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Edited by
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YIVO ANNUAL
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STUDIES ON THE EPOCH OF THE JEWISH CATASTROPHE, 1933—1945

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The present issue of the YIVO ANNUAL, like the current number of YIVO BLETER, is devoted entirely to studies dealing with the Jewish catastrophe of 1933-1945. Both volumes are issued concurrently in commemoration of the eleventh anniversary of the heroic uprising of the Warsaw ghetto in 1943. All articles appearing in this volume are also published in Yiddish in the current issue of YIVO BLETER, except for the Diary of Zelig Kalmanovitch which appeared previously in volume xxxv of the YIVO BLETER, in 1951. The materials gathered in these volumes were planned and supervised by an editorial advisory committee consisting of Philip Friedman, S. Gringauz, Leibush Lehrer, S. Niger, Jacob Shatzky and the undersigned.

The materials included here cover a number of important phases of this area of study. Nazi policies of segregation and liquidation find treatment in the articles by Friedman, Shechtman, Blau and Koniuchowsky; internal life and adjustments in the ghetto and concentration camp are dealt with in the essays by Trunk and Glicksman and in the moving diary of Zelig Kalmanovitch; the quiet mood of resignation which fills the pages of Kalmanovitch's entries finds its counter expression in the story of Jewish resistance recounted by Poliakov and Kabeli; and the story of salvage and rescue is told by Diamant and Valentin.

The subject of rescue and salvage of Jews has until now received inadequate attention. Much more interest was focused in the years immediately following the war, and rightly so, upon the story of extermination and liquidation. But the annals of survival and rescue must now also be sifted and studied. And a study of this area of the subject will uncover a record of humanitarian service and self-sacrifice that deserves to be told. There is hardly a case of Jewish survival that is not bound up in some way or other with assistance and support by non-Jews, whether it is in the function of guide by the simple Lithuanian peasant Jonas Balevičius (p. 217); or the extra portion of bread given by the Pole Cyrankiewicz to a Jew in Auschwitz (p. 148); or the sermon preached by the Archbishop of Toulouse (p. 279-80); or the mass heroism of the Danish population as recounted by Valentin; or the noble self-sacrifice of Raoul Wallenberg in behalf of the Hungarian Jews (p. 239). Inhuman bestiality and violence, unfortunately, fill a larger part of the annals of these years, but this should not close our eyes to the other side of the picture. Emanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw ghetto saw clearly and objectively the nature of this problem (p. 294). The nobility and the grandeur of

the humanitarians are not diminished by the fact that they were outnumbered; this is only more to their credit. And the future of the Jews as of the entire human race depends on faith in the enduring strength of this humanitarian ideal to triumph ultimately over the Satanic forces of evil and violence.

Various aspects of the Jewish catastrophe have been treated in previous YIVO publications. Readers may here be reminded of the following articles and books which are more outstanding:

1. Guttmann, Josef, "The Fate of European Jewry in the Light of the Nuremberg Documents," in YIVO ANNUAL, vol. ii-iii (1947-48) 313-28.
2. Hershkovitch, Bendet, "The Ghetto in Litzmannstadt (Lodz)," in YIVO ANNUAL, vol. v (1950) 85-122.
3. Weinreich, Max, *Hitler's Professors. The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes Against the Jewish People* (YIVO, New York, 1946) 291 pp.
4. Mendelsohn, S., *The Polish Jews Behind the Nazi Ghetto Walls* (YIVO, New York, 1942) 32 pp.
5. Ringelblum, E., *Underground Cultural Work in the Jewish Ghettos in Poland* (YIVO, New York, 1945) 6 pp.
6. YIVO BLETER, vol. xxx (1947) is devoted entirely to a collection of essays and documents on the Jewish catastrophe.
7. Mendelsohn, S., *The Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto* (YIVO, New York, 1944) 28 pp.

I wish to express my cordial thanks to Dr. Philip Friedman for his help on several editorial problems, to Mr. Moses Kligsberg for assistance in compiling bibliographical and biographical data, and, as always, to the loyal and efficient collaboration of Dr. S. Noble and Mr. Szymon Dawidowicz.

K. S. P.

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A DIARY OF THE NAZI GHETTO IN VILNA

By ZELIG KALMANOVITCH

Originally published in the *Yivo Bleter* XXXV (1951)

Editor's Foreword: The diary kept by Zelig Kalmanovitch in the tragic days of the Vilna ghetto is one of the most remarkable and most poignant human documents to have come out of the tragic era of the Jewish catastrophe. It will undoubtedly take its place among the universal masterpieces of autobiographical literature.

The diary was preserved in an almost miraculous way. After Kalmanovitch was deported to Esthonia, Herman Kruk discovered the diary in Kalmanovitch's home and secreted it in the ghetto library. After the liquidation of the ghetto a great portion of the books and manuscripts of the ghetto library was used by the janitor of the house for heating the furnace. After liberation in 1945 Abraham Sutskever, the Vilna poet, salvaged the remains of this collection and among other valuable materials he also found Kalmanovitch's diary. He sent the manuscript to the Yivo library, where it is now deposited.

Zelig Hirsh Kalmanovitch was born on October 30, 1881 in Goldingen, Courland. Up to the age of 15 he received a traditional rabbinic education. He then turned his attention to secular studies, graduated from the gymnasium and then studied Semitic philology and history in the universities of Berlin and Königsberg. He began his literary activity in 1906 with a series of studies in Yiddish philology and this remained his major scholarly interest for the rest of his life.

In 1921 Kalmanovitch left Russia and lived in Lithuania, Latvia and Berlin. In 1929 he settled in Vilna and became one of the guiding spirits of the newly-founded Yiddish Scientific Institute. When the *Yivo Bleter* commenced publication he became its editor-in-chief. When the Soviet Union turned over Vilna to Lithuania in October 1939, Kalmanovitch was the only member of the Yivo administrative committee to be left in Vilna and he carried on the Yivo work single-handed until the second occupation of Vilna by the Soviet Union in June, 1940, when he was summarily dismissed from his post by the Soviet authorities. His activities under Nazi occupation form the subject matter of the diary here published. With the liquidation of the Vilna ghetto in September 1943 he and his wife were deported to an extermination camp in Esthonia, from which they never returned.

The diary was kept by Kalmanovitch in Hebrew. A few passages were

written in Yiddish. It is replete with Biblical and rabbinic quotations. In some instances the quotations are exact, in other cases they are paraphrased and integrated into the author's own style. In translating the diary we have adhered closely to the author's original and have even attempted to preserve the writer's own sentence structure. All the footnotes are by the editors of *Yivo Bleter* and were prepared on the basis of published materials on the Vilna ghetto and from personal informants.

The original publication of this diary elicited lively discussion in Jewish circles throughout the world. Many found unpalatable the mood of quiet resignation that is characteristic of Kalmanovitch's diary and chided him for the absence of a spirit of militant resistance to the Nazi oppressors. The issue is one that divided the ghetto Jews themselves in those tragic days. What should the Jews do in order to save as many lives as possible from the extermination plans of the Nazis? Zionist and Socialist groups, especially the youth groups, advocated armed resistance and guerilla warfare. Under their leadership a number of such heroic uprisings were carried out in several ghettos. Another position was to avoid the unequal battle between a weak and unarmed civilian population and a powerfully armed oppressor by various methods of concealment and subterfuge. This was the attitude of the average man of the street. A third position, and this is the one reflected in Kalmanovitch's diary, was to try to carry out the orders of the Nazi masters and thus soften the effects of their brutal designs and by patience and resignation hope to salvage as much as possible from destruction until liberation would come by the triumph of Allied arms. This was also the position taken by those individuals who consented to serve in the administrative offices set up by the Nazis in order to retain the carrying out of the Nazi orders in Jewish hands and thus make it easier to save Jewish lives. This was a point of view reflected most among the religious groups in the ghetto and Kalmanovitch's diary indicates a powerful undercurrent of religious piety. In their eyes the religious and cultural activities carried on by the Jews in the ghetto were in themselves acts of resistance against the tyrant. These were decisions that were fraught with danger and charged with tragedy, no matter what position one took. To pass moral judgment on them is difficult and well-nigh impossible. Each group grappled in its own way with a fateful problem and each was motivated by the noble desire to salvage as much as possible of Jewish life, of Jewish culture and of Jewish honor.

For the discussion of the diary see: H. Leivick in *The Day,* March 17 and 31, 1952; Y. Charlash in *Unzer Tsait,* April-May, 1952; S. Niger in *The Day,* July 6 and 13, 1952; P. Novik in *Yidishe Kultur,* July 1952; A. Eisen in *Keneder Odler,* August 4, 11, 18, 25 and September 1, 8, 1952; Ber Mark in *Bleter far geshikhte,* July-September, 1952; N. Blumenthal in *Arbeter Vort* (Paris), March 6, 20, April 3, 17, 30, 1953.

Today, one year after the outbreak of the war, I begin to record my recollections of the past days. What a pity that I did not have the courage to put these down when the events were still fresh in my

THE FIRST PAGE OF KALMANOVITCH'S DIARY

mind. I was afraid lest someone see these recollections who ought not to see them. He who knows no fear and is ready to risk his life will be able to preserve for the coming generation an exact account of what is happening to us at this time. I have high hopes that the end of the war is approaching and it will soon be possible to tell publicly what we record here clandestinely, and that what I begin today in sorrow and in anguish I shall be able to continue and finish in joy and tranquility.

Sunday morning.[1] It is the day of rest in the Soviet state. My work as proofreader in a printing establishment does not tire me but it does not interest me.[2] Several days ago we were discussing conditions and Khayim Levin[3] told me that in his house there lived a Jewish young man, a high official in the police department, who had said that there would be no war. "The reports of the British radio are figments of the imagination," he declared. I replied that my wife and I would nevertheless prefer to be sent to Kazakistan with the rest of the evacuees.[4] I walked over to the radio and turned it on and suddenly I heard an announcement that the Commissar for Foreign Affairs[5] would speak in a few minutes. Something told me that this was serious business. Yesterday and the day before they had talked about air raid drills. Such drills did not take place. But we expected the sirens at any moment. Now the commissar speaks in a trembling voice, which is very unusual for him. The enemy has attacked us during the night, without a declaration of war and without any demands on us. Grodno, Kiev, Sevastopol, and other cities were bombed. Only this morning did the ambassador deliver a declaration of war. In the midst of this radio announcement explosions are heard and airplanes appear in the sky. We do not know if they belong to the enemy or to our forces, but of one thing we are sure—the decisive hour has come: the loving allies have become enemies. The day is nearing when humanity will be delivered from both of them and when it will once again become the same warm humanity we knew in our youth. It is

[1] This refers to Sunday, June 22, 1941.

[2] The late Zelig Kalmanovitch was removed from his office in Yivo by the Soviet authorities, who occupied Vilna in June, 1940. He thereupon became a proof reader in the printing establishment that had formerly belonged to B. Kletzkin.

[3] Former editor of the Vilna Yiddish daily, *Di tsayt*. He lived on Zawalna Street.

[4] *Cf.* Lazar (Litai), Hayim, *Hurban umered* (Tel Aviv 1950) p. 18.

[5] Vyacheslav Molotov.

also clear that the transition will be difficult. We have been given over into the hands of harsh masters and there is no one to defend and deliver us.

The first feeling was that of fear of an air raid. Such an air raid actually began in the evening. There was no shelter. We went down to the cellar where the inhabitants of the house gathered.[6] We were afraid, however, that if a bomb struck the house we would all be buried beneath the ruins. We went back to our apartments. The walls and the windows trembled from the force of the explosions. We remained in the hall and attempted to lean against the wall. The roaring and buzzing of the planes dropping the bombs were heard overhead. They circled over us and their buzzing kept up in a constant rhythm which penetrated into the depths of the soul and struck terror therein. All thinking stopped and only dull instinct remained. "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."[7]

Dawn came and silence descended over us. We returned to our apartments and went to bed, without undressing, of course. Some dozed off and others fell into a deep sleep, wearied by the cares of both day and night. Suddenly the walls shook and a crash of broken glass was heard. The electric lights flashed suddenly and then went off. In great confusion we again descended the steps, terrified lest the house collapse over us. Our house was not hit but the neighboring house was.

(I forgot to tell: M. Reyzen,[8] who concealed herself last week in Niemierz[9] for fear that the N.K.V.D. would exile her for the sins of her husband and her son, left her hiding place in the morning during the attack and witnessed the bombardment of the airport.)

In the morning people made an attempt to go out into the street. Neighbors and relatives came into the house. The Russians fled in panic. The wives of the officers who lived in the apartments over us sobbed: "What will happen to us? We have been deceived. Where are our eagles?" They crossed themselves, knelt down and entrusted themselves to the protection of their God. But there is no mercy in judgment. Rumors circulated that on Słowacka Street, in the house of

[6] Kalmanovitch lived at 7 Kiev Street.

[7] *Psalms* 140:7.

[8] Miriam Reyzen, the wife of Zalmen Reyzen, whom the Soviet authorities arrested and later executed.

[9] Niemierz, about four miles from Vilna. This was the estate of Dr. Cemach Szabad, where Dr. Szabad's widow lived at that time.

Dr. Zarchin, there was a safe shelter. All the neighbors gathered there. The in-laws of our neighbors across the hall live there. We[10] decided to go there to seek safety. We ran through the deserted streets. Here and there we encountered individual soldiers, rushing apparently to the railway station. We saw young men and women with knapsacks on their backs, running in terror of the enemy. The sidewalks were littered with broken glass. Again airplanes roared by. We pressed against the walls. Apparently they were not after us. We reached the gate of the house of our destination. At the gate we met two of Sholem's wards.[11] They were panicky. Whither should they turn? They too attempted to escape. Where are they now?

We remained in the cellar all day. Toward evening a fire broke out on our street, in the motion picture house for the railroad officials. A rumor circulated that the fire had spread and had reached our house. It turned out to be a false rumor. Our neighbors returned to their house. We waited but they did not come back [to us in the cellar]. Apparently it was safe to go home. We too left. At night we were back in the cellar [of our house] . . .[12] returned.

The third night too, Tuesday going on Wednesday, we expected the arrival of the conquerors. We were prepared for the worst. I remained in my room, afraid to appear in the street. The women would go out from time to time to procure food. Polish women who were neighbors helped us obtain vegetables and other provisions. Acquaintances came to visit us—the refugee from Berlin, Saly and his wife Gerda.[13] They told us that the conquering soldiers were friendly in their attitude toward the people: they were handing out cigarettes, and although they were encamped with their trucks in the synagogue courtyard and in the Jewish streets, they molested no one.

I was surprised. But it is really quite simple. These are plain soldiers, soldiers from the front. They keep the war in mind. They received orders to show a friendly attitude toward the inhabitants of the conquered territories and they carry out these orders. The job of

[10] Kalmanovitch and his wife, Rivele.

[11] Sholem was Z. K.'s son. His wards or pupils—a group of the "Hashomer hatsair."

[12] The passage in the original is not clear. It is probably Mrs. Yd. or Y. D. Sheftel. (The surname is also not sure.)

[13] A Jewish couple from Berlin. At the time of the expulsion from Germany of Jews that were Polish citizens, they, along with thousands of other Jews, were deported to the tragically famous Zbąszyń, Poland. Later they came to Vilna and lived in Kalmanovitch's former apartment, at 3 Small Stephan Street.

settling accounts with the Jews has been delegated to a special task force, and it will no doubt do all it has been charged to do in thorough fashion, with all the system and accuracy of the German machine. For the vision is yet for the appointed time.

Trucks stand in front of our house. Endless groups of soldiers pass through the streets, on automobiles and motorcycles. Occasionally they stop to rest before our windows. As resting places they selected the neighboring synagogue, the Maccabi Place, and the market place. They pay no attention to us. Nor do they enter the houses. They also took over the club of the railroad workers and there was singing there all night. Apparently there was also some drinking going on there. The liquor that was in the store of our building was taken away by the soldiers. It is theirs as the right of the conqueror. Just so long as they do not bother us!

Thus the week came to an end. June passed and July began. Official proclamations by the military authorities made their appearance. A Lithuanian municipal committee was established and a police force was in the process of being organized. During the first few days we had no reports of violence. Undoubtedly there must have been some. There were also some arrests. An announcement appeared concerning hostages: forty Jews and ten Poles. Among the Jewish hostages was poor Hershl, the janitor of the Yivo.[14] The hostages are obscure individuals. On Tuesday or on Wednesday Zalmen Meizner[15] suddenly appeared. He had been arrested by the N.K.V.D. on a charge of emigration. Along with hundreds of other prisoners he was put in a railway car to be carried off to Russia. The guards fled, however, and the prisoners broke the doors open and escaped. Several days after that Rachel Chernikhov[16] also returned. She had been imprisoned in Wilejka for the sins of her husband. The town was attacked. The men were removed from prison and the women and the sick remained. They later fled and came back afoot. On the way the White Russian peasants manifested hostility toward the Jews. Aided by Polish women, Mrs. Z.[17] and a Bialystok Jewish girl arrived in Vilna from Bialystok. It was not easy for them to become established as they lacked the

[14] Along with the other hostages he was imprisoned (in Łukiszki) and thence taken to Ponary, where he was put to death.

[15] See *Yivo Bleter,* xxvi, no. i, p. 13-14. Zalmen Meizner had been arrested when he tried to leave Vilna with a false passport.

[16] The wife of Joseph Chernikhov. He was arrested by the Soviet authorities and later put to death.

[17] It is impossible to identify the name.

proper documents. They went to live in the room which they had occupied during the time of "the Great."[18] Her days of peace were numbered, however, as will be seen later.[19] May she be remembered for good, for by the narration of her sufferings she has implanted in my heart a feeling of faith and confidence. How much that woman had suffered and what trials she had gone through in the past few years! But she never lost her will to live and this will kept her alive in the prison of "the Great," despite her illness. She told us that during the air attack all the Polish women—several score—in her prison cell fell on their knees in prayer to their God. She envied them and was sorry that she could not join them in their faith.

I have previously mentioned acts of violence. I do not recall if these things were mentioned then. It seems to me that no one came in to us from the outside. Only Zalmen used to go in and out, and even he did not venture out too far. Only later did I hear of Jews that were killed on the cemetery. Much later I found in the records of the *Khevra Kadisha* of the community, that two or three people, employees of the cemetery, had been killed on June 24 or 26. They were shot. I also heard that on Novogrod Street Jews were attacked and killed. Then I heard nothing more until we entered the ghetto.[20]

One more episode. On Tuesday, Edia[21] and her mother came. On Sunday, Edia's husband, after roaming around for a while, decided to leave and left. When the young woman arrived, she looked for him and was in great distress at not finding him. But she had to take care of herself and her mother, and we decided that they should not remain here but return home and be together with Alter.[22] The thing was not so easy. We collected the small amount of money that we had and gave it to them. They hired one of the city coachmen to take them out as far as possible. If necessary, they were prepared to walk, the same way that they had come from Druskieniki. In about ten days or so a Lithuanian acquaintance of theirs arrived with a note from them and also told us about them. With great difficulty they had reached

[18] "The Great" is the name given to the Bolsheviks, a designation which had its origin in the beginnings of the Soviet regime in Russia. In the diary both the Soviet authorities and Communists in general are designated by that term.

[19] Nothing is told hereafter about these two women.

[20] This took place on September 6, 1941. This is a peculiar sentence: thousands of Jews had perished prior to the entry into the ghetto.

[21] Edia Frumkin, the daughter of Alter Frumkin (see the following note).

[22] Dr. Alter Frumkin, a teacher in the Hebrew Real Gymnasium in Kaunas, who was stranded in Druskieniki, where he had gone for his vacation.

their home. They found it completely cleaned out. Everything had been plundered. Alter was not there. He had disappeared. In the early days, when the bands of partisans were fighting with the retreating armies, they attacked Jewish homes and killed many Jews, perhaps thousands. Apparently Alter was among them. Thus perished a kindly person, full of life and humor. I knew him for thirty-seven years. So began the year. This was the first victim—and the end is not yet in sight! How long, O God of Spirits?

The Lithuanian newspaper began to appear.[23] It was important to learn the aims of the new masters, how they intended to carry out their program with reference to the hundreds of thousands of us who fell into their nets. How will they implement the previously mapped out program? We knew that this program would be a harsh one, but we had no conception as yet of the taste and the measure of their harshness. Terror seized hold of all of us. Gone was all taste for food. It was a good thing that there was no desire to eat, for food was hard to obtain. Jews were being driven away from the food lines and were forbidden to enter the stores. Later on special stores were set aside for Jewish customers. To be sure, Gentiles helped us. They purchased food for us and sold it to us in secret. Our gratitude to them. The human attitude of the citizenry was of great aid to us. We should be very thankful for these sentiments.

The new Lithuanian paper is out. Let us see what these people have to say. It is clear: they are faithful servants fulfilling the orders of their masters. But they also reveal their own feelings. Their suppressed hatred came to the fore; their insensitivity was revealed. And it is small wonder. There are accounts of the liberation from Red slavery. Armed groups, secretly organized in the last days, captured the cities. Stories of barbarism of the Soviet regime. At first I did not believe them, but Mrs. Z.[24] and another acquaintance from the neighborhood of Kaunas came and confirmed it all. It was thus: they opened up with machine gun fire on the camp of prisoners that they could not take with them. People were tortured with barbed wire around their necks. The Cushite has not changed his color. The transition from Reds to Jews was simple and easy: we were liberated also from the Jews. Let us deal wisely and know what to do. Jewish workers were dismissed from their jobs and positions. There began a policy of segre-

[23] Apparently *Laikas*.

[24] Perhaps the same woman mentioned previously (see Note 17), or perhaps Mrs. Chernikhov.

gation. New Lithuania has entered into the orbit of the New Europe. The great Führer in his graciousness has accepted us and we must prove ourselves worthy by fulfilling his teaching, which is a doctrine of life for us. Let us emancipate ourselves from our enslavement by the Red Jews. Letters from the provinces are published in the press, with a feeling of editorial approval and matchless satisfaction. Here and there the Jewish question is being solved in a concrete and radical manner.

This was stated explicitly. When I read these words I understood their meaning. I don't know what others thought when they read them. The events of the following months, when the Jewish problem began to be "solved" also in the larger cities, in communities of thousands and ten thousands, clearly demonstrated what they are, what their deeds are and what we are in their eyes. Let them be whatever they are, as for us — " The Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up."[25]

True, we have sinned, we have sinned against ourselves. The guilt is ours. We did not see the signs of the times. We heard, indeed, but we understood not. When the adversary came to power one writer wrote: "Do not insist upon remaining in our midst; you will not succeed. Look for a place overseas; we will help you find such a place. From a distance we shall perhaps be good friends. You are neither worse, nor inferior, but you are strangers, and we do not want to tolerate you any longer in our midst. We are becoming stronger and more homogeneous than ever before. Your presence in our midst is disturbing. Get out of here!" None of our leaders, not even the Zionists, paid any attention to these sincere words. They did not believe that Palestine could absorb the German Jews, who were those involved at the time. Emigration meant at that time the quest for another territory, which they did not want. This call and the events in Germany found a stifled echo among the remnants of the Territorialists,[26] and individuals who had joined them here and there—the poor group "Freeland." This "movement" was not even able to acquire a decent publication. What engaged the attention of world Jewry at that time? It presumably declared war upon the deadly enemy. It thought it could break his might with amulets, exorcisms and excommunication. World

[25] *Lamentations* 1:14. Kalmanovitch cites the Biblical passages from memory and they are not always entirely accurate.

[26] K. here alludes to Ben-Adir's brochure, *Farn geshikhtlekhn yom-hadin* (Paris 1940).

Jewry proclaimed its opposition to him and aroused his anger. It did not perceive to what extent that man and, especially that nation, have pinned on that movement. It will bring deliverance from the fear of impending revolution. Our people did not understand that they were fighting not only the enemy but the whole enlightened world. To be sure, here and there noble words were uttered in our behalf, articles were written, declarations were read, but no one moved a hand or lifted a finger against the movement. We remained alone in the front line. He also found devoted disciples in Poland who followed in his footsteps. There they did not succeed in carrying out his program at once but they approached their goal step by step. And we, the leaders and the spokesmen and the writers in the newspapers, what did we do? "We shall fight for our positions come what may. We have the right of existence, we are citizens, and in the name of righteousness and justice etc. we shall not retreat—and victory must come." With all our strength we dug into the ground that was tottering beneath our feet. We did not envisage the fact that in our position between the hammer and the anvil we would come out badly hurt. Now it is clear that it was foolish to battle for lost and untenable positions, that it was wrong to be stubborn. Now it is clear to all what was the behest of history, the word of God through deeds and not visions, through actual happenings and not through the words of prophecy. The events proclaimed: "Jewish people arise, go out from the cataclysm!" And we —we failed to understand it.

Sunday, July 26.[27] For quite some time I have had no leisure to record any entry in the diary. Last week a number of people were invited to the commandant[28] to consider a plan for the establishent of a "monument to the ghetto."[29] Men want to "perpetuate themselves in history." They are entitled to it. Several albums are being compiled: an actors' album and a collection of artistic works. Prizes were also announced for poetry, prose, and drama. There is some talk that 21,000

[27] 1942. Up to here everything was recorded on June 22, 1942. K. intended to keep a regular diary, but already between the first and the second entry five weeks elapsed.

[28] The commandant of the Jewish police, Jacob Gens. He is always referred to as the commandant. Considerable material about him is found in all books about the Vilna ghetto.

[29] K. has in mind the ghetto archives and the ghetto museum. See Dworzecki, Mark, *Yerushalayim delite in kamf un umkum* (Paris 1948) p. 243; Sustkever, Abraham, *Vilner geto* (Buenos Aires 1947) p. 109-10; Abramowicz, Dina, "Vilner geto biblyotek," in *Lite* (New York 1951) p. 1675-76.

meters of wood have been delivered and it has to be cut. Four hundred young people will be asked for this task. Whoever volunteers will receive a cubic meter of wood each month.

On Thursday and Friday a search was again carried out for old and ailing people and on Friday the incurably ill were removed from the hospital, apparently more than 80 of them. It is said that the request was for some 300 persons.[30] The reply was: there are no more. The young men and women of the police force who are in charge of the aged have no peace. It is quite clear. I have no words to express the sufferings of the condemned. The day before yesterday six old men and women were sent home.

As I expected, the change in the administration of the ghetto[31] is beginning to affect my position. The friend of former years[32] must demonstrate that he is showing no partiality. Within a few days the matter will become clearer.

At the Yivo the books that the Herr librarian[33] has selected are being crated. About 90 boxes are ready. A good deal of Russian literature was brought in to be turned into pulp. I don't understand why it was not taken directly to the factory. "The prudent shall keep silence."[34] We are not supposed to know about these matters. Now an exhibition is being prepared. Prominent guests from the capital are expected. Tomorrow the museum will be brought over to us.[35]

Friday, [July] 31. All week I had no time to write. We worked till six o'clock to prepare for the exhibition. There were all kinds of pretexts. In the meantime a number of serious events occurred and rumors spread that are worth recording. I shall record them very briefly for it is getting late. On Tuesday the Home for the Aged and the hospital were liquidated.[36] Among the eighty-four victims was a

[30] Here we are told of the "Action Pospieszki" on July 16 and 17. The old folks were made to believe that they were being taken for a vacation to Pospieszki, a suburb of Vilna.

[31] The supervision over the ghetto passed formally from the Jewish council to the commandant, who was given the title "Ghetto Representative." This occurred on July 15, 1942. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

[32] Bank director Aaron Langbart.

[33] It is impossible to determine with certainty who the German is to whom Z. K. refers.

[34] *Amos*, 5:13.

[35] Apparently, the museum of the Historical-Ethnographic Society of the An-sky Museum.

[36] The action of July 28, 1942, is not mentioned either in Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, "Dates," p. 497-500, or in S. Kaczerginsky's *Khurbn vilne* (New York 1947) "Khronologye fun toyt," p. 29-32. The hospital mentioned here was apparently the insane asylum.

woman, eighty years old, an inmate of a Christian home for the aged, who had become a Christian sixty-five years ago. It is impossible to penetrate into [the hearts] of those who executed such orders. May God preserve us.

A session of the committee for the museum of the ghetto,[37] devoted to establishing a monument for men and events. The exhibition came as a demonstration of the cultural powers of the Jewish people. The leaders decided: like Balaam in his day, who came to curse and then blessed against his will. Even the corner of "the Great" does not embarrass us.[38] It is difficult to imagine what these people will feel when they will soon behold the cultural accomplishments of the eternal slaves. In the meantime we are really eternal slaves. The young master[39] pretends that he is interested and appreciates every little detail. But who knows what is in his mind? It seems that he is not in good health. Above all, what significance does an individual have in this complex of events? Needless to say that to an individual in a condition like mine even a friendly expression also means something.

Mr. Caspi[40] is here. All kinds of rumors about him circulate in the ghetto. Something rotten must be present when a Jew is exempt from the anti-Jewish laws. I do not want to repeat the things said about him. Terror seized the people to such an extent that the commandant had to instruct the police to calm them. There is no danger. Another rumor has it that he has to deliver 300 of the young "Great."[41] This is the way of the rumor mongers. Meanwhile let us hope. Here we shall interrupt. It is the Sabbath.

Sunday, August 2. We are entering the twelfth month of our imprisonment. To be sure, we are approaching the day of deliverance. But it is still wrapped in clouds. We must fortify our spirits. In the meantime, however, things are being done which are irrevocable. Thus

[37] In the committee were Gens, Herman Kruk, Z. Kalmanovitch, Blacher and several others.

[38] Kalmanovitch apparently wanted to say that this part of the exhibition did not dominate over the others and did not bear a Jewish character.

[39] Willi Schaeffer. Later on he is also referred to as "the young one."

[40] Caspi-Srebrovitch, a Kaunas journalist. A member of the Revisionist Party and a participant in an illegal Lithuanian fascist organization, he was arrested by the Soviet authorities. He was liberated by the Germns and given permission to live outside the ghetto. The Jews of Kaunas were afraid of his connections with the Gestapo. See Gar, Joseph, *Umkum fun der yidisher kovne,* p. 113-14. Shortly after his appearance in Vilna, Caspi and his family were executed by the Gestapo.

[41] This means that there was a rumor that Caspi came to hand over 300 young Communists.

the libraries were emptied[42] and the books are scattered around the stockroom like refuse. The master said that this week he would procure trucks to take the "paper" to the factory, and that it was necessary to make room for a new shipment. The employees save from destruction as much as they can.[43] A blessing upon them, for they risk their lives. May they find shelter under the wings of the Divine Presence and may God have mercy on them and on our whole *geniza.*[44] May He also have mercy on our remnants and permit us to see in peace the uncovering of that which we have hidden.

The exhibition was presumably organized objectively, and possibly even with a secret sympathy for us and our lot. Even the corner of "the Great" does not bear our imprint. In the corridor are pictures of workers. All this we arranged, but they supervised and controlled our work. It appears that our collections did not have anything that is particularly striking. The young man selected objects, books and manuscripts that delight the eye. Was it his intention to make a good impression? Or was this a case where even the evil angel says "Amen" against his will? Or perhaps a humane feeling has stirred in that man's heart? When new officials arrive they try not to look at us, not to meet our gaze. For us they are like inanimate objects and so are we for them. They are the machine that presses, pounds and crushes, the hammer that strikes, and we are the block, the inanimate stone, the shattered glass, etc. Only when man approaches man, when man looks into the eyes of his fellow, there awakens in him perhaps the sense of death that will inevitably come and he realizes that the same fate is in store both for him and for his victim. When individuals meet daily, speak and help each other in their work, it is impossible that a human feeling should not come to the fore. The exhibition, beginning with a statue of Antokolsky and ending with a small prayer-book printed in Vilna, clearly demonstrates that we are a great people in the realm of culture. Our freshness is not yet abated. We are a nation apart, a unique nation in the world.

There was a ball game between five and seven on the playing

[42] *Cf.* Sutskever, *op. cit.*, p. 113-16; Pupko-Krinsky, Rachel, "Mayn arbet in yivo unter di daytshn," in *Yivo Bleter,* vol. xxx (1947) no. 2, 217.

[43] *Cf.* Sutskever, *op. cit.,* p. 115-7; Pupko-Krinsky, *op. cit.,* p. 217-22; Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 320.

[44] The *geniza,* or hidden depository, was in the Yivo building. See Pupko-Krinsky, *op. cit.,* p. 219-20. There was also a hidden depository in the ghetto, organized by Herman Kruk.

field.[45] A thousand people or more, mostly youth, came to see the game. There were also some older people. Also representatives of our regime, the former chairman of the Council,[46] and officers of the police were there. The spectators applauded and cheered the victors, despite the fact that their voices could be heard in the streets of the enemy, for only a wall separates us.

Thursday, [August] 13. Quite some time passed, almost two weeks, since I was able to make an entry. There were a good many interferences. The exhibition was successful. It impressed the masters. They are making preparations to continue the work. Trucks now arrive two or three times a week and take away the pages and the discarded paper to the factory. This will take weeks and perhaps months. Yesterday the highest officers came to see the work and the exhibition. They put questions to us, mainly: "What was your occupation before?" I was asked: "How come you did not serve in the tsarist army in World War I? Where were you at the time of the revolution?" On the whole, these questions were, formally speaking, serious and objective. Of course, poison is concealed in them. The grand master[47] looks like a stork. Is he not troubled by nightmares? They are deserving in such an instance. O Lord, Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, Thou God to whom venegeance belongeth, shine forth.

Life pulsates in the ghetto. Children go to the woods with their teachers and adult men and women go along with them. Children play in the playground.

On August 8 I had a talk with "the young one."[48] It is necessary to classify Jewish literature, to show its content and essence. "This will indicate concretely how to solve the Jewish problem."

August 9. It is necessary to make a survey of the ghettos in Lithuania by the end of the month. It is necessary to make a survey of the literature about the Karaites, to write a history of the Karaites and of their present condition.

On August 10 the commandant came with a permit from "the master of the Jews"[49] to ask for books to read. The request was grant-

[45] The place near the building on 6 Straszun Street was cleared of ruins and levelled off to serve as a recreation and athletic field for young people.

[46] Anatol Fried.

[47] Hingst, commissar of the district of Vilna.

[48] Willie Schaeffer.

[49] Murrer, the expert on Jewish affairs for district commissar Hingst. On Murrer, see Sutskever, *op. cit.*, p. 80-81; Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 317; Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

ed. The "young ones" will give the books. Today he left and was replaced by another one, a slightly more pleasant individual. It is as if the fear of the master has departed. Some books and other things will be brought in.

Today we began to set out the Jewish books. Saw a letter of a girl who is hiding with a Lithuanian peasant. Hundreds have saved themselves. Clergymen and peasants have concealed them. The peasants want to get rid of the present masters as of those of two years ago. There are predictions that it will be soon.

Mrs. Yoffe came.[50] She was hiding for nine months. Perhaps we can take her in. H.[51] already spoke about it. It was decided to keep it in mind when that one will return.

The "grand master" himself has examined the pots in the kitchen to see what was in them. He asked: "Why is there no meat?"

Meanwhile another group left for the forest. The museum is being prepared. There are rumors that several houses will be added to the ghetto. In the meantime we are yearning for the end. It must come speedily.

Friday, [August] 21. Again there were days of interference. It is characteristic that I make use of every pretext not to record. A time will come when I shall regret it. But it will be too late then. Somehow I feel the spirit of the Sabbath eve. A strange thing: men, women, and children run with pots in their hands to put away the *tsholnt.* It is not so much in honor of the Sabbath but because it is cheaper that way and tomorrow there will be a warm, tasty meal. I do not intend to censure. For who am I to speak ill of my brothers in misery? I merely record it in a gentle manner. It is a fact and it should be recorded.

There is still excitement about the exhibition. Visitors come to see it, and the journalist prepares tidbits for his readers or for those who sent him, and constantly describes what is bound to please them. Let us hope that the wheel of the universe will return everything to its position and that our miserable work will also help a little in making the crooked straight. The "masters" visited the ghetto and found that all was well and orderly. "There is no ghetto like it among all the ghettos." So! After depirving us of all opportunities for a human life

[50] Dinah Yoffe. See Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[51] Dinah Yoffe was taken into the group employed by the Rosenberg staff, which worked in the Yivo building. H. is here perhaps Herman Kruk, although elsewhere in this diary he is referred to as H. K. See note 58.

we have nevertheless not given up hope.[52] The dweller in the ghetto has strength in his soul and might of hand and a will to live that conquer all difficulties. And when the day of peace comes—do not their hearts prophecy to them of the coming end?

On the 16th I visited the children's home.[53] It was on a Sunday forenoon. The children of kindergarten age were dancing and singing. When time for lunch came, they arranged themselves in pairs and proceeded quietly on the sidewalk. His Majesty the child! just as among progressive nations, to their special kitchen. The children look well, are neatly dressed and washed. This too is one of the wonders of the ghetto.

The news about the capital[54] struck us like a hatchet blow. Is it true? Or a nightmare? Would to God that we find out speedily. On the following day M.[55] came in to the ghetto—to search for vegetables. The municipal food offices had complained that the peasants bring all their vegetables into the ghetto and that none are obtainable in the city. He found only left overs, for the stuff had been sold out and the intake of 50,000 rubles had been hidden before he entered the store. Nevertheless the result was an order prohibiting peasant carts from entering the ghetto. Potatoes and other vegetables were to be brought in by the watchman.

The athletic field is most active, not to speak of Sundays, when there are games. Over 1,000 people, mainly youth, fill the field. Gymnastic exercises are carried out. The games are cheered loudly—as if we were free. A road to man. My pious friend laments: "So many mourn, so many died, and here merriment and celebrations!" Such is life. But live we must as long as God gives life. He knows best! Jewish children devote themselves to sports; may God give them strength.

We received permission from M. and later from our masters to bring in books. (In the minor capital[56] one keeps a book at the peril of his life.) They are being unloaded. Jewish books are crated and

[52] In the original Hebrew this is a play upon the words *enosh,* "human," and *noash,* "hopeless."

[53] Kalmanovitch here means the day-home on Straszun Street. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 208. The children's kitchen was at 12 Straszun Street. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 177.

[54] Warsaw. Reports of the "expulsion" of the Jews of Warsaw, the decree announced July 22, 1942, which was responsible during the months of July-September for over 250,000 victims, reached Vilna. See Nayshtat, Meylekh, *Khurbn un oyfshtand fun yidn in varshe* (Tel Aviv 1948) vol. i, p. 69-98.

[55] M. is Murrer. He is designated in the original Hebrew as "Mem."

[56] Kaunas.

sorted. Our master wants a survey of our life previously—statistics. We have to collect books and articles in German. They want a map of Vilna indicating the synagogues. They want to know now how high was the mountain they have levelled.

Thursday, [August] 27. It is difficult to record. All day I am outdoors and in the evening it is dark. It is forbidden to put on the light. I shall try to set down the main points in the morning, before my work begins. On Friday, August 21, the chief of the cultural department[57] and his wife were seized as they were leaving for the fields. They have not as yet been released. On Sunday the 23rd, some forty of the masters were invited to the concert. Those that came were the bookish people. They came into the hall. Some remained outside. The chief of police did not permit them to mingle with the rest of the audience. They went home perplexed. On the following day M. said not to attach any significance to this occurrence. It left a painful impression, but we are accustomed to it by now and no longer evince any surprise. H. K.[58] is preparing hiding places in the city and in the schools. It is a tale from the story of the rose of the valley.[59]

Sunday, September 6. For over a week I had no time. Events occurred that should be recorded. Before I can get around to it, however, they go by and are obliterated from memory. The area of the ghetto was increased by 6,000 meters. Today it is exactly one year that we have been here. It is like a day of mourning. Playing and singing are forbidden. Even on the field there are no games. Today is also the first day of the *Selihot* prayers. Last Monday the "master of masters"[60] was supposed to come to see if it is necessary to extend the ghetto. He did not come. Today we began thinking of a literary prize. Again dreadful news from the capital. People are sent to work in the forests. —About 200 railroad workers were gathered near the border. Grisha who had

[57] Gregory (Grisha) Jaszuńsky, a "Bund" leader who played a prominent role in the ghetto.

[58] Herman Kruk, "Bund" leader, director of the ghetto Library (formerly the librarian of the *Mefize Haskala*) and one of the leaders in the cultural life of the Vilna ghetto. His diary, written in the ghetto and covering the period from September 1941 to the beginning of 1944, is now in the Yivo Archives. See *News of the Yivo*, no. 22, September 1947; Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

[59] Apparently H. K. told Kalmanovitch about hiding places for men and arms. "The rose of the valley" is most likely Pavel Rosenthal [Valley of Roses], who wrote, under the pseudonym of P. Anman, "Stories of Revolutions in Western Europe" (Geneva 1905). There the author discusses the manufacture of home-made arms, the concealing of such arms, and the like.

[60] Hingst.

been seized managed to redeem himself.[61] Regards from workers. The master promised me work in the libraries and monasteries.

Thursday, [*September*] *10.* Several days ago, on the 7th, candy, cookies and other goods disappeared from our streets. Only home-made cigarettes remained. The stores are closed. Goods are being stamped. There are rumors that the present currency will be discontinued. People are hoarding sugar, flour and other non-perishable goods. Gold went up to over 5,000 from 3,500; some say that it went up to 7,000.[62] Again a strict order was promulgated against bringing in food.—The "young one"[63] wishes to study Hebrew. The work of sorting the books at the university began. Sunday at dusk, baked goods were seen in the bakery. The panic has died down. Apparently, this was the work of speculators. Rumor has it that M. left the city, and that yesterday three German policemen guarded the gate. Today only one was there. Yesterday and this morning cookies were sold again. Candy was available all day. They say that yesterday morning and at night food was brought in to the co-operative kitchen. Today the first lesson with the German. Tomorrow at the university. A rumor circulates in the ghetto: the son of Ben-Khayim[64] has fallen from his pedestal; an argument with the commandant. The children carry on their gymnastic exercises and play. The weather is like in the early fall. The children are half-undressed. They are becoming hardened. May God grant them health. The German woman[65] came again. A fullness of hidden life. Today pictures of artists were brought from the museum. H. K. was supposed to go to the cemetery to save several tombstones. The cemetery is being completely demolished. There in Germany only the cemetery remained. Here we still have life.

Tuesday, [*September*] *22.* The High Holy Days are over. This year these Holy Days were not like last year. In the street I heard the following saying: "Last year, may it not happen this year." Today a man [told] me something about the events of the Day of Atonement, 5702.[66] He had been miraculously saved from arrest in the city. He

[61] Grisha Jaszuńsky (see note 57).
[62] A golden imperial ten-ruble coin brought 7,000 rubles.
[63] Willi Schaeffer.
[64] Grisha Jaszuńsky. His father, Joseph Jaszuńsky wrote under the pseudonym of Ben-Chayim.
[65] Nowhere is there any mention of a German woman engaged in conspiratorial activities.
[66] The action of October 1, 1941. Nearly 4,000 Jews perished. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 89-93; Kortshak, Rejzl, *Lehavot baefer* (Merhavya 1946) p. 35-36.

had been taken with his wife and daughter. Later on, during the three days of deportations, he was seized again and by coincidence he was freed. Thus our life hangs by a thread. A peculiar thing: all my thoughts have vanished. I forgot what I wanted to record.

On the 13th [of September] the deliberations about the prizes were over. The literary society received a New Year's greeting from the commandant. My answer: "Thank you! I hope we shall soon be in a position to tell throughout the entire Jewish dispersion what you have meant for the ghetto." When he received it he began to laugh. The deputy[67] took it to be unduly daring. The master[68] went away for a week. He is back already. Now everything is as before. All the time they bring in.[69] I am afraid. Happy is the man who is afraid. The rumors about the "children of the handmaid"[70] are varied and strange and come from different sources. There is something in them, but for the time being we see no change. The rabbi's sermon on New Year's eve in the Home[71] brought tears to the eyes of the audience. In the west[72] measures are being taken to protect the children. Yesterday the morning services were conducted between five and seven o'clock. At work, up to five o'clock, services are forbidden. From five to nine o'clock the *Musaf* service was completed, up to *Neila.* The worshippers pledge generously for being called up to the Torah. The same holds true for the synagogue. Occasionally there are Germans at the gate. Those who bring in stuff do it when the military are not around. Everything that the mouth can utter is being brought in. Rumors about Bialystok, Radom, Kielce and other places. When will the end come?

The "young one" began the study of Hebrew. But he has no time. We are arranging the bibliography cards.

Sunday, October 11. With God's help today is the New Moon of Heshvan. Hope deferred. Nevertheless the end is approaching. Weeks have passed in which I recorded nothing. And now briefly of that

[67] Apparently S. Dessler. See note 113.

[68] It is not clear whether the reference is to the master of the Jews in general or only to the master of the Rosenberg staff.

[69] It is not clear whether the reference is to food being brought into the ghetto or books into the Yivo building.

[70] The "children of the handmaid" are Poles, Lithuanians, and other nationalities, except the Germans, who are designated "children of the mistress." The expressions occur again several times.

[71] At 3 Hospital Street there was a home for orphans and abandoned children. Services were also conducted there. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 290.

[72] Apparently a report had reached Kalmanovitch about special measures to save the children that were taken in the west, possibly in Riga, possibly in Warsaw.

which has remained in my memory and in my notebook. Thursday, September 24. I saw a *sukka* in the courtyard of the kosher kitchen, a *sukka* in accordance with all the religious requirements, made of boards. The branches for covering the *sukka* were brought in by peasants. They tell of some other four or five *sukkot.* Warm days, with little rain. The ghetto people enjoy their holiday. Only it is forbidden to light candles in the *sukka.* Rumors spread that the "children of the handmaid" are being driven east. Undoubtedly these rumors are false for in the last few days they are no longer heard. To be sure, their number here has decreased. Dozens of families of officials from the western capital[73] are coming here. It is said that the "children of the mistress," whose homes were destroyed are settled there. Who knows the truth? Preparations for the winter are beginning.

On Monday, the first day of *Hol Hamoed,* was the funeral of Jacob Gerstein.[74] He died on Sunday, at three o'clock. The entire ghetto attended his funeral, which took place at five o'clock in the afternoon.

Today a new master came.[75] I began to translate the Russian book of the Karaite *hakham.*[76] A conversation with the master. He wants a human relationship. He admits the guilt of his people. Here you are safe. There is a thought of reciprocity. He himself suffered. His famliy is suffering. He helped in Riga. He will help as much as possible.

The next day and also on other days he brought bread. When alone, he shakes hands in exchanging greetings. He enters cautiously. He proposed finding a pretext for taking me out of the ghetto. Perhaps there is some special virtue attaching to my family. Mrs. Yoffe and I are busy with the translation. He is satisfied. What else do we need?

Repairs of the house have begun. The lights were repaired and the heating system will be repaired. The gang bought some potatoes to cook. The chief master, too, bought his share. Yesterday again they were bought and brought into the ghetto. Firewood is brought in as well as boards for making crates. English books on ethnography are

[73] Riga. The reference is to rumors that Germans whose homes had been destroyed were sent to Riga. The natives of the Baltic provinces in turn were sent to Vilna and farther east.

[74] A teacher and choir director in the Yiddish schools in Vilna. See Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.,* p. 184-85; *Yivo Bleter,* vol. xxvi, no. 1, 7-8.

[75] Perhaps Sporket.

[76] The Karaite *hakham* in Vilna was called Seraia ben Szapszal. On the attitude of the Karaites toward the Jews and on the role of Kalmanovitch in saving the Karaites see Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 332.

being placed in these crates in order to ship them to the Hohe Schule.[77] The chief librarian came. To me he seems nervous and worried. I am afraid that now they will speed up the sending of the books west. To be frank, nearly a year has passed and not even one piece of paper went out there. They even want to take printing paper there.

On Friday, October 2, I received dreadful news about a large community.[78] Heavens, plead for mercy for me! (The news has reached us today that only 55,000 certificates were issued there, that means that only some 100,000 people out of 500,000 or 600,000 are left.) Lord of the universe, remember Thy compassion! They say that the cup of fury will also be poured over the city of factories.[79] There are rumors of decrees against cities and towns in the province. "Have compassion in Thy kindness on Thy people, our Rock."[80]

Upon the invitation of the rabbi, I went on Simhat Torah eve[81] for *hakafot* in a house that had formerly been a synagogue and was now a music school. The remaining yeshiva students and scholars were gathered there, as well as some children. There was singing and dancing. The commandant and his assistants were also there. I was honored with the first *hakafa.* H. K. also came to see the spectacle. I said a few words: "Our song and our dance are a form of worship. Our rejoicing is due to Him who decrees life and death. Here in the midst of this small congregation, in the poor and ruined synagogue, we are united with the whole house of Israel, not only with those who are here today and with the tens of thousands of the pure and saintly who have passed on to life eternal, but with all the generations of Jews who were before us. In our rejoicing today we give thanks for the previous generations, the noble generations in which life was worthwhile. We feel that with our song today we sanctify the name of Heaven just as our ancestors did. And, I, a straying Jewish soul, feel that my roots are here. And you, in your rejoicing atone for the aims of a generation that is perishing. I know that the Jewish people will live, for it is written: 'As the days of the heaven upon the earth.' And even if we were

[77] This refers to Alfred Rosenberg's "Hohe Schule" in Frankfurt-am-Main. For details see Weinreich, M., *Hitler's Professors* (Yivo, 1946) p. 97-119.

[78] Warsaw. See note 54.

[79] Lodz.

[80] From the Hebrew liturgy.

[81] Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.*, p. 209, tells: "I saw [Z. K.] on Simhat Torah in the *beys-medresh,* where he danced ecstatically with a Torah around the platform." This was in Rabbi Shoulke's *kloyz,* at 5 Shavle Street. We don't know the name of the rabbi.

the last generation, we should give thanks and say: 'Enough for us that we were privileged to be the children of those!' And every day that the Holy One, blessed be He, in His mercy gives us is a gift, which we accept with joy and give thanks to His holy name."

Last night we had a big meeting discussing relief measures for the winter. Warm clothes will be collected for those who work in the forest and for the needy in general. H. K. thinks the meeting was successful. Today a concert of the school of music. There are a number of students, some seven or eight teachers and eleven pianos are available. The girls (the majority of the students) would also excel in a large city.[82] On the same day, at five o'clock, an orchestra concert. At nine o'clock . . .[83] It would be a good thing to go over to the new houses that were added, but the master wants to visit them and the visit was postponed to next Sunday.

[*Sunday*], *October 25.* Today I must record. Yesterday all the policemen were assembled and the commandant gave them a summary of the terrible events of the last days.[84] Horrors, the most dreadful of all trials, but there is no way out. Praised be the God of Israel who has sent unto us this man. All our Jewish brethren in the Vilna district were gathered into one ghetto. In my town[85] thirty out of eight hundred people remained. Our policemen were sent there with passes to be distributed among the remaining workers, and to turn over the rest of the people, "the superfluous," to the hands of the authorities to do with them what is customary these days. The young men took upon themselves this difficult task. They donned their official caps, with the "star of David" upon them, went there and did what they were supposed to do. The result was that more than 400 people perished: the aged, the infirm, the sick, and retarded children. Thus 1,500 women and children were saved. Had outsiders, God forbid, carried out this action, 2,000 people would have perished.

The commandant said: "To be sure, our hands are stained with the blood of our brethren, but we had to take upon ourselves this dreadful task. We are clean before the bar of history. We shall watch over

[82] The original reads: מצטייגות גם בעיר גדולה. Perhaps this should be: could also excel . . .

[83] This passage is illegible.

[84] The reference here is to the liquidation of a number of towns in the district of Vilna, particularly the action in Oszmiana, and the participation of the Jewish police in these actions, which is designated as "the most dreadful of all trials." See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 414-16.

[85] It is not clear what city Kalmanovitch has in mind.

the remaining. Who knows if any more victims will be demanded from us here, as they were demanded there. We shall give them only the old and the sick. Children we will not give them. They are our hope. Young women we shall not give them. There came a request for workers. I replied: 'We shall not give. We need them here.' Thereupon they went out into the street, seized a thousand Poles and sent them to Riga. Who can guarantee the future?" A heavy dread hung over the assembly while he spoke. Merciful and gracious God! Merciful and gracious God!

In comparison with these events throughout the entire country, which suffers under the yoke of the proud oppressors, how insignificant and petty are the occurrences that befall us! The paper was taken away to be shipped to Germany. I have not noticed if the crates and shelves were removed. The remnants of the Kletzkin publishing house are being borught in, books and leaves that are suitable only for the factory. Money and clothes are being collected for those working in the forest. It is said that enough warm clothing has been collected. All kinds of rumors are being circulated, and it would be desirable to record them in order to see what the situation was outside and how it was reflected in the imagination of the ghetto. There is talk about peace between the neighbors. A piece of nonsense that the pen refuses to record. Now I have forgotten some of the things worthwhile recording.

Monday, [*October*] *26.* Really, what a pity that I did not write down the things at the proper time. A memorial meeting for Dr. Gershon.[86] A decent man. He took poison after the death of his wife. He must have been 80 years old and possibly older, an honest and active person. At the meeting they talked of his modesty and honesty. The first Jewish council was established under his influence. When he rapped on the table with his cane he silenced those who quaked before the masters and before the dangers of the time. After the Jewish council was organized he declined the chairmanship, although he participated in the meetings and worked with all his energies. He was of the opinion that we have to do it. His memory inspires the people. A peculiar thing. People know what proper and decent conduct is and they praise the humble person and the one who is a faithful servant of the community, but they themselves do not observe these precepts too

[86] Dr. Gregory Gershon. The meeting was on the occasion of the anniversary. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 42.

scrupulously. Hypocrisy? No. Everyone knows who they are, it is impossible to hide. They hold on because they are aggressive, perhaps they are more fit for their task than the honest and naive. The majority, however, bear their yoke and they nominate them during the elections, although they know that they are insincere. It is a complex matter, like all human affairs.

Tuesday, [October] 27. This evening in the house of the commandant the young men recounted what had happened to them, the record of suffering, how 400 people were delivered into the hands of the murderers. An order came with a threat. They went there. More than 1,000 people were demanded, women and families with many children. After some dickering the number was reduced to 600 and only 400 were actually delivered. Some 53 women were rescued from off the trucks. They were gathered in the square. The children were left at home. At first they did not have any clear idea what was to be done, but the heart prophesied. Gradually, everything became clear. The Jews themselves consented after they found out that the rest could be saved. The rabbi [of Oszmiana] handed down a decision to deliver the aged. Some of the old people themselves asked to be taken. There was one woman who was about a hundred years old.

They pleaded with the police of the "children of the handmaid," with the "soldiers of the mistress," but in vain. They offered ransom for their lives, but it was refused. Only their belongings remained. Also food remained. Had strangers carried out the action there would have been more victims and their belongings would have been plundered. In the synagogue some people recited Psalms. Women wept before the holy ark.[87]

Sunday, November 1. Again, heavy and bitter days. Again the police was invited "to arrange" matters in Swieciany. There was some apprehension lest the action be carried out without them and then the number of victims would be much higher. This time, apparently, it was a vain fear. But here a new difficulty entered the picture. The commandant began to demand that he and his aides should not be the only ones engaged in this activity. He does not want others to say: "Our hands are clean." At first he had declared that the entire responsibility rests upon him and that he himself would render account before the Supreme Judge. In effect, however, he does not want us to be merely

[87] On actions with the participation of the Jewish police, *cf.* Kortshak, *op. cit.*, p. 136-46; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 76-80.

spiritual partners with him. He wants us to be actual partners. Yesterday his former assistant[88] was arrested for refusing to go out with the police group to S. to participate in the action. The ghetto is seething like a cauldron. Meeting sessions, deliberations. Apparently, he wants others to participate. In effect, we are as it is not innocent of Jewish blood. We have purchased our lives and our future with the death of tens of thousands. If we have decided that we must continue despite everything, then we must go through with it. And the forgiving God will forgive us. The old rabbi[89] may serve as an example: "It is necessary to rescue all that can be rescued." This is the situation and we cannot change it. Of course, a noble soul cannot tolerate such deeds, but the protest of the soul has only psychological and no moral value. All are guilty, or better perhaps: all are innocent and holy, and above all, those who actually carry it through. They must control themselves, brace themselves, and master the sufferings of their souls. They liberate others and shield them from sorrow.

On Thursday the police handed over to the Gentiles ten people (mostly girls). This was a ransom for the people that were seized in the vicinity with provisions amounting to half a million. There were some thirty people. It is very difficult now to bring in provisions. In the past three days there was a shortage of bread in the ghetto. In comparison with bread, potatoes are plentiful. They are rationed. Nevertheless, prices go up. Apparently people are hoarding for the winter, for they do not believe that the thing will end soon. Rumors circulated about peace between the neighbors in the east. The concrete basis of this news apparently was the rumor of negotiations about burying the dead, which was later officially denied. Yesterday a fire broke out in the gasoline warehouse. There was some fear that the fire was in the place where our Jewish brethren work. Fortunately it was in another corner, and the Jews excelled in putting out the fire and in rescue work. Yesterday correspondents came here. They entered the shops. M. boasted of the work of his slaves and promised that within half a year the scope of the work would expand and remarkable articles would be produced. Our master too lectured us yesterday on main-

[88] Joseph Glazman, leader of the Revisionists, who played a prominent role in the life of the ghetto in the F. P. O. (Fareynikte partizanen organizatsye—United Partisans Organization.) See Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.*, p. 295-96; Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, 303, 305, 369-70, 436, and others; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 25-26, 81-95, and numerous other passages (see "Index of Names"). Joseph Glazman refused to direct the action at S.—That is Stare Święciany.

[89] Apparently the same rabbi of Oszmiana that was mentioned previously.

taining order at work. He pointed out that he had attempted to find work. There is more than enough materials. He attempted to renovate the building: the light and the heating. It is necessary to gather materials, to place them in the crates and ship them. There is work now for nine months and more. He praised me especially for my diligence and for my work on the translation.[90] He added a loaf of bread to my ration. Others who excelled in work also received additional bread, among them the cabinet maker. Provisions and firewood are brought in wagons and in automobiles. A report from the capital that Isaac Ish Tov[91] had left before the catastrophe. A rumor about the pope's speech.

Thursday, [November] 5. I had no time. What a pity! The days are tense. The scales move up and down. The secretary[92] was sentenced to banishment into the forest. Some had it that he would be sent to a labor camp. Tomorrow he is leaving for the forest. In the forest (forty diggers) an unseemly incident took place. A wounded policeman[93] (the commandant of the post) was brought in. Peasants came in, speaking Russian (some say they were Partisans), took something and fired at him with a revolver. He is dying. (Some say this was an act of vengeance for his severe and heartless attitude toward Jewish workers.)

Rumors of the enemy's defeat in Africa.[94] There are plenty of potatoes. The Germans bring in food and firewood. They treat their Jews to whiskey.[95] Yesterday the young German came from Minsk. He looks bad. When we came home in the evening the house was dark and cold. It is not being heated. Fifty-three crates with books are ready for shipment. They are being brought from the neighboring capital.[96] G. in place of T.[97] The Polish women are beginning to return the arti-

[90] Kalmanovitch translated for the Rosenberg staff the work of the Karaite *hakham*, Falkovitch's book, *Yiddish*, and other works.

[91] Isaac Giterman, a member of the Executive Board of Yivo. Giterman actually managed to escape from Warsaw, but on the way to Amsterdam, he was arrested and returned to Warsaw, where he later perished. See *Yivo Bleter*, vol. xxiv, p. 7.

[92] Joseph Glazman.

[93] Nathan Schlossberg. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[94] Montgomery's offensive against Rommel began on October 23, 1942. The Germans began their retreat.

[95] The last two sentences seemingly refer only to those groups that worked in the Yivo building, or to several other groups.

[96] Kaunas.

[97] We have not succeeded in deciphering this code.

cles that they had taken to hide. Is there a new spirit prevailing? Rumors about Grodno.

Saturday [night, October] 7. The wounded policeman died. Tomorrow will be the funeral. There are rumors that eighty policemen were given permission to participate in his funeral procession through the streets of the city. The rumors are being denied. Here great honor was shown him upon the order of the commandant. This is as it should be. The reports of the enemy's defeat are confirmed by a speech by the Devil.[98] The Power of Evil is still enthroned. The salvation of God [may come] instantaneously.

Sunday, [October] 8. The procedure at the funeral of the policeman. A large multitude gathered at the sportfield. The coffin; wreaths and flowers were brought. The police guard and the officers were dressed in leather jackets. Torches burned around the coffin. The choir sang. Not at all like a usual Jewish funeral. If the Jewish service were reformed in this manner it would leave a deeper impression and fortify the hearts of our youth. To be sure, the reforms did not prevent assimilation. But the religious sentiment was preserved to a larger degree among the western European Jews. The *el mole rahamim* was repeated twice. The following spoke: the commandant, his assistant, Rabbi Jacobson,[99] representatives of the workers. A wreath from the workers in the forest. His memory is like that of a martyr who fell in the line of duty. This ceremony attains additional significance in the ghetto by indicating once again that living people reside here. Twenty policemen followed the coffin in the city.

Sunday, [November] 15. This week world events have taken a significant turn. The fruit has ripened. What was being prepared for the past two years is beginning to be revealed concretely.[100] Of course, we do not yet feel it at all. Rumors, to be sure, are circulated and everything is measured and weighed. Events are reported in a factual manner, only their significance is slightly enhanced.

A letter from the leader of the ORT to his son.[101] They live in the former capital. There are also reports about some of their other friends

[98] Hitler. In his speech Hitler conceded a German setback.

[99] The rabbi was a member of the religious council of the cultural department of the Jewish council.

[100] This was written after the invasion of North Africa under the leadership of General Eisenhower.

[101] A letter from Joseph Jaszuńsky, the director of the ORT in Warsaw, to his son, Grisha. On Joseph Jaszuńsky, see *Yivo Bleter*, vol. xxvi, 11-12.

that they are alive and well. It seems that the message-bearers have slightly exaggerated. (No wonder: the news is dreadful enough.) B. W.'s daughter[102] was married. Friends and acquaintances, some forty people, gathered in his room. The marriage was solemnized in the traditional Jewish manner. Sweets were passed around and drinks were served liberally. For a while we felt like free persons. This week large quantities of potatoes were brought in. It is very cold and fruit spoils. It is being distributed among the inhabitants for preservation for the winter. On the whole, the watch at the gate is no longer as strict as before, although considerable searching still goes on. Occasionally the enemy also comes to search and to observe. They began to send away the matrices of religious books. They will be melted into lead, of which there will be more than sixty tons. The turn of the books has not yet come. An exhibition is being arranged, propaganda for the Nordic idea. Our people copy and translate the captions into the native languages. I continue to translate the book of the Karaite *hakham.* (How limited is his horizon! He is proud of his Turkish-Tartar descent. He has a better understanding of horses and arms than of religion, although he is religious in the Christian sense.) There is a bureau of control. The officials tell all kinds of things about the bureau. On the whole such supervision is necessary. Economic activities multiply. There is progressively more money. There is also a wealth of objects. All of which requires close supervision, for the outside authorities regard it as ownerless and consequently the majority of the people also have become accustomed to this feeling of lawlessness: what is mine is mine and what is yours is mine. Collective ownership, this concept is almost alien to us. Would that our group remain as it is until the day of liberation comes.

Monday, [*November*] *16.* There is a rumor that the former chairman of the council[103] has resigned. Eight friends of the former assistant commandant[104] were arrested. The manager of the technical department[105] is also leaving his position. Nerves are shattered. Last night a purge was expected. The people slept in their clothing. A census of the ghetto is being taken for M. In the morning he came in to see the work of the young people. The people were afraid of him and

[102] Apparently the daughter of B. Weiner, who was foreman of a tailor shop outside the ghetto.
[103] The engineer Anatol Fried.
[104] That is of the Revisionist Party.
[105] The engineer Gregory Guchman.

did not come. Potatoes are being collected, spoiled, decayed and frozen. No flour will be given to them. A story about the master, chief of the murderers.[106] A workman stuffs animal skins for him. The work pleased him, and the reward—he will be the last to die. A vampire! His face, the face of a murderer, becomes him. He drinks blood and is not sated. I am stupefied. How does a man like this live? The very thought that nearby at the table, before the electric light, sits such a monstrous creature is simply dreadful. He is inscrutable. There has never been anything like it. And does he not feel anything? Do not black shadows come to frighten him and to disturb his peace? Will not some small insect enter his brains and put an end to him? "How tremendous are Thy works, O living God. Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth! It is time to work."[107]

Tuesday, [November] 17. Yesterday there was a rumor that the chairman is about to resign. It turned out to be a lie. Someone spreads rumors in order to create confusion. The controller[108] in the ghetto, who was an official under the expelled masters, has the function of a detective. But this is necessary. The commandant said today at the meeting of the police that those who spread false rumors will pay for it, for they jeopardize the existence of the ghetto. Essentially, they are those who make calculations as to when the end will come. In his speech the commandant assailed the secretary for his partisanship. He is also accused of fraud. There are some who are interested in sowing discord. The relief committee[109] was disbanded and a new one organized. Revisionists were arrested and beaten. Confused stories about trips to Warsaw. Today crates of books, more than fifty, were taken out, apparently to the train. Books are being brought from the warehouses. Rumors about demonstrations for peace in the south.[110] Here a controversy goes on in the cave.[111] What for? What will be the results? Who will effect a compromise? How can the fire of controversy be quenched?

Thursday, [November] 19. A report that the secretary was brought

[106] Here apparently Martin Weiss. The following sentence is not too clear in the original and it is uncertain whether the workman actually stuffed skins of animals.

[107] These are made up from *Psalms* 66:3; 94:1 and 119:126.

[108] Grisha Ginzburg, the head bookkeeper of the Jewish council.

[109] See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 377-79.

[110] Italy.

[111] Under Nazi rule in the ghetto. The reference here is to party dissensions. The expression "well-known party" is used to designate the Revisionist Party.

back from the forest and incarcerated. He is accused of extravagant spending of public funds. It looks like there might be persecution of the well-known party. For the benefit of what party? It seems that the commandant has become involved in the mater. Let us hope that no complications with the outside will arise therefrom.

There is a rumor that the paper factory in the immediate vicinity was closed down. The paper from Yivo is sold to a factory several score kilometers [from here] and is taken there. I had thought that the transportation difficulties were the cause of the delay. It actually turned out that the masters had originally planned to take the material to their country, but because of a shortage in means of transportation they permitted its sale to a local factory, which has its own trucks. It is said that, according to the speech of the commandant, a Jew in our capital[112] shot the master who tried to stop him as he was escaping with gold and jewels. Sixty Jews were killed and the investigation still goes on. There is an article in the Polish newspaper about an organization to combat the rebel groups in our vicinity.

Wednesday, [November] 25. A day of confusion in the tents of Jacob. An order was issued for the registration of all those that eat and do not work. The commandant declared that his regular assistant,[113] who was charged with carrying out the order, had changed the order himself, had taken away from all officials of the Jewish council their certificates and had them assemble in the theatre auditorium. There are rumors in the whole vicinity about evil decrees. People began to hide themselves. Gates were barred. The order was soon rescinded.

Saturday [night, November] 28. The day before yesterday several rows of people were lined up before the gate in the dark and in the mud, and M. and police of the masters inspected them by the light of lanterns. Our police ordered hats to be removed. The inspection was very severe. People were beaten murderously in the store,[114] mainly the women. Rumors circulate in the ghetto that an order was issued to exterminate all the inhabitants. Bunkers for hiding are being prepared[115]

[112] Kaunas. See Garfinkel, Leyb, "Vikhtike momentn in kovner geto," in *Lite,* p. 1699-1700.

[113] Salek Dessler. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 304-305, 391-92, and others; Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.,* p. 81; Kortshak, *op. cit.,* p. 314; Lazar, *op. cit.,* p. 124-26, 161-63, 173-74 and 187-88.

[114] An empty store, near the entrance to the ghetto, served as a temporary jail. People who were caught smuggling something into the ghetto were taken there and beaten.

[115] On bunkers see Sutskever, *op. cit.,* p. 127-43; Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.,* p. 76-77 and others; Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 94-100, and others.

Today when M. visited the commandant he told him that there was absolutely no foundation for these alarmist rumors. Yesterday our master[116] beat one of the workers.

Tuesday, December 1. Yesterday there was a meeting of the labor supervisors. The commandant spoke. The supervisors should arrange their affairs in orderly fashion. Consultation. Their representatives should be on duty every day. He calmed the people, telling them there was nothing to fear. He warned against theft. Yesterday many stolen articles were found near the gate. The Germans came in, and the number of lashes was doubled. Thirty-five per cent of the officals of the [Jewish] council are sent to work in the city. Women are exempt, since there are many unemployed among the non-Jewish women. For several days now the working women have been crating paper for the factory. The master has ordered the crates to be packed. Religious books were loaded.

Tomorrow a new master[117] is coming. He is interested in bibliography of religious literature or the literature of the history of religion. The meeting of the officials of the council to check on those who are in hiding has not taken place.

We mourn over the future of a remarkable culture that is being destroyed before our eyes and over a gifted people, with many merits in the past, which because of its trust has fallen into the net of evildoers and murderers and is getting the punishment it deserves. How will our oppressors be able to withstand the oppressors that will rise over them?

Monday, [December] 7. Last week several things occurred worth noting. On Wednesday and Thursday (the 2nd and 3rd) I had a conversation with the new master, a learned doctor of theology. He is the representative of the Institute in Dorpat, where they are preparing a bibliography of the religious publications of all the religions in the eastern lands. From us he wants a Jewish bibliography covering all the Baltic states. He regretted the destruction of the bibliographical institute [of the Yivo]. I read to him from the *Yorbukh.* I showed him the method and system of the card file. He suggested that I help him

[116] Willi Schaeffer, who displayed his politeness, once beat up one of the workers employed in carrying the crates of books.

[117] Dr. Gotthard. The group that worked in Yivo referred to him as "the little pig" (he was short and very stout). After the war he was found in a DP camp. See Kaczerginsky, "Men hot arestirt dos khazirl," in *Undzer moment,* Regensburg, No. 16 (34), July 14, 1947.

prepare material for his work on *Exodus* 1-2, 10: the birth of Moses. I have to prepare for him a digest of our traditional commentaries. I advised him to make that suggestion to our master. He wants to recommend me for the job of assistant in their institute: to translate and to expound the works of Maimonides. He took down my age, place of birth and education. I pleaded for a deferment of this transfer to the end of the war. I do not want to leave my place now.

A number of changes have taken place in our camp. The entire affair of the secretary was quashed and completely forgotten. Nothing irregular could be found in his conduct. The commandant wanted to appoint a special court of the representatives of the organizations. But the shrewd rogue[118] pointed out his mistake and he gave up the attempt. He appointed the friend of the secretary in his place. The secretary himself wants to work outside the city. In connection with the Hanukah festival there was a special celebration in honor of the police and awards were given to those policemen who have been with the force from its inception. Rumors about five sealed cars at the railroad station concerning which no one knows anything. No one is permitted to come near them.

Wednesday, [December] 9. A visit of a military officer. A good impression. Yesterday the entire group was detained before the gate and some were searched for materials that are brought in from our treasure and sold. Several of them were slapped. Poor F.[119] took sick from excitement. G.[120] is afraid that his books will be taken away. There are rumors that old books are being sold, etc.

Today I was ordered to furnish reports about the local press. What is the meaning of this?

Thursday, [December] 10. My men are working on the press. The paper is turned over to the warehouse to be converted into industrial materials.

Sunday, [December] 13. A celebration in honor of the 100,000th book read in the library. Of these books, 17.6 percent were Yiddish, 2 percent Hebrew, 70.4 percent Polish and the others were Russian and in other languages. The figures are as of from October 1. By now

[118] It is hard to say to whom Kalmanovitch refers here in the rhetorical use of the word "*meshumed.*" S. Dessler was not particularly reputed for cleverness.

[119] Dr. Daniel Feinstein.

[120] Dr. Gordon.

the number has risen to 140,000. The lectures are good. The speeches, not worth mentioning.

Saturday, [night, December] 19. The day before yesterday the German police arrested some twenty-five persons in the street. Flour and provisions were found in their possession. At the intercession of the commandant they were brought here yesterday. Today M. came and ordered their return until he investigates the matter. Rumor has it that the people were well received. Four of them, the leaders, remained here. A false rumor. Only those in whose possession nothing was found were freed. The others are under arrest.

Sunday, [December] 27. A week has passed. M. ordered the re-arrest of those prisoners who were freed. The ransom of fifty was not enough for him. Rumor has it that he demands 250,000 "small ones."[121] Meanwhile the chief of the guards of the gate was arrested.[122] M. was lying in wait and caught a wagon of flour that was stolen from the mill. The non-Jewish driver maintained that he did not know who had hired him to haul the wagon to the ghetto. They say that prior to this the Germans had seized a cartload of lumber. The first result—the co-operative that provides us with food is being closed. Worse consequences are in store for us. The matter was post-poned till after the Christmas holidays. Tomorrow will be the decisive hour.

This morning I was in the children's nursery. Women who work leave their children from 7 to 6. There are 150 children between the ages of three months and two years, [one group] from two to three years, [one group] from three to six and another group that studies reading and writing. Speeches, dramatic presentations, the children march in line. But the Jewish flavor is missing. In ghetto circum-stances the order is remarkable. What vitality in this people on the brink of destruction!

Who mourns the destruction of east-European Jewry? The destruction is a hard fact. Undoubtedly even those who predicted it did not envisage it in this form. Three or four years ago the central Zionist organ spoke of a Jewish center in the diaspora parallel to the center in Palestine. But the catastrophe was so certain, its contours so

[121] In the ghetto, marks were called "small." Under conditions in the ghetto this was a fantastic amount.

[122] Apparently Meir Levas or Lev. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 305-306, and 378.

clearly visible. Indeed, what is so new and horrible to our human consciousness is the personal destruction of human lives: old people, children, blooming youth, weak and old men, but also men full of vigor. There is no doubt, it tears one's heart. But millions of people are losing their lives in all parts of the world in the war. Not only combatants, but also infants and old people. The war has affixed its mask to the catastrophe. But the catastrophe was certain even if there had been no war. It proceeded on its way in an expansive manner. No one attempted to stem it. On the contrary, whoever attempted to convince himself and the world that he was erecting ramparts against it, was actually tearing them down. The full proof came in the east.[123] Everything was swallowed up in one great endeavor to disappear. The apparent cultural life was pure nonsense and arid. When the east came here no one as much as raised his voice. All was happiness. All found a place, a sense of belongingness. Undoubtedly here and there someone thought: something is missing. Another reflected: Judaism is disappearing. But all this was glossed over by the fact of mere existence. There is no discrimination. One amounts to something, particularly something in the machine. One can have his say. Had the thing continued in existence nothing would have been left of the enemies of Israel anyway, except, of course, the youth that yearns thither. Could it actually have got there, it would have been saved for the nation, and the nation through it. But the rest? The individuals would have remained intact, but would have been lost to the nation. Jewry is disappearing in the east. The final result the same as now.

What is better? Better for whom? The individuals who are saved are saved individuals. There are two billion people in the world, two billion people + x. For the nation—the Jewish people had constructive elements in east-European Jewry. Those that yearned thither, if they actually succeeded in coming there they strengthened our people. Otherwise, the people will mourn them. Great will be the sorrow and mourning, the joy of redemption will be wrapped in black. But the same sorrow is also for the parts that disappeared through apostasy. And if you wish, the sorrow is even greater. Here the evil beast came: "Joseph was surely devoured." But how would Jacob have had to weep if the first plan, God forbid, had been carried out?[124] In that case the people would have felt: there is sick and impure blood cours-

[123] Under the Soviet regime.

[124] The plan to kill Joseph.

ing through our veins. It is no external enemy that is tearing us apart. Our limbs are rotting and falling off by themselves. There will be a page of history that will read: The grandchildren were not inferior to the grandfathers. Only fire and sword overcame them. A curse upon the murderer! Eternal glory to the innocent victim! But in this case, however, where comfort lures people into the camp of the mighty, it is of no interest for history. It will not condemn, but silence means condemnation. You are no longer. Like all of them—Ammon, Moab, Edom, the hundred kingdoms of Aram—[illegible]—an object for excavations and students of epigraphy. History will cherish your memory, O inhabitants of the ghetto. Your most insignificant expressions will be studied, your battle for the individual will inspire poems, your impurity and moral decay will call and rouse to morality. Your murderers will stand in the pillory forever and ever. Humanity will look at them in horror and be afraid of itself and will endeavor to refrain from sin. Men will ask: "Why was it done so to this people?" The answer will be: "This is the punishment of the evildoer who destroyed east-European Jewry." In this manner the catastrophe will find its way into world history. Extinction by means of a loving caress creates no sensation and means nothing to anyone. Eventually the Jewish people itself will forget this branch that was broken from it. It will have to do without it. The healthy trunk will bring forth branches, blossoms and leaves. There is still strength and life. Dried up and decayed—this happens to every tree. There are still thousands of years ahead. Lamentation for the dead, of course: that is natural, particularly if they are your own near and dear ones. But the people must not be confused. The mourning for relatives—some people bear their sorrow for a long time; the largest part takes comfort. This is the nature of man, such is the world. Whatever the earth covers up is forgotten. Here in the ghetto we see how people forget. It cannot be otherwise and it certainly deserves no censure. The real motive in mourning is after all fear of one's own end. Wherein are we better than those tens of thousands? It must happen to us too. If we only had a guarantee of survival! That we don't have and one cannot keep on in constant fear, therefore the sense of fear is projected into mourning for the fallen, and sorrow over the destruction of Jewry. Refrain from sorrow! The nation will not be hurt. It will, we hope, come out fortified by these trials. This should fill the heart with joyous gratitude to the sovereign of history.

Monday, [December] 28. Today is again a day of dread, one of those ghetto days that engraves itself on one's body and soul. M. came to guard the gate. He wants to know how much money his slaves have. Guards were seated at tables. Groups of people came in one after another and were told that they must hand over all the money they possess. Several of the group are picked as an example and their pockets and belongings are searched. Whoever is found in possession of something goes to jail. There may have been other methods of search too. According to rumors there also were floggings. Women were stripped naked. M. was pleased with the work of the young chief of police[125] and he remained in his post. The storm over the wagons has apparently calmed down. Would that it were so! We are always standing on the edge of the sword. May the Lord have mercy on the remnant that escaped. The commandant was agitated all day. He did not know what to show off with before his master. The police whispered that it was not necessary to hand over the silver money.

I read the description of a visit by one of the masters to the ghetto in B.[126] on the 27th. Here there is no barbed wire. The ghetto takes in all the ordinary Jewish streets. Everything is in good order there. Police accompany the visitors. The chief of police is a type similar to Lazar Kaganovich.[127] The workshops. Industrious and competent workers produce beautiful objects. Also for remuneration. Children also work. The streets are clean. Here and there groups of Jews. Among them beautiful children; girls that look Aryan. Pitiful creatures! The police rule with an iron hand. They even carry out executions. There is also a prison. We went down the cellar. A thought flashed through our minds: suppose the Jews will immure us alive! They will not dare! For then not a single Jew would remain alive. Formerly there were 55,000 here. Some fled with "the Great"—and where are the rest . . .? He praises the sport field and the bath-house, through which 300 people pass daily. Bathing is compulsory. Failure to bathe is punished with loss of the ration card. There is a home for children whose parents perished in the events. The beds are too clean, evidence that they have not been used, a kind of Potemkin village. The hospital is not clean. The patients are dirty. A child with tuberculosis of the bones, hopeless. Perhaps I shall succeed in copying the document.

125 Meir Levas.
126 Bialystok.
127 The well-known Soviet commisar.

Thursday, [December] 31. Generally I never wanted to participate in the festivities of New Year's eve, out of spite. Today if I had an opportunity I would participate. Once again opportunity to be integrated into the world. To be sure it could be a better world, but it is, nevertheless, the world of man, from which the enemy wants to eject us, but we must remain in it. We count the years, do we not, therefore we are entitled to celebrate New Year's Day together with all who count the same years. When I shall be in the land of Israel I will advocate the celebration of this holiday. It may be assumed that many celebrate it anyway.

I can't help recalling the New Year's eve of 1902 in Berlin. First semester. Two months in the big city. Half the night I wander among Germans, some completely drunk, others half drunk. There is rejoicing, a surprise to me. People more experienced than I say that it is an awkward rejoicing. It is much livelier in Munich, and needless to say in Paris or in Nice. We will never have this again, at least not in our generation. Incidentally, the promenading Berliners of that day could not even dream that they, their children and children's children, forty years later, would be where they are now. One did not exactly have to believe that redemption was near; but that we shall be hurled back to brutality—who could have dreamt of it? But the world will pass through the crisis peacefully. The imagination of youth will quicken again. Man is still better than is generally assumed. The gentile woman in the market place that sells her goods cheaper to the Jewish woman buying from her clandestinely, for "she is wronged." Or the woman who meets Jews in the street and exhorts them to return to God and comforts them: "Pray to Him, He will help." Wickedness has revealed its shame through its nakedness. It will have to crawl into hiding again and undoubtedly much deeper and farther than before. It will never again be able to raise its head openly. Shall this be our comfort?

The day before yesterday, yesterday and today—three days of calm following the storm. Apparently no lives were lost. They tell of a girl who was sentenced to twenty-five lashes and of an old man sentenced to one symbolical lash. Many persons were beaten at random. But no one was arrested. Here 65,000[128] were collected. The council made some profit and also individual policemen helped themselves to some

[128] Apparently 65,000 marks. On the finances of the Jewish council see Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 170-76

extent. Such is the way of the world. The aforementioned document is now in a proper place.[129]

Sunday, [January] 17, [1943]. It is quite some time since I made an entry, although there were "events." To be sure, they were not "startling," but nevertheless such as have left an impression not merely upon those who were directly involved in them but also upon the entire community. M. seized gate-smugglers, sacks of flour, lumber, and above all, money was taken out from the pockets of those who passed through the gate. The co-operative was dissolved. The homes of the leather workers were searched. More than 150 hides were taken away. Jews from various camps are brought here for work on the railway station. New warehouses are being built, "store-houses." Some 2,000 men and women and perhaps even more work every day, including Sunday. Friday evening was the first anniversary of our theatre and speeches were delivered in quiet voices. Our people are full of courage and hope. Activity is necessary in order to keep alive. Would that this were the hour of redemption! Perhaps this is not the time to give vent to all that the heart feels. Who knows what may happen later? Another thing: for the moment the work helps inwardly. Thought has to ripen. Let the individual make his account with the world. There is no remedy for him who is governed merely by habit and the present. If a social movement will arise the backward ones will be drawn along in the current. The memory of the Vilna publications is being completely obliterated, but this is no unnatural thing. After all the entire warehouse was destined for that. Let people say: "The work of the wicked."

The young master is studying Hebrew and Yiddish.[130] He read some two or three pages. He begins to feel the power of the language. "It is worth the effort." We are translating articles from Lithuanian newspapers. They reveal the mood in the country.

Sunday, [January] 24. There is a vigorous cultural life in the ghetto. Last night we had the premiere of the choir, a lecture in the literary club, on the subject of "Shylock and Nathan." Today a *siyum* on the completion of the tractate *Kidushin* by the Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Ozer in Shoulkes "kloyz," and in the evening in the kosher kitchen. The library is full of readers. The literary club is discussing the subject of subsidies for literary works. On the whole there is hope

[129] Seemingly the description of the Bialystok ghetto.
[130] Kalmanovitch designates Yiddish with the Hebrew word *"yehudit."*

for salavation, although not so soon. Last week the enemy[131] was raging again. There were victims. Waste paper is constantly being hauled away. The master assigns more and more to waste paper.

Thursday, February 4. Many things should have been recorded but there was no desire. Today something occurred which may lead to a general catastrophe unless Divine Mercy intervenes. M. arrested the former eldest of the Jewish council,[132] a man who was under surveillance. He entered his office, searched the closet and found wine, sweets and cigarettes. Apparently he was arrested. The commandant was excited. For the time being it is hard to say if the misfortune that hovers over us can be prevented. That ugly creature is liable to divulge secrets. He may, however, brace himself. These are days of hope and trembling.[133]

Sunday, Purim, March 21. Many days passed and there was no desire to make an entry. "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed."[134] The days pass quickly, each day bringing new evil decrees. The masters are always looking for ways of bringing misfortunes upon us. We are still alive. Daily the homes are searched to see if all is according to regulation, if there is nothing that is prohibited—for us everything is prohibited, and work we must. The shops produce various articles. We employ our ingenuity to find raw materials. The children learn trades. They go to work at various occupations for the masters in the city. The work on the railroad is very hard. It is cold. The ground is frozen, yet has to be dug. The delicate hands of the women are not strong enough for such hard work. They are beaten over the head. The houses must be clean, and clean also are the teeth.

New passes with numbers (a small tag to be worn on the neck) are distributed among the inhabitants of the ghetto. Men and women over sixty who do not work receive no passes. All kinds of apprehension and fear arise. The communities in the provinces are liquidated for fear of the partisans. They are estimated at some 15,000 persons. They are distributed among the three large ghettos: Vilna, Kaunas and Shavel. There is a rumor that a certain number will come here.

A kind of paralysis prevails in our work group. All the paper, *i.e.* all that was thrown out of the library and other institutions, has

131 Apparently Martin Weiss.
132 The engineer Anatol Fried.
133 This is a veiled allusion to the military developments in January and the beginning of February, 1943; the Allied victories in North Africa and in Russia.
134 *Nehemiah*, 4:10.

already been hauled away. This is lost for ever. Whatever was saved may possibly be retrieved. The days drag on and there is no way out. This hope, too, hangs on a thread. Thus, for example, an order was issued to empty the university library, after it had been closed because of the sins of the people of the land who had resisted.[135] The books of the Jewish community library are there. There are rumors of a plan to send the crates over there and put the books in them for quick hauling away. The new decree on books is due to the frequent visits of the master. No book may be kept at home. Everything must go to the library. The book store was closed down. The theatre performances continue.

On the first of the month there was a meeting on the problem of education in the house of the commandant. How to infuse a national spirit and if it is possible to introduce religious studies. I expressed the bitter truth that it was impossible to introduce a national spirit into the school if it was absent in the life of the community. All that exists is the will of individuals to continue their physiological existence at all cost. And this will cloaks everything. All national feeling has evaporated. When the ghetto walls will fall all these people will scatter in disgust in all directions. The individuals, exceptions, in whom there will still remain a spark of Jewishness will aspire to the land of their fathers. The others will go their separate ways. The teachers complain, as usual. Subsidies for writers are continued. What is submitted is trash. This is readily understandable. There are no creative individuals here.

News of several people has reached us from across the wire front. Hope of liberation has again been aroused. From the other side rumors of slaughter and extermination come to us. And the end is not yet in sight.

Sunday, April 25. For over a month I have not made an entry. The usual weakness. For about two weeks I was sick, and from April 3 to April 12, I was in the hospital. At that time the dreadful events occurred.[136] About 5,000 (or 3,000) fell in the valley of death. The police were called to bury them. Their clothes, effects and the rest of their provisions were brought here. The oppressor showed them the

[135] Nowhere is there any mention of any resistance to the Germans on the part of the circles that were grouped about the Lithuanian University in Vilna.

[136] The so-called "Kaunas Action" took place on April 25, 1943. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 420-28; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 92-101.

place of the murder. He (Laban)[137] knows everything. Terror seized the entire community. According to reports even the commandant was deeply shaken. He stood as thunderstruck before the events. What shall we say and what shall we speak? Now it is our turn. We are promised. There are orders for several months. But who knows if this is not the end? This is the central event. For a week there is heavy mourning. Later on, the world goes on as usual. Lectures, plays, work, of course. We received our passes and the tin tags. We are marked. The master left for a month's vacation. He used to come daily into the house and search for forbidden food. Time and again we anticipated new evil decrees. (A rumor spread among the physicians that the hospital will be taken away.) If someone is caught with food his entire family is arrested. There were instances of murder. Individuals were freed after the general slaughter. The evil beast has drunk its fill of blood. Verily, each day should be recorded, but I do not have the strength.

In my own work everything is in order. I turned over the material on the Moses legend. Now I am preparing a bibliography on the Karaites. He wants me to go to the cemetery to copy the inscriptions on the tombstones. (They are planning to remove them.) On the whole there is no pressure in the work there. The University is closed and no one can enter the room in which the books of S.S.[138] were placed.

Friday, [April] 30. Those arrested at the beginning of the week were freed. Most of them were not involved in the affair. Two or three confessed and returned the stolen articles. The masters pardoned them. These are peaceful days. The master of the community is in town today. He came back from his vacation. Let us see how his return will be felt in the community. Passover is over. There were *sedarim* in the kosher kitchen. "Recitals" and celebrations among "the children" and others. At the second *seder* I spoke briefly.[139]

"A year ago some circles of the intelligentsia in the ghetto sought an answer to the question: what is a Jew and who is a Jew? Everybody was tremendously preoccupied with this question. Formerly the majority of these people had never given much thought to this question. They felt they were Jews. Some more so, others less. Some, per-

[137] Martin Weiss. For his effect on the ghetto see Kortshak, *op. cit.*, p. 90-91.

[138] The Straszun Library.

[139] The following speech Kalmanovitch recorded on May 25.

haps, did not feel so at all. And if someone suffered because of his Jewishness he somehow found a remedy for it and, in general, occupied himself with other more practical affairs, rather than speculate about such an 'abstract' matter. Now these various people were driven together and locked up in the narrow confines of the ghetto. People of different languages, different cultures, different interests and beliefs, of different and, at times, mutually exclusive hopes and aspirations were gathered and placed under one label: Jews. Confined as punishment: *i.e.* they committed a crime and the crime consisted in being a Jew. Many of them actually did not know what to say about the 'crime.' They did not know what it means 'to be a Jew.' To be truthful, practically nothing resulted from all these speculations and reflections. It was impossible to find a clear and definite answer to the question: who is a Jew nowadays? For only now, in our generations, in the past 150 years, has the concept of Jew assumed so many meanings. Earlier, 'Jew' was a clear concept that had only one meaning. A Jew was one who observed the Jewish law and was a member of the Jewish group. Now various kinds of people are considered and consider themselves Jews, even such as do not observe or cherish the Jewish law or have no idea what Jewishness is. But even in this case I obtained an answer to the question, 'who is a Jew?' from a child in the ghetto. The statement, 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou founded strength,' was again confirmed. A teacher of religion in the ghetto school told me the following story of his experiences. In the school are children who were total strangers to Jews, who had never heard either in their homes, or in school, or in the street anything of the Jewish past, of Jewishness. Now in the ghetto many of these children listen eagerly to the stories of the old sacred history, of the Bible. One such child, who had previously attended a Polish school and had spoken Polish at home, studied with great interest the stories of the Bible. When, in the weekly portion of *Toledot,* they studied the story of Jacob and Esau, this child suddenly called out: 'Teacher we are the descendants of Jacob and they (*i.e.* those that wrong us) the descendants of Esau. Right? It is good this way. I want to be of the descendants of Jacob and not of the descendants of Esau.' I reflected on this story and discovered that I could deduce from it a method for determining who is a Jew. It is as follows: The fantasy of the individual is free, no walls can confine it. A person in the ghetto can therefore on occasion imagine that he is given a choice: he can divest himself of his Jewish inferior and beaten 'I' and assume the 'I' of the master of the ghetto.

Now I ask: What would he do? Would he want to change? Would he desire to take on the image of the master? If he does we may assume that he is not a Jew. But if by his free choice he wishes to remain a Jew, then he is a Jew. Continuing to reflect: the Jewish child instinctively chose to be a Jew. It feels naturally at home among Jews. In the case of the adult, whom I imagine choosing freely to be a Jew, is instinct a sufficient ground in his case? Or can there be rational motives also?

"I believe it can. To be a Jew means in every instance to be in an exalted position. The temporary suffering and blows that descend upon the Jew have a meaning, are not merely oppressions, and do not degrade the Jew. For a Jew is a part of the sacred triad: Israel, the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He. That means the Jewish people, the moral law and the Creator of the universe. This sacred triad runs through the whole course of history. It is a reality that has been proved countless times. Our grandfathers clung to the triad, lived by its strength. And now too: the Jew who does not cling to this triad is to be pitied. He wanders in a world of chaos, he suffers and finds no rationale for his suffering; he can be severed from his people, *i.e.* he can wish to change his self. But the Jew who clings to the sacred triad need not be pitied. He is in a secure association. To be sure, this is a stormy period in history. A war is being waged against the Jew. But this war is not merely directed against one link in the triad but against the entire one: against the Torah and God, against the moral law and Creator of the universe. Can anyone still doubt which side is the stronger? In a war it happens that one regiment is beaten, taken captive. Let the Jews in the ghetto consider themselves as such prisoners of war. But let them also remember that the army as a whole is not and cannot be beaten. The Passover of Egypt is a symbol of an ancient victory of the sacred triad. My wish is that all of us should live to see the Passover of the future."

[*Tuesday, May 26, 1943*]. I finished writing the speech on May 25.[140] Needless to say, nothing remained of the expressions of that evening. Many events are over and it is too bad that I did not record them at the time. What happened cannot be brought back.

I shall record what I remember.

I was in the house of the Karaite *hakham*. I went by car with the masters. His manuscript had to be corrected. Refreshments, coffee.

140 That is a month after the speech had been delivered.

THE PAGE OF THE DIARY CONTAINING
THE FINAL PORTION OF THE PASSOVER SPEECH

Small talk. He showed us his archives. An excellent tribe in its way. This was on Tuesday, the 18th.

When M. returned from his vacation he assured us that the situation of the ghetto was secure. We shall work in two or three shifts. But the slightest infraction will be severely punished. The clothing, furniture and provisions of the murdered were brought here. Needless to say that the murderers picked out the better clothes and their Jewish workers have to clean and mend them. Here too work clothes, underwear and other things are distributed among those who need them.

The vigorous cultural activity continues: dramatic presentations, orchestras, a Yiddish and Hebrew choir, a young people's club, lectures for workers every Sunday, lectures by the physician, a Hebrew circle, men of letters write articles and are subsidized, painters paint, the sport field is as before. The tyrant[141] does not skip a day. He stands at the gate. He examines the papers. He orders our police to administer brutal floggings. This is the way of life in our ghetto. From afar come reports that stir us to the very depths.[142] Rumors have spread among our neighbors that the same bitter destiny is also in store for us. I defy thee, Satan!

Friday, [*June*] *11.* What a pity that I did not record the tragic events when they happened. Every day brings something new. Great tension prevails. The situation [of the ghetto] appears fairly safe. There are many orders. The workshops are expanding their scope. There is work in various trades. Clothing, shoes and straw sandals are repaired. Workers are in demand. There was a request for 5,000 workers for the western capital[143] and 3,000 for an eastern city. We succeeded in putting it off. Again a number of those employed in the administration were dismissed. The men must work in the city and the women in the workshops. Here work is truly our life in the literal sense of the word. We attempt to satisfy our masters in this way. From the camp in Žiežmariai[144] 400 persons were sent to the front. Another 1,400 were to be brought here but they hastened toward the new capital[145] and were taken there. The masters are tottering.

A tragic event—and it is really a miracle that it did not bring about

141 Apparently Martin Weiss.
142 The allusion is to the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto.
143 Riga. The eastern city mentioned farther on may be Minsk.
144 A town on the highway between Vilna and Kaunas.
145 Riga, the capital of the entire eastern province under the Nazis.

a general catastrophe. It happened the day before yesterday. The young people in the provinces boast that they possess arms. Tuesday morning a young man wanted to enter the camp. He was examined at the gate and a search of his effects aroused suspicion. He was taken to prison. Whereupon he whipped out a pistol and shot a policeman to death. The commandant who quickly appeared on the scene paid him his due. Again he saved the ghetto from dreadful danger. Do not give . . . an opportunity. Once again he warned against bringing in arms. He began systematic searches. Yesterday, *The Eternal Jew* was performed. It aroused interest. In the evening there was a celebration in the yeshiva. There were speeches by the rabbis and singing. The orthodox feel that they are being wronged. Children go daily for walks in the woods. The master offered vegetables for the camp.

Friday, June 18. The day before yesterday, after an interruption of two days—their holidays—my master suggested that I translate Yiddish letters. For the first time I felt the yoke of my work. I nearly cursed my knowledge. These are letters that fell into the hands of the strangers, letters of relatives that contain nothing that is incriminating but which nevertheless can bring misfortune upon their owners. Perhaps some details can be glossed over, but I am no expert at this. I am afraid, there might be a check. I told it to the commandant of our police. He did not know about it. It is hard to tell if someone will suffer on account of it. All in all, the affair is somewhat dated, going back to April. Yesterday the translation was ready. I sent it with the chauffeur to my master, who was entertaining guests and forgot about it. He departed for a conference and took the documents along—so the chauffeur reported. There is hope that the affair will passs peacefully.

Today was a day of rejoicing. The assistant came in with a smiling face. Yivo lives—overseas.[146] He told me of a report in an overseas paper of the conference in January of this year. Great was the excitement. I praised the Lord who permitted me to hear good tidings. I was particularly happy about the young historian,[147] who escaped from the French army. I told it to several people, former friends of the Institute, and they were all happy. I have no words to express my tempestuous feelings. Thus, Lord of the Universe, houses of wood are

[146] Willi Schaeffer read of the Yivo conference in a German periodical and told about it. Abraham Sutskever tells that Kalmanovitch wept for joy at the news.

[147] The reference is to Z. Szajkowski, who read a paper at the seventeenth annual conference of Yivo in New York, in January 1943.

destroyed and you replace them with stone edifices. All is for the sake of Thy Name, regardless of whether it be known or concealed from the outer eye. The root and the essence, of course, are in the land of our fathers. From there too, come encouraging reports. Against his will, the evil angel tells the praises of the Holy One, blessed be He.

Here in the ghetto all moves too slowly. More men and women were drafted to work for the strangers. The masters are satisfied. In the past few days we hear nothing of oppressions. Vegetables are brought in.

Sunday, [June] 27. Yesterday there was great agitation in the Jewish camp. Today also. The commandant and his intimate friends are excited. This is what happened. The temporary commandant of the secret police[148] came to invite the former secretary of the police[149] to go to the forest. He is suspected of being the moving spirit and leader of the Revisionists, who are preparing themselves for defense. This, of course, is dangerous. There may be some other people who favor this idea. He began to dodge. Then he sent three young policemen, who took him by force, beat him and, bound in chains, placed him on a wagon to be taken to the forest. Young boys and girls of his followers gathered, each one with his weapon, and a fight ensued. The followers of the former secretary were victorious and they freed him from his chains. Afterwards, he himself went to the commandant and thence departed for the forest. In the evening the commandant declared publicly in the theatre that all this had been done against his will. The official will be punished. But whoever wants to depart for the forest better take his family with him. Today the intermediary[150] was dissatisfied with a poem by Halperin that was recited in the course of a lecture to the workers. When attempts were made to continue, the commandant adjourned the meeting. Needless to say, he is afraid, for even the walls have ears. In the meantime there is great excitement. The former chief of the cultural department,[151] the German poet, was discharged. Nominally, he was suspended for two weeks, but in effect it means a discharge. For the time being the Hebrew writer who received the literary prize[152] is taking his place. An order for all men

148 Raphael Oster.

149 Joseph Glazman. On this incident *cf.* Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 436-39; Kortshak, *op. cit.*, p. 176; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 108-10.

150 Aaron Broido.

151 Dr. Leon Bernstein. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 238, 390, and others; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 148-50 and 347.

152 Israel Dimentman. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 270-71.

to shave their beards and mustaches, for shaving soap has arrived. They say that it is forbidden to keep your hands in your pockets. A story that the commandant searched today the pockets of several girls and beat them. Nerves are taut to the breaking point. It is time to free ourselves. Saw today a boxing match: Jose beat Jose. This was unofficial. Because of inclement weather the opening of the field and all that goes with it did not take place. It was postponed for next Sunday.

Monday, July 5. This week there was considerable agitation, but one no longer becomes excited. The tragic events have no more effect. The final day is being awaited. After the clash between the police and the members of "Betar," the chief of the cultural department was given a furlough for two weeks. Some said that he resigned. But these apprehensions did not materialize. The former eldest of the council[153] moved to discontinue the subsidy to the writers' association, but the members of the general committee[154] rejected the motion. There is said to be a great financial stringency because of the loss of shops. And above all: the change in the personnel ruling the ghetto. M. was sent to the front (?). It is not yet known who will take his place. They tell that he came in a car with all his suitcases (eighteen pairs of shoes!) and stopped before the ghetto clock. He looked without saying a word, turned around and departed. Meanwhile the police officer of the Germans is in charge.[155] It is hard to say anything about him. He addressed the leaders of the labor groups and cautioned them to comply with all the restrictive measures. He placed the responsibility upon the leaders. In some instances all members of the group will be responsible for one another, if they do not tell. We have not yet heard of any victims on account of him. He loves jazz, plays and conducts dances. Let us hope that he will not be averse to a gift. He threatened that in case any one escapes all the inmates of the room will be held responsible. In Bialowake[156] he ordered fifteen people shot because of the flight of one.[157] Merely to indicate into whose hands we have been delivered, one more little point. Our chief explains to a friend the meaning of *Agada.* He says: "Don't you know? In Greek *agados*

153 Anatol Fried.

154 The communal relief committee. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 183-85, 366-79 and others.

155 Kittel.

156 About twelve miles from Vilna. There Jews were employed in the peat works.

157 The young man's surname was Reznik. We could not ascertain his given name. See Lazar, *op. cit.,* p. 117-18.

means holy." This is the man who has been entrusted with the destiny of cultural treasures. He already demonstrated what he can do. He cast into the waste heap a large number of rare books. What had been left of the Yivo library went to the factory. I was at the closing exercises of the academic year. Of course, one cannot expect any special excellence. But the work is good. Considerable accomplishments.

Friday, July 9. Tension mounts. There are dire indications of a catastrophe. Further killings in the surrounding provincial towns. This morning one of the "Betar" people, a dismissed policeman, was arrested. They searched for the second fellow.[158] It is well-known that this is the work of informers. The commandant is perplexed. Our secret police has surrounded the library. The director is kept under close guard.[159] Who knows what may happen yet? What is the new master planning? His heart ferments with evil. An inhabitant of the city visited one of the false preachers. His evil eye inspires terror. The honest one[160] told: "Some of us think, let them go, the dejected ones." But the other one explains: "If we will be defeated they will be the first to rise in vengeance against us. Therefore we must exterminate them to the last." The wicked plotteth against the righteous and gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord doth laugh at him; for He seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn the sword to slay the poor and needy, to slay those whose path is upright. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and all their bones shall be broken.[161] The hour has come. The waters are come even unto the soul! The murderers—this is their only concern! Don't they realize that all is lost? The honest one says: "We shall be the first to fall." The conversations that they conduct among themselves: "We veterans have been driven into a corner, and the newcomers have seized the leading positions."

The arrested man was freed. Today the court watchman stopped the main carrier[162] and took away his books. How the affair was cov-

158 This passage is not clear in the original. The reading is apparently: חפשו אחרי העדי השני.

159 The director of the library was Herman Kruk. See Note 58.

160 This passage is not clear. It is possibly a conversation between a Nazi racist and a German or Lithuanian.

161 *Psalms* 37:12-15, with the substitution of *"azmotam"* (their bones) for *"kashtotam"* (their bows). Also the other passages are from *Psalms* 28:1; 13:4-6.

162 Apparently Shmerke Kaczerginsky. The watchman's name was Virblis. See Pupko-Krinsky, in *Yivo Bleter,* vol. xxx, 216-17.

ered up I do not know. They know no restraint and no limit. All of us tread on the edge of the sword. Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? Show us a sign for good! The time has come. Hide not Thy face from me for I have become like them that go down into the pit. Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest mine enemy say: "I have prevailed against them;" else mine adversaries rejoice when I fall. But as for me, in Thy mercy do I trust; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because He hath dealt bountifully with me.

Tuesday, [July] 13. Days of great agitation and of terror for the entire community. In the aforementioned labor camps several hundred people were put to death. They were gathered into a barn and were thanked for their loyal services. Meanwhile the demons of destruction approached, surrounded the building, and the angel with the thousand eyes was given a free hand.[163] Yesterday and the day before there was talk of separating the men from the women. There were rumors of the need for "heads." They talk of thousands. Towards evening the clouds lifted slightly. But the "heads of the tribes"[164] began to consider the situation. In the labor department they worked all night compiling lists of workers in the military institutions. This led to the conclusion that the others would be exterminated. Work was stopped in all departments. The master[165] came in yesterday and also today. I have not heard anything of his deeds. Terror stalks through the streets. There are assurances that nothing will happen if the ghetto will refrain from undesirable deeds. But who knows what is desirable, if one judgment awaits all of us—the innocent and the guilty. Apparently, something is going to happen. Something is in the air. A very heavy blow will fall upon our heads. Hiding places are being prepared. But how is that possible? I endeavor to show my neighbors that I am not worried about the future. In effect, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Unwillingly one becomes infected with the mood of the environment. The very air inspires panic. People are downcast. Their eyes stare into empty space. One individual inspires deadly terror in the heart of the other.

163 The reference is here to the burning of the Jewish workers in the Bezdan camp. See Kortshak, *op. cit.*, p. 179-80; Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 475; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 118-120.

164 That is, of the parties.

165 Apparently Kittel, who liquidated the Vilna ghetto. See Sutskever, *op. cit.*, p. 144-47; Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 318-19 and 481; Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.*, p. 18-19.

Meanwhile the workers in the peat mines,[166] who had been summoned to work several days ago, returned to the city. Is this a good or bad sign? The watch at the gate has been practically discontinued. None of the masters are seen. As much as possible is being brought in. Prices have dropped. Today there was a cartload of bread from the city and the gentile driver sold two-killogram loaves of bread. Is this a sign for good or, God forbid, for evil? People attempt to figure out the future. To me it appears impossible to predict anything. Terror paints the picture of the future. No one can grasp the full danger that hangs over us because of last Friday's arrest. The impression was gained that they believe it to be a false accusation. This may be possible, but the reverse is also possible. If a pretense is made of believing that it is a false accusation, one may conclude that at the present moment there is no question of a terror action. To be sure, this question may arise at any moment. Anything will do as a pretext. There were rainy days. When the skies are clear the action is more pleasant for those who execute it. This too may be for the best. The tension here may have been effective in preventing the expression of joy over the enemy's defeat. Blows fall on him from all sides.[167]

In my own little world the superintendent caught the "man of memory"[168] in the act of smuggling out books. He brought him to the master. Needless to say the latter fell into a rage, but finally confined himself to threats. Many problems have arisen. He wants to have information about the conditions of orthodox Jewry in the days of "the Great." He wants to look at the Yivo archives. He said that he was sick of propaganda. He wants scientific data. He wants to study the social conditions in the villages under the Poles. Perhaps he is beginning to prepare for himself a position in the coming regime? But why should I be concerned with him? The burden of my lot is sufficient unto me. When I am alone there is no trace of fear in my heart. I have absolute confidence. This may be indifference? No, I have the will to see, and, mainly, to tell the events to the Jews on the other side of the ghetto. What will be the reaction of the Jewish soul upon which the heavy hand has not fallen? What will be the results upon the life of the total community? Will the heavy hammer of the smith shatter

166 Some ten miles from Vilna, in Reshe, nearly 100 Jews were employed in the peat works. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

167 The conquest of Sicily began on July 10, 1943. In Russia the Germans were also in retreat.

168 Dr. Daniel Feinstein.

the steel anvil? Boys are playing ball in the square before me. Occasionally they gather in groups and talk. Are they perhaps waiting for a brighter future?

The commandant "temporarily" disbanded all organizations: teachers, engineers, pharmacists, physicians, writers. There is fear of an evil eye. The new regime is not clear. Who knows if they will be satisfied with a gift that we can give, that we can afford? In all workshops this mood prevails. The better ones among them refuse to believe what is happening. But, of course, when they will be told that this was a means of defense against underground groups, then the majority of them will agree to the action *ex post facto* and not interfere with the coming actions for the same reason. We can rely on no one but our Father in Heaven. And if He has hidden His face, we must pray that He again have mercy on us and hasten the downfall of the oppressor and speedily in our days cast him into the pit that he himself had dug.

Wednesday, [July] 14. [Yesterday] toward evening a rumor spread that deliverance and salvation have come. Some say that this is only temporarily. It is said that the redeemer [from fear] was the head of the gangsters himself.[169] He communicated directly with the capital, in the presence of the commandant, and received a pacifying order. The community will remain under his control and will not be handed over to new harsh masters. It is also said—and today these rumors have been repeated again—that the soldiers requested and specifically demanded the cessation of the executions.[170] For the time being the merciful ones won out. But the majority of our people are in the grip of the terror of death. It is hard to listen to their words. The word "last" recurs on every occasion. And precisely among those who were secure in the quiet days. Had they been apprehensive before we would not have come to this pass. It rained last night and today. This may be the reason the oppressor did not show up. The tyrant has not yet appointed a chief supervisor [over the ghetto]. It is therefore hard to say if the new murderer will be in control. M. is now remembered favorably. And people dream of salvation at the hands of H![171] This is the way of the world. New misfortunes cause the earlier misfor-

169 Hingst.

170 In the ghetto considerable hope was placed upon the difference of opinion between the military authorities and the Gestapo. The military authorities were regarded as a force that might save the Jews from total extermination. On the difference between the two forces in their attitude toward the Jews, see Weinreich, *op. cit.*, p. 140-202.

171 Hingst.

tunes to be forgotten. Yesterday and the day before there was some talk that the chief murderer[172] in the eastern districts was killed in battle. Would that the same fate that overtook the murderer of forty years ago in Palmyra of the North[173] also overtake Armilius speedily in our days. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation. All survivors of the two neighboring camps were brought here.

Thursday, [July] 15. The tension has subsided slightly. But last night the men of the third police district[174] brought here the workers on the neighboring railroad, with their families, in two cars. The cars that stopped in the street caused a panic. It is well known to whom they belong; nevertheless, it was thought that they came to take away people from here. People began hiding, until the purpose of their arrival became known. Some say that now the situation is secure. Others, on the other hand, are of the opinion that the catastrophe has merely been postponed for a few days. Today the leader of our group asked the master kindly to clarify the situation. His work, after all, is impossible without us. He admitted this and promised to inquire from the masters in the high office, who are his friends. Lord of the universe, how, in what manner, can a touch of humanity be brought into the hearts of these people? How can their spirits be fortified? Their esteem raised in their own eyes? They are in need of faith! May this faith descend from the Gates of Mercy into their petrified hearts. May they perceive and know that they live only by a miracle.

Friday, [July] 16. The past night was a horrible night, without parallel as yet. At two o'clock sounds of steps and cries were heard in the streets. Confused and frightened, people hastened to hide. All who live in our house escaped. Only we and the couple with the sick husband remained. After half an hour the people were told that it was safe to return to their homes. The majority of the people, however, remained outside. Later a panic broke out again. At five o'clock came an announcement that the workers are proceeding to their work in the city. The root of the matter was this: after the tension had ostensibly subsided and tidings had come from all sides that the danger for the ghetto had passed, there came another demand for the surrender of the representative of the G.[175] in the defense. One version has it

[172] Heinrich Lohse.

[173] The allusion is to the attempt made on the life of von Plehve in St. Petersburg, the "Palmyra of the North" (Derzhavin's phrase).

[174] The ghetto police were divided into four commissariats or districts.

[175] G. stands for Great. The reference is to the demand for the surrender of

that the commandant called the people for a consultation. During the meeting secret police from outside came in and he pointed him out, saying: "There he is." He was arrested and put in chains. But the young men assembled and freed him. They barricaded themselves in a house and began to threaten the police with arms: "Whoever approaches will pay with his life." Eventually, common sense prevailed and representatives were sent to negotiate with the commandant. It was agreed that he was to surrender voluntarily. But he escaped twice and disguised himself in woman's attire. (Some say that the foreign regime stipulated a period of time; others say that such a period has not been stipulated.) Some say that there was shooting and that there were wounded. Others, deny it. Meanwhile half a day passed and he got up sufficient courage and surrendered. Thus the situation calmed down slightly. Needless to say the night passed without sleep. The fear resulting from the rumors of last week had its effect upon the people. All offices are closed. No one works. People are tired and embittered. Every one is afraid of his own image. One is embittered because he had to deliver a person to death and another is embittered because his relative or acquaintance was handed over. And who knows what will happen tomorrow? Will the prisoner be able to control himself and not divulge new names? There is some supposition that the oppressors already have a list of sixty people. But they are in no hurry to look for them. They have ample time. Is this a cat-and-mouse game? Who can penetrate their secret? It is to be supposed that also in the city the work was futile. We, of course, practically moved no hand. This is the usual situation. I did not hear what had happened in other places. What aid can be given by excited and frightened people, tired because of sleepless nights? The organization[176] may bring misfortune upon the entire community before it launches its activities. In the meantime the organization is oriented inward and interferes with the activities of the commandant. Where there is no unity in deed there is always danger from every possible direction and there will be no peace until it is dissolved. But it will not dissolve; its members are linked in guilt. The leader[177] is a frivolous and hysterical person. There may

Isaac Wittenberg. See "Der Wittenberg-tog in vilner geto," in *Yivo Bleter*, vol. xxx, no. 2, 188-213; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 122-27; Kortshak, *op. cit.*, p. 182-88.

176 The F. P. O. Details about the organization are to be found in the aforementioned works of Kortshak, Lazar, Dworzecki, Sutskever and Kaczerginsky.

177 The reference is to Joseph Glazman, the commander of the first batalion of the F. P. O.

also be some pride. But personality here is a secondary matter, the important thing is the way of this well-known party.[178] Let us hope that when the reign of terror falls, this group, too, will disappear from Jewish life, for it will have no hold in the days of creating and building.

The day passed peacefully. Praised be the Lord. The Sabbath comes all over the world but not here. Here it is not admitted. There are Jews who would like to observe the Sabbath, despite all obstacles. But the majority cannot do it and should not be asked to do it. Propaganda for Sabbath observance would succeed if the orthodox were wise and adjured the Jews thus: "If the Holy One blessed be He, keeps us alive and delivers us, then we shall observe the Sabbath appropriately all our years."

Sunday, [July] 18. What occurred the day before yesterday surpasses in inner tension everything that happened before. Jews raised hands against Jews. The arms intended for the protection of Jewish lives took Jewish lives. Several were wounded and there is a rumor that one died of his wounds. The youngsters who had undertaken to defend the outraged honor of the nation themselves desecrated the Name of Heaven. And it is a veritable miracle that the tyrant did not learn about it. If he will find out later, the consequences will not be so grave. I think it is the fault of the extreme nationalists. The other extremists followed them because of weakness. The young man who fell a victim[179] will remain a saint. He really wanted to avoid suffering and in this he succeeded. Not being able to stand the tortures of that day, he took poison and bequeathed life to all the living. Blessed be his memory. My feeling of hatred for that party diminishes daily.[180] A Jewish heart beats in their breast. Perhaps when free, they will repent. For the time being it seems to me they are conducting themselves properly. Their allies carry out as far as possible the duties imposed upon them, and they, the imprisoned, must suffer and be silent. Self-defense is a false vision. It has no meaning or value and certainly no concrete significance. One dare not say that those who perished died the death of churls, although they went to their slaughter like lambs. The living Jewish people will always remember them in glory. Their death will be a monument to the crimes of the murderers. Their death

178 The Revisionists.

179 Isaac Wittenberg.

180 The party of "the Great."

is an atonement for the sins of the entire generation. Let all men the world over know how God's people was murdered innocently. All over the world they will be remembered and their memorial will remain a sign unto the coming generations. Whenever the spirit of tyranny arises again and seeks to spread its dominion over men, let it be remembered what the cruel tyrant did to the people of Israel, and men will brace themselves to suppress the evil spirit before it spreads. Glory and honor to the victims of the birthpangs of redemption! The attempt to arm is the result of irresponsibility, of total lack of thought. It is operative only against the brother [the Jew]. And the tyrant will stand aside and laugh at our misfortunes. Perhaps they will become wiser and more careful in the future. Then, I believe, the danger will remain hanging over us, but will not materialize.

Yesterday our master visited the masters of the place and received assurance from them that all is well and that for the time being there is no danger. Details will come on Monday. On Thursday very prominent guests visited our workshops. They marvelled at our work. So it is: even the Evil Angel must against his own will say "Amen" to creative work. Labor and creation are our life. Let us express our enthusiasm for our people whose creative forces have not yet left them. Our hope is great that in the days of our deliverance the power of creativity will come to our aid in rebuilding the ruins of our people in its own land and in uniting the scattered of Israel. May God guard us from the extremists. It is impossible to comprehend their feelings: is it the feeling of the community or of the individual who is tense, who has lost his patience and is no longer capable even of thinking? The extremists in Jerusalem[181] were confident of victory. They knew that they were few in number. But then, was it not possible for God to deliver the many into the hands of the few? Only after the final blow did they conclude that God had abandoned His people and did not want its survival. Then they took their own lives lest the enemy make a mockery of them and also to the end that their souls return to their origin. It cannot be that our extremists believe in the possibility of victory. If they were pervaded by a community feeling they would surely know that mankind as a whole has sufficient strength to cast off the yoke of the dominion of arrogance and although the end will tarry, it will nevertheless come. Then why make a useless uprising? The strength of the prisoner lies only in his continued existence. The group demands

181 At the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.

no deeds from him other than his self-preservation at all costs. And if any other feeling intervenes there is ground for suspicion that it is cowardice, lack of the will to live. How can one make the young people ponder this fact? How can one warn them against following the short-tempered, who have brought harm to the nation more than once and who are liable to impede its creative work? Can we forget their noisily proclaimed slogan: "Break the Histadrut!?"[182] Today not a trace remains of all their speculations. There is no foundation for their program, which was perhaps really the product of tyranny. Not merely because tyranny by its very nature is directed principally against us, but mainly because our redemption will materialize—again by the nature of the thing—within the framework of human liberty, which will arise after the fall of tyranny. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall the Lord be one and His name one." In building the future there will be one program or a unified program.

The same day. Rumors: the white city,[183] a community of 60,000, was turned over to the control of the army, as a security measure. Negotiations are going on also about our community. Would that it were so! There is a story that a drunkard, who brings in liquor regularly, came last night at eleven o'clock dressed in a German uniform, with a belt and a revolver. The Lithuanian demanded 100,000 hush-money. Meanwhile he was arrested together with his wife and child.[184] The matter was settled. The Lithuanian was silenced. The commandant spoke today. He wants to resign. It is difficult to remain on the job.

Friday, [July] 23. At the invitation of the assistant,[185] a "mass meeting" took place yesterday in the theatre. The commandant told the audience what had happened: "Thank God, we have rescued 21,000 people.[186] Efforts are being made to obtain work. Through work we shall force the Evil Angel to yield to our will. The party people stand like Satan. They must be removed, the conventicles must be dissolved. No former sins must be remembered in the ghetto. Similarly, former merits have no value if they cannot preserve the ghetto.

182 The reference is to the attack of the Revisionists upon the *Histadrut Haovdim* (General Federation of Jewish Labor) in Palestine.

183 Bialystok.

184 The Lithuanian was delivered into the hands of the Lithuanian police. Gens arrested him. It is strange that the Jewish police should have had in their power the wife and child of the Lithuanian.

185 S. Dessler. See note 113.

186 The number of Jews presumably at that time in Vilna.

We must defend our lives. Should anything similar happen in the future I shall take the proper steps.

"Work will save our lives. We must not believe those dwelling outside,[187] for they have only their own interests at heart. We dare not leave the ghetto and separate ourselves from the community. There was a grave danger, but it is passing."

There is a rumor that several days ago another young man with arms was apprehended. Fortunately, the policemen were our own . . . Fourteen young men and women, members of the party,[188] were dismissed. He does not want to employ such as may jeopardize the community of the ghetto. In reality, when these people speak of the so-called "honor" which they defend they bring disgrace upon the tens of thousands that perished. These martyrs are in truth no less worthy than those who took to the sword. One cannot compare the Haganah in Palestine or even the self-defense organization during the pogroms in Russia with the situation here. Only cowards and confused people can think of bringing in arms here. The capital[189] cannot serve as a basis of comparison. We do not know what happened [there]. One can imagine that there our young people defended a more communal cause than the lives of 20,000 people, where there was absolutely no hope of averting by these means the danger to which they were exposed.

Monday, [July] 26. The news of the retreat from Orel[190] has not called forth that joy that would have broken out had there not prevailed such cumulative terror. We are still afraid that we shall not live to behold with our own eyes the end, that the tyrants will anticipate. Another thing: at night people were taken out again, old folks and the families of those who escaped. The defenders escaped and saved their lives. According to rumors the murderer has served notice that the local powers are inclined to take means, but they consulted the center. The wicked plotteth evil. The Lord doth laugh at him, for He seeth that his day is coming. This day is coming soon.

Tuesday, [July] 27. In the wide world the horizon is beginning

187 The Partisans in the forests.

188 The Revisionist Party.

189 Warsaw.

190 On August 5, 1943, during the great summer offensive, the Red Army entered the city of Orel (in Russian: Eagle). In the world of rumor the German retreat was at a much faster pace than in reality.

to clear. In the south[191] an armistice was concluded. Peace is plainly evident. And here the fear of death prevails. The day before yesterday eleven foremen of the labor groups were taken in addition to the old folks. Some of their relatives were among those that had escaped. The murderer announced that families, households and work groups will again be taken out. It is strictly forbidden to walk alone. Work outside the city is not allowed. Last night the people of the apartment (eleven people) were seized because of one young man.[192] On account of one young man there perished his father, mother and sister. And he himself returned today. Can they not restrain themselves? Control their fears? The commandant has taken upon himself a heavy task. Have mercy, O Lord, upon the remnant of Thy people. Wherefore should the nations say, Where is God?

(*Monday, August 2*), *Tuesday August 3.* When we came home from work last evening we found unexpected news: over one hundred (one hundred and fifty?) labor units were dissolved, and are no longer. Among them is also our group. A total of over 3,000 men and women. They will be assigned to work on the railroad and to dig trenches. The others will continue to work in the shops of the ghetto, which will be expanded. Needless to say that such events are coupled with rumors: some foremen of the units protested and managed to have the order rescinded. When our superior heard about it he felt offended that his slaves had been taken from him without his knowledge. He promised to protest tomorrow. There is some hope that he will succeed in rescinding the order. Without us the unit cannot exist. We cannot be replaced by non-Jews.[193] We shall see what will come out of his dreams. It must be admitted that most of the units that are important for the ghetto economy remain intact. The run for food that began yesterday afternoon is apparently over. Bread is being sold. In the morning the change is not very noticeable. Only now there remain [in the ghetto] many people who formerly would go out. They were not assigned to new shops yesterday because they waited in the hope that their foreman would succeed in restoring the previous condition. The main thing is: the day is near already, so near.

191 In Italy. The south and the southland refer to Italy. This was written after the revolt against Mussolini. A speedy end of the war in Italy was expected at that time. As is well-known, no armistice was declared in Italy in July 1943.

192 It was impossible to determine the name of the young man.

193 The text is not clear. Dr. M. E. Edelstein suggests the reading: אין להמיר אותנו בנכרים.

Four o'clock. The foreman of the group came back from the city. Our fate is in the balance. The matter was not decided here. It was necessary to refer to the center to decide: what is the importance of the rearward that gathers the remnants? If this be so, there is still some slight hope. If not, then relief and deliverance will arise from another place. Needless to say that the prevalent mood is one of dejection. People are mainly exercised over the slowness with which matters proceed outside.

Friday, [*August*] *6.* Again panic and terror. Yesterday there were rumors that thousands of workers are needed in Riga. They will be transported there with their families. As soon as they are uprooted they are in grave danger. This was generally so in other cities. They were led to slaughter in groups. Someone has decided that he is sure of this. Yesterday many did not go to work in the city. The police warned against dodging work. Dodgers will be arrested and handed over to the authorities along with their families. Arrests were expected last night. Whoever had any influence besieged the foremen that his name be removed from the list of those working in the city. In the evening the commandant spoke: "Don't believe the rumors. For the time being the ghetto is not in danger. Those assigned to work should go. Those refusing will be punished as stated previously." The people dispersed. The police and the labor department remained to compile the lists. In the speech [of the commandant] there was no denial of the rumors about thousands of people. It cannot be said in truth that the [whole] ghetto is in danger. Perhaps no evil will befall the workers. And even [if] evil should befall them there will be great sorrow and mourning in the ghetto and the confusion and terror will mount, but the ghetto will remain for the time being.

There were arrests during the night. In our courtyard, too, people were arrested, for we heard a commotion that roused us from our sleep. An hour later we heard they were all freed. In the morning people were telling: a crowd of young men and women gathered in the courtyard of the commandant crying and threatening. Finally he ordered the release of the arrested. But he warned of the necessity to report for work, otherwise also the families will be arrested.

At six o'clock I was in the courtyard and saw the commandant with his intimate friends. They talked and looked exceedingly worried. Apparently they had not slept all night. Policemen gathered in the thea-

tre auditorium. I went out into the street. Groups of workers were on their way to work as usual, nervous and with terror in their eyes.

Eight o'clock. Suddenly there were cries and weeping in the courtyard. According to information, the same took place in all houses. Has misfortune befallen the community? The rumors: all the groups were surrounded by soldiers. Afterward there were pacifying tidings: nothing happened. The information that is closest to the truth is: the soldiers began counting and dividing into sub-groups a group of 2,000 that reported for work at the railway station. This was not the usual procedure and a panic broke out. The people began to run and the soldiers fired in the air. Someone escaped from there and told of the incident, causing a panic. There is some conjecture, based upon unreliable sources, that now workers are really needed. For it is harvest time. Also to Grodno 4,000 were brought from Bialystok. From Kaunas people were taken to Latvia. But here the notorious trip to Kaunas[194] is still remembered by the people and they are afraid, in view of the fact that, according to one rumor, the workers reported the arrival of empty cars.

Thus our life is enveloped by confusion and terror. But the days are days of hope. The end is soon approaching. The southern kingdom has almost completely collapsed. The entire island has been captured. In the east, too, Orel was captured. Soon, perhaps within a few days, the chief tyrant will fall. And terror numbs the soul. Terrors are upon us.

I have forgotten: servants of the police of the wicked,[195] some thirty people, went to live outside the ghetto. There is a house there with a little garden, like a prison. There live the interned wives of "the Great." They work. These workers will not be allowed to have any contact with the surrounding world, not even with the ghetto. There are rumors that other groups will also be settled in this way. The rumors do not cease. Men and women believe that thousands were led to the slaughter, that the murderer has realized his wicked plan. If so, is this the beginning? I refuse to believe! "The Lord doth laugh at him; for He seeth that his day is coming."[196]

Eleven o'clock. Apparently the thing is clear now. Clear? An announcement that thousands will be sent to work in Riga in the well-

194 The action of Ponary-Kaunas. See the entry of April 25.
195 The group that worked in the Gestapo.
196 *Psalms*, 37:13.

known group. Specially assigned foremen will accompany them. Within a few days they will return and bring back regards and letters. The belongings of those sent away will be shipped after them. This is the official version: some 350 people were placed in railroad cars in the morning. Apparently the promise about thousands will be fulfilled. Fifty more are demanded at once. Obviously no one believes the official version. There is weeping without cessation on the part of those that were personally affected. The 2,000 are directly connected with the [entire] ghetto and the ghetto is full of "mourning and lamentation."[197] And I in my naiveté still believe that things are as represented. They will go to work in the Baltic states. What will happen to them when the work will be over? Or perhaps working conditions will be hard? Who knows? But my heart is steadfast that salvation will come ere the murderer will succeed in executing his evil plan. Whoever slipped away escaped, and whoever was caught may the Lord help him that we see him after our liberation. "In the Lord put I my trust"—"I will not be afraid."[198]

Monday, [*August*] *9.* It is clear that there were several score killed and wounded. Those that escaped were fired at. Those that thirst for blood received their reward. Their bloody guilt shall descend upon their heads. There are various stories about the attitude of the strangers. Some aided in the escape and others delivered the escaped ones to the authorities. It is inferred that the people went to work. The number was not completed. The situation for the future is uncertain for a number of reasons. All kinds of fictitious stories are current, as usual. What do I think? The masters want the work of the slaves. They demand that the shortages in the workshops in the city should be filled. If the current report that there is no more need of our work is false and our work is needed, then it is necessary to go into the city. Yesterday several individuals went out and brought in food. In order to obtain bread apparently a little influence was necessary. But nothing was heard of a shortage of bread. Nor is anything said about a rise in prices. They remained the same as before. The women say: "We fear the Lord."

In the morning a mood of dejection prevailed. Terror stalked across the land. Rumors have spread about the fugitives and their

[197] *Lamentations,* 2:5.

[198] Combined from *Psalms* 11:1 and *Isaiah* 12:2; close to the version of the *Havdala* service on Saturday night.

fate, about the burial of the slain, about the wounded in the hospital. In the afternoon there were rumors about a change in the regime of the wicked.[199] The people are afraid to believe. The rumors are undoubtedly false, as usual. This time, however, the rumors were persistent and received a more concrete form. Faces brightened; hope was kindled. Joy is marred, however, because of the terror. We wish to believe but cannot believe that our redemption is so near. And although it is so close at hand, we are nevertheless still in the hands of the murderers. Who knows what they will do to us in the brief hours before the end. We cannot believe the hearing of our ears. In effect: the full complement of workers is demanded for tomorrow. A shortage in the number will be considered as rebellion. The commandant replied: "The workers do not believe. But I shall deliver those that are in my power, police and officials, to fill the places of those missing." His suggestion was accepted. Arrangements were quickly made with the various bureaus and 250 men and women from among the officials went out to work. The rumor about the change in the country of the enemy is so pleasant, so exhilarating. One would love to see it realized and pronounce the benediction on deliverance from danger. It seems that God has heard the voice of our supplication. O that the days that are in store for us, the days of accomplishment, the days of deliverance and upbuilding hasten and come unto us! Today it is raining.

Tuesday, [August] 10. Yesterday the people gathered to hear the words of the commandant of the police of the masters.[200] He promised that all would be well. "All those that went off to work arrived at their places of work. In a few days the foremen will come back with letters and take the belongings of the workers. Those who did not obey and escaped were punished. Over 130 were killed. Let the workers go to work in the city. No more of them will be taken." (From which it is to be concluded that from the ghetto itself more workers will be taken.) "The needs of war demand workers, and if Jews will work they will not be harmed." Apparently, these words have slightly calmed the minds of the people. Many of them went to work. The officials of the ghetto also continue to go to work. Yesterday's rumors refuted those of the day before. Nevertheless, something must have happened on the other side of the wall. Redemption is approaching with rapid steps. There are announcements that the unemployed must

199 In the tensest moments come rumors of redemption.
200 Neugebauer. See Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

register. They will be distributed in various workshops. The authorities have promised that nothing untoward will happen. Once again reports of a change in the regime. Now there is talk of a dictatorship of three. The tyrant[201] himself has disappeared. Today some of our neighbors were seized. The catchers came in to calm the workers.

Thursday, [*August*] *12.* Rumors have spread that the flags and swastikas are being removed in the city. Needless to say this news called forth great elation. But it seems to be premature. A more reliable report: additional 5,000 workers were requested for the graphite mines. Implementation was postponed for next week. Would that nothing untoward happen! Apparently the people actually go to work, for all sorts of foodstuffs have appeared. Was the number completed? Were the requested workers registered? There are announcements that not all who were supposed to register have actually done so and that even some of the registered have escaped. Threats of punishment. Yesterday the foremen of the groups returned from their places near the sea. The camp consists of 25,000 people of various nationality. There came 900. The barracks are clean. Bread and soup.[202]

Sunday, [*August*] *15.* The day before yesterday there was a meeting of the police in the square. Apparently the situation has become clear. In the evening the commandant spoke in the courtyard of the council. "The situation has become stabilized, but we have to work. All unemployed must register and go to the city. There is a demand for 5,000 workers outside. Efforts were made to reduce the number as much as possible. If there will be no news we shall have to send some of our people. Let them go without panic. Those that will have to go will be selected. Whoever will receive orders will have to go. Single persons will be selected. Those working in the ghetto will receive passes. Seizures will stop."

There are other indications that the order of extermination is no longer effective. Only individuals who will not be careful will suffer. Sometimes even our masters come to the ghetto to see what their workers are doing. They hope that the unit will continue in existence. Either way we are in need of—redemption. The strength of the bearers of burdens is gone. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation.[203]

Thursday, [*August*] *19.* Salvation has not yet come to our camp.

[201] Hitler.
[202] *Cf.* the entries after August 6 with Dworzecki, *op. cit.,* p. 449-58.
[203] *Psalms* 38:23.

Trying days. There is no perceptible panic. Life follows its normal course. But the worm of extinction gnaws at the heart. The decree about workers is being carried out. Members of families and new workers are taken to the western coast. They are being taken to work. But all, including the foremen and, needless to say, the workers themselves, believe that the end will be extermination. It is true they say that the ghetto will remain, but there is some apprehension that if its working force is diminished and only the very weak remain it will not be able to exist, for it will not be able to fulfill the task imposed upon it by the authorities. And another thing: since industry is being established within the ghetto there will be no going out to the city and no bringing in of food and then hunger will ravage the ghetto, a catastrophe that is worse than death by the sword. Various plans are devised to deal with the situation, to maintain the balance of age in the community by sending away also old folks and children, who are unsuitable for work. If all the weak will remain here who will support them? At the head of the committee in charge of sending away people is the former president of the council,[204] a man as hard as flint, the reincarnation of a community president in the days of the catchers. "Every river has its own course."[205] In any event we must hope for salvation from heaven. Only He who has chosen Jacob His servant will strengthen us, liberate us and bring us to our goal in peace.

Sholem's birthday. He is 23 years old. The years of happiness passed away in one moment. In reality I have nothing to complain over my lot. All that a man like myself could have found in life I have found. I practically had no pains in bringing up children. He grew up and became a man by himself. I see in him a continuation of my own spiritual life, my own youth is repeated. I recall that before the outbreak of World War I, I returned from a trip abroad and that before the outbreak of the present war I came back from Palestine.[206] And just as the first war ended in peace, so we shall have peace when this war will come to an end. May it end with all its woes. "The redeemed of the Lord shall return with singing."[207] Today I was again in the Yivo. The masters are greatly disappointed. Their world is crumbling. They quarrel with each other. "Because you have drowned

[204] Anatol Fried.
[205] *Hulin*, 18, that means each locality has its own customs.
[206] Kalmanovitch visited Palestine in the summer of 1939, where he planned to settle. His only son Sholem had settled there previously.
[207] *Isaiah* 51:11.

others, they have drowned you."[208] The shop will undoubtedly be closed. We shall work for another week, to the 25th of the month. The situation is— the destruction of the destruction. The negation of negation must result in something positive. "Let not them that wait on Thee be ashamed for my sake O God of Israel."[209]

Monday, [August] 23. Today people were seized again. In the morning the gates were locked and only those were permitted to go in or out who went to work in the city or had blue passes, which show that they work in the offices or shops of the ghetto. The unemployed or those who were "naturalized" here later, indicated by the number of their identification card, were taken away for deportation. Tomorrow the first group of 2,000 (?)[210] will leave. Thousands more are being prepared. Some exaggerate the number. There is great concern over the fate of those that were sent away. There is also concern over the fate of those that remain. If all workers will leave for the west, the ghetto will automatically be dissolved. Would that the entire matter end well speedily. Our work is coming to an end, that means that thousands of books will be cast out on the rubbish pile. The Hebrew division will be dissolved. Whatever can possibly be rescued will be rescued with the help of God. We shall find that out when we will come back free men.

Thursday, [August] 26. Yesterday, a group left for their place of work. We had expected our policemen to accompany them. When such accompaniment was rejected, great concern was expressed over the fate of those that were leaving. Towards evening there was a report that they depart in peace, that the police had turned them over to the officials of their place of work and that they would arrive safely there. I believe that it is a matter of mood.[211] Next month people will be selected for the next group. Lord of the Universe, would that there were no longer time for it! Women are registered for work in the sewing and knitting shops. All unemployed were taken from our group. It seems that one group will be completely disbanded. All week I selected books; several thousands I cast with my own hands on the rubbish pile. A pile of books is scattered on the floor of the reading room of the Yivo—a cemetery of books, a brothers' grave, books that were hit by the war of Gog and Magog just like their owners. Needless

[208] *Ethics of the Fathers*, 2, 6.
[209] *Psalms*, 69:6.
[210] The question mark is in the original. It is not clear whether Kalmanovitch meant two thousand or thousands.
[211] The original here is uncertain.

to say, most of these books were completely worn and no longer of any use. But also the new volumes taken from the book stores are perhaps entirely superfluous, for there are no customers for them. Even under the previous regime they had no place in life. The few that I have selected—perhaps we shall manage to save them. And if salvation will hasten to come, perhaps we may be able to save a remnant from the pile. Would that it were so!

Monday, [August] 30. Yesterday—a speech by the commandant. "My mother[212] said: 'I heard that you and those around you, some 2,000 people will go over to the capital and leave us to sorrow and destruction.' If this were another woman she would get 40 lashes and then to the grave. But out of respect for mother I had to tell her: 'It is an absolute lie. There is nothing to it. All of us shall remain here. One dare not create a panic. It is dangerous. Those who go out, do it because of cowardice—they fall into the trap.' This is what happened to the twenty heroes that were apprehended by two non-Jews.[213] What good were their arms? It is necessary to wait patiently. The end is already in sight. The deportations to the north for labor have temporarily been stopped. If resumed they will be on the previous basis—only those people will be sent whose being here is not essential. We must constitute a community of workers. Thus we shall be saved." Apparently the moods have somewhat calmed down, such is the report. But the dreadful rumors continue. Nerves are unbearably taut. Our comfort are the children. They gather in the athletic field, exercise, play, and await redemption. Today is a communal fast. The Minor Day of Atonement. Penitential prayers, psalms, exhortations as usual. The orthodox have awakened. This is a good sign for them and for us.[214]

Besides the diary, written on the reverse side of a Yivo receipt book, there remained a few loose pages. These pages have not reached us. We have only the translation, made in Vilna, which S. Kaczerginsky sent to us. We publish it with only a few matter-of-course emendations. We have had no opportunity to compare the translation with the original and we do not know to what extent it is faithful to Zelig Kalmanovitch's original.

212 The mother of the commandant, who lived in the ghetto and outlived her son. This is apparently an oratorical way of saying: there are rumors.

213 This is Gens' version of the attempt of Joseph Glazman and his Partisan group to make their way into the woods. See Dworzecki, *op. cit.*, p. 446-48; Lazar, *op. cit.*, p. 128-37.

214 Kalmanovitch was sent to Estonia in the first week of September, possibly on September 1. On Kalmanovitch in Estonia see Kaczerginsky, *op. cit.*, p. 109-10.

The confusion in dates is striking. May 15, 1943, was on a Saturday, but the following dates are doubtful. After the entry of May 15 come the following dates: June 17, June 19, then again May 20 and June 26. Worse than that: the date does not correspond with the indicated day of the week. June 17, 1943, was on a Thursday and not on a Sunday. June 19 was on a Saturday and not a Tuesday. If we assume that it happened in May and there is an error in the month, there still would be no correspondence between the dates and the indicated days of the week. May 17 was on a Monday and not on a Sunday and May 19 was on Wednesday and not on a Tuesday. Then comes an entry: Wednesday, May 20. In 1943, May 20 was on a Thursday. The last date is Tuesday, June 26, again an erroneous date, for June 26 was on a Saturday. Even if these entries were from 1942 the dates and the days of the week do not correspond. But the content of the entries is not plausible for 1942.

Although in these supplementary pages the personal element is much more manifest than usually in Kalmanovitch, there is no doubt that they also derive from him. We have here the same moods, opinions and evaluations. Even the same expressions appear in part. However, since we do not have the original the identity of expressions cannot be fully determined.

For these reasons we have not incorporated these pages in their proper places in the diary, but given them separately.

We are told that in Vilna there was supposed to have been a diary that Kalmanovitch wrote in Estonia. This diary is said to have contained thirty narrow pages. It is also possible that beside the diary there was a smaller notebook about the Vilna ghetto, from which we have the following pages.—*The Editors.*

Saturday, May 15 [1943]. We went out at the appointed time. The work is as usual. I took off the bookstacks a Russian collection. I returned it at one o'clock. The former director of the theatre museum[215] brought me half a cheese. There is no money. After the meager lunch, sleep. It is a hot day and it is hard to don the winter coat. In the hot days it will be very difficult to sit all day in our coop. Coming back, I met H. K. Yesterday's rumors about the dreadful events in the townships are exaggerated. They originated with a certain hysterical woman. Within a few days the matter will be clarified. When I woke up I went to the library. I browsed and fell asleep again. I returned home. I met the gloomy, frightened and worried face of Mishke.[216] Heard the report about the capture of Kerch.

[215] Uma Olkenicky. See *Yivo Bleter,* in vol. xxvi, no. 1, 5.

[216] S. Kaczerginsky indicates in the notes to the supplementary pages that this is Mishke Prener, a laborer in the Rosenberg staff (in the Yivo building).

But the "course" of life has not changed. Tonight there will be a lecture in the literary society on Solomon Molcho. Tomorrow, in memory of Sholem Aleichem. All is well. Yesterday, at the reception in the police headquarters the commandant assured us that the position of the Vilna ghetto is secure. There is nothing to worry about. We have found favor in the "upper windows." Yesterday the water cans of several returning policemen were searched, but no contraband was found. The heat and the overcrowding are unbearable. There is not enough air to breathe. Nevertheless praised be the Lord, who has kept us alive and permitted us to reach this day.

Sunday, [May 16].[217] The assembly in memory of Sholem Aleichem was not successful. There were no streaming crowds. There were some students. The recitations that lasted for an hour were boring. The music was not in place. Thank God that the day passed peacefully. In the library all is well. I began compiling a list of the Hebrew books. The young men complain about the new director. Tomorrow we shall see. Regards from Kaunas. There life is freer, although the regime is strict. At the lecture in the literary society on Solomon Molcho the assembled audience suffered because of the heat and the crowding. Meat was distributed. But there is no bread and the food is not satisfying. Rivele[218] does not feel well because of liver or gall trouble. Of gossip: there are no rumors about evil decrees. The radio announced the capture of Kharkov by the Russians and the use of gas in the Crimea. Those that complain are wrong.

Tuesday, [May 18].[219] Yesterday I had no time to make an entry. I came home late because of the arrival of the new master[220] and a meeting in the evening. The master came at two o'clock, accompanied by three friends. He assembled all the workers and announced that if the work will proceed in proper fashion there will be no change for the time being. He is young and talks a lot. He dropped a hint that the newspapers will be sent to Frankfurt-am-Main, to the Institut für Judenforschung. Let us hope that this plan will not materialize. I have taken down and classified the two Russian collections of F. E. and

[217] We have changed the date, "Sunday, June 17" to Sunday, May 16. June is here an obvious error and we assume an error in the date is more probable than an error in the day of the week.

[218] Kalmanovitch's wife.

[219] We have changed the date "Tuesday, June 19" to Tuesday, May 18.

[220] S. Kaczerginsky indicates that Kalmanovitch here undoubtedly refers to Sporket. According to other testimony, Sporket had joined the Rosenberg staff earlier.

Idelsohn. The group continues to work as usual. Today is a warm day. The weather is clear and Jews rush to breathe the fresh air and to rest. Who would interfere with them? I returned home with the group. In the afternoon I arranged the list of books in the library. Children attempted to remove books from the storeroom, which is in the attic. Our policemen were on the lookout. They caught a boy and imprisoned him. Two children, one about five years old, and the other about four, were caught red-handed. Fear, cries and supplications. I comforted them, caressed their heads, but they could not be quieted. It was impossible for them to escape, for the exit to the ladder was locked. As soon as I permitted them to run home, they disappeared. When we came down later to examine the stockroom, boys and girls surrounded us, pleading: "Give us a book for mama . . . a German book, she knows only German." Finally the police came and dispersed them.

At the meeting the programs were discussed. On Saturday night a Pentecost program,[221] and so forth. A motion was made to take steps to provide for our friends. Aid must be in the form of provisions. Money is of no avail, for nothing can be purchased. A committee was appointed to try to arrange this matter.

Upon returning today I met at the gate H. K. and with him distinguished gentlemen who want to visit the ghetto. He was to see the director. Yesterday's meeting was discussed. He wants to invite a translator who can translate from several languages into German. He brought Leyb Feldman's book, *Di yidn in dorem-afrike* and suggested translating it. We shall look for linguists. The gentlemen were late. They arrived at four o'clock. They visited the hospital, the children's home and several apartments, as well as the library and the bathhouse. He reported that our ghetto pleased them.

Seven o'clock. In the bathhouse for the first time. Cleanliness and model orderliness prevail. If my neighbors' vermin will not attack me all will be well with me. I met B. in the bathhouse,[222] and there of all places, he asked in the name of the commandant that I set the time of my lecture. I replied that I was ready at any time at his convenience. I have to submit an outline to him.

Rumors from all sides: a peace proposal, defeat of the enemy,

[221] In 1943 Pentecost fell on June 9 and 10.

[222] S. Kaczerginsky indicates that this is Sabbetai Blacher, artist and secretary of the writers and artists association in the ghetto.

confusion, misfortunes. Signs of rebellion? Are we really approaching the end? God knows. May He strengthen the hearts of all who hope unto Him.

Wednesday, [May 19].[223] We continued our work as usual. Soviet books and brochures in German were sent out to the German police. On Friday crates will be brought for shipping the printing plates. A translator was invited for our office and it was decided to have Leo Bernstein translate the book *The Jews in South Africa.* Attempts are made to solve the problem of a kitchen for hungry writers and artists. I submitted to the commandant an outline of a plan. Quarrels among our workers about justice in the distribution of the purchased products. A father and two sons—how many portions are they entitled to? The single person feels wronged if one family gets three portions. The father argues: three workers are three mouths. Invective, insults and threats were voiced, as is usual in the ghetto. The motivation is: "Here everyone lives for himself. Whoever is stronger takes possession." Another one: "Look out, you will get stuck, there are no privileged!" A third one (an artist): "You are devoid of human feelings. Some months ago, you had more than enough bread and I was hungry. When a non-Jewish woman, an acquaintance, gave me some food in her apartment, you attacked me, and took away my food . . . "And the youthful Moshe goes around among the piles of books and papers and snatches, apparently, without discrimination, mostly because he cannot bear to see anything lying around. There is no master. Ownerless. Things are destroyed and broken without mercy. All seek to destroy. Apparently they are hungry, or does it seem to them that they are hungry?

Tuesday, [June 16].[224] For about a week I had no time to record my notes, despite the fact that these days were precisely days of rumors about atrocities perpetrated at a distance, similar to the November and December days, and of happenings involving the Polish inhabitants in the city itself. There were many interferences, holiday, Sabbath, and much work till late and meetings. The rumors were about the events on the 8th of the month in the townships, in L. and W.[225] There were some 8,000 innocent victims. People were stunned when they heard about it. The debut of the orchestra, which was scheduled for the

223 Here we have changed the date from May 20 to May 19.
224 We have changed the date, "Tuesday, June 26," to Tuesday, June 16.
225 Apparently Lida and Wilejka.

night following Pentecost, was postponed as a token of mourning. On the night following Pentecost there was an assembly in honor of the holiday and on Sunday a Hebrew assembly. The new master demands intensive work. He was supposed to have come last Friday, but he postponed his coming. It was thought he would arrive tomorrow, but in the meantime he took a trip to Minsk. He let fall a remark that he ordered 400 crates for shipping the cargo. We shall see what will happen in the end. In the meantime inhabitants of the city are arrested. It is said that they are being taken by families, in the manner of "the Great," or they are being taken to be killed like us. An official report . . .

EPIDEMICS AND MORTALITY IN THE WARSAW GHETTO, 1939-1942

By ISAIAH TRUNK

In their campaign of annihilation against the Jewish population of Poland the Nazis employed not only the well-known technique of "deportations" to the death camps, but also used bacteria. Until now this subject has hardly been investigated. It is now clear, in the light of the facts known to us, that this method occupied a prominent place in Hitler's project to exterminate the Jews. By deliberate design the German authorities created conditions in the ghettos which made the outbreak of epidemics inevitable. Once an epidemic did break out, the Germans proceeded to "combat" it in a way which was sure to aggravate it and to spread it still further. By their practices the Germans attained the dual objective of isolating the ghetto from the outside world by a stringent quarantine and of decimating its inhabitants. The epidemics were blamed on the Jews themselves and the Polish population was frightened away from the ghettos by the spectre of the Jews as germ carriers. Moreover, attempts were made to justify the mass killings of Polish Jews on the grounds of safeguarding the health and the lives of the general population. On July 11, 1943, Governor-General Frank, in an audience given to a delegation of German physicians, in Cracow, publicly stated that the extermination of three million Polish Jews was unavoidable for reasons of public health.[1]

Far from helping the Jews against epidemics, the German authorities definitely interfered with the attempts of the Jews to combat disease. Thus, when a plague of spotted typhus raged in Warsaw and Kutno, the German health authorities prohibited the importation of anti-typhoid serum to the ghettos of those towns. The serum had to be smuggled in by clandestine methods and was not within the reach of people of small means. In the Kutno ghetto the Germans expressly

[1] Hirszfeld, L., *Historia jednego życia* (Warsaw 1946) p. 220.

said there would be no injections available to Jews and Poles.[2] At first, Jewish hospitals were even debarred from ordering medical supplies outside the ghetto and a secret collection of medicines and medical supplies had to be organized. The Czyste hospital in Warsaw was forced by the German public health authorities to employ uliron for the treatment of spotted typhus. This drug had a toxic effect on the organism, causing the body to become blue and cold, and many deaths resulted from this treatment. A film record was taken of every patient after the treatment and the hospital personnel was threatened with penalties if the recommended "cure" was not applied.[3] What was to pass as a fight on epidemics in fact served to aggravate them.

There is no doubt that the higher German authorities had a clear idea of the real causes which brought about spotted typhus in the ghettos. On September 9, 1951, Governor-General Frank made the following entry into his diary:

> The Chief of the Office of the Gouvernement, Dr. Hummel: The danger of spotted typhus has increased because of the lowered resistance of the population, especially of the youth. The nourishment of the ghetto inhabitants is insufficient. On top of that come the shortage of soap, and the overcrowding. The number of reported cases of spotted typhus today amounts to 2,405. The actual number must be much greater . . . The confinement of the Jews to the ghetto is in itself a boon. It is now important entirely to isolate the ghetto.[4]

Another method used to hasten the liquidation of the Jewish population was that of starvation. Hunger yielded a large number of direct victims and caused a deterioration in the sanitary conditions in the ghettos (a hungry man cannot easily be made to observe even the most elementary rules of hygiene), increasing the cases of tuberculosis, heart ailments and other diseases.

Our thesis that the Germans included epidemics as a method in their plan to annihilate the Jewish population in Poland is based on materials from the Warsaw ghetto. We have used the following materials: the Ringelblum archives, the bulletins of the statistical department of the Judenrat, the minutes of the Jewish social service organi-

[2] Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (hereafter designated as JHI), testimony no. 307 by Dr. Jendraszko, who had permission to enter the ghetto for treating patients.

[3] Testimony of L. Bielicka-Blum, former director of the nurses' school at the Czyste Hospital.

[4] "Okupacja niemiecka w Polsce w świetle dziennika Hansa Franka i protokołów posiedzeń Rządu Gen.-Gubernii," in *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*, vol. ii, p. 38.

zation, the ghetto reports supplied by "Aryan" liaision personnel to the underground Polish movement, the underground archives of the Jewish Bund and information in the underground press. In depicting health conditions in the Warsaw ghetto all these sources agree as regards statistical figures. Variation is never more than several score. This is probably to be explained by the fact that all the above-mentioned documents must have emanated from one information center.

In this conection it is important to establish the statistical value of the sources we have used. Given the extraordinary conditions of life in the ghetto one could hardly expect the statistical material to be fully reliable. For example, the official figures on cases of illness do not by any means cover the actual number. Fear of eventual "deportations" led the Jewish officials to suppress, where possible, reports on such contagious diseases as typhoid fever, spotted typhus, dysentery, tuberculosis, etc. If the absolute numbers are not complete, they are, however, fair approximations. The picture, therefore, of the health situation and of the mortality in the Warsaw ghetto which we shall attempt to present here, will be relatively correct, even though some deviations from the actual facts may be possible here and there.

I

SANITARY CONDITIONS AND MORTALITY AMONG WARSAW JEWS BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GHETTO

The war with Hitler Germany and the two week siege of Warsaw brought about a catastrophic deterioration in the health condition of the general population and of the Jews in particular. The Jewish quarter in the northern part of Warsaw was strongly bombarded, especially on September 14, 15 and 24, 1939, on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, causing many dead and wounded. The disruption of the water supply, the transportation system and of electric power and the shortage of food had an adverse effect on the health situation and there was a rise in mortality.

In the month of August 1939, one month before the outbreak of the war, the number of Jews who died in Warsaw was 360. In the month of September, in the same year, the first month of the war, the number was 1,936. (This does not include those who remained buried under the rubble after bombardment.) The mortality in the following months also was pretty high: 1,850 in October; 1,395 in November; 1,179 in December. This average of over 1,000 deaths per month

continued on to May 1940, when only 856 cases were recorded. The high mortality among the Jews of Warsaw during the months of September 1939 to June 1940 was the result both of the bombardment and of the progressive deterioration of living conditions in the city, which was flooded by a stream of refugees and exiles from the western and northern provinces of occupied Poland.

The situation during the first months of the war resulted in an epidemic of abdominal typhus. There were 2,057 cases of this disease among the Jews of Warsaw recorded in the three months of September, October and November—an average of 685 per month. In December there were 540 cases, but in January 1940 the number fell to 104; in February it was 25 and in April only 10. The latter figure was maintained during the following summer months. Evidently the preventive inocculations of the fall of 1939 still retained their effect.[5]

Spotted typhus made its appearance in Warsaw in December 1939, during which month 88 cases were recorded among the Jews. The records show 191 cases for January; 214 for February; 398 for March; 407 for April. That was the peak month of the early period of the epidemic. In May the epidemic began to recede; 335 cases were registered during that month, to be followed by 123 in June, 68 in July and only 18 in August. At the same time there was a drop in the mortality: 856 in May, 650 in June, with further decreases as time progressed, gradually approaching the pre-war figure with 445 deaths in November, that is, only 20 per cent more than in August 1939.

The average mortality from spotted typhus was not very high. Thus, out of 1,266 patients stricken with spotten typhus who were admitted to the hospital during the period from February to June, the number of those who died was 167, that is, about 13 per cent.[6]

As regards other contagious diseases, the numbers were higher, but not much higher, with the exception of tuberculosis, of which the number of cases rose from 5 in March to 21 in April (even before the setting up of the ghetto). In those circumstances, recuperation through change of climate was out of the question. The percentage of tubercular cases was especially high in quarters occupied by refugees and exiles.[7] The methods used by the German police in combatting spotted typhus (stringent quarantine of all occupants of the house and even

[5] Ringelblum Archives (hereafter designated as RA), no. 83, p. 3.
[6] JHI Archives, Bulletin of the statistical department of the Warsaw Judenrat (Polish) no. 5, p. 6.
[7] RA, no. 83, p. 5.

of the neighbors of the patient, the steaming disinfection of garments, linen, etc., the isolation of whole street blocks) greatly hindered the control of the epidemic, since it often happened that, for fear of the quarantine and the stringent disinfection, some people covered up the case and did not even call a doctor. When the epidemic became severe, the whole Czyste hospital was closed off and even the physicians and the nurses were not permitted to leave the premises. This situation continued for over three months—until August, when the epidemic nearly stopped.

In the Jewish community the campaign against the unsanitary conditions and the epidemic diseases was carried on during that period by the TOZ organization and by the section for fighting epidemics specially set up by the Jewish Social Service. Thus, in the month of April, twenty-one refugee centers in which sanitary conditions were unsatisfactory were liquidated and new ones opened in their place. All such centers and kitchens for refugees were placed under medical and sanitary supervision. An extensive activity was undertaken to disinfect the refugees. In April 1940, the number of persons given a thorough washing in nine bath establishments was 12,908, while six specially organized brigades of workers effected the disinfection of 198 residences and 35,000 pounds of laundry. Sanitary commissions were established with every communal district committee to supervise their work. The feeding of the inhabitants of houses blocked off by the quarantines was organized for its duration.[8]

II

THE EFFECT OF THE GHETTO ON INCREASE IN SICKNESS AND MORTALITY

The ghetto was one of the most effective instruments for accelerating the extermination of the Jews. Three objectives were attained by the confinement of the Jews to the ghettos. In the first place, the concentration of Jews within a limited and strictly supervised area made it easier for the German authorities to exercise control over the Jews and to ruin their economy. In the second place, overcrowding and unsanitary conditions provided a fertile soil for diseases and epidemics; in the third place, the isolation of the Jews from the outside world deprived them of all possibility of receiving help from the outside.

[8] Records of the Jewish Social Service (JSS), no. 114, p. 6-7; circular no. 3 of JSS, May 1940.

In order to have a clear idea of the connection between the ghetto and the high mortality, it is necessary to study such aspects of ghetto life as population density, social and economic structure, food policy, refugees, exiles, etc.

1. *Density of Population and Living Conditions*

According to the census ordered by the German authorities on October 28, 1939, the number of Jews in Warsaw was 359,827. This was 28.2 percent of the total population of the capital.[9] This, however, did not represent the full number, since many refugees who filled the city on the day when the count was taken were not reported. According to the report of the supply department of the Warsaw Judenrat,[10] the number of Jews in the ghetto in December 1940, *i.e.,* immediately upon its establishment, was 392,911, or 31 percent of the whole population. During the period from January to April 1941 the Germans forced into the Warsaw ghetto another 70,000 Jews from the western part of the Warsaw district. In April the Jewish population of Warsaw was 450,000, which made up 32.9 percent of the total.[11] The statistical bulletin of the Warsaw Judenrat gives the figures for March 15, 1941 as approximately 445,000 Jews.[12]

Table I illustrates the density of the population in the ghetto of Warsaw as compared with the so-called "Aryan" part of the city.

TABLE I

DENSITY OF POPULATION IN THE WARSAW GHETTO IN MARCH 1941[13]

	Entire City	"Aryan" Part	Ghetto	Percentage in the Ghetto
Population	1,365,500	920,000	445,000	32.6
Area (in hectares)	*14,150	13,810	**340	2.4
Dwelling units	284,912	223,617	61,295	21.5
Number of residents per hectare	96.5	66.6	1,308.8	—
Number of residents per room	4.8	3.2	7.2	—

* Comprising also 800 city parks and 85 hectares of public squares.
** 29 hectares were taken up by the cemetery and 4 hectares by the ball field "Skra." These places served the sole purpose of burying the dead.

9 Bulletin of the Warsaw Judenrat, no. 1, May 3, 1940.
10 Records of the JSS, file no. 409.
11 *Ibid.*
12 Bulletin of the Warsaw Judenrat, no. 14.
13 Archives of JHI.

This table hardly requires comment: 32.6 percent of the population was squeezed into 2.4 percent of the total area of the city. The density in the ghetto per hectare was thus almost 20 times that of the "Aryan" section; the density of inhabitants per room 2¼ times greater. These figures, moreover, do not give a full picture of the living conditions in the Warsaw ghetto, especially among the more than 150,000 refugees and exiles. No statistics can convey the horror of the so-called "centers," where frequently 20 to 25 people lived in one room of 14 by 20 feet.[14]

The following is found in the diary of an attendant in a refugee center, under the entry of March 12, 1941:

> . . . A room with three windows, about 70 people and 25 cots. An agglomeration of filthy, lice-ridden and hungry individuals lying on cots. They haven't undressed for four weeks . . . Most of them are asleep from sheer exhaustion . . . In the corner lies a woman of about 35 with two small children.[15]

There are similar descriptions of the centers at 7 Dzielna St. and at 9-11 Dzika St. Ruined buildings were occupied by the homeless from the provinces. Here too street urchins made their home. In the winter of 1941, 17 children were found frozen in cellars of the devastated houses.[16]

It was not only the refugee centers which presented such a sorry spectacle. The native Warsaw Jews were not much better off. Here is a description of the living conditions in the so-called "special houses," taken from a report:

> Ragged and torn, covered with tatters, these human shadows inhabit cellars, basements and pantries. Often those dwellings consist of nothing but the four naked walls, without a single article of furniture or a single garment. People are seen lying on the bare ground, on straw; beds are conspicuous by their absence. Whatever bedding one finds has the color of mud. Sometimes they lie in a heap of feathers, the pillowcases having been sold a long time ago. There are houses whose evicted tenants lie around on the steps or have managed to discover a still unoccupied cellar.[17]

Although the mortality rate was enormous the overcrowding in the ghetto did not diminish. On the contrary, the area of the ghetto having been reduced several times, the density increased and living conditions became increasingly unbearable. In September 1941 over

[14] RA, no. 83.
[15] *Ibid.*, no. 116.
[16] Ringelblum notes of November 1941 (ms).
[17] JHI Archives, file no. 401.

50,000 Jews were put out of their dwellings (from Sienna St., Ogrodowa St., part of Żelazna St. and other streets) and were assigned to quarters which could accommodate only 17,000 souls.[18] At the end of January 1942, after the ghetto had been reduced in size several times, its area was about 300 hectares and was inhabited by some 400,000 Jews. The density at that time was 1,333 souls per hectare, or about 85,000 per square mile.

2. *Social and Economic Structure*

According to the figures of the statistical department of the Warsaw Judenrat, the economic structure of the Jewish population in the ghetto on June 30, 1941 presented the following picture:[19]

Proprietors of business enterprises	5,115
Proprietors of industrial enterprises	3,105
Independent artisans	8,185
Employed in business enterprises	1,276
Employed in workshops and factories	2,814
Employed in the Judenrat and communal institutions	3,788
Laborers in German installations	2,000
Total	26,283

To this number should be added about 10,000 persons whose income was derived from their own capital[20] as well as a large number of smugglers and others who lived by illegal occupations (which we estimate at from 2,000 to 3,000). This makes a total of about 40,000 economically active and self-sustaining individuals who, together with their families, made up some 120,000 persons.

It must also be borne in mind that a certain number of small factories and workshops were carried on in secret and were not included in the count. These establishments operated with many interruptions on account of the constant shortage of raw materials. Grocery stores constituted 90 percent of the "business enerprises."[21] When we take into consideration the fact that by the end of June 1941 the Jewish

[18] *Bulletin* (underground organ of the "Bund") no. 14 (24), December 20, 1941.

[19] These figures are found in the underground organ of the "Bund," *Za naszą i waszą wolność*, July 1941, p. 8.

[20] RA, no. 349, p. 20.

[21] *Za naszą i waszą wolność*, July 1941.

population numbered about 435,700, the picture we get is that slightly over a quarter of the population (27.5 percent) made a living somehow, while the rest starved and were dependent on communal support.

One year later the picture was as follows: In June 1942 the number of persons employed in crafts, industry and in German installations was 47,000; in trade and allied occupations, 18,000; in transportation, 2,500; in all other occupations, 17,500. The total number of workers and employees amounted to 88,000, of which 47 percent were employed in crafts, 5 percent in industry, 24 percent in commerce, and 24 percent in all other branches.[22]

Comparing the occupational structure of the ghetto population in June 1941 with June 1942 we notice the following changes: The number of economically independent persons has greatly diminshed. In June 1941 the number of artisans, small manufacturers and traders was 16,405, which made up 62.5 percent of the economically active persons, while laborers and employees amounted to 9,678, *i.e.* only 37.5 percent. But in June 1942 the number of wage earners came to nearly 85,000, certainly a much larger percentage of all the economically active persons than in 1941. The absolute number of employees and workers increased nearly ten times.[23] (Unfortunately, the statistical data for June 1942 does not provide any classification into economically self-employed and wage earners).

A change also occurred in the industrial enterprises. In June 1941 the number of "independent" industrial entrepreneurs was 3,105, that is, 11.8 percent of all actively employed individuals, making up, together with their employees, certainly about 20 percent; but in June 1942 the number of people employed in industry made up only 5 percent of the total. This means that during that year the Jewish factories and workshops were practically all liquidated. On the other hand, the number of people employed in crafts rose from 46 percent in June 1941 to 47 percent in June 1942.

The growing impoverishment of the ghetto population is attested by the number of those exempted from the payment of the two zloty for ration cards imposed on consumers by the Judenrat and by the

[22] *Der jüdische Wohnbezirk in Warschau* (Judenrat publication), June, 1941.

[23] This figure is not accurate because a great many fictitious workers were registered in the so-called "shops," in order to escape deportation through the possession of a worker's card. A number of communal leaders were also registered as employees in communal institutions as a protective fiction. The exact number of fictitious workers and clerks is not known.

increase in the number of people fed in the public soup kitchens. In April 1941, out of a total of 443,583 ration cards, 127,518, that is 28.8 percent, were exempted from payment; in August, out of 420,116 cards, 127, 263, or 30.3 percent, were exempted; in October, out of 394,348 cards, 139,348, or 35.3 percent, were exempted.[24]

We thus see that in October 1941 more than one-third of the population was so poor that it could not afford to pay the two zloty impost on ration cards. The large mass of the Jews did not even have the few zloty to buy the few food products on the coupons and they used to sell the coupons to the house administrators and others.

In April 1940 an average of 59,314 plates of soup were distributed daily; in July 1941 the number was 117,500. By the end of September the number came to nearly 130,000 plates of soup daily. Later the number declined, not because the number of the needy was reduced but because of the difficult material condition of the relief committee. In January 1942, the number was still 80,000 daily.[25]

3. *Food Policy*

In the light of the policy pursued by the Germans towards the Jewish population, this section ought more properly to be entitled "Starvation." There is no doubt that hunger formed an important part of the Nazi plan for the destruction of the Jews.

Governor-General Frank entered the following into his diary on October 5, 1941: "The Governor-General is of the opinion that it will be impossible to provide the Jewish population with food."[26] Nearly one year later, on August 24, 1942, he wrote quite frankly: "Let me note, incidentally, that we have condemned 1,200,000 Jews to death by starvation. It is, of course, obvious that the fact that the Jews will not die of hunger will hasten — so let us hope — the issuance of anti-Jewish decrees."[27]

The food that came into the ghetto was confined almost exclusively to bread. Other products, such as flour, sugar, marmalade, meat, eggs, etc. were seldom distributed and then in very small quantities. Even the bread, however, was given out in smaller quotas than had been apportioned, and the tendency was to reduce the rations. Ac-

[24] Bulletin of the Warsaw Judenrat, no. 14.
[25] Records of the JSS, no. 404, January 1, 1942.
[26] *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji* . . . vol. ii, p. 40.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

cording to a report of the supply office of the Judenrat, the difference between the quota apportioned and the quota received for the period covering December 1940 to April 1941 was as follows: The amount of bread, figuring at 250 grams per person daily (or flour at 130 grams), that should have come in was 5,200,537 kilograms; the actual amount that was received was 3,354,200 kilograms, *i.e.* less than two-thirds. The amount of sugar (at 250 gr. per month) that came in was 128,346 kilograms, instead of 410,000.[28] During the succeed- months the food deficit was even greater.

The following few examples will give a picture of the distribution of food. During November 1940 the distribution of bread was 3,200 grams per person, or a daily average of about 5 ounces. In 1941 the total per month was 2,500 grams, or a little more than 3 ounces. In 1942 the rate was still smaller, the distribution taking place more seldom. Thus, in March of 1942 bread was given out only twice: 1,000 grams and 250 grams per person. In May it was 1,000 grams.[29]

As regards other foodstuffs, as already pointed out, they were given out sporadically and in very small quantities. Thus, in 1941 the sugar ration oscillated between 120 and 170 grams.[30] In 1941 no food besides bread was provided.

The following are a few examples of the food distribution in 1942: between January 25 and 31 each Jew received, on coupons, 750 grams of bread and 5 kilograms of beets; during the week of March 8-14, 250 grams of marmalade and 520 grams of synthetic honey; during the week of May 31-June 6, 250 grams of bread and 100 grams of candy (only for children) and so on. The cost per person of these commodities during those months ranged from 0.03 to 1.13 zloty per day. For purposes of comparison it is worth noting that during the month of May 1941 the rations for the Polish non-Jewish population were 3,500 grams of bread, 400 grams of sugar, 400 grams of wheat flour, 250 grams of cereal, 250 grams of white bread, 5 eggs, 100 grams of meat, and marmalade according to demand. The supply office of the Judenrat had the right to import into the ghetto only unrationed food, mainly vegetables.

The nutritional value of the food received is indicated in the following figures.

[28] Records of the JSS, file no. 409.
[29] *Ibid.*, file no. 406.
[30] RA, no. 1193.

TABLE II

CALORIC VALUE OF OFFICIALLY RATIONED FOOD DURING JANUARY-AUGUST 1941[31]

Minimum Daily Requirements of Calories	RECEIVED		PERCENTAGE	
	January	August	January	August
2,380*	219 gr.	177 gr.	9.2	7.0

Minimum Requirements of Nutritional Elements	RECEIVED		PERCENTAGE	
	January	August	January	August
Proteins, 55 gr.	4 gr.	3 gr.	7.2	5.4
Carbohydrates, 430 gr.	51 gr.	41 gr.	11.8	9.5
Fats, 42 gr.	—	—	—	—

* This was the minimum number of calories consumed by a laborer in pre-war Poland.

As may be seen from the table, the caloric value of the rationed foods during these months hardly covered 10 percent of the minimum requirements. During this entire period no fats were given out to the Jewish population.

It must also be borne in mind that the quality of the food was very poor, that it was not very nourishing, and that often the products were not really what they purported to be. According to the reports of the chemical and bacteriological institute of the Health Department of the Judenrat, out of 86 specimens of bread analyzed between July 7 and December 31, 1941, there were 47 which proved to be unsatisfactory; out of 45 specimens of flour, 17 were unsatisfactory; 34 cases of honey showed 27 unsatisfactory, etc. All told, the 33.3 percent of all the food examined proved to be unsatisfactory.[32]

It is clear from the above that if the Jewish population of the ghetto would have relied solely on the food legally allowed it by the Germans, it would have died of starvation within a very short time. A survey made in the Warsaw ghetto in December 1941, covering ten groups of the population, showed that even the street beggars, who were fed the worst, consumed an average of 784 calories daily, while the daily average for the whole ghetto population was 1,125 calories per person, the highest being 1,665 calories. Thus, even the beggars ate twice as much as the Nazis provided.

Naturally, this tremendous deficit in fodstuffs had to be made up

[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*, no. 191.

by illegal means, mainly by smuggling. The German authorities carried on a bitter fight against smuggling. Importing food into the ghetto was punished by heavy fines, but it also entailed the risk of death. Any Jew who crossed the ghetto boundary without authorization or who was caught on the "Aryan" side was in danger of being shot. (In November 1941 eight Jews were shot in the Jewish prison for just such a violation.) Despite all this, smuggling in the ghetto did not stop. Prices for smuggled food were very high and only a thin layer of the ghetto population could afford it.

It is interesting to note some of the prices on the black market.

TABLE III
FOOD PRICES ON THE BLACK MARKET DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1941 (PER KILOGRAM)[33]

	January	June
Rye bread	3.45 zl.	18.15 zl.
Corn bread	5.00	27.60
Groats	8.00	25.00
Beans	6.50	29.95
Sugar	9.20	35.80
Potatoes	1.20	6.75
Horse meat	5.00	20.30
Lard	15.50	72.30

The prices rose very sharply between January and June 1941—an average rise of 300-500 percent.

The family budget for a household of four, based on the staples of bread, groats, potatoes and fat, in June 1941, would present the following picture:

Bread (in addition to the 300 grams per person daily)[34]	36 kg. at 18.15 zl.	653.40 zl.
Groats (in addition to 0.5 grams monthly)	2 kg. at 25.00	50.00
Potatoes (in addition to 12 kilograms monthly)	48 kg. at 6.75	324.00
Fats (in addition to 0.3 kilograms monthly)	1.2 kg. at 72.30	86.76
Total		1,114.16 zl.

[33] *Ibid.*, no. 1193.

[34] These figures are taken from "Ankete vegn farbroykh in der varshever geto," in *Bleter far geshikhte*, vol. ii (Warsaw 1948) 273-87.

A family of four, to avoid starvation, had to spend about 1,120 zlotys a month on the black market, in addition to the food bought for ration coupons. Together, that made a food budget of 1,150 to 1,200 zlotys a month.

What were the earning opportunities in the ghetto? First of all, it must be pointed out that the group of gainfully employed constituted a very thin layer of the ghetto population. Even they, however, did not earn enough to pay the prices on the black market. The German decree to freeze wages at the pre-war level was in flagrant contradiction to the rise in prices. While prices increased by forty times, the wages rose to about twice what they had been before the war.

The average wage in the leading branches of production in the ghetto, such as carpentry and brush-making, in 1941 ranged between 2.50 and 3.00 zlotys per hour. A skilled carpenter or brush-maker, working 10 to 11 hours a day, would thus make from 750 to 1,000 zlotys a month. A master artisan employing 3 or 4 workers in his workshop would net 60 to 100 zlotys per day, or 1,800 to 3,000 zlotys per month.[35] This means that the earnings of a skilled worker hardly sufficed to buy the necessary food not given on his ration coupon. This does not take into account rent, heating, lighting, laundry and other household expenses.

On the whole the inhabitants of the ghetto made up their deficits by selling their belongings—from clothing and furniture to pillow cases. According to the above-mentioned survey, in the fall of 1941 the average sale of clothing and furniture amounted to 20 million zlotys per month.[36]

The large majority of the ghetto population (60 percent) had to depend for its sustenance on the rationed food. A substantial number, consisting of the very poorest, had to do without that too, unable to buy the few rationed foods allowed them, and had to depend on the community soup kitchens. According to a survey carried out in the Warsaw ghetto during the months of May-July 1941, over 62 percent of the population was dependent in one way or another on the Jewish social agencies and on food from the public kitchens. The public kitchens, even during the period of their most intensive activity, could not take care of all the needy cases. The nutritive value of the soup

[35] Winkler, I., "Dos geto kemft kegn virtshaftlekher farnikhtung," *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 25.

[36] "Ankete . . .," p. 282.

was very low, ranging between 170 and 277 calories.[37] The content of the soup consisted mainly of oats, which the Germans occasionally allowed into the ghetto to supplement the rations.

The horrible effects of starvation in the Warsaw ghetto may be judged from two known cases of cannibalism, in which mothers ate portions of the bodies of their dead children. One case took place on December 15, 1941 at 53 Sliska Street; the other at 30 Solna Street (date unknown).[38]

III

THE NEW OUTBREAK OF SPOTTED TYPHUS (1941-42)

The inevitable result of the conditions under which the Jews lived in the ghetto during the winter of 1940-41 was a new outbreak of spotted typhus. This time the epidemic reached greater proportions than the one in the early part of 1940, before the confinement of the Jews to the ghetto.

In 1941 the number of officially registered cases of spotted typhus amounted to 15,449 (compared to 1,758 cases in 1940). The following are the monthly figures: January, 57; February, 129; March, 201; April, 241; May, 367; June, 841; July, 1,742; August, 1,805; September, 2,492; October, 3,438; November, 2,156; December, 1,980.[39] The epidemic began to grow in severity during the summer months, reaching its peak in the month of October. Comparing the course of the epidemic in 1941 with that of 1940 we see that whereas in 1940 it had almost disappeared by the autumn months(an average of 20 cases a month), in 1941 it reached its peak during the same months.

The figures given above include only the officially registered cases. The actual number was much greater. In an entry in September 1941, Ringelblum wrote: "Some assert that there are four to five thousand unreported cases of typhus. The Germans speak of 14,000 concealed cases." Another document of the Ringelblum Archives contains a reference to the fact that the physicians estimated the actual number of cases to be five times the number officially registered.[40]

For reasons which we shall discuss later, every attempt was made to evade the obligation to report cases of illness to the health department. Even if we accept the lowest estimate of September 1941 (4 to

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[38] RA, no. 1920; Archives of the JHI, file IV/2, in which the cases are reported from the "Aryan" side.

[39] Diagram of the statistical bureau of the Warsaw Judenrat in the JHI Museum.

[40] RA, no. 363.

5 thousand concealed cases) we get a ratio of 8 concealed cases for every 5 reported (2,492 officially registered: *c.* 4,000 concealed). If we apply the same ratio to the other months we get 15,449 officially registered in 1949 plus an estimated 22,700 unreported cases, making a total of about 38,150 cases of spotted typhus in 1941. It is worth noting that in all of Poland in 1930 there were 1,640 reported cases of spotted typhus, and in 1935, 4,149.[41]

The mortality from contagious diseases in general and from spotted typhus in particular during the year 1941 is illustrated by the following figures. The number of deaths in the Warsaw hospitals in 1941 amounted to 4,920. Of these 3,171 died of contagious diseases, including 1,580 cases of spotted typhus. In January 1941 the number of deaths from typhus was 5 (4.2 percent of all deaths) but by October it rose to 341, *i.e.* 57.0 percent. Altogether, the number of deaths from spotted typhus during the whole year amounted to nearly one-third of all the deaths and nearly half of all deaths from contagious diseases.

The course of the epidemic showed a decline in the first half of 1942. In January there were 1,220 cases; in February, 787; in March, 478; in April, 319; in May, 208; in July only 67 cases. On the other hand, mortality rates from spotted typhus rose during this period. In January there were 220 deaths; in February, 119; in March, 80; in June, 11. Out of 3,130 cases of illness during the first half of 1942 there were 512 deaths, which amounts to 16.3 percent as compared to 11.3 percent in 1941. This can be explained by the lowered resistance of the population in 1942, as well as by the aggravated food situation.

It is significant to point out that in the refugee and deportation centers the rate of deaths from spotted typhus was lower than the general average. Thus, in May 1942 only 0.3 percent of all deaths were in the deportation centers and 6 percent in the refugee centers[42] This puzzling phenomenon, that the common people suffered less from the disease than the more well-to-do, was noted by E. Ringelblum.[43] It should also be noted that a substantial proportion of the patients suffering from spotted typhus died during convalescence, because of undernourishment. Finally, it is worth citing a few figures comparing the extent of the spotted typhus epidemic in the ghetto with that among the "Aryans."

[41] *Ibid.*, no. 85.
[42] *Ibid.*, no. 223.
[43] His notes of September 1941.

TABLE IV
SPOTTED TYPHUS IN THE WARSAW GHETTO AND ON THE "ARYAN" SIDE, 1940-41

Year	Month	No. of Cases in Ghetto	Cases on "Aryan" Side	Ratio to Ghetto Cases	Ratio of "Aryan" Population in Warsaw
1940		1,758	189	9.7	70.0
1941	January	57	5	8.6	70.0
	February	134	78	36.8	70.0
	August	1,805	434	24.0	67.0
	September	2,492	450	18.0	67.0

As we see, the epidemic of spotted typhus on the "Aryan" side increased beginning with February 1941, when the number of cases was 36.8 percent compared to the number of cases in the ghetto, but its course was incomparably less severe than in the ghetto.

IV

THE GERMAN "CAMPAIGN" AGAINST SPOTTED TYPHUS

German public health authorities had a tradition dating from World War I of applying police methods in fighting epidemics. The medieval system of quarantines, of blocking off buildings, etc., was developed in the Warsaw ghetto to a point of lurid brutality and senseless malice. From the moment it was undertaken the whole so-called campaign to combat the typhus epidemic bore a pronounced political propagandistic character. The very confinement of the Jewish population to the ghetto was said to be a measure to fight spotted typhus in Warsaw. The area of the subsequent ghetto was designated in the beginning as *"Seuchensperrgebiet."* As early as October 1939 signs appeared around the Jewish section with inscriptions: *"Seuchengebiet; Eintritt verboten."* A "scientific" explanation was given to the establishment of the ghetto by German medical spokesmen in the theory that the Jews, although themselves comparatively immune, are dangerous for the non-Jewish population as germ carriers. There can be no doubt that the German physicians knew as well as the German administrative authorities that the creation of the ghetto in order to "fight" epidemics would have the very opposite effect.

Jewish spokesmen pointed out the absurdity of this so-called scientific explanation for the institution of the ghetto.[44] The German au-

[44] Memorandum to the German authorities, written by the well-known epidemologist, Ludwig Hirszfeld (RA, no. 85).

thorities, however, sought, on the one hand, to exploit the spotted typhus epidemic as a medical justification for setting up a ghetto and, on the other hand, to create the most favorable conditions for the spread of the epidemic in the ghetto. That the Germans intended their so-called "health" measures as a means for decimating the Jewish population is evidenced by the methods they applied in combating spotted typhus. Professor Hirszfeld characterized those methods as "worse than the epidemic itself."

In each case of spotted typhus the patient was taken to the hospital, while his whole family as well as all the inhabitants of the building and even those of adjoining buildings were isolated in a quarantine which lasted two to three weeks. The house itself and the two adjoining houses were isolated until a thorough disinfection was carried out of the house, the furniture and all their contents, and the people were bathed and disinfected. The house blockade lasted from 7 to 14 days and sometimes three weeks.

We shall endeavor to examine in more detail the methods employed by the Germans prior to April 1941 in their "fight" against spotted typhus.

1. *The Jewish Hospital*

The Czyste Jewish hospital passed through three stages under German occupation: (a) up to the rise of the ghetto; (b) up to the large-scale deportation of September 1942; (c) up to the final liquidation of the ghetto in May 1943.

At the end of 1939 and early in 1940 the condition of the hospital was described as follows:

> The Czyste Jewish hospital, although it suffered less [from the bombardment of September 1939] compared to other hospitals, was nevertheless severely damaged (the laundry was destroyed by fire) and was still occupied in part by wounded soldiers and civilians . . . There were times when the hospital had 2,400 patients, although there was room only for 1,200 . . . At first the patients lay on the floor in their clothes, in the cold, almost without food. There were no beds and no laundry . . . no coal, and the central heating system had been destroyed . . . Many patients had their fingers, hands or feet frozen. The diet was so sparse . . . that it is amazing how the survivors were able to endure it all . . .[45]

[45] RA, no. 83.

When the epidemic of abdominal typhus increased during the autumn months of 1939 the Jewish hospital was absolutely unprepared to receive the steadily growing stream of patients. Before the war the Jewish hospital had no ward for contagious diseases. It had to be set up in the unfinished 10th pavillion (bearing the name of Dr. Samuel Goldflamm), which contained hardly anything besides the walls. No wonder then that the relatives, disregarding the strict quarantine, would steal the patients out through the fence around the hospital.[46]

The strict quarantine in the hospital (including the whole hospital personnel) lasted over six weeks. It was only after the disinfecting and bathing establishment was completed that the quarantine was abolished. But when the epidemic of spotted typhus became aggravated a quarantine was introduced again which lasted nearly three months.

After the ghetto was set up (on November 15, 1940) the Czyste Jewish hospital was ordered to move to the ghetto. This was a severe blow, since in the ghetto there were no suitable buildings for a hospital of its size. The hospital was forced to split up into several sections on different streets. The surgical ward was moved to the building formerly occupied by the hospital of the Finance Ministry officials on 1 Leszno Street. The contagious diseases ward went into the quarantine building at 86 Żelazna Street. Other departments of the hospital were moved to 4 Tłomackie Street (gynecology) and into the building formerly occupied by the Jewish school at 6-8 Stawki Street (infections, etc.). Later on the building at 21 Stawki Street was given to the hospital and they set up there the wards for contagious diseases and internal diseases, the chemico-bacteriological laboratory and the pathological institute. The administrative buildings, the pharmacy, the sterilization and disinfection installations were at 12 Elektoralna Street. When the epidemic of spotted typhus became severe in the summer of 1941 nearly all departments for internal diseases were liquidated and the hospital was assigned another branch at 109 Leszno Street.[47]

The evacuation of the hospital equipment met with obstacles. The municipal administration refused to permit the equipment to be moved out unless repairs were made in the laundry and kitchen of the old buildings (the alterations cost about 200,000 zlotys).[48] According to notes left by Ringelblum, articles nailed to the wall (which in-

[46] Testimony by L. Bielicka-Blum (see note 3).

[47] Fenigstein, Dr. H., *Varshever yidisher shpitol beysn natsi-rezhim* (1948) p. 1.

[48] Bulletin of the Warsaw Judenrat, no. 12, p. 7.

cluded some of the most expensive appliances) were not to be removed. On the other hand, the officials took out from their hospital on Leszno Street even the faucets, the wash basins and anything that could be removed.[49] The buildings assigned to the Jewish hospital were not suitable for the purpose. The building on Stawki Street had no gas installation and the water was shut off because the pipes had frozen.[50] A large part of the hospital equipment was lost or stolen during the moving. The Jewish hospital went into the ghetto depleted and lacking equipment such as quilts, linens and important appliances.

The situation with respect to food supplies in the hospital was the same as in the ghetto. The patients starved and died of hunger. The supply office of the Judenrat, in keeping with its policy of giving priority to the working section of the ghetto population, relegated the providing of the sick with food and necessities to third place. As for the German authorities, far from allowing supplementary food for the hospital, they sometimes even confiscated the food sent out by the central depot on Stawki Street to one of the hospital branches.[51]

According to a communication by Dr. Wielikowski, adviser to the Warsaw governor, to the leaders of the Jewish Social Service, dated June 3, 1941, the ghetto commissar Auerswald endeavored to have the food supply for the hospital channeled directly through the municipality. How much truth there was in Auerswald's assertion it is impossible to ascertain. At any rate, the food situation did not improve.

Dr. Stein, director of the hospital, wrote as follows about the food situation:

> The hospital has ceased to be a hospital; it is not even a poorhouse. All the patient finds there is medical assistance, which, in most cases, operates with very inadequate means. The food supply . . . is simply a fiction. The daily rations of about 700 calories cannot sustain the organism . . . The patient who has no means for providing his own food becomes swollen with hunger and soon dies—unusual progress in the history of hospital treatment![52]

During the spotted typhus epidemic all wards except surgery and

[49] Notes by Ringelblum, of December 20, 1940.

[50] "Materiały do dziejów Żydów podczas okupacji niemieckiej," in the JHI Archives, file no. IV/2, p. 498 (Hereafter referred to as "Materiały").

[51] Bulletin of the Judenrat, no. 14. The hospital too was always in financial straits. After the Judenrat took over the hospital, a monthly budget was assigned to it of 209,230 zlotys (before the war, when prices were much lower and the hospital was maintained by the municipality, its monthly budget was 223,450 zlotys), but it received only 50 or 60 percent of the agreed sum (RA, no. 315).

[52] RA, no. 315, p. 1, 2.

gynecology discontinued operations in order to make room for the victims of the plague. Even at that, however, the accommodations were far from adequate and two or even three patients were often put in the same bed.

The German health authorities, although well aware of the tragic situation in the hospital, did nothing to alleviate it. In an undated memorandum to the German authorities, entitled *"Denskschrift über die prophylaktischen Massnahmen in jüdischen Viertel"* (Memorandum on Preventive Measures in the Jewish Section), we find the following description:

> The Czyste hospital is the only one that receives patients. Already it has had to change its location twice, losing a good part of its equipment in the process. As it is, two patients often lie in one bed, without shirts and without bedclothes. The number of patients admitted daily is 50, but the bathing establishment of the hospital cannot serve so many. The patients often have to lie for a day or two in the courtyard awaiting their turn.[53]

A similar picture of the situation in the hospital is found in Dr. Munweis' application to the chairman of the hospital administrative commission, dated May 1, 1941:

> The wards suffer from a serious shortage in linens; the patients often lie two in one bed, without shirts, on wet mattresses, without sheets and under torn quilts . . . without bedclothes, shivering from the cold (lately the hospital has not been heated). It often happens that a newly admitted patient is placed on the dirty mattress vacated by a discharged or deceased patient. The wards become more and more filth-ridden and infested with lice, which is a danger to the patients and to the hospital personnel and to the whole community.[54]

The overcrowding in the hospital is indicated by the following table.

TABLE V
POPULATION DENSITY IN THE CZYSTE HOSPITAL IN JUNE AND JULY, 1941[55]

Date	Number of Patients	Number of Beds	Density
June 1, 1941	785	831	91.5%
July 1, 1941	916	831	110.2%
July 15, 1941	1,136	831	135.9%

[53] *Ibid.*, no. 85.
[54] *Ibid.*, no. 214.
[55] *Ibid.*, no. 223.

The spread of the typhus epidemic necessitated a larger number of beds. The liquidation of the internal diseases departments gained 500 beds for adults and 80 for children, but the expectation was that within the succeeding months there would be a shortage of nearly 7,000 beds for the ever-growing number of typhus cases. Because of this situation patients were discharged from the hospital much sooner than usual. In June 1941 the hospital admitted 1,419 patients and discharged 947 (66.7 percent). In the first half of July, 1,073 were admitted and 643 were discharged (59.9 percent).[56] The high mortality also contributed to increase the turnover in the hospital. Thus, in June 1941, out of 1,419 patients, 346 died (24.4 percent).

The hospital's usefulness in treating patients may be gathered from the memorandum by Jewish physicians:

> Four months after evacuation and the hospital on Stawski Street still has no diagnostic x-ray apparatus. There is no x-ray treatment in the whole hospital. Patients die for lack of possibility to give them x-ray treatment in cases where such treatment is essential. Patients moved for x-ray examination from the Stawski branch to Leszno Street and back sometimes die not from their ailment but from pneumonia.[57]

The tragic situation in the hospital was in no small measure due to the helplessness of the administrative management which often resulted in organizational chaos; the unsocial atmosphere prevalent in the hospital made it possible for abuses to develop such as graft, exploitation and plain thievery. The undated memorandum, referred to above (most likely of the latter half of 1941), speaks of the shady aspects of the hospital in no uncertain terms. The document is addressed by Dr. Munweis and a group of communal leaders to the president of the Judenrat.[58]

The salaries of the hospital personnel, especially of the technical personnel, were extremely low. Furthermore, the salaries were not paid on time. The result was constant friction between the management and the help. At one time, after a stormy meeting, the employees, who had not reecived their pay for four months, decided to go out on strike.[59] The need for economy reduced the number of attendants, nurses and physicians far below the necessary minimum. Physicians attached to

[56] *Ibid.*
[57] *Ibid.*, no. 214.
[58] *Ibid.*, no. 315, item 5.
[59] *Ibid.*, no. 1418. The strike which was at first voted unanimously did not take place, when a group of physicians withdrew, fearing repressive measures by the Germans (*Ibid.*).

the hospital who were not regular staff members, did not receive any salary, and this also contributed to the poor quality of the medical attention. For these physicians the hospital was a means of obtaining a practitioner's license and they derived their income from private practice. In addition, many unqualified persons, such as students and practical nurses, were employed.

The following figures illustrate the mortality among the patients at the hospital, especially typhus cases. In June 1941, out of 959 patients, 176 died (18 percent); during the first half of July, out of 782 patients, 153 died (17 percent). It should also be noted that many of the patients discharged from the hospital died after leaving it. Some were discharged while still in a serious condition, because of lack of space. Others fell easy victims to death from starvation on arriving home. The actual percentage of deaths among the hospital patients was, therefore, undoubtedly much higher. Dysentery resulted in an extremely high mortality rate. Thus, out of 27 cases of dysentery admitted to the hospital in June 1941, all but one died.

The situation in the Baumann and Berson Children's Hospital was not any better. An entry of March 20, 1941 in the diary kept by a nurse of that hospital states:

> I am on duty from 3 to 11. I come to my ward. It is a real hell. Children sick with the measles, two or three in one bed . . . Shaven heads covered with sores swarming with lice. My assistant and myself have to take care of fifty children. We go mad with work . . . Ten children wait in the reception room. I have no beds, no linens, no covers, no bedclothes. I telephone the superintendent . . . The answer is terse: where there are two children in a bed, put in a third one and that is the end of it . . . There is no coal. The rooms are terribly cold, they huddle under the covers, shaking with fever . . . In the corridor lies a child of five swollen with hunger . . . The child moves its lips begging for a piece of bread. I try to feed him . . . but his throat is locked and nothing goes down. Too late. After a few minutes he utters for the last time the words "a piece of bread" and falls asleep with the plea for bread on his lips.[60]

It is no wonder that patients dreaded the hospital and families did everything in their power to avoid committing anyone to it. The well-to-do simply bribed the health commissions and the block physicians. For a large fee a physician would attend to the patient in secret. Even the conscientious physician, however, could not bring himself to send

[60] *Ibid.*, no. 1308, "Bilder fun kinder-shpitol"; *Ibid.*, no. 1418 contains notes of May 1941 written by nurse D. Wagman about the terrible hunger in the hospital.

a patient to the hospital because it meant not only aggravated danger to life but also economic ruin for the family and even for the neighbors.

It was only later, when the methods of the "campaign" against spotted typhus were changed, that the family was permitted to keep the patient at home provided the sanitary and physical conditions permitted it. The decision rested with the health department of the Judenrat, which, in such cases, used to send out a public health commission to check the case on the spot. The poor were excluded from such eventuality, since the fee for the visit of the commission amounted to 100 zlotys.[61]

The Czyste Hospital and the Children's Hospital carried on under such conditions until July 22, 1942. During the deportation of the population the Jewish Hospital, according to Dr. Stein, "was not transferred but ejected, accompanied by the complete destruction of all its departments, scientific laboratories and library."[62] On July 22-23 the hospital had to vacate the buildings on Stawki St. to make room for a transshipment center. The contagious diseases patients were transferred to the branch of the Children's Hospital at 80 Żelazna Street. The rest of the patients and the salvaged laboratories were moved to 1 Leszno Street. The branch at 89 Leszno Street was also liquidated.[63]

After the great September action against Jews ("the kettle") the hospital, now with a reduced personnel (only 200 persons were given the so-called "life certificates"), was moved for the third time. This time it was placed in a most inadequate building at 6-8 Gęsia Street, which formerly housed dry goods stores. In such a condition the hospital carried on until January 18, 1943, when the Germans carried out their action in which 800 patients and over 50 members of the medical personnel perished.[64]

2. *Quarantine*

The quarantine system, as indicated above, was applied in its full severity to all the inhabitants of a building in which there was a typhus case during the period from December 1939 to April 1941. The following figures illustrate the turnover in the quarantine centers from

[61] *Ibid.*, no. 270.
[62] *Choroba głodowa. Badania kliniczne nad głodem wykonane w getcie warszawskim w roku 1942*, p. 22-23.
[63] Dr. Fenigstein, *op. cit.*, p. 12-13.
[64] Bielicka, L., in *Bleter far geshikhte*, vol. 1, 211-13.

December 1939 to January 1941.[65] (No figures are available for the months of January to May 1941). During this period, 7,652 persons went through quarantine. The number of typhus patients for the same time was 1,846. This makes four persons quarantined for every typhus patient.

When the epidemic grew severe in the winter of 1941, it became technically impossible to isolate all those subject to quarantine. Thus the memorandum of June 28, 1941 speaks of a capacity of 1,400 beds in the quarantine stations, whereas the need was for twice that number.[66] The health authorities refused to take this into account. A memorandum to the German authorities[67] reported that 6,000 to 8,000 persons were isolated for about 5,500 cases of spotted typhus.

The overcrowding and unsanitary conditions of the quarantine stations are described in the following eye-witness account:

> In the course of a month 1,300 to 1,600 people passed through quarantine. The quarantine represented a veritable hell for the inmates . . . In the rooms stood army cots with straw mats which were rarely changed, wet and full of lice. Fifty to sixty people had to use twenty beds. The isloated persons were to get every day soup twice, coffee and 200 grams of bread, but these rations never reached them . . . The hunger was severe and about eight to ten persons died of starvation every day...In the daytime the inmates used to lie on the cots and cry from hunger . . . Protests were punished by beatings. There was even one case of a person beaten to death . . . The staff consisted entirely of Jews and everything was done with the knowledge and participation of the administration . . .[68]

For poor families such isolation during two or three weeks spelled economic ruin. Whatever little money there was had to be spent to stave off death by starvation. Such a person, on coming out of quarantine, could no longer get back on his feet and was forced to join the ranks of those dependent on public support.

In April 1941 the quarantine system was changed. In cases of spotted typhus the dwelling was closed off and all its inhabitants were placed under the care of the Jewish administration. In addition, all the inhabitants of the building were sent to a bathhouse for disinfection. At first all buildings were disinfected, without exception, but

[65] Diagram of the Warsaw Judenrat in the JHI Museum.

[66] RA, no. 214.

[67] *Ibid.*, no. 85.

[68] "Geto sof 1941: Kvarantanne oyf Leshno," in Archives of the "Bund," in the Warsaw ghetto.

later, beginning with September 26, 1941, the physicians of the health department were permitted to exempt from disinfection all dwellings they found to be clean.[69]

3. *House Blockade*

During the period of the strict police system of "combating" the epidemic, the procedure was to close off the house in which the case of spotted typhus occurred and also the two adjacent houses, and to keep them isolated until the disinfection brigades arrived. This was a heavy blow for the inhabitants of the blocked-off houses. All economic activity was paralyzed for the duration of the blockade. In the ghetto, where most of the inhabitants made their living from day to day earnings, this meant economic ruin to those affected by the blockade. For hundreds of families this was the last straw that pushed them into an abyss of destitution and death. The extent of this brutal "health" regulation can be seen from the figure of 179 blockaded houses in June 1941.[70] As was the case with every oppressive regulation in the ghetto, attempts were made in this instance also to seek redress through bribery. The Jewish policeman who stood watch at the gate or the house superintendent were bribed to allow the inhabitants of the house to move freely in the ghetto. The blockade came to mean a season for additional earnings for these functionaries. In time a regular price schedule evolved for exit fees during a blockade.

The main burden of the blockade, naturally, fell first of all on the poorer classes, who could not afford to indulge in such bribery. The Jewish communal leaders pleaded for the abolition of the blockade regulations. In the above-cited memorandum to the German authorities it was pointed out that "since it is the residential group and not the building group that constitutes the epidemiological unit, the blockading of entire houses is unnecessary."[71] The Germans remained deaf to all such practical or scientific arguments and they carried out stringently the blockade of the epidemic-stricken houses. Koblińsky, the German commissar for combatting the epidemic,[72] in his instruc-

[69] In a circular of the commissar for epidemics, Dr. Ganz, to all Jewish physicians.

[70] RA, no. 223.

[71] *Ibid.*, no. 85.

[72] Edward Joachim Kobliński was a Pole from Posen who considered himself a *"Volksdeutsche."* Being a great grafter, he made a large fortune out of the epidemic in the Warsaw ghetto. He had associates in the health department of the Judenrat. On March 21, 1950 he faced a Polish tribunal which sentenced him to five years' imprisonment. The present author appeared there as an expert witness.

tions to the Jewish police, threatened them with severe penalties if they were caught permitting anyone to leave the blockaded houses. This warning was repeated in the orders of the day of the Ordnungsdienst, and Jewish policemen were known to have been deported to Auschwitz for allowing persons to leave the blockaded houses.

4. *The Steaming Action (Parówka)*

One of the most horrible chapters in the German "fight" against spotted typhus was the so-called disinfection, or, as it was known by its popular appellation, the "*parówka*" (steaming).[73] Senseless brutality and lust for loot, the two features which characterized Hitler's policy towards the Jews, were both in evidence. The whole disinfecting activity was a mockery of the most elementary principles of prophylaxis. It may be said that far from stopping the growth of spotted typhus the Nazi disinfections fostered its spread. The *parówkas* became breeding nests of epidemics and caused the illness and the death of hundreds and perhaps of thousands of persons. It must be stated at the outset that part of the responsibility for the sufferings caused to the inhabitants of the ghettos, especially, the poorer ones, belongs to the Jews and Poles who were used to carry out the German instructions, the so-called disinfection brigades (Polish and Jewish), the Jewish police, some Jewish physicians and health commissions and the health department of the Judenrat.

During the whole period of the epidemic it was the rule to send all the inhabitants of a house in which a case of spotted typhus was found to one of the four bath-houses in the ghetto. Here too bribery helped many to escape this modern "bath-inquisition." The four bath-houses of the ghetto had a maximum total capacity of 2,000 to 3,000 persons. There resulted terrible overcrowding and clean and lice-ridden persons were crowded together for hours, spreading contamination. Opoczyński, after telling of the brutal and cynical behaviour of the disinfection brigades, describes the condition as follows:[74]

> There [in front of the bath-house] stand long lines of persons who came earlier . . . They are on top of one another. They push, they jostle . . . Every one tries to get in first . . . For money one can be one of the first to get in. For money the attendant, or the physi-

[73] In the Ringelblum Archives there is a document (RA, no. 207) which describes in detail the whole matter of disinfection from beginning to end. The author of the document was A. Opoczyński, a co-worker in the Ringelblum Archives.

[74] *Ibid.*

cian (who knows what he really is?) will not examine too carefully one's hair, will not order one to be shorn like a sheep, or will even exempt the garments from the steaming . . . Those who finally push their way in find a large crowd inside . . . The benches have already been occupied and there is no place to sit down or to get undressed . . . People sit on top of one another, get their clothes mixed up, breathe one another's perspiration . . . The bare feet are chilled by the cement floor . . . Now and then one of the attendants throws open a window and a gust of cold air comes in from the outside. The steam rises and snow comes in. Through the open window the attendant takes down the steamed clothes from the disinfecting machine . . . Some cough and spit incessantly and their sunken and weakened bodies break under the strain.

The clock strikes 12 midnight. They shiver with cold . . . From the next hall, where the women are, one hears hysterical weeping, outcries, fits of wailing (they cut the hair) . . . By 12 noon (the next day) they finally bring back the clothes. People begin checking on their garments and discover here a shirt missing, here a pair of trousers, or a scarf, or a sweater has been burned . . .

The author also describes the disinfection of the household goods:

Suddenly there is a great commotion in the courtyard. They begin carrying out the bedding to the *parówka* carts (after it had been lying outside in the rain and in the snow for about twenty-four hours). Several Polish boys and girls stand on the cart and sort out . . . the bundles . . . They trample them with their feet, not caring that their mud-covered boots are soiling the clean linens, the sheets and pillow-cases. They know that Jewish women are standing there, looking on with breaking hearts to see the destruction of their meager possessions. The boys and girls take joy in the pain they cause and they laugh with malicious pleasure.

Fortunately here too bribery could occasionally bring relief. For a fee one could get a certificate from the bath-house that the disinfection has been completed. The physician, the police and the disinfector shared the proceeds.

It was only when the health reform was introduced that the principle of decentralization and selection was recognized in disinfection. A room or two would be set aside in the house for disinfecting and only places designated by the physician were disinfected. But the local disinfection rooms did not fulfill their function. The sanitary brigades, which were more concerned with their side-earnings, would carry out the work in a careless manner. Ringelblum writes in his diary (September 1941) that "the sanitary brigades, busy with collecting extortion money from the richer residences, have no time to

seal up the windows of the room which had been turned into a gas-chamber, so that the lice remained alive . . ."

Dr. Urisohn of Lodz, whose notes on "Fighting the Epidemic" (in Polish) were preserved in the underground ghetto-archives, writes: "It has been established that even in the best applied sulphur disinfection the sulphur fumes do not penetrate the closely packed parcels of clothing and linens and the lice are not exterminated." He also remarks that clean articles were disinfected along with the soiled, with the result that the insects spread to the clean articles.[75]

On the one hand the corruption made the rational fight on the epidemic more difficult; on the other hand, however, it presented the only means for relieving the draconian severity of the German health regulations, which contributed to the further spread of the epidemic. German officials themselves were among the chief recipients of the bribes. This becomes especially evident in the activities of the disinfection brigades.

5. *The Disinfection Brigades*

These brigades were formed during the early phase of the spotted typhus epidemic in Warsaw. In April 1940 six such brigades or columns were active, but later, in September, their number was reduced to two, because of financial reasons. The members of these brigades were undoubtedly not too competent. In a period of twelve days (October 28 to November 9) fifty Jewish auditors completed a course in disinfection at the State Institute for Hygiene. The instructors were well-known Polish physicians. The German chief medical officer, Dr. Richter, a university professor, was present at the examinations.[76]

With the spread of the epidemic in the spring of 1941 the number of brigades steadily increased until, in September 1941, there were twelve. At the beginning of 1942 the number went back to eight. At the height of the epidemic (June to August 1941) anyone who volunteered was accepted for disinfection work. Before then it was necessary to have a recommendation from the chief physician, Golde. The candidates were given a three-week course at the health department of the Judenrat. Up to September 1941 the brigades were mixed, consisting of Jewish and Polish members. As a result of representations

[75] *Ibid.*, no. 270; Hirszfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 221, reports an experiment carried out by himself and his assistant. They placed test tubes with lice into the parcels of clothes to be disinfected, and found, after the disinfection that the lice were still alive.

[76] RA, no. 221.

made by Dr. Ganz, the commissar of epidemics in the Health Department, the Polish members were dropped. They behaved very brutally and used their position for extortion (they would take a fee for not cuting off a beard, etc.). There were, in addition, German officials who supervised the disinfectors, with a chief disinfector at the head.[77]

The disinfection brigades, created supposedly to combat spotted typhus, became in fact an extortion and blackmail gang. An eyewitness in the Warsaw ghetto writes as follows:

> These gangs consist mostly of young people whose careers in life were broken and who have no moral feeling. They are delinquents or just plain hoodlums. Their daily activity is blackmail, bribe and extortion . . . After the first five minutes they come straight to the point: they count heads and determine the amount of the bribe, take the ransom and in addition whatever happens to lie on the table, even bread, and then go after their next victim. Woe to him who does not pay off the graft; then the whole skillfully constructed complicated machinery for blackmail is immediately put into action against him.[78]

A member of one of these disinfection brigades (he was called a *kolumnarz* in the ghetto) has left us a detailed and realistic account of the whole system of corruption. We cite a few of the more interesting excerpts:

> The members of the brigades are primarily interested in their side-earnings, which range from 10 to 20 zlotys daily (their regular pay was nominally 6 zlotys a day but actually it came to less). These side-earnings come from bribes . . . In most cases, the house committee (which gets a rake-off) pays for the exemptions . . . The average for an apartment is 10 to 50 zlotys. In dirty apartments the fee for leaving the contents . . . depends on the financial means of the owner. In most brigades the entire income goes into one pool, and distribution is by points: 4 points to the physician, 3 points to the head of the brigade, 1½ points to the section leader, one point to the ordinary workers — altogether 25 points.[78a]

6. *"Public Health Actions"*

In their so-called "fight" on spotted typhus the German health authorities carried out from time to time larger public health campaigns directed against the inhabitants of Krochmalna Street, which the Germans considered as the chief breeding place of contagious diseases for the whole of Warsaw. "The health authorities assert that Krochmalna Street is the main center of contagious diseases," Ringel-

[77] *Ibid.*, no. 363.
[78] *Ibid.*, no. 428.
[78a] *Ibid.*, no. 250.

blum wrote in his diary early in April 1940, "and if they could they would set fire to the whole street."[79] The situation in that narrow, overcrowded street, inhabited by the poorest Jews, was no doubt not in keeping with the best public health standards. The Germans harbored a special hatred for the poor district of Krochmalna Street.

The first German "action" took place there in the early days of May 1940. A large part of the street with about 20 houses and 20,000 inhabitants was roped off for 23 days. It was only thanks to the help rendered the inhabitants by the Jewish population of other sections, who established secret contacts with the isolated group, that thousands of persons were saved from death by starvation.[80]

Of another "public health action," which took place in September 1941, we have two detailed reports by eye-witnesses. Following are some excerpts:

> At 5 o'clock in the morning the German gendarmerie (about 100 men), the Polish police (about the same number) and the Jewish police (over 100) roped off Krochmalna Street from Ciepła Street to Rynkowa Street . . . In the course of one hour several thousand frightened people were rounded up on the market place. They were certain that a deportation action was taking place and that they would be shot. Their living quarters, left unguarded, were looted by thieves. Every hour over 100 people were taken to the bath-houses . . . Evening came and not all of the people had gotten their baths yet. Those still unbathed had to remain there hungry all night in the Janasz Arcade. Those who had their bath . . . were not allowed to return home because their street remained roped off. A heavy rain in the evening soaked them all to their bones. It was only at about one o'clock in the morning that those who had bathed were allowed to return to their homes, and the blockade was lifted from a few houses in the direction of Rynkowa Street. The campaign was taken up again the next day and those who had been waiting all night in the Janasz Arcade were given a bath. The only result of the "action" was the looting of the possessions of large numbers of the inhabitants . . . All dead bodies were cleared away and those ill with spotted typhus were taken to the hospital.[81]

The health department of the Judenrat also carried out so-called

[79] Ringelblum reports that in Kraśnik (Lublin region), the Germans walled up a whole street where spotted typhus broke out, imprisoning both healthy and the sick. Food was given through a small opening (RA, no. 250). In Turobin (also Lublin region) it was decreed that in a house in which there was a typhus case the whole family must be immured, leaving only a small opening for inserting food and medical supplies and for the discharge of physiological needs (*Ibid.*, no. 1243, July 1940).

[80] Records of the JSS, no. 411.

[81] RA, no. 93. Participating in this "Action" were all the physicians of the

"punitive steamings." One such punitive "steaming action" is described in the underground organ of the Bund, *Der Veker,* of February 23, 1942.

> On Saturday, January 31 [1942] a horrible *parówka* took place in the courtyard of 39 Dzielna Street, where 3,000 people live. At 6 o'clock in the morning the Jewish police and the "brigade" drove all the inhabitants out into the yard and let them stand in the cold, with the temperature at zero, until 12 noon. Then they began sending groups of people to the bath-house on Spokojna Street. There, after standing naked in the cold for an hour or two, they were beaten while their hair was cut. There are dozens of cases of pneumonia . . . People were beaten and abused in the foulest language.

According to the paper the *parówka* was ordered as a penalty: the houses of the courtyard owed the Jewish Community the sum of 700 zlotys. As the brigade men boasted, they managed to get out of the house some 2,000 zlotys in "greasy money" (*"shmaltsove,"* a term for extortion money in the Warsaw ghetto).

V

MORTALITY AND ITS CAUSES IN THE WARSAW GHETTO

The problem of the high rate of mortality in the Warsaw ghetto, already mentioned above, deserves more detailed treatment. Table VI gives the number of deaths among the Jewish population in Warsaw from September 1939 to August 1942 and shows the enormous rate of increase. For the sake of comparison we shall designate the average number of deaths during 1940 by the index number 100. We cannot use the number of deaths during the period from September 1939 to December 1939 because a great many persons were killed by the bombardment. We are concerned here with the mortality as a direct result of the German policy towards the Jewish population.

TABLE VI
RATE OF INCREASE IN NUMBER OF DEATHS IN THE WARSAW GHETTO, SEPTEMBER, 1939-AUGUST, 1942

Year	Months	Number of Deaths	Yearly Average	Increase Compared to 1940
1939	Sept.-Dec.	6,560	1,312	175.4
1940	Jan.-Dec.	8,981	748	100
1941	Jan.-Dec.	43,239	3,603	494.9
1942	Jan.-Aug.	29,788	4,255	571.2

health department of the Judenrat, Polish physicians, officials of the German health office with the chief physician, Dr. Hagen, at the head. The gendarmerie held its guns ready to shoot.

We see from the above table that the mortality in 1941 was nearly five times that of 1940 and in the first half of 1942 nearly six times as many. The terrifying aspect of this increase in the rate of mortality becomes even more pronounced when we consider that phenomenon not in absolute numbers but in relation to the population.

TABLE VII
MORTALITY IN THE WARSAW GHETTO IN RELATION TO THE POPULATION IN 1939-1942

Year	Month	Approximate Population	Number of Deaths	Deaths per 1,000 Persons
1939	August	380,500	360	0.9
1939	October	360,000	1,850	5.1
1940	December	392,900	581	1.5
1941	December	416,700	4,366	10.7
1942	April	400,000	4,432	11.1

We see that the mortality rate in the ghetto continued to mount during the whole war period. The rate in October 1939 was more than five times as high as in August of the same year; in December 1941 and in April 1942 the mortality rate was more than 12 times as high. We must also point out that the above table does not take into account the months with the highest number of deaths, such as June 1941, with 5,550, August with 5,560 and January 1942 with 5,123 deaths, because no exact figures are available on the size of the population in the ghetto during those months. Presumably, the mortality then was even higher.

We have no detailed statistics on the age and sex distribution of the deaths. All we have are general classifications of men, women, children. The distribution was as follows: in 1941 out of 43,239 dead, there were 22,978 men (53.1 percent), 16,246 adult women (37.5 percent) and 4,015 children (9.4 percent). For the first three months of 1942, out of 12,698 dead,[82] 6,854 were men (53.9 percent), 3,957 women (31.3 percent) and 1,887 children (14.8 percent). These are average numbers which would not present a full picture of the high mortality in the Warsaw ghetto if we did not separate from them the large group of refugees and deportees, which yielded the greatest number of victims.

[82] During those three months 14,692 persons died, but in the case of 1,994 the age and the sex are not recorded. The figures are taken from "Materiały . . .," p. 490.

Refugees and Deportees

The problem of refugees and deportees requires separate treatment as one of the most tragic chapters in the story of life and death in the Warsaw ghetto. We possess statistical material on refugees and deportees only for those stationed in the special centers, *i.e.* of the very poorest group. Those who stayed with relatives or who rented rooms and apartments were not recorded.

As soon as the war broke out a wave of refugees began streaming into Warsaw. To these were later added — in the fall of 1939 and in the winter of 1940 — the masses of Jews who had been expelled by the Nazis from the northern and western parts of Poland that had been incorporated into the Reich. In the winter of 1941 there were nearly 70,000 deportees from the western region of the Warsaw district. According to a report of the Warsaw refugee committee dated December 31, 1940 there were in Warsaw on that day 78,625 refugees and deportees, coming from 73 localities. That figure does not cover the whole mass of refugees and deportees because, as already pointed out, a considerable number did not register with the committee. We shall probably be nearer the truth if we assume that in March and April of 1941 the number of refugees and deportees in the Warsaw ghetto amounted to 150,000, nearly one-third of the whole ghetto population.[83]

As for the refugees and deportees in the special centers, we have, as already mentioned, precise figures. According to a report of the Warsaw relief committee dated April 20, 1941, there were during that month 17,583 persons in 193 centers.[84] A later report, of May, records 176 centers with nearly 20,000 persons.[85] Thus, only about 12 to 14 percent of the refugees and deportees found asylum in these centers. One can hardly assume that the remaining 86-88 percent were so well off as not to need assistance. We may rather assume that many could not be admitted to the centers because of overcrowding. These persons lay around on the stairs in the yards, in the cellars, and amidst the rubble of the destroyed buildings.

In order to get a picture of the mortality rate in the refugee centers we shall take as a sample the center at 47 Smocza Street. During the

[83] Records of the JSS, no. 409. A similar estimate is given by M. Linder in his article on the situation in the Warsaw ghetto, in *Dror*, no. 7-8, Iyar-Sivan, 5611, p. 43.

[84] Records of the JSS, no. 409.

[85] *Ibid.*

period between February and May, 68 cases of death were reported for an average population of 456, *i.e.* 15.5 percent of all the inhabitants. (In February the number of deaths was 12; in March, 16; in April, 17 and in May, 24.) Within four months the rate of mortality rose from 2.65 percent in February to 5.65 percent in May, *i.e.* more than twice as much.[86] That center was not the worst one. There were others where mortality was even higher. Thus, the large center at 15 Stawki Street had 207 deaths during the months March to July of 1941 for a population of 673, *i.e.* 36.2 percent.[87] There the rate of mortality rose within five months from 1.55 percent to 13.50 percent, *i.e.* nine times as many.

It must also be emphasized that these figures cover only those cases that were reported by the hospitals and quarantine centers and not anonymous deaths on the street. In the months of March to July 1941 the number of such anonymous deaths on the streets was reported to have been 323 (846 deaths for the whole of 1941).[88]

The situation in the TOZ centers was better in this respect, apparently because of better sanitary conditions and better attention and supervision. About 10,240 persons were accommodated in these centers between April 1941 (132 centers) and June 1941 (121 centers) and out of this number there were 890 deaths, or 8.8 percent.[89] Even in these better centers 9 percent of the average population died within three months.

In the children's homes the mortality rate was also very high. As an example we shall take the largest such home on 127 Leszno Street (on November 25, 1940 it was moved to 39 Dzielna Street). There were 47 deaths in this home between July 4 and August 15, 1940, out of 470 children, *i.e.* 10 percent.[90] In 1941, in the ghetto, the rate of mortality in the same children's home rose still higher: for an average of 600 children there were 178 deaths in May and 155 in June.[91] At this rate, if no new children were added to the home, all the children would have died out within three or four months!

[86] Records of the Joint Distribution Committee, no. 373.

[87] RA, report by leader of the center, civil engineer Einhorn, August 2, 1941.

[88] Diagram of the statistical department of the Judenrat in JHI Museum. The number of deaths on the streets increased. In March 1942 there were 290 such cases (report for May 1942 in "Materiały . . .").

[89] RA, no. 223.

[90] Bulletin of the Judenrat, no. 15.

[91] RA, no. 223.

We get indirect confirmation of the high mortality in the centers for refugees and deportees and among the poor of the ghetto generally by comparing the figures for free and paid funerals. We may assume that free funerals were given to those who died in the refugee and deportee centers and to the dead placed on the street by their poor relatives who could not afford the burial fee.[92] In 1940 there were in the ghetto 8,981 funerals, of which 2,757 were paid for and 6,224 (69.3 percent) were charity cases.[93] The conclusion is unmistakable: nearly 70 percent of the deceased belonged to the impoverished masses. In 1941 the proportion was even higher. Out of 765 funerals between January 31 and February 20, the number of charity cases was 709, *i.e.* 92.6 percent. In the week between February 20 and February 27, out of 245 funerals, 223 (90.7 percent) were free.[94] These figures, at the same time, give us a picture of the terrible destitution among the ghetto population.

The Rate and Causes of Mortality

How the high mortality broke up entire families can be seen from a survey taken in 1941 (exact date unknown). Among 1,304 families, with a total population of 5,420 persons, living in all six ghetto districts, there were 1,696 deaths, distributed as follows: 123 out of the 5,420 were unattached—all of them died; out of 193 families of two persons each, 31 families (16 percent) died out entirely, while the remaining 162 lost one member each. Among 230 families of three, 11 families died out completely (4.7 percent) and 36 (15.5 percent) lost two members each, etc. Altogether, 168 out of the 1,304 families died out entirely (12.8 percent), 205 families were reduced by two-thirds or even three-fourths. The sum total of deaths among 5,240 members of the families under examination was 1,696, or 31.3 percent.[95]

A few figures on the rate of mortality in the ghetto as compared with the mortality on the "Aryan" side will help provide a clearer picture:

[92] According to a report of the house committee of 13 Krochmalna Street they carried 63 dead out of the house to save funeral expenses. ("Materiały, p. 400).

[93] Bulletin of the Judenrat, no. 13, p. 13.

[94] *Ibid.*, no. 13-14, p. 13, 23.

[95] RA, no. 1456.

TABLE VIII
MORTALITY IN THE GHETTO AND ON THE "ARYAN" SIDE, APRIL-JULY, 1941[96]

Month	Per 10,000 in the Ghetto	Per 10,000 on the "Aryan" Side
April	55.0	18.8
May	104.0	18.8
June	118.3	18.8
July	153.8	—

We see that there was no increase in the rate of mortality on the "Aryan" side during that period whereas in the ghetto the rate nearly trebled. In April 1941 the rate of mortality in the ghetto was three times higher than in the non-Jewish part of the city; in June it was already six times as high.

The primary cause for the high rate of mortality in the Warsaw ghetto, from which all other causes flowed, was the ghetto itself. (1) In the first place, the ghetto brought about a deterioration of the hygienic and sanitary condition of the population. Because of the shortage of electricity, gas, and fuel, people washed less frequently and hardly if ever were able to take hot baths. The shortage of soap and fuel meant that clothing and linens were changed less frequently. The dwellings being unheated, were not aired, the houses and the courtyards were dirty, the garbage was removed very seldom (from Krochmalna Street no garbage was removed for six months). The incessant worries and misfortunes, the constant hunger resulted in laxness and indifference to personal cleanliness. Lice infestation became widespread and increased especially among the refugees and deportees. (2) Overcrowding in the ghetto created the most favorable conditions for the spread of contagion, both in the street, where people moved in thick masses, and in the homes. The ghetto had no parks, no public squares, no trees. (3) The maintenance of the food supply in the ghetto on a starvation level not only yielded a large number of direct victims of hunger but also weakened resistance to disease.

In considering the direct causes of mortality in the ghetto we must distinguish between the years 1939-1940 and the years 1941-1942. The following table will illustrate the difference.

[96] *Ibid.*, no. 85.

TABLE IX
CAUSES OF MORTALITY IN THE WARSAW GHETTO
IN THE YEARS 1939-1942[97]

Year	Month	Total Number of Deaths	Number Died of Spotted Typhus	Percentage	Number Died of Hunger and Exhaustion	Percentage	Number of Undetermined Deaths	Percentage
1939	Sept.-Dec.	6,560	5	0.07	4	0.06	2,056	31.3
1940		8,981	216	2.3	91	1.01	1,032	11.5
1941		43,239	1,991	4.6	10,971	25.3	10,653	24.6
1942	Jan.-July	26,116	512	1.9	7,254	27.7	10,694	40.0
Total		84,896	2,724	3.2	18,320	21.5	24,435	28.7

A mere cursory glance at the table shows the great quantitative and qualitative difference between the causes for death in Sept.-Dec. 1939 and 1940 and those of the first half of 1941-1942: in the last four months of 1939 and in the whole of 1940 the number of deaths from spoted typhus amounted to 0.07 and 2.3 percent, whereas in 1941 and in the first half of 1942 it was 4.6 and 1.9 percent. In relative and in absolute terms, the largest number of deaths from spotted typhus occurred in 1941 (during the years from 1931 to 1936 all typhus cases, including abdominal typhus, spotted typhus and others, among the Jews of Warsaw, were responsible for 1.1 percent of the deaths and were in 17th place in the list of causes of death).[98]

The increase in the number of deaths from hunger and exhaustion is even more appalling, particularly in 1941 and during the first half of 1942. The last four months of 1939 and all of 1940 showed a small number (0.06 percent and 1.01 percent respectively) but in 1941 and during the first half of 1942 more than one quarter of the deaths are accounted for by hunger and exhaustion (25.3 percent and 27.7 percent). The actual number must have been larger for, no doubt, it included many cases of death officially reported as from "cause unknown."

There was an especially high rate of deaths from hunger among the refugees and deportees in the centers, as is shown by the following

[97] *Choroba głodowa* . . . p. 113.
[98] Hersch, L., "Yidishe demografye," in *Algemeyne entsiklopedye, Yidn,* vol. i, col. 367-68.

figures. During the months of May-June 1941 the number of deaths among the refugees was 66 percent from starvation; 12 percent from tuberculosis; 6 percent from spotted typhus; 16 percent from other causes. At the same time the figures among the deportees were 83.1 percent from starvation; 3 percent from tuberculosis; 13.9 percent from miscellaneous causes. There was only one death caused by spotted typhus.[99]

We see that the largest number of deaths among the refugees and deportees during May and June of 1941 was caused by hunger. In June of 1941, more than four-fifths of the deaths among the deportees was caused by hunger, and the trend kept increasing. Among the refugees the rate of deaths caused by hunger rose in May and June by 8.7 percent (from 57.3 to 66 percent), among the deportees by 11.9 percent (from 71.2 to 83.1 percent).

We may now compare the causes of death among the deportees and refugees with those of the general ghetto population. We shall take only two characteristic ghetto diseases as examples: starvation and spotted typhus.

TABLE X
CAUSES OF DEATH IN REFUGEE AND DEPORTEE CENTERS AND AMONGST THE REST OF THE GHETTO POPULATION IN MAY-JUNE, 1941

Cause	TOTAL NUMBER OF DEATHS		DEATHS IN CENTERS		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL NUMBER OF DEATHS	
	May	June	May	June	May	June
Hunger	1,349	1,599	277	332	20.5	20.7
Spotted Typhus	38	89	1	3	2.5	3.3

The number of refugees and deportees in the centers at that time amounted to about 20,000, *i.e.* 4.4 percent of the whole population, which then numbered about 450,000. But the number of deaths caused by hunger among them was more than 20 percent, *i.e.* nearly five times their ratio of the population.

The relatively small number of deaths in the centers caused by spotted typhus is worth noting. We have already pointed out that this disease bore down less heavily on the poorer people in the ghetto than

[99] RA, no. 223.

on the well-to-do. Here too, however, the rate of mortality increased. The organisms, weakened by hunger, could offer but weak resistance to spotted typhus.

In 1942 the situation became further aggravated. During the first ten days of March 1942 there were 2,792 (34.9 percent) cases of patients swollen with hunger out of about 8,000 refugees and deportees. (In December 1941, 18.7 percent of all uprooted were found to be swollen with hunger — 1,763 cases out of 9,425 persons, including 835 children.) In the special centers the percentage of cases swollen with hunger was even greater; at 9 Stawki Street, 49 percent; at 3 Dzika Street, 62 percent; at 48 Grzybowska Street, 63 percent; at 64 Żelazna Street, 73 percent.[100]

With regard to deaths caused by other ailments, the statistical material for the period is not very precise and concerns only heart disease and tuberculosis. There is enough evidence there too to indicate the accelerated trend. Following are some figures for these ailments. In 1939 there were 1,434 deaths from heart disease and 387 from tuberculosis. In 1940 the number of deaths caused by heart disease was 2,309; from tuberculosis, 754. During the first two months of 1941, 523 people died of heart disease and 649 of tuberculosis.

In this connection it is worth pointing out that during the pre-war years of 1931-1933 heart diseases accounted for 23.9 percent of all causes of death among the Jewish population in Warsaw and were first on the list of causes of death. Tuberculosis, during this period, caused 8.3 percent of all deaths and was fifth on the list.[101] The rate of mortality from cardiac ailments changed very little during the first years of the war (an increase by 4.3 percent in January-February 1941 as compared with 1936). In the case of tuberculosis, however, the mortality during the same period increased four-fold (from 8.3 to 33.7 percent). It is superfluous to stress the part played by hunger in the spread of tuberculosis in the ghetto, especially among children and adolescents. A considerable proportion of the deaths among the refugees was caused by the freezing weather during the winter months in the unheated rooms in the centres. Sometimes the rooms were without window panes. In the children's home on Dzielna Street they often found on winter mornings children in their beds frozen to death, their urine turned to ice.[102]

100 "Materiały . . ." p. 405-408.
101 Hersch, *op. cit.*
102 RA, no. 214.

On the basis of the materials and the figures which we have cited, the following summary may be made: From September 1939 to August 1942 inclusive, *i.e.* during a period of 36 months, 88,568 Jews died in Warsaw. Pre-war mortality among the Jews of Warsaw had amounted to 350 per month. At the same rate, the number of deaths during these 36 months should have been 12,600. This means that 76,000 Jews died as a result of hunger and disease (a certain number, however, must be credited to the September bombardment, to pogroms and execution). This amounted to 19 percent of the 400,000 Jews who inhabited the Warsaw ghetto.

If we were to assume that the Nazis did not liquidate the ghetto and that the situation in the ghetto during the succeeding years did not deteriorate and the mortality rate did not increase over that of the first half of 1942 (over 26,000), it would have taken eight years for all the Jews of the ghetto to die out.

But the Nazis had no intention to wait that long.

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION IN THE GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

By W. GLICKSMAN

A considerable literature has been accumulated on the concentration camp of Auschwitz (Oświęcim). There are books, newspaper reports, eye-witness testimony, descriptions, and also official German documents, camp regulations and the archives captured by the Russian armies when they occupied the camp. Most of the literature is by former inmates of the camp and reflects in the main only one aspect of life in Auschwitz: the torturing and destruction of individuals and ethnic groups. The reader of this literature sees only transports of prisoners, terror, brutality, crematoria and gas-chambers. The accuracy of the facts described is indisputable. Everything is the naked truth. But it would be entirely misleading to accept these descriptions as comprehensive and exhaustive. The accumulated literature on the Jewish catastrophe is, with few exceptions, subjective and one-sided. Natural and justified as such an approach may seem, it cannot provide an objective and complete picture of the camp. There was another side of Auschwitz life that is not treated in this literature, life not always associated with hunger, sickness, torture, pain and death. Life in the concentration camp involved problems common to any social group. In this camp, as in many others, human character, human relationships and the interplay of individual and social conduct were prominently displayed. This applies to both elements in the camp: the prisoners and their S.S. guards.

Among the more significant problems which developed in the camp were those dealing with the relationships among different ethnic groups, the attitude toward the Jews of the non-Jewish political and criminal prisoners, and, above all, the relations among the Jews themselves. The social stratification of the Auschwitz inmates proceeded according to the general rules of social and economic life. There were illegal trade, love affairs, prostitution, recreational activities and sports.

If the autobiographical accounts fail to bring out the full picture of the camp, one can readily imagine that captured Nazi documents do so even less. The reason is twofold: in the first place, the Germans sought to give their interpretation of the camp in the light of the slogan "Work liberates." That is, of course, entirely false. There are no words to describe the cynicism, the arrogance and the deceit of that slogan. In the second place, these documents fail to give an answer to a multitude of questions. We do not have accurate statistical data on the number of people who perished. The figures we have are based on estimates; this applies to Jews as well as to non-Jews. There are no documents to explain some of the mysterious orders issued by the S.S. Important material was destroyed when the camp was evacuated.[1]

The student of the great catastrophe is confronted with a number of complex questions. Why did the Nazis uselessly destroy millions of human beings who could have been productively employed in the German war industry and the German economy? Why did they find it more important to kill off able-bodied men and women than to win the war?[2] Why did they maintain dozens of camps whose contribution to the German production was nil?[3] Why did they nevertheless bring to Auschwitz the remnants of German and Hungarian Jewry? What differences of opinion were there in the Nazi leadership about methods for getting rid of the European Jews? A number of studies have already appeared which make a serious attempt to find answers to these questions. Among them is Dr. Philip Friedman's *Oświęcim* and articles and books by Hannah Arendt, Bruno Bettelheim, E. A. Cohen, St. Jagielski, E. Kogon and others. The author of the present article does not pretend to exhaust the whole maze of problems touched upon here. He wishes to deal with only one aspect of the social problem in the camps, the economic stratification of the imprisoned, as he observed

[1] In 1944, when the fate of Germnay was already sealed, administrative documents were being used as fuel in the central laundry of the Auschwitz camp. On the day of the evacuation of Auschwitz, on January 18, 1945, documents were burned in the camp factory D. A. W. (Deutsche Ausrüstungs-Werke), in the S. S. houses and in other departments.

"The decisive proof of the guilt of the S. S. was the event on April 15, 1945. The leaders of the S. S. had destroyed the most important documents several days before. . . ." (Kogon, E., *Der S. S. Staat,* Munich 1946).

[2] Hans Frank, former Governor-General of Poland, said in 1942: "I was able to prove, the other day, to Staatssekretaer Ganzenmüller, who was complaining that a big building project in the General Government came to a halt, that this would not have happened if the many thousands of Jews working at it had not been deported." (*Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression,* vol. iv, p. 902).

[3] In some of the factories in Auschwitz there was already an acute shortage of raw materials in the summer of 1944. Certain departments had to be closed down.

it as an inmate in the course of several years in different camps. Emphasis will be placed on the life of the privileged class in the camp. It should be noted that we are dealing here with the camp as a whole, including both the Jewish and non-Jewish inmates.

CAMPS AND CAMP ADMINISTRATION

The Nazi concentration camps were originally established for the opponents of the Hitler regime. The administration of the camps was first entrusted to the S. A. and they introduced a regime of terror unknown in the history of mankind. Torturing and murdering innocent people without responsibility towards anyone was the daily routine of the S. A. man. The Nazi authorities encouraged such a state of affairs in order to compensate the S. A. men for joining the Hitler movement. It was a means of diverting their petty-bourgeois opposition to the large industrialists whose support the government was anxious to have.

Later the supervision of each camp was entrusted to two administrative authorities, one external, carried out only by the S. S. and their military auxiliary units, the other internal, managed by the prisoners themselves under S. S. supervision. The hierarchy of the internal administration was capped by the Elder of the Camp, followed by the Camp Clerk and the Chief of Labor Statistics. Then came the block elders, block clerks, house elders, and block barbers. The group of kapos[4] began with the camp kapo, chief kapo, under-kapo and work foreman. The camp administration also functioned in the camp kitchen, the dispensary, the hospital, the laundry, the canteens, the orchestra, among the firemen and among the street cleaners.

The internal administration of the camp was based on the principle of autonomy. The camp elder was appointed by the S. S. Certain camps succeeded after a while in inducing the S. S. to have the position filled by a candidate nominated by the inmates themselves. The camp elder was responsible for order in the camp. It was a very difficult assignment. In many camps, especially in the small ones, the fate of the camp inmates depended on the measure of humanity or inhumanity of the elder. The S. S. always sought to place in that post a person who would serve the interests of the S. S. and show a hostile attitude towards the human mass in the camp. Thus, the first camp

[4] This term is believed to be derived from the Italian *Il capo*, the chief (Kogon, *op. cit.*).

elder in Buchenwald was a former S. S. man of the 33d Berlin Storm group, a man noted for his unmatched brutality. On the other hand, the elder in Jawiszowice, near Auschwitz, in 1943, was a political prisoner, thanks to whom the inmates enjoyed some relief.

Second in the camp hierarchy was the camp clerk. Assisted by a group of prisoners he managed the *Schreibstube,* or camp offce. The whole internal management, with the card file, the distribution of the prisoners into blocks, the preparation of inspections, the food distribution, etc., were in their hands. By and large, their work for the camp was of a positive nature. Over a period of years they managed, in many ways, to save many prisoners from death, or from harsh physical penalties and to assign prisoners to work which would be of use to their fellow-inmates. At times, it proved possible to get rid of an undesirable kapo by bribing the *Schreibstube.*

Another office administered by the prisoners was that of labor statistics. Its function was to distribute the inmates according to occupations and keep the records of the amount of work done.[5] This office supplied the work-commandos for outside and inside the camp. There were both good and bad aspects to this office. The employees in this office, in co-operation with the *Schreibstube,* were able to save the lives of many people condemned to the gas-chambers.[6] The clerks sometimes assigned prisoners to labor gangs for outside work whose lives were endangered by the S. S. By the use of bribes it was often possible to effect a change in workplace or be shifted to easier work. There were cases in which sinister elements exploited their positions to the detriment of the inmates. The office of camp interpreter was in a class by itself.

The block elder who took his orders from the S. S. chief of the block, occupied an important position in the hierarchy. He was responsible for order in the block, which he maintained with the assistance of the "room-servants." Their function was to keep the rooms clean, to bring the food from the kitchen and distribute it, to give out linen, etc. The block elders and house elders enjoyed certain privileges. Each block elder had a block clerk to assist him.

Quite a special group in the camp hierarchy was made up of the

[5] Every camp inmate was the property of the S. S. . . . Any factory employing a man paid the S. S. a set fee. But the prisoner did not receive anything from the S. S. *Cf.* Friedman, P., *Oświęcim* (Buenos Aires 1951) p. 80-81. See also Rajewski, L., *Oświęcim w systemie RSHA* (Warsaw 1946) p. 68.

[6] Reference is to selections often taking place in the camp itsefl and not to shipments from the ghettos.

kapos. They served as labor supervisors, under the constant surveillance of the S. S. man who was in charge of the labor commando. The kapos had foremen to assist them, all appointed by the S. S. chief, with the consent of the office of labor statistics. The kapo did no work himself.

In the earlier period, during the S. A. administration, the camp inmates consisted for the most part of political prisoners. Jews, as a racial group, were added after 1938.[7] Later, during the S. S. administration, there were the following categories of camp inmates: political opponents, members of inferior races, criminals, and "a-social" elements. The class of political prisoners consisted mostly of opponents to the Hitler regime and non-party people who had been denounced as opponents. This was not a homogeneous group, since it included among the political prisoners also former members of the S. A. or of other military establishments who had been found guilty of violations of military regulations. After the outbreak of the war, the political prisoners of the vanquished nations were added to the group. Jews and gypsies were classed as members of the "inferior" races.

The criminals, drawn from the lowest social elements, managed to attain to positions of comparative power in the camp. These were individuals who had received sentences for murder, robbery and such-like offenses. With them were the anti-social elements, such as thieves, swindlers, drunkards, pimps, vagrants and the like. They too attained to high positions and belonged to the class of camp "notables." But classed by the Germans among the criminals were also those who were guilty of minor infractions, such as coming late to work, leaving a job without permission or victims of denunciation. Homosexuals, men and women found guilty of "race defilement" and work shirkers were in a group by themselves. Another separate group was that of members of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The administrative system changed considerably after the S. S. took over the camps. The most important change was the fact that the camp now became a permanent institution. While at first the prisoner could entertain some hope of release, the fate of the inmates under the S. S. was sealed. Only death or the end of the Nazi regime could liberate him.

[7] Until 1938 there were very few Jews in the camps. It was only following the pogrom in November 1938 that Jews began to be sent to the concentration camps. See Bettelheim, Bruno, "Behavior in Extreme Situations," in *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol. xxxviii (1943) 418.

CLASSES AND CLASS STRATIFICATION IN THE CAMPS

It is not correct to assume that the whole camp population consisted of a single social stratum. Conditions of life in the camp gave rise to divisions into classes. There was a privileged class and there were the non-privileged. The privileged class was known in camp jargon as "notables" (*prominente*). It consisted in the main of two groups: (1) the camp elder, the interpreter, the camp clerk, the block elders, the block clerks, the house elders, the block barbers, the kapos, the supervisors, other high officials of the camp and those who had been in the camp since its inception; (2) those who attained social prestige through illegal trade in gold and silver, clothing, liquor, food and other articles of human requirements. They were known in the camp jargon as "great organizers." These two groups, which made up the camp aristocracy, enjoyed unwritten privileges at the expense of the rest of the inmates of the camp. This came about without official sanction by the S. S. administration. Among the "notables" in the camp there were often pimps and murderers who enjoyed better conditions as prisoners than they ever had when they were free.

The other classes consisted of the "small organizers" and the so-called *muslmen* (the origin of this expressision is hard to establish). The former included both Jews and non-Jews who were petty traders, artisans, lower officials and clerks in the camp administration and those who managed to receive food parcels from their families.[8] The *muslmen* were considered the lowest class in the camp. They were the people who worked the hardest, had inadequate food, suffered more than others from cold, vermin and disease and were the first victims to be assigned to the gas-chambers and crematoria. Some of them were intellectuals. They were innocent people who had never broken the law. The "small organizers" and the *muslmen* made up the great majority of the camp population.

Even though conditions in the camp were terrible there was, nevertheless, both class division and mobility, and possibilities for rise and decline in the camp hierarchy.[9] The previous social origin of the camp

[8] The Christian inmates in Auschwitz could receive food parcels from the outside. Jews could not receive such parcels. Apart from that, there was no one who could send any food to the Jew in the camp. His relatives had been killed or deported to another camp. But even when a Christian friend of the Jew wished to send him a food parcel it was not accepted. See the author's review of Dr. Friedman's book in *Fraye arbeter-shtime* of March 28, 1952.

[9] There is a sharp difference of opinion on the matter of divisions in the camps between H. Korotyński and S. Faszumski. See: Korotyński, H., "Kiedy będziemy znali Oświęcim," in *Odrodzenie,* 24 Sierpnia (Warsaw 1947).

inmate had nothing to do with his social position in the camp. In order better to understand the economic divisions in the camp and the social status connected with them, it is necessary to direct attention to the trading activities that went on in the camp.

ILLEGAL TRADE AND BARTER

Barter of goods among camp inmates was almost a regular manifestation of camp life. In the camp jargon the exchange was known as "organization" and the camp trader as "organizer." "Organization" in the camps differed in several ways from trade in a free society. While trade in a free society is legal, "organization" in the camp was illegal and prohibited; while trade in a free society embraces various fields and requirements of human beings, "organization" in the camps was confined mainly to articles of food and to needs of health. While the goods involved in free trade come from normal sources of production, the goods for "organization" arrived by abnormal routes. In fine, "organization" meant the utilization by a camp inmate of all his resourcefulness to maintain a miserable existence, to be able to endure suffering and pain, to fortify his resistance to sickness and epidemics and to keep alive the hope for liberation. "Organization" went on practically in all German camps.

"Organization" did not always mean barter. Sometimes it meant plain stealing. When one inmate stole from another the act was branded as thievery, but no one was considered a thief if he stole from the Germans or from the camp warehouse.

"Organization" was a necessity for every camp inmate. In the course of time, after the individual had become established in the camp and adjusted to camp life, he began to "organize" his affairs. A capable "organizer" would seek to obtain work which would facilitate and perforce improve his physical conditions. "Organization" also included bribing the labor office to secure a transfer from heavier to lighter work. This gave additional hope to be able to endure and to save one's strength for the future hardships. Every achievement and every improvement in personal life was accompanied by the remark: "The main thing is organization." Conversely, every failure led to the complaint: "It all comes from lack of organization."

Exchange of goods brought about closer relations among the camp inmates. Partnerships and friendships were formed and a mutual interest shown in one another's welfare. The functions of "organization"

were divided among the partners in accordance with an unwritten agreement based on human relationship. On the other hand, occasional conflicts and dissolutions of partnerships occurred, and differences were often mediated by a third party. The extent of "organization" depended on the abilities of the "organizers."

"Organization" also meant finding out the informers and traitors among the camp inmates. That was done by people who worked in the camp offices, especially in the political department. They had access to the files and to information about every inmate of the camp. If one was suspected his doom was sealed. His life was made miserable and he was brought to such a physical state that the S. S. at the "selection," would send him to the gas chambers.

TYPES OF "ORGANIZERS"

There were different categories of "organizers." (1) A group which "organized" gold, silver, currency and other precious objects, consisted in the main of the "notables" of the camp. It seems quite certain that members of this group had associates among the S. S. (2) A second group "organized" all sorts of merchandise, formed partnerships with members of the first group or paid them hush money. In either case, the "organizers" were more or less insured against being apprehended or denounced. (3) A third group "organized" for the sole purpose of securing more food and improving its physical conditions. These were the petty "organizers." (4) Brokers and porters. The former served as middlemen in bringing together parties to a transaction. The latter did no "organizing" themselves but undertook to smuggle goods into the camp for the large "organizers" in order thereby to supplement their rations. (5) There was also a group, and they were the majority of the camp inmates, who neither "organized" nor acted as brokers or porters. For them "organization" meant begging some food from the more "prosperous" inmates.

The exchange of goods was officially prohibited and the S. S. used its power to suppress it. Any goods found on a camp inmate were taken away and the individual punished. Nevertheless it is also true that the S. S. winked at such practices a good deal of the time. This tolerance, of course, was not motivated by humanitarian feelings. It stemmed from purely selfish interests. The S. S. men had great opportunities for enriching themselves. Hundreds of thousands of garments, footwear, and especially gold, jewelry, pearls, diamonds and other pre-

cious objects which were taken from the victims were placed in their charge. Nearly every deportee took something of value with him to the camp, in the expectation that it would serve him in the new life the Germans had promised.

This aggregate of wealth turned the S. S. man into an "organizer." His "organizing" was different from that of the camp inmate. It incurred less risk, but he had to be careful not to be discovered by his comrades. According to the military regulations such activity was strictly forbidden and he, therefore, had to be cautious. Moreover, some of the S. S. men had associates among the camp inmates. Interestingly enough, the superior S. S. officers tolerated the "organization" practiced by their colleagues of lower rank.

Every deportee, on arriving in the camp, had to surrender all his possessions. These goods were taken into a special room known as the *"Effekten-Kammer."* Those who were to be gassed were stripped naked and their clothes were placed in the *Effekten-Kammer.* The *Effekten-Kammer* was in effect a huge warehouse of the camp with a tremendous accumulation of all sorts of goods. A special labor group was appointed to sort out these mountains of articles. It was called the "cleaning commando" (*Reinigungs Kommando*). In the camp jargon it was known as "Canada." The members of this labor group were the chief suppliers of goods to the camp market. Each one of them was an "organizer." They brought all sorts of valuable objects into the camp for sale and barter and they did it under the very noses of the S. S. and frequently with their connivance as partners. The goods which were thus brought into the camp consisted of the most necessary personal effects. Other labor groups who were employed in the S. S. kitchen, in the camp bakery, in the camp kitchen, in the food warehouses, in the slaughter houses, etc., supplied food for the camp market.

Since "organization" was prohibited the goods had to be smuggled into the camp. Smuggling entailed grave risks. If anyone was found with goods, it was taken away from him and he was punished. If he was found to possess gold, silver, diamonds, foreign currency or other valuables he was sent to Block 11, which usually meant death. Yet this did not stop "organization." The pressure of want and hunger outweighed these perils. Various methods were evolved for evading, at least in part, the repeated searches. The large "organizers" were protected by their silent partners among the S. S. (The S. S. man in most cases engaged in such partnerships where gold or other valuables were

involved). In the case of other types of goods he was bribed.) The bribed S. S. men, therefore, did not carry out their searches in the strictest fashion. The smuggler would say softly: *"Linke Tasche für Sie"* ("Left pocket for you") and he would escape penalty and confiscation of his goods. Most camp inmates, however, did their smuggling without partners. Whenever they had indications that a search would be carried out they would hide the goods in the area in which they worked. When rumors of an impending search came too late, after the camp inmates were already on their way back to the camp, the "organizer" would cast aside his goods on the road. In such cases the S. S. men accompanying the group had a rich harvest.

The "Union" ammunition factory in the Auschwitz camp employed about 1,500 camp inmates during the day shift and about half that number during the night shift. On both shifts half of the workers were men and half women. The men's barracks were in the main camp; the women's barracks were in the neighboring camp of Birkenau. That camp, together with other, smaller camps, like Jawiszowice, Monowicze, Jaworzno, Blechhammer and others, were under the administration of the main camp of Auschwitz.

The gas-chambers were in Birkenau and the "Canada" labor gang, therefore, was stationed there. Their barracks were divided from the women's barracks by a barbed wire fence. Through various means and taking grave risks, these two groups transacted their business. Many times they risked missing a day's work. The women "organizers" who worked at the "Union" factory smuggled the goods into the plant. If the smuggling succeeded they would sell the articles to the men and be paid with cigarettes, which also had been acquired through smuggling. The men then brought the goods into the camp.

These business transactions were carried on practically along the same lines as in a free society. There was bargaining, business quarrels, extension of credit, bankruptcy, cheating, fraud, and the like. All activities were carried on in the evening after work. The "Union" group would return from work at about 7 p.m. At 8:30 the camp inmates had to be in their barracks, so that there was only an hour and a half in which the business deals could be carried through. During that short period too the camp inmate had to get his food portion. Other groups would return before sunset during winter and at about 5 p.m. during the summer. The "organizers" in these groups therefore had more time in which to carry on their transactions. Business

affairs were also often taken care of on a free Sunday or on other occasions.

Of the above-mentioned categories of "organizers" the first two developed in the course of time as permanent establishments. Such was the case, for example, with the "organizers" of bread. When for some reason or other the merchandise was not sold on the same evening, the large "organizers" would leave it with the house elder, if he was honest and reliable. Merchandise was also hidden in straw mattresses. This involved considerable danger since the block elders and the house elders now and then carried out searches on their own and confiscated whatever they found. Goods were also hidden with other camp inmates and with porters. This also was a risky step for one was liable to be caught by an S. S. man or supervisor.

The dealers were members of the labor gang, who, because of their work, came into contact with civilian workers, *i.e.* laborers, and peasants from the neighboring villages employed by the Germans. These civilians bought everything and paid with articles of food. Another class of buyers were the "notables" of the camp who, because of their work, had the opportunity to meet women. Friendships were formed between the men and women. The camp regulations, however, prohibited them from being together. A man could sometimes bring food or a garment to his female acquaintance. Some of the "notables" used to buy women's garments for the prostitutes in the camp brothel. There were also camp inmates who received food parcels from the outside and who exchanged the food for garments and other personal effects.

While the trade of the "notables" was established on a permanent basis, that of the smaller "organizers" was much smaller in scale and also more or less sporadic. They did it only to get a little more food. Such a trader experienced the normal difficulties of a small businessman. He had to hustle customers, he had to extend credit and provide better merchandise and he was greatly affected by competition. As a man who was merely an occasional "organizer" and unknown in the market, he had to be able to meet competition. The smaller "organizer" also had to operate with a smaller amount of cigarettes—which constituted his capital—and his trading, therefore, was more difficult. For the same reason any losses, through searches or bankruptcies, bore more heavily on him than on an "organizer" of the class of "notables."

By and large the cause for "organization" was the constant dire want. The food rations given to the prisoners were meager in quantity and poor in quality. They consisted of 1,500 to 1,800 calories daily for a 10 to 12 hours' workday. Added to that, the poor prospects of a speedy release simply compelled the individual to seek a way for improving his own physical condition. Those who were unable to "organize" became so exhaused physically within a very short time that they became *muslmen,* which meant that they were the first candidates for the gas-chambers. It must be borne in mind that one's physical appearance determined one's fate—whether to continue as a laborer or to be consigned to the furnace.

Some "organizers" dealt in pieces of gold, silver, or other valuables, in small quanitities which could easily be concealed. Such inmates worked in groups of two or three, since it was almost impossible for a single individual to carry out such deals. During the first years of the existence of the camps in Germany some of the inmates managed to send out to their families still at liberty the valuables they had amassed in the camp. Others buried it in the ground, hoping to dig it out when the time came.

There were some who "organized" merely in order to keep their minds occupied and to forget their tragic situation. Although, like the rest, they were likely to be caught at any time, they disregarded the danger and went on with their "organizing" activities. Individuals in such groups who had been businessmen could cherish the illusion of a normal existence. It must be noted, however, that many really enjoyed the game of such business transactions.

TYPE OF INMATE IN THE CAMP ADMINISTRATION

During the period in which the camps were administered by the S. A., the camp inmates used for the camp management came chiefly from the criminal group. This was in keeping with the policy of the Nazi regime to suppress every kind of political opposition. It must against be emphasized that at that time the largest part of the camp population consisted of political prisoners. In the 1940's, when Himmler began to make use of the camps as a source of labor for the German industries, the political prisoners gradually penetrated into the camp administration as the élite of the camp. This was because the S.S. could not collaborate with the criminals under the new conditions.

There were various ways to attain to the class of "notables." One

way was through the S. S. High camp officials might recommend a candidate to the S. S., and the office of labor statistics would then officially confirm him. Occasionally the S. S. man himself would nominate or promote camp inmates to functions in the camp administration. Sometimes an individual, through bribery or friendly connections in the labor office, was able to secure a higher post in the camp administration. Another way to become a "notable" was by means of material wealth derived from illegal trading in the camp. The amount of food one had became one of the main factors determining class divisions in the camp.

The chief qualification an individual needed in order to be nominated by the S. S. to a leading position was brutality. The more heartless one was the more likely he was to rise in the esteem of the S. S. and be promoted more rapidly to higher posts in the camp hierarchy.[10] The criminals in the camp and a goodly number of political prisoners outdid themselves in their attempts to win the approbation of the S. S. They vied with one another in administering beatings, torture and murder. These were the men that the S. S. selected for posts in the camp administration. Whoever could boast of base crimes committed before detention in the camp and of having beaten a couple of camp prisoners to death, had an easy path to the camp aristocracy. The promotion, in turn, gave him new privileges to terrorize and to torment the prisoners of the "lower" classes. This served the S. S. man as an alibi that he himself was innocent of the killings and that the inmates were murdering each other. The Auschwitz kapo Bruno Frohnecke, nicknamed "the killer," had been sentenced 19 times before coming to Auschwitz. His last sentence had been 5 years hard labor.[11] The kapo of the road-building commando during the months of April and May in 1943 was a criminal from Silesia who had murdered his fiancée. The supervisor Bischoff in the "Union Commando" was a criminal offender. Otto, the house elder of Block 4A was a German who had spent 15 years in prison, for complicity in a murder. The house elder of Bakers' Block 16, house 5, used to supply the S. S. every day with victims of his own killing.[12] He was later elevated to the post of kapo. There are innumerable other such instances.

The following incident illustrates the extent to which the "notables" used their social position. One day a camp inmate in Buchen-

[10] Rajewski, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[11] Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

wald was found hanged. By accident the prosecuting attorney of nearby Weimar learned of the case and ordered an investigation. It turned out that the supposed suicide had been beaten to death by the house elder, with the assent of the block elder Osterloh, and he was then hanged to simulate suicide. He had been killed for daring to protest against the theft of food rations by the block elder and house elder. The S. S. defended the two murderers and the result was that the house elder was promoted to the rank of block elder.[13]

The kapos also belonged to the camp aristocracy. A good number of them were former members of the S.A., former soldiers of the Foreign Legion and criminal elements skilled in the arts of beating and murder. There were some labor commandos in which camp inmates had to bribe the kapo to allow them to live and not be killed while at work. The camp inmate of the "lower" stratum had to give away his last morsel of food to the kapo to buy his own life. The kapos soon adapted themselves to the requirements and wishes of the S. S. It was through them that the Gestapo and the S. S. succeeded in rendering the large mass of the camp inmates harmless and submissive to the regime. Through their terror they broke the individual's power of physical and moral resistance.

The criminal and anyone else who rose to the ranks of the camp aristocracy showed application and resourcefulness in practicing torture. The main thing was to win the favor of the S.S. By being brutal the criminal gained the sense of feeling the equal of his judges.[14] This was the situation when the concentration camps were first established and it continued to be so later during the war. A former procurer, a Pole, boasted that now finally he had been given the opportunity to be a judge and mete out punishment to others. The political prisoner, too, found life in the camps somewhat easier. He could at least find consolation in the knowledge that he had been incarcerated for political activity. The worst off were the masses of innocent people. They suffered doubly. First, because their arrest had no legal foundation. Secondly, because of the tortures inflicted on them. That was the reason why the innocent elements in the camp were the least capable of resisting the demoralizing influences of camp life.[15]

[13] Kogon, *op. cit.*, p. 34-35.

[14] Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

[15] Bruno Bettelheim in his aforementioned work discusses the fact that criminal offenders could endure camp life longer than the mass of innocent prisoners. He maintains that since most of the innocents were of the middle class, they were

After a while the S. S. turned over part of the executioner's functions to the members of the higher social class in the camps. The kapo of Block 11 in Auschwitz, where executions were carried out, was a camp inmate. Some of the functions before the gassing of prisoners were carried out by camp inmates.[16] By and large a certain system was established in the practice of murder and torture. The S. S. had to deliver a certain number of dead every day and the "notables" had to supply it with the required number of victims. The internal administration of the camps was never in the hands of the "lower" class, which later during the war, constituted the great majority of the prisoners in the camps.

WORK, FOOD AND CLOTHING

While the greatest number of prisoners in the camps worked under the most inhuman conditions, the "notables" did almost no work. Their social position enabled them to evade labor service. Their functions differed, according to the office they held in the camp hierarchy.

The function of the house elder was to rouse the prisoners every morning with his call *"Aufstehn"* (Get up!). About 20 or 30 minutes later he would distribute breakfast, which consisted of a lukewarm bitter liquid, a kind of tea or coffee. He himself did not eat his breakfast with the inmates of his house. His job was to drive them out of the barracks to work. When he was through with that, he would order his assistants to clean up the barracks. While they were doing this he would eat his breakfast, which consisted of white bread (he seldom ate the bread used in camp) with butter or margarine, sausage, marmelade or cheese. In addition he had hot tea or coffee with sugar. He obtained all these articles by devious ways such as illegal trade, barter with his fellow-"notables" and at the expense of the camp population. About noon-time he would distribute soup to those inmates who for some reason or other had to remain in the camp for the day (the soup for the rest was distributed at the place of work). Very often the house elder would take a nap during the day. In order not to be caught sleeping by an S. S. man he would station one of his helpers on guard.

weaker in resisting the force of the camp and perished sooner. Hannah Arendt in her essay disputes this view, citing as proof the similar fate of people in Soviet camps who were of lower class origin. See Arendt, H., "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," in *Jewish Social Studies,* vol. xii (1950) 62-63; Bettelheim, *op. cit.,* p. 475.

[16] See Friedman, *op. cit.,* p. 132-148. The same stratagem of engineering the murder and the torture of victims by other victims in order to have the excuse that the Germans were not to blame was also applied in the ghettos.

Toward evening, when the labor gang would return from work he would dole out the bread and sometimes linen. This concluded the working day of the house elder.

Other members of the class of "notables" were likewise able to avoid working. Kapos, supervisors and their attendants merely had to see to it that the men in their group carried out the assigned work. They distributed the food at the working places, hounded and tortured the laborers, and sought to ingratiate themselves with the S. S. man in command in every possible way. The following description of the way a kapo "notable" spent his day is given by Henryk Korotyński, a former inmate of Auschwitz:

> Here is the chief (in the camp hierarchy a chief kapo) of the foodstores in Birkenau; a Pole, a former subaltern in the Polish police force, a big "organizer," an old hand but not a camp bandit. He lived in a private, well-appointed room, had two *"piepels"*[17] to prepare tasty lunches and dinners for him, to brush his clothes and shine his shoes and clean his room. . . . The chief kapo would rise later than all the others (everybody in camp was awakened before sunrise) and, after breakfast, he would make a short tour of inspection of the main warehouse in the camp. After giving out instructions and establishing that everything was in order, he would go out into the camp street to see what kind of weather was to be expected. Passers-by would greet him with a certain measure of obsequiousness. He would touch his cap with his hand in condescending reply. (He wore a navy blue cap, in distinction from the ordinary camp inmate who wore one made of camp material with stripes.) He would greet the S. S. men, but not hastily, for he felt secure in his position, in his contacts and his financial resources. He was dressed in a well-cut camp garment made of striped material. . . . Today he had several things to take care of in the women's camp and in the zone [The outside camp]. He was invited for lunch by his friend Zosia, the female block elder in camp B. In addition, he intended to visit several patients in the camp hospital to see for himself whether Dr. Zenkteler was carrying out his promise to look after them. He decided to go to the zone first, since business is business. He had a pass which enabled him to move about freely in all the camps. But no one asked him for his permit anyway, since he was well known to all. One of the S. S. men merely reminded him quietly that the warehouse was supposed to send "on the quiet" three loaves of white bread to the room of the block chief. He replied that, of course, he remembered and that he would have them sent over.[18]

[17] The "Piepels" or "Piepeln" were the boys (of about 12 to 15 years old) who attended on the block elder. The elders fed and clothed their boys fairly well, refrained from sending them to hard work and used them for perverse practices.

[18] Korotyński, *op. cit.*

As indicated above, food became one of the main factors in determining social prestige. The individual who had more to eat, more than the official camp rations, occupied a higher social grade and, conversely, the one who had only the rationed food was relegated to the lowest stratum of the camp population. More food naturally meant better physical appearance, better clothes and better general living conditions under the circumstances of camp life. It was quite natural for camp inmates to try to obtain more food by whatever means they could, such as illegal trade, "organization," etc. Kapos, supervisors and house elders would seize more food for themselves at the expense of the others. Non-Jews also got more food from food packages sent to them by their families outside.

An inmate of the Auschwitz camp was supposed to receive daily the following rations: 350 grams of bread; for breakfast, half a liter of black *"ersatz"* coffee or tea made of grass with 5 grams of sugar; for lunch, a liter of meat broth (with 20 grams of bone-meat per liter), or potato soup; for supper, 40 grams of sausage or margarine, or 50 grams of marmalade or cheese. Such rations were hardly more than a starvation diet, especially for one who had to put in 10, 12 and 14 hours of work a day. But the camp inmates actually never received even their full allotment of these meager rations. At various points in the food distribution system the amounts of the rationed portions were reduced by stealing. Employees in the warehouses, in the kitchens and the block elders all helped deprive the camp inmate of his full quota of food. The tea or coffee was usually served without sugar and only rarely with sacharine. The soup for the noon meal was a very thin soup and only rarely did it contain such ingredients as potatoes or groats. In the soup was nothing but water with some grass and leaves. The ladle used to dole out the soup from the kettle measured one liter. If the kapo did not like a prisoner he would not quite fill the ladle or fill it from the upper part of the kettle where the soup was thinnest. If the prisoner complained of such treatment he would only get a blow with the ladle over his head or in the ribs and lose his ration of soup. To lodge a complaint against a kapo with the S. S. man meant only additional punishment. Officially bread was to be distributed 7 days a week. In practice, it was given out only 6 days a week. No bread was handed out on Sundays. The loaf of bread was supposed to weigh 1,400 grams. It weighed that much when the baker first placed it in the oven. From the bakery, however, it went to the campstore, where it lay for several weeks, and when it arrived in the block for distribu-

tion the loaf weighed from 1,000 to 1,100 grams, seldom 1,200, and never as much as 1,300.

The bread and whatever went with it was usually distributed at Auschwitz in the following manner.

Monday: a portion of bread of 200 to 250 grams, with a spoonful of marmalade made of beets. The house elders invariably removed the thickest part of the marmalade for themselves and added water instead. *Tuesday*: the regular portion of bread with an added half loaf, a piece of sausage of about 20 grams and a bit of margarine. *Wednesday*: the regular portion of bread with a piece of cheese. *Thursday*: the regular portion of bread with cheese or marmalade. *Friday*: the regular portion of bread with an added half loaf, a piece of sausage of about 20 grams and a piece of margarine of 2-3 grams. *Saturday*: only the regular portion of bread. It happened very often that the additional portion of bread due on Tuesdays and Fridays was skipped. In such cases it was never made up on another day.

The portions of sausage and cheese came in ready cut slices from the kitchen. The slices were not equal in size. The house elder would keep the larger ones for himself and for the "notables" and give the smaller slices to the others. He would do the same thing with the soup, ladling out the thickest parts for himself and the others of his "class."

Tuesdays and Fridays were the main days for barter. That was when the inmates received the additional portions of bread, margarine and sausage. The *muslman* or even the small "organizer" rarely enjoyed the sausage or margarine. He would exchange them for additional bread, which the "notables" always had in abundance either from trade or from their fellow "notables." Thus, the little amount of fat available to the poorer prisoner and which he needed so much was consumed by the "notables."

The poor individual had his steady customers. Food was exchanged not only with the "notables" in one's own block, but with those in other blocks as well. Blocks 22 and 23 were considered good places to dispose of "surplus" food. Here lived the *"Vorbereitschaft"* commando, the group which took care of the vehicles of the S. S. and which belonged to the camp élite. The members of this small group were distinguished from all other labor groups in both dress and general appearance. They were for the most part Poles, priests, intellectuals and on the whole a better element. They were able to keep out of their commando anyone who was not acceptable to them. The

appearance of their living quarters also was distinguished. They had sheets to cover the straw mattresses on their beds and tablecloths for their tables and the walls were adorned with pictures and mirrors.

Usury also was found in Auschwitz. It was practiced mostly on Sundays when no bread was handed out. The *muslmen* and small "organizers" who never had any bread reserves had to come to the usurers for bread, mortgaging in advance their Tuesday or Friday sausage rations. The house elder acted as the guarantor, and he withheld the portion when Tuesday or Friday came around. Occasionally the "notables" exploited their advantage and offered one portion of bread for two portions of sausage. The poor man had no alternative but to accept such an offer.

Milk was a good article to pawn. Once in two months, sometimes once a month, each prisoner was given a quarter of a liter of milk. The quality of the milk was very poor and drained of all its fat and vitamins. Under the circumstances, however, this white fluid was a delicacy. After so many days of drinking the bitter "coffee" and the bitter-sour tea made of grass (the water in Auschwitz was not good for drinking), a little milk, even of poor quality, was like the best wine. Very many of the poor inmates would pawn the milk with the "notable" in exchange for a half portion of bread.

The foregoing provides an idea of the quality of the food consumed by the "notables." Apart from the food parcels which some of them received from the outside, they also drained off a good deal of the more desirable products given to the camp prisoners. In the "Union" ammunition factory, which was a large trading centre in Auschwitz, the "notables" and some of the large "organizers" were able to prepare meals from potatoes, groats, beans, eggs and even slices of pork. The factory had large electric heaters for drying and polishing various metal products. The inmates who were employed at these heaters did the cooking and preparing of the food. Of course, all this was officially forbidden. The German civilians employed as skilled workers in the factory also tried to prevent the use of the heaters for cooking. But in one way or another a way was found to use them. The number of pots and other cooking utensils was small and the workers managed to hide them. Those who worked at the heaters would receive a few spoonfuls of food for their trouble.

The clothing of a camp inmate consisted of an undershirt and a pair of underpants, (never to the size of the individual), two socks,

mostly of different size and color, a pair of shoes with wooden soles, a pair of trousers and a jacket made of striped material (a *"pasiak"* in camp jargon) and a cap, also of striped material. The material was cotton or jute.

The prisoner was given these articles of clothing as soon as he had been put through a bath on arriving at the camp. The suit of clothes was intended for all occasions. It was worn during work, after work and on the "free" Sundays (when he was not entirely free). The camp inmates worked in ammunition factories, where oil, rust and grime filled every nook and cranny, on the roads, where sand, mud and dust settled on the garments, in unloading railway cars of cement and chemicals, in the fields, where rain and snow soaked through both the outer and under garments, and at other sorts of work such as soil amelioration, where they had to spend long hours in swamps, etc. The garments, therefore, soon became torn and rotted, nor was there any opportunity to dry or air one's clothing overnight since there was danger of the clothing being stolen.

The *muslmen* and poor inmates would keep patching their clothes, and try to keep them together until the time "new" clothes would be distributed. This meant waiting for many months, and even then, the all-powerful house elder would take away the best coats and trousers and set them aside for himself or his fellow-"notables," leaving the worst, mostly patched up garments to be distributed among the non-privileged.

Linens were changed frequently. Although the linens were supposed to be washed and disinfected, dead lice and live lice's eggs were often found on them. There was no other choice but to accept such linens, tear off the seams and use the rest for covering one's body.

Good articles of clothing, underwear or shoes could be gotten in the clothing room. Officially, it was the block elder who had to provide them. But in practice, the one who really needed the clothing never received it. The camp inmates who worked in the clothing room exchanged clothes for cigarettes, bread, sausage and other articles. Of course, these transactions were not officially sanctioned. It was practically impossible to acquire a garment or a pair of shoes through regular and honest means.

The miserable clothing of the "lower" class was especially noticeable during the daily inspections and parades. Often it only increased their troubles. Thus, for example, the S.S. man Somerer, for a while Chief of blocks 4 and 4A, would often inspect the clothing of the camp

inmates and beat up or report for whipping (5 to 10 lashes) anyone found with a torn garment or a missing button. There was no use complaining or explaining. The punishment had to be taken with a compliant *"Ja Wohl."*

The "notables" knew nothing of these troubles. They would, in the first place, secure the better garments at distribution. Besides, they always had enough food, cigarettes and other valuable articles with which to buy from the attendant in the clothing-room whatever additional or new clothing they wanted. The store rooms were always full of clothing and footwear. When, in the summer of 1944, the Nazis began to change the camp clothing for civilian clothing (the reason for this is still not clear), the "notables" were dressed in the best suits. If not for the fact that the seams on the shoulders and on both sides of the trousers were dyed with red stripes, one could imagine this was a civilian labor camp.

It is interesting to note that the red stripes of oil paint on the shoulders and trousers were narrower on the suits of the "notables" than on those of the ordinary camp inmates. The house elder in charge of making the stripes, would oblige the "notables" by painting the stripes narrow. The stripes were used to prevent the escape of the prisoners. When civilian clothes began to be given out the "notables" were able to secure, through "organization," good winter overcoats and capes while the poor inmates had no heavy clothing at all.

The camp inmates slept on cots and the cots were arrayed in three tiers. During the years of 1943 and 1944 nearly every prisoner in the Auschwitz camp had a cot to himself. There were other camps in which two or three prisoners would share one cot. In the quarantine blocks, in Jawiszowice, there were no cots at all. The prisoners slept on straw mattresses on the floor. Each cot had with it a sack filled with straw or sawdust and a military blanket to serve as a mattress. A second blanket was provided for a cover. During the winter they also used the mattress blanket as a cover. There were no pillows, not even pillows made of straw.

The straw was changed once in several months. From time to time the blankets were aired, to get rid of the fleas and bedbugs. During the summer months of 1943 part of the upper tier in Block 11 was so infested with bedbugs that it was impossible to sleep on the cots or even on the floor.

The "notables" had better sleeping accommodations. Their cots were usually placed near the ovens and the bedclothes were of better

material. There was more straw in their straw mattresses, they had woolen blankets, sheets and sometimes even pillows. They secured these by trading with "Canada," the group that sorted out the personal effects of the victims of the gas furnaces.

THE "NOTABLES" AND WOMEN

As a general rule there were separate camps for men and women. The women's camp was either a separate administrative unit or part of a central camp. Thus, the women's camp in Birkenau near Auschwitz, was part of the main camp of Auschwitz. The women's area was divided from the men's grounds by a barbed wire fence. Communication between the two camps was prohibited. Men and women saw each other only at work. Such a meeting place, for example, was at the "Union" munitions factory, where men and women worked together. Even during work, however, communication between men and women was strictly forbidden. Male supervisors watched the men and female supervisors watched the women. It was only during the midday meal that an exchange of a few words was possible, but even then one had to watch out for the various guards and supervisors. On the other hand complete isolation of the two sexes was well-nigh impossible. Working together at machines or in the fields made for a certain familiarity out of which developed friendships, platonic love-affairs and feelings of intimacy. There was mutual assistance with food and other needs.

The "notable," who had a healthier appearance, was better dressed and was more often shaved (most inmates shaved only once a week) had greater success with the women than the *muslman* who was a candidate for the gas-furnace. The "Union" building, which occupied an area of 70 square meters, provided quite a few spots where one could hide for a few minutes from the eyes of the S. S., the kapo or the supervisor. At noon, when free from work, such encounters lasted longer. Such moments often allowed for a furtive kiss. Some of the "notables" also enjoyed sexual relations with the female kapos. One of the big "organizers," the chief of the transport commando in the "Union" factory, boasted frequently of his sex exploits in the factory warehouses.

"Notables" at work in the fields at Birkenau had their mistresses, with whom they had sexual relations behind a bush, in the tall grass or in the ditches in the fields. This was quite possible during the course of a long working day. The "notables" helped one another. When one was engaged at the *rendezvous,* the other stood guard. For the most

part the women yielded to such intimacies only because of need. In a certain degree they suffered more than the men did and the "notables" took advantage of their own privileged position and forced the hungry woman into sexual relations in exchange for some food. The privileged position of the "notables" in the camp went so far that the Germans, in January 1944 even opened a brothel for them in Block 24.

JEWS AMONG THE PRIVILEGED CLASSES

Generally speaking there were no Jews among the "notables." Most of the Jews belonged to the non-privileged group. There were some Jews however, among the large "organizers." In camps where there were only Jews or where the Jews were in the majority, or in camps in which there were special Jewish blocks (as in Buchenwald) there were also cases where Jews served as block elders, house elders, kapos or foremen.[19] The qualifications for such positions were the same as in the case of non-Jews: brutality and economic well-being. In large camps such as Dachau and Auschwitz there were no Jews in high camp posts. There was one single high-placed Jew in Auschwitz. This was the kapo of execution Block 11 known as Jakob.[20]

Jews took part in every type of work carried out in the camps. They worked in the coal-mines (Jawiszowice, Brzeszcze, Jaworzno and other places), in heavy industry (in the iron foundries of Silesia and Poland), at building roads and airfields (near Munich), at soil amelioration (near Auschwitz), in synthetic rubber factories (Buna) and in many other types of work. It would be no exaggeration to say that Jews worked in most of the eighty odd workplaces in the camp of Auschwitz and its environs. Jews were always subjected to more beatings and torture than non-Jews.

The attitude of the Jewish "notables" towards the camp inmates of the lower strata was in the spirit of the whole atmosphere of the camp and based on the camp morality. A few facts in my own experience

[19] It was only during the second half of the year 1944 that Jews were officially appointed to leading posts, such as kapos, house elders, block elders, clerks, etc. This was due to the fact that many Germans, Poles and other non-Jews were at that time sent out of the camps. There were Jewish block elders, camp elders and other officials in the camp of Jawiszowice, in Waldlager, at Amping, in the camps of Płaszów near Cracow and in several other places.

[20] The Jew Jakob is a controversial figure. When the writer in the summer of 1943 was on the upper tier of Block 11, he asked Jakob for a piece of bread and received it at the hands of one of Jakob's aides. On the other hand L. Rajewski reports that Jakob helped the S. S. men in carrying out executions, that he himself acted as the executioner and that he mistreated every one in Block 11 (See Rajewski, *op. cit.*)

will illustrate this situation. In Auschwitz the kapo of the night shift in the "Union" factory, the Czech Jew Weiss, treated his group very brutally. He often failed to give the workers on the night shift the additional portion of soup which was coming to them and offered the excuse to the S. S. man in command that this was punishment for not carrying out instructions. There usually followed additional punishment by the S. S. man himself. The kapo B. A., on his way to the United States, confessed his sinister deeds in Birkenau. A Hungarian woman, the daughter of a rabbi, as the house elder in the women's camp in Birkenau, was notorious for her disgraceful behavior towards the Jewish women under her command.[21] The kapo Zudeck, a Polish Jew in Waldlager, used to break the ribs of the inmates who were too weak to stand erect at the morning inspections. He would do this in the presence of his camp superior in order to display his application in carrying out his duties. The block elder Karl, in the Jawiszowice camp, a German Jew, diligently took part in all punitive actions imposed by the S. S. administration on the camp prisoners. The house elder Goldstein, a German Jew in the same camp, as the leader of a labor gang in the Jawiszowice coal mine, had another Jew dispatched to Block 11 in Auschwitz.[22] In the Block 19 in Dachau, a German Jew reported another Jew for not keeping in line on entering the barracks, as a result of which the culprit was subjected to merciless beating. The camp elder Chilowicz, in the camp of Płaszów, left a sorry record in the camp.[23]

There were numerous Jews who sought to save their own skins and improve their own position at the expense of other Jews. The details of such instances were lost with the death of the victims or have not yet been brought out into the open. These Jewish kapos try to justify themselves with the excuse that they were forced to such conduct. Even if this were so it still is no justification for their behavior.

[21] Testimony by Mrs. Esther Jasgur-Aronson, of the camp at Birkenau.

[22] That was in July 1943, on the day when the Polish General Sikorski was killed. In the morning, when the labor gang was to return to camp after a night's work in the coal mine, it transpired at the count that one was missing. The Jew who was absent, according to every surmise, must have lost his way in the mine which extended over an area of 60 square kilometers, with hundreds of dark passages, paths and byways. Goldstein could in different ways explain to the S. S. guard that losing one's way was a common occurrence and that there was no ground for the suspicion that the Jew had sought to flee. The Jew was later found and was brought to camp several hours later. No one expected any grave consequences. But all were shocked when a few days later the Jew was taken to Block 11 in Auschwitz on the suspicion that he had wanted to escape. The writer was then in Block 11.

[23] More on this is found in Jagielski, St., *Sclavus Saltens,* p. 61-68. Also the testimony by Akiva Weinberger of the Płaszów camp, now in Montreal, Canada.

There were also Jewish "notables," just as there were such among the non-Jews, who in many different ways sought to help the needy. The kapo of the hospital in Waldlager always tried to obtain some extra soup for the sick. He also "organized" medical supplies for the very seriously sick and saved more than one from death. All this he did at the risk of his own life. The Jewish camp leader in Hirschfeld near Breslau endangered his life for the sake of the prisoners and rescued not a few Jews from the clutches of the S. S. There were Jewish "notables" in Auschwitz who often helped other Jews with bread. It would be misleading, however, to draw conclusions regarding the relations among the Jews on the strength of such exceptional cases. The majority of Jewish "notables" were vicious and brutal.

The situation was altogether different with the mass of Jewish camp inmates. The ordinary prisoner never had enough to be able to help others with bread or other material goods. They did, however, give each other moral support and in the life of the camp this was an important factor. The social differentiation from the class of "notables" strengthened the moral solidarity of the "lower" classes. Almost automatically there developed methods of defense against the "notables." The above-mentioned Jewish kapo, Weiss, was sentenced to death for his misdeeds by a conspiratorial group in his labor battalion. The group, led by the Polish Jew Kowalski, attacked Weiss in the middle of the night, when he went to the outhouse, and beat him up mercilessly. He was saved from certain death only by the footsteps of the S. S. man on night duty, but he lay in the hospital for a long time. His assailants were not discovered. Another means of defense was bribery in the office of labor statistics. For a suitable fee the chief clerk of the office would send the kapo away to another place where he would be less harmful or entirely harmless.

The Jewish "notable" hardly differed from the non-Jewish in all aspects of camp life. As soon as he reached a socially higher grade, the Jew became the equal of the non-Jew in the class of "notables." Common economic interests and social position brought them together and levelled off the differences between Jew and non-Jew. There were individual cases of non-Jewish "notables" who refused to associate with Jews of their class because of antisemitism. On the whole, the antisemitic feeling among ethnic groups like the Poles, the Russians and the Ukrainians worsened the position of the Jews in the camps. But there were also among these very same groups some individuals who displayed warm friendship for the Jews and a real comprehension of

the Jewish tragedy. One such friend of the Jewish people in Auschwitz was the subsequent prime minister of Poland, Józef Cyrankiewicz. His post as a block clerk placed him rather low in the camp hierarchy. When I arrived in Auschwitz I happened to meet Cyrankiewicz on the very first day. His first act toward me was to give me a sizable portion of bread. This was the highest expression of human feeling in the camp. Another Polish "notable," the pre-war leader of the antisemitic youth movement, Jan Mosdorf,[24] frequently risked his life to carry letters for me to a relative of mine in the women's camp of Birkenau. Mosdorf worked in Birkenau and often brought me vegetables sent to me by my relative and sometimes a piece of bread or articles of clothing.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In any normal society the upper classes impress their influences upon the paterns of community life. This was equally true of the camp life. The class of "notables," conscious of their higher social position, their feeling of security and power, laid its stamp upon the life of the other classes. The S. S. administration sanctioned and encouraged the brutality practiced by the "notables." The S. S. was interested in creating division within the camp society, destroying the sense of unity among the prisoners and in playing off the privileged against the non-privileged and at the same time ferreting out those who were politically disloyal. As a result of their intimacy with the S. S. and of the unwritten privileges enjoyed by the "notables" either collectively or individually, they banded together to protect their interests. They placed their own men in leading positions and used other means to entrench themselves. If one of them got into trouble every effort was made by the rest to save him from punishment. It must be noted, however, that intercessions by the "notables" could only avail where the decision rested with an S. S. man of the lower echelons. In the case of political offenses, which was in the hands of the higher authorities of the S. S., the "notables" were helpless.

The "notables" also helped one another with food, clothing and other commodities. There were cases of kapos in charge of labor gangs, who killed several members of their groups and then shared the inherited food rations with the block elders or the house elders of the barracks in which the victims had lived.

[24] On Mosdorf, see Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

The class of "notables," it must be underscored, consisted of both political and criminal prisoners. The groups were always contending for the highest positions in the camp. To some extent the antagonism between the two groups eased the lot of the "lower" class. It often happened, especially in Auschwitz or even in a smaller camp like Jawiszowice, that the political "notable" saved an ordinary inmate from the hands of a criminal or vice versa. Not all political prisoners were always the more humane. Some of them displayed greater brutality then the criminals. Conversely there were the occasional criminals who out of a sense of superiority showed magnanimity towards members of the downtrodden class. Kapo Ludwig, in the laundry at Jawiszowice, was a political prisoner who helped many people of the "lower" classes. In the same camp another political prisoner, the block elder Karl, was a sadist. Alex, a kapo of the "Union" factory commando in Auschwitz, also a political prisoner, was known for his beatings in the labor gang.

The political prisoner whose opposition to Nazism was based on firm ethical principles and who was not broken in his faith by the demoralizing influences of the camp, exhibited a humane attitude towards every sufferer. But there were some who had fallen under the devastating camp morality and turned their backs on their political and ideological convictions. These people were noted for their brutality in dealing with other camp inmates. There were socialists, communists and liberals among the worst murderers. This was true for both Jews as well as non-Jews. There were German political prisoners in the camp who had a decent attitude towards their former neighbors and country-men of the "lower" classes. The Polish Jews could hardly say the same about the Polish political prisoners, although there were some exceptions. On the other hand, the German, as an ordinary camp inmate, was more dangerous than a member of any other nationality, because, in the end, his patriotic sentiment got the upper hand. The ruin of his fatherland and the dark prospects for the future won out. The German camp inmate wanted to leave the camp with the help of a German victory. Others looked to Germany's defeat.

Testifying at the trial of Rudolf Hoess, former camp commandant of Auschwitz, the above-mentioned Józef Cyrankiewicz said that there is no one who really knows the full truth about Auschwitz. This is true. There were daily executions on the one hand, and there was play, song and drink on the other hand. Ordinary camp inmates died from hunger and exhaustion while at work, but there was a group of prisoners who had plenty to eat. There was the low degradation of a man wait-

ing impatiently for another to be shot or killed in order to inherit his shoes or clothes, and there were instances of sublime human conduct.

Many of those who have described conditions in Auschwitz attempt to explain, although not to justify, the inhuman actions of the "notables" in terms of their previous social background. It is alleged that most of these people originally came from groups that were always in conflict with the laws and mores of society and they therefore found it natural to give free rein to their criminal inclinations when the new environment in the concentration camps both allowed and encouraged it. This approach to the problem is inadequate. A psychological analysis of camp life is of course very valuable. But it cannot serve to explain the criteria of social stratification of the camp population. It was, as we have attempted to show, the interplay between the groups of political and criminal prisoners that was the major factor in shaping the social position of the class of "notables."

THE LUBLIN RESERVATION AND THE MADAGASCAR PLAN

Two Aspects of Nazi Jewish Policy During the Second World War

By PHILIP FRIEDMAN

1. THE LUBLIN RESERVATION

From the very beginning of their occupation of Poland the Nazis used the district of Lublin, in the southeastern part of the General-Gouvernement,[1] as their favorite area for experimenting with various projects of population transfer. As soon as Poland was occupied they began to set up a reservation for Jews in Lublin. In February 1940 the Nazis devised the plan to transfer the 30,000 Germans who had been living in the Lublin district since 1865 back to their "German homeland." They began to carry out this plan in September 1940. The Lublin Germans were settled in Warthegau[2] (this was part of a policy to Germanize that province) and the Poles of that region were brought to Lublin. On June 15, 1941, however, before the start of the German-Soviet war, the chief of police and of the S.S. in the district of Lublin, Globocnik, surprised the representatives of the German press with an announcement which amounted to a complete reversal of this transfer policy. He announced that a "purely German community" was now to be formed in the Lublin territory for German colonists from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Bessarabia and other countries where they lived as minorities. In order to make room for the Germans, the Nazis began to deport the Poles of the Zamość region (in

[1] The General-Gouvernement was created by the Germans in 1939 out of portions of occupied Poland. It comprised the four districts of Cracow, Radom, Lublin and Warsaw. In August 1941 eastern Galicia was added as the fifth district. The General-Governor of this area was Hans Frank.

[2] Portions of western Poland were incorporated by the Germans in 1939 into the German Reich. Parts of these areas, especially in the regions of Posen, Kalisz and Lodz, were constituted as the Reichsgau Warthegau and were placed under the administration of Arthur Greiser.

the southeastern part of the Lublin district). About 110,000 Poles, from 297 communities, constituting 31 percent of the Polish population of the Zamość region, were thus deported between November 1941 and August 1943.[3]

These population transfers formed part of an extensive policy practiced by the two totalitarian regimes, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. The method of exchanging populations in order to solve knotty minority problems had been applied after World War I (Greece and Turkey, 1923; Greece and Bulgaria, 1919-1932).[4] But it was not until World War II, when the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany began "to solve" complex nationality problems by shifting entire nations and tribes, that population transfers were carried out on such gigantic scale and in such brutal and inhuman fashion. It is hard to tell in this case who set the model for whom. Soviet transfers still go on, embracing millions of people and constituting a menace to the surviving Jews in the U.S.S.R. and in the sattelite states. Similar gigantic and inhuman population transfers were planned and carried out by the Nazis. Hitler began in South Tyrol (through a treaty with Mussolini) and in the occupied zones of Poland (through a treaty with Stalin). He had much more ambitious projects, such as ejecting the Czechs from the Protectorate and the French from Alsace, transferring the South Tyroleans to Crimea, transplanting tens of millions of east-European ethnic groups to Siberia, etc.[5] Amidst all these

[3] *Cf.* Klukowski, Z., ed., *Teror niemiecki w Zamojszczyźnie 1939-1944,* 2 vols. (Zamość 1945-46); *Akt oskarzenia przeciwko Dr. Józefowi Buehlerowi,* Prokuratura Najwyższego Trybunału Narodowego (sign.: Prok. N.T.N. 1875/48), Cracow, May 31, 1948, karta 58, a, b. Mimeographed, in author's archives. See also *Gazeta Żydowska* (Cracow, Sept. 27, 1940); Schechtman, Joseph B., *European Population Transfers, 1939-1945* (New York 1946) p. 214-23.

Himmler showed great interest in the expulsion of the Poles from Zamość and dreamt of establishing a closed German colonization area in that section. On July 21, 1941, Himmler visited Zamość. According to Reitlinger, a "Führerhof" (a school for the Nazi elite) was established in Zamość on that occasion and the name of the city was changed to "Himmlerstadt." (Reitlinger, Gerald, *The Final Solution* (London 1953) p. 45. According to Polish sources, these projects were never implemented.)

[4] *Cf.* Vishniac, Marc, *Dos transferirn bafelkerungen* . . . (New York, Yivo, 1942).

[5] See *Hitler's Secret Conversations 1941-1944,* ed. by H. R. Trevor-Roper (New York 1953); "Hitlerowski plan wysiedlenia 50 milionów słowian," in *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji . . .,* vol. v (1949) 209-42.

One of Himmler's weird dreams was to transfer the Dutch to Russia and the British—after German victory, of course—to the Baltic states. Up to August 1943 the Germans transferred to the "Greater Reich" (including the incorporated Polish provinces) 546,000 "Volksdeutsche" (ethnic Germans) from eastern Europe and expelled from the incorporated Polish provinces 1,200,000 Poles and 300,000 Jews. (*Cf.* Reitlinger, *op. cit.,* pp. 36, 40.)

projects for population transfers, the deportation of Jews could have passed as part of a general plan. There was, therefore, little suspicion, at first, that behind this innocent mask of "re-settlement" a scheme was in preparation which was of quite a different nature—nothing less than the total extermination of the Jews.

The execution of all the population transfers in the Lublin district was in the hands of the S. S. Brigade Chief, Odillo Globocnik. This Austrian S.S. leader gained the reputation among the Nazis of "the man with the iron hand." He was one of the organizers of the Nazi terror in Austria and of the assassination of Chancellor Dolfuss. He was appointed chief of the S.S. and police in the district of Lublin in November 1939. As soon as Globocnik arrived in Lublin, the Governor, Schmidt, entrusted him with the "systematic organization of all matters pertaining to the Jews of the district of Lublin." Globocnik immediately set up a special Division for Jewish Affairs, headed by Dr. Hofbauer. The Division prepared a project for forced Jewish labor and for settling Jewish refugees in the Lublin region, and began to carry the plan into effect. Soon a sharp conflict developed between Globocnik and the German civil authorities. Governor Zoerner, who succeeded Schmidt, and Richard Türk, his consultant on Jewish affairs and head of the department for population problems, constantly complained to their superiors that Globocnik was interfering with their work and usurping their jurisdiction in connection with the Jewish question. To this Globocnik replied that Governor Schmidt had authorized him to concentrate all Jewish matters in his hands and that Governor Zoerner had agreed to the arrangement.[6] The conflict between the S.S. and police on the one hand, and the civil administration on the other, grew in intensity. To be sure, it was not a conflict over basic principles, but only one of prestige and authority. Both Zoerner and Globocnik were at one on the basic policy of Jewish extermination. The first bloody actions in the Lublin district (especially, the action in March-April of 1942 in the city of Lublin) were carried out by Zoerner himself with the greatest brutality.

In the end, Globocnik won out in this struggle for prestige. Zoerner was forced to resign and Globocnik's authority increased. Early in 1942 he was given new and wide powers for dealing with the Jews. He began organizing Jewish labor camps and later Jewish extermina-

[6] Letter from Globocnik to Zoerner, February 13, 1940, in archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Lublin documents.

tion camps. He was named head of all extermination camps in the General Gouvernement (Treblinka and the three camps in the Lublin district, which he had founded; Bełżec, Majdanek and Sobibór) and was entrusted with the task of annihilating the Jews of the whole General-Gouvernement ("Einsatz Reinhardt"). Late in the summer of 1943, after the fall of Mussolini, Globocnik was dispatched to carry out the important mission of "pacifying" the provinces of northern Italy.[7] This was the man who was charged with the task of setting up the Lublin reservation.

The plan for such a reservation originated in the days before World War II. On July 8, 1938 Alfred Rosenberg posed the question "Whither the Jews?"[8] On February 7, 1939, in an address to foreign diplomats and journalists, Rosenberg declared:

> Palestine, as an area for compact Jewish concentration, is out of the question. . . . The area must be capable of absorbing about 15 million Jews. . . . And, since the two projects, Madagascar or British Guiana, have already been taken up officially, the whole problem must be concentrated around these two territories. . . . If the millions of Jews are to be re-settled, it would be a consideration of elementary humanity towards the Jews not to leave them alone among themselves, but to hand over those colonies into the hands of administrators experienced in policing. The question is not of creating a Jewish state, but a Jewish reservation.[9]

Rosenberg's words make it quite clear that the Nazis drew a distinction between a Jewish state and a Jewish reservation.

A short time after the start of the German-Polish War in 1939, the chief of the Jewish section of the Gestapo, Adolf Eichmann, called to his office a group of Jewish representatives from Berlin, Vienna,

[7] On Globocnik's part in the liquidation of Polish Jewry, see S. Piotrowski's *Misja Odyla Globocnika* (Warsaw 1949).

Many documents dealing with the conflicts between Globocnik and Zoerner are found in the Lublin archives of the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw. Among these is an interesting account by Simkhe Turkeltoyb, a Jewish forced laborer in the office of the Lublin governor, of the discussions by the Germans regarding these conflicts which he overheard. The differences between Zoerner and Globocnik pertained not only to Jews but also regarding the Poles. Goebbels, in his diary entry for May 25, 1943, tells of a visit from Zoerner who came to explain his resignation as governor of Lublin. Globocnik's brutal policy of forced transfers of Polish population led many Poles to join the partisan bands in the forests. Zoerner opposed these deportations and he was supported by Hans Frank. But Frank did not have sufficient atuhority to overrule the S. S. leader. *Cf.* Piotrowski, *op. cit.*, p. 8, 25-26, 93-94.

[8] *Völkischer Beobachter,* July 8, 1938.

[9] *Ibid.,* Feb. 8, 1939. An abbreviated version of Rosenberg's speech is found in Hebrew translation in Moshe Prager's *Hurban yisrael beeropa* (Ayn Harod 5708) p. 269-70.

Prague and other cities.[10] He informed them that a Jewish autonomous territory was about to be created in the district of Lublin and he requested them to submit lists of Jewish volunteers for "immigration." It appears that only the Vienna representatives agreed to comply with this request.[11]

The Germans made no secret of the Lublin reservation. On the contrary, the German propaganda machine sought to publicize it as widely as possible in the foreign press, giving it, of course, its own interpretation. As early as September 19, 1939 the plan was discussed in the Belgrade newspaper *Vreme.* Soon the whole European press began to devote space to the Lublin reservation in connection with Hitler's address in the Reichstag on October 6, 1939, in which he hinted at the need for "adapting and regulating the Jewish problem." At the same time the Germans launched a propaganda campaign for the plan among the Polish Jews. Shmuel Zygelbojm mentions in his diary[12] that on the very day they invaded Warsaw the Germans began spreading rumors about the Lublin reservation. In Częstochowa the officer for Jewish affairs in the Gestapo stated to a Jewish delegation which appeared before him on September 16, 1939: "All of the Lublin district will be cleared of non-Jews and Jews will be transferred there from all occupied countries. A Jewish state will be set up there."[13]

German newspapermen and German officials naturally gave their enthusiastic support to the project sponsored by their government. The well-known political commentator, Hermann Erich Seifert wrote:

> From time to time there is talk of a Jewish settlement area in the district of Lublin, a sort of a Jewish reservation, in which the Jews would live among themselves and, for the first time in their existence, would have to organize their lives in every detail. . . . Since February 1940 they began tackling the Jewish question, especially in Lublin, not with the "humanitarian" nonsense you find in the democracies, or with soulful appeals, but according to new methods, with order and work.[14]

[10] It is possible that Moshe Merin, head of the united Jewish communities of Upper Silesia, also participated in this conference. *Cf.* Katsetnik, *Salamandra* (Tel Aviv 1946) p. 124; Wiederman, P., *Płowa bestia* (Monachium 1948) p. 85-88; Ringelblum, E., "Notatki z getta," in *Biuletyn Zydowskiego Institutu Historycznego* (1951) 125-27.

[11] Syrkin, Marie, *Blessed Is the Match* (Philadelphia 1947) p. 66-67.

[12] Hertz, S. J., ed., *Zygelbojm-bukh* (New York 1947) p. 188-89.

[13] Brener, L., *Vidershtand un umkum in tshenstokhover geto* (Warsaw 1950) p. 11.

[14] Seifert, H. E., *Der Jude an der Ostgrenze* (Berlin 1941) p. 86, 88.

Seifert was evidently favorably impressed by Globocnik's "new methods."

Also General Jürgen Stroop, who later was in command of the German troops during the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, mentions in his well-known report the attempts to create a Jewish reservation in the district of Lublin: "At the same time [in the Spring of 1940] a plan was considered to declare the District of Lublin the collecting area for all Jews within the General-Gouvernement especially for the evacuated or fugitive Jews arriving from the Reich."[15]

The broader objectives of the Lublin Reservation were discussed in retrospect by Professor Peter-Heinz Seraphim:

> It is well-known that . . . such a reservation for the Jews in the eastern portion of the present General-Gouvernement was often under consideration, the intention being for that area to admit the Jews of Greater Reich and of the rest of the General-Gouvernement and, in time, also of the rest of Europe.[16]

On November 17, 1939 the then deputy of Hans Frank, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, left Cracow on a tour of inspection of the whole General-Gouvernement. He visited Lublin, where he conferred with Governor Schmidt and the higher S. S. officers Hasselberger and Globocnik. It was then decided to set up in the Lublin region a reception centre for "destructive elements" (Jews as well as Poles from the Polish provinces incorporated in the Reich). The plan was even submitted for approval to General-Governor Frank.[17] Evidently, they did not have to wait long for Frank's consent. In October 1939, *i.e.* even before Frank's official approval of the project, transports of Jews from the Reich, from Austria and from Warthegau began to arrive in the General-Gouvernement.

In the meantime, the project for the Lublin reservation received the blessing of the highest Nazi political authorities. At a conference in Berlin on February 12, 1940, under the chairmanship of Marshal Hermann Goering, and attended by Heinrich Himmler, Hans Frank, the Gauleiters, Foerster, Arthur Greiser, and other cabinet ministers

[15] *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington 1946) vol. iii, p. 719-20.

[16] "Bevölkerungs-und wirtschaftliche Probleme einer europäischen Gesamtlösung der Judenfrage," in *Weltkampf* (1941) 43-51. This speech was delivered on March 26, 1941 at the opening session of the Frankfurt Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage.

[17] International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals,* Document PS-2278.

and state secretaries, it was decided to shift 30,000 Germans from the Lublin district, which was to be set aside for a Jewish reservation.[18]

One would have expected that a project of such dimmensions would be preceded by careful preliminary preparation. Nothing of the kind took place. Nothing was done to prepare for the reception of this mass of humanity, consisting mainly of Jews, but including also Poles and Gypsies.

In a letter of February 13, 1940,[19] Globocnik mentions the fact that in December 1939 his consultant on Jewish affairs, Dr. Hofbauer, had sent out a questionnaire to the local authorities in the Lublin district to find out where the transports of Jews could be placed. It is not known what replies Globocnik received to his queries. In any case his questionnaire was belated since tens of thousands of Jewish refugees had already arrived in the Lublin district and Globocnik expected the immediate arrival of another 162,000 Jews.

In setting up the Lublin reservation no account was taken of the numerous complexities involved. During a vehement discussion which took place in Globocnik's office on April 22, 1940, Türk, the consultant on Jewish Affairs for the civil administration, roundly berated Globocnik for the whole business of the transfer. He pointed out that the Ukrainians in the southeastern part of the district of Lublin had been promised that they would not be made to live with Poles, and certainly "they ought not to be blessed with numerous—rather too numerous—additions of Jews." To this Dr. Hofbauer, consultant on Jews in Globocnik's office, replied that there was no intention of settling the transported Jews in areas populated by Ukrainians.

In general, he said, there was no thought of allowing the Gypsies or the Jews to settle permanently or even semi-permanently. This was to be only a temporary arrangement, and they would soon be shipped off to various labor camps.[20] It is clear that from the very beginning the object was to exterminate the Jewish refugees and all the talk about "colonization" was merely a device to keep the Jews calm in order to create the necessary mood for smooth transportation. The practical implementation of the transfer showed that such was the real objective.

[18] *Ibid.*, Document EC-305.

[19] *Cf.* note 6.

[20] Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Lublin documents, Minutes of the session of April 22, 1940 with the Chief of the S. S. and Police in the Lublin district.

As already mentioned, the transfers began with Jews from Vienna. In October 1939 the Jewish community in Vienna sent out a number of mimeographed announcements under the caption "Memorandum on Resettlement in the Polish Province," in which the recipients were requested to report within two or three days for transport to Poland for "colonization work." On October 20, the first shipment of Vienna Jews left for Poland. The Jewish community in Vienna is said to have been ordered to supply 1,000 Jews weekly. During the month of October 1,672 Jews arrived from Vienna in the Lublin reservation.[21]

At the same time large shipments kept on arriving from the Czech Protectorate (Bohemia-Moravia). The first transport of 600 Czech Jews left on October 26, 1939. The transports came from Prague, Brno, Maehrisch-Ostrau (Moravska Ostrava), Pilsen, Cieszyn (Teschen), Bohumin, and other Czech towns. According to Czech sources, 10,000 to 20,000 Jews were sent out from Moravska Ostrava alone. These figures seem grossly exaggerated. The journey was very difficult. Transports which left at the end of October did not arrive in the Lublin district until about November 26.[22] Large transports of Jews also arrived from the Polish provinces that had been incorporated into the Third Reich. From October 1939 to July 1940 more than 50 Jewish communities of the Warthegau were broken up and uprooted and their members sent to Poland, mainly to Lublin.[23] Transports also arrived from the German Reich itself, such as the one from Stettin and other cities in Pomerania, which came early in February 1940 with 1,2000 Jews.[24] Besides that, thousands of Jewish war prisoners from the Polish army were brought to Lublin. Globocnik as-

[21] *Yivo Bleter,* vol. xv (1940) 154-57. A facsimile of another announcement is published in *Contemporary Jewish Record,* vol. iii (1940) 78-79, and in *The Black Book of Polish Jewry* (New York 1946) p. 130-31. See also Brustin-Bernstein, T., "Geyrushim vi an etap fun der daytsher farnikhtungs-politik legabe der yidisher bafelkerung," in *Bleter far geshikhte,* vol. iii (1950) 52-53; Winfried, "Tagebuch für Ruth," in *Wiener Revue,* Sonderheft (1946).

[22] Segal, Simon, *The New Order in Poland* (New York 1942) p. 233; *The Black Book,* p. 134; *Czechoslovakia Fights Back* (Washington 1943) p. 110-11. Before the first transports departed for the Lublin Reservation several transports were sent to Nisko, on the San, in Western Galicia, among them a transport from Moravska Ostrava (October 12, 1939) and from Vienna (October 20, 1939). (*Cf.* Reitlinger, *op. cit.,* pp. 43.44.)

[23] Trunk, I., "Shtudye tsu der geshikhte fun yidn in 'varteland,' in der tkufe fun umkum, 1939-1944," in *Bleter far geshikhte,* vol. ii (1949) p. 77-78.

[24] Minutes of the Lublin Judenrat session of Feb. 17, 1940, in Lublin documents, Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw. More details regarding the transports from Stettin and other parts of Pomerania are found in the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Hans Lamm, "Über die innere und äussere Entwicklung des deutschen Judentums im Dritten Reich," available in the Yivo Library.

signed them to a specially set up camp in Lublin (7 Lipowa Street) and later in Majdanek.[25]

The number of Jews "colonized" in the Lublin reservation kept growing. At a conference in the office of the Chief of the S.S. and of the Police, Reinhard Heydrich, in Berlin on January 30, 1940, it was reported that 78,000 Jews had already been shipped and that plans called for the transfer of additional 400,000 Jews during the following months.[26]

The German administration in the General-Gouvernement protested sharply against the deportation of such large numbers of Jews to Poland. In a memorandum entitled "German War Economy in Poland," the administration complained to Berlin against these "unbridled deportations," which are cause for so many headaches:

> These evacuations, without any plan, render it extremely difficult to take any census, to collect any statistical data and to make any methodical use of Jewish labor, and have crowded all the ghettos with an impoverished proletariat. The continuation of such transports will endanger the social and economic future of the whole province.[27]

In another report (March 28, 1940), the language used is even more outspoken:

> Despite the protests of [the Administration of] the General-Gouvernement against the hasty and chaotic deportations of German Jews to eastern Poland, those deportations are still carried on at the order of the S.S. . . . The Governor [Zoerner, Governor of Lublin] refuses to bear any responsibility for these steps and for their consequences. Marshal Goering has been informed of it.[28]

Among all the arguments used to protest against the deportations there is naturally one argument that is wholly absent, the humanitarian argument regarding the cruel sufferings of the victims. Such an argument was unthinkable for a Nazi official. The most characteristic feature of that bitter struggle was the keen competition between the civil and military authorities on the one hand, and the Nazi party and S.S. on the other. The conflict became more pronounced

[25] There are many documents regarding the Lublin camp for war prisoners in the archives of the Yivo and of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Jewish war prisoners were permitted to write brief letters to their families. Thousands of such letters that were never mailed were found after liberation in the Nazi archives in Lublin and are at present in the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. *Cf.* also Blumenthal, Nachman, ed., *Obozy* (Łódź 1946) p. 127-28.

[26] I.M.T., Document ND-5322.

[27] *Ibid.*, EC-344.

[28] *Ibid.*, NG-2490.

when General-Governor Frank sent a sharp protest to Berlin, in which he underscored that he, Frank, was the highest German authority in the Gouvernement and that the S.S. must obey his orders.[29] As we now know, these protests availed little in Berlin. The heads of the S.S. (Walter Krueger in Cracow and Globocnik in Lublin) acted more and more on their own and managed in time to oust the administration from all influence in the Jewish question.[30] Four years later the arrogant Hans Frank was still smarting from his defeat, when, at a conference with his higher officials in Cracow, on May 16, 1944, he bitterly criticized Globocnik's policies, although Globocnik had left Lublin long ago and was then in Italy.[31]

On arriving in Lublin, the deported Jews were placed in old dilapidated buildings, in empty barracks, warehouses, stables, synagogues and schools. When there was no more room even in such places, they were simply left in the open fields, in areas fenced off by barbed wire. The sufferings of the deportees filled the Polish Jews with horror. The truth of what was going on in the Lublin reservation soon reached the outside world and the foreign press published alarming reports. Jews who escaped from Poland brought shocking details. A. Hartglas, former deputy of the Polish Sejm, reported that the refugees lived mostly in tents.[32] A refugee who had passed through Lublin described the plight of the thousands of Jews who were lying on the streets, falling victims to death by starvation and pestilence. He gave an exaggerated estimate of the number of Jews in the city of Lublin as 200,000 to 250,000 Jews (including the 40,000 Jewish residents of the city). American and west-European journalists estimated the number of Jews transferred at between 30,000 and 60,000. A prominent American newspaperman, Oswald G. Villard, wrote: "It is

[29] Poliakov, Léon, *Bréviaire de la haine* (Paris 1951) p. 42.

[30] On the conflicts between the Nazi Party and S. S. on the one hand and the administration, the economic authorities and the Wehrmacht on the other see Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York 1951) p. 381 ff.

[31] *Frank's Diaries,* vol. iv, p. 86-88.

[32] The report by Hartglas is published in *Sefer hazevaot,* ed. by J. Klausner and B. Mintz (Jerusalem 5705) p. 1-8. On the reservation see *ibid.,* p. 20-22, 106-108. See also *Luxemburger Wort,* Oct. 21, 1939; *Neue Zeitung,* Nov. 1, 1939; Moldawer, S., "The Road to Lublin," in *Contemporary Jewish Record,* vol. iii (1940) 119-33; Mandelbaum, M., "The Road to Lublin," in *The Nation,* Oct. 10, 1942; *Hitler's Ten-Year War on the Jews* (New York 1943) p. 140; Segal, Simon, *op. cit.,* p. 233-35; Cohen, Israel, *The Jews in the War* (London 1943) p. 30.
Even the commander-in-chief of the German army, Field Marshal Johannes Blaskowitz complained in his report of December 1939 that Jewish children arrived in the transport trains frozen to death and those that survived perished of starvation in the villages where they were settled. (*Cf.* Reitlinger, *op. cit.,* p. 44.)

impossible to conceive of any more barbarous cruelty, and it is deliberately calculated."[33] S. McCrea Cavert, General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches in America, wrote in a similar vein.[34] The Jewish press in America was especially loud in its condemnation of these Nazi brutalities.[35]

The attitude of foreign public opinion apparently had little if any effect on the Nazi rulers. No hint of such effect can be found in the official correspondence or in the numerous printed Nazi documents. Nevertheless, the transport of Jews to the Lublin reservation was suddenly stopped. The same Goering, who, on February 12, had presided over a meeting at which further steps for creating the Jewish reservation were determined, issued an order on March 23, 1940, to discontinue further transfers. Himmler too immediately issued an order strictly forbidding any more "deportation of Jews" to the east. The chief S.S. and police officer in the General-Gouvernement, Walter Krueger, issued a directive in April 1940 in which he indicated that the plan to set up a Jewish reservation in the Lublin district was no longer being considered.[36]

What brought this sudden reversal of policy? We can only offer conjectures to answer this question since there are no documents available to explain why the previous policy was altered. The following causes might possibly account for this change: (1) as a result of the overcrowding and miserable living conditions a typhus epidemic developed in the area; (2) the Germans needed all their means of transportation for the invasion of Norway and western Europe which they were preparing and they could not, therefore, undertake any large scale transport of Jews; (3) the invasion of the Soviet Union (Plan Barbarossa) was already in its preparatory stages and the Nazis realized that it was not desirable to have a compact mass of Jews on the Russian-Polish border; (4) the possible effect of the sharp conflicts between Globocnik and the civil authorities.

The abandonment of the plan for the Lublin reservation did not mean the end of Jewish deportations to Poland. The final decision

[33] "The Latest Anti-Jewish Horror," in *The Nation*, Dec. 30, 1939.
Some Polish emigrants in London also reacted vigorously. A Polish writer spoke of the Lublin Reservation as a "fiendish German plot." Aldor, Francis, *Germany's "Death Space"* (London 1940), p. 162.

[34] "The Jewish Reservation," in *Religion* (February 1940).

[35] *Cf. Contemporary Jewish Record*, vol. ii (1939) 5, 35-36.

[36] Trunk, *op. cit.*, p. 82, 90. Stroop's report is found in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. iii, p. 720.

in this matter stemmed from the Führer himself. On October 2, 1940, Hitler entertained some of his closest collaborators, including Martin Bormann, Hans Frank, Baldur von Schirach (then Gauleiter of Vienna), Erich Koch (then Gauleiter of East Prussia) and others. After dinner they started a discussion of the Polish and Jewish problems. Hans Frank boasted that he had confined the Jews of the General-Gouvernement in ghettos and that soon, the capital city, Cracow, would be completely cleared of Jews. Von Schirach then remarked that he still had 50,000 Jews in Vienna whom he wanted Frank to take from him. Koch said that he too would have to transport all the Jews and Poles of the Ciechocinek district to Frank in the General-Gouvernement. Frank replied he had no facilities for receiving more people. As usual, Hitler had the last word. His verdict was that the evacuation of the Jews to Poland must go on.[37]

In March 1940 Dr. Gottong[38] was appointed consultant on Jewish affairs for the General-Gouvernement. Immediately after his appointment he was informed that beginning with May 1, 1940, there would arrive in Poland 400,000 Jews for whom he would have to find place. Gottong did not even think of placing them in the Lublin reservation but looked for a new solution. In his circular of April 6, 1940 to all the district chiefs in the General-Gouvernement[39] he proposed a plan of his own. First of all he wanted to effect a strict isolation of the Jews from the Poles. In time all Jewish settlements would be concentrated in one area, where they would have an autonomous community under the supervision of the Reich. In the meantime he asked all district chiefs to let him know of any territory under their jurisdiction which might be suitable for "exclusively Jewish colonization."

Gottong was apparently a naive bureaucrat who lacked an understanding of the real objectives pursued by his government and who was busying himself with paper plans. At the same time, Globocnik,

[37] The full text of this conversation as reported by Martin Bormann is published in *Der Ruf*, Munich, July 1, 1947.

[38] This is most likely the same person who published articles on racial policy in the General-Gouvernement. *Cf.* Gottong, H., "Zwei rassenkundliche Untersuchungen im General-Gouvernement," in *Volk und Rasse* (1943); idem, "Die Judenfrage und die Anfaenge ihrer Loesung im General-Gouvernement," *Der Deutsche im Osten*, iv, no. 2 (1941) p. 92-100; idem, "Stand der anthropologischen Forschung im frueheren Polen," *Deutsche Forschung im Osten*, I, no. 4 (1941) p. 11-17.

[39] Archives of the Warsaw Jewish Historical Institute, city documents, no. 40, p. 87-90.

after a series of pointed discussions and vehement sessions, put through his plan. Under Globocnik's leadership the Lublin reservation went through a remarkable metamorphosis. Out of the reservation for Jewish settlement grew labor camps, where Jews were slowly tortured to death, and out of the labor camps slowly grew extermination camps with an accelerated and highly-developed technique for mass-killings. Naturally, Globocnik did it all with the knowledge and consent of the highest authorities in Berlin, who were later to designate him officially for this mission. At a session on April 22, 1940, Globocnik proposed the plan for creating labor camps for Jews. Men and women were to be isolated from each other. They were to be set at digging trenches and other fortifications on the Polish-Russian border. Globocnik reported that he had already registered about 50,000 Jews for that purpose.

The first camps were set up early in the summer of 1940. In July of that year there were more than 30 camps with 10,000 Jews.[40] In a detailed report prepared for the Warsaw Jewish Archives by officials of the Jewish Community of Warsaw sent out early in 1941 for this purpose, the names and places of 51 labor camps in the district of Lublin were listed: 41 of them at that time contained about 17,000 Jews; as for the others, no statistical data were available.[41] The largest camp was in Bełżec, established in July 1940. Globocnik brought specialists from Germany to help him set up his camps. Among them was Major Dolf, one of Hitler's oldest friends and comrades in the Nazi party. Globocnik named him as commandant of the camp for war prisoners in Lublin (January 1940) and later as commandant of the camp at Bełżec. Dolf soon acquired notoriety as one of the worst sadists and tormentors.[42]

In connection with the camps there was a renewal of the bitter rivalry between Globocnik and the civil administration. We have a record of a telephone inquiry made by the department of "Internal Administration, Population and Provision" of the General-Gouvernement in Cracow to the Lublin administration about the camp at Bełżec which was to be abolished. The answer came from Türk,

[40] *Gazeta Żydowska,* June 8, 1940.

[41] "Materyaln vegn arbet-lagern in lubliner gegnt," a manuscript from the Ringelblum archives and published in *Bleter far geshikhte,* vol. ii (1949) 242-72.

[42] On August 14, 1940 the Bełżec camp had about 10,000 Jews who worked in six different sites. See Archives of the Warsaw Jewish Historical Institute, the documents of the Lublin Judenrat; see also the testimony of Simkhe Turkeltoyb and Blumenthal, *op. cit.,* p. 217-24.

in an acrimonious letter dated October 21, 1940, saying that he had no knowledge of the matter, although the subject of Jewish labor was under his administration. But, said he, the administration of the labor department had no idea of what was going on "on account of the poor co-operation by the S.S. Brigade Commander, Globocnik."[43] He went on to complain that "it is no longer possible in practice to attain the right kind of co-operation on the part of the S.S. and police." He cited some examples of the calamitous effects of such management; two trainloads of Jewish laborers, containing 920 persons, left for Hrubieszów, but only 500 arrived. Nobody knew what happened to the other 400. It does not stand to reason, Türk argued, that 400 had been shot. Something, in his opinion much worse, must have taken place." I have heard it rumored," he said, "that they were most probably released as a result of bribes." On another occasion Globocnik complained that the civil administration had sent a whole transport of Jews to Chełm who were intended for Bełżec. The outcome of the quarrels we know: Globocnik came out as the victor. The Lublin reservation became a center for extermination camps under his supervision.

The rapid end of the Lublin reservation did not, however, destroy the legend of the reservation. On July 10, 1940 the Chief of the department of deportation in the Warsaw district, Waldemar Schoen, inquired of the Chief of the department of deportation in the district of Lublin, Türk, if he could send him to Lublin 10,000 Jews from the Warsaw district. He was especially eager to send him Jews from Żyrardów, which had to be cleared of Jews, or from Łowicz. To this Türk replied with a categoric "No."[44] In 1942 there were still rumors circulating among the Jews of Warsaw that the Germans were seeking to create a Jewish reservation in eastern Europe.[45] The Germans were interested in the continued existence of the legend and used it as late as the latter part of 1942 to mask their real objectives with regard to the Jews. At that time the German Foreign Office addressed a request to the Hungarian government, with a plan to deport a number of Jews from Hungary to Poland. The German under-secretary of State, Luther, assured Premier Kalay of Hungary that the Jews would be

[43] Archives of the Warsaw Jewish Historical Insttiute, Lublin Documents. The original text of the letter is published in Blumenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 220-21.

[44] Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, Lublin documents.

[45] Goldstein, Bernard, *Finf yor varshever geto* (New York 1947) p. 240.

employed in building roads, after which they would be settled in the Jewish reservation.[46] By that time, as is well known, there was not a trace left of the reservation.

2. THE MADAGASCAR PLAN

The island of Madagascar, a French colony since 1896, has an area of 228,000 square miles and had a population in 1936, of 3,800,000 natives and 36,000 Europeans, mostly French. In 1926 the Polish government considered a plan to send a number of impoverished Polish peasants to that island but the plan was soon abandoned. The first project to colonize Jews in Madagascar came from the pen of a German publicist, probably a Nazi, in 1931, who wrote that "the entire Jewish nation, sooner or later must be confined to an island. This would afford the possibility of control and minimize the danger of infection." On the cover of the pamphlet was a map of the island of Madagascar.[47]

The name of the author was apparently fictitious. The pamphlet was probably published by Nazi circles close to Himmler. At any rate, Himmler told his personal physician, Felix Kersten, that he had suggested to Hitler in 1934 that the Jews be settled in Madagascar.[48] Other high-placed Nazis, in their testimony after the war, also mentioned Himmler as the initiator of this plan.[49]

In 1937 the Polish government again took up the Madagascar project. This time, however, it was intended not for peasants but for Jews.[50] The Polish government sent a commission to Madagascar to investigate the situation. The commission consisted of Major Mieczy-

[46] I.M.T., NG-1800.

[47] Wingheue, Egon von, *Arische Rasse, christliche Kultur und das Judenproblem,* cited in Hevesi, E., "Hitler's Plan for Madagascar," in *Contemporary Jewish Record,* vol. iv (1941) 381-95.

[48] *The Memoirs of Dr. Felix Kersten* (New York 1947) p. 213-35.

[49] Kastner, I., "Shavuot shenehtam gezar din," in *Molad,* vol. i (1948) 121, 124.

Julius Streicher also boasted of the fact that he was one of the first initiators of the Madagascar Plan. In an editorial, published in the *Stürmer,* January 1, 1938 (vol. xvi, no. 1), he wrote: "Several years ago, when the *Stürmer* suggested that the transfer of the Jews to the French colonial island Madagascar offered a possibility for a solution of the Jewish problem, we were ridiculed by the Jews and their friends and declared inhuman" (I.M.T., vol. xli, p. 556-57).

[50] The Polish Peasant Party was violently opposed to a peasant emigration to Madagascar but was not adverse to sending Jews there. *Cf.* Cang, Joel, "The Opposition Parties in Poland and Their Attitude Towards the Jews and the Jewish Problem," in *Jewish Social Studies,* vol. i (1939) 250.

sław Lepecki, representing the ruling political party (*"Sanacja"*), a well-known Jewish agriculturist from Tel Aviv, Shlomo Dyk, and Leon Alter, director of the Jewish Emigration Association (JEAS) in Warsaw. The commission could not agree on a unanimous report. Lepecki thought it possible to settle immediately about 40,000 to 60,000 persons, half of them farm workers and half merchants. Alter saw possibilities only for 400 families. Dyk had doubts even for that number. Both the Polish and the French governments thought Lepecki was far too optimistic. The local population in Madagascar demonstrated its strong opposition to the whole project. *La Dépêche,* the most influential newspaper in Madagascar, also voiced violent opposition.[51]

The Jewish press in Poland naturally opposed the plan and treated the whole idea with irony and sarcasm.[52] Despite all the protests, the Polish Foreign Minister, Józef Beck, endeavored to secure the consent of the French government and, according to reports in the Nazi press, carried on negotiations regarding the matter with the prime minister, Léon Blum.[53] Studies were made by the French Colonial Office and materials were gathered. Later on, after France was invaded, the Nazis got hold of the materials and used them in developing their own Madagascar plan. During the years immediately before the war, the Madagascar plan became popular in certain Polish circles, which considered it as a means of getting rid of the Jews. A Polish novel was published revolving around the theme of Jewish emigration to Madagascar. The author of this utopian novel envisaged

[51] Lepecki, M. B., *Madagaskar, kraj, ludzie, kolonizacja* (Warsaw 1938); "Projects for Jewish Mass Colonization," in *Jewish Affairs* (Nov. 1941); Hevesi, *op. cit.*

[52] Białoskórski, J., "Piekło na Madagaskarze," in *Chwila Poranna,* Lwów, January 18, 1938; Gen, "Madagaskariada," *ibid.,* March 11, 1938; "Legenda madagaskarska w proch się rozwiała," *ibid.,* March 12, 1938; "Niechaj jadą do Madagaskaru, tam ich zniszczy dżuma i tyfus," in *Chwila Wieczorna,* March 5, 1938, and other articles in the issues of January 10 and February 26, 1938.

[53] *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten,* Jan. 20, 1937, cited in Seraphim, Heinz-Peter, *Das Judentum im osteuropäischen Raum* (Essen 1938) p. 672.

The *Stürmer,* xvi, nos. 1 and 20 (January and May, 1938) reported that the Polish government was about to conclude an agreement with the French government about the transfer of 30,000 Polish Jews to Madagascar. A regular line of communication between Gdynia (a Polish port) and Madagascar was considered. These Polish-French negotiations were conducted during the visit of the French Foreign Minister Delbos to Warsaw. The *Stürmer* refers to a report in the Italian daily, *Il Tevere,* of January 18 and 19, 1938 (*Cf.* I.M.T., vol. xli, p. 557-58). No other documentary materials confirming Streicher's information are known at present.

the situation when only 100,000 thoroughly assimilated Jews would remain in Poland.[54]

In 1938 the Nazis again revived the Madagascar plan, this time on a broad international scale. This was probably intended as an answer to the discussions at the Evian conference (July 1938), which dealt with the problem of the refugees from Nazi Germany. The Nazis wished to expose their own plan against the various plans for colonization suggested by the western powers. We mentioned already A. Rosenberg's reaction to the Evian conference, particularly to the Guiana and Madagascar projects. At a German cabinet meeting on November 12, 1938, Hermann Goering declared that Hitler was preparing a new proposal on the Jewish question and that he would suggest to the western powers to solve the Jewish question by creating a Jewish territory in Madagascar.[55] Germany initiated talks in London with the British government and with the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees set up after the Evian conference. The negotiations were carried on by Dr. Hjalmar Schacht during his visit to London, and they were continued by the German ambassador in London, Herbert von Dirksen, the Austrian Finance Minister, Fischbeck and others.[56] Schacht's plan called for securing an international loan for Germany to finance this emigration and thus to bolster German exports. The Jews would be able to take out a portion of their possessions from Germany only in German goods. The Madagascar plan became an object of international politics. According to some sources Hitler took up the matter personally with the French ambassador in Berlin, François-Poncet.[57] The Defense Minister of South Africa, Oswald Pirow, played an active role in those negotiations. Pirow was an admirer of Hitler and a self-confessed "outspoken anti-

[54] *Cf.* Mazor, M., "La cité engloutie," in *Le Monde Juif*, vol. v (1950) no. 33, p. 2.

[55] I.M.T., *Proceedings . . .*, vol. xxviii, p. 538-39.

[56] Dirksen, Herbert von, *Moskau, Tokio, London* (Stuttgart 1951); Glazer, M., "The Jewish Problem and the United States," a confidential mimeographed document in the author's private archives.

Schacht negotiated with Lord Bearsted, Lord Winterton and Mr. Rublee, of the Evian Committee. He left London in December 1938 and as early as January 2, 1939, he had a lengthy conversation with Hitler in Berchtesgaden. Three days after this conversation Hitler appointed Schacht as the "Special Deputy for Jewish Emigration." At the Nuremberg trial Schacht declared that as late as December 1939 Hitler backed his emigration plans (See Reitlinger, *op. cit.*, p. 20).

[57] Staatsanwaltschaft bei dem Landgericht Nürnberg-Fürth, AZ:3 c Js 1321-24/49, Anklageschrift gegen Franz Rademacher und Dr. Karl Klingenfuss (1949); Das Schwurgericht bei dem Landgericht Nürnberg-Fürth, 85 Ks. 4/50. Urteil [against Franz Rademacher]. Mimeographed, in author's private archives.

semite." In an editorial in the first issue of his periodical *Neuwe Orde* (October 4, 1945), Pirow described his journey to Europe in 1938 and his negotiations. At first Pirow discussed the plan with British prime minister Chamberlain and with a Jewish member of Parliament (whose name is not given). Then he went to Berlin. Here he suggested to Hitler that he allow Jews to emigrate to one of the following three countries: former German East Africa, British Guiana or Madagascar. Hitler selected Madagascar, stating he was ready to offer France compensation for the island. This could only mean that the Jewish "Homeland" was to be placed under a German protectorate. From Berlin Pirow was to go to Paris to negotiate with the French government, but the sudden outbreak of the general strike and the cabinet crisis in France forced him to postpone his visit.[58]

The Italian government also supported the Madagascar plan. Italy was preparing itself to displace Great Britain in the Middle East and was interested in hampering the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine and winning the friendship of the Arabs. The Madagascar plan served both of these purposes. *Informazione Diplomatica,* the organ of the Italian Foreign Ministry, in its issue of February 16, 1938 wrote that the only answer to the Jewish question was to create a Jewish state, but not in Palestine. The Italian Foreign Minister, Count Goleazzo Ciano, in his diaries, mentioned a conversation with Mussolini and the U. S. Ambassador William Phillips on January 3, 1939. William Phillips presented a message of President Roosevelt suggesting to open Ethiopia to Jewish immigration. The President's proposal was based on the fact that the Fascist Grand Council had approved on October 6, 1938 a resolution "permitting controlled emigration of European Jews into some parts of Ethiopia,

[58] Materials are found in the following South-African newspapers: *Die Vaterland,* March 8, 1941; June 1, 1942; December 12, 14, 1942; *New Letter,* May 2, 1945; *Die Neuwe Orde,* Oct. 4, 1945; Jan. 16, Feb. 21, Sept. 12, Oct. 4, Oct. 18, Dec. 13, 1946; *The Star,* March 12, 1943; *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus,* Feb. 22, 1948; *The Natal Mercury,* March 17, 1937; April 13, 1948; *Rand Daily Mail,* April 15, April 30, 1938; Dec. 13, 1947; *The Friend,* March 23, 1940.

Hitler's valet, Karl W. Krause, tells that he accidentally overheard a conversation between Hitler and Chamberlain during the latter's visit to Berchtesgaden, on September 15, 1938. This was the nature of the conversation: Chamberlain asked: "How do you propose to solve the Jewish problem, Herr Reichskanzler?" To which Hitler replied: "The British Empire has plenty of islands. Set aside one of them. There all the Jews of the world can gather. . . . Above all a place where there are quarries. We [Germans] shall supply the food and the Jews the marble." Krause, Karl Wilhelm, *Zehn Jahre Kammerdiener bei Hitler* (Hamburg, n.d.) p. 367. If Krause's report is authentic, Hitler discussed then with Chamberlain the problem of Jewish emigration to the colonies.

in order, among other things, to divert Jewish emigration from Palestine." Mussolini, in this January conversation, rejected the plan of a Jewish settlement in Ethiopia but declared himself favorable to the creation of an independent Jewish state.[59] (Of course, Palestine was excluded.) On February 7, 1939 Alfred Rosenberg, at a press conference in Berlin, discussed the plan to settle 15 million Jews in Guiana or in Madagascar.[60]

After Rosenberg's fantastic project the discussion of this matter suddenly subsided. Pirow explains it by the continuous attacks on Hitler by Churchill and "the Labour party politicians," which made friendly negotiations impossible. In his pro-Nazi explanations Pirow left out one thing, however: in March 1939 Hitler, by his attack on Czechoslovakia, aroused the indignation of the whole world. The pressure of an aroused public opinion most probably made the governments of the western powers discontinue their negotiations with Germany. Not long afterwards, the Second World War broke out.

The Madagascar plan again became an issue when the Nazis, after the war broke out, decided to use it in a new diplomatic game and in a new setting. In December 1939 the German Foreign Minister, von Ribbentrop, submitted a peace proposal to the Pope, which contained, among other items, the plan for the emigration of all German Jews to Palestine, Ethiopia and Madagascar.[61]

Military operations, however, soon caused a complete change in the Jewish policy of the Nazis. They now had a large portion of European Jewry under their rule and they were in a position directly to determine the fate of the Jews. They were able to use this power as a lever to press their plans with the western powers. Their victories in Poland and in western Europe strengthened the belief of the Nazis in their ultimate victory and held forth the prospect of forcing the defeated French to cede to them the island of Madagascar. Diplomatic talks were now of secondary significance. First in importance were the practical preparations for carrying out the colonization of the island. The matter was now in the hands of the German police and the S.S.—and not only of the Foreign Ministry.

On May 15, 1940 Himmler, after the official collapse of the Lublin

[59] Starr, Joshua, "Italy's Antisemites," in *Jewish Social Studies,* vol. i (1939) 117.

[60] *Ciano's Diaries, 1939-1949* (Toronto 1947) p. 4; Cianfarra, C., *The Vatican and the War* (New York 1944) p. 145-46.

[61] Cianfarra, *op. cit.,* p. 209.

reservation project, prepared a detailed memorandum entitled "Some Thoughts on the Treatment of Non-Germans in the East," in which he devoted only one sentence to the Jews: "I hope that, thanks to the possibility of a large emigration of all Jews to Africa or some other colony, I shall live to see the day when the concept of Jew will have completely disappeared from Europe." Himmler wrote those words in his official capacity as "Reichskommissar for the Consolidation of German Volkstum in the East," and he submitted his project to Hitler on May 20, 1940. Hitler designated Himmler's proposals as "very good and correct," and ordered a few copies of this strictly confidential document to be distributed among his Reichsleiter in eastern Europe (Koch, Förster, Greiser, Hans Frank).[62]

Hans Frank, seeing this decision, was overjoyed. He had long been complaining against the incessant transports of Jews to the General-Gouvernement. Frank himself, his deputy, Dr. Joseph Bühler, and the expert on Jewish affairs, Peter-Heinz Seraphim, used every occasion to point out that there were too many Jews in the General-Gouvernement and that any further increase in their number would be an unbearable burden.[63] On June 10, 1940 Frank gleefully told his associates that the Jews of the General-Gouvernement were going to be shipped overseas. On July 12, 1940, he discussed the whole plan at a meeting of his department and district chiefs in Cracow.

> The Fuehrer's decision, [said Frank] which came at my suggestion, is of the utmost importance. No more transports of Jews to the General-Gouvernement are to take place. It is now planned to transfer the whole Jewish tribe from the Reich, the General-Gouvernement and the Protectorate within the shortest possible time after the conclusion of peace to some African or American colony. There is talk about the island of Madagascar, which France will have to yield for this purpose. An area of 500,000 square kilometers ought to suffice for several million Jews. I tried to win also for the Jews of the General-Gouvernement the privilege to be able to build their life anew on new soil. That has been accepted. Thus, we may expect that within the very near future we shall be tremendously relieved.

[62] A Polish translation of the documents is found in *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji dla Badania . . .*, vol. iv, p. 117-25.

[63] Seraphim, "Die Judenfrage im General-Gouvernement," in *Die Burg,* vol. i (1940) 56-63; "Das deutsche General-Gouvernement, Raum, Bevölkerung, Landschaft," in *Deutsche Monatshefte* (1940) 169-84; *Die Wirtschaftsstruktur des General-Gouvernements* (Cracow 1941); "Bevölkerungs-und wirtschaftliche Probleme einer europäischen Gesamtlösung der Judenfrage," in *Weltkampf* (1941) 43-51.

Speaking before a larger party meeting in Cracow, Frank related the news in a jovial tone:

> As soon as sea communications permit the shipment of the Jews (laughter in the audience), [said Frank] they shall be shipped, piece by piece, man by man, woman by woman, girl by girl. I hope, gentlemen, you will not complain on that account (merriment in the hall). I believe, therefore, that we are already, as they say, out of the morass.[64]

It appears that for a short time even the highest authorities in Germany took the Madagascar plan quite seriously. Hitler's official interpreter, Dr. Paul Schmidt, relates in his memoirs that on June 18, 1940, when Hitler and Mussolini talked about the disposition of French colonies, Hitler said: "A Jewish state could be created in Madagascar."[65] Also Ciano mentioned in his diaries, under the same date of June 18 and 19, 1940 that the German Madagascar project was communicated to him by Ribbentrop. Soon thereafter, on July 18, 1940, the semi-official *La Stampa* of Turin wrote about the Madagascar plan as an officially adopted project. At the same time an Italian racist periodical ran an article about Madagascar as a place for Jewish settlement.[66]

The actual preparations for the implementation of the Madagascar plan started during the early months of the war. The Berlin Gestapo called in the representatives of the German Jews and told them to speed up Jewish emigration. After some lengthy negotiations and after hearing several proposals by the Jews, the Gestapo announced its own plan: to ship five million Jews to the island of Madagascar, with the financial assistance of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and Jewish organizations in America.[67] Von Ribbentrop charged the chief of the Jewish division in the Foreign Office, the young and ambitious jurist, Dr. Franz Rademacher, with the preparation of a detailed plan from the point of view of international law. On July 3, 1940 Rademacher submitted a memorandum entitled "The Jewish

[64] *Frank's Diaries;* Brustin-Bernstein, *op. cit.,* vol. iii (1950) p. 54; Szroit, E., "Okupacja hitlerowska w Polsce w świetle 'Dziennika' Hansa Franka i protokołów posiedzeń Rządu Generalnej Gubernii," in *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji dla Badania . . .*, vol. ii (1947) 9-41; Osmańczyk, E., "Szubienica Hansa Franka," in *Rzeczpospolita,* March 12, 1946.

[65] "Behind the Brown Curtain," in *New York Times,* August 25, 1950; *Ciano's Diaries,* p. 267.

[66] Barduzzi, C., "La soluzione della questione giudaica, Il Madagascar," in *La Difesa della Razza,* Rome, July 20, 1940.

[67] *Cf.* Nussbaum, M., "Life in Wartime Germany," in *Contemporary Jewish Record,* vol. iii (1940) 577-86.

Question in the Peace Treaty," with the slogan "All Jews Out of Europe."[68] His plan was as follows:

France was to cede Madagascar to the German government for the purpose of solving the Jewish question. The 25,000 Frenchmen living on the island would have to leave so that the Jews might be cut off from any contact with white Europeans. Germany was to be given the mandate over Madagascar with the right to install naval and air bases. The parts of the island not occupied by German military bases or by the local native population would be set aside for Jewish colonization. Jewish immigration was not to be voluntary, but based on forced deportations. With this in mind, Germany was to include in every peace treaty with European nations a clause calling for the evacuation of all Jews from Europe. The Jews of Madagascar were to serve as hostages in German hands for the "good behavior of the people of their race in America" towards Germany. The Jews in Madagascar were to enjoy local autonomy, have their own mayors, their own postal service, railway service, etc. But the island was to be administered by a German police governor who would take his orders from the central German police authorities. Money derived from confiscated Jewish possessions in Europe would be used to set up a bank in Europe to purchase land in Madagascar for Jewish colonization and to buy and import the necessary goods.

The plan was soon endorsed by Ribbentrop and was enthusiastically received by the Chief Office of State Security (S.S., Police and Gestapo). Heydrich instructed his official, Theo Dannecker (later the hangman of French and south-European Jews), to work out a plan for emigration and transportation to Madagascar. Dannecker submitted his plan on August 15, 1940. It called for the creation of a special fleet of ships of the North German Lloyd and the Hamburg-American lines to carry the emigrants. The Jews were to pay for their transportation. The transports were to begin after the end of the war. Four million Jews from Europe (evidently, the Jews of Soviet Russia were not yet included) were to be transported to Madagascar. First to go would be the pioneers who would prepare the land for colonization.[69]

[68] I.M.T., *Documents . . .*, NG-2586.

[69] The original draft of Dannecker's plan is lost. The documents of the I.M.T. contain only the notes of Under-Secretary Luther.

It is significant that the new French Governor General of Madagascar, Armand Annet, appointed by the Vichy Government in December 1940, apparently knew

The Nazis, in formulating their Madagascar plan, employed some of the terminology of the Zionists and Territorialists and proposed to use some of their methods. But the concepts of international trusteeship, Jewish territorial autonomy, an international Jewish colonization bank and pioneer vanguards, emerge as carricatures of the Jewish formulations. The basic idea becomes apparent in the decision to appoint a police governor over the Jewish territory and to isolate the Jews from every contact with the surrounding world, especially with the white race. In other words, Madagascar was to become a vast prison for the Jews, or, as the foreign press put it, a "superghetto" or concentration camp. The Nazi rulers were also well aware of the fact that there was no room on the island for millions of new immigrants, particularly when the Jews were to be relegated to the poorest land not settled by the natives and not reserved for the German military installations. In short, like the Lublin reservation, Madagascar was conceived as a gigantic concentration for slow death.

Be it as it may, for a brief period, even the Chief Security Office, especially the Jewish affairs division under Adolf Eichmann, saw in the Madagascar plan a possibility for the "final solution of the Jewish question."[70] There was even a candidate for the office of police governor: it was the Chief of Hitler's private chancellary, Philipp Bouhler.[71] Hitler himself endorsed the project. He let the cat out of the bag as to why Madagascar was selected of all places in one of his statements. On May 29, 1942 he declared that Jews must not be exiled to Siberia, where the rigorous climate might toughen them and endow them with new vitality. They must be sent to Africa where climatic conditions have a debilitating effect on the human organism and lower its resistance.[72] This was as telling a revelation of the motives behind the Madagascar plan as one could expect.

nothing of the plan of Jewish colonization in Madagascar. At any rate, there is no mention of it in his memoirs, *Aux heures troublées de l'Afrique française* (Paris 1952). He does mention, however, that he found in Madagascar a "very small number of Israelites," who have resided there for a long time. The wife of the director of the cabinet was a Jewess. This proved to be a great embarrassment, "since it was a time when the Jews were eliminated from public life." Annet finds it necessary to emphasize the fact that after he discovered the great secret his relations with the director remained unchanged and the friendly relations between the households continued exactly as heretofore.

[70] According to the testimony of Dieter Wisliceny, I.M.T., *Proceedings . . .*, vol. iv, p. 395.

[71] According to the testimony of Viktor Brach in the Nürnberg "Medical Case" trials. See also Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 51-52.

[72] *Hitler's Tischgespräche,* ed. by H. Picker (Bonn 1951) p. 118, 311.

After Rademacher and Dannecker had submitted their memoranda, the subject of Madagascar became very confused and it was set aside like its twin project of the Lublin reservation. The new turn in the situation came in August or September of 1940. On September 20, 1940 Hitler ordered his General Staff to prepare a plan of action for "Operation Barbarossa" (invasion of Soviet Russia). This meant the prolongation of the war. But it also involved a new policy towards the Jews. Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Luther, was told by Heydrich that the Jewish question could no longer be solved by emigration. At the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, Martin Luther declared that owing to political developments the Madagascar plan was no longer practicable. Somewhat later Rademacher wrote to his friend, Ambassador Bielefeld, that the Führer himself had decided that the Jews were to be transported not to the island of Madagascar but to eastern Europe.[73]

Notwithstanding all this, the Madagascar affair was kept up as a means to befuddle the public. Hitler, Goebbels, Rosenberg and others continued to speak of the Madagascar plan in 1942 and 1943. Hitler brought up the subject several times in talks with his close associates. On July 24, 1942 he remarked: "After the war the Jews will emigrate to Madagascar or to another Jewish national state." Since the extermination of European Jewry had already been decided at a conference at Wannsee on January 20, 1942, this Madagascar statement was nothing but cynical hypocrisy. In 1941 the Madagascar plan was brought to life again by Admiral Darlan of France.[74] The plan was likewise submitted by Alfred Rosenberg in his paper at the opening of the "Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question" at Frankfurt on March 28, 1941.[75] The Nazi news agency "Der Weltdienst," on April 28, 1941, published the following report: "Rumors are circulating here that a secret clause in the Franco-German armistice calls

[73] The materials on the Madagascar plan are based chiefly on the following: I.M.T., *Documents* . . ., NG-2586, 5764; The Ministries Case, vol. xi of *Trials of War Criminals;* Franz Rademacher Prozess, *Anklageschrift* and *Urteil* (q.v.); *Le Monde Juif* (1949) 16 ff.; Goldstein, Anatole, *From Discrimination to Annihilation* (New York 1952) p. 14-16.

I wish to express my thanks to the Public Prosecutor Gitler of the Landgericht of Nürnberg-Fürth and to Dr. Schnelbogel, archivist of the Nürnberg public archives, for materials and data regarding the Rademacher trial and the Madagascar plan.

[74] *Cf. Bulletin du Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine,* Nov. 1945, p. 2-3.

[75] "Die Judenfrage als Weltproblem," in *Weltkampf* (1941) 64-72.

for the French government to permit all European Jews to come to Madagascar." The following day the JTA cabled from Stockholm: "Jewish personages from the Reich, Austria, Nazi-occupied Poland and the Protectorate have been convened by the Nazi government to Berlin to confer on the plan for evacuating all Jews from Europe to Madagascar." No such conference took place: the JTA fell for a Nazi propaganda trick. Jewish public opinion abroad never took the plan very seriously. Responsible Jewish leaders in the United States took a negative attitude.[76] Polish Jews knew about the plan in 1940 but there are not enough materials to enable us to evaluate their reaction.[77]

In the meantime the Nazi press kept writing about the project. It was given the greatest publicity by H. E. Seifert, who, in all his writings, insisted that the ghettos were not the solution but only a "transitional solution" of the Jewish problem.[78] It is not enough to segregate the Jews, he argued. They must be completely isolated. The Lublin reservation also was not "a final solution." Any such ultimate solution must be based on the principle that "the Jew does not belong to the community of white peoples, but to the area of habitation of the colored peoples." The final habitation of 10 million European Jews must be located as far as possible from the white race and must be strictly guarded. Seifert recalled that at the international Congress of Antisemites in Budapest in 1926, "influential German quarters" had offered suggestions which sounded fantastic at the time but were now

[76] ". . . sending Jewish masses . . . to Madagascar . . . would mean sending them to their grave. . . . The forced deportation . . . *en masse* . . . must be resisted by decent people of whatever origin or mentality is an outrage. No pogrom in history would equal the slaughter. . . ." (Hevesy, *op. cit.*, p. 394).

"It appears that Madagascar may be destined, if Hitler has his way, to become a Devil's Island for the Jews of Europe." (*Jewish Affairs*, Nov. 1941); *Cf.* also Tartakover, Aryeh, "Shedlekhe spekulatsyes" *Yidisher kemfer*, November 29, 1940, in which he opposes negotiations with Germany and Italy about the settlement of European Jews in tropical countries.

[77] The head of the population section of the General-Gouvernement, Dr. Arldt, told a delegation of Jews who came to him in Cracow to ask for repeal of the Warsaw ghetto order: "The Führer will solve the Jewish question after the war by creating a fatherland for the Jews." (See Ringelblum, *Bulletin*, p. 110. There are three allusions to Madagascar in Ringelblum's diary, but without comments. *Ibid.*, p. 110, 155, 156). Dr. Hillel Zeidman relates that Dr. Alfred Nossig worked on a German project on Jewish emigration from Poland. Nossig once took Zeidman with him to a conference in the Warsaw Gestapo office, in February 1940, and they discussed various plans for emigration. Considerable attention was given to the Madagascar plan, but no mention was made of emigration to Palestine. See Dr. Zeidman's *Togbuch fun varshever geto* (Buenos Aires 1947) p. 246-48.

[78] *Der Jude an der Ostgrenze*, p. 85, 88; *Der Jude zwischen den Fronten der Rassen, der Völker, der Kulturen* (Berlin 1942) p. 150-58.

capable of execution. Seifert did not mention the island of Madagascar by name nor did he designate any territory for his colonial "colored" Jewish reservation. The plan was revived again, this time as a means for anti-Jewish incitement, when the British forces occupied Madagascar in May 1942. The Nazi and collaborationist press in France wrote that the perfidious British had been scheming since 1937 to hand over to the Jews this island "with its ideal climate" [sic!] and "with all its numerous natives to slave for them."[79] Thus, the Madagascar plan became, in the Nazi press, a Jewish contrivance!

It is interesting to note that Goebbels, after studying the plan for the extermination of European Jewry, as evolved at the conference at Wannsee, still toyed with the idea of Jewish emigration to Madagascar.[80] He used the Madagascar plan for propaganda purposes as late as 1943. At a conference for the foreign press in Berlin on March 14, 1943, Goebbels hinted that "that international poison," *i.e.* the Jews, could be removed in a humanitarian fashion through the creation of a state, "entirely reserved for European Jews." The collaborationist press in France seized on this idea and gave it a great deal of publicity.[81] Goebbels was clever enough not to mention the name Madagascar, which by that time had already been exposed as a fraud of German propaganda. He evidently had appraised the whole project from the beginning as a swindle. In his diaries, Goebbels discusses the occupation of the island by the British (on May 7 and 8, 1942), but makes no mention at all of the plan for Jewish colonization.[82] All his talk about creating a Jewish state for millions of Jews at the time when most of the Jews in Europe had already been murdered was nothing but a smoke screen.

As a characteristic detail it is worth mentioning that the Nazi plans for a Jewish reservation in Europe (Lublin) or Africa did not fail to have some effect among the Allied statesmen. In the Spring

[79] Wacogne, Claude, "Les Juifs et Madagascar," in *L'Appel,* May 28, 1942; Boissel, Jean, "Madagascar aux Juifs," in *Le Reveil du Peuple,* Sept. 1, 1942. (These articles are available in the Yivo archives.)

[80] "I read a detailed report from the S. D. and Police regarding a final solution of the Jewish question. Any final solution involves a tremendous number of new viewpoints. The Jewish question must be solved within a pan-European frame. There are 11,000,000 Jews still in Europe. They will have to be concentrated later, to begin with, in the East; possibly an island, such as Madagascar, can be assigned to them after the war. In any case there can be no peace in Europe until the last Jews are eliminated from the continent" (*Goebbels Diaries,* p. 115-16).

[81] *Pariser Zeitung,* March 15, 1943; "Y aura-t-il un État Juif?" in *Le Nouvelliste,* Lyon, March 18, 1943.

[82] *Goebbels' Diaries,* p. 207-209.

of 1942 Zygmunt Kaczyński, a highly-placed Polish cleric, who was a member of the Polish National Council and Vice-Minister for Information in the Polish government-in-exile in London, came to the United States. He brought with him a plan for settling the Jews after the war in some reservation in eastern Poland or in Bessarabia (with the approval of the Rumanian government). Apparently the plan had the support of the Polish underground movement in Warsaw.[83] At the Bermuda Conference (April 19-30, 1943), during the discussion of the refugee problem, somebody let a remark drop about asking the French government to open Madagascar to the refugees. Although the intention of the proposal was totally different from that of the Nazi Madagascar plan, it was, from a purely psychological point of view, a false move. "This was especially deplorable,' 'a Jewish historian comments, "in view of the unsavory reputation the Madagascar venture had earned in connection with plans of the pre-1939 Polish government and the Nazi government to ship European Jews there."[84]

[83] *Cf.* Dr. I. Schwarzbart in *Folk un Velt,* New York, Feb. 1952, p. 16-19, in which he refers to a secret document sent from Warsaw to the Polish government-in-exile in London.

Dr. Adolf Berman, in his article, "Hayehudim bazad haari," *Enziklopediya shel galuyot, Varsha,* vol. i (Jerusalem-Tel Aviv 1953) p. 727, relates the following fact. In the spring of 1944 the Jewish organizations in Warsaw discovered that the Warsaw director of the Foreign Department of the Polish government-in-exile in London wrote in an article that even after the great Jewish catastrophe there will still remain too many Jews in Poland and it will be necessary to assign to them a closed territory somewhere in the East. Berman does not indicate the name of the writer or the publication in which the article appeared.

[84] Wischnitzer, M., *To Dwell in Safety* (Philadelphia 1948) p. 247.

THE TRANSNISTRIA RESERVATION

By JOSEPH B. SHECHTMAN

Rumania declared war on Soviet Russia on June 22, 1941. By the end of July the German-Rumanian forces had regained Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, territories ceded to the Soviet Union by Rumania in June 1940. Although Rumania's account with Russia was ostensibly settled, Marshal Antonescu sent his troops across the Dniester River into southern Ukraine. The provinces of Podolia and Kherson were quickly conquered. On August 13th Odessa was assaulted and it was occupied on October 16th. On the basis of the German-Rumanian pact signed in Tighina, Bessarabia on August 18, 1941 the Antonescu government proclaimed, on October 17,[1] the setting up of the Rumanian province of Transnistria—the land beyond the Dniester. It consisted of a large sector of the southern Ukraine (16,000 square miles), from Nikolaev on the Black Sea along the Bug River via Voznesensk, Konstantinovka, Gaiyvoron, and Bar to Mogilev on the Dniester, with Odessa as the capital, and it contained a population of 2,240,000.[2]

I

The main part of Transnistria was the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, on the left bank of the Dniester, with an area of 8,400 square kilometers and a population (in 1933) of 615,000. To this core the Rumanians added large parts of the adjacent Ukrainian territory with the large seaport of Odessa, which had in 1939 a population of 604,000 and which was the center of a vast and rich region. The city of Mogilev, situated in the Vinnitsa region of the U. S. S. R., had a population of 22,000 in 1935. Within the same region is found the key railroad station of Shmerinka, with over 20,000 inhabitants. According to Soviet statistics the 2,236,000 inhabitants of this

[1] *Transnistria,* October 27, 1941, no. 14, Annex I.
[2] *Stockholm Tidende,* May 16, 1942.

region included 290,000 Rumanians, 1,070,000 Ukrainians, 710,000 Russians, 125,000 Germans, 15,000 Bulgars, 16,000 Tartars and small numbers of other ethnic groups. The density of population was very low—55 per square kilometer, as compared to 78 in Rumania.[3]

Marshal Antonescu announced that Transnistria would be converted into a model Rumanian settlement through large-scale Rumanian colonization. In October 1941 it was reported that some 50,000 to 80,000 Rumanians living in districts on the east bank of the Bug River would be transferred to Transnistria.[4] A special committee was appointed by the Antonescu government to handle the repatriation of persons of Rumanian stock living beyond the Bug River as well as in other parts of the Ukraine, in the Crimea and in the Caucasus. The number of prospective repatriates was estimated as somewhere between 30,000 and 200,000. A large proportion of these were to be settled in Transnistria to give the province a Rumanian character.[5]

This project never materialized. There is no evidence of any significant colonization of Rumanians in Transnistria. Allied political circles believe that Antonescu "foresaw the probability that Rumania would not be able to keep Transnistria."[6] The very limited influx of Rumanians into this province consisted almost exclusively of officials and military personnel. On the other hand, there was at that time no question of transferring the indigenous German minority to the Reich or to the German-occupied territories, as in the case of 93,000 Germans evacuated from neighboring Bessarabia in the autumn of 1940. There were about 125,000 *Volksdeutsche* in the area; they constituted almost six percent of the population of the province and in 120 towns and communes, according to a German source, they made up either the entire or major part of the population.[7]

The plan for making Transnistria a model Rumanian province certainly precluded the settlement of Jews in this area. At the outbreak of the war there were in this area about 300,000 Jews, including

[3] *Südost-Economist,* December 10, 1943; *Bukarester Tageblatt,* August 20, 1943.
[4] *Magyar Nemzet,* October 30, 1942.
[5] *Grenzbote,* October 21, 1942; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* October 23, 1942.
[6] *The New York Times,* February 1, 1943; The *Bukarester Tageblatt* of July 7, 1943 quotes the official Rumanian newspaper *Informatia* as stating: "We do not wish to acquire foreign soil, but have only temporarily occupied enemy territory in order to deprive the serpent of its fangs."
[7] *Donauzeitung* (Belgrade) December 13 and 20, 1942. They were hurriedly evacuated in May-July 1944, when the Soviet troops were nearing Transnistria (*Ostdeutscher Beobachter,* July 23, 1944).

some 55,000 farmers. It may be supposed that about 60 to 70 percent of this Jewish population was evacuated or fled before the Axis armies occupied the territory, thus leaving some 100,000 to 120,000 Jews. These Jews were not removed from the "model Rumanian province," as might have been expected. Professor Alexianu, the Rumanian governor of Transnistria, issued a decree, dated November 11, 1941, which converted this area into a gigantic penal colony for Jews.

According to this decree the police-inspector of the province was to determine the places where Jews could live. Any Jew leaving the place of residence assigned to him without special permission was subject to execution as a spy. The Jews in each community were to be constituted as a colony governed by an official designated by the praetor of the region. They were to be divided up into groups of twenty, each group under a leader appointed by the head of the colony. The head of the colony and the group leaders were to be held personally responsible for the observance of all the regulations issued by the administration and the police. They were likewise ordered to draw up lists of Jewish artisans and of all Jews capable of work. The trained workers were to be employed in their special skills; the unskilled workers were to be used for agricultural work, road repair, work in the forests, quarries and other such labor. The wages for the labor were to be at the rate of two marks per day for skilled work and one mark per day for the non-skilled work, all to be paid in produce. The use of Jewish workers outside their own colonies required special authorization by the regional prefect and complete supervision of the Jewish colonies was placed in the hands of the police.

II

At first the decree applied only to Soviet Jews under Rumanian occupation. After the fall of 1941, however, the local Jewish population of Transnistria was swelled by consecutive waves of deportees from Bessarabia, Bukovina and even old Rumania; in 1943, they were joined by a number of Jewish deportees from central and western Europe. The first group of 1,500 Jews from the ghetto of Kishinev, the capital of Bessarabia, was deported to Transnistria on October 8, 1941; by June 13, 1942, the entire Kishinev area became *Judenrein.*[8] Simultaneously, about 85 percent of Bukovina's Jewry were dispatched to Transnistria. During the winter months of 1941-1942 the deportations were suspended but resumed in the summer of 1942. On August

[8] Jewish Telegraphic Agency, *Daily News Bulletin,* June 30, 1942.

13, 1942, the well-informed German *Krakauer Zeitung* reported that 185,000 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina had been sent to Transnistria.

There is no evidence as to whether the figure of 185,000 represented the total of those deported or only those who reached Transnistria alive. In 1939 the Jewish population in Bessarabia, north Bukovina, south Bukovina and the district of Dorohoi (in old Rumania) totaled 330,000. By May 1942 only 19,475 of this number were left. It is quite likely that a certain percentage had managed to escape or to go into hiding; others were evacuated or fled with the retreating Soviet army. But tens of thousands still remained unaccounted for. These must have either perished in the pogroms which preceded deportation or they died of maltreatment, exposure, hunger and disease on the road to Transnistria.

The wholesale deportation of some 185,000 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina in the fall of 1941 and the first part of 1942 did not close the chapter of deportation for Rumanian Jewry. During the second half of 1942 and in 1943, Jews in other parts of Rumania had been intermittently threatened by new expulsions to the Transnistria "reservation." A report compiled in Rumania in the second half of 1942 (date uncertain) refers to a transport of some 5,000 Jews from Czernowitz and Dohoroi dispatched to Transnistria. In August 1942, the Government Commissioner for the Jewish Question announced that "all Rumanian Jews will be deported to Russia.[9] The well-informed *Bukarester Tageblatt* (August 8, 1942) predicted that by the end of 1943 the entire Jewish population of Rumania would be sent partly to Transnistria and partly even "farther to the east, on the other side of the Bug River, somewhere in the Russian areas occupied by the German and Rumanian armies."

This prediction was only partly realized. No wholesale deportation took place. But sporadic mass removals did occur. A Bucharest newspaper reported that 25,000 Jews were deported to Transnistria in the middle of October 1942.[10] Rumanian Jewry lived in constant fear of being exiled to Transnistria. A total of about 200,000 Rumanian Jews (a most conservative estimate) were transferred to Transnistria. The plight of these newcomers proved to be even more tragic than that of the local Jewish population.

[9] *New Daglit Allehanda,* August 10, 1942.
[10] JTA, *Daily News Bulletin,* November 15, 1942.

A report sent from Rumania in August 1942 described the fate of the Jewish deportees in Transnistria. It told of the fact that almost all letters coming from Transnistria contained pleas for money to save the writers from starvation. Many of the letters reported in terse language that A was now with X. This always meant that A was dead, since X always referred to some friend or member of the family who had previously been reported as dead. The letters, dspite the rigorous censorship, made it quite apparent that the government authorities were bent on the physical annihilation of the Jews. Another report smuggled out of Transnistria described how out of 10,000 Jews in Mogilev, 3,000 were taken to a camp about five miles from the city and the remaining 7,000 were shut up in a ghetto and subjected to severe and oppressive regulations. According to a confidential report of the International Red Cross, dated January 20, 1944, Jewish mortality in 1941 and 1942 was gigantic. Thousands of people died every day of typhoid and dysentery.

An extremely painful feature of the life of the Jewish deportees in Transnistria was the idleness enforced upon many of them, particularly in the early stages of their new existence. Thousands of able-bodied men and women accustomed to be occupied in various kinds of work were suddenly transplanted to new and strange surroundings and left for many months completely unemployed. This protracted idleness not only affected their economic situation but also deeply undermined their morale. The intellectual classes in particular were seriously affected by this enforced idleness.

The relief action organized for the Jews deported to Transnistria was belated and completely inadequate. The "Judenzentrale," organized at the behest of the Germans, was authorized to deal with this matter by a government decree of January 30, 1942 (*Monitorul Official*, no. 26, January 31, 1942) but was not able to begin work before mid-February and the first results did not materialize until June. Up to that time the Transnistria deportees were almost completely isolated from the rest of the world, even from the rest of Rumania. Correspondence between the Jews in Transnistria and their friends and relations in Rumania was rendered most difficult by the postal authorities and by strict censorship. Messages, therefore, were frequently sent through friendly officers and soldiers, even though such liaison contacts were strictly forbidden and violators were subject to court-martial and heavy punishment. Such "couriers" were also

frequently used to transmit money to the deportees, at charges of 30 to 50 percent of the sums transmitted. Such transactions naturally involved risk of total loss of the funds but they were on the whole faster and even cheaper than sending funds through the government bank and the Judenzentrale. Up to August 1942, about 36 million lei and medical supplies worth about 7 million lei were sent to Transnistria, partly by individuals and partly from funds collected through the Judenzentrale.

A report dated September 1942 tells of a relief action for the deported Jews carried out in old Rumania by the loyal elements of the Judenzentrale with the sanction of the government. Beside money they also collected used clothing, scrap iron, lumber, glass and other building materials to be used for constructing new barracks or for repair of the old houses. The transports of these materials were held up by government officials for many months and they were not able to be used before the winter season set in. Such transports usually came by way of the General Gouvernement in Tiraspol, which was notorious for its inhuman treatment of the Jews. The meagerness of the aid sent to the deportees in Transnistria by way of official channels is revealed in the fact that the 40 million lei transmitted during six months amounted to an average of 150 lei per individual, just enough to buy one-third of a loaf of bread.

The reports of the Judenzentrale of July and September called for the establishment of an international commission by the International Red Cross to see to it that the Jewish deportees in Transnistria be accorded at least minimum human rights and that they receive food, clothing, medical supplies and especially anti-typhus serum. They urged that the Red Cross, the Vatican and other such influential circles bring to bear sufficient pressure for the creation of such a commission. This commission, enjoying diplomatic immunity, they hoped, would be able to check the terror that was being waged by the Rumanian authorities against the deported Jews.

III

The desperate call for an international investigation commission remained unheeded. Instead, a Jewish commission appointed by the Judenzentrale was permitted to visit Transnistria in January 1943 and to make a survey of the Jewish situation. It was clear from the very beginning that this commission, composed of nominees of the gov-

ernment-controlled Judenzentrale, would not be free either in its investigation or in its conclusions. Nevertheless, the report presented by the commission is appallingly eloquent even in its more than cautious presentation.[11]

The commission arrived in Odessa on the evening of January 8, 1943 and was received the following day by Prof. Alexianu, the governor of Transnistria. The governor gave the commission detailed instructions regarding the execution of its task. He called to its attention that "all Transnistrian Jews must work according to order number 2927 and the more recent order number 23 and that all those not working are forbidden to receive relief of any kind or form, either in their new dwelling places or in old Rumania." The spokesman of the commission set forth in detail the working program which had been fixed by the president of the Judenzentrale together with the relief organization. He asked that the contacts of the commission should not be confined merely to the representatives of but a few Jewish communities out of the 101 localities where the deportees were permitted to settle. The governor designated four places which could be visited and he allowed the commission to meet in Mogilev and have conferences with the leaders of the more important communities of the district. The commission was also permitted to visit the government shop in the Odessa ghetto.

On the basis of a personal survey made in Odessa, Shmerinka, Crasna, and Mogilev and of statements by representatives of the Jewish committees of eleven other places who met on January 8th and 9th at a regional conference in Mogilev, the commission was able to compile an incomplete list of 32 Transnistria localities (out of a total of 101) where Jewish ghettos had been established. The total number of Jews in the above enumerated localities at that time was 83,839, of whom about 13,000 were local residents and the remaining 70,000 were deportees. The largest centers were Mogilev, with 15,000 Jews (of whom 3,000 were local residents), Bershad with 9,200 (2,250 local residents), Shargorod with 5,300 (1,800), Murafa with 4,500 (1,800), Cihrin with 4,050 (997), Shmerinka with 3,274 (1,200), Balta with 2,723 (70 percent local residents), Lucineti with 2,897, Copai-Gorod with 2,200, and so on; in Odessa, which before the war had a Jewish population of 175,000, the commission found only 54

[11] World Jewish Congress. Advisory Council on European Jewish Affairs, *The Situation of the Jews in Transnistria,* New York, December 30, 1943.

Jews, who were living in a ghetto located at 6 Adolf Hitler Street and were working in a governmental workshop.

In Crasna the deportees were quartered in the homes of the resident Jews, from 8 to 15 persons in a single room. In Balta the Jews lived crowded together, as many as 40 to 50 in a single room; 500 to 600 persons lived in four communal buildings, and 130 people were crowded together on a single farm. In Shmerinka those who were able to work were employed either by the Rumanian or the German military and civil authorities (lathe-turning, public works, railroads, water-system, etc.). The wages were 2 *Reichskasse-Kriegsscheine* for skilled work and 1 *Rkks* for unskilled work, paid either by the government authorities or by the firm which happened to be the employer. In the ten workshops of this colony there were shoemakers, tailors, cabinet makers, knitters, house painters, workers at wooden nails, tinsmiths, barbers, confectioners and soda water workers. Six governmental workshops were in operation in Crasna: tailoring, shoemaking, cabinet making, barber shops, tinsmith shops and mechanical workshops.

In Mogilev about 500 Jews were employed in iron works, an electric station and a nail factory; the work was conducted under the management of the Transnistria governmental authorities. All able-bodied Jews of Copai-Gorod were sent daily to work on street construction, house-wrecking, at the communal farms and for the district military command. Among them were many qualified workers and even some specialists, but they had no tools to work with and they received no pay.

In Lucineti, Jews also worked on street construction and other public utilities, with considerable amounts of back pay due to them. In Murafa, Jews were employed at various public utilities. Most of Debrecen's 200 Jews had worked in a local factory where they received maintenance, but at the time of the Commission's survey they were unemployed. In Balta, on the contrary, the entire able-bodied Jewish population was employed. There were 590 Jews employed in the felt factory and they got meals twice daily. The existing shops embraced the following trades: tailoring, shoemaking, watchmaking, hair cutting, glove making and soap production. They all were managed by the local Jewish community. The tailoring and shoemaking shops were almost without working tools since their 22 sewing machines were requisitioned for the felt factory. The Jewish workers on public

utilities received only about 16 percent of their wages and that was paid to them in food. Even worse in this respect was the situation in Obedovka, where the Jewish ghetto supplied workers for all the public utilities; none of them received any pay. In Bershad, where some of the work shops belonged to the Rumanian military command, the Jewish workers were paid no wages. In Cihrin, 500 out of the 4,050 Jews worked in the fields during the entire summer. They were to receive 20 carloads of grain for this work. All they got was but one carload.

Appalling details concerning the hygienic and medical conditions of the deportees are found scattered through the commission's report. When formulating its "conclusions," however, the commission sought to present the general picture in less gruesome colors. Speaking of "hospitals and polyclinics," the report concluded as follows: "Thanks to the relatively considerable shipments of medicines by the Relief Committee and to the presence of sufficient number of physicians, the health situation may be considered satisfactory, especially after last winter's catastrophe. In most of the places we have visited or about which we have data available, the mortality rate is almost normal." The vague reference to "last winter's catastrophe," however, is fraught with meaning.

The commission's conclusion as regards clothing was as follows: "It is urgent that abundant clothing of all sorts, from undershirts to overcoats and shoes, be sent. Shoes are particularly difficult to obtain. Having barely succeeded in saving their lives from last winter's scourge, weakened, undernourished and without clothes, the deportees still have a chance to preserve their health if they will be provided with clothing, medicines, food for themselves, the aged, the crippled and invalids. This will assume specific importance should the project of their employment at productive work be carried into effect."

The most tragic chapter in the story of the deported Jews of Transnistria concerns the plight of the orphans. The commission registered nearly 8,000 orphans, at least 5,000 of whom had lost both their parents. Some lived in orphanges, others were being brought up by local Jewish families. Even the condition of those who were taken care of, however, was appaling. Most of the 900 children in the three orphanages of Mogilev were without clothes; the commission found them all in bed, four to six in a single bed, "under hygienic conditions which leave much to be desired." In the "best organized colony" of

Shargorod, out of some 500 orphans, only 77 were fully maintained by the local Jewish committee, while 150 were partially maintained by it; the remaining 273 received no assistance at all. In Cihrin, there was no orphanage, although there were 279 orphans; 51 of them had neither parent, 155 had no father and 73 had no mother. Similar conditions pertained in Trepova, where there were 105 orphans. As a rule these children received no schooling. In Balta the elementary school was closed and the petition for its re-opening was denied.

In presenting their report the members of the commission were compelled to describe the terrible plight of the deportees and of the remaining resident Jewish population in very "moderate" and veiled terms. Much must be read between the lines of the report, which repeatedly alluded to the tragic situation of the Jews. By stressing the extraordinary number of orphans, the housing conditions under which as many as 50 people lived in one room, the numerous cases where children were forced to spend their days in bed for want of clothing, they gave sufficient implications of what the actual situation was like. Finally, the report constantly referred to the terrible "last year's winter" which had drastically reduced the number of the population.

IV

As was to be expected, the findings of the commission did not produce any tangible results. The situation in 1943 remained as desperate as it had been before. The wave of epidemics which had raged in 1941 and 1942 and had taken a heavy toll among the Transnistria deportees had, it is true, almost ceased in 1943; the acute mortality had subsided considerably and a confidential report of the International Red Cross, dated January 20, 1944, contains the surprising statement that "the number of births which had previously fallen to nil, increased exceedingly during 1943." Basically, however, the situation did not improve to any noticeable extent.

According to data from the archives of the Judenzentrale there were 77,214 Jewish deportees in Transnistria in March 1943. They were distributed as follows:[12]

[12] *Memento Statistic*, p. 120.

LOCALITY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
District of Mogilev	39,974	48.4
District of Balta	23,035	31.9
District of Jugastra	6,000	8.3
District of Golta	3,620	5.0
District of Tulcin	3,500	4.8
District of Ribnitsa	600	0.8
District of Berezovka	425	0.6
City of Odessa	60	0.2
TOTAL	77,214	100.0

Thus only a little more than one-third of the 200,000 Jews deported to Transnistria from Bessarabia, Bukovina and Old Rumania in 1941-42 survived by March 1943.

The condition of the survivors in 1943 was as desperate as it had been in 1942. Two reports from Bucharest, dated June 1943, describe the situation in Transnistria as follows: The situation has not changed appreciably. The price of foodstuffs is almost prohibitive. Promises by the government to supply food were carried out only to a very slight degree and did not include major items of food consumption. Jews who work are to receive, according to official regulations, wages in kind to the value of one to two marks per day, but actually they are seldom paid. When they are paid they do not get foodstuffs. Thus, for example, two Jewish communities in the district of Mogilev have as much as 240,000 marks coming to them as back pay. The canteens were closed down because the aid coming from the Jews in Rumania is insufficient for their maintenance. On top of all this the German authorities artificially boosted the cost of living. The normal exchange rate of the mark is 12-16 lei but the German authorities set the rate at 60 lei. The local authorities rule over the Jews in arbitrary fashion and even orders of the central government are not always carried out. The postal system functions very badly, especially in Mogilev, where there are 54 percent of all the deportees. All pleas to have these facilities improved were to no avail.

The second report describes the suffering of the deported Jews brought about by lack of food, clothing, medical supplies, etc. It is impossible for them to earn enough to maintain themselves because they are not permitted to work for wages. In larger centers like Mogilev it was possible to organize the group life so as to make conditions somewhat bearable, but in the smaller towns and villages the

situaion is desperate. Malnutrition and crowded living conditions have brought on a serious epidemic of dysentery. Most of the deportees go around almost naked because they exchanged their clothing for food. Parcels from Rumania stopped coming during the previous two months because the officials refused to grant the necessary permits. Boxes full of goods are held in Bucharest while the poor deportees in Transnistria suffer hunger and cold.

The report makes the following concrete proposals to improve the situation:

(1) The government should grant permission to send out the parcels already paid for by the Judenzentrale.
(2) A fixed exchange rate be set for the mark and lei.
(3) The deportees to be permitted to work and receive regular wages.
(4) The Jews to be concentrated in the larger cities so that relief can be administered more expeditiously.
(5) Members of families to be kept together.
(6) Canteens to be set up.
(7) The establishment of orphan asylums.
(8) Permission to maintain correspondence with friends and relatives in Rumania proper.

After outlining this very modest program, which did not even touch upon the basic fact of deportation to Transnistria, the report continues: "For all this we need the help of the Holy See and of the International Red Cross as well as the financial assistance of the Jews abroad, for with our own modest means we are unable to save the lives of the poor unfortunates in Transnistria." The report adds that all they were able to collect from their own resources was 130,000,000 lei, which was enough to provide only 3 lei per day per person.

This picture was fully substantiated by the few Jews who succeeded in emigrating from Transnistria to Palestine. In May 1944 *The New York Times* correspondent in Istanbul visited the ship *Belasitsa* with 152 Transnistria survivors on their way to Palestine. He reported that children and adults he spoke to told him that from October 1941, when they were deported to Transnistria, to their arrival in Bucharest, from where they proceeded to the ship, they had not tasted a piece of bread. Their meals, which were received only once every two or three days, consisted for the most part of thin barley or potato soup; those who were able to obtain potato peelings considered themselves

most fortunate. Elisabeth Kerstein, aged 11, said: "My parents died of hunger and cold, and so did my two older sisters."[13] Many of the survivors were hit by an epidemic of paralysis, including a type known as lathryism, affecting the legs, that came from eating harmful plants. According to a report published in July 1943, 207 persons were reported gravely ill with paralysis and 401 showed initial symptoms.[14]

A counterpiece to this systematic starvation is provided by accounts in German-language newspapers of south-eastern Europe late in October, upon the second anniversary of the fall of Odessa, after which event Transnistria passed into Rumanian administration. According to a Bucharest report to the Belgrade *Donauzeitung* (October 19, 1943), "Transnistria today not only supports its own population, but provides abundant surplus." The *Südostdeutsche Tageszeitung,* of Timisoara, on October 24, 1943, contained a long article entitled "The Rich Land across the Dniester," describing the wealth and fertility of the Transnistrian area, which was pictured as the richest granary in the world, next to the Mississippi Valley, and on a par with the Ukraine. In a long statistical account of its cereal and oil crops, its orchards and pasture land, its Californian fruits, its 130,000 *Volksdeutsche,* the author comes to the conclusion that Transnistria is "a virgin territory whose development is under way and that it has enormous possibilities for future exploitation." Already the area was supplying one-half of its products to the administration of the territory, the remainder being retained by the peasants for free marketing.

If the facts described in these accounts are true—and there is no reason to doubt their general accuracy—the systematic starvation of the Jews in Transnistria becomes an even more damning testimony against Rumanian administration. It was not before the beginning of 1944 that food from abroad, sent by the American Joint Distribution Committee[15] and the Jewish Agency for Palestine,[16] began to reach Transnistria and was distributed by representatives of the International Red Cross.

V

There are indications that in 1943 Transnistria began to serve as a kind of a "reservation" for deportation not only of Rumanian Jews,

[13] *The New York Times,* May 7, 1944.
[14] *The New York Post,* July 14, 1943.
[15] *JTA Bulletin,* December 20, 1943.
[16] *Ibid.,* January 16, 1944.

but of Jews from other Nazi-dominated countries. On February 28, 1943, the London press reported that thousands of Jews who had been transported from their homes in Germany, Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Protectorate to the "model concentration camp" at the fortress of Theresin in the Protectorate, were being sent to Transnistria.[17] Eight months later, reports from Bucharest stated that freight trains crowded with Jews deported from France, Holland and Belgium "continue to reach the city of Jassy en route to Transnistria," where they "are isolated in camps together with Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina."[18] Jews from Germany and Bulgaria, as well as 700 Polish Jews, were reported among the deportees in Mogilev.[19]

A confidential report of the International Red Cross, dated January 20, 1944, states that, according to official Rumanian statistics, there were on September 1, 1943, 82,098 Jews in Transnistria. Of this number, 50,741 were deported Rumanian Jews, while the remainder were Russian Jews, native inhabitants of this area. The Jews were distributed as follows: Mogilev, 44,552; Balta, 20,895; Yugastra, 6,892; Tulcin, 4,242; Golta, 3,063; Ananiev, 500; Breskova, 296; Dubossari, 230; Oczakov, 153; Odessa, 62; Tiraspol, 28. A small number of Jews were scattered over the whole area. Thus, of the some 200,000 Bessarabian and Bukovina Jews who had been deported to Transnistria, only 50,000 remained there two years later. About 150,000 either perished or were deported to German-occupied Poland.[20] There are reliable indications that considerable numbers of Jews from Transnistria were sent to work on fortifications along the German-held eastern front. The *Krakauer Zeitung* of August 13, 1942 hinted at this when it stated that the Jews deported to Transnistria "were housed in large ghettos until an opportunity arose for their removal further east." Simultaneously, the Rumanian Ministry of the Interior issued a regulation under which Jews charged with evading labor service or carrying on sabotage would be deported to occupied parts of Soviet Russia east of the Bug River (and not to Transnistria proper).[21] This seems to indicate that Transnistria was no longer to serve as a "reservation" for deported Rumanian Jews. An underground report of 1943 stated that "the Rumanians are now lend-

[17] *Ibid.*, March 1, 1943.
[18] *Ibid.*, November 1, 1943.
[19] *Ibid.*, July 23, 1943.
[20] *Davar*, January 28, 1944.
[21] *The Jewish Standard*, August 14, 1942.

ing many of the deported Jews to the Nazi military authorities for forced labor in the German-administered part of the Ukraine. These Jews are grouped in special formations and sent to build roads under Nazi supervision in the devastated districts of the Ukraine. . . . The first transport included 3,500 Jews from Shmerinka and 500 Jews from Mogilev who were dispatched in units to various Nazi-occupied places near the front."[22]

The Antonescu government apparently had no precise information on the actual number of Jews in Transnistria. Very instructive in this respect are the minutes of the meeting of the Rumanian cabinet which took place on November 17, 1943. Marshal Antonescu opened the discussion of the Jewish situation with a statement that "according to the latest statistics, there are in Transnistria over 50,000 Jews." General Vasiliu added: "There are 10,000 more from Dorohoi, *i.e.,* a total of 60,000." Marshal Antonescu corrected himself: "I think, there are 70 to 80 thousand," and commented: "But if there are only so few, that means that they are dying at too fast a pace." General Vasiliu then intervened once again and said: "There must be some mistake. We have consulted Colonel Radulescu who carried out a census; there are now just 61,000 Jews in Transnistria."

VI

There were various reports that indicated that single groups of Jewish Transnistria deportees, following the example of the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto, revolted against their German and Rumanian oppressors. In July 1943 a ONA dispatch from "somewhere in Europe" told the story of one thousand Jews from the ghetto of Mogilev who were "requisitioned" by German engineers for road building and who desperately resisted maltreatment by the Nazi guards; "both sides had casualties."[23] Another revolt occurred on September 25th, when the Rumanian authorities, anticipating the necessity of retreat before the onrushing Soviet troops, began to evacuate the Jewish concentration camps. The Jews, suspecting that this evacuation meant deportation to extermination centers in Poland, resisted with arms smuggled into the camps for just such an eventuality. Many on both sides were killed and wounded before the Rumanian troops overpowered Jewish resistance. "The fate of the Jewish survivors is

[22] *Ibid.,* July 30, 1943.
[23] *The New York Post,* July 7, 1943.

unknown," stated a report which reached London a month later via Turkey.[24] According to information disclosed considerably later in Moscow, armed Jewish insurrections took place in the towns of Smotrichi, Gusiatin, Staraya Ushitsa and Dunayevtsy.[25]

In the fall of 1943 the relentless advance of the Soviet troops forced the German-Rumanian armies to abandon considerable areas of occupied Soviet Ukraine. The situation of the Jews became exceedingly dangerous since it became known that the German command intended to murder all the Jews in localities from which they had to withdraw. Antonescu was apparently scared by this prospect. Anticipating the defeat of the Axis, he was anxious not to be made responsible for the final extermination of the Transnistria deportees. The minutes of the meeting of the Rumanian cabinet which took place on November 17, 1943 give evidence of his eagerness to prevent this German move. During the course of this meeting Antonescu indicated several times that he was opposed to the German plan to exterminate all the remaining Jews in Transnistria and he ordered General Vasiliu to present this view to the Germans in no uncertain terms.

Apparently in order to prevent the massacre of the remaining Jews by the Germans, Antonescu devised the rather fantastic plan to concentrate all the Jewish deportees of Transnistria in the town of Vijnita (Vizhnits) in order to save them from extermination by the retreating Germans and to organize anew their existence. He made the realization of this scheme dependent upon the provision that the food, clothing and other necessities for the Jewish deportees would be supplied by the Jews of Rumania and by Jews abroad. But he would not allow the Jews to go beyond Vijnita. "If ill-fortune will force us to retreat from Vijnita," declared Antonescu, "they will have to remain there. I will not allow them to take one step further into the interior of the country." When General Vasiliu pointed out to the Marshal that Vijnita was too small a place to accommodate some 60,000 Jews, Antonescu agreed to permit the Jews deported from Bessarabia and Bukovina to return to their original homes. The entire discussion took place in an atmosphere of chaotic disorganization.

The discussion at the cabinet meeting apparently led to no tangible results. It did, however, reflect the thoughts which began to pre-

[24] *Independent Jewish Press Service,* October 25, 1943.
[25] *JTA Bulletin,* February 7, 1945.

vail among the leaders of Axis Rumania. Sensing the shadow of defeat, they suddenly became concerned with the plight of the remnants of the Transnistria deportees. A few weeks after this cabinet meeting the Swedish press reported the surprising news that the Antonescu government has concluded a kind of a "compensation agreement" with the Judenzentrale in Bucharest, of which the main provisions were as follows:

(1) The government will have ten transport trucks available daily for repatriating the Jews.

(2) Within three days of his arrival every repatriated Jew must apply for an identity card and be assigned for labor in public works.

(3) The government guarantees returning Jews personal security.

(4) The Judenzentrale must pay for a third-class ticket for every repatriated Jew and must advance the money which each Jew is taxed for an identity card; the price per card was set at a minimum of 70,000 and a maximum of 800,000 lei. The Judenzentrale must also clothe every returning Jew before he leaves for home.[26]

These arrangements attracted world-wide attention and aroused far-reaching hopes. But very soon it became clear that the possibly well-meant but half-hearted efforts to repatriate remnants of Transnistria Jews had come to nought. Details about the agreement which the Rumanian government reached with the Judenzentrale failed to indicate a serious attitude on the part of the government towards this undertaking and were completely inadequate for rescuing even a small part of the Transnistria deportees.

Some limited attempts for repatriation from Transnistria nevertheless were made. The International Red Cross reported on January 20, 1944 that the Rumanian government was prepared to permit 6,500 Jews originating from Dorohoi in Bukovina to return to Rumania, and that their repatriation had actually begun on December 20, 1943. According to this report, 4,400 orphans who lost both parents were also scheduled for repatriation.

In February 1944 a London dispatch disclosed that, according to neutral sources, the Rumanian government had communicated to United Nations officials that it was prepared to release all Transnistrian Jews, to bring them first to Bucharest where they would be

[26] *Dagens Nyheter,* January 2, 1944; *Stockholms-Tidningen,* January 2, 1944; *Aftontidningen,* January 13, 1944.

accommodated in specially designated buildings, and then to co-operate in transferring them to any refuge selected by the Allies, on Rumanian ships, which would be permitted to display the insignia of the Vatican to insure safe passage. The Rumanian government intimated that shipment to Palestine would be most convenient and that it would levy a tax of some 200 lei on each refugee "to cover traveling expenses." Allied observers saw in this offer evidence that the Antonescu government was no longer confident of an Axis victory and was trying slowly to work into the United Nations' good graces.[27] On the other hand, the Allies were not very eager to receive tens of thousands of new Jewish refugees; the British government clearly refused to permit their entry into Palestine. The Rumanian offer—even if it was meant seriously—remained unheeded.

Two months later the War Refugee Board, created by President Roosevelt, surprisingly announced that "more than 40,000 Jews interned by the Rumanians in Transnistria have been removed to comparative safety out of the way of retreating Nazi armies because of the pressure exerted by the War Refugee Board." The announcement stated that the International and the Rumanian Red Cross were instrumental in this transferring of Transnistria deportees to "an undisclosed port of Rumania." The War Refugee Board admitted that "their safety and comfort at present is not of the best," but was confident that "as many as possible will be sent to Turkey and then to Palestine."[28]

This confidence proved to be unfounded. Only 300 Transnistria refugees entered Palestine in March 1944, followed in April by additional 904.[29] On the other hand, many "repatriated" Jews were redrafted for forced labor, so that even the "comparative safety" proved to be rather imaginary.[30] Finally, the number of 40,000 "repatriated" Jews was obviously an overstatement. Several months later, when the Antonescu regime collapsed, the total number of Transnistria Jewish repatriates in Rumania were reliably estimated at between 15,000 and 17,000.

A considerable number of Rumanian Jews remained in Transnistria when this area was reconquered by Soviet troops. After the establishment of a pro-Allied government headed by General Sa-

[27] *The New York Times,* February 13, 1944.
[28] *The New York Herald-Tribune,* April 12, 1944.
[29] *Ibid.; The New York Times,* May 7, 1944.
[30] *Independent Jewish Press Service,* June 2, 1944.

tanescu, they were given the right to return to Rumania. By the end of December 1944, 564 Jewish families, totalling 2,000 persons, decided to do so.[31] Simultaneously, a Jewish delegation, headed by Dr. Filderman, visited General Sergei Vinogradov, chief of the Russian Armistice Commission in Rumania, and submitted to him a memorandum requesting that 9,000 Rumanian Jews who at that time were still in Transnistria be repatriated by the Soviet authorities to their home towns in Rumania. It is obvious that the 9,000 in question were deportees from south Bukovina or old Rumania; Jews deported to Transnistria from north Bukovina and Bessarabia were considered as Soviet citizens.

In February 1945 the Rumanian section of the World Jewish Congress was informed by Colonel Borisov and Colonel Gusev of the Inter-Allied Control Commission that the problem of return to Rumania of Jews from southern Bukovina deported under the former regime to Soviet Ukraine and Transnistria was definitely resolved by the Soviet authorities. The Soviet government approved the plans for the repatriation of the Jews to old Rumania as well as to south Bukovina. Commissions for reception and first aid were to be established at the Rumanian frontier with the participation of representatives of Jewish organizations approved by the Rumanian Commission for the Implementing of the Armistice. Repatriation started early in March.[32]

About 15,000 Bukovina Jews were repatriated in the spring and 5,000 in the fall of 1945; some 15,000 followed in the spring of 1946. An estimated total of 40,000 survivors of the Transnistria reservation found their way back to Rumania.[33]

[31] Bucharest Radio, December 23, 1944.
[32] Bucharest Radio, March 2, 1945.
[33] Report of the Relief Organization for the Bukovina Repatriates.

THE LAST DAYS OF GERMAN JEWRY IN THE THIRD REICH*

By BRUNO BLAU

When the brown-shirted cohorts marched through the streets, after Hitler assumed power, singing,

> Wenn vom Messer spritzt das Judenblut,
> Dann geht's noch mal so gut

no spectator could imagine that even a section of the German people could become so brutalized as to carry out that threat. The last to expect it were the German Jews. They had been accustomed to hear the explanations of the antisemitic mobsters, when hauled into court, that such words were only intended as "figures of speech." Unfortunately, subsequent events demonstrated that the words were meant in dead earnest.

I

In order to impress upon the German people the reality of the "Jewish peril" the Nazis claimed that there were one and one-half million Jews and half-Jews in Germany. This was a gross distortion and exaggeration of the facts. In June 1933, soon after Hitler became chancellor, the count of Jews by religion within the borders of the Reich showed that there were 499,682 Jews. To these were added in 1935, 3,117 Jews of the Saar, making a total of 502,799 Jews, or 0.77 percent of the total population. By 1939, when the next census was taken, the number of Jews by religion dropped to 213,930 (not

* The statistical material contained in this article is derived from a still unpublished work by the author prepared at the request of the Yivo, "The Development of the Jewish Population in Germany from the Beginning of the 19th Century till 1945." The section dealing with anti-Jewish legislation is based on my work *Das Ausnahmerecht für die Juden in den europäischen Ländern, 1933-1945*, I. Teil: Deutschland (New York 1952). The article as a whole is based on materials available in the Yivo archives, on notes prepared for a larger work and on personal experience.

counting Austria and the Sudetenland), or 0.32 percent of the total population. To these were added 19,716 Jews by birth but not by religion, 52,005 individuals with two Jewish grandparents and 32,669 persons with one Jewish grandparent, giving a total of 318,320 persons classed as Jews according to the Nürnberg laws. The general notion that Jews were concentrated in the large cities was also a gross exaggeration. In 1939 there were only 24 cities in Germany in which there were more than 1,000 Jews. Of these cities, Frankfurt am Main had 2.46 percent Jews; Breslau, 1.66 percent; Berlin, 1.07 percent; Munich, 1.03 percent; and Cologne, 1.01 percent.

During the first six years of the Nazi regime the number of Jews by religion in Germany decreased by 289,000 (57.4 percent). The surplus of deaths over births accounted for about 34,000, and conversions for about 3,500. The greatest decrease in numbers came through emigration. By 1939 emigration had practically ceased. The following figures on the number of Jews for the period after 1939 were compiled by the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland at the request of the Gestapo.

May 1, 1941	168,972
October 1, 1941	163,696
January 1, 1942	131,828
January 1, 1943	51,257
April 1, 1943	31,807
September 1, 1944	14,574

If we add to the above figures the small number of Jews who remained in hiding and those who returned from concentration camps after the war, we arrive at a total of 19,000 to 20,000 German Jews who were left in Germany after the close of hostilities in 1945. For a more correct comparison with the figures for 1944, we should add to the original figures given for 1933 the persons of Jewish "race" but not of the Jewish faith. This would give us a total of about 540,000 Jews in Germany in 1933 and would mean a loss of about 520,000 or 96.4 percent of the original Jewish population over a period of eleven years. Of this number 317,000 Jews emigrated from Germany, 135,000 were deported and 68,000 died a natural death.

The figures cited by the Nazis to prove the alleged domination by Jews of certain professions were also grossly exaggerated. The occupational census taken in 1933 gave the following data for Jewish professionals:

Profession	No. of Jews	Percent. of total no. in country
Academic Instruction	192	2.64
Judges and Public Prosecutors	286	2.76
Lawyers and Notaries	3,030	16.25
Physicians	5,537	10.88
Dentists	1,041	8.59
Pharmacists	657	3.61
Editors and Writers	872	5.05
Theatrical Producers and Managers	60	5.61
Musicians	1,915	2.04
Dancers, Actors, Artists	703	2.97

As a result of the measures taken by the Nazi authorities the occupational structure of the German Jews was completely transformed between 1933 and 1939. This is shown by the following table:

Occupation	Percentage of Jews Employed, 1933	Percentage of Jews Employed, 1939
Agriculture and Forestry	1.7	8.9
Industry and Crafts	23.1	33.8
Commerce and Communication	61.3	18.9
Public and Private Services	12.5	25.3
Domestic Service	1.4	13.1

Over two-thirds of the Jews who had been engaged in commerce in 1933 (61.3 percent) disappeared by 1939. On the other hand, the number of independent employables without profession rose from 16 percent to 75.8 percent. There was a similar transformation in the social structure.

Occupational Status	Percentage of Jews Employed, 1933	Percentage of Jews Employed, 1939
Independent	46.8	15.7
Helping Family Members	9.7	3.4
White Collar Workers	33.9	23.9
Manual Workers	8.8	56.4

As may be seen, most of the Jews of independent status as well as a portion of the white collar workers became manual workers.

II

The beginnings of the physical annihilation of the Jewish population in Germany found its first expression in the 10th decree of the Law of Citizenship of July 4, 1939. Under this innocuous-sounding title was concealed the setting up of the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland, which was designed for the purpose of the self-liquidation of the Jewish community in Germany and the acceleration of the emigration of its members. The Reichsvereinigung took over the functions of the Zentralstelle für die jüdische Auswanderung, previously created by the Gestapo, and of the old Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden. After the pogroms of November 1938 a large section of German Jewry was seized with panic. The majority of them were ready to flee to any country for which they could secure a visa. They did not give much thought to economic conditions in the new land or to the opportunities for establishing a new life in that land. The only thing that mattered was to get out of Germany. Despite all efforts, however, a large number of German Jews were not able to emigrate and were forced to remain in Germany. When the war broke out transportation difficulties made emigration almost impossible and only Jews of certain ages were permitted to leave. At the end of 1941 the Reichsfuehrer of the S.S. prohibited the emigration of Jews entirely.

Deportation now took the place of emigration and it was given the euphemistic designation *"Abwanderung"* by the Gestapo. Fear of deportation drove thousands to suicide. During the years of most active deportation (1942-1943) about one-quarter of the deaths among the Jews in Berlin were due to suicide. The first deportation took place on the night between February 12th and 13th of 1940 in the city and administrative district of Stettin. About 1,000 persons were deported to Piaski, near Lublin. On March 12, 1940 a small transport of 160 Jews from Schneidemühl arrived there. On October 22 about 6,500 Jews from Baden and the Palatinate were deported to southern France, mainly to Gurs. These were actions of a local character.

On October 16, 1941 the general deportations from the whole Reich began and they continued until April 4, 1945. There were still 164,000 Jews in Germany when the deportations started. The transports went to Lodz, Warsaw, Lublin, Riga and Minsk. Later they went mainly to Auschwitz and to unknown places. Towards the end the deportees were sent to concentration camps in Germany. Most of the

deportees were killed, or rather gassed, in the course of the journey. Others were subjected to long torture before they perished.

In July 1942 transports were still arriving at Theresienstadt, which was a concentration camp for privileged Jews, distinguished veterans of World War I, Jews married to non-Jews whose spouses had died or divorced them, prominent leaders of the community and sick old people. It was assumed in Germany that conditions in Theresienstadt were comparatively better than in other camps and that its inmates had some hope of survival. It was not known that for many Theresienstadt was merely a midway stop to Auschwitz. There were 42,103 people who arrived in Theresienstadt from the Reich and only 5,639, that is, 13.4 percent, remained alive. Of this number 5,120 were liberated at the close of the war and 519 had been brought to Switzerland on February 5, 1945. Thus, 36,464 persons either died in Theresienstadt by natural death or were taken to Auschwitz, Birkenau, Lublin, or other such places where almost all perished. We do not know how many of the 36,464 were sent out of Theresienstadt.

Those who were deported to Theresienstadt had to sign a contract (known as *Heimeinkaufsvertrag*) with the Union of German Jews according to which they turned over to the latter all their possessions and in return were to be fed and maintained in Theresienstadt for the duration of their lives. The sum total of all these contracts amounted to 125 million marks, of which 110 million were actually paid in by the middle of July 1944.

The transfer to Switzerland in 1945 of a small number of Jews from Theresienstadt came about in the following manner. Jean-Mary Muesy, recently deceased member of the Swiss parliament, endeavored to effect the release of Jews from the concentration camps. Himmler was willing to consider it on condition that ransom money be paid to the International Red Cross. The money was provided by American Jewish organizations. Part of the money, five million Swiss francs, was to be applied to aid needy Germans. According to Himmler's figures, there were at that time 60,000 Jews in all the concentration camps in Germany and occupied territories. Himmler's consultant, Gehrig, stipulated that the released Jews proceed on foot to Bavaria and south Tyrol, from where they would be transported further. In reply to Muesy's query, Kaltenbrunner, the Chief of the Reich Security Office, explained that in a long march like that about 40 percent of the persons involved would perish. Muesy then broke off the negotiations.

Himmler then demanded assurances from the Allies that they would not shoot any of the camp guards who might fall into their hands unless they were guilty of definite crimes. Muesy brought such assurances and the first transport left by train on February 5, 1945. It was also the last transport. The Jews in Theresienstadt suspected a trap and refused to enter the trains, fearing they would be taken to a place of extermination. When Himmler learned this he forbade all further transports to Switzerland.

In principle all Jews who were still in the Reich were to be deported. Exceptions were made only in the cases of Jews married to non-Jews, so long as the marriage was still legally valid and practiced, or if the couple had a child who was brought up as a non-Jew and lived with his Jewish parent, or in the case of so-called *"Geltungsjuden,"* that is, offspring of mixed marriages who for some reason or other passed as Jews. Special exemption also applied to Jews who were indispensible in their jobs, such as hospital personnel or employees of the assembly camp in Berlin; also for Jews exchanged for Palestine Germans or such who for special reasons had been promised that they would be spared. Such promises were not always kept.

Several deportation actions deserve special mention. On October 20, 1942 a large number of officials of the Jewish community in Berlin were designated for deportation. Some failed to report and could not be found. In reprisal four leading officials of the Jewish community and four of the Union were arrested on November 9 and executed on December 2. Among the victims was Dr. Fritz Lamm, for many years the head of the community's welfare activities.

On February 27, 1943 the so-called "factory action" took place all over the country. This was the day of the tenth anniversary of the Reichstag fire and in commemoration of that event about 10,000 Jews (7,000 in Berlin) were dragged out of the factories in which they worked and were deported. They were not even given an opportunity to go home to take along a few necessary articles.

On the same day Jews who had non-Jewish wives were arrested and placed in the administrative building of the Jewish community. The wives of the arrested persons gathered in front of the building every morning to demand the release of their husbands. Despite the police who harassed them they persisted in their demonstrations until the men were released.

On June 16, 1943, 200 patients of the Jewish hospital in Berlin

were deported to Theresienstadt. Many were carried out on stretchers and mattresses. Somewhat later, on November 22, 1943, all mental patients who had been brought from all over Germany to Berlin were deported to Theresienstadt. This time those who had non-Jewish wives or husbands were also sent away. The authorities then stated that this was not a matter of deportation but merely of transferring people from one institution to another. Some did in fact return from Theresienstadt.

Sometimes it was possible for a Jew to buy his exemption from deportation. That required huge sums of money, as may be seen from the following case. A German shoe manufacturer by the name of Haynitz who lived in Guatemala decided to return to Germany. But he first wished to sell his business in Guatemala and asked the German government to help him carry out his plan. The government turned the matter over to the banking firm of Samland & Co. in Berlin. Some twelve to fifteen well-to-do Jews were found who were willing to buy the factory in partnership on condition that they be allowed to leave Germany. Each of them deposited the sum of 200,000 marks plus traveling expenses and other costs. In this manner, a considerable sum was raised, amounting to several million marks. Haynitz, however, received only a small part of this sum. The partners managed to leave Germany in time to escape deportation.

May 27, 1942 was a black day in the history of the Jews under Hitler. On that day 500 Jews were suddenly arrested in Berlin, Vienna and Prague. On the face of it, the arrest was in connection with the attempt made against the life of Reinhard Heydrich, Reichsprotector of Bohemia and Moravia. Since it was quite clear who the attackers were and the circle to which they belonged, this incident could not be used as the pretext for the arrest. An exhibition took place that day in Berlin called "This is the Soviet Paradise," which purported to give a realistic picture of life in Russia under Soviet rule. When a fire broke out at the exhibition the Jews were blamed for it. Several members of the Union of German Jews and of the Berlin Jewish Community were called in to the office of the Security Police and given to understand that 500 Jews had been arrested for the Berlin fire, that 250 of them had already been executed and the other 250 were being sent to a concentration camp.

The closer the Third Reich approached its end the more dangerous became the position of the Jews still left there. It was feared that at

the moment the Nazis realized that their game was up they would carry out a final massacre of all the Jews. That fear was not without foundation, as was later learned from a Gestapo official arrested by the Russians. But the defeat came too quickly. Only a few individual Jews were dragged out of their homes by the S. S. and killed while the final battle was raging in the streets of Berlin.

In the middle of April 1945 the Gestapo ordered the destruction of all documents which pertained to the deportation of Jews. The documents of the trials for "race defilement" in the Berlin courts were also burned. All deportations from Berlin had ceased on March 25, 1945. But a transport left Hamburg on April 4. On April 18 some of the spies engaged by the Gestapo to apprehend Jews fled from Berlin. A few days later the other officers of the Gestapo left. This was a good omen for the Jews.

On April 21, when the bombardment of Berlin commenced, there were about 800 Jews in the Jewish hospital (patients, physicians, attendants, members of the staff of the Union of German Jews, internees, fugitives and survivors from the Old Folks Home and orphans). On that day the people were taken down to the cellar, as it was dangerous to remain above. They lived there for fourteen days, without heat, without light, and without the most elementary sanitary installations. The hospital area was particularly dangerous. It was full of barricades containing nests of resistance and remnants of the military forces who put up a stubborn defense. On the other side, the Russians placed cannon behind the hospital, one of the guns in the very entrance to the main building. In this way 800 Jews lived through the last days of Nazi Berlin. When they came out into the open the Nazi nightmare was over. Thus ended the most tragic period in the history of the Jews of Germany.

THE LIQUIDATION OF THE JEWS OF MARCINKONIS

A Collective Report

By L. KONIUCHOWSKY

Editors' note: Thousands of eye-witness reports by survivors of the Jewish catastrophe have been collected since the end of World War II. Most such reports were gathered by "historical commissions" established by Jewish communities immediately after liberation. Some were also made before judicial tribunals and other non-Jewish institutions. The largest collection of such eye-witness accounts made by a private individual is that of Leyb Koniuchowsky. His collection was made in Lithuania and among the Jews in the D.P. centers in Germany and Austria. The reports were set down faithfully, and the facts, names and dates were properly checked by comparing all the testimony pertaining to a given community. Every witness was characterized and described, every report certified by the witnesses and by the camp administration. The records include photographs of the witnesses and topographical sketches and maps of the locations involved. Thus we have detailed reports by about 153 individuals and groups. Most of the testimony is collective. The whole collection covers 1,683 written pages (folio size), with 157 certified photographs of persons, mass-graves, monuments and statues, and 13 topographical maps and charts. It provides an account of the catastrophe in 171 Jewish communities within the 1941 boundaries of Lithuania. Kovno and the whole region of Vilna (except the district of Swiencian) are not included.

The testimony regarding the town of Marcinkonis is part of this collection and covers about 70 written pages. We have selected a number of excerpts from this record, which deal with Jewish resistance as it took place in the ghetto, during one of the Nazi liquidation actions and in the forests. Each page of the manuscript is stamped "Committee of Liberated Jews, Sedan Camp, Ulm/Danube" and bears the signatures of the witnesses. We have followed faithfully the original text of the documents, except for minor changes in style, spelling and punctuation.

THE WITNESSES

1. *Shloyme Peretz,* born in Marcinkonis on January 10, 1907. At the outbreak of the war between Hitler Germany and the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, he lived in Marcinkonis. Education, public school; occupation, merchant. Father's name, Abraham; mother, Shifre.

2. *Leyb Kobrovsky,* born in Marcinkonis on January 18, 1914. At the outbreak of the war on June 22, 1941, he lived in Marcinkonis. Education, public school. Father's name, Abraham; mother, Khaye, Abraham's first wife.

3. *Khayim Kobrovsky,* born October 15, 1922 in Marcinkonis. At the outbreak of the war on June 22, 1941, he lived in Marcinkonis. Education, Polish public school. Father's name, Abraham; mother, Perl Aizenshtat, Abraham Kobrovsky's second wife.

4. *Khane Gorfing,* née Kobrovsky, born October 1, 1912. Graduated from Polish public school. Father's name, Abraham; mother, Khaye, Abraham's first wife.

Leib, Khayim and Khane are brothers and sister.

BEFORE THE WAR, JUNE 22, 1941

Geographic Location of the Town

Marcinkonis, a railway station between Grodno and Vilna, two stations before Grodno. Distance between Marcinkonis and Merecz, 21 kilometers; to Aran 20 km. The town is situated on the small stream, Grudi. Up to the collapse of the Polish state in 1939, the town was within the borders of Poland. When the Red Army in the fall of 1939 occupied Vilna and its environs, the town was given to Lithuania.

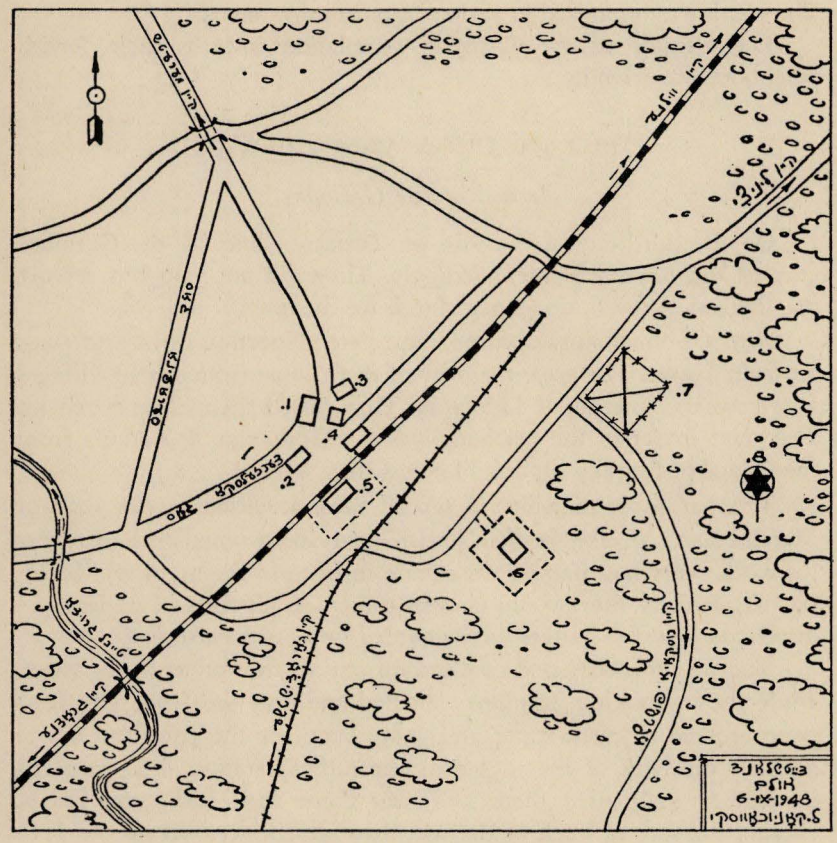
The town of Marcinkonis was inhabited mostly by Poles and Jews. The surrounding villages were inhabited mostly by Lithuanians and only a few Poles.

Jewish Population

Three hundred and seventy Jews lived in Marcinkonis when the war broke out on June 22, 1941. This number included men, women and children. The majority of the Jewish population was engaged in commerce, petty trade and handicrafts. The larger Jewish enterprises included: (1) a sawmill and a flour mill belonging to Shloyme Kaplan; (2) a small mushroom factory belonging to the partners Leyzer Rushanski and Yaskulko (who came from Bialystok); (3) a mushroom factory belonging to Abraham Kobrovsky.

There were in Marcinkonis large Jewish lumber merchants and shopkeepers. By and large, the economic life of the Jews was prosperous.

The town had a Hebrew elementary school (Tarbuth) of six grades; a Yiddish and Hebrew library, a *beys-medresh.* Jewish chil-



A TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF MARCINKONIS

Prepared with the assistance of the witnesses and according to the *Deutsche Heereskarte,* 3d ed., N35.

1. Municipal Building
2. Culture Center
3. *Bes-medresh*
4. Post office
5. Railroad depot
6. Kaplan's sawmill
7. The Ghetto
8. Mass grave

Railroad line
Railroad branch line
Forest
Highways and streets

dren from nearby communities came to the school in Marcinkonis. The youth was organized in various Zionist movements.

The attitude of the Christian population towards their Jewish neighbors was friendly.

AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

Arrival of the Germans

On the third day of the war, on Tuesday, June 24, the Germans entered the town without a struggle. They did not stop but rapidly marched on. A few Jews managed to leave the town.

Armed Lithuanians appeared immediately, sporting white armbands on their sleeves. The great majority of them came from nearby villages and from the interior of Lithuania. They called themselves partisans. The chief leader of the partisans was the Lithuanian J. Žuraula from the village of Roduky, eight kilometers from Merecz.

The partisans immediately turned their attention to the Jews of Marcinkonis. All able-bodied Jewish men and women had to report for work every morning on the square in front of the municipal building. From there they would be sent out to do all sorts of useless and dirty jobs. Jewish laborers were guarded by armed partisans.

The first job consisted of cleaning out all the toilets in the town, while the on-looking partisans ridiculed and beat the Jews. The Jews were ordered to carry water and chop wood for the partisans and to peel off the bark of the logs near the railway station. The partisans incessantly maltreated them and beat them with sticks and lashes. During the second week of the war they mercilessly beat up the Jewish merchant Yokhl Kaplan and three other Jews. The Jews received neither pay nor food for their work. After a day's hard labor, accompanied by blows and insults, the Jews would return to their homes before dark.

Oppressive Measures and Insults

On Thursday July 3, 1941 the partisans drove out of their homes *shohet* David Leyb Shereshevsky, Raphael Lubotzky, Khayim Yitzkhok Berman and Shimen Latz, all four orthodox Jews. The partisans forced the four Jews to drive a large pig through the streets of the town. Two Jews were made to hold the animal by its ears, one had to hold it by its tail and the fourth Jew had to drive it on with a bread shovel. With

bowed heads the four Jews were forced to carry out the orders of the partisans, who regaled themselves with laughter. The townspeople accompanied the "spectacle" with cries of joy and applauded as at a circus.

On the following day, Friday, July 4, the partisans gathered up all the portraits of the Soviet leaders found in the town. They drove all the young people out of their houses and lined them up in a row. Then the partisans addressed the young Jews as follows: "You used to enjoy and kiss the portraits of Soviet leaders. Now you shall gouge out their eyes and lick the dirt from them." The portraits had been dipped in toilets and smeared. The partisans whipped every young Jew who hesitated to kiss the portraits covered with excrement.

The young girl Beyle Pugachevsky was so brutally beaten up that she fainted. The "spectacle" was attended by peasants who gathered from the nearby villages and hamlets and all laughed uproariously at the "ingenious" schemes of the partisans. For several weeks peasants from the surrounding villages would come into town to "enjoy" themselves watching the humiliation of the Jews.

The *shohet* David Leyb Shereshevsky was once harnessed to a cart and made to draw it through the streets. At the same time the partisans lashed him with their whips.

Moyshe Kobrovsky, a respected member of the community, was arrested by the partisans. Ježukevićius, one of the partisans, accused Kobrovsky of communism and threw him into jail. The partisan also accused the Jew of having torn off the stripes from Lithuanian officers when the Red Army entered Vilna. Moyshe was brutally beaten up. His relatives then succeeded in ransoming him from prison.

At the same time the partisans arrested the brothers Berl and Moyshe Sosnovich and the Jewish whig-maker David Podberesky. Berl was brutally beaten and released. Moyshe Sosnovich and David Podberesky were beaten brutally in the prison every day. One day both Jews were driven out about two hundred meters from the railway station, on the way to Druskieniki. In a grove near a stream the partisans shot both Jews to death. Jews from the town were forced to bury the two on the spot where they had been killed. Those were the first two Jewish martyrs in the town of Marcinkonis.

On July 14, 1941 the chief of the Lithuanian division of the German Gestapo, Antanos Ježukevičius, a university student, the secretary Gaidys and others issued various decrees and regulations against the

Jews: (1) Jews were to bring all their cows, bicycles, machines and food stocks to the municipal office; (2) Jews were not to converse with Christians and were to put on yellow stars of David on their shoulders and chest; (3) Jews were barred from all places of amusement; (4) between 7 P.M. and 5 A.M. Jews were not to leave their homes. Anyone violating these regulations was threatened with shooting. On one occasion the partisans detained the Jews Peretz Bloch, David Gudovsky, Lozer Rozenlud and others and held them until it was past 7 P.M. The Jews were taken to prison were they were subjected to beatings and torture all night long, so that they had to stay in bed for several days. There were quite a number of such cases. On the day after the decrees were issued, on July 15, all the Jews in Marcinkonis, men, women and children, had to report to the town hall. The commander of the partisans, Žuraula, Gaidys and a few others inspected the yellow stars of David of the Jews to see that they were sewn on properly. Whoever, in their opinion, had not carried out this regulation properly was brutally beaten and lashed.

Looting and Indemnities

During the first weeks of the war, Germans, accompanied and directed by partisans, would go through Jewish homes and plunder the possessions of the Jews.

One day Antanos Ježukevičius and two Germans came to the house of Khane Gorfing and they gave her two hours time to secure cloth for twelve pairs of trousers. The material for all twelve pairs was to be of the same kind. Khane tried to beg off, explaining that it was impossible for her to carry out the order. She opened the closet and asked them to take all its contents and release her from the impossible assignment. But the Lithuanian assured the Germans that Khane was in a position to secure the cloth. The Germans threatened to shoot her and her whole family if their demand was not met. Thanks to the assistance of friends, Khane succeeded in filling the quota on time. There were many similar requisitions made to the Jews by Germans and Lithuanians.

Apart from these requisitions there were many cases of plain robbery. Any Lithuanian partisan and any German could take from the helpless Jews whatever he wanted.

In the beginning of September a new partisan commander came to Marcinkonis in place of Žuraula. He came from the interior of

Lithuania. On Saturday, September 13 he called to his office the brothers Khonen and Ahron Kobrovsky and ordered them to collect from the Jews all their money, gold, silver and other valuables and deliver them all to him at a specified time. He warned the two brothers that the fate of the Jews was in his hands and that it depended on the manner in which his order would be carried out. Balancing his hands up and down, he said the fate of the Jews was in them as in a pair of scales. The brothers promised to endeavor to carry out his order.

Reluctantly the Jews gave up a part of their valuables. When the two brothers brought the loot to the commandant and laid it out on the table, he became incensed and threw everything on the floor. He warned that if by Sunday, September 14, his request was not properly complied with, he would do what he thought necessary. The collected indemnity he considered insufficient. But he did not name any definite amount.

The two Kobrovsky brothers then called a meeting of the Jews in town in the home of Yeshue Berezovsky. There it was decided to raise more money and valuables. Every family was assigned a definite quota for the indemnity. The Jews sensed the seriousness of the situation and everyone gave according to his means, as decided at the meeting.

The collected sum was brought to the commandant of the partisans. This time he agreed to accept the proffered sum and was pacified for awhile. While the Jews were collecting the gold, money and valuables, they learned that the peasants of three villages had received orders from the county office not to leave their villages for three days and stand by with their horses and carts.

The Town of Marcinkonis Is Detached from Lithuania

The town of Marcinkonis was at this time situated on the border between Lithuania and White Russia. A dispute arose over the town. The Lithuanians tried hard to have it assigned to the Alita district in Lithuania, while the White Russians in Grodno sought to have it become part of the Grodno district. The Lithuanians sought before anything else to obtain authority from the Germans to deal with the Jews. Three requests of the Lithuanians were turned down. The German military commander, who was also in charge of the railroad station, did not turn the Jews over to the Lithuanians nor did he allow them to be moved to Alita; he needed them for work at the station.

The Jews of Marcinkonis knew quite well by this time what was transpiring in the nearby Lithuanian villages. They had received detailed information about the fate of the Jews who had been taken from Merecz, Aran, Dugai and Bultermanis to a forest in Alita, where they were all shot.

On Friday, September 19, 1941, the Lithuanians spread a rumor that Marcinkonis had been assigned to Lithaunia, to the Alita district. To the Jews it meant that they had all been sentenced to death. They hastily gathered their most necessary possessions, abandoned their homes and property and fled to villages in White Russia, where the Jews lived in comparative quiet and were not annihilated. Some of the Jews fled to the Grodno ghetto and to Druskieniki.

Very few Jews remained in town. The German military commander assured the remaining Jews that he would not permit the Lithuanians to take out of the town any Jews whom he needed for work at the railway station. After a while Marcinkonis was made part of the Grodno district of White Russia. German police came into the town and drove out all the Lithuanian officials, police and partisans.

The Jews who had fled began gradually to return to their homes. In many of the houses the doors and windows had been broken and all the goods left by the owners plundered. Little by little the returned Jews began to settle down and to prepare for the winter.

The Judenrat

The German police demanded that a *Judenrat* be elected to represent the Jews. Elected to the Judenrat were Ahron Kobrovsky, Dr. Shmuel Leytman, Yeshuye Berezovsky and Ruven Svirsky. Ahron Kobrovsky was elected President of the Judenrat and Dr. Shmuel Leytman Vice-President. The Judenrat was the body representing all the Jews and was the intermediary with the German authorities. The Judenrat supplied the required number of laborers to the Germans. The demands of the Germans were not overly stringent.

A Jewish police force was formed consisting of 6-7 men with Chief Berke Aizenshtat at the head. The police maintained order among the Jews of the town, distributed notices to the Jews about coming to work, etc.

The Judenrat served as a kind of an office for placing orders for the German rulers. The Judenrat had to supply the Germans with anything they demanded. Every Jew in town was assessed a definite

tax determined by the Judenrat. The money thus collected was used to fill the "orders" placed by the Germans, to bribe local civil administrators and to purchase "gifts" for the Germans. During the fall of 1941 the Jews of Marcinkonis were near to hundreds of mass graves of Lithuanian Jews who had been shot. The Jews of Marcinkonis worked diligently, carried out the orders of the Germans with meticulous care and they "buttered" the Germans profusely. They were always on guard, however, against any unexpected dangers to their lives that could come at any time.

In the Ghetto

Shortly before Passover 1942 the commissar of the town office informed the Judenrat that the Jews of Marcinkonis would have to settle in a ghetto. He allowed them to remain where they were until after the holiday "so as not to interfere with the Passover," as he explained.

The day after Passover all of the three hundred and seventy Jews had to settle in three small houses, one kilometer from the town. The Judenrat brought the commissar a present of a gold watch, a fine fur coat and some other valuable articles and succeeded in having him reassign for the ghetto 14 small houses near the railway station. Two days after Passover the Jews moved into this section and they themselves had to close it off with a wooden fence. The Jewish police force was stationed at the gate and around the fence and it was alerted to report on any possible dangers to the ghetto to the Judenrat and to the Jews of the ghetto. The police force was also charged with the duty of protecting the ghetto population from robbery by Jews inside and by Christians outside.

It was not a hermetically sealed ghetto. Jews could move freely in and out. Some even resumed their pre-war trade with the villages. Compared to other ghettos the Jews of the Marcinkonis ghetto lived fairly well. All summer of 1942 they worked at the railway station, on the roads and in the mushroom factory.

In the middle of the summer of 1942 reports began to arrive about the terrible annihilation of Jews in the towns of White Russia. A considerable number of survivors of the carnage came to the little ghetto of Marcinkonis. The Judenrat was responsible for every new arrival in the ghetto. Those who held power over Jewish life in the ghetto warned the Judenrat not to admit any "outside" Jews from the

White Russian towns. These Jews had to be concealed. Seventy odd refugees found shelter in the small ghetto in the summer of 1942 and some were sent to Grodno. The arrival of these Jews who had miraculously escaped and the horrid details of Jewish liquidation reported by them created panic among the Jews of Marcinkonis. The inhabitants of the ghetto and the Jewish police intensified their watchfulness.

In the fall of 1942 information reached Marcinkonis about the activities of Red partisans in the forests of White Russia. Some of the young people in the ghetto together with the refugees began to prepare to leave the ghetto in order to join the Red partisans. The Judenrat knew of these plans and assisted in the efforts to secure arms and to prepare for armed resistance, in case the ghetto was threatened with liquidation. A sum of money was raised for the purpose and 12 rifles were purchased. The rifles were expected any day in the ghetto but they arrived a few days later than agreed upon.

The Heroic Resistance of the Jews of Marcinkonis

During the night of Sunday, November 1, 1942, the Jewish ghetto police noticed that the ghetto was being surrounded by a heavy and strongly armed guard. They immediately notified the Judenrat and all the Jews in their homes. Many Jews had returned late that evening from work and had gone to bed very tired, but no one slept that night. Everyone anxiously waited for the coming of dawn. Marcinkonis at that time had already been severed from White Russia and joined to the Third Reich. On Monday, November 2, at 6 A.M. the Jews gathered at the gate to go out to their work in the town. But they were not allowed to leave the confines of the ghetto. The members of the Judenrat came to the ghetto gate. The Commissar of the Town Office, accompanied by armed police, told the Judenrat that the Jews would no longer go to work and ordered everyone to pack up their belongings and make ready to leave the ghetto to go to "work" in another place. Freight cars stood in readiness a small distance from the ghetto. The commissar told the Jews to make haste and that all must be at the station with their families by 8 o'clock, lined up six in a row.

A few had managed to steal out of the ghetto at night. A few left the ghetto in the morning and stole through the armed ring. Only a few score Jews came to the place before 8 o'clock. The German murderers began to feel nervous. The military commander of the White

Russian town of Sobakince had come to help in the successful liquidation of the ghetto. He was a notorious butcher who had experience in several acts of annihilation of Jews in ghettos in White Russia. This time he failed. He sensed that something was going on which he had not been accustomed to see in the destruction of Jews. The Jews did not even dream of carrying out his order to line up.

A group of bold Jews, among them Bentsiyon Kobrovsky, 17 years old, Fayvl Rapoport and others, were preparing to attack the assassin with the "red boots" (this is what the Jews called the commander of Sobakince) and to take away his automatic pistol.

The members of the Judenrat made as if to approach him in order to make a request. But he would not allow them to come near. Ahron Kobrovsky, President of the Judenrat, then cried out: "Jews, whoever wants to live, let him run where he can! The play is with the devil!"

The Jews began to run towards the ghetto fence. They also began to run from the houses towards the ghetto fence. The commandant with the "red boots" began shooting his automatic pistol in all directions. His subordinates did likewise. Cries of women and children were heard and the groans and rattling sounds of the wounded and the dying. Everybody ran from the ghetto. The fence was broken down. The panic and pandemonium in the ghetto was indescribable. There were not a few cases of Jewish men beating the armed murderers with their bare fists and trampling them underfoot. The shooting on every side became intensified. Many dead and wounded fell. Groans and wails filled the air. The Germans did not succeed in catching alive one single Jew, man, woman or child, to throw into the freight car. One hundred and five Jews remained lying dead in the ghetto and outside the enclosure. The diabolical plan to transfer the Jews of Marcinkonis to Kelbasin near Grodno and thence to the crematoria in Poland was frustrated by the heroic Jews of Marcinkonis, who paid for their effort with their blood. Like wild beasts the murderers set upon the abandoned Jewish houses looking for hidden Jews. But even there they failed to capture any Jew alive.

The President of the Judenrat, Ahron Kobrovsky, his brother Bentsiyon, Yossl Gilinsky and Berl Aizenshtat had managed to hide in a bunker underneath a house. The Germans discovered the bunker and ordered the Jews to come out. Revolver shots came out of the bunker in reply. The Germans threw two hand grenades into the bunker and put an end to the lives of the brave Jews. A number of

women and children had gone into the underground hideouts previously prepared under their homes. Apart from the hide-out of Ahron Kobrovsky not one such place was discovered by the Germans. Christians, however, who came in search of loot, stumbled upon some of them and reported them to the Germans and their collaborators.

That very day hundreds of peasants from the surrounding villages and many of the local inhabitants came to the ghetto. They volunteered to bury the 105 Jewish victims. Their object was loot. They pulled off the clothes and boots of the Jews and joyously filled their sacks. One hundred meters from the ghetto, near Lake Kastinis, they dug a mass grave into which they threw the dead along with the still living wounded. Peasants who took part in the burial of the fallen heroes later reported that many Jews had been thrown into the grave while still alive. The mass grave is situated not far from the sawmill which belonged to Shloyme Kaplan.

The German constabulary and armed German civilians took part in the siege of the ghetto and the shooting of the Jews. They were joined by a number of Lithuanian police and partisans from nearby Lithuanian towns.

The mass grave remained unfilled with earth for two days. A wild and desperate chase began for the escaped Jews through the whole countryside. But the pursuers failed to seize a single adult alive. Only small children and a few women were apprehended. A special detachment of the German constabulary came to Marcinkonis to help catch the escaped Jews. They were assisted by many local Lithuanian peasants, who saw a chance for easy loot. The Germans distributed arms to the peasants and promised them the property found on the Jews. Singly and in group formations the peasants then undertook the chase after the hiding Jews. They called it *"ieškoti turto"* (treasure hunting). They looked upon the Jews who were hiding out as upon fur-bearing animals who had to be trapped for the sake of the profit their skins would bring. Scores of Jewish women, children and men were brought to their death at the hands of peasants. The peasants demanded gold of the Jews. The harrassed Jews called the peasants *"auskinikes"* (from the Lithuanian word *ausko* meaning gold) and watched out for them. The Lithuanian peasants of the village Musteika distinguished themselves especially in the hunt on the Jews.

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Part of the Jews who had escaped from the ghetto, came together near the village of Musteika, in a forest. In this group was also one of the witnesses, Shloyme Peretz with his little daughter (3 years old), his mother Shifre and his sister Libe. Shloyme's wife, Sheine-Khaye and his father Abraham perished in the ghetto. The group also included Abraham Weinberg with his three sons: Khayim, Leybl and Motl; the family Pilevsky, Khayim Shloyme with his wife Khane, a son, Efrayim and a daughter, Sarah. Several days after the liquidation of the ghetto some 20 Jews, men, women and children, gathered in the forest.

These Jews "settled" in tents, covered with branches and foliage, three kilometers' distance from the village of Musteika.

After a few days the Jews established contact with the Lithuanian peasant, Jonas Balevičius, in the village of Musteika. He was one of the few truly fine peasants who fully sympathized with the plight of the Jews and did all he could to help them. He was a good friend of the Kobrovskys. Jonas would get money from the Jews and buy them food, traveling many miles to make the purchases and to bring the provisions to the forest. A few days after they settled in the forest he sold the Jews three rifles and ninety bullets, for which the Jews paid him 25 rubles in gold. The possession of firearms made the Jews feel more secure.

On November 2, when the ghetto of Marcinkonis was liquidated, the ghettos in the neighboring towns and in Grodno were also liquidated. The three brothers Kobrovsky, Moyshe, Leyb and Jacob escaped from the Grodno ghetto on November 2. Other Jews escaped from Grodno together with these three brothers, including the daughter of the Jewish druggist of the Lithuanian town of Dugai, Miriam, the young man from Visei, Meyer Khmilevsky and others. The Grodno Jews went to stay with friendly peasants in Lithuanian villages. The three Kobrovsky brothers with the girl from Dugai came to a peasant they knew by the name of Balevičius who brought them to the Jews in their hiding place in the forest. This was exactly one week after the flight from the ghetto. The brothers began looking for some of their close friends. From the peasants they learned who had perished in the ghetto. Friendly peasants in the village of Kupinivkis informed them that their sister Khane with her husband Yitzkhok Gorfing and their two boys had fled the ghetto and were now in the neighborhood. But all their efforts to locate their sister and her family were in vain. They

asked the peasants they knew in the surrounding villages to let them know as soon as they learned anything.

While looking for their sister and her family in the forest, near Musteika, they came upon a group of three Jews: Ayzik Krenica, Joseph Rapoport and their cousin Khayele (15 years old) who was Khonon's daughter. The brothers Kobrovsky took Khayele along to her brothers Elke and Shloyme. Joseph Rapoport and Ayzik Krenica perished a short time later (Rapoport in the forest near Musteika and Krenica suffocated in a bunker).

During this time the Jews obtained, with the help of friendly peasants of the nearby village of Kupiniškis, more arms: two more rifles, a pistol and three hand grenades.

The cold and the snow made it impossible to continue hiding in the same place. Shloyme Kobrovsky had been wounded while fleeing the ghetto and he could not think of recovering in wintertime in the forest. The Jews broke up into small groups. The Kobrovsky family with the girl from Dugai went to a peasant in the village of Kupiniškis. Khane Aizenstadt, her daughter-in-law Gitl with her child and Khane's son Ayzik went to live with another peasant in the same village. Shyloyme Peretz with his family and the rest of the group went further into the forest belt of White Russia known as *"Russkaya Pushcha."*

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THE JEWS OF MARCINKONIS MEET AGAIN IN THE RUSSIAN FOREST BELT

The group of Jews in the woodland began to receive reliable reports about a well-armed German army which was evidently getting ready to carry out raids in the forests. The group did not remain idle. It sent out scouts to every trustworthy friend in the villages to obtain more detailed information about the impending blockade and they prepared to change their quarters and to move into the more remote part of the woods. In the villages of Kotre and Pagarenci they learned that the Jews who had left the woodlands in the spring of 1943 were now again situated somewhere in a forest. In the village of Gžibauliai they had left a letter for the Kobrovskys telling them where and how they would meet. In a few days' time the two brothers Yitzkhok and Leybl Kobrovsky came to the appointed place where they met with Jews of Shloyme's group. All went together deeper

into the woodland where Shloyme's group was camped. That very day the Germans began their heavy blockade. Yitzkhok and Leybl could not get back to their group, and to their families, wives and children.

The Great Blockade

The inhabitants of the woodland learned that the famous union of red partisan brigades led by Major Kapustin was waging a bitter battle with a large German army not far from the *"Pushcha."* Their trusted informants in the surrounding villages told them that Major Kapustin's red partisans had arrived from the east. On their way they had occupied cities, towns and villages, had liquidated small German army units and had destroyed the civil administration along with the Gestapo and S. S. groups. Whole divisions of the German forces, armed with every kind of weapon, engaged in bitter battles with Kapustin's partisan units who were slowly retreating towards the *"Russkaya Pushcha."*

In the autumn of 1943 a great battle took place between the Germans and Kapustin's red partisans about one and a half kilometers from Kobrovsky's Jewish group. The Germans used heavy artillery, tanks, airplanes in that battle. Kapustin's Red partisans were also fairly well equipped and they had artillery. They could not stand up, however, against the regular German army units and they were surrounded on all sides. The supply convoy with a substantial portion of the Red partisans including Kapustin and his staff broke through the ring and penetrated into the forest. A short distance from the Kobrovsky group the supply convoy bogged down in the swamps. The Germans stopped at the edge of the forest, fearing to go into the interior of the *"Pushcha."* Kapustin and his aides visited the Kobrovsky group and held a friendly conversation with its members. He listened attentively and with interest to their experiences, and told them of his own struggles with the Germans during the past few days and about the losses inflicted on them by his brave soldiers. Khayim Kobrovsky, Efrayim Pilevsky and a few others of the group led Kapustin's staff out to the edge of the *Pushcha* near the village of Kotre. At Kapustin's request the Jews in the company of a few of their soldiers brought to him the forester Shilka, a confidant of the Jews. The forester showed Kapustin and his staff the trails of the vast woodland and took him nearer to its eastern part. A number of the partisans remained in the *Pushcha* with the wounded. The whole

supply convoy, with produce, horses and dogs, remained bogged down in the mire not far from Kobrovsky's group. The Jews transported the largest part of the supplies further into the interior of the forest, where they hid it and camouflaged the hiding place. The Jews now had enough food for several months. The rest of the supplies fell to pilfering peasants from the surrounding villages.

A few days after the blockade the two brothers Yitzkhok and Leybe came back to their group. They had heard the cannonade during the few days they spent with the other Jewish group and knew about the desperate battle. They were certain that all the members of their group had perished in the fire of battle. The Kobrovsky brothers and their friends moved deeper into the *"Pushcha"* with the other Jewish group of Jews from Marcinkonis, where they stayed together as one group until after liberation.

THE JEWS OF MARCINKONIS BECOME RED PARTISANS

Misunderstanding with the Stankevich Company

A short time after the blockade, life in the forest became calm and the inhabitants carried on their precarious and care-laden existence. It was already late in the fall of 1943. The Marcinkonis Jews were now preparing for the hard winter life in the woods and they energetically set out to provide whatever was necessary. One day Red partisans from Stankevich's company came to the Jews with the impudent request that the Jews deliver to them their choice arms. To the Jews this meant depriving themselves of any possibility of protection against the least attack by Germans or their collaborators. The sorely tried, hardened and stubborn Jews of Marcinkonis who had learned to understand the significance of weapons refused and stated in no uncertain terms that they would not willingly allow themselves to be disarmed and left defenseless with their women and children.

They stood facing one another—the Jewish heroes of Marcinkonis with their weapons and the Red partisans. Yitzkhok Kobrovsky negotiated with the Red partisans and asked them to appreciate the position they would be in if they would give up the weapons they had collected at such peril. He also spoke to them in harsh tones, scolding them and ridiculing their demands. He tried to convince the partisans that such conduct on their part only brought disgrace on their cause and on the reputation of the Red partisans. The latter then proposed that all the young people among the Jews should fight with them.

The Jews agreed on condition that the women and children go with them. The Red partisans insisted they wanted only the fighters. The Jews categorically refused. The partisans, seeing that they were faced with determined men who were excellent soldiers not likely to allow themselves to be disarmed, left. In a few days the Jews movd to another place in the woods and began to avoid being seen by the Stankevich Red partisans. The best weapons they concealed.

After ten days thirty well-armed Red partisans arrived at the new place. They demanded vigorously that the young people join their company. The Jews refused to leave their wives and children without protection. A long and bitter wrangling ensued. The partisans spent the night in the forest with the Jews.

The next day they strictly forbade the Jews to get food from private peasants in the villages. Four Jews of the group, Elke Kobrovsky, Borukh Aizenstadt, Motl Weinberg and Aizik Aizenstadt, joined their company and took along with them two rifles. The resentment of the Jews was intense.

The men in the group did not lose their heads. They secured more weapons in distant villages and began to obtain food from the large government depots, despite the dangers which this entailed, since German military units were frequently stationed at these depots. But the orders of the Stankevich company against obtaining food from peasants in nearby villages were carried out.

The Jews, together with the fighters in the Stankevich company, began to carry out acts of sabotage. They derailed three military trains and jointly dynamited several road bridges. The Stankevich company made use of the Jews who were familiar with the whole countryside. From day to day relations between the Red partisans and the Jews grew friendlier. The fighters of both sides began to visit one another and spend nights in one another's quarters.

Davidov's Company

Late in the fall of 1943 a company of Red soldiers took up its quarters in the Russkaya Pushcha, commanded by Davidov and known as the "Davidov company." It engaged in parachutist sabotage and intelligence activities. They were all first class fighters and well equipped with the most modern weapons, which were parachuted to them from planes. This company which arrived from the east took over command over all Red companies in the forest. Among

the soldiers in the Davidov company were many Jews from White Russia who had escaped the massacres of the spring and summer of 1942, including Lipe Skolsky, a good friend of the Kobrovskys, who had survived the massacre at Aran. Lipe spoke with enthusiasm and admiration of the virtues of Commander Davidov and of his help to the Jews. Davidov was himself a Jew. Lipe took Yitzkhok, Leybe and Shloyme Peretz and a few others of the Jewish group to Commander Davidov for a consultation. Davidov received the Jewish representatives very cordially and listened with interest to the tale of their experiences. He expressed his sympathy, comforted them and promised to do all in his power to help their family group.

The next day Davidov paid a visit to the Marcinkonis Jews. He chatted amiably with everyone and played with the children and kissed them. They all lined up before him and Davidov promised to provide everyone with automatic pistols and to see that they received food supplies. He appointed Yitzkhok Kobrovsky as commander of the Jewish family company and asked that he be obeyed. All other partisan companies were forbidden to molest the Jewish unit. No one could now deprive the Jews of their weapons. The Jews in the new family company were now infused with a new spirit of hope and confidence. Firmly resolved to be loyal to their new "father," Davidov and to the newly appointed commander Yitzkhok Kobrovsky, the brave Jews of Marcinkonis now commenced the life of true partisans.

The Marcinkonis Jews together with the fighters in Davidov's company set out on their work in earnest. A joint group of both companies derailed a military train and the locomotive was blown to pieces and three cars were damaged. The fighters of Yitzkhok's company once adopted a resolution at a conference to ask Davidov to let a group consisting only of their men blow up a military railway convoy. Davidov agreed. Khayim, Leybl, Shloyme Peretz and Khayim Weinberg, led by Yitzkhok Kobrovsky, blew up a miiltary train on the road between Grodno and Vilna, nine kilometers from Marcinkonis. Twelve cars of ammunition and the locomotive were damaged and several hundred meters of railway tracks were destroyed. The great success of this undertaking meant that the Jewish unit had stood its first test of sabotage action. It now became endeared to Commander Davidov and to his company. The success of this act of sabotage was all the more amazing since it was carried out in broad daylight. For several days the railway connection between Vilna and Grodno was

paralyzed. Davidov and his fighting men congratulated the Jews on their success.

All acts of sabotage after this event were undertaken with the participation of the Jewish unit. The Marcinkonis Jews went enthusiastically to carry out such tasks and came back happy with their execution, fired by a desire to avenge the extermination of the Jews of Europe. Dozens of military trains never reached the front. Those that did arrive, were badly damaged and were behind schedule. Other Red partisans groups hammered away at the German military machine. The trains that managed to get through without damage at one place were harassed at other points.

Davidov's company destroyed not only military trains but also many bridges of all types. Here too the Marcinkonis Jews displayed their courage and their daring. Following each successful act of sabotage the fighters were given testimonials. The Jewish family company acquired a very large number of such testimonials. Many Jews of other companies were taken by Davidov into his own lines. The four Jews who had joined Stankevich's company also went into Davidov's unit. The Jews, thoroughly familiar with the whole region, successfully carried out acts of espionage with the assistance of their friends in the villages. Many German spies were thus liquidated by Davidov's group during that winter.

RESCUE AND RELIEF ACTIVITIES IN BEHALF OF JEWISH VICTIMS OF NAZISM IN SCANDINAVIA

By HUGO VALENTIN

Before Hitler came to power, in 1933, the Jews in Scandinavian countries, on the rim of the Jewish world, lived in peace and tranquillity. Their number was not large: Sweden had about 7,000 Jews officially counted as members of the Jewish community and another 1,500 who were not citizens of Sweden, although some were natives of the country; Denmark had about 8,000 Jews; Norway about 1,500. The overwhelming majority of these Jews was concentrated in the capital cities. This was especially the case in Denmark, where the Jewish population outside of Copenhagen was exceedingly small. This fact proved to be of significance in 1943, when the Jews of Denmark had to be saved by flight to Sweden. In Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, the Jewish community numbered about 4,000 souls, while the two other large cities, Malmö and Göteborg, together had over 3,000 Jews. It was the leaders in these three Swedish communities who carried on the main burdens of the rescue work, collecting funds and dealing with the government authorities.

The Jewish communities of Copenhagen, Stockholm and Göteborg were led by patrician Jewish families who had attained distinction in the national life of their respective countries. In Oslo and in Malmö the leaders were comparative newcomers from eastern Europe. Differences in social standing and Jewish traditions resulted in differences of approach and in difference of views regarding the handling of the rescue work. The members of the old families were accustomed to bureaucratic methods and were opposed to innovations. Their reputation for reliability and fairness and the good will they enjoyed with the authorities were their great assets. The leaders who came from the later immigrant groups, however, had more understanding of desperate situations and showed more readiness to take economic and financial risks and to attempt what to others seemed impossible. From their passionate will to rescue the Jewish victims came dynamic energy and bold imagination.

The position taken by the government and by public opinion in the Scandinavian countries on the question of Jewish refugees until November 1938 was influenced mainly by the economic depression of the 1930's and the often exaggerated fears that unemployment would be increased by the competition of the incoming refugees, or that they would become public charges if they were admitted to the country without permission of employment. None of the Scandinavian countries at that time were considered capable of absorbing new immigrants. Government agencies, therefore, demanded financial guarantess to make sure that the refugees admitted to the country did not become a burden on the public. This insistence on guarantees greatly obstructed and limited the activities in behalf of the Jewish refugees. There was, in addition, the constant fear on the part of the small northern countries lest they provoke Hitler and there was also considerably pro-Nazi sentiment. The upper social classes in Sweden, in particular, had traditional sympathy for the German people and for German culture. They had become accustomed to regard Germany as a *Rechtsstaat* and they refused for a long time to believe that the German Jews had actually been deprived of their rights in the Third Reich.

It happened not infrequently, therefore, that Jewish refugees from Germany attempting to gain admission to one of the Scandinavian countries were turned away at the border. Those that gained admission were frequently deported on the basis of the antiquated laws of asylum. The fact that the refugees were subjected, because of birth, in their native country to restrictions on making a living or that they were made "uncomfortable" there did not make them "political" refugees with the right to asylum. There was constant altercation, with varying degrees of success, between the official authorities on the one hand and the Jewish and non-Jewish refugee committees of the various communities on the other hand. Professor Fredrik Paasche, a non-Jew who himself died in exile later in 1943 and one of the most devoted friends of the refugees in Norway, declared on one occasion: "It is much more dangerous to stifle in a people its natural feeling of pity than to admit into the country a few people with whom one shares employment and livelihood."[1] But the government and the majority of the population took a different attitude.

It was only after the pogroms in Germany in November 1938 that

[1] Valentin, H., "Tal vid Wergelands grav," in *Judisk Tidskrift* (1945) p. 226.

people in the Scandinavian countries came to realize that emigration for the German Jews was a matter of life and death and that the old laws of asylum were outdated. Even then, however, there were important sections of the population which did not share this new approach. As late as February 1939 the students of the largest Swedish university adopted a resolution by a large majority opposing the admission into Sweden of ten Jewish physicians, including several of world renown. In the course of the vehement discussion opinions were voiced on the need to protect Sweden against the "invasion" of foreigners and to keep the Swedish medical profession for Swedish students. When a world-famous gynecologist requested permission to settle and practice in Sweden, about one thousand Swedish physicians raised protest against granting his request.[2]

Although occasional antisemitic views were heard now and then in the discussions these did not play a significant role. But it was not uncommon for the argument to be advanced that if a large number of Jews were admitted into the Scandinavian countries the result might be the creation of a "Jewish question," which thus far had been absent from these countries. No doubt this fear was not altogether absent also from the minds of some Scandinavian Jews. But the leaders of the Jewish communities, without exception, made it their business to induce their governments to act more generously towards the refugees. Differences of opinion among the leaders concerned only the methods for attaining that goal, not the goal itself. There is no foundation for the statements made now and then, statements which reached beyond the borders of the Scandinavian countries, that the leadership of one of the largest Scandinavian Jewish communities had taken an unfriendly position with regard to the refugees. Misgivings do remain, however, as to whether the Scandinavian Jewish communities during the early years of the Hitler triumph displayed sufficient energy in their relief work. On the other hand, one may well argue that it took the German Jews themselves a considerable period until they realized all the implications of the Hitler policy toward them. Were it possible in those years to foresee the full development of the Nazi activities, no doubt, both the Jews of the Scandinavian countries and the governments would have acted differently. To judge them harshly today is unfair.[3]

[2] Hellner, Kerstin, *De landsflyktiga och Sverige,* Verdandis småskrifter, no. 254 (Stockholm 1952).

[3] Josephson, Gunnar, "Mosaiska församlingen och flyktingspolitiken," in *Församlingsblad for Mosaiska församlingen i Stockholm* (February 1945).

RESCUE AND RELIEF ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF DENMARK AND NORWAY

The number of Jewish refugees from Germany that entered Sweden up to October 1933 was only about 300-400. The number who entered Denmark and Norway was even smaller. The first arrivals were generally people of means who came provided with regular passports. Many had relatives in the country and their chief problem was to obtain permission to remain. Soon, however, refugees began to arrive who had little or no means and who needed help. Committees to help refugees were then founded, headed by rabbis and communal leaders. voluntary contributions were collected and communal taxes were increased. A number of non-Jewish refugee committees came into being for special groups of refugees, such as intellectuals, Communists, Socialists, converted Jews, etc. At the same time special governmental agencies were set up to deal with problems arising from the influx of refugees.

Up to April 1940 the refugee question developed more or less evenly in all three countries of Scandinavia. The number of refugees who arrived during the whole period between 1933 and 1940 was very small. It was well known in the countries controlled by Hitler that the Scandinavian governments did not regard persons persecuted on account of race as political refugees deserving of asylum. Moreover, the immigration regulations were made more stringent in order to deter the thousands who were desperately looking for a place of refuge. Typical of such legislation was the Swedish law of September 9, 1938, according to which no foreigner could cross the Swedish border unless he had previously obtained a permit of sojourn, and he could be turned back at the border even with that permit if the officials believed that he had left his home for good. Since such permits were issued only in exceptional cases and under certain guarantees, very few were able to find refuge in Scandinavia. It should be noted that this law was severely criticized by some who considered it unduly harsh and by others who thought it was excessively liberal.[4]

Under these circumstances the Jewish and non-Jewish relief committees had to endeavor to induce the governmental agencies to adopt a more magnanimous attitude in interpreting the immigration laws. In addition, it was necessary to collect large sums of money and levy

[4] Hellner, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

higher taxes on the members of the communities in order to provide the necessary financial guarantees. The main efforts were directed to influence the governments to grant transit visas to refugees who planned to settle in other countries, especially in Palestine, and who were in need of a temporary place of asylum.

The refugee committee in Denmark succeeded in obtaining from the government permits for Jewish young boys and girls from Germany to stay in Denmark in order to receive agricultural training for life in Palestine. Benjamin Slor, prominent Danish Zionist, had long advocated that Zionists use Denmark as a model for agricultural development. Even before Hitler assumed power he was instrumental in establishing a number of *halutzim* from Germany and from eastern Europe on Danish farms. After Hitler's seizure of power this activity was greatly extended since there were no difficulties in securing labor permits for agricultural workers. In this way, some 1,400 halutzim were trained in Denmark, out of which some 1,000 reached Palestine before the German occupation of the country.

Slor's brother-in-law, Emil Glück in Sweden, emulated his example and organized a similar *hakhsharah* activity in his country. Later the halutzim who received their training in Sweden and those who escaped from Denmark merged into one organization during the Hitler occupation. There were thus in Sweden about 300 halutzim at that time. Besides, entry permits were obtained for some 500 children and 150 transit-emigrants. Before that took place, the Jews of Sweden, by taking over the care of Jewish children in Germany as trustees, sent 65 Jewish children to the schools of the Youth Aliyah in Palestine.

Some 500 refugees from central Europe arrived in Norway and more than half of these managed to leave the country before the Hitler occupation. Jewish relief committees were organized in Oslo and in Trondheim. There were also some non-Jewish organizations of political coloration which helped certain Jewish refugees. The Nansen Committee led by Odd Nansen, son of the famous explorer, Fridtjof Nansen, headed the most important of those organizations. The Nansen Committee made it its special province to take care of the so-called "stateless" refugees, whose problem became acute with the Nazi occupation of Austria, Czechoslovakia and later Poland. The Nansen Committee managed to secure asylum in Scandinavia for a number of such refugees, among them many Jews.

There were 1,000 Jewish refugees in Denmark and 300 in Norway

when these countries were occupied by the Germans. About 100 of those in Norway succeeded in getting over to Sweden. About 3,000 Jewish transit-emigrants had passed through Denmark. About 3,000 refugees and a larger number of transit-emigrants were in Sweden at the time that the other two countries were occupied.

SWEDISH RESCUE EFFORTS AFTER THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF DENMARK AND NORWAY

After the outbreak of the war in 1939, and especially after the Germans occupied Denmark and Norway on April 9, 1941, Jewish immigration to Sweden practically stopped. In the fall of 1941 the authorities began to take a more liberal attitude towards the refugees. Entry permits were to be issued to individuals who had close relatives in Sweden who could guarantee that the migrants would not become public charges. But now it was too late. In April 1943 the Jewish community of Stockholm made a last attempt to rescue the Jews out of Germany and a large fund for guarantees was raised. But the German government refused to issue exit permits and only three persons were saved.

In this situation the various refugee relief committees as well as individual leaders grappled desperately with the question how to come to the aid of the threatened Jews on the European continent. At the same time public opinion in Sweden turned more favorably toward the refugees and this in turn induced a more sympathetic attitude on the part of official government circles towards more active aid. The field of activity was thus enlarged and the burdens assumed by the Jewish relief committees in Sweden greatly expanded. At the head of all this activity stood the leader of the Stockholm Jewish community, Gunnar Josephson, who was respected for his high moral qualities and practical sense and whose word carried great weight in government circles. We shall deal later and at greater length with the more important projects, such as the bringing of Norwegian and Danish Jews to Sweden, the rescue action in behalf of the Hungarian Jews and the saving of Jewish inmates of the concentration camps in Germany at the end of the war. We should mention here a few of the attempts of lesser proportion.

The Swedish Zionist Organization vainly tried to obtain from the British, through their Stockholm embassy, Palestine certificates for halutzim in Denmark who were in grave danger. Two other projects

had better luck and brought about satisfactory results. After an unsuccessful attempt to induce the British government, through the mediation of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, to use its influence with some South American countries that they grant protective passports to Jews in the Nazi-dominated countries, an appeal was made to the Stockholm consul of a small Latin American republic to the same end. He granted the request and made out passports for a number of persons as citizens enjoying the protection of the republic he represented. Some of those passports were intercepted by the German censorship and never reached their destination, but others, with the consul's signature, did arrive.[5]

Of greater significance were the steps taken by the Swedish section of the World Jewish Congress in 1944 under the direction of its energetic leader, Hillel Storch, to secure the consent of the Swedish government to allow food to be shipped to Jews in the concentration camps. The Allied powers agreed to lift their blockade in favor of such shipments and the Swedish section of the World Jewish Congress received economic aid from its parent body overseas. The food was sent via the Swedish Red Cross to Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald and other concentration camps. Not all the parcels arrived at their destinations but many Jewish lives were undoubtedly saved by this action. In Bergen-Belsen, for example, the Nazis failed to deliver the packages to the inmates but the food stores thus accumulated in the warehouses were used later when the camp was liberated and before it was possible to bring in food from the outside.[6] These shipments were continued in large proportions for a considerable time after the close of the war.

A few words now about the Jews in Finland. The entrance of Finland into the war as an ally of Germany against the Soviet Union posed a grave danger for the Jews of Finland. There was fear lest the Nazis exert pressure upon the Finnish government to bring about the liquidation of Finnish Jewry, not to speak of the stateless Jewish refugees found in that country. No one in Stockholm could have

[5] This was just what a consul of a Latin-American country in Switzerland did. The bearers of those passports, most of whom were Dutch Jews, were kept in Bergen-Belsen in a separate division and were treated better than other Jewish internees. Some of them were released in 1944 and sent to Switzerland, others were sent to a camp in Würtemberg, which was under the supervision of the International Red Cross and where they were well treated.

[6] Rost, Nella, "Ur svenska sektionens protokoll," in *Vår Röst* (October 1949); also address by Josef Rosensaft reported in the issue of May 1952.

known that the Finnish government made it plain to the Germans that they would not yield to Nazi antisemitic demands. Felix Kersten, in his recently published diaries, tells of his meeting with Foreign Minister Witting of Finland in August 1942, after Himmler had demanded that the Finnish Jews be turned over to him. "Finland is a decent nation," Witting said to Kersten. "We would rather perish with the Jews. We will never hand over Jews to them."[7]

In 1944 Finland began to waver and became increasingly more dependent on Germany. At that time the relief committee in Stockholm began making the necessary preparations to remove the Jews out of Finland in the same way that the Jews of Denmark and Norway had been evacuated. The Swedish authorities approved the plans. In the spring of 1944 a large number of Jewish children, pregnant women and about 160 stateless refugees were taken out of Finland.

THE RESCUE OF THE JEWS OF NORWAY

On April 9, 1940 the Germans attacked Norway and after a struggle of two months all of Norway came under the heel of the Nazis. It may seem strange that the Jews did not endeavor during those two months to save themselves by crossing the border into Sweden. It must be remembered, however, that such flight entailed serious perils and besides, there was a general expectation that sooner or later Sweden, too, would be occupied by the Germans and the position of the refugees would be even worse than in their native land. Certain measures taken by Reichscommissar Terboven were interpreted as indirect evidence that there was no intention to molest the 1,700 Jews and part-Jews of Norway. The number also included 200 refugees from central Europe. A certain number of non-Jews who foresaw what was likely to take place offered their help to their Jewish neighbors to get them into Sweden. Unfortunately only a few Jews took advantage of this opportunity. Moreover, some Jews who had escaped into Sweden during the early days of panic returned to Norway in the summer.

As a matter of fact, the situation of the Jews during the early months after the occupation was not unbearable. Individuals here and there were subjected to oppressive treatment, but that happened to non-Jews as well. The sense of solidarity shown the Jews by their Christian fellow-citizens (the Quislings were an insignificant minority)

[7] Kersten, Felix, *Totenkopf und Treue: Heinrich Himmler ohne Uniform* (Hamburg 1952) p. 180.

contributed to their comparative sense of security. Little by little, however, the situation of the Jews grew worse.

In June 1941, soon after the outbreak of the war with Soviet Russia, the Nazis rounded up all the Jews in Tromsö and several other towns in the northern part of Norway and deported them to Germany. In Trondheim only the stateless Jews were arrested, but they, too, were soon released. In Oslo about 60 Jews, all Russian citizens, were arrested and subjected to torture. Three weeks later, however, they were released. In the fall of 1941 the Jews in Trondheim and in cities in the north and west were again subjected to arrests, confiscation of property and even summary execution. Jews in Oslo remained unharmed. There was an evil omen in the decree of February 2, 1942 that documents of Jews must bear the stamp "J" (Jude).

On October 22, 1942 a member of the Norwegian border police was shot and killed by a non-Jew on a train near the Swedish border. On that train were about ten Jews who probably were planning to escape to Sweden. They were immediately placed under arrest. The next day their families in Oslo and its environs were also arrested. The death blow to the Jews of Norway followed immediately. On the night between October 25th and 26th all male Jews over sixteen years of age all over Norway were arrested and their property confiscated. Only individuals who managed to hide out or who were overlooked were miraculously saved. There were some exceptions made for Jews who were married to "Aryans"—but not in the northern part of the country. These Jews, married to non-Jews, were interned and on March 1, 1945, were allowed to leave for Sweden. Some Jews who were foreign citizens were also spared. A number of Norwegian Jews who had relatives in Sweden were quickly made Swedish citizens and thus saved. But the Germans did not always respect Swedish citizenship.

A month later, on the night between November 25th and 26th, all the women and children were also arrested. Except for a few Jews whose transportation had been delayed, all were placed on a ship in Oslo that same day and taken to Stettin, from whence they were transported to Auschwitz. More than half of those thus seized, whose number came to 531, were burned in the crematoria upon their arrival in Auschwitz. Later a few more deportations took place. Altogether 770 Jews were deported from Norway, including 100 refugees from central Europe.

This massacre evoked bitter resentment throughout Norway. But the press was under strict censorship and naturally no public protest meetings could be held. Nevertheless the hierarchy of the Lutheran church sent a letter of protest to Quisling. The letter stressed that the persecution of the Jews was not only contrary to the Christian principle of brotherly love but was also a violation of the most elementary demands of human justice. According to the word of God, the letter said, all men have "the same dignity and the same human rights." On the Sundays of November 15 and 22 special services for the Jews were held in the churches.

The number of Jewish victims would have been much greater had not some Jews fled betimes to Sweden, before the fatal night in October 1942. By some unknown way rumors of the Nazi plans had reached the Jews. Some Jews believed them, others did not. Those who took the rumors seriously tried to escape. The Norwegian state police whose duty it was to co-operate with the Nazis in arresting the Jews, often gave ample warning to those in danger.

Escape to Sweden was fraught with grave danger. One had to trundle for days through thick forests and wilderness. Underground organizations to help Jews escape to Sweden had been formed before. Usually Norwegian families in the sparsely populated districts of eastern Norway would receive the refugees in strict secrecy and provide them with food and shelter until guides who were familiar with the country could lead them past the German border patrols to safety in Sweden. In November 1942, when the danger to the Jews became most acute, the sudden increase in the number of persons who needed help made tremendous demands upon the underground organizations for concealing Jewish families and guiding them into Sweden. It was especially difficult to provide enough automobile drivers to bring the victims as close as possible to the frontier. Nevertheless the organization functioned pretty well on the whole. There were days in which they succeeded in bringing several hundred Jews from Norway to Sweden. But there were times when the refugees had to wait in hiding for months until they could be taken out. Those who had means paid for the help they received, others received it gratis. It was also a stroke of fortune that the Nazi persecution of Norwegian students and officers and other groups of the non-Jewish population did not coincide with the campaign against the Jews.

As soon as the Jewish refugees arrived on Swedish territory they were received with cordiality and sympathy by the border population

and government officials. They were then looked after by the office for refugees of the Norwegian embassy in Stockholm and by the Jewish refugee committees in Sweden.

Altogether about 1,000 Jews from Norway (including the refugees from central Europe) arrived in Sweden. Of these 930 were smuggled across the border and about 60 were released from concentration camps in Norway in 1945. There were also about 100 half-Jews or quarter-Jews.

After the defeat of Hitler the Norwegian Jewish refugees returned to their homes and were warmly welcomed by their countrymen. Their property, of which the Nazis had despoiled them, was restored to them. (This was also true in the case of the Jews in Denmark.) But for the small Jewish community in Norway the loss of nearly half of its members, who had fallen victim to the Nazis and the Quislings, was a great tragedy. Only twelve Norwegian Jews came back from Germany. There was not a single Jewish family in the country but had lost at least one member. Some families were wiped out entirely.

RESCUE WORK IN DENMARK

When the Germans occupied Denmark on April 9, 1940, they promised to guarantee the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of the country and not to interfere in its internal administration. It was on that condition that Denmark did not offer military resistance to the invaders. At first it seemed that the Germans would keep their promise and would try to make Denmark into a sort of model protectorate. As long as the Germans honored their obligations the Jews of Denmark were in no danger since the Danish government had not the remotest intention of agreeing to any antisemitic concessions. When the German ambassador in Copenhagen tried to explore the possibilities of introducing special anti-Jewish legislation in Denmark, two prominent members of the government, who were considered to be more or less pro-German, promptly let him know that such a policy "could not be carried out" in Denmark. The very rumor of such a step being considered at the behest of the Germans evoked widespread indignation in the country. King Christian, who throughout the trying years was a towering rock of support for Denmark's patriots and lovers of freedom, missed no occasion to indicate publicly that he shared these views of his people.

Despite all this the Jews in Denmark did not feel secure, especially those Jews who were not Danish citizens. Their uneasiness became

more pronounced in November 1941 when Denmark was compelled to join the anti-Comintern pact and when the Nazis declared that the Jewish problem would have to be solved sooner or later in their New Order in Europe. A small number of Jews managed to escape to Sweden. Thus in April 1943 a group of halutzim went from Bornholm to Sweden in a small fishing vessel and amidst a raging storm.

The relations between the Danish government, and still more, the Danish people, and the occupying power became more and more strained until they led to the crisis of August 29, 1943. The Danish government resigned and von Hanneken, the German Supreme Commander, took over. The administrative departments, however, remained in the hands of Danish officials. There was now no obstacle in the way of the Germans to tackle the Jews in their own way.

This they did. From the Nazi standpoint the results of the anti-Jewish action were disappointing. This was in part due to the fact that the Germans themselves had little stomach for this activity. First of all, it seems clear that Werner Best, who was the German representative in Denmark, was not enthusiastic about his task, although it was he who had proposed the project in Berlin, mainly to maintain his position against von Hanneken. Generally, the attitude of the Germans in leading positions in Denmark, was the same, including even the chief of the Gestapo, who argued that he had too few men at his disposal to carry out the arrest and deportation of the Jews. A crucial fact in the developments was that the attaché of the German merchant navy, G. F. Duckwitz, was so shocked by the Nazi policy of violence towards the Jews that he revealed to the Danish leaders the Nazi plan to arrest all Jews in a raid which was to be made on the night between the 1st and 2nd of October. Hans Hedtoft, chairman of the Social-Democratic Party and prime minister of Denmark after liberation, reports that Duckwitz was white with shame and indignation when he reported this to him. Characteristic of the sense of security of the Jews in Denmark is the fact that when Hedtoft reported Duckwitz's warning to C. B. Henriques, head of the Jewish community in Copenhagen, Henriques refused to believe it.[8]

When the Swedish government learned from Duckwitz of the planned action against the Jews it decided on a bold step. On October 1, 1943, the Swedish ambassador in Berlin drew the attention of the German government to the grave effect such action would have

[8] Bertelsen, Aage, *Oktober 43* (Aarhus 1947) p. 12.

on public opinion in his country and offered in the name of his government to admit all the Jews of Denmark into Sweden. The Germans did not reply to this démarche but the Swedish government released the news of its step to the press and the general public response was one of approval. In Denmark the report made a tremendous impression. Jews in Denmark now knew that as soon as they would cross over to Sweden they would be received not as poor refugees but as welcome guests.

When the Jews of Copenhagen gathered in the synagogue on the eve of Rosh Hashana, on September 29, 1943, they were told of the impending German action and were advised to hide out with their non-Jewish neighbors. Those who were not in the synagogue were also informed, so that very few Jews remained in the dark as to the German plan. When the Germans began their raids the great majority of the Jews were safely concealed in Christian homes in the towns and villages or, thanks to the swift action by Danish doctors, were admitted under assumed names as patients in various hospitals. Everywhere the Jews were received with open arms.

On October 2 the Germans announced officially that the Jews had been eliminated from Danish public life and thus prevented from continuing "to poison the atmosphere." At the same time they made known the release of all interned Danish soldiers. This naive attempt to weaken the effect of the violent action against the Jews was a complete failure. The interned soldiers and sailors let it be known through their commanding officers that they would not accept any favors at the expense of their Jewish fellow-citizens.

Denmark was swept by a wave of anger at the revolting deeds of the Germans. No previous measure undertaken by the Nazis had evoked such resentment as this one. From now on reconciliation between the Danish people and the occupying power was out of the question. A deluge of protests came from the universities, students, officials, political parties and youth organizations. On the Sunday following the shameful act a pastoral letter was read from every pulpit in which the Christian congregants were reminded that Jesus too was a Jew. Almost the whole Danish people (the Nazis and their fellow-travelers constituted only about two percent) joined forces to save their Jewish countrymen and the Jewish immigrants.

A few days after the German raid several organizations were founded to rescue the Jews. The organizations were the product of

individual initiative and included men and women of various social strata. A central committee of ten members was formed to direct activities. The tasks of these committees consisted, first of all, in finding secure hiding places for the Jews and, in the next place, in transporting them by boat to Sweden. The costs of transportation came to about twelve million kroner. Part of this sum was covered by the Jews themselves, part by various illegal organizations, including the association of manufacturers and the Federation of Labor.

This operation was referred to as a "little Dunkirk." Fishing boats and other vessels were hired for the purpose and within about a month's time 7,460 men, women and children, of which some were non-Jews, were brought to the shores of Sweden. They were very few losses. During the first few days the rescue work was of an improvised nature but in time it was well regulated and the boats operated to and fro during both day and night. One of these boats was manned by halutzim, who were in the fishery *hakhshara* in Denmark and in close contact with the Swedish "Hehalutz." The success of the operation was due in no small measure to the help of the Danish police and to the fact that in many places the Germans deliberately refrained from interfering. This was probably due to the antagonism which marked the relations between the Wehrmacht and the Gestapo.

The rescue work in Denmark also received considerable aid from the Swedish officials, whose sympathetic attitude and active support proved to be invaluable, from Danes who had previously escaped to Sweden and from relief committees of the Swedish Jewish communities. On October 3, 1943 the Stockholm lawyer Ivar Philipson was requested by the leaders of the Jewish community in Stockholm to organize the transports of Danish refugees. Within a matter of hours Philipson and his friends raised the initial capital for the undertaking. He then got in touch with two Danish political refugees already in Sweden. They were Ebbe Munk, chief of the secret Danish Information Bureau in Stockholm, and Leif Hendil, an editor. The latter proved to be a most enterprising and brilliant organizer who refused to accept anything as impossible. Together with Philipson, and with the co-operation of the Swedish Foreign Ministry and other Swedish government offices, he organized the above-mentioned secret sea communication line between Denmark and Sweden under the Swedish flag with headquarters in Malmö. It is worth noting that the "service" continued operations even after all the Jews had been cleared from Denmark.

It engaged in bringing non-Jewish refugees and in carrying to and from Denmark spies, British parachutists and saboteurs.

Despite all these efforts, some Jews in Denmark did not manage to escape and about 460 fell into the hands of the Nazis. They were deported to Theresienstadt, where they were treated comparativly well. An order of the Nazi High Command to have them all liquidated before May 10, 1944 was never carried out. With the exception of about 45 who had died in the meantime, they were all brought back home in April 1945 in busses of the Swedish Red Cross.

It is quite obvious that the Swedish authorities and the Jewish communities and individual Jews in Sweden were not ready for so sudden an influx of several thousand Jewish refugees who had to be supplied with food, clothing and shelter. Thus, Dr. Carl Mannheimer, head of the Jewish community in Göteborg, received in one day 130 relatives from Denmark. During the first half of the month of October 1943 the number of Jewish refugees who had come to Malmö exceeded the number of native Jews in the city. Practically every Jewish home in the city took part in the relief activity. There was not enough room in the community offices to register the refugees and the synagogue had to be opened for this purpose. Besides the material needs of the refugees, their religious and cultural requirements were taken care of. They were given a place to worship and their children were given schooling, including vocational training.

Jewish relief committees were active not only in the large cities, but also in the smaller towns and hamlets. All along the coastline of the Skāne, relief committees were organized to co-operate with the government in rescue activities. Those committees enjoyed the support of the local population which displayed extraordinary devotion to the cause of saving refugees. People would receive the newcomers in the dark of the night and find asylum for them.

The costs of this relief activity were very great. The money was provided by special campaigns and taxes imposed on the members of the communities. Jewish organizations abroad, especially the JDC, also helped. The refugees from Denmark, Jews and non-Jews, whose number reached 20,000, established a "central relief office" in Stockholm, with branches in other parts of the country. The office was under the supervision of the Danish embassy in Sweden, which, since August 29, 1943 functioned as an independent agency, without contact with the homeland. The expenses of the office were covered mainly by credit in the Swedish central bank. But the expenses were

greatly reduced when the Swedish government showed generosity in issuing work permits for the refugees. The first director of the office was a Danish Jew, Professor Stephan Hurwitz, who was succeeded by another Jew. Jews and non-Jews were all treated equally. By the end of the war the number of Jews from Denmark in Sweden numbered 5,919 full Jews, 1,301 half-Jews and 686 non-Jews married to Jews. These figures do not include the 425 Jews who were brought to Sweden by Count Bernadotte from Theresienstadt. Thus, no less than 93 percent of the Jews of Denmark in the critical weeks of the fall of 1943, following the German raid, were rescued and brought to Sweden.

This rescue action was unique in Jewish history. The unanimous resoluteness of the people of Denmark in protecting their Jewish fellow-citizens and Jewish refugees is not equalled anywhere except perhaps in Holland, where the population unfortunately did not have the same opportunities for helping the Jews. Moreover, the position taken by the Swedish government was unique, in its protesting to Berlin against the persecution of Danish Jews and in its decision to open the doors of its country to the Jews of Denmark. In this, the government of Sweden had the full support of the Swedish people. Although these steps were taken at the time when Hitler's star began to wane, it nevertheless entailed a certain amount of danger to that small country. Finally, it must be noted that nowhere were Jewish refugees given such a warm reception as the Jews of Denmark in Sweden. The attitude of reserve towards the Jews of Germany which had prevailed in Sweden before this time underwent a radical change when the Jews of Denmark had to be saved. The story of the rescue of the Danish Jews reads like a legend. A Danish Jew, Julius Margolinsky, who had himself played an important role in the rescue work, rightly observed that if the Biblical canon had not been closed the saga of this rescue activity would have been accepted into the Sacred Scriptures in the same way that the book of Esther had been included in the canon.[9]

RAOUL WALLENBERG AND THE ATTEMPTS TO SAVE THE JEWS OF HUNGARY

On March 19, 1944 the Magyar Nazis seized power in Hungary and immediately set out to exterminate the Jews, whose numbers,

[9] Private report by Julius Margolinsky, Copenhagen (in manuscript).

including the half-Jews, amounted to about one million. The first steps were taken in the provinces. Preparations were also made to confine the Jews of Budapest in a ghetto and later to deport them to death-camps. Admiral Horthy was now regent only in name. Plans began to mature in the minds of some people for a large project to rescue the Jews of Hungary through the mediation of neutral Sweden. The initiative originated with Norbert Masur, a prominent Jewish communal leader in Stockholm. In a letter to the Chief Rabbi of Sweden, Dr. Marcus Ehrenpreis, on April 16, 1944, Masur proposed that they secure the services of an eminent non-Jew who, with the help of the Swedish Foreign Ministry and with financial aid from the United States, would establish contacts with the Swedish embassies in Bucharest and in Budapest and would organize rescue activities to save the threatened Jews. The activity was to be carried on simultaneously in Rumania and in Hungary and the rescued Jews would be brought to Turkey. Dr. Ehrenpreis endorsed the project.

At the same time, the United States Department of State, following the representations made by American Jews, requested Sweden to utilize its position as a neutral state to intervene in behalf of the Jews of Hungary. The Chief Rabbi of Switzerland asked Dr. Ehrenpreis to ask the King of Sweden, who was known to be a staunch opponent of antisemitism, to intercede with Regent Horthy in order to prevent the extermination of the Jews of Hungary. Dr. Ehrenpreis waited on the aged sovereign and King Gustav, the oldest and perhaps the most respected monarch in the world, telegraphed to Horthy, appealing to him "in the name of humanity" and "in the name of the reputation of Hungary among the nations of the world," to try to save the Jews of Hungary from death. Regent Horthy replied that he would do everything possible under the circumstances to see that the principles of justice and humanity were respected. The Pope also addressed a similar request to Horthy. The intervention bore fruit and the deportations which had already begun were discontinued. But the danger was still ever-present.

Even before the intervention of King Gustav of Sweden a suitable man was found in Stockholm to carry out the mission in Budapest. This was Raoul Wallenberg, a thirty-two year old businessman, a scion of a prominent Christian family in Sweden, which had played an important role for many generations in the country's finances.[10]

[10] In certain circles in Sweden and in Germany it was thought that the family

Wallenberg's name was suggested to Dr. Ehrenpreis on May 15 by the former's business associate in Hungary, Dr. Lauer.

At the same time preparations were under way in Stockholm for another campaign to rescue the Hungarian Jews. The Executive Committee of the War Refugee Board set up by President Roosevelt, through the United States Ambassador in Stockholm, Herschel Johnson, asked the Swedish Foreign Ministry to designate a native Swedish citizen who would be prepared to carry on rescue work in Budapest. Later, when Dr. Lauer met with Ivar C. Olson, United States financial attaché in Stockholm and representative of the War Refugee Board, the arrangements were concluded. Both agreed on Wallenberg. It is possible that Raoul Wallenberg first applied privately to Ivar C. Olson and thus brought about the American intervention at the Swedish Foreign Ministry. Wallenberg was named as secretary of the Swedish embassy in Budapest, which gave him diplomatic immunity. On June 6, 1944 Wallenberg set out with only a knapsack on his back which contained a list of Jews who were to be given priority in rescue and of Catholic and Protestant anti-Nazis whose assistance could be expected.

The Nazis, fearing the effects of the open slaughter of Jews upon the native population and upon the neutral embassies in Budapest, tried to carry out the deportation of the Jews to what they called "labor camps" in the west, but what were really extermination camps. Wallenberg made it his business to keep delaying the deportations, hoping that in the meantime Allied bombers would put the railway communications out of commission or that the approaching Russian armies would enter the city. Horthy, under pressure by the Pope and by the neutral powers, wavered between dread of Hitler and fear of reprisals by the victorious Allies if Hitler should fall. Wallenberg skillfully exploited the situation. Upon his recommendation the Allies gave Horthy assurance that if the deportations would be discontinued his name would be stricken from the list of war criminals. As already mentioned, Horthy put a temporary stop to the deportations. Wallenberg used the time thus gained to add a new department under his charge in the Swedish Embassy for the sole purpose of rescuing Jews.

In order to protect Jews from deportation Wallenberg made out several hundred Swedish passports for those Hungarian Jews who

was Jewish. This is entirely untrue. As far as it is known, the family is descended from Protestant clergymen.

had relatives or business contacts in Sweden. He devised a new kind of passport which he called "Protective Passport." It bore the Swedish colors and the stamp of the embassy with his own signature. Such a passport was to enable the bearer to return to his home in Sweden at the first opportunity and called for his protection as a Swedish citizen until he reached his goal.

At first the protective passports were issued only to people who had some contacts with Sweden, even though the contacts for the most part were fictitious. But when the Nazi terror increased Wallenberg relaxed his requirements and within a short time placed more than 1,000 persons under his protection in this manner. The Swiss and other neutral embassies followed his example. The Gestapo, Nazis and Hungarists refrained from interference, feeling that if they cooperated they might obtain such protective passports for themselves if need be. Even the extreme Nazis were reluctant to get into a conflict with the more moderate Hungarian police and officials.

The Budapest director of the Swedish Red Cross, Waldemar Langlet, also issued several thousand "protective passports" over his signature. But all this was not enough. Thousands of Jews besieged the Swedish embassy every day asking for protective passports. Soon there sprang up underground printing presses that produced counterfeit protective passports on a large scale. These operated independently of Wallenberg. But it was Wallenberg's influence that was responsible for saving numerous possessors of such passports from being deported even though these documents had no legal status.

Apart from that, Wallenberg used his protective passports as a means of bargaining with officials of the Hungarian police and constabulary. By giving them such passports Wallenberg hoped he could induce them to release thousands of arrested Jews. The scope of these exchanges increased as Hitler's position became more shaky in Europe.

Wallenberg worked indefatigably, sometimes twenty hours a day. Branches of the Swedish embassy were opened in various parts of Budapest with extra-territorial rights. His staff came to number 660 persons, including their families. The main thing was that these protective passports would have had no value at all if not for the fact that behind them stood an energetic, enterprising and fearless man who intervened personally in behalf of every possessor of such a passport who was molested or seized.

When the Szalasi government took away from the Jews their food

ration cards and issued an order to the police to check the ration cards of all persons on the streets and detain those who had no cards, Wallenberg again showed his resourcefulness. In one night he and his staff prepared thousands of documents bearing the stamp of the embassy and a facsimile of his signature and indicating that the bearers were entitled to the return of their ration cards. Thousands of persons were thus saved from arrest and deportation.

When the Szalasi government later issued a decree that only the possessors of regular neutral passports were to be treated as privileged foreigners, Wallenberg again issued thousands of certificates indicating that the protective passports had the force of regular passports. The issuance of such certificates was tantamount to the annulment of a government decree and to intervention in the affairs of the Hungarian government. But they saved thousands of lives.

Wallenberg's cool self-possession and his dauntless determination served as an inspiration to his subordinates who acted as his agents and negotiated in his name. He organized commandos, consisting almost exclusively of Hungarian Jews, to carry out the release of prisoners. The commandos often wore the uniforms of the Hungarian police and of the Hungarian military forces and at times even of the S.S. or of the Hungarists.

The day arrived, October 15, 1944, when the German and Hungarian Nazis took over entire control of the government in Budapest. A reign of terror was inaugurated which lasted for three months. For Wallenberg this was a period of heroic struggle trying to keep the murderers from their victims, while two Russian armies tightening the noose around the city were raining explosives on the population.

The neutral embassies were located in Buda while the largest part of the Jewish population lived in Pest, across the Danube. When the terror reached its peak Wallenberg transferred his offices to Pest in order to be closer to the persecuted. He did so against the advice of his superior, Ambassador Danielson. He rented 32 large houses which he placed under the protection of extra-territorial rights. Those houses were packed full with men, women and children who sought refuge from death; on October 16 the streets of Budapest were littered with the dead bodies of Jews and opponents of the new regime. The Swedish Red Cross and other embassies followed Wallenberg's example and set up extra-territorial centers. In this way the so-called International Ghetto was created in which 13,000 people lived under more

humane conditions than the 80,000 in the real ghetto who were crowded like cattle. Jews were not permitted to leave their residences under any circumstances for ten days.

Suddenly the Gestapo declared all protective passports as invalid (somewhat later they were again declared as valid). Only here and there individual members of the police could be induced to honor them. Now a real struggle ensued between the Gestapo and Wallenberg and his staff in which the lives of thousands of unfortunate Jews were at stake. The railway line to Auschwitz had been destroyed by bombing but Jews were herded together at large assembly centers and from there ordered to march on foot to Auschwitz. They were placed under the control of young Hungarists who exulted in their power by whipping the Jews and forcing them to keep on the march day and night. The Jews received neither bread nor water on the way and whoever failed to move his bleeding feet quickly enough through the deep snow and mire was mercilessly shot down by the young Hungarists. Thousands of Jews died on the way from cold, hunger, thirst and exahustion.

These days and nights were a veritable inferno for Wallenberg. He was on the road almost all the time, accompanied by his Jewish chauffeur. Step by step he followed these marching columns of deportees. Jews recognized him, thousands of hands were stretched out toward him and mothers held forth their children to him. All called upon him to save them.

Every morning Wallenberg would receive lists of the Jews arrested during the previous night. He would sign protective passports made out for them, place them in his file and secure permission to take out these charges from the marching lines of deportees. Then he would go to the assembly centers and when the lines began their march he would follow them. Each time he would force the commandant to release ten, or a hundred or even more of his victims. If he succeeded in winning the respect of the commandant he would first of all take out of the lines those whose names he had in his file, and then those who had protective passports of the Swedish Red Cross and finally all those under the protection of neutral embassies and of the Pope. Soon Wallenberg found it necessary to take along a truck on this death march. It would be loaded with bandages, warm clothes and shoes, which he would distribute among those he could not get released. He was, in this way, the messenger of humanity and civiliza-

tion for thousands of persons in their lowest degradation. Here too his conduct became a pattern to be followed by others. Soon officials of the Swiss embassy and Catholic nuns likewise went out on the road and aided the Jewish victims with bread, water and clothes. Many deportees were able to escape thanks to this help and they found refuge in monasteries.

Baroness Kemény, née Baroness von Füchs, the wife of the Foreign Minister in the Szalasi cabinet, rendered Wallenberg immeasurable assistance in his work. It was of the utmost importance to gain time. Days and even hours could save thousands of lives. Thanks to the influence of the Baroness with her husband, many deportations were delayed. In the meantime Wallenberg had protective passports made out for the intended victims, thus saving them from death. It was in these days that Wallenberg developed from a successful amateur diplomat to a Samaritan. He became an indefatigable leader and fighter. In persons who had already given up all hope he set aflame once again the will and courage to go on living and to defend their lives.

Wallenberg also succeeded in recruiting aid from among the Hungarian police and army. He took advantage of the fears that began to seize these helpers of the Nazis. He acquired stores of food for the hungry and on several occasions prevented the Hungarists from blowing up the ghetto.

On December 23, 1944 the Russian army stormed Budapest. With bombs raining down upon the unfortunate city the Nazi mobs took over complete control. The embassy buildings were looted by Hungarist squads and the diplomatic representatives were forced to hide in the cellars in Buda. Wallenberg was the only neutral diplomat who remained in Pest, continuing tirelessly to work for the rescue of his charges. He succeeded in winning over to his side the representative of the Hungarists in police headquarters. Through this officer he secured the help of police officials who hoped to save themselves and their families by co-operating in this way with Wallenberg. Acting together with Wallenberg's commando squad they were able to frustrate the plan of the Nazis to kill all the Jews.

On January 10, 1945 Wallenberg met with his staff for the last time. He reported briefly on the situation and stated that he intended to go to Debrecen, the seat of the provisional Hungarian government and the headquarters of the Russian Marshal Malinovsky. He had in

mind to present plans for the maintenance of the Jews who had remained without means during the critical period following liberation. Wallenberg had asked for permission to set up in the premises of the Swedish Red Cross in Budapest a Swedish embassy for the liberated territory. On January 13 a Russian patrol led by a sergeant arrived in the new Swedish embassy. Wallenberg registered as the representative of Sweden, the state that had Russian war prisoners under its protection, and as special protector of the Jews. He asked that the embassy be placed under Russian protection and that he be put in contact with the Russian commander. From then on he was under Russian guard. On January 17, 1945 he was heard from for the last time. He announced that he was to travel under Russian guard to Debrecen and he added: "Whether as a guest or a prisoner, I do not know." It has been established that as late as 1951 he was still alive as a prisoner of the Russians. But all attempts to secure his release and repatriation to Sweden have thus far been to no avail. The Russians claim they know nothing of him.

It would not be correct to characterize Wallenberg's activities as pro-Jewish. His prime concern was to save human beings in their hour of greatest need, without regard to their racial or ethnic affiliations. He was one of the few who entered the struggle without any external coercion at all. As a national of a neutral country he could well have enjoyed peace and comfort in Sweden. Instead of this, however, he joined the front lines of the battle and exposed himself daily to mortal danger.

Raoul Wallenberg's view of life was not at all heroic. He lacked the hard qualities which were so characteristic of many of the leaders of the resistance movements. He came into the orgy of blood of the Nazi war directly from the peaceful world of western democracy. It was this precisely that impressed those desperate people to whom he brought aid. They saw in him a revelation of a world which they thought had utterly disappeared from the scene, a world dominated not by hate but by humanity. It is no wonder therefore that Raoul Wallenberg has become a lengendary figure and a symbol of love for all Jewish survivors and their families who owe their lives to him. Through him the Swedish embassy in Budapest became a rescue center for countless Hungarian Jews. He was a diplomat of a most unusual character. Wearing a wind-breaker jacket and steel helmet, he went about unarmed amidst bloody bandits for whom human life was of

no consequence, a young man with no authority except that vested in him by Sweden and the name of King Gustav, or that which he was able to exercise by the assertion of his own personality.

RESCUE WORK IN GERMANY

As the end of the Nazi regime became increasingly apparent people in Sweden and in other neutral countries began to consider what could be done to save the surviving Jews still in the concentration camps. There was apprehension that the Nazis, in desperation, might kill them all off before final collapse. The activity which was started in Sweden for this purpose is connected with the names of Count Folke Bernadotte and Dr. Felix Kersten. Opinion is divided to this day as to which of the two deserves more credit for the work accomplished[11] and we cannot go into this problem here. Suffice it here to quote from the well-considered statement of Christian Günther, Swedish Foreign Minister during the war. And it should also be noted that the Swedish Red Cross expedition headed by Count Bernadotte was set up primarily for the liberation of Norwegian prisoners of war. This is what Günther writes:

> The Swedish Red Cross expedition for rescuing Norwegian and Danish war prisoners from German concentration camps certainly was not initiated by Felix Kersten or any other private individual. It was planned by the Swedish government. But Kersten's role was very great and perhaps decisive. It was through this mediation that contacts were established with Himmler and it was he who was responsible for winning Himmler's support of the project. As regards Jews and other prisoners Kersten accomplished very great things.[12]

Günther's conclusion is that without Kersten the Bernadotte rescue action would not have succeeded.

Felix Kersten, a Finnish physician, had made himself almost indispensable to Heinrich Himmler through the massage methods he devised for Himmler's nervous stomach. Kersten used his influence with his patient to save inmates of the concentration camps. In the fall of 1943 Kersten moved to Stockholm. On October 12, 1943 he visited Foreign Minister Günther, who was then engaged in making preparations for the rescue action mentioned above. Kersten promised

[11] Trevor-Roper, H. R., "Kersten, Himmler and Count Bernadotte," in *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1953) 43-45. See also Kersten, Felix, *Totenkopf und Treue*; *The Memoirs of Dr. Felix Kersten* (Garden City 1947); interview with Dr. Hillel Storch in *Dos Vort*, Munich, November 17, 1947.

[12] *Dagens Nyheter*, January 26, 1953.

to intervene with Himmler in favor of this plan the next time he visited him and this he did. Kersten managed to get Himmler's consent. At a later meeting with the Swedish foreign minister Kersten reported that he was also endeavoring to obtain the release of the Dutch internees in the camps. To this Günther replied: "Whomever you get released we shall gladly receive."

Before the conclusion of these negotiations, which had nothing to do with the Jewish victims of Nazism, Kersten met with the leader of the Swedish division of the World Jewish Congress, Hillel Storch. Storch asked him to use his influence with Himmler in favor of the Jews in the concentration camps. It was decided that Kersten should request from Himmler first that he permit food parcels and medical supplies to be sent to the Jewish inmates and then that he effect the release of as many Jews as possible, of whom five to ten thousand would then be brought to Sweden. Himmler was inclined to favor both proposals but he stipulated that the whole thing be kept secret from Hitler, who would never forgive him any concessions made to the Jews. Himmler also demanded that the matter be kept out of the press, for the report of such a transaction would be interpreted as an indication of the weakening of Germany. On February 1, 1945, 2,700 Jews were released from concentration camps at Himmler's order and brought to Switzerland. The news of this action elicited a wild outburst of rage from the Führer.

On March 15, 1945 Kersten was promised by Himmler that he would consider the proposal to permit certain Jews to move from the camps to Sweden and to Switzerland and that he wished to discuss the matter personally with Bernadotte who was charged with providing transportation to Sweden. A few days later Kersten suggested that Himmler negotiate directly with a representative of the World Jewish Congress. To this Himmler replied: "I cannot receive a Jew. If the Führer should learn of it he would have me shot." Kersten replied that a secret meeting could be arranged on his estate near Berlin and Himmler agreed. Kersten informed the proper people in Stockholm. He added that the representative of the World Jewish Congress might be able to induce Himmler to increase the number of Jews permitted to leave the concentration camps for Sweden. It was quite apparent that Himmler sought to curry favor with the future victors and that he believed that Jews and the World Jewish Congress could wield powerful influence in that direction.

While these negotiations were in progress Count Bernadotte made attempts to establish informal contacts with the Swedish government. He knew of the plans to help the Norwegian and the Danish internees. He also established contact with the leaders of the Swedish Red Cross. On February 16, 1945 he flew to Berlin to contact Himmler and he met with him on February 19. In the course of their talk Bernadotte touched on the fate of the Jews in the concentration camps and obtained a promise from Himmler that the camps in which the Jews were kept would not be evacuated and that the inmates would be handed over to the Allied military authorities. On February 21 Himmler informed Bernadotte that the Scandinavian prisoners would be assembled in one camp, at Neuengamme, near Hamburg, from which they could then be transported in the Red Cross busses which were at the disposal of Count Bernadotte.

A long-drawn-out wrangle began between Ernst Kaltenbrunner, chief of the Security Police, and Himmler's agent, Walter Schellenberg, which lasted for weeks. Kaltenbrunner made every effort to prevent Himmler from keeping his promise to Bernadotte. Schellenberg won. On March 1945 a large number of Danes and Norwegians were transported in the white busses of the Swedish Red Cross to Neuengamme. In April the order was issued for the Scandinavian prisoners to be taken to Denmark. But what was to become of the 20,000 non-Scandinavian internees? The armies of the Allies were approaching fast. On April 20 Bernadotte came to Berlin again and tried to contact Himmler that same day or night. Himmler had ordered the stopping of the transport of the Scandinavian Jews. As Kersten reports, Himmler had promised him to continue negotiations with Bernadotte regarding the release of the Jews, "mainly Norwegian and Danish Jews."

A few hours before Bernadotte secured access to Himmler on the morning of April 21, Himmler received Norbert Masur, the representative of the World Jewish Congress, on Kersten's estate near Berlin. Kersten was also present at the meeting. Masur had accepted Himmler's invitation to visit him secretly.[13] It lasted for two and one-half hours, until five in the morning, and was one of the most dramatic encounters of the war. On the one hand there was a free representative of the Jewish people and on the other hand one of the greatest

[13] Masur, Norbert, *En jude talar med Himmler* (Stockholm 1945).

mass-murderers in history, with the blood of six million Jews on his conscience, now in a desperate plight and looking for a way out. The most important result of these negotiations was Himmler's promise to release 1,000 Jewish women from the concentration camp at Ravensbrück. The 1,000 Jewish women were to pass as Polish women and their arrival in Sweden was to be kept secret.

A few hours later Himmler again refused to withdraw his prohibition to stop the Scandinavian transports. But when Bernadotte appealed to him to allow him to take out the French women who were interned in the camp at Ravensbrück, he gave permission to take out all the inmates without regard to nationality. That concession was made, no doubt, on the basis of the commitment he had made to Masur.

A few days later Himmler committed suicide and the Nazi Reich went up in smoke and ashes. There then began the rescue of the surviving victims. With the help of the Swedish Red Cross about 20,000 people were taken out of the concentration camps in April and May, 1945 and brought to Sweden. Of these, 3,500 were Jews. The women were mainly from the camp at Ravensbrück. In June and July, with the assistance of U.N.R.R.A., another 10,000 or 11,000 persons arrived in Sweden. About 80 percent of these were Jews, most of them from Bergen-Belsen. Almost all the 12,000 Jews who arrived in Sweden that year were from eastern Europe; 60 percent were from Poland. The overwhelming majority—80 to 90 percent—were women, of the ages between 17 and 30. Nearly all of them were fearfully exhausted by the ordeals they had gone through and many were so ill that they had to be carried from the ships. They were taken to hospitals, sanatoria and convalescent homes. Most of them were quickly restored to health and later, with the assistance of the state, were given vocational training to enable them to lead a normal life. Those who had no occupational training were, for the most part, given positions in the textile factories in various parts of the country, including localities in which there were no large Jewish communities.

In 1945 and in the course of the following years permission to settle in Sweden was given to some 300 relatives of the immigrants, to 1,500 skilled workers and their families and to 1,500 who had transit visas. Of the 14,000 to 15,000 Jews who had entered Sweden after Hitler's downfall, about 8,000, with the assistance of Swedish-Jewish relief organizations, emigrated to the United States, Israel and

Canada. Many went without outside aid, including 1,000 who went to Israel.

Of the Jews who entered Sweden during the Hitler period, about 2,500 or 3,000 remained in the country. A larger number remained of those who came in subsequently. Thus since 1933 the number of Jews in Sweden has doubled.[14]

[14] Apart from the works mentioned in the notes, the author drew on the following sources: Private report by Oskar Mendelson, Oslo (manuscript); Private report by Ivar Philipson, Stockholm (ms.); Private report by Emil Glück and Norbert Masur, Stockholm (ms.); Några ord och siffror om Mosaiska församlingens i Stockholm flyktingshjälp under åren 1933-1950 (manuscript in the Bureau of the Stockholm Jewish Community); Steen Sverre, *Norges krig, 1940-1945,* vol iii (Oslo 1950) p. 62, 430, 450, 473-490; La Cour, Wilhelm, *Denmark under besaettelsen,* vol iii (Copenhagen 1946) p. 357-368; Frisch, Hartvig, *Denmark besat og befriet,* vol. iii (Copenhagen 1948) p. 48-59; Möller, Per and Knud Secher, *De danske flyktinge i Sverige* (Copenhagen 1945) p. 17-31; Philipp, Rudolph, *Raoul Wallenberg, Diplomat, Kämpe, Samarit* (Stockholm 1946) and *Raoul Wallenberg, Kämpe for humanitet* (Stockholm 1947); Lévai, Jenö, *Raoul Wallenberg, hjälten i Budapest* (Stockholm 1948); Bernadotte, Folke, *Slutet.* Aina humanitära förhandlingar i Tyskland våren 1945 och deras politiska följder (Stockholm 1945).

JEWISH RESISTANCE IN FRANCE

By L. POLIAKOV

There was a great difference between the limitless sufferings which were the lot of the eastern European Jewish communities during the Nazi occupation and the distress of the Jews in the western countries during the same period. Great as was the tragedy of the western Jews, it was not marked by the same brutality as in the east. The causes were various: on the one hand, the Jews in the west were more assimilated to their non-Jewish environment, they were few in number and were more widely distributed among the general population; on the other hand, the enemy pursued a different policy in the west than in the east. In the west he acted with greater cunning and circumspection, to avoid shocking too strongly the native population, which was not as contaminated with the germ of antisemitism as the peoples of eastern Europe. The chief factor, however, was the attitude of the native population and the sympathy the Jews in the countries of the west received from their fellow-citizens. The difference is most clearly revealed in the simple numerical comparison of the number of Jews who perished. In Poland more than 90 percent of the Jews were liquidated, in France, the country which we will examine in this article, the losses were less than 30 percent.

Having said this, it is important to state, however, that in broad lines the problems posed for the Jews of the west were technically the same as those that faced their fellow-Jews in the east, and their reactions to these problems took on the same two forms: (1) passive resistance, carried out by the entire Jewish population and most particularly by the Jewish social agencies; (2) active resistance, animated by a handful of heroes who carried the youth along with them. We shall deal with each of these as they were carried out in France.

I. PASSIVE RESISTANCE

1. The Union Générale des Israélites de France (UGIF)

The most important factor dominating the evolution of the Jewish situation in France was the division of the country into two "zones"

and the existence alongside the delirious antisemitism of the Nazis of the more crafty and more "respectable" antisemitism of the men of Vichy. The situation thus created was a complex one. Some of the prominent Vichy leaders, like Pierre Laval, were quite indifferent to the "Jewish question." Pétain himself wanted a "solution" which would be patterned after the better medieval traditions and he even sought to cover himself with the authority of the Vatican for that purpose. (The Holy Ssee, far from entirely discouraging him nevertheless counselled "moderation" and "humanity".[1]) The Jewish Statute of June 1941, with its *numerus nullus* in public administration and public offices, and its *numerus clausus* in numerous other professions, was the concrete expression of such conceptions. Under these conditions the Germans, although they enacted a certain number of police measures in their zone of occupation, preferred to delay carrying out their major lines of policy in the hope that these would finally be taken by the French themselves and thus be better received by the French population. It should be remembered too that at the very beginning Pétain was acclaimed as a savior by a large proportion of the French people, including also a certain number of Jews.

Utilizing their experience in Germany, Austria and Poland, the Nazis sought to set up in France a "Conseil Juif," by means of which they would impose their will upon the Jewish community, which was being progressively reduced to slavery. Since the Germans thought it important to create the impression that the initiative for this action stemmed from the French, involved negotiations were carried on between the German embassy in Paris and Vichy, which in April 1941 resulted in the formation of the "General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs," under the direction of the well-known French antisemite, Xavier Vallat. At the behest of the German police, Vallat undertook to create the Union Générale des Israélites de France, an association which was to unite all the Jews of France and which was to be the representative agency of the Jewish community in France *vis-a-vis* the German and French authorities. In theory there was to be one single organization for all of France. In practice, however, there were two Jewish organizations corresponding to the two zones into which the country was divided. The UGIF of the "northern zone" was reg-

[1] Details are to be found in the reports to Pétain by Léon Bérard, Vichy Ambassador at the Vatican. See *Monde Juif* (October 1946) and the author's "The Vatican and the Jewish Question," in *Commentary*, November 1950.

ulated by the Germans, the UGIF of the "southern zone" was under the authority of the Vichy regime. Their careers were different and it is best to examine them separately.

The Northern Zone

When the Germans entered Paris a large part of the population, and nearly all the Jews, left the city. During the first few months after the armistice was signed the Germans tried to conduct themselves in a "correct" manner, with the result that there was a gradual return of the evacuees, followed by a partial resumption of Jewish communal life. It was not until December 1940 that the Gestapo experts on Jewish affairs appeared in Paris. Their first task was to amalgamate all Jewish activities in a manner that could be used as a foundation for the future *Judenrat.* Early in 1941 they forced the Jewish community to create the "Co-ordinating Committee," which subsequently became the backbone of the "UGIF, Northern Zone."

In any discussion of the "Jewish Councils" under the Nazis one must first consider the moral aspect of the problem. After the liberation a debate was carried on in France, as in all the other occupied countries, on the question of the UGIF, which pitted one segment of Jewish public opinion against another. The problem of participation in the UGIF, that instrument *par excellence* of segregation and ghettoization, is without doubt a most delicate one. Properly speaking, one cannot blame the Jewish leaders for having accepted this amalgamation into one association that was nothing more than a working agency, without any political coloration. It should be noted for the record that when the leaders of the "UGIF, Northern Zone" accepted their posts, they made their reservations quite clear in the following letter to Marshal Pétain, dated January 20, 1942:

> At the close of our first session, we have the honor, Monsieur le Marshal, to convey to you our sentiments and our unanimous resolution.
>
> We accept, with deep feeling, the task with which you have charged us to help our co-religionists, French and foreign.
>
> We accept—willingly and insofar as we shall not have to forego our twofold dignity as Frecnhmen and as adherents of the Jewish faith—to serve as mediators between you and our co-religionists, French and foreign.
>
> Nevertheless, as Frenchmen of an ancient race, whose families have clearly demonstrated it, we take the liberty to point out that it

> is impossible for us to accept the principle which excludes Frenchmen of the Jewish faith from the national community.
>
> You will permit us to convey to you that although we have been appointed by you, we have received no mandate from our co-religionists, French or foreign, and that we have thus far not been able to establish contact with our colleagues in the Free Zone. . . .

The letter was written before any deportations of Jews from France had taken place. No one at the time suspected any of the sinister measures that were soon to come. It is, therefore, only in the light of their subsequent attitude and the results of their activity that a fair evaluation can be made of the UGIF, Northern Zone.

Let us note here that the leaders of UGIF, Northern Zone were spared some of the tormenting trials to which Jewish leaders in other Nazi-occupied countries were subjected. In France you never had a situation where Jews were systematically presiding over the deportation of other Jews. As we have already indicated, the attitude of the French population, which strenuously opposed the policy of segregation and isolation of the Jews, made such degradation impossible.

The UGIF of the northern zone carried out a number of positive functions. It maintained actively a number of Jewish social agencies that provided assistance to tens of thousands of Jews whose situation had become increasingly difficult. It likewise gave relief to the Jews held at the camp in Drancy. It created behind a "legal" facade a network of underground assistance for Jews hounded by the police. It found asylum in the homes of "Aryan" French families for hundreds of threatened Jewish children. Such activities involved grave risks. On numerous occasions the Gestapo, tipped off by informers,[2] carried out

[2] Following is a sample of a denunciation by an official of the "General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs": ". . . It appears that the UGIF in both zones, and mainly in the Occupied Zone, under a mantle of an institution for public relief, is covering up a whole series of secret organizations for Jewish self-defense and is employing for that purpose means and resources outside its legal jurisdiction. . . .

"It has also been established that the first illegal fund was opened with the UGIF under various forms, and especially through the theft of sums of money from funds which the Commissariat itself placed at the disposal of the UGIF. . . . It is reported that those who receive relief are not those who need it most, not the poorest, but those who for some reason or other are in special need of assistance. That need is designated in their dossier by a secret code. For instance, a dossier with the inscription "Difficult Situation" really means "I am being sought for deportation," or that "Food requirements" means in fact the need to acquire a forged food card for people in hiding.

"Another aspect of Jewish self-defense, functioning under even more suspicious circumstances is the secert maintenance of various old organizations which were officially closed down. This activity is carried on with the criminal co-operation of UGIF and with the help of funds from abroad, no doubt through the help of

raids on the UGIF and a number of its members paid with their lives for their devotion. In July 1943 several members of the administrative council, including the president, André Baur, were arrested and immediately deported to Auschwitz.

On the debit side of the record one may mention, apart from the very fact of the existence of a Jewish body officially collaborating with the Germans, the doubtful procedure of financing its activities by levies on Jewish property looted by the Nazis, and especially the tragic event which took place during the confusion of the German debacle. Four weeks before the liberation of Paris, 200 children lodged in the children's homes of the UGIF, who might easily have been hidden and dispersed, were carried off by the Gestapo and deported. Let the reader draw his own conclusions of this tragic record.

The Southern Zone

In the southern or "Free" Zone the UGIF came into being only after long and arduous discussions. One group of Jewish leaders who were approached refused to co-operate. Among these was René Mayer, later prime minister of France. Others demanded guarantees that the UGIF would engage only in relief activities without involving political representation. This Xavier Vallat promised them. The manner in which "UGIF, Southern Zone" was actually constituted made it in practice the intermediary between the Vichy authorities and the Jewish relief organizations. It may even be said that it had no autonomous existence of its own as each of the seven sections was headed by a director of one of the social agencies, while Raymond Raoul Lambert, President of the "Committee for Refugee Relief" became its deputy administrator. Under these circumstances what really counted was the policy pursued by each of the seven sections. Particular problems for UGIF, Southern Zone only began when the Germans occupied the southern zone and all of France was subjected to the same regime. It was then that UGIF in the south, like the one in the north, became a front for underground activities, about which

fictitious names. The source of these funds, however, remains the greatest mystery. Thanks to those funds, for example, the 'Mother and Child' clinic under the protection of its innocent and purely philanthropic name, effectively operated as a factory for forged documents for Jews who wanted to escape from the Occupied Zone and as a well-fortified illegal fund for providing them with supplies on the trip. The whole work is being carried on with a caution which makes the problem of controlling it a very delicate one." *See L'Activité des Organisations Juives en France sous l'Occupation* (Paris 1947) p. 210-11.

more will be said later. The situation in which it found itself placed from then on is tellingly illustrated by a tragic event which took place in March 1943.

Early in 1943 the Germans, dissatisfied with the lack of zeal displayed by the French police, took the drive on the Jews into their own hands and German field gendarmes began arresting Jews on the trains and on railway stations in the "Free" Zone. With the consent of his colleagues Raymond Raoul Lambert decided to lodge a protest against this conduct, which was an infraction of the theoretical sovereignty of the territory under the Pétain government. Lambert went to Vichy but Laval refused to receive him. He gave expression to his indignation in the course of a conversation with the chief of Laval's office. He was thereupon denounced to the Germans by Antignac, a high official of the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, and immediately arrested and deported with his wife and four children to Auschwitz. We have here a Jew trying loyally and courageously to serve both his co-religionists and the "French state" of the time, a high official of that country in the role of a base informer, and the Germans in their habitual role of executioners. After the martyrdom of Lambert two trends became apparent in the UGIF, Southern Zone. One maintained that the organization must be disbanded or "scuttled" right away. The other group held that the responsible officials must remain on their posts. Each side had good arguments on its side. In the end, the fear that their resignations might affect adversely their colleagues in the northern zone prevailed and the officials of the UGIF in the south, placing the organizations on their guard, maintained a semblance of activity up to the very end.

Within the framework of the present study it is impossible to give a full account of all the organizations which were included in the southern UGIF or which functioned under the supervision of the UGIF, Northern Zone. We shall content ourselves with sketching the history of the Jewish Scout Organization of France which played a particularly important role.

2. The Jewish Scouts in France

The Jewish Scout Organization (Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France) before the war differed very little from the general scout movement in the country. When the war broke out the E.I.F., like all other scouts, also helped in evacuating the children from the cities to

children's homes in the provinces, in finding lodging for refugees and other such activities. The armistice and occupation, however, confronted the E.I.F. with a multitude of new tasks which rapidly changed the character of the organization. It now acquired a totally new physiognomy. The persecution of the Jews aroused in the Jewish youth a new interest in Jewish life, which greatly increased the scope of the work of the E.I.F. and which at the same time changed the orientation of the organization to less "French" and a more national "Jewish" spirit. Moreover, when the Vichy racial laws resulted in the ouster of many professors, officials and military officers, these groups brought to the movement a fund of technical skills of the greatest value. From merely an "amateur" movement the E.I.F. was transformed into a "professional" organization which did not limit itself to normal scout activities but which devoted the most significant part of its work to tasks of quite a different order.

The E.I.F. maintained the children's homes created in 1939 and managed to take in a number of additional children released from the Vichy concentration camps. In this way these homes which were originally set up as temporary shelters became permanent institutions, with schools and centers for professional training, with workshops in plumbing and carpentry, electrical work and mechanical dentistry and other such trades. These aspects of the work of the E.I.F. were inspired by practical necessity. But it was also strongly influenced by motives of an ideological character. The desire to develop a strong youth that would provide useful pioneers for Palestine, prompted the E.I.F. to set up agricultural schools for boys and girls. Several of the schools functioned to the satisfaction of both the pupils and the advisers for more than two years, until a new outbreak of Nazi persecutions forced the E.I.F. to disperse its young people among rural shops or board them in children's homes.

Once again the E.I.F. was forced to change its activities radically. One group, given the somewhat enigmatic title of "The Sixth,"[3] became the most important section. It helped in finding safe hiding places for children and adults, providing them with forged documents, bringing them food and clothing and visiting them regularly. The main task of "The Sixth" was concentrated on assisting the foreign

[3] The E.I.F. was assigned to the Sixth Division of the UGIF, the Youth Division. This may be the origin of the name. It may also have originated in derision of the German "Fifth Column."

Jews—Polish, Rumanian, etc. These foreign Jews, ignorant of the French language and without local connections, were particularly exposed to danger. Beginning with the summer of 1942 they were hounded down mercilessly by the Nazis in the larger cities. They had to be evacuated and dispersed in country homes or, better still, smuggled out of the country. For that purpose contacts were established with the religious orders, with Catholic and Protestant clergy, with friendly police officers and municipal authorities, with professional smugglers who covered the Swiss and Spanish borders and with the Resistance movement. As indefatigable "pilgrims of salvation," the young boys and girls of "The Sixth" spent their days and nights in trains and busses, going to and fro between the large exposed centers, Marseilles, Lyon and Nice and the evacuation zones in the Alps or the central mountain chain. Orthodox Jews presented a special difficulty, since they refused to shave off their beards and earlocks, and many of them did not speak a word of French. The leadership of "The Sixth" revealed an amazing precosity and resourcefulness. An example of such was Maurice Lobenberg, who, in the fall of 1943, established at Nice a laboratory for forged documents which managed to produce several hundred identity cards per day. At the beginning of 1944 Lobenberg became chief of the section for forged documents in the Mouvement de Libération Nationale, one of the principal groups in the French resistance. He met his tragic end in the cellars of the Gestapo just a few weeks before liberation.

It is impossible to do justice in the brief compass of this article to the manifold and necessarily disorganized activities of "The Sixth." A few figures will give an idea of the extent of its work. It rescued over 3,000 adults and over 1,000 children. Of the original 88 boys and girls of "The Sixth," 4 were shot to death and 26 were deported never to be heard from again. "The Sixth" was also the nucleus out of which evloved the Jewish Fighting Organization in France. This brings us to the second part of this study, the active resistance of the Jews in France.

II. ACTIVE RESISTANCE

1. Jewish Resistance

The young Jews of France who wished to offer armed resistance to the Nazis had two alternatives before them. They could join one of the French resistance organizations, whose doors were generally

open to them, (most Jews made this choice) or, being persecuted as Jews, they could join the ranks of a specifically Jewish organization.

The idea of an exclusively Jewish resistance was the achievement of a few dreamers. Under the slogan *"Faire face!"* in the summer of 1940, they drew up plans for a secret organization to fight the Germans. The initiator of the movement was the poet David Knout. At first these dreamers met with almost general skepticism. It was only two years later, in July 1942, when the large-scale deportations began, that their ardent appeal found an echo and, with the financial assistance of the Zionist Organization of France, the Jewish fighting organization was formed. The best forces of the organization were recruited from the ranks of the E.I.F.[4]

The activities of this small but heroic group are described in the passionate and on-the-spot testimony of Hubert Beuve-Mery, a member of the French resistance who fought side by side with the Jewish fighting organization and who is now the editor of *Le Monde.* Here are his words:

> Chance wished it for me to have Jewish fellow-combatants. These are not two or three Jews, lost in the mass of Maquis, but a compnay of two divisions, consisting almost exclusively of Jews, with its Jewish group leaders, Jewish section officers and a Jewish captain. The nucleus of this group came from the Jewish Scouts. . . .
>
> The suspicious tolerance which they enjoyed during the first few months of the Vichy regime did not last long. Placed outside the pale of the nation and constantly harrassed, they tried to cope collectively with their calamity. In secret they pursued a task which was exhausting and terribly dangerous. . . . But it was necessary to live (and by preference so) shoulder to shoulder and with the consolation and fragile protection of a common shelter.
>
> The group settled on a farm and took to agriculture. . . . Suddenly came the [Normandy] landings. The rural community constituted itself into a military formation and joined the Maqui in a body. Soon new elements were added, some non-Jewish, and the company grew to a hundred members. . . .
>
> The Germans launched an attack on one of the cantonments of the Jewish company. The struggle was violent but short. . . . Later the shrivelled body of the lieutenant was found near that of the company commander in the lying position of a sharpshooter. The Germans made short work of the wounded and the camp was burned down.

[4] It distinguished itself especially in the fight near Castres, in the environs of Mazamet, on August 19, 1944. It vanquished and captured the German garrison in the city consisting of about 3,500 men. See *L'Activité des Organisations Juives . . .*, p. 70-72.

A few days later the American breakthrough in Brittany led to a new disposition of forces. Although the Germans still enjoyed strong preponderance, their heavy tanks were moved to the north. Certain types of offensive operations now became possible for this daring group. The most stirring and most successful was the attack on a very heavily armed German train, carrying among other things five 20-millimeter rapid-fire cannon. It was a young Jewish sub-lieutenant, a recent graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique, who set off the charge, despite the risk of being buried or torn to pieces by the imminent explosion. A machine gun manned entirely by Jews engaged in a very unequal duel with German guns. After the cannonade ceased, Jewish patrols from time to time would remind the Germans that they were not forgotten. In the morning, when another unit, this time non-Jewish, mounted a few small guns, the Germans lost courage. From their improvised shelters the attacking Jews were able to see the German commanding officer come down into the road, symbolically and picturesquely enveloped in a sheet. While a young Jewish soldier made the Germans explain to him how their cannon was operated so that he would be sure to be able to set it going again, a rabbinical student took a count of the terrified prisoners who thus fell into the hands of the E.I.F. *"Ich bin Jude,"* he repeated, as he passed before them. It was the sole act of proud vengeance by these soldiers who suddenly became masters over their executioners.

Today, accompanied by these precious cannon and armed only with the weapons taken from the enemy, these Jews are fighting somewhere on the eastern front.[5]

2. The French Resistance

Jews played a very prominent role in the organizations of the French resistance. It is a little-known but nevertheless indisputable fact that the Jews made up 15 to 20 percent of the active membership in those groups, although they constituted less than one percent of the French population. It is impossible to give a complete picture of the Jewish participation in the liberation of France. That would involve the whole history of the underground struggle with its innumerable conspiratorial groups, each with its own story of countless adventures. A few examples will have to suffice.

One of the most glorious organizations of the French resistance bore the name "Libération." It was founded in 1941 by six persons, three of whom were Jews: Georges Zerapha, Samuel Aubrac and

[5] *Cf. Temps présents* (October 1944) no. 7; Knout, D., *Contribution a l'histoire de la Résistance Juiv en France, 1940-1944* (Paris 1947) p. 124.

Albert Kohan. Soon after it was founded, "Libération" began publishing an underground journal. Several months later, when contacts were established with the representatives of Free France in London, the organization undertook to gather military information for London. At the end of 1943 the Germans discovered the organization and put an end to it. Georges Zerapha escaped to London where he joined the Free French forces. Samuel Aubrac joined the Maquis in Provence and became Commissar of the Marseilles region after the liberation of France. Albert Kohan met a tragic end. This 64 year old Russian Jew showed himself to be a real conspiratorial genius. For 18 months he traveled from one end of France to the other organizing new branches of resistance in every place he visited. In April 1943 he was called to London for a month and there this sedentary merchant successfully passed the test for parachutist. On his second trip to London, however, the airplane in which he flew crashed into a mountain and put an end to his career.

In examining other important organizations, such as "Combat," "Franc-Tireur," "Liberté," and others, we always find Jews, whether at the top or at the bottom, in the same glorious, often tragic role. The same is true of the organization "Fighting France" (France Combattante) in London and especially of the BCRA (Bureau Central de Résistance et d'Action), which had the function of co-ordinating the activities of the organizations operating in France, of sending them arms and equipment and of lowering parachutist agents to maintain contact with them, etc. Among a whole list of heroic Jews we may mention the young Riviére, the first radio agent to be parachuted into France, and Jacques Bingen, who represented General de Gaulle with the resistance organizations in occupied France. In May 1944 the Vichy police arrested Bingen and rather than risk betraying his comrades he took poison. We may also mention Colonel Manuel, the right hand man of the famous Colonel Passy, head of the BCRA, who also accomplished several misions in France; the half-Jew Stephan Hessel, a young philosopher of great courage, who was a native of Berlin and who descended in a parachute in France in February 1944. He was denounced in July 1944 and deported to Buchenwald where he was sentenced to death by a German military tribunal. Hessel managed to escape by a ruse. He was active in the underground cell in Buchenwald. When a typhus epidemic broke out his comrades reported him dead and gave out the corpse of a typhus

victim as Hessel's. Another figure to be mentioned is Maurice Schumann, who was the voice of the radio of Free France which gave courage to the hearts of millions of Frenchmen. Among the Jews who joined the military forces we may note the name of Col. Victor Mirkine, a devoted Zionist who displayed legendary heroism. He was wounded three times and was cited five times with the highest decorations. Late in December 1944 he fell in the battle of Alsace. Mention should also be made of the Russian Jew Michael Schick, who fought in Russia with the famous squadron "Normandie-Nieman," and of the Moroccan Jew Max Guedj, the ace of the flyers of Free France, who shot down the greatest number of German planes. On August 25, 1944, the day of the liberation of Paris, Guedj lost his life while torpedoing a German tanker. Coutnless such examples of human heroism could be cited. We may also cite the credible anecdote which tells of a French Duke de G. coming to London and having to change his name (as was the general practice of all Free French volunteers) in order to protect his family at home from reprisals. The Duke de G. selected the name of Lévy in order to indicate in this fashion his solidarity with the Cohens, Blochs and Greenbergs who had become Durands, Martins and Vermonts, fighting that France might live.

JEWISH REFUGEES ON THE FRENCH RIVIÉRA

By ZANVEL DIAMANT

THE RIVIERA AS A CENTER FOR JEWISH REFUGEES

Soon after the "exodus" from Paris and its occupation by the Germans, and after France was divided into "occupied" and "non-occupied" zones, the report spread among the scattered Jews that a center for Jewish refugees had sprung up spontaneously on the Riviéra, especially in Nice, and that it was relatively easy to establish one's self there. The reason for this situation was chiefly economic. This whole region on the Mediterranean Sea was dependent on the tourist and hotel industry. All along the Côte d'Azure, from Fréjus to Cannes, Nice, Monte Carlo and Menton, the area was lined with magnificent villas, hotels and palaces, which in normal times housed the gayest vacation crowds in the world. During the war all these hotels and amusement centers were left vacant. When a Jew came and wanted to settle in one of the hotels the hotel-keeper had no difficulty in accommodating him and evading the anti-Jewish housing regulations of the Vichy regime. If he only was able to prove to the police that he had enough money to maintain himself without work or trade he was not molested. The report of the relative ease of registering in Nice soon spread everywhere among the Jews and all those who had managed to salvage some of their capital directed their steps to Nice.

First came the rich, next the moderately prosperous, and, soon also some Jews without means. The latter had to depend on the traditional benevolence of their fellow-Jews. Soon a number of philanthropically minded Jews organized a miniature local "Joint" in Nice, which functioned illegally. The leading spirits in this movement were Jacob Dubinsky, Khayim Preger, Mendel Vishniak and Mr. Toronchik. Wherever a Jewish refugee arrived from Paris or elsewhere in the occupied zone, or from a "forced residence" in the free zone which

had become unbearable, he was provided with asylum and he was loaned sufficient funds to show the police that he had independent means. He was then registered and thus got quasi-legal status. In this way a sizable Jewish community grew up in Nice and the city became known throughout the Jewish communities of France, Belgium and Holland as a haven of refuge.

The radio and the press in the "Free Zone" incited the populace against the "Jewish invasion" and crowds of students often marched through the streets of Nice, shouting "Death to the Jews!" Occasionally, too, individual Jews were assaulted and chased off the beach. But the will of the hotel-keepers, restaurant-keepers and the owners of the gambling casinos proved stronger than the antisemitic animus and propaganda. The Jews were able to live in comparative peace, hoping to carry on in this way until Hitler's defeat.

RABBIS, RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONARIES AND JEWISH WRITERS

The rabbis, religious functionaries and other observant Jews who fled from Paris, northern France and Belgium found it more difficult than other Jews to carry on their existence in the out-of-the-way, non-Jewish communities in which they landed or in the villages to which they were assigned by the Vichy police. They could not appear on the streets in their traditional Jewish garb, they had no synagogue, no *shohet,* no kosher food, and none of the other marks of orthodox Jewish life. Soon, too, their meager savings began to be exhausted and they were confronted with the problems of bare existence. Such individuals were among the first to be drawn to the Riviéra, especially to Nice. Nice thus became a center for orthodox Jews. The local committee took good care of them. They were housed in the spacious Hotel Roosevelt, a large hall was rented for them which served as a synagogue and house of study, and they set up a traditional rabbinic tribunal. While all over Europe Jews were subjected to terrible persecution and they had to conceal themselves under assumed Aryan papers, the French Riviéra, the very center of fascism and collaborationism, where all the new French antisemitic and fascist organizations had their general staffs and propaganda machinery, presented a peculiar spectacle. Here one could see rabbis in their traditional apparel walking through the streets, here one could listen to Talmudic discussions and hear the old tunes of Hebrew prayer and Talmudic study. The rabbinical tribunal held sessions in the hotel Roosevelt and adjudicated

cases. The fines charged against the defendants were turned over to the local committee.

Jewish writers, journalists and artists were also drawn to the Riviéra. Of the group of Yiddish writers who left Paris in June 1940 to trek over the roads of France, only Shloyme Rosenberg and Moyshe Dluzhnovsky managed to reach the coast, from which they sailed to north Africa and thence to New York. Zalmen Schneour and Daniel Charney remained in Paris. The present writer had volunteered for service in the French army when the war broke out and was later transferred to the Polish army which was raised in France. He was taken prisoner by the Germans, escaped prison and returned illegally to the occupied zone of France to look for his wife and children. Most of the other authors, newspapermen and artists were scattered all over the "Free Zone," mostly in "compulsory residence." Later the largest part of these writers were assembled in Nice. Here were Oyzer Varshavsky and V. Vevyorke, who later perished in deportation, the art critic Yehiel Aronson, the writer and dramatist Simkhe Shvartz, the journalists, I. Kh. Klinger and M. Blank, the artist H. Berlevi and the present writer.

The material position of the writers, who had never been rich, was very difficult. But the Nice committee took good care of them. They were provided with legal residence and supported generously. But the scarcity of food was such that only the very wealthy could afford to pay for a decent meal. Those who had to depend on communal support, notwithstanding all the good will, often had to go hungry.

As long as the "Free Zone" made a pretense of being a sovereign French state, there still was some contact with the outside world. One could appeal to relatives in America; the writers could wire to the New York Jewish Labor Committee and to the Y. L. Peretz Writers' Association and receive occasional help. One could also go to the United States consul or get in touch with the HICEM in Portugal and hope for a "special visa" to enable one to leave France by a ship, which occasionally sailed from Marseilles, or by clipper. Very few, however, were fortunate enough to escape. The maze of formalities, regulations and restrictions with which one had to contend at the United States consular offices made it impossible for all but a few to save themselves. Some who finally did obtain visas and had steamship tickets fell into the hands of the Germans and perished.

OPPRESSION, RAIDS AND "HERMITS"

The pressure on Vichy by the German ambassador Abetz became more and more pronounced. The antisemitic agitation in the press and on the radio grew more violent. Anti-Jewish demonstrations on the streets of Nice became more frequent. Synagogues were attacked and worshippers beaten up; windows were smashed in Jewish homes and stores; Jews were driven off the market places, where one could still obtain some food; they were ousted from the beaches, the cafés and the restaurants.

The police, too, following the order of Prefect Marcel Ribyère of Nice, intensified its restrictive measures against the Jews. It became more and more difficult for new arrivals to establish residence and those already established often had trouble getting their permits extended. This involved danger of internment in a concentration camp and for foreign Jews this could lead to immediate deportation. The least infraction of the law, such as buying bread or potatoes on the black market, led to arrest and the jails were filled with Jewish prisoners, the camps with Jewish internees.

Hitler and his ambassador to the Vichy government were not content with administrative restrictions against the Jews in the unoccupied zone. What they sought was the complete annihilation of the Jews in all of France. The Vichy government of Pétain and Laval, fearing the indignation of the French masses and wishing to maintain an outward appearance of sovereignty, were in no hurry to yield. Since it was impossible to refuse outright the demands of the overlord, Vichy meanwhile gave in to Abetz's requests regarding foreign Jews who had entered France after 1936. The practice of sacrificing the "foreign" Jews first was thus repeated in the free zone. Nice thereupon witnessed for the first time the terrible spectacle of mass-hunts of Jews on the Nazi model, executed in all their brutality by the Vichy police of the "New France."

Early on a June morning in 1942 strong police detachments surrounded hotels, villas, whole blocks of houses and dragged out of their beds terrified Jews who had come to France after 1936. The shouts, the wailing and the groaning broke the stillness of the morning. As had been the case in the occupied zone and in Paris, so here too the propaganda machine of the Vichy government had so prepared the ground that the Nice population looked on at this action almost with indifference. The radio and the press had "informed" the public that

these were all "criminals," "speculators" and "black-marketeers," and that they had entered the country illegally from Germany and from countries annexed by Germany, and that it was proper for France to get rid of these elements who, on top of all, were inciting to revolt and were consuming the bread of the French population.

Fortunately the underground movement had already struck deep roots in France, especially in the Alpine sections of the country, and Jews were also connected with the movement. In this way information about the pending raids had reached the Jews through secret channels. Whoever could manage to do so changed his address or went into hiding and many Jews were saved in this way.

These Jews in hiding were nicknamed "recluses" or "hermits." The Committee had the difficult task of furnishing them for months in their hiding places with all their necessities. Among those who distinguished themselves in this heroic work were Jacob Dubinsky, Khayim Preger, commonly referred to as "Reb Khayim," and the artist Berson. Despite their advanced age these men worked indefatigably in the heat of the summer and disregarded all danger to themselves to provide the Jews who were in hiding with all the necessities that could be gotten.

JEWS UNDER ITALIAN OCCUPATION

In 1942 the political and strategic situation took a turn in favor of the Allies. The summer offensives on the Russian front failed to bring the Germans the victories they had expected; the Soviet counter-offensives in the winter inflicted heavy losses on the Nazis; the United States entered the war; the British Eighth Army scored great victories in Africa; the Allied air-force carried out nightly raids on munition factories in Germany and on military bases in Italy; the Americans landed forces in north Africa; the French in Algeria sued for peace; the Maquis and the partisans stepped up their attacks and sabotage. On November 10, 1942 Hitler ordered his armies to occupy all of France.

The Jews of Nice were seized by panic. It was now clear that the days of "tranquillity" were gone and that under the rule of the Germans and their French collaborators the avenues of escape would be closed. Soon, however, a report spread that southern France would be occupied not by the Germans but by the Italians. This was somewhat reassuring. It was known that Mussolini, though Hitler's ally,

had not introduced in Italy the kind of anti-Jewish legislation the Nazis had imposed. The Jews of the Riviéra hoped for a milder regime under the Italians.

On November 11, 1942 (Armistice Day), strongly-armed police detachments marched through the streets of Nice. Military units guarded all government buildings, because for several days the Free French radio in London had been calling on the French to stage patriotic demonstrations. No demonstrations took place that day. But something took place which was of tremendous importance to the Jews of France: the Italians, rather than the Germans, arrived to occupy the city. Italian troops occupied the coastal area, the towns and villages of the following eight departments: Alpes Maritimes, Var, Hautes Alpes, Bas Alpes, Isère, Drome, Savoie and Haute Savoie. Before the war there were 15,000-20,000 Jews in those eight departments; how many there were now was not known.

The French population received the Italian invasion with suppressed hatred and quiet resignation. The Italian population, which is considerable in that part of France, welcomed the soldiers as their own. The Jews looked upon the marching troops with anxiety and fear but hoped that the Italians would be more humane than the Germans and would not deliver them into Nazi hands.

SIGNOR ANGELO DONATI

The German military defeats aggravated the fury of the Germans and their French collaborators. They pounced upon their Jewish victims in the newly-occupied regions, such as Toulouse, Lyon and Marseilles. German S.S. and Gestapo detachments, aided by French police, informers and antisemitic gangs, surrounded hotels, homes and hiding places, dragged out Jewish men and women, including sick and aged, herded them into trucks and carried them off to "unknown destinations." Now the Vichy government offered no resistance to its masters: there was nothing to lose. All of France was occupied and there was no more need to play the comedy. Any child could see that the "New French State" was a mere sham, that the actual masters of the country were Hitler, Himmler, Abetz and their lackeys, Pétain and Laval.

On the one hand, the French fascist rulers, seeing their power wavering, sought to vent their fury on the Jews; on the other hand, however, the situation served to awaken the conscience of many

Frenchmen who until then had stood aloof from the resistance movement. The Maquis and the partisans in the hills in Haute Savoie and in the Vosges increased in numbers and in influence. Acts of terror against the German occupying power became a daily occurrence. Many Jews left their places of hiding and joined the ranks of Fighting France.

In Nice the Prefect of Police, Marcel Ribyère, intensified the terror against the Jews. The police and the gendarmes stepped up the search for Jews who had come in after 1936 and later they extended their hunt to Jews who had come in after 1933. It was now no longer a secret that Laval had promised Hitler in July 1942 to deliver into his hands 50,000 Jews from the unoccupied zone of France. Vichy was now forced or was anxious to fulfill the promise with a surplus.

The position of the Jews in the Italian-occupied regions was also desperate. At first the Italians did not interfere, being too busy fortifying the important coastal defenses entrusted to them by the Axis. They left the matter of the Jews to the Vichy authorities. It then occurred to Jewish leaders in Nice that it might be possible to induce the Italians to offer the Jews protection. It was decided to try to contact them. Here emerged the noble figure of Signor Angelo Donati, an Italian Jew who enjoyed the respect of high-placed personalities in the Italian government and at the Vatican.

On December 20, 1942 the Prefect of Alpes Maritimes issued a decree ordering all foreign Jews in his department to be deported to the Drome and Ardèche departments, which were now under German occupation. There was no doubt that these Jews were slated to further deportation "to the East," as the official version ran. Signor Donati thereupon appealed to the Italian Consul-General in Nice. He drew his attention to the following circumstances: first, that the repressive decree also affected Italian Jews living in that department; second, that, if the decree were to be carried out, Italian Jews in occupied France would be in a less favorable position than Italian Jews in Italy; third, that the Italian authorities, as the occupation power, would bear the responsibility for the deportation of any Jews.

The Consul-General agreed with Donati. He immediately sent a telegram to the Foreign Ministry in Rome, presented the situation and asked for instructions, recommending, for his own part, that the Italian government resist the persecution of the Jews in its occupied territory. Signor Donati also had influential friends in Italy to whom

he appealed. Soon a telegram arrived to the military occupation forces in Nice, ordering them to oppose the persecution of the Jews in their territory.[1]

There was rejoicing among the Jews of Nice. In the very midst of helpless suffering there suddenly appeared, as if by a miracle, a corner in Europe which became an asylum for the Jews and where the military authorities, Hitler's allies at that, took them under their protection. The Jews could hardly believe it and prayed that it only last. In the meantime the Jews of Nice began smuggling into the Italian-occupied zone Jews from other parts of France, occupied by the Germans or under the Pétain-Laval regime.

The newly-created circumstances made it possible to accomplish a good deal. The Jews of Nice, not content with being in a privileged position themselves, wished to make their country a center of aid and rescue for all those Jews who could reach their town, the only bright spot in the darkness of Europe. An enlarged committee was formed, including among its members Joseph Fischer, Yisroel Yefroikin, Herman, Kellman, Alter, Levin, Fink, Massis, Topiol and Toronchik,[2] all of them responsible communal leaders. Modiano and Dubinsky took over the financial aspects of this vast undertaking. This historic event evoked great enthusiasm among the Jewish population. Well-to-do Jews came forth with substantial contributions. Jews of the middle class also helped, each according to his means. The Jewish youth, too, from the Right to the Left, threw itself into the work with selfless devotion. It was necessary to maintain contacts with the underground, to prepare forged documents, to travel over various departments, to spot proper localities and to seek out smugglers for bringing over Jews from the German-occupied zone. The young people, with their French spirit, their knowledge of French and with their familiarity with the country and its people, were well-suited for the job. Yet many fell into enemy hands and paid with their lives.

GERMAN AND VICHY INTERVENTION

The synagogue on Boulevard Dubouchage became the seat of the Committee and the center for Jewish refugees. Here the terrified and worn-out refugees arrived, those that had been smuggled out and

[1] The full text of this correspondence was published in L. Poliakov's *La condition des Juifs en France sous l'occupation italienne* (Paris 1946) p. 21 ff.

[2] According to Poliakov, Erdmann was also a member of the Committee, and the chairman was Joseph Fischer. *Cf. op. cit.*, p. 25.

those who had arrived by themselves from Belgium or from Paris. Day and night the synagogue was like a busy beehive. Representatives of the Committee were engaged in work here, and there was plenty of work to do, because the arrivals were completely destitute. Here too people came to obtain information, to find out how relatives could be rescued and to exchange news and plans.

The synagogue also became a center of secular Jewish culture. The Jewish writers and artists organized a league which arranged literary soireés attended by large crowds. There were larger celebrations, such as the anniversary of the death of Y. L. Peretz, the Herzl anniversary, Hanukah and Purium festivals. Every Saturday the well-known preacher from Brussels, Mr. Fenster, spoke before large audiences. The well-known rabbi and scholar of the Paris Jewish section (the *"Pletsl"*), Rabbi Rubinstein, presided over *"sholosh sudes"* with appropriate rabbinic discourses. The artist Berson directed the Jewish education of the children, and the writers and artists organized the celebration of Berson's birthday and an exhibition of his paintings.

All these things incensed the Germans, the Vichyites, Prefect Ribyère and his police and all the fascist and antisemitic organizations in Nice. In Paris Pierre Laval could not rest. He addressed a query to the Italian ambassador. He could understand, he argued, that Italy would protect her own Italian Jews, but why non-Italian Jews? He pointed out that Italian policy created an embarrassing situation for the French since French citizens of the Jewish faith were now in a worse position than the foreign Jews. (The Italian did not take under their protection French citizens who were Jews. They referred them to their own *"patrie."*) But the Italians insisted on asserting their authority in the region they occupied.

To the credit of the Italians it must be stated that they extended their protection even to Jews who had violated certain French laws such as housing and food regulations. They told the French that the offenders could be penalized with fines and even with imprisonment but could not be deported. The French antisemites then adopted the practice of attacking Jews physically. When they started a march on the synagogue on Boulevard Dubouchage, the Committee got in touch with the Italian authorities and the military commandant of Nice stationed a guard of carabinieri in front of the synagogue. When the prefect refused to legalize the stay of newly-arrived Jews or to issue identity cards and food ration coupons to them the Committee again

appealed to the Italian occupation forces and the latter empowered the Committee to issue to the refugees its own identification cards stamped "Synagogue Boulevard Dubouchage." Capt. Salvi, of the carabinieri, told the prefect personally that he would order the arrest of any policeman who would detain those Jews. The Germans sent Ambassador von Mackensen to Rome to lodge a protest against such "unheard of" conduct by an Axis power towards Jews. Donati and his friends used their influence to counteract the pressure and Mussolini merely promised that as of March 26, 1943 he would no longer tolerate any newly arrived Jews. Mackensen was not satisfied, while the Jews, for their part, knew that they could stamp the documents as antedating the deadline.

In yet another important case the Italians took the side of the Jews against the Nazis and their French collaborators. When the Vichy government promulgated a law that all documents issued to Jews bear the stamp *Juif* (Jew), the representatives of the Italian occupation forces refused to allow the law to be applied to Italian Jews or to Polish, Czech, Austrian or even German Jews, whom they viewed as stateless refugees under Italian protection. Donati and other representatives of the Committee induced the Swiss, Turkish and American representatives to request the Italian authorities that the law be not applied to the Jews who were citizens of their respective countries. The Italians promptly acceded, and a paradoxical situation arose again, when the police could apply the law only against French Jews. The prefect exchanged several telegrams with Vichy and in the end only a few French Jews, who had not been properly informed, went to the police to have their papers stamped *"Juif,"* and the law was completely nullified.

THE NICE REFUGEE CENTER UNDER ITALIAN PROTECTION

The Committee of Boulevard Dubouchage was confronted with a very difficult task: on the one hand, it strove to utilize every possible opportunity for rescuing the largest possible number of Jews and to concentrate them in the Italian zone; on the other hand, it presented a heavy burden on the meager financial resources of the Committee, for the food scarcity had become more and more acute. Following their occupation of all of France the Germans despoiled the country and took everything to Germany. The Italian occupation forces were large, since Italy was entrusted by the Axis with the defense of the whole Mediterranean coast against Allied invasion.

Hunger and deprivation among the Nice population grew from day to day. The resistance movement made use of the situation and called for demonstrations and revolt. Women with children in their arms demonstrated, demanding bread and milk for their children and the return of their husbands whom the Vichy government had sent to Germany to work. The Vichy regime and the fascist organizations which had control over the radio exploited the situation to blame all the troubles on the Jews who had come in "illegally." They asserted that the Jews engaged in speculation, that they paid high prices and were hiding and hoarding food and starving out the French people.

The Jews and their leaders were on the horns of a dilemma: being devoted to the cause of the resistance, they had to agree that it was ncessary to provoke unrest against Vichy and those among them who were active in the movement took part in the agitation; but it was in their immediate interest to have peace and quiet in the Italian zone, for there was always the danger that the Germans would come in to "re-establish order," and then everything would be lost. Following lengthy consultations between the Committe and the Italian occupying forces, it was decided, in order to avoid playing into the hands of antisemitic propaganda, to establish Jewish refugee centers under the supervision of the Italians, but maintained by the Committee. The Italians requisitioned several large hotels in Saint-Martin, Vesiby, Megève, Vense and Barcelonet, and thousands of Jewish refugees were transported to them by bus, truck and car. All the expenses were paid by the Committee.

At first the Committee encountered difficulty in effecting this transfer, since few Jews were eager to go into a new camp and many tried to use their connections in the Committee to get out of it. Tempers were ruffled. But the Committee was determined and, armed with the authority bestowed on it by the Italians, successfully carried out the transfer of several thousand Jews. Schools were established in the centers, the one in Saint-Martin bearing the name of Angelo Donati. ORT classes for occupational training were opened and branches of the OZE functioned. Jewish writers were occasionally invited to lecture or to read from their works. In time the inmates came to like their centers. The air was good, the landscape magnificent and food was provided by the Committee. The Italian carabinieri were stationed there more to protect the Jews than to restrict their freedom.

A PREFECT MEMBER OF THE RESISTANCE

The resistance movement spread throughout France, extending over an increasing area and penetrating into high offices. Priests and nuns hid Jews, especially Jewish children, in the churches and monasteries. The Archbishop of Toulouse delivered a sermon in the cathedral in which he condemned the persecution of the Jews on French soil and called upon Christians to give aid to these innocent and unfortunate people as to their own brothers and sisters. This call by a high ecclesiastic personage evoked a strong echo among the population. The Archbishop of Montauban read a similar appeal and had it distributed among his parishioners.

The Jewish resistance organization was founded in Toulouse in 1941 and consisted, for the most part, of Socialist-Zionist youth and of Jewish scouts. It was supported by the clandestinely functioning Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency and the Federation of Jewish Societies. It now spread its activities through all of France and it found it easier to make important connections. It was the period when priests and nuns and Protestant clergymen organized groups of starved, worn-out French children to take them to Switzerland. The Jewish resistance movement managed to place a few Jewish children into each of the groups, particularly children whose parents had been deported. The children remained in Switzerland. The work entailed grave risks, but the young people who carried it on were fired by selfless idealism.

As the Germans sustained crushing defeats in Russia the hatred of the French population for the occupying foe grew in intensity. And with the rise of the resistance movement the sympathies of the French for the Jews also increased. In July 1943 Marcel Ribyère was deposed as prefect of police in Nice and he was replaced by André Chennault, a member of the resistance.

The new prefect invited the Jewish representatives, Modiano, Donati and others to come to see him and expressed his regrets over the savage anti-Jewish laws and his sincere sympathies for the persecuted Jews. "I will not allow any violence against Jews in my department," he declared, "but neither will I leave the privilege of defending the Jews only to the Italians; I will not allow the occupying power to usurp the part of tolerance which has been an ancient French tradition." After this interview came the sensational demand by the prefect to legalize the residence of all Jews in his department, including those serving terms in jail for various infractions such as

illegal entry, failure to renew residence permits, traveling without special permits, buying food on the black market, etc. The legalization was to take effect upon the completion of their jail terms.

The Germans did not relent. They could not endure the toleration of Jews right under their noses. Von Ribbentrop himself went to Rome to lodge a protest with Mussolini. The latter was inclined to yield but Donati brought new influence to bear. At his request officials in the Foreign Ministry collected a mass of documents relating to the massacres perpetrated by the Germans against the Jews in Poland and presented them to Mussolini with an accompanying letter strongly recommending that the Italian people must never allow themselves to become parties to such crimes. This had the desired effect. Mussolini merely promised Ribbentrop to send a special emissary to southern France with special power to investigate the Jewish situation and make recommendations.

The emissary was a certain Signor Lo Spinozo. When he arrived Donati had the Capuchin priest Benoit Marie go to see him. Father Marie was a member of the resistance and a friend of the Jews and he won Signor Lo Spinozo to his side. Lo Spinozo again left the authority in the hands of the Committee of Boulevard Dubouchage under the supervision of the local occupying forces.[3]

DONATI TRAVELS TO ROME TO SAVE JEWS

All political signs pointed to the pending collapse of Italy's position and its defection from the Axis to join the Allies. Among the members of the Committee plans were discussed for transferring the Jews to Italy if the expected should happen. For this purpose it was necessary to bring to Nice all the Jews in the seven French departments under Italian ocupation and those of the refugee centers. This was an undertaking which required immense sums of money and the consent of the Italian government. Donati now tackled this problem. On July 23, 1943 came the fall of Mussolini and his government and Marshal Badoglio took over the reins of power. On August 28 the Italian Council of Ministers decided not to oppose the flight of the Jews from France to Italy. Donati left for Rome at that time. He negotiated with the Badoglio government, with the United States Ambassador to the Vatican, Tittman, and with the British Ambassador

[3] More details about the investigations of Lo Spinozo can be found in Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 101-29.

Osborne. Italian clergymen also tried to secure an audience with the Pope for him.

The British ambassador warned Donati, during their conversation, that he risked being held by the Gestapo and that, in that case, the Italian government would be unable to help him, since he was subject to the death penalty for dealing with the enemy. Signor Donati, in the finest tradition of the Jewish *shtadlen,* persisted in his efforts. He demanded that the Italian government admit Jews and that the Allied powers, after the armistice with Italy, transfer the Jews to North Africa.

The Badoglio government agreed to admit 30,000 Jews. An agreement to that effect was signed by the Italian government, by Donati and by the Committee of Boulevard Dubouchage. Signor Donati now waited for the consent of Britain and the United States, of which he felt quite certain. So sure was he of such consent that he began negotiations with shipping firms to transport the Jews to North Africa. In the meantime, on September 3, 1943, Badoglio secretly concluded an armistice with the Allies. It was agreed that the fact was not to be made public for four weeks. During that period Donati planned to effect the evacuation of the Jews to North Africa.

The Nice Committee concentrated as many Jews as they could in the city. About 20,000 Jews were brought in on fifty trucks hired by the Committee. Many Jews came into Nice of their own accord. It was expected that the Allies would recognize Italy's claim to Nice. Besides, nearly every Jew was determined to follow the Italians to Italy if they evacuated Nice.

Unfortunately, the Allies did not act quickly enough to save the few Jewish survivors. The Allied ambassadors wired to their governments and were told the proposal would be taken into consideration. Then Donati was informed that the matter had been referred to the Inter-Governmental Refugee Committee. Donati was helpless against the procrastination. Hoping and trusting that the Allies would give their consent before he returned home, he went back to Nice.

THE FINAL TRAGEDY

For various diplomatic and strategic reasons the Allies evidently could not keep the secret of the Italian armistice and released the sensational news on September 8, while Donati was en route from Rome to Nice. All hope was gone now. The Italians began hastily to evac-

uate their positions. Evacuation started in Nice, too. The Jewish population was in panic. Everyone awaited the decision of the Committee, whose prestige had grown tremendously in the meantime. But the Committee was helpless and disorganized. Donati had not returned. The permission of the Allies had not arrived. Some were in favor of evacuation without organization; others felt that without Allied permission to move to north Africa, flight to Italy entailed greater dangers than staying on the spot, for there was no doubt that the Germans would fight in Italy. The expected help from the Allies failed to arrive and the Germans entered within three days.

Only a few hundred Jews fled with the Italian army and were treated with sympathy by the army, the Italian population and the partisans of Italy. Subsequently, however, most of them fell into the hands of the Germans and suffered the fate of the six million Jews. Among the victims was also the Yiddish writer Oyzer Varshavsky.

In Nice the Germans and their lackeys took brutal venegeance upon the Jews. As soon as they arrived they staged raids and hunts for the Jews. The Germans demanded of Prefect Chennault that he give them a list of all the Jews in Nice. Chennault asserted that he did not have it and that the Allies had taken it with them. In the meantime he destroyed all copies of the list and all other documents that might have brought harm to the Jews.

The few Jews in Nice now suddenly found themselves drifting without leadership. The Committee was forced to leave the synagogue on Boulevard Dubouchage as soon as the Italians evacuated Nice. French hoodlums tried to stage a pogrom there. From a small hotel on a side street the Committee distributed the little money it had left and advised each individual Jew to hide or flee as best he could. When a report arrived that a gang of hooligans was marching on the hotel the last meeting of the Committee was dissolved.

Some of the loyal representatives of the Committee, like the well-known Labor Zionist leaders, Alter and Toronchik, braved danger to distribute aid to needy Jews on the streets. Alter fell into German hands while he was attending the funeral of a Hebrew teacher, a lonely refugee who had died of tuberculosis in a hospital in Nice.

The Germans raided hotels, homes and villas day and night. They stopped everyone on the street who looked like a Jew. Suspects, even though they carried "Aryan" documents, were taken into a house or court-yard and given a "physical" examination. If found to be cir-

cumcized they were beaten mercilessly and taken to an assembly center.

Many of those who had managed to find hiding places were denounced to the Germans and were taken away at night. The Germans paid 2,000 francs per head for such denunciations. Thousands of Jews—old people, sick, women and children—were caught by the German S.S. and Gestapo and deported to "unknown destinations." Those who witnessed or lived through these infernal scenes in Nice can testify that they were the equals in brutality of the actions in the ghettos of Warsaw and Vilna. Among the thousands captured in those raids were: the Parisian artist Monchnik and his wife, the violinist Speiser and the novelist and journalist W. Vevyorke and his wife, daughter and son-in-law. All of them later perished in the crematoria of Auschwitz.

During those days many young Jews risked their lives to carry food and other aid to those in hiding. They forged "Aryan" documents for those who had prospects of leaving the country, and they risked their lives to take children into Switzerland. Not a few of these self-sacrificing young people were caught by the Germans and brutally murdered, without even their graves being known. Their memories remain inscribed in the hearts of the survivors in western Europe as heroes of the same order as those that perished in the struggle against the foe and for the honor of their people.

In 1946, when Angelo Donati was a delegate from Italy to the Congress of the International Red Cross, he told the present writer that unfortunately the sole responsibility for what happened to the Jews in the Italian zone must be borne by the Allies.

APPENDIX

TEXT OF THE SERMON BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF TOULOUSE

Mes trés chers fréres

Il y a une morale chretienne, il y a une morale humaine qui impose des devoirs et reconnait des droits. Ces devoirs, ces droits tiennent à la nature de l'homme. Ils viennent de Dieu. On peut les violer. Il n'est au pouvoir d'aucun mortel de les supprimer.

Que des enfants, des femmes, des hommes, des péres et des méres soient traites comme un vil troupeau, que des membres d'une même famille soient séparés les uns des autres et embarqués pour

une destination inconnue, il était reservé à notre temps de voir ce triste spectacle.

Pourquoi le droit d'asile dans nos églises n'existe-t-il plus?

Pourquoi sommes nous vaincus?
Seigneur ayez pitié de nous.
N. D. priez pour la France.

Dans notre diocése, des scénes d'épouvante ont lieu dans les camps de Noé et de Récébádou. Les juifs sont des hommes, les juives sont des femmes. Les étrangers sont des hommes, les étrangéres sont des femmes. Tout n'est pas permis contre eux, contre ces hommes, contre ces femmes, contre ces péres et méres de famille. Ils font partie du genre humain. Ils sont nos fréres comme tant d'autre. Un chrétien ne peut l'oublier.

France, patrie bien aimée, France qui porte dans la conscience de tous tes enfants la tradition du respect de la personne humaine, je n'en doute pas, tu n'es pas responsable de ces horreurs.

Recevez, mes chers fréres, l'assurance de mon affectueux dévouement.

Jules Geraud ALLIEGE
Archevéque de Toulouse

22/VIII/42

A lire dimanche prochain sans commentairs.

THE RESISTANCE OF THE GREEK JEWS

By ISAAC KABELI

When Italy attacked Greece in 1940, the whole country, which had until then tried to stay out of the war, offered determined resistance. The Greek Jews threw themselves into the fight with all their heart and soul.[1] According to data compiled by the Jewish community of Salonica, of which this author was the Director at the time, 12,898 Jews joined the Greek army.[2] This number included 343 officers, 2 lieutenant-colonels, and one colonel, the national hero Mordecai Fraggi, who fell on the battlefield of Porido. The total losses sustained by the Jews in the battles with the Italians and later with the Germans were 613 dead and 3,743 wounded (of which 1,412 were completely incapacitated and 862 partially incapacitated).[3]

While the losses of the Greek army in general amounted to 12 percent, Jewish losses on the battlefield were 34 percent. The sacrifices of the Greek Jews for their country were thus incomparably greater than those of their non-Jewish fellow-citizens. "They fulfilled their duty to their country in full measure," wrote Marshal Alex Papagos, then commander-in-chief of the Greek forces and later prime minister of Greece.

After the German intervention and the conclusion of the armistice, most of the Greek army was demobilized. The remaining battalions which returned from the front fled to the southern part of the country, mainly to Athens, which the enemy was not expected to reach. Over 1,500 young Salonican Jews decided not to return to

[1] Testimony to this fact is found in the Order of the Day, November 13, 1940, issued by the Third Army Corps; Orders of the Day of the Governor-General of Salonica, issued on December 25, 1940; a letter by Governor-General Kyrimis to the President of the Jewish community in Salonica, dated January 1, 1941, which says: "In the name of the Greek state, I congratulate you on the heroism displayed by the Jews on the field of battle..."; a letter from Prime Minister Metaxas to Isaac Sciaky, Senator from Salonica, dated January 4, 1941 which reads: "I am proud of our Jews and I consider the country fortunate to have such Jews. . . ."

[2] Statistics of the Ministry of War, issued on November 1, 1946.

[3] Statistics of the Jewish community of Salonica, issued March 31, 1941.

their homes but went to the south to carry on their struggle for Greece and for the cause of their suffering Jewish brethren. On April 27, 1941 the German motorized army occupied Athens. A strict 24 hour curfew was imposed on the entire population. There was no mail, no windows were to be opened and not even a light was to be seen. It was a "dead city." Officially, as far as the mainland of Greece was concerned, that marked the end of the war. The King of Greece and the government found asylum on the island of Crete, from which Greeks, together with remnants of the British army, fought on. On the mainland the war was carried on by guerillas and partisan fighters up to the hour of liberation.

The resistance of the population commenced as soon as the Nazis entered Athens. In the first months of occupation there was no organization of the resistance movement. It became well organized between August 1941 and December 1942, and from then to December 1944 it assumed a strictly military form. Armed resistance was waged in the cities, in the mountains, on the sea and on the islands.

Although the Jews ran greater risks in taking part in the resistance than the non-Jews,[4] they joined the small bands from the day they were formed and they carried out the most dangerous assignments.[5] Over 300 Jewish soldiers from different cities in Greece took up arms in the snow-clad mountains and battled with the Germans and Italians.[6] After four or five months nearly all the Jews of Athens, and especially the college and university students, joined the more than fifty-four different underground resistance organizations.[7] This did not include the strictly military formations organized by the Allied army in the Near East, which consisted of Greeks, British, Americans and others.

To co-ordinate the activities of all the resistance groups and to attain better results it was decided at the end of 1941 to organize them into two large bodies. These took in almost the entire population of Greece. The more important of the two was "The National Organization" under General Napoleon Zervas. It was from the very start placed on a military basis and built up as a guerilla force. More-

[4] Chrysochoou, Athanas, General of the Greek Army, *Sketches of National Resistance in Macedonia* (Athens 1949).

[5] Official Report of the National Committee of the Greek Resistance, issued November 24, 1949.

[6] Michael Kaleyeropouros, letter to the editor of *Vima* of May 25, 1948.

[7] Kokkinos, D., "History of the Second War," vol. ii.

over it remained aloof from party politics. The organization had only one aim in view, to fight the enemy, and not the parties which at that time supported King George. The other body, larger and more numerous than the first, was the "National Liberation Front." It was organized above all in the larger cities, especially in Athens. The center of activities for the "National Organization" was in Epirus, where the mountains and forests provided hiding places for guerilla fighters. The "National Liberation Front" centered its activities chiefly in Athens.

It was natural for the Jews, who could not make a move without danger to their lives, to enroll in "The National Front." From the first days they carried out missions which called forth the admiration of their leaders.[8] The most difficult objective facing the resistance groups at that time was to carry out acts of sabotage against military centers, to destroy industrial installations and ships carrying German munitions and, mainly, to disrupt as much as possible the enemy's lines of communication. Jews participated and distinguished themselves in these dangerous assignments.[9]

Early in 1942 the British high-command in Cairo discovered that Rommel's Afrika Korps was being re-inforced by new military units arriving from Greece. The main line of communication between central Europe and the Balkans passed over the Gorgopotamos Bridge, whcih was 338 feet long and which connected northern and southern Greece. Over this bridge passed the only rail line available to the Germans and every day train-loads of German soldiers were being transported in haste to Africa. The British High-Command requested Gen. Zervas to blow up this bridge. In the commando raid which succeeded in carrying out this most difficult and dangerous operation there were more than forty Jewish participants. All of them were cited for courage and bravery.[10]

Resistance organizations that were either entirely or predominantly Jewish were formed early in 1943 in Salonica, Athens and in Thessaly. All these units were headed by either Greek or British officers. The Jewish resistance organization in Salonica was headed by the well-known journalist Elie Veissi, who had been the proprietor of

[8] Treantafyllou, P., "Four Years as a Partisan in Athens," p. 102.

[9] Declaration by the leader of the revolt, Zalacostas, deputy of the Greek parliament, of July 25, 1946.

[10] Commander of National Army: "How We Blew up the Gorgopotamos Bridge" (Salonica 1949).

the Judeo-Spanish paper *Messagero.* Veissi knew German well and he was summoned at first to serve in the Jewish community organization of Salonica, which was then engaged in a merciless struggle with the Gestapo. He refused this call and continued to retain the confidence of the German officers who were billetted in his house. Through this association he was able to gather information of inestimable value which he transmitted through the underground to Cairo and to the military centers in the Near East.[11] Close collaborators of Elie Veissi were Mentesh Bensantzi, a well-known journalist and president of the Zionist Federation of Greece, the former deputy Jacques Ventura, the poet A. Molho (he wrote under the name of Napoletan),[12] the brilliant lawyer and former president of the Bnai Brith in Salonica, Yom Tov Yacoël,[13] the former senator Isaac Sciaky, the lawyer Abraham Levy and Shemtov Alalouf.[14]

Although the Jewish partisan organization in Athens was not as large and as well-organized as the one in Salonica, it also had no mean achievements to its credit. The principal leaders were Baruch Sheby, a journalist, Emmanuel Levy, a merchant, Eliyahu Levy, a high government official, Simon Cohen, a lawyer, and Sam Sides. The organization worked closely with the famous British officer Jeffrey Rakkliff, who was himself of Jewish origin. Rakkliff perished in a battle with the Germans[15] in which three other Jews lost their lives.

The National Resistance Organization in Thessaly, formed by the Jews of Volo, Larissa and Trikale after the arrest of the Jews in Salonica, was led by the chief rabbi of Volo, Moshe Pesah. Despite his advanced age Rabbi Pesah went into the mountains where, with gun in hand, he fought with the other Jews against the enemy.[16] At

[11] Based on four letters by Elie Veissi to the author of this article, dated February 2, 1943; March 3, 1943; March 14, 1943, and April 28, 1943.
On April 29, 1943 the Germans arrested Veissi and brought him to Auschwitz, where he died on April 24, 1944.

[12] Ben Yossef, "Jewish Writers and Newspapermen in the National Resistance" (Volo 1949).

[13] Kabeli, I., "The Greek Bnai Brith Lodge in the National Resistance" (Salonica 1949).

[14] It is worth noting that the last three were also members of various communal organizations in Salonica, which is why the Germans always kept an eye on them.

[15] Rakkliff was severely wounded and was taken away by the Germans. As they bandaged up his wounds, they noticed a tattoed inscription on his arm, reading, "I die, but England shall never perish." They then shot him to death on the spot (*Thisavros,* no. 578, 1949).

[16] The Greek king later rewarded him with the Great Golden Medal for his achievements for the country. In 1936 he was honored with the Gold Medal of King George I. The Chief Rabbi is now 90 years old.

his side were the brothers Mizrahi, Jacques Cohen, a former officer of the Greek army, and his son, Victor, who is now in New York. That group collaborated with the British sabotage commando in destroying military installations and creating havoc among the Germans in Thessaly.[17]

In Athens and in other parts of Greece, the Jewish resistance groups worked closely not only with the intelligence services but also with the partisan groups organized by the Allied High Command. Among these Jewish partisans the most famous was Sam Modiano[18] of Athens, who used to transmit messages containing important information through a wireless set he carried on him almost under the very noses of the Germans.[19] Modiano was also in close contact with the New Zealand officer Dan Stote who did a great deal for the Allied cause until he became an irresponsible adventurer.

After the defeat of Italy and the armistice of September 25, 1943, the Germans, who until then merely exercised control over military matters, took full charge over the city of Athens and southern Greece. The Nazis now put into effect the anti-Jewish laws which the previous Italian regime had closed its eyes to. The situation of the Jews in Athens and its environs became critical. The resistance groups in general but the Jews of Athens in particular were now at the mercy not only of the German authorities, who carried out searches day and night, but also of Greek traitors, who were ready even to hand over infants to death for the sake of money.[20] Despite all these dangers the resistance groups maintained continuous contact with the American, British and French officers who were attached to the Greek resistance[21] and with the various commando groups, and they were cited for bravery by General Wilson, the Allied commander in the Near East.[22]

The organizing talents of the Jewish resistance were best revealed in the close contacts they established between the various groups in

[17] Col. X, "The History of the National Resistance in Our Country" (Volo 1950).

[18] Sam Modiano was manager of the French-language periodical *Progres* in Salonica and is now correspondent of the Reuter News Agency in Greece.

[19] Colosakis, P., "Dangerous Services During the War" (Salonica 1949) p. 42.

[20] A traitor denounced two Athenian Jews, Mair Talvi and Sam Samuelides. They were arrested on the street and made to bring their children, who were taken with them to a concentration camp where they were all murdered.

[21] Greek officers also acted under instructions from Allied officers.

[22] Marshal Wilson, in an interview with the Athenian press, September 26, 1947.

Macedonia, Thessaly and Athens, despite the complete lack of means of communication between the various parts of Greece and despite the constant surveillance to which the Jewish organizations were subjected. They were able to establish contact with Col. Moch, the special envoy of the British government, who, among other things, was charged by his government to do everything possible to save whatever Jews remained in Greece. Unfortunately the mission of Col. Moch was not realized but his contacts with the Jewish partisans served to bolster the morale of the oppressed Jews of Greece.

On September 27, 1943 Gen. Stroop, the infamous hangman of the Warsaw ghetto, took over the command of the S. S. in Athens. On October 3 he issued a ruthless order according to which every Jew who did not report to the German authorities within five days would be shot and that any Greek who would provide shelter or asylum for any Jew would likewise be shot without trial. The Jewish organizationns, envisaging all the difficulties now confronting them in carrying out their work, decided to attempt to evacuate all the Jews from Athens with the help of other Greek national organizations. It was a difficult and dangerous task. Financial means for such an undertaking were completely lacking. The rich Jews had already left the city and the leaders of the community had also fled abroad. It proved to be impossible to organize a general evacuation of all the Jews but the Jewish resistance groups did succeed in rescuing hundreds of Jews from Athens and placing them comfortably in the mountains near the guerilla fighters or in remote mountain villages that were so inaccessible as to provide a safe haven for the hounded Jews.[23]

The Jews of Salonica, before this, had refused to listen to the warnings of the Jewish resistance organization and to the insistence of Yom-Tov Yacoël that the Jews seek refuge from the danger by leaving the city.[24] Despite all the appeals made to them to flee, the great majority of the Jews in the Macedonian capital remained in the city.[25] Between February 25, 1943 and May of the same year the Salonica Jews were deported to Auschwitz and almost all of them

[23] It is told that a number of Jews arrived from Athens to a remote village whose inhabitants had never set eyes on a Jew. When the local population showed signs of a hostile attitude, the priest, addressing the villagers on Sunday in the church, said: "Do you know that Jesus was a Jew? That He lived and died as a Jew? I therefore beg you in His name to save His brethren."

[24] Yacoël, Yom-tov, "My Diary," in *The Jewish Home* (Athens 1951).

[25] Only 3,400 out of the 68,148 Jews of Salonica fled to Athens.

met their death in the crematoria.[26] A few escaped to the mountains, where they carried on the partisan struggle with the enemy. Most of these were killed in action, some were massacred by the Germans and only a handful survived to recount the saga of heroism and self-sacrifice.[27]

On March 24, 1944, the Germans surrounded the synagogue in Athens and arrested the two hundred Jews who were inside. Two days later the Nazis dragged out 500 more from their hiding places. Nearly 700 Jews thus seized were taken to the temporary camp at Heidar where they joined other Jews who had been denounced. The rest of the Jewish population of Athens managed to survive with the help of their non-Jewish neighbors. These Jews soon organized a new form of resistance. In close collaboration with the Red Cross they succeeded in forming "assistance groups," whose task it was to bring food and money to the Jews who were in hiding. This was not a simple matter. There was danger involved for the Jewish partisans, for the concealed Jews but, above all, for the Greeks in whose homes the Jews were hidden. Fortunately these missions were carried out successfully up to the end of the war not only to Jews concealed in Athens but also to those hiding in the mountains and in the remote villages.

A number of Jewish partisans, passing themselves as Greek orthodox communicants, succeeded in getting into the German shipping installations in Piraeus and, together with their Greek comrades, they carried out extensive acts of sabotage. They blew up two large German munition ships destined to re-enforce the German armies on the eastern front.[28]

The crowning achievement of the Jewish resistance groups of Greece was the revolt they organized in Auschwitz for the purpose of blowing up the four crematoria of the camp. There were 135 Greek Jews who worked in the special commando group whose job it was to consign the Jews to the crematoria. At the head of this commando group were three former officers of the Greek army, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Baruch and the two lieutenants, Jose Levy and Maurice Aron. With them too were Isaac Baruch, Sam Karasso and Yom-Tov Yacoël. These men decided to blow up the crematoria with dynamite and thus

[26] Of the 65,000 Jews taken by the Germans to Auschwitz, only 1,475 came back.

[27] 57 perished and 43 survived.

[28] Col. Stuber, "Heroic and Legendary Deeds" (Volo 1949) p. 143, and Captain Constantinides, "The Truth about the Sabotage in Piraeus" (Athens 1945).

prevent the further extermination of Jews from central Europe. According to reliable information which they had received, large transports of Jews from Hungary and Bukovina were to be brought to Auschwitz on September 5, 1944. Detailed plans were made, with the co-operation of the other Greek Jews at Auschwitz, for the revolt to commence at 12 noon on September 6.[29] During the days before the appointed time they managed little by little to collect stores of dynamite, munitions and weapons, stolen from the German warehouses, and they brought them to a secret hiding place. On the morning of September 6 the 135 Greek Jews, with the collaboration of two commando groups of French Jews and one commando group of Hungarian Jews, blew up two of the four crematoria in Auschwitz, numbers 3 and 4. Numbers 1 and 2 were not blown up because at the last moment those entrusted with the mission lost courage. S. S. men came on the scene immediately and five planes came shooting down upon the heroic fighters. For over an hour the Jews maintained their valorous resistance until they were all shot down.[30] But the Nazis no longer had the facilities to carry out the same number of daily cremations as before.[31] They were forced to content themselves with a slower rate of liquidation—only 2,000 per day. When the great Allied offensive was launched the Nazis hastened to demolish the remaining two furnaces.

[29] *Cf.* Kabeli, I., "The Revolt of the Greek Jews in Auschwitz," in *P.A.M.E.M.* (May 1946); article on "The Crematoria in Auschwitz," in the "Greek National Encyclopedia," vol. ix, p. 783; Ben-Yossef, "Heroic Figures in Auschwitz" (Salonica 1950).

[30] The struggle lasted for an hour. All 135 Greek Jews fell, and four of the wounded were hanged a week later. Four German officers, twelve German soldiers and four civilians who helped the Germans were also killed.

[31] The transports of Jews brought to Auschwitz were taken to the gas-chambers to be gassed after which they were thrown into the crematoria. On July 24, 1944 the highest record was reached in the number of victims, when 46,000 were burned on that day. The smallest number was on September 4, 1943 when only 8,600 Jews were consigned to the furnaces. (See the Report of the State Commission to Investigate the Atrocities in Aushcwitz, published on February 24, 1945 in several languages.)

MUTILATED VERSIONS OF RINGELBLUM'S NOTES*

By J. KERMISH

Among the mass of materials of the underground archives of the Warsaw ghetto known as the Ringelblum Archives a special place is occupied by the notes and works (in completed as well as in fragmentary form) penned by Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum himself, the founder and moving spirit of the extensive documentation program in that ghetto. Because of his far-reaching communal activity in the ghetto, mainly in the field of documentation and research (the hundreds of manuscripts in the archives bear witness to the scope of his activities along the line of documentation), Ringelblum was in intimate contact with Jewish life and was one of the best informed people in the ghetto. A keen observer, thoroughly familiar with the mechanism and problems of occupation, a historian who thought in terms of the total Jewish community and in terms of Jewish survival, Ringelblum recorded in his notes (written in the heat of the moment in a cryptic manner and with all kinds of allusions) every happening in Jewish life while it was still fresh. "All that I had heard in the course of the day," Ringelblum wrote, "I recorded in the evening and provided with notes." When the staff of the ghetto archives (to which they gave the name *Oneg Shabat*) expanded he prepared weekly and monthly surveys of his daily notes.

In his evaluation of the *Oneg Shabat,* written after three and a half years of work on the archives, Ringelblum distinguished between two kinds of records: diaries and notes. The former were in a finished form, whereas the latter were planned to be completed after the war. Ringelblum's own notations belong to the first category, although he does not say so. In his personal notations as well as in his completed works, Ringelblum set the same goal for himself as he had outlined

* Emanuel Ringelblum, *Notitsn fun varshever geto,* Warsaw, Yidisher Historisher Institut in Poyln, Farlag "Yidish Bukh," 1952, Pp. 352. The Polish version of these notes is published in the *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego,* nos. 1-3 (1951-53), under the title "Emanuel Ringelblum, Notatki Z getta."

for his co-workers of the *Oneg Shabat,* namely to give a comprehensive picture of Jewish life at the time of the war, of all that the Jewish masses experienced, thought and suffered. "We have aimed at presenting in our works the entire truth," wrote Ringelblum, "regardless of how bitter that truth is. Our pictures are real, not touched up."

To insure the largest possible measures of objectivity Ringelblum endeavored to have the same events recorded, simply and responsibly, by several writers. In both his written and oral instructions he constantly stressed the need for objectivity, even with reference to our mortal enemies, and the desirability for presenting an objective picture of the attitude of the Germans toward the Jews. Hence we find in the archives considerable material that gives evidence to the humane attitudes of some Germans toward the Jews.

Ringelblum's notes comprise all aspects of ghetto existence: economic conditions, the relations of the Germans and the Poles with the Jewish population, the *Judenrat* and its institutions, the social services, religious life, labor problems in all their ramifications, such as labor camps, compulsory labor, catching people for work, the labor departments of the Jewish community, the relation between the Germans and the Jews during work, and other such phases. German atrocities perpetrated upon the Jewish population figure most prominently in the notations. Of great significance are the facts and details of the inner life of the ghetto, of men and their actions, thoughts and feelings in time of danger. In Ringelblum's notations are recorded not only the facts and happenings of daily life, depicting the atmosphere of those barbarous events and the gloomy mood of those days, but also evaluations of noteworthy incidents and issues. There is hardly an important event in Jewish life during the war that did not find an evaluation in his notes. These evaluations and elucidations are very important, for they frequently furnish a historical-synthetic survey of the various phases of the period in question. Thus, for instance, he reflects with analytic profundity upon the basic aspects of underground activity in the ghetto, the acute social differentiations, the social and cultural dynamism of the ghetto, the German strategy of war and treachery toward the Jews, the losses in the field of scholarship, literature and art, and similar phenomena, and expresses the thoughts of the remnants of the Jewish group about current problems of ghetto life after the great havoc of the summer of 1942.

The preparation of Ringelblum's manuscript for publication is

no easy task. The notes, as already stated, were not completed. In addition there are cards with mere outlines in a cryptic manner; others are in the nature of a first draft. Ringelblum planned to complete his notations after the war and had he lived to do so he would undoubtedly have introduced considerable changes and would have revised more than one formulation. Since it was not granted to him to correct his manuscript, it is the moral duty of the editors to do everything within their means to see to it that the work of the martyred author should come to the reader in substantially the same form as it came from his pen. The notations should have been provided with numerous footnotes, and it would not have been difficult to complete the fragmentary passages on the basis of materials from other diaries and chronicles found in the ghetto archives. Editorial footnotes are especially needed for those notations that were penned in a hurry, occasionally with mistakes or on the basis of unverified rumors. There are many such news items from the provinces as well as echoes from abroad that reached Ringelblum. The few highly subjective appraisals and opinions, mainly of persons, should also have been corrected in footnotes.

We looked forward eagerly to see the Ringelblum notes in book form because, despite the aforementioned shortcomings, they constitute one of the most important sources for the history of the Jews during the Hitler occupation. Unfortunately, the Warsaw edition of Ringelblum's manuscript is very far from meeting the elementary demands made upon an editor of a deceased author's work. It contains countless gaps and distortions that alter the character of the original and reduce its value.

At first glance the present publication gives the impression of a complete document. This impression is gained from the editors' appraisal of Ringelblum as a "historical source of inestimable value" and from the assurance by the editors that they "have not changed even the stylistic, orthographic and grammatical mistakes, although there are such mistakes undoubtedly because of the haste of ghetto conditions." This impression is strengthened by the editors' note that although they are not in full accord with all of Ringelblum's opinions they deem it necessary to publish his notes as a document of the times. Only because of a number of technical difficulties, they explain, it is impossible for the time being to publish all the notations. What are these technical difficulties? Some notations are almost illegible; in

some pages fire and decay have damaged certain passages. "The illegible and scorched passages were indicated by means of dots. . . . There were also difficulties in deciphering Ringelblum's illegible handwriting and in ascertaining many doubtful words." Objectively speaking, these are adequate and convincing motives for the editors' decision "to present to the public for the time being only those notations that they have succeeded in deciphering fully, although they are not always understandable."

These qualifications are, regrettably, only partly true. Nakhman Blumenthal, who was originally engaged in 1949-50 to prepare Ringelblum's manuscript for publication, has indicated (*Goldene keyt,* no. 15, p. 237) that "of the first part of the Ringelblum notations [that is those that had been discovered in 1946] more than a half were not included in the book." Nor are all of Ringelblum's completed essays published in this edition. His work on communal self-help, for instance, is missing.

The present writer, studied the original manuscripts in the Ringelblum Archives and has in his possession exact copies of these materials. He can testify, on good evidence therefore, that the substantive and important gaps in this edition of the Ringelblum notes have nothing to do with "technical difficulties." On the contrary, there are chapters and pages as well as whole lines and words that were not printed that are as legible and understandable as the ones that were printed. It is not even necessary to compare the published notes with the original (which we did in part) to be convinced of that. Suffice it to juxtapose the published Yiddish version with the same notes published in Polish translation by the Polish organ of the institute to see the great difference between the two texts and therefore to question the "faithful adherence" to the original. In the following critical remarks we shall not attempt an analysis of Ringelblum's notes themselves. This will have to be done after the publication of a full and complete edition of all the works in his handwriting. We shall deal mainly with the deliberate editorial changes in the Warsaw edition, which reduce to a large extent the great value of the work and which deny expression to several moments in Ringelblum's fact recording, feelings, opinions and elucidations.

The Polish version is more complete than the Yiddish. In the latter the following notations for 1940 are missing: January 7-9; February 15-19; March 2-30; April 13; May 2-9; August 14-22;

September 16-19; around October 10; October 20 (only one half printed); October 25-November 6; November 15; November 26 and 27; November 29-December 2; December 12-14 (news from abroad); December 31, 1940-January 5, 1941 (the second half is missing).[1] For 1941 the following notations are missing: February 27 and 28; March 18; April 6; April 20-May 4.[2] Thus in the Yiddish text for the period of 1940 to April 1941 over 60 printed pages are missing which are found in the Polish version. The editors did not deem it important to mention the changes they made in the Yiddish text in comparison with the Polish version. Unfortunately the Polish version is also not faithful to the original. It too is incomplete, containing many gaps and mistakes. The Polish version does not have the notations for January 15 and 16; February 15, 27 and 28, 1941 (one-half). Far worse is the fact that the Polish version abounds in omissions, ranging from a few lines to entire sections. Thus in the notation for February 1, 1940, the Polish text omits 22 lines of the 59 in the Yiddish text and in those of October 12 and 13, 1940, 42 lines of the 121 in the Yiddish text are missing.

Needless to say the omissions in the Polish version are not due to lack of clarity or illegibility of the text, for they are published in the Yiddish edition. There were other reasons for omitting entire sentences and sections in the Polish text; for not publishing either in the Yiddish or in the Polish version Ringelblum's notations for 1939, of the first months of the occupation, when for reasons of caution hardly any one kept a diary; for omitting the notations for a day or even for entire weeks. Even those notations that were published as fragments in the *Bleter far geshikhte,* such as some of the notations for December 1941;[3] April 10, 1942,[4] May 1942 (three entire pages)[5] and some notations for June,[6] were not reproduced in full in the published volume.

The omitted passages are usually those that deal with the relations of Poles, Jews and Germans, or with apostates, political developments, parties (both Jewish and Polish), survival, religion, and other such problems. On all such matters the Warsaw editors are very scru-

[1] *Biuletyn,* no. 2, p. 91-94, 99-101, 106-20, 122-25, 130-32, 136-37, 140-44, 156-57, 160-61, 164-72, 173-77, 180-82, 184, 87, 191, 94, 200-202, 205-207.
[2] *Idem.,* no. 1 (3), p. 49, 57-59, 61-63, 66-68, 70-75.
[3] *Bleter far geshikhte,* vol. i, no. 1 (1948) 21-22.
[4] *Ibid.,* 25.
[5] *Ibid.,* 41-43, 45-46.
[6] *Ibid.,* 48.

pulous, they simply do not print the passages they think unfit to publish.

Ringelblum endeavored to be as objective as possible in dealing with the delicate subject of relations between Poles and Jews in the days of Hitler. He recorded both positive and negative manifestations in his diary. On the one hand he noted with satisfaction (February 21, 1940) the considerable improvement in the relations between the Polish intelligentsia and the Jews, and the fact that on the first day of the closing of the ghetto very many non-Jews brought bread to their Jewish acquaintances and friends. He described the friendly attitude toward Jews during the beginning of the occupation on the part of officials in municipal councils, revenue departments and even in police headquarters. He recorded cases in which Poles taxed themselves for Jewish purposes and recounted Polish reactions to attacks on Jews by hooligans—reactions that were unknown before the war. Ringelblum also mentions the humane attitude of the Poles in Cracow, where all Polish parties, beginning with the P.P.S. (Polish Socialist Party) and ending with the O.N.R. (Camp of the National Radicals), taxed themselves for the benefit of Jewish transferees, and where Polish customers sent parcels to their Jewish merchants in payment of their debts. Ringelblum therefore maintained that one of the sad symptoms of the ghetto was the growing animosity toward Poles. "It is assumed," wrote Ringelblum in a notation for March 1940 which is not published. "that they [the Poles] are responsible for all economic discrimination. One generalizes upon the attacks of drunken youths of the trade schools (for example the Konarski School on Leszno) and draws sweeping conclusions, although in reality there are many symptoms of active anti-antisemitism." On the other hand, Ringelblum recorded carefully every case of an unfriendly attitude on the part of the Polish population. The antisemitic sentiments of the Polish population were strong enough to afford fertile soil for the agitation of the Nazis. Even some of the underground publications of the Camp of National Unity praised Hitler's policy toward Jews although they condemned barbarous methods. Ringelblum devoted a great deal of space to the phenomenon of militant antisemitism, to pogrom sentiments and pogroms. He also recorded the frequent cases of failure to return Jewish possessions hidden in the homes of Poles. The editors of the present volume systematically omit all such negative facts and reflections. This leads to a completely one-sided picture of the painful problem. The reader of the notes in the Polish translation

encounters only good and decent Poles; the bad ones have almost completely disappeared. Thus, for instance, the editors omit the notation for February 1, 1940, which recorded that "attacks on Jews take place on numerous streets: Chłodna, Żelazna; the attacks are coupled with looting." Similarly, the notation for October 23-24, 1940, is omitted. It reads: "Several days ago hooligans broke into 93 Żelazna Street and occupied Jewish homes. They hung out a crucifix and said: 'Dare touch it'." A few notations of attacks on Jews are published in the Polish version but they were considerably touched up. Wherever Ringelblum speaks of Polish hooligans and Polish robbers and murders, the word "Polish" is omitted. Examples of such editorial liberty are the notations for August 7 and 15-16, 1940. In the first notation Ringelblum wrote: "Today there occurred again attacks of Polish hooligans on Jews in the streets." The second notation reads: "Disorders in Praga; Poles plundered Jewish stores." In the Polish translation the words "Polish" and "Poles" disappeared. It does not convey Ringelblum's explicit words about disorders against Jews. "Everywhere Jewish shops were plundered," complains Ringelblum, "the stores were emptied, the most massive iron bars were torn out. In the first days only windows were broken. Later on looting began." This notation is rendered laconically: "Everywhere Jewish shops were plundered."[7]

The editors not only omit items concerning acts of violence, such as the aforementioned and similar ones (such as the notation for February 9-14, 1940: "Lately, non-Jews are standing in front of the gates and pull Jews inside. There the others [the Germans] empty their pockets,") but also omit items concerning individual behavior of Poles, such as the notation for January 4-6, 1940, about a non-Jew who threatened a Jewish tailor with Gestapo action. Ordinary "innocent" items, such as the following (from the above notations) are omitted. "The non-Jews who had moved into the Jewish homes from the southern part of the city exchanged their apartments for larger ones, whereas the Jews exchanged them only for smaller ones." Nor is there mention of such items as "in many instances the non-Jews demand and obtain key money" (notation for October 23, 1940), or, "The Poles petitioned, pointing out that the Jews are a minority on Złota Street," or, "The Poles resort to all sorts of ruses to increase the number of houses in the Polish section. Thus, for example, the gates

[7] *Biuletyn*, no. 2, p. 115.

of the houses opening on the Jewish section are walled up and only the gate opening on the non-Jewish section is left. . . . Some Poles select Jewish homes and appear there with dispossession orders from the city council. Thus these Jews are deprived of the right to exchange their apartments with non-Jews" (notation for October 12-13, 1940).

In June 1942 Ringelblum dwelt in detail upon the outrages committed by Polish treasury officials and policemen. Not a word of this is mentioned in this edition. Similarly, notations about non-Jewish maids are eliminated, as the one for October 12-13, 1940, which tells of the maids "doing as they please," and of "instances where they put on the garments of their mistresses," of employing Polish women to search Jewish women during the great raid at Hirschfeld's.

The following notation (for December 31, 1940-January 5, 1941) is a concrete example of Ringelblum's manner of writing and of his balancing positive and negative moments: "I heard that recently there had occurred demonstrations in the Polish sections, under the banner of 'Warsaw without Jews.' Simultaneously I also heard that sermons had been delivered in all churches calling upon the congregations to forget the misunderstanding with the Jews and not permit themselves to be instigated by the enemy [the Germans], who wishes to sow discord among the nations." This notation, however, is not published in the Polish version, just as the notation (for the end of March 1940) stating that "in the circles of the Polish intelligentsia the opinion prevails that the Jews have conspired with those [the Germans], resulting in mass arrests of non-Jews" was omitted. It is difficult to understand the omission of the following notation for March 18, 1941: "Every day the Polish newspaper incites against the Jews in connection with the typhus epidemic," although the reference is to official Nazi publications in the Polish language. The editors systematically eliminate from Ringelblum's lexicon the term "antisemite" and "antisemitic." Thus, for instance, the notation that "Nowodworski and other antisemitic lawyers are imprisoned because of the Jews" becomes "Nowodworski and other lawyers."[8] The conciliatory tendency on the part of the editors prompts the editors to omit from Ringelblum's notations comical moments in the relations between Poles and Jews, such as the following: "A non-Jewish woman wants to board a Jewish street car. She is kept back and exclaims: See here,

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

the street car is also for the Jews only. . . . [A] Jew laughs and shouts in his dream. His wife wakes him. He is angry and tells: I dreamt that I saw inscriptions on the walls: Kill the Jews! Down with ritual slaughter, and similar slogans. So what are you so happy about? What do you mean? Ours [the Polish authorities] have come back" (notation for October 23, 1940).

In consonance with these tendencies, the editors also omit those items that refer to German intervention in behalf of Jews and against Poles, such as the following: "I heard about a chief who, seeing that the students of the Konarski School attacked Jews, leaped out of the street car and gave chase, firing in the air. The end is unknown" (October 12-13, 1940). "The righteous of the non-Jews [a German] reprimanded the Polish chief of police of Grochów for imprisoning the halutzim. Made him personally responsible for the property. Brought for them [the halutzim] a Dutch cow. Great feeling for Jews [that work] on the land."

In their attempt to obliterate all friction between Poles and Jews, the editors omit significant moments testifying to Jewish perseverance and attempts at resistance, such as the first notations for September 6-9, 1940, which read: "I heard stories in September that the rank and file refuse to bow but remain at their posts. Permission was granted to both Jews and non-Jews to re-open the stalls on Wielopole. The latter were dissatisfied with the fact that some [Jewish] stalls were in front. They therefore forced the Jews to the rear. Soon the entire trade moved over to the rear and 120 non-Jewish shops closed. The others began to avenge themselves, but the Jews hit upon an idea: they hired a German watchman for 150 zlotys, who comes twice a day. Now there is peace and quiet." Similarly, the Polish reader was deprived of the following very important notation for February 20, 1940: "The Jews of Warsaw reply to the non-Jewish hooligans with blows, although the example of 9 Nalewki Street proves that touching a non-Jew may lead to serious consequences."

Some notations concerning relations between Poles and Jews were published neither in the Yiddish nor in the Polish version. Several examples are worth noting here: "Yesterday [the notation is for January 29, 1940] Polish gangs made merry. People were taken out from cabs and horsewhipped. People were beaten on Leszno, Elektoralna, Orła, Królewska, Marszałkowska and other streets. . . . Today, [June] 30 [1940] I lived through a sad day. A band of Polish

hooligans, 14-15 years old, espied me in the Saxon Park with an arm band [the Star of David]. I barely managed to escape alive. The streets are empty. Hardly any people on them. The insane woman (said to be a Russian) still rages on Marszałkowska Street. She runs around at the head of a group of juveniles. She attacks suddenly and beats mercilessly. Yesterday many were seriously wounded in the hooligan attacks. One was robbed of his overcoat. They wanted to take my hat. I succeeded in escaping because of my swift legs. (I used to be called Kusoczyński [a Polish champion runner].) The anti-semitic attacks are organized by someone; juveniles 9-10 years old participate in them. One is afraid to reply although in some places (Karmelicka Street) they did reply." "In Jewish circles," writes Ringelblum on November 29, 1940, "the conduct of the Polish population is criticized. There are stories of Poles who expressed their satisfaction over the fulfillment of their dream of Warsaw without Jews. It is pointed out that when armbands [stars of David] for Jews were introduced in Antwerp, the entire population donned these bands and therefore the order had to be repealed. Similarly in Paris, when the Jews were ordered to walk in the street, the French did the same and thereby brought about the repeal [of the decree]. This did not happen among the Poles. On the contrary, the word "*Jude*" was frequently heard."

We shall not dwell on the omission of the notations about the problem of the apostates, but we shall point to those dealing with Zionist activities and Zionist leaders that were similarly omitted. Thus, there is the notation at the beginning of April, 1940: "The Jewish group did not disintegrate during the occupation. The festival of Purim was celebrated. The mood is not that of despair, although the situation is quite difficult. The young people are not asleep. They travel from town to town in the interests of Palestine. A publication in Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew about events in Palestine appeared." Similarly, there is the notation for November 1, 1940: "One recalls Weizmann's address [at the congress], terror seizes him when he ponders over the fate of the Polish Jews in the coming war."

From the Polish version are also omitted items with a national coloring, as, for example, the notation for March 18, 1941: "This year Purim was celebrated with merriment. There is hope for a new Purim which will be celebrated as long as Jews will exist in the world. The new Purim will surpass all previous ones in history." Neither

must the Polish reader know that "memorial days for Herzl and Jabotinsky were arranged in the Kutno Ghetto, in Konstantsye [?] with the consent of the authorities" (notation for October 4, 1940), nor that "in the restaurant on Shimek's Street [probably Lesznol one of the guests requested in Polish that the Hatikva be played. All rose" (notation for February 4-6, 1941), nor that "the Bund" finally succeeded in gaining admittance to the Sejm [the National Council in London] (Arthur) (notation for February 28, 1940).

The following notations with a political coloring constitute a special group that were not printed at all, or were omitted in the Polish version: "Molotov's trip [to Berlin] has called forth a wave of pessimism" (notation for November 1, 1940)). "Today there was talk of a conference of neutral states: Switzerland, Turkey, Italy and Belgium under the aegis of the Allies" (notation for January 4-6, 1940). "A false rumor spread that the Finns had crossed the border and had even captured Leningrad. Hungary and Rumania appealed to Italy for a protectorate. . . . In Włodawa a clash is said to have occurred between those [the Germans] and the Russians. . . . S. Welles in his conversation with von Ribbentrop is said to have touched upon the condition of the Jews in Poland. . . . Heard yesterday of a concert by Paderewski in London, after which the king shook hands warmly with Paderewski" (notation for January 4-6, 1940). "The P.P.S. called for a two-hour strike of staying in the house [September 1]" (notations for September 6, 1940).

There are also unpublished notes of this kind with a purely Jewish accent, such as: "The people anticipate America's entry into the war, but simultaneously there is anxiety about what will happen to the Jews" (notation for October 2-10, 1940). "A rumor has spread that flour for *matzos* arrived" (January 4-6, 1940). "The former leader of the O.N.R. in the Warsaw city council, Koziołkiewicz, speaks now about the Jews in an entirely different manner from that of before the war, simply unrecognizable" (September 1940). "An N.D. attorney who formerly voted for the Aryan paragraph now carries with pride his notice of removal from the list for having a Jewish assistant" (notation for March 6, 1940).

Notations regarding Germans and their attitude toward Jewish labor are also concealed from the Polish reader. Thus, for instance, the two following characteristic notations (selected from a larger number) are omitted: "I heard of a Polish professor in Oranienburg,

an angel all his life, who maintains that there is no remedy for the Germans of the new generation save extermination" (notation for October 4, 1940). "Despite the energetic demands to employ Poles, the S.S. dismissed only 50 Jews of the 800 employed by them. They did not, however, replace them with non-Jews."

In like manner, items dealing with the demoralization and dreadful corruption in the ghetto, particularly in the Jewish police, with amusements and amusement halls in the ghetto and with the methods of Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda do not reach the Polish reader.

Also a number of notations about rabbis and hassidic rabbis, such as the long notation (April 10, 1942) about the Kozienice rabbi which affords an insight into the attitude of some Polish Jews to charity, were not published. Nor did they publish that highly interesting item about a rabbi, who "brought from the camp in Starograd a torn scroll of the Torah, taken from a *beys medresh,* which was several hundred years old." The Polish version omitted the sarcastic comment of the Kozienice rabbi, who had inquired if there were Jews in Holland. "He was told that there were Jews in Holland, [also] in Denmark, France, Norway. In that case he [the German] is a captive of the Jews. . ." (notation for November 29, 1940).

The omission of a number of notations in itself is a great injustice. A greater wrong, however, is the publication of a number of notations in incomplete or in radically altered form, which leads to distortion and falsification of the author's intentions. Thus, for instance, Ringelblum notes, on March 23, 1941, that "all Polish parties in Cracow, from P.P.S. to O.N.R. taxed themselves for the benefit of the Jewish transferees." This notation was not published in the Yiddish version and in the Polish version it appears as follows: "In Cracow the Polish people taxed themselves for the benefit of the Jewish transferees."[9] On April 6, 1941, Ringelblum notes that "the illegal *Wolność* condemns the action of the Polish populace, who completely ruined their homes on Dzika Street before leaving them: they tore out the window frameworks, doors, windows, stoves, roofs." The translation of this notation is exceedingly "free:" the illegal *Wolność*, organ of the Polish Socialists, is artfully rendered: "The Polish underground press." The editors "explain" in a footnote that the writer "has in mind the press of the revolutionary and left-wing Socialist circles." The Polish

[9] *Biuletyn,* no. 1 (3), p. 58.

populace becomes in the translation "antisemites."[10] Incidentally, noteworthy are also the following curiosa of translation: "N.D. lawyer" becomes "a certain lawyer;"[11] "Poles plundered Jewish stores" becomes "hooligans plundered, etc."[12]

Impermissible is the failure to quote the sentence to the end, the interruption of Ringelblum's words in the middle, as for instance, the notation for March 18, 1941, in which we read: "A vignette: In a secret apartment in a Jewish court people study. It is a conspiratorial apartment. The door is opened only for those who know the special sign (a peculiar knock). A large group of yeshiva students and others sit there studying. One looks into the *Eyn Yaakov,* another one recites a chapter of the *Psalms,* a third one looks into a folio of the Talmud." In the Polish translation everything about the yeshiva students disappears, resulting in a distorted picture of Ringelblum's vignette. Not infrequently the editors omit names that are not to their liking. From the list of prominent Poles arrested in connection with the attempt on the life of Igo Simen, a well-known Polish artist, the editors struck out the names of the Polish artists: Stępowski, Malicka, Przybyłko-Potocka (notation for March 10, 1941).

In the light of these tendentious mistakes, of which the Warsaw edition is full, the considerable number of mistakes made "unwittingly" by the publishers appears almost "innocent." Nevertheless, we shall note some of them: The number of killed in Sosnowiec during the events of September 1939, is correctly indicated in the Yiddish version as 300, and not 13, as given in the Polish version.[13] Several translated passages are contrary to the meaning of the original. Dysentery is rendered "scarlet fever."[14] A wave of malice becomes "a wave of news."[15] The notation about the work of the Jews of Częstochowa and Hrubieszów is falsely translated.

We could indicate page by page the countless tendentious admissions and irresponsible mistakes in the Warsaw editions of Ringelblum's manuscripts. But what was said above is sufficient to render an account of the great wrong that was done to the author, the martyr, who had brought such great sacrifices so that no important event, no significant phenomenon should be missing from the work of the *Oneg Shabat.* To right this wrong an authentic, exact and complete edition of Ringelblum's writings should be issued as soon as possible.

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 64.
[11] *Biuletyn,* no. 2, p. 106.
[12] *Ibid.,* p. 13.
[13] *Ibid.,* p. 126.
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 160.
[15] *Ibid.,* p. 178.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

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WOLF GLICKSMAN lived in Częstochowa, Poland during the Nazi occupation and was then deported to Auschwitz. He managed to survive this extermination camp and bring with him the experiences and the data on which the present article is based. He has previously published several studies and articles on conditions under the Nazis. He is at present principal of a Yiddish school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and is completing his Ph.D. dissertation for Dropsie College on the subject of "The Economic Life of the Polish Jews during the Years 1914-1939 as Depicted in Yiddish Literature."

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ISAIAH TRUNK had published several studies on the history of the Jews in Poland before 1939, of which the most important were the volumes on the history of the Jews in Kutno and in Płock. During World War II he was in the Soviet Union and was repatriated to Poland in 1946. On his return to Poland he worked in the Central Jewish Historical Commission (now the Jewish Historical Institute) and he published several articles on the life of the Jews under the Nazi regime, based on archival materials. His article included in this volume is based on similar archive materials. Mr. Trunk later emigrated to Israel and from there went to Canada, where he now resides.

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CORRIGENDUM

An unfortunate error in translation occurred in the last issue of the YIVO ANNUAL, in the article by E. Lifschutz on "Merrymakers and Jesters Among Jews," in the section on Eliakum Zunser. On p. 74, the last line on the page should read "without resort to jewelry work." The sentence as previously published casts a wholly false and unwarranted shadow on the noble integrity of the famous Jewish bard.

THE EDITOR