

Chapter 8

Medical Practitioners targeted by zbV¹⁶¹



Fig. 15: Dr Mark Redner¹⁶²

Dr Mark Redner:

¹⁵⁹ Dr Redner, Papers sent to the author by family Redner: Original Memoirs (in Polish), written between 1944 and 1949. Yad Vashem, file 03/430 in Jerusalem, Israel, preserves the manuscript.

¹⁶² Holocaust Survivor. Son of Berisch 'Bernard' and Reize 'Roza/Dinah' (Findling) Redner. Born: 3 July 1898 in Lemberg, Poland. Died: December 1984 in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Last Residence in Poland: Sonnegasse 47 Lemberg. Occupation: Physician in Poland. Married: Bromislawa Schrenzel January 4, 1924.

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I can fully agree with the now classic testimony of Polish Prime Minister, Joseph Cyrankiewicz, a former prisoner of Oswiecim (Auschwitz) extermination camp, and a witness during the trial of the camp commander Rudolf Hess. He testified, when called by the prosecutor to tell the truth, and declared categorically that alas, in spite of his best efforts and intentions, he cannot relate the truth accurately, since no human being can describe truthfully the enormities of the crimes, that quantitatively and qualitatively exceed human imagination. Nevertheless, I cannot remain silent or resign myself to inaction. The spilled blood of millions of our innocent brothers calls loudly and incessantly for justice. The shadows and souls of our Martyrs visit us in our dreams and keep us company in every step of reality, calling for hunting and punishing the perpetrators. They show the bleeding wounds and lacerated hands, bodies infected and torn by Gestapo dogs... their faces deformed by suffering deaths in gas chambers with bloody foam on their lips. They tell us about the tortures suffered on 'Umschlagplatz' during the transport in cars sprayed with chlorine, about the extermination camps, about inhumane work, about the torture of hunger and thirst, and their torments inflicted before their deaths.

Besides the plague of expulsions, Jewish Intelligensia were constantly threatened by a conspiracy of German robbers. Members of the Gestapo and NSDAP systematically raided apartments of known Jewish doctors, plundering whatever they found appealing, or useful, for furnishing of their own homes. They would frequently bring along their girlfriends, encouraging them to choose clothing, or any object of value. These activities were carried on in broad daylight, in full view of the police (Schutzpolizei) that never intervened.

The appetite of these bandits had no limits. They would pull a pillow from a bed, a suit from a closet, or a shirt from a drawer. They would reach in a pocket for change, or find a

watch. They stole paintings off the walls, kitchen utensils, even those heavily worn, along with children's toys. In wintertime, they frequently pulled the coal chunks from basements.

In my apartment, a group of mid and higher-ranking German officers walked in once, searching for money, ruining the furniture and bedding. After a while, when they did not find the valuables, they took several items of minimal value, such as a leather suitcase, some wall hangings, two lamps, a coal loading shovel and a soccer ball. With this loot, they walked out triumphantly, without a trace of shame on their faces. That was the way the 'Herrenvolk' governed in Lwow.

The first doctor who perished at the hand of German murderers, starting the bloody chain of nightmares, was Dr Perec Gleich. On that morning, he left his house at Kollataja Street. A few hours later he was executed by a German firing squad in the yard of Brigidki, together with the rabbi, Dr Lewin, and the newspaper editor, Henryk Hescheles.

The second victim, although not killed, was Dr Ascher Izrael, who was dragged to the yard of the Zamarstynowski prison, where he was terribly beaten, his face transformed into bleeding rags and his body covered with open bleeding lacerations. The third victim was Dr Mejbaum, a surgeon, also heavily lacerated to a point that he never recovered and was unable to return to work. He was killed in an action at a later date. On that day several hundred Jews were killed, and over 2000 were severely wounded. The next day the situation was quiet and we started the work, caring for the victims of the pogrom. The Jewish neighbourhoods had the appearance of a battlefield, covered with traces of the terrible butchery. Most houses were full of victims of beating, calling desperately for help and assistance.

The next Action followed on 25 July (directly after the prison murders) and was directed specifically by zbV against the Jewish intelligencia, including a group of most

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prominent doctors.

Petlura Action 88 lists¹⁶³

This pogrom was called the 'Petlura Action', since it was carried out following a list prepared by the Ukrainians cooperating with the German authorities. They were taken in the middle of the night from their beds, and given orders to take a blanket and change of underwear, under the pretext of being taken to a field hospital. They were taken to the police station and never seen or heard of again. Some unconfirmed reports were received later that they were deported to one of many extermination camps near Lwow. During this Action, approximately 2000 Lwow Jews, mostly prominent citizens distinguished by their social and professional position, perished. Among them were 20 doctors, including Dr Mauryc Pensias, an outstanding radiologist; Dr Schneider, president of the Medical Union; Dr Marek Wollner, laryngologist; Dr Bernard Sonnenschein-Swiatlowski, Dr Kornelia Graf, wife of Dr Natan Graf, president of T.O.Z (Towzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia,) and many others.¹⁶⁴

German colleagues take advantage.

It was a sad reality of the times when German doctors, both military and civilian, quietly looked on while Jewish doctors were murdered and tortured. They observed the tortures and bestialities inflicted on their colleagues without a single word of protest and without any sympathetic reaction. They participated actively in actions, with willing zeal. They derived personal profits, exploiting the hopeless situation of Jews, blackmailing whenever possible, extorting gifts in exchange for worthless 'Ausweis', armbands, certificates, 'iron lists' or similar 'protective' devices. They frequently evicted their fellow Jewish doctors literally on to the street, occupying their fully furnished apartments.

¹⁶³ 'The Research Book' (88 list) which contained lists of addresses of the Polish intelligentsia.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

The German doctors, in committing these felonies and crimes, used their own initiative and zeal, not necessarily imposed by the regime, but rather flowing directly from their own anti-Semitic instincts. There is abundant evidence of this: Immediately following these actions, in front of the Jewish hospital on Alembek Street, Dr Doppheide, principal physician of 'District Galicien', arrived in his car with his staff. After emptying all the halls and evicting all the patients, he stole, with great deal of effort, all the expensive instruments left by the departing Jewish doctors, delighted with his looting.¹⁶⁵

The days following these events brought an avalanche of new directives and orders, following each other at a lightning pace, not giving the battered community time to breathe or recover. The orders to surrender radios and telephones were followed by prohibition of employment of a Jew in workplaces, then interdiction of employment of Aryans by Jews, the immediate release of Christian domestic helpers, interdiction of school attendance by Jewish children, forbidding the Jews entrance to movies, theatres, public parks, restaurants, coffee shops, etc. Then, buying food in markets, use of public transportation, such as streetcars or railways were prohibited. Shortly afterwards, the closing of synagogues was followed by the burning of the Temple on Zolkiewska Street, and finally the order to wear a white armband on the left arm with an embroidered star of David.

At the same time, Jewish assets were confiscated including businesses, retail stores, warehouses, real estate. Farms were confiscated and taken over by so-called German 'Treuhänders'. In order to dig out hidden assets and jewellery, huge 'contributions' were imposed. With these powerful blows, the Germans, in a very short time, eliminated all advances and gains of the emancipated Jewish community. Jews were removed from the protection of law,

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

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becoming free game for every Aryan without a hunting permit, totally unprotected. An active hunt could even result in a reward and recognition by the German authorities, while hiding or helping a Jew was punishable by death.¹⁶⁶

Now, let's review some numbers. The number of Jewish doctors annihilated in Lwow by the Germans cannot be established accurately. When the Red Army occupied Lwow in September of 1939, they found many doctors, refugees from Western Poland, who fled at the time the war started from Hitler's advancing armies and found in Lwow a warm welcome, hospitality, and jobs, thanks to the help and friendly attitude of the Jewish and non-Jewish population. At the very end, they did not escape their tragic destiny, when they fell back into the hands of their German executioners, with the exception of those few that the Soviets deported deep into Eastern Soviet Union.

As a result of these complications, it is impossible to account exactly for the number of Jewish doctors remaining in the city on 1 July 1941, which is the day of the occupation of the city by the Germans. Also, we cannot establish exactly the number of colleagues that survived the annihilation. Many escaped the city and survived using 'Aryan' papers, changing their names and religions, staying in Poland, and perhaps till today retaining their assumed identity. Many of them, after the war, broke ties with the Jewish community as a result of the loss of their families and of the persecution they suffered. One thing is certain, that the Jewish medical community, so rich and remarkably excellent, was completely annihilated and simply ceased to exist.

The expulsion of Jews from their apartments located in the Aryan neighbourhoods started soon after the invasion by German troops. In the beginning, it was a sporadic and random action affecting mostly the largest and most beautiful apartments of doctors and other wealthy Jews.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

After a while, the Germans started to clean up whole streets, or city blocks of the newest and most modern houses, assigning them to dignitaries, members of the N.S.D.A.P, military authorities, and civilians assigned on the basis of 'Raumungabefehland,' issued by Stadthauptman's office. It was also a daily occurrence to see an arbitrary expulsion of a doctor by a Hitlerite, with typical brutality. It would be perpetrated by a Gestapo bureaucrat, or by another German kicking in the door, with loud screams, requesting the owner to vacate the house within hours.

It was not uncommon to see the expulsion carried on with a whip, chasing people from their home straight onto the street, and not allowing them to carry any belongings. More than one doctor suddenly found himself under the blue skies, sometimes with a sick child in his hand... In a very few exceptional cases Germans returned some items, such as bedding and clothing to the owner. The medical instruments, X-ray equipment, and other medical tools were confiscated, if not saved previously by donation to a Jewish Hospital or institution.

The local Ukrainians also took an active part in the expulsion of Jewish doctors. In a few instances, Poles, including professionals and neighbours (till recently 'good friends') participated in the plunder, with the help of Gestapo friends or acting with a formal allocation from the Stadthauptman's office. A classic case of this type was the expulsion of Dr Nadel by Dr Reinc, a Volksdeutsch, in an extremely brutal manner, without any warning.'

Dr Schöngarth's Shooting Seminar.

A matter of hours after the professors' murder, Dr Schöngarth gathered his officers and proceeded to lecture them on their forthcoming duties. His senior officers, including Krüger, Rosenbaum and Kütschmann were taken to the Lwow prison where they were shown the thousands of dead prisoners the Soviets had

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left behind. It was emphasised that they had been killed by the Soviets at the instigation of the Jews.¹⁶⁷

The shooting of the prisoners found in the three prisons in Lwow, were committed by the NKVD prior to the Russians withdrawal from the city and on the orders of the Soviet 'Special Courts'. From the prison, the SD entourage was taken to a previously prepared pit on the outskirts of the town where shooting of Jews had already commenced.

Dr Schöngarth lectured his men on the exact way that these pits were to be prepared. According to Hans Krüger's testament after the war, Schöngarth pointed out the precise Berlin-designated dimensions, transport, security, the varieties of execution, the placement of the bodies in the graves, and the coup de grace:¹⁶⁸ 'Schöngarth stood at the pit edge while the executions were going on. Ukrainians were in the pit arranging the dead bodies. Men and women were driven up in trucks. They stood at the edge of the pit and were then shot. They had remained clothed. The Ukrainians were then ordered into the pit to arrange the bodies'.¹⁶⁹

Other reports of the Dr Schöngarth seminar suggest that he instructed all his commanders to personally engage in the killing.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Arad, Krakowski, Spector, the Einsatzgruppen Reports, London 1989, 2. The NKVD on the 25.6.41 in Lwow bloodily suppressed Ukrainian insurrection movements. About 3000 were shot by NKVD. EK 4a and EK 4b have arrived in Lwow'. Operation Report USSR No.10. There were three prisons in Lwow: Brygid at Kazimierzowska Street, the prison at the former police headquarters on Lecki Street; and the prison at the former military headquarters on Zamarstynowska Street. Their population consisted mostly of criminals and political prisoners from the Lwow area. Many of them had been murdered by the NKVD and buried in the prison courtyard. The Lwow Jews were made to dig up the corpses and photographed in the process for propaganda purposes – 'look at the Jewish-Bolshevik murderers whom we have just caught red-handed!' (See David Kahane, *The Lwow Ghetto Diary*, 4).

¹⁶⁸ Krüger Verdict: Statement Hans Krüger, 8 January 1962.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ The commander of EG 4a, Paul Blobel, delivered in Sokal on 27 June 1941, made similar demands. He gathered his men around him and explained that the Jews must be killed and that everybody must participate, as was a 'Führer Order'. See YVA TR-10/616, 137, 142. See also Helmut Krausnik, *Anatomy of the SS*

Evidence was given of Jewish men and women being brought to the pit and made to undress, robbed of their possessions and made to kneel or stand at the edge of the pit.¹⁷¹ Each commander took it in turn to shoot at least one Jew. SS Scharführer Wallenberg (noted chief executioner of zbV) and Dr Schöngarth demonstrated to those present how this was to be done. Wallenberg (as per Rabka training) selected his Jew and shot him in the nape of the neck. He then called the next officer to repeat the action with another victim and so it went on.¹⁷²

Hans Krüger: Schöngarth ordered his commanders to shoot Jews during these actions. On the evening after the Lwow demonstration, Schöngarth gathered together all SS staff. Rosenbaum and Menten were there. Schöngarth made a speech:

'You saw how it was done'. Every man should join in the shooting. I will shoot anyone who doesn't agree. I will back up every SS Führer who shoots a man for not obeying my order'.¹⁷³

Two SS men who refused to kill Jews were driven to commit suicide by Schöngarth: some SS men went into the woods near Lwow in search of partisans. An SS Führer shot himself there. The other SS men reported that partisans had shot him. In fact this man had shot himself on orders from Schöngarth because he did not

State, London, 1968, 262. Dr Otto Rasch, commander of EG 'C', made similar demands.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. The shooting of women and children was now taking place on a daily basis, although it would appear there was no authorisation for it. I would suggest that Himmler was influenced by zbV's actions that subsequently resulted in a directive to kill all genders of all ages. (I refer to this later)

¹⁷² Ibid. For many of the junior ranks this was their first introduction of what was expected of them. Some, refused, some looked to more senior officers for help. On this aspect, Schöngarth was not approachable.

¹⁷³ Ibid. I think the point to highlight here is, that these SD commanders were acting on their responsibility (vide the Hitler-Himmler Directive). It is interesting to see how many writers have gone along with the excuse: 'Orders are orders' and their refusal or failure to pull the trigger was never the subject of reprisal by the senior officers. It is shown: J. and C. Garrard, *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 28, number 2, winter 1998/9, note 22, 19. See also Klee, Dressen, Riess, *Those were the days*, London 1988), 77. This subtle point, I would suggest, has been overlooked in both cases.

wish to kill Jews. Schöngarth gave him the opportunity to kill himself so that his wife would receive a pension, which she wouldn't have done if the officer had appeared in an SS Court.¹⁷⁴ In Warsaw, an SS Führer refused to kill Jews and was imprisoned. Schöngarth had arranged for a pistol to be put in his cell and the man shot himself.¹⁷⁵

Krüger's remarks are interesting. In most war crimes trials the accused continually put up the defence of 'Acting under orders'. *'If I refused to obey and order, I could be shot'*. Prosecution at these trials invariably challenged this assumption. Many historians today assert that there is no evidence where a German officer was disciplined for refusing to shoot Jews. The evidence that no German was ever killed or incarcerated for having refused to kill Jews is conclusive'. The officer was given other duties or transferred.¹⁷⁶ We have in Krüger's testimony a direct contradiction (if true). I would suggest that repercussions for refusal, very much depended on the commanding Officer of the day. Dr Schöngarth was not one of those officers who adhered to leniency. We will see later, where seven of the SS-garrison in Belzec were acquitted of mass murder, citing their defence: If we disobeyed orders, our lives and our families lives were in danger.¹⁷⁷ We will also review the suicide by shooting of two SS-Scharführer s in the 'Reinhardt' camps brought about by fear of Commandant Wirth.

Hans Krüger moves on to Stanislawow and Kolomyja

Dr Schöngarth sent Hans Krüger, no stranger to executions, to Stanislawow as a forward unit of Sipo-SD where, in October 1941, he would instigate one of the biggest mass murders in the history of the Holocaust and pave the way for the resettlement transports to

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Krüger Verdict: statement of Hans Krüger, statement 8 January 1962. In the first paragraph, I am not sure that this was the case and that it may have been a defensive lie on behalf of Krüger. The second paragraph seems more likely.

¹⁷⁶ See Klee, Dressen and Riess, xiii

¹⁷⁷ Belzec Verdict.

Belzec. In my view, this was a defining moment that set in motion the entire destruction of European Jewry.

Stanislawow¹⁷⁸ was in south-east Galicia and had been occupied by the Hungarians before the Nazis' arrival. The first killing action in the city was overseen by Krüger on 2 August and resulted in the murder of approximately 500 male Jews and 99 Poles in the forest near Pawelce. This was documented at Krüger's trial after the war.

These killings still came within the scope of the so-called '*Intelligenz-Aktion*', killing the intelligentsia. An escalation of killing to include normal civilian men, women and children occurred in September, and was prompted by the decision of the new Lwow chief, SS-Major Tanzmann, to set up a ghetto in Stanslawow that was too small to hold all the Jews. Krüger gave a candid account of this process in his pre-trial interrogation of 26 June 1962. . One small area where Krüger would not have to concern himself with, were the lost villages in the Stryj valley, where a splinter group of zbV (BdS) were about to make a visit.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Stanislawow was a city with 37,000 Jews - a Jewish city with a highly developed cultural life. Who in east Galicia had not heard of the Stanisławów Jewish theatre '*Goldfaden*', with its symphony orchestra? Who does not know about the book, '*Mechajej Hakaraim*' by Rubin Fan, the Stanislawow writer?

¹⁷⁹ The villages in the Stryj valley see below.

Chapter 9

Establishment of the Sipo-SD in east Galicia.

Dr Schöngarth remained in Lwow with Wilhelm Rosenbaum to organise the setting up of Sipo-SD regional offices, while dispersing his personal commando units to other locations. Oskar Brandt, a brutal Gestapo officer who had served as a 'special officer for Jewish affairs' with the Security Police (Sipo) in the Krakow District, was sent with six men to Stanislawow. He was joined a week later by Hans Krüger¹⁸⁰ who was ordered to set up a branch office of the KdS - the Regional Command of Sipo-SD in Stanislawow.

The Sipo consisted of the Gestapo and Criminal Police (Kriminalpolizei, Kripo) and was a part of the SD. The KdS was the regional co-ordinator of the Sipo and Sicherheitsdienst (SD), the investigation branch of the SS in the occupied territories.¹⁸¹ Krüger's exact impact on the Holocaust is something that will emerge in due course. The SD personnel, who had set out from Krakow with zbV, were now dispersed. After disbandment of zbV in mid-July, these officers were sent to the major towns in east Galicia to organise and prepare for further Jewish actions and later,

¹⁸⁰ South-eastern Poland (Galicia) became the fifth District of the Generalgouvernement by enactment of a decree (signed by Hitler, Keitel, and Lammers), 17 July 1941, NG - 1280. See Hilberg, *The Destruction* Vol, 1, 349.

¹⁸¹ Krüger Verdict/Pohl.

as it turned out, Jewish resettlements to Belzec:¹⁸²

The majority of these men were experienced 'Jewish Affairs Officers' ¹⁸³ selected personally by Dr Schöngarth from many districts in the General Government specifically to carry out this task. By the very nature of their geographical postings, they covered all of east Galicia under the command of the SS and Police Leader, Fritz Katzmann¹⁸⁴ and the Kommander KdS, SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Krüger. By inclusion of the SD from the 'Jewish Affairs', reinforces the prominence of this select bunch of zbV and their designated purpose. These instruments of the HHE were vehemently and brutally anti-Semitic and the ideological representative bureaucrats of death and destruction in east Galicia.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² My findings appear to be corroborated (independently) by Thomas Sandkühler, *National Socialist Extermination Policies*, edited Elrich Herbert, Oxford, 2000, 109.

¹⁸³ See Hans Mommsen, *The Realisation of the Unthinkable* Translated by Alan Kramer and Louise Willmot, from *Die Realisierung des Utopischen*, functional analysis, Yad Vashem, 1983, 381-420).

¹⁸⁴ (1906--1957), SS officer. Fritz Katzmann joined the Nazi Party in 1928 and the SS in 1930. From November 1939 to August 1941, he served as SS and Police Leader in the Radom district of the General Government. Next, he was appointed SS and Police Leader in the Galicia region, a post he held until the fall of 1943. In this capacity, Katzmann was in charge of the implementation of the 'final solution' for the Jews of Galicia. Under his direction, most of the Jews of eastern Galicia were exterminated. On 30 June 1943, Katzmann submitted a report to his superiors, in which he described in detail how he and his men had eliminated almost all of the Jews who lived in the region, either by shooting them on the spot, or by deporting them to their deaths at forced labour or extermination camps. His report also made mention of cases of Jewish resistance to his actions. In 1944, Katzmann was appointed SS and Police Leader in Military District XX, whose main offices were located in the city of danzig. After the war, Katzmann falsified his name and went into hiding; he died in 1957. No other details are known about his post-war life.

¹⁸⁵ SD Jewish Department 11/112 (Surveillance of Ideological Opponents/Jewry) in the Berlin HQ, to emerge as RSHA 1VB4. The Judenreferate (section for Jewish affairs) was a mechanism in radicalising the persecution of the Jews, which since 1933 kept a watching brief on the numerous anti-Jewish legislation. Every citizen in Germany could refer to this legislation by referring to the Reichsgesetzblatt (Official Gazette).

Women and Children: was there an all gender killing policy?

It is generally accepted that orders given to the Einsatzgruppen immediately before the Russian war, were to implement murder of all the Jewish Bolshevik leadership and intelligentsia, or any person who was, or likely to be, a threat to the Nazi state. Whether this order was to include women and children is contentious. There appears to be no argument that the 'all gender' policy was certainly being carried out after mid-August 1941. In the rural areas of Lithuania this practice had been endorsed even earlier (end of July), when the German civil authorities were murdering all Jews.¹⁸⁶ It is in the opening weeks that we have conflicting views.

Certainly, in the first wave of killings, many thousands of Jewish men and communists of military age had been slaughtered, but the women and children detained in the round-ups were released.¹⁸⁷ This is the debatable point. Otto Ohlendorf, Commander of Einsatzgruppen 9:

'Himmler stated that an important part of our task consisted of the murder of Jews - women, men and children. I was informed about this about four weeks before the advance'.¹⁸⁸

In Brest on 10 July 1941, over 6,000 Jews, men women and children were shot into pits by the EG, which is recorded in the state archive of Brest.¹⁸⁹ In the Tarnopol region, several hundred women and children were killed out of a total of 5,000 Jews, between the 4 – 11 July, 1941.¹⁹⁰ This all gender policy was clearly

¹⁸⁶ Christopher Diekmann, *The War and the Killing of the Lithuanian Jews*, (National Socialist Extermination Policies, Ed. Ulrich Herbert, Oxford, 2000, 240).

¹⁸⁷ Ralf Ogorreck, *Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD im Rahmen der 'Genesis der Endlösung*, Berlin, 1996, as cited by Dr Dieter Pohl in correspondence to the author.

¹⁸⁸ PRO: NTD 2620-PS. Affidavit Otto Ohlendorf. (My underline). See also University of Southampton Archives (Ohlendorf) NMT/9/14/1) r.21.

¹⁸⁹ See Garrard, *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 28, number 2, winter 1998/9, 22.).

¹⁹⁰ B. F. Sabrin, *Alliance for Murder*, NY, 1991, 64.

understood by Ohlendorf.

These early all gender killings appear to be corroborated by events occurring a thousand miles away in Lithuania. On 24 June 1941, in the border village of Gargzdai, the SD and auxiliary police, under the direction of Dr Walter Stahecker, shot 201 Jews, including women and children. Dr Stahecker claimed that he also had received orders (he claims Heydrich) to kill all Jews regardless of gender. On 23 June 1941, Dr Stahecker continued this order in the town of Tilsit where the local police shot Jews of all genders.¹⁹¹

Further evidence that there was such an order of 'total genocide order', including women and children comes from Hans Krüger and that this order was given by Schöngarth just prior to him returning to Krakow at the end of July. So between the end of July and mid-August there was a definite policy. The high-powered Goring conference (Hitler, Göring, Lammers, Rosenberg and Keitel) on 16 July 1941, and Göring's subsequent order 'all necessary measures etc.' of 31 July 1941, seem to confirm this.¹⁹² This 'order' by Göring has been the bedrock by historians for interpretation of a 'final solution'. Although this Göring order still stands, there is now further evidence of an earlier note recently found in the Moscow Special Archive that is dated 26 March 1941. This gives perhaps a wider interpretation and should not be underestimated and sends a clear message: that the final chapter of the Holocaust has yet to be written, and that major contributory factors may yet be found in Russia.

Goetz Aly¹⁹³ (Berlin) has interpreted this information: In this document, he commissioned Heydrich, 'to submit a comprehensive blueprint of the organisational, subject-related, and material preparatory measures for the execution of the intended "final solution" of the Jewish Question'. Aly concludes that this note of 26 March 1941 must be understood as a confirmation, possibly an

¹⁹¹ Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men* 241.

¹⁹² Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction*, London, 1972, 88.

¹⁹³ Goetz Aly, *Political Prehistory*, (National Socialist Extermination Policies, ed. Ulrich Herbert, Oxford, 2000, 71).

extension of an assignment for the ‘final solution’ of the ‘Jewish Question’.

We get some indication of the position from Hans Krüger: ‘among other things...I’d been given the order (from Dr Schöngarth) to clean the area of Jews. Initially, that meant deporting the Jewish population or concentrating them in ghettos. A bit later (he doesn’t say exactly when), a directive from the RSHA gave the order to render the area judenfrei a new interpretation: their liquidation’.¹⁹⁴ In fact, it wasn’t until the 14 August 1941, that there was some confirmation and clarification, when Himmler issued a confirmative directive to the Higher SS and Police Leaders (HSSPF) in the occupied Soviet territories, ordering them to murder all Jews irrespective of gender and age.¹⁹⁵

An interesting point arises from these zbV actions, particularly the Podhorodse action of 7 July 1941 (see above), with the release of the Jewish women and children.¹⁹⁶ Were the standing orders of the day for east Galicia different from Lithuania? Only Jewish males over the age of 15 years were to be slaughtered. In zbV’s second visit to the murder scene on 27 August 1941, they rounded up the women and children and murdered them.¹⁹⁷ By this action it would seem to confirm Himmler’s Order of 14 August.

We have further contradictory explanation. At about this time (mid-July) there was a massive build up of reserve security forces to back up the Einsatzgruppen.¹⁹⁸ However, police auxiliaries report that the order to kill women and children did not come until the end of August 1941.¹⁹⁹ The probable answer is that (as we know), some women and children were being killed from the very

¹⁹⁴ Krüger Verdict: statement of Hans Krüger 8 January 1962 (my brackets).

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Sandkühler, *Galicia*, Oxford, 2000, 113.

¹⁹⁶ Menten Verdict.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ See Browning, *Path to Genocide*, Cambridge U.P. 1992, 105.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 107. We know that some women and children were being slaughtered right from the commencement of Barbarossa, but this was on the responsibility of the individual EG commander. As mentioned, Hans Krüger in Stanislawow and Schöngarth, Katzmann, and Tanzmann in Lwow was setting the pace and precedence, and I have no doubt that the HHE had taken notice of this.

commencement of 'Barbarossa' as Ohlendorf and Staheckler have stated. With the euphoria of success in the East, it was only a minor adjustment to spread this all gender killing to east Galicia.

The evidence is both conflicting and confusing. We must remember that some of the leadership were expounding defensive explanations on a morally heated issue. There are two points (among others), which in my view, tend to confirm an all-out gender killing policy was instigated from the beginning: the general honesty of Ohlendorf which comes over in trial transcripts, and the evidence from a much lower ranking officer, SS-Unterrführer Krumbach who was engaged in Jewish slaughter in Tilsit, Lithuania (June 1941). In answer to the question 'were women and children also discussed? He answered, 'According to an order from the Führer, the whole of eastern Jewry had to be exterminated so that there would be no longer Jewish blood available there to maintain a world Jewry'.²⁰⁰

So, from very early on, women and children were being killed in increasing numbers, but by mid-August it had become official policy. Before then, it very much depended on the whim and authority of individual commanders.

On 16 July 1941, Hitler authorised east Galicia to be incorporated into the General Government (official decree 1.8.41) in order to spike OUN aspirations of statehood. What makes this interesting is that east Galicia was now within the Reich jurisdiction (under Reich Law) with an added bonus of half a million Jews.²⁰¹ With no clear direction from above, the SD leadership were making the decisions and exercising their own initiatives and acting on their own responsibility (as encouraged by Heydrich) in dealing with this added problem - shooting them as exemplified by Hans Krüger in Nadworna and Stanislawow in early August 1941. By late August 1941, when Menten's zbV returned to Podhorodse, it didn't matter anymore.

²⁰⁰ Dieckmann, 246.

²⁰¹ Hans Frank must have been tearing his hair out. All efforts to get rid of his Jews were now compounded by events.

SIPO-SD IN EAST GALICIA

It is clear that there was a consensus between the SS and the different departments of the local administration about the mission to kill Jews. This is documented in the statements of SS men such as Krüger and Katzmann but also in the eager compliance of civilian officials.

Kreishauptmann Heinz Albrecht, an official of the internal-affairs administration who had previously held a similar post in Konskie was a committed National Socialist and dedicated anti-Semite as reflected in his inaugural speech delivered in the town of Rohatyn on 28 September 1941, and reconfirmed in testimony given in 1962: *'As a National Socialist, I believed then that the Jews were the cause of all our misfortune.'*

When the Higher SS and Police Leader Frederick Wilhelm. Krüger intervened in the Jewish question on November 10, 1942, a Police Order was issued for the formation of Jewish quarters. 254,989 Jews had already been evacuated or resettled to the death camps. Further instructions were given to accelerate the total evacuation of the remainder of Jews.

Further work was necessary in order to catch those Jews who were left in the armaments factories. These remaining Jews were declared labour prisoners of the Higher SS and Police Leader and were held either in the factories themselves, or in camps erected for this purpose. Large camps were erected on the outskirts of the town holding 8,000 Jewish labour prisoners.

SS-Lieutenant General Katzmann's report is a vital piece of evidence on several levels. It uses the terms *'special treatment'* and *'resettlement'* in a context where it is undeniable that the terms meant *killing*. It lists the belongings of dead Jews and connects their fate specifically with Aktion Reinhardt. It demonstrates beyond question that forced labourers were not intended to remain alive after their labour had been completed (nor were the SS reluctant to shoot even those who were desperately needed for such labour). It also confirms that the SS were willing to over-ride civilian authorities and employers in their ideological determination to make Galicia *'judenfrei'*.

Dr Schöngarth (taking with him Wilhelm Rosenbaum) had now

returned to the BdS in Krakow, probably to supervise the oncoming Jewish resettlement in the General Government and the re-commissioning of the Sipo-SD Academy at Bad Rabka. SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Krüger was under no illusion, as he immediately commenced his own anti-partisan and Jewish murder policy on his arrival in Stanislawow.²⁰²

In 1942, a soap manufacturer, Rudolf Reder was deported with his family from Lwow to Bełżec. He was married to Feiga (née) Felsenfeld. They had two children, daughter Freida and a son Boruch. The Reder family were deported on 11 August. Reder survived, his family perished. See Appendix 2.

²⁰² From the quality of evidence I have researched, I concluded that the order to kill men, women and children existed before 22 June 1941, but like everything in this war, some officers pleased themselves.

Chapter 10

The Leadership Return to the School



Fig 16: SS – Untersturmführer Wilhelm Rosenbaum 1942

Within days of the Rabka School becoming operational again, a large black flag and a swastika was prominently mounted on the roof, and in large black letters, the following was displayed across the top floor of the building:

**BEFEHLSHABER der SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI und
des SD im GG SCHULE des SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI'**

Between November 1941, and March 1943, over 200 Jewish men, women and children a month, were brought into the School from surrounding districts and kept imprisoned. During the daytime, selected numbers were taken out of their prison and used for training purposes. Ukrainian, Polish, and German students. Many were tortured, used for target practice and execution techniques. All were buried in mass graves at the rear of the School.²⁰³



Fig 17: Comradeship SD School Rabka 1942

General Administration

Within a few months after the commencement of Barbarossa (June 1941), the German hierarchy realised that the war would be long and protracted, with the result that there was now more emphasis on political and military training requirements. Final decisions had been made with regard to the '*Jewish Question*', and these requirements would be reflected in the new courses about to commence.

²⁰³ Yad Vashem. See Jewish Commission of Enquiry Report 7 June 1945.

THE LEADERSHIP RETURN TO THE SCHOOL

In occupied Poland, although the German police and security personnel were thin on the ground, they resisted taking into their confidence the indigenous population. Generally speaking the Polish police, although used for law and order purposes in the General Government, were rarely given full access to the SS/SD security services in Jewish actions. Paradoxically local Jewish collaborating cadres were preferred to Poles when Jewish actions were contemplated. In German eyes, the Poles were only just above the Jews in the pecking order of '*untermenschen*'. Only those Poles fully vetted and considered loyal collaborators, usually of some years standing as V-Agents, were favoured for further training in the SD establishment.

To encounter their military move into the east, the School curriculum was up-dated to reflect their foreseen duties. Selected candidates for the re-established School were nominated and recruited from a wider range of sources, but mainly from German security establishments; Waffen SS, and the Civil Service (Polish and German) throughout the Reich. Pro Nazi Poles and Ukrainians were also open for selection for police training and V-Agents.

Since its establishment in Zakopane, the Rabka School had introduced specialist Ukrainian instructors, namely, the Mauer brothers,²⁰⁴ Scharführers Wosdolowicz, Jaworski, and Vasilko were all transferred to Rabka to supervise and train Ukrainian recruits. In overall command of training was SS-Oberscharführer Bohnert, and Hermann Schuppler who had been on the permanent staff since November 1940.

SS-Scharführer Bandura was the school driver and SS-Scharführer Dziuba was clerical officer. SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Oder joined the school in March 1942 and with SS- Walter Proch and Pohland acted as deputies to Rosenbaum. Proch became commander of the Ukrainian detachment. Wilhelm Oder chief firearms and execution instructor.

²⁰⁴ Johann Mauer and his brother Wilhelm.

Leon Trześniower:

There was also an Oberscharführer called Proch, who came there at the time when the shooting range was being built. He was the site manager. He was a worse torturer than Rosenbaum. I remember that, when a transport of Jews arrived, Proc picked them up in the railway station in Rabka. At that time, the road from the crossroad leading to 'Tereska' was covered with dead bodies. There was also a driver, a Pole named Badura, who came from Katowice. He also harassed people in terrible ways. Then there was a Ukrainian driver, who lived with his wife in Słone. He only wanted to make business. He looked for gold for his wife. He was not that bad to us. As far as other Ukrainians who kept an eye on us are concerned, there was only one that harassed us a lot. His name was Wasyl. Apart from that, a few lived with us on very good terms. There was also one German, who ran an office. He was a Viennese. He never carried his weapon. He constantly visited our camp. He was sent to the front because he had never taken part in any operation. When he took some time off from the front and was going to Germany, he came to our camp. He confided in us what was happening in the front etc.²⁰⁵

SS-Scharführer Otto Schroff was administrator of school premises. The female contracted staff (and later witnesses) was Meta Kück, Schindler, and Engelmann, who was secretary to Rosenbaum.

Visiting lecturers to the School were drawn from specialist offices in the General Government. Many of the teaching staff, in addition to the established instructors, came on secondment from

²⁰⁵ Trześniower Leon, a letter to the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy in Rabka, 1978, the archive of the Veterans Union of the Republic of Poland and Political Ex-Prisoners in Rabka (in:) Moskal G., Rapta M., Tupta W., *Mroczne sekrety willi „Tereska”, Rabka-Zdrój 2008.*

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Berlin and were specialists in their field, e.g., SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Vopel was an expert on ‘*Free Masonry*’ and questions of ‘*World View*’, SS-Obersturmbannführer George Schaepel, Head of section V (Criminal Investigation), BdS Krakow, took the Polish Police courses for Criminal Law and Procedure during the war time emergency.²⁰⁶

Prospective candidates for non-commission courses were required to be healthy men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five were ranked and segregated according to their standard of education. Not all recruits were successful. Johann Bornholt, an ethnic German was inducted into the School but was soon found to be below the educational standard required. Bornholt was transferred to the prison establishment at Nowy-Sacz where he was made a prison guard in the SD security detention block.²⁰⁷

SS-Hauptscharführers/Kriminalassistenten Alois Bohnert and Schuppler had been on the permanent staff since November 1940. SS-Scharführer Bandura was the School driver, Dziuba was clerical officer. SS-Unterscharführer Wilhelm Oder, SS-Hauptscharführers/Kriminalassistent Walter Proch²⁰⁸ and Pohland joined the School in March 1942, and acted as deputies to Rosenbaum. These officers from the Waffen SS were brought in to train emergency conscripts and the lower ranks of the Sipo-SD. The female contracted staff (and witnesses) were Meta Kuck (nee Speck), Personal Secretary to

²⁰⁶ RAD: Statement of Rosenbaum, 11. 1. 1962, 729-745.

²⁰⁷ Ibid: Statement of Johanne Bornholt, 19. 9. 1962, 96-102.

²⁰⁸ Ibid: Statement of Rosenbaum, 30. 7. 1963, 1381-6. Oder, Wozdolowicz, Jaworski and Proch (all ‘Zugführer’) were the expert killing instructors. Using Walther PPK, calibre 765 pistols, they would shoot Jews in the back of the neck at a distance of 10-20cm. Proch was very central to the murders in the School and in the town where he would shoot anyone he took a dislike to - Jew or non Jew. Beck usually accompanied Proch when collecting the Jews from Nowy-Sacz for labour. He shot many Jews, several at a time, before returning to the SD School. See RAD, statements of the Jews Grossbard and Blatt (Rosenbaum cross examination statement, 20). 9. 1963, 1398-1411). See also Wiesenthal, ‘*The Murderers Amongst Us*’, London, 1987. Wiesenthal tracked down Proch (Austrian) in 1947 in Blomberg, a village near Salzburg. He was subsequently sentenced to death for his activities in the Rabka School (Schule der Sicherheitspolizei in Rabka).

Rosenbaum (41-42), Schindler (nee Hendriks), and Engelmann who were also secretaries to Rosenbaum and senior staff. As many as 200 -500 Ukrainians, non-commissioned Poles, and Germans passed out of the School each month after 6 - 8 week courses. Students of officer rank on the command courses were of between 3 and 6 months duration.

Rabka SD School 1942

In addition to the basic recruits, Sipo-SD officers of the senior command structure were sent to the School for refresher courses of shorter duration and personal assessments prior to promotions or change of duty before returning to the war zone. As early as November, 1941, there is photographic evidence of senior Sipo-SD officers from various districts of the General Government in the classroom, being lectured by Dr. Schöngarth.²⁰⁹ There is no way of knowing what was subject under discussion, but in view of the circumstances at that time, we may assume with some probability, that engagement of war and the '*Jewish Question*' were high on the agenda. Lecturers at the School came from the elite of the Nazi hierarchy: Frank and Bugler (GG); Globocnik and Hofle (Lublin); F.W.Krüger, Scherner, Müller, Grosskopf, Schöngarth, Dr. Neiding (Krakow); Katzmann, Tanzmann and H. Krüger (Lwow).

The Soap Rumour lecture.

Dr. Schöngarth would often chair these lectures and meetings before retiring with his students to the casino for refreshment. Dr. Kurt Neiding, a sitting Judge of the SS/SD Court in Krakow, remembers one such lecture given by an SS -Führer (probably Hofle) from the office of Odilo Globocnik, SS -Lieutenant General , Lublin and the overall officer in charge of *Operation Reinhardt* in the General Government':

²⁰⁹ Yad Vashem Archives TR-10. (11 206 AR-2 34-61.

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I once took part in a commanders meeting in Bad Rabka, which was chaired by Dr. Schöngarth. An SS -Führer, who was stationed in Lublin, brought a piece of soap with him. It was an experiment, which on the orders of Polizeiführer Globocnik, had been made out of Jewish corpses. There were obviously attempts being made to use the Jewish corpses to make soap.²¹⁰



Fig 18: Rosenbaum front left

Domestic Arrangements.

Accommodation for Rosenbaum, his guests and lecturers was located in the villa *Margrabiank*, known as the '*Führer heim*' situated on the other side of the Slonka river closely guarded by Ukrainian sentries at all times. The Casino was also available for

²¹⁰ RAD. Statement of Dr. Kurt Neiding, Wiesbaden 11. 1. 1962, 765-776. SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Neiding was a lawyer by profession and had been drafted into the SD-Sipo apparatus as legal adviser and interrogator to the BdS in Krakow in July 1942, where he prosecuted SS officers. He was a long standing colleague and personal friend of Dr. Schongarth. He also knew Rosenbaum and the set-up in Bad Rabka.

the SS- Leaders and visiting SD personnel. A recreation place for the general SS was established in the villa *Haus Annemie*. Rosenbaum's fiancée, Annemarie Bachus, was managing the house.

Shortly after Rosenbaum's return to the School, he appointed auxiliary staff to open up and prepare the School for the first intake of students in the third week of November 1941. In the School premises he had installed a variety of workshops: tailor's shop, shoemaker, saddlery and a hairdresser's shop, which were all manned by Jewish workmen under the direct supervision of a few Ukrainians; the brothers Czarnowicki and Herman Gold belonged to the Jewish tailors, Zelinger worked in the saddlery, Trieger was the gardener, and Michael Ettinger was locksmith and driver whose domain was based in the School garage, and as such, was in a position to observe the School activities on a daily basis. The Jewess Hela Bauman had been brought from Zakopane to work in the laundry.²¹¹



Fig. 19: Sara Schon (top)

The Jewesses Sara Schon (Nee Louisa Goldfinger) and Ada Rawicz (Nee Ada Peller) were cleaners and worked in the *Margrabianka*. The Jewess Schon also worked as a maid and nanny in the households of Krüger, SS-Schuppler Proch, and finally Rosenbaum. Overseer of the Jews and personal interpreter to Rosenbaum, and very much central to this investigation, was Beck who lived on the School premises with his son.

²¹¹ RAD. Statement of Schon (604-614). Helen Bauman was brought from Zakopane by Hans Krüger where she was his maid. She was awaiting orders to move with Hans Krüger to Stanislawow, but was shot by the SS when the Rabka Jews were killed, much against Krüger's wishes. Helen was a close friend of Sarah Schon. (Mark Goldfinger to the author 1998).

Construction of the Shooting Range.

Based on the employment of the Jews, Rosenbaum constructed more buildings in the School grounds. He also laid out a sport ground and shooting range in the small woods behind the School. Building materials for this construction work came from Jewish cemeteries in the district. From the Jewish cemetery of Nowy-Targ, the smooth granite and marble stones were shipped to the Rabka School and used in the construction of the shooting range and the paved area at the front of the School.²¹²

Rosenbaum obtained additional Jewish workers from the responsible Employment Office in Nowy Targ. Later on, from May 1942, Jews from other neighbouring towns and were transported to the School based upon his needs. When these Jews had out-lived their usefulness, they were simply killed off and replaced by others.

Accommodation for Jews.

The mobilised Jews who, like all Jews in the General Government, had to wear an armband with a blue Star of David as identification were able to stay in their houses. Outside Jew-workers were accommodated in the proximity of the School in three houses on Slonna Street (now called Ulica Poniatonskiego), which had become a mini-camp surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed Ukrainians. Each day these Jews were marched under escort into the School for work and returned under guard in the evening. Gradually, the Jewish population from Bad Rabka were massed together there. The Jews of Rabka fared better than many other communities in the district, not only retaining 200 workers in full employment (without pay) but they managed to stay alive.²¹³ Many of these Jews had been personally selected by Rosenbaum from

²¹² Rabka and District Memorial Book (National Archives, Washington, DC).

²¹³ RAD. Part of the Jewish workers in the School was finally transported to Bełżec in August, 1942 and the rest in September, 1943, to Plaszow Concentration Camp.

Jews in the immediate town or brought in from outside the area. The camp kitchen was under the supervision of the Jewess Alicja Nogala.

Appearance of Commandant Rosenbaum.

Rosenbaum made sure of showing himself regularly in his impeccable smart uniform during his service and free time. According to the dress regulations, he was wearing '*roebuck leather*' or grey gloves. On his blue uniform shirt, he was wearing apart from the gold H-J sign (Hitler Jugen), the Reich-sports sign, the SA-sports sign and later the war merit cross with swords and other decorations.²¹⁴



Fig 20: Wilhelm Rosenbaum (L) Rabka c.1942

²¹⁴ Ibid. The observations are based upon the statements of (non Jews) - Dr. Bath, Hans Krüger, Meta Kuck, Elfiede Bohnert, Dr. Hann, Draheim, Oder, Dr. Neiding and Alfred Kuck.

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Within the Sipo-SD-Führer -corps, he was looked upon as a sharp, dynamic, and well-educated Sipo-SD-Führer. Rosenbaum, in the first place considered himself an SS-Führer above his loyalty to Party. He was proud of being promoted SS-Führer at the age of 25, and being the youngest SS-Führer in the Krakow District.

Conduct towards Subordinates.

Friends of the same rank considered Rosenbaum to be arrogant and a man where the *‘Führer went to his head’*: others considered him friendly in their official and private relationship. The Sipo-SD-staff under him, knew to respect him. Rosenbaum appeared to others as a superior who was used to giving orders and being obeyed without question. Nobody dares not to execute his orders, nor act without his orders for important things. Rosenbaum was correct and polite towards female employees of his office. They considered him to be lively and cheerful Sipo-SD-Führer .²¹⁵

Conduct towards Jews.

Rosenbaum exercised power with a despotic cruelty over his Jewish-workers. He tortured them physically, psychologically, mentally and hurt their religious feelings. From their point of view, he was the *‘master over life and death’*, *‘the horror of the camp’*, a *‘God’*, He put the Jews working in the School in constant fear of death. Each worker avoided him. His appearance in the places of work meant corporal punishment, or the possibility of being shot.

Almost daily, Rosenbaum appeared by foot or horse back at the building sites in the School area, shooting range, sports grounds, and stables. Among the workers, everyone became restless; working faster, not to attract attention. Rosenbaum urged on the frightened people: *‘Shovel, Shovel, fill the carts and run!’*, *‘Shovel,*

²¹⁵ Ibid: The behaviour of Rosenbaum towards friends and subordinates are described in statements of: (non Jews) Alfred Kuck, Ilse Raemisch, Dittmar, Draheim, Muller, Czakainski and Bohnert.

shovel, shovel you Jews, I will show you how to work!, *'Go, go, on the double!'* were his commands.

If a worker would draw attention for no reason, he received a lash with a whip covered by a metal piece at its end, which Rosenbaum was always carrying with him. The lash was given in such a way that the metal end of the whip would hit the victim from the back towards the front in the face, in the proximity of the eyes causing swelling and bruising of the eye socket.

Rosenbaum used also other objects and his bare fist to maltreat his workers with the slightest excuse.²¹⁶ He used every possible opportunity to hurt the Jews in their human dignity - the *'foolish kid'* of Dr. Schöngarth was making his presence felt with unprecedented power.²¹⁷

There was a catalogue of violence and abuse against his Jew workers, that would pale into insignificance when placed alongside the catalogue of murder that was about to break out in the Rabka School.

Training of Students.

Of particular significance, was the *'on-site'* practical training using *'live bait'*!: Jews: men, women and children specifically selected from the locality and held in captivity in the School grounds, were brought out of their confinement when required for shooting practice seminars, as happened with the young mothers and children from the Jordanow *'action'* on 30 August, 1942.

The practice of shooting babies in the air, which was practised in the School was a preferred method and adopted mostly by the Ukrainians. The ostensible reason was to avoid ricocheting bullets that were a danger to the shooter, and were well documented in occurrences in the General Government. The dominant motivation

See also Statement of Friedrich August Glienke, 16. 6. 1961, 274-277.

²¹⁶ Ibid: Jewish witnesses stated that Rosenbaum wore an SS ring from which two spikes protruded as if they were large teeth, or maybe the eye-sockets.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

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was to show their total disdain for the Jews and show off their expertise.²¹⁸

Grave Sites in the School

Another practice introduced during training was the digging and preparation of graves at the sites of execution. Under supervision of SS- Scharführer Bohnert, the Jewish staff in the presence of the instructors and students dug these graves. The graves or pits were of exact Berlin manual dimensions of shape and size, but may be varied according to soil construction.

At Belzec (see appendix 2 for grave descriptions) ,where the ground was all sand, pits (between 10m. x 10m.x 6m. deep and the largest 65m. x 25m. x 6m deep) were dug by hand with straight sharp edges.

Later a machine was brought in to do the excavating. In these isolated execution sites (like Rabka) small and large pits (5m. x 5m. x 3m. deep), the digging was all done by hand. Initially, the Jews were told that this work was for '*air raid defence*', but they were never fooled and there was always one spare pit held over for unexpected arrivals²¹⁹.

When Hans Krüger organised the mass killing of 12,000 Jews on '*Bloody Sunday*' (12.10.1941) in Stanislawow he preferred to have the pits 'V' shaped so that body fluids settled below the corpses.

Another addition practised at the School and elsewhere, was the plank over the pit method used by in the villages in the Stryj valley. Alternatively, the plank was placed on the pit edge. In both cases,

²¹⁸ Ibid. No German witness from the Rabka trials has ever referred to 'live training' which is not surprising. The evidence comes mainly from Jewish witnesses (Ettinger, Goldfinger and Schon) all present at the School during the relevant period.

²¹⁹ Once the School was established it became the approved centre in east Galicia where small groups of prisoners were brought from outside areas for immediate execution. A phone call to the School reception was sufficient to organise an execution party.

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the victims were ordered to stand on the plank, in one case they fell into the pit when shot, in the other, the victim was propelled forward into the pit. The idea of executing Jews in the woods near the SD School appealed to the Gestapo for its exclusiveness.

Chapter 11

Methodology of Murder

Initially throughout the General Government, the Jewish victims were shot clothed, but this changed when orders came from the RSHA that all Jews were to be shot naked, the clothes cleaned and sent directly to the KdS in Krakow.²²⁰ The method of shooting and the selection of weapons were also displayed at the School. Rosenbaum preferred to shoot his victims in the back of the neck with a pistol, a practice he had learnt from Dr. Schöngarth in Lwow, but the instructors used all manner of weaponry depending on circumstances.²²¹ For running targets across the School, shooting range carbines were used.

Throughout the General Government and occupied areas, particularly on Soviet territory, the Einsatzgruppen initially executed their victims with more or less standard execution procedures using rifles, two shooters to a victim or properly convened execution squads with man to man, woman or child! There were no such considerations or niceties in Bad Rabka.

Maria Zak:

During one of the house searches, Rosenbaum ordered someone to open a box, in which there was a crystal

²²⁰ RAD: Statement of Rosenbaum cross-examination 20. 9. 1963, 1398-1411, referring to the witness Steiner's allegations of 19. 6. 1962.

²²¹ This was why this practice was introduced at Rabka when he returned.

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wrapped in an old fur over sleeve. The owner of it, while packing things, forgot to take out this piece of fur when there was an order to give away furs. As a punishment, he locked her in a toilet. He killed her the following day

Arthur Kuhnreich recalls his time in the School:



Fig 21: Arthur Kuhnreich

When the war started, I was 16 years old. I had a beautiful family: a sister, Hessa who was 18 years old and parents. Father's name was Elias, mother's was Braindl. We had a lumber export business, chemical farm fertilizers, and building materials. We were considered well off and respected by the townspeople. The Germans confiscated everything they could lay their hands on. We found ourselves stripped of all our possessions and for food had to barter clothing, linen, etc. At times, local farmers who knew us brought some potatoes and bread.

A Judenrat (Jewish Council) was established in Makow at the order of the Gestapo. They nominated an Obmann (Chairman), Beno Pastor. Asked to join, my father categorically refused. Every day, the Germans gave orders to the Judenrat demanding money, jewellery, furs, furniture,

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works of art and free labour. Every Jew in town from 16 to 60 was obligated work, without pay, of course. Makow had a population of approximately 5,000, of which 500 were Jews. All Jews had to wear a white armband with a blue Star of David.

In 1941, the Jewish population was about 450. This was a resort town, near Rabka and Zakopane. For some reason, our town was lucky; there were no killings as yet. All this changed drastically with the start of war with Russia in 1941.

At that time, the Gestapo took over the villa Marysin and made it its headquarters. The chief was named Schmidt. Every day, someone was beaten, arrested, or shot. The first one to be murdered was the Shochet of Makow, Mr. Mann, for ritually killing a chicken. A short time later, an elderly couple, Eliezer and Liba Grubner were murdered for selling yard goods in exchange for food. They raided a farmhouse in Bialka on the outskirts of town, wiping out the entire family of Artur Edelstein, an attorney, his wife, son, and daughter. Everyone was very fearful.

In the first week of December 1941, the Gestapo demanded twenty men to be sent to Auschwitz concentration camp for work. Father was arrested, but released. We were so happy they let him go, we could hardly believe it. My father said, 'I don't trust them. It must be a trick.' The next day, early in the morning, all of us, men, uncles, cousins, seven in all, went into hiding at the farm of Polish friends, Salapatek, who helped us many times. That same day, two Gestapo men showed up at our house asking for me. My mother told them that I was at work.

They said very politely to report to them in the evening and bring all my documents to be checked. My mother asked innocently if there was anything wrong. They said, 'No, just checking.' Naturally, I stayed in hiding, never slept or ate at the same place, afraid of being caught. Of the twenty men arrested and sent to Auschwitz, nobody survived. All were dead within two weeks' time and their ashes were returned

to their families for which they had to pay.

In Rabka Zdroj, a similar situation existed, but on an even more cruel and much larger scale. In 1940, the Gestapo confiscated a large building, St. Teresa School, and a couple of villas near a forest. This place became a training School for SS Gestapo (Sicherheit Polizei) in occupied Poland. The sole purpose of this School was to teach how to torture and kill people. From here, murderers were sent out to other places to torture and kill. Chief of this 'college' was Wilhelm Rosenbaum. In 1942, at age 25, he held the fate of thousands of Jews in his hands. In Rabka, he murdered around 1,000 Jews. Nearby, Nowy Targ had another murderer, Heinrich Hamann, who butchered hundreds of Jewish people.

In Makow, we lived in fear, not knowing whose turn would be next. On 28 April 1942, large contingents of Gestapo arrived early in the morning in towns of southern Poland: Rabka, Nowy Targ, Nowy Sacz, Makow, etc. They took Jewish people out of bed to the Gestapo, where they were shot. Being on the list of hostages, they came to get me. I made the mistake of sleeping at home that night. They knocked on the door and shouted, 'Aufmachen!' ('Open up!') Thinking that they were probably looking for men, my sister pushed me toward the window and urged me to jump out and escape. My father also jumped out and we hid in the cellar. When they opened the door, my mother was too stunned to answer, but my sister spoke up, saying that she did not know our whereabouts. They told her to get dressed and to come along. She was taken to the villa Marysin, which housed the Gestapo. After it quieted down upstairs, we came out of the cellar. Upon learning that my sister was arrested, I went to surrender myself so that she is freed. My parents were against that.

My father made a notation in a Holy Book, saying that his daughter was arrested and he hoped that she would not be harmed, that perhaps she will only be sent off to work. On

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my way to surrender myself, I met a former Polish policeman, who asked me where I was going. I told him. He said that it was already too late; all hostages, including my sister, were shot immediately against the wall of the Gestapo building, ten men and two women. He said that if I went there, they would do the same to me. I went home, very sad and depressed, but kept quiet, not being able to relay such terrible news to my parents. The Polish neighbours knew and also kept quiet. About three weeks later, my father found out from a Volksdeutch, who worked for the Gestapo. How my parents took this is very hard for me to describe. Father made another notation in the Holy Book, giving the date and describing what happened. In case someone survived, Kaddish (Memorial Prayer) could be said for my sister. The Holy Book was found after the war by a friend of mine, and because it had our business seal with the name on it, he knew it belonged to us. He found me and mailed it to me.

In 1941, the Gestapo raided the house of Warenhaupt, who was a barber in town. He had four sons, one of whom, Dolek, lost his life on the front in 1939. Three were active in the Underground. One day, while visiting their parents in Makow, the Gestapo came to arrest them. They jumped the two Gestapo men, banging their heads together, thereby knocking them out. They escaped. Two of them, Kuba and Heniek, survived the war. Maniek was recognised in Katowice, in late 1942, while cutting hair in a barber shop. That same Volksdeutch who told my father the 'news' about my sister, recognized Maniek Warenhaupt and shot him on the spot. Sometime later, the brothers Kuba and Heniek, together with partisan friends came to Makow. They took this murderer out in the middle of the night, read him the Underground death sentence and shot him for the murder of their brother.

The weather in the months of May, June and July 1942 was beautiful. All was in bloom. But at the same time, ominous clouds were gathering over the Jewish people.

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Everyone felt that something terrible was about to happen. During that summer, my father and I were on a list of employees at a brush factory, supposedly employed. The owner, Mr. Emil Pierog, was my father's friend from School. This used to be a brick factory and the tall chimney served to hide the antenna of the Polish Underground radio transmitter. Mr. Pierog was a leader in the Underground, but we did not know it at that time.

I was afraid to go home, staying away to avoid capture. One day, it was 1 August 1942; there was a commotion near our house. Noticing a local unarmed policeman, I asked him what was going on. He told me that my mother was arrested and held at the prison, the reason being that the Gestapo had me on their list of three men who were needed in Rabka. I told him, 'You can take me with you, but make sure my mother is freed.' He kept his promise. Mother cried and was very upset about my surrender. I told her not to worry, it might be safer for me in Rabka and it was only for work. That same policeman escorted me to Rabka camp. Before boarding the train, my aunt, Kaila Kuhnreich Lebron, her husband Jonas, son Romek, and daughter Henia, who had come to stay with us to avoid going to the Cracow ghetto, gave me postcards, with instructions that I should write when I arrived, so that my parents would not worry. It was strictly forbidden to do that, but the policeman mailed it for me.

On the second day of August, 1942, I found myself together with one hundred young men between 18 and 28 in the Rabka camp. We had to be ready for work at six o'clock in the morning. Breakfast consisted of dark warm water, nothing else. At noontime, there was soup and one slice of bread which had to last the entire day. We were building a sports complex and to work 14-15 hours a day at a fast pace, seven days a week. Armed guards watched us and beat us for no reason at all. They told us how much had to be accomplished every day; if not, ten of us would be shot. If

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they thought that you worked too slowly, you were shot on the spot. At times, the Gestapo brought large transports of Jews from nearby towns to be executed in the forest. We were forced to dig the ditches, and then bury the victims. We were forced to watch a hanging of ten innocent people. This was part of Wilhelm Rosenbnaum's entertainment. Besides being exhausted, desperate and horrified, we were also starved all the time. Some of our people could not take it and committed suicide. Many were on the brink of it.

When leaving for Rabka, I had promised my cousin, Henia Lebron, that I would write another card to the address of our Polish neighbour, Mr. Kokot, and that I would tell how it was at the camp. I wrote that it would have been better for me to have gone where my sister Hessa was. They understood my message. I received two food packages from home; at the time, I did not know that it had been smuggled in by Mrs. Genowefa Pierog, who risked her life doing it. She was the wife of my father's friend, Mr. Emil Pierog. Mrs. Pierog, with her two daughters, survived the war, but her husband, Emil, was arrested in the summer of 1944, sent to Zakopane, tortured, and then executed in the Montelupich prison in Cracow for Underground activities.

The other two men from Makow, besides myself, sent to Rabka, were Feingold and Fischer. Rumours began circulating that any day now, the whole southern part of Poland would become Judenrein (free of Jews). The feared end came on a sunny Sunday, 1 September 1942.

Wilhelm Rosenbaum and his cohorts assembled all Jews from Rabka at our camp. He also removed from the camp anyone with red hair, which he especially hated, those who wore glasses, and, in general, anyone who did not pass his scrutiny. They were all herded of on a freight train to their final destination, Belzec. One of the three from Makow, Feingold, was among those taken, because he happened to have red hair. That same day, the Jews of Makow, about 160 in number, were packed into freight cars after being ordered

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by SS Officer Heinrich Karhof to assemble at the railroad station. Among them was Szmuel Zainwel Beer, the Rabbi of Makow. All were sent to the crematorium in Belżec. Out of 600,000, not one person survived.

About 92 Jews escaped into the surrounding villages. They could not hide out for very long. They were captured and gathered up at the villa Marysin, the Gestapo headquarters. They were kept in the cellar under inhuman conditions for two to three weeks, and then taken out into the yard, one at a time, and shot. All were killed and buried right there. The Obman of the Makow Judenrat, Beno Pastor, shot himself. One Jewish woman was saved by the stationmaster of Makow. He received a medal from Yad Vashem in Jerusalem after the war. Jewish workers in Zakopane were all executed on that fateful day of 1 September 1942, among them, my cousin, Romek Lebron.

I was one of 100 men left in the Rabka camp for the time being. The atmosphere among us was that of hopelessness. We knew that the past had been destroyed forever and we did not see any future. Even the Gestapo looked depressed, for there were no more Jews to be killed. Here and there, some were dragged out of hiding, from bunkers, but very few in comparison to the past, and that made the SS unhappy. Also, they did not relish the idea of going to fight at the front. Three of us, Unterberger, Schiff and I, were assigned as gardeners for Rosenbaums's girlfriend, Ann Marie Bachus.

A villa belonging to a rich Pole was confiscated for their love nest. It had a big orchard. We were to work, doing gardening, picking and storing the fruit in the basement. Every morning, we were escorted by an armed guard to work and back.

The three of us wanted some apples, but all were afraid, until I got careless and before leaving work, I stuffed some into my knickers' legs down in the basement. It seems the guard must have noticed and promptly reported me.

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Rosenbaum and his girlfriend, with other SS, were having a dinner party upstairs. One SS came down to check it out. He ordered me to open my knickers and the apples fell out. Seeing the crime, he punched me hard in the jaw a couple of times and said not to do this ever again. Next time, just ask. Of course, I never did.

After a while, we thought that this episode had been forgotten. Rosenbaum did not. One evening, after 9:00 P.M., armed guards came to tell the three of us and seven others who must have sinned, that Rosenbaum wanted to see us in his office. We cried, said good-bye to our friends and thought that this must be the end. The guards took the ten of us to the Gestapo building. We waited in the hallway in utter terror. We saw Polish prisoners brought in for interrogation and heard their screams; they looked awful. Around midnight, Rosenbaum showed up with a cane in his hand. We were lined up in a row; each one was hit with the cane over the head, once forward and once back. Two huge bumps swelled up on each head. I had one bump, being at the end of the line. It was painful and we had swollen heads, but were glad to be left alive. We returned to the camp and went to work the next day as usual. This was a first in the history of this camp. We still worked on the sports complex which was carved out of a forest.

In the middle of February 1943, the camp was ordered to be divided in half. Fifty workers were sent to the Plaszow concentration camp. I even volunteered, thinking about escape. There was no chance at all.

Supply & Demand

To fit in with training schedules Jews were often snatched off the streets in towns and villages and bussed into the School from a wide area: Nowy-Sacz, Lwow, Tarnow, Krakow etc.²²² Several witnesses

²²² Ibid: Ettinger, Schon and Goldfinger - Statements and interview with the

declared that Rosenbaum hacked hands and feet off Jewish children, then ordered the children tied to trees, and then proceeded to shoot these atrociously tortured human targets himself.



Fig. 22: Fir Tree²²³ (execution location) (KK)

On the back of the photograph sent to the author was written:
'Silver fir tree next to where people were shot. It was hit by so
many bullets that its sap ran like tears'.

author.

²²³ Photograph by kind permission of Krystyna Kynst sent to the author. During my visit in 1998, I found several mature trees that still bore the marks of bullet holes. The bark of these trees was still weeping after all this time. I confirmed this with the help Jan Krakowski (Secretary of the present day School for deaf and dumb children) and a metal detector which registered when placed against these locations.

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Mendel Braun:

Johan Swoboda was known as a work inspector in Nowy Sącz. His job was to divide work between people. Once, he gathered all the sick Jews and sent them from Nowy Sącz to Rabka to work. Later on, it turned out that there was an SS school where SS-men were taught how to shoot. The people supposedly sent by Swoboda to work served as targets. After a short time, these people were shot.²²⁴

During his quieter moments, Rosenbaum would take pot shots at Jews from his office window, from his horse carriage, while on horse, or just walking the grounds. In one of his more enlightened exhibitions, Rosenbaum called on one of his instructors to demonstrate to a gathered audience the School's torture techniques that had become a daily occurrence. The selected victim had an iron rod placed across his neck. The instructor balanced his full weight on the rod, rocking from side to side until he had crushed the man's neck until he died. Another victim was brought forward and the exercise was repeated with variations.²²⁵

It wasn't just the Jews who were subjected to this inhuman behaviour as there are many recorded instances of similar atrocities committed against POWs under German control, particularly the Russians: some were tortured with bars of red-hot iron; their eyes gouged out, their stomachs ripped open; their feet, hands, fingers, ears, and noses hacked off.²²⁶

During the Barbarossa campaign, two Russians, political and military personnel were found nailed to a stake with a five-point star carved on their bodies. Another Russian soldier found nearby, was burned and his ears cut off.²²⁷

All forms of murder and torture were carried out here at Bad

²²⁴ Braun Mendel, a testimony from 25 July 1947, no 3460, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny w Warszawie

²²⁵ Ibid

²²⁶ Lord Russell of Liverpool, *Scourge of the Swastika*, London, 1964, 58.

²²⁷ Ibid.

Rabka: shooting, hanging, and beatings. It is estimated that over 2000 Jews from 30 neighbouring villages were held and the victims executed in the School grounds. It was in many cases murder by appointment.²²⁸

Pious Jews brought into the School were received with particular satisfaction as it gave the reception cadre the opportunity for entertainment and extend their anti- Semitic cruelty even more intently. These unfortunates were made to run the gauntlet of the SS and Ukrainians, who beat them mercilessly before being imprisoned in the specially prepared cells in the stables and pig stys that had been adapted for this purpose.²²⁹ Kept imprisoned, without food or water in filthy conditions, they waited for selection at the whim of the Commandant.

Again, to fit in with schedules and the curriculum of daily instruction, a selected number of these pious Jews were brought out of the cells to be humiliated, and ridiculed before being marched to the pits that had been dug in the woods. Stripped naked, their scrolls cut into shreds; they fell or walked the plank before being shot into the pit crying '*Shema Yisrael*' (the Jewish prayer to be repeated at death).

These actions were all staged managed performances in the presence of V.I.Ps, senior and junior SS ranks candidates from all

²²⁸ RAD. Rosenbaum cross examination- 10. .5. 1962 in answer to allegations by former employment Head in Neu-Markt, Grimmlinger, Statement 4. 7. 1962, 13. Grimmlinger opened a whole 'bag of worms', exposing the Weissmann, Hamann, Rosenbaum conspiracy to murder Jews in the School. Grimmlinger's office supplied the Jews from Neu-Markt on receiving instructions from Rosenbaum via the Jew Paul Beck. Grimmlinger was a regular visitor to the School and was present when executions were taking place. He remembers on one occasion over 100 Jews were being prepared to be shot at the shooting range. He was also privy to the later shooting of Beck. There were many murders of 'picked-up' Jews by the Border Police. It was an accepted procedure for a phone call to be made to the School just to arrange a grave. The SS would just turn up, murder the victims, and leave until the next time. It was only necessary to inform Rosenbaum or Bohnert by phone. No records were kept. See also Rosenbaum statement 9. 8. 1962, 993/69, the witness Dattner.

²²⁹ Ibid. The cellars and stables, which were used for imprisonment, are directly under present day converted sleeping quarters.

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over the General Government. To cover up their murder, Rosenbaum ordered the Rabka Town Clerk, Cheslav Tribowski, to register the deaths as '*victims of heart attack*'.²³⁰

²³⁰ Ibid. Rosenbaum cross-examination, 3. 1. 1962, 675-681.

Chapter 12

Operational Actions within the School²³¹

In addition to the recognised form of static targets, Jews were brought to the School specifically to be used as ‘*running targets*’ across the shooting range. For training on the shooting range, buses laden with children came from Auschwitz, and were released like ‘*Hares*’ to be shot as moving targets.²³² These incidents were widely known and were not isolated or unusual occurrences.

We also have corroborated reports in the camps and ghettos, of Jews rounded up for liquidation who were sent running and used as target practice.²³³ We have other corroboration and confirmed reports from a number of locations where Jews were used for shooting targets at the whim of the perpetrator, particularly in the Janowska and Plaszow camps. In the town of Makov Podhalanski, near Zakopane, Jews were taken to the Gestapo headquarters at the Marishia Hotel, where they were tortured by recruits from the Rabka Sipo Academy, then taken to the courtyard one by one and used for target practice.²³⁴

In the village of Bely Rast, Krasnaya Polyana district,²³⁵ a 12-year-old boy was placed on the porch of a house where he was used

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Lord Russell of Liverpool, ‘*The Scourge of the Swastika*’, London, 1964, 212.

²³⁴ Rabka and District Memorial Book for the town of Makov Podhalanski.

²³⁵ ‘*Soviet Government Statements on Nazi Atrocities*’, London 1946, 19-20. (Report signed by Molotov, People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Moscow, and 6.1.42). See also Russell, ‘*Swastika*’, 119.

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as target practice, by the SS who then moved around the village taking pot-shots at other children running in the streets. In the village of Voskresenskoye, Dubinin district, a three year old boy was selected for target practice and shot with machine-gun fire.²³⁶ In the village of Basmanova, Glinka district, 200 School children working in the fields were rounded up and used for target practice.²³⁷ In the village of Vinnitsa over 500 Jews had been rounded up in the market place where they tore up their paper money. The children, and there were many, made a run for it across the square only to be picked off by the marksmen:

'I saw children being shot as though they were hares and you could see a number of children's bodies lying in the street'.²³⁸

It wasn't only the students of national-socialism that underwent instruction. The Jews had to undergo courses of instruction, but of a very different nature, Michael Ettinger:

Selected Capos of the Jewish prisoners were regularly ordered by Scharführer Bohnert to attend instruction classes which were usually arranged early in the morning. We were taken to the fields behind the School where we were given instructions as to how to conduct ourselves when called upon to dig pits. We were not stupid and knew that people were being shot in the woods. At first they told us that the pits were for anti-aircraft purposes, but this lie had no meaning to us.

After a time, even the Germans knew these lies were not practical. The pit had to be dug to precise measurements which would be given at the time. On arrival of the Commandant we had to make ourselves scarce and hide in the bushes with our backs to the pit. On the sound of a whistle we would return to the pit and work to instructions, which meant arranging the dead bodies, and then filling in

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Klee, Dressen, Reiss, *'Those were the Days'*. 120.

the pits to a level.

Of course, some of us looked at what was going on: groups of people were brought to the edge of the pit and made to undress. Then they were positioned at the edge and shot in the back of the head. The shouts, pleas and screams were terrible.²³⁹



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Fig. 23: Naked Jews with a child on the right just before execution

Leon Trzesniower as above:

In the evening, after finishing our job, we were taken to the wood near 'Tereska' so that we could see the executions. They were brought 10 at a time, they undressed, and then they were placed in front of a grave and shot in the back of their head, in the neck. After the grave filled with the victims, we had to bury it. After we finished,

²³⁹ RAD. Statement of Ettinger and interview with the author Haifa 1997.

²⁴⁰ <http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/39492.html>

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Oberscharführer Kruk ordered us to pick leaves from trees and lay them on the grave and to pray for the next victims. However, during the next day, there was 'only' beatings done by Rosenbaum, who, when he noticed that the victim was bleeding, was satisfied.

Rosenbaum gave the orders for all executions, and was present at all the following ascertained actions. These actions of both mass shootings and individual shootings were carried out according to a specific plan based upon trained shooting practices in the General Government in which Rosenbaum was personally engaged. Only cases where there was direct evidence against Rosenbaum were the subject of later trials. We will never know about certainly many other incidents.

In the case of mass executions, the Jews that were to be shot were accommodated during the day in the bunker next to the School, which was guarded by Ukrainians. Where smaller groups were concerned, which was frequently the case in executions of '*picked up*' Jews, the victims were locked up in the so-called '*clinks*' (cells).²⁴¹ One of these was the cellar under the pig sty where the victims were made to lie face down on earth floors.²⁴² According to the size of the group, a number of Jew-workers were ordered by Scharführer Bohnert to dig the graves hard and fast to be ready on the day of execution. By the afternoon, the work of digging the grave always had to be finished ready for the executions that usually took place early evening. Small groups of 3 - 5 people, sometimes more, were taken out of the bunkers to the graves and executed.

The gravediggers had to come out of the graves as soon as they saw the victims arrive in order not to be shot themselves. The Jews had improvised their own method based on their experience to avoid being stuck in the pit: from a depth of 3 metres, the workers built steps into the side of the pit, which enabled them to climb out

²⁴¹ Ibid. Statements of the Jews - Derschowitz, Kolber and Dattner and Goodrich.

²⁴² Ibid

when in a hurry. It was frequently the case that the victims brought to the grave had already been beaten up and were ordered to undress and stand as directed. During this time, the gravediggers were either sent back to the School or had to hide in the undergrowth or amongst the trees in the woods some 20 metres from the graveside depending on circumstances. If ordered to hide nearby, they were ordered to turn away from the shooting until ordered to return and seal the grave.

At the time of these executions, Rosenbaum would appear with his SS Party. Sometimes terrible scenes took place. The victims screamed in Yiddish for fear of death and begged for their lives. Mothers were imploring the SS to shoot them first, before shooting their children. Women refused to undress and their clothes were ripped off by force from their bodies. Then the chosen Jews were ordered, by force if necessary, to stand at the edge of the graves or sit around the graveside. They were killed by a single shot in the nape of the neck. The bodies fell into the grave or were given a kick by their executioner right after the shot. Other methods were also used: the plank was placed across the pit, and the victim was invited to walk across the plank to the centre when they were shot.²⁴³

The grave was a horrifying sight. The bodies were lying in total disorder, one on top of the other and covered in blood. The Jewish workers were called, usually with the blow of a whistle, were sent into the graves to arrange the bodies. Often they would notice that some of the Jews were not dead. Rosenbaum or other executioners would fire additional shots to finish them off. After the shootings the bodies were covered with lime and then with earth. The execution site was then sealed over. The Jewish workers, taken to the School where they were cleaned and repaired removing Jewish Stars etc, then either sent to Krakow or re-used locally, collected the clothes of the victims.

On 20 May 1942, Rosenbaum ordered through the Judenrat at

²⁴³ Ibid. Statements of the Jews - Form, Goodrich, Derschowitz, Kolba, Mendel, Lustig, Kesterbaum, Gold. Frolich, Farber, Susskind, Statter, Steiner, Kalfus, Grossbard, Lonker, and Zwi Schiffeldrin.

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least 45 old and disabled Jews from Rabka (those that he had previously noted) to come to the School. Among them, there was the mother of the Jewess Nogala (Mrs Pasto), as well as the grandmother of the Jewess Schon (Mrs Ernestine Kranz), and her uncle (Chaim Beim). The grandson of Mrs Kranz, Mark Goldfinger, 11 years, remembers the day his grandmother (Mrs Kranz) was taken away by the local Polish police officer and a representative of the SS.²⁴⁴

When the Polish Police and SS called at our house, they asked for Ernestine Kranz. My mother told them that she wasn't at home, to which the SS man said that my mother should come instead.

My grandmother must have heard the conversation as she suddenly appeared and identified herself. She was taken away to the SS School.

On the next day, I took some sandwiches to the School, hoping to give them to grandmother. I approached the School from the rear and when I reached the clearing by the woods I saw that a grave was being prepared. I was watching from behind a bush when suddenly a Ukrainian guard saw me and told me to clear off as fast as possible.

That same evening, my grandmother was among a number of Jews who were shot into the grave. We heard the shots as we lived close to the School. My sister Sarah, who worked for Rosenbaum, told me later that Rosenbaum had come to her and regretted that her grandmother had to be shot, but assured her that he hadn't allowed her to suffer.

The Jews concerned: the ones Rosenbaum had marked with a cross in his lists came during the day to the School, not expecting the worse. After their arrival, the Jews were

²⁴⁴ Interview Mark Goldfinger and Sarah Schon (brother and sister) with the author June 1997, Israel and London. A few days after the murder of Mrs Kranz, Sarah Schon identified her grandmother's dress that had arrived in the laundry room for processing. She recognised the dress as the one worn by her grandmother on Shabbat.

locked in the bunker next to the School building and guarded by Ukrainians. They had to lay flat down, with their faces towards the earth floor.²⁴⁵

That same day, Jewish workers had started to dig a grave at the executions site behind the School. SS -Scharführer Bohnert had chosen about 20-25 Jewish workers to do this work. At 5pm, the locked up victims in the stalls were taken in small groups by the Ukrainian guards, who were beating them and urging them on to the execution area. The gravediggers were concealed in the bushes nearby, facing away from the execution site. The Jewish victims were ordered to undress and then to stand or sit around the grave. One Jewess who refused to undress had her clothes ripped off her body. Simultaneously, Rosenbaum arrived with a posse of Sipo-SD and immediately started the action. Rosenbaum personally shot at least six Jews with his pistol in the back of the neck. Sipo-SD - Bohnert, Oder, Bandura, and the Ukrainian Wosdolowski all shot Jews into the grave. The bodies were arranged and the graves treated as generally described above.²⁴⁶

Rosenbaum believed the Jewish workers from Bad Rabka to be insufficient for the work to be carried out at the School. He requested more workers to complete the projects he had in mind. The Employment Office of Nowy Sacz was the Central Employment Agency for Jewish labour, so he made a number of requests for more labour. Between May and July, 1942 at least three working transports were sent to Bad Rabka from Nowy-Sacz, on the confirmation order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Security Police (Dr. Schöngarth).²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Ibid

²⁴⁶ Ibid

²⁴⁷ Rosenbaum states that he made it his policy to obtain Schöngarth's approval for all his actions. This was not the conclusion of the court.

Chapter 13

The Nowy Sacz Actions²⁴⁸

In late 1940, Nowy-Sacz had become a centre for a Jewish labour pool that was drawn from towns and villages in the surrounding area. The camp was established in the Carpathian Mountains in the village of Lipie near the town of Koluszowa. Here the Jews were put to useless work breaking up rocks and transferring the debris from place to place. Not far from Koluszowa and near the town of Debica, was the labour camp Pustkow where the Jews from the Lipie camp were often sent to join hard labour gangs building roads. This was a cruel camp whose Commandant, Schmidt, hanged Jews on a regular basis.²⁴⁹

The Gestapo Chief, in Nowy-Sacz (1941 - 1943), was SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich Hamann, (who was no less efficient than Rosenbaum) as he had already shot 881 Jews in the nearby Mishana Dolne,²⁵⁰ and shot his own deputy SS- Untersturmführer Koster in a

²⁴⁸ Court of Bochum (Germany) with sentences between 1967 and 1971: Crimes in: Neu-Sandoz (Nowy Sacz) in August 1942.

Hans Wilhelm Bar: 3 years imprisonment.

²⁴⁹ Interview with Norman Salsitz, survivor of the Pustkow camp in Washington DC, November 1997. There were thousands of camps, of all sizes and for many purposes in Poland and Ukraine. Many of the camps sound or are spelt very much the same. For reference purposes: Hitlerowskie Obozy Na Ziemiach Polskich W Latach 1939 - 1945, obtained from the Polish Underground Trust, West London.

²⁵⁰ Rosenbaum Verdict: Mishana Dolne, nearer to Rabka but was under the jurisdiction of the Nowy-Sacz Gestapo. Where Rosenbaum chose his execution place in the Rabka Academy, Hamann chose the village of Mishana Dolne for his

drunken brawl following celebrations in the Casino after the shooting of 300 Jews in the town cemetery. Hamann was the organiser of this transport to Rabka, and later to the final clearing and murder all the Jews in the big ghetto in August, 1942.²⁵¹ Nowy Sacz was adjacent to Rabka and was the main supplier of Jewish labour to the SD Academy. A separate prison block of 12 large, six medium and 3 single cells had been set aside for Jews supervised by the SD Academy reject Bornholt.²⁵²

Prison Guard Bornholt gives us an interesting view as to the attitude to the shooting of Jews:

Members of the Grenzpolizeikommissariat, Krakow (Nowy Sacz), were, with very few exceptions, quite happy to take part in shooting Jews. They had a ball! Obviously they can't say that today! Nobody failed to turn up...I want to repeat that people today give a false impression when they say that the actions against Jews were carried out unwillingly. There was great hatred against the Jews; it was revenge, and they wanted money and gold. Don't let's kid ourselves; there was always something up for grabs during the Jewish actions. Everywhere you went there was always something for the taking. The poor Jews were brought in, the rich Jews were fetched and their homes were scoured.²⁵³

Further Actions June 1942

In May 1942, the first transport was organised from Nowy Sacz by

executions. He demanded that the Judenrat collect an exorbitant amount of money to stop the deportations. When the Judenrat could not pay, Hamann gathered 800 Jews in the Square and murdered them. Hamann, after the war was sentenced to life imprisonment for the Mishana Dolne murders.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid. Statement of Johann Bornholt, 19 September 1962, 96-102. Bornholt was a police officer with the Grenzpolizeikommissariat (Krakow District).

²⁵³ Ibid. See also Klee, *Those Were The Days*, 76.

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Herr Swoboda, Head of the Employment Department for Jewish workers.²⁵⁴ The Judenrat kept a file of all fit Jews available for transport. Those unfit for work were not registered and taken to the cemetery to be shot. When a registered Jew died, the card was marked with a cross in the files and then destroyed.²⁵⁵

A call went out from the Judenrat to the Jewish Police to round up male Jews between the age of 15 and 40, and bring them to the former *Maccabi* clubhouse. After a short fitness, inspection by the Employment Office a selection was made. At least 60, healthy and fit Jewish men of the required age group were selected and ordered to present themselves with their luggage in a few days at the Jewish Employment Office in Nowy Sacz. On 9 May, 1942, the transport with the Jewish-workers left by train for Bad Rabka.²⁵⁶ The transport was received in the afternoon by the Rabka Judenrat, Paul Beck (from the School), and Scharführer Bohnert. The transport escort handed over a list of names to Beck who brought the Jews to the local baths where they were shaven. Beck then allocated them accommodation in one of the three houses in the work camp.

The following morning the newcomers were brought to the School and received by Scharführer Bohnert who checked the transport list. Rosenbaum arrived in a horse drawn carriage. Beck informed the Jews: '*Here comes Leutnant Rosenbaum!*' Rosenbaum made a speech and expressed with sharp words that one had to work and work again. Whoever did not work was '*dealt with*'. Accompanied by Bohnert, Rosenbaum inspected the Jewish workers. The Jews were divided into 4 or 5 groups and each group had a Kapo who were chosen from the ranks. The Kapos selected

²⁵⁴ Ibid. The Jews Grun and Regina Weiss.

²⁵⁵ Several Jews were able to escape unnoticed with the help of the J.E.O. By marking up cards 'dead', these cards were destroyed by the German Authorities, along with the identity.

²⁵⁶ RAD. On this transport from Nowy-Targ were the Jews: Statter, Derschowitz, Henry Frolich, Joseph Grossbard, Alexander Lustig, Mendel Lustig, Kolber, Appel, Farber, Stammberger, Steiner, Lonker, Sammy Frolich (brother of Henry), Zwickler, Einhorn, Wenger, Wolkowitz, Kauffer, Buxbaum, Gutwirt, Kalman, Tiefenbrunner, Wildfeuer, Wildstein and Schermer.

were the Jews Farber, Sammy Frolich, Lonker, Hennek, Grossbard, and Joseph Grossbard.

The Jewish workers were sent to their places of work in the School. Separate groups were set to work levelling the terrain around the School, other groups had to build a cellar under the Pig stys, - later to be the prison bunker for the prisoners - and the biggest building project, the installation of the shooting range, which was planned a few hundred metres behind the School in the woods. In order to make clear the lines of fire on this range, considerable earth masses had to be removed.²⁵⁷

Already, Rosenbaum and Bohnert, during their inspection walks, had made notes of individual Jews. Rosenbaum had a list of eight Jews in his notebook. He would approach a work-group and say to a Jew, '*What's your name?*' This selection was entirely random. In no way did it concern weaklings or Jews unfit for work. It may have been because the Jews wore glasses, or looked in a particular way. Among the '*noted*' Jews was the fit and healthy butcher Wieldstein who happened to have a scar on his face.

For the time being, these '*noted*' eight Jews were ignored. Then on 26 May 1942, very shortly after, these '*noted*' Jews were separated from their work groups, brought to the bunkers, and imprisoned. A large posse of Jewish gravediggers supervised by SS-Scharführer Bohnert and Ukrainian guards went to the woods and prepared a mass grave. That same day, the eight Jews were paraded before an assembled class and shot single handedly by Rosenbaum in the back of the neck. Among them was the gravedigger Schermer who probably was not part of the chosen victims, but was in the grave to arrange the corpses and had failed to get out in time.²⁵⁸

On the same day, in the evening, sixty Jews were brought to the execution site. Supervised personally by Rosenbaum who demonstrated to the assembled class how each Jew was to be shot. The Jews were made to undress, which brought laughter from

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

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Rosenbaum because they couldn't undress quickly enough, then in small groups were made to face the pit and shot in the presence of the other waiting Jews. The witnesses to all this were the Jewish gravediggers hiding in the nearby bushes waiting for the '*whistle order*' from Bohnert to cover the bodies and fill the grave.²⁵⁹

Further actions in Nowy Sacz²⁶⁰

In June 1942, a further transport of Jewish workers from Nowy Sacz arrived at the railway station to be picked up by Beck, SS-Scharführer s Bohnert and Proch. Several of the Jews from this transport were shot en route to the School. The others were dealt with in the normal way.

At the end of July 1942, in the early afternoon, another transport of Jewish workers arrived from Nowy Sacz. Some of the 100 strong group were orthodox Jews with '*pajes*', beards and dressed in traditional clothing: some of them were carrying holy books and Torah Scrolls. The Jewish workers were young, fit, and healthy to be employed on the terrain or building sites in the School. The Jews were met by Beck, the SS staff, and Ukrainians and taken to the baths as described above. On the march to the School, between 5 and 10 Jews from this transport were shot by the escort, Some of the corpses were left on the spot at the side of the road, others collected later by lorry and taken to the School to be buried with other actions of the day.²⁶¹

When these Jews arrived at the School, SS staff and Ukrainians organised games. The Jews were driven back and forth in wheelbarrows, the elder Jews had to sit in the wheelbarrows, and the younger Jews had to push them through dirt and water pools until the wheelbarrows turned over. The Torah Scrolls were taken from the religious Jews were destroyed or kept back to allow these Jews to take them to the graves. This was not a consideration but an

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. 410. 16,000 Jews deported from this region to Bełżec.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

added torment as it produced laughter among the SS. Dogs were let loose on the Jews to frighten them, for fun. Their tormentors were also beating them with sticks. Rosenbaum took part in this scene by whipping the Jews and screaming to these anguished people: *'Where is your God now, you damned Jews?'*²⁶²

During the day, about 20 Jewish workers had excavated a large grave in the woods. The pit measured 20m. X 4m. and 3m. (deep) About 12 - 15 Jews were picked out from the newly arrived transport and separated from the others. That evening at least 59 Jews were executed in the woods. Rosenbaum personally directed the execution in the presence of eager onlookers and was carried out by the SS staff and Ukrainian Instructors as described above.

Action Against Picked-Up Family July 1942.

Approximately one month before the deportation en-bloc of the Rabka Jews to Belzec (end of August), Rosenbaum ordered 5 Jewish workers to dig a grave in the woods.²⁶³ The digging was supervised by the Ukrainian Jawoski. The Jewish workers had to hurry-up in order to finish on time. Some diversion brought Jawoski to say the following:

'let's go, hurry up, if Rosenbaum finds you still working, he will kill you all!' All of a sudden, Jawoski ordered: *'Get out of the hole and disappear 10 metres in the vicinity; when you hear a whistle, show yourselves again!'*

The Jewish-workers hid in the surrounding bushes and trees. Directly after that, Rosenbaum, whose voice could already be heard, appeared with SS -Scharführer Bohnert. A family: father, mother and a 20 -year old daughter with their grandchild were brought to the graveside. They were *'picked up'* Jews, namely the kind that was either caught with Aryan papers, denounced, or had moved

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid. Among them were the Jews Form (who had just arrived from Neu-Markt), Susskind, Goodrich, Kalfus and others.

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outside of their residential area.²⁶⁴ The victims first realised what was about to happen when they saw the pit and started to scream. They were forced to undress and stand on the edge of the pit. The mother of the grandchild begged Rosenbaum to shoot her before the child. Rosenbaum shot the child first and then the mother.

After the execution of this family, the Jewish-workers appeared on the command of a whistle. Susskind was ordered to get into the pit and arrange the bodies. When Susskind touched the child, he almost fainted. Rosenbaum yelled and cursed: *'You dog, if you do not turn these people around, I will shoot you!'* Form took his working colleague out of the pit and took his place in the pit. During this time, Rosenbaum was standing at the edge of the pit and was watching Form working who was now covered in blood. Subsequently, the grave, as usual, was closed and levelled.²⁶⁵

Murder by Appointment.

At about the same time as the *'group'* hanging at the School was about to take place organised by Rosenbaum, the Zakopane Gestapo team led by SS-Hauptsturmführer Weissmann and SS-Scharführer Bottcher, brought to the School a large group of people and placed them in the detention block. It is not known if they were Jews or Poles. The Rabka Jews, supervised by SS-Scharführer Bohnert prepared a very large grave in the woods. In the late afternoon the prisoners were brought out in small groups to the execution site where they were individually shot into the pit.²⁶⁶

About two days later, the Zakopane team returned with a single Polish prisoner and took him directly to the stable block where he was hanged with rope supplied by Bohnert. The Jewish workers took the body to the woods for burial. Some days after this hanging,

²⁶⁴ Ibid. Statement of the Jew Form.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. Statement of Rosenbaum, 20. 9. 1963, 1398-1411, cross examination of the Jews Steiner and Blatt. It is probable that this group, which numbered about 50 and may have been political executions as they were shot, clothed which was unusual.

the Zakopane Gestapo brought a family of American Jews (named Falk or Feig) to the School. They had attempted to cross the border into Slovakia but were caught. The family were taken to the woods in the usual way where they were individually shot by Proch.²⁶⁷

Group Hangings.

A few days before Sunday 30 August, 1942, when the deportations took place in both Bad Rabka and Neu-Markt to Bełżec, a new type of execution took place, deviating from the now practised methods. News about a forthcoming deportation had filtered through to the Jewish population. Some of the Jews belonged to the permanent staff at the School decided to escape. Two of the escapees, the brothers Czarnowicki, both of whom worked in the tailor's shop, managed to reach Krakow. More Jews escaped when they started to close off the accommodation of the Jewish workers, whose 3 houses were below the School premises right on the Slonnka River. Based on this development, Rosenbaum decided to put a plan to the test, in order to avoid further escapes.

Immediately after work, the Jewish workers were ordered to gather for a roll call on open space behind the School. Not less than 150 Jews paraded. In a barn type shed on the building site, at the back of the School, preparations were made for a hanging. Ropes were placed or attached with hooks on horizontal beams. Underneath there were boxes or barrels covered by boards. Apart from the Jewish workers, Rosenbaum, SS -Bohnert, Oder, Badura, Paul Beck (Jewish foreman) the Ukrainians instructors and students were present.

Ten Jews were brought to the spot, among them was the young boy Edek Liebenheimer who was Rosenbaum's '*boot boy*'. All the victims had been locked in the '*clink*'(cells). Also among these chosen Jews was one member of the Judenrat, Simon Zollmann. The 10 Jews were placed on the prepared barrels and boards. The

²⁶⁷ Ibid. Although denied by Rosenbaum, witnesses stated that over 2000 Jews were murdered in the School.

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ropes were put around their necks. Rosenbaum yelled to the gathered mass that workers had escaped and therefore these Jews would hang as a deterrent. The gathered Jews were ordered to look in the direction of the execution place.



Fig 24: SS-Oberscharführer Walter Proch²⁶⁸

The boards were pushed from under the victims feet so they fell; the ropes tightened and strangled the victims. It didn't all go according to plan. Liebenheimer's noose ripped or he slid through the noose of the rope and fell on the ground. Liebenheimer tried to escape; When the Sipo-SD were about to shoot him, Rosenbaum yelled in wild excitement: *'Do not shoot, hang again!'* Liebenheimer begged Rosenbaum: 'Mr Untersurmführer, please shoot me!' Rosenbaum yelled at him: *'You dog, for you I am not an 2nd Lieutenant anymore, you will be hanged!'* He was hanged a second time. This time, the noose also ripped and he again fell to the ground. The third attempt was successful.²⁶⁹

The victims were taken by the Jewish-workers to the grave in the woods. One living victim, carried by Kalfus, was shot on the

²⁶⁸ SS-Oberscharführer Walter Proch, who served with the SD in Rabka. (Yad Vashem archives)

²⁶⁹ Ibid. Statements: The Jews Form, Goodrich, Derschowitz, Kolber, M, Lustig, Kestenbaum, Dattner, Ettinger, Zollmann, Grossbard.

way. Shots were fired in the grave to make sure all were dead. Rosenbaum stayed at the execution place until the end of the hanging action:

Frania Tiger:

We Jews of Rabka were only 1,500 souls, in a population of 10,000. On the 31 August, 1942, all the Jews were rounded up and later sent to their death in Bełżec. The Poles were warned not to help Jews,²⁷⁰ nor conceal information about them, under pain of death. Many Jews were shot wherever they were found. Those who tried to escape were hanged. The common graves dug for the victims in the woods at the Rabka School contained seven times as many corpses as there were Jewish inhabitants in Rabka before the war

Eight days before the deportation, my mother and I hid in an attic. My father was working for the Germans in Nowy Targ. Our hiding place was not discovered because the attic had a secret access. We survived the war due to the help of a Polish neighbour, Mrs Wagner.²⁷¹

On Yom Kippur Eve, 1942, many Jews were rounded-up for failing to report for a deportation (to Bełżec).

Hirsch Schiffeldrin:

‘There was no way out the Gestapo was making ready to deport the Jews. I had to return to the labour camp. At the railway station I presented my travel pass, but the Polish policeman ignored it and took me to the gathering area in Rabka. I saw my family there, along with the others we were divided up by Rosenbaum I found myself in a special group

²⁷⁰ SPP-3.18.1. Polish Underground and Movement Study Trust, London, ‘German Reprisals’, 17, 25.10.1941.

²⁷¹ RAD. Statement of Frania Tiger. Interviewed by the author Israel, 1997.

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of four, a man named Shaut a tinsmith, Yehiel Tirk a mechanic, Finkelstein a locksmith, I and an electrician was the fourth. We were put to work on maintenance of the target practice range.

On Yom Kippur Eve 1942, the four of us were taken to a spot where 30 Jews were to be executed for failing to report for the deportation. The Germans shot them. Next to the pit stood a barrel of lime. The four of us were ordered to pour lime on the corpses and cover the pit with earth. All the possessions of the Jews were taken to a large warehouse for sorting and refurbishing.'

Dr. David Yacobovitz

'Untersturmfuhrer Willhelm Rosenbaum was the worst of all the Gestapo men in the Rabka district. The others tried to hide their barbaric acts by committing them some distance outside the town. Rosenbaum and Heinrich Hamann, head of the Gestapo in Nowy Targ, committed the atrocities in broad daylight for all to see.

Rosenbaum's favourite place for executions was the densely populated Salona quarter. The doctors in the sanatoriums complained that the cries and shootings disturbed their patients, but Rosenbaum paid the complaints not the slightest heed. Hamann selected Mishana Dolna for his executions. He demanded that the Judenrat collect an exorbitant amount of money, supposedly to pay for the deportation of the Jews. When the Judenrat could not come up with the payment, Hamann gathered 800 Jews in the square and murdered them.'

Action against the Jewess Zollmann and Child.

The end of August, beginning of September, 1942, (a few days after the hanging) the widow of Simon Zollmann (one of the hanged) was '*picked up*' with one of their two sons. The Jewess Zollmann

and her son were locked up in the bunker and the pig sty with other Jews including a certain Stern.

Gold, with others were ordered to dig a grave in the woods -the usual procedure - the locked up Jews were brought to the graveside, including the Jewess Zollmann with her son. Zollmann begged Rosenbaum for mercy and implored Rosenbaum to keep her son alive, as he doesn't know he is a Jew. Rosenbaum shot the child and then the mother. The grave was covered in the usual way.

Action against Picked-up family Autumn 1942.

A woman, man and young girl aged 18-19 years old - most probably a family - were '*picked up*' and brought to the School. The Jewish-workers Kalfus and two others from the Neu-Markt transport, Bier and Grunspan, were ordered to dig a grave in the woods. The victims were ordered to undress and face the pit. One of the SS who was watching said that the girl was so fat that soap could be made out of her. Rosenbaum executed the family in the usual way.²⁷²

Further action of Picked-up Jews,

Towards the end of 1942 when the ground was already frozen, the Jewishworkers Form and Stammberger were ordered to dig a grave in the woods in the usual way. In the afternoon, at least 15 Jews from the bunker were brought to the graveside. While passing the bunker, the Jewish-workers heard yelling and screaming through the grated windows. The prisoners were hungry and wanted food and water. Among the Jews who were walking towards the wood, was a father, mother and a 4 year old child who was being carried in the father's arms. When the group knew what was about to happen, they hugged and kissed each other. Among the group was a girl in her teens. She was approaching the grave cheerfully and pleased in protest. One of the Sipo-SD guards or maybe it was Rosenbaum -

²⁷² Ibid. Statement of the Jew Goodrich.

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went to the girl and yelled: *'Do you not know where this is leading to?'* The young girl answered: *'I want to show you how a Polish girl faces death!'* Rosenbaum led this execution in the usual way.²⁷³

Shooting of family Rosenbaum.

In Bad Rabka, there was a Jewish family who had the same name as the School Commandant (Rosenbaum). There was a mother, father, and a 15 year old daughter and son, who was about 10 years old. Before the war, the mother's side of the family owned a haberdashery shop near the railway station. Until the German occupation, the father was a 'driver'; he took care of all the affairs in Bad Rabka, travelling to other cities and to the countryside. As soon as the School of the Commander-in-Chief of the Security Police (BdS) was settled in Rabka, he became a Jewish worker in the School; he worked on the small farm and guarded the sheep.

Only when the Jewish population had to present themselves in the School, in the spring of 1942, SS -Rosenbaum noticed that there was a Jewish family in Bad Rabka with his name. He could not stand the thought of this. Rosenbaum realised that he had a name with a Jewish sound and therefore, he had previously filed an application before the war to change his name, which was never taken care of. It was a standing joke amongst the School staff and they would talk about 2nd Lieutenant Beck (who was Jewish) and Rosenbaum (with a Jewish name - the Commandant).²⁷⁴ This was also the basis for his being so shocked and infuriated: that the Jewish origin of his name was confirmed by this family Rosenbaum from Rabka.

On one occasion, in the summer of 1942, quite a while before the general deportation of the Rabka community to Bełżec, Rosenbaum killed the family Rosenbaum. In a late afternoon, they - father, mother, daughter and son - were brought to the School. Whether all the family members were brought together or father and

²⁷³ RAD. Statement of the Jew Form.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. Statement of Fruederich August Glienke.

son, who worked in the quarry, was brought later, cannot be ascertained. After the family had been assembled in the School yard, Rosenbaum appeared and rushed at the father, cursing: '*You damned Jew, by what right are you carrying my good name.*' He then beat the father. Rosenbaum called for SS -Scharführer Bohnert and ordered him to shoot the family there and then, on his responsibility, on the School premises. Bohnert drew his pistol and shot the family in Rosenbaum's presence.

The news of the shooting quickly spread throughout the community and resulted in an increase of outrage, fear and terror among the Jews.²⁷⁵

Two Candles for Sammy

Simon Wiesenthal reflects on the shooting of the Rosenbaum family, which he passed on to the author 1990:



Fig 25: Simon Wiesenthal

'I first heard of Sammy Rosenbaum in 1965, when a Mrs. Rawicz from Rabka came into my office in Vienna to testify at a War Crimes trial. Mrs. Rawicz remembered Sammy

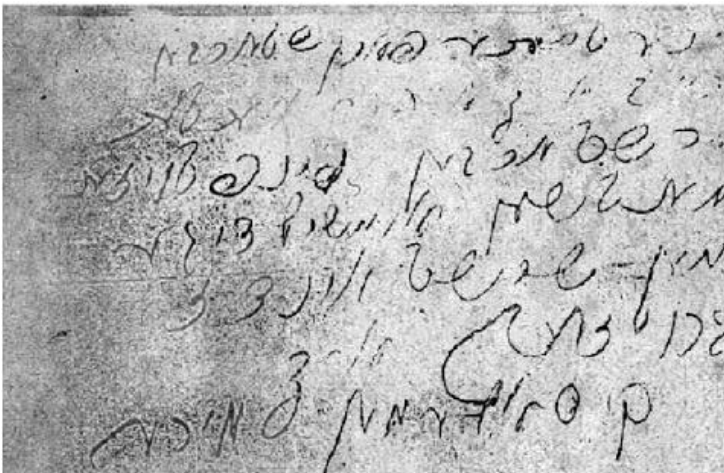
²⁷⁵ Ibid. Statements of the Jews Goodrich, Bar-Sade, Ettinger, Zollmann, Zwi Schiffeldrin, Abraham Schiffeldrin, Alicja Nogala, Elfyd Trybowka, Schon, Blatt, Czarnowicki, Derschowitz, Steiner, Farber and Mendel Lustig.

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Rosenbaum as 'a frail boy, with a pale, thin face and big, dark eyes, who looked much older than his age -- as did many children who learned too early about life.' Sammy was nine years old in 1939 when the Germans entered Rabka and made life a nightmare.

Sammy's father was a tailor who lived in two musty rooms and a tiny kitchen in an old house. But they were happy and religious. Every Friday night Sammy went with his father to the synagogue, after his mother and sister lit the Shabbat candles.

In 1940 the SS set up a training centre in a former Polish Army barracks near Rabka. In the early phase of the war, the SS platoons shot their victims; fifty, a hundred, even a hundred and fifty people a day.



**Yiddish note, written in pencil,
found in the clothes of a female corpse
during an exhumation).**

'My dearest, Before I die, I am writing a few words,
We are about to die, They are cruelly shooting us,
Kisses to you all, Mira...'

The SS men were being hardened at Rabka so they would become insensitive to blood, to the agonizing cries of women and children. The job must be done with a minimum of fuss and maximum of efficiency. That was a *Führer befehl* - the Führer's order.

The School commander was SS 2nd Lieutenant Wilhelm Rosenbaum from Hamburg. Cynical and brutal, he walked around with a riding crop. 'His appearance frightened us,' the woman from Rabka remembered.

Early in 1942, SS Rosenbaum ordered all Rabka's Jews to appear at the local School to 'register.' The sick and the elderly would be deported, and the others would labour for the Wehrmacht.

Toward the end of the registration, SS Führer Rosenbaum appeared, accompanied by two deputies, Wilhelm Oder²⁷⁶ and Walter Proch. SS Führer Rosenbaum read through the list of names. 'Suddenly, he beat his riding crop hard on the table,' the woman from Rabka told me. 'We each winced as if we had been whipped.' SS man Rosenbaum shouted: 'What's this? Rosenbaum? Jews! How dare these verdammte Juden have my good German name?'

He threw the list on the table and strode out. We knew the Rosenbaums would be killed; it was only a matter of time. People would be executed because their name was Rosenberg, or if their first name happened to be Adolf or Hermann.

The Police School practiced executions in a clearing in the woods. SS students shot Jews and Poles rounded up by the Gestapo, while SS Führer Rosenbaum observed students' reactions with clinical detachment. If a student flinched, he was removed from the execution squad and sent to the front.

After the registration, Mrs. Rawicz worked in the police

²⁷⁶ In the original document, SS Untersturmführer Herman Oder is named. This was a mistake as it was not Hermann but Wilhelm Oder, the brother of Wilhelm, Werner's uncle (author).

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School as a charwoman. 'When the SS men came back from the clearing in the woods I had to clean their boots covered with blood.' It was a Friday morning in June 1942. Two SS men escorted the Jewish prisoner Rosenbaum, his wife, and their fifteen-year-old daughter Paula. Behind them came SS Führer Rosenbaum.

'The woman and the girl were marched around the Schoolhouse and then I heard some shots,' the witness said. 'I saw SS man Rosenbaum beat our Rosenbaum with his riding crop, shouting: 'You dirty Jews, I'll teach you a lesson for having my German name!' Then the SS man took his revolver and shot Rosenbaum the tailor two or three times. Then the SS sent an unarmed kapo (Jewish policeman) to the quarry to get Sammy.

He went to Zakryty in a horse drawn cart. He stopped and waved at Sammy Rosenbaum. Everybody in the quarry stared -- the Jewish labourers and the SS guards. Sammy put the stone in his hands on the truck, and walked toward the cart.

Sammy looked up at the Capo. 'Where are they?' he asked - 'Father, Mother, and Paula. Where?' The Capo just shook his head.

Sammy understood. 'They're dead.' He muttered, and spoke matter-of-factly: 'Our name is Rosenbaum, and now you've come for me.' He stepped up and sat down next to the Capo.

The policeman had expected the boy to cry, perhaps run away. Riding out to Zakryty, the policeman wondered how he might have forewarned the boy; allow him to disappear in the woods, where the Polish underground might help him. Now it was too late. The SS guards were watching.

The Capo told Sammy what had happened that morning. Sammy asked if they could stop for a moment at his house. When they got there, he stepped down and walked into the front room, leaving the door open. He looked over the table with the half-filled teacups left from breakfast. He looked at

the clock. It was half past three. Father, Mother and Paula were already buried, and no one had lit a candle for them. Slowly methodically, Sammy cleaned off the table and put the candlesticks on it.

'I could see Sammy from the outside,' the Capo told Mrs. Rawicz. 'He put on his skullcap, and lit the candles. Two for his father, two for his mother, two for his sister. And he prayed. I saw his lips moving. He said Kaddish for them.' Kaddish is the prayer for the dead. Father Rosenbaum always said Kaddish for his dead parents, and had shown Sammy the prayer. Now he was the only one left in his family. He stood quietly, looking at the six candles.

The Jewish policeman outside saw Sammy slowly shaking his head, as though he suddenly remembered something. Then Sammy placed two more candles on the table, took a match and lit them, and prayed.

'The boy knew he was already dead,' the policeman said later. 'He lit the candles and said Kaddish for himself.'

Sammy came out, and sat down near the Capo, who was crying. The boy didn't cry. The Capo wiped away his tears with the back of his hand and pulled the reins, but the tears kept coming. The boy didn't say a word. He gently touched the older man's arm, to comfort him -- to forgive him for taking him away.

They rode to the clearing in the woods, where SS Führer Rosenbaum and his students waited.

'About time!' screamed the SS man?

No tombstone bears Sammy Rosenbaum's name. No one might have remembered him if the woman from Rabka had not come into my office. But every year, one day in June, I light two candles for him and say Kaddish'

Chapter 14

The Jews of Jordanow.

Jordanow's location near the Slovakian border also led to its early occupation by German forces.²⁷⁷ Like Nowy-Targ, the Jews were immediately subjected to the now familiar restrictions. A Judenrat had been formed and the Jews ordered to register for labour. The young were sent to work as forced labourers in the stone quarries where, like the Jews in Nowy-Targ, they were made to break up rocks for no apparent reason. The women cleaned the streets and other menial tasks at the whim of the Germans. In 1940, the Jewish Quarter was placed under curfew and the arm band regulations introduced. In 1941, all Jewish property was confiscated. Jews from the town of Sluptza in the Posnan district were cleared and sent to Jordanow where the Judenrat had to arrange accommodation for them in the dilapidated Jewish Quarter.

At the beginning of 1942, the Nazi destruction machinery commenced with the introduction of a census to be conducted by the Judenrat to list all Jews in the town. Unachievable ransom levies were demanded from the Judenrat. The Judenrat, who were unable to pay such large sums, went to their community for help. Great efforts were made to meet these quotas, many of the Jews removing their gold teeth as a donation to the cause.

²⁷⁷ The Battle of Jordanów took place on 1–3 September 1939, during the Invasion of Poland and the opening stages of World War II. It was fought between the German XVIII Panzer Corps of Gen.E.Beyer and the Polish 10th Motorized Cavalry Brigade under Col. Stanisław Maczek.

On 30 August, 1942, on the same day as the Nowy-Targ liquidations, instructors and recruits from the Rabka Sipo School, led by Rosenbaum, assisted by the SS/SD from Nowy-Targ, carried out a brutal action in the town of Jordanow. The Jews of Jordanow were rounded up and taken to the town square where they were assembled. For some unknown reason at that time, mothers and small children were separated from those assembled and marched off separately to specially prepared pits that had already been dug in the lawns of the Jewish cemetery bordering the square. Local Poles, who needed no invitation, assisted the SS in guarding the Jews, and when the Jews were ordered to remove their clothing and shoes, the Poles took it away for their own use.

Rosenbaum, who had taken personal charge of this '*action*', had sent a team under the supervision of SS-Scharführer Proch to prepare the pits in the Jordanow cemetery. Apart from the mothers and children, every Jew in Jordanow was shot into the pits using the '*plank and walk*' technique perfected by Proch. Many were not killed outright but no '*mercy*' shot was given. The pit was filled in, burying many half dead Jews. Reports that the ground was heaving are not exaggerated. The Ukrainians and Poles who were guarding the grave site had to stamp the ground to even out the heaving earth.²⁷⁸

On checking their lists, the action squad discovered that some Jews were not accounted for and still at large. All houses in the town and surrounding villages were searched ferreting out those they could find who were immediately shot on the spot. Some Jews escaped into the nearby forest and tried to cross into Slovakia. The local Polish peasants assisted in the search who then extorted from the Jews their last valuables before handing them over to the Gestapo, who killed them on the spot. Local farmers with their wagons collected the corpses and took them to the horse cemetery at Ushlatz. That day there was a great celebration at the Rabka School for a job '*well done*'.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Mark Goldfinger interview with the author.

²⁷⁹ The witness Schon who gives an account of the Jordanow action obtained from

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Late in the afternoon, directly after the slaughter, horse-drawn wagons arrived in Rabka, fully laden with young mothers and very small children (babies and 3 - 4 year olds). The local Jewish community did not know about the massacre, and were perplexed at the arrival of these wagons and their distressed cargo. The SS had killed every Jew in Jordanow, with the exception of these young mothers and children. The mothers from Jordanow were in shock after seeing their families shot in the cemetery. On Rosenbaum's orders, the mothers were taken to the Judenrat who were ordered to house and feed them.²⁸⁰



Fig 26: Women Medical Selection 1942.

‘Selection’: Plaszow KZ 7 May 1944. Selection to make way for Hungarian Jews being deported.

Mark Goldfinger, who was then aged 11 years of age, was with

residents brought to Rabka, and the atmosphere in the Rosenbaum household on the day of the action.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

his mother when this dreadful sight entered the town. Mark remembers going with his mother to collect clothes, food and blankets for the unfortunate women of Jordanow. The Jewish community could not understand why the women and children had been spared by the SS. They knew enough not to expect humanitarian considerations. A few weeks later, on a date unknown all became clear:

The arrival of these women was the first indication of what had happened in Jordanow, that every Jew, with the exception of the women and children had been murdered. The explanation for the spared selection did not take long to emerge. A few weeks later, all the women and children were rounded up and taken into the School. They were imprisoned in the stables and bunkers where previous prisoners had been held. The mothers and children were used in small batches of 3 and 4 at a time and used as examples by the SS staff at the School to show the new recruits how, and the best way to murder women and children when engaged on Ghetto clearing duties and other actions. Recruits who showed dissatisfaction after these exercises were carefully noted and removed from the School. After the completion of these exercises, the bodies of the women and children were disposed of in the usual way in the woods.²⁸¹

It was at about this time that Schöngarth became aware of an SS investigation into corruption and theft of the Krakow/Lwow Sipo-SD, which was instigated at the highest level. There was now a damage limitation exercise by Dr. Schöngarth and a hurried covering of tracks began.

The first action was the shooting dead of Beck at the Rabka

²⁸¹ RAD. The practice of throwing young children in to the air (see notes re Janowska camp) and shooting them was demonstrated by the instructors to impress (and show off) to those present and the value to be placed on the Jews, the pit and plank procedure was demonstrated, shooting in the back of the neck was demonstrated, torturing and interrogation techniques were demonstrated, hitting children with the butt of the rifle was demonstrated, the 'sardine method' (lining up children/adults one behind the other and shooting them with a single bullet) was demonstrated.

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School.²⁸² Beck had been privy to every known murder in the Rabka School. As a Jew, he was in possession of very sensitive information of the personal activities of Commandant Rosenbaum, his senior members of Staff and their murdering activities. Beck must have known that he was only tolerated for his expertise, and that after all a '*Jew is a Jew*'. Beck had witnessed the huge warehouse in the School packed with beautiful paintings he had helped to carry the property to Rosenbaum's villa, and had to reverse his trailer and helped unload the goods. Beck was the man who knew too much about the black market deals of his Nazi bosses that had been played out before his very eyes.

Dr. Schöngarth sent an immediate order to Rosenbaum to have Beck shot. Within hours of that order, SS - Unterscharführer Bohnert had taken Beck to the woods and shot him dead.²⁸³ There was panic in the School among the Jewish staff. There were escapes in all directions, many ending up voluntarily in the confines of the Plaszow Lager. Ettinger, who, like Beck, was just as privy to the goings on in the School had escaped to Krakow and found his way into the clothing factory of Julias Madritsch. Ettinger met his brother Henryk there, and together they were taken out of Plaszow with the Oskar Schindler transport to Brunnlitz in Czechoslovakia, and survived to tell the tale of the Rabka happenings.²⁸⁴

Once the initial phase of the destruction of the Jewish population were realised, the School settled down to a more conventional syllabus, and continued in this manner until January 1945, when it was transferred to Berlin due to the Russian advance.

One of the most curious aspects of the Rabka School murders was the secrecy Rosenbaum was able to maintain. When Rosenbaum gave evidence at his trial in Hamburg in 1968, he agreed that he had done his utmost to conceal the murders from domestic staff at the School. That is why most executions were

²⁸² Ibid: Statement of Dr. Neiding.

²⁸³ Ibid. Statement of Rosenbaum.

²⁸⁴ Michael Ettinger shown on the Schindler list number 69014. See the authors book: *Oskar Schindler: Stepping Stone to Life*, London 2012.

committed in the evening time, when all the general office and domestic staff had finished work and gone home. To this extent he was successful. While the witnesses Meta Kuck, Kathe Engelmann and Adela Schmitt (non Jews) - all employed in the offices of the School in 1942 - were quite ignorant, the witness Elfrieda Bohnert - wife of SS-Scharführer Bohnert - noticed the places during her walks in the woods where graves were located. She had overheard the kitchen staff that Jews were killed. However, she considered questions about this were inappropriate. The Jewess, Lucia Schon, in her special relationship with Rosenbaum and the senior SS staff, mentions that the SS wives climbed onto the roof to view the killings when they were taking place in the woods.

The Jordanow Killings

A list of surnames of Holocaust victims who were deported to death and concentration camps: Bełżec, Auschwitz, Plaszow, Mauthausen, Theresienstadt, and Majdanek. In one place, on 29 August 1942, in the district Strącze, 67 Jews were murdered

Victims of the Jordarnow Murders

1. Bandmacher Willi	59. Isralowicz Jakow	116. Rainhold Rywka
2. Bandmacher Samuel	60. Rainhold Rywka	117. Reinhold Naftali
3. Braunfeld Hela	61. Kanengisser Ignacy	118. Reinhold Dawid
4. Braunfeld Leibisch	62. Kegel Hana	119. Rigler Dow
5. Braunfeld Rachel	63. Kegel Eliezer	120. Rigler Seindl
6. Braunfeld Mirl	64. Kegel Erwin	121. Rotter Jakow
7. Braunfeld Baruch	65. Kegel Szmuel	122. Rotter Ruzya
8. Braunfeld Priva	66. Kegel Rachel	123. Schachner Salomon
9. Braunfeld Berka	67. Keh Natan	124. Silbermann Anna
10. Braunfeld Reisel	68. Keh Debora	125. Silbermann Leon
11. Braunfeld Sara	69. Keh Hirsch	126. Silbermann Malwin
12. Braunfeld Herszel	70. Kinslinger Gitl	127. Silbermann Maurice
13. Braunfeld Abram	71. Koegel Izydor	128. Steiner Jite
14. Braunfeld Giza	72. Korn Chaim	129. Stern Berta
15. Broinfeld Genia	73. Korn Pesia	130. Stern Gitel
16. Burger Herman	74. Korn Paulina	131. Sternberg Abraham
17. Burger Jadzia	75. Kornceld Ignacy	132. Sternberg Henryk
18. Burger Sara	76. Kornceld Anna	133. Sternberg Aharon
19. Burger Henia	77. Kornceld Irena	134. Sternberg Mojsi
20. Cytermann	78. Kornceld	135. Sternberg Zelman
Fryderyka	Aleksander	136. Sternberg Berta
21. Dunkenblum Szmuel	79. Kornceld Icchak	137. Sternberg Izaak
22. Dunkenblum Gita	80. Korngold Anna	138. Sternberg Mindl
23. Eberstark Markus	81. Kornhauser Leon	139. Sternberg Sijek
24. Engelhardt Lobl	82. Kreiger Chaim	140. Sternberg Bella
25. Engleib Eliezer	83. Kreiger Eleonora	141. Stotter Heinrich
26. Engleib Izrael	84. Kreiger Henryk	142. Süsskind Chaskiel
27. Engleib Berta	85. Kreiger Hanka	143. Sussman Jette
28. Engleib Pinkas	86. Kreiger Lea	144. Szapira Tema
29. Engleib Kaila	87. Kreiger Joanna	145. Szlager Meir
30. Engleib Feigel	88. Kriger Hana	146. Szlagier Leib

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31. Forber Adela	89. Kriger Leon	147. Szlagier Ida
32. Freidhaber Herman	90. Kriger Johan	148. Szlagier Sara
33. Freidhaber Fradel	91. Kriger Helena	149. Szwimer Fryderyk
34. Geldzahler Freida	92. Kring Riwka	150. Timberg Adolf
35. Geldzahler Szymon	93. Lakserberg Cwi	151. Timberg Jechil
36. Glazer Felicja	94. Libler Gitl	152. Timberg Aron
37. Goldfinger Amalia	95. Lejblar Blima	153. Timberg Cwi
38. Goldfinger Baruch	96. Lilienthal Beniamin	154. Timberg Rachel
39. Goldfinger Malka	97. Lilienthal Hela	155. Timberg Mordechaj
40. Goldman Jakow	98. Lilienthal Aron	156. Timberg Beresch
41. Goldman Benik	99. Lilienthal Gitel	157. Taler Cila
42. Goldwasser Rywka	100. Miller Chaskiel	158. Wasserberger Czesia
43. Goldwasser Helen	101. Monk Israel	159. Wasserberger Liliana
44. Goldwasser Abram	102. Munk Beila	160. Wasserberger Władys
45. Goldwasser Hershel	103. Munk Zalman	161. Wasserberger Malka
46. Goldwasser Izaak	104. Munk Meszia	162. Wasserberger Mania
47. Grau Ida	105. Munk Lowa	163. Wasserberger Awadja
48. Grau Juliusz	106. Markus Cila	164. Wasserberger Roman
49. Grau Izrael	107. Markus Hela	165. Wasserberger Sara
50. Grau Risl	108. Markus Jakow	166. Wasserberger Mina
51. Grau Marizio	109. Markus Mordechaj	167. Wilf Heinrich
52. Gunner Max	110. Markus Hinda	168. Wilf Berta
53. Isralowicz Hana	111. Neuman Malcia	169. Witterman Frida
54. Isralowicz Frida	112. Neuman Henryk	170. Zolman Samuel
55. Isralowicz Sypra	113. Neuman Juliusz	171. Zolman Cela
56. Isralowicz Chanoch	114. Neuman Sabin	172. Zolman Jakow
57. Isralowicz Jehuda	115. Polak Tauba	
58. Israelowicz Szmuel		

Chapter 15

The Reichsführer SS purges the Rabka Four + 1

It is between the autumn of 1941, and the spring of 1943, that Rosenbaum's murderous activities had taken place in Bad Rabka. In April, 1943, there was a big upheaval of Security personnel in Krakow and Lwow districts. The Reichsführer SS, Himmler disciplined a number of Sipo-SD officers. Dr. Schöngarth was transferred to Greece and later Holland, Hans Krüger to Paris, and Rosenbaum, by the skin of his teeth escaped charges, but not without serious condemnation from his superiors as to his actions in Rabka and implication in theft of Jewish property and black marketing activities. He was relieved from his duties at SD School to Krakow Sipo-SD²⁸⁵ where his new commander was SS-Major General Dr. Bierkamp, successor to Dr. Schöngarth.

Dr. Schöngarth celebrated his transfer by holding a farewell party in Krakow which was attended by all the senior SScommand of the district. It was at this party that Rosenbaum broke down and confessed and attempted to justify his actions, particularly to past executions, the shooting of Beck, and his involvement with others. Dr. Kurt Neidling:

I occupied a small flat in Dr. Schöngarth's house in Krakow.
One evening, maybe in the spring 1943, Dr Schöngarth held

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

a party with many guests. The celebrations went on through the night and were very loud. I had stayed in my room and didn't join the party. When I got up the next morning at about 6am, I met Rosenbaum in the hallway. He had been at the party and had consumed a lot of alcohol. He followed me to my room and sat down in a chair. He put his head on the table. Suddenly he started sobbing, his whole body shook. He looked at me helplessly and said, 'I'm not guilty, I only carried out orders'.²⁸⁶

A few months after this episode with Dr. Neidling (probably engineered by him as a sympathetic favour), Rosenbaum was transferred to the KdS (admin) in Salzburg as Polizei Inspector (SS-aligned rank 2nd Lieutenant) and adjutant to Ober Inspector (SS-aligned rank of Hauptsturmführer) Wilhelm Teege, arranging conferences and making provisions for those attending. On 7 August 1943, he married his fiancée Annemarie Bachus. Rosenbaum had come full circle, starting out with similar responsibilities of manager in the SD School Zakopane, 1939, to organiser and manager of conferences in Salzburg in mid 1943.

As a result of the massive clear out of all personnel with past related activities in Rabka, the SD School was totally cleansed and re-structured with new staff from outside and from the BdS in Krakow. There was a new emphasis on training. Rosenbaum had been replaced by a well seasoned desk-Nazi SS- Hauptsturmführer Fritz Herrmann, with SS-Hauptsturmführer Wilhelm Teege (recently transferred from Salzburg) as deputy for course construction. Courses continued for Civil servants of the government, Sipo-SD, and Polish police officers (Ukrainians had been dropped). Ethnic Germans and Poles continued to guard the premises. Oddly enough, the School driver, Bandura, was kept on and went about his business with the secrets of the School locked away in his head.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Ibid. Statement of Dr. Karl Neidling 24. 1. 1962, 765-776.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. Statement of Teege, 19. 1. 1962, 751-2

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Ober Inspector Wilhelm Teege arrived at the School in August 1943, a few weeks after the main deportation of Jews to KZ Plaszow. However, a small number (10-15) Jews were held back from this deportation to look after the animals on the School farm. Teege confirmed that there were '*Jew hunts*' still going on in the area. All past deeds were '*swept under the carpet*' of all that went before. It was a masterpiece of obliteration by deception.

It was about this time that attention was directed to the mass graves in the woods. The *Blobel Kommando 1005*, were digging up mass graves and destroying the evidence in nearby KZ Plaszow and thoughts were now turned to solving the mass graves in Rabka, where it is thought over 2,000 bodies lay beneath the soil.²⁸⁸ In any event, 1005 by-passed Rabka to more pressing appointments. For what reasons the Rabka graves were not exhumed is not known.

In mid 1944, due to the heavy bombing in Berlin, all in-training courses from the city were transferred to Bad Rabka. The courses and curriculum at the now re-vamped SD School were geared to officers of the Sipo-SD, Police Officers and Civil Servants who had been selected and earmarked for promotion. The courses were of 6 months duration and, by all accounts, were very selective but with a high rate of failure. Candidates were tested every few weeks and those failing to pass the tests were removed. In June 1944 intake of 68 students who commenced the courses: 24 left after the first test, 20 left after the second test, of the 24 students left who took the final exam, 3 failed. Running parallel was a course of 62 Policeführer's all recruited from the elite of the civil service.²⁸⁹

At this time (June 1944), the war was still being heavily contested on all fronts. The Jewish Question had all but subsided,

²⁸⁸ Ibid. The whole question of using the services of Blobel 1005 was allegedly discussed between Teege and Rosenbaum. See Rosenbaum Statement 11. 1. 1962, 729-786. With the prospect of over 2,000 bodies lying in the School graves there had been discussions on whether 1005 should be used. However much the Nazis tried to destroy the evidence they would have been unsuccessful as shown by our investigation at the Belżec death camp 97/99.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. Statement of Kriminalkommissar Helmut Armbricht, Hannover, 19. 6. 1961, 243.

but the furnaces of Auschwitz were still filled with the Jews from Hungary, Łódź and elsewhere. The curriculum at the School had not quite reverted to civil proportions. There was a continued high emphasis on firearms training on Rosenbaum's shooting range, and it is interesting to note, that these past students who were interviewed for the Rosenbaum trial, the majority had no idea that shootings had taken place there, or that there had been a significant Jewish presence at the School, or in the camps nearby.²⁹⁰ For the teaching staff that was more established, it was known but never spoken about.²⁹¹ Other subjects covered general war conditions and regulations and their world view.²⁹² The School continued to function until January 1945 as an SD educational establishment, devoid of Jews and devoid of murder.²⁹³

Another curious twist in all this was, on 2 January 1945, whilst organising conferences in Salzburg, Rosenbaum was selected for an Ober-Inspectors course to be held at his old School. He returned to Bad Rabka, to his former place of activity, as a participant in a Chief of Staff course on 3 January 1945, but due to the advancing Russians the course had to be abandoned on 17 January.²⁹⁴

Now operating under emergency orders from Berlin, the whole class of candidates led by Wilhelm Teege, were directed to Krakow to assist the *Volkssturm*, *Ordnungspolizei*, *Waffen SS*, and *Airforce Officers* to prepare for a counter attack against the advancing Russians. The overall commander of this *Verbindungsführer* (intermediary) group was SS-Major General Dr. Bierkamp. Part of their duties were the rounding up of German deserters and stringing them up and planting a notice on them: '*I hang here because I left*

²⁹⁰ Reading closely into these statements. I am reasonably satisfied as to their accuracy.

²⁹¹ Ibid. Statement of Willy Teege, 19. 1. 1962, 751-2. Teege was an established teacher in the last phase of the School and a close friend of Rosenbaum, personally and professionally.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid. Statement of Kriminalkommissar Heinz Bohm, Dusseldorf, 29. 6. 1961, at the School June - December 1944, 92. See also Paul Enders, Solingen, 26. 6. 1961, 210, who was the School between 15. 6. 44 and 15. 12. 1944, 210.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. Rosenbaum.

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my unit without permission'.

In another turn of events, Rosenbaum was to come across in Krakow, the Jew Henryk Ettinger, who had previously serviced the School vehicles in Rabka, and had witnessed the criminal activities of the Rabka Four. Ettinger was a prisoner in KZ Plaszow where he was on a point of escaping during the turmoil of the Russian advance.²⁹⁵

Rosenbaum was ordered back to Salzburg, where on 20 April, 1945, he was promoted to SS-2nd Lieutenant.²⁹⁶

Profile, Conclusions, the Appeal Court and End Game.

Rosenbaum fully and uncritically adopted the opinion of the Sipo-SD and the conviction of his model Dr. Schöngarth, that the inferior race of Jews had to be destroyed. He believed he had to prove his suitability as Sipo-SD - Führer of the Commander-in-Chief of the Security Police by co-operating with or without the actual order to deal with these 'tasks'. This approach and not the security considerations persuaded him to carry out the killings. It was clear to Rosenbaum that Jews - as far as they were working in the School, had no legitimate claim to receive the same justified treatments as the German or Polish workers; he regarded them as 'people material', which he did not demolish out of a practical point of view when he needed them for work. This did not belong to the weak or unsuitable and therefore, superfluous creatures were reminded with lashes of the whip and humiliations that the world in Bad Rabka was separated into the master race, and inferior race.

Not only the surviving Jews, but also the Germans recognised that Rosenbaum had been a '*very small light*' all his life and had to bear humiliations and disdain, and whose unimportant social position as well as his miserable human powers of expression were based upon his aggressive instinct. He was powerful in Bad Rabka, the decision-maker about life and death, a 'God'.

²⁹⁵ Interviewed by the author Israel 1987.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. Rosenbaum/Teege.

The product of this overwhelming lust for power was the barbaric tortures, which he subjected his victims; the climax of this voluntary power lust was the selections and executions. This also counts as much as Rosenbaum was covering himself for his killings by the general orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Security Police. The feeling of the subaltern and anxious Rosenbaum to carry out the will of the leadership and receive favour of Dr. Schöngarth, constituted the 'green light' to act. Within the wide framework that Dr. Schöngarth's order gave him, he could enjoy and exercise his OWN power.

The killings of Jews also represent the horrifying execution and other surrounding circumstances of murder: In all the cases, the victims were locked away for a while before the execution and left there without food or water, waiting death; the executions took place in a disgraceful way as the victims were forced to undress or they were undressed and then shot naked.

This did not apply to the Rosenbaum family four, who were dispatched around the corner of the School building fully clothed; the way the execution and other described modalities meet the sign of atrocity.

For the rest, there are circumstances in separate cases adding horrifying signs to the facts, such as the shooting of entire families where one member of the family has to experience the liquidation of the other ones; the killing of children before the eyes of their mother; the insult and blasphemy of victims at the sight of the grave. It is in all probability that the Rabka Jews had accepted the notion of what was awaiting them when they were called to the School.

It was certain that the 'The Final Solution' embarked on, by the Nazis, was overpowering as far as the shooting of the picked up Jewish men and women, in the General Government were concerned. Since the Barbarossa Campaign, it was the rule to punish with death those people that tried to escape and sabotage in order to frighten the others:

The Appeal Court

Rosenbaum cited in his defence, in respect of the shooting cases, the following instances where it was considered appropriate for Jews to be killed:

that a dreadful state of affairs regarding gangs in the east had taken an unbearable cost and threatened to become a serious danger where Jews were considered running around as potential opponents and supporters of the so-called gangs combat²⁹⁷

that civilians that were found without any ID on the country roads and did not belong to the next village, were to be shot.²⁹⁸

As to the hanging action, Rosenbaum claimed 'justification in war' and based his defence on three documents. He had claimed that the execution of the picked up Jews in the General Government was encouraged and executed from a military point of view regarding the tight security situation in the area - namely because of the increasing partisan activity, gang developments, communist activities supported by the Jews. He believed that this situation was put very clearly in three documents:

1. Document of the 'Oberfeld' Commander's Office (Oberfeld- Kommandantur) of Lublin d.d. 19.12.1941
2. Document of the Commander's Office in Warsaw d.d. 20.11.1941, stating that 26 Russian POW's were picked up and shot during the period from 15.10 until 1.11.1941.
3. Document of the 'Oberfeld' Commander's Office

²⁹⁷ RAD. OKW law/WFSt Op.Nr. 00 2811/42 (directive nr. 46) d.d. 18.8.1942

²⁹⁸ RAD. Law '*Behaviour of the troops in the East*' in the version 12. Inf. Div.Abtlc/Ia Nr. 607/41 geh. Dd. 17.11.1941

(Oberfeld-Kommandantur) of Warsaw d.d. 22.6.1943, stating that escaped Jews formed an integral part of all the communist gangs and that gang attacks in the countryside were mainly related to communist elements.

The Appeal Court denied these defences stating that even existing anti-Jewish decrees in those days - whose validity need not be disclosed - did not allow Rosenbaum to kill Jews.

That Rosenbaum was condemned as sole offender of murder and not as an assistant. That he had acted without any general order or authority. Rosenbaum is entirely responsible under criminal law for the committed crimes. The Appeal Court determined:

Rosenbaum was a ruler over life and death in the School; he ordered - and not the far off Dr. Schöngarth - what needed to be done. The accused decided which victims were unfit for work and which picked up Jews were to be liquidated, whether and which investigations regarding working suitability of the workers and 'law offences' of the picked up Jews were to be determined. He determined how the killings were to take place from a local, temporal or other point of view and which measure needed to be taken to wipe away the traces of these crimes.

Eventually, certain dependability on the Commander-in-Chief of the Security Police was based upon the fact - as noted by Rosenbaum himself - that the far off Dr. Schöngarth gave instructions to the accused. After that, the accused is an offender in all cases for which he has been charged. He is the sole offender:

The Appeal Court doubted whether Rosenbaum would have endangered his life by not executing the orders of Dr. Schöngarth. I am not sure about this and the contrary may well have been a consideration. We already know of Schöngarth's attitude to his SD for refusing to carry out his execution orders. It is even more surprising as Hans Krüger gave evidence at the trial and it is mainly

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from his deposition that we learned initially of the Schöngarth 'kill or be killed' policy. I think the point is, that Rosenbaum acted on his own responsibility and this was recognised by the court.

Subject of the proceeding:

Mass and single killings by shooting and hanging of Jewish forced laborers and of Jews, who had escaped from deportation as well as of a Jewish family, which carried the same name as the defendant

The overview of this whole miserable episode is that moral values were turned around as such that it was a holy duty - although difficult to fulfil - to wipe the 'Jewish race' off the earth. The normal feelings of morality and right were turned into baser instincts' and into cowardice; instead of compassion with the victims, the complaint was made as to the weight of the historical task.

Rosenbaum was taught and indoctrinated by the SS and Sipo-SD, which influenced his conduct, that was clearly expressed in his conduct and actions.

He lived in a psychological fantasy dream world.

Rosenbaum idolised Schöngarth and became literally absorbed by him, as he had Hans Krüger. Rosenbaum, not least because of his unlucky childhood was longing for authority and a role model. Dr. Schöngarth quickly turned into his Führer - and father figure to whom he submitted himself blindly and unconditionally. Therefore, he carried out his orders and directions so to speak automatically and without giving it any thought; on top of that, he had the tendency to interpret every move, every remark and comment of Dr. Schöngarth as an order. He made a diligent effort to receive a 'good mark' and deserve credit with his Commander-in-Chief. His efforts to win favour of Dr. Schöngarth lead to effeminate subservience. He read each wish from his superior's mouth was hanging on every word and served him blindly and zealously. Rosenbaum was as a rabbit caught in the headlights of a car when he was in the presence of Dr. Schöngarth:

Rosenbaum did not always earn thanks and recognition. In spite

of everything, he remained for Dr. Schöngarth - the '*foolish kid*' and '*bootjack*'. Whenever Dr. Schöngarth showed his dissatisfaction with him, e.g., criticised loudly that the served food was not enjoyable, the Schnapps too warm etc., Rosenbaum was deeply hurt, down and depressed. When criticised, Rosenbaum always felt this to be an outrageous insult, had a self-pitying reaction and immediately broke out in tears whenever Dr. Schöngarth criticised. The situation reached even the level of perversion in the sense that Rosenbaum considered it an honour when Dr. Schöngarth treated him in this manner.

After a bizarre incident, when Rosenbaum presented Dr. Schöngarth with a brace of geese in order just to please him, there were terrible repercussions. Rosenbaum had mistakenly taken the geese from property belonging to the Higher SS Police Führer, F.W. Krüger (not our Krüger) who was informed of the incident. Rosenbaum received a 'tongue lashing' from Dr. Schöngarth over the incident and sunk into further depths of depression and cried on the shoulders of a comrade, SS-Unterscharführer Kluck.

Wilhelm Rosenbaum feared Dr. Schöngarth had obeyed him unquestioningly. All the evidence shows that Rosenbaum was the one most strongly under his spell. Rosenbaum killed his victims based upon low motives, namely racial hatred and pure despotism to enjoy personal power. He regarded the Jews to be creatures of the lowest moral kind, '*Untermenschen*'.

Not all these humiliations resulted in Rosenbaum's breaking away from his inner fixations on Dr. Schöngarth as model and father figure. His idolatry would remain intact, until reasons lead to it that both roads were separated. To outsiders, Rosenbaum, the small Untersturmführer became someone respectable, as a personal confidant and indispensable aid and organiser. Dr. Schöngarth, the big benefactor, had made him a little God and despised him at the same time.

When the war drew to a close in April, 1945, Rosenbaum moved from Salzburg to Simmling where he saw out the war.

On the disbandment of the German military forces, Rosenbaum was employed as a transport manager for a farm co-operative in the

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eastern zone, but after a few months moved to Hamburg where he was employed as an Insurance Agent, Private Detective and Travelling Salesman. In 1949, he settled to taking a sweet shop in Hamburg, and then moved into wholesale confectionery where he was very successful. The Rosenbaum business had a total annual turnover of approximately 1.3 million DM. His marriage was childless, but adopted a nephew of his wife.²⁹⁹

It is difficult to understand that this inadequate individual, Wilhelm Rosenbaum, would go down in history as a cruel, sadistic murderer who had few equals.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 16

SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Krüger

At the conclusion of the war Hans Krüger was detained by the Dutch authorities suspected of war crimes but no evidence was forthcoming. He was released in 1948, and returned to his native Germany where he worked as a salesman until 1950, when he started his own company. He attempted to be re-instated into the Civil Service but this was denied probably due to his past in the SD. Krüger made further attempts to gain respectability and acceptance in the 'New Germany' by applying to join the State Internal Security Agency (Verfassungsschutz) in North Rhine-Westphalia, again he was unsuccessful.

Hans Krüger, instead of burying himself in obscurity, where he would have been safer from subsequent investigation, he turned to politics and became the district managing director of the Free People's Party (FVP) in Munster, and later, switching to the German Party (DP). From 1949 to 1956, he was state chairman of the Association of Former Germans from Berlin and Brandenburg, (Landsmannschaft Berlin-Mark Brandenburg); where he served as spokesman, a high powered appointment which was his undoing. In 1954, Krüger attempted to be elected to the NRW state assembly campaigning on behalf of the League of Eastern Expellees and Victims of Justice (Bund der Heimatvertrieben und Entrechteten), but again was unsuccessful.³⁰⁰

Hans Krüger had also been on the periphery of the *ODESSA*

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

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(*Organisation Der Ehlemaligen SS - Angehörigen' -Organisation of Former Members of the SS/Sipo-SD*). Better known through the writers of spy thrillers, Krüger was a supporter of this organisation but preferred to stay within the New Germany. One of Krüger's comrades who did use this facility and escaped to Argentina via Spain, was Dr Walter Kutschmann, the alleged murderer of the Lwow professors. He was also the officer who had terminated Krüger's career over the Countess Karolina Lanckoronska affair. Kutschmann, alias Pedro Ricardo Olmo, was eventually tracked down and arrested in the Argentine in November 1984, on extradition charges relating to murder of Jews in Brzezany, and the single murder of a Jewish girl in Drohobycz. Up until his death he was a regular contributor to the *Kammeraden* of the Death's head insignia, attending anniversary meetings in the beer halls of Munich.³⁰¹

In 1959, Hans Krüger was eventually tracked down and arrested for alleged war crimes. No doubt his high profile over the preceding years had contributed to his demise. The State Prosecutor of Dortmund finally issued a formal indictment in October, 1965. The subsequent trial, known as the 'Stanislawow trial', opened in April 1967, when he was indicted with the murder of 120,000 Jews. The trial lasted two years, during which he had not lost any of his anti-Semitism which he displayed openly to the court. Facing him across the court were a few Jewish survivors, and Countess Lanckoronska. He was convicted, and later sentenced on 6 May, 1968, to life imprisonment.³⁰²

In 1976, Krüger, whilst in prison, was to receive unexpected visitors. Detectives investigating the Menten case which was at a crucial stage, requested to interview him regarding his association with Schöngarth, Rosenbaum and particularly Menten, concerning their activities in Galicia during the war. Krüger refused to see the detectives and stated that he had no interest in meeting them until

³⁰¹ Simon Wiesenthal, 'Justice Not Vengeance': The Reluctant Murderer, Weidenfeld, London 1989, 164-173

³⁰² Krüger Verdict.

the question of the 'Breda Three' had been resolved.³⁰³ The detectives came away empty handed.

The Krüger – Lanckoronska, and Menten connection described by Zygmunt Albert:³⁰⁴

In 1976, I was requested by the prosecutor Nachtigall-Marten from Hamburg to supply the names of the Gestapo men who arrested the Lwow professors. I gave the names: Hans Krüger, Walter Kutschmann, Kurt Stawizki, police officer Kurt, non-commissioned officers Hacke and Köhler and the Dutch collaborator Pieter Nikolaas Menten.

Countess Karolina Lanckoronska arrested in 1943, by Hans Krüger, the Gestapo chief at Stanislawow, learned from him that he took part in arresting the professors during the night on 3 to 4 July, 1941. Krüger, being intoxicated, was sure she would be executed together with his 250 victims, teachers of primary and secondary schools, lawyers, judges, doctors, and with tens of thousands of Jews, known to have been victim of that massacre. Countess Lanckoronska, due to the intervention of the Italian Royal Court was at the last moment snatched out of Krüger's hands by the Lwow Gestapo. There she met Walter Kutschmann, Krüger's personal enemy, to whom she disclosed her knowledge about the execution of the Lwow professors. Kutschmann initiated in Berlin a trial against Krüger, at which the latter was sentenced for revealing official secrets. The Countess was sent to the concentration camp at Ravensbrück from which she was released thanks to the efforts of her friend Professor Burckhardt, President of the International Red Cross in Geneva.

³⁰³ Ibid. 'Breda Three' - the remaining life-term Nazi war criminals in Dutch jails. For years, the 'Breda Three' had been a 'cause-celebre' in West Germany.

³⁰⁴ http://www.lwow.home.pl/lwow_profs.html: Wacław Szybalski (edited English version and partially translated Polish version of Zygmunt Albert's Polish book 'Kazn Profesorow Lwowskich')

SS-HAUPTSTURMFÜHRER HANS KRÜGER

A very interesting account of these events was published by Lanckoronska in the London issues of 'Orzel Bialy' (The White Eagle), Nos. 46-48³⁰. I repeated parts of this account in 1964.

After the war, Countess Lanckoronska, living abroad, read in a newspaper about the trial against Krüger held in Münster. He was charged with murdering thousands of Jews in Stanislawow, but not Poles. She went there as a witness and accused him with the murder of the Lwow professors. The court, however, concluded that there was no evidence proving his participation in the murder of the professors and implied that this may have been only boasts and attempts to intimidate the arrested woman.

For his crimes committed in Stanislawow, Krüger was nonetheless sentenced to imprisonment for life. Consistent with the West German law a person receiving capital punishment cannot be called to account for other even most serious crimes. This made it impossible to judge Krüger for the murder of the professors. On the request of Wladyslaw Zelenski, the prosecutor interrogated Krüger but he denied taking part in the Lwow crimes. The prosecutor suspended additional investigations implying that further details were of concern only to historians. All attempts of Lanckoronska, Mrs. Krukowska, Wladyslaw Zelenski (Tadeusz Boy-Zelenski's nephew) and others failed to advance the case and to bring to justice the perpetrators of the bloody July night.

Wladyslaw Zelenski published several articles in the London 'Wiadomosci' (News) about the Lwow crime. He rectified in '*Die Welt*' the erroneous information suggesting that the murder of the professors was committed on racial grounds, because those killed were supposed to be Jews. Zelenski stated that there was no one who could be considered Jewish in a religious sense among the 22 professors shot on 4 July. Only Henryk Korowicz, killed on 11 July was of Jewish descent, but he had a Polish name and was certainly not arrested by the Gestapo as a Jew but as a Polish scholar, just as the other 22, including Ruziewicz and Bartel.

Many Poles asked themselves who supplied the Germans with the list containing the professors' names. This is of little substance to the case, because the names and addresses could have been copied from the pages of a prewar telephone book. But Walter Kutschmann has told Countess Lanckoronska that Ukrainians prepared the list for the Gestapo. Luckily there were only 25 names on it, although the University itself had 158 members of the Faculty; among Lwow Institutions of Higher Learning, there was also the large Institute of Technology, the Academy of Veterinary Medicine and the Academy of Foreign Trade.

Pieter Menten comes under the protection of the Reichsführer-SS³⁰⁵

In 1951, Rosenbaum travelled to Holland to seek out Pieter Menten who owed him a share of the looted property from Galicia from the 'Good Old Days'. Menten persuaded him to sit tight and he would get his share, but at the same time also persuaded Rosenbaum, to share on a 50-50 basis, to support a private prosecution for damages, that Menten was taking against the West German Government. Menten at that time was a free man, as his war crimes in Rabka, the Stryj Valley and Lwow had not come to notice. Menten was suing the government for his arrest and detention by the SS prior to his expulsion from Krakow to the Netherlands in 1943. Menten won his case and received over \$200,000 for his trouble.³⁰⁶ It is not known if Rosenbaum ever received a share of this. Meanwhile, the investigation into his past was completed. Rosenbaum was arrested for War Crimes on 7 September, 1961. The trial dragged on until 1965 when he was given sixteen life sentences. All appeals were dismissed in 1968.

³⁰⁵ Jonathan Petropoulos, based on his book *'Art as Politics in the Third Reich'*, London 1997

³⁰⁶ Ministry of Justice, Trial Transcripts, the Netherlands vs. Pieter N. Menten, 1961 - 65, 1977-80.

Pieter Menten arrives in Holland.

As the Germans increased their grip on Polish society, all Jewish property was seized and appropriated to the Reich. Pieter Menten had been appointed Treuhander to Jewish art galleries in Krakow which enabled him to serve both Himmler and himself.

Like all friendships that are based on greed and betrayal, there were to be serious repercussions, not only in respect of the 'Rabka Four', but to the general criminal factions that had spread throughout the General Government. In 1943 The 'Rabka Four' were dispersed to other regions: Pieter Menten was escorted out of the General Government with some pomp, heavily loaded with stolen property of the murdered Lwow professors and elsewhere. With the authorisation of the Reichsführer SS and connivance of Dr. Schöngarth, a special train was placed at his disposal for his journey out of Poland to Holland at *the* most critical time in the war for the Germans.

In Holland, Menten resided in the wealthy Aerdenhout where he kept a low profile as an art dealer. However, the Dutch Underground's attention was now focused on Menten and they recorded visits by Schöngarth to his residence. At the conclusion of the war, Menten was high on the agenda as a Nazi collaborator.

Shortly after the liberation Menten was arrested and held in custody and brought to trial. The trial concluded in 1949 and Menten was sentenced to an eight month term for having worked in uniform as a Nazi interpreter. In 1951 the Dutch government refused a Polish request for Menten's extradition to Poland to face war crimes charges.

Menten lived an untroubled life until on the 22 May 1976, Holland's most popular newspaper, *De Telegraf*, described a remarkable venture planned by the art-auctioneers Sotherby-Mak van Way:

Pieter Nicolaas Menten. Now, one of the richest men in Holland, was selling his Amsterdam apartment. He had to dispose of 425 pictures and other objets d'art for which

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there was no room in his country house at Blaricum, already crammed with other treasures.

Menten was quoted as saying that his fortune had first been acquired in pre-war Poland, he had been ruined by the Nazi occupation, but he had restored his finances, and his art collection.

What Menten failed to mention was his service in the Abwehr before the war, and his wartime service as an SS Sonderführer, and that he was personally responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of Jews and communists in the villages of the Stryj valley.

He also failed to mention that his coveted art collection was the proceeds of theft from the residences of the Murdered Professors of Lwow and elsewhere in the Galician District.

Following investigations by Hans Knoop the editor of the Dutch magazine *Accent*, in collaboration with Chaviv Kanaan that Menten was brought to trial after being extradited from Switzerland, where Menten had fled with his wife on 14 November 1976.

Chapter 17

A Fact-finding Mission to the Soviet Union to investigate the Podhorodse Murders.

In September 1976, an official request was made to send a Dutch investigation team to Podhorodse and Urych, now part of the USSR. Simultaneously, Hans Knoop of *Accent* requested visas for himself and a photographer: because of *Accent's* fierce anti-Communism, he expected nothing, but in fact, his visas came through in October, while the official party had heard nothing.

The two journalists were conveyed to Lwow, capital of Eastern Galicia under the old Polish regime, and from there to Podhorodse, where a team of pathologists was examining the freshly exhumed remains of 180 people. They were invited to attend exhumations also at Urych, Dogve, and Kropivnik, but decided after a week's investigating, tape-recording and photography that they had had enough.

Dutch Journalist Hans Knoop³⁰⁷

‘The trip in that taxi was pleasant (although it smelled alarmingly of gasoline) and it took us all the way from Moscow’s international airport to the national airport,

³⁰⁷ See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/holocaust/5096.shtml>

Vnukova, past the other side of town, a distance of about 60 miles, which took a little more than two hours. Moscow, in that October of 1976, was already under a blanket of snow. It was cold. The people were wearing their heavy winter clothing.

Vnukova, the jumping-off place for our trip to Lwow some 1,400 kilometres (800 miles) west, was a grim and dreary place. And cold as it was outside; the airport building itself was stifling inside. (Something, by the way, which I hear is true all over the Soviet Union.) There wasn't any proper waiting room, and no restaurant. There was nothing to do for four hours but hang around staircases and sit on rickety wooden benches, killing time by playing cards, waiting for the old-fashioned propeller plane, which was going to take us to Lwow.

The plane was full of soldiers, and there was almost no room for anyone else. Since we were the only two non-Russians, we were expected to get on the plane first and leave it last. What a trip! Two and a half hours of sudden shuddering dropping and rising, to the accompaniment of motors, which alternately angrily screamed and feebly whined. The only thing served to the passengers was one thimbleful of mineral water Aeroflot thought should sustain us! Tired and famished (we hadn't had anything since midday) we finally landed at one a.m. local time at the airport of Lwow, which as far as the eye could see was full of military planes.

As I've said, our interpreter, Vladimir Molchanov, wasn't there. Although we'd never met, we should have recognized each other quite easily. I knew what Molchanov looked like because he had worked with the Dutch television crew who made the trip earlier. And the Soviet Embassy in the Netherlands had sent him several copies of *Accent* which carried my picture. However, no one approached us, and there was no one even roughly resembling our missing translator. When all the Moscow passengers had left what

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was called the ‘arrivals hall,’ and not a soul had paid any attention to us, we decided to go outside and try to get a cab. We found a driver who could speak a few words of German, with which he addressed us because he assumed we were from East Germany. Since my hotel voucher mentioned that we were to stay in one of the town’s two big hotels, the Lwow, I told the driver to take us there.

The reception desk inside that pompous building was deserted. After we had paced up and down for a half-hour, whistling and banging on doors and counters, an old woman appeared. Answering our questions in broken German, she kept telling us that there were no reservations made in our names. She had never heard of Molchanov either, and said we were probably booked at the Intourist Hotel some 100 yards up the street. There were no cabs, of course, so the photographer and I had to walk it, each of us lugging two heavy suitcases.

We were more successful at the Intourist. First of all, there was someone at the desk who spoke fluent German, and secondly there was indeed a reservation for us. And Molchanov, too, was staying there, we were told by the receptionist. But he wasn’t in at the moment; he had left the hotel around ten o’clock and hadn’t returned yet. Although the tiredness had reached my bones, and my eyes were at half-mast, we decided to wait for him in the lobby area and not go to bed before we had introduced ourselves to him.

Thirty minutes later Molchanov stood before us dressed in a raincoat, making a sort of qualified apology. It hadn’t been possible for him to be at the airport because the wrong arrival time had been called through from The Hague, and there had been other circumstances involved too, he said. Molchanov spoke surprisingly good Dutch, only a slight accent betraying him as Russian. (It was not an exaggeration; several months later, during the Parliament debates concerning Van Agt’s role in the Menten affair, I answered Van Agt’s sleighting references to my interpreter’s

ability that the Dutch Molchanov spoke was much more understandable than the bureaucratic Dutch in which the minister of justice was expressing himself at that time.) Molchanov told me he had studied the language for several years at the University of Moscow, and that he'd written a thesis on the important Dutch novelist Louis Couperus.

We decided to continue our conversation in our hotel room, which had a great supply of heat but very little air. Molchanov ordered a bottle of mineral water from the female floor guard at the top of the stairs—every floor has one! Molchanov told us that we had come to the Soviet Union at just the right time, for a few days before, at the command of the district attorney of Lwow Province, Russian soldiers had opened the mass graves at Podhorodse. The remains of the victims were being carefully and elaborately studied on the spot by experts from the University of Lwow.

Next morning at ten-thirty, Popov, Novosti director in Lwow, a small, dark, energetic man, welcomed us with outstretched arms on the second floor of his Novosti office building. The man spoke nothing but Russian and Ukrainian; Molchanov translated for us. Popov offered us a chauffeured car for almost the entire length of our stay. He'd already telephoned Podhorodse and been told we could come the following morning. A representative of the Communist Party from the neighbouring village of Skole would accompany us for the last stretch from Skole to Podhorodse because it was difficult to find. I'd had a long telephone conversation with Chaviv Kanaan the evening before my departure to the Soviet Union, and asked him then if he could give me the names of any people to look up contacts who might be of importance for the investigation into Menten's crimes.

Kanaan didn't have to think for long, rattling off the names of three Jews still living in Lwow who, according to him, should have full knowledge of the executions. If I succeeded in locating them, I should start off with a story he told me, and send them the regards of individuals in Israel in

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order to gain their confidence. Kanaan pointed out I might expect them to clam up when a Western stranger came knocking on their door unexpectedly. He emphasized that I should play it subtly, draw them out, and slowly try to win their confidence. One of them was a hard-core party man, an engineer for the city of Lwow, and I'd have to be especially careful to watch my words when I spoke to him.

The addresses for the three people given to me by Kanaan proved to be incorrect. They must have moved since the war. Popov promised to find them through the Lwow registry, and told us that he hoped to have them for us when we returned a few hours later.

My photographer and I, with Molchanov, spent the time driving around the beautiful city of Lwow. I could see why it was formerly called 'Little Vienna.' Before the war the total population of Lwow was 300,000, of whom more than a third were Jews. There is no longer any organized Jewish life as such in Lwow. Of course, that is to be found practically nowhere in the Soviet Union. The city has no synagogue, and religious services, when they are held at all, are conducted in the most discreetly private, almost clandestine manner. Lwow still maintains its large Jewish cemetery with a great deal of care.

Our tour carried us past the house of Dr Ostrowsky, the Lwow surgeon and art collector who had been killed in June 1941 during the so-called 'professor murders.' According to a number of depositions, Pieter Menten had moved into the famous physician's house the very night of the murder, appropriating the art collection. Menten's rushing in there to 'take care of' Ostrowsky's valuable collection was brought to the attention of the Dutch press in 1951 by the bulletin of the Polish legation to the Netherlands, which was attempting to publicize Poland's request for the extradition of Menten.

According to Wiesenthal, it's not at all unlikely that Menten played some role in those 'professor murders.' However, I wish to emphasize that I have no specific proof

linking him to them. But Lwow neighbours of Ostrowsky's confirmed that Menten became their neighbour hours after the murder, and immediately had men working to remove the collection to a warehouse near the railroad station.

I questioned Menten about the whole Ostrowsky business, and so has Commissioner Peters. Menten stubbornly denies ever having heard the name, let alone living in the professor's house and stealing his collection. Neighbours of the professor, however (contrary to many press references, by the way, Ostrowsky wasn't a Jew), remember all too well Menten's nameplate nailed to the door. The same fact was communicated soon after the war to the former examining magistrate of the Special Court in Amsterdam, Mr. Rohling, later to be accused by Menten of having committed perjury and falsified evidence against him.

Rohling vividly remembers hearing Ostrowsky's stepdaughter give evidence as a witness in Amsterdam. Jadwina Roswadowska, one of the few remaining members of the Ostrowsky family after the war, testified to having seen Menten's nameplate on the door of her dead stepfather's house. Although its actual value was never assessed, Ostrowsky's collection was said to be worth millions. The house on what is now called Saskasangsko Street also contained many precious paintings and artefacts that had been brought to him for safekeeping by the Polish nobility of eastern Galicia. Many a Polish count and baron feared his art treasures would be devoured by the Russians (who were the ruling power in eastern Poland till they were chased out by the Germans in 1941). They believed that because Ostrowsky was a doctor and a professor, the Russians would let him be and their treasures would be safe with him. When the Germans attacked Russia, this collection fell into Menten's lap like a ripe golden apple.

In our ride through Lwow we also found Isaac Pistiner's last house. He had been trucked off to the Lwow ghetto from

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this place by the Germans sometime before Menten allegedly came looking for him, eager for revenge. And it was in front of this house that Menten had, according to witnesses, sent a bullet into Hirsch's head and succeeded in the cold-blooded murder of others in the Pistiner family. The present Ukrainian occupants knew nothing of the story, although they did say they'd heard that before the war the house had been lived in by a rich Jewish family. But they had no knowledge of Menten or of the execution of the members of that family in front of their door. Not so strange when one considers that the new occupants must have been children back then.

When we returned to the offices of Novosti, the helpful Popov had some good news for us—he'd found the addresses of the three people Kanaan had given me to contact. Together with Molchanov and Popov (Molchanov doesn't speak Ukrainian, but Popov does) we visited them in the afternoon. The engineer was indeed a good friend of someone living in Israel, just as Kanaan had said, and he spoke seven languages fluently—but he had very little to say to us in any of them. He had never heard of any massacres in Podhorodse and Urycz. He himself had always lived in Lwow, although it was true that in the old days he had had some good friends in Podhorodse. He didn't know exactly what had happened to them; he'd always assumed that they'd been killed by the Germans in a concentration camp during the war, just like so many members of his own family. One thing of which there was no shortage in eastern Galicia was death camps. Not more than two miles from Lwow was an immense concentration camp, Janowska. Hundreds of thousands of Jews had died there in that hell, fed into the place from Lwow and its surroundings.

We didn't find anything new about Menten on our second stop either. The man we were looking for wasn't in and his wife told us she didn't expect him back from Moscow for several days.

We did not come away empty-handed, however, at the third and final address: that of a man named Halpern (not to be confused with the Halpern from Stryj mentioned earlier). Kanaan had told me that after the war the monument to the Jewish dead had gone up in Urycz at the site of the executions largely because Halpern himself was a native of Urycz, and one of the few Jewish inhabitants of this village to survive Menten's mass executions. Halpern wasn't at home when we came, but his wife knew everything. Yes, her husband was indeed from Urycz, and his entire family was said to have been wiped out by a Dutchman named Menten. She wasn't Jewish herself, but had married Halpern after the war and knew the whole horrible story. But she'd let her husband tell us. She suggested we come back later that evening at around six when he was expected back.

When we returned we were met by a small, grey-haired man in his sixties. Halpern was most eager to answer all our questions. We had to set up a somewhat complicated assembly-line procedure: I asked my questions in Dutch, Molchanov repeated them in Russian, and then Popov translated them into Ukrainian. The line went into reverse for the answers. (Cassettes of this and all other taped interviews I conducted with witnesses in east Galicia were later handed over to the Dutch judiciary.)

Halpern could not recognize and identify Pieter Nicolaas Menten from the pictures we showed because he had never actually met the man. The name, however, was more than familiar. As a boy of ten or eleven, he'd often heard it mentioned in pre-war Podhorodse and it kept coming back after the war in connection with the Podhorodse and Urycz executions. Halpern told us he'd often played in Pistiner's back yard in Podhorodse only a few miles away from Urycz. He recalled the local gossip about a business argument between Pistiner and Menten, and also that Pistiner had lost a great deal of money to Menten.

Sometime during the war, Halpern had joined the Red

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Army. As soon as Lwow and surroundings were liberated in 1944 he had returned to Urycz to search out his family and acquaintances. One of the first people he met was a certain Cyglarova, a farmer's wife who'd known his family very well. This woman, now living in Poland, broke out in tears when she saw Halpern. She told him what had happened.

On a summer's day in 1941, at ten in the morning, she had seen a German car enter the village. In the car were a young officer, a driver, and a German soldier. The car pulled up at the house of a certain Mr Nordligt, which stood on a little hill. The officer gave an order to the Ukrainian nationalists, who were gathered in some force there that morning, to round up all the two hundred Jews living in the town and corral them in that house. The nationalists (who had been recruited from neighbouring villages) then went on a house-to-house search, telling the Jews to come to Nordligt's house because someone wanted to address them there.

Of course, all knew what was going on, because they had heard what had happened in Podhorodse earlier that summer. Weeping and praying, the Jews were led into Nordligt's house. Halpern's mother, going by the farmer's wife, said: 'I feel so glad Misja isn't here today.' 'Misja' was Halpern's nickname. Only one Jew refused to go along, a man by the name of Lev Roth who locked himself in his room. The Ukrainians forced the door and pulled him out, tied a rope around his feet, and had a horse drag him along the ground to Nordligt's house. The two hundred Jews locked up in those three rooms (the house was small, with a total area of about 1,000 square feet) must have been unbearably hot, Cyglarova told Halpern; they had to wait three hours before the Ukrainians finished preparing the great hole. The Ukrainians had initially ordered the Jews to dig their own grave, but they had refused.

Halpern told me that he was sure Menten had been in command, and it was all a ghastly repeat of his performance

in Podhorodse. According to Halpern, only three Jews of Urycz escaped death that day: Michael Hauptmann, Nordligt's son Saul, and one other. The Ukrainians didn't completely close the grave full of dying and wounded as well as the dead, a grisly detail Halpern gave us which tallied with Hauptmann's description. Halpern lost his parents, his four sisters, his daughter, and his wife. He was sobbing by the time he finished Cyglarova's story.

Two weeks before I visited Halpern, he had journeyed to Urycz and had again stood at the place where on that 27 August they all had stood. Again he saw it happening, heard the wailing and the bursting shouts of gunfire. While his wife got a photo album out of the closet and showed us pictures of his murdered family, Halpern put a nitroglycerine tablet under his tongue. He had suffered a heart attack several months earlier.

While we drank down our vodkas Russian-style (emptying the glass at one toss), Halpern told us how peaceful life had once been in Urycz. It was a unique village, its population flourishing and prosperous, and the relations between Jew and non-Jew exceptionally harmonious. Although many other Jewish villages in Poland were plagued by a virulent anti-Semitism, this was not so in Urycz. Halpern gave a resonantly bitter laugh when I told him that according to Menten there weren't any Jews either in Podhorodse or in Urycz; they used to live in the big cities. Halpern said the Jews themselves always referred to their village as 'Little Israel' because there were so many of them there. In Urycz there were three prayer houses. Zionists among the Jewish population of Urycz had been laughed at by their fellow villagers. Why should a Jew want to emigrate from the paradise of Urycz to the desert of Palestine? Halpern was shaking his head slowly from side to side. How dare a vile criminal like Menten, with his record, say such a thing that there weren't any Jews in Urycz and Podhorodse? The insolent scoundrel! Now there weren't any Jews in

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Urycz and Podhorodse and only one man was responsible for that: Pieter Nicolaas Menten.

Halpern said that, of course, he knew the two chief witnesses for the prosecution, Hauptmann and Pollack. But after he had joined the Red Army he had lost sight of them, and it was news to him that one was living in Sweden now and the other in New York. Would we please give his regards to them?

Halpern was also of help in our locating another valuable witness, Hennek Schleiffer. On the eve of my departure for the Soviet Union, Commissioner Peters had told me that Schleiffer could possibly be the key to several unsolved unclarified points. Peters had put out a search for him throughout the world, with no results. Before the war Schleiffer had briefly been married to Michael Hauptmann's sister, but Hauptmann had lost all contact with his former brother-in-law. Halpern almost knocked over the vodka glass his wife was filling when I mentioned Schleiffer's name. 'Well,' he said, 'you are certainly very well informed.' Where had I found that name? He knew Schleiffer very well; he was an old boyhood chum from Urycz and he still saw him regularly. He lived in a place about 60 miles from Lwow, Drohobycz, not far from Podhorodse and Urycz. Halpern said, however, that there would be no point in our visiting Schleiffer; he wouldn't talk to us unless we were in Halpern's presence and since Halpern had to go on a business trip to Moscow the following day, we might as well forget about Schleiffer this time round. (After returning to Holland, the CID in Amsterdam was delighted to hear I'd located Hennek Schleiffer, and that he'd survived the war. The same CID, by the way, was still awaiting official permission to go on its fact-finding trip and would continue to wait until February 1, 1977.)

The following day we made the long and tiring journey from Lwow to Podhorodse. The chauffeur-driven car put at our disposal by Novosti was waiting promptly for us at six in

the morning in front of the Intourist Hotel (formerly called 'The George,' where Menten had conducted many of his business conferences). Popov was supposed to come along, but an acute backache kept him in bed, so we had to make out with one interpreter, Molchanov.

In Skole, about 20 miles from Podhorodse, a functionary of the local Communist Party was supposed to join us. He'd show us the way, and in case any witnesses could only speak Ukrainian, he would fill in as interpreter. The two-lane highway from Lwow to Skole ran on with an endless sameness, a thick morning mist hung over the steppes, and all was grim and desolate as one imagines when reading about the landscape in many Russian novels. Only after the town of Stryi (Menten made his home there for a while before the war) did the landscape get richer and more pleasant as we were approaching the foothills of the Carpathians. We got to Skole in one and a half hours.

In the town hall (which was also the seat of the Communist Party) Molchanov made our introductions to the local dignitaries. We were to follow one of these officials, who would lead the way to Podhorodse in a jeep, and if necessary he'd assist us when we were there. The last stretch took us through a beautiful landscape, thick woods marching over hill-mountains while the dark, sliding Stryj River ran companionably along. Women in black wearing babushkas were toiling in the fields.

Within half an hour we reached the village of Podhorodse and minutes later Molchanov was pointing to Pistiner's big farmhouse on top of a hill. Molchanov recognized it, because months earlier he'd gone on the same road with our TV colleagues. When we drew close to the sign that said 'Podhorodse' we decided to take a picture of it, a whim which seemed totally unimportant at the time, but which could play a role in Menten's trial. (When Menten was questioned by the CID after his arrest, he insinuated that the Russians had led us astray to another village with a more

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or less similar name and not to Podhorodse.)

The village was one big mud pool, impossible to drive into. We walked the last 50 yards to Pistiner's farm with pants' legs rolled up, sinking up to our ankles in the mud. What we saw next, I will never forget. The whole area was littered with children's shoes, braids, skulls, vertebrae, everything chaotically mixed together, and the grave staring at us like a great open eye. Some fifteen Russian soldiers were busy cleaning these remains on a large table off to the side, performing this macabre task in a sort of haughty, dreaming silence, supervised by an officer.



Fig: 27 Post-War reburial of the bodies from the Podhorodse executions

Podhorodse is a village where time seems to have stopped: small wooden houses, children playing in front of them in rubber boots; old, bent women bringing in wood for their stoves with cart and horse. This is the way Podhorodse looked, and this is the way it must have looked years ago when Pieter Menten owned his vast forests here before the war, and this is much the way Menten must have found it when on 7 July 1941, wearing his SS uniform, he returned to the village to take his revenge. The same road which led us to that small and peaceful village in the hills had carried him there.

While the Russian soldiers were scraping the bones clean

with knives, I realized suddenly that this must have been the peaceful place where Chaviv Kanaan had played. Now, wherever one looked, there were skulls, ribs, shoulder blades, children's shoes, and other mute witnesses of the 1941 massacre. Several pathologists were sitting cross-legged on the ground, fitting together hundreds of vertebrae pieces, while others put the skulls in long, long rows on sheets of plastic.

The photographer was taking pictures, and while I followed behind him I stepped on some bones and was overcome by a sense of shame. But it was almost inevitable; one couldn't walk anywhere in Isaac Pistiner's garden without a horrible reminder that thirty-five years before scores of people had died there.

The chief pathologist was a middle-aged man wearing a white doctor's coat and a fur hat against the cold. When I was introduced to him he stood up and led me to a pile of bones. Picking up some of the shoulder blades, he showed me the bullet holes in them. He told me they had unearthed remains of about 180 people from the two separate graves in Pistiner's garden. The first held only men, and the second (which had been found the day before we arrived) was full of the remains of women and children. I walked behind the head pathologist, Vladimir Zelengoerov, and we stopped at a small table on which lay plastic bags containing the jewellery they had found in the grave. There were earrings, necklaces, and all sorts of other objects, among them several silver stars of David.

Dr Zelengoerov picked up a braid of hair, all intact. According to him, the human remains had been preserved reasonably well because the soil was so swampy. As far as possible they were trying to identify the victims through teeth and bridgework. Assistants were numbering every bone, and then putting the pieces together on a large canvas cloth, trying to build up skeletons.

There in that garden, warming myself before a blazing

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fire, I also met the Lwow district attorney, Mr Antonenko, who was in charge of everything. He told me that the Soviet judiciary had already questioned more than five hundred people living in the surroundings of Podhorodse who were born before 1926, and so were at least fifteen-years-old at the time of the murders. More than thirty people had declared they had seen Menten present at the executions and that he had been in command at the executions they had seen.

Antonenko was the first to tell me that Menten's murders were not limited to Podhorodse and Urycz. In at least two other villages not far away, he said, Menten had been equally active. According to the prosecutor, the total number of victims could be close to a thousand. This was the first time the name of Pieter Nicolaas Menten was mentioned to me there in Podhorodse. That morning, near the open grave, we were to hear it many more times, from the mouths of eyewitnesses who said they had been forced by Menten to attend the executions, often of their relatives. We didn't have to look for these witnesses; there were already three people present who had been there in 1941, at the executions. They would walk among the bones as if in a daze, staring into that hole for minutes at a time, while I registered their shocking stories on my tape recorder. It was the tape recordings of these interviews which were finally to lead to Menten's arrest in 1976.

One of these witnesses, Meron Wascielevitsj Pistolak, at the site of the open grave, told me how his brother Vladimir was murdered by Menten at the first Podhorodse execution on 7 July 1941. He was eleven years old then, and had watched from a tree. His eighteen-year-old brother was selected by Menten to be the first to walk the plank, the first to be shot, falling into the hole.

Pistolak, now forty-six, told me:

‘All the people of the village had to come to the grave to watch the mass execution—children too. The older people would form a semicircle around the grave so the children couldn’t see anything. So we took to climbing the trees. I saw everything, and will never forget it for the rest of my life. My brother was first because he was the leader of the local Komsomol, the communist youth movement. Menten also had a special hatred for the communists because they took his land in 1939. So when he returned in 1941, the first ones he settled scores with were the Jews and communists. Menten gave the orders to shoot. There is no doubt whatsoever it was him. Everybody knew him. I estimate that more than a hundred people were shot at that first execution, by five or six soldiers under Menten’s command. He even had a Nazi officer under him, who transferred his orders to the nationalists:

‘Not all the people who fell into the pit were dead; there were many wounded among them. When the pit was being covered with soil I could still hear them scream, from the grave. The ground was still breathing. I cannot say anything about the second execution because I wasn’t present then.’

I had hardly switched off the tape recorder when a second witness announced herself, Karolina Michailona Semelak, also forty-six. She told me she was born in Podhorodse and lived there all her life. She’d known Isaac Pistiner, very slightly. Her mother, however, had known Pistiner and Pieter Menten very well. Mrs Semelak told me that her mother often mentioned that Menten and Pistiner had transacted a lot of business with each other, and that Pistiner had sold Menten some woods. Both were very well known, as important figures in the village. Mrs Semelak continued:

‘When the executions happened here in 1941 I was eleven years old, but I still remember it as if it were only

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yesterday. Menten was in command and ordered all the people of the village to come watch the executions, children also. He himself didn't shoot, but each time the order was given by him. It was shortly after the German invasion of 1941. Menten came back here to Podhorodse ordering his soldiers to assemble all Jews and communist activists in the garden of Isaac Pistiner's house. Pistiner didn't live there anymore. I saw it all with my own eyes. Everybody, the whole village, was there. All the victims were brought together in Pistiner's house. And next they had to come out in groups of three and five and walk across a plank which had been placed across the grave. When they'd get to a point in the middle they were shot. I can still very vividly see Pistolak walk the plank; first the local leader of the communists fell, shot, into the hole. The commands were given by Menten.

On that day, the seventh of July, only men were killed. But on August twenty-eighth, it was the turn of the women and children. Their grave is right next to the first. Yet there was one woman murdered at the first execution—she was called Novicka. When her husband, Novicky, had to walk on that board, she wouldn't stop her frenzied screaming at Menten, upon which he ordered his soldiers to shoot her, too. The second execution also, I saw it with my own eyes, and again Menten was in command. He must have been a very high-ranking man, for he gave his orders to a German officer, who then ordered the soldiers to shoot. It is impossible that I should be mistaken that this man was really Menten. When Menten, before the war, came to Podhorodse he was a very well-known man in our village, and when he returned in 1941 wearing a German uniform, people of course recognized him. They all said: 'That is Menten, Petro Menten.'

A remarkable detail was that none of the witnesses there in Pistiner's garden stated that Menten fired a shot at the executions. They all said he gave the orders. According to

them, Menten was present, he was in command, but he hadn't fired a single shot himself. He did do that in several other places, however. One of the witnesses actually present at one of Menten's alleged personal murder actions was Stanislav Moechinsky. He told me that in 1941 he'd seen Menten cold-bloodedly order his former forest-keeper, Alfred Stepan, killed. Stepan had quarrelled with Menten before the war because Menten had refused to pay his wages:

'When Menten came to our village as SS Sonderführer in 1941, he tracked down Stepan and said, 'I've come to pay you now.' Then he ordered Stepan shot in front of his own house. His wife could not control her furious grief. Menten said to her: 'Shut up or you'll get it too,' and then said to the Ukrainian nationalist with him, 'Shoot her.'

Another friend of Vladimir Pistolak who is still living, a certain Dimitri Federowitsj, was compelled by Menten on that 7 July in Podhorodse to watch the execution. Federowitsj was the second most important man in the Komsomol. When he saw his friend Pistolak die, the first to fall at Menten's orders, Federowitsj feared that his turn would come, too. But he slipped away through the crowd and fled to the surrounding hills to Borislav, where he stayed hidden for two weeks. Later he heard that indeed the Ukrainians had been looking for him, and that he'd been on Menten's list.

Altogether, I have fifteen of these eyewitness statements in my possession, recorded on the spot. By far the most shocking account, because it so strikingly demonstrates the behaviour and mentality of Menten, I recorded from a certain Dimitri Antoniak:

'It happened in July 1941,' he said. He was twenty years old then, and remembers how the invaders drove the people into the village centre, rounding them up inside a small Jewish prayer house. About 120 men, women, and children were brought together there. A little farther on the mass

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grave was being dug. The Germans took the victims out of that house in groups of three and five, and brought them to the big hole in the earth. There was an officer sitting in an armchair: Pieter Nicolaas Menten, dressed in Nazi uniform. The people of Dovge instantly recognized Menten, for they often used to see him in Podhorodse and Sopot. And now there he was in the chair, legs crossed, puffing casually on a cigar, and from time to time giving the orders to have more people come across the wooden board and be shot.'

Antoniak remembered vividly a particularly horrible detail:

'A tall thin SS man, a certain Horst, grabbed a woman's baby, threw it up in the air, and shot it as if it were a clay pigeon. When the mother of the child started screaming, he shot her too. Menten stayed in the chair, gave the orders, till there was no one else to be killed. Not all the people were dead immediately; some of them were given another shot while in the pit.'

Antoniak ran away after seeing this spectacle, and some minutes later fainted out of sheer emotion. He estimates that about 120 Jewish inhabitants of that village were murdered at Menten's orders. Afterward, the Germans plundered the empty shops and houses of the Jews. When some of the villagers protested, the Germans yelled that they were claiming back Menten's possessions, seized from him by the communists. They were robbing everything in sight, according to Antoniak, including things which never could have been Menten's, and belonging to the workers of the village.

It is noteworthy that the statements by the witnesses from Podhorodse, Urycz, Dovge, as well as Kropovnyk, agree in the particulars of the method. All mention the long plank, set across a great hole dug in the ground, and the victims being compelled to step onto that board and start walking. In all cases, too, the graves were, more or less, closed without

ensuring that all the victims were dead. And finally, in none of the four places did anyone see Menten do any of the shooting himself, although in each one he was recognized by scores of witnesses as the man who gave the orders.

After several hours of walking in the piercing cold among the bones in Isaac Pistiner's garden, the photographer and I had seen about as much as we could take. There was one more horrible sight. Passing through Pistiner's deserted house, we were shown the intact shrivelled mummified corpse of a woman in the basement. The district attorney told us it was going to be reburied elsewhere in the village the following Sunday together with all the other remains, in a special ceremony we were invited to attend. He asked again if we would be present in Urycz the next Monday when they planned to open the grave there, and we told him we were not sure yet.

I asked the district attorney why the Soviet authorities, so many years after the crimes, had suddenly decided to have the graves opened. He answered that the chief prosecutor of the Soviet Union, Rudenko (the same man who prosecuted for the Russians at Nuremberg), had received a request from the Dutch judiciary to be allowed to conduct an inquiry in east Galicia into the crimes of Pieter Menten. Therefore, after having discussed it with the prosecutor of Lwow, Rudenko decided to have the graves opened in order to try to determine how many victims had been there altogether, and to identify them if possible.

We took our leave from the place of slaughter and returned to Skole. The chairman of the town council was awaiting us with an elaborate meal, most liberal doses of vodka, and many speeches. Later that day, with the horror we had seen still vividly before us, we drove back via Stryj to darkening Lwow. Molchanov, the photographer, and I were so powerfully affected that the return journey was almost silent; it was very difficult to put anything into words. We were not too eager to go to Urycz and the other places

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the next day. Still, I decided to visit Urycz, Kropovnyk, Dovge, and Drohobycz albeit before the graves in those towns were to be opened.

Two days later we were on our way again to that same fateful area along that lonesome road. Urycz, a village built on the edge of a fast-moving stream, looks even more peaceful than Podhorodse. The local headmaster was to be our guide there. His School lay in that part of the village which had held no Jews in pre-war years. Urycz had been composed of two sections, Jewish and non-Jewish. The Jewish part was about a mile from where we were, up in the hills and surrounded by thick pine woods. The headmaster led us a short distance upstream to a place simply but powerfully marked by the white obelisk Halpern had set up as a memorial. About 15 yards from that place at the edge of the stream, Nordligt's house still stands.

The present owners, a farmer and his wife, gave me permission to enter. It was horrible to realize that in the hot summer of 1941, on an August day, some two hundred men, women, and children awaited their turn for death, terrified in that small space. The farmer said he didn't know anything about what had happened some 15 yards in front of his house during the war, and he didn't know that the house had once belonged to a Jewish family. When he had come to Urycz in 1954, the house stood empty and they had been able to buy it from the village for very little money.

I couldn't find a single soul in Urycz who had been a witness to the slaughter in 1941. Because the village consisted of two separate sections, the massacre could occur out of sight of the non-Jewish villagers. A number of people, however, told me they had heard shots that day and there were plenty of hearsay witnesses whose statements weren't at variance with the eyewitness testimonies of Hauptmann and Pollak. One man told us he'd heard shooting that day, but did not go up to investigate until one month had passed. Then he was appalled to see how the land in front of

Hauptmann's hiding place and the stream there too were still red with blood. A horrible and gruesome story, which was unquestionably true because of the following special circumstances: Right after the execution on 27 August a big storm had suddenly broken loose (Hauptmann had mentioned that) and heavy rains had come down on Urycz. At that point the Ukrainian collaborators and the few German soldiers had given the grave only a thin covering of earth. They rushed off when the storm began. As a result of the rainstorm, which continued for days, the stream became swollen and flooded the scarcely covered grave. Then a huge blood pool filled the field.

In one of the other villages I met a woman, Katarina Barnatska, who used to live in Sopot (which is in fact a continuation of Podhorodse and the place where Menten owned an estate). She told me that Menten and his men had had a bad reputation in her village. They were always very harsh in guarding against the villagers' making off with logs from Menten's woods for their household fires. In the war, she said, Menten came back, uniformed. And she also told me that he led the executions. He murdered, she said, her brother, Joseph. She also remembers her nephews and nieces, Joseph's children, dying of hunger.

All the witnesses I spoke to in Russia recognised Menten's picture without any reservations. I carried about ten photographs of different people in my pocket; one of them was Pieter Menten. Every witness pushed aside the rest of the pictures and picked his, without fail. That was him, that was Petro Menten; or, as they pronounced it in the accusative, Menten.

After travelling in east Galicia for almost a week with our guide and interpreter Molchanov, the photographer and I decided to return to the Netherlands. We wanted to get back as soon as possible to report our findings and confront the Dutch judiciary and the CID with the shocking material. From my hotel room in Lwow, via a telephone conversation

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with my wife, I'd already informed Commissioner Peters of the main thrust of what we found. He was eager for me to get in touch as soon as we got back, and make an appointment to see our material.

After a journey of almost twenty hours, we touched down in London late Sunday night. Flying on to Amsterdam was impossible because all the flights were fully booked to the very last seat, filled with good Dutch citizens whose idea of adventure was to go on a bargain-shopping weekend trip to London. So we spent the night in a London hotel, and although we would much rather have been in our own beds, this wasn't too bad, actually. In Russia we had had to do without any kind of creature comforts or service. And now it seemed a tiny miracle to push a button and be able to order anything we felt like having; after six days of Ukrainian beet soup, finally a good big steak and a bottle of wine!

The material we brought back with us from Russia almost led to a crisis of the Dutch government. Less than three weeks later, during a spectacular Parliament debate on 18 November the minister of justice, Van Agt, was going to get his vaguely fluttering protesting hands rapped with copies of Accent.

I believe I may permit myself to point out that when, in November 1976, the decision was finally made to arrest Pieter Menten, it could hardly have been on the basis of the material gathered much later by the CID, but because of the evidence my photographer and I brought back from Russia. If we hadn't gone to Russia, then surely Menten wouldn't have gone anywhere either—he'd still be enjoying a hideously earned luxury and freedom.

Why two journalists were given the opportunity to attend the opening of a mass grave in east Galicia and the Dutch judiciary was not given visas till much later, I cannot say. It will remain one of the many unsolved riddles in the Menten affair. But I am prepared to state under oath my belief that there couldn't have been any form of staging by the Soviet

authorities. It is true that the mass grave in Isaac Pistiner's back yard had already been opened by the time we got there. But the fact remains that other mass graves were still to be opened, and we could have been present at those. We were in Podhorodse on a Thursday, and four days later the great grave in Urycz was going to be opened. The prosecutor of the district of Lwow, whom we'd met in Podhorodse, invited both of us to attend the Urycz 'opening.' Even if it could be true (as some spiteful tongues keep saying) that the whole operation in Podhorodse was especially rigged up for us, such a thing was impossible for Urycz. And the same holds true for the villages of Kropovnyk and Dovge, where more mass graves were scheduled to be opened at spots located by relatives of other victims.

The only thing I'm willing to admit is that the Russians gave us our visas only when they knew graves were to be opened. But I myself would call this a good kind of 'staging.' If they let us come as witnesses only when there was something to see, I have more reason to be grateful than to blame them. We got all the cooperation a journalist could hope for while we were in the Soviet Union. For the purpose of fact-finding we were allowed to talk freely with everybody and see everything, and in theory nothing was impossible. One might wonder (and, of course, I have) what moved the Russians to be so generously helpful to two Western journalists, one of them a notorious anti-communist. They must have had their reasons for that, but I see no point in endlessly trying to figure them out.

We were out for facts, and facts were what we got in the Soviet Union. While some people said they didn't know anything, and others seemed close-mouthed, others knew a great deal. And told us!

The Dutchman Runs!³⁰⁸

Back in Amsterdam, Knoop showed the photographs to the Menten prosecution team, playing tapes of the statements of witnesses. They all agreed that if the material were to be published in *Accent*, Menten would attempt to abscond, and that they were aware that the Ministry of Justice would resist preventive detention, begged Knoop to wait until official evidence could be brought back from the USSR (due to Soviet delays, it was to be months before this happened).

Knoop, with some sympathy from the police, maintained that it was his duty to publish, and theirs to apprehend Menten. The story, he said, would appear in *Accent* and in the Hamburg magazine *Stern* on 20 November 1976. On the 11 November the police fixed 15 November as the day that they would arrest Pieter Menten.

But on the night of 14 November, warned by some still-unknown official in the Ministry of Justice, Menten and his wife got into their Simca estate car, drove away from their mansion at Blaricum and disappeared, leaving frustration by one and all.

Menten's escape led to a savage debate in the Dutch Parliament, lasting 14 hours and conducted before television cameras. The Prime Minister promised an inquiry to discover the source of Menten's tip-off, and a police search to bring him back to justice. Neither promise was redeemed.

Capture!

Menten was recaptured through the efforts of the journalist Hans Knoop and the German Magazine *Stern* who offered Knoop the use of their foreign network. On 6 December 1976, a freelance correspondent in Switzerland telephoned *Stern* and said that for 5,000 Deutschmarks he could reveal Menten's hiding place.

That evening Knoop and three Dutch police officers flew to Zurich, where a few hours later the Swiss authorities arrested

³⁰⁸ Reuben Ainsztein, *New Statesman*, 8.

Menten in his suite at the Hotel Muster.

The Swiss-Dutch extradition treaty does not mention war criminals, and the expensive lawyers hired by Meta Menten portraying their client as a victim of Jewish vengeance and KGB intrigue suggested that the Swiss should expel him to a country of his choice, such as Ireland.

That campaign collapsed when Hans Knoop and Haviv Canaan (his first Israeli informant) revealed to the Swiss press the available evidence against Menten. Swiss embarrassment was not lessened by wartime memories of how the country had excluded Jewish refugees and on 24 December Menten was returned to Holland, with the condition that he must be tried there and not extradited to Poland.

Menten instantly claimed that he had lost his Polish naturalisation without regaining his Dutch citizenship: he was thus stateless, and couldn't be tried in Holland. The fact that this made Menten's previous accounts of his citizenship into perjury did not stop *De Telegraaf*, the most important Dutch newspaper, from leaping to his support and predicting that a trial would find him innocent.

When proceedings began the defence, led by a prominent member of the neo-Nazi Ritter van Rappard party, tried to repeat the 'Jewish conspiracy' ploy, with suggestions that Menten resembled Solzienitsyn as a victim of the KGB. But when the evidence of mass-murder became overwhelming, there was a startling tactical shift. The prisoner alleged that in 1952, the Socialist Minister for Justice had promised him immunity.

Chapter 18

Dr Schöngarth's Final Contribution

Dr Schöngarth became enmeshed in a serious war with his superiors—especially with his Higher SS-and Police Führer Friederich Wilhelm Krüger (not to be confused with Hans Krüger), and with the ‘Reichsführer’ SS Himmler, who personally took care of Dr Schöngarth’s degradation and transfer to Greece and finally to Holland where he was the Commander of the Sipo-SD, and deputy to General Rauter.

Dr Schöngarth’s demise had already been sealed when on the 10 August, 1943, RFSS Himmler issued his directive concerning the fate of English and American captured airman:

‘It is not the task of the police to interfere in clashes between German, English, and American fliers who have baled out.’³⁰⁹

This order was transmitted on the same day by SS-Obersturmbannführer Brandt of Himmler’s personal staff, to all Senior Executives SS and Police Officers with the following directions:

³⁰⁹ Ibid. A similar order by Hitler, dated 18 October, 1942, referred to the slaughter of Commandos to the last man after capture (498-PS)

'I am sending you the enclosed order with the request that the Chief of the Regular Police and of the Security Police be informed. They are to make this instruction known to their subordinate officers verbally.'³¹⁰

The whole question of prisoner of war status was taken out of control of the army and placed in the hands of Himmler and his SS by a short directive to all Security Police personnel on 6 March 1944.³¹¹

War Crimes: Kugel Erlass ('Bullet Decree')

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENT 1650-PS

Source: Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. IV. USGPO, Washington, 1946, pp.158-160

SECRET STATE POLICE—STATE POLICE OFFICE
COLOGNE. Branch Office, Aachen.

To be transmitted in secret—To be handled as a secret government matter: To all State Police Directorates except PRAGUE and BRUNN-Inspectors of the Security Police and of the Security Service.

Subject: Measures to be taken against captured escaped prisoners of war who are officers or not working non-commissioned officers, except British and American prisoners of war.

The Supreme Command of the Army has ordered as follows:

- 1 Every captured escaped prisoner of war who is an

³¹⁰ IMT (HMSO) – R-110.) 'Opening Speeches', 32.

³¹¹ Ibid 058-PS

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officer or a not working non-commissioned officer, except British and American prisoners of war, is to be turned over to the Chief of the Security Police and of the Security Service under the classification 'Step III' regardless of whether the escape occurred during a transport, whether it was a mass escape or an individual one.

Since the transfer of the prisoners of war to the security police and security service may not become officially known to the outside under any circumstances, other prisoners of war may by no means be informed of the capture. The captured prisoners are to be reported to the Army Information Bureau as 'escaped and not captured'. Their mail is to be handled accordingly. Inquiries of representatives of the Protective Power of the International Red Cross, and of other aid societies will be given the same answer.

If escaped British and American prisoners of war who are officers or not working non-commissioned officers, respectively, are captured, they are to be detained at first outside the prisoner of war camps and out of sight of prisoners of war; if Army-owned buildings are unavailable they are to be placed in police custody. In every instance the Corps Area Command will request speedily the Supreme Command of the Army (Chief, Prisoner of War Section) for a decision as to whether they are to be turned over to the Chief of the Security Police and of the Security Service.

In reference to this, I order as follows:

1. The State Police Directorates will accept the captured escaped officer prisoners of war from the prisoner of war camp Commandants and will transport them to the Concentration Camp Mauthausen following the procedure previously used, unless the circumstances render a special transport imperative. The prisoners of war are to be put in irons on the transport—not on the station if it is subject to view by the public. The camp

Commandant at Mauthausen is to be notified that the transfer occurs within the scope of the action 'Kugel' (*translator's note: the literal translation of 'Kugel' is 'bullet'*). The State Police Directorates will submit semi-yearly reports on these transfers giving merely the figures, the first report being due on 5 July 1944 (sharp). The report is to be made under the reference 'Treatment of Captured Escaped Prisoners of War who are officers within the Scope of the Action 'Kugel'.' In the case of special events, reports are to be submitted immediately. The State Police Directorates will maintain exact records.

2. For the sake of secrecy, the Supreme Command of the Armed Force has been requested to inform the prisoner of war camps to turn the captured prisoners over to the local State Police Office and not to send them directly to Mauthausen.
3. Captured escaped British and American officers and not working non-commissioned officers are to be 'detained in police custody in a city in which a State Police office is located provided the Army has no suitable quarters'. In view of the existing crowding of police prisons, the State Police officer will accept captured prisoners only if the Army actually does not dispose of any suitable space. The prisoner of war camp Commandants are to be contacted in reference to their quarters immediately after the receipt of this order. In the interest of the secrecy of this order, confinement outside of police jails, e. g. in Labour Education Camps is not permissible.
4. If escaped prisoners of war who are officers and not working non-commissioned officers except British and American prisoners of war are captured by police authorities, reasons of practicability render it unnecessary to return the prisoner to the prisoner of war camp Commandant once the facts have been

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clarified adequately. The prisoner of war camp is to be informed of the capture and is to be requested for a transfer under the classification 'Step III'. Captured escaped British and American prisoners of war who are officers and non-commissioned officers are always to be turned over to the Army.

5. The city and county police authorities are not to be informed of this order. Chief of the Security Police and of the Security Service, IV D5d-B NR 61/ 44 GRS.—

For the Chief.

(Signed) Müller. SS General.

Branch Office Aachen.

Aachen 6 March 1944

Overview of War Crimes Violations and Nazi policy War crimes: namely, violations of the laws or customs of war shall include, but not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labour or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.

Chapter 19

Lt. Americo S. Galle:

USAF Bomber Command



Fig 28: Americo S. Galle (circled).

Americo was a student at Gorton High School prior to entering the Army Air Force in July 1942. He received his wings in December 1943. He was stationed in England. Just before H-Hour for the airborne invasion in Holland he participated in an Eight Air Force bombing attack on gun installations near Rotterdam. The

LT. AMERICO S. GALLE

bombardment was intended to weaken enemy defenses against the Airborne attack.

A/C 107 was damaged over Zwolle at 1100 hrs. It slid out of formation about five minutes later and dropped bombs. A/C 107 then did a 180 degree turn under perfect control with No. 4 prop feathered. The aircraft was last seen heading west and under control. Americo was captured and murdered by order of SS General Eberhard Schöngarth at Enschede, Holland. He was initially buried in an unmarked and unidentified grave.

Galle Family

Vincenzo (Poggiogalle) (father)

Margaret Galle (mother)

Irving Galle (brother)

Salvatore Galle (brother)

Vincent Galle Jr. (brother)

Residents of Westchester County, New York

The Herald Statesman 14 October 1943

Americo S. Galle Completes Basic Flying Training
Bakersfield, California. — Aviation.

Cadet Americo S. Galle of 12 Montague Street, Yonkers, N.Y. has been graduated from Minter Field, Army Basic Flying School near here. He has completed successfully his basic flying training and now enters advanced school, the final phase in the course of instruction prescribed by the Army Air Force for its flying officers.

The young man shot this day....:

The airman (estimated age 26 years), who was apparently unhurt, was taken by the SS to the cellar of the villa (serving as SS headquarters), where he was kept under guard while arrangements were made for his disposal. These

ROBIN O'NEILL

arrangements consisted of the removal of his flying kit, and the substitution of a civilian light-coloured shirt, a pair of dark trousers, and a pair of socks.

In this dress he was placed into a security vehicle, his hands handcuffed behind his back, and taken some distance in the grounds of the SS HQ to a spot within the compound where a grave had already been prepared. The airman was marched from the car by an escort of two SS men, one of whom dropped back and shot the airman in the back of the neck. He was buried and the grave was carefully camouflaged.



Fig 29: US Bomber Crew

Top L – R: Lew Baxter; Americo S. Galle; Dick Edgar; Bill Cox.
Front L – R: Dick Sipes; Merle Auerbach; Jenkins; Bill Massy;
Herman Schroeder; Marvin Cooper

To this day, the airman's identity has not been established. It was assumed that he was British or American, most probably American, as the trousers he was wearing were of a dark shade of khaki, and the fact that when he was

informed in the car, in English, that he was to be executed, he made an indistinct reply in which the word 'America' was uttered.

In the course of the war, many Allied soldiers who had surrendered to the Germans were shot immediately, often as a matter of deliberate, calculated policy. On 18 October, 1942, the OKW circulated a directive authorised by Hitler, which ordered that all members of Allied 'Commando' units, often when in uniform and whether armed or not, were to be 'slaughtered to the last man' even if they attempted to surrender. It was further provided that if such Allied troops came into the hands of the military authorities after being first captured by the local police or in any other way they should be handed over immediately to the SD. This order was supplemented from time to time, and was effective throughout the remainder of the war. This order was distributed by the SIPO-SD to their regional offices. These escaped officers and NCO's were to be sent to the concentration camp at Mauthausen, to be executed upon arrival, by means of a bullet shot in the neck.

In June 1944, there were a number of conferences attended by the Nazi top order which had been initiated by Göbbels, and endorsed by Hitler. These meetings of the principal leaders of the Nazi Party proposed to legalise the lynching of captured allied bomber crews in the occupied zones. This was not only the basis for the indictment against Dr Schöngarth after the war, but was also the damning evidence that was used at Nuremberg.³¹²

Further, it was also about this time that the entire Security Services of the Reich were advised from the centre to prepare false identity papers in the event of the government collapsing under military pressure from the Allies and that poison capsules for personal use be issued should they be arrested and feel the need.³¹³

³¹² See Michael Bloch, Ribbentrop, Bantam Press, London, 1992, 402.

³¹³ WO 311 1304 Interrogation of Walther Albarth. When Joachim von Ribbentrop was arrested on the 14 June 1945 and examined by a doctor, he was found to have a small tin of poison attached to his lower parts (The Times 16 June 1945). Herman Goring managed to use his poison the evening before he was

The Herald Statesman 16 October 1944:

AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STATION, England-

Shortly before H-Hour for the airborne invasion of Holland,
two Yonkers residents:



Fig 30 Top L: Lt Galle with crew

Flight Officer Americo S. Galle, twenty, of 12 Montague Street, 2nd Flight Officer Richard Edgar of 140 Westchester Avenue, Crestwood, participated in an Eighth Air Force bombing attack on gun Installations near Rotterdam. The bombardment was intended to weaken enemy defences against the airborne attack. The third invasion was the third of occupied Europe assisted by the heavy bombardment group of which these two men are members.

The group, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Elbert Helton, of San Antonio, Texas, on D-Day attacked the

due to be hanged.

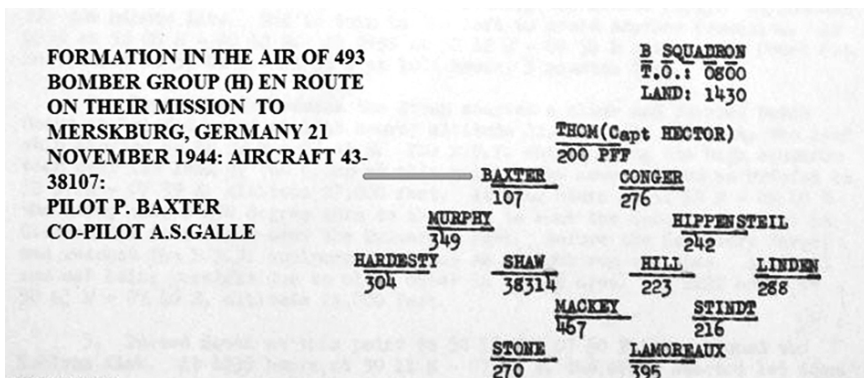
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marshalling yards at Lisieux, in Normandy, and in August, during the Allied landings along the Riviera, struck at Angoulene marshalling yards in Southern France.

The Mission 21 November 1944:

Mission Reports

On 21 November 1944, thirty four aircraft from the 493rd Bomb Group, plus two pathfinder aircraft from the 34th Bomb Group left their bases in Suffolk on a bombing mission to the Synthetic Oil Plant at Merseberg, Germany. Our subject: 2nd Lieutenant Americo S. Galle was co-piloting Aircraft 107, Piloted by Lieutenant Llewellyn Baxter. See below:



Mission 'Merseberg'; Flight Plan Formation over the countryside of Suffolk 21 November 1944.

One Aircraft was Lost: Aircraft 43-38107 was damaged by flak while passing over Zwelle and crashed. The aircraft was last seen under control heading west. No open chutes were noted:

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Report by Major L. Dwyer, Group S-3:

The aircraft referred to: B-17G; AAF S/N 43-38107; Group 493; Sqdn 861.

Aircraft 43-38107 was damaged while passing over Zwelle at about 1100 hours. It slid out of formation about five minutes later and dropped bombs, then made a 180-degree turn under perfect control with number four prop feathered. When aircraft was last seen, it was under control heading West. No chutes were noted.

The crew of nine bailed out Northeast of Enschede, Holland: the officers escaped from the front escape hatch; the enlisted personnel left the aircraft through the rear door. Eight of the nine were captured and dispatched to interrogation centres.

The Herald Statesman (USA) 12 December 1944

Galle Missing On Last Flight before Leave. Yonkers Lieutenant, Pilot of B-17,-Wears Air Medal, four Clusters



Fig. 31: B-17 'Sea Symphony'

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Believed to have been on his last mission before returning home on leave, First Lieutenant Americo S. Galle, pilot of a B-17 flying Fortress bomber based in England, failed to return from a flight over Europe Nov. 22 and is listed as missing in action, the War Department has notified his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent P. Galle of 12 Montague Street.

The young flyer will be twenty-one on 26 December. He recently mentioned in letters that he had completed 35 missions and expected to be home on leave before the end of the year. His last mission, according to his mother, was one from which he failed to return.

He piloted the 'Silver Symphony' the name given to the B-17 by Lt. Galle and his crewmen. Lt. Galle has been overseas with the Eighth U.S. Army Force since 28 May.

In Real Time!

The three officers: Baxter, Edgar and Cox were transferred to Stalag-Luft 1.³¹⁴ Enlisted men were sent elsewhere. All were well treated and subsequently released when war ended. They had flown 27 missions.

1. Pilot: Lieutenant Llewellyn Hunter. Baxter, service number 0-818812, born Jan 20, 1924
2. Co Pilot, 2nd, Lieutenant Americo S. Galle, service number 0-886490. Next of kin listed as his mother Mrs

³¹⁴ Stalag Luft I German World War II prisoner-of-war camp near Barth, Western Pomerania, Germany, for captured Allied airmen. The presence of the prison camp is said to have shielded the town of Barth from Allied bombing. Approximately 9,000 flyers (7,588 American and 1,351 British and Canadian), were imprisoned there when it was liberated on the night of 30 April 1945 by Russian troops. The camp was opened in 1941 to hold British officers, but was closed in April 1942, when they were transferred to other camps. It was reopened in October 1942, when 200 RAF NCOs from Stalag Luft III were moved there. From 1943, American POWs were sent to the camp.

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- Margaret Galle of 12, Montague Street, Yonkers, NY
3. 2nd Lieutenant Richard Edgar, Navigator, service number 0-886467, born 1 June 1919
 4. 2nd Lieutenant William Biggs. Cox, service number 0-886637, born June 28, 1920
 5. Sergeant Richard L. Sipes, service number 6896232
 6. Sergeant William Carrington Massey, service number 20937609
 7. Sergeant William Brake Jenkins, service number 6552038 born 12 December 1913.
 8. Sergeant Merle Auerbach, service number 36730072 born Apr 2, 1925.
 9. Sergeant Herman Adam Schroeder Jr, service number 37623121, born Jan 21, 1924

On their release and de-briefed as to the whereabouts and subsequent fate of 2nd Lieutenant Galle, the following responses were recorded in the individual casualty questionnaire:

- a. 'While being interrogated I heard a German guard say that one man was killed or shot. The German officer then turned to me and said that I had a brave pilot. I knew that Lt Baxter was alive so I presumed that he was speaking about Lt. Galle.'
- b. 'Lt. Galle was the only crew member who carried a firearm, a .45 calibre sidearm and may have used it to offer resistance.'
- c. 'The enlisted men left the ship (B17) via the rear door at about 2,000 ft. Cox, Edgar Galle and myself left via the front escape hatch at about 500 ft.'
- d. 'I saw all members of the crew in good condition at one time or another after being captured, with the exception of the Co-pilot.'
- e. 'Lt. Galle was a devout Catholic and a Latin scholar and maybe he sought help from the church and community.'

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- f. 'He was in good spirits and laughed when I told him I would see him in London.'
- g. 'My personal opinion is that he was shot during the descent as the gun-fire was directed to the front of the ship.'

Unknown to the outside, Lt Galle had parachuted from the plane safely but had landed in the grounds of SS Headquarters.

Chapter 20

The Murder of Lt Americo Galle



Fig 32: SD Headquarters: Villa Hoge Boekel at Enschede, Holland 21 November, 1944:

The scene of the events in question was the Villa Hoge Boekel at Enschede, Holland, which was occupied from September 1944 to April 1945, by a detachment of the Sicherheitsdienst, that is to say the German Security Service, under the immediate command of SS-Obersturmführer Beeck. This detachment was primarily concerned with economic matters, requisitioning agricultural supplies. In

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addition to the members of the detachment there were some twelve Dutch political prisoners employed there. There was also a Dutch forester who had worked at the Villa since before the war.

There were also a few Germans there who described themselves as Kommand-diensten (voluntary members of the SS). (Several of these Kommand-diensten and Dutch politicals were later called to give evidence at the subsequent trial of the seven accused.)



Fig 33: Entrance to Sipo-SD Headquarters Villa Hoge Boekel

Brigadier and Major General of the Police Dr Schöngarth was in command of the whole German Security Services in Holland. On the night of the 20/21 November he had stayed at the Villa, where a party took place following a conference. The following morning at about 12.30 hours, some airmen were seen to bale out of an Allied bomber. One airman dropped into the Villa grounds. The airman was apparently unhurt and was taken into the Villa where he was kept under guard while arrangements were made by Brigadier Schöngarth for a locally based Einsatzgruppe commando (execution squad) to attend the Villa and deal with the airman. (We must remind ourselves that Dr Schöngarth was well versed in organising

executions as he had supervised the executions of the Lwow Professors and had trained his own zbV personnel in the art of execution.)

The Crime Unravels

After the war several witnesses came forward and volunteered statements to the War Crimes Commission. Their observations were the substance of charges initiated against Dr Schöngarth and his SD men. These edited accounts by the author set the scene to events on that day:

The principal SS/SD officers engaged at the Villa to deal with the airman were as follows:

Schöngarth – Brigadierführer.

Beeck – SS Obersturmführer officer in charge at the Villa.

Knop – Kriminal Kommissar, Einsatzgruppe commando

Hadler, Wilhelm – Kriminal Sekretaer, Einsatzgruppen

Gernoth Herbert Fritz Willi – Kriminal Sekretaer, Einsatzgruppen.

Lebing Erich – SS Scharführer, Villa Security Police.

Boehm Fritz. SS Scharführer, Villa Security Police.

Prosecution Witnesses: Local forester from Enschede Sybrand Lefers (author's brackets):³¹⁵

‘On 21 November 1944, two airmen baled out from a three-engine aeroplane (number four propeller was feathered) which had colour circles on the side. The colours were red and blue. One airman landed about 150 metres from the Villa Hoge Boekel. The other airman landed somewhere in the neighbourhood of the airfield at Twente. I did not go to his assistance because the Villa was occupied by Germans. This occurred between 1200 hrs and 1230 hrs.

³¹⁵ Statement 11 August 1945. See WO 311/1304.

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At about 1530 hours I was standing about 300 metres from the house when I heard a single shot from a small bore weapon coming from the direction of the grave of the unknown airman. I have been told that Oberscharführer Beeck wore felt-lined airman's boots after the 21 November, 1944, and that a tunic, coloured blue-grey, and a brown overall suit were seen in a cart used by the troops occupying the Villa.'

Political prisoner Jacobus Rippers:³¹⁶

'At about midday I heard a bomber come over very low and people shouting, 'They've baled out!' I later saw an Allied airman brought to the Villa by SS-Obersturmführer Blankenagel. The airman was in uniform and wore a cap and large Jack-boots. At the time the Brigadierführer (Schöngarth) was present at the Villa. Sometime later I saw the airman being taken to the cellar where he was guarded by two SS men.

Later in the afternoon I went to the cellar where I saw the airman sitting on a bag wearing white pants, without shoes and barefooted. I did not see any civilian clothes. Some minutes afterwards I heard a shot. I was told that the airman had been taken away in a car.'

Workman Heinrich Albert de Haar: ³¹⁷

'When the airman was in the cellar, four soldiers of the Wehrmacht came to the Villa and demanded that the airman be handed over to them. SS-Rottenführer Kampf denied that there was any airman and the soldiers went away. When I first saw the airman he was wearing grey-green trousers of a rough material, the ends of which were tucked into his dark

³¹⁶ Ibid 15 August.

³¹⁷ Ibid 16 August.

coloured boots. On the left leg of the trousers was roughly painted in white the following marks:

B 83 / B

At about 3.30 p.m. I saw the airman coming from the house and enter an open car. His hands were bound behind his back. He had no shoes, very light socks, dark grey civilian trousers and a light coloured shirt. The following persons accompanied the airman into the car: I did not recognise the driver, Scharführer Liebing, SS-Hauptsturmführer-Kommissar Knop who had an automatic rifle on his right shoulder, and Scharführer Boehm. Two minutes later I heard a shot from the direction of the grave.

Some days later I saw in a room at the Villa a parachute and a pair of trousers which had the same markings as described earlier. I also saw boots similar to those that the airman wore. These boots were later used by the men in bad weather. I saw Beeck wearing felt slippers which I believe airmen wear inside their boots. The boot-maker named Fokkens removed electrical heating elements from these slippers. Also present that day was a Brigadierführer whose name I do not know. He was there when the airman was captured but left before the airman was killed.'

Workman Hugo Reul:³¹⁸

In November 1944, during an air attack, an Allied plane was shot down. One member of the crew was brought to the office where I was working at the time. He came for a short spell into the storeroom. There, I myself brought him dinner which he did not accept. I was then relieved after dinner, and when I came downstairs from my room, the prisoner was in the corridor. He had received a civilian suit from SS-

³¹⁸ Ibid 16 August.

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Sturmscharführer Blankenhagel. He did not wear shoes. Later I was told by SS Oberschaführer Boehm that the prisoner was taken away for execution. We showed our disapproval by stating between ourselves that it would not be just to treat a prisoner of war in that way.

Requisitioned Civilian Clothing

Shortly after the war, when the War Crimes Investigators searched the Villa a number of civilian suits were found which, it was established, had been seized by the SS from the local neighbourhood. The significance of this, I would suggest, is that it was a common occurrence that when aircrews baled out over the occupied area many were murdered by the SD, but before execution the individual was stripped of his uniform and dressed in civilian clothing. This no doubt, was to conceal the identity of the victim should their remains be recovered at a later date. It didn't go unnoticed by the Nazis that the war was not quite going according to plan.

Post-War Exhumation: September 1946.

Major William M. Davidson, R.A.M.C, a medical Practitioner attached as Pathologist to the War Crimes Investigation unit, was present at the exhumation of one grave found in a wood behind the Villa Hoge Boekel. Major Davidson was also present at further exhumations when three further graves were found. The graves were numbered 1—4. From all four graves the contents were examined and photographed with forensic samples taken from the bodies in situ.³¹⁹

Major Davidson particularly examined grave number four which had been identified as the grave where the Allied airman had been interned. He came to the following conclusions:

³¹⁹ Ibid 12 September.

Grave Number Four: Pathology Report:

No headgear was found in this grave.

The hair was of medium brown colour and was straight. The composition was more advanced about the face and neck, with particular separation of the vertebrae. A ragged exit wound was found in the region of the inner end of the right supra-orbital ridge, and the bullet was traced through the dorsum seller and the supro-internal wall of the right orbit. The bullet appeared, by the line of the track and the more advanced state of decomposition at the back of the neck, to have entered the skull from slightly to the left of the middle line, by passing between the atlas and the base of the skull, or to the edge of the foramen magna.

The dental state was as follows: upper right, 87654321/ 8 metal filling in crown, 7 and 6 large metal fillings in the crown; upper left, /12345678 6 had a metal filling in the crown, 7 had two small metal filling in the crown and 8 had metal fillings in the crown, and two on the outer side, 7 had a metal filling in the crown, 8 had small metal filling in the crown. Lower right 87654321/, 8 had metal fillings in the crown, 6 had metal fillings in the crown and outer side; lower left /12345678, 6 had a large metal filling in the crown and back, 7 had a metal filling in the crown and 8 had a small metal filling in the crown. The cervical vertebrae were intact, but were separating from decomposition. There was not any sign of injury to the trunk or limbs, and no tattoo marks could be found.

Identification:

No identity discs or documents were found. The teeth were in excellent condition. The body was of a slim build and measured 165 cms in length, making the height in life 5' 5". The body was dressed in a blue waistcoat with four outer pockets—the upper one on the right side, which had a flap,

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contained two pieces of good quality thin string. There were no markings on the waistcoat apart from the buttons being marked 'Hengelo' A long sleeved, thin woollen under-vest without markings and long woollen underpants buttoned at the top and having a lace behind were marked 'Size 32 S—Wool NORWICH KNITTING COY....Phila. Q.M. Depot' and stamped G1938 and, on the front, L214 L80 (identified as USAF issued clothing by the author), black thin cloth trousers with pleated tops and turn-up foots had, in the right hand pocket, one .22 bullet and three air-gun slugs as well as some pieces of corn. White or grey woollen socks, the right one being worn inside out—no shoes were found. (Note: It was the practice that before execution to re-dress the victim with spare clothing held at the base.)

No incongruous tissues were found in the grave.

Summary:

A young man of slim build, dressed in civilian clothes, some allied origin (probably American) with a bullet wound through the head. Teeth were in good repair.

It is my opinion—

That the bodies found in graves one, two and three had been hanged, while that in grave four had been shot through the head from the back of the neck.

That from the post mortem findings, despite the identification, the body in grave four may be that of the airman.

In the wood north of Villa Hoge Boekel four graves were found, containing four male bodies. The body found in grave four was the most decomposed and that in grave one the least decomposed. The body in grave one appeared to be the youngest and that in grave four only slightly older. All were in civilian clothes with, in the cases of bodies in graves two

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(three) and four, garments of British or American origin. The body in grave one was of a short stocky build, that in grave three of a large heavy build while the other two were slim.

The bodies in graves two and three had elaborate dental repair work, that in grave one had neglected teeth and that in grave four had teeth in excellent condition. The body in grave four had been shot through the head.

General Conclusions:

That the bodies found in graves one, two and three had been hanged (see the statement of Wilhelm Hadler above), while that in grave four had been shot through the head from the back of the neck, and

That from the post-mortem findings, despite the identification, the body in grave four may be that of the airman, as I do not consider it likely that an airman would have been permitted to go on operational duties with completely neglected teeth

Signed: Major William M. Davidson, Major, R.A.M.C
War Crimes Investigation Unit, British Army of the
Rhine.

Chapter 21

Trial and Retribution.

The Law Takes its Course

After the interrogation of six former SS suspects by Harold Johnston, formerly Lieutenant-Colonel, R.A., he recommended the following:

This appears to be a clear case of murder of a prisoner of war. It is considered that the evidence contained in the statements will be sufficient to convict all the accused.³²⁰

Number and description of the crime alleged:

No. 1 - Murder

The relevant provisions under which all the defendants were being investigated was as follows: Breaches of the Laws and Usages of War and in particular Article 2 of the Geneva Convention 1929 relating to the treatment of prisoners of war.

All the defendants named:

Karl Eberhard Schöngarth - Doctor at Laws and Brigadier-

³²⁰ Ibid-22nd August.

führer. In custody

Frederick Beeck – SS Obersturmführer. Not in custody

Erwin Knop – Kriminal Kommissar. In custody

Wilhelm Hadler – Kriminal Sekretaer. In custody

Herbert Fritz Willi Gernoth – Kriminal Sekretaer. In custody

Erich Lebing – SS Scharführer. In custody

Fritz Boehm – SS Scharführer. In custody.

Charge Against all Seven:

Murder: on the 21 November, 1944, of an unknown member of the crew of an Allied aircraft. The deceased landed from an aircraft by parachute and was immediately apprehended and made a prisoner of war by the first named accused. After some hours in custody a grave was dug, on the orders of the second named accused, and shortly after its completion the deceased was ordered to get into a vehicle accompanied by the third, sixth and seventh named accused and was driven to the location of the grave where he was shot by the fifth named accused in the presence of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh named accused.

A wealth of detail is supplied by the statements made by the various accused when interrogated, and by the evidence at their trial:

Karl Eberhard Schöngarth, aged 42 years, Doctor of Laws and Brigadierführer in the Security Police (Gestapo) which he commanded in Holland. He remembered being at the Villa about that date, when an Allied plane flew low, but has no recollection of an airman baling out in the grounds, nor was such incident reported to him. He blamed the other defendants for concocting their defence by blaming him.

The 'Einsatzgruppenkommando Knop' was an execution squad consisting of the accused: Knop, Hadler, and Gernoth, brought in from outside by Brigadier Schöngarth to deal with the airman's execution. At the Villa they liaised with the office in charge, SS

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Obersturmführer Beeck, to carry out Schöngarth's order.

Continued cross examination of Dr Karl Eberhard Schöngarth: on the fourth day of the trial, Monday 11 February, 1946. Defence Counsel for the other accused directs his questions to the defendant:

After preliminary opening questions of identity the line of questioning was as follows:³²¹

Q. What were your duties while in Holland?

A. I was Commander of the Sicherheitspolizei. My task was to command the Sicherheitspolizei, to carry out the central power of command, to keep open the communications with higher SS commanders and to the duty officer of the Reich Kommissar and to the commander of the Wehrmacht and also with other commanders of the Wehrmacht.

Q. Did you have many men under you?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you often go to the Villa Hoge Boekel?

A. Until the end of the war I have been there about five or six times.

Q. Do you know what happened when you went there on the 21 November?

A. I cannot remember the 21 November, I cannot remember the date, but I was present at the meeting in the autumn when a plane with a loud noise of its engines came in the direction of the house.

Q. For what purpose had you gone there the night before?

A. I had a conversation about duties.

Q. Where were you when you heard the aeroplane?

A. In a room inside the Villa.

Q. What did you do when you heard the plane?

A. I was having a conversation with Standartenführer Albart.

Q. What was the conversation about?

A. About the evacuation of the population who were still on the right side of the Maas to the north and to the east of

³²¹ WO, 3544. 235 / 102A, 35-44.

Holland. Against these measures I had been opposed before. This part of the country had already been taken away from my command and put in the hands of Albart, and the evacuation would take place into the region of the Rhine.

Q. Did you mention in the discussion about the treatment of prisoners of war who had been captured?

A. No, we had no reason to speak about, that.

Q. What happened after your conversation?

A. The conversation was over and Albart wanted to go away, and then we heard the plane.

Q. Did you notice anything about the plane?

A. No, I only heard a very loud noise of engines, and I thought they were going to dive-bomb the house.

Q. Did you notice anything else?

A. Then I went outside.

Q. What did you do then?

A. I walked to the front of the house with Albart and I saw a plane whose nationality I could not discern at a distance of about 400 metres. I saw it disappear above the woods, and I saw several white parcels coming down, and I thought they would be airman who baled out. I did not see the parachute unfold because at the same moment everything was hidden from my eyes by the wood.

Q. What did you do then?

A. Then I entered the house again.

Q. And then?

A. After the conversation I wanted to drive away, I wanted to fix up some technical difficulties about this evacuation and I wanted to speak about this to the chief of my staff, and I went back to finish my second breakfast which had been served to me.

Q. Was anybody with you while you were having your meal?

A. Yes, my adjutant was also with me; and when I have no guests also present at my meals.

Q. What was the name of your driver at that time?

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A. My driver is Heinz Grotjahn.

Q. He was your driver at the Villa on that day?

A. Yes, as far as I can remember he was my driver that day because shortly afterwards he left for Bremen; I think it was in the beginning of December.

Q. Did you see any captured airmen?

A. No, I saw nobody.

Q. Did you give any orders about any prisoner of war?

A. No, I never gave an order about a prisoner of war.

Further cross-examination of Dr Schöngarth:

Q. You have heard your two officers, Knop and Beecks and the four NCOs describing their various parts in the murder of a prisoner of war on the 21 November?

A. Yes.

Q. And you are agreed that that day, the 21 November, when you and Dr Alban had been in conference at the Villa, was the day that the parachutist landed?

A. I do not quite know that it was the 21 November, but it was on the day when I had the conference with Dr Albert when the plane appeared.

Q. Was the discipline in the SS strict?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you imagine an SS detachment murdering a prisoner within half an hour of their Major-General's departure without his orders?

A. As I have heard of this here I must assume this was so. I had been away for several hours already.

Q. What was your pre-war occupation?

A. I was in command of a detachment of the State Police.

Q. Are you a Doctor of Laws?

A. Yes, I am of the legal profession.

Q. Were you at the University of Leipzig?

A. Yes.

Q. Was Leipzig the seat of the German Supreme Court?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you make any studies of international law?

A. I know in general those laws.

Q. Do you agree that during a war no one power can repudiate conventions such as the Hague Convention to which all powers were parties before the war?

A. Yes, I agree.

Q. Do you agree that if any officer or soldier was ordered by his superior to murder a prisoner of war and did so, the subordinate would himself be guilty as an accomplice of his superior who ordered that breach of international law?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever hear of an order issued during the latter part of the war from the highest authority in Berlin to the effect that! *Terrorfliegell* were not to be protected from the anger of the population?

A. I have heard for the first time of this order during my captivity. During my time of service, until the capitulation I have never received such an order, either verbally or written and I have never at any time to any of my commands given such an order.

Q. What newspapers did you read during the war?

A. I arrived in Holland in June, 1944. Up to the time of the strike of the railways I read the German newspaper of Holland and other papers which I got there from the line.

Q. Where were you in May 1944?

A. I was in Greece; I was fetched back at the end of May.

Q. Did you know that that order was quoted in all the Berlin papers in an article by Dr Gobbels in May 1944?

A. No.

Q. If such an order had reached you, what would you yourself have done about it in your commands?

A. May I ask from which source this order is supposed to originate?

Q. If you received an order from Hitler or from Himmler that you were to disregard the rights of prisoners of war, would you, as a Doctor of Laws, have felt bound to obey that or not?

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A. I would have had to carry out this order, because an order of the Reichbelung (?) has to be carried out even if it cancels any existing laws.

Q. So your fellow Accused were correct when they told us that the SS and the Sicherheitspolizei stood outside the law?

A. No, they are just the same subject to the same ordinary criminal law as any other German.

Q. How is it that they all believe that if they had handed over this captured airman to the Luftwaffe or the Wehrmacht they would have been summoned before an SS court for disobeying your orders?

A. This is an assumption of the Accused, which is wrong. There is no special SS police court; SS police courts are equivalent to the normal courts. The SS police court convicts on the same basis as any ordinary court, according to the law. It is correct, however, that these sentences are much severer than those of any normal court.

Q. Would the SS then be bound by the regulations made during the war by Marshall Keitel of the Wehrmacht regarding the proper manner of carrying out executions?

A. No, we have received all our orders via the Chief Security Office.

Q. You said in answer to your Defending Officer that you had certain responsibilities to the Wehrmacht as well as to the Police in Holland?

A. I did not have responsibilities, merely liaison between all parts of the Wehrmacht.

Q. Will you as a lawyer agree with me that under German military law a sentence of death should only be executed by a firing party commanded by a staff officer, with another officer 'representing the tribunal present, to read out the sentence, a priest of the condemned man's religion and a medical officer?

A. The German regulations were not so comprehensive.

Q. I put it to you that that regulation was signed by Field Marshall Keitel in October 1939.

A. I do not know this regulation.

Q. Tell us the SS regulations for carrying out executions?

A. I can quote the regulations of the police.

Q. Did they apply to the SS?

A. I do not know whether they applied to the Waffen SS, I assume so.

Q. I am not referring to the Waffen SS, I am referring to the SS of the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) and the Sicherheitspolizei?

A. Yes, they were applicable.

Q. Tell us what those regulations were.

A. The firing squad was supplied by the normal police force; an officer was in charge; a medical officer had to be present; for every man to be executed there had to be at least three rifles; the aim was to be taken at the head and the chest of the man; the presence of a priest was not necessary during the war because of the lack of manpower; in the ordinary police force executions have been carried out by the SS police.

Q. Where did they learn this technique of shooting a man in the back of the neck?

A. There were no orders that executions were to be carried out in this manner. If these cases have occurred I know that this has come from the east.

Q. Do you remember saying when you were interrogated on the 24 January: 'I never had any complaints about the staff of the Villa Hoge Boekel or Enschede Einsatzcommando'?

A. Yes.

Q. You have heard the things that your staff have been saying about you in this Court?

A. Yes.

Q. You heard, for instance, Blankenagel saying: 'I myself heard Schoengrath ordering Knop to shoot the airmen?'

A. I heard that.

Q. And you heard Boehm say that he himself was told by Reul that you captured the airman?

A. Yes.

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Q. And you heard Knop, say: 'I received my orders from Schöngarth'?

A. Yes.

Q. And you heard Beeck say: 'Schoengrath told me personally that Dr Albart had suggested airmen were treated as terrorists in the Reich', and you had decided to do the same at the Villa Hoge Boekel?

A. No.

Q. Look at your former and once loyal staff and tell one why they should say this about you, their commander whom they once trusted.

A. I do not know why. I can only think that because I was there when the plane came down they wanted to put the blame on me.

Q. To put the blame for the murder on you?

A. Yes, one of these men has taken this decision to put the blame on me.

Q. Did you hear what Boehm and Lebing told us on Saturday about the shooting?

A. This is the first time I have heard about it.

The Legal Member of the court and who acted as 'referee' for and behalf of the accused allowed further questioning to Dr Schöngarth:

Q. During your period in Holland, how many executions in all did you have to order or sanction?

A. At the time of that interrogation I thought it would be about 150 to 200 cases, but they were all executions after proper sentences; they were only civilians who were sentenced to death on account of their disturbing order; and that was an order from the Reichskommissar.

Q. Am I right that those sentences had to be confirmed by your superior, Obergruppenführer Rauter?

A. At the end of the war the Polizeigericht were summary courts, and these sentences were afterwards examined by a

lawyer on my staff, and this lawyer had the power of a judge. After that they were given to the higher SS Polizeiführer Rauter. This only concerns the cases in which the evidence was clear. If there were cases in which the evidence took a long time to be proved, then the cases were handed over to the normal courts.

Q. After the attempt on Rauter's life, whose duty was it to confirm sentences?

A. I was his deputy, but after I took on my duties we did not have any other cases, after we had a meeting with the leaders of the Resistance Movement that they would stop their terrorist activities.

Q. Do you think it is possible that just as one man was shot, as you say, without your knowledge at the Villa Hoge Boekel, and six without your knowledge at Gorssel, 150 hostages could be shot without your knowledge by people such as the Accused, similar Commandos, after Rauter was shot?

A. After the attack on Rauter we did not shoot hostages, but we shot people who were already condemned to death.

Q. Was that the 100 shot on the road between Apeldoorn and Arnhem and in the town of Schevengen?

A. About those at Schevengen I do not know, but the 100 on the road from Apeldoorn to Arnhem were shot on account of the attempt on Rauter's life; but they were not hostages but people who had already been condemned to death, and they were condemned to be shot at that place.

Final remarks to Dr Schöngarth by defence counsel for the other accused:

Q. I put it to you that the real truth of what happened on the 21 November is this: a British or American airman landed in the grounds of the Villa and was captured by your men. You yourself decided that he was to be shot. You yourself ordered Knop to have him shot. You then went away in your

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car leaving your men to take the responsibility, and now that they stand in peril you, their commander, are trying to save your life at their expense.

A. No.

The other accused:

Friederich Beeck, aged 60 years, Kriminal Sekretser (Sicherheitspolizei) and Commander of Villa Hoge Boekel, chose the burial site and gave orders for the grave to be dug, and waited for the report that all was ready, before the airman was brought out of the Villa. He superintended the execution from start to finish at a discreet distance.

Erwin Knop, aged 40 years, a Commissar in the Security Police (Sicherheitspolizei), was in charge of the Detachment at Enschede. Knop stated under cross-examination that he made the arrangements for the execution and supervised it, but he did so under the orders of Schöngarth and with the assistance of Beeck, who was the senior police officer at the Villa. Knop agreed that he spoke to the airman in English when he was escorting the handcuffed airman to the grave site:

‘I said to the airman, I have orders by the General to shoot you. I can do nothing for you, but would you be so kind and give me your name and home address.’ The airman was very downhearted.’

When asked by defence counsel at the trial if the execution team had refused to carry out the Brigadierführer’s order, Knop replied:

‘We could say Yes or No to this question, but because we belonged and were under the jurisdiction of the SS Polizei we did not act under normal laws. If we had refused to obey this order we would, after a very short trial, be sentenced to death. The SS Polizeigericht have their own procedures and courts.’

(In addition to the airman's body found in a grave, three other bodies of SS men were also found in graves nearby having been hanged.)



Fig 34: The track where Lt. Galle was driven to execution

Wilhelm Hadler, aged 47 years, Kriminal Sekretser and SS Untersturmführer and member of the Einsatzcommando. He was told by Knop that the airman was a 'terror-airman' (*'Knop gae dem Gernoth den Befehl; Das ist ein Terrorflieger, der ist zir erschiessen'*) and was to be shot, and we (Knop, Beeck, Gernoth, and Hadler) were to carry it out. After searching for a suitable spot in the woods Hadler and Gernoth dug a shallow grave. When the rest of the team arrived with the airman Hadler and Gernoth escorted the airman from the car towards the grave. Gernoth then dropped back behind the airman and then shot him in the back of the neck. Hadler agreed that he was present when an SS man called Bell was hanged and brought to the wood to be buried. Hadler also confirmed that it was Dr Schöngarth who had ordered Bell's hanging.

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Herbert Fritz Willi Gernoth, Kriminal Sekretser (Sicherheitspolizei), SS Unterscharführer aged 39 years. Part of the Einsatzgruppencommando (execution squad). Gernoth admitted that he carried out the 'execution' under the orders of Knop:

'After a conversation with Knop, with Hadler, we escorted the airman in the direction of the grave. I did not know whether the man was aware that he was about to be shot. I came to the conclusion that I should do it in such a way that he would not be aware of what was going to happen to him. I stayed back for two or three paces, and without warning I shot him.'

In cross examination Gernoth was asked what would have happened if he had not shot the airman and replied:

'I myself would have been shot or hanged. Two of my comrades were already lying buried nearby.' When asked by defence counsel: 'What was the German for shot in the nape of the neck or the base of the skull?', he replied: 'Genickschuss—the recognised method of the Security Services for executing people.'

Erich Liebing, SS Scharführer aged 56 years, was on duty at the Villa Hooge Boekal under the orders of SS Obersturmführer Beeck. Liebing went with Beeck to the woods where he witnessed Hadler and Gernoth digging a grave. He was told by Beeck to keep watch and inform him when the grave had been completed, which he did as ordered.

Fritz Boehm, aged 28 years, SS Unterscharführer, Waffen SS, attached to the Polizei. Boehm was told by his commanding officer, Beeck, that he had received orders to shoot the airman who was under guard in the cellar and to assist the others in preparation of the execution.

The Allied Airman Trial and Sentence:

Military Court at Burgsteinfurt 11 February 1946: All the accused were found guilty:

Karl Eberhard Schöngarth was sentenced to death but claimed total denial of complicity. Schöngarth had taken refuge in The Hague and transferred to Germany for his trial before he was returned to Holland for interrogation as to his activities there. Other SD/SS personnel arrested and tried by the British Military Court were:

MILITARY GOVERNMENT - GERMANY
MILITARY COURT - WAR CRIMINALS
DEATH WARRANT

To: The Director or Officer in charge of WIG. LUDWIG
Name and position of Prison

WHEREAS one Eberhard SCHÖNGARTH
Name of condemned

was on the eleventh day of February 1946
Day of Month Year

convicted by a Military Court at BURGSTEINFURT of a war crime and sentenced
Place of trial by such Court to the penalty of death by judicial hanging and

WHEREAS in accordance with Army Order No. 81 of 1945, such sentence has come before me
for confirmation and after due consideration and in exercise of the powers conferred upon me,
I have confirmed the sentence of death by judicial hanging so imposed.

NOW THEREFORE I hereby order you to execute such sentence within 24 hours of receipt of
this warrant by judicial hanging and for so doing this shall be sufficient warrant.

Upon execution of said sentence the return below will be completed and forwarded to this
Headquarters (AFS4).

Date 26 March 1946
HQ BAOR Field Marshal, Commander in Chief,
Confirming Authority.

Montgomery of Alamein

RETURN OF WARRANT

The above sentence imposed on Eberhard SCHÖNGARTH
Name of condemned

was put into execution at Hannover Luchthaus
Place of execution

on 16 May 1946 0945
Date (Date) (Hour)

Frederick Beeck
Signature and Appointment of Prison Official

DSB. H. G. Gernoth
(Counter signature and name identifying witness)

922 2103, 1240 39

Fig. 35 Death Warrant signed by Montgomery of Alamein against Karl Eberhard Schöngarth.

Frederick Beeck (death), claimed superior orders.

Erwin Knop (death), Claimed superior orders.

Wilhelm Hadler (death) claimed superior orders carried out in the presence of the superior.

Herbert Fritz Wille Gernoth (death) claimed superior orders disobedience would have been fatal.

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Erich Liebing (15 yrs imp.), claimed he did not know that the victim was a POW until too late.

Fritz Boehm (10 yrs imp), claimed ignorance and disgust at the shooting. I protested to the uttermost of my power.

Pieter Menten Resurfaces

At about this time Pieter Menten surfaced as he now resided in Holland and had been in regular contact with Dr Schöngarth.³²²

In a letter to his wife written by Schöngarth before his execution, there was a request that Pieter Menten be informed and reminded that he (Schöngarth) had done him many favours in the past. There was a request from Schöngarth that Menten now repay this debt by looking to the welfare of Mrs Schöngarth and his 5-year old-daughter Ermuth.³²³

The Army investigators were anxious to identify the subject Pieter Menten, as to his possible implication in war crimes. Enquiries were made with the result that he was traced and identified as a man of Dutch nationality, engaged in art dealing and residing in Aardenhout, Holland. It was established that Menten had previously been arrested for 'collaboration' and sentenced to 8 months imprisonment (the time in custody) and then released. There were no other charges pending. The report also confirmed that Pieter Menten had previously resided in Eastern Poland where he had a large forest estate, and that he had resided in Krakow where he had become friendly with Dr Schöngarth. This purported personal friendship continued during Schöngarth's service in

³²² This was to be a recurring factor in the War Crimes Trials of the 'Rabka Four'. Each would support the other in some way or other. In my opinion, Menten was the most dangerous and devious, and his actions resulted in the destruction of many careers in the process.

³²³ Corroboration of fact re the agreement of the 'Rabka Four'. See PRO, WO/235 – report from War Crimes Section (Gr.Capt. Legal Staff, requesting information as to the identity of Menten, dated 14.6.1946, to the War Crimes Investigation Unit, ref. BAOR/15228/2/c.7.JAG.)

Holland. Otherwise there was nothing to report.³²⁴ However, shortly after liberation, Dutch investigators acted on other information and arrested Menten. When they searched his house the investigators found incrimination evidence of collaboration with the Nazis, together with a photograph showing Menten in the uniform of an SS-Unterscharführer. This was enough to detain him in custody. Now the investigators were anxious to interview Dr Schöngarth.

After sentence, Schöngarth was returned to Holland to assist with other enquiries that were gathering pace at that time, particularly in respect of Pieter Menten who was also languishing in jail.

A Dutch war crimes investigator interviewed Schöngarth in the Dutch prison where he produced a photograph of Pieter Menten in SD uniform and asked him if he recognized the subject of the photograph. Schöngarth, without hesitation, identified Pieter Menten: *'That is Pieter Menten—how is he?'*

Schöngarth confirmed that Menten had been a *Trehauder* (caretaking Jewish properties) in Krakow and had been part of his zbV unit as an art consultant and interpreter. He further confirmed that he had associated with him in 1944, when they were both in Holland and had often discussed 'old times'.

Then, as he was about to leave the cell, Inspector van Izendorn asked Schöngarth to sign the back of the photograph of Menten and the pages of notes van Izendorn had written. Schöngarth replied, *'You know, I have only three weeks to live. That's the whole truth.'*

A few days later Schöngarth welcomed another visitor to his cell: Pieter Menten had arrived to say his farewells. Because of these circumstances the meeting between the two men suggested some urgency; the content of what they discussed went well beyond the grave. With the guards and prison officials respecting their privacy, this was the most important discussion either man would have in his life.

Back in their days in the General Government, as close friends,

³²⁴ Ibid, reply to request for information vide report dated 17.10.46, ref. BAOR/WC/CMisc C.19.

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Menten and Schöngarth had promised to take care of each other, no matter how it turned out. Drink had stimulated a lot of that Casino talk, but for some reason, perhaps friendship, they had kept their word. Schöngarth had asked Himmler for Menten's private train transport from Krakow to Holland. He had seen that Menten received priceless artefacts of great value. Now in return for those favours he wanted a promise that Menten would keep no matter what. The discussion was about Schöngarth's immediate family. With only a few weeks to live before facing the hangman, he wanted to put his affairs in order, and Pieter Menten at that time was his closest friend. Schöngarth's family—Dorothea his wife, Ermuth his beloved daughter aged 5 years, and his two sons who had both died as officers on the Eastern Front—presented a dim future without financial support.

Straight out, Schöngarth asked Menten to 'watch over' Ermuth and ensure that she did not suffer for his crimes. If that meant paying her school fees or, later, her university tuition, then would Menten do that? Would he become Ermuth's 'uncle'? Menten responded, 'Yes, of course.' In return, Schöngarth advised Menten to the line of defence he should adopt when his time came to face the Allies' retribution. Despite the horrendous past of both men, at this very moment was a moment of sadness.

The matter was finally concluded when on 16th May 1946, the official UK Legal Executioner, Albert Pierrepoint, visited Schöngarth and his fellow accused and carried out the sentences according to the warrant. It is of note, that Schöngarth was charged and executed for the one single act of murdering the airman on 21 November, 1944. For all his other crimes, committed in Galicia, which are too numerous to account, and including the ordering of the execution of 260 Dutch hostages after an unsuccessful attempt on the life of his immediate chief, SS Gruppenführer Hans Albin Rauter that same year,³²⁵ justice was seen to be done.³²⁶

³²⁵ Rijks Institute for War Documentation. On 6 March 1944, the Dutch Resistance mounted an attack on Rauter's chauffeur-driven BMW staff car in the village of Woeste Hoeve (between Arnhem and Apeldoorn) in an attempted

Reference has been made to the uncompromising stance that Dr Schöngarth took when it came to the execution of the Jews in Lwow by officers under his command—that any SS officer would be shot for failing to carry out an order of execution, and that he would support any officer who shot his comrade for this failure. It is also interesting to note, and in some way corroborates this attitude, that when the grave of the airman was exhumed, three other corpses were found in graves nearby. All these three corpses had been hanged as opposed to the airman who had a bullet wound in the head. The three corpses, in SS uniform, were identified as SS/SD officers, one of them named as SS Hauptscharführer Peter Bell.³²⁷ We may assume, with some certainty, that these corpses had been the subject of an SS hanging party, but for what offences it has not been ascertained.

These actions corroborate the defence suggestion by the Einsatzgruppe that had they refused to carry-out the execution of the airman they too would suffer a similar fate.

Rosenbaum, Schöngarth and Menten had teamed up to play a dangerous game in their rampage of condoned murder and theft. Krüger would make history in the killing fields of Galicia. The Rabka School under Rosenbaum became the centre for murder and the instruction of murder. With the help of Menten, the School would be used for storage of their loot and their investments. Schöngarth was their leader and willing supervisor of this unobtrusive training establishment. For the Jews that survived Bad Rabka and surrounding communities, their end was in sight.

The one that got away:

SS-Standartenführer Dr Bruno Albat, who had been present with Dr Schöngarth's decision was made to execute airman Galle.

assassination on Rauter (Kommissar-General für das Sicherheitsdienst in den Niederlanden).

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid. Post-mortem report of the bodies found.

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Bruno Walter Hugo Albath, born in Strasburg, West Prussia, in 1904. He was a German lawyer, SS officer and official of the Gestapo. He studied law and graduated to Dr. jur. In 1939 he was the head of the State Police, Central Dusseldorf, and at the beginning of the Polish campaign was leader of Einsatzcommando 3 in Olsztyn. In 1941 Albath was Chief of Security Police and Security Service and was appointed head of the Gestapo at Konigsberg. His responsibilities saw the infamous detention camp Soldau. In November 1943 he was promoted to SS Colonel and Government Director.

On Albath's arrest he was found to have in his bedroom eight tablets of poison. He stated that he obtained the poison in January 1945 at the same time as his false papers had been prepared stating, 'Everyone in the SD Headquarters was ordered to do this.' He tried to have his teeth drilled for a capsule, but this had been impossible. His wife at the time of his arrest was living with family at Heslingen. When she was questioned after her husband's arrest she was convinced she would never see him again. They had arranged mutually that should he be arrested he would send his gold ring to her—a sign that he had committed suicide. His wife was also in possession of letters from her husband to his children to be read when they became of age in the event of his demise. Mrs Albath knew nothing of her husband's SS lady friend who was residing in the Russian Zone.

On 23 February, 1946, Albath was in custody when he was interrogated by the War Crimes Investigation Unit: Dr Albath agreed with the interrogating officer's opening suggestion that he must have found his duties as an official of the Gestapo somewhat out of keeping with his legal conscience as a Doctor of Laws at the Gottingen University. Albarth replied that he had not joined the Gestapo of his own free choice—he was detailed there. It was pointed out to him that he had been continuously serving in the Gestapo ever since its formation about six years before the war. Albath stated that he had just completed his university studies and entered the police administration shortly before the Nazis came to power, and when first detailed to the Gestapo he was so reluctant to

undertake this class of work that he applied to be released on the pretext of wishing to pursue further university studies, and was, in fact released but was recalled eight months later.

Albath had completed a Questionnaire where he gave details of visits abroad during the war to various occupied countries including Holland, but had not included in those dates his visits to Holland in November 1944. He had been circulated by the Allies as wanted for inciting Schöngarth and others to the murder of an Allied airman at Enschede (for which the others had already been convicted).

Questioned about this visit, he first purported not to remember it and then, when he realised that all the details were already known he said that in the course of a number of visits to posts on the Dutch frontier, he happened to learn at Gronau that Schöngarth whom he wished to see had been spending the previous night at the Villa Hoge Boekel near Enschede and that he might just catch him there which he did at lunchtime (a likely story—author). Albath was obviously reluctant to volunteer any information about this excursion but when it was put to him, he agreed that he saw an Allied bomber crashing near the Villa and parachutists jumping out, but he told the same story as Schöngarth—namely that they saw personnel going into the woods but did not see any of them captured and denied that he had said to Schöngarth, 'In the Reich we treat these bomber-pilots as terrorists' or that he had encouraged the shooting of the airman.

When it was pointed out to Albath that he was, throughout the latter half of the war, Regional Director and Inspektor of the Sipo in District 6 which included the Ruhr, where more murders of allied airmen are known to have occurred than anywhere else, Albath replied that he had received a copy of Himmler's order that Allied airman were not to be protected from the populace but denied having passed the order on though he admitted knowing that it had in fact been passed down to all Gestapo and ordinary police in the District. Albath firmly placed the issuing of this order on SS-Major General Guttenberger, his immediate superior. He said that Guttenberger ordered him to furnish a periodic return of airmen killed in accordance with Himmler's order, and was annoyed

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because the only return he was ever able to make reported the killing of only two airmen by the Populace of Wuppethal. Albath professed complete ignorance of other such crimes, and expressed the belief that members of the German populace who give evidence of their commission by the Gestapo had really committed the crimes themselves.

Questioned about the murder of at least 1089 victims of nine different nationalities by the Cologne Gestapo—many already identified in Cologne cemeteries or from the Gestapo's own records—Albath professed ignorance although he willingly furnished particulars of Gestapo chief Kulzer and other associates of the Cologne Gestapo Office. (There is no doubt that Albath was reiterating a well rehearsed script which he had thought over for some months whilst in custody.)

The questioning continues:

Albath stated that units of the Sipo in towns the size of Cologne received their orders direct from Berlin and not through himself, as his duties being of an administrative character were concerned with such matters as location of Gestapo billets for officers and workers, routine inspections, internal discipline, etc., and with no executive authority (a Chief of the Gestapo—a likely story—another ruse to avoid responsibility). However, it is true that the Sipo-SD came directly under the Chief of the RSHA Security Office, Kaltenbrunner (who replaced Heydrich when he was assassinated). Albath knew full well that there was an order authorising the Sipo-SD units to shoot foreigners who looted during air-raid alerts or the black-outs.

Albath denied having had any training in Special Intelligence sabotage, subversive and fifth column activity of Security for which kind of work he professed that the Sipo-SD drew exclusively on trained detective personnel of the Kripo. He denied that he was granted a delay in his military service in order to carry on with certain lectures at the Sipo-SD School in 1938. He also denied that he had served in the army at all. These were all lies as the

interrogating officer had his military file in front of him showing that he served as a gunner in 1937 and 1940 and further, that he had been an 'Assessor' at the Sipo-SD Training School in 1936-7 in examinations for the rank of Kriminal Kommissar. This information is very relevant when we consider the association he must have had with SS-Major Rosenbaum and Dr Schöngarth who served at the training School about this time.

Asked why he had made such complete arrangements for suicide to avert capture if he had nothing on his conscience, Albath said that he recognised he was in the category liable to be arrested and such was his love of liberty that he did not feel his physical or mental health equal to enduring captivity. He agreed that he and his office had all been issued with false identity papers should they be overrun by the Allied Forces.

Finally, the remarks by the interrogating officer:

'Albath is probably a degenerate but not unintelligent type of rat and is unlikely to incriminate himself willingly in war crimes, although it is to be estimated that once Guttenberger, Kuzler and others are located and arrested thanks to information provided by Albath. He also volunteered information that a mixed party of 32 airborne troops who had apparently landed in the wrong place during the battle of Arnhem were handed over to him by Guttenberger with instructions that they were to be 'sonderbehandelt' (receive special treatment). He quite understood that 'special treatment' might mean that the prisoners were to be killed but on this occasion deliberately misinterpreted his orders by assuming the 'special treatment' to mean that the search of the prisoner's identity papers, etc., was to be specially thorough. Albath states that after being inspected he passed these prisoners (including a Lieutenant and some Americans) to the Wehrmacht.

The depravity of Nazi standards is perhaps illustrated as well not by the direct evidence of their crimes but by the fact

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that the equivalent of a full Colonel or Brigade Commander, a Doctor of Laws, should claim special credit for the fact that he refrained from murdering 32 POWs when he had the opportunity to do so, as if such self-restraint possessed the merit of positive virtue. I have cautioned him that he is liable to be charged as a party to the murder of the airman at Enschede.'

Subsequently, several investigations were initiated against him by the War Crimes Commission resulting in a British Military Court trial when Albath was sentenced to 15 years in prison from which he was released in 1955. He died in 1990.