

**THE
DESTRUCTION
OF THE
EUROPEAN
JEWS**

STUDENT EDITION

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A destruction process is a series of administrative measures that must be aimed at a definite group. The German bureaucracy knew with whom it had to deal: the target of its measures was Jewry. But what, precisely, was Jewry? Who was a member of that group? The answer to this question had to be worked out by an agency that dealt with general problems of administration—the Interior Ministry. In the course of the definition-making, several other offices from the civil service and the party became interested in the problem.

The problem of defining the Jews was by no means simple; in fact, it was a stumbling block for an earlier generation of anti-Semites. Hellmut von Gerlach, one of the anti-Semitic deputies in the Reichstag during the 1890s, explained in his memoirs why the sixteen anti-Semitic members of the legislature had never proposed an anti-Jewish law: they could not find a workable definition of the concept *Jew*. All had agreed upon the jingle:

Never mind to whom he prays,
The rotten mess is in the race.

But how to define race in a law? The anti-Semites had never been able to come to an agreement about that question. That is why "everybody continued to curse the Jews, but nobody introduced a law against them." The people who wrote the Nazi Party program in 1920 did not supply a definition either. They simply pointed out that a member of the community could only be a person of "German blood, without regard to confession."

When the Interior Ministry drafted its first anti-Jewish decree for the dismissal of Jewish civil servants, it was confronted by the same problem that had troubled the anti-Semites and the early Nazis. But the bureaucrats of the Interior Ministry attacked the problem systematically, and soon they found the answer.

The decree of April 7, 1933, provided that officials of "non-Aryan

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descent" were to be retired. The term *non-Aryan descent* was defined in the regulation of April 11, 1933, as a designation for any person who had a Jewish parent or grandparent; the parent or grandparent was presumed to be Jewish if he (or she) belonged to the Jewish religion.

The phraseology of this definition is such that it could not be said to have run counter to the stipulations of the party program. The ministry had divided the population into two categories: "Aryans," who were people with no Jewish ancestors (i.e., pure "German blood"), and "non-Aryans," who were all persons, Jewish or Christian, who had at least one Jewish parent or grandparent. It should be noted that this definition is in no sense based on racial criteria, such as blood type, curvature of the nose, or other physical characteristics. Nazi commentators, for propagandistic reasons, called the decrees "racial laws," and non-German writers, adopting this language, have also referred to these definitions as "racial." But it is important to understand that the sole criterion for categorization into the "Aryan" or "non-Aryan" group was religion, not the religion of the person involved but the religion of his ancestors. After all, the Nazis were not interested in the "Jewish nose." They were concerned with the "Jewish influence."

The 1933 definition (known as the *Arierparagraph*) did give rise to difficulties. One problem arose from the use of the terms *Aryan* and *non-Aryan*, which had been chosen in order to lend to the decrees a racial flavor. Foreign nations, notably Japan, were offended by the general implication that non-Aryans were inferior to Aryans. On November 15, 1934, representatives of the Interior Ministry and the Foreign Office, together with the chief of the party's Race-Political Office, Dr. Gross, discussed the adverse effect of the *Arierparagraph* on Far Eastern policy. The conferees had no solution. The Foreign Office reported that its missions abroad had explained the German policy of distinguishing between the *types* of races, rather than the *qualities* of the races. According to this view, each race produced its own social characteristics, but the characteristics of one race were not necessarily inferior to those of other races. In short, racial "type" comprised physical and spiritual qualities, and German policy attempted no more than the promotion of conditions that would permit each race to develop in its own way. However, this explanation did not quite satisfy the Far Eastern states, who still felt that the catchall term *non-Aryan* placed them in the same category as Jews.

There was another difficulty that reached into the substance of the measure. The term *non-Aryan* had been defined in such a way as to include not only full Jews—that is to say, persons with four Jewish grandparents—but also three-quarter Jews, half Jews, and one-quarter Jews. Such a definition was considered necessary in order to eliminate

from official positions all persons with "Jewish influence" even in the smallest degree. It was recognized that the term *non-Aryan*, which included also a number of persons of Jewish descent, more drastic measures would be required for the application of subsequent measures. The definition of what was actually meant by the term was actually meaningless.

At the beginning of 1935, the party circles. One of the most important was the chief medical officer of the party, Dr. Blome, at that time. Dr. Blome spoke out against the party's desire for a "third race." Consequently, the party considered Germans and that "Among half-Jews, the Jewish influence was the most dangerous view later became party policy." The party's policy on the Interior was written.

On the occasion of the Reichstag session on September 13, 1935, that a decree was issued with the title "Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor." Experts of the Interior Ministerialrat Lösener, were there. When they arrived they found Ministerialrat Seel (civil service) Ministerialrat Sommer (a representative of several other gentlemen in the Interior) Minister Frick and the party's chief of staff, between Hitler's quarters and the Reichstag. In the middle of the commotion, to the accompaniment of the playing of the national flag, the party no longer dealt with "non-Aryan marriages and extramarital intercourse with Jews or related blood," the error of the party's policy. The citizens of "German or related blood" were to be protected from the raising by Jews of the Reich. The party's policy was defined in the decree.

On the evening of September 13, 1935, the party's chief of staff visited Hitler and told the story of the Reich citizenship law. The party's policy was to go to work in the music room. Soon they ran out of paper. At 2:30 A.M. the citizenship law was

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from official positions all persons who might have been carriers of the "Jewish influence" even in the slightest degree. Nevertheless, it was recognized that the term *non-Aryan*, aside from embracing the full Jews, included also a number of persons whose inclusion in subsequent more drastic measures would result in difficulties. In order to narrow the application of subsequent decrees to exclude such persons, a definition of what was actually meant by the term *Jew* became necessary.

At the beginning of 1935 the problem received some attention in party circles. One of the meetings was attended by Dr. Wagner, then chief medical officer of the party; Dr. Gross, head of the Race-Political Office; and Dr. Blome, at that time secretary of the medical association. Dr. Blome spoke out against a special status for part-Jews. He did not want a "third race." Consequently, he proposed that all quarter-Jews be considered Germans and that all half-Jews be considered Jews. Reason: "Among half-Jews, the Jewish genes are notoriously dominant." This view later became party policy, but the party never succeeded in imposing that policy on the Interior Ministry, where the decisive decrees were written.

On the occasion of the Nuremberg party rally, Hitler ordered, on September 13, 1935, that a decree be written—in two days—under the title "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor." Two experts of the Interior Ministry, *Ministerialrat* Medicus and *Ministerialrat* Lösener, were thereupon summoned to Nuremberg by plane. When they arrived they found *Staatssekretäre* Pfundtner and Stuckart, *Ministerialrat* Seel (civil service expert of the Interior Ministry), *Ministerialrat* Sommer (a representative of the Führer's Deputy Hess), and several other gentlemen in the police headquarters, drafting a law. Interior Minister Frick and Chief Medical Officer Wagner shuttled between Hitler's quarters and the police station with drafts. In the midst of the commotion, to the accompaniment of music and marching feet and in a setting of flags, the new decree was hammered out. The law no longer dealt with "non-Aryans" but with "Jews." It prohibited marriages and extramarital intercourse between Jews and citizens of "German or related blood," the employment in Jewish households of female citizens of "German or related blood" under the age of forty-five, and the raising by Jews of the Reich flag. None of the terms used were defined in the decree.

On the evening of September 14, Frick returned to his villa from a visit to Hitler and told the exhausted experts to get busy with a draft of a Reich citizenship law. The *Staatssekretäre* and *Ministerialräte* now went to work in the music room of Frick's villa to write a citizenship law. Soon they ran out of paper and requisitioned old menu cards. By 2:30 A.M. the citizenship law was finished. It provided that only persons

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of "German or related blood" could be citizens. Since "citizenship" in Nazi Germany implied nothing, no interest attaches to the drafting of this decree, except for a provision to the effect that "full Jews" could not be citizens. This implied a new categorization differentiating between Germans and part-Jews, on the one hand, and such persons regardless of religion who had four Jewish grandparents, on the other. Hitler saw this implication immediately and crossed out the provision.

The attitudes of the party and of the civil service toward part-Jews had not emerged quite clearly. The party "combated" the part-Jew as a carrier of the Jewish influence," whereas the civil service wanted to protect in the part-Jew "that part which is German." The final definition was written in the Interior Ministry, and so it is not surprising that the party view did not prevail.

The authors of the definition were Staatssekretär Dr. Stuckart and his expert in Jewish affairs, Dr. Lösener. Stuckart was then a young man of thirty-three. He was a Nazi, a believer in Hitler and Germany's destiny. He was also regarded as a party man. There is a difference between these two concepts. Everyone was presumed to be, and was accepted as, a Nazi unless by his own conduct he insisted otherwise. But not everyone was regarded as a party man. Only those people were party men who held positions in the party, who owed their positions to the party, or who represented the party's interests in disagreements between the party and other hierarchies. Stuckart was in the party (he had even joined the SS in an honorary capacity), he had risen to power more quickly than other people, and he knew what the party wanted. But Stuckart refused to go along with the party in the definition business.

Stuckart's expert on Jewish affairs, Dr. Bernhard Lösener, had been transferred to the Interior Ministry after long service in the customs administration. Definitions and Jewish affairs were an entirely new experience to him. Yet he became an efficient "expert" in his new assignment. Ultimately he drafted, or helped draft, twenty-seven Jewish decrees. He is the prototype of other "experts" in Jewish matters in the Finance Ministry, the Labor Ministry, the Foreign Office, and many other agencies.

The two men had an urgent task to perform. The terms *Jew* and *German* had already been used in a decree that contained criminal sanctions. There was no time to be lost. The final text of the definition corresponds in substance to a memorandum written by Lösener and dated November 1, 1935. Lösener dealt in his memorandum with the critical problem of the half-Jews. He rejected the party's proposal to equate half-Jews with full Jews. In the first place, Lösener argued, such a categorization would strengthen the Jewish side. "In principle, the

half-Jew should be regarded as : because, in addition to Jewish Germanic ones which the full J result in an injustice. Half-Je compete with full Jews for jobs the need of the armed forces, v 45,000 men. Fourth, a boycott German people would not go meritorious services (recital of riages between Germans and h Schmidt finds out, after ten y Jewish—a fact that, presumably

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half-Jew should be regarded as a more serious enemy than the full Jew because, in addition to Jewish characteristics, he possesses so many Germanic ones which the full Jew lacks." Second, the equation would result in an injustice. Half-Jews could not emigrate and could not compete with full Jews for jobs with Jewish employers. Third, there was the need of the armed forces, which would be deprived of a potential 45,000 men. Fourth, a boycott against half-Jews was impractical (the German people would not go along). Fifth, half-Jews had performed meritorious services (recital of names). Sixth, there were many marriages between Germans and half-Jews. Suppose, for example, that Mr. Schmidt finds out, after ten years of marriage, that his wife is half-Jewish—a fact that, presumably, all half-Jewish wives kept secret.

In view of all these difficulties, Lösener proposed that the half-Jews be sorted into two groups. There was no practical way of sorting half-Jews individually, according to their political convictions. But there was an automatic way of dealing with that problem. Lösener proposed that only those half-Jews be counted as Jews who belonged to the Jewish religion or who were married to a Jewish person.

The Lösener proposal was incorporated into the First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law, dated November 14, 1935. In its final form the automatic sorting method separated the "non-Aryans" into the following categories: Everyone was defined as a Jew who (1) descended from at least three Jewish grandparents (full Jews and three-quarter Jews) or (2) descended from two Jewish grandparents (half-Jews) and (a) belonged to the Jewish religious community on September 15, 1935, or joined the community on a subsequent date, or (b) was married to a Jewish person on September 15, 1935, or married one on a subsequent date, or (c) was the offspring of a marriage contracted with a three-quarter or full Jew after the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor had come into force (September 15, 1935), or (d) was the offspring of an extramarital relationship with a three-quarter or full Jew and was born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936. For the determination of the status of the grandparents, the presumption remained that the grandparent was Jewish if he or she belonged to the Jewish religious community.

Defined *not* as a Jew but as an individual of "mixed Jewish blood" was (1) any person who descended from two Jewish grandparents (half-Jewish), but who (a) did not adhere (or adhered no longer) to the Jewish religion on September 15, 1935, and who did not join it at any subsequent time, and (b) was not married (or was married no longer) to a Jewish person on September 15, 1935, and who did not marry such a person at any subsequent time (such half-Jews were called *Mischlinge* of the first degree), and (2) any person descended from one Jewish

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grandparent (Mischling of the second degree). The designations "Mischling of the first degree" and "Mischling of the second degree" were not contained in the decree of November 14, 1935, but were added in a later ruling by the Interior Ministry.

In practice, therefore, Lösener had split the non-Aryans into two groups: Mischlinge and Jews. The Mischlinge were no longer subjected to the destruction process. They remained non-Aryans under the earlier decrees and continued to be affected by them, but subsequent measures were, on the whole, taken only against "Jews." Henceforth the Mischlinge were left out.

The administration of the Lösener decree, and of the Arierparagraph that preceded it, was a complicated procedure, which is interesting because it affords a great deal of insight into the Nazi mentality. In the first place, both decrees were based on descent: the religious status of the grandparents. For that reason, it was necessary to *prove* descent. In this respect the decrees affected not only "non-Aryans"; any applicant for a position in the government or the party could be requested to search for the records of his ancestors. For such proof of ancestry seven documents were required: a birth or baptismal certificate, the certificates of the parents, and the certificates of the grandparents.

Prior to 1875-76, births were registered only by churches. Thus the churches were drawn into an administrative role in the implementation of the first measure of the destruction process, a task they performed as a matter of course. Not so simple was the attempt to obtain the cooperation of officeholders. Although civil servants had to fill out a form only if it could be presumed that the information disclosed therein would result in their dismissal, the disquiet, not to speak of the paper work, was still considerable. At one point the Interior Ministry proposed that proof of descent be supplied by all civil servants and their wives, and the Justice Ministry demanded this evidence of notaries. At least some universities (counting their non-Aryan students) contented themselves with the honor system, but the party insisted on procedures, even if not always with complete success. As late as 1940 the chief of the party's foreign organization had to remind his personnel to submit the documents. Most employees in the office had simply ignored an earlier directive for submission of records, without even giving an excuse or explanation for failure to comply.

Even in the early 1930s a whole new profession of licensed "family researchers" had appeared on the scene to assist applicants and officeholders in finding documents. The researchers compiled ancestor charts, which listed parents and grandparents. Sometimes it was necessary to do research on great-grandparents also. Such procedures, how-

ever, were limited to two t such party formations as th proof of non-Jewish descer Jewish grandparent was ac latter procedure was poss *sumed* to be Jewish if he (o same way, inquiry into th used to the detriment of Christian grandparent had parent would be consider would result.

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ever, were limited to two types of cases: (1) applications for service in such party formations as the SS, which, in the case of officers, required proof of non-Jewish descent from 1750, and (2) attempts to show that a Jewish grandparent was actually the offspring of Christian parents. The latter procedure was possible because a grandparent was only *presumed* to be Jewish if he (or she) belonged to the Jewish religion. In the same way, inquiry into the status of the great-grandparents could be used to the detriment of an applicant. For if it was shown that a Christian grandparent had actually been the child of Jews, the grandparent would be considered a Jew, and a "downward" classification would result.

The final decision about the correctness of the facts was made by the agency that had to pass on the applicant, but in doubtful cases a party office on family research rendered expert opinions for the guidance of agency heads. There was a very interesting category of doubtful cases: the offspring of extramarital relationships. The status of these individuals raised a peculiar problem. How was one to classify someone whose descent could not be determined? This problem was divided into two parts: individuals with Jewish mothers and individuals with German mothers.

In cases of offspring of unmarried Jewish mothers, the Family Research Office presumed that any child born *before* 1918 had a Jewish father and that any child born *after* 1918 had a Christian father. The reason for this presumption was a Nazi hypothesis known as the "emancipation theory," according to which Jews did not mix with Germans before 1918. However, after 1918 the Jews had the opportunity to pursue the systematic disintegration of the German people. This activity included the fostering of extramarital relationships.

In commenting on this theory, Judge Klemm of the party's Legal Office pointed out that it was quite true that Jews were guilty of this practice but that, after all, the practice was intended only to violate German *women*. It could hardly be assumed that a Jewish woman undertook pregnancy in order to harm the German *man*. According to the criteria used by the research office, complained Klemm, a Jewish mother could simply refuse to tell the office who the father was, and her child would automatically become a Mischling of the first degree. Klemm's comments were probably quite correct. This was perhaps the only Nazi theory that worked to the complete advantage of a number of full Jews.

The "emancipation theory" does not seem to have been applied to the offspring of unwed German mothers. The reason was simple: the party's research office rarely, if ever, got such cases. If it had gotten them, just about all of Germany's illegitimate children born after 1918

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would have been classified as Mischlinge of the first degree. But since the party did not get the cases, the illegitimate offspring of a German mother remained a German, with all the rights and obligations of a German in Nazi Germany. However, there were a few instances when a Jew or Mischling had acknowledged paternity of a German mother's child. In some of the cases, persons who had been classified as Mischlinge went to court, pointing out that the legal father was not the actual father and that, therefore, there was ground for reclassification. For such cases the Justice Ministry laid down the rule that the courts were not to inquire into the motives of the person who had acknowledged fatherhood and that they were to reject any testimony by the mother, "who is only interested in protecting her child from the disadvantages of Jewish descent."

The cumbersome task of proving descent was not the only problem that complicated the administration of the decrees. Although the definition appeared to be airtight in the sense that, given the facts, it should have been possible at once to determine whether an individual was a German, a Mischling, or a Jew, there were in fact several problems of interpretation. Consequently, we find a whole number of administrative and judicial decisions that were designed to make the definition more precise.

The principal problem of interpretation hinged on the provision in the Lösener decree according to which half-Jews were classified as Mischlinge of the first degree if they did not belong to the Jewish religion and were not married to a Jewish person on or after September 15, 1935. There was no legal difficulty in determining whether a person was married; marriage is a clearly defined legal concept. But the determination of criteria for adherence to the Jewish religion was not so simple. Whether a half-Jew was to be classified as a Jew or a Mischling of the first degree ultimately depended on the answer to the question: Did the man regard himself as a Jew?

In 1941 the Reich Administrative Court received a petition from a half-Jew who had not been raised as a Jew and who had never been affiliated with any synagogue. Nevertheless, the court classified the petitioner as a Jew because there was evidence that on various occasions since 1914 he had designated *himself* as a Jew in filling out forms and official documents, and he had failed to correct the impression of the authorities that he was a Jew. Toleration of a presumption was sufficient conduct for the purpose of classification as a Jewish person.

In a later decision the highest court in Germany ruled that conduct was not enough; the attitude disclosed by the conduct was decisive. The particular case concerned a young woman, half-Jewish, who had married a half-Jew (Mischling of the first degree). The marriage con-

sequently did not place her there was the matter of her and 1924 she had had Jewish her Jewish father. In substance the synagogue, once a year died in 1934, she discontinued a job in a Jewish community Jewish. Until 1938, more or less, she had resisted the synagogue. The court decided that she had resisted with prayer and visited the synagogue not to please her father. In asking for an organization, she was motivated solely by economic considerations in the Jewish community.

The attitude and intention in this case, which is very interesting, was that of a half-Jew who had married a German woman and had ceased to be a member of the Jewish organization in Berlin, which was destroyed in the destruction process. The man's personal finances, a Jewish community went to his synagogue but not his organization's argument, pointing out that the man had no legal personality as a man who had quit his synagogue unless there was evidence to the contrary. There was no such evidence in this case. The court provided proof of his membership in the synagogue in other respects; the court was satisfied with his connections with Jewry.

This decision was one of the most important in the Race-Political office. A lawyer referring to the fact that the defendant to be a member of the Jewish community was more pontifical than the pontiff."

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sequently did not place her into the Jewish category. Now, however, there was the matter of her religion. The evidence showed that in 1923 and 1924 she had had Jewish religious instruction upon the insistence of her Jewish father. In subsequent years she accompanied her father to the synagogue, once a year, on Jewish high holy days. After her father died in 1934, she discontinued visits to the synagogue, but, in asking for a job in a Jewish community organization, she listed her religion as Jewish. Until 1938, moreover, she was entered as a member of a synagogue. The court decided that she was *not* Jewish. The evidence showed that she had resisted her father's attempt to have her formally accepted with prayer and blessing into the Jewish religion. She had visited the synagogue not for religious reasons but only in order to please her father. In asking for a position with the Jewish community organization, she was motivated not by a feeling of Jewishness but solely by economic considerations. As soon as she discovered her entry in the Jewish community list, she requested that her name be struck out.

The attitude and intention of the individual was decisive in another case, which is very interesting from a psychological point of view. A half-Jew who had married a German woman in 1928 had thereupon ceased to be a member of his synagogue. In 1941 the Jewish community organization in Berlin, which was then performing important functions in the destruction process, suddenly demanded information about the man's personal finances, and when this information was refused, the Jewish community went to court, claiming that the defendant had quit his synagogue but not his religion. The court rejected the Jewish organization's argument, pointing out that the Jewish religious community had no legal personality and no public law status. Consequently, any man who had quit his synagogue had quit his religion at the same time, unless there was evidence that he still regarded himself as a Jew. There was no such evidence in this case. To the contrary, the defendant had provided proof of his membership in party organizations, and in every other respect the court was satisfied that this man had intended to sever his connections with Jewry when he left the synagogue.

This decision was one of the few that were assailed by the party's Race-Political office. A lawyer of that office, Dr. Schmidt-Klevenow, referring to the fact that the Jewish community itself had claimed the defendant to be a member, asked whether the court had to be "more pontifical than the pontiff."

From all these decisions the judiciary's concern with half-Jews is quite evident. This concern was the product of a desire to balance the protection of the German community against the destruction of the Jews. When a person was both German and Jewish by parental descent,

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the judges had to determine which element was dominant. To do this, they only had to be a little more precise than Lösener had been in asking the question of how the individual had classified himself.

The court interpretations of the Lösener decree illustrate once more that there is nothing "racial" in the basic design of the definition. In fact, there are a few very curious cases in which a person with *four* German grandparents was classified as a Jew because he belonged to the Jewish religion. In its decision one court pointed out that Aryan treatment was to be accorded to persons who had the "racial" requirements, "but that in cases when the individual involved feels bound to Jewry in spite of his Aryan blood, and shows this fact externally, his attitude is decisive." In another decision, by the Reich Finance Court, it was held that an Aryan who adhered to the Jewish religion was to be treated as a Jew for the duration of his adherence to the Jewish faith. According to the court, an individual "who is racially a non-Jew but who openly claims membership in the Jewish community, belongs to the community and therefore has placed himself in the ranks of the Jews."

While the judiciary closed the loopholes of the Lösener definition by making it more precise, it became necessary in an increasing number of cases to make exceptions on behalf of individuals whose categorization into a particular group was considered unjust. In creating the Mischlinge, Lösener had constructed a so-called third race, that is, a group of people who for administrative purposes were neither Jews nor Germans. Mischlinge of the first degree, in particular, were to suffer from a series of increasingly burdensome discriminations, including dismissals from the civil service, the requirement of special consent for marriages with Germans, exclusion from active service in the armed forces, nonadmission to secondary schools and colleges, and (by the fall of 1944) forced labor to build fortifications.

Because of these discriminations, pressure for exceptional treatment was applied by colleagues, superiors, friends, and relatives. Consequently, in 1935, a procedure was instituted for the reclassification of a Mischling into a higher category, i. e., Mischling of the first degree to Mischling of the second degree, or Mischling of the second degree to German, or Mischling of the first degree to German. This procedure was known as liberation. There were two kinds: "pseudoliberations" and "genuine liberations." The pseudoliberation was a reclassification based on a clarification of the facts or of the law. It was achieved by showing, for example, that an allegedly Jewish grandfather was not really Jewish or that a presumed adherence to the Jewish religion had not existed. The "real liberation," however, was granted on showing the applicant's "merit." Applications for real liberations were routed

through the Interior Ministry. The petitioner was a civilian, and the application was processed in the Führer Chancellery if the petitioner was a member of the party.

The recipients of the liberations were not limited to the Reichstag members. The recipient of the liberation was the Reichstag member Killy of the Reichstag. He had held important functions in the Reichstag in the second degree. His wife had joined the party and had been active in the party (see *paragraph*), was issued a liberation and offered to resign because of Killy's wife. Lammers spoke to Hitler about the matter. Then, on Christmas Eve, 1942, Hitler came around the tree and offered liberation for Killy and his wife.

The "liberations" in July 20, 1942, Lammers spoke to Hitler about Hitler's desire to cut down the number of Mischlinge handled too "softly." Hitler said that a Mischling was sufficient and that the Mischling had to show "positive national character" without awareness of his racial origin. The liberation succeeded and for many years the Mischling lived with Germans without any further discrimination.

Lest we leave the impression that the liberation of Mischlinge with Germans was a special privilege, another tendency to eliminate the Mischlinge of the second degree and the Mischlinge of the first degree from the party circles and the police circles succeeded.

Thus we find that the different definitions of the categorization throughout the Axis states, the basic definition was changed.

In summary, here is a list of the changes:

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through the Interior Ministry and the Reich Chancellery to Hitler if the petitioner was a civilian, and through the Army High Command and the Führer Chancellery if the petitioner was a soldier.

The recipients of this favor sometimes were high officials. Ministerialrat Killy of the Reich Chancellery, a man who performed significant functions in the destruction of the Jews, was a Mischling of the second degree. His wife was a Mischling of the first degree. He had joined the party and had entered the Reich Chancellery without telling anyone about his origin. When the decree of April 7, 1933 (*Arierparagraph*), was issued, Killy informed Lammers about the state of affairs and offered to resign. Lammers thought the situation quite grave because of Killy's wife but advised Killy not to resign. Thereupon Lammers spoke to Hitler, who agreed to Killy's continuing service. Then, on Christmas Eve in 1936, while the Killy family was sitting around the tree and opening gifts, a courier brought a special present: a liberation for Killy and his children.

The "liberations" increased in volume to such an extent that on July 20, 1942, Lammers informed the Highest Reich Authorities of Hitler's desire to cut down on their number. The applications had been handled too "softly." Hitler did not think that the blameless conduct of a Mischling was sufficient ground for his "liberation." The Mischling had to show "positive merit," which might be proved if, for example, without awareness of his ancestry, he had fought for the party uninterruptedly and for many years prior to 1933.

Lest we leave the impression that the tendency to equate Mischlinge with Germans was unopposed, we should point out that there was another tendency to eliminate the "third race" by reclassifying Mischlinge of the second degree as Germans and transforming all Mischlinge of the first degree into Jews. This pressure, which came from party circles and the police, reached its zenith in 1942. However, it never succeeded.

Thus we find that the Lösener definition remained the basis of categorization throughout the destruction process. Even though different definitions were later adopted in some occupied countries and Axis states, the basic concept of these early decrees remained unchanged.

In summary, here is a recapitulation of the terms and their meanings:

CONCENTRATION

these two men. It is characteristic that, as enemies and rivals, Himmler and Frank competed only in ruthlessness. The competition did not benefit the Jews; it helped to destroy them.

GHETTO FORMATION

From the fall of 1939 to the fall of 1941, three expulsion movements had taken place from west to east: (1) Jews (and Poles) from the incorporated territories of the Generalgouvernement; (2) Jews (and Gypsies) from the Reich-Protektorat area to the Generalgouvernement; (3) Jews (and Gypsies) from the Reich-Protektorat area to the incorporated territories. These movements are significant not so much for their numerical extent as for their psychological mainsprings. They are evidence of the tensions that then convulsed the entire bureaucracy. The period 1939-41 was a time of transition from the forced emigration program to the "Final Solution" policy. At the height of this transition phase, transports were pushed from west to east in efforts to arrive at "intermediary" solutions. In the Generalgouvernement the nervousness was greatest because 1,500,000 Jews were already in the area and there was no possibility of pushing them farther east.

If the expulsions were regarded as temporary measures toward intermediary goals, the second part of the Heydrich program, which provided for the concentration of the Jews in closed ghettos, was intended to be no more than a makeshift device in preparation for the ultimate mass emigration of the victims. In the incorporated territories the administration looked forward only to the expulsion of its Jews to the Generalgouvernement, and the Generalgouverneur was waiting only for a "victory" that would make possible the forced relocation of all his Jews to the African colony of Madagascar. We can understand, therefore, in what spirit this ghettoization was approached. During the first six months there was little planning and much confusion. The administrative preliminaries were finished quickly enough, but the actual formation of the ghettos was tardy and slow. Thus the walls around the giant ghetto of Warsaw were not closed until the autumn of 1940. The Lublin ghetto was not established until April 1941.

The preliminary steps of the ghettoization process consisted of marking, movement restrictions, and the creation of Jewish control organs. Inasmuch as these measures were being aimed at "Jews," the term had to be defined. Characteristically, not much initial thought was being given in the Generalgouvernement to the feelings or interests of the Polish community in matters of categorization. In December 1939, Stadtkommissar Drechsel of Petrikau (Piotrków Trybunalski) decided

that all persons with a Jewish blood were to be included in the Generalgouvernement's Interior Ministry. This was a measure that would have included Jewish partners in undisclosed. The Nuremberg principle was applied by decree. By then, the ghettoization was under way.

As early as the beginning of 1940, it was decided that all "Jews and Gypsies" were to be forced to wear a white armband. This was carried out by the German administration in the incorporated territories a few weeks before the war began. For the sake of uniformity, the Reichsgovernment ordered that all Jews in the Reich and Protectorate star sewed on the front of their clothing. In Warsaw it became a regular business. The Jews bought fancy plastic armbands for a few zlotys.

In conjunction with the ghettoization, it was decided to move freely. Under the decree of November 11, 1939, signed by the Heydrich, it was forbidden to change residence without permission. It was also forbidden to enter the streets of the ghettos. The decree of January 26, 1940, restricted travel on railways, except for authorized persons.

The most important step in the formation of the ghettos was the establishment of Jewish community councils. According to the Generalgouvernement, every Jewish community was to have a Judenrat of twelve members. In communities of 10,000 people had to choose their own council after many of the council members had been appointed. The council's acceptance signified an assertion of their responsibility and a confirmation of their character.

In Poland, as in the Reich, the Jewish leaders, that is to say the heads of the community councils that had previously served on municipal committees, or who had held positions in Jewish organizations. As a rule, the council members, in their absence, would be summoned by the German authorities.

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that all persons with a Jewish parent were Jews. During the following spring the newly appointed specialist in Jewish affairs in the Generalgouvernement's Interior Division, Gottong, proposed a definition that would have included not only all the half-Jews but also the non-Jewish partners in undissolved mixed marriages. Finally, in July 1940 the Nuremberg principle was introduced into the Generalgouvernement by decree. By then, the process of concentration was already well under way.

As early as the beginning of November 1939, Frank issued instructions that all "Jews and Jewesses" who had reached the age of twelve be forced to wear a white armband with a blue Jewish star. His order was carried out by the decree of November 23, 1939. In the incorporated territories a few Regierungspräsidenten imposed markings of their own. For the sake of uniformity, Reichsstatthalter Greiser of the Wartheland ordered that all Jews in his Reichsgau wear a four-inch yellow star sewed on the front and back of their clothes. The Jews took to the stars immediately. In Warsaw, for example, the sale of armbands became a regular business. There were ordinary armbands of cloth and fancy plastic armbands that were washable.

In conjunction with the marking decrees, the Jews were forbidden to move freely. Under the Generalgouvernement decree of December 11, 1939, signed by the Higher SS and Police Leader Krüger, Jews were forbidden to change residence, except within the locality, and they were forbidden to enter the streets between 9 P.M. and 5 A.M. Under the decree of January 26, 1940, the Jews were prohibited also from using the railways, except for authorized trips.

The most important concentration measure prior to the formation of the ghettos was the establishment of Jewish councils (*Judenräte*). According to the Generalgouvernement decree of November 28, 1939, every Jewish community with a population of up to 10,000 had to elect a Judenrat of twelve members, and every community with more than 10,000 people had to choose twenty-four. The decree was published after many of the councils had already been established, but its issuance signified an assertion of civil jurisdiction over the councils and a confirmation of their character as public institutions.

In Poland, as in the Reich, the Judenräte were filled with prewar Jewish leaders, that is to say, men who were holdovers from Jewish community councils that had existed in the Polish republic, or who had served on municipal councils as representatives of Jewish political parties, or who had held posts in Jewish religious and philanthropic organizations. As a rule, the prewar council chairman (or, in the event of his unavailability, his deputy or some other willing council member) would be summoned by an Einsatzgruppen officer or a functionary of

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the new civil administration and told to form a Judenrat. Often the rapid selection of the membership resulted in many retentions and few additions. In Warsaw and Lublin, for example, most of the remaining old members were renamed, and new appointments were made primarily in order to assemble the required twenty-four men. If there was a subtle shift in the traditional alignment of leaders, it manifested itself in the greater presence of men who could speak German and in fewer inclusions of Orthodox rabbis, whose garb or speech might have been provocative to the Germans, or of socialists, whose past activities might have proved dangerous.

Radically different from the old days were the circumstances surrounding the newly installed Judenräte. However eager some of the Judenrat members might have been for public recognition before the occupation, now they felt anxieties as they thought about the unknowns. One veteran Jewish politician chosen to serve in the Warsaw Judenrat recalls the day when Adam Czerniaków (a chemical engineer by training) met with several of the new appointees in his office and showed them where he was keeping a key to a drawer of his desk, in which he had placed a bottle containing twenty-four cyanide pills.

Before the war, these Jewish leaders had been concerned with synagogues, religious schools, cemeteries, orphanages, and hospitals. From now on, their activities were going to be supplemented by another, quite different function: the transmission of German directives and orders to the Jewish population, the use of Jewish police to enforce German will, the deliverance of Jewish property, Jewish labor, and Jewish lives to the German enemy. The Jewish councils, in the exercise of their historic function, continued until the end to make desperate attempts to alleviate the suffering and to stop the mass dying in the ghettos. But, at the same time, the councils responded to German demands with automatic compliance and invoked German authority to compel the community's obedience. Thus the Jewish leadership both saved and destroyed its people, saving some Jews and destroying others, saving the Jews at one moment and destroying them in the next. Some leaders refused to keep this power, others became intoxicated with it.

As time passed, the Jewish councils became increasingly impotent in their efforts to cope with the welfare portion of their task, but they made themselves felt all the more in their implementation of Nazi decrees. With the growth of the destructive function of the Judenräte, many Jewish leaders felt an almost irresistible urge to look like their German masters. In March 1940 a Nazi observer in Kraków was struck by the contrast between poverty and filth in the Jewish quarter and the businesslike luxury of the Jewish community headquarters, which was

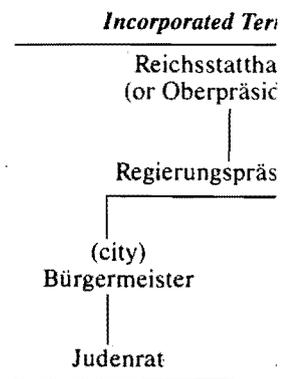
filled with beautiful carpets. In Warsaw the Judenrat was the ghetto "dictator," "my likeness and made speeches to children," "my factor seemed already quite reigning and disposing was absolute. On these absolute rulers a

Under the General Judenräte were placed the *Kreishauptmänner* incorporated territories the in the cities and to the

Under the decree offices over the Judenräte were held personally in fact, the Jewish leaders their German overlord desire. As Frank pointed out: "The Jewish step did not remain u

On May 30, 1940, a bid for power over the the Security Police and ment, Brigadeführer

T A B L E 7
GERMAN CONTROL



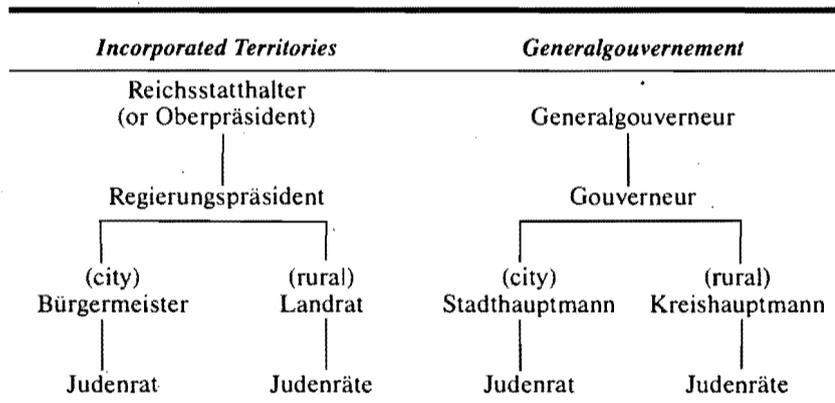
filled with beautiful charts, comfortable leather chairs, and heavy carpets. In Warsaw the Jewish oligarchy took to wearing boots. In Łódź the ghetto "dictator," Rumkowski, printed postage stamps bearing his likeness and made speeches that contained expressions such as "my children," "my factories," and "my Jews." From the inside, then, it seemed already quite clear that the Jewish leaders had become rulers, reigning and disposing over the ghetto community with a finality that was absolute. On the outside, however, it was not yet clear to whom these absolute rulers actually belonged.

Under the Generalgouvernement decree of November 28, 1939, the Judenräte were placed under the *Stadthauptmänner* (in the cities) and the *Kreishauptmänner* (in the country districts). Similarly, in the incorporated territories the Judenräte were responsible to the *Bürgermeister* in the cities and to the *Landräte* in the country (see Table 7).

Under the decree of November 28, the authority of the regional offices over the Judenräte was unlimited. The members of a Judenrat were held personally responsible for the execution of all instructions. In fact, the Jewish leaders were so fearful and tremulous in the presence of their German overlords that the Nazi officers merely had to signal their desire. As Frank pointed out in a moment of satisfaction and complacency: "The Jews step forward and receive orders." But this arrangement did not remain unchallenged.

On May 30, 1940, at a meeting in Kraków, the SS and Police made a bid for power over the Judenräte. Opening the attack, the commander of the Security Police and Security Service units in the Generalgouvernement, Brigadeführer Streckenbach, informed his civilian colleagues

TABLE 7
GERMAN CONTROLS OVER JEWISH COUNCILS



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that the Security Police were "very interested" in the Jewish question. That was why, he said, the Jewish councils had been created. Now, he had to admit that local authorities, by close supervision of the councils' activities, had gained something of an insight into Jewish methods. But, as a result of this arrangement, the Security Police had been partly edged out, while all sorts of agencies had stepped into the picture. For example, in the matter of labor procurement everyone was planlessly approaching the Judenräte: the Kreishauptmann, the Gouverneur, the Stadthauptmann, or possibly even the Sicherheitspolizei (the Security Police). If Streckenbach recommended his Security Police, he did so for "functional reasons." Sooner or later, he said, all questions pertaining to Jewish matters would have to be referred to the Security Police, especially if the contemplated action required "executive enforcement." Experience had shown, furthermore, that only the Security Police had a long-range view of conditions affecting Jewry. All this did not mean in the least that the Security Police desired to skim off the cream, so to speak. The Security Police were not interested in Jewish property; they were receiving all their money from Germany and did not desire to enrich themselves. Streckenbach would therefore propose that the Jewish councils "and thereby Jewry as a whole" be placed under the supervision of the Security Police and that all demands upon Jewry be handled by the Security Police. If the Jewish communities were to be further exploited as much as they already had been, then one day the Generalgouvernement would have to support millions of Jews. After all, the Jews were very poor; there were no rich Jews in the Generalgouvernement, only a "Jew proletariat." He would therefore welcome the transfer of power to the Security Police. To be sure, the Security Police were by no means eager to shoulder this additional burden, but experience had shown that the present arrangement was not "functional."

At the conclusion of the speech, Frank remained silent. The Gouverneur of Lublin, Zörner, gave an account of conditions in his district. Since Frank had not spoken, the Gouverneur ventured to suggest that the Security Police could not handle the Judenräte because of insufficient numerical strength. After Zörner had finished, the Gouverneur of Kraków, Wächter, made a speech in which he alluded to Streckenbach's remarks by pointing out that in Jewish matters the civil administration could not get along without the Security Police and that, conversely, the Security Police could not act without the civil apparatus. Cautiously Wächter suggested that perhaps the two bodies could cooperate. Finally, Frank spoke up. In terse legal language he rejected Streckenbach's suggestions. "The police," he said, "are the armed

force of the Reich interior. . . . T.

The opening had been made, and the Jews were to continue unabated. The prize was a head.

The three main centers of the establishment: the first few months of actual formation. In other words, to say, the concentration process. The intent was to concentrate the Jewish ghettos only, but

Military headquarters in the Warsaw district had been allowed to restrict migration, rather than the imposition of constant surveillance in the cities, uniformed because of concentration activities, and

The earliest in the winter of 1941 the city of Łódź in the Generalgouvernement. The Warsaw ghetto was the largest Warsaw ghetto remaining in the Generalgouvernement in 1941. The Lublin, Radom, and Białystok, in the first month. The ghettos also came into existence. The Generalgouvernement acquired the Warsaw ghetto had wrested from the Generalgouvernement (the Warsaw ghetto), became the largest ghetto in the Generalgouvernement in 1941. The ghetto on the whole, remained to be

Although there was no order or discipline in the cities. This sh

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force of the Reich government for the maintenance of order in the interior. . . . The police have no purpose in themselves.”

The opening move by the police had failed. Yet the challenge had been made, and for the next few years the struggle over the Jews was to continue unabated. Ultimately the police emerged victorious, but their prize was a heap of corpses.

The three preliminary steps—marking, movement restrictions, and the establishment of Jewish control machinery—were taken in the very first few months of civil rule. But then a full year passed before the actual formation of the ghettos began in earnest. Ghetto formation, that is to say, the creation of closed Jewish districts, was a decentralized process. The initiative in each city and town was taken by the competent Kreishauptmann or Stadthauptmann and, in the case of major ghettos only, by a Gouverneur or by Frank himself.

Military headquarters (the *Oberfeldkommandatur*, or OFK) in the Warsaw district complained that, because each Kreishauptmann had been allowed to decide the manner of gathering up his Jews, the migration, rather than presenting a uniform picture, created an impression of constant movements this way and that. One might add that in cities, uniform planning was completely out of the question, if only because of complex population distributions, intertwined economic activities, and intricate traffic problems.

The earliest ghettos appeared in the incorporated territories during the winter of 1939–40, and the first major ghetto was established in the city of Łódź in April 1940. During the following spring the ghetto-formation process spread slowly to the Generalgouvernement. The Warsaw ghetto was created in October 1940; the smaller ghettos in the Warsaw district were formed in the beginning of 1941. For the Jews remaining in the city of Kraków, a ghetto was established in March 1941. The Lublin ghetto was formed in April 1941. The double ghetto of Radom, shaped into two separate districts, was finished that same month. The ghettos of Częstochowa and Kielce in the Radom district also came into existence at that time. In August 1941 the Generalgouvernement acquired its fifth district, Galicia, an area that the German army had wrested from Soviet occupation. The Galician capital, Lwów (Lemberg), became the site of Poland's third-largest ghetto in December 1941. The ghetto-formation process in the Generalgouvernement was, on the whole, completed by the end of that year. Only a few ghettos remained to be set up in 1942.

Although the creation of the closed districts did not proceed from any order or basic plan, the procedure was remarkably similar in all cities. This should hardly be surprising, for the problems of ghetto

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formation were largely the same everywhere. Let us look at the first major ghetto-forming operation, which was the prototype of all subsequent operations: the establishment of the Łódź ghetto.

On December 10, 1939, the Regierungspräsident in Kalisz, Uebelhoer, appointed a "working staff" to make preparations for the formation of the ghetto. Uebelhoer himself took over the chairmanship. He appointed his representative in Łódź, Oberregierungsrat Dr. Moser, as deputy. The working staff also included members of the party, the offices of the city, the Order Police, the Security Police, the Death's-Head Formation of the SS, the Łódź Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and the Financial Office in Łódź. The preparations were to be made in secret; the moving was to be sudden and precise. This secrecy was needed in order to assure the hurried abandonment of a lot of Jewish property, which could then be conveniently confiscated.

Uebelhoer did not look upon the ghetto as a permanent institution. "The creation of the ghetto," he said in his order, "is, of course, only a transition measure. I shall determine at what time and with what means the ghetto—and thereby also the city of Łódź—will be cleansed of Jews. In the end, at any rate, we must burn out this bubonic plague."

The working staff selected a slum quarter, the Bałuty area, as the ghetto site. The district already contained 62,000 Jews, but more than 100,000 Jews who lived in other parts of the city and its suburbs had to be moved in. On February 8, 1940, the Polizeipräsident of Łódź, Brigadeführer Schäfer, issued his sudden and precise orders. Poles and ethnic Germans had to leave the ghetto site by February 29. The Jews had to move into the ghetto in batches. Every few days the Polizeipräsident published a moving schedule affecting a certain quarter of the city. All Jews living in that quarter had to move into the ghetto within the time allotted. The first batch had to vacate its apartments between February 12 and February 17, the last moved in on April 30. Ten days later, on May 10, Polizeipräsident Schäfer issued the order that closed off the ghetto population from the rest of the world. "Jews," he ordered, "must not leave the ghetto, as a matter of principle. This prohibition applies also to the Eldest of the Jews [Rumkowski] and to the chiefs of the Jewish police. . . . Germans and Poles," he continued, "must not enter the ghetto as a matter of principle." Entry permits could be issued only by the Polizeipräsident. Even within the ghetto, Jews were not allowed freedom of movement; from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. they were not permitted to be on the streets.

After the movements had been completed, the Germans threw a fence around the ghetto. The fence was manned by a detachment of the Order Police. The more intriguing job of secret police work was entrusted to the Security Police. This organization consisted of two

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branches: State Police (Gestapo) and Criminal Police (Kripo). The State Police, as its title implies, concerned itself with enemies of the state. Since the Jews were enemies par excellence, the State Police established an office within the ghetto. The Criminal Police was competent in the handling of common crimes. A Criminal Police detachment of twenty men was consequently attached to the Order Police that guarded the ghetto. The function of the detachment was to prevent smuggling, but the arrangement irked the Criminal Police. Like their colleagues of the Gestapo, the Criminal Police men wanted to be *inside* the ghetto. Accordingly, Kriminalinspektor Bracken drafted a memorandum in which he set forth the reason for the urgent necessity of moving his detachment across the fence. "In the ghetto," he said "live, at any rate, about 250,000 Jews, all of whom have more or less criminal tendencies." Hence the necessity for "constant supervision" by officials of the Criminal Police. The detachment moved in.

As Regierungspräsident Uebelhoer had predicted, the ghetto was a transitional measure, but the transition did not lead to emigration. It led to annihilation. The inmates of the Łódź ghetto either died there or were deported to a killing center. The liquidation of the ghetto took a very long time. When it was finally broken up in August 1944, it had existed for four years and four months. This record was unequaled by any ghetto in Nazi Europe.

Across the border from the incorporated territories, in the General-gouvernement, three specific arguments were made for the formation of ghettos. One was put forth by German physicians, who were convinced that the Jewish population was spreading typhus. Another was the allegation that Jews, as urban residents and as holders of ration cards that—in the words of the Food and Agriculture chief of the Warsaw district—entitled them for practical purposes only to bread, were bidding for unrationed foods and creating a black market in rationed items. The third was the claim that suitable apartment space was unavailable to German officials and members of the armed forces. The answer each time appeared to be ghettoization. To be sure, when the ghettos were in place, spotted fever was rising in the congested Jewish houses, smuggling by Jews was increasing to stave off starvation, and apartments were still needed by Germans. In fact, the three principal explanations for creating the ghettos were going to be revived at a later time as reasons for dissolving them and for removing their Jewish inhabitants altogether.

Ghetto formation was not an easy undertaking from the start. In the case of Warsaw, where the process took a year, the first step was taken early in November 1939, when the military commander established a "quarantine" in an area within the old part of the city, inhabited largely

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by Jews, from which German soldiers were to be barred. On November 7, Gouverneur Fischer of the Warsaw district proposed that the Warsaw Jews (whose number he estimated at 300,000) be incarcerated in a ghetto, and Frank gave his immediate consent to the proposal. During the winter, Fischer created a Resettlement Division under Waldemar Schön, who was going to have a major role in ghetto planning and who was subsequently deputized to carry out the plan. The first idea, in February, to locate the ghetto on the eastern bank of the Vistula River, was turned down in a meeting on March 8, 1940, on the ground that 80 percent of Warsaw's artisans were Jews and that, since they were indispensable, one could not very well "encircle" them. Doubts were also expressed about supplying a closed ghetto with food. On March 18, 1940, Czerniaków noted cryptically: "A demand that the Community ring the 'ghetto' with wire, put in fenceposts, etc., and later guard it all." The quotation marks around the word *ghetto* refer to the previously established quarantine. By March 29, Czerniaków noted that the ghetto was to be "walled in," and the next day he argued with Stadtkommandant Leist about the "virtual impossibility of building a wall (damaging the water installations, electric and telephone cables, etc.)." Wall building was actually suspended in April, while the Germans were considering a short-lived idea of dumping the Jews in the Lublin district. Schön's Resettlement Division then examined the feasibility of setting up two ghettos, one in a western section (Koło and Wola) and another in the east (Grochów) to minimize any disturbance in the city's economy and traffic flow, but this plan was abandoned after word of the Madagascar project had reached Warsaw. Czerniaków on July 16, noted a report to the effect that the ghetto was not going to be formed after all. In August 1940, however, Subdivision Health of the Generalgouvernement's Interior Division, pointing to increased troop concentrations in the area, demanded the formation of ghettos in the district. The nonmedical officials of the Interior Division, acquiescing, argued only against sealing the ghettos heremetically, lest they could not survive economically. On September 6, 1940, Obermedizinalrat Dr. Walbaum, citing statistics of typhus among Jews, insisted in a *ceterum censeo* speech on their incarceration in a closed ghetto as a health-political measure. Six days later Frank announced during a conference of main division chiefs that 500,000 Jews in the city were posing a threat to the whole population and that they could no longer be allowed to "roam around." Czerniaków, who had still harbored hopes for an "open" ghetto that would have combined compulsory residence with freedom of movement, knew of this decision by September 25. On that day he wrote "ghetto" without any doubt about its character.

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six weeks during October and November 1940, in an area covering about two-thirds of the old quarantine. In the course of the move, 113,000 Poles left the ghetto site and 138,000 Jews took their place. T-shaped, the ghetto was narrowest at a point where an "Aryan" wedge separated the larger, northern portion from the smaller southern one. The borders, drawn with a view to utilizing existing fire walls and minimizing the security problem, were not final. During September 1941, in a spirit of creeping annexationism, some German officials considered severing the southern part of the ghetto. At this point, an unusual man in the German administration made an unusual move. He was the chief physician of the German city apparatus, Dr. Wilhelm Hagen. In a blunt letter to the Stadthauptmann, he predicted a worsening of the typhus epidemic and called the proposed plan "insanity." The southern ghetto remained, but more blocks were chopped off, more wall building was ordered, and, as the only link between the two ghetto sections, there was now a foot bridge over what had become an "Aryan" corridor.

The Warsaw ghetto was never open to unhindered traffic, but at the beginning there were twenty-eight points for exit and entry, used by about 53,000 persons with passes. The Warsaw district health chief, Dr. Lambrecht, objected to the number of permits, arguing that they defeated the entire purpose of the ghetto. The gates were then reduced to fifteen. The Warsaw police regiment (Lt. Col. Jarke) was responsible for guarding the ghetto. This duty was carried out by a company of the 304th Battalion (from the second half of 1941, the 60th), augmented by Polish police and the Jewish police (*Ordnungsdienst*, or Order Service). At each gate, one man from each of these services might have been seen, but inside there were 2,000 men of the Order Service.

After the Warsaw ghetto had been closed, Stadthauptmänner and Kreishauptmänner in all parts of the Generalgouvernement followed suit. In town after town, local officials followed the same three-stage process. They selected the location of the ghetto, issued the sudden movement orders, and sealed off the finished ghetto. There were some variations. A number of small Jewish communities were incarcerated in ghetto towns; that is, whole towns became ghettos. The larger communities were crowded into closed-off city districts, each of which became a city within a city.

As may be seen from the statistics in Table 8, a ghetto was usually a tightly packed slum area without parks, empty lots, or open spaces. In spite of its small size, a ghetto, placed in the middle of a metropolis, invariably created traffic problems. In Warsaw, trolley lines had to be rerouted, In Łódź the city administration had to install a new bus line that skirted the ghetto, while in Lublin, Stadthauptmann Saurmann had

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T A B L E 8
DENSITIES IN THE GHETTOS OF WARSAW AND ŁÓDŹ

	<i>City of Warsaw, March 1941</i>	<i>"Aryan" Warsaw</i>	<i>Ghetto of Warsaw</i>	<i>Ghetto of Łódź, September 1941</i>
Population	1,365,000	920,000	445,000	144,000
Area (square miles)	54.6	53.3	1.3	1.6
Rooms	284,912	223,617	61,295	25,000
Persons per room	4.8	4.1	7.2	5.8

to build a detour road around the Jewish quarter. Traffic problems also determined to a large extent the method of sealing a ghetto. Only a few cities, such as Warsaw, Kraków, Radom, and Nowy Sącz surrounded their ghettos with massive, medieval-like walls and built-in gates. Some ghettos, such as Łódź, were fenced in only with barbed wire. Still others, including Lublin, could not be sealed at all.

While not every ghetto could be closed completely, no Jew was permitted to remain outside its boundaries. In Łódź, Jews in mixed marriage with their Polish spouses, and Mischlinge of all degrees were pushed into the ghetto. On February 26, 1941, the First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, Bogdanov, inquired why certain nationals of the Soviet Union were forced to live in certain places. Unterstaatssekretär Wörmann of the Foreign Office replied that the nationals involved were Jews and that Jews of Soviet nationality were receiving the same treatment as Jews of other nationalities.

By the end of 1941 almost all Jews in the incorporated territories and the Generalgouvernement were living in the ghettos. Their incarceration was accompanied by changes in German control machinery and enlargements of the Jewish bureaucracy. In Łódź and Warsaw, new German offices for ghetto supervision came into being.

The Łódź Jewish Council was placed under a "Food and Economic Office Ghetto." Originally this office regulated only economic questions affecting the ghetto. Soon, however, its title was changed to *Gettoverwaltung Litzmannstadt* (Ghetto Administration, Łódź), and with the change of title there was also a change of function. The office took charge of all ghetto affairs. The place of *Gettoverwaltung* in the local governmental structure is indicated in Table 9.

In Warsaw the administrative changes also took place in stages. Initially the Judenrat was answerable to Einsatzgruppe IV and thereafter it received instructions from the Stadthauptmann. During the process of ghetto formation, control over the council passed into the

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When the bureaucracy had completed all those measures that comprised the definition of the Jews, the expropriation of their property, and their concentration in ghettos, it had reached a dividing line. Any further step would put an end to Jewish existence in Nazi Europe. In German correspondence the crossing of this threshold was referred to as "the final solution of the Jewish question." The word *final* harbored two connotations. In a narrow sense it signified that the aim of the destruction process had now been clarified. If the concentration stage had been a transition to an unspecified goal, the new "solution" removed all uncertainties and answered all questions. The aim was finalized—it was to be death. But the phrase "Final Solution" also had a deeper, more significant meaning. In Himmler's words, the Jewish problem would never have to be solved again. Definitions, expropriations, and concentrations can be undone. Killings are irreversible. Hence they gave to the destruction process its quality of historical finality.

The annihilation phase consisted of two major operations. The first was launched on June 22, 1941, with the invasion of the USSR. Small units of the SS and Police were dispatched to Soviet territory, where they were to kill all Jewish inhabitants on the spot. Shortly after these mobile killings had begun, a second operation was instituted, in the course of which the Jewish population of central, western, and southeastern Europe were transported to camps equipped with gassing installations. In essence, the killers in the occupied USSR moved to the victims, whereas outside of this arena the victims were brought to the killers. The two operations constitute an evolution not only chronologically but also in complexity. In the areas wrested from the Soviet Union, the mobile units could fan out with maximum freedom to the farthest points reached by German arms. The deportations, by contrast, were the work of a much larger apparatus that had to deal with a host of constraints and requirements. The effort, as we shall see, was deemed necessary to accomplish the "Final Solution" on a European-wide scale.

P R E P A R A T I O N S

The invasion of the Soviet Union and the mobile killings carried out in its wake mark a break with history. This was not an ordinary war for ordinary gain. The battle plans were discussed in the Army High Command as early as July 22, 1940, eleven months before the armies crossed the Soviet border. No ultimatum was to alert the Soviet government to any danger. No peace treaty was envisaged to bring the war to its conclusion. The objectives of the campaign were not limited, and the means with which it was to be fought were not restricted. In unprecedented numbers, a ground force was assembled that was to be engaged in what was soon to be called "total war."

The invading army groups were accompanied by small mechanized killing units of the SS and Police that were tactically subordinated to the field commanders but otherwise free to go about their special business. The mobile killing units operated in the front-line areas under a special arrangement and in a unique partnership with the German army. To understand what made this partnership work, it is necessary to have a closer look at the two participants: the German *Wehrmacht* (Armed Forces) and the Reich Security Main Office of the SS and Police.

The *Wehrmacht* was one of the four independent hierarchies in the machinery of destruction. Unlike the party, the civil service agencies, and the business enterprises, the armed forces had no major role to play in the preliminary phase of the destruction process. But in the inexorable development of the process, every segment of organized German society was drawn into the destructive work. We may recall that even in 1933 the *Wehrmacht* was interested in the definition of "Jews." Later the army was affected by the appropriation of Jewish enterprises producing war materials. In Poland the generals narrowly escaped from an entanglement in the concentration process. Now, with the onset of the mobile killing operations, the armed forces found themselves suddenly in the very center of the holocaust.

Broadly speaking, the military authority over civilians increased with the increased distance of the territory from the Reich. In Germany proper, that authority was virtually nonexistent; in the newly invaded areas it was nearly absolute. The forward region, from army group rear areas to the front line, was considered an operational zone. There an administrative body, not part of the armed forces, could operate only under a special arrangement with the *Wehrmacht*.

The only agency admitted to the forward areas during the Russian campaign was the Reich Security Main Office (the RSHA). It was the

agency that, for the first time, carried out the massive killing operations.

The RSHA was a creation of Heydrich in the Polish spheres. However, it took a preeminent place in the machinery of destruction that was crucial for the development of the mobile killing centers during that period.

The Heydrich organization was a fusion of the regional machinery of the SS and the Police. The fusion of these two agencies was almost every man could see. The drastic Nazi plans with their iron discipline. This personnel was assembled over a period of years, piece by piece.

The building process was completed when Himmler and his staff moved to the Interior Ministry and to the Reich Security Main Office (*Geheime Staatspolizei*) and Daluge the chief of the Security Police.

Next, Heydrich (as chief of the *polizeiamt*, or Criminal Police) were subsequently joined together into the Reich Security Main Office (the Security Police). Heydrich

The creation of the RSHA was accompanied by the reorganization of the so-called Security Service. It had two main offices: one for the state organization, and one for the party organization. On September 1, 1941, in pursuance of which the RSHA was created, the Reich Security Main Office was reorganized.

The RSHA revealed the Security Police (Kripo), while the Security Service (SI) (Foreign). Heydrich's *Sicherheitspolizei und*

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agency that, for the first time in modern history, was to conduct a massive killing operation. What sort of an organization was the RSHA?

The RSHA was a creation of Reinhard Heydrich. We have already seen Heydrich in the concentration process within the German and Polish spheres. However, the Heydrich organization did not assume a preeminent place in the machinery of destruction until 1941. That year was crucial for the development of the entire destruction process, for it was during that period that Reinhard Heydrich laid the administrative foundations for the mobile killing operations and for the deportations to the killing centers.

The Heydrich organization reflected in its personnel composition a characteristic of German government as a whole. The RSHA and its regional machinery was an organization of party men and civil servants. The fusion of these two elements in the RSHA was so complete that almost every man could be sent into the field to carry out the most drastic Nazi plans with bureaucratic meticulousness and Prussian discipline. This personnel amalgamation in the RSHA was accomplished over a period of years, in which Heydrich put his organization together piece by piece.

The building process began in the early days of the Nazi regime, when Himmler and his loyal follower Heydrich raided the Prussian Interior Ministry and took over its newly organized Secret State Police (*Geheime Staatspolizei*, or Gestapo). Göring was then Interior Minister and Daluge the chief of police.

Next, Heydrich (as Himmler's deputy) took over a special division in the office of the police president of Berlin: the *Landeskriminalpolizei*amt, or Criminal Police (Kripo). The Gestapo and the Criminal Police were subsequently detached from their parent organizations and joined together into the *Hauptamt Sicherheitspolizei* (Main Office Security Police). Heydrich had all key positions in this office.

The creation of the Security Police as an agency of the state was accompanied by the parallel formation of a party intelligence system, the so-called Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, or SD). Heydrich now had two main offices: the *Hauptamt Sicherheitspolizei*, which was a state organization, and the *Sicherheitshauptamt*, which was a party organization. On September 27, 1939, Himmler issued an order in pursuance of which the two main offices were amalgamated into the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or RSHA).

The RSHA revealed in its structure the history of its organization. Thus the Security Police comprised Offices IV and V (Gestapo and Kripo), while the Security Service functioned in Offices III (Inland) and VI (Foreign). Heydrich himself henceforth carried the title *Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*, abbreviated *Chef SP und SD*.

MOBILE KILLING OPERATIONS

The RSHA had a vast regional network, including three types of organization: one in the Reich and incorporated areas, another in occupied territories, a third in countries undergoing invasion. Outside the Reich the Security Police and SD were completely centralized, down to the local (or unit) level. For the moment, however, we shall be concerned only with the machinery in the newly invaded areas: the so-called *Einsatzgruppen*. These groups were the first mobile killing units.

The context for deploying the *Einsatzgruppen* was operation "Barbarossa"—the invasion of the USSR. A written notation of the mission appeared in the war diary of the OKW's (High Command of the Armed Forces) Wehrmachtführungsstab (WFS—Operations) on March 3, 1941, at a time when invasion plans were already far advanced. The topic of the entry was a draft directive to troop commanders, which had been prepared by General Warlimont's office (defense) in the WFS, and which had been submitted by WFS Chief Jodl to Hitler for approval. The war diary contains Jodl's enclosure of Hitler's comments, including a philosophical point defining the coming battle as a confrontation of two world views, and several specific statements, in one of which Hitler declared that the "Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia" would have to be "eliminated." According to Hitler, these tasks were so difficult that they could not be entrusted to the army. The war diary went on with Jodl's instructions to Warlimont for revising the draft in conformity with Hitler's "guidelines." One question to be explored with the Reichsführer-SS, said Jodl, was the introduction of SS and Police organs into the army's operational area. Jodl felt that such a move was needed to assure that Bolshevik chieftains and commissars be "rendered harmless" without delay. In conclusion, Warlimont was told that he could contact the OKH (High Command of the Army) about the revisions, and that he was told to submit a new draft for signature by OKW Chief Keitel on March 13, 1941.

On the specified date, the revised directive was signed by Keitel. The decisive paragraph was a statement informing the troop commanders that the Führer had charged the Reichsführer-SS with carrying out special tasks in the operational area of the army. Within the framework of these tasks, which were the product of a battle to the finish between two opposing political systems, the Reichsführer-SS would act independently and on his own responsibility. He was going to make sure that military operations would not be disturbed by the implementation of his task. Details would be worked out directly between the OKH and the Reichsführer-SS. At the start of operations, the border of the USSR would be closed to all nonmilitary traffic, except for police organs dispatched by the Reichsführer-SS pursuant to directive of the Führer. Quarters and supplies for these organs were to be regulated by OKH/

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6. Halder, Chief of the OKH, had been informed of Himmler's "special task" as early as March 5, and when the OKW directive was issued eight days later, he made a cryptic notation of a "Discussion Wagner-Heydrich: police questions, border customs."

The circuitous Hitler-Jodl-Warlimont-Halder-Wagner-Heydrich chain of communications was certainly not the only one. Shorter and more direct was the route from Hitler to Himmler and from Himmler to Heydrich, but there is no record of instructions or "guidelines" passed through this channel during the first two weeks of March.

The army's correspondence goes on. It includes a draft of an agreement resulting from the Wagner-Heydrich negotiations. Dated March 26, 1941, the Army-RSHA accord outlined the terms under which the Einsatzgruppen could operate in the occupied USSR. The crucial sentence in the draft provided that "within the framework of their instructions and upon their own responsibility, the Sonderkommandos are entitled to carry out executive measures against the civilian population." The two agencies also agreed that the mobile units could move in army group rear areas and in army rear areas. It was made clear that the Einsatzgruppen were to be administratively subordinated to the military command but that the RSHA was to retain functional control over them. The armies were to control the movements of the mobile units. The military was to furnish the Einsatzgruppen with quarters, gasoline, good rations, and, insofar as necessary, radio communications. On the other hand, the killing units were to receive "functional directives" from the Chief of the Security Police and SD (Heydrich).

The relations of the Einsatzgruppen with the army's Secret Field Police (*Geheime Feldpolizei*, or GFP) were to be based on a strict separation of jurisdictions. Any matter affecting the security of the troops was to be handled exclusively by the Secret Field Police, but the two services were to cooperate by prompt exchange of information, the Einsatzgruppen to report to the GFP on all matters of concern to it, and, conversely, the GFP to turn over to the Einsatzgruppen all information pertaining to their sphere of competence.

The final discussions between the army and the RSHA were carried out in May 1941. At first the negotiators were Generalquartiermeister Wagner and Gestapo chief Müller. The two could come to no final agreement. At the request of Wagner, Müller was therefore replaced by a subordinate, SS-Sturmbannführer Regierungsrat Schellenberg, then chief of IV E. Schellenberg, who was chosen because of his experience in matters of protocol, drew up the final terms. They differed from the

THE FIRST SWEEP

residences and hideouts. Now, however, the Kommandos had found their most efficient helpers: the Jews themselves. In order to draw together and assemble large numbers of Jews, the killers had only to "fool" the victims by means of simple ruses.

The first experiment with ruses was made in Vinnitsa, where a search for members of the Jewish intelligentsia had produced meager results. The commander of Einsatzkommando 4b called for "the most prominent rabbi in town" and told him to collect within twenty-four hours the most intelligent Jews for "registration work." When the result still did not satisfy the Einsatzkommando, the commander sent the group back to town with instructions to bring more Jews. He repeated this stunt once more before deciding that he had a sufficient number of Jews to shoot. In Kiev, Einsatzkommando 4a followed the much simpler expedient of using wall posters to assemble the Jews for "resettlement." Variations of the registration and resettlement legends were used repeatedly throughout the occupied territories.

The psychological traps were effective not only for the seizure of Jews within the cities; the Einsatzgruppen actually managed to draw back large numbers of Jews who had already fled from the cities in anticipation of a disaster. We have seen that the Jews who had taken to the roads, the villages, and the fields had great difficulty in subsisting there because the German army was picking up stray Jews and the population refused to shelter them. The Einsatzgruppen took advantage of this situation by instituting the simplest ruse of all: they did nothing. The inactivity of the Security Police was sufficient to dispel the rumors that had set the exodus in motion. Within a short time the Jews flocked into town. They were caught in the dragnet and killed.

THE KILLING OPERATIONS AND THEIR REPERCUSSIONS

During the first sweep, the mobile killing units reported approximately one hundred thousand victims a month. By now we can understand how it was possible to seize so many people in the course of a mobile operation. A simple strategy—combined with a great deal of army assistance, native collaboration, and Jewish gullibility—had transformed the occupied Soviet cities into a series of natural traps. Now, however, we have to find out what happened after the Jews were caught; for with the seizure of the victims, the administrative problems of the Einsatzgruppen were not entirely solved, while the psychological difficulties were only just beginning.

In their daily operations, the Einsatzgruppen were preoccupied with preparations, logistics, maintenance, and reporting. They had to

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As if to strengthen its case, the German bureaucracy continued in 1939 to exhaust the emigration policy. This time, however, the primary effort was internal. Many bureaucratic encumbrances had impeded the emigration process: every prospective emigrant had to acquire more than a dozen official papers, certifying his health, good conduct, property, tax payments, emigration opportunities, and so on. Very soon the overburdened offices were jammed, and stagnation set in. The congestion hit Vienna first. To remedy the situation, Reichskommissar Bürckel (the official in charge of the "reunification of Austria with the Reich") set up, on August 26, 1938, the Central Office for Jewish Emigration. Each agency that had some certifying to do sent representatives to the central office in the Vienna Rothschild Palace. The Jews could now be processed on an assembly-line basis.

The Bürckel solution was soon adopted in the rest of the Reich. On January 24, 1939, Göring ordered the creation of the Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration. The chief of the Reichszentrale was none other than Reinhard Heydrich. The *Geschäftsführer*, or deputy, taking care of the actual administration details was Standartenführer Oberregierungsrat Müller, later chief of the Gestapo. Other members of the Reichszentrale were Ministerialdirektor Wohlthat (Office of the Four-Year Plan) and representatives of the Interior Ministry, the Finance Ministry, and the Foreign Office.

Emigration was still the policy after the war had broken out. In fact, the first reaction to the victories in Poland and in France was to punish these countries for their attitude toward Jewish emigration by sending there some of the Jews who had previously been kept out. In the beginning of 1940, six thousand Jews were sent from Vienna, Prague, Moravska Ostrava, and Stettin to the Generalgouvernement. In October 1940 two Gauleiter in western Germany, Wagner and Bürckel, secured the cooperation of the Gestapo in the deportation of 6,500 Jews to unoccupied France. But by far the most ambitious project of 1940 was the Madagascar plan.

Until 1940, emigration plans had been confined to a consideration of the resettlement of thousands or, as in the case of the Schacht plan, 150,000 Jews. The Madagascar project was designed to take care of millions of Jews. The authors of the plan wanted to empty the Reich-Protectorat area and all of occupied Poland of their Jewish population. The whole idea was thought up in Section III of Abteilung Deutschland of the Foreign Office. (Indeed, Abteilung Deutschland was to concern itself a great deal with Jewish matters.) The plan was transmitted to a friendly neighboring agency: Heydrich's Reich Security Main Office. Heydrich was enthusiastic about the idea.

The reason for Heydrich's enthusiasm becomes quite clear the

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moment we look at this plan. Briefly, the African island of Madagascar was to be ceded by France to Germany in a peace treaty. The German navy was to have its pick of bases on the island, and the remainder of Madagascar was to be placed under the jurisdiction of a police governor responsible directly to Heinrich Himmler. The area of the police governor was to become a Jewish reservation. The resettlement of the Jews was to be financed through the utilization of Jewish property left behind.

This plan, according to Abteilung Deutschland, was greatly preferable to the establishment of a Jewish community in Palestine. In the first place, Palestine belonged to the Christian and Moslem worlds. Second, if the Jews were kept in Madagascar, they could be held as hostages to ensure the good conduct of their "racial comrades" in America. Heydrich did not need these arguments. For him it was enough that practically the whole island was to be governed by the SS and Police. But the Madagascar plan did not materialize. It hinged on the conclusion of a peace treaty with France, and such a treaty depended on an end of hostilities with England. With no end to the hostilities there was no peace treaty, and with no peace treaty there was no Madagascar.

The Madagascar plan was the last major effort to "solve the Jewish problem" by emigration. Many hopes and expectations had been pinned on this plan by offices of the Security Police, the Foreign Office, and the Generalgouvernement. Even as it faded, the project was to be mentioned one more time, during early February 1941, in Hitler's headquarters. On that occasion, the party's labor chief, Ley, brought up the Jewish question and Hitler, answering at length, pointed out that the war was going to accelerate the solution of this problem but that he was also encountering additional difficulties. Originally, he had been in a position to address himself at most to the Jews of Germany, but now the goal had to be the elimination of Jewish influence in the entire Axis power sphere. In some countries, such as Poland and Slovakia, he could act alone with his own organs. In France, however, the armistice was an obstacle and precisely there the problem was especially important. If only he knew where he could put these few million Jews; it was not as if there were so many. He was going to approach the French about Madagascar. When Bormann asked how the Jews could be transported there in the middle of the war, Hitler replied that one would have to consider that. He would be willing to make available the entire German fleet for this purpose, but he did not wish to expose his crews to the torpedoes of enemy submarines. Now he was thinking about all sorts of things differently, and not with greater friendliness.

While Hitler was thinking, the machinery of destruction was permeated with a feeling of uncertainty. In the Generalgouvernement, where

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ghettoization was viewed as a transitional measure, the unsightly Jewish quarters with their impoverished crowds were trying the patience of local German officials. These irritations and frustrations were expressed in monthly reports by the late summer of 1940. In the Lublin district the Kreishauptmann of Krasnystaw, surfeited with his administrative tasks, insisted that Jews who had Polonized their names spell them in German—in Madagascar, he said, they could have Madagasarian names. At the same time, the Kreishauptmann of Jasło (in the Kraków district), noting the “invasion” of his Kreis by Jews expelled from the city of Kraków, invoked the opinion of Polish residents who, he asserted, were doubting the German resolve to undertake an eventual total evacuation of the Jews. Several months later, in the Radom district, the Kreishauptmann of Jędrzejów, complaining about the intractability of inflation, suggested that the principal tool for dealing with price rises was the early solution of the Jewish problem. Generalgouverneur Frank evidently shared these sentiments. On March 25, 1941, he revealed to his close associates that Hitler had promised him “that the Generalgouvernement, in recognition of its accomplishments, would become the first territory to be free of Jews.”

In the neighboring Wartheland, a grass-roots movement to eliminate the Jews became even more pronounced. There, Sturmbannführer Rolf-Heinz Höppner wrote a letter to Eichmann on July 16, 1941, pointing out that in the course of various discussions in the office of Reichsstatthalter Greiser, solutions had been proposed that “sound in part fantastic,” but that in his view were thoroughly feasible. A camp for 300,000 was to be created with barracks for tailor shops, shoe-manufacturing plants, and the like. Such a camp could be guarded more easily than a ghetto, but it was not going to be a complete answer. “This winter,” said Höppner, “there is a danger that not all of the Jews can be fed anymore. One should weigh earnestly,” he continued, “if the most humane solution might not be to finish off those of the Jews who are not employable by some quick-working device. At any rate, that would be more pleasant than to let them starve to death.” According to Höppner, the Reichsstatthalter had not made up his mind about these suggestions, but by the end of the year the Jews of the Wartheland were being killed in a death camp, Kulmhof, in the province.

In the Reich itself the ministerial bureaucracy was cementing the anti-Jewish process with decrees and ordinances. During the spring of 1941 there were deliberations about a complex legal measure: a declaration that all Reich Jews were stateless or, alternatively, “protectees.” The Interior Ministry desired the measure in order to remove the “awkward” fact that harsh action was taken against people who were still viewed, at least in the outside world, as Reich nationals. Because of

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central agencies concerned with the remaining work in connection with this final solution, I suggest that these problems be discussed in a conference, especially since the Jews have been evacuated in continuous transports from the Reich territory, including the Protektorat of Bohemia and Moravia, to the East, ever since October 15, 1941.

The reception of the Heydrich invitation was quite interesting. Heydrich had spoken only of a "Final Solution." He had not defined it and he had not mentioned killings. The meaning of the "Final Solution" had to be surmised. The recipients of the letter knew that the Jews were to be deported, but they were not told what was to be done to the deportees; that was something they had to figure out for themselves. The situation created an intense interest.

In the Generalgouvernement the news of the "final solution" conference was the thought, if not the topic, of the day. Frank was so impatient that he sent Staatssekretär Bühler to Berlin to sound out Heydrich. In personal conversation with the RSHA chief, Bühler found out everything there was to know. The Reich Chancellery, too, was the scene of excited expectation. Even before the Heydrich letter was received, Lammers—who was one of the best-informed bureaucrats in the capital—had alerted his chancellery with an order that "if invitations to a meeting were sent out" by the RSHA, one of the chancellery officials was to attend as a "listening post." In the Foreign Office, Abteilung Deutschland received the news of the conference with enthusiastic endorsement. The experts of the division immediately drew up a memorandum entitled "Requests and Ideas of the Foreign Office in Connection with the Intended Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe." The memorandum was a kind of priority deportation schedule, indicating which countries were to be cleared of Jews first.

The conference was originally scheduled for December 9, 1941, but it was postponed, at the last minute, until January 20, 1942, at noon, "followed by luncheon." On that day the conference was held in the offices of the RSHA, Am Grossen Wannsee No. 50/58. The following officials were present:

SS-Obergruppenführer Heydrich, chairman (RSHA)
Gauleiter Dr. Meyer (East Ministry)
Reichsamtseiter Dr. Leibbrandt (East Ministry)
Staatssekretär Dr. Stuckart (Interior Ministry)
Staatssekretär Neumann (Office of the Four-Year Plan)
Staatssekretär Dr. Freisler (Justice Ministry)
Staatssekretär Dr. Bühler (Generalgouvernement)
Unterstaatssekretär Luther (Foreign Office)
SS-Oberführer Klopfer (Party Chancellery)
Ministerialdirektor Kritzinger (Reich Chancellery)

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SS-Obergruppenführer Hofmann (RuSHA)
SS-Gruppenführer Müller (RSHA IV)
SS-Obersturmbannführer Eichmann (RSHA IV-B-4)
SS-Oberführer Dr. Schöngarth (BdS Generalgouvernement)
SS-Sturmbannführer Dr. Lange (KdS Latvia, deputizing for BdS Ostland)

Heydrich opened the conference by announcing that he was the plenipotentiary for the preparation of the "Final Solution of the Jewish question" in Europe; his office was responsible for the central direction of the "Final Solution" regardless of boundaries. Heydrich then reviewed the emigration policy and cited statistics on emigrated Jews. Instead of emigration, he continued, the Führer had now given his sanction to the evacuation of the Jews to the East as a further "solution possibility." The RSHA chief then drew out a chart that indicated the Jewish communities to be evacuated. (The list included even the English Jews.)

Next, Heydrich explained what was to happen to the evacuees: they were to be organized into huge labor columns. In the course of this labor utilization, a majority would undoubtedly "fall away through natural decline." The survivors of this "natural selection" process—representing the tenacious hard core of Jewry—would have to be "treated accordingly," since these Jews had been shown in the light of history to be the dangerous Jews, the people who could rebuild Jewish life. Heydrich did not elaborate on the phrase "treated accordingly," although we know from the language of the Einsatzgruppen reports that he meant killing.

Practically, Heydrich continued, the implementation of the "Final Solution" would proceed from west to east. If only because of the apartment shortage and "socio-political" reasons, the Reich-Protektorat areas were to be placed at the head of the line. Next he touched on the subject of differential treatment of special classes of Jews. The old Jews, Heydrich announced, were to be sent to a ghetto for old people at Theresienstadt in the Protektorat. The Jews who had distinguished themselves on the German side in World War I also were to be sent to Theresienstadt. In that manner, he concluded, all interventions on behalf of individuals would be shut out automatically.

Unterstaatssekretär Luther, speaking for the Foreign Office, then made a few comments. Luther felt that the "deeply penetrating treatment of this problem" would create difficulties in some countries, notably Denmark and Norway. He urged that evacuations in such areas be postponed. On the other hand, he foresaw no difficulties in the Balkans and in Western Europe.

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DEPORTATIONS

Following the Luther remarks, the conferees got into an involved discussion of the treatment of the Mischlinge and of Jews in mixed marriages. Although this problem affected victims only in the Reich, the Staatssekretäre spent about half the conference time in discussion of the issue.

Finally, Staatssekretär Bühler urged that the "Final Solution" be organized immediately in the Generalgouvernement. He explained that in Poland the transport problem was negligible and that not many Jews were working there. The majority, he said, were incapable of work.

At the conclusion of the conference the participants, already quite relaxed while butlers were pouring brandy, talked about "the various types of solution possibilities." In the course of these remarks, Staatssekretäre Meyer and Bühler urged that certain preparatory measures be started immediately in the occupied eastern territories and the Generalgouvernement.

After the meeting was concluded, thirty copies of the conference record were circulated in the ministries and SS main offices. Gradually the news of the "Final Solution" seeped through the ranks of the bureaucracy. The knowledge did not come to all officials at once. How much a man knew depended on his proximity to the destructive operations and on his insight into the nature of the destruction process. Seldom, however, was comprehension recorded on paper. When the bureaucrats had to deal with deportation matters, they kept referring to a Jewish "migration." In official correspondence the Jews were still "wandering." They were "evacuated" and "resettled." They "wandered off" and "disappeared." These terms were not the product of naïveté, but convenient tools of psychological repression.

On the very highest level the full burden of knowledge revealed itself in the written word. Hitler, Göring, Himmler, and Goebbels had a complete view of the destruction process. They knew the details of the mobile killing operations in Russia, and they saw the whole scheme of the deportations in the rest of Europe. For these men it was difficult to resort to pretense. When Goebbels found out that the SS and Police Leader in Lublin, Globocnik, was constructing killing centers, he wrote: "Not much will remain of the Jews. . . . A judgment is being visited upon the Jews [which is] barbaric. . . . The prophecy which the Führer made about them for having brought on a new world war is beginning to come true in a most terrible manner."

Göring spoke of burned bridges and of a position "from which there is no escape." Himmler and also Goebbels explained that the "Final Solution" was a task that could not have been postponed, because in world history there was only one Adolf Hitler and because the

DEPORTATIONS

war had presented to the German leadership a unique opportunity for "solving the problem." Later generations would have neither the strength nor the opportunity to finish with the Jews.

Hitler himself addressed the German people and the world once more. This is what he said on September 30, 1942:

In my Reichstag speech of September 1, 1939, I have spoken of two things: first, that now that the war has been forced upon us, no array of weapons and no passage of time will bring us to defeat, and second, that if Jewry should plot another world war in order to exterminate the Aryan peoples of Europe, it would not be the Aryan peoples, which would be exterminated, but Jewry. . . .

At one time, the Jews of Germany laughed about my prophecies. I do not know whether they are still laughing or whether they have already lost all desire to laugh. But right now I can only repeat: they will stop laughing everywhere, and I shall be right also in that prophecy.

CENTRAL AGENCIES OF DEPORTATION

The implementation of Hitler's prophecy was a vast administrative undertaking. To start with, the preliminary process of defining the victims, attaching their property, and restricting their movements had to be extended to all the areas from which deportations were to be conducted. Before the completion of these steps in a particular territory, that area was not "ready." Even a segregated community could still be tied in countless social and economic relationships to its neighbors. The more "essential" a Jew appeared to be in the economy, the more extensive his legal or family connections with non-Jews, the more medals he had to show for service in the First World War, that much greater was the difficulty of uprooting him from his surroundings. Outside the German and Polish frontiers these complications were multiplied. Wherever Germans did not exercise plenary power, they had to employ foreign machinery for the accomplishment of their aims, and they had to deal with foreign conceptions of the ramifications and consequences of the operation. Only then could transports begin to roll. Finally, the very departure of the Jews generated new tasks. Lost production had to be replaced, unpaid Jewish debts had to be regulated, and—after the fate of the Jewish deportees could no longer be hidden—the psychological repercussions on the non-Jewish population had to be smoothed and eliminated.

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CENTRAL AGENCIES OF DEPORTATION

large array of offices, German and non-German, uniformed and civilian, central and municipal. Two agencies were instrumental in carrying out the deportation process in its very center: one, the RSHA's office IV-B-4, was relatively small; the other, the Transport Ministry, was one of the largest. *Referat* IV-B-4, under Adolf Eichmann, covered the entire deportation area outside of Poland (where SS and Police offices dealt with the dissolution of the ghettos). The Transport Ministry, with its subsidiaries and affiliates, was responsible for trains throughout Axis Europe.

Even so small a section as Eichmann's was involved in manifold decisions. Within the Reich-Protectorat area, Eichmann's jurisdiction extended to seizure and transport. For this purpose he availed himself of the regional Gestapo offices and the Central Offices for Jewish Emigration. In the satellite and occupied countries, from Western Europe to the Balkans, he stationed experts on Jewish affairs with German embassies or Higher SS and Police Leaders to work out deportation plans on the spot. There his control was less total than in the Reich, but in these foreign areas the Eichmann machinery concerned itself with the entire uprooting phase of the deportations, including the initiation of anti-Jewish laws, the various definitions and categorizations of the Jewish victims, and the time and procurement of transportation.

In the RSHA hierarchy Eichmann's office, with its subdivisions, was placed as follows:

- RSHA: Obergruppenführer Heydrich (Kaltenbrunner)
- IV (Gestapo): Gruppenführer Müller
- IV-B (Sects): Sturmbannführer Hartl (later vacant)
- IV-B-4 (Jews): Obersturmbannführer Eichmann
- IV-B-4-a (Evacuations): Sturmbannführer Günther
- General matters: Wöhrn
- Transport: Novak (deputy: Hartmann, later Martin)
- Single cases: Moes (Kryschak)
- IV-B-4-b (Law): Sturmbannführer Suhr (later Hunsche)
- Deputy: Hunsche
- Finance and property: Gutwasser
- Foreign areas: Bosshammer

There was a direct line between Gruppenführer Müller, the Gestapo chief, and Eichmann. Müller, as Eichmann recalled after the war, was a "sphinx." A criminologist by background, he acted like a bureaucrat, committing everything to paper and holding frequent conferences with large numbers of subordinates. He also reserved power to himself. Whereas Eichmann made arrangements for deportations, only Müller could "take his orange-colored pencil and . . . write on top 5,000

ORIGINS OF THE KILLING CENTERS

To keep up with the influx of victims, the camp network had to be extended. In 1939 there were six relatively small camps. In 1944 Pohl sent Himmler a map that showed 20 full-fledged concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager* or KL) and 165 satellite labor camps grouped in clusters around the big KLs. (Again the camps of the Higher SS and Police Leaders were not included.) Himmler received the report with great satisfaction, remarking that "just such examples show how our business has grown." Pohl's empire was thus characterized by a three-fold growth: the jurisdictional expansion, the increase in the number of camp slaves, and the extension of the camp network.

The six killing centers appeared in 1941-42, at a time of the greatest multiplication and expansion of concentration camp facilities. This is a fact of great importance, for it ensured that the construction and operation of the killing centers could proceed smoothly and unobtrusively.

The death camps operated with gas. There were three types of gassing installations, for the administrative evolution of the gas method had proceeded in three different channels. One development took place in the Technical Referat of the RSHA. This office produced the gas van. In Russia and Serbia the vans were auxiliary devices used for the killing of women and children only. But there was to be one more application. In 1941 Gauleiter Greiser of the Wartheland obtained Himmler's permission to kill 100,000 Jews in his Gau. Three vans were thereupon brought into the woods of Kulmhof (Chelmno), the area was closed off, and the first killing center came into being.

The construction of another type of gassing apparatus was pursued in the Führer Chancellery, Hitler's personal office. For some time, thought had been given in Germany to doctrines about the quality of life, from the simple idea that a dying person may be helped to die to the notion that life not worth living may be unworthy of life. This move from concern for the individual to a preoccupation with society was accomplished by representing retarded or malfunctioning persons, especially those with problems perceived to be congenital, as sick or harmful cells in the healthy corpus of the nation. The title of one monograph, published after the shock of World War I, could in fact be read as suggesting their destruction. It was called *The Release for Annihilation of Life without Value* [*Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens*]. The last three words of the German phrase were to grace official correspondence during the Nazi years.

Not until after the outbreak of World War II, however, did Hitler sign an order (predated September 1, 1939) empowering the chief of the Führer Chancellery, Reichsleiter Bouhler, and his own personal physician, Dr. Brandt, "to widen the authority of individual doctors with a view to enabling them, after the most critical examination in the realm

KILLING CENTER OPERATIONS

of human knowledge, to administer to incurably sick persons a mercy death." The intention was to apply this directive only to Germans with mental afflictions, but eventually the program encompassed the following three operations.

1. Throughout the war, the killing, upon determination of physicians' panels, of about 5,000 severely handicapped children in hospital wards.
2. Until the late summer of 1941, the annihilation of about 70,000 adults in euthanasia stations equipped with gas chambers and bottled, chemically pure carbon monoxide gas. The victims, selected from lists screened by psychiatrists, were in the main institutionalized
 - a. senile persons, feeble-minded persons, epileptics, sufferers from Huntington's chorea and some other neurological disorders,
 - b. individuals who had been treated at institutions for at least five years,
 - c. criminally insane persons, especially those involved in moral crimes.

The euthanasia stations, which did not have resident patients, were Grafeneck (after it was closed: Hadamar)
Brandenburg (after it was closed: Bernburg)
Sonnenstein
Hartheim

3. From the middle of 1941 to the winter of 1944-45, the pruning of concentration camp inmates too weak or bothersome to be kept alive and the killing of these people, upon superficial psychiatric evaluation, in euthanasia stations under code 14 f 13.

The administrative implementation of this psychiatric holocaust was in the hands of Bouhler's Führer Chancellery. The man actually in charge of the program was a subordinate of Bouhler, Reichsamtsleiter Brack. For the technical aspects of the project, the Reichsamtsleiter obtained the services of Kriminalkommissar Wirth, chief of the Criminal Police office in Stuttgart and an expert in tracking down criminals.

"Euthanasia" was a conceptual as well as technological and administrative prefiguration of the "Final Solution" in the death camps. In the summer of 1941, when the physical destruction of the Jews was in the offing for the whole of the European continent, Himmler consulted with the Chief Physician of the SS, Gruppenführer Dr. Grawitz, on the best way to undertake the mass-killing operation. Grawitz advised the use of gas chambers.

On October 10, 1941, at a "final solution" conference of the RSHA, Heydrich alluded to Hitler's desire to free the Reich of Jews, if at all possible, by the end of the year. In that connection, the RSHA chief discussed the impending deportations to Łódź, and mentioned Riga and Minsk. He even considered the possibility of shipping Jews to

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ORIGINS OF THE KILLING CENTERS

concentration camps set up for Communists by Einsatzgruppen B and C in operational areas. The Ostland, emerging as the center of gravity in this scheme, served to crystallize the idea of what was to be done to Reich deportees on their arrival.

By the end of the month the race expert in Bräutigam's office in the East Ministry, Amtsgerichtsrat Wetzel, drafted a letter in which he stated that Brack was prepared to introduce his gassing apparatus in the east. Brack had offered to send his chemical expert, Dr. Kallmeyer, to Riga, and Eichmann had referred to Riga and Minsk in expressing agreement with the idea. "All things considered," wrote Wetzel, "one need have no reservation about doing away with those Jews who are unable to work, with the Brackian devices." There were, however, some second thoughts about directing a continuing flow of transports to the icy regions of the occupied USSR. Dr. Kallmeyer, told to wait in Berlin because of the cold in the east, spent Christmas at home. The scene of the action had already been shifted to the Generalgouvernement.

Under primitive conditions, three camps were built by *Amt Haushalt und Bauten* (after the reorganization of March 1942, the WVHA-C) and its regional machinery at Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka. The sites were chosen with a view to seclusion and access to railroad lines. In the planning there was some improvisation and much economizing; labor and material were procured locally at minimum cost.

Bełżec, in the district of Lublin, was the prototype. Its construction, according to Polish witnesses, was begun as early as November 1941. A locksmith who worked in the camp while it was being built provides the following chronology:

- October 1941 SS men approach Polish administration in town of Bełżec with demand for twenty workers. The Germans select the site.
- November 1, 1941 Polish workers begin construction of three barracks:
 - a waiting hall leading through a walkway to
 - an ante-room, leading to
 - a third building that had a corridor with three doors to three compartments, each of which had floor piping and an exit door. All six doors (entry and exit) in these three compartments were encased in thick rubber and opened to the outside.
- November-December 1941 A contingent of about seventy black-uniformed eastern collaborators (Soviet

KILLING CENTER OPERATIONS

prisoners of war released from captivity) lay narrow-gauge rail, dig pits, and erect a fence.

December 22, 1941 Polish workers are discharged.
January-February 1942 Watchtowers are built.

The Germans at the Belzec site who had requisitioned the Polish work force were members of an SS construction Kommando. The work was supervised by a "master from Katowice," an unidentified German with some knowledge of Polish who was in possession of building plans. When one of the Poles asked about the purpose of the project, the German only smiled. Some time before Christmas, the construction chief showed the blueprints to an SS noncommissioned officer (Oberhauser) who was stationed in the area and who was going to be a functionary in the administration of the death camps. The drawings were plans of gassing installations. By that time the construction of the buildings was substantially finished, and shortly thereafter the chemist Dr. Kallmeyer arrived from Berlin.

Sobibór, also in the Lublin district, was built, evidently more quickly, in March and April of 1942. Supervision of the construction was in the hands of Hauptsturmführer Thomalla, a master mason regularly assigned to the local construction office in Lublin. Thomalla had some professional help from Baurat Moser, employed by the Kreishauptmann of Chełm (Ansel), in whose territory Sobibór was located. To speed the work, Jewish labor from the surrounding region was employed extensively during the construction phase.

At Treblinka (within the Warsaw district), where euthanasia physician Dr. Eberl was in charge, the Zentralbauleitung of the district, together with two contractors, the firm Schönbrunn of Liegnitz and the Warsaw concern Schmidt und Münstermann (builders of the Warsaw ghetto wall), were readying the camp. Labor for construction was drawn from the Warsaw ghetto. Dr. Eberl also availed himself of the resources of the ghetto for supplies, including switches, nails, cables, and wallpaper. Again, the Jews were to be the unwitting contributors to their own destruction.

Even while the three camps were being erected, transports with Jewish deportees from the Kraków district, the Reich, and the Protektorat were arriving in the Hrubieszów-Zamość area. The director of the Population and Welfare Subdivision of the Interior Division in the Gouverneur's office of Lublin (Türk) was instructed by the Generalgouvernement Interior Main Division (Siebert) to assist Globocnik in making room for the Jews pouring into the district. Türk's deputy (Reuter) thereupon had a conversation with Globocnik's expert in Jewish "resettlement" affairs, Hauptsturmführer Höfle. The Hauptsturm-

führer made a few remarks near Generalgouvernement. Where on the Dęblin-Łódź line, the meantime? Höfle at Belzec: "These Jews to the Generalgouvernement March 16, 1942, was during the following Treblinka.

The terrain of each and width. The layout of barracks for guard per undressing station, at two or three yards wide covered with ivy. The their way to the gassing to convince the Jews be required to clean chambers, disguised rooms, but during gassing, no camp had used at Belzec was monoxide that had been hydrogen cyanide. L. the (start) were equipped at Sobibór recaptured Soviet tanks and carbon dioxide stalled; the bodies were

The limited capacity of Globocnik; he did not there was congestion the line to Sobibór reduced and interrupted Treblinka received the unburned bodies in deportees.

Between July at three camps. Mass Treblinka, containing the old facilities. In both sides of a corridor at its far end. The fr

ORIGINS OF THE KILLING CENTERS

führer made a few remarkable statements: A camp was being built at Bełżec, near Generalgouvernement border in subdistrict Zamość. Where on the Dęblin-Trawniki line could 60,000 Jews be unloaded in the meantime? Höfle was ready to receive four or five transports daily at Bełżec. "These Jews would cross the border and would never return to the Generalgouvernement." The discussion, on the afternoon of March 16, 1942, was held a few days before the opening of Bełżec. During the following month Sobibór was finished, and in July, Treblinka.

The terrain of each camp was small—a few hundred yards in length and width. The layout was similar in all three camps. There were barracks for guard personnel, an area where the Jews were unloaded, an undressing station, and an S-shaped walkway, called *Schlauch* (hose), two or three yards wide that was bordered by high barbed-wire fences covered with ivy. The *Schlauch* was traversed by the naked victims on their way to the gassing facilities. The entire arrangement was designed to convince the Jews that they were in a transit camp, where they would be required to clean themselves on the way to the "east." The gas chambers, disguised as showers, were not larger than medium-sized rooms, but during gassings they were filled to capacity. At the beginning, no camp had more than three of these chambers. The gas first used at Bełżec was bottled, either the same preparation of carbon monoxide that had been shipped to the euthanasia stations or possibly hydrogen cyanide. Later, all three camps (Sobibór and Treblinka from the start) were equipped with diesel motors. A German who briefly served at Sobibór recalls a 200-horsepower, eight-cylinder engine of a captured Soviet tank, which released a mixture of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide into the gas chambers. No crematoria were installed; the bodies were burned in mass graves.

The limited capacity of the camps troubled SS and Police Leader Globocnik; he did not wish to get "stuck." During the summer of 1942 there was congestion of railway traffic in the Generalgouvernement, and the line to Sobibór was under repair. At Bełżec operations were reduced and interrupted, and at Sobibór the stoppage was prolonged. But Treblinka received transports to the point of overflow, and mounds of unburned bodies in various stages of decay confronted new arrivals of deportees.

Between July and September an expansion was undertaken in the three camps. Massive structures, of stone in Bełżec and brick in Treblinka, containing at least six gas chambers in each camp, replaced the old facilities. In the new gas buildings the chambers were aligned on both sides of a corridor, and at Treblinka the engine room was situated at its far end. The front wall of the Treblinka gas house, underneath the

KILLING CENTER OPERATIONS

gable, was decorated with a Star of David. At the entrance hung a heavy, dark curtain taken from a synagogue and still bearing the Hebrew words "This is the gate through which the righteous pass."

The Generalgouvernement was the location also of a regular concentration camp of the WVHA, where Jewish transports were received from time to time. In German correspondence the camp was referred to as Lublin, whereas its common name after the war was Majdanek. Up to October 1942, the camp had facilities for men only. It had been built to hold prisoners of war (among them Jewish soldiers of the Polish army) under SS jurisdiction. Even during these early days, however, several thousand Jews, including men, women, and children, were brought into the camp from nearby localities. In September–October 1942, three small gas chambers, placed into a U-shaped building, were opened. Two of them were constructed for the interchangeable use of bottled carbon monoxide or hydrogen cyanide gas, the third for cyanide only. The area in front of the building was called *Rosengarten* and *Rosenfeld* (rose garden and rose field). No roses adorned the camp—rather, the SS managers associated the facility with a typical name of Jewish victims. The gassing phase, which resulted in about 500 to 600 deaths per week over a period of a year, came to an end with the decision to wipe out the entire Jewish inmate population in one blow. When the Lublin camp acquired administrative control of the Trawniki and Poniatowa labor camps, mass shootings took place at all three sites in the beginning of November 1943.

While Kulmhof in the Wartheland was being set up with gas vans and a network of gas-chamber camps was established in the Generalgouvernement, a third development came to fruition in the incorporated territory of Upper Silesia. This project was built by a man who had come up in the concentration camp world. He was an early Nazi who had been imprisoned before Hitler came to power, with a top Nazi: Bormann. During the 1930s he had held several posts in Dachau and Sachsenhausen, until (in 1940) he took over a camp of his own. The new camp was located in Upper Silesia.

Originally no great destiny had been intended for this place. The camp was encircled by stagnant fish ponds, which permeated the compound with dampness, mist, and mud. The German army quartered a company of its construction troops there, and the Inspectorate for Concentration Camps, making a survey of the area, decided that, after certain "sanitary and construction" measures were taken, it could use the camp as a quarantine center. A few months later, the new commander approached the German land-acquisition agency in the area, the Bodenamt Schlesien, to confiscate the necessary grounds. Another

T A B L E 16
THE "FINAL SOLUTION" IN THE DEATH CAMPS

<i>Camp</i>	<i>Main Geographic Origins of Victims</i>	<i>Principal Time Spans of Systematic Killings</i>	<i>Number Killed</i>
Kulmhof	Wartheland Reich, via Łódź	December 1941 to September 1942 and June-July 1944	150,000
Belzec	Galicia Kraków district Lublin district (including Reich deportees)	March-December 1942	550,000
Sobibór	Lublin district Netherlands Slovakia Reich-Protectorat France Minsk	April-June 1942 and October 1942 to October 1943	200,000
Treblinka	Warsaw district Radom district Białystok district Lublin district Macedonia-Thrace Reich Theresienstadt	July 1942 to October 1943	750,000
Lublin	Lublin district Warsaw district France	September 1942 to September 1943 and November 1943	50,000
Auschwitz	Hungary Poland Incorporated areas Białystok district Wartheland Upper Silesia East Prussia Generalgouvernement Remnant ghettos and labor camps France Netherlands Greece Theresienstadt Slovakia Belgium Reich-Protectorat (direct) Italy Croatia Norway	February 1942 to November 1944	1,000,000

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cautionary measures had to be taken before the victims arrived, while they went through the processing, and after they were dead. At no point could any disclosure be permitted; at no time could the camp management afford to be caught off guard. The killers had to conceal their work from every outsider, they had to mislead and fool the victims, and they had to erase all traces of the operation.

CONCEALMENT

We have already noted or at least hinted at a number of concealment measures. Thus the very speed and haste with which the deportation-killing process was carried out was prompted to no small extent by considerations of secrecy. When Viktor Brack of the Führer Chancellery wrote to Himmler about the necessity of speeding up the construction of the Generalgouvernement camps, he pointed out: "You yourself, Reichsführer, said to me some time ago that for reasons of concealment alone we have to work as quickly as possible."

Another concealment measure was verbal camouflage. The most important and possibly the most misleading term used for the killing centers collectively was the "East." This phrase was employed again and again during the deportations. When reference to an individual death camp was necessary, the term used was *Arbeitslager* (labor camp) or *Konzentrationslager* (concentration camp). Birkenau, the Auschwitz killing site, was called *Kriegsgefangenenlager* (PW camp) in accordance with its originally intended purpose, later KL Au II (concentration camp Auschwitz II). Sobibór was appropriately called *Durchgangslager* (transit camp). Since it was located near the Bug, on the border of the occupied eastern territories, the designation fitted the myth of the "eastern migration." When Himmler proposed one day that the camp be designated a *Konzentrationslager*, Pohl opposed the change.

The gas chamber and crematorium units in Auschwitz were known as *Spezialeinrichtungen* (special installations), *Badeanstalten* (bath houses), and *Leichenkeller* (corpse cellars). The diesel engine operated in Bełżec was located in a shack called the "Hackenholt Foundation." (Unterscharführer Hackenholt was the operator of the diesel). The primary term for the killing operation itself was the same that had been employed for the killings in Russia—*Sonderbehandlung* (special treatment). In addition, there was some terminology more appropriate to the killing center operations, such as *durchgeschleusst* (dragged through) or *gesondert untergebracht* (separately quartered).

Next to verbal camouflage it was most important to close the mouths of the inner circle; hence all camp personnel, especially top

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KILLING OPERATIONS

air. The agony lasted for about two minutes, and as the shrieking subsided, the dying people slumped over. Within fifteen minutes (sometimes five), everyone in the gas chamber was dead.

The gas was now allowed to escape and after about half an hour, the door was opened. The bodies were found in tower-like heaps, some in sitting or half-sitting positions, children and older people at the bottom. Where the gas had been introduced, there was an empty area from which the victims had backed away, and pressed against the door where the bodies of men who in terror had tried to break out. The corpses were pink in color, with green spots. Some had foam on the lips, others bled through the nose. Excrement and urine covered some of the bodies, and in some pregnant women the birth process had started. The Jewish work parties (*Sonderkommandos*), wearing gas masks, dragged out the bodies near the door to clear a path and hosed down the dead, at the same time soaking the pockets of poison gas remaining between the bodies. Then the *Sonderkommandos* had to pry the corpses apart.

In all the camps bodily cavities were searched for hidden valuables, and gold teeth were extracted from the mouths of the dead. In Crematorium II (new number) at Birkenau, the fillings and gold teeth, sometimes attached to jaws, were cleaned in hydrochloric acid, to be melted into bars in the main camp. At Auschwitz the hair of the women was cut off after they were dead. It was washed in ammonium chloride before being packed. The bodies could then be cremated.

ERASURE

There were three methods of body disposal: burial, cremation in ovens, and burning in the open. In 1942 corpses were buried in mass graves in Kulmhof, the Generalgouvernement camps, and Birkenau. Before long this mode of dealing with the dead gave rise to second thoughts. In Birkenau, near the huts that constituted the first gas chambers on the site, the summer sun took its effect. A survivor recalls that corpses began to swell, the earth's crust broke open, and a "black evil-smelling mass oozed out and polluted the groundwater in the vicinity." At Sobibór during the same summer, the graves heaved in the heat, the fluid from the corpses attracted insects, and foul odors filled the camp. Moreover, the many hundreds of thousands already buried posed a psychological problem. Ministerialrat Dr. Linden, sterilization expert in the Interior Ministry, on a visit to the Lublin district, is quoted by an SS man to have remarked that a future generation might not understand these matters. The same consideration had prompted the Gestapo chief Müller to order Standartenführer Blobel, commander of Einsatzkom-