

INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again -- beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

73-22,744

SCHNEIDER, Gertrude, 1928-
THE RIGA GHETTO, 1941-1943.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1973
History, modern

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© COPYRIGHT BY

GERTRUDE SCHNEIDER

1973

THE RIGA GHETTO, 1941 - 1943

by

GERTRUDE SCHNEIDER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York.

1973

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 14, 1973
date

Howard L. Adelson
Chairman of Examining Committee

May 14, 1973
date

David C. Lynett
Executive Officer

Howard L. Adelson
Keith Swarth
Harold Trifonov
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing and researching this dissertation, I was fortunate to have had the advice and assistance of Professor Howard L. Adelson, under whose direction this study was done, and the invaluable help given by Professors Hans L. Trefousse and Keith Eubank, all of whom have shown great patience and have given unstintingly of their time.

Grateful acknowledgement is also made to the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte in Munich, Bavaria, and the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Hessen, as well as to the Yivo Institute in New York City.

My special thanks goes to the numerous survivors who have spent endless hours with me, discussing events which must have been painful at times, yet never once refusing to being interviewed.

Without the patience and understanding of my husband Eric I could never have accomplished the research and writing of the dissertation.

I dedicate my work to the memory of my father and to the millions who did not live to see freedom.

Gertrude Schneider

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....6
INTRODUCTION.....16
THE JEWS OF RIGA.....25
JEWS FROM THE REICH.....43
LIFE IN THE GHETTO
 Winter 1941/1942.....80
 Spring: A Time for Hope.....103
 The Second Winter.....144
THE END OF THE RIGA GHETTO.....163
CONCLUSION.....195
APPENDIX.....216
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....239

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Page 212.....Barbed wire around the Riga Ghetto. In German and in Latvian it warns people not to cross the barbed wire and not to make any effort to speak to the inmates. In the event that this order is disobeyed, the guards would shoot without warning.
- Page 213.....House on Ludzas Iela (later Leipziger Strasse) as it looked when the German Jews arrived.
- Page 214.....House on Mazu Kalna Iela (later Berliner Strasse) as it looked when the German Jews arrived.
- Page 215.....Work detail on way back to the ghetto.

PREFACE

Much has been written and said about the wrenching experience of the Holocaust. To be sure, it was meant to be read and digested by the world at large, but has in reality reached a rather limited audience, primarily Jews and a few historians, sociologists and psychologists who were looking for source material.

The results were disappointing. Most historians described the Holocaust meagerly, if at all; the sociologists tended to blame the victims; and the psychologists found the behavior of those who were led to the slaughter rather offensive. So far, no one has come up with a satisfying explanation of how and why the whole thing happened. Never before, in the long history of mankind, had it been technically possible for one people so systematically and diligently to destroy another people.

To write a dispassionate account of this destruction was not an easy task. However, among the few who have tried to do this in any cohesive and accurate manner, the two outstanding examples are The Destruction of the European Jews, by Raul Hilberg, and The Final Solution, by Gerald Reitlinger.

Hilberg even offers an analysis of how and why the

whole program could succeed as well as it did. As far as the German people were concerned, he feels that they were made to believe through incessant propaganda that the Jews were saboteurs, assassins, bent on a world conspiracy. Last, but not least, the Germans were successfully taught that the Jews were indeed a lower form of life.¹

As far as the Jews were concerned, Hilberg states that they were not oriented towards resistance, but rather towards petitions and legal appeals, woefully inadequate in the face of what was in store for them, and hoped to forestall their destruction by a judicious compliance with orders.²

Reitlinger's work focuses on the actual workings of the machinery set in motion as early as 1933, which came to a halt only with the allied victory over Germany. He is comforted by the fact that "the immense disaster was

¹ Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews (Chicago, 1961) p. 655, 656. In connection with anti-semitism, its origins and subsequent results, there are several excellent works, such as Poliakov's Harvest of Hate, translated from the French, (Syracuse, New York, 1954) and Reichmann's Hostages of Civilization: The Social Sources of National Socialist Anti-Semitism (Boston, 1951).

² Ibid., p. 665, 666.

partly whittled down" because, owing to the inconsistency of human nature, not all orders were carried out, and thus, he feels that there is still hope for humanity.³

Of course, there are also the numerous accounts of survivors. These are usually charged with emotion, and not always correct as far as details, dates, and numbers of victims are concerned. It is therefore, wherever possible, of great importance to compare them with the thousands of records left by the Germans so thoughtfully, with proverbial thoroughness.

Within this subject of the Holocaust, the Riga Ghetto constitutes only one very small part and it is treated as such by both Hilberg and Reitlinger. As far memoirs, there are three lengthy ones, two of them published, and there are many short depositions.

Of the two memoirs published, one concerns the Latvian Jews and their destruction, written by Max Kaufmann, and one discusses the experience of the German Jews, written by Jeanette Wolff. The third memoir, unpublished, was written by a young Catholic woman, Gerda Gottschalk, who shared the Jewish experience because her parents had originally been Jewish, and thus, under

³ Gerald Reitlinger, The Final Solution, revised edition, (New York, 1967) p. 532.

the law, so was she. Her account concerns the German ghetto too, but it differs in scope from that of Jeanette Wolff, chiefly because of their age difference and also because the accounts were written with different objectives in mind.

All three accounts were written immediately after the war, when the gruesome events were still in the writers' minds with full clarity. In the two published accounts especially, it seems that the enormity of the suffering left no place for a description of the real life in the ghetto, a life which existed and went on parallel to the horrible events gradually enveloping everything.

Yet, it is exactly this daily life which can, in some small way, show that this particular ghetto was unique and at the same time, a microcosm and a mirror of the big world outside. Miss Gottschalk's story does go into the subject of life in the ghetto; perhaps because of her youth or her unbroken faith, she saw another side to it than did Kaufmann and Wolff, then already middle-aged.

Kaufmann for one was mourning his wife and son. He felt that the Latvian Jews had been exterminated to make room for the German Jews, and his bias is therefore quite evident. Only rarely does he mention the daily existence

of either ghetto. His book is an unending stream of atrocity after atrocity, of murder after murder, with fear and hunger as constant companions. To be sure, these were indeed always present. But so were love and hope, so was human endeavor to make the best of things, so were kindness and the belief in the future.

Jeanette Wolff, always a politically active woman in her native Saxony, enumerates the horrors faced by the deportees and describes the continuous slaughter, as does Kaufmann, while failing to describe the living and breathing community within the ghetto, and the efforts which were expended on preserving some kind of cultural life and thus the sanity of the individuals. Actually, she and her family took part in it, as did most survivors, but it was just not the thing to write so soon after the war. People expected to hear the gory details, perhaps because they were so hard to believe and almost impossible to understand. In her descriptions, Mrs. Wolff is not always accurate as far as dates and figures are concerned. When she comes to the end of her book, she extends her hands to the Germans, in an effort to build bridges, a goal she was able to achieve by becoming a member of the German Bundestag.

Both the Kaufmann and the Wolff books are used as

sources by Hilberg and Reitlinger - errors and all. The depositions made by survivors are used as well, and here, too, it was hard for a witness, having been an inmate, to really know the whole story. All he could really see was himself and his immediate world. The rest was mostly conjecture. Judging the number of victims was not easy, and dates are often easily forgotten. Not knowing the whole story, however, was a good thing, for in an experience such as this, where a loss of hope meant certain death, ignorance was indeed bliss. Even hiding from the awful truth was beneficial. As long as one could sustain the belief that not only luck, but cleverness in outwitting the Germans would ultimately result in survival, one could stay alive. Without this conviction, one ceased to be a human being and became a "Muselmann" or moslem, in camp jargon, signifying a mindless, robotlike zombie, who left everything to fate, and was thus lost.

The story of the Riga Ghetto, and of the two years it existed, is therefore not just another report of mass killings and atrocities. Of necessity, they will be mentioned, but only in passing. The scope of the story is the creation and eventual destruction of a self-conscious German ghetto, attached to the older Latvian ghetto, but autonomous and separate from it. It is the story of people who thought they could buy time by being compliant,

people who would at the same time hold on to their cultural roots, German though they were or maybe because of it, and who would not let themselves become dehumanized, no matter what the provocation.

So as to trace as to how they could do this, it will be necessary to examine the psychological responses to transports⁴ heading east and to sudden ghetto life. On the one hand, there was the shock of being resettled; on the other hand, however, there was also present an element of relief, of having survived something that one had feared and which turned out to be just what had been indicated: A ghetto made up of one's own people, which in time actually became a home rather than a prison, where inmates lived with others who spoke their language and shared their culture.

The question arises therefore that if the German Jews saw their ghetto rather as a means of protection and not a menace, would it not logically follow that they turned inward, refusing to credit the stories they were told of atrocities being committed against Latvian Jews? And, constituting a small German town within a large Latvian city, would it not be natural that dealings with German authorities became commonplace and familiar, making these dealings similar to the ways in which authorities

⁴ shipments of Jews, commonly called transports.

had been treated in their own native cities? The only difficulty may have been the fact that these middle class Jews, who had been so independent and law abiding, who had been such upright members of society, in a way gave up this particular trait and complied with orders which were transmitted by ghetto administrators, so that there was little need for individual decisions.

To understand the uniqueness of this ghetto, it is also necessary to examine the cultural life which flourished there at a time when millions were being cruelly slaughtered. How was it possible that here, in the German ghetto, the Nazis strolled freely, were greeted politely by inmates who did not scatter at their approach, but who were delighted to see them at concerts and sports events? Yet, just across the street, in the Latvian ghetto, such behavior would have been unthinkable. There, they walked only in groups, and only on business.

Another question in this context would be the attitude of the Nazis themselves. Did they really look upon the German Jews as something better than those of Eastern European origin? Since it did indeed appear that way, did this attitude not strengthen the belief that because German Jews were obviously more important, they would not have to suffer the same fate

as did the Latvian Jews?

As for the social life, so obviously neglected in the already mentioned memoirs, but so evident in survivors' later depositions and personal interviews, was this not a manifestation of a quest for normalcy? Or was it more than that?

Was this concern for guests, for instance, this interest in one another, a form of safeguarding the ego and in that way, keep as much of the past alive as possible, allowing for constant hope? Even at that point, could the absence of any crime or for that matter, of beggars, not be looked upon with pride, when comparing this ghetto with, for instance, Lodz or Warsaw? Or, when examining the school system in the ghetto, could it not be said that here, too, reality was ignored and children were taught so that they would be able to join their age-
group once they were free, without having to repeat classes? Other ghettos in the east had schools too, most of them clandestine. Here, in Riga, in that German ghetto, it was the commandant himself who had permitted schools to be set up. Was this not one more reason to believe in ultimate survival and cling to optimism? And furthermore, did not the city itself conspire to take care of the German Jews, with its very position of a

Frontleitstelle, (front-line supply position), a veritable garrison with huge supply depots, constant travel to and from the front, as well as to and from the Reich? It was certainly seen as such, for the enormous number of German army personnel, with their insatiable need for workers, and, so it was thought, with their preference for German-speaking workers, Jewish though they were, might guarantee the German Jews' survival.

Last but not least, did this army personnel not show many kindnesses to their Jewish workers with whom they were in daily contact? Was it therefore so incongruous that one tried to understand them too? Was there not also the common language and a bond of having been part of the identical school system? How could one doubt that they preferred Germans, even if Jewish, to the ubiquitous Latvian workers?

In the following pages, an attempt will be made to describe the life in the German ghetto of Riga, in all its aspects, so that the questions posed above may be answered and so that the very uniqueness of this particular ghetto may be demonstrated.

INTRODUCTION

In an address to the Reichstag,¹ on January 30, 1939, the German Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, declared, "If war comes, brought about by international Jewish financiers, the result will be the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe."¹ At the time, his words were only a prophesy. When he reminded the world of this several times during the next few years, they had become stark reality.²

In the meantime, though, at a press conference only a week after Hitler's speech, Alfred Rosenberg, the philosopher of the Nazi movement, informed his interviewers that the solution to the Jewish question would be achieved when the last Jew had left the territory of the Reich.³

Rosenberg was thinking of the Madagascar Project,

¹ Dokumente der Deutschen Politik und Geschichte, Band V, (Berlin, 1953) p. 8.

² Ibid., p. 8. The other dates are January 30, 1942, September 30, 1942, February 24, 1943, March 21, 1943, and November 9, 1943.

³ Voelkischer Beobachter, Vienna Edition, February 8, 1939.

a plan which would take care of Jews still occupying the German lands, which were to be made judenrein (cleaned of Jews). The war against Poland, however, complicated the problem by adding millions of Jews to the Reich. The refusal of Britain and France to make peace rendered the Madagascar Project unfeasible. More drastic solutions had to be considered, even though the Madagascar Plan was not completely abandoned until 1941.⁴

It was decided to use parts of the newly occupied territories as a reservation for the Jews from the Reich. Rosenberg was made Minister for Germany's Eastern Occupied Territories. Soon, after an inspection of the planned locations south of Lublin by Arthur Seyss-Inquart, at that time the governor of Austria, the deportations began.⁵

At the same time, in the larger cities of Poland, whole neighborhoods were set aside for the creation of ghettos. In accordance with plans worked out by Heinrich

⁴
The Goebbels Diaries (London, 1948). Goebbels, as late as March 7, 1942, stated that Madagascar should be assigned to the surviving Jews after the war, so that not one Jew would be left on the European continent (page 116). As for the Fuehrer, Goebbels reported on March 20, that Hitler felt the Jews had to be eliminated from Europe, and, if necessary, by the most brutal method (page 138).

⁵
International Military Tribunal, Vol. XXX, p. 93.

Himmler and Reinhardt Heydrich, the Jews both from these cities as well as from the surrounding countryside, were herded into those ghettos. These were modelled after the medieval ghetto, surrounded by walls, doors locked at night, isolated from the other inhabitants of the city, and vulnerable to attacks from the outside. At first, though, the earlier ghettos such as in Nisko, Opole, Lask and numerous others in small towns were not really what Heydrich had envisioned, but were only parts of towns where Jews had always lived. Eventually, these small towns were made free of Jews and the inhabitants of the so-called ghettos were either moved into the large, enclosed ghettos or were exterminated.

In April 1940, the first enclosed and guarded ghetto was established at Lodz.⁶ Conditions were appalling. In spite of some contact between Jews and Poles, and bartering of jewels for food, the hunger in the ghetto was awful. Since most of the inmates worked inside the ghetto, they had no way in which to supplement their rations. There was little thought of any cultural activities. People were glad to be left alone with their misery.⁷

⁶ Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 56.

⁷ Sala Pawlowicz, I Will Survive (New York, 1962).

In November of 1940, the Warsaw Ghetto was sealed off too. Here, in a ghetto the size of a city, conditions were such that people despaired. Compared to Lodz, however, the Warsaw Ghetto was considered a paradise, for here one had at least an opportunity to survive. There was, if one had the means, food available in black market restaurants, and there were cafés, night clubs, and even brothels.⁸ There was also corruption and brutality, and while one could hear the songs being played in the cabarets, naked bodies were thrown into the streets to be buried the next morning.⁹

The death rate in both of these early ghettos was extremely high. In Warsaw alone, between January 1, 1941, and July 22, 1942, over 50,000 inmates died of "natural" causes.¹⁰

By March 1941 several more ghettos had been enclosed as for instance at Lublin, Radom, Cracow, Sosnowiec, Tarnow, Kielce, and other large towns. In all of these ghettos, conditions were terrible. Even though many of the

⁸ Guenther Deschner, Menschen im Ghetto (Guetersloh, Germany, 1969).

⁹ Chaim Aron Kaplan, Scroll of Agony (New York, 1965).

¹⁰ Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 61.

inhabitants could have been used as a labor force, the German authorities did not avail themselves of this opportunity. Thus, their dismal existence of enforced idleness coupled with hunger and fear weakened them to such an extent that they eventually succumbed. Work could have meant survival, at least for the time being. Unfortunately, only a small number of Jews were given this opportunity.

The fate of Jewish children was especially disheartening. In the ghetto of Warsaw, there were a few schools and orphanages; most of the children were classed as destitute. At a later time, they were the first victims to be taken away for extermination.¹¹

It was mainly at such occasions that the Germans ventured into the ghettos. At other times, they drove through the streets and people did well to stay out of their way.¹² The behavior of the SS personnel towards the ghetto inmates was one of utter contempt. Jews who went out to work, however, sometimes found sympathetic Germans who alleviated their lot. Within the ghettos,

¹¹
Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto. The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum (New York, 1958).

¹²
Alexander Donat, The Holocaust Kingdom; A Memoir (New York, 1963) p. 32.

though, there was little hope; hunger and sickness, as well as constant mental stress, had become a way of life.

The arrivals from the Reich were added to these already crowded communities, exacerbating the situation. There were also camps built on marshland to house those Jews needed for labor. In this way, during 1940, a small part of the German and Austrian Jews were resettled in Poland.

On October 2, 1940, at a meeting at the Fuehrer's headquarters, Dr. Hans Frank, the governor of Poland, was told that there would be more Jews from the Reich coming his way. The Gauleiter of Vienna, Baldur von Schirach, talked about sending him the Jews from that city and Erich Koch, the Gauleiter of East Prussia, promised to send him the Jews from that region too. Frank, who felt he had enough Jews already, was very angry, but a long speech by Hitler prevented him from saying anything more.¹³

Shortly after this meeting, Hitler decided that resettlement should be accelerated, since there was need for apartments in the bigger cities of the Reich,

¹³
IMT, Vol. XXXIX, p. 425; see also Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 53.

where many Jews still lived. In December, letters to this effect were sent to the officials in charge of deportations, as well as to those in charge of the receiver cities and the trains started to roll.¹⁴

20,000 Jews from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia were sent to Poland, mainly Lodz, re-named Litzmannstadt by the Germans. The conditions in Frank's domain went from bad to worse. While thousands died of such causes as hunger, exposure and diseases, the rest seemed, in the words of Frank, "useless eaters," and would therefore have to be eliminated.¹⁵

Because of the impending Operation Barbarossa, the code name for the invasion of Russia, the deportations came to a sudden halt in March, when the army needed the trains for the coming invasion.

About one month before the attack on Russia, Reinhardt Heydrich, the chief of the Sicherheitspolizei (security police) and the Sicherheitsdienst (security service), got in touch with Eduard Wagner, the Quartermaster General of the army, and they coordinated their

¹⁴
IMT, Vol. XXIX, p. 176.

¹⁵
Stanislaw Piotrowski, Hans Frank's Tagebuch Polnischer Verlag der Wissenschaften (Warsaw, 1963) p. 113. See also Hermann Langbein, Wir haben es getan (Vienna, 1964) p. 47.

plans for using the SD Einsatzgruppen in the rear of the fighting lines. In addition to certain categories of Russians, "a l l" Jews were eventually to be executed. For this purpose Heydrich had created the four Einsatz-¹⁶gruppen, lettered A, B, C, and D.

In the meantime, ghettos were to be set up in the larger cities of the new territories; they were usually in the worst sections of the cities, and not too far from forests which later served as ideal sites for killing centers. In that way, the ghetto of Minsk used the forest at the Mogilew Road, the ghetto of Lwow used the Janowska Road, the ghetto of Kowno used the old Russian forts, the ghetto of Wilno used the pits at Ponary, and the ghetto of Riga used first the Rumbula forest and later the near-¹⁷by Bikerniek Forest.

16

Deposition by SS Brigadefuehrer Walter Schellenberg on November 6, 1945, also a statement by Dr. Otto Ohlendorf on April 24, 1947. The latter was the head of Einsatzgruppe D. See also Joseph Tenenbaum, Underground (New York, 1952) p.182.

17

For Minsk see IMT, Vol. XXXII, p. 3428, report from Reichskommissar Wilhelm Kube to Reichskommissar Hinrich Lohse, dated July 31, 1942; for Lwow see Leon Weliczker Wells, The Janowska Road (New York, 1963); for Kowno see Joseph Gar, Umkum fun der yidisher kovne (Munich, 1948); for Wilno see Mark Dworzecki, Zikhroynes fun vilner geto (Paris, 1948); for Riga see Kaufmann, Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands.

Jews arriving from the Reich were usually brought straight to the killing centers. In Minsk, the first contingents were made part of the ghetto, but most of them were liquidated within the next few months.

Life in these ghettos was even worse than in the Polish ghettos. In addition to the physical discomforts, there was the realization that they were essentially nothing but transient communities. From the time of the German invasion to the setting-up of the ghettos, the native Jews had experienced enough brutal treatment to make it clear to them that their days were numbered. A series of German victories on the Eastern front, the United States' entrance into the war, as well as the apathy of the outside world to the fate of the Jews, encouraged the German government to go ahead with the most stringent measures.

From accounts published and depositions made at the International Military Tribunal, it appears that the ghettos in the former Russian sphere of influence were transient camps leading to the killing centers, with very little done in the way of cultural activities or schools for children. The original ghetto at Riga was no exception to this until the arrival of Jews from the Reich.

THE JEWS OF RIGA

In the vast territories which had been added to the Reich since the beginning of the war with Russia, the first attempts at mass genocide had their trial runs. Latvia in particular was made into one great slaughterhouse.

In the city of Riga, the capital, with the enthusiastic help of the population, on November 29, 1941, and on December 8, 1941, all the native Jews, with the exception of approximately 4,500 men and 300 women, were slaughtered.¹

Thus, one of the oldest, most distinguished Jewish communities of Eastern Europe was virtually wiped out.

Despite occasional setbacks over the past four centuries, the Jews in Latvia had enjoyed a better life than Jews in the neighboring countries. Even the pogroms raging in the Russian Empire around the turn of the century hardly touched the Baltic states. The influx of Jews from the affected areas was great and by 1914, there were 185,000 in the territory of Latvia, a number greatly reduced during World War I.

¹ Reitlinger, Final Solution, p. 231.

The year 1919 brought the establishment of an independent Latvia. It was the Jewish element which greatly contributed to the shaping of the young state, with much emphasis given to the rights of minorities within its borders.

Between 1920 and 1925, the Jewish population of Latvia, reduced so drastically during World War I because of emigration and forced resettlement, grew from 80,000 to 95,000; at times it reached a peak of 100,000.² This was the result of refugees returning after the great war. At the same time, there was a considerable Aliyah (emigration to redeem the Jewish homeland) of younger people going to Palestine. The Zionist and Revisionist movements in Latvia were very strong. The latter, which called for a Jewish State in Palestine, if necessary by force, was organized in 1923 in Riga, when Vladimir Jabotinsky arrived there. He was struck by the physical appearance of the Latvian Jews and thought that their height and good looks were due to the fact that they had never been subjected to

2

The Jews in Latvia, Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews in Israel (Tel Aviv, 1971) p. 53. See also American Jewish Yearbook, Volumes 22 through 27 for the years cited.

life in a ghetto.³ Eventually, under German rule, it would be members of Betar, the revisionist organization, who attempted the ill-fated ghetto uprising of October 1942.

With the Fascist coup d'état of 1934, many of the civil liberties, which had been fought for so diligently by the Jewish population, came to an end. The authorities, applying the German laws promulgated about the same time between 1933 and 1935, did not restrict any Jewish emigration movement. However, they closed down all Jewish papers except the organ of the rightist, religious organization Agudath Yisroel, and placed economic and social restrictions on Latvian Jewry. A "Permit System" in all branches of trade required Jews to sell their business to Latvians, and Jews were forbidden to employ⁴ Latvian domestics below a certain age.

In 1939, the Baltic lands became part of the Russian sphere of influence, thanks to the pact between Stalin and Hitler. Once more, Latvian Jewry, then numbering about 93,000, found itself in a dilemma. After the

³ Isaac Levinson, The Untold Story (Johannesburg, 1958) p. 113.

⁴ The Jews in Latvia, pp. 72,73.

annexation in 1940, there were some Jews, to be sure, who greeted the Communists with open arms. This was true of Latvian Communists as well. Yet, the majority of the Latvian population, whose hatred for Jews was already great, became even more ferocious because they considered the Jews to be Communist sympathizers.⁵ To stem this tide, both Jewish and non-Jewish Communists held meetings at which anti-Semitism was condemned as a device to divert attention from the real social class struggle against capitalism.⁶

On the other hand, the persecution of the Jewish middle class by the Russians was never taken into account by the great majority of Latvians. As a matter of fact, in Riga there was only one Jewish Commissar under Soviet rule, and he was responsible for health services.⁷

⁵ Zenta Maurina, Die Eisernen Riegel Zerbrechen (Memmingen, 1957) p. 129. P. 216 - 222 presents an exact description of how satisfied even well-educated Latvians felt about the later fate of the Jews. The author, who left her country in 1944, tries to be even-handed in her description of Jews. While she is very detailed in her report on horrors perpetrated by the Russians whom she hates, she says very little about the fate of the Jews in Riga, even though she was there throughout the time of their destruction.

⁶ American Jewish Yearbook, (1941 - 1942), Vol. 43, p. 249.

⁷ Kaufmann, Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands, p. 41.

At the same time, there was the plight of a small number of illegal refugees who came in from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Most of them were Jewish, and clearly anti-Nazi. Yet, the authorities, instead of helping them, subjected them to compulsory labor, using them for building roads and public project works.⁸

The fact that they were definitely a part of the hated bourgeoisie, saved some of the Latvian Jews, since the Russians deported them only a week before the German invasion and in that way, they did not fall into German hands. But even here, of the approximately 10,000 thus saved, only a few came back. The conditions in eastern Siberia and Soviet Mongolia were indeed hard.⁹

On July 1, 1941, the Germans entered Riga. The final chapter of its Jewish community, numbering 40,000 men, women, and children, began. The Latvians made the Germans' job an easy one, by committing unbelievable atrocities against the Jews. Many Latvians joined the SS, in order to be part of the German machine.

⁸
American Jewish Yearbook, (1940 - 1941) Vol. 42, p. 386.

⁹
The Jews in Latvia, p. 73; see also Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1972) Vol. 10, p. 1467.

On July 7, only one week after having come to the city, Einsatzgruppe A, one of the four main groups employed in effecting a final solution in the eastern territories, organized a pogrom in Riga, and reported that 400 Jews were killed. Pictures were taken to show how the natives took "self-cleansing action." In a report to Himmler, Dr. Franz Stahlecker, the official in charge of Einsatzgruppe A, stated that no other outbursts took place in the Baltic states.¹⁰

He may not have known about conditions in the Central Jail, the site of brutal murders, or the Riga Police Prefecture, presided over by Roberts Stiglics. It is possible also that he forgot about the Perkonkrusti, the Latvian fascist organization, who, under the able leadership of Sturmbannfuehrer Victor Arajs, a Latvian, murdered at least two-thousand Jews during July alone, concentrating on the well-to-do, so as to confiscate their property.¹¹ In the Great Synagogue of Riga, a

¹⁰ Reichssicherheitshauptamt IV-A-1, Operational Report USSR 15, July 7, 1941, No. 2935. Stahlecker to Himmler, October 15, 1941, L 180.

¹¹ J. Silabriedis & B. Arklans, Political Refugees Unmasked (Riga, 1965) p. 21.

gang led by that same Victor Arajs and Herbert Cukurs, burnt alive several hundred Jews, chiefly women and children.¹²

The Riga press did its best to encourage the populace in their hatred against Jews. Articles appeared such as one printed July 11, 1941, aptly titled "The Jew - Our Destroyer." It ended: "The sins of the Jews are great. They wanted to destroy our nation - therefore, as a nation of culture, they must die."¹³

By October 25, 1941, all Jews living in Riga were contained within the ghetto, located in the Moscow suburb. It had taken that long because the Christian population of the suburb had to be coerced into leaving. It is hard to see why; what they left behind were old, dilapidated houses, most of them badly in need of repair. Approximately 33,000 people were now contained in a space big enough for perhaps one third of that

¹²
Ibid., pp. 49 - 56.

¹³
Tevija, the main Latvian newspaper, issue of July 11, 1941. The editor was Pauls Kovalevskis, vice manager was Arturs Kroders. The owner of the paper met Himmler in Berlin, in 1942, and assured him that there was no longer a Jewish problem in Latvia. Quoted in Daugavas Vanagi, p. 21.

number. The fear of epidemics was great.¹⁴

Nevertheless, people worked regularly, because the enormous war machinery badly needed them and because they depended on whatever they earned, having been separated from their former means of making a living. They made the best of existing circumstances. A Jewish committee was created, as well as a Jewish police force to keep order inside the ghetto. There was a labor committee which assigned jobs according to demand by German authorities. The ghetto could boast of a small hospital, the Linas Hazedek, and there were, of course, numerous doctors, including the famous Dr. Vladimir Mintz, who had once operated on Lenin. While there were enough doctors, there was only very little in the way of medication. There was much trepidation about the coming winter, but the Jews need not have worried, for this ghetto lasted only thirty-five days.

On November 27, the Jews were notified that their ghetto would be liquidated and that they were to be resettled. On November 28, specific streets had to be evacuated and they were told to assemble in front

¹⁴ Kaufmann, Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands, p. 85.

of their houses on November 29. There, in the evening, the Latvian SS led by Herbert Cukurs, and the German SS, led by Rudolf Lange, swarmed through the streets hunting for Jews. Children were thrown out of windows, women were pushed downstairs, shots were fired and found their mark.

Half dead with fright, the people formed orderly columns. Over 15,000 of them were marched towards the Rumbula forest, heavily guarded by the Latvian and German SS. Buses were used for the very old, the sick, and the youngest children. In the forest, graves had already been prepared by Soviet prisoners, but it took days for some of the victims to get their turn. They waited, forced to stand in the bitter cold, watching the massacre, knowing they would soon be next, probably waiting for a miracle or praying for it to be over soon, always closely guarded. Even so, one of the victims managed to write a little note, later found and brought back into the ghetto. It said simply "don't forget us - take vengeance." This note prompted Max Kaufmann to write his book once the war was over.

In the ghetto meanwhile, the remaining Jews had cleared the streets and apartments of corpses, and had buried them in the cemetery situated right there. The

next day it was back to work as usual.

The organization responsible for the liquidation of the Latvian Jews was Einsatzgruppe A, led by Dr. Franz Walter Stahlecker. Each of the four Einsatzgruppen had so-called Einsatzkommandos and Sonderkommandos, which took care of the actual executions, augmented by the Sicherheitsdienst, commonly called the SD.

Einsatzkommando 2 C, part of Einsatzgruppe A in Riga was headed by Dr. Rudolf Lange. ¹⁵ The local SS troops usually helped with the gory jobs. They were attached to the Sonderkommando, and performed the task of shooting the victims at the edge of the enormous mass graves, so that the bodies would fall right in. While the Germans provided expert guidance, it was the

15

Reitlinger refers to him as Fritz Lange, possibly because all documents are signed Dr. Lange and never with his first name. Hilberg calls him Otto Lange, for probably the same reason. In a booklet published by the Director of Prosecutions in Herford, Germany, in 1946, he is listed as Hans Lange; according to that source, he was being held prisoner in the English Zone. As late as 1972, however, the German authorities in Hamburg, who handled all cases pertaining to the Baltic States, had declared that the former commander of the SD in the city of Riga, Dr. jus. Rudolf Lange, born in 1910, committed suicide in the fortress of Posen in 1945, so as not to be taken alive by the besieging Russian army. According to a quotation in NS Prozesse, however, the Russians did take him prisoner, and his fate is unknown(p. 103).

Latvians who did the "dirty" work. Obergruppenfuehrer Friedrich Jeckeln, the Hoehere SS und Polizeifuehrer Gruppe Nord, who was attached to all the Einsatzgruppen with his mobile killing units, credited the Latvians with "strong nerves for executions of this sort," at his trial after the war.¹⁶

The carnage was repeated in almost the same way on December 8. The last people to be exterminated left the ghetto in the morning hours of the 9th.¹⁷

There are discrepancies in the number of Jews killed in these ten bloody days. Reitlinger, who prefers to under-estimate, says at least 24,000 were murdered, but Dr. Stahlecker estimated the number at 27,000, which is much closer to the figure arrived at by Max Kaufmann, who says that more than 27,000 were killed. He includes the Jews murdered inside the ghetto, whom Stahlecker probably overlooked. The latter does, however, add a contingent from the Reich to the number of victims, and therefore the actual number is still

¹⁶
Avotins, Dzirkalis & Petersons, Daugavas Vanagi (Riga, 1963) p. 24.

¹⁷
For depositions by members of the German army who witnessed the slaughter in the forest, see The Black Book, pp. 328 - 331, 447, 448.

higher; most likely it is 29,000. The train from the Reich left Berlin on November 27, carrying 1,000 Jews.¹⁸ If their arrival followed the usual pattern of later arrivals, it was the ubiquitous Sturmbannfuehrer Lange who received them at the station, Skilotava, and escorted them to the forest, an accomplishment which got him an invitation to the Wannsee Conference.¹⁹

According to Kaufmann, after December 9 there were now about 5,000 Latvian Jews left in Riga, mostly males who had vital jobs. Stahlecker, in his diagrammed report to Himmler, lists only 2,500 on hand in the Riga Ghetto.²⁰

18

Records supplied by the Juedische Gemeinde zu Berlin and Gestapo lists consulted at the International Tracing Service at Arolsen, Hessen.

19

To prevent misunderstandings and to synchronize future programs in the Eastern territories, the indefatigable Heydrich had invited fourteen high officials to Berlin, to take part in the Wannsee Conference, where more explicit guidelines on the Final Solution were given. One of the fourteen guests was Lange. The purpose of the conference is analyzed in Das Wannsee Protokoll zur Endloesung der Judenfrage und einige Fragen an die, die es angeht (a report of Trial XI against Ernst von Weizsaecker and others, Duesseldorf, 1952); see also SS im Einsatz (Berlin, 1964) pp. 162 - 170.

20

Whitney R. Harris, Tyranny on Trial (Dallas, 1954) p. 361; see also Verbrecherische Ziele - Verbrecherische Mittel, Dokumente der Okkupationspolitik des faschistischen Deutschlands auf dem Territorium der USSR 1941 - 1944, SZAOR der UdSSR, Fonds 7021, Liste 148, Akte 206, Bl. 18.

Stahlecker evidently did not include those Jews working outside the ghetto, some of whom were kept at their place of work in an effort to save them, as was the case with about 300 women as well. The higher figure seems to be the correct one.

The women were taken to the Central Jail just before the "action." One nameless Latvian SS man urged several of them to come along "for their own good." When the women were brought back into the ghetto after the massacre, they were all put into one house, separated from the surviving men, and also separated from what soon would become the German ghetto. When they marched back into the ghetto, the bereaved men stood silently at the barbed wire, and the small group of surviving women kept their eyes lowered, so as not to have to see the agony in the men's faces.²¹

Once again, the people who had been killed within the ghetto, were buried by the survivors.

The aftermath of this tragedy was a furious exchange of letters between the German Army and the SS.

21

Interview with Mara Godes, one of these survivors. New York City, May 28, 1972.

There were complaints about how the badly needed labor force had been diminished; the army was at a loss as to where to get replacements, since the local population was neither adequate nor trained. While these complaints did not help those who had already been exterminated, they did help the Jews from the Reich who had begun to arrive in Riga in November.

They, too, had been meant for execution, and such was still the plan; in the meantime, however, they were now allowed to live in the space vacated by the Latvian Jews. Moscow suburb had never figured in the plans of Dr. Lange. He had been concerned only with Camp Salaspils and Camp Jumpramuize, later renamed Jungfernhof, and that only for as long as it would take to eliminate the majority of inmates. Both of these camps were more than an hour away from the city. Jungfernhof was meant to be a farm, and Salaspils a transit camp for Jews on their way to the forest.

As late as November, there was still doubt about the projected plan of sending Jews from the Reich to Riga; it was decided then to send the first five trainloads to Kovno. This was done. A letter dated December 4, even mentions Pleskau as an alternate site.²²

In regard to sparing the lives of the Jews thought necessary for the economy, until November the instructions from Berlin were explicit: no exceptions were to be made. As for the Jews arriving from the Reich, it was made equally clear that their stay in the two camps near Riga would only be temporary. The telegram containing this message is dated November 9 and bears the ominous notation to get in touch with Obergruppenfuehrer Friedrich Jeckeln, the man in charge of the hard-working mobile killing unit.²³

Then followed the massacre of the Latvian Jews with the complaints pouring into Berlin, resulting in a temporary reprieve for the German Jews. To outsiders, however, it looked quite different. The massacre had all the earmarks of a diabolical master plan, and the Latvian Jews could therefore not help feeling bitter. Kaufmann, as well as many other Latvian Jews, err in believing that their people were murdered to make place for the German Jews. Such was not the plan; the correspondence bears it out. Unfortunately, because neither the German nor the Latvian Jews knew about the complaining letters, the massacre ultimately became a wedge driving them further apart. Neither knew that

23

See appendix, p. 219.

the German Jews had been meant for slaughter as well.

Even so, to the eternal credit of the surviving Latvian Jews, it was often they who helped the newcomers over the hurdles of the first shock of cold and hunger; it was they who smuggled in milk for the children of the German Jews, children who, for the time being, were allowed to live and who must have been bitter reminders to those whose own children had been so brutally murdered just a few days earlier.

The Latvian Jews, in contrast to the newcomers, still had money with which they could buy things. They had valuables and, having lived there all their lives, knew the city well. They were thus able to procure food much easier than the German Jews could hope to do.

Even though Kaufmann says that the German Jews were strangers to the Latvian Jews, and remained strangers, ²⁴ his opinion is just one of few and was not shared by the majority. There were difficulties, to be sure, and presumably, these difficulties were reinforced by tactless people on both sides; they

²⁴
Kaufmann, Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands,
p. 139.

were also cultivated by the German authorities.

While the two ghettos remained separate, the people did help each other in many ways, economically as well as emotionally. The Latvian Jewish group was all-male, and most of them were young, healthy, and quite lonely. As will be seen, the German ghetto was depleted of its young men by several transports to Camp Salaspils, and the young girls and women were equally lonely. An additional factor, which very often played an important role, was the comparative affluence of the Latvian Jews and the existing hunger in the German ghetto. Affection could thus be bought as well as genuinely merited, and here, too, Kaufmann feels it was unwise that the Latvian youths brought food to the German women.²⁵

His phrasing is unfortunate; it may have been unconventional, and in the eyes of a middle-aged man therefore immoral, but was it unwise? The German girls cooperated in their moment of need, both emotionally and for economic reasons, exactly as it occurs in the

25

Ibid., p. 189, where his exact quotation is "es war ungeschickt dass die lettische Jugend den deutschen Frauen so viel zu essen brachte." The word ungeschickt in this context would be unwise.

world without barbed wires. In many, many cases, relationships were formed and continued throughout the span of the ghetto as well as that of Camp Kaiserwald. Some even endure to this day, transcending the cultural chasm between the Latvian and German Jews, thus foiling the concerted efforts of the German authorities who tried so hard to keep the two ghettos apart.

JEWS FROM THE REICH

Plans for the deportation of Jews from the Reich to the Baltic States and of their destruction upon arrival had been made as early as October 1941, when Dr. Alfred Wetzel, a member of the Ministry for Occupied Territories wrote to Reichskommissar Hinrich Lohse that it would be much easier to build gas chambers in Riga, rather than in the Reich itself, and that Jews from the Reich would arrive shortly.¹ At no time was there a suggestion to bring these Reich Jews to Riga as a replacement for the native Jews; they were to be shipped east to be exterminated. The erection of gas chambers proved unnecessary, however, thanks to the work of Einsatzgruppe A, with its auxiliaries. To make things easier, gas vans were often used for the extermination of children and older people.

To facilitate their execution, these Jews from the Reich had to be collected in one place. Consequently, it was decided to build a large concentration camp for

¹
Bernd Nellessen, Der Prozess von Jerusalem (Duesseldorf, 1964), p. 249.

them, about one hour's distance from Riga, in the village of Salaspils.

In charge of this phase of the Final Solution were Brigadefuehrer Dr. Franz Walter Stahlecker and Sturmbannfuehrer Dr. Rudolf Lange. Both were aware of the fact that Reichskommissar Hinrich Lohse objected to having Jews from the Reich come east. So as to explain matters, Lange sent a long letter to Lohse, outlining what was to be done with the arriving Jews. He told him that he would need both Salaspils and Jumpramuize for them. He also wrote that if at all feasible, the first five transports meant for Riga would go to Kovno instead.²

In his next letter to Lohse, Lange told him that transports had begun arriving in Minsk, and that the first five meant for Riga would definitely go to Kovno.³

As late as December 4, the Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories wrote to Lohse, telling him of a conversation with Heydrich, at which time the latter

² Letter dated November 8, 1941, see appendix, p. 221.

³ Letter dated November 20, 1941, see appendix, p. 225.

had told him about the alternate site of Pleskau (Pskov).

By December 9, the massacre of the Latvian Jews had emptied the factories and army installations of badly needed personnel. Both camps, Salaspils and Jungfernhof, were too far from the city to furnish labor details. It must have been then that the plan was made to put the new arrivals into the now empty ghetto. The Latvian Jews were ordered to bury their dead, clean up the ghetto, and make it ready for Jews from the Reich. Even so, a letter to Lohse from the Reichsminister for the occupied territories, dated December 18, 1941, mentioned that economic needs should not be considered. In another letter, however, Hinrich Lohse asked the SS and Police Leaders in Reval, Riga, Kovno, and Minsk to prevent the liquidation of skilled workers who were needed in military installations. At the same time, he asked for a speedy training of the natives.⁴

As had been planned, the first five transports went to Kovno. The first came from Munich, leaving that city on November 15, the second came from Berlin,

⁴

See appendix, p. 227 and p. 229.

leaving on the 17th, the next one came from Frankfurt, leaving on the 22nd, one came from Vienna, leaving on the 23rd, and one came from Breslau, also leaving on the 23rd. The Gestapo lists are marked "no survivors" and they are correct, since the new arrivals were taken to Fort Number Nine in Kovno, where the first three contingents of Jews were murdered on November 25th, and the last two on November 29th.⁵

November

<u>Day of Departure</u>	<u>Number of Deportees</u>	<u>City of Departure</u>	<u>Destination</u>	<u>Date of Execution</u>
15	1,000	Munich	Kovno	Nov. 25
17	943	Berlin	Kovno	Nov. 25
22	991	Frankfurt	Kovno	Nov. 25
23	1,000	Vienna	Kovno	Nov. 29
23	<u>1,005</u>	Breslau	Kovno	Nov. 29
	4,939			

The next transport, which left Berlin on November 27, was the one Stahlecker had mentioned in his report, and to which Lange probably owed the honor of being

⁵
Gestapo lists are on file at the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Hessen. Some are still marked "Riga," evidently because that is where they were supposed to go at first. Interview with Ceil Welles, a survivor of the Kovno Ghetto, who saw the Jews from the Reich arrive. Also see the "Jaeger Brief" a report made by SS Standartenfuehrer Jaeger to Dr. Stahlecker, with a detailed list of executions in Lithuania from July 4 to November 29, 1941, quoted in NS-Prozesse.

included in the Wannsee Conference. All the deportees, with the exception of a few young men, were added to the doomed Latvian Jews and joined them in their graves in the Rumbula Forest. The few young men, who unloaded the luggage, were sent to Camp Jungfernhof. They were joined there on the next day by a contingent of Jews from Nurnberg, containing Jews not only from that city, but also from Wuerzburg, Fuerth, and other little towns in the vicinity.

The commanding officer of Camp Jungfernhof was Oberscharfuehrer Rudolf Seck; he had the people clean up the former troop barracks, set up a kitchen, and made one of the men, a Mr. Kleeman, the "camp eldest." Conditions were appalling; people became sick so that many of them died. It was impossible to bury them because the ground was frozen so hard that it could not be dug. It was decided to keep the corpses in a shed. Eventually, by the end of January, the commandant had the ground dynamited, so that the approximately⁶ five-hundred unfortunates could be buried.

In December, three more transports arrived at Camp

⁶
Deposition of Hans Werner Loszynski at the trial of Rudolf Seck in Hamburg. Riga Prozess, Akte MB/1A. See also deposition of Mascha Katz, from Lehrte, Hamburg transport.

Jungfernhof. They came from Stuttgart, Hamburg, and Vienna, bringing the population of the camp to almost four-thousand. Whenever a transport from the Reich arrived at the station in Skirotava, Dr. Lange, by that time promoted to Obersturmbannfuehrer, was there to greet the victims. On the day the Hamburg transport arrived, it was extremely cold. Because of this, one young fellow, Werner Koppel, could not open the door of the train fast enough. He paid for it with his life; Lange shot him on the spot.⁷ In retrospect, this was unusual for him. He did most of his shooting after the people were confined within the camps. At the station, he usually held himself in check, so as not to alarm the arrivals unduly. Of all the Germans, it was he who was feared the most. His nervousness that day may have been due to the fact that at precisely the time of the arrival of the contingent from Hamburg, the massacre of the Latvian Jews was taking place not too far away.

At Camp Jungfernhof, a few days later, a selection of young men was made by Seck and they were sent to Salaspils, where they started to build a new camp,

⁷ Deposition of Gerda Rose-Wasserman, Hamburg.

supposedly for all other Jews who would come from the Reich. It never became what it was intended to be; instead, it remained a camp for men only until August 1942. After that date, Russian and Latvian prisoners lived there, and sorted some of the belongings taken from subsequent transports from the Reich, who passed through Salaspils solely on their way to death in the forest, with the exception of small children needed for a variety of experiments.⁸ In the forest, adjoining the camp, graves had been prepared by the inmates, and the victims, after disrobing, were either shot at the edge of the graves or ordered to lie face down between the legs of those already shot, and were then killed. The latter method saved much needed space. This method was invented by Friedrich Jeckeln, who called it "Sardinenpackung" (packed like sardines).⁹ At times, this method even saved a victim's life, as in the case of Jeanette Wolff's son-in-law, who worked his way out of the grave after it got dark, and somehow

⁸
Latvian survivor of Camp Salaspils, Roland Jaucis, in his deposition at the Munich Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte. See also IMT, Vol. VII, p. 286. There were more than three-thousand children in Salaspils.

⁹
NS Prozesse, p. 73.

10
or other got back into the ghetto.

On December 10, a transport from Cologne was brought directly into the ghetto. The streets had not as yet been completely cleaned up after the latest massacre. The German Jews were horrified to see the evidence of the slaughter that was being cleared away by the Latvian Jews. These Jews had been at work now for the last two days, having been ordered to prepare that part of the ghetto for the new arrivals.¹¹ To them, this could only have one meaning: their own people had been killed to make place for others.

The Jews from Cologne were the first German Jews to enter the ghetto; they numbered approximately one-thousand. As they straggled in, after walking seven kilometers in the cold from the station, they were "greeted" at the gate by SS Obersturmfuehrer Kurt Krause, who announced that he was the commandant of the ghetto. Immediately he ordered one of the men,

10
Jeanette Wolff, Sadismus oder Wahnsinn (Dresden, 1946), p. 9.

11
Eyewitness account of the engraver and jeweler Isser Lurie, whose wife and three children were killed on December 8.

Hans Leiser, to assume the leadership of the group. His title was to be Lageraeltester, meaning eldest of the camp. Krause made another man, Herbert Schultz, Arbeitseinsatz, which meant that he would be responsible for making up work details to be sent to the city, to help in the general war effort. The commandant left no doubt in the mind of his listeners that this was the reason why they had been brought here; he also told them that their being German was especially important, since they could understand the language and could therefore follow orders.

The Latvian Jews who were cleaning the street, listened to his speech. Now they knew exactly for whom and why they were preparing the ghetto; their sense of despair and dejection was immense.

The German Jews, however, although horrified by the blood and the corpses which were clearly visible, felt secure in the belief that being German did make them more important and therefore safe. The enormous and obvious difference in treatment justified their belief, for the time being.

The next day, December 11, Generalkommissar Drechsler wrote a sharp letter to Lange, chiding him for bringing these German Jews into the ghetto, and

asking him not to bring any others. From this letter it appears obvious that Lange had not consulted with the local authorities. The main reason for Drechsler's displeasure was the fact that there had not yet been sufficient time to take out the valuables left there by the murdered Latvian Jews.¹²

Lange was not influenced by the letter and continued to bring Jews into the ghetto. He cooperated with Drechsler to the extent of giving only certain houses over to the German Jews, and seeing to it that it was strictly forbidden to enter other houses, which were kept off limits until they had been thoroughly searched by employees of Drechsler, who looked mainly for jewelry, money, and furs, but left other things behind.

In the houses that were turned over to the new arrivals, food was still on the plates, frozen solid, dentures were in waterglasses, likewise frozen. Often the newcomers even found corpses, overlooked earlier, also frozen solid, which they then had to bury. On the walls, floors, stairs, and corridors they found

12

See appendix, p. 231.

bloodstains in such quantity, that it took months before they could be completely scrubbed away.

On the very next day, columns of Jews marched out of the ghetto to clean the snow from the streets of the city. Only children and some mothers with infants, as well as a few men chosen by Leiser and Schultz, stayed in the ghetto. The men were to be the German Jewish police force of group Cologne. The Latvian Jews had their own.

Between the German ghetto and the Latvian ghetto there was barbed wire, extending the entire length of Ludzas Iela, the street which divided the ghettos. However, when the inmates of the two ghettos met at work, outside, they were able to speak to each other, and in that way, the newcomers found out the gruesome details of what had befallen the former inhabitants of their new houses.

Most of the German Jews, however, having been allowed to stay together as families, did not foresee such a fate for themselves. Krause and other members of his staff had told them that the ghetto had been prepared for them, because they could speak German and were therefore "different" and much better equipped to help in the war effort. The German Jews thus had a

feeling of security after surviving their arrival in Riga. Even after finding out what had happened to the Latvian Jews, they thought it could never happen to them.

They had no idea that the authorities had realized much too late of what importance Jewish labor was in the city of Riga, which had become virtually a garrison because of the war with Russia. They were unaware that only after reflection on the part of the Germans had there been a decision to let them live until their strength would give out. At one point, the local German authorities even commented that the Latvian Jews, now gone, had been more valuable, since many of them were artisans, while most of the German Jews could only be utilized for unskilled labor.¹³

Because no one in the ghetto knew this, it was possible to cling to the belief that being German, even though Jewish, one was of greater importance and therefore safe. It was a very comforting delusion that permitted the German Jews to hope for a better life.

13

Generalkommissar Riga, Abteilung fuer Arbeits- und Sozialverwaltung, Bericht ueber die allgemeine Wirtschaftslage. Document No. MA 201/2910/62, Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, Munich.

Even later, when older people, children, and the sick were taken to the forest to be killed, although they, too, were German Jews, the survivors rationalized that perhaps only the strongest would survive because they could work. They felt that it was their duty to survive.

On December 12, a transport from Kassel arrived, bringing Jews not only from that city, but also from Fulda, Eschwege and other little towns. Here, too, Krause selected a group eldest, and a man in charge of work details. It was decreed that Leiser would be the head of all groups, but that each group would have its own eldest, responsible to Leiser. Krause informed the people that many more transports were to come. A clean-up detail was formed to prepare additional houses, already examined by Drechsler's people.

It was clear to all that workers were badly needed in the city, with veritable mountains of snow to be cleared; yet, the very next day, Krause selected two-hundred young men to go to Salaspils, where they were to build even more barracks. They met the Jews from Jungfernhof there.

On December 14, another transport came from Duesseldorf. There had been a series of interruptions

during the trip from Duesseldorf to Riga. When the people boarded the railway cars, one man tried to commit suicide to no avail. One woman tried to escape, also to no avail. The loading had been done very sloppily, so that there were sometimes sixty people in one car, while there were only thirty in another one. There was heat in all twenty cars. After passing through several stations, two of the cars had to be taken out because the axles were broken. In Konitz, a railway agent seemed to have little sympathy for the German police who accompanied the Jews, but rather for the victims being transported to the east. In Schaulen (Siauliai), however, the personnel working at the station turned out all the lights in the cars of the Jews. The leader of the convoy, a captain of the Schutzpolizei, reported even on the temperature and said how cold it got, the nearer they approached Riga. Once there, he was under the impression that Skirotava, the name of the last stop in Riga, was the name of the ghetto as well. He mentioned in his report that the Riga ghetto contained at that time two-thousand, five hundred male Jews and that the other 32,500 had been shot by the Latvians! His figures therefore tend to agree with

Kaufmann and the Einsatzgruppe A, and not with Reitlinger.¹⁴

As had been the case with all other transports up to date and those which were still to come, the people had to leave their luggage at the station. They were told that they would get it at a later time, but they never saw it again. It was taken to one of the many places in the city where Jewish belongings were sorted and evaluated. The new arrivals then walked into the ghetto, where an eldest and a man in charge of labor details were selected, as well as a few men to be the group's police, called Ordnungsdienst.

On December 16 a contingent of Jews from Bielefeld arrived. Again all was the same, but there was one surprise which gladdened the ghetto inmates. One young man who came from Bielefeld found his family in the ghetto. They had come from Kassel a few days earlier.¹⁵

14

Bericht ueber die Evakuierung von Juden nach Riga, dated December 26, 1941, pertaining to the transport from Duesseldorf to Riga between December 11 and 17, 1941, signed Salitter, Captain of the Schutzpolizei, Document No. 138, Police of Israel, at the Wiener Library.

15

Interview with Solly Katz, the sole survivor of his family. He was liberated by the Russian army and because of his "Aryan" looks was believed to be a German spy. He was sent to Siberia, was released after ten years, and now lives in New York.

Two days later, on the 18th, a transport from Hannover arrived and the commandant selected as the eldest one Guenther Fleischl, a Catholic. Rumor had it that he had at one time, not knowing that his father was a Jew, tried to join the brown shirts himself and had known Krause then. He was well over six feet tall, had leadership qualities, and managed to have some kind of rapport with the commandant, which seemed to give substance to the story of their having known each other from before. Fleischl had met a young, very beautiful girl on the train or shortly before. They entered into what was called a ghetto-marriage, where the woman took her partner's name, even though there was no official sanction. Most people, realizing that this was the only way, accepted this method; even the group office entered the new name on all records. By this time, the ghetto already possessed a bureaucracy.

Fleischl, being a Catholic, held services in his apartment for many other Catholics, who were ethnically Jewish in German eyes only, according to the Nuremberg laws. The position of these "ethnic" Jews was a touchy one. They were accepted by no one - not by Jews and not by Germans, their fellow Christians.

Krause knew about the services Fleischl held; he was a Catholic himself. As for Fleischl's wife, it was said that she did not participate in the services.

For the first time, a woman was selected to hold office. Mrs. Selma Sollinger of Hannover was to be in charge of labor details and her husband Julius joined the police force, of which there were eight for the group. Her daughter and son-in-law went to work outside the ghetto.

There were no more transports arriving in December, obviously because the trains were needed to get soldiers home in time for Christmas.

On December 22, another five-hundred men were taken from the ghetto to Camp Salaspils, among them the young man who had just found his family. After they left, there were about four-thousand German Jews and over three-thousand Latvian Jews in the two ghettos. Conditions were serious, all the pipes were frozen, there was very little food, and that particular winter was one of the coldest on record. However, when working outside the ghetto, in the city itself, many people were able to barter jewelry and clothing for food, and in this way supplement the meager rations. Needless to say, if found out it would mean certain death. But

the hunger was so great that people threw caution to the winds and thus there was hardly a day without a hanging, still the most popular form of punishment for men. Women were shot at the cemetery by Krause. Hangings were rather gruesome; the victims lost control over their sphincter muscles and the horrified audience was witness to this final indignity. At the end of the day, the columns of work details had to come and watch the bodies sway in the icy air.

People were coughing, sneezing, their feet were swollen from the effects of hunger, frostbites were tormenting them, diarrhea was a scourge, and to make matters worse, there was little in the way of proper medication. A hospital was opened on the German side of Ludzas Iela, opposite the Linas Hazedek, with Dr. Hans Aufrecht of group Cologne in charge as chief physician. Group Cologne alone could boast of a small synagogue, equipped with everything, not far from the cemetery. Most people, however, prayed in their homes.

From its very beginnings, the ghetto functioned in an orderly way. The older people, who could not go out to work, were required to clean the houses, the courts and some of the apartments as well, so that those in the labor force, who came home exhausted, would be able to conserve

their energies. Schultz, being constantly in touch with the Germans, was told and passed it on that the ghetto's only chance was in the work it did for them. At this time, the work consisted mainly of shovelling snow on the city's busy thoroughfares, or of unloading wares in the harbor. Women were also sent out to clean the numerous quarters of the SS, Army and Air Force stationed in Riga. Furthermore, people who had special skills, such as mechanics, tool and dye makers, watchmakers, engravers, etc., were made part of the more important part of the German war machinery. Since the work was often quite complicated, they got something to eat at their places of employment, obviously to keep them fit. These jobs were therefore considered desirable and added to a person's status.

Unfortunately, among the German Jews, many had been merchants or professionals, and not artisans. As for the younger people, who could have learned crafts easily, they were sent to Salaspils. It was therefore the Latvian Jews whose jobs were better, since many of them had been skilled workers before the war too. This meant that they were, economically speaking, in a far better position than their German Jewish counterparts.

After a lapse of almost four weeks, additional

transports reached Riga. On the 13th of January, the first Czech Jews arrived via Theresienstadt.¹⁶ Group Prague was formed in the usual way. Their street was called Prager Strasse, the end of which faced the big gate to the Latvian ghetto, manned by both German and Latvian Jewish police at all times.

Two days later, another four-hundred young men left the ghetto for Salaspils, among them many of the newly arrived Czech Jews. On the same day, a transport from Vienna arrived at Skirotava station, but this time the procedure was different. Only about three-hundred people walked into the ghetto; the others were sent to Jungfernhof. Since it did not pay to form a new group,¹⁷ these Viennese were added to Group Prague.

¹⁶ Zdenek Lederer, Ghetto Theresienstadt (London, 1953). This ghetto was established for the "important" Jews, a so-called "Prominenten-Ghetto." In reality, it was rather like a transient camp, with transports leaving for the east almost weekly. The author describes the two transports, numbered O and P, which went to Riga. The number of survivors he lists, (117), is also on file at the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Hessen.

¹⁷ Interview with Vera Kisch-Mausner, whose father went to Camp Jungfernhof, while she and her mother walked into the ghetto.

The next day brought a contingent of Jews from Berlin. Another street was "opened" up, actually one side only, and the old Mazu Kalna Iela was now Berliner Strasse. This group, too, got a woman to be Arbeits-einsatz (in charge of labor), but Mrs. Scheucher could not put together too many work details, since the transport contained a great many old people and children. Those who could work were immediately added to the work details which went out every day. Private firms, in addition to those military agencies already mentioned, were clamoring for Jewish workers and were getting them. They sent their own men to pick up the small work details, and they must have been trusted, indeed, for in most cases, there was not need for uniformed guards.

Since many children were now in the ghetto, plans for schools were discussed. Guenther Fleischl, the eldest of group Hanover, went to Krause and was told to wait until all the transports would be in. The commandant was willing to have schools operate, but not quite yet. In the meantime, though, and in order to give the children something to do, Krause ordered a former dance instructor, Ruth Wilner, to give the children gymnastic lessons once a week. He had heard about her from Mr. Baum, the assistant of Schultz.

Baum's son Ernst had been one of her pupils in Cologne. She was allowed to stay home from work one day during the week, use an empty room in the house behind the main office building, the Kommandantur, and teach the children on an hourly bases, e.g. from 9:00 to 10:00 the children from Cologne, from 10:00 to 11:00 the children from Kassel, and so on.

Krause had talked about more transports, and it was rather difficult to imagine where the expected people would be housed, since the ghetto was already bursting at its seams. While a directive from the Generalkommissar in Latvia ordered that there should be four Jews in a room, in reality there were often as many as ten and twelve, depending on size.¹⁸ Kitchens, too, were used as bedrooms. It was therefore necessary to create a system which would assure the best possible utilization of every inch of space, one that would also assure cleanliness and order, so that life would be a little bit more bearable.

18

Interview with Ruth Wilner-Roseboom, November 1972.

19

Directive drafted and signed by Boenner, containing several orders, one even prohibiting smoking in the ghetto. It ordered four to a room, but it also ordered that Jews were not allowed to demolish any of the furniture. Both these orders were ignored. Occ. E 3-20.

Each house therefore had one man in charge. Responsible for sanitary conditions and for giving messages to the inhabitants of his house, he acted as a go-between for orders filtering down, and saw to it that everyone did just as he was supposed to do, such as having permission from the doctor to stay home from work, etc. It was the man in charge of the house who assigned families to rooms, so as to make sure that the distribution of space was fair. Before that position was created, as the transports arrived people were simply told that a certain number belonged to a certain house and were then expected to find their own locations and make the best of it.

On January 18, late at night, another transport arrived from Czechoslovakia. That same evening, eighty men were taken off the train and were sent to Camp Salaspils. The others were unloaded in the morning, and were brought into the ghetto, where they were incorporated into group Prague.²⁰ Since they now needed all the houses on Prager Strasse, most of the Viennese were transferred over to Berliner Strasse, and were

20

According to Lederer, Ghetto Theresienstadt, p. 208, these people were taken to the forest and shot. However, during January, when Lange was in Berlin, there were no mass shootings. Many people died of natural causes.

made part of group Berlin. They were put into Number Two, the biggest house on the street, as were people who came with the next transport from Berlin two days later. Most of them were old.

Conditions in the apartments became very cramped. Being in such close proximity to one another, and suffering from a lack of privacy as well as from physical disabilities, made especially these older people very irritable. Verbal fights broke out for real and imaginary causes, and life, difficult enough already, was made even worse.

By the time the next transport arrived, a week later, on January 25, the clean-up work detail had taken care of the entire street where the commandant's offices were located, the street which divided the two ghettos. Since this new contingent came from Saxony, bringing Jews from Leipzig and Dresden, Ludzas Iela now became Leipziger Strasse. In addition to the commandant's offices, there were the headquarters for the police, both German and Jewish, there was the office of Schultz, where he kept all the records relating to the various work details, and there was also the big warehouse to which food was delivered from the outside world,

and from which it was then taken to the various groups.²¹

Even though the houses had been cleaned after a fashion, the Jews from Saxony found frozen food on the tables, still edible after being thawed, and therefore precious. They found clothing as well, and this, too,²² was welcome.

Another transport arrived from Berlin on January 30th, and a few hours later came a contingent from Vienna. Group Vienna was thus created and was given the other side of Berliner Strasse, as well as several houses facing the barbed wire separating the ghetto from the outside world. They called this short street Moskauer Strasse, even though the real Moskavas Iela, one of the main roads in Riga, was the next parallel street at that particular point. They were not allowed to use the doors leading to the outside and could use only the backdoors leading into the courts behind the houses. The clean-up detail had not been ordered to work there as yet, and the new arrivals therefore found

21

For a description of the methods used for food distribution, see p. 25

22

Gerda Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, unpublished memoir on file at the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte in Munich. This transport from Saxony was her own.

not only frozen food and clothing, but several corpses as well.

Mr. Karl Loebel was made eldest, and Mrs. Else Sekules was to be in charge of work details. Several men were chosen to be part of the ghetto police.

The next day, on February 1, a contingent from Dortmund arrived and was formed into a group according to the same system as all the others before it. Everyone thought that the transports would now cease.²³ The clean-up detail was not actually abolished, but they were told that there would be no more newcomers and the guards let them use some of the furniture in the houses where they worked for firewood.²⁴

The German ghetto was extremely overcrowded, even after having been given additional houses. Each room held so many people that it was impossible to avoid

23

Hermann Voosen, a member of this group, in his deposition after the war still maintained that his was the last transport, since he had been told so upon arrival. (Deposition is on file at the Wiener Library, London.)

24

This researcher lived with family Brunn. The old Mrs. Brunn was a member of the clean-up detail and brought wood home from her job as well as other things she found, such as jewelry hidden by the Latvian Jews and overlooked by Drechsler's men. She was taken to Auschwitz on November 3, 1943.

falling over one's neighbor during the night when the mattresses were put on the floor. During the day, to have some room, they were placed against the walls. Whatever there was of furniture became firewood for cooking.

On February 3, about twenty men of the German Jewish ghetto police were taken to the forest. There they had to dig graves, using dynamite because the ground was frozen. They were brought back into the ghetto after they had completed their task, and were forbidden under the threat of death to tell anyone, even their families, of where they had been and what they had done.²⁵

Thursday, February 5, members of groups Berlin and Vienna were told not to go to work, but to assemble in front of their houses right on Berliner Strasse. Together, they numbered well over four-thousand. The street swarmed with SS men. The men in charge of the houses were instructed to have everyone come out, even the sick people. In charge of what followed, was

25

Deposition given by Mrs. Sollinger, the woman in charge of work details for group Hannover. Her husband was one of the police men involved. When he came back he told her, but did not tell anyone else. She alone survived the war and is now living in the United States.

Obersturmbannfuehrer Gerhard Maywald, who took up position in front of Berliner Strasse 2, and ordered the people to file by.

In the meantime, several of the SS men went into the houses to check whether anyone had hidden himself inside. They found several people and told them to go out, but did not use their guns. They behaved with restraint, obviously having been ordered not to alarm the inmates in any way.

While the people passed by Maywald, he invariably asked them politely whether they were working and where. Those who answered in the affirmative, were told to go home, and in many cases, even one worker per family was enough for all to be told to go home. Those who were sick or too old to work, with no one to vouch for them, were told that they were to go to a camp where the work would be easy, and were loaded onto the trucks standing ready at the corner of Berliner Strasse and Leipziger Strasse. In several cases, for no apparent reason, even young people were included, as for instance Mrs. Anna Sauerquell, a strikingly beautiful, statuesque Viennese, who had arrived in the ghetto only five days earlier and had not as yet been sent to work, since her son Kurt had a sore throat. Maywald asked her what work

she had done in Vienna and she answered that she had last worked in an Old Age Home. "Very good," he said, "so you can go along and take care of the old people here too." When her son, then fourteen years old, six feet tall, and handsome like his mother, wanted to go with her, Maywald did not let him go. The boy did not leave, but hung around to see if he could join his mother in some way. He made his way up the length of Berliner Strasse, behind the houses, almost to the corner where the trucks were waiting. He could observe them and saw that the people were thrown onto the trucks when they could not board them on their own. As the vehicles left, he could see people's feet hanging out and this, of course, filled him with dread.²⁶

The real truth, however, was known only to those twenty Jewish police men, who had prepared the mass graves two days earlier. They knew that the trucks would go there, and that the people on the trucks would join the Latvian Jews who had been killed in the forest earlier.

26

Interview with Kurt Sauerquell, now living in the United States. He is still waiting for Maywald to be tried by the German authorities in Hamburg. So far, Maywald is out on bail and has not been punished in any way.

Altogether, approximately 1,500 were taken away that day; about 1,100 from Berlin and 400 from Vienna. The reason for this localized "action" was evidently the small number of workers contributed by group Berlin, and since the Viennese lived on the same street, logistics decreed that they should be included. While many of those who remained behind had doubts, the absence of a definite pattern permitted hope. After all, younger people had been included too, and many of the older people had been allowed to stay with their families, provided someone worked. While it was true that the majority of those sent away were unfit for work, the optimists did believe that they had merely been taken to another camp, where the work was inside and easier.

To raise expectations higher and make the optimists seem to be right, three days later two-hundred women were brought to the ghetto, women who had up to then been inmates of Camp Jungfernhof. Most of them were from Hamburg, and they brought news about the many who were at Jungfernhof and had not been heard from. In this way, they dissipated doubts about their fate, not realizing that the days of the majority of inmates at Jungfernhof were indeed numbered. Already on the day

after their departure for the ghetto, there was a similar action at Jungfernhof as the one in the ghetto, and approximately 1,000 were taken away. The two-hundred women were added to group Hannover.

On February 10, another contingent arrived from Vienna. It was to be the last one to reach the ghetto, and was met at the Skirotava Station by Dr. Lange. He had last been seen on January 13, when the first Czech transport arrived. The long vacation during which he attended the Wannsee Conference had not really changed him. If possible, he was even better looking, tall, blond, blue-eyed, every inch an officer and, so the people thought, a gentleman. Who could even suspect him to be a murderer?

He told the new arrivals that those who were unwilling or unable to walk the seven kilometers to the ghetto, should take advantage of the vans prepared for them. "In this way," he said, "those of you who ride can prepare a place for those who walk." It was an extremely cold day - 42 degrees below zero to be exact - and so the majority of the hapless, unsuspecting Viennese Jews taking his advice, got in line for the vans. They did not know that the greyish-blue vans had been manufactured by the Austrian Saurer Works, especially

to help in the task of the Final Solution. They were the famous gas vans, so unpopular with the SS, but used from time to time in spite of mechanical difficulties.²⁷

Among the newcomers was a family of four, father, mother, and two daughters, thirteen and eleven years old. The younger one wanted to go by van, but her father told her that a family should stay together. When the child started whining, her father slapped her. Lange turned around, looked sternly at the child and told her that children should do what their parents said. A few months later, Lange saw the father in the ghetto, and in a flash of recognition asked him whether his family was still staying together.²⁸

Approximately three-hundred members of the transport actually reached the ghetto, where they were incorporated into group Vienna. From their transport, two corpses were unloaded at the station. One man had died of a heart attack en route, and the other man, the

²⁷ Testimony of Otto Ohlendorf, head of Einsatzgruppe D. Trial of Major War Criminals, IMT, Volume IV, p. 332.

²⁸ Diary of author.

famous financier Siegmund Bosel, had been shot during the trip by transport commander Aloys Brunner.²⁹ Bosel had been brought to the train at the Aspang Station in Vienna directly from the hospital, by ambulance. According to rumors, he had already been safe in England, but was called back to Vienna in order to untangle some of his financial dealings. He had been promised safe conduct, but the SS had betrayed him and he was added to the transport just before it left on February 6. It was during the second night of the trip that Aloys Brunner chained him to the platform of the first car, still in his pajamas, and berated him for having been a profiteer. The old man asked repeatedly for mercy; he was very ill, and it was bitter cold. Finally, Brunner wearied of the game and shot him. Afterwards he came into car one and asked whether anyone had heard anything. After being assured that no one had,³⁰ he was satisfied and left.

29
T. Hirschhorn, "Fahrt ins Grauen" in Der Neue Weg (Vienna, 1946) p. 3. Both Anton and Aloys Brunner are mentioned in the article.

30
The author was kept awake all night by this episode, sitting in the corner nearest the door of car one. As for the story of his having been recalled from England, Bosel's cousins, Dr. Felix Gerstmann and his wife Wilma were part of the transport and talked about his financial dealings. They were killed in July 1944.

The new arrivals were told by the already established ghetto inmates that their relatives, who had opted for the vehicular transportation, were probably in one of the camps in the vicinity. Again, the deception was successful because others could point to the fact that they had just heard from a relative who had also been separated from them at the station. The rumors which circulated were too awful to be believed. Sometimes, Latvian civilians or even German military personnel would talk about what was going on in the forest. The Latvian Jews, who had been witness to much of their destruction, believed all of it and were rather pessimistic about their own chances of survival. The German Jews remained curiously oblivious to the truth. There were doubts, of course, but these were dissipated by incidents such as the one with Lange, and the way he behaved in regard to the recalcitrant child. Such a man could not be capable of mass murder. One simply assumed that many of the horror stories were greatly exaggerated or that things such as these happened mainly to Eastern European Jews, but not to Jews from the Reich. Despite occasional setbacks, this firm belief in one's superiority was not easily shaken.

When the people at the station, who had elected to march, milled around, waiting for some signal to be given, Dr. Lange at one point called out to them "Ihr bloedes Volk, kommt mal her!" (You stupid people, come here!) His choice of words was not thought proper for an officer, and the people were indignant. They did not invest his words with any other meaning.³¹

Altogether then, twenty transports bringing exactly 20,057 people, reached Riga. This figure agrees with the reports made by the Einsatzgruppe and also with Kaufmann's estimate. Reitlinger, as usual, feels that "a figure of 15,000 for all the Riga transports, including the death transports, might be rather high."³² His dates for transports are incorrect, some are left out and he misinterprets Stahlecker, whose report said that half of the Jews had been admitted to the Riga ghetto and half to two labor camps. Since Stahlecker was referring to Camp

31

He may have truly thought them stupid, having duped them so easily, and thus shared the opinion of Goebbels, who mentioned in his diary that the Jews were not all that smart as they would like themselves to believe. He said "when they are in danger, they prove to be the stupidest devils." Goebbels Diaries, entry for April 24, 1942, p. 183.

32

Reitlinger, Final Solution, p. 95.

Jungfernhof and Camp Salaspils, he was essentially correct. The only transport to go straight to the forest, was the one from Berlin which had arrived on November 30th. There were others, which would come later, and the people would go through Salaspils on the way to be exterminated in the forest. In the meantime, as of February 10, 1942, there were approximately 2,500 Jews in Jungfernhof, 11,000 Jews in the German ghetto, 3,500 in the Latvian ghetto, and still about 1,000 men in Salaspils. In addition, at several places in the city, there were small numbers of Jews employed at sorting clothes and packing same for transfer to Germany, and there were others, mainly Latvian Jews, who were employed in factories which found it easier and safer to just keep them there. The reason for the small number of men in Salaspils was that the death rate there was the highest of all the camps. Replacements of German and Czech Jews constantly left the ghetto, always endangering the younger people, but eventually even fathers and older men.

Thus, of the 20,057 Jews from the Reich who had come to Riga, almost 15,000 were still alive; even from an historical perspective, the odds were not too

bad. As for the inmates, they did not know that a quarter of their number had been exterminated. To them it was clear that their resettlement had been for the purpose of forced labor and they could live with that. Accordingly, while hoping that their strength would last for the duration of the war, they settled down and began to regard the ghetto as their home.³³

³³ For a detailed list of transports from the Reich to Riga, containing Day of Departure, Number of Deportees, City of Departure, and Destination, see appendix, p. 238.

L I F E I N T H E G H E T T O

WINTER 1941/1942

The ghetto was organized into ten groups. They were, in order of their arrival, Cologne, Kassel, Duesseldorf, Bielefeld, Hannover, Prague, Berlin, Saxony, Vienna, and Dortmund. Each had as its leader¹ the Eldest, often with another man as his assistant. Each group had a person in charge of the work details, each group had its own office where the eldest and the work administrators kept their records and did their work.

Leiser, of group Cologne, was the boss of all the group elders, and Schultz was the head of all the work administrators. He actually dealt directly with the outside world, both German and Latvian. He had two assistants, Schiff and Baum, as well as three or four secretaries. As the ghetto grew, so grew its bureaucracy; the German authorities insisted on detailed reports, which, because of a lack of typewriters, were

¹ Letter written by Heydrich as early as September 21, 1939, outlining directives for ghetto administrations, quoted in SS im Einsatz, p. 155.

written by hand at the groups' offices and were delivered to the Kommandantur by 11:30 each morning by the Ordonnanz (messenger) of the group. The reports were the equivalent of "morning reports" in the army. The ghetto administration was under the Reichsicherheitshauptamt, RSHA for short, which was run in a military fashion. These reports contained the following information: Number of people in group as of the day, number who died during the night, number who were out sick for the day, number employed within the ghetto, number of children, and number of people who went to work. At the main office, the reports were then tallied against the lists made by Baum and Schiff earlier that day, of the outgoing work details.

The Kommandantur housed both the central office for work administration, which was later moved further up on Leipziger Strasse, as well as the offices of the commandant of the ghetto, at that time Krause. He had a Jewish secretary and she had several assistants.

Krause came in every day and kept his eyes on everything. Since the ghetto received pay for its workers, there was need for record keeping; everything required his signature; income as well as expenses

for food had to be accounted for.²

Each group had a small store where the daily rations were given out. These local food stores got their supplies from the central food warehouse on Leipziger Strasse. Usually, two people worked in such a store, and they had a list which contained everyone living in their particular group. They simply checked off the names of those who came in and got their food. Generally, people who worked within the ghetto, picked up the rations for those who worked outside, in order to save them the task. There was hardly any cheating. People knew each other too well and depended very much on one another. Such action as stealing food would have meant complete ostracism, and would not be in character with existing middle class mores.

The ghetto also had a Kleiderkammer, a big clothing depot, where inmates, after obtaining an order to the effect of dire need, could procure clothing and shoes. The order was obtained from the group's eldest, and was, in general, not too hard to get. Of course, the

²
Amtsblatt des Generalkommissars in Riga, 1942,
p. 149, Lohntabellen fuer juedische Arbeiter in Lettland
(directive on compensation for Jewish labor in the
district of Latvia).

better acquainted an inmate was with the official, the greater the chance to get such an order. It was therefore a good idea to bring him a box of cigarettes from time to time, or a special tid-bit from the outside. This attitude was best expressed in the saying "If you don't grease the wheels, the cart won't go."

The clothes and shoes that were available were those thought to be too shabby to be sent to the Reich. For the ghetto, however, they were an important part of the economy because in addition to being needed simply as clothing, they were used as bartering objects on the outside. The staff of the store consisted of women from Cologne, Kassel and Hannover. They took some of the clothing home and had their own connections as well; that is, people who would take it out, barter it, and then share the proceeds on a fifty-fifty basis. Naturally, they took the best things, because there was no market for the really bad material; if one was wise, and did not come empty-handed to the store, the chances for getting good clothes, relatively speaking, were better.

Each group had at least one doctor, and there were a number of dentists in the ghetto as well. There was

also the hospital, euphemistically called Zentral Lazarett; there, the chief physician, Dr. Aufrecht of Cologne, had his office. The surgeons who did most of the work were the gynecologist Dr. Josef, and the internist, Dr. Mintz. Both were members of the Latvian ghetto, but Dr. Josef had originally fled Vienna and was now re-united with his compatriots.

The most commonly performed operations were abortions. In the first year, there were also a few normal births, but the babies were immediately exterminated by an injection of poison. The mothers were told that their infants had been still-born.³ One boy, born to a Latvian Jewess, even lived for a while, but was finally killed too. His name was Ben Ghetto, Son of the Ghetto.⁴

Dr. Aufrecht had another function: If an inmate worked at a work detail from which he could not otherwise escape, having been trained by the Germans for important work, only the head physician could write

³ Lizzy Brunn, of group Vienna, gave birth in September 1942 and was told that her baby had died just before the delivery.

⁴ The Jews in Latvia, p. 358.

a note to the effect that due to a certain sickness, weakness or whatever, the patients should be transferred to another Kommando (work detail). Aufrecht tried to do his best and yet he was not well liked. Most people thought him arrogant. This belief was reinforced by the fact that he was extremely near-sighted, even with his glasses, and rarely recognized people. Few, if any, realized the pressures to which he was exposed. The commandant visited the hospital almost every day; it was he who disposed of the few babies born in the ghetto. In addition, he always exhorted the people in the hospital to "get up and work....the ghetto needs only healthy people."

Young women, who had to undergo abortions, made him especially angry. To the discomfiture of the physicians, he sometimes even insisted on watching the procedure.⁵

It was for this reason that eventually the Jewish authorities, prodded by Dr. Aufrecht, set up a room in one of the houses of group Kassel, and there put

⁵
Deposition by Rita Hirschhorn-Wassermann, Ordonnanz of the Zentral Lazarett. She worked there every day after school let out, and later, after August 30, 1942, when she had reached her twelfth birthday, she worked there full time.

those girls who had to undergo abortions. This was done also to prevent sterilization of the female and eventual punishment of the male partner, something Krause had threatened to do.

There were also several nurses in the hospital, headed by Mrs. Aufrecht. It was she who also took care of the secret room in group Kassel. Also in the hospital was a so-called welfare office, where Mrs. Irma Rosenthal of Cologne tried to get help to those ghetto inmates who had absolutely nothing except their rations, or who needed help for a variety of reasons and were too shy or ashamed to ask for anything. She coerced people who were known to bring in food, to give up some of it and then brought it to the needy. There was a kitchen in the hospital, where she had soup prepared and then enlisted the help of the groups' police men and messengers who would then carry soup in army containers to people who were in need. It was not much, but it was something. She was a very religious woman and saw her work as not only needed, but highly moral. There were those, of course, who envied her the job. The fact that she was a rather heavy woman gave rise to many jokes about the food she collected. Towards the end of 1943, when she

arrived at Camp Kaiserwald, people who never realized that she had been truly devoted to the welfare of the poor, harassed her and waited for her bulk to disappear. They were disappointed, for she was sent away to another camp where she could not be observed by them. Others reprimanded those who had insulted her.

Each group in the German ghetto, depending on size, had several police men, e.g. Hannover at one point had eight of them and Vienna had four. From time to time, the number was reduced, leaving an eventual staff of forty. The head of the ghetto police was Rudolf Haar, also from group Cologne. All wore dark coats, riding breeches, and army-type, peaked hats, as well as a band on their left arm with the name of their group on it. Such an armband was worn by all other ghetto personnel as well, in order to give instant identification. In addition, of course, the German Jews wore the yellow star on their chest with "Jude" printed on it, in Gothic letters resembling Hebrew style of type. The Latvian Jews had to wear two stars, without an inscription, one in front and one on their back. This made it virtually impossible for them to disappear in a crowd when bartering valuables for food outside the ghetto. When the German Jews, on their way to the east, had

first seen this double sign, the reason was not immediately clear. With time, however, this, too, was seen as extremely logical.

Good organization permitted smooth functioning of the German ghetto as well as the Latvian ghetto. There was little, if any, interference from the SS, except for the periodic episodes in the hospital, involving Krause. The German authorities were convinced, and rightly so, that the inmates were doing their best to obey existing rules so as to keep things on an even keel and not "make waves." The SS felt secure enough to walk around in the German ghetto. They were a common sight, known by name, and were not really feared either, since they did not commit atrocities at random. Most people, when meeting them, came to attention and then passed by. The only one feared by everyone was Lange. His arrival brought panic. The streets emptied as soon as the Jewish police and the Ordonnanz warned the people. He had, on several occasions, shot people, who, in his opinion, walked too slowly or just because they were there. Nationality of the victims did not matter either; he shot German Jews as well as Latvian Jews with equal

zest. To the other SS men, the nationality of the inmates must have mattered, for they seldom, if ever, walked through the Latvian ghetto in the same fashion. If they did go there, it was strictly on business, and always in groups.

Krause, who never missed a day of work in the ghetto, often stopped people and asked them questions. At one time, at the end of March 1942, he walked up to a woman just coming home from work and asked her what she had in her coat pocket. He could see a bottle protruding. She took it out, showed him that it was milk, took out a sandwich from her second pocket and told him that a Latvian civilian had given all this to her while she was shovelling snow; she added that this would be a great treat for her two children. The unpredictable Krause, who had killed people for lesser "crimes," said "Funny, you people always get presents, and nobody gives me anything!" Then, as an afterthought, he told her to go home. Needless to say, she was a nervous wreck by the time she got to her home. Experiences such as these were common. Had he been in one of his moods to kill, he would certainly have taken her to the cemetery to be shot. However, unlike Lange,

he never shot anyone at random. To satisfy his legalistic mind, there had to be a crime, which it would then be his duty to punish as he saw fit.⁶

If the German authorities had information concerning the ghetto inmates, or if they had to give an order, it was first transmitted to the central ghetto government, headed by Leiser and Schultz, and be filtered down by messengers to the groups' local governments, which in turn informed the people of their group through the house commanders. Most often, these orders had to do with a change in work details, such as to what place a person was to go next morning. Sometimes there were edicts announced, other times news about rations. The system employed many people, but it worked well.

In more sinister ways, this system was also used when the German authorities decided once more that the ghetto was far too crowded, and that there were too many eaters and not enough producers. Each group was given

6

Diary of author. For similar episodes, Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 19. She says that Krause liked it if one answered him in a positive way and did not whine or beg for forgiveness.

a small quota, except Berlin, which was to supply the bulk. On Saturday, March 14, the men and women in charge of work administration compiled lists which the Ordonnanz brought to the house commanders. The people thus listed and called upon, were told that they were going to a work detail outside the ghetto, at another city, Duenamuende or Daugavpils, where they would all be working inside, in fish canneries. To the hungry people, this meant food as well as a certain security and reprieve from the cold. In itself, it sounded quite logical, for the Baltic sea was rich in fish, and everyone knew that workers were badly needed everywhere. The people who were to leave, most of them elderly, or sick, or parents with small children, busily packed the few possessions they still had. Valuables, such as watches and jewelry which they had kept in spite of the authorities' demands to turn them over to them, were sewn into clothing. There was an air of excitement in the ghetto. Several doctors were on the lists as well, and so were some of the ghetto personnel. Group Vienna's eldest, Mr. Loebel, was to go along. His daughter Inge too. Her feet had been amputated shortly after they had reached the ghetto.

On the way from Vienna to Riga, their railway car had not been heated and she had suffered severe frostbite, resulting in gangrene. Her father was supposedly going to be the eldest at the new camp to which they were going. There was nothing to fear. In other groups, similar arrangements were made; from each, some administrative personnel were included, ostensibly to assist "Camp" Duenamuende to function properly immediately.

Sunday morning the people assembled in front of their houses. From each group, they walked slowly towards Leipziger Strasse where the vans were waiting. Some people had been up all night, working feverishly to sew their valuables into clothing, getting help from those who were to stay behind. Some people, not on the lists, asked if they could go along with friends or relatives. Permission was always granted. Other people, however, had second thoughts and went into hiding. Since there seemed to be the required number present, no further demands were made by the authorities and no searches were made.

Towards afternoon, when the last columns of groups Berlin and Vienna had been waiting for hours, the SS men

became nasty. Mr. Nadel, the house commander of Berliner Strasse 13, who also went along with the transport, was pushed around because he wanted to go back into the house with his little boy, who had to go to the bathroom. When the blond, blue-eyed child started to cry, the SS man relented and let them go in. He waited for them and when they came back out, asked the boy for his name and age. The child, who always answered in this way, said: "Rudy Nadel, drei Jahre, ledig, und gesund!" (Rudy Nadel, three years old, single, and healthy!) The SS man laughed, gave him a candy, and then urged father and son to get back into line, so as not to miss the van.⁷ The procedure went on smoothly.

The identical kind of method was used in Camp Jungfernhof eleven days later, on March 26. Here, too, the promise of inside work and food gave people impetus

⁷ Diary of author. The first section of the diary, starting May 27, 1938, and ending February 1, 1942, was buried in the Riga Ghetto shortly before resettlement to Camp Kaiserwald. Unfortunately, when the author came to Riga in 1971, the spot had been searched before and was empty. The second part of the diary, starting with February 1, was written in pencil on whatever paper could be found, and was re-copied into a notebook upon liberation and subsequent return to Vienna. The diary was used in depositions for trials against Germans connected with events in Riga.

to go very willingly. However, when some of the younger people wanted to go along with their parents, who were part of the contingent that would go to Duenamuende, the commandant of the camp, Seck, did not give them permission. One young girl went down on her knees, begging to go along with her mother and little brother. Seck just smiled at her, said something about how pretty she was, and said no to her pleas.⁸ To many of the inmates, his behavior seemed ominous. For those loaded upon the trucks, however, second thoughts came much too late.

On that day, Camp Jungfernhof was reduced by 1,840 persons.⁹ Since there had already been a previous selection in the second week of February, and with the many "natural" deaths in the first few weeks, the camp now numbered four-hundred and fifty men and women, and it remained like that, with small changes, until the summer of 1944.

⁸ Interview with Gerda Rose-Wassermann, now living in New York.

⁹ Weg und Schicksal der Stuttgarter Juden, p. 224. Gedenkschrift on file at the International Tracing Service, Arolsen, Hessen.

The ghetto had lost approximately the same number; the original number requested was 1,500.¹⁰ Evidently, this amount was one which could be handled comfortably by the busy Sonderkommando. Yet, almost 2,000 people had been "resettled" to Duenamuende, since, as has been pointed out, many people not on the lists asked to be included and increased the number.¹¹

Latvians were well aware of what took place in the ghetto and in the surrounding camps. An item quoted in Daugavas Vanagi mentions the account of a witness in Riga, who lived near the Bikernieker Forest, and who counted the vans which passed her house the Friday and Saturday before Easter. She obviously refers to the "action" at Camp Jungfernhof. In her deposition she said that she counted forty-one vans on Friday¹² alone, between morning and noon.

¹⁰ Krause's secretary, Frieda Marx, née Meyer, in her deposition for the trial of Baltic war criminals.

¹¹ Deposition by Kurt Roseboom, a police man of group Berlin, who counted the people going into the vans.

¹² Deposition by Mrs. M. Stabulniece, quoted in Daugavas Vanagi (Riga, 1963) p. 11. In the same book, mention is made that Arajš was in charge at the forest, p. 28. See also The Black Book, pp. 329, 330.

The aftermath of the "resettlement" may have been planned or accidental. On Monday and Tuesday, March 16 and 17, approximately twenty-five vans came into the ghetto to be unloaded. They contained clothes. These clothes, which had been taken off hurriedly, were still turned inside out, haphazardly thrown onto the trucks, stockings still attached to girdles, shoes encrusted with mud, babies' milk bottles, toys, eyeglasses, bags containing some food, satchels, photographs, documents--all this was dumped at the Gewerbebetrieb, a factory-type building, located at the edge of the last houses of group Prague and the Tin Place, a square with a variety of uses.¹³

From each group in the ghetto, women were selected to sort out these clothes. The best pieces were to go to Germany; the others were to be used in the Kleiderkammer. The women were not even told to keep quiet about their work, and about what they found. Needless to say, many of the clothes were familiar to them. Some had names sewn into them, many had identity cards in the pockets, and there were dresses or coats or suits

13

Eyewitness report of Lizzy Brunn, a Viennese who was pregnant at the time and was given this job at the Gewerbebetrieb to make things easier for her.

which their own friends and neighbors had worn just a few days earlier. They also found jewelry and foreign currency, but it was hard to get it out, since they were watched by several SS men, new to the ghetto, and often searched. There were those, however, bold enough to take risks, and they brought back badly needed items for bartering.

Soon everyone in the ghetto knew about these trucks and what they had brought, knew about the condition of the clothes, and it did not require much thought to grasp what had happened. No more would anyone scoff at the tales of the Latvian Jews, or think that it could not happen to German Jews as well. In many of the houses in the ghetto, Kaddish, the Hebrew prayer for the dead was said. A sense of gloom pervaded the German ghetto.

In spite of this deep sense of despair, however, there were those Jews who rationalized that as long as a person was strong and could work, there was no danger; that as long as anyone would be of use to the Germans, he would not be a victim. Still, there were Jews who gave up hope; at the end of March, there were suicides, the first ones since the last transports had arrived.

Suicides occurred usually after arrival in the ghetto, and not after a person became accustomed to the prevailing conditions. The ways in which suicides were committed, varied. Poison was used most often, e.g. an overdose of sleeping tablets brought from home. The death struggle in some cases took several days.¹⁴ Some people jumped out of windows. One family simply sat down in their courtyard one night and froze to death, holding each other tightly.¹⁵

The two subsequent small transports which left the ghetto contained only men and arrived safely at Camp Salaspils. While it was well known in the ghetto that life at Salaspils was extremely harsh and that conditions there were bad, it was also known that the men were not taken away from the ghetto for extermination. Jews who held positions there were able to come to the ghetto several times. These two transports were to be

14

With the transport from Vienna which arrived on February 10, came a former banker, Schlesinger, and also his secretary. They both took sleeping pills on February 11, but Dr. Bloch gave them black coffee as an antidote. It took them four days to die. The doctor was sorry that he had attempted to save them. Diary of author.

15

Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, pp. 17, 18.

the last to go to Salaspils. The second one left the ghetto on May 4, after a long correspondence between Krause and Lange, where the latter felt that five-hundred men were needed there for work in the peat bogs, and with Krause insisting that he needed every available man for work in the city of Riga. Eventually they decided on three-hundred.¹⁶ About a third of these men, in addition to survivors from earlier transports to Salaspils, returned to the ghetto within the next few months. The last contingent, numbering 192, came back on August 2, 1942.¹⁷ Many of the returnees died shortly afterwards; they were simply too far gone.

By late summer, Salaspils had become a camp for Latvian political prisoners and Russian prisoners of war. It also served as a clearinghouse for subsequent

16

Correspondence between Krause and Lange, Document MA-201, pp. 373-383, Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, Munich. The author's father left with this last transport, but returned to the ghetto on June 2. In these four weeks, due to the harsh conditions within Salaspils, he had lost almost twenty-five pounds.

17

Deposition made by Hans Baermann, group Cologne, upon his arrival at K.Z. Buchenwald in August 1944, quoted by Eugen Kogon in Der SS Staat (Stockholm, 1947) pp. 227-230.

Jewish transports on their final way to the forest. The camp contained a children's barracks as well, and from some depositions made by inmates, as well as the report contained in the secondary literature on the camp which is kept as a monument by the Latvians, it appears that experiments were conducted on these children. According to post war examinations of their exhumed bodies, it was revealed that various poisons had been tested on the small victims. Tags worn by the children were found in the forest and at Salaspils. In many cases the tags were marked to the effect that these children were orphans, reading "ohne Eltern." (without parents). For the most part, they are Jewish names, with some of the transports coming from as far away as France. Most came from the Reich, but there were some from Byelorussia and several from
18
Czechoslovakia as well.

18
Death Camp Salaspils, p. 9. Avotins, Daugavaš,
Vanagi, pp. 32, 33. Also see deposition of Arnold Roland Jaucis, Latvian political prisoner, at the trial of Teckmeier in Bielefeld. Lists compiled by Juedische Gemeinde zu Berlin are marked "Riga." French lists are marked "nach dem Osten" (to the east) and do not specify exact point of disembarcation. The same is true of several Czech transports, also marked "nach dem Osten" as quoted by Lederer, Ghetto Theresienstadt, pp. 215-223.

Within the ghetto, throughout 1942, there were vague rumors that Jews were being brought to Riga and its environs for extermination. Persons who worked in the city and had their sleeping quarters there as well, at what was called Work Detail Einsatzkommando 2 C, knew the whole truth, since they had a continuous flow of clothing and jewelry to sort out, most of which was shipped to the Reich. Some of the shabbier things were handed out to loyal Latvian subjects. None of it reached the ghetto.

Another group which knew the sad truth, was a work detail made up of thirty-eight Jewish men who were kept at the Central Jail and who were regularly taken to the forest to bury the victims. While in their cells at the jail, a record played two hours each day, warning them never to tell what they were doing. Of the thirty-eight, only sixteen came back to the ghetto.¹⁹

Even though several of them risked death and told their families and friends about what they had done, prophesying that this would eventually be everyone's

19

Kogon, Der SS Staat, p. 229, quoting Baermann.

fate, people just could not imagine that this would be their end. The preoccupation with survival, the will to live and the hope to do so, in spite of what had been seen, left no room for conjecture. The grim reality was unacceptable. People lived each day at a time and rationalized that if they could continue to do so, it would be possible to hold out. To this was added a return to normalcy after the "Duenamuende Action" and a feeling that one could really not help those who had been taken away. There was also the certainty that winter was almost over and that one had weathered it successfully; this was still another reason to be optimistic.

SPRING - A TIME FOR HOPE

Passover came and the German ghetto received permission to bake matzoth, the unleavened bread which at another time and in another place had signified the end of slavery. Each person was to receive one piece, just as a token, as ordered by the unpredictable Krause.

On the same day that he gave permission for the baking of matzoth, he shot two young Latvian Jews caught with cigarettes. He was in a good mood for he decided to shoot them rather than inflict the usual punishment for men: hanging. One of them asked to be allowed to smoke one last cigarette before dying. Krause, still in an expansive mood, permitted it. As the cigarette got smaller, the young man pointed to the ashes, flicked them off, and said to Krause: "You see, just like these ashes, so will Germany one day crumble!"¹ Enraged, the commandant shot him.

With the thawing of the snow and ice, living

¹ Episode was related by Fleischl in the combined office of groups Berlin-Hannover-Vienna to the staff there. (Interview with M. Israel, Fleischl's secretary.) Mager, one of group Vienna's police men, who stood guard at the old Jewish cemetery, also told the story, but added that Krause had slapped the man before shooting him.

conditions within the ghetto improved considerably. Faucets in the houses started to work again, and water did not have to be hauled from the central spigot on the Tin Place, right below the gallows. Half of the precious water thus obtained was spilled on the way back to one's house. Consequently, the streets were unsafe, since they were constantly covered with a sheet of ice.

As a result, however, of the long-awaited thaw, the cess pools of each house began to overflow. The ghetto authorities, fearful of epidemics, promulgated strict sanitary rules to prevent disease. Each group got its own Jewish inspector; he controlled every house in his domain and did not have to go out to work anymore. It became an unwritten rule that anyone who committed a minor infraction had to clean the cess pools after coming home from work. Minor infractions consisted of being late for work, of not having worked hard enough and being reported for it, and other such little crimes. Until now, these violations had been either ignored, or the culprit was punished by having to clean the street. Even children, who were truants from school, were punished in this manner. If there was no one to be punished, the people of each house

took turns cleaning the cess pools. The contents were either put into deep pits, or used to fertilize the empty lots behind the houses. While the stench was at times unbearable, the ground thus treated became extremely productive, and later yielded unbelievable harvests. The deep pits which had been dug up, were filled and closed again and there was always work to be done. Younger fellows, provided they had the strength, would do the work for their older relatives or would do it for someone who could give them food. It was fortunate that the thaw did not last too long; for a while, the physical demands were enormous.

The terrible overcrowding had been somewhat alleviated by the Duenamuende action of March 15; people now had more space in which to move around. This in turn prevented friction and gave a semblance of normalcy to one's existence. Furthermore, the places of employment in most cases were now the same every day for the workers. Because employers often had contracts with the German ghetto authorities, they insisted on trained personnel. Since people knew exactly where and when to go to work, reporting

each morning at the same corner on Prager Strasse, for the same work detail, with the same co-workers, their lives assumed a degree of stability. They began to know the Latvians or Germans with whom they were in daily contact on a regular basis, and they soon found out who could be trusted and would be willing to trade food for clothing or jewelry.

During the winter months, when many people had been shovelling snow, they took terrible chances running into houses to barter for food, knocking on any door. Not only was there the danger of being turned over or discovered by the accompanying Latvian or German SS guard, but the more frequent occurrence was that the buyer would take whatever was offered, give what had been promised in the bargain, and one would later find that a bag of flour, for example, contained only spackle underneath, or that a lump of butter contained a stone² in the middle. In addition, the constant change of place made it impossible to collect from those who still owed certain items they had promised. This led to unpleasant scenes inside the ghetto, when another

²
Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 16.

person expected to get half of the food, having supplied the clothes or valuables.

On a steady job, however, such occurrences were rare. A lively trade developed and daring men and women brought badly needed food into the ghetto. While it was true that people had left most of their belongings at the train station, of the few things they had managed to save there was always something they could do without. In addition, even though technically they were required to deliver their valuables to the German authorities, more often than not something was kept back and later bartered for food. At great risk, clothes were stolen at the Gewerbebetrieb as well as at the Kleiderkammer, and so the trade never let up.

There was still another way to get goods which could later be bartered--the most dangerous of all. It meant stealing clothes from army and airforce depots, insulated underwear, socks, and even shoes. Because the Latvian civilians paid well for this kind of merchandise, people took the necessary risk to smuggle it into the ghetto and have it taken out by others who had good connections for obtaining food. Ingenious ways were devised to bring the goods in.

Bags of cloth were fashioned with double bottoms; still other bags were made that could hang under women's skirts, right below the buttocks, thus escaping detection.

Each work detail had its leader, who in most cases saw to it that everyone obtained something. These work detail leaders, called Kolonnenfuehrer, wore a white armband with this title on it. They were usually chosen by Schultz, on the first day he put the particular work detail together, or, at times, by Krause himself. That was rare but when it did happen, he always chose young, beautiful girls to be in charge. In small work details, the leader had to do the same work as all the others, but in large work details, they were usually exempt from work. Each Kolonnenfuehrer was allowed to have a wristwatch. Naturally, there was no way to control whether this was the same watch every day; in this way, many of the hidden watches were smuggled out and exchanged for flour, bacon, butter, or sugar. Food obtained in this way would be shared on a fifty-fifty basis with the former owner, and two people would be happy. The work detail leader often had to report to Schultz or his assistants Baum and Schiff

upon arrival back in the ghetto, and he or she usually managed to let them have some of the food or cigarettes, as a gesture of good will. It was also prudent to do the same for the ghetto police.

Sometimes, of course, people were caught while bartering, by a guard or a zealous overseer. What was worse, upon returning to the ghetto, either the commandant or some of the SS standing at the entrance, discovered the contraband after a search.³ The guards on the outside could often be bribed, but when Krause or his men found evidence of trade, it meant death unless one could talk fast. Even eloquence, however, did not help when he was in one of his black moods. The victim, if a man, would be hanged shortly on the Tin Place, or, if a woman, Krause personally took her to the cemetery, shot her, and, in ghetto jargon, "got his satisfaction" for the day. Although he was unpredictable, the general opinion was that he needed such an occasional exercise of his power. After he came back from the cemetery, his face seemed different. It was in some way relaxed and lost its usual pinched expression. During the summer, however,

³ The entrance to the ghetto was closed off by a wooden bar, usually used at railroad crossings. When columns arrived from work and saw that it was lowered, they knew immediately that a search was taking place.

this changed. Ending extreme punishments, he had the woman's hair shorn off completely on the spot by a Jewish barber. Then he placed a sign around her neck proclaiming her crime and let her stand for a few hours in front of his office. All work details had to pass by so that they could see her.⁴

Unfortunately, such mercy came too late for many who had committed trespasses before the summer months. The only punishment he meted out then was death. In March, for example, the former owner of the famous "Aunt Mary" children's camp in Austria, on the Semmering, still had her gold watch on her wrist. It was discovered by Fleischl, the eldest of group Hannover, who scolded her loudly. Commandant Krause, in one of his bad moods, overheard Fleischl as he passed by on Berliner Strasse. Immediately, Krause took her to the cemetery and made "Aunt Mary's" old mother and Fleischl watch the execution. The old lady lived on for a long time, until late into the second winter. At times, her mind would wander and she would ask people where her daughter was.

4

The first one to be so lucky was Dolly Spiegel of group Prague, an extremely beautiful woman--her beauty may have influenced him. She survived the war.

Two days before Passover, Krause shot another Viennese woman, a Mrs. Hauser, who had kept one glove from a pile of woolen donations for the soldiers at the front. She had been searched by the SS officer at her place of employment, the Truppen Wirtschaftslager der Waffen SS, and he reported her to the ghetto. Her two teen-age daughters went to the commandant and asked for mercy, but he was in a rage and threw them out.⁵

For men Krause had no mercy at all. At the Tin Place, where the gallows stood, he had either one of the Jewish police or one of the Latvian SS guards do the hanging while he watched closely. If the hanging occurred on a Sunday, everyone had to come and watch. In such a case, the victim had to spend his last days until the appointed Sunday inside the ghetto jail, also located at the Tin Place. On week-days, the home-coming work details had to pass by the gallows and if Krause was still there, he admonished people to look. It was prudent not to avert one's eyes, for he became very angry and started screaming at the poor wretch.

⁵ The girls were Josephine and Sally. Josephine died in 1944. Sally survived and now lives in England.

Once he sentenced a man to die by hanging because money had been found hidden in his glove. German Jews were not allowed to have any money. This man, a lawyer and former officer of World War I, had a wife and daughter in the ghetto. The young girl went to Krause and pleaded for her father's life. When she realized that it was useless, she asked the commandant at least to commute the sentence from hanging to shooting; the latter was an easier death; hanging was public and undignified. Krause agreed.

Immediately after the last transport from the Reich had reached the ghetto on February 10, Krause gave his permission to open schools for the numerous children who had come with the transports. In the Vienna group, a large room in a house on Berliner Strasse 5 had been made ready for that purpose, and all the children between four and fourteen were told to come every day. In charge was the former owner of the sleep-away summer

6

Dr. Johann Weiss was shot by Krause. A year after the execution, when Krause had already been transferred and Roschmann had taken his place, the widow and daughter asked permission to visit the grave to comply with the Jewish custom of visiting the cemetery on the anniversary of a relative's death. Roschmann permitted it. Both Mrs. Elizabeth Weiss and her daughter Hertha survived the war.

camp, Aunt Mary, at that time very much alive and bent on giving each child the proper training for a later time. Her lesson plans were supervised by Professor Alfred Lemberger, formerly of a Vienna Gymnasium, now assistant to Loebel, the elder of group Vienna at the time, yet required to go to work outside the ghetto at least three times a week. Aunt Mary used a type of monitorial system, in which the older children helped the younger ones. Since there was very little paper, almost no books, and few other paraphernalia usually associated with learning, much was done through rote learning and repetition. Because she was an experienced teacher, the school was in its way rather successful; the children enjoyed coming and made progress in their learning. Aunt Mary was strict, but fair. There were several children who had known her from her camp on the Semmering, but she did not play favorites. Her death (see page 110) was a trauma for the children.

Group Berlin had a rather large school at the corner of Berliner and Leipziger Strasse. Group Saxony's school was also large. If there were few children as in Cologne and Kassel, the two groups combined to form one school. There was no lack of personnel, except that

in the case of male teachers it was not really felt by the Jews to be advisable for them to stay within the ghetto. As it was, the German ghetto was depleted of its men, and workers were needed in the city. After all, the inmates had been told over and over again that the safety of the ghetto depended on its will to assist in the war effort.

Besides learning, the school children had other duties as well. They came home after school and in some cases, if they were old enough, they prepared a fire or even cooked something for the home-coming adults. Some of them acted as messengers for the offices or helped to clean the houses. The small children were kept in school until they were picked up; sometimes the teacher even brought them home. The older children, whenever feasible, would be standing near the barbed wire as soon as dusk fell, to wait for their mothers or fathers or even just neighbors. They were able, at times, to warn the people of searches being made. In that case, if the contraband could be eaten immediately, it would be divided among the work detail who swallowed it as rapidly as possible. Otherwise, precious food was thrown away rather than risk punishment. If the Latvian SS guard had his back turned, food could be thrown to the waiting children.

This, however, was extremely rare.

Many of the parents, wherever possible, saw to it that the teachers received something extra because they appreciated that some learning was going on. This, too, made life seem almost normal at times.

The man in charge of group Berlin's school was an old Studienrat[?] he was permitted to remain in the ghetto, being too feeble to do any other work. Most of the other teachers were female, but in many cases, experienced former professors would, after work, make up lesson plans and instruct the teachers as to what they were to teach the next day, just as Professor Lemberger did in Group Vienna. The same monitorial system was used in all classrooms, since the children were ranged between four and fourteen years. As soon as they reached that age, they were assigned to a work detail and could now regard themselves as grown up. Some did so even before they reached the age of fourteen.

Understandably, the schools lost many of their pupils in March, due to the Duenamuende action, since

[?] There is no comparable rank in the English language. It refers to a secondary school teacher, below the rank of professor.

at that time, families with small children had been especially vulnerable. Yet, there were quite a few left, children of skilled workers employed in "safe" work details, who had therefore not been commandeered to go away. There were, furthermore, children of ghetto functionaries, like the twin boys of Schultz, whose parents were deemed too important to send them away.⁸

Many schools, therefore, consolidated and just before Aunt Mary's execution, which occurred about ten days after the Duenamuende action, plans had been made to consolidate the schools of group Prague and group Vienna. With Aunt Mary gone, a young schoolteacher, Elizabeth Bergner, formerly of Brno, or Bruenn, took over. Once more, Professor Lemberger prepared lesson plans tailored for each child. As for the consolidation, he saw only the benefits: the Viennese children would learn some Czech, and the Czech children would speak a better German.

8

The twins were killed in the last children's round-up in the Spring of 1944. He and his wife survived the war.

Private lessons were also given. Dr. Jakob Schwartz of group Vienna taught mathematics to older pupils who went to work during the day and came for lessons in the evening once or twice a week. It was customary to bring him something in return, such as an egg one's parents had bartered, or a piece of bread, or whatever could be spared by the pupil's family. Dr. Schwartz felt, as did the involved adults, that the learning of mathematics was very important and would enable his students to be on a par with the outside world, once freedom would be theirs. The children, however, did not always agree with this view.

Every night, the old Studienrat of group Berlin gave private lessons in Latin. Among his students were adults. If one could not pay, he gladly gave free instruction, for he loved to hear himself read and explain. Even though he had lost all his other luggage, he had managed to carry into the ghetto several Latin textbooks, no mean feat for an old man. He was thus able both to teach and to enjoy himself.

After the big upheaval of the Duenamuende action, when life returned to normal, the teenagers of the two ghettos discovered each other. In addition, the Latvian

Jewish police, the majority of whom were members of the right-wing Revisionist Betar,⁹ found among the German, Viennese and Czech youths members of the same organization and soon arranged for Friday night meetings, where Betar songs and speeches were the order of the day. Being members of the police gave these young fellows considerable freedom of movement. They were on good terms with the German Jewish police and had earmarked a large room in a house near the hospital, where most of these meetings were held. They would walk casually along Leipziger Strasse and would then just check whether anyone was there, so that they could safely slip into the house on the "German" side.

They approved heartily that there were schools set up and at one point even made a proposal that Hebrew should be taught to all the children. This was not followed up. Nevertheless, the Friday night meetings were very successful, and were attended by young people of other Zionist organizations as well, once word of the meetings had gotten around. At that time, the difference in ideology seemed rather unimportant. What

⁹
See page 27.

was important to those who came were the Hebrew songs and the spirit of the young people from the two ghettos, who hoped that they would all go to Palestine one day. Even the pessimists among them, when making speeches, expressed the idea that after the war would be over, after the end of all the suffered indignities and tragedies, emigration to Palestine was the one hope left.

Even older people came. Often, there was standing room only as the candles were lit by one of the girls and the Oneg Shabbat, the celebration of the coming of the Sabbath, began. When the older people sometimes cried, the younger ones became impatient with them, and would then dance the Hora with abandon, until late at night, when one by one, silently and carefully, they would all go home. The Latvian Jewish police were the last to leave, so as to be able to intervene in case of trouble.

Because of the curfew, there was always the danger of being apprehended either by the German Jewish police, whom these boys knew well and could handle, or by the Jewish group inspectors, some of whom took themselves quite seriously. The greatest danger though, especially in those early months, were the Latvian SS guards patrolling

the outside of the ghetto. It was they who were in charge, for in the evening the German SS usually left the ghetto. The Latvian guards would shoot at anything that moved. Frequently they entered the ghetto, forcing their way into apartments, and taking away whatever they fancied. There were also numerous cases of rape. People began barricading their apartments before going to sleep. This proved to be a dilemma for those who had to use the toilets, which were situated in the halls.

Finally, one night early in May, the commandant, who had been told about these incursions, got it into his head to inspect apartments on Berliner Strasse during the night. Trouble had been reported the previous night. He chose number thirteen, on the Viennese side.

Escorted by German SS men as well as by Jewish police, he tried to enter an apartment on the second floor, shared by several women, including a Mrs. Rosa Maier. Through the closed door, she told him in no uncertain terms, where he could go. She simply could not believe that it was, indeed, Commandant Krause. Only after the intervention of Mager, one of the group's police men, did she open the door. The language she had used was rather low Viennese dialect, and the

commandant, being from Breslau, understood only half. Nevertheless, he got the gist of it, had a good laugh and promised her that she would never have to be afraid anymore. After this episode there was an end to the nightly forays by the Latvian guards into the ghetto. Three of the twenty-six guards were never seen anymore. Rumor had it that they were sent to the front. Whatever it was, from then on Mrs. Maier was a sort of lucky mascot for the house.

Following the Puenamuende action, groups Berlin, Hannover and Vienna had been consolidated under one eldest, Guenther Fleischl, but each group kept its own female administrator in charge of work details. These three women shared a common office on Berliner Strasse 4; Fleischl had his office upstairs, complete with two secretaries. He did not really like to sit in his office, but preferred to be on the move, constantly alert to whatever happened in the ghetto. He was not liked by the people; neither was he trusted. He was rather feared. As for the other group elders, they did not like him either, because Krause always held him up as an example. The fact that he was Catholic may have been a reason for some of the dislike, but even those people thought him strange who came to the services he conducted

10
in his apartment.

Both he and the group inspector of the Viennese, Sonnenschein, kept a careful watch on the house at Berliner Strasse 5, where the school was located. Both of them did not particularly like the idea that the same room which served as a school during the day, now had its use on Saturday nights and Sunday nights as well, when the teen-agers of the three groups, as well as visitors from other groups, congregated and had dances there every week. Several of the fellows had managed to hold on to their musical instruments. One had a guitar, one had a banjo, and two had harmonicas. They were always willing to play. In addition, an enterprising young fellow from group Prague had noticed a phonograph at his place of work. With great skill he dismantled it and brought it into the ghetto virtually piecemeal. After he re-assembled it, it was used until September 1943.

Phonograph records were stolen by other enterprising youngsters at their places of employment, and thus the

10
Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 17. She also says that Fleischl was a peculiar man and that he sometimes beat people who were found to have done something wrong.

teen-agers kept abreast of the latest German hit songs. In other groups, the process was essentially the same. In group Saxony, dances were held in the home of the Simmons family, whose son had smuggled in a fabulous collection of records.

Fleischl knew what was going on and he did not care for any of it. He always threatened to forbid it, but he never really did.

Starting early in May, the people congregated on some of the empty lots behind their houses, wherever grass was growing, almost every Sunday afternoon. Not only did they enjoy the fresh air, but also the concerts given in a rather spontaneous manner one day and continued from then on. A very talented young woman, Grete Picker, was always willing to sing; others, not that talented, would sing too and get applause. The star, however, was always Miss Picker. People from all the other groups came to the open space formed by the courts of Berliner Strasse five, seven, and nine, and those of Moskauer Strasse twenty-five, twenty-seven, and twenty-nine. A few times during that summer, the commandant, flanked by his chauffeur Max Gymnich and Oberwachtmeister Neumann, would come to hear the singing. While they did

not sit down on the grass, they leaned against one of the houses, smoked a cigarette, and also listened to the music. When the people stood up, Krause motioned for them to sit down again.

Once they had Anton Brunner with them, the Gestapo official who had been in charge of deportations in Vienna.¹¹ Of the more than five-thousand Jews he had sent to Riga, only about nine-hundred were still alive at that time. It was clear that almost everyone present recognized him, and he seemed to enjoy the notoriety. At the time of deportation, after the people had been arrested and brought to the schools where transports were assembled, it was always Brunner who decided whether they were to go or could stay. He was a small man, rather cruel, who clearly enjoyed his power. At night he went to the "bunker" (basement used as jail)

11

At his trial in Vienna, in 1946, Brunner denied that he had ever been in Riga, insisting that he had not known where the people were going and could therefore not be held responsible for any crimes. Since this author had just published an article relating the above event, and could, together with other survivors, clearly identify him, he was convicted and hanged. Reitlinger mixes him up with Aloys Brunner, Eichmann's right hand, who was an expert on deportations on a larger scale and worked in several European countries. It was Aloys who shot Siegmund Bosel on February 7, 1942(see p. 75). Aloys Brunner was never found.

and maltreated the Jewish security risks who had been picked up in the city for such crimes as going without the yellow star, or trying to shop at the wrong time or store. Another one of his delights was to surprise the women who were in the communal washroom.

Anton Brunner stood there, in the middle of the Riga ghetto, listening to the concert, humming some of the melodies. Obviously he had a good time. He was not the only one, for the music made people forget how dismal their lives really were.

At one time, on another Sunday afternoon, Krause spotted Mrs. Maier, the woman who had given him a piece of her mind a few months earlier. He made her get up and sing a Viennese drinking song. She did quite well, got a lot of applause, and he was beaming.

More formal concerts were held a few times under the auspices of groups Cologne and Kassel. The Viennese sent Erich Eichenbaum, a violin virtuoso, who still had his very precious violin with him. He brought great pleasure to others as well as to himself. His wife Gertrude said that only the violin made him forget that he was hungry, that he was a prisoner, and that conditions were sometimes intolerable. The Latvian Jews

were represented by Brandt, another violin virtuose, also the owner of an excellent violin. For cultural affairs such as these, it was very easy to obtain a pass, enabling Brandt to cross from the Latvian ghetto into the German ghetto. There were never any cultural events in the Latvian ghetto, since their set-up was so utterly different. The absence of women may have been a factor as well.

A theatre in the ghetto was formed and so as to insure the widest possible audience, it was housed in the same factory-type building where clothing was sorted. Krause had been enthusiastic about the idea and had given permission.

The plays were performed Saturday and Sunday nights several weeks in a row for each play; seating was on a "first come, first sit" basis. The three front rows consisted of chairs; they were kept free for the elite. The other rows had long benches. A stage and a beautiful curtain gave the large hall, cleared of bundles which represented mass murder, the respectable look of a theatre. Staged were mainly the old classics, such as Nathan the Wise by Lessing, the first act of Goethe's Faust, also Everyman, the play made famous by

Max Reinhardt. Several times the groups cooperated in staging variety-type shows. There was a good orchestra as well, which also contained several of the Latvian Jews, who composed a march for the ghetto police.

While the Latvian Jews, being musicians, could come and play, the majority of the other Latvian Jews never even made an attempt to come and hear them. There were several reasons for this attitude. Most important, they considered the efforts made by the German Jews to live a normal life some kind of mockery. For those of them who did join the German Jews it could not have been easy, but their desire to escape their drab, hopeless existence must have been stronger than the punishment of contempt and criticism from their compatriots.

The commandant usually came to see the productions, always with an entourage of other Germans. Gymnich came and so did most of the other German ghetto personnel. On these occasions, there was little difference between Nazi and Jew, between murderer and victim. Krause and the other Germans sat in the first row, surrounded by

Jews with whom they were in daily contact, enjoying and applauding the cultural offerings.

It was said in the ghetto that Krause was quite fond of one Viennese Jewess, the beautiful Olly Adler, now a member of group Prague. At any rate, he let her run the ghetto's only beauty parlor, complete with hair dryers, mirrors, and basins. So as to repay her for favors, her younger sister, Gerda Hacker, was made part of a work detail which was known to be quite advantageous because a lot of food was obtainable where they worked. In addition to the commandant, any SS man in the ghetto who wanted to help a Jew, could easily get him or her into a "good" work detail, by just telling Schultz. Their word was law. Krause seldom interfered in work details, but whenever he liked a young girl, he gave her a better job. He was reported to have several affairs with girls in the ghetto, besides Olly Adler. Evidently, he was not afraid of the consequences, for consorting with a Jewess was a grave crime. The usual punishment for this crime, called "Rassenschande," was death for the Jew and either the same or jail for the Christian partner. The Riga ghetto seemed to be oblivious to any laws except those made by Krause. Somehow or

other, the stigma of Rassenschande did not bother him, but he was not the only one. Oberwachtmeister Neumann had a girlfriend from group Saxony whom he met regularly in the garden behind Berliner Strasse 17. Krause's driver Gymnich was very friendly with a girl from group Cologne. Rumor had it that he even smuggled letters from her to friends in the Reich.

Since there was not too much to do at the beauty parlor, it became a hangout for the ghetto's élite, who would stop in and chat with Olly. Even though she did enjoy a certain status, the majority of the ghetto inmates did not regard her as another Queen Esther but found the situation shameful.¹²

Life for the ghetto population became easier. After a few false starts and unexpected snowflurries

12

Olly's beauty proved to be her undoing. At Camp Kaiserwald, Hannes, one of the professional criminals in charge of Jews, fell in love with her. The affair was so open and obvious, that Emilie Kowa, the SS overseer of women, reported it. Kowa herself liked Hannes, and thus got rid of the hated rival. Olly was shot at the Central Jail, but nothing happened to Hannes; he was merely transferred to one of the camps outside Kaiserwald. When he returned, it was rumored that Emilie Kowa was the recipient of his favors. Olly's sister Gerda died in Stutthof, in the fall of 1944.

late in April, the warm weather finally stayed. In back of most of the houses people created small vegetable gardens. Seeds had been obtained through barter in the city and even from some of the German administrators and watchmen who came to the ghetto. Several of the gardens were surprisingly beautiful. The gardeners, most of the time the house commanders, grew quite ambitious. The man in charge of Berliner Strasse 3 even grew watermelons.

Behind the hospital was the largest of the gardens. It even had a hothouse, with the glass brought in on order of the commandant. Several older people, who had experience in raising vegetables, were employed there. The products were mainly for the German authorities, but inmates of the ghetto were able to obtain something too, provided they knew one of the gardeners.¹³

Needless to say, the vegetables that were grown in the ghetto were sorely needed, for the rations had not changed during the past few months. Each person still received 220 grams of bread per day, a portion of rotten fish per week, an occasional portion of turnips

13

Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 22.

or sour cabbage, and from time to time a portion of horse meat. Small children, and there were still quite a few of them around, received fat-free milk, but not¹⁴ regularly.

Throughout the winter months, many people had starved to death. The occasional additional plate of soup or piece of bread from the Welfare Committee was not enough. Only those who either went outside to work and could obtain food, or those lucky enough to have items which they could barter, survived. Sickness took its toll, and so did the suicides. It was not even possible to get very excited about death anymore, since it was so commonplace. Records of these deaths, both natural and suicide, were kept. The Nazis had the official records, but the Jews kept records too, to be used after the war. When the ghetto, however, was liquidated in November 1943, the records were destroyed as well. It was impossible to take them along. Many people kept diaries, and some managed to smuggle them through Kaiserwald and even Stutthof. These diaries,

14

Wolff, Sadismus oder Wahnsinn, p. 11. Her list of rations agrees with the memoirs of Gottschalk and with the list made by author.

however, were mostly of a personal nature and really not meant to be documentaries. To make matters worse, the people who by age and education could have at least remembered important data, did not survive the war. Even so, whatever was written down then, was invaluable, because it was the only available record.

The warm weather revived people's hopes. The workers who cleaned apartments in the city for high SS officials, had occasion to listen to the BBC. They brought back the welcome news about the coalition between the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. People felt that Germany would not be able to hold out long against such a combined force. Whenever people visited each other, the talk turned to politics and the promise of the future.¹⁵

Inmates of the ghetto who worked in cleaning details and in hospital kitchens within the city, saw soldiers being brought back from the Russian front, with frozen toes and fingers, sometimes completely demoralized. Jokes

15

The reliable sources for news from the BBC were Elvira Altschul, Margit Reckler, and Wilma Gerstman. All three were alone in the apartments they had to clean and regularly listened to news from outside. Of the three, only Mrs. Altschul survived.

in the ghetto compared Hitler to Napoleon, with both having taken on the Russian winter, and presumably, with Hitler following Napoleon's defeat. Added to these hopes was the conviction that the remaining people of the ghetto, most of whom were working, were sorely needed and would therefore not have to share the fate of the earlier victims.

Stirrings of hope were not only mental, but physical as well. It was not long before the German authorities, noticing an increase in abortions, sent down the order, via the groups' offices, that sex was henceforth forbidden. They did not want the working force diminished even for a few days needed to recuperate. Posters to the effect that sex was "verboten" were put on the doors of houses. At no time, however, was there any attempt made to enforce this ruling, simply because there was really no way to do so, as long as families lived together. During that summer of 1942, the group doctors gave all of the teen-agers lectures both on venereal diseases as well as on contraception. Dr. Rolf Bischofswerder, a young doctor from Cologne who now practiced in group Vienna, was quite succinct about it. He warned about pregnancies, saying that there could well result the punishment of sterilization, and

this would be, in his words, "a tragedy for you, once this war is over, and we are all free again."¹⁶

Another reason for renewed hope was the fact that from time to time, people whose fate had not been known and who, in some cases had been given up for dead, came into the ghetto on furlough. Several of the younger fellows, who had been kept at the station in Skirotava, to unload the luggage from the trains, were living in the city, where they were busy at sorting out clothes and making packages to be sent to the Reich. Technically, they were part of the ghetto, but their names did not show up on the lists since they had never entered it. Now they brought news from the outside, and not only news, but food and valuables as well. In comparison with the inmates of the ghetto, they looked excellent and reported that they were treated well.¹⁷

16

Dr. Bischofswerder and his wife Ruth fled from Camp Kaiserwald in September of 1944, believing that the end was near. While this was indeed true, with the Russians taking Riga on October 14, these two as well as their accomplice, Lotte Adler of Cologne, were found and brought back to the camp, where they were shot.

17

Two of the men, Hans Steinitz and Gabriel Hoffenreich of Vienna, found their families in the ghetto. All these men, however, were shot in 1944, when the Germans left the city.

From time to time when trucks arrived from Camp Jungfernhof, the people of the ghetto saw their old friends, even if for a short time. In addition, Camp Salaspils was slowly emptied of Jews and, starting with June, each week brought the badly undernourished skeletal men back to the ghetto. These were now back permanently and the inmates of the ghetto made an all-out effort to restore their strength. Each day, the arriving work details, once inside the ghetto, were asked to contribute a little something for the Salaspils returnees. Everyone gave and within a relatively short time, the majority of them recuperated. Many of them, however, were too far gone and did not recover.

A Czech Jew who had been a boxer before the war, the hangman of Salaspils, came back too. Since he did not have another choice if he wanted to save his own life, he was not scorned by anyone. The returning men told how quick and skillful he had been, in order not to prolong the victim's agonies. As a matter of fact, he was well liked. In the ghetto, he was added to the police force. On one of his earlier trips to the ghetto he had met Mrs. Maier. They entered into a ghetto marriage, living together until they were sent to Camp Kaiserwald, where they were separated. Neither of them

survived the war.

The attitude of the ghetto inmates towards those who held functions in the ghetto was usually tinged with a little envy for their better life, rather than malice. It was understood that the ghetto personnel in some way cooperated with the German authorities, but it was also quite clear that anyone working outside the ghetto, in some way also contributed to the war effort and therefore also cooperated with the Germans. Cruelty towards one's own people, cruelty in excess of what the German authorities expected, incurred hatred. This was considered a crime and there was almost none of it in the ghetto of Riga.

Crime such as stealing from fellow prisoners was almost impossible as well. People wanted to be part of society, not be ostracized. Other offenses, such as for instance adultery, were perpetrated. Several of the Jewish policemen had girl friends in addition to their spouses. The only people who considered it a crime, however, were their wives and not the other people in the ghetto.

Much later, the survivors of the ghetto, now inmates of subsequent camps such as Kaiserwald and Stutthof,

came across their former Jewish bosses. They experienced some kind of satisfaction because they were now on the same level. Vengeance in any other way was taken only once, and even there, a conscious crime was never proven.

After the war, there developed an unwritten agreement to blot out whatever one's acquaintances may have been doing which would be unthinkable under normal conditions. Affairs or abortions, for instance, or anything else which a free society, given that generation, could not condone, were just not talked about. All the suffering had in some way expiated the sins.

Whenever people from the surrounding camps came into the ghetto, hope flared up that there might still be others who were indeed working in fish canneries somewhere. Some relatives thus kept up hope. They never gave up believing that they would one day meet again.

Even the school curriculum became more optimistic that summer. For the Viennese school, Professor Lemberger added English, and those of the older students who had known some of it before, had to teach it to the smaller

children.

About this time, legal contact with the Latvian Jews was made possible. It may have started with the soccer teams when the Latvian Jewish police played against the German Jewish police. The games were held on that same Tin Place where the gallows stood. The Latvians' goalie was the star of the matches. Schulmann, a boxer before the war, had superb reflexes. Even the SS was impressed. They came whenever there was a game, but their presence was no damper on the general excitement. Everybody rooted for Schulmann, especially the girls.

Every Sunday, the Latvian Jews came to the German ghetto, provided they had a pass. Actually, they were ingenious enough to come at other times as well. There were still, on most Friday nights, the clandestine Oneg Shabbat being held. With the coming of spring, the talk became at times quite militant. The young Jewish policemen, the élite of the Latvian ghetto, spoke about the need for resistance. Similar thoughts were voiced in all the ghettos.¹⁸ Since there was no contact with other ghettos, however, these plans can be regarded as spontaneous.

18

Michael Elkin, Forged in Fury (New York, 1970). See chapter 3, pp. 50 - 85, for a description. The author bases his information on interviews and written sources.

In Riga, unfortunately, these young Latvian Jews had evidently confided in the wrong people. Plans for an uprising had been made; a few of the police were in on the plans. When several dissident Latvian Jews left the ghetto by truck, to join the partisans instead of staying and taking part in the uprising, they ran into an ambush and managed to kill several Germans. The result was a surprise search conducted within the ghetto. An arsenal of guns and even a small, outmoded cannon was found in a bunker, the entrance to which was through a stove. A list containing names and maps was found as well. The weapons had been smuggled in piece by piece from the work detail called Pulverturm, a storage house for weapons.

Immediately, all forty-one of the Latvian Jewish police were arrested and put under heavy SS guard in the Kommandantur on Leipziger Strasse. Actually, only a few of them were implicated by the list of names. It was well known, however, that all of them would be sympathetic to an uprising; they had been heard talking often enough. Not only that, but they were single, their families had been cruelly murdered, and even though the majority of them had girl friends in the German ghetto,

their wish for revenge transcended their attachments. In addition, they were quite realistic about chances for survival. The Latvian Jews were always far more pessimistic than their German counterparts.

That Friday night, the 29th of October 1942, all inhabitants of the ghetto, both German and Latvian, were informed that they were to come to their assembly places a quarter of an hour earlier the next morning. Saturday, the 30th, saw both ghettos swarming with SS men. In the court of the Kommandantur, in addition to the commandant, there were Lange, the head of Einsatzkommando 2 C, Maywald, one of his deputies, and Kurt Migge, the commandant of Salaspils. The forty-one arrested policemen were brought to the court as well.

In the meantime, at the exit of the Latvian gate, about three-hundred older men were put onto waiting vans and taken away. The elder of the Latvian ghetto, as well as the man in charge of work details, were arrested and brought to the ghetto jail. After this, all other people were permitted to go to their places of work. The forty-one "suspects" were still standing in the courtyard.

At about 10:30 A.M., the whole group was taken through the big gate of the so-called Saxony House, and they were marched to the Tin Place; behind them was a contingent of SS. The doomed Jews knew what was coming. Upon a signal from one of them, they tried to disperse. Immediately, the machine gun fire commenced; forty of them were killed. One got away, but only for a short time. He had stumbled into the cellar on the Kassel Court, where potatoes were being sorted, and asked them to hide him. They threw old bags over him, but the SS soon found him, dragged him out and shot him too.¹⁹ In the general confusion, one SS man was shot and killed as well, and his comrades put up a small sign at the edge of the Tin Place, to commemorate where he fell. The bloodsoaked earth, where the Jewish policemen died, was later scooped up by several of the murdered men's girls, who put the earth into little bags which they carried around their

19

Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 28. See also Wolff, Sadismus oder Wahnsinn, p. 30, but note that she lists the date as October 30, 1943, which is a year later. When interviewing Wolff in Berlin in August 1971, the author told her of the error and she realized her mistake. Since Reitlinger and Hilberg use her as a source, they also have the date wrong. By October 1943, the Riga Ghetto was almost empty.

necks.

According to rumors still rampant among survivors, it was the head of the German Jewish Police, Rudolf Haar, who allegedly had turned them in, after hearing of their talk about resistance because he feared that an uprising would endanger the whole ghetto. In reality, he merely told the SS afterwards, when they threatened to liquidate both ghettos, that the German Jews had nothing to do with the whole matter and should not be punished. This attitude, which he never concealed, reinforced the belief that he was responsible for the elimination of the Latvian Jewish police. The episode with the ambushed truck was ignored. What made Haar look so bad was the fact that Krause had German Jewish police with him when he looked for the arsenal. Had there been only the SS, the Latvian Jews would not have blamed Haar.

After the ghetto was dissolved, Rudolf Haar came to Camp Kaiserwald where his coming was eagerly awaited. On the second night after his arrival, he was thrust head first into the cess pool until he died. As he was being dragged to the cess pool, Haar screamed that he had not betrayed anyone. According to the camp's grapevine, the

execution was instigated by the bereaved girl friends of the murdered Latvian Jews. It was perpetrated by the professional criminal prisoners and not by Jews. Despite an investigation by the commandant of Kaiserwald, the culprits were never found.

The summer had come to a dreadful end. The earlier complacency was gone, and with it, much of the hope. The prospect of another winter loomed threateningly, and the absence of those young, handsome fellows upon leaving and arriving, was a heartache. They had been so spirited, they had been so helpful, always ready with a good word for everyone, that they were sorely missed. In addition, their fate was a constant reminder that if it could happen to them, then it could happen to all.

THE SECOND WINTER

After a brief autumn, which had transformed the drab ghetto into a burst of colors, the people settled down to face another winter of imprisonment. This time, thanks to existing rules pertaining to cleanliness as well as to a continuation of having the faucets working inside the houses, also because of less crowding and greater stability, it seemed in some ways to be an easier winter than the one before. The cold was still the great enemy; firewood was more scarce now than the year before. The SS even permitted forays under their watchful eyes into the empty houses around the ghetto, so that broken furniture could be brought back to the ghetto to be used for cooking, although food was less abundant too. These were the houses from which first the local inhabitants had been removed, and later the homes of the murdered Latvian Jews. They formed a cordon sanitaire between the ghetto and the outside world.

The Day of Atonement had come and gone, and the prayers for deliverance had remained unanswered. Those who fasted did not find it too difficult; by now they

were used to never having a full stomach. The German authorities had taken no notice of the Jewish calendar. In general, they took little notice of the inmates, a fact which, in spite of physical discomforts lulled many into a false security.

Little tragedies occurred daily, not even noticed by the great majority of the ghetto population. There was the law against sexual intercourse, which had in the beginning been the subject of any number of jokes, but which now, in reality, led to what young Dr. Bischofswerder and his colleagues had feared all along. On Krause's order, sterilizations were to be performed on all women coming in the second time for an abortion. Compliance with the verbal order was rather sketchy, since there was never an SS physician in the hospital. Sterilization was performed only when a woman asked for¹ it. It was also done when her condition warranted it, as in some cases of female disorders. At that time a hysterectomy would be performed in order to avoid any

¹
Lizzy Brunn got pregnant twice after the birth of her baby. The second time, her husband Fritz got twenty-five lashes on Krause's order; this prompted her to ask for sterilization.

future troubles.

While abortion was humorously called "appendicitis with arms and legs," it was no laughing matter for the two partners. Depending upon the mood of Krause, he might order any number of lashes for the male, to be administered either at the hospital or at the Jewish police station. The next commandant even sent several of the implicated males to the Central Jail, from which they might or might not come back, depending on the treatment handed out to them and on their stamina. Roschmann preferred not to be the sole arbitrator of laws as his predecessor had been. If a girl refused to give the name of her partner, and this happened more than once, she was punished by not getting anesthetics during the operation. To avoid this suffering, the secret hospital in group Kassel had been created, but it was far too small to take in everyone.

Other operations were performed as well; in most cases, people recovered and went back to work after their convalescence. There was a high incidence of boils, which had to be lanced, there were other infections, there were broken limbs to be set, and there were many men suffering from hernias, brought about by lifting

heavy objects; in short, the hospital was always busy.

In spite of the stringent laws about sex, ghetto marriages were formed and most certainly consummated. The Latvian Jew Isser Lurie, who was both a jeweler and an engraver, fashioned the very popular rings used by the happy couples. They were made of silver, sometimes with a thin, golden plate or rim, and always with the initials and the date. The rings were not only used as marriage bands, but became a fashion item as well. Even at his place of work, at a clothing warehouse for the air force, he received many orders from the soldiers to make up rings for them too. His business was lucrative; his prices were steep; only the marriage bands were bargains, for the small, gentle craftsman believed in making people happy.²

There was little difficulty if two people from the same group wanted to get married. The couple just moved together, the name of the female was changed, usually hyphenated, and that was all. When it came to liaisons between members of different groups, the Jewish bureau-

2

Lurie was one of a contingent of ten men taken to the forest to exhume bodies and burn them. It happened to him in spite of being always alert; the SS fooled him by asking for ten men to stuff mattresses in Camp Kaiserwald, in July 1944. (Interview with Hanka Spiegel, Miami.)

cracy did not appreciate it, for it made their book-keeping much harder. How were they to account for people moving from one group to another? After all, the reports had to be delivered each day and they could not contain ghetto marriages. Therefore, legally, the partners remained within their groups, living together in one or the other. The SS never knew what went on; it is doubtful whether they would have cared about people moving around. Still, one had to be careful. For this reason, some people considered themselves married and did not tell the Jewish authorities either; they probably felt that it was best to remain as inconspicuous and anonymous as possible.

The worst situation, from the standpoint of bookkeeping, was love between Latvian and German Jews. In spite of the obvious cultural differences, this was a rather common occurrence, since almost all of the Latvian Jewish women had been murdered and since many of the German Jewish men had perished in Salaspils, and were also generally more vulnerable than their women. The Latvian Jews could not move into the German ghetto, and neither could the German Jewesses move into the Latvian ghetto. While the men could come for visits

to the German ghetto, it was prohibited for women to enter the Latvian ghetto. Marriage, in any true sense, was thus made impossible. Yet, there were several; they lived apart all week and saw each other on Sundays.

Romances usually had their beginnings at the place of work or on Sundays in the ghetto, to which the Latvian Jews were allowed to come. Now, being married after a fashion, it took enormous skill and good will all around to give the couple some privacy. These ghetto marriages, provided the participants survived the next few years, endure to this day, even though, at the time, the older Latvian Jews were not too happy about this. It may well be that they considered any liaison so soon after the death of the Latvian women shameful, or that they objected because they did not trust the German Jews. There might also have been that old feeling, which exists to this day, that the native Jews had been killed to make room for the German Jews. They were not aware then and do not want to acknowledge it now, that only after the Riga ghetto had settled down, by March 1942, was there an entry in Goebbels' diary to the effect that Jews from

the Reich would be sent to the ghettos which had been "emptied" of their native Jews.³ Until then, it was usually the Reich Jews who were exterminated first, as for instance in the big ghetto of Lodz.⁴ At any rate, Goebbels' scheme was never really followed up, since the Reich Jews were generally sent to collection centers from where they were then dispatched and soon exterminated.

During that second winter, the people who had contact with the outside world other than through bartering, brought back news of the Battle of Stalingrad. The contact was seldom with SS, but mostly with either army, air force, or navy personnel, many of whom did not agree with the brutal methods used by the SS and who treated the Jews working for them as human beings. There were also thousands of Russian prisoners stationed in and around Riga, who managed to tell Jewish prisoners that the war was not going too well for the Germans.

³ The Goebbels Diaries, p. 148. Entry for March 27, 1942. He refers to the procedures as barbaric, but says "it is a life and death struggle between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus."

⁴ Rabbi Leo Baeck in We Survived, Ed. Eric Boehm, (Yale, 1949) p. 48.

One Sunday, shortly after the liquidation of the Latvian Jewish police, the Latvian Jews had to form long lines in front of the Kommandantur. Rumors started flying and it was almost with relief that the German ghetto found out the reason for their being lined up. They had to hand in all the money they possessed and would henceforth not be allowed to have any. Up to then, they had been able to handle money and use it, while the German Jews were prohibited from doing so under punishment of death. They had even paid for their rations, unlike their German counterparts. The Jews from the Reich had originally been told that they could not keep their money since it consisted of Reichsmark. The money used in the Baltic States were Ostmark, and it is logical to assume that the Germans saw no need to have yet another form of bookkeeping on their hands. By making the Latvian Jews give up their money, the German authorities evidently did not consider them anymore as an autonomous unit, but thought of the two ghettos now as one. In reality, they were still separated.

Due to the fact that even a combined ghetto was relatively small, it had evidently not occurred to the Germans to let the Jews have their own "Jewish" money,

as was done in other ghettos. In this respect, the Riga Ghetto was treated like a concentration camp rather than a ghetto.

Christmas came, and those to whom the holiday meant something, saw at least one wish fulfilled. The ghetto received chicken meat as a special treat! It was a little offensive, not quite fresh, but it was still a treat and not one person got ill. It was said that it came from the Swedish Red Cross.⁵ No matter where it came from, for most of the inmates it was a great feast.

A few weeks after Christmas, Krause was sent to Poland. There are several conflicting versions of his fate. In the list of criminals operating in the Baltic lands, he is believed to be dead, having been killed during 1943. In Gottschalk's memoirs, however, which are usually quite reliable, there is a note to the effect that he was in the ghetto in September 1943, when Fleischl died, and had three salvos fired for his old friend. There is also a deposition by a former inmate which states that Krause was present at the

⁵ Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 29.

final selection in the ghetto, on November 3, 1943.

In January, in Krause's stead, Obersturmfuehrer Eduard Roschmann, formerly a lawyer in Graz, Austria, was made commandant. He did not like to hand out justice on the spot, in the ghetto, as Krause had done, but in most cases sent the people who had trans-⁶gressed in any way, to the Central Jail in the city. It was said in the ghetto that this was not due to any qualms he may have had, but simply because he could not shoot straight. It took him at least three shots to finish off a victim.⁷

The great majority of the ghetto inhabitants were aware of the fact that the commandant was gone and another was in his place. It did not really matter. As far as they were concerned, life at the moment was quiet, the ghetto was at peace, interrupted by only an occasional natural death, or by news that someone had

6

A popular novel published in 1972 calls Roschmann "the butcher of Riga." This is preposterous, as is the whole description of the Riga Ghetto given in the book. (Frederick Forsyth, The Odessa File.)

7

Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 29. One of the few people he did shoot, however, was young Arthur Kaufmann, Max Kaufmann's only son.

been sent to jail because he had been caught breaking existing rules. They could live almost undisturbed, as long as they made sure not to get caught while breaking the rules; it therefore became a deadly game. To stay alive, one had to outwit one's persecutors.

At the end of 1942, the two ghettos were reported to supply a total of 6,994 males and 3,664 females as a labor force in the various army establishments and factories in Riga. According to the same report, another 40,000 people could be used.⁸ Already during the summer, the army had complained about Jewish workers doing farmwork, when they were so badly needed in munition factories.⁹ No complaints, however, were registered about the extermination of Jews occurring at the same time in the forest adjoining Camp Salaspils. On the other hand, an outside work detail, at the sea-shore, where sick officers or those on leave could spend a few days, and where Schultz, on orders of Krause,

⁸ Document MA 201 2910/62. Collection WW II Records Division, Generalkommissar Riga, Abteilung fuer Arbeits- und Sozialverwaltung, Allgemeine Wirtschaftslage.

⁹ Document MA 201, pp. 387-393.

had sent fifty young women to clean up and serve food, was singled out for complaints from Army High Command in Riga.¹⁰

Apparently, one part of the army was jealous of another part just for employing those precious Jews. As for the SS Dienststellen, (work details connected with the SS), they had no cause for complaint. They always got Jews; it was clear that they were the most powerful.

While Jews were used mainly for work, both skilled and unskilled, there were still other uses, namely that of being needed for experiments. In 1942, experiments were conducted to find out more about spotted typhoid fever, which was known to be transmitted by lice. One Dr. Abhagen of The Institute of Medical Zoology asked permission to have the three Jews used in his experiments work no more than four hours per day, so that they could heal faster and be used again as blood donors for his lice. The permission was granted him on November 1, 1942; the Jews in question would be allowed to work less than eight hours daily.¹¹

¹⁰
Document MA 202, p. 286.

¹¹
Document MA 201, pp. 403-404.

At a later time, experiments were performed at Camp Kaiserwald, which, according to the rumors, were concerned with spotted typhoid fever too. The human guinea pigs from Kaiserwald were sent away with the last selection. As for Dr. Abhagen's "patients," they simply disappeared.

Within the ghetto itself, some work was done for the army as well. The Gewerbebetrieb, where all those items had been sorted after the massacre, had not received any more of that clothing. Instead, it became a place where uniforms were mended, where army furs were repaired, and where some women even darned heavy army socks, so that the German soldiers should not have to freeze at the front. Essentially the same people worked there, provided they were still alive; any additional workers had to have some skill, such as sewing or being familiar with furs. Even though there was no chance of getting food through bartering, this work detail was not too difficult, since it was inside the ghetto. Consequently, there was no long walk to and from the place of employment involved, which took a lot out of the prisoners. The German officer in charge was easy to get along with. The only excitement

were the occasional searches, which kept the prisoners on their toes, but did not deter them from occasionally taking something home.

While the Gewerbebetrieb did not receive any more clothing connected with genocide, Camp Salaspils and several small, stationary work details in the city continued to receive a steady supply until late fall of 1942. Depositions from survivors as well as existing documents show that transports from the Reich and occupied territories stopped coming in November. After that, Gestapo lists are usually marked "Destination Auschwitz." The environs of Riga, as well as other extermination centers in the east, were no longer needed. Auschwitz was centrally located and could also eliminate Jews far more effectively.

There was one special transport to Riga in March 1943. It consisted of a contingent of four-hundred and fifty men, none of them Jewish, who had until then been prisoners at the notorious Concentration Camp Buchenwald and were brought in to build Camp Kaiserwald.¹² They were political and professional criminal prisoners,

12

Record Book, K.Z. Buchenwald, Abgaenge. International Tracing Service, Arolsen, Hessen.

who would see to it that the Jews, who were to join them at a later time, would toe the line and have experts teach them about life in a concentration camp. When they arrived at the site of the new camp, they found approximately fifty Jews who had lived there since November 1942, clearing the ground for the barracks; these Jews left as soon as the contingent¹³ from Buchenwald arrived.

Blissfully, the ghetto inmates were unaware of any changes in store for them. They could only see that the labor shortage in Riga was acute, for suddenly, the so-called Sprungkommandos (special work details on call) started. The men, who had worked hard all week, were informed Saturday night by the house commander that they had to go to work the next day, on Sunday, as well. They went, not to their regular jobs, but to

13

Deposition of Ivan Brager, Hamburg, who came to Riga in November 1942. Together with seventy-seven other men he was sent to what was to become Kaiserwald. The remainder of his transport were shot. When the Buchenwald contingent came, he and the other men, then numbering about fifty, were sent first to the ghetto and then to an SS Repair Park for trucks and other vehicles. Document MA 707/1,2. Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, Munich.

other pressing jobs such as finishing roads, loading and unloading ships in Riga's busy harbor, clearing forests for still more roads needed by the army, and in that way, contributing even more to the war effort. In due time, women were affected too, although never as badly as the men. Even though the work load increased, the rations stayed the same and the loss of the day of rest sapped the strength of the ghetto population even more. On the other hand, to give up hope now, when it was obvious that the German army was not doing so well in the East, seemed positively foolish. And so, throughout that second winter, men and women struggled to keep alive.

Even though the transports had kept on coming during 1942, as early as June of that year Himmler had given orders to the Einsatzgruppen that there should not be a trace left of what had been done in the forests.

Accordingly, plans were made for the formation of special work details which were to obliterate all the evidence in such locales where slaughter had occurred. ¹⁴

14

Affidavit by Standartenfuehrer Paul Blobel, commander of Einsatzkommando 4 A. He testified that Himmler ordered him to erase all traces of the murders.

Thus, early in 1943, although they could do very little while the ground was frozen, Kommando Stuetzpunkt, the name it had in Riga, came into being. There was a lot of work to be done. The members of the work detail had to first exhume the bodies, erect pyres, stack the bodies in a most efficient manner, and then burn them. Yet, they could never work sufficiently fast and well enough to hide the crimes which had been perpetrated. In addition, as soon as the men had gained some experience, they were killed off and a new detail was brought to the forest. Unobtrusively, at first from the ghetto and later from Camp Kaiserwald, every few weeks or so, ten men would be taken away and never seen again. Suspicions were aroused, but the SS always used new ruses and in this way, always obtained new victims easily. It was the outside world, consisting of Latvians or army drivers, who told about the grisly work being done in the forest.

In January 1943 it became known that the German army had suffered a great defeat at Stalingrad. Again hopes were aroused and unguarded comments by army personnel gave food to these hopes. Many people began making plans as to what they would do upon achieving freedom;

most of them could not think further than of warmth, of frequent hot baths, and of good food.

In the meantime, the daily struggle took its toll and the winter months again saw an increase in mortality. Whoever had been prudent throughout the past months, and had done his best to be on good terms with the Jewish authorities in the ghetto, had occasion now to profit from it, because only they had the power to free individuals from the hated Sunday work.

Even though almost no new clothes or valuables were brought into the ghetto anymore, it seemed as if there was still something left to barter outside. During occasional searches made by the SS, people threw away the precious food rather than be caught with it and punished. Later it was gathered up and given to the police men or other administrative personnel; a few times it was given to the hospital. Luckily, these searches were only sporadic, for there was a decided decrease in the food being brought in. In addition to food, firewood was at a premium and could actually be bartered inside the ghetto.

One had to be extremely careful at all times, but most people developed a marvelous skill at deceiving

the authorities and thus saving their lives for the time being. The spiritual leaders of the ghetto, not necessarily the functionaries, but people like Dr. Schwartz, Professor Lemberger, Elizabeth Bermann, or Dr. Bischofswerder, never stopped telling the young people that the first law of resistance was survival. Otherwise, in any other sense, the word resistance was never mentioned.

THE END OF THE RIGA GHETTO

In June 1943, Heinrich Himmler decided to do away with the entire ghetto system which had been set up in the East and replace some of the ghettos with concentration camps. The inhabitants of other ghettos would be exterminated almost entirely. Himmler did this on the advice of Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Heydrich's successor, who felt that the contact between Germans and Jews was too close;¹ both of them may also have thought that conditions in the ghettos, where families lived together and Jews had a certain degree of autonomy, were not conducive enough to accomplish the "destruction through work process" which had been outlined so long ago at the Wannsee Conference. It seemed that as long as the Germans did not actually kill the people, in spite of rather harsh conditions, the Jews managed to hang on to life. There may also have been the fear of uprisings, such as the one which had occurred in Warsaw in April 1943.²

¹
Letter from Kaltenbrunner to SS Hauptquartier, dated June 2, 1943 (document number 2403) and letter dated August 13, 1943, in which he complains that "relations between Reich Germans and Jewish women had exceeded the limits which for world-philosophical and race-political reasons should have been observed most stringently." Translated by Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, p. 254.

²
Rahel Auerbach, Der yidisher oyfstand in varshe 1943, (Warsaw, 1948).

Plans for a proper site for a concentration camp in the suburbs of the city of Riga had been made even earlier than June and Camp Kaiserwald was being built with the idea of consolidating the Jews from the two ghettos as well as from all outside work details. It was understood that only the strongest would be sent to the new camp. The remainder, already too weakened or overlooked at previous selections or doing work in the ghetto, would then be eliminated.

Transferring the Jews from the ghettos to the camps would mean a separation by sex, for in all of the German concentration and labor camps, males and females lived in separate quarters. This separation was demoralizing and broke people's spirit.

Needless to say, no one in the Riga ghetto could even guess at this new horror. There had been no mass executions since October 1942. The newspaper Voelkischer Beobachter sounded subdued, even though it reported a spring offensive in the East. Each worker seemed to be at a premium. News had been received about other ghettos in the Baltic region, Kovno and Libau (Liepaja), and they, too, seemed just then destined to go on forever. With the advent of spring, the ghetto once more experienced an awakening.

As in the year before, open air concerts were in

vogue. Of necessity, they started later and lasted until dusk came, because of the additional Sunday work details.

Attendance at the few remaining schools was considerably reduced, since all children over twelve had gone to work, either in the city or within the ghetto, working in the vegetable garden or in the hospital, or being used as messengers. The reduction of the age level had seemed wise.

Groups Berlin-Hannover-Vienna had about thirty-five single young men who had absolutely no families. Following the example of Group Bielefeld, Fleischl decided to open a special house for them, where they would have a housekeeper and a cook, so that they would not have to bother with it themselves. Accordingly, he received permission from the commandant to have one more house on Moskauer Strasse opened, and it was duly added to the combined groups. This house was to be a home for men only, called Herrenhausen. There was a big party, attended by all the ghetto notables, and the young men were happy, for here there would be service personnel, freeing them from the kind of work they disliked.

In March, there had been an even bigger party, given by Fleischl to commemorate the fact that he had already been the eldest of all three groups for a whole year. There was the finest food one could think of, luscious cakes and cookies, there was wine and vodka, and there was dancing to a live band throughout the night. It was the most magnificent party any of the people present had ever seen or given in the ghetto. The source of the food and liquor was not made known, but Fleischl and the other ghetto notables had adequate opportunities to barter for it. The baking went on in the ghetto for a week before the party and was then sent over to the large room where Group Berlin had its school. It may be assumed that the German authorities knew about the party, but none of them were present, which made it even more successful. Fleischl was the perfect host. He danced with even the most insignificant functionary, charming everyone. Much, much later, in the fall of that year, it became clear that he had known then that he was already sick, and that he did not believe he would ever recover. Events proved him right, but at the moment, the party was talked about by everyone. When he got up to speak, he exhorted

those present to have patience, and to never give up hope. He ended his speech by quoting a popular song which ended that after every December, May must come. He received a standing ovation.³

Meanwhile, following Himmler's schedule, the Polish ghettos were being liquidated. In Riga, there was no news about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and in retrospect, it probably would not have made a difference. There were changes in the behavior of the SS, but they were not correctly interpreted. For there was a tightening of security. Searching the home-coming work details which had been done only sporadically, was taken up with new vigor. People thought it was because of the good weather, when the SS who did the searching, would not mind freezing while waiting for the long lines to pass. The prisoners, however, should have been suspicious when it turned out that the SS very often let them keep the piece of bread or the soup they were carrying into the ghetto. People still threw away much of what they carried, or ate it

³ Interview with Putty Israel, Fleischl's secretary, Selma Sollinger, work administrator, and author's diary.

very quickly, before their turn would come to be searched, but if they did not, the authorities were far more lenient than they had ever been. It seemed that their way of searching was more probing and often proved to be embarrassing. Evidently, they were searching for something else, and logically, given the events in Warsaw and at other, not that well publicized locations, they were looking for weapons. If they did, they were searching in vain, for at that time, at least in the German ghetto of Riga, there was no thought of any armed resistance. With the episode of October 1942 still fresh in everyone's memory, to most of the German Jews, except the younger males, the death of these forty-one heroes seemed quite pointless.

In addition, there was a conspicuous change in the attitude of the young people as well. They became hedonistic. It almost seemed as if they were trying to get what they could, while they could. There was no more talk of Zionism; this, too, seemed pointless. The dances were still going on, but there was a hectic strain underneath it all, a wish to live, a preoccupation with the few pleasures the ghetto could offer, and at times

the dangerous feeling of having come too far to face the possibility of losing out. Many, too many, felt invincible.

Even the Sunday visitors to the ghetto, who worked outside and who knew what had happened in the forest, although they did not talk about it freely, shared this feeling of security, incongruous as it may have been. There was a frenzied, stepped-up pace of enjoyment of life, without a care, trying to get the most out of everything while there was still time. Yet, there was an almost ludicrous certainty of surviving.

Among these visitors to the ghetto were three young Jews who had been brought to Riga from the ghetto of Lodz, when a unit of Organization Todt, the German Army Engineering Corps, left that city. These three Polish Jews had established contact with the Jews from the Reich and from Latvia, when a ghetto work detail was attached to the engineering corps, called Baugruppe Giessler. At the time, they were the only Polish Jews in the city and from them, the inmates of the Riga ghetto found out about life in the ghetto of Lodz. From their accounts it was obvious that conditions in Riga were far

better and much more relaxed, a fact which made especially the German Jews even more confident and arrogant.⁴

An early transport from Kovno, which was added to the Latvian ghetto, had also given the impression that life in the Riga ghetto was far better than in Kovno. It seemed that the ghetto of Riga, especially the German part of it, was unique in many ways. This very fact may be an additional explanation for the continuation of hope.

As for the older people, they still felt that by doing their job properly, by being disciplined as befitted German Jews, by trying to follow orders to the best of their ability, life would go on in the same way. The ghetto would continue in the same manner until the day of freedom would arrive. Forgotten were some of the earlier doubts; pessimism was simply not tolerated. Sadness about past losses could be dealt with; as for the future, only optimism was permitted. People became angry

4

The three Polish Jews were Moses Tellmann, Abraham Goldmann, and Meyer Wilczkowski. Tellmann and Goldmann worked as tailors, Wilczkowski worked as a locksmith. He was tall, blond, and blue-eyed and freely walked around the city. During a surprise check for papers, he was found out, brought to the Central Jail, and eventually shot. The other two survived and were interviewed by the author.

if anyone voiced doubts; they pointed to some of the obvious achievements of the ghetto, as well as to the fact that everyone of its inhabitants was of great value to the Germans.

Around this time, however, it seemed that there was much drinking going on in the formerly staid ghetto. The Latvian Vodka, Degvins, was smuggled in and was always offered when people visited one another. There was also a slight increase in the food rations, with occasional extra portions given out. Yet, the end was near but no one knew it.

Compared to other ghettos in the East, with the exception of Kovno and Lodz, dissolution of the Riga ghetto was slow. It actually began in May 1943 and was completed only by November, when the last "action" took place. At ghettos such as in Wilno, Liepaja, Minsk, or Cracow, for example, the break-up period lasted usually from three to six weeks.

Starting at the end of May, in small numbers at first, people were sent out of the ghetto to work details but they were not brought home every evening as had been the custom; provisions were made for them to sleep and

eat at the places where they worked, so that they could live right there. As early as April, in fact, plans had been made by the German authorities to send a large contingent of Jewish workers to work in the numerous peat bogs of Latvia as well, and as soon as summer came, the plans were put into effect.⁵

Factories that were not deemed as important, would simply cease to exist as employers of Jews. The people who had been working there and were now, suddenly, in this way out of a job, were destined to go to Camp Kaiserwald, that newly erected camp at the outskirts of Riga, formerly called Mezapark. There, men and women were separated, living in wooden barracks under conditions which made life in the ghetto seem beautiful indeed.

The transports of the first inmates to go to Camp Kaiserwald were made up of people whose firms had not been of great importance. They would arrive on Prager Strasse one morning as usual, expecting to go to work as they had done so often, and, upon reaching the gate, would find Mr. Schultz or Mr. Baum or Mr. Schiff, and

⁵ Document MA-201, pp. 403,404. Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, Munich.

would be told that their "Kommando" was cancelled as of now. Very often, they could see the Latvian or German arguing outside, when "his" Jews did not come out. The next step was one that each had dreaded ever since they had reached the ghetto: an order to go home, pack, and at a certain time the next morning assemble at the Tin Place for transfer to another camp.

The first transport left the ghetto in July, on a very hot day. In spite of the heat, people had put on three or four sweaters and sometimes a coat as well, because they could remember that there had been a time when they were left only with what they wore. In spite of a distance of nearly ten kilometers, the people had to walk. They walked right through the main thoroughfares of the city and thus presented a shocking spectacle; the way they were dressed and the extreme heat combined to make even the strongest among them feel weak. All along the way, whenever they passed places where Jews worked, they begged for water and very often would manage to get it. The accompanying German and Latvian SS raged at those who brought out the water. The Jewish police men and Fleischl, who also walked along to the

new camp and then came back to the ghetto, recognized some of the daring Samaritans and scolded them, saying that their action had been foolhardy and could have provoked the nervous SS into shooting.

The fact that the column had marched in the direction of Kaiserwald and not the dreaded forest, plus the fact that Fleischl and the Jewish police had actually seen the camp and had come back to talk about it, was proof that the Germans did not mean to stage another extermination, but this time really meant what they said: a transfer. Everyone knew it would be a hard life, although no one imagined how bad it was going to be, but still, as long as the Nazis would let people live, they were content.

There had apparently been criticism in the city about the sorry spectacle these walkers presented. After another two transports had walked there in the same manner, all subsequent transports were brought there in vans, presumably the same vans that had been used before for a grisly purpose.

While these transfers were taking place, political news once more took one's mind off the changes going

on. People were warned not to congregate in groups and discuss politics. The exciting news of the Italian defection was indeed welcome; Fleischl and the other elders of the ghetto found it necessary to call their respective groups together and to appeal to them not to show their obvious happiness by standing around in groups, discussing the Duce and Badoglio. After all, one never knew who might come around the corner. Furthermore, the Latvian guards could see through the barbed wire and draw their own conclusions.

This last summer in the ghetto was truly beautiful. The vegetable gardens were even more abundant than the year before. Several of the groups had built public baths, which were very popular even though they only contained a very primitive kind of shower and perhaps one bathtub. Only the Latvian ghetto had a real bath with several showers. At any rate, people could come and take a shower after work, instead of having to contort themselves while using their small washbasins.

Rations continued to be a little better. Horse-meat was given out more frequently, a few times oatmeal, stale but edible, was added to the diet. It was hard

to think of leaving. Nevertheless, even some of the more important work details connected with army and air force, had to give up their workers. Slowly, these people too were sent to Kaiserwald. Several of these important places had received the assurance from the authorities that their workers would be back, once the transfer was complete. Upon finding out such good news, many of the workers were able to carry their belongings clandestinely out of the ghetto, store them at their places of employment, and then take possession of their things again, once the transfer was made. Quite often, this did indeed happen as planned. Sometimes, however, when they returned to their place of work, they found that someone else had appropriated their belongings. In some cases, their particular place did not get its workers back as promised, and they lost whatever they had taken there. It really did not make a difference, for they would have lost it anyhow, the policy in Camp Kaiserwald being one of having the people undress completely, go through a system called delousing, in spite of not having any lice, and then get old, dilapidated, ill-fitting rags instead of the nice clothing they had so

carefully hoarded over the years.

Efforts were made by the remaining administrators in the ghetto to send away the single people first. In effect, this meant that the Latvian Jews were vulnerable. They were sent to the peat bogs en masse, and they were sent to Camp Kaiserwald at a higher percentage than were the German Jews. Families in the German ghetto, where one person had lost his employment abruptly one morning, were not separated, but would all leave together when all members of the family had lost their jobs as well. In the meantime, those who were unemployed, would be sent to the place of work from which a single person had been taken for shipment to the new camp.

After some time there was little left in the way of administration. As the ghetto grew perceptibly smaller, with each transport to Kaiserwald, some of the functionaries went along too; most of them, however, went to work details which still existed. After all, each day one could stay longer in the ghetto was like a gift.

To fill the quota for Camp Kaiserwald, people whose work was of a seasonal character, such as farm

work and peat bogs, were sent directly there and sometimes never even saw the ghetto again. Even Camp Jungfernhof, the oldest settlement of Jews from the Reich, was disbanded after the harvest, and, with the exception of fifty skilled artisans, who were needed elsewhere, its inhabitants were sent to Camp Kaiserwald.⁶

By August 21, 1943, 7,874 prisoners had been sent to Kaiserwald; of these, only 1,950 were actually there. The others were quartered where they worked, at several extremely important firms. For book-keeping purposes, they always remained attached to the main camp.⁷

Still more workers were needed, since detailed plans existed as to how many would go to each institution, and these plans involved far more than the ghetto was able to deliver. The German authorities, of course,

⁶ Interview with Victor Marx, who had come to Camp Jungfernhof from Stuttgart, and who was one of the fifty artisans. He now lives in the United States.

⁷ See appendix: Report dated August 21, 1943, concerning Jewish workers and their numbers as well as their places of work, also the plans for additional work details, (pp. 235-237).

knew that more Jews were coming to Kaiserwald; they knew that all remaining inmates from the ghettos of Wilno and of Libau would soon be coming, they knew that there would be some from Kovno, but all that was in the future. Some would finally come from as far away as Hungary via Auschwitz; but it is safe to say that not even the German authorities knew that at the time.

In the meantime, Guenther Fleischl died during the month of September. He had cancer of the stomach. Dr. Aufrecht operated on him, but there was nothing anyone could do. A genuine funeral took place with the coffin borne through the streets of the ghetto, followed by the beautiful, sobbing widow, all in black, including a veil.⁸

All the functionaries who were still in the ghetto at the time, followed the coffin too. The funeral was like an omen; most of the mourners felt

⁸ Shortly after the funeral, Mrs. Fleischl, together with her sister and brother-in-law, was sent to a work detail. After the war, she took back her maiden name and remarried.

that it was indeed the end of the ghetto. German guards were present and three salvos were fired over Fleischl's grave. This was Krause's idea, and he apparently attended the funeral.⁹

The ghetto was emptying at a fast rate now. While the first numbers received by Jews at Camp Kaiserwald had started with 500, the numbers were now well over 8,000. Everyone had to wear his or her number on the left side of the chest, exactly where the yellow star had always been. Since the numbers of the Jews had a yellow triangle preceding them, there was no need anymore for the star of David. The first five-hundred numbers had gone to the German prisoners who had come from Buchenwald and apparently to the fifty Jews who had levelled the ground for the camp.

Several times during the month of October, into the quiet ghetto came vans from Kaiserwald, bringing back sick people. They were put into the still functioning hospital, and from there, after a few days,

⁹ See page 152 for the conflicting versions of Krause's fate.

those who showed no improvement were sent to the
forest.¹⁰

Many of them had been so strong just a few weeks earlier, and had gone through so much without succumbing, but Camp Kaiserwald had finished them in a short time. It was hard to believe, but the answer was simple. Conditions at the camp, especially in those first few months, were worse than anything up to now, with the exception of Camp Salaspils. The arrival itself was a trauma; the first impression, upon leaving the van, with professional criminal prisoners in striped clothing shouting and hitting, and pushing people through the big gate, was enough to make one wish for an end. Then came the standing in line in

10

Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 32. It must be said here that it was her opinion that they were going to the forest, since this had always been the "custom" in the Riga ghetto. In view of the fact that only a month later, when the ghetto was liquidated, the people were brought to Auschwitz, there is reason to believe that the same happened to the sick who had come from Kaiserwald; it may even be that these sick were part of the final liquidation, but since there are no records and no depositions concerning this item, it is a conjecture. As far as the forest was concerned, the work details were busy trying to erase the evidence of mass killings; it is therefore not likely that they would have added another contingent of "fresh" bodies.

front of one of the barracks and the waiting for another unknown treatment, which was not long in coming. Everything one carried was taken away; after that, still more trouble: the victims had to go to the showers. This was both painful and complicated. First, everyone had to strip. Then, the SS with much relish would examine the hair of each person for lice. At that point, there were none, but still, whenever they felt like it, they would order long hair on women to be cut very short, or a man shaved. Bodyhair, too, was shaved, and a vile smelling solution was put on it. Finally, the shower, and then, dripping wet, one would receive new clothes. These, of course, consisted of rags and usually the taller people got very short things and the small people almost fell out of theirs.

With a kind of relief, one then entered the barracks. There were three women's barracks and three men's barracks. In the beginning, two people shared one bed, and the beds were arranged in two tiers. The upper one was not so terrible, but the lower one was torture, since the straw from the upper bunk fell into one's eyes and made rest almost impossible. Men and

women were separated by two rows of barbed wire. Even though it was permitted to meet "at the fence" and talk across the two yards' separation, very often the criminal prisoners or even the SS guards would feel inclined to disturb the talking people and would deal out slaps and beatings whenever the inmates did not scatter quickly enough into their barracks.

There, the lack of privacy was equally felt. There was literally no space to turn around in, especially in the beginning. Soon, the prisoners really caught lice, and could be seen sitting at the foot of their bunks, delousing their clothing. But worst of all was the unceasing, constant harassment from the German prisoners, criminal as well as political. The latter wore the red triangle next to their number, denoting the fact that their crime had been of a political nature; this, however, did not deter them from treating the Jews badly. Many of them were Poles.

Eventually, shortly before Christmas, the political prisoners were sent back to Germany. Camp Kaiserwald kept only the professional criminals, those with the green triangles next to their number. They were, if possible, for more cruel than the SS. To give the new

arrivals a taste of what it meant to be at the camp, on the night of September 25, a day when two transports had arrived, one from the Riga ghetto and one from the Wilno ghetto, the criminal prisoners arranged for what they called "a sour night," during which the Jewish male prisoners who had just arrived, were forced to run around and around inside their barracks, while on the tables stood their tormentors, with clubs and whips, beating everyone running below them. This was kept up until the morning roll call. The women's camp heard the screams all night long and could do
11
nothing.

There were no more titles used, there was no more time for social amenities. One had ceased to be a person and was just a number.

People resembled scare-crows. As long as the weather was warm, however, the lack of clothing was not really a hardship; even the shoes with wooden soles could be endured, since work details for the most part used vans. With an attempt at humor, the prisoners felt

11

Interview with Ruth Bensinger-Nussbacher, Wilno transport, now in the United States.

they were being transported in this manner so as not to frighten anyone who might look at them.

With the arrival of cold weather many people became sick and died, being already weakened and unable to shake off even simple colds. Eventually, coats were distributed, but very often much too late for some of the prisoners.

The various transports which arrived at the camp, regardless of size, were always eagerly awaited by the German authorities, for invariably there would be much to confiscate. An especially wealthy transport was the one from the Libau ghetto, which came to Kaiserwald in October 1943. After the women had been chased out of their temporary barrack, two SS men went in and brought out a whole big basket filled with gold and other valuables, which the bewildered women had hidden in the straw mattresses, believing that this barrack would be theirs. The interesting fact about these Jews from Libau was that most of them spoke an excellent German, which made them something like a bridge between the Jews from Riga and the German Jews. As for the Jews who had come from Wilno, they were not particularly

liked by their fellow inmates, mainly because they were considered extremely shrewd and had actually managed to fill all the important positions, especially in the camp kitchen.

Kaiserwald was essentially a transit camp. At its fullest, it never contained more than 2,500 prisoners, except for two weeks in the summer of 1944, just before the first transport left it forever. The outside camps belonged to Kaiserwald, were administered from there, had their own criminal prisoners in charge of the Jewish prisoners, and did not fare much better. There was one exception: the inmates seldom had to worry about the next day, since their days were all alike - all bad - but there was no uncertainty. In Kaiserwald, prisoners could never be sure what would happen next. The beginning was very hard. There were countless victims whose only crime was that they walked between the barracks, were seized upon by the criminals, were beaten to a pulp and could never again recover. Later on, as they had done in the ghetto, people knew how to behave, they adjusted, and avoided unpleasant surprises. They went to the same work detail each day

and once more managed to maintain a kind of stability. Even then, however, one could still expect a beating upon leaving and returning, and worst of all, during the endless roll calls and the "special" work details each and every Sunday.

The elder of the camp was a German criminal, and so was the man in charge of work details, so were the barrack commanders in the male camp, and so were most of the leaders of work details. The women's barracks were administered by Jewish women, except for a period of about three months, when the camp received fifty German female prisoners from Concentration Camp Ravensbrueck, who were to be in charge of the Jewish women. Most of them wore the black triangle next to their numbers, denoting that they were "asocial;" this in turn meant that they were former prostitutes. They were very cruel to the Jewish women. Fortunately, they lived in their own barrack. On Christmas Eve 1943, they had a party to which all the German male prisoners came. When the SS raided the party, which had apparently turned into an orgy, there was a scandal, the women were severely beaten and were sent back to Ravensbrueck

shortly.¹² They were quite upset, but the Jewish women were enormously relieved.

Some of the smaller work details had a Jewish "Kapo," the name of the work detail leader. To be part of such a work detail was sheer happiness and it could be said that people loved to go to work and hated to stay in the camp on Sundays. One of these work details was the Feldbekleidungsamt der Luftwaffe (clothing supply office of the Air Force). The same Jews who had come there every day from the ghetto were now brought from Camp Kaiserwald in vans belonging to the air force, driven by air force personnel. In addition to the workers who had been there before, there were also a number of Jews from Wilno and Libau. The officer in charge of the Jewish workers, Oberzahlmeister Hans Boos of Hannover, was so shocked by the way everyone was dressed, that he asked and received permission from his colonel to have the men wear blue air force coveralls, even though the SS insisted upon painting a white cross on the back of each. He also let each worker have a pair of air force shoes. This included women too. Best of all, the men got those suits

12

Interview with Leo Granierer, camp electrician, who was called to make repairs.

back after each delousing, a process one had to undergo every few weeks. The officers of the air force also saw to it that the Jewish workers ate good soup each day, a gesture which was very welcome.¹³

The army was also trying to make the lot of its workers a little bit easier. The people destined to be there were never even fully processed in Camp Kaiserwald, so that they were spared a change of clothing, as well as all other indignities. They just walked through and were registered. Thus, the Armeebekleidungsamt 701, (clothing supply office of the army), consisting then of about 1,000 people, was one of the better work details.¹⁴

The best of them, however, was the SD Werstaette Lenta (security service repair shop Lenta), a veritable heaven. In addition to all their belongings, prisoners received much better food and had extremely sympathetic German authorities in charge. Since everyone had wanted to go there, it was necessary eventually to select the workers and bring some of them back to the ghetto and from there to Kaiserwald. Commandant Albert Sauer of

13

Interview with Chayele Rozental, Wilno transport, now South Africa. She, her sister Mary and friend Ida worked there. All three survived.

14

Interview with Selma Breitner, now New York.

Kaiserwald had threatened to close Lenta down completely,¹⁵ if the superfluous workers were not delivered to him.

Other outside camps were less fortunate. Some were even worse than the main camp, because they were completely isolated. The Allgemeine Elektrizitaets Gesellschaft (General Electricity Corporation), or A.E.G., consisted of women only; they were almost starving.¹⁶ The inmates of Camp Strasdenhof, although for a time treated rather decently, as described by Gottschalk, eventually had the peculiar distinction of being the one camp in Riga where in July of 1944, almost every person over thirty was taken away and murdered.

But all this was in the future. So was the transport of five-hundred women who came in May 1944 from Auschwitz, having been brought there from Budapest and other cities only a few days earlier. Many of those who were now struggling, would not live to see all of this, for in the meantime, there was another winter to over-

15

Gottschalk, Der Letzte Weg, p. 33. She and her sister were at Lenta, but only her sister could stay; Gerda went to Strasdenhof, her sister later died in Stuttgart.

16

A.E.G. after the war paid their former slaves restitution. (\$500.-) Interview with Hertha Kisch, now New York.

come, one which taxed the remaining survivors to the utmost.

It seemed a long time ago that they had been inmates of a ghetto. Most of the people had left it by October, and on November 2, 1943, the decimated ghetto was ready for the last act. In the morning of that day, the few remaining work details, which still included the Armeebekleidungsamt 701, had gone out to work as usual.

When they came back that evening, they found that all the older people who had been in charge of cleaning the houses, all the remaining children and their teachers, all the sick people, both those in the hospital and those who were just sick that day, as well as some people working inside the ghetto, had been taken away. Among them were some who asked to go, those whose own children were¹⁷ part of the transport.

The entire contingent was sent to Auschwitz and not to the forest as had always been the case in Riga, because of the fact that efforts to obliterate the

17

Deposition of Hermann Heymann, who, together with his family, went to Auschwitz. He believes he is the sole survivor of the whole transport. In a deposition by Heinz Samuel, it says that Krause was in charge of the action.

traces of the mass killings were being made throughout the year, always claiming as victims the men who did the grisly job. In addition, the extermination methods used in Auschwitz were far more effective than those in the forest had ever been, in that they required far less manpower.¹⁸

After a few more days in what was now a veritable ghost town, the survivors were sent out, either to Camp Kaiserwald, or to the aforementioned Armeebekleidungsamt. As they left, they could see small columns of people arriving in the ghetto. Approximately one-hundred and twenty Jews who had up to then still been working in several small work details outside the ghetto were being brought in. They were all housed in one building; it was their job to clean up, to go into the empty apartments, select what could still be used for transfer to

18

There are conflicting reports of numbers. In several depositions the number of over 2,000 is given, which seems large considering that there were never that many inside the ghetto. There may, however, have been many new sick arrivals from Camp Kaiserwald, increasing the number. Frieda Marx, working at the Kommandantur, gives the number as 2,246. Hermann Voosen, whose child was taken away that day, gives the number as 2,286. The registrar at Auschwitz, Dr. Wolken, is quoted by Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 327, footnote, as receiving 596. He does not make it clear, however, whether this number was left after the usual selection, whether this number just contained the males, or whether a large part of the contingent died en route.

the Reich, sort clothing, repair some of it, pack it up and load it onto the waiting vans. Their life was an easy one. There was enough food obtained through barter at the station to which they brought the packages to be sent to the Reich, they had entertainment in the person of the violinist Brandt who was part of their group and always willing to play for them. They lived only from day to day.¹⁹

Occasionally, every few weeks or so, a small detail of men would be removed from the ghetto and never be seen anymore; since they did not arrive at Camp Kaiserwald, they were presumably sent to the forest as a replacement for those who were periodically exterminated so as to be silenced forever. Later events proved that the Germans could have saved themselves the trouble; there was not enough time or maybe effort to really get rid of all the evidence. A State Emergency Commission appointed by the Russians in October 1944,

19

Interview with Abraham Goldmann, who was among those brought into the ghetto as the others left it. He was one of the three Jews who had been brought to Riga from Lodz and was mentioned earlier in this report. During the interview he mentioned that upon arrival at Kaiserwald, in July 1944, another ten men were taken from the incoming contingent of which he was part.

found several mass graves as well as fuel barrels
in the Bikernieki Forest.²⁰

By July 1944, there were still about sixty persons left in the ghetto. After completing their task, they were put on vans, and were finally taken to Camp Kaiserwald.

The ghetto was empty.

20

Avotins et al, Daugavas Vanagi, pp. 10,11, showing pictures taken by the commission of the opened mass graves and of the fuel barrels.

CONCLUSION

Thirty years after they left it, the survivors of the German ghetto of Riga remember it as a harsh place, but not as an impossible one to live in. Most of them, during the personal interviews, spoke of it in a wistful way, and were quite aware of the fact that their own experience was somehow different from that of survivors of other ghettos. As a matter of fact, they have a society made up of Jews from all cities in Germany as well as from Austria and Czechoslovakia, based on the shared ghetto experience.¹ No other ghetto has this kind of society, since for instance, the Lodz Society, or the Cracow Society, or the Latvian Society, have as their common bond the members' place of birth or upbringing. German Jews who were sent to Lodz and were part of the ghetto there, are not part of the Lodz Society here.

From the observations gained when evaluating the numerous interviews conducted and the depositions of

¹
Society of Survivors of the Riga Ghetto, Inc., based in New York City, with a membership of approximately five-hundred and fifty people, which includes survivors who live in Germany, Austria, Israel, and Australia.

people who had been in the Riga ghetto, it seems justified to say that they had been able, to a large extent, to follow their own private behavior while in the ghetto, thus making it possible for them to safeguard their ego. This meant that it protected them from a disintegration of their character, leaving them approximately the same persons they were when deprived of liberty.² Since the Riga ghetto experience lasted for two years, the damage to the ego of survivors, which did occur afterwards, was not as traumatic as that experienced by survivors of other ghettos, where former lifestyles could not be pursued at all.³

² Dr. Bruno Bettelheim, "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XXXVIII, 3 (March 1943) pp. 417-452. Bettelheim observed and collected his data while imprisoned in camp; he did so to protect himself against disintegration of his character and referred to it as "private" behavior, making mention of the fact that such behavior characteristically followed an individual's former lifestyle. In the paper, he also differentiated between "new" and "old" prisoners, calling those new who had been in camp less than a year.

³ Gertrude Schneider, "The Trauma of the Holocaust upon Adolescent Survivors," paper delivered at the Herzl Institute April 18, 1971, at a Conference on Social Psychology and Jewish Life.

It may safely be said that the inmates of the German Riga ghetto had not reached the state of "old" prisoners, meaning inmates who did not speak of their former lives and who had learned to direct a great amount of aggression against themselves, so as not to get into too many conflicts with the German authorities. These people, who had been brought to Riga from all parts of Germany, as well as from Austria and Czechoslovakia, said that while in the ghetto, they constantly discussed their lives before their deportations, and not only with their fellow inmates, but with German army or air force personnel stationed in and around Riga. As a matter of fact, their common language frequently served as a bond.

As for self-aggression, this, too, was not evident and mainly because of the fact that there were scarcely any conflicts with the German authorities that could have led to such behavior patterns. One reason for the lack of conflict were the various institutions within the ghetto, which made it possible for them to think of themselves as human beings, as people who had not lost status in the process of incarceration. Both in interviews as well as in depositions,

they point with unconcealed pride to such institutions as schools for the children, a theatre, frequent concerts, sports events, and also to a society where there was no crime and where ethical standards were scrupulously observed. They maintained that if they had lost any self respect, it was later, in the concentration camps, and also after they had realized that many of the beliefs they had held while in the ghetto had been delusions. While there, for instance, they believed that certain rules sent down by the German authorities were desirable standards, and they tried to comply with them; it must be said, however, that this compliance went only as far as rules of sanitation and work orders. The rules pertaining to smuggling and stealing were not only ignored, but consciously disobeyed. Stealing was called "organizing" and it could be argued that the inhabitants of the ghetto stole back their own belongings; however, the very fact that they used the euphemism, points to their middle-class desire for respectability.

The majority of German Jews in the Riga ghetto managed to have positive feelings for some of the German

personnel by insisting that behind some of those rough surfaces there was a feeling of justice and propriety; they were supposed to be genuinely interested in the prisoners and even trying, in a small way, to help them. This attitude sharply divided the Latvian from the German ghetto. The former never trusted the Germans and neither were they trusted by them. While it was a common sight to see any of the familiar SS walk through the German ghetto, alone, such a thing would have been unthinkable in the Latvian ghetto; there, they went in en masse. The same is true of other ghettos in the East, with the possible exception of Theresienstadt.⁴

An examination of reasons for the "uniqueness" of the German ghetto in Riga yielded several interesting facts. In their case, the word "resettlement," usually a euphemism for mass murder, was found to be simply what it said. They were resettled from their various towns and cities and were now in another town, albeit in a ghetto. Once there, they were exposed to

4

Lederer, Ghetto Theresienstadt. It should be noted that Theresienstadt was the so-called Prominenten-Ghetto, made up chiefly of German and Austrian Jews who were deemed important for one thing or another, and as such were seen as trustworthy by the SS. In addition, the ghetto consisted mainly of older people.

the carefully nurtured belief in the German Jews' superiority to their Latvian co-religionists, who had, so the legend went, been murdered to make place for the more important Jews from the Reich. This delusion led to a feeling of security of almost pathetic proportions, making it easy for the SS to obtain more than the desired number of victims for the two selections held in the German ghetto, on February 5 and March 15, 1942. In both cases the German Jews were told that people were needed for easy work; they never suspected any criminality on the part of the SS, even though they knew what had happened to the Latvian Jews just three months earlier.

Another reason for their apparent inability to perceive the reality of the Final Solution was the fact that the ghetto seemed like home, a place where correct behavior was still prized, where titles were used not only among prisoners, but by most of the German authorities as well, and where one's social status of former days was quite important. There was, naturally, a so-called ghetto elite in evidence, but since their power was only minimal and they could help but not harm, they were not regarded with awe, unless they also had, in their past, been of substance.

For their refusal to actually come to terms with the atrocities which had befallen the Latvian Jews and of which they had found ample evidence, it is important to consider that first of all, the human mind often refuses to accept such unprecedented reality, and secondly, that they saw it, registered it, and then promptly started to believe that it could only happen to the Latvian Jews, but not to them. When, after March 15, 1942, there was evidence that they, too, were vulnerable, and they had to acknowledge that even German Jews would be exterminated, they rationalized this fact away by correctly maintaining that just then it was the old, the sick, the unfit and the children who were exterminated, but that it would never be the strong ones, so important to the German war effort. Some, of course, realized the truth even while refusing to acknowledge it, but found it difficult or even impossible to convince their fellow inmates. As experts on the Holocaust have pointed out repeatedly, the Nazis used the "Big Lie" to induce their victims to go to their death like sheep to the slaughter. It was much easier to believe this big lie, and in Riga it was extremely successful, for even when the gruesome truth was staring into their faces, in the vans loaded with bloodied clothes

of their friends and neighbors, they blithely continued to rationalize, believing that they were invincible. This does not mean that they did not mourn for the victims; they were acutely aware of the loss, but the harsh life eventually dulled the pain and they went on with their work.

As for the attitude which the German Jews held towards the Nazi authorities, it has been shown that there were some who were feared and hated, as for example Obersturmbannfuehrer Lange. The feelings towards the original ghetto commandant, Kurt Krause, were ambivalent, but for the most part, the various ghetto personnel were regarded as fair and were at times even liked. Some were trusted as well as respected. It was not so with any of the Latvian SS guards. Here the ethnocentricity of the German Jews reared its head. They were hated and despised, not only for their cruelty, but also for their alleged backwardness. It seemed to the German Jews that the German authorities shared these feelings and also hated and despised the Latvian guards. While this may have been the case, the fact was that to the Nazis, Jews were the lowest form of life even if it was not apparent during the two years they spent in the ghetto.

While in the ghetto, after the first shock of their arrival had passed and after weathering the two selections mentioned earlier, the German Jews, in their own eyes and only at the time, did not consider themselves as degraded and in that way they could keep their self-image intact. As has been shown, their hard life was alleviated in many little ways, quite in contrast to that of the German Jews in for instance Minsk or Lodz. Even in those ghettos, however, as long as the Germans left them alone, the Jews were able to survive after a fashion. Eventually, this became apparent to the authorities in Berlin, which in turn led to more resettlements, partly to concentration camps and partly to extermination centers.

When comparing the first winter in the ghetto, a time when conditions were still in flux, with the second winter, equally harsh, but stable, it becomes apparent that here was, indeed, a self-conscious community bent on surviving and leading a well regulated though poverty-stricken life. The fact that they had come this far, and the news of German defeats on all fronts, together made for hope and gave cause for optimism. During the first winter, the pessimists whose fears were well founded, could correctly point to the insurmountable obstacles. The lowest point in the ghetto's existence came shortly after March 15, when it could be assumed that those taken from the ghetto had not been the only ones killed, but that earlier transports

had met the same fate. After this, however, when life settled down to normal, conditions were stable. All was quiet until the summer of 1943, when it became obvious that the ghetto was being dissolved.

During the first winter, as new transports kept coming, people were inconvenienced but at the same time reassured. The commandant had told the early arrivals that additional Jews from the Reich were to come and were needed. Once more, when his statements were confirmed, optimists saw this as further evidence that the German authorities could be trusted. In addition, with each succeeding transport, the Jewish ghetto administration was developed further and was even able to greet and reassure the newcomers. This came to mean that the later transports saw the German reception committee only at the station, but at the ghetto gate and often along the road they were met by Jewish police and Jewish officials. This, too, was reassuring, as was the subsequent setting-up of schools and the active social life within the ghetto, largely unhampered by outside forces.

People could visit one another on Sundays and did so. There was visiting going on at night, after work, not necessarily social but concerning bartering; more

often than not, business and pleasure were combined. There was a spirit of sharing, even if frequently there was only very little that one could offer guests. Visiting in cramped quarters required cooperation from the people who shared one's lodgings and it was obtained.

Cultural events in the ghetto were eagerly awaited and very much appreciated. Whether anyone consciously thought of personal involvement, be it active or passive, as a form of resistance, is hard to ascertain. Those who did put on shows or organized concerts may have done so to alleviate the drabness and to show that cultural activities were stronger than barbed wire. There may have been a deep need to elevate others from merely existing and their only payment was applause; yet, throughout the two years, they felt compelled to go on. The delight with which the German authorities greeted these events, may have been a factor as well. Artists and audience were flattered by the presence of the commandant and his entourage. Since he often brought guests, it was seen as a compliment to the talents of the artists.

Hindsight permits admiration for these efforts and recognition of their expression of an indomitable spirit. At the time they seemed natural and merely a manifestation

of the prisoners' former life style. Thus, they formed a bridge between ghetto and outside. Had liberation occurred just then, the inmates would have been perfectly comfortable in the "free" milieu, and not as bewildered and rootless as they were when they left the concentration camps in 1945.

These statements would not hold true for the inmates of the Latvian ghetto, for their lives had been shattered by the events of November 29 and December 8, 1941. Their ghetto, just across the street, was a camp for men only, a ghetto devoid of any alleviating institutions, a society without hope. Only when they were able to get in touch with the German Jews could they revert to pre-war behavior, as evidenced by the Friday night meetings of the Revisionists, or the joining of Latvian Jewish sportsmen and artists with their German Jewish counterparts.

The brutal destruction of their wives and children made any semblance of normalcy impossible. While their eventual contact with German Jewish women brought personal satisfaction to some, it did not change their ghetto make-up. They perceived the situation therefore much more realistically, and, being without hope, could plan for armed resistance. Uprisings in other ghettos and camps

have demonstrated that armed resistance was resorted to only when the Final Solution became "real" to the prisoners and they knew that there was no hope.

Many of the survivors of the Riga ghetto are now living in the United States. There are several in Israel, and a good many remained in their country of origin. After liberation in 1945, the majority of those who lived to see it and survived the sudden trauma, went back to their hometowns, trying to find out who else came back. Of the 20,000 German, Austrian, and Czech Jews who had been deported to Riga during the winter of 1941/1942, approximately eight-hundred returned.

There is no doubt that their incarceration had changed them, both physically and psychologically. In some subtle way their contact with the Jews of Latvia, with whom they lived side by side, so to speak, had an effect on them. Even though, for the most part, it was a different culture, more Jewish in its way, it did have a profound influence on their future lives. Coupled with what they had learned after they left the ghetto, it showed them that in the eyes of the non-Jewish world they were all the same.

As for their own ghetto, there were several items

which set it apart from most others in the East.⁵ At no time, in contrast to those others, such as Lodz, Warsaw, or Wilno, for example, did a Jewish functionary have to send his own people to their fate and do it knowingly. With the exception of Haar, there was never a need nor a desire for reproach. The proof for this is the fact that among the present survivors, slightly over six-hundred still alive, there are many who held positions within the ghetto and who are perfectly comfortable among the other survivors.

Other than living a little better, but not really at the expense of other inmates, there was no way in which these functionaries manifested their power. They may have helped those whom they knew, but they never harmed the others. In the Riga ghetto, Jew did not transgress against Jew - indeed a unique achievement when considering how easy it would have been to give in to baser instincts. They can therefore say that they were not de-humanized yet, and that there was not yet the feeling of being sub-human, of having been degraded or being treated like animals rather than homo sapiens, as was the case later

⁵ Gertrude Schneider, "Memoirs and Diaries of the Holocaust," The Herzl Institute Bulletin, Vol. 10, No. 28, pp. 2-7.

in places like Kaiserwald and especially Stutthof.

In these camps, as well as in subsequent camps, even the attitude towards the Nazis changed; there was no more room either for searching out their humanity or for trying to understand them. Unceasing hatred was the response to the indignities and degradations suffered there; it had at last become clear that a l l the Germans involved in the Jewish Question were implacable enemies. This was something which had never been thought out by the inmates of the Riga ghetto.

There, they had been human beings who hoped for better days and prepared for them by living as normally as was possible. Unlike the ghettos of past centuries, there was the certainty of the war eventually coming to an end and freedom once more becoming a reality. No one really believed that he would not survive, despite all the signs pointing to the Final Solution.

Today, there is ample documentary evidence, and among survivors, there is the inevitable hindsight which makes them in one way or another feel responsible for the fate of their loved ones; they feel they should have resisted, they feel they should have done things differently, in short, they feel guilty for having survived.

At the Wannsee Conference, on January 20, 1942, Heydrich had explained to all those present what was to be done with the Jews who were sent to the East. At one point he said that the survivors would have to undergo "special" treatment, for they would clearly constitute a danger, being the strongest of their race, and thus able to become a nucleus for a new tribe of Maccabees.⁶ He need not have worried; there were not enough left to make much of a difference. For even though they had lived to see freedom, for which they had waited so long, it came much too late. Their tormentors had left them with a burden almost too great to be carried. They had left them with a sense of guilt.

Most of the survivors blame not only those who held them captive and executed them, but blame themselves for not having recognized the whole master plan at the time it occurred. They blame themselves for behaving in the way they did, hoping through compliance to avert their destiny.

At this point in time, they are integrated in their

⁶ Hilberg, The Destruction of European Jewry, p. 265. Heydrich called them the "dangerous Jews who could rebuild Jewish life."

various communities, they are an inconspicuous part of society, they do what is expected, they live what can be considered a good life, they form relationships, they do their work, and they are good citizens wherever they are, even though most of them know that they are marginal men and women in every country they inhabit. They do all the things other people do, and yet, they never left the ghetto. Their memories overshadow everything they do. They cannot kiss their children without fear that they, too, will be taken away from them, or without remembering those children whose lives ended in the Bikernieki or Rumbula Forest near Riga. They try to fight these depressions as well as they can, by pretending to be part of society and trying to improve the world, even though they are skeptical about the outcome. They are constantly on guard, alert, and watchful, and let themselves go only when they are together with other survivors, equally tainted, equally guilty, and equally encumbered by memories which cannot be erased. Then, and only then, no matter what the occasion, their talk turns to their ghetto, and they are back home again.



House on Ludzas Iela (later Leipziger Strasse) as it looked when the German Jews arrived.



House on Mazu Kalna Iela (later Berliner Strasse) as it looked when the German Jews arrived.



Work detail on way back to the ghetto.

APPENDIX

**Der Reichsminister
für die besetzten Ostgebiete**

Berlin W 35, den 4. Dezember 1941
Rauustraße 17/18
Fernsprecher: 21 95 15 und 39 50 46
Druckanschrift: Reichsministerost

Nr. I/293/41

Es wird gebeten, dieses Geschäftszeichen auf den
Gegenstand bei weiterer Schreiben anzugeben.

48

Zgh Nr. 345/41 f

Reichskommissar
Ostland
9. XII. 1941
Hauptstadt

1.)

An den
Herrn Reichskommissar für das Ostland

H. Leibbrandt
17. 12. 41

R i g a
Leitort Tilsit

R *BTI*

Betr.: Lösung der Judenfrage.

Mir sind die dortigen Vorgänge des Herrn Generalkommissars
in Riga bezüglich des Transportes von Juden aus dem Alt-
reich nach Riga sowie die Errichtung von Judenlagern
zugeleitet worden. Wie SS-Obergruppenführer H e y d r i c h
bei einer Besprechung vor wenigen Tagen mitteilte, soll
das Judenlager, dessen Errichtung in der Umgebung von
Riga geplant war, in die Gegend von Pleskau kommen. Ich
habe bereits mit Schreiben vom 13. 11. 1941 das Reichs-
sicherheitshauptamt gebeten, mich in Zukunft vor Einlei-
tung von Maßnahmen zur Durchführung der Lösung der Juden-
frage zu unterrichten, damit die Schwierigkeiten, die
bisher durch die mangelnde oder zu späte Inkenntnissetzung
meiner Stellen entstanden sind, vermieden werden.

Im Auftrag

J. D. A. Day *ma. 17/12.*

(gez.) Leibbrandt

Beurlaubt

Regierungsinspektor



Symon

The Reichsminister
for the occupied territories

Berlin
December 4, 1941

To: The Reichskommissar for the Ostland
Riga via Tilsit

Re: Solution of the Jewish Question

I was informed about the actions of the Generalkommissar in Riga in regard to the transports of Jews from the Reich, as well as to the erection of camps for Jews. Several days ago, at a meeting, SS Obergruppenfuehrer Heydrich announced that the camp for Jews, which was planned to be in the environs of Riga, would be erected in the vicinity of Pleskau (Pskov) instead.

On November 13 I wrote to the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, asking to be informed in the future before measures are contemplated, so that the difficulties arising from letting me know too little or too late can be avoided.

Signed: Leibbrandt

Dieser Teil mir von der Fernschreibstelle auszufüllen

Fernschreibstelle		4316	
Fernschreibname		Kaufnummer	
Aufgenommen: Datum: 18/11/41 um: 0.00 von: HOF durch:		Befördert: Datum: um: an: durch: Note:	
Fernschreiben: Posttelegramm: von: Fernspruch:			

+++ HZ 97759 13. 11. 41 1745==

AN DEN HERRN REICHSKOMMISSAR FUER DAS OSTLAND, RIGA ==

-- DETI.:-- TELEGRAMM V. 9. 11. 41. -- Bestimmungsart

BEZUEGLICH JUDENTRANSPORTE IN DAS OSTLAND.--

GERAUES SCHREIBEN UNTERWEGS. JUDEN KOMMEN WEITER NACH OSTEN
 LAGER IN RIGA UND MINSK NUR VORLAEUFIG E MASSNAHME / DAHER NIE
 KEINE BEDENKEN ==

DR. LEITBRANDT, REICHSMINISTERIUM FUER DIE BESETZTEN
 OSTGEBIETE ++

+++0205 EINS LU HRAX ++

*Ta. Forderung von. Haupt Jaechel
 Melnikov. Durchgang 10/11
 nach Moskau. 1.11.41 weiter nach Osten
 W. 10. 11.*

Unterschrift des Aufgebers

Fernspruch-Buchstabe des Aufgebers
 S. A. 9. 39

Telegram

November 13, 1941

To the Reichskommissar for the Ostland

Re: Telegram of November 9

In regard to Jewish transports to the Ostland.

Exact information is on the way.

Jews will continue to come east.

Camps in Riga and Minsk only temporary measures, therefore
no doubts here.

Signed: Dr. Leibbrandt, Reichsministry of the occupied
territories

Note on the bottom of telegram, signed "L" as Lange did:

Get in touch with Obergruppenfuehrer Jeckel.

Transit camps to be moved further east, if possible.

November 16

- 2 -

Ich werde hierüber noch berichten.

Der Bau von Baracken in der Nähe von Salaspils wird mit grösster Beschleunigung weitergeführt. Da wegen der vielfältigen Schwierigkeiten bei der Materialbeschaffung und angesichts des Mangels an Facharbeitern die Baracke beim Eintreffen der ersten Transporte noch nicht vollständig fertiggestellt sein werden, ist vorgesehen, für die ~~2.~~ Transporte in ehemaligen Truppenbaracken im Jungfernhof (rechts der Strasse Riga-Dünaburg, zwischen Riga und Salaspils) Unterbringungsmöglichkeiten zu schaffen. Der Gebietskommissar Riga-Land, dessen Stabsleiter, Pg. B r u h n, die Oertlichkeiten selbst besichtigt hat, hat sein Einverständnis erklärt.

Wegen der Verpflegung der Juden sind mit der Gruppe Landwirtschaft der Dienststelle des Herrn Generalkommissars die weiteren Vereinbarungen getroffen worden.

J. A.



Sturmbannführer.

Bl.-

Commander of the Security Police &
Security Service, Einsatzgruppe A

Riga,
Nov. 8, 1941

S E C R E T

To: Reichskommissar for the Ostland

Re: Jewish transports from the Reich to the Ostland

As per the information received from the Reichs-
sicherheitshauptamt, 50,000 Jews will be shipped to the
East.

As reported, 25,000 will be shipped to Riga and
25,000 to White Ruthenia. The transports come from all
larger cities of the Reich and the Protectorat. The first
contingent of 1,000 Jews will arrive in Minsk on November
10, 1941. Until the 16th of December 1941, the transports
will arrive at the rate of one every two day. The remaining
transports will be sent during the time from January 10th
to January 20th, 1942.

Transports to Riga will begin on November 17, 1941,
with the first contingent arriving here on the 19th. Until
December 17, there will be further contingents of 1,000
Jews each arriving every second day. The remaining
transports will be sent between January 11th and 29th, 1942.

There are plans to send the first five transports

meant for Riga to the Ghetto in Kovno instead. If it is technically possible to do this with the first five, or with later ones, has not been decided definitely. I will let you know about it.

Barracks are being built near Salaspils as fast as possible. Since there are difficulties in obtaining materials and also due to a lack of experts, the barracks will not be finished when the first contingents arrive. It is therefore planned to house them in the former troop barracks of Jungfernhof (Jumpramuize), to the right of the Riga-Duenaburg Road, between Riga and Salaspils.

The commissar of the area Riga-Land agreed. His staff-leader, Member of the Party Bruhn, went to see the places himself.

As far as food for the Jews is concerned, arrangements were made with the office of the Generalkommissar and with the farm administration.

Signed Dr. Lange

Der Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei
und des SD. - Einsatzgruppe A.

Riga, den 20.11.41

- II -

Dec E3-26

21. XI. 41
Minsker
No. 25/11
H. Jankov
RK

An den
Herrn Reichskommissar Ostland
in R i g a .

Betr.: Judentransporte aus dem Reich .
Vorg.: Mein Schreiben vom 8.11.1941.

Die Judentransporte treffen in
Minsk in der vorgesehenen Weise laufend
ein.

Von den 25 Transporten, die ursprüng-
lich für Riga bestimmt waren, werden die
ersten 5 nach Kaunas geleitet.

1) in Ordnung
Herrn Reichskommissar Ostland
Einsatzgruppe A
20.11.41



J. A.

[Handwritten signature]

Sturmbannführer.

2) - Einem jungen Rassisten für vorzulegen

3) S. D. A. T. a. s.

mn. 26/11.

Bl.

1) a. Nicht mehr in Minsk
mn. 1/12. W. 29/11.

2) a. Jankov
Jv. 29. 11.

Commander of the Security Police &
Security Service, Einsatzgruppe A

Riga,
November 20, 1941

To: Reichskommissar for the Ostland
Re: Jewish transports from the Reich,
my letter of November 8, 1941.

The Jewish transports will arrive in Minsk as planned.
Of the twenty-five transports originally meant for
Riga, the first five will be sent to Kovno.

Signed Dr. Lange

3666-PS

**Der Reichsminister
für die besetzten Ostgebiete**

24

Berlin W 35, den 18. Dezember 1941
Rauchstraße 17/18
Fernsprecher: 21 95 15 und 39 50 46
Drahtanschrift: Reichsministerost

Nr. I/1/157/41 geh. Reichssache

Es wird gebeten, dieses Geschäftszeichen und den
Gegenstand bei weiteren Schreiben anzugeben.

z. B. Nr. 394/41 g. B. B.

Ergebnis 22/12
Ta
Nr. 9 I.
Mon. 22/11

Geheime Reichssache

A 657

1)

An den
Herrn Reichskommissar für das Ostland

R i g a / Leitort Tilsit
Adolf Hitler Strasse

Betrifft: Judenfrage
Auf das Schreiben vom 15.11.1941

In der Judenfrage dürfte inzwischen durch mündliche
Besprechungen Klarheit geschaffen sein. Wirtschaftliche
Belange sollen bei der Regelung des Problems grundsätz-
lich unberücksichtigt bleiben. Im übrigen wird gebeten,
auftauchende Fragen unmittelbar mit dem höheren SS - und
Polizeiführer zu regeln.

Im Auftrag

2) f. d. A. II a 3. Mon. 24.

Präsident

**INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
NURNBERG, GERMANY**

U.S.A. Exhibit 826
April 17 Filed 1946

"ATTACHMENT C"

The Reichsminister
for the occupied territories

Berlin
December 18, 1941

SECRET MATTER OF STATE

To the Reichskommissar for the Ostland

Riga via Tilsit

Re: Jewish Question

Letter of November 15, 1941.

As per our conversations, matters concerning the Jewish Question should be cleared up by now. When solving the problem, economic considerations are to be ignored. It is asked, furthermore, to settle any future questions with the higher SS and police leader.

Signed Braeutigam

3664-PS

A 651

Der Reichskommissar
für das Ostland

Riga, den , Dezember 1941

Abt. II a Tgb. Nr. 220/41 g.

Bitte im Antwortschreiben vorstehende Abteilungs-
bezeichnung angeben.

21

31

An
den Reichskommissar f.d.Ostland
- Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer-

in R i g a

die Herren Generalkommissare

in R e v a l

R i g a

K a u e n

M i n s k

Nachrichtlich an den Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Ostland

in R i g a

Der Chefintendant beim Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Ostland beschwert sich darüber, dass der Wehrmacht in Rüstungsbetrieb und Reparaturwerkstätten jüdische Facharbeiter durch Liquidation entzogen würden, die dort zur Zeit nicht zu ersetzen sind.

Ich ersuche nachdrücklichst die Liquidation von Juden zu verhindern, die in Rüstungsbetrieben und Reparaturwerkstätten der Wehrmacht als Fachkräfte tätig und zur Zeit durch Einheimische nicht zu ersetzen sind. Das Einvernehmen darüber wer zu den unersetzlichen jüdischen Arbeitskräften gehört, ist mit den Gebietskommissaren (Abtlg. Soziale Verwaltung) zu erzielen.

Für Schulung geeigneten einheimischen Nachwuchses als Facharbeiter ist beschleunigt Sorge zu tragen.

Das gleiche gilt für jüdische Fachkräfte in Betrieben, die nicht unmittelbar den Zwecken der Wehrmacht dienen, aber wichtige Aufgaben im Rahmen der Kriegswirtschaft zu erfüllen haben.

2.) J. 9. 4. Tag mm. 10/2.

" АТТАЧМЕНТ В-2 "

Bv

Incl. #1

The Reichskommissar for
the Ostland

Riga, December 1941

To: Reichskommissar for the Ostland - higher SS and
Police leader in Riga

To: The General commissars in Reval, Riga, Kovno, Minsk
Copy to the Army High Command Ostland in Riga

The official in charge at the Army High Command Ostland has complained that due to liquidation skilled Jewish workers had been removed from army munition factories as well as repair parks. They are irreplaceable at this time.

I seriously urge you to prevent the liquidation of such skilled Jews working in the army's munition factories and repair parks, since they cannot, at this time, be replaced by natives. As to who is irreplaceable should be discussed and agreed upon with the areas' commissars of the Department for Social Organization.

Natives who can be taught, are to be trained as quickly as possible.

The above guidelines are to be applied also to those skilled Jewish workers who are not exactly serving the army, but are equally important in regard to wartime economy.

Dr. Lange erklärte, dass für diese Frage während der ~~Bestand~~
wenigkeit des Reichskommissars der ~~Schiffers~~ SS und Polizeiführer
Vertreter des Reichskommissars, auf Grund einer in der ~~letzten~~
ohne ~~ergangenen~~, aber nicht veröffentlichten Verfügung, sei. Ich
erklärte ~~gestern~~, dass mir von einer derartigen Anordnung nichts
bekannt sei und bat darum, mir diese Tatsache zu meiner Entlastung
dem Reichskommissar gegenüber schriftlich mitzuteilen. Ich erklär-
te Herrn Dr. Lange, dass ich mich schriftlich beschwerdeführend
an ihn wenden werde, um Klarstellung zu gewinnen. Herr Dr. Lange
sagte mir seinerseits sofortige Beantwortung meines Schreibens
zu.

1. Schreiben ~~an~~ SS und Polizeiführer zu Hd. von ~~...~~
Dr. Lange, 8 i g a.

4. Vorlegung 15. Dezember 41.

Riga, December 11, 1941

- 1) Mr. Brasch and Mr. Schulz informed me that 4,000 Jews from the Reich have arrived here and that it is the intent of the Security Service to house them in the ghetto of Riga. According to Mr. Altemeyer, it is impossible to be responsible for objects of value still in the ghetto, if new Jews were to be brought there, since a third party would thus have access to the ghetto. Mr. Altemeyer contacted Sturmbannfuehrer Dr. Lange, and is to report on the result of their discussion.
- 2) Last night I had the opportunity to talk with Dr. Lange about the question of German Jews being housed in the ghetto. Dr. Lange explained to me that we could count on receiving another 10,000 from the Reich within a short time; he asked that they be accepted into the ghetto. I explained to him that it would be impossible for me to take these Jews in, since we had not as yet been able to take out the valuables left there by those Jews who had in the meantime been resettled. Since the Reichskommissar had declared that the responsibility for the collection of Jewish wealth still belonged to the area's commissar, I would have to prevent the

housing of new Jews in the ghetto until I could secure the Jewish objects of wealth still there.

Dr. Lange explained, however, that he had already brought 1,000 Jews to the ghetto and that they were quartered in several houses.

I, on the other hand, explained that this had been done without the knowledge or permission of the area's commissar and that I would make Sturmbannfuehrer Dr. Lange responsible for the Jewish valuables. Because of his action I would be unable to secure the items.

Dr. Lange then said that during the absence of the Reichskommissar the Higher SS and Police Leader was his substitute and that an order to that effect was contained in a secret edict, sent out a week earlier. I said that I had never heard of such an edict, and asked to be sent this in writing, so that I could be relieved of all responsibility vis-a-vis the Reichskommissar. I also said that I would send in a written complaint to make my position clear. Dr. Lange in turn promised to answer my letter immediately.

- 3) Letter sent to Higher SS and Police, attention Dr. Lange.
- 4) Notice presented December 13, 1941.

Fachgebiet : 2 Arbeitseinsatz
2 E 2 / Se/Go
(in der Antwort bitte angeben)

An den

Herrn Generalkommissar in Riga

- Abt. III Aso -

Fachgeb. 2 : Arbeitsverwaltung

R i g a

Riga, den
12. August 1943
General-Kommissar
in Riga
2

Betr.: Abzug jüdischer Arbeitskräfte und Umsetzungen in Konzentrationslagern.

Vorg.: Mein Bericht vom 26.7.43 2 E 2/1

Der Abzug der jüdischen Arbeitskräfte zum Zwecke der Grosskasernierungen wird noch weiter fortgesetzt. - Wie ich jetzt in Erfahrung bringe, ist durch den SD. vorgesehen, in folgenden Betrieben Judenlager einzurichten:

	Angeford.	Gestellt	Fehlbed.
1. Konzentrationslager Kaiserwald	2.000	1.950	50
2. Dünawerk	1.500	398	1.102
3. S.D. Werkstätte/Lenta/	2.000	1.053	947
4. Truppenwirtschaftslager d. SS.	700	419	281
5. Flughafen Spilve	1.500	775	725
6. HKP jetzt KPO	1.000	375	625
7. Papierfabrik Schlock	250	250	-
8. Reichsbahn	500	192	408
9. Armeebekleidungsamt 701	1.300	737	563
10. VEF /ABG/	300	80% Frauen	300
11. Zementfabrik Riga	300	205	95
12. Strassenhof	3.000	820	2.120
13. Generalkommissar Abt. Finanzen	2.000	700	1.300

Im einzelnen bemerke ich hierzu : Das Konzentrationslager Kaiserwald wird als Durchgangslager aufgezogen, von welchem der Bedarf für folgende Kasernierungen gedeckt werden soll:

1. Dünawerk
2. Truppenwirtschaftslager
3. Flughafen Spilve
4. Papierfabrik Schlock
5. Zementfabrik Riga
6. VEF /ABG/
7. Reichsbahn
8. Armeebekleidungsamt 701
9. HKP jetzt KPO
10. SD-Werkstätte /Lenta/

Das Konzentrationslager Strassenhof soll mit einem Bestockungskapazität von 1.000 jüdischen Arbeitskräften ausgestattet werden. Der Bedarf für dieses Lager wird durch den SD. gedeckt. Wie weit der Betrieb des Lagers vorangetrieben werden soll, ist noch nicht entschieden.

ist anzunehmen, dass ein Teil dieser Kräfte aus den Kasernierungslagern der Torfwirtschaft nach Schluss der Torfarbeiten genommen wird.

Der Herr Generalkommissar in Riga - Abt. Finanzen - Dr. Neuen-dorf erklärte, dass die Kasernierung der in den Werkstätten des Generalkommissars beschäftigten 700 Juden genehmigt sei. Bedauerlicherweise fehlen immer noch die Arbeits- und Unterkunftsräume. Der SS-Wirtschaftler soll anheim gestellt haben, die Werkstätten des Reichs- und Generalkommissars mit in das K.L. Strazdenhof zu verlegen, da dort Arbeits- und Unterkunfts-möglichkeiten vorhanden seien. Dr. Neuen-dorf lehnte das ab, weil der Herr Generalkommissar selbst Träger des K.L. sein will. Wie weit die Unterbringung der angeforderten Juden fort-geschritten ist, ist mir noch unbekannt.

Den technischen Innendienst im Ghetto in Stärke von 100 Fachkräften habe ich dem Herrn Generalkommissar mit zugeteilt. Der SD. will diese Kräfte geschlossen zum Aufbau des Konzentrationslagers - Strazdenhof verwenden und dort kasernieren. Ich vermute, dass diese Juden durch den Einsatz in Strazdenhof den Werkstätten des Herrn Generalkommissars entzogen werden.

Die jüdischen Fachkräfte beider Geschlechter, welche sich bis jetzt noch in den Kleinkasernierungslagern der Wehrmachtsdienststellen befanden / Schneider, Schneiderinnen, Schuhmacher und Kürschner / werden sobald die Kasernierung des Armeebekleidungs-Lagers 701 erfolgt, in dieses Lager mit über-nommen.

Wann der K.P.O. /HKP/ kaserniert, ist mir noch unbekannt. Die jüdische Belegschaft der bestehenden Werkstätten des H.K.Ps wird geschlossen in das Kasernierungslager des K.P.O. über-nommen.

Die Reichsbahn hat einen Bedarf von 600 Kräften zur Kasernierung gemeldet. 302 Kräfte sind bereits gestellt. Der Rest von 298 Kräfte wird wie folgt zugestellt: 250 Kräfte aus dem K.L.-Kauen /Ghetto/, die restlichen 48 Kräfte über K.L.-Riga - Kaiserwald.

Der SD. verfügt über 1.209 jüdische Arbeitskräfte beider Geschlechter. Zu 80% sind diese Kräfte Handwerker und setzen sich wie folgt zusammen - siehe Anl. 1.

Die Firma " Meteora", welche ausschließlich mit der Reparatur von Schlauchbooten beschäftigt ist, hat 70 jüdische Arbeitskräfte. Die Kasernierung für diese Leute wurde vom SD. aus technischen und räumlichen Gründen abgelehnt. Das Verbleiben dieser Kräfte bis zur Ersatzstellung ist zugesagt.

Das K.L.-Kaiserwald untersteht der Überwachung des Stabsr. Bauer - Tel. 54180 - Im Augenblick befinden sich in diesem Lager 1.350 Juden. Weitere 200 Männer und 100 Frauen wurden am 18.8.43 angefordert. Aus den Arbeitskolonnen wurden vom SD. 175 Männer und 50 Frauen für die Kasernierung zugewiesen.

1.	F.W.L. mit	415	
2.	SS-Lazarett Rothenburg	54	
	Rehabilitations		
3.	SS-Machschubkommandantur	25	
4.	Luftpark 6/I	210	
5.	Flughafen Spilve	250	
6.	Bauleitung I	866	
7.	Dünawerk	295	
8.	OT-Tanklager	67	
9.	SS-Bauhof /Ballastdamm/	150	
10.	Feldbauamt 6/I Pa. Wplf u. Dering u. Mäller	130	
11.	Leder- und Gerbestrakt-Fabr.	20	
12.	Papierfabrik Schlock	250	

Dem SD. habe ich, wie vereinbart, eine Aufstellung der Dienststellen, welche jüdische Arbeitskräfte beschäftigen, eingereicht, soweit sie als Schonbetriebe anzusehen sind und von denen Abzüge der Juden vorerst nicht erfolgen sollen, was mir auch zugesagt wurde.

Bis zu welchem Termin sämtliche Juden in den K.L. untergebracht werden sollen, konnte mir nicht gesagt werden. Der voraussichtliche Termin soll jetzt der 30. September sein. Ob das technisch durchführbar sei, ist ebenfalls noch unklar.

Mit weiteren Abzügen der bei den Dienststellen noch beschäftigten Juden ist zu rechnen.

Im Auftrag:

[Handwritten Signature]
Regierungsrat
Amtsleiter

1/1 Prof. Luffmann, Leiter SD (B. Lang)
übertr. für Sperre für ...
2/ j. i. l. e. *13/14*

TRANSPORTS FROM THE REICH TO RIGA

<u>Day of Departure</u>	<u>Number of Deportees</u>	<u>City of Departure</u>	<u>Destination</u>
<u>Nov.</u> 27	1,000	Berlin	Rumbula Forest
29	714	Wuerzburg	Jungfernhof
<u>Dec.</u> 1	1,200	Stuttgart	Jungfernhof
3	1,042	Vienna	Jungfernhof
4	808	Hamburg	Jungfernhof
7	1,000	Cologne	Ghetto
9	991	Kassel	Ghetto
11	1,007	Duesseldorf	Ghetto
12	1,000	Bielefeld	Ghetto
15	1,001	Hannover	Ghetto
<u>Jan.</u> 9	1,000	Theresienstadt	Ghetto
11	1,000	Vienna	Ghetto, Jungfernhof
13	1,037	Berlin	Ghetto
15	1,000	Theresienstadt	Ghetto, Salaspils
19	1,006	Berlin	Ghetto
21	1,000	Leipzig	Ghetto
25	1,051	Berlin	Ghetto
26	1,200	Vienna	Ghetto
27	1,000	Dortmund	Ghetto
<u>Feb.</u> 6	1,000	Vienna	Ghetto, Rumbula Forest
	<u>20,057</u>		

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

Depositions made by survivors of the Riga ghetto on file at the International Tracing Service, Arolsen, Hessen:

Hilda Diamond, Prague
Rosa Kaufmann, Nuernberg
Arthur von Lankisch-Hoernitz, Prague
Heinz Samuel, Duesseldorf
Betty Willner, Fuerth

Depositions made by survivors of the Riga ghetto on file at the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, Munich:

Ivan Brager, Hamburg
Julius Ceslanski, Nuernberg
Hermann Heymann, Duisburg
Harry Kahn, Stuttgart
Herbert Kurt Kallmann, Berlin
Mascha Katz, Lehrte
Hans Werner Loszynski, Hamburg
Frieda Marx, Cologne
Werner Georg Nettler, Berlin
Sally Simons, Cologne
Edith Steinmetz, Stuttgart
Edith Wolff, Westfalen

Depositions made by survivors of the Riga ghetto on file at YIVO, New York:

Johanna Rosenthal, Berlin
Heinz Samuel, Krefeld
Hermann Voosen, Dortmund

Deposition by a Latvian:

Arnis Roland Jaucis (Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte)

Deposition by a German:

Ernst Freisiner, German Police, who accompanied transport from Stuttgart to Riga (International Tracing Service)

Documents pertaining to the Riga ghetto as well as to K.Z. Kaiserwald were obtained at the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte in Munich and are part of the appendix, complete with translations.

Gestapo Transport Lists are on file at the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Hessen. See also Juedische Gemeinde zu Berlin for lists of Jews from Berlin and environs, and The Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien for lists of Jews from Vienna and environs.

Gottschalk, Gerda. Der Letzte Weg. Memoirs. On file at the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, Munich.

Schneider, Gertrude. Diary.

Schneider, Gertrude. "The Trauma of the Holocaust upon Adolescent Survivors" paper delivered at the Herzl Institute April 18, 1971, at the Conference on Social Psychology and Jewish Life.

II. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH SURVIVORS OF THE RIGA GHETTO

Elvira Altschul, Hannover, now Canada
Eva Bender, Kassel, now New York
Selma Breitner, Vienna, now New York
Friedrich Deutsch, Vienna, now Vienna
Hertha Field, Vienna, now New York
Rose Geissenberger, Stuttgart, now New Jersey
Irma Gerber, Dortmund, now New York
Mara Godes, Riga, now New York
Abraham Goldmann, Lodz, now Florida
Lotte Goldsmith, Vienna, now New York
Leo Granierer, Vienna, now Vienna
Minna Gruber-Wettenstein, Vienna, now New York
Bettina Gruenbaum, Cologne, now New Jersey
Solly Katz, Bielefeld, now New York
Max Kaufmann, Riga, now New York
Paul Kaufmann, Duesseldorf, now New York
Friedel Kaufmann, Kassel, now New York
Hertha Kisch, Vienna, now New York

Margot Landes, Leipzig, now New York
Hans Levy, Hannover, now New York
Henney Levy, Duesseldorf, now New York
Horst Lucas, Duesseldorf, now New York
Victor Marx, Stuttgart, now New York
Hannelore Marx, Stuttgart, now New York
Vera Mausner, Vienna, now New York
Ruth Nussbacher, Wilno, now New York
Leo Oppenheimer, Kassel, now New York
Lore Oppenheimer, Hannover, now New York
Larry Pick, Prague, now New Jersey
Dolly Pinkassowitsch-Gold, Vienna, now Michigan
Kurt Roseboom, Berlin, now New York
Ruth Roseboom, Cologne, now New York
Chayele Rozental, Wilno, now South Africa
Herta Salomon, Dortmund, now New York
Kurt Sauerquell, Vienna, now New York
Lutz Schloss, Dortmund, now New Jersey
Trude Schloss, Stuttgart, now New Jersey
Walter Schmitz, Cologne, now New York
Bertl Schwartz, Stuttgart, now New York
Herbert Schwarz, Vienna, now California
Selma Sollinger, Hannover, now New York
Dolly Spiegel, Prague, now Germany
Steven Springfield, Riga, now New York
Kurt Steinbach, Vienna, now Vienna
Margie Strauss, Hannover, now California
Moses Tellmann, Lodz, now Israel
Hannelore Temel, Prague, now Florida
Nina Van Dyck, Vienna, now Connecticut
Gerda Wasserman, Hamburg, now New York
Rita Wassermann, Vienna, now New York
Carrie Wolf, Nuernberg, now New York
Jeanette Wolff, Westfalen, now Berlin
Frieda Wolfinger, Vienna, now New York

PRIMARY SOURCES

I. NAZI GERMANY

Dokumente der deutschen Politik und Geschichte. Berlin, 1953.

Dokumente ueber die Behandlung der Juden durch das dritte Reich. Duesseldorf: Verlag Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland, 1958.

Hofer, Walter. Der Nationalsozialismus. Dokumente 1933 bis 1945. Frankfurt am Main, 1957.

Rueckerl, Adalbert. NS Prozesse. Karlsruhe: Verlag C.F. Mueller, 1971.

SS im Einsatz. Eine Dokumentation ueber die Verbrechen der SS. Berlin: Deutscher Militaerverlag, 1964.

The Goebbels Diaries. London, 1948.

II. MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS: MONOGRAPHS AND DOCUMENTS

Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militaergerichtshof. International Military Tribunal; volumes of especial interest to Riga are numbers III, VI, VII, XXIX, XXX, XXXIX. Nuernberg, 1948.

Dokumenty i Materialy. Three Volumes. Warsaw, Lodz, Krakow: The Central Jewish Historical Commission, 1946.

Piotrowski, Stanislaw. The Diary of Hans Frank. Warsaw: Polskie Wydanie Narodowe, 1963.

The Black Book. The Nazi Crimes against the Jewish People. New York: Duel, Sloan, and Pearce, Inc., 1946.

The Destruction of Hungarian Jewry. A Documentary Account. Edited by Randolph L. Braham. New York: Pro Arte Publishers for the World Federation of Hungarian Jews, 1963.

Verbrecherische Ziele - Verbrecherische Mittel.
Dokumente der Okkupationspolitik des faschistischen
Deutschlands auf dem Territorium der U.S.S.R. 1941 -
1944. Moscow: Verlag fuer fremdsprachige Literatur,
1963.

III. THE GHETTOS

Adler, H.G. Die Verheimlichte Wahrheit. Theresien-
staedter Dokumente. Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul
Siebeck), 1958.

Adler, H.G. Theresienstadt 1941 - 1945. Das Antlitz
einer Zwangsgemeinschaft. Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr
(Paul Siebeck), 1955.

Auerbach, Rahel. Der yidisher oyfstand in varshe
1943. Warsaw: Zentral Komitet fun Poylishe Yidn,
1948.

Bozykowski, Tovy. Tsvishn falendike vent. Warsaw:
Hechalutz, 1949.

Dworzecki, Mark. Zikhroynes fun vilner geto. Paris:
Yidisher Volksverband, 1948.

Gar, Joseph. Umkum fun der yidisher kovne. Munich:
Farband fun Litvishe Yidn, 1948.

Goldstein, Bernard. The Stars Bear Witness. Trans-
lated from the Yiddish. New York: Viking, 1949.
Paper edition as Five Years in the Warsaw Ghetto.
New York: Dolphin Books, 1961.

Hirschhorn, Traudl. "Fahrt ins Grauen," Der Neue
Weg, Volume I, (March, 1946) pp. 3-10.

Kaplan, Chaim Aron. Scroll of Agony. Edited and
translated by A.I. Katsh. New York: Macmillan, 1965.

Kaufmann, Max. Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands.
Munich: Deutscher Verlag, 1947.

Lederer, Zdenek. Ghetto Theresienstadt. London: Edward Goldstone & Son, Ltd., 1953.

Neustadt, Melekh. Khurben un oyfshtand fun die yidn in varshe. Two Volumes. Tel Aviv: Histadrut, 1948.

Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto. The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum. Edited and translated by Jacob Sloan. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958.

Pawlowicz, Sala with Kevin Klose. I Will Survive. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1962.

Trunk, Isaiah. Lodzer geto. New York: Yivo, 1962.

Turkow, Jonas. Azoy is es geven. Khurbn varshe. Two Volumes. Buenos Aires: Zentral Farband fun Poylishe Yidn, 1948-1950.

We Survived. Edited by Eric Boehm, 20th Century Series. Santa Barbara, California: Clio Press, 1966.

Wolff, Jeanette. Sadismus oder Wahnsinn. Dresden: Sachsenverlag Druckerei, 1946.

IV. CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Bericht des Internationalen Lagerkomitees Buchenwald. Weimar: Thueringer Volksverlag, 1945.

Borowski, Tadeusz. This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, and other stories. Translated from the Polish. London: Jonathan Cape, 1967.

Commandant of Auschwitz. The Autobiography of Rudolf Hoess. Translated from the German. New York: Popular Library, 1961.

Darkness Over Europe: First Person Accounts of Life in Europe during the War Years 1939 - 1945. Edited by Tony March. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1969.

Donat, Alexander. The Holocaust Kingdom. A Memoir. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963.

Erinnerungen Auschwitzzer Haeftlinge. Translated from the Polish. Krakow: Verlag Panstwowe Muzeum W Oswiecimiu, 1960.

Kaczkowski, Adam. Auschwitz-Birkenau. Krakow: Drukarnia Narodowa, 1947.

Kogon, Eugen. Der SS Staat. Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager. Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1947. English Paperback entitled The Theory and Practice of Hell. Berkley Publishing Company, 1950.

Kolb, Eberhard. Bergen-Belsen. Hannover: Verlag fuer Literatur und Zeitgeschichte, 1962.

Lengyel, Olga. Five Chimneys: The Story of Auschwitz. I Survived Hitler's Ovens. New York: Avon, 1948.

Levi, Primo. If this is a Man. Translated from the Italian. New York: Orion Press, 1959. Paperback edition entitled Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity. Colliers, 1961.

Nyiszli, Dr. Milos. Auschwitz. A Doctor's Eyewitness Account. Translated from the Hungarian. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Crest Books, 1960.

Poller, Walter. Arztschreiber in Buchenwald. Hamburg: Phoenix Verlag Christen & Company, 1947.

Reder, Rudolf. Belzec. Krakow: Centralna Zydowska Komisja Historyczna przy C.K. Zydow Polskich, 1946.

Shtigler, M. In die fabrikn fun toyt. Buenos Aires: Zentral Farband fun Poylishe Yidn, 1948.

Shtigler, M. Majdanek. Buenos Aires: Zentral Farband fun Poylishe Yidn, 1947.

Steiner, Jean-Francois. Treblinka. Translated from the French. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967.

Vrba, Rudolf and Alan Bestic. I Cannot Forgive.
New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964.

Wells, Leon Weliczker. The Janowska Road. New York:
McMillan Company, 1963.

Wiesel, Elie. Night. Translated from the French.
New York: Avon, 1969.

SECONDARY SOURCES

I. BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Books on Persecution, Terror and Resistance in Nazi Germany. Edited by Ilse R. Wolff. The Wiener Library Catalogue Series, No. 1. Second Revised Edition, London, 1960.

German Jewry, Its History, Life and Culture. Edited by Ilse R. Wolff. The Wiener Library Catalogue Series, No. 3. London, 1958.

Guide to Jewish History under Nazi Impact. Edited by Jacob Robinson and Philip Friedman. Yad Vashem and Yivo Joint Documentary Project, Bibliographical Series, No. 1, New York, 1960.

Guide to Unpublished Materials of the Holocaust Period. Edited by Jacob Robinson and Yehuda Bauer. Jerusalem, 1970.

II. JOURNALS

Bulletin fuer die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Leo Baeck Institutes. Tel Aviv.

Der Neue Weg. Vienna.

Herzl Institute Bulletin. New York.

Le Monde Juive. Paris.

Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxieme Guerre Mondiale.
Paris.

The Wiener Library Bulletin. London.

Vierteljahrshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte. Stuttgart.

Yad Vashem Bulletin. Jerusalem.

Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe
and Resistance. Jerusalem.

Year Book of the Leo Baeck Society. London.

Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science. New York.

III. COMPREHENSIVE WORKS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Arendt, Hannah. Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on
the Banality of Evil. Revised Edition. New York:
Viking, 1964.

Bettelheim, Bruno. The Informed Heart. Anatomy in
a Mass Age. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960.

Das Wannsee Protokoll zur Endloesung der Judenfrage
und einige Fragen an die, die es angeht. Duesseldorf,
1952.

Dawidowicz, Lucy S. "Toward a History of the Holo-
caust," Commentary, XLVII, 4, (April, 1969) pp. 51-56.

Die Kontroverse: Hannah Arendt, Eichmann, und die
Juden. Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1964.

Dubnow, S.M. History of the Jews in Russia and
Poland. Translated from the Russian by I. Friedlaender.
Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of
America, 1916.

Hilberg, Raul. The Destruction of the European Jews. With a new postscript by the author. Chicago: Quadrangle Paperback, 1967.

Levin, Nora. The Holocaust. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968.

Nellessen, Bernd. Der Prozess von Jerusalem. Vienna; Duesseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1964.

Page, Stanley W. The Formation of the Baltic States: A Study of the effects of great power politics upon the emergence of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959.

Poliakow, Leon. Harvest of Hate, The Nazi Program for the Destruction of the Jews of Europe. Translated from the French. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1954.

Reitlinger, Gerald. The Final Solution. The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939 - 1945. New and Revised Edition. South Brunswick, New Jersey: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961.

Robinson, Jacob. And the Crooked Shall be made Straight. The Eichmann Trial, the Jewish Catastrophe, and Hannah Arendt's Narrative. New York: Macmillan, 1965.

IV. NAZI GERMANY

Arendt, Hannah. The Origins of Totalitarianism. Second revised edition. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, Meridian Books, 1958.

Bracher, Karl Dietrich. The German Dictatorship. Origin, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism. Translated from the German. New York: Praeger, 1970.

Bracher, Karl Dietrich, Wolfgang Sauer, and Gerhard Schulz. Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung. Studien zur Errichtung des totalitaeren Herrschafts-systems in Deutschland, 1933-34. Cologne and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1962.

- Bullock, Alan. Hitler. A Study in Tyranny. London: Odhams Press, 1952.
- Crankshaw, Edward. Gestapo. New York: Viking Press, 1956.
- Das Ausnahmerecht fuer die Juden in den Europaeischen Laendern 1933 - 1945. Bearbeitet von Bruno Blau. New York, 1952.
- Dallin, Alexander. German Rule in Russia, 1941 - 1945. A Study of Occupation Policies. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957.
- Friedman, Philip. "Research and Literature on the Recent Jewish Tragedy," Jewish Social Studies, XII, 1 (January, 1950) pp. 17-26.
- Harris, Whitney R. Tyranny on Trial. Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1954.
- Heiden Konrad. Der Fuehrer. Hitler's Rise to Power. Translated from the German by Ralph Mannheim. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1944.
- Kempner, Robert M.W. Das Dritte Reich im Kreuzverhoer. Munich: Bechtle Verlag, 1969.
- Kinser, Bill and Neil Kleinman. The Dream That Was No More A Dream. A Search for Aesthetic Reality in Germany, 1890 - 1945. New York: Harper and Row, Colophon Books, 1969.
- Klemperer, Victor. Notizbuch eines Philologen. Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1946.
- Langbein, Hermann. Im Namen des Deutschen Volkes. Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1963.
- Langbein, Hermann. Wir Haben Es Getan. Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1964.
- Mosse, George L. The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Universal Library, 1964.

Neumann, Franz. Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of National Socialism. New York: Harper and Row Torchbooks, 1965.

Pinson, Koppel S. Modern Germany. Its History and Civilization. New York: Macmillan, 1954.

Poliakov, Leon and Joseph Wulf. Das Dritte Reich und die Juden. Dokumente und Aufsätze. Berlin: Arani, 1955.

Reitlinger, Gerald. The SS. Alibi of a Nation. 1922-1945. New York: Viking, Compass Books, 1957.

Snyder, Louis L. Hitler and Nazism. New York and Canada: Franklin Watts, Inc., A Bantam Book, 1961.

Stern, Fritz. The Politics of Cultural Despair. A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1965.

Taylor, Telford. Sword and Swastika. Generals and Nazis in the Third Reich. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952.

Totalitarianism. Edited by Carl J. Friedrich. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Universal Library, 1964.

Viereck, Peter. Metapolitics. The Roots of the Nazi Mind. New York: Capricorn Books, 1961.

Weinreich, Max. Hitler's Professors. New York: Yivo, 1946.

Wheeler-Bennett, John W. The Nemesis of Power. The German Army in Politics, 1918 - 1945. New York: Viking, Compass Books, 1967.

World Jewish Congress. Hitler's Ten Year War on the Jews. New York: International Press, 1943.

V. ANTI-SEMITISM

Adorno, T. W. and others. The Authoritarian Personality. New York: Harper, 1950.

Cohn, Norman. Warrant for Genocide. The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocol of the Elders of Zion. New York: Harper and Row Torchbooks, 1969.

Hay, Malcolm. The Foot of Pride. The Pressure of Christendom on the People of Israel for 1900 Years. Boston: Beacon, 1950.

Heer, Friedrich. God's First Love. New York: Weybright & Talley, 1970.

Massing, Paul R. Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany. New York: Harper, 1949.

Parkes, James. Antisemitism. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969.

Pinson, Koppel, Ed. Essays on Anti-Semitism. Second revised edition. New York: Conference on Jewish Relations, 1946.

Poliakov, Leon. A History of Anti-Semitism. Translated from the French. New York: Vanguard, 1964.

Pulzer, Peter G.J. The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria. New York: John Wiley, 1964.

Reichman, Eva. Hostages of Civilization. The Social Sources of National Socialist Anti-Semitism. Boston: Beacon, 1951.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS: MONOGRAPHS AND DOCUMENTS

Avotins, Evian, J. Dzirkalis and V. Petersons. Daugavas Vanagi: Who Are They? Riga: Latvian State Publishing House, 1963.

Bernadotte, Count Folke. The Curtain Falls. Last Days of the Third Reich. Translated from the Swedish. New York: Knopf, 1945.

Elkin, Michael. Forged in Fury. New York: Ballantine Books, 1971.

Feingold, Henry L. The Politics of Rescue. The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938 - 1945. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1970.

Friedlaender, Saul. Pius XII and The Third Reich. A Documentation. Translated from the French and German. New York: Knopf, 1966.

Friedman, Philip. "Jewish Resistance," Yad Vashem Studies II (1958) pp. 113-131.

Halperin, Irving. Messengers from the Dead. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970.

Hausner, Gideon. Justice in Jerusalem. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

Katz, Robert. Black Sabbath. A Journey through a Crime against Humanity. New York: Macmillan, 1969.

Kusnetsov, Anatol. Babi Yar. Translated from the Russian. New York: Dial Press, 1967.

La persecution des Juifs dans les pays de l'Est. Edited by Henri Monneray. Paris: Edition du Centre, 1949.

La persecution des Juifs en France et dans les autres pays de l'Ouest. Edited by Henri Monneray. Paris: Edition du Centre, 1947.

Levinson, Isaac. The Untold Story. Johannesburg: Kayor Publishing House, 1958.

Lewy, Guenther. The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Maurina, Zenta. Die Eisernen Riegel Zerbrechen. Memmingen: Maximilian Dietrich Verlag, 1957.

Morse, Arthur D. While Six Millions Died. A Chronicle of American Apathy. New York: Random House, 1967.

Moser, Jonny. Die Judenverfolgung in Oesterreich, 1938 - 1945. Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1966.

Ruhm von Oppen, Beate. "Nazis and Christians," World Politics, XXI, 3 (April 1969) pp. 392-424.

Schwarz, Leo W. Ed. The Root and the Bough. The Epic of an Enduring People. New York: Rinehart, 1949.

Silabriedis, J. and B. Arklans. Political Refugees Unmasked. Riga: Latvian State Publishing House, 1965.

The Jews in Latvia. Tel-Aviv: D. Ben-Nun Press, 1971.

Tenenbaum, Dr. Joseph. Underground. New York: Philosophical Library, 1952.

Zahn, Gordon C. German Catholics and Hitler's Wars. A Study in Social Control. New York, 1962.

VII. THE GHETTOS

Bloom, Solomon F. "Dictator of the Lodz Ghetto. The Strange History of Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski," Commentary, VII, 2 (February 1949), pp. 111-222.

Deschner, Guenther. Menschen im Ghetto. Gueterslow, Germany: Bertelsmann Sachbuchverlag Reinhard Mohn, 1969.

Friedman, Philip. "Problems of Research in Jewish Self-Government "Judenrat" in the Nazi Period," Yad Vashem Studies, II (1958), pp. 95-113.

Gringanz, Samuel. "Some Methodological Problems in the Study of the Ghetto," Jewish Social Studies, XII, 1 (January 1950), pp. 65-72.

Kaplan, J. "Arms in the Riga Ghetto," Fun letzten hurbn I, 4 (November 1946), pp. 4-6.

Trunk, Isaiah. Judenrat. New York: McMillan Company, 1972.

Wiesenthal, Simon. The Murderers Among Us. Edited by Joseph Wechsberg. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Wulf, Josef. Lodz: Das Letzte Ghetto auf Polnischem Boden. Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale fuer Heimatdienst, Heft 59. Bonn, 1962.

VIII. CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Arendt, Hannah. "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," Jewish Social Studies, XII, 1 (January 1950), pp. 49-64.

Bettelheim, Bruno. "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XXXVIII, 3 (March 1943), pp. 417-452.

Cohen, Elie A. Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp. Translated from the Dutch. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Universal Library, 1960.

Death Camp Salaspils. Riga: Publishing House Liesma, 1960.

Eitinger, Dr. Leo, Dr. Paul Matussek, and Dr. Helmut Paul "Das K.Z. Syndrom," Der Spiegel, Numbers 10, 11, 12, 1958.

Le systeme concentrationnaire allemand, 1940 - 1944. Revue d'Histoire de la Deuzieme Guerre Mondiale. Numbers 15 and 16, 1954.

Michel, Henri. "The Need for a History of the Nazi Concentration Camp System," Yad Vashem Bulletin, Number 17, (December 1965), pp. 4-8.

Poliakov, Leon. "The Mind of the Mass Murderer," Commentary, XII, 5 (November 1951), pp. 451-459.

Przewodnik po upamietnionych miejscach walk i meczenstwa. Lata wojny 1939 - 1945. Warsaw: Drukarnia Narodowa, 1966.

Schneider, Gertrude. "Memoirs and Diaries of the Holocaust," Herzl Institute Bulletin, Vol. 10, No. 28, (April, 1973), pp. 2-7.