp excluded the death penalty for offences against the security of the German State. From this day on executions were carried out at more or less regular intervals, the victims being called up on Tuesdays and Fridays. Later a special place of execution was set up within the camp's boundary, an open space between "Blocks 10 and 11" where executions took place generally in the morning.

The index cards of the condemned men were sent from the chief clerk's office to the respective "blocks" and in the morning, immediately after roll call, the numbers of the prisoners were called up by the "block recorder." If the index card bore the inscription "to report immediately after roll call" and the signature of the "recording clerk," it meant that the prisoner called up was to be shot. The "block recorder" assembled the victims and brought them over to the chief clerk's office. There the numbers, names, and dates of birth were checked again. Ordered into rows of five by the camp eldest and the block eldest (also prisoners), they were then marched to the place of execution. If the shooting was only to take place a few hours later, the men were locked up in cells. If the execution, however, was to be carried out at once they were taken first to the washhouse. They undressed and their numbers were marked on their thighs with indelible pencil. After these preparations, they were again lined up in fives and then sent out to the execution wall (first four men and then two at a time). The men were led out by the block eldest of "Block 11" or then by the Capo of the cell block (a Jew), who took hold of the hands of the condemned and dragged them out to the wall where he stood between the two. In the beginning the condemned were forced to kneel and bend their heads forward, but later they were usually shot standing. The executioners shot their victims in the back of the head with a short-barrelled rifle which made a muffled report.

After the execution the "body bearers" went into action and removed the corpses to a nearby stable where they were thrown on a heap of straw. The blood stains were removed and the emplacement prepared for the execution of two further victims. After the whole group had been liquidated, the bodies were kept in "Block 28" until the evening. At dusk all the bodies, including those of other prisoners deceased during the same day, were

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piled on to a big cart and pulled to the crematoria. Later, the corpses were also removed from the place of execution in coffins and, if a considerable number were involved, a truck was used for this purpose. These "death transports" always took place during hours of curfew, as the camp authorities wished to keep the executions as secret as possible, in which they were, however, not particularly successful.

As mentioned before, such executions started during the summer of 1941 and reached a peak in 1942 with the transfer of "disciplinary companies" from AUSCHWITZ to RAJSKO (BIRKENAU) towards the end of May, 1942. Together with a large group of "Muselmänner" ("Muselmann" was a term applied in camp jargon to convicts utterly exhausted by starvation or over work) many young and sturdy men were selected and drafted into these "disciplinary companies." They were all marked with a large red dot, as in these special groups the inmates were differentiated by red dots on their chests and backs for offences committed in civil life and by black circles for "crimes" committed in the camp itself. Such "companies" were made up of about 500 men of whom, every second day, 10 to 15 were shot. The rest of them had to work extremely hard and await their turn. At the same time mass executions started in AUSCHWITZ (middle of May, 1942). Once, twice, or three times a week, 40 to 60 men were simply picked out and shot. Restlessness increased in the camp, when by the middle of June the situation had not changed, to a point approaching open rebellion, especially after one mass execution which cost the lives of 120 prisoners. The camp administration apparently got wind of this and, during a roll call sometime in June, it was announced that executions would cease and the death penalty would be abolished. It was true that the prisoners reacted with deep distrust, but on the whole the news had a quieting effect on everybody. And, in fact, there was a pause of 1 to 1 1/2 months after which executions began again, although less often and only in small groups. This state of affairs continued until October, 1942 when one of the largest mass executions ever held took 247 victims, all Poles from the LUBLIN and POLSKA districts. Terror broke out in the camp as a result, although again many reacted with complete apathy. This ended a ghastly series of executions of prisoners who, upon arrival in the camp, were already condemned to death. But some of them had been in camp over a year without knowing that their fate was already sealed. It often happened, for instance, that a prisoner selected for execution would be lying ill in the hospital but, as the sentence had to be carried out, he received a deadly injection in his bed. The famous Polish actor Witold ZACHAREWICZ was murdered in this way.

All this, of course, did not mean that October, 1942 saw the end of the execution of prisoners brought to AUSCHWITZ with death warrants already signed. Only the method underwent certain changes. In the early days, for instance, the Aryan prisoners had always been given numbers and then incorporated into the camp. Later a new method was evolved consisting in immediately dividing the newcomers into two groups: those condemned to death and those who were to remain as regular inmates. The first group was not allotted serial numbers but directly transferred from the "block leader's" central office to the cells in "Block 11." The executions took place there and the arrivals were either shot at once or a few days later. This procedure was adopted in an attempt to keep the whole matter secret, and executions were only carried out late at night. In addition, the camp inmates were led to believe that only "civilians" were submitted to this radical treatment (it must be stated that only a permanent camp inmate was considered a "prisoner," whereas newcomers, without numbers and who had not yet joined the ranks, were still designated as "civilians"). So as long as only "civilians" were executed the regular inmates were not particularly upset.

Executions of "prisoners," however, did not cease altogether. The camp administration was extremely severe regarding discipline and respect of camp rules. For the slightest omission one was marched off to the execution cells and, of course, never returned. Things became even worse when the political section (meaning the camp Gestapo) decided to take charge of the punishment of petty internal offences. The frequent result was that they decided questions of life and death according to their own judgment. Bribery became the order of the day. Among the "offences" for being locked up in the execution cells were: being "politically suspect" on the grounds of having contacted "civilians" in the camp, spreading political news or commenting on the German High Command's communiques, drunkenness, theft (foodstuffs, gold, precious stones), premeditated escape, etc. The death cells were always overcrowded and every now and then they had to be "evacuated." This took place as follows: the camp leader, chief of the political section, GRABNER by name, dashed in, accompanied by a number of SS men as drunk as himself. They went from cell to cell, taking down the particulars of each occupant's case, the reason for his punishment, etc. If the camp leader had a list of those condemned to death in hand, the prisoners could consider themselves lucky, inasmuch as it might not yet be their turn. But usually no notice was taken of such a list. What decided the individual prisoner's fate was mainly the impression he made on this gang of drunkards and the mood in which the camp leader happened to be. There was no question of considering the actual penalty. If the impression he made was not too unfavourable, the prisoner remained in his cell to await his execution at a later date unless he went to his death voluntarily. The whole

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inspection was accompanied by a great deal of vile language and brutal treatment. Usually 85 to 90 percent of the death cell occupants were "evacuated" and shot in front of the wall so that space was again available for new arrivals. The camp in general was, of course, never informed of this secret justice nor who were its victims. It is true that the relatives of the victims were duly informed, but the cause of death was always given as being "natural." An incredible amount of paper was wasted compiling fake records of illnesses, fever charts, etc., destined to justify each single death. Death announcements were telegraphed never more than at the rate of two a day so as not to arouse suspicion on the "outside." From the beginning the executions were carried out by a single man: first, by "Oberscharführer" PALITSCH, who was later sent to an officers' training center, and then by "Scharführer" STIWETZ, who still performs these duties. Executions of women were reported from AUSCHWITZ, but in small numbers. On the other hand, great numbers of people were shot after having been brought in by truck straight from freedom or from prisons. In two instances whole families were executed, parents together with their children. In one case, an infant a few months old ended his short life in the arms of his mother before the execution wall.

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