

Oskar Schindler: Stepping Stone to Life



**Code names: “Ing. Zeiler”, “Osi”, “Schäfer”, “Otto”:
Angehöriger des
"Generalkommandos VIII in Breslau; Abwehr Admiral Canaris"**

**by
Robin O’Neil**

Donated to the “Yizkor Project:” 2015

‘Buy it, read it, prepare to be overawed!’

‘When researching the Schindler story in 1987, I walked the site of the former Belzec death camp and realised that beneath my feet were the remains of over 500,000 Jewish families who had been murdered on an industrial scale between March and December 1942...and the sudden realisation...they are still there!’

**An addendum of *Vernichtungslager* ‘Belzec’
has been added in their memory**

Sir Martin Gilbert: ‘No one has done more justice to the life and achievements of Oskar Schindler than Dr Robin O’Neil, whose archival detective work and zeal for telling the story in all its fascinating details of the highest order.

Amazon: "spyder man" (Orpington, Kent, England)

The author of this book is an acknowledged and well-respected expert on Nazi war crimes in eastern Europe and on the destruction of European Jewish communities. The book is well-written in a narrative style. It opens with a detailed breakdown of the primary sources and moves on with a brief history of the town and area that Schindler grew up in and of the development of the Jewish community. There are 20 pages of detailed notes which tell a story in themselves. There are many photographs of locations and people, maps of regions and towns, and sketches which all add to the overall enjoyment of learning the facts about this amazing couple, yes couple. Buy it, read it, prepare to be overawed!

Amazon: Kevin J. Roberts on May 14, 2012

Dr Robin O’Neil has given us the full story of the remarkable life of Oskar Schindler. What is most remarkable about this book is that it is a great read. So many books by scholars of history bore the reader immensely. O’Neil, although a widely recognized Holocaust scholar, has pruned the details to an extent as to permit an appreciation of the full width and breadth of Schindler without being burdensome to read. I have read other books on this subject, and plenty of them, and this is THE BEST. O’Neil brings a passion for the story with an equal attention to accuracy. Do yourself a favour and get this book if you have any interest in Oskar Schindler, the Holocaust, or in the potential for human beings to be redeemed. Schindler offers inspiration in overabundance, and Robin O’Neil has given us a very approachable and easy-to-digest work that allows for that inspiration to come through loudly and clearly.

My Heroes in the Schindler Story

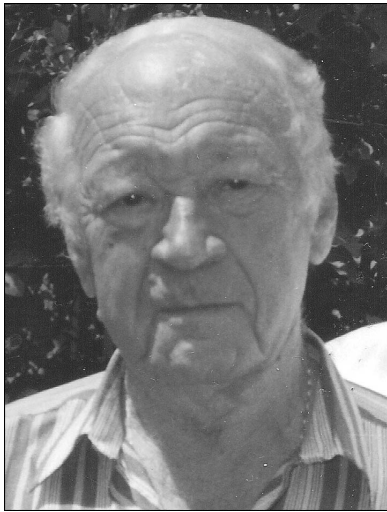


Figure: 1: Viktor Dortheimer¹ 69124



Figure 2: Moshe Bejski 69387

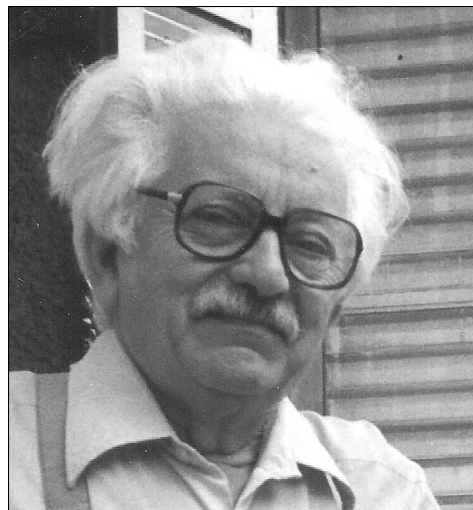


Figure 3: Josef Bau² 69084

The immediate and extended families of the above three Schindler survivors were murdered in the Bełżec death camp and elsewhere.



Fig. 4

Acknowledgements

To personally thank the many individuals who have helped and contributed to my research over many years was an impossible task. To close friends, survivors of the Holocaust, archivists, and academia in general, I pay due acknowledgment.

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Finally, special thanks are extended to my long term editor, friend and mentor, Hon. Professor of the English language (USA) Joyce Field who I first met in the old east Galician town of Lwow many years ago when the search for justice began.

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My introduction to the investigation of the Schindler story began in November 1987, with my arrest by armed security guards at 4, Lipowa Street (Krakowskie Zakłady Elektroniczne ‘TELEPOD’), Krakow, the former factory premises (Emalia) of Oskar Schindler. This was the cold war period during which foreigners travelling in Eastern Europe were eyed with suspicion.

Taking a photograph of Schindler’s factory, I had failed to notice the signs forbidding photography at this Warsaw Pact communications establishment. Taken under guard, first to the central police station in Krakow and then to the headquarters of the SIB (Special Investigation Branch), I was interrogated for several hours. It was somewhat comical, as, despite all their efforts, they failed to find an interpreter. I sat in the corner smoking my pipe and reading Tom Kenealley’s novel *Schindler’s Ark*. Eventually common sense prevailed: having examined my camera and film and failing at any point to communicate with me, they kicked me out of the front door.

Early in 2008, while escorting a group to Schindler’s haunts in Krakow, I met the guard named Mietek, who had arrested me in 1987. Long retired, he was now a security officer at 4, Lipowa Street: housing The Schindler Museum!

Introduction

The late Dr. Moshe Bejski, former Chairman of the Commission for Recognition of the Righteous Gentiles and a former Justice of the Supreme Court in Israel, is central to the Schindler story. It was my privilege to have met Dr. Bejski in the early 1990s in Israel when he kindly edited my first attempt to reconstruct the Schindler story. Dr. Bejski remained a good friend and mentor until his untimely death in 2007.

Moshe Bejski was born in 1920 in the Polish town of Dzialoszyce, near Krakow. After the Nazis invaded Poland, Bejski's family was deported to the Belzec death camp. He and his brother Uri were saved by Schindler when the industrialist drafted them to work in his factory. Officially, the Bejski brothers were listed as a machine fitter and a draftsman, but Uri was known for his expertise in weapons and Moshe was a master document-forgery. Throughout the war, Moshe Bejski created rubber stamps with the Nazi regime's symbol on them, and forged papers and passports that Schindler used to smuggle Jews out of harm's way.

In the 1960s, Bejski testified at Adolf Eichmann's war crimes trial. Bejski remained close with Schindler for many years, giving him money and defending him against critics who accused the industrialist of alcoholism and womanizing. In 1974, he delivered the oration at Schindler's funeral in Jerusalem.

From 1970 to 1975, Bejski chaired Yad Vashem's Commission of the Righteous, where he was tasked with identifying gentiles who saved the lives of Jews during the Holocaust to be honored as Righteous Among the Nations. The commission made several controversial decisions during the time he was chairman, sifting through those who hid Jews while simultaneously aligning themselves with the Nazis and others who saved Jews in exchange for payment. As part of his work with the commission, Bejski created the principle of "the inherent consistency of the rescuer's gesture," ruling that a person could only be Righteous Among the Nations if his actions were spurred by a genuinely humanitarian spirit.

Bejski was appointed to the Israeli Supreme Court in 1979, and served there until he retired in 1991.

In 1994, Yad Vashem Studies published Moshe Bejski's personal thoughts about Oskar Schindler. This appraisal is now offered as an introduction to set the scene for what is to follow.

Oskar Schindler and *Schindler's List*

Moshe Bejski

It appears that Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* has by now reached the peak of public interest in the Holocaust. The film brought the horrors of the Holocaust – to the extent that they could be cinematically reconstructed – to the consciousness of hundreds of millions of people who until now had little or no knowledge of what had happened to the Jewish people in Nazi-occupied Europe.

From the moment Spielberg's film was screened in cinemas all over the world, many asked whether the events depicted in *Schindler's List* are factually grounded and whether the figure of Schindler, as portrayed by the American director, corresponded to the actual person and his conduct.

The answer is not simple, and a preliminary clarification is in order: Spielberg's movie is largely an adaptation of a book by Australian writer Thomas Keneally, *Schindler's List*, published in 1982. Although before writing his book Keneally interviewed a large number of survivors who had been saved by Schindler and availed himself of archival material related to the story, he did not intend to – nor did he – write a documentary-historical book. Despite the fact that the characters, both Jews and non-Jews, bear the names of actual persons, and the events described in the book did actually take place, their fictional representation belongs to the realm of poetic license; that is, deviation from actual facts in order to enhance the artistic effect.

Descriptions of certain events are only loosely related to historical-documentary realities, just as dialogues between characters were conceived in the writer's imagination. Moreover, there are a number of factual errors in the book that stem from faulty memories of the survivors. Nevertheless, all these qualifications do not detract from the general accuracy of the depicted events, with one important exception: even a writer as gifted as Keneally cannot reconstruct in full the horrors of existence in a concentration camp, simply because these horrors defy human imagination.

Spielberg did not aspire to make a historical-documentary feature, and *Schindler's List* certainly does not belong in this category. I do not regard myself as qualified to pass professional judgment on the artistic merits of the film; but, as a person who went through the actual experience, I do feel entitled to say that, despite the fact that in numerous instances the film is at variance with facts, it remains firmly grounded in reality. This notwithstanding certain modifications dictated by the need to make the film appealing to a wide audience.

Despite its considerable length (three and a quarter hours), the film describes only a part (probably a small part) of Schindler's undertakings during the five and a half years of the war. The film passes over the Brännlitz period in almost complete silence and does not depict the greatest rescue act of the Schindler couple; namely, bringing in the freezing prisoners from the Golleschau camp. They had been travelling back and forth for two weeks in sealed boxcars without food or water.

The occasion does not permit me to do justice to Oskar Schindler's personality, to relate the full story of his efforts on behalf of the Jews who worked for him, his individual approach to each one of them, his efforts to protect and rescue them. The truth is that the details of his story were not widely known before 1962.

When Schindler came to Israel for the first time, the survivors who lived in the country (240, many of them with families by then) gathered for a festive reception with their wartime benefactor in a Tel Aviv hotel. That evening, May 2, 1962, was the first time they spoke out about what Schindler had done for each of them individually and for the whole camp in order to protect and rescue the prisoners. The venue did not provide an opportunity for all those gathered to bear testimony; only 14 survivors spoke. But their stories were recorded as direct, reliable, and independent testimony regarding the "Schindler affair" and were subsequently deposited in the Yad Vashem archives. There is no doubt that they constitute the most direct and reliable record, particularly those testimonies of survivors who were close to Schindler. But they were not made into a book or a film, and even they do not tell the entire story.

Included here are selected excerpts from testimonies given by survivors on that night as well as a number of other documents. This selection of documents bears out the conclusion that, essentially,

both Keneally's book and Spielberg's film are based on actual events. The material also offers some information about Schindler the man, his relationship to the Jews, his unique and numerous efforts that led to the rescue of 1,200 men and women, including the list of names of the 300 women whom he saved from the inferno of Auschwitz.

There are three aspects of Spielberg's film that I find of great importance:

- (1) The film has reached an audience of tens, perhaps hundreds, of millions, offering them an opportunity to learn something about the Holocaust that struck the Jewish people.
- (2) In recent years there have been hundreds of publications that seek to deny that the Holocaust ever took place. Spielberg's film, based on testimonies of persons who are still alive, provides an effective means to blunt the impact of these nefarious undertakings.
- (3) Oskar Schindler, together with some 12,000 persons that have been honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations, including those who acted in concentration and death camps, is yet another example and proof that it was possible to help and rescue persecuted Jews everywhere and under every circumstance. There were simply not enough people with the will and courage to render assistance. Perhaps the film will awaken the world to the fact that during the war humanity failed the persecuted Jews.

Moshe Bejski

Background

The Final Solution, Nazi Germany's plan for the extermination of European Jewry, turned the eastern occupied territories into a mass grave for six million Jews – men, women and children. Rising from the ashes and learning the tragic lessons of the Holocaust, the State of Israel chose to never forget. Through a special Knesset (Israeli Parliament) law, Yad Vashem was established in 1953, to enshrine and preserve the memory of the six million Jews annihilated and the thousands of flourishing communities destroyed.

On August 15, 1953, the Knesset unanimously passed the Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance (Yad Vashem) Law, which outlined the objectives of Yad Vashem and its organizational framework. Section 1(9) deals specifically with commemorating the high-minded Gentiles who risked their lives to save Jews.

This recognition carries with it the privilege of planting a tree on the Avenue of Righteous Gentiles, and the award of a medallion inscribed in Hebrew and French, with words from the Talmud: Whosoever saves a single soul, it is as if he has saved the whole world.

In 1963, Oskar Schindler was nominated a 'Righteous Person,' only the third individual to receive the privilege of planting a tree. His contemporaries, Julius Madritsch, Raymond Titsch, and Oswald Bousco, were also recognized.

The Speaker of Israel's Parliament said: "It is our duty to discover these knights of morality, to establish contact with them, to pay them our debt of gratitude, and to express to them our admiration for their courage ... These few saved not only the Jews but the honor of man."

The Jews named the Holocaust *Shoah* (I will give them an everlasting name, Isaiah 56:5).

The Shoah was a turning point in history – a logical progression of the persecution of the Jews, dating back over a thousand years, culminating in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. It was there, on January 20, 1942, that the bureaucratic destructive process of the Jews was determined. The final seal of approval came in a two-paragraph letter from Goering to Heydrich in July 1941, with orders to proceed with the Final Solution.

The wheels of destruction slowly started to turn. Nothing was committed to writing and there was no specific plan. All was left to inferences and inventions conjured up in the minds of the architects and technicians of human destruction.

The Jews had lived for centuries with discriminatory edicts: firstly, 'you may not live amongst us as Jews'; then, 'you may not live amongst us'; and finally, from the Nazis, 'you may not live'.³

In 1942, when Jews in the whole of Poland were being rounded up and sent to extermination camps, Oskar Schindler distanced himself from the Nazi racial policy. He operated his own rescue mission to

save as many Jews as possible, by taking them with him when he moved his factory from Poland to Czechoslovakia. To some, his actions were that of a saint. To others, he remained a Nazi who made money from Jewish slave labor. He remains a controversial figure, an enigma of his times.

A letter from Oskar Schindler to Director Dr. Ball-Kaduri at Yad Vashem shows the essence of the man's character and thinking: the conflict between obedience and conscience which he experienced in 1939, and the decision he took to follow the latter regardless of the consequences that might result from his dangerous and adventurous existence.⁴

Schindler wrote:

"In judging my actions, I want people to keep in mind, that in all my decisions, I acted as a free human being who had everything life could offer. In critical and hopeless situations, I was often able to inspire weaker characters and pull them along with me.

Let me give you a few details about myself and my change of opinions. I will try and explain some of my actions as well as it is possible in the circumstances in which I now find myself.

Ultimately, I am a German. When the Prussians marched in and occupied the Sudetenland, my homeland; when they made a colony of it, pillaged it like enemy territory and used the inhabitants as second-rate people, only finding use for them as cannon fodder; when the last of my Jewish school friends and acquaintances immigrated as quickly as possible, I started thinking. The memory of a happy childhood, spent with those friends, became for me a moral obligation that drove me on.

Then, when I experienced the German occupation in the Protectorate and in Poland for a few months, I knew clearly that I and a million other non-Reich Germans were being taken for a ride by the convincing propaganda about a 'New' Europe with nationalistic and economic advantages. I was not going to become subordinate to a bunch of sadistic murderers and deceitful impostors who surreptitiously got the government of a very straight and ordinary nation on their side.

This realization may have been in many German minds, but because of the fear of being ruined professionally, or disadvantaged economically, they kept quiet in spite of their doubts and carried on as if nothing had happened because it was easier and safer to do so.

Thank God, I had the courage to see the consequences of this disastrous time and jumped off the bandwagon to save what was still possible to save. A large number of like-minded people, mainly former Austrians, allied with me. It was important to remember that this change did not take place after July 20, 1944, (the attempt on Hitler's life) when all frontiers had broken down and many had given up. It started four years prior to this date, when the German Blitzkrieg made the world hold its breath. The political uncertainty of the war years put me under enormous mental pressure. My upbringing to respect orders, to be obedient and follow the law, made me battle with myself, until I finally buried all those instilled doctrines.

I was not going to be uncritical anymore. I was going to follow my instinct and judgment; to do something for humanity and to make room for compassion.

Like-minded friends, and the sight of the daily suffering, helped me overcome all my conflicts. I am not a religious man, far from it. As an immoderate man, I have far more faults than the average person who goes modestly through life.

'Respect for humanity', as Albert Schweitzer says. 'I could hold and defend it.'

Who could understand the inner conflict I felt, after sending a dozen women to the SS 'super humans,' to whom alcohol and presents had already lost their attraction. Some of the women knew what was asked of them, although they were only aware of fragments of my difficulties. The pain I experienced was certainly not jealousy, but disgust with myself. To throw pearls before the swine and say that the end justifies the means was poor comfort to me.

When the German war success neared its end and friends repeatedly called to persuade me to leave with them for Switzerland, take all my possessions with me and leave everything else to chance (for example, the destruction and extermination, which was relentless), I found that, morally, I could not do this. Instead I drove to Krakow, taking my reserves of dollars, and bought large quantities of food and medicines. These I dispatched as express goods to my camp at Brünnlitz in new ammunition boxes, which I registered as ammunition parts.

In the last months of the war, I paid hundreds of thousands of Marks to the SS as wages for totally senseless work, but it kept the gangsters satisfied and left me in peace.

What would have been said if I had gone to Switzerland? The survivors of my factory would have said, 'He was quite decent, but a pity he had to run away.' I know some quite decent people who today live far better than I, but who failed when it was important.

And, what of my wife, Emilie? I wonder if the wives of any of those so-called 'decent men' would have traveled 300 kilometers in the bitter cold weather, with a case full of schnapps, a case far too heavy for her, to exchange the contents for medicine in order to help those starving and suffering Jews from the Golleschau transport who had lost their last spark for life through German barbarism. For my wife, this task was self-evident. Whenever there was a need to help people in peril, she would care, regardless of the dangers. She had the courage to treat SS leaders as butlers and valets. 'I felt the Jews were being destroyed – I had to help. There was no choice.'"

Oskar Schindler, September 9, 1956

The 1982 publication of Thomas Keneally's book, *Schindler's Ark* (re-published later as the novel *Schindler's List*), and the 1993 release of Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* brought world-wide prominence to the Holocaust in general, and to Oskar Schindler in particular, as the embodiment of all those who risked their lives to save Jews and other victims of the Final Solution. The Holocaust and Oskar Schindler both remain inexplicable in their entirety, but I hope my efforts will shed light on one aspect of those terrible times.

In Dr. Luitgard N. Wundheiler's analysis⁵ of Schindler in 1986, she poses the question: "Why, then, is Oskar Schindler not better known? Why is he never mentioned together with Raoul Wallenberg, Elizabeth Abegg or André Trocme?" Twenty years later, we scratch our heads over Abegg and Trocme but are more conversant with Wallenberg and Schindler.

Among the Righteous now commemorated at Yad Vashem, one asks one's self, how does he fit in with all these other heroes, how was he different, what makes us sit up and take notice? Dr. Moshe Bejski, himself a Schindler survivor, put it quite plainly: "Schindler was different for two reasons: first, his exploits were on a very large scale; and second, he carried them on for a very long time."⁶

The story of Oskar Schindler is not the history of a man born to be a hero, like Raoul Wallenberg; rather it is the story of a common – even a base man. Before the war, Schindler had been something of a ne'er-do-well. After the war, he was a financial failure. Yet, under the right circumstances, he became a savior. It is only the presence of monstrous evil that makes Oskar Schindler a good man – finally, an exceptional one.

While many of us would like to think we would have acted in a similar fashion towards oppressed people of any race, the difference was that Schindler found himself in a position of some authority and power, and this, together with his charisma, enabled him to influence the events that unfolded before him.

During the entire course of the war, in so far as the many hundreds of Jews who were touched by Schindler are concerned, not one single Jewish life was lost by unnatural causes. As Dr. Wundheiler remarks: "...and if a human being with so many shortcomings could do that, is there anyone among us who can say, 'I am not good enough or powerful enough to help?' It is uncomfortable to know about Schindler because he stirs our conscience precisely because of his weaknesses."

My purpose is to re-examine and analyze the novel *Schindler's List* by Thomas Keneally. As the novel lacks notation of primary and secondary sources, we are at the mercy of the writer regarding the credibility of the facts surrounding Schindler's activities during the Holocaust. I also consider it important to accurately document Schindler's story because of the many publications and films now being produced which rely entirely on the Keneally book as source material.

I am writing this account biographically and proceeding in chronological order from the years 1908 to 1945. Each section is subdivided into chapters, analyzing Schindler's behavior within the historical context of the times. New evidence is introduced which challenges existing facts, and I present my own assessments and opinions.

Documentation and Sources

In researching documentation on the life of Oskar Schindler, I interviewed and corresponded with many of the Schindler Jews who have become celebrated survivors of the Holocaust.

When Spielberg was asked why he used the American publication title *Schindler's List*, in preference to the more widely known and original title, *Schindler's Ark* (in America, this title was considered too religious), he replied, "I want to make a lot about lists."⁷ He was right. The Schindler story is all about lists; there are right lists and wrong lists, long lists and short lists, personal lists, official lists, and the lists to which I attach most evidential value – the Madritsch list and the Davar list.

The list of Oskar Schindler is not as straightforward as one might think. Although it remains the framework from which everything radiates, it takes on different and perplexing guises as the Schindler story unfolds. What one must appreciate is that the list one identifies with Schindler – i.e., the list of names he selected for the exodus of his Schindler Jews on the transport from KL (concentration camp) Plaszow⁸ to Brännlitz in October, 1944 – should not be directly identified with the list in the archives at Yad Vashem. The Yad Vashem list is a German document drawn up from a list of names presented to them on behalf of Schindler and subsequently processed (with alterations and replacement names made for personal gain) by the Jew Marcel Goldberg (69510).⁹ This presentation first took place in the labor office of Plaszow, then later in the administration department of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.

However, it is not that simple. There are more complications to examine before one arrives at any sensible understanding of how the list or lists came into being. One can safely disregard the notion that Oskar Schindler personally dictated a list of his Jewish personnel for transfer to the safer camp at Brännlitz. All the evidence suggests that he was away from Krakow at this time, securing the factory in Brännlitz.

Schindler's original list was based on the 300 Jews retained for decommissioning purposes in the Emalia¹⁰ factory when it was being closed down in August 1944. It was these Jews who were the first batch to be transferred to Brännlitz. The remainder of his workers, some 800, had been sent to Plaszow. Apart from a small number of personally sanctioned Jews chosen by Schindler,¹¹ the remaining names that were to make up the Brännlitz transport were left in the hands of Marcel Goldberg (69510) and SS-Unterscharführer (Corporal) Smith of the Jewish labor office in Plaszow.¹² This is when the wheeling and dealing and corruption took place, and when the diamonds talked. Some of the most distinguished community leaders were removed from the list and replaced by those who could pay.¹³ In the post-war analysis of Schindler's list, there are added complications with claims and counter-claims by survivors who profess to have had some part in the formulation of the list.

The pro-forma list perceived to be Schindler's is in fact the standard form for the transport of prisoners filled in by the German authorities, in this case for Gross-Rosen. When the Schindler men arrived at Gross-Rosen from Plaszow, they were selected in groups and processed accordingly. Each man received a number, obliterating him as a person, before being transferred to the Schindler factory camp at Brännlitz.

The Schindler's lists held by Yad Vashem and widely circulated as "The List" is nothing more than a regulated form of accounting. To support and to corroborate my argument I refer to Emilie Schindler's recollection on arriving at the Brännlitz camp:

"Miss Kronovsky had come with us from Zwittau (Svitavy) to work at the plant (Schindler's factory in Brännlitz). She was remarkably meticulous and punctual, and as the secretary she also had to keep up to date the lists of all those who worked at the plant. These lists had to be submitted every eight days when the food rations were delivered, supposedly calculated according to the required number of calories per person."¹⁴

The scene in Spielberg's film where Itzhak Stern (69518) is shown typing the list at Schindler's dictation is the colorful imagination of a Hollywood film director. Stern, according to my research,

was never an employee in Schindler's Emalia factory. One of the greatest misconceptions in the Schindler story – in books, film, and in other literature – is that Itzhak Stern worked as Schindler's accountant in the Emalia factory. Stern only occasionally worked for Schindler. Schindler's accountant and factory manager was the Jew Abraham Bankier (69268). Bankier was the previous owner of Emalia under its former commercial business name – Rekord. Ousted from his factory through bankruptcy, Bankier became the manager for Schindler, and many of the Schindler Jews that the author has interviewed said he was the kingpin behind most of Schindler's activities. In Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, the characterization of Stern should mainly have been that of Bankier. The scene in the film where Stern is shown being swept into a departing train for the death camps, only to be saved at the last minute by Schindler, who is seen running along the platform shouting his name, was in reality Bankier. Nevertheless, this does not lessen Stern's contribution.¹⁵

Schindler's women traveled from Plaszow, but instead of going directly to Brännlitz, found themselves in Auschwitz-Birkenau. The bureaucrats of Auschwitz-Birkenau processed the women exactly as the men had been processed at Gross-Rosen, with one exception: the men were listed by consecutive numbering only and not by name alphabetically, whereas the women were listed both by consecutive numbers as well as by alphabetical name. Gross-Rosen, Plaszow, and Brännlitz were all satellite camps within a spreading arc of penal establishments working to a standard set of rules and regulations. To simplify matters, the men's list was restructured into alphabetical order for easy reference to the individuals concerned.

The list throws up many anomalies; name changes, dates of birth, and occupations are not what they seem. Generally, they are correct, but for a number of reasons, some of the prisoners chose to give inaccurate information, while other inaccuracies were simply the result of typing errors made by the German authorities.

The interviewing technique I adopted, was, from the outset, based on the realization that memory is not history. It stands to reason that much of the events described and dialogue recalled form a memoir – a compilation of recollections of incidents and conversations as elderly witnesses remembered them happening 50 years earlier. It has been a challenge for the researcher to disentangle the mass of testimonies, which have – for many reasons – been exaggerated or mistaken, to arrive at the probable true course of events. I was more comfortable in relying on written evidence made at the time or immediately after the described events occurred.

Much of the dialogue came through the filter of translation, whether in the form of personal interviews with witnesses or in dealing with documentation. Eyewitnesses heard or spoke the original in one language and repeated it to me in another, often through an interpreter. Most of the time, the oral translations were just about adequate but mostly grammatically incorrect, as the interpreter switched from direct to indirect quotations. Fortunately, the majority of witnesses forming the core of my research spoke English.

I was not so fortunate when dealing with documentation extracted from archival sources in Israel, Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Apart from English press reports and the odd book in English which referred to the subject, I was at the absolute mercy of friendly translators. Many of the translators were Schindler Jews who were spread far and wide, and were able to feed me further information when requested. I had to take advantage of every opportunity that presented itself, sometimes in very odd situations. A brief example of one such incident is illustrative: I had just secured some material from the archives in Svitavy, Czech Republic. Waiting at a bus stop, I entered into conversation with a complete stranger¹⁶ who was eager to converse in English, so I immediately asked him to translate some documentation, which he did directly into a tape recorder, one eye on the lookout for the bus and one eye on the document.

Tape recorders were an essential part of my equipment when dealing with foreign-language documents. I was heavily reliant on this practice, and initially sent each document to a translator who would translate the document onto tape. Upon its return, the translation was transferred from the tape directly into print. All tapes have been kept in my archives. On some occasions, I obtained independent clarification of a particular translation and found this practice was able to verify the accuracy of the original translation.

The Schindler investigation I began some 20 years ago was protracted and sometimes difficult. However, on occasions luck came my way: staying at the City Hotel in Tel Aviv I left each day for Yad Vashem to interview survivors or other witnesses.



Figure 5: Yaël Reicher (now Mrs. Birnbaum), City Hotel, Tel-Aviv 1995

At the hotel I met Yaël Reicher, who was interested in my research. Each day I left her sheets of Hebrew documents and the following morning I would find this material translated and left at the hotel desk for my attention. My grateful thanks, Yaël.

Principal Research Documents

1. Dr. Ball-Kaduri Documentation
2. Steinhouse Documentation
3. Madritsch List and Documentation
4. Czech Security Documentation
5. Emilie Schindler Documents and Memoir (1996)
6. Keneally's *Schindler's List*
7. The *Davar* List

1. The Ball-Kaduri Documentation¹⁷

Much of the information about this period comes from a detailed and lengthy report and from documentation and observations (in German) by Dr. R. Ball-Kaduri. The documentation deals with both Schindler and Stern and the protagonists surrounding them at that time.

In 1945, Ball-Kaduri represented a Jewish Agency dealing with the evidence of Holocaust survivors and restricted his investigations solely to German-speaking witnesses. Any matter that arose in other languages was passed over to another department. In 1956, he was working under the auspices of Yad Vashem; all the references are in the archives at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

The information collated by Ball-Kaduri was obtained with the help of Stern, and, later, through direct communication with Schindler. There are a large number of very interesting documents – some originals, some photocopies. The letters Schindler sent to Ball-Kaduri in which he writes about himself are of great value.

The accounts may be divided into sections covering the period 1939-1945:

1. Itzhak Stern
2. Oskar Schindler
3. Stern in Krakow
 - a. Work at J.L. Bucheister and Co.
 - b. Work for TOZ and the Joint

- c. Work for armed forces in Unkelbach; the Progress factory
- 4. Schindler in Krakow
 - a. Schindler's factory and Schindler's camp in Krakow
 - b. Schindler and the Nazi system
- 5. Stern in Plaszow
 - a. End of outside work at Progress factory
 - b. Commandant Goeth, liaison between Stern and factory management
 - c. General observations
- 6. Collaboration, Schindler/Stern, Krakow/Plaszow
- 7. Transition from work camp Plaszow to concentration camp Plaszow
- 8. Move of Schindler's factory to Brünnlitz
- 9. Work camp Brünnlitz
 - a. Schindler's welfare of the Jew
 - b. Salvage [Saving? Rescue? Liberation?] of the Golleschau transport of 100 Jews in January, 1945
- 10. Liberation of Brünnlitz

When Ball-Kaduri was compiling his report, he had to use a special method. As he received Stern's statements, he found it impossible to write them down in chronological sequence. At the time he presented his evidence, Stern resided in Tel Aviv and was the manager of a factory. It is said that he was a first-rate organizer and was an expert on factory statistics. These characteristics, however, did not appear to help him as he related the details of the war years with Oskar Schindler to Ball-Kaduri.

According to Dr. Ball-Kaduri, Stern would bubble over when thinking of the past. He spoke very quickly and recounted isolated incidents very vividly, just as they entered his mind. There was no chronological order in his narrative, and he seemed to lack an understanding of the interviewer's difficulties.

Dr. Ball-Kaduri decided to take detailed notes in shorthand while Stern was speaking, and then transfer the notes that same evening or the next day to a typewritten account. It was only after about five meetings with Stern that Dr. Ball-Kaduri started to see the whole of the extraordinary story Stern and Schindler had experienced. Through specific questioning, the account became clearer.

These interviews lasted six months, during which time Stern would repeat an incident many times, until he was halted. Nothing of importance changed throughout the repetition of incidents. The report was completed in December 1956 and signed by both Yitzhak Stern and Dr. Ball-Kaduri as a true statement of the events that took place during that critical time.

We have, in Stern's deposition, a unique insight into his dealings with Schindler. He provides an account which would otherwise be impossible for us to realize.

2. The Steinhouse Documentation¹⁸

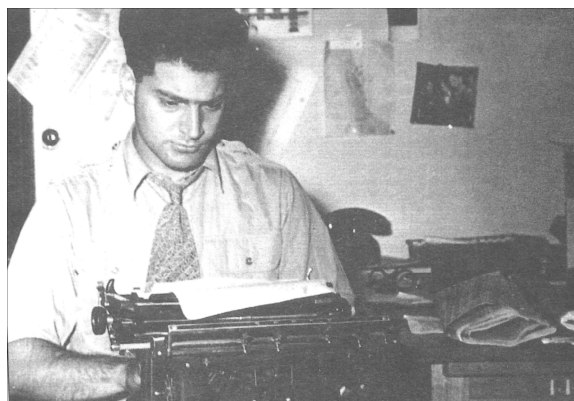


Figure 6: Herbert Steinhouse in Paris, 1949
Writing the original Oskar Schindler article sent to the author in 1995

Unknown to Keneally, Spielberg, Ball-Kaduri, and other interested parties, another writer had stumbled onto the Schindler story over 40 years earlier. In 1949, Herbert Steinhouse worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Paris, and was the first journalist to interview Schindler and Stern about their wartime exploits. Being the professional he is, Steinhouse arranged several interviews with both Stern and Schindler, conducted under strict conditions. Translators of German and Yiddish were present and a shorthand typist recorded the interviews, verbatim. Also present was Al Taylor, a professional photographer who captured pictures of the most telling truth, revealing the symbiotic relationship between Schindler and Stern since their first meeting on November 19, 1939. Evidence of the love and understanding that existed between these two men has not been shown since, in writing or in film. Al Taylor does it with one photograph of great symbolic tenderness.



Figure 7: Itzhak Stern and Oskar Schindler, Paris 1949 (Al Taylor)

It is interesting how closely the article written by Steinhouse 50 years earlier supports *Schindler's Ark* by Keneally, who never met Schindler. The Steinhouse documentation makes Schindler even more extraordinary than either the book or the film, both of which depict him as someone who started out wanting cheap labor in order to make money and who became a humanitarian in the process. The Steinhouse papers wrestle with the answer to the question that we all want to know: What made Schindler tick? Why did he do what he did? Herbert Steinhouse's interviews would appear to have more validity than the speculative writing of both the book and the film.

The Steinhouse documentation is important for several reasons: for the corroboration it gives to the established record; for the additional details and anecdotes not contained in either Keneally's novel or Spielberg's film; and, most importantly, for the direct access it gives us to Schindler himself.

3. The Madritsch Documentation¹⁹

One cannot discuss Oskar Schindler without incorporating into the dialogue his contemporaries in Plaszow – Julius Madritsch, Raymond Titsch²⁰ and Oswald Bousco.²¹ These four, recognized by the State of Israel as Righteous Persons, occupy a unique place in the hearts and minds of the Jews formerly incarcerated in the ghettos and labor camps of Krakow and Tarnow. The four conspired to lessen the hurt and deprivation of the Jews interned in the most appalling circumstances. Much of my information comes from a personal record kept by Madritsch – original German documents of the time recording his dealings with the SS bureaucrats in Berlin. The Titsch documents, by way of affidavit, were made after the war to counter allegations against his employer, Madritsch. The recollections of both men are also important for the memory of Oswald Bousco, who was executed by the Nazis in Krakow.



Figure 8: Julius Madritsch



Figure 9: Raymond Titsch²²

4. Czech Security Services Documentation 1938 and 1946²³

The documentation dated 1938 deals with Schindler's arrest and interrogation in Svitavy on August 18/19, 1938. The documentation of 1946 deals with the aftermath of the war when the Czechoslovakian government was tracking down known Nazis, Schindler included, and when the arrest and interrogation of Joseph Aue took place.

Finding these police reports was quite significant. In Keneally's account of Schindler, he appears to have skipped a chapter – the period when Schindler was engaging with the Abwehr in 1938 and was imprisoned on a capital charge of espionage against the Czechoslovakian state. Sentenced to death by hanging, he languished for some months in jail until Hitler took over the whole of Czechoslovakia, at which time all political prisoners were released.

Mrs. Schindler has noted, "Oskar was condemned to death for his offence. The German invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939 saved his life."²⁴

This material exposes Schindler's direct connection with the German security services and his appointment as second-in-command of the security services in Moravska Ostrava,²⁵ a town on the Czech/Polish border. It also delineates his role in the recruitment of Joseph Aue as an agent and the transfer of Aue to the premises of J.L. Bucheister and Co., Stradom Street, Krakow. Keneally's reference to the Bucheister premises centers on the first meeting between Schindler and Stern on November 19, 1939; Stern was the Jewish accountant working directly under Aue, the German-installed Treuhänder. Keneally nearly got it right, but for the missing piece in the jigsaw, found in this Czech security documentation. In short, Schindler was a high-ranking officer of the Foreign Section of the Abwehr in Moravska Ostrava and Krakow. Aue was a committed agent operating and residing at the premises of Bucheister, used by the Abwehr for its undercover work in Krakow. Stern appears to have been ignorant of this.²⁶

5. Emilie Schindler's Documentation

This was of exceptional help not only because of her close personal relationship with Oskar,²⁷ but also because of her direct involvement in his activities as an agent of the Abwehr in Ostrava and his early activities in Krakow. Emilie was also directly involved in the Brännlitz camp and the incident concerning the Golleschau tragedy. My material began with the help of Jon Blair, the film director, who gave me access to a full schedule of interviews he had had with Emilie Schindler in Argentina in 1981. This was followed up by my own personal interviews with Mrs. Schindler in Israel and subsequent correspondence. Finally, I used information in Emilie Schindler's memoirs later published in Argentina.

6. Keneally's *Schindler's Ark* (later *List*)

My problem with this book was that sources were not attributed, nor was there an index from which to work. Generally, it is accurate, with parts painted in, or out, for the sake of the novel. The research, however, is impeccable. I deliberately put the Keneally book aside and worked from my own notes, but I used his book as a guide to the Schindler story and was impressed with Keneally's attention to detail and his progress as the story unfolded.

7. The *Davar* List: The original Schindler's List?

The *Davar* publication is of considerable importance considering the list's controversial legacy. The list of Schindler's Jews given by Schindler to the Committee for Aid to Jews was published in Palestine's daily newspaper *Davar* between August 31 and September 5, 1944. The list with 901 names and birthdates was created in March 1944.

The quoted documentation (section 1-7) remains the author's main source of information covering a broad spectrum of Schindler's activities between 1938 and 1945. There are many other documents and witness accounts covering the periods prior to, and after, the war years and these are incorporated into the text.

Historical Synopsis²⁸

Svitavy – A Town in the Bohemian-Moravian Borderlands

The history of Svitavy, a feudal town of the Olomouc bishops, dates to the year 1256. Up until 1945 the main language heard in town streets and on the Renaissance Square was German. The arrival of the railroad in Svitavy in the 19th century led to the heavy industrialization of the entire area. While a large number of factories determined the industrial character of the town, the historical town square became an important tourist attraction.

The town of Svitavy underwent dramatic changes in the 19th century. The textile industry, the main livelihood of town citizens, entered a phase of tumultuous expansion. The complexes of factories that were founded gave Svitavy an unmistakable industrial character. The vast majority of the 9,029 residents recorded in the 1900 census were Catholics. A mere 75 individuals declared themselves to be Czech-speaking citizens. Over 100 societies and associations, including organized labor, had an important impact on town life. Despite all their difficulties, the citizens of Svitavy coexisted in relative peace. But the “Manchester of Moravia,” as the town had been called, found itself at a historical crossroads during the period of the First World War. A deep economic crisis, the loss of markets for produced goods and social tension were a portent of unrest in 1918.

The declaration of a free Czechoslovakia and the demise of the Hapsburg monarchy were not accepted with enthusiasm in Svitavy. The town was situated in the German-speaking enclave of Hřebečsko and the leaders of Svitavy tried to align the town with German Austria. While the occupation of Svitavy by the Czechoslovak army in December 1918 calmed the situation, it did nothing to resolve the prevailing attitudes of town citizens. Life in Svitavy over the next 20 years developed peacefully, but with the rise of Adolph Hitler the exemplary German-Czech cooperation came to an end in the small town in the Bohemian-Moravian borderlands.

Jews in the Bohemian-Moravian Borderlands

Life moved at a slow pace on the border between Bohemia and Moravia. The region had been settled by Czechs and Germans; towns were founded by monarchs, the nobility, and Church authorities. Jews began taking up residence in this region in the 14th century. The first Jews appeared in the town of Jevíčko, others in Svitavy, followed by Litomyšl. It wasn't until the 18th century that reports about the Jewish community began to increase. Jews settled in larger towns, wherever it was permitted. It took a long time before they were allowed to practice trades and own farm the land. Jews leased distilleries, made a living in banking, and in the 19th century, having already been granted equal rights, they established factories. Nevertheless, despite their hard-earned accomplishments, the tragedy of the Holocaust destroyed this pillar of national and denominational life in the Bohemian-Moravian borderlands.

The Jewish Community in Svitavy

While Svitavy had obtained the right to supervise and control Jewish moneylenders as early as the 14th century, the first Jew in written town records was Jakob Donat in 1715. Jews were not allowed to reside in the town until 1848. After this date Jews moved to Svitavy from the Jevíčko and Boskovice areas and their numbers continued to grow. This growth was the impetus for the formation of a prayer congregation. In 1888 this congregation was transformed into a Jewish community under the administration of the Boskovice rabbinate. The community became independent in 1890 and the first rabbi appointed was Daniel Fink of Boskovice, who focused his efforts on building a synagogue for the 189 Jews registered in Svitavy in 1900.

The independent synagogue of the Svitavy Jewish community, from plans by Ernst Gotthilf, was consecrated on September 27, 1902 by Dr. Felix Kanter, a man who also played a role in the story of Oskar Schindler. Kanter lived near the Schindler family home in Jihlavská Street (today Poličská St). According to witnesses the young Oskar Schindler often played with the rabbi's children, a fact that may help explain Schindler's special relationship with Jews which, in the fury of the wartime period, blossomed into friendship.

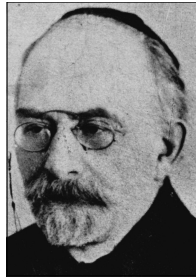


Figure 10: Daniel Fink

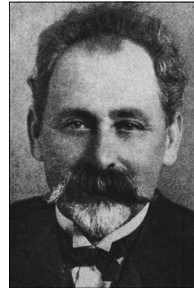


Figure 11: Dr Felix Kanter

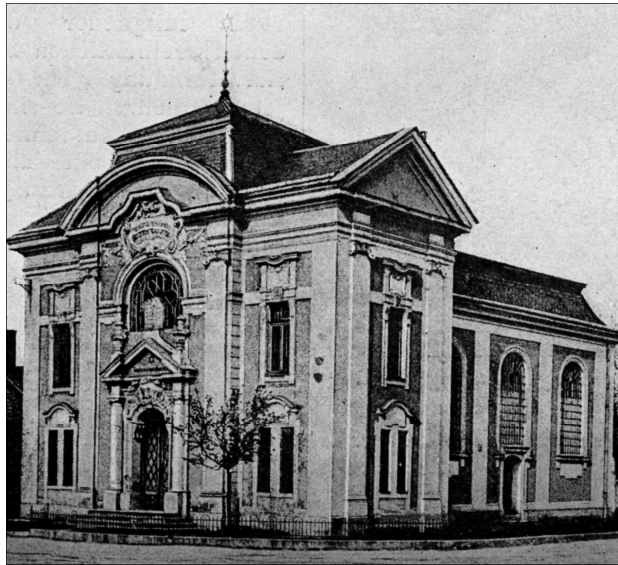


Figure 12: Independent Synagogue, Svitavy

The Nuremberg Laws

Upon taking power in 1933, Adolph Hitler used the anti-Jewish sentiment prevalent in Europe over the centuries for massive and targeted propaganda purposes. Jews were declared the “root of all evil” and this myth, along with the myth of the “superiority of the Aryan race,” was elevated to the level of German state policy in two constitutional laws. These laws were announced by the Reichstag on September 15, 1935 in Nuremberg during a Nazi Party rally.

The first of these laws – The Reich Citizenship Law – established that only people of German blood or people with “related blood” could be Reich citizens. This meant German Jews were stripped of all civil rights. The second law – The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor – prohibited marriages between Germans and Jews.

German Annexation of the Sudetenland October 1938



Figure 13: Wehrmacht enter the Sudetenland October 1

As part of the 5th occupation zone Svitavy was taken by German military units on October 10, 1938. The Germans crossed the border on October 1 but didn't enter Svitavy until the 10th. The occupation of the town received a thunderous welcome by throngs of citizens. Celebrations climaxed the following day with a review of the assembled forces on the square.

As agreed to in the Munich Agreement, the Wehrmacht began moving into the Sudetenland on October 1, where they were received with jubilation. The press in London published accounts of the jubilation of the Sudeten Germans along with photographs showing the cascade of flowers greeting the German soldiers. This is, of course, not what these peoples are cheering about; the emotional display is largely an outburst of nationalism and patriotism. The people in the images saw themselves being liberated and finally united with the German Reich. One of the Sudeten Germans impressed with the Nazis was a young Oskar Schindler.²⁹

Occupation of Poland

On September 1, 1939 the German army invaded Poland and provoked the largest military conflict in the history of the world. Krakow was occupied by the 14th Wehrmacht Army on September 6 and the first anti-Jewish decrees were issued shortly thereafter. All Jewish shops, businesses, restaurants, and cafes were to be marked with the Star of David. The first 25 Jews were killed in the prison of St. Michael on September 13. Jewish doctors were permitted to treat only Jews and Jewish butcher shops were closed. Beginning October 26 all prayer rooms and synagogues were closed and Jews were ordered to perform mandatory work on Saturdays. Krakow became the capital of the General Government – a part of divided Poland with a population of 12 million people. Thirty prisons and camps of various types were established in the city during the occupation and tens of thousands of people passed through these facilities. Between 1940 and 1945 a total of 210 trains with over 17,000 prisoners, including 2,400 women, departed from Krakow. No other city in Poland had so many Germans living in it during the war – 10,000 police and SS forces alone were in Krakow at the beginning of 1940. The rest is history...

The Holocaust – 1935-1945

When the extermination camp at Auschwitz, Poland, was liberated by the Red Army on January 27, 1945, many people were still unaware that one of the most terrible and spine-chilling stories in the history of human civilization had occurred there and behind the barbed wire fences of other camps. The genocide of Jews, Roma, Slavs, and other groups deemed "inferior" by the Nazis involved over 11 million people, half of whom were murdered in concentration camps and ghettos. This period in history was designated as the Holocaust, or in Hebrew "Shoah," meaning disaster. Today, January 27th is commemorated around the world as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. In the Czech

Republic this day is named Memorial Day for the Victims of the Holocaust and the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity.

The Final Solution

At the Wannsee Conference held on January 20, 1942 in suburban Berlin, a meeting convened by Reinhard Heydrich discussed the coordination and implementation of the genocide of European Jews. The genocide, **Endlösung**, or the final solution to the Jewish question, involved 11 million European Jews who were to be “displaced” to the East, where they were to receive “special treatment.” Translated into real terms, this meant the continuation of the mass murder of Jews in extermination camps. At the beginning of 1942 the concentration camps in occupied Poland were renamed extermination camps. Names such as Auschwitz, Treblinka, Chelmno, Sobibor, Bełżec and Maly Trostenets became synonymous with death and suffering.

The Nazi’s pretence for legalizing the anti-Jewish measures in Germany was the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a legation secretary at the German embassy in Paris, on November 7, 1938. The assassination provoked an outcry of emotion among Germans, resulting in an anti-Jewish pogrom, later named Kristallnacht. During the night of November 9-10, 1938, synagogues and prayer rooms were plundered, shops were ransacked and tens of thousands of mainly wealthy Jews were shipped to concentration camps at Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen. Over 100 people were killed during the pogrom.

Kristallnacht, named after the shards of broken glass from windows and display cases reflecting the moonlight, continued in other locations of the Reich. In many towns of the occupied Sudetenland the pogrom continued the following days. Not even the Svitavy synagogue escaped the fury. On the morning of November 10 the building was surrounded by firemen who prevented the flames from spreading to adjacent buildings. Max Pirschl carried several Hebrew books from the burning synagogue and used the flyleaves of these volumes to keep a journal of the course of the Svitavy pogrom. The books are part of the museum collection today. The wreckage of the synagogue was soon removed and a square was established in its place. The square was named Lübecker-Platz after the Wehrmacht regiment that occupied Svitavy in October 1939.

Chapter One

Early Years 1908-1938



Figure 17: Oskar's parents, Hans and Francizka Luisa

Oskar Schindler was born on April 28, 1908,³⁰ in Svitavy, a Moravian industrial town which, at the time of his birth, was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Many ethnic Germans lived in Svitavy and the surrounding area, the Sudetenland. Oskar's parents, Johann³¹ and Francizka,³² had come to Svitavy from Silesia. Both were German. A sister, Elfriede,³³ born in 1915, was seven years younger than Oskar. The relationship between the two children was good. Oskar's relationship with his mother was, allegedly, also close; nobody, however, seems to know about his early relationship with his father. His father appears to have been a jack-of-all-trades but dealt mainly with farm machinery, traveling the area and plying his trade.³⁴

In *Schindler's List*, Keneally draws our attention to the Schindlers' neighbors, one of whom was Dr. Felix Kanter, a liberal rabbi, who had two sons attending the same school as Schindler.³⁵ By all accounts, the children enjoyed a natural and free upbringing, participating together in the rough and tumble of daily life. Both Jew and Gentile assimilated into the social strata of the community. Keneally states that the Kanter family left Svitavy in the mid-thirties and was not heard from again.³⁶



Figure 18: Oskar at three years

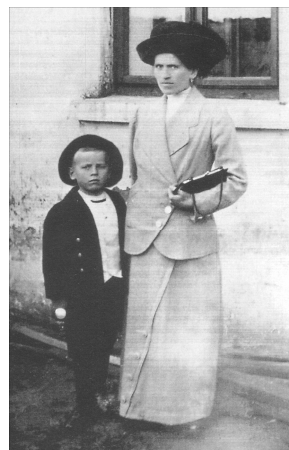


Figure 19: Oskar at five years

At the end of World War I, when Schindler was 10 years old, Svitavy became a Czechoslovakian town. Schindler's education took place at the local German grammar school. Expected to continue his father's business, he took the Realgymnasium course, designed to produce practical-based trades of all kinds suitable for the industrial requirements of the area. After being well into completing junior school in Svitavy (November 1925), because of some boyish misdemeanor (cheating in school exams), he was expelled from school and never graduated.³⁷

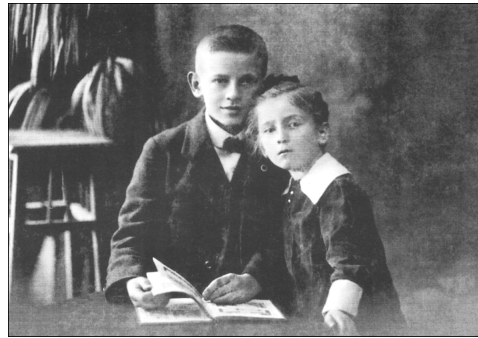


Figure 20: Oskar at 12 years with his sister Elfriede

In his early to mid-teens, Schindler's physically strong body soon outstripped his parents' efforts to clothe him satisfactorily. From the age of 16, he was renowned for his heavy smoking and frequent visits to the local drinking dens.³⁸ At 18, he had a heavy build and stood over six feet tall. There followed several brushes with the police. Arrested on several occasions for rowdiness, drinking and assault, he was well-documented with the judiciary.³⁹

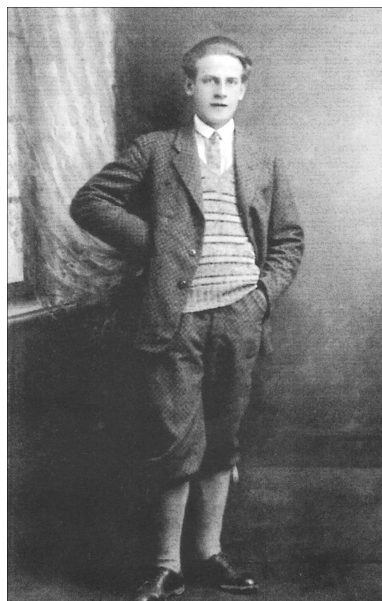


Figure 21: Oskar at 21 years

Women were always to play a big part in the life of Oskar Schindler. By the time he was 19, and before his marriage, he had fathered illegitimate twins,⁴⁰ a fact that was not to become known until after his death in 1974. Further information revealed two more children born out of wedlock: on March 20, 1933, his daughter Edith Schlegelova was born from a relationship with her mother, Aurelie Schlegelova (born 1909); on December 20, 1934, a second child was born – a son named Oskar, who has been missing from the records since 1945. This Oskar may be the individual that Keneally met in Australia.⁴¹ His taste in women gravitated towards the older in preference to the younger. He was to carry on his fraternizing with the opposite sex right up to the day of his marriage (and, of course, well after that), with near catastrophic results.

Schindler's main hobbies were anything mechanical. Johann Schindler encouraged his son's natural ability with motorbikes. He showed off his skills by competing in road races at a very high standard on specialized motorcycles. On May 13, 1928, he came in third in a road race in Brno, riding a 250cc Motto-Guzzi.⁴²

Schindler's reputation as a gambler, drinker, and womanizer would appear to stem from this point of his development. One observer of Schindler in Svitavy at this time was Ifo Zwicker, a Jew and a resident of the town where Schindler was born and grew up. He knew Schindler well, as he was also with Schindler in the Emalia camp in Krakow. Interviewed some years later, he remarked:

“As a Svitavy citizen I would never have considered Oskar Schindler capable of all those wonderful deeds. Before the war, everyone in Svitavy called him ‘Gaurer’ (swindler or sharper).”⁴³

After leaving full-time education, Schindler worked in the family business in Svitavy; and afterward he commuted to Brno, where he worked for an electrical company as a representative.⁴⁴ Bored with this work, he then became the manager of a driving school in the town of Mahren-Schonberg.⁴⁵

It was towards the end of 1927 that Schindler first met Emilie Pelzl, born October 22, 1907, at her parents' house in the village Alt Moletein, in the area of Honeenstadt, northern Moravia, some 60 kilometers to the east of Svitavy. The family had lived in the region since the twelfth century, when they arrived as colonizers.⁴⁶ Emilie lived with her parents and her brother Frank in a comfortable farm environment in a middle class district of the town. The Pelzl family made a good living as farmers trading in wheat, rye, and flax. There was also an orchard with many fruit trees and they kept horses for riding and for the plough. Emilie Schindler's recollection of her mother was that she was always understanding and sympathetic with a kind word for all. Emilie worked in the family home, for which she was paid. Her love for the country far outweighed her love for her weekly piano lessons, which were compulsory.⁴⁷

As she grew up, she began to notice racial and cultural differences. Even when she was young she had felt an attraction towards gypsies – their appearance, their freedom, and independent lives. When the gypsies came to the town, she would go out of her way to talk to them and listen to their stories and songs. She could never understand the prejudice against them. Emilie recalls that on one occasion an old gypsy read her fortune: “An extensive life with much pain and suffering. There would be a man who would take me away from Alt Moletein; I would love him but never be happy by his side.”⁴⁸ Emilie's grandparents lived close by and were a great influence in her upbringing. Her grandmother paid for a dressmaker to dress Emilie and, by all accounts, worried about Emilie's eating habits.

In 1914, when Emilie was seven years old, her father was recruited into the army. After the end of the war when he returned to their farm, he was changed. During his service, he had contracted an incurable case of malaria and developed a heart condition. He was subject to fainting fits without warning. At the age of 40, he was a broken man – ruined. He had returned as one of the many mutilated, maddened, sick, and hungry from a discarded army.

At 14, Emilie attended a convent. She disliked this part of her education. The nuns were unpleasant, the food was awful, and the whole atmosphere was one of disillusionment and regret. Emilie says that the nuns did not understand her. She was a free country spirit now encased in an introverted environment, with no purpose in sight. After one year, Emilie left the convent and continued her education at an agricultural college where she remained for three years. It was the happiest time of her life. Emilie made many friends. One was a young Jewish girl named Rita Goss.⁴⁹ Emilie and Rita discussed the racial intolerance that was sweeping the country. Rita Goss was brutally murdered by the commander of the German forces in Alt Moletein during the opening phase of the war.⁵⁰

Emilie's relationship with her brother Frank strengthened because of her father's medical condition and withdrawal from normal life. She talks about finding her brother in the stables smoking a cigarette. He persuaded her to try the cigarette, which she did. They were to share many secrets over the years. One winter night, when she was with Frank out in the woods, she was in danger of passing

out from the cold. Frank made a sled and pulled her on it to the safety of home, realizing the danger of hypothermia.

Her mother was now the mainstay of the family upon whom they all depended.⁵¹ That Christmas was one to remember. Emilie marvels at her mother's puddings, with Christmas cake, homemade marmalade, cherry sponge cake, and her grandmother's huge goose full of apples and plums. This was the life of the well brought-up country girl of Alt Moletsein.

She recalled:

"Infancy and old age seem similar. When we are young, we perceive with an innocent eye; when we are old we forgive without indulgent spirit. Old age is a second innocence, and our memories are simply shadows, allowing us to perceive a contented reality. The images of my countryside childhood are forever in my mind, but that idyllic image would soon be torn by war and by the arrival of a man who would take me away and share with me a life of happiness and misfortune."

It was a business trip for Oskar, accompanying his father to the Pelzl household to sell electrical equipment to Josef Pelzl. On that day, Emilie observed the two men as they spoke to her father: one, over 50, tall and well-built. The other, young, slim, with wide shoulders, blonde hair and blue eyes. On subsequent visits, Oskar paid a little more than casual attention to this young beauty. The business calls accelerated over the next few weeks; there was a flirtatious whirlwind courtship with a momentum of its own. Three months later, on March 6, 1928,⁵² against the wishes of both families, they were married. Emilie Schindler says:

"My father was ill and bad-tempered; my grandmother was suffering from old age, and my mother progressively tired by overwork. I was prepared to believe in words and emotions, and the protection his wide shoulders offered me. Now, I believe I would act differently."⁵³

On the very day of the wedding, there was a disaster. The local police had received anonymous information that Schindler was already married. He was arrested and detained in the Svitavy police cells so that inquiries could be made. It transpired that Schindler had been cohabiting with a much older woman for three years, a fact that he denied to his new wife, Emilie. The allegation of bigamy was malicious, but the facts were correct and caused Emilie much heartache. She never forgave him.⁵⁴



Figure 22: Marriage: Svitavy 1928

After the wedding, the newly married couple moved into Oskar's parents' house at 24 Iglaustrasse, where they occupied the upper part of the house. Emilie was never happy with this situation and was

in constant argument with Johann Schindler, whom she describes as an uneducated man who came home drunk on many occasions. She was kinder about Mrs. Francizka (Fanny) Schindler, who she says was a very elegant woman, but always ill. Elfriede Schindler (Oskar's sister), then 13 years old, was described by Emilie as looking like Johann: ugly, with chestnut hair and large brown eyes. Despite all this, Emilie helped Elfriede with her homework and generally made allowances for her.

One of the highlights of Emilie's early marriage was traveling to Prague on an errand for her husband. She was overwhelmed with the architecture and scenery surrounding Prague. Thereafter, everything declined. Her marriage was collapsing and she became sadder and more disillusioned with life. Old man Pelzl had given Oskar 100,000 Czech Crowns, a considerable sum of money. Despite old man Pelzl's attempt to safeguard the dowry, Schindler bought a car and squandered the rest in the bars and clubs of Ostrava and Svitavy. Emilie challenged him over this waste, for which Oskar would ask forgiveness like a child who knew he had been caught in the act. Emilie, although very annoyed about her husband's stupidity and deceit, still thought of him as an affable, benevolent, magnanimous, and charitable person. She put his behavior down to the fact that he was spoiled by his mother because of the constant absence of his father. Her days were spent in domestic isolation. Schindler was without doubt a scatterbrain, an impulsive liar, and a playboy of immense charm.

Emilie led a comparatively sheltered life. She was a quiet convent-schooled girl but endowed with personality and humor. She was a well-educated young lady who spoke very directly and a woman of devout faith who attended mass twice a day.

She may well have been under the aura of her flamboyant husband, but she was subsequently never to be deceived again. However, throughout the tumultuous years ahead she would never hear a bad word against him and she remained loyal and supportive to the end. The marriage, as everyone had predicted, was one that Oskar would never quite adjust to. After a brief period of harmony, he reverted to the ways of a single man. Despite all this, the couple remained more or less together until their final separation well after the war.⁵⁵

By the end of 1928, we find Schindler conscripted for military service in the Czechoslovakian army, where he served for 18 months.



Figure 23: Schindler in the uniform of the Czechoslovakian army in 1935

After completing his service he returned to his old job in the electronics company M.E.A.S. in Brno. The economic climate had changed and the company went into liquidation in 1931. The Schindler family business was also in financial trouble and that, too, went bankrupt in 1933.⁵⁶ Schindler went out on his own, running a poultry farm in the village of Ctyricetlanu, but gave up after six months, unable to make any money. After a short period of unemployment, Schindler worked in Prague at the Yaroslav Chemnitz Bank. His last period of serious employment was as a representative for the company Opodni Ustev, 30 Veveri Street, Brno, earning between 6,000 and 10,000 Crowns a month.

In 1935, Johann Schindler left his wife Francizka and the marriage collapsed, leaving the family in turmoil. A short time later Francizka Schindler died, resulting in further recriminations and splits in the family. By this time, Oskar had completely fallen out with his immediate family. He was not to see his father again until well into the war. He had only one other relative, an uncle named Adolph Luser, who had a publishing house in Vienna, whom he hadn't seen since 1929.⁵⁷

Oskar, the reluctant husband, spurned Emilie and turned to other familiar pastures and into the web of espionage and treason.



Figure 24: Emilie: Svitavy 1929



Figure 25: Emilie: Poland 1940



Figure 26: Oskar Schindler (at the wheel) Svitavy 1928

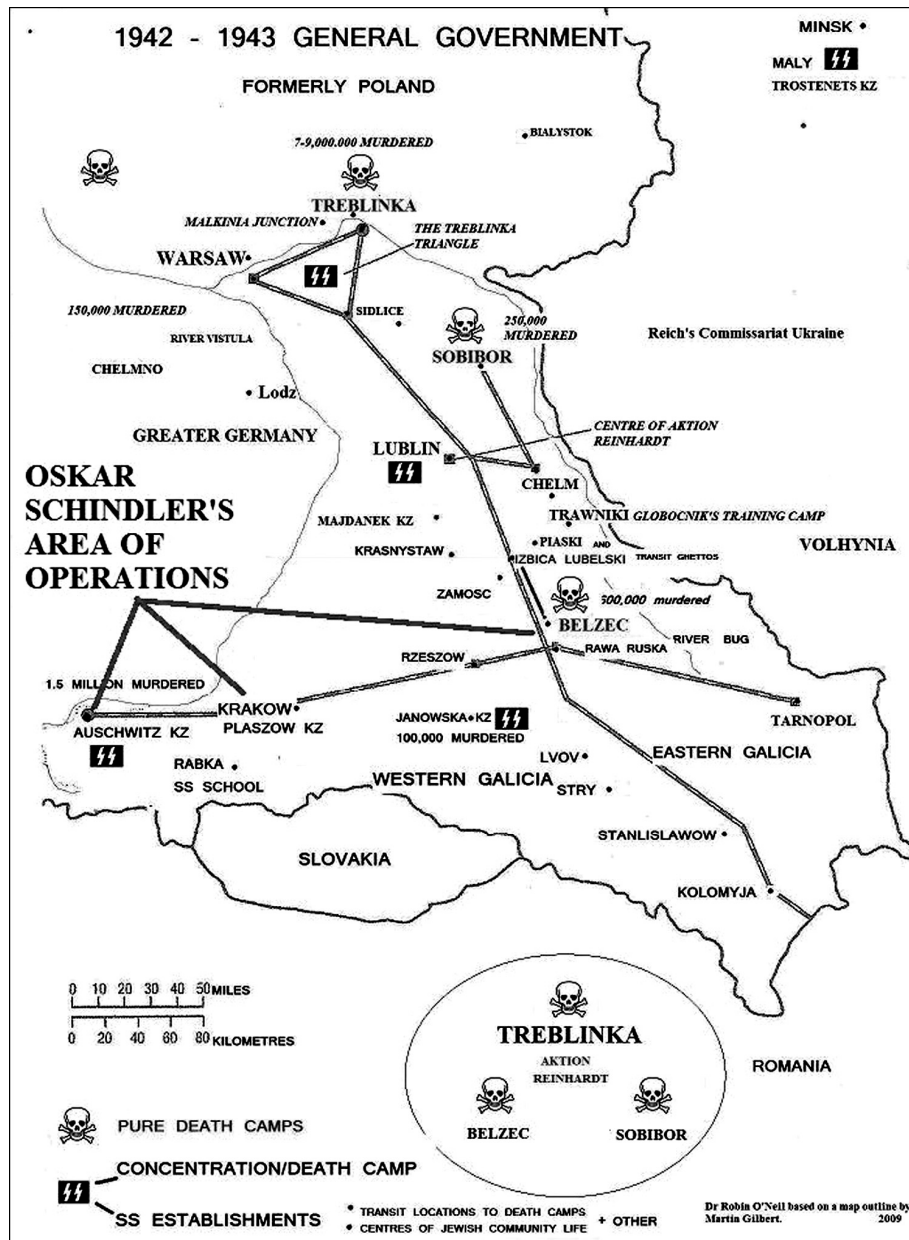


Figure14: General Government District

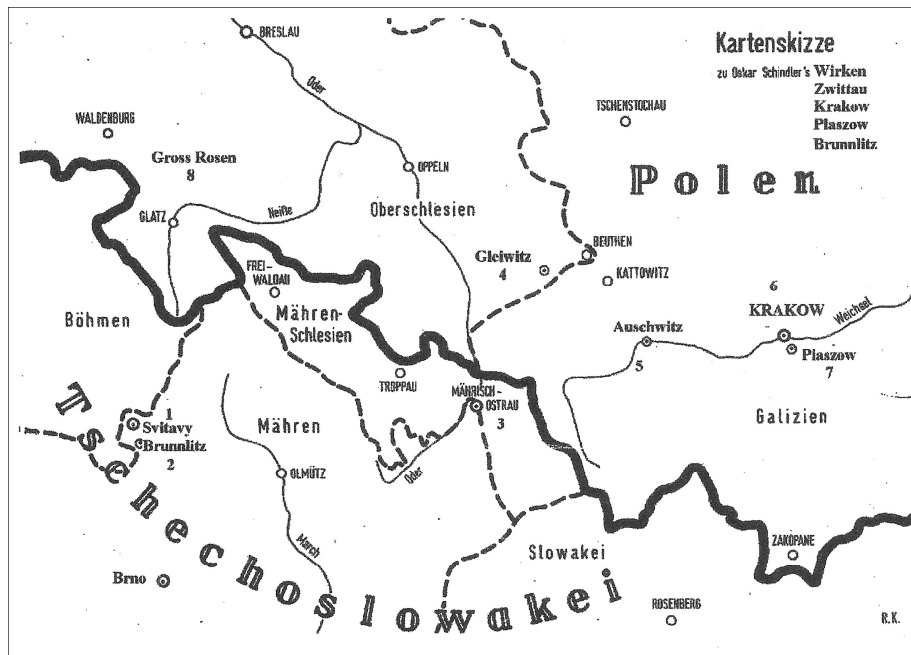


Figure 15: Schindler's Area of Wartime Activity

1. Svitavy/Zwittau: Schindler's home town
2. Brünnlitz: Schindler's factory
3. Mährisch-Ostrau: Schindler's Abwehr HQ.
4. Gleiwitz: Location that set off the Second World War
5. Auschwitz: Concentration/death camp
6. Krakow
7. Plaszow: Amon Goeth's Concentration Camp
8. Gross-Rosen Concentration Camp

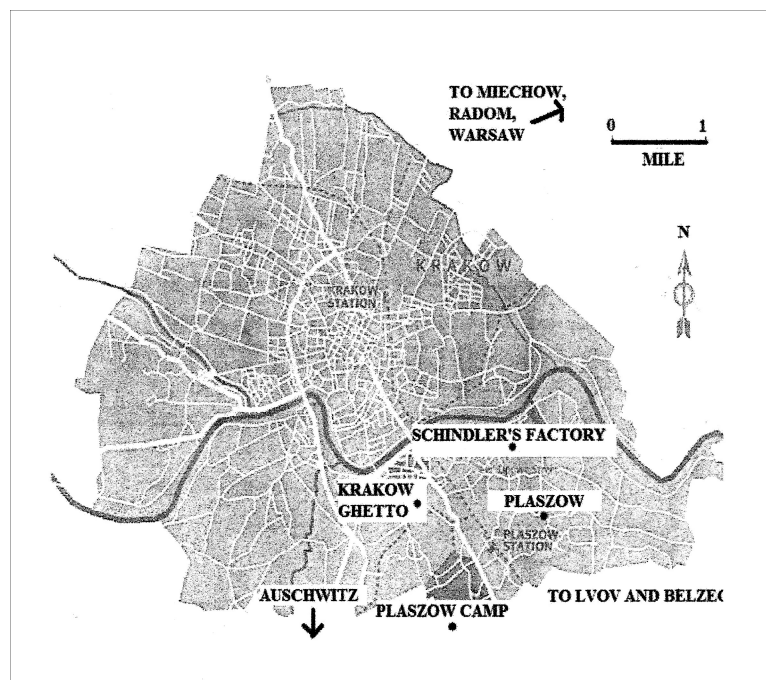


Figure 16: Schindler's Krakow

Chapter Two

Recruited into the Abwehr



Figure 27: Oskar and Emilie, agents of the Abwehr

There are gaps in Keneally's book that have, in my opinion, resulted in a slight ambiguity, particularly regarding Schindler's dealings with the Abwehr in the period 1938-39. My purpose is to bring the events back on course and, where necessary, provide sources for the material already researched by Keneally. I will enhance the evidence from my own inquiries to ensure a clearer understanding of the man himself.

It was during this opening barrage of German military expansion that we come to the opening phase of Schindler's wartime activities, his recruitment into the Abwehr. Keneally touches on these activities, Spielberg implies them, and Steinhouse was not aware of them. Other writers and filmmakers who have worked with the Schindler story have relied on one basic source for their information – the novel and film, *Schindler's List*.

In 1935, the German intelligence agencies were collaborating with the security offices from Austria and Hungary. Czechoslovakia and Poland were high on the agenda for political infiltration, and it was at this time that Schindler became active and a spy for the Third Reich.

One of Schindler's first contacts with the Abwehr web of agents was on a business trip to Krakow when he met the Jew Simon Jeret (69506), the owner of a timber company in Zablocie. Jeret had introduced him to Amelia, a fellow agent of German Counterintelligence. Schindler and Jeret were to remain friends throughout the war and well into the peace. After the war Jeret became one of the closest friends of Oskar Schindler.

On June 24, 1937, Hitler signed the plan *Fall Grün* (Case Green – a preparation for war directive). Upon receiving the order, Canaris instigated a web of coordinated actions to penetrate Czechoslovakian security in Moravia, Bohemia, and the Sudetenland border areas.

The winter of 1936-37 was, for Schindler, the moment from which everything would radiate. The past would become insignificant and the future uncertain. New Year celebrations in 1937, in a select hotel in the suburbs of Berlin, would bring the unemployed and frustrated man from Svitavy face-to-face with the top echelon of the Wehrmacht Military Intelligence and with his own personal destiny.

It began in late December, 1936, when, by chance, Schindler met an old girlfriend, Ilse Pelikan, whom he had known when he was a driving instructor in Mährisch Schonberg. Ilse invited Schindler to a New Year's celebration to meet friends whom she identified as high-ranking officers of the

German Wehrmacht.⁵⁸ We can only speculate what went on at this New Year's party, but knowing the character of Schindler and his love for pretty women and a good time, it is not difficult to imagine that towards the end of the celebrations he would have been at the center of things and by then known to all as "Oskar." The opening of Spielberg's film, *Schindler's List*, shows the easygoing Schindler mixing with high ranking SS and Wehrmacht officers.⁵⁹

According to Mrs. Sophia Stern, after the war, Schindler told her husband, Itzhak, that it was at this New Year's party that he had been introduced to a man very high up in German Intelligence Services, who was celebrating his fiftieth birthday and the second anniversary of his appointment as the Chief of the Abwehr. This man was probably Wilhelm Canaris.⁶⁰ When Schindler was in trouble with the SS in Krakow, it was the Canaris factor that afforded him immediate release.

Schindler's immediate acceptance by this elite company indicated to him what was to follow. Ilse Pelikan, knowing Schindler to be one of those committed Germans awaiting deliverance by the Führer, had invited him to work for the "better good of Greater Germany." Schindler knew he was being propositioned to become a gatherer of intelligence.⁶¹ A few days later Schindler returned to Svitavy, dismissing his night out with Pelikan as just another good night out. Whatever Schindler thought of this offer can only be considered in the light of his subsequent actions.⁶²



Figure 28: Schindler's Boss: Wilhelm Franz Canaris⁶³

January 1, 1887-April 9, 1945

Many months later, Schindler was to meet another lady from a previous friendship, Gritt Schwarzer, an hotelier in Rumberg, a village just inside the Czech border. Schindler had been closely involved with Schwarzer (just as with Pelikan) some years previously and was surprised to receive a letter from her. Schwarzer suggested they meet for old time's sake, and suggested the Juppebad Hotel at Ziegenhals, which required crossing of the Czech/German border. When Schindler said there would be difficulties because of security documentation, he was assured that it had been taken care of. He was about to be recruited into the Intelligence Services, the Abwehr.⁶⁴

The political situation in Europe⁶⁵ was at boiling point. In March 1938, Hitler marched into Austria⁶⁶ to the welcome and open arms of the population. All eyes now turned to Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia was a state of nationalities, not a national state. Only the Czechs were genuine Czechoslovaks; the others were Slovaks, Hungarians, Ruthenes, and Germans, all national minorities. The three million Germans, Sudeten Germans, were closely linked to the Austrians by history and blood. The Anschluss had stirred them to ungovernable excitement. Hitler was threatening to liberate the German minority in Czechoslovakia and the German minority was beckoning him to do so.⁶⁷

On March 28, 1938, Hitler received the Sudeten representatives and appointed Konrad Henlein, their leader, as his viceroy. They were to negotiate with the Czechoslovakian government. In Henlein's

words, “We must always demand so much that we can never be satisfied.”⁶⁸ Henlein’s party was to be a third force in the politics of the country and would remain legal and orderly, preying on the disaffection of the German populace. Schindler, like many of the Sudeten Germans, joined up with the party that promised plenty. He now worked as a salesman for his old employers, the Electrical Company in Brno, and moved about the area securing business from like-minded sympathizers of the New Order.⁶⁹

Hitler had his eyes on Czechoslovakia, and the world that was watching seemed unable to deal with the situation. The momentum of German expansionism was unstoppable and Jews who had fled Germany and Austria to the safety of Czechoslovakia trembled and prayed to the Almighty.

Schindler’s Abwehr activities can be divided into two distinct phases: first, his initial engagement on July 2, 1938; second, his activities in the Svitavy and Brno areas. This period was catastrophic for him, resulting in his arrest and death sentence. The second phase deals with his release from prison brought about by Hitler’s takeover of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, when all political prisoners were released.

On July 1, 1938, Schindler set off from Svitavy for the Czech/German border to meet Gritt Schwarzer at the Hotel Juppebad. Despite assurances from Schwarzer, he was unable to cross the frontier without papers and sought the assistance of a local publican named Folkel. That night, Folkel showed Schindler the route across the border to avoid the German customs post. The crossing went via the rear of the local church, across fields and into Germany. Schindler telephoned Gritt Schwarzer at the Hotel Juppebad⁷⁰ and she arranged transport for him to the hotel. There he met Peter Kreutziger, an agent of the Abwehr, who opened up a docket on the table and addressed Schindler. He said, “Do you want to join us, the German Information Service?” The driving instructor and poultry keeper from Svitavy, lured by the money, power, and other promises well beyond his dreams, agreed to join.

Schindler must have been one of the most inept spies recruited by the Abwehr. By July 18, 1938, he had been arrested and charged with capital offenses against the Czech State.⁷¹ Schindler had made some very basic mistakes. His assignment was to obtain political and economic information that would be of use to the Wehrmacht: railway installations, fortifications and troop movements on the Czech/Polish border around Ostrava. He was to make contact with like-minded sympathizers and use these contacts to obtain information. Results of his activities were to be filtered back via Gritt Schwarzer at the Hotel Juppebad.⁷²

Schindler’s first mistake was that he didn’t move out of his immediate home area. He lived in Svitavy and worked in Brno. He was well-known to everyone, including the police. The naive Schindler approached his first assignment by recruiting a Sudeten German police officer named Prusa. Prusa worked for the Criminal Investigation Department in Brno and was an alcoholic, in debt, and separated from his wife. After several days, Prusa agreed to join Schindler. Abwehr Agent Kreutziger, Schindler, and Prusa traveled the area looking at likely targets for closer inspection.⁷³ Unknown to Schindler, Prusa had reported the facts to his superiors, which resulted in the Czech Security Service monitoring Schindler’s activities. Schindler was set up, and on the evening of July 18, 1938, at the Hotel Ungar in Svitavy, Schindler and Prusa met in the bar of the hotel. In the course of Prusa handing over material to Schindler, the Security Service arrested him. Schindler was taken to the Svitavy police station and on the following morning transferred in custody to Brno for interrogation.⁷⁴



Figure 29: Hotel Ungar (now Hotel Slavia) where Schindler was arrested

Immediately, the CSO⁷⁵ raided the Schindler home and searched for other incriminating evidence. Mrs. Schindler stated that the police returned on several occasions but were unable to find anything. Then, according to Mrs. Schindler, the police returned and went directly into the bathroom where, from behind a bathroom panel, they found plans of Czech military establishments.⁷⁶ Schindler made a deal whereby, cooperating with the CSO, he would receive certain considerations. It was apparent that he was under a great deal of pressure to cooperate. The CSO threatened to arrest his wife and father unless he cooperated fully. This he apparently did.⁷⁷

Emilie Schindler contacted Kreutziger. He was aware of the arrest but declined to help. In August, 1938, Schindler appeared before the court in Brno and pleaded guilty to offenses of betrayal against the State. He was sentenced to death. (The warrant and conviction of Schindler were never rescinded and attempts immediately after the war to arrest him were considered a priority. This is the reason he never returned to his home town, Svitavy.)

Figure 30: Schindler's arrest documentation, Brno 1938

In October, 1938, Germany moved into the Sudetenland and all political prisoners were released. Having escaped the hangman, Schindler resumed his duties and was promoted to deputy commandant of the *Abwehr* in Moravska Ostrava on the Czech/Polish border.

After being released from prison, Oskar Schindler spent a short amount of time in his native Svitavy. Schindler was then ordered to relocate to Moravska Ostrava, where he took up residence in a flat on

Sadova St. (Parkstraße). Along with Emilie, Schindler continued his work for the Abwehr, though this time with different assignments.

We now move into the second phase of his Abwehr activities, which encompass facts hitherto unknown. This period also clarifies the work of Schindler and the roles of Mrs. Schindler and Josef Aue.⁷⁸

Chapter Three

Prelude to War

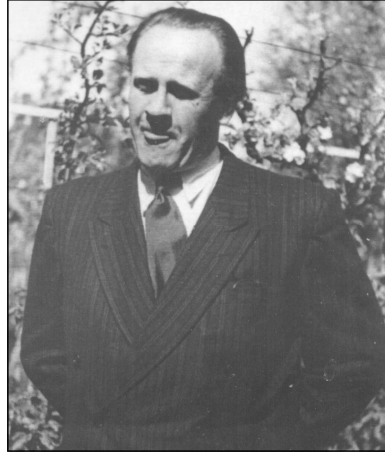


Figure 31: Oskar Schindler Krakow 1940⁷⁹

The Abwehr building in Moravska Ostrava⁸⁰ shared offices with sections of the Gestapo, SD, and Kripo. Karel Gassner was head of the Abwehr in Moravska Ostrava, with Schindler as his deputy. Schindler's team members in the field were Alois Girzicky, Ervin Kobiela, Hildegard Hoheitcva, and Hans Vicherek, all of whom were engaged in collecting and assessing information from a number of sources with sub-agents acting on their behalf on the Polish border.⁸¹

When Emilie Schindler was asked whether her husband was a Nazi she gave this reply:

"My husband was not at all a Nazi. He had nothing to do with the SS; he worked for the Wehrmacht, for the German military. It had nothing to do with the Nazis. He had to join; otherwise, he could not have existed and lived at all. He never performed any function for the Nazis. He was directly under the protection of the German Wehrmacht, not the SS."⁸²

Mrs. Schindler cannot be criticized for misunderstanding the question. She has always accepted that her husband was a member of the NSDAP (Nazi Party). Her problem was that in her understanding, Nazi was synonymous with SS (Shutztaffeln). But Mrs. Schindler was absolutely correct when she said, "He was directly under the protection of the German Wehrmacht."⁸³

Schindler took his counter-intelligence work seriously. According to a memoir by Mrs. Schindler, her husband brought three cages of pigeons home to their flat in Moravska Ostrava to be used for carrying messages. He installed them in the loft and his wife was expected to feed and clean them daily. Schindler, characteristically, soon lost interest in this new venture and Mrs. Schindler, tired of looking after them, resorted to desperate measures; she opened the cages and allowed the pigeons to fly away. Much to her dismay, the pigeons returned to the roof of their apartment (as they do!) and she was soon getting complaints from neighbors.⁸⁴

The Schindlers' apartment in Moravska Ostrava was run by their housekeeper, Viktorka, an excellent cook and loyal servant. Emilie recalls that at a dinner party at the apartment, an impeccably dressed high-ranking officer of the Wehrmacht arrived. He slowly took off his gloves, hat, and overcoat, and was shown into the living room, where he occupied a plush green velvet chair. Emilie's husband and the officer were engrossed in political talk most of the evening. Suddenly, the officer stood and toasted the Führer, and proceeded to throw one of Emilie's best crystal wine glasses against the piano, breaking it into many pieces. Emilie castigated the officer and chalked up her first act of defiance against the Third Reich.⁸⁵

It is important to clarify the relationship between some of these departments and, in particular, the personal relationship between the Chief of the German Security Police (the SD), Richard Heydrich, and Wilhelm Canaris. From his headquarters,⁸⁶ Heydrich concentrated his efforts on those whom he considered to be the State's dangerous potential enemies: those within the Party and the police.

Heydrich forged a working relationship with his old acquaintance, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the Abwehr. Heydrich was convinced that within the Abwehr there were "reactionaries" – men with old ideas and attitudes who would need watching. But as the SD and the Abwehr were in the same business, they had to get along because a good working relationship was essential.

Although a professed National Socialist, Canaris was known to dislike the cruder excesses of the Nazis and was not reluctant to say so. In short, Heydrich and Canaris did not get on. Each was suspicious of the other and protective of his own power bases. An intermediary⁸⁷ was brought in, resulting in an agreement based on what has since become known as the "Ten Commandments." In essence, the document drew a line between the rival intelligence agencies of the Wehrmacht (Abwehr) and the SS. This uneasy truce shielded Canaris from interference by the SS, and established the Abwehr's predominant role in espionage and counter-espionage.⁸⁸

It was Schindler's contact with Canaris that sent Oskar to Dachau concentration camp in the spring of 1939 where he observed the persecuted Jewish women and children. That experience opened his eyes and he decided that he had to find a way out for his Jewish friends.

"I felt obliged towards all my school mates with whom I had spent a wonderful youth time without racial problems."⁸⁹

I believe that Canaris was crucial to the future activities of Schindler. Canaris surrounded himself with like-minded men with a commitment to the cause, but who opposed the excesses of racial persecution engineered by Heydrich and the SS. Canaris was Schindler's insurance and ace card which he used later in the war when he was in trouble.

Also living in Moravska Ostrava was an unemployed half-Jew named Josef Aue.⁹⁰ Brought up as a German-speaking Czech, he was now earning his living buying and selling Polish money. His main area of business was with the Jews who were leaving the country. Aue's main source of money changing was Mrs. Bohdanova, who owned a fur shop in Tesin, in the suburbs of Moravska Ostrava. Through Bohdanova, Aue was introduced to a man named Ing-Zeiler.⁹¹ Zeiler told Aue that he was from the police and was aware of his money-changing activities. Zeiler pointed out that Aue was breaking the currency laws and could go to prison, but then suggested an alternative arrangement. Aue should work for him, to collect intelligence on the Polish border. Zeiler impressed upon Aue that it was his duty as a true German to comply with his instructions. Aue agreed.⁹²

Josef Aue's first assignment was to travel to the area around Bohumin and gather reports of military activity by Polish soldiers and reports about the installation of fortifications. Aue made a complete mess of his assignment. He couldn't read the maps Zeiler had given him, so he made up a story and when he met Zeiler the following day in the Café Plaza he gave him false information. Zeiler was now aware that Aue was not capable of this type of work and suggested that he would find other work for him. For some months Aue disappeared from the scene and was not to re-establish contact with Zeiler until October, 1939.⁹³

Zeiler was, in fact, Oskar Schindler.⁹⁴ Aue was not to know this until after the invasion of Poland when he traveled to Krakow with Schindler. From archive material, we know that Schindler also used the cover names of Osi, Schäfer, and Otto.

The German High Command had opted for the invasion of Poland, but before this could be carried out, some pretext was necessary. This was conceived in the crudest melodramatic terms and was the work of Himmler's SS and Heydrich's SD.⁹⁵ Operation Himmler was launched by Heydrich, who summoned to Prinz Albrechtstrasse one of his highly trusted associates, a veteran street brawler from Kiel named Alfred Helmuth Naujocks. Naujocks had joined the SD in 1934 and held the rank of SS-Sturmabführer. Five years later, Naujocks had become head of a sub-section of Section III of SD-Ausland under the control of SS-Oberführer Heinz Jost and became involved with the fabrication of documents for agents working abroad.⁹⁶

The events leading to the invasion of Poland were outlined by Naujocks at the Nuremberg trials after the war. His task, he was told by Heydrich, was to make a staged attack on the German radio station at Gleiwitz in Upper Silesia near the Polish border. The incident had to appear as an act of aggression committed against the station by a force of Poles. Documentary proof of Polish aggression would be made available along with German convicts decked out in Polish uniforms. The man who was to supply the necessary equipment for this operation was Schindler.⁹⁷

Mrs. Schindler noted:

“The following is an example of the activities we had gotten involved in. A Polish soldier was paid to get a Polish army uniform. It was then sent to Germany to serve as a pattern for manufacturing more Polish uniforms that spies of the Third Reich would wear as camouflage. When Germany invaded Poland, the SS were wearing these uniforms in the attack on the radio station but then blamed the Polish resistance for acts of sabotage.”⁹⁸

Schindler’s apartment was filling up with large cardboard boxes: uniforms, weapons, identity cards, and even Polish cigarettes were being assembled. According to Mrs. Schindler, who was privy to her husband’s activities, their greatest problem was with the Polish Counter-Intelligence Services, who were paying attention to their apartment.⁹⁹

The role of the Gestapo emerged when Naujocks was ordered to Oppelin, a small Silesian town forty miles north of Gleiwitz. There, Heinrich Müller (Heydrich’s SS representative) and SS-Oberführer Herbert Mehlhorn explained that the Gestapo had been ordered by Heydrich to provide a commodity referred to as Konserven (canned goods). The commodity in question turned out to be a dozen prisoners who were under sentences of death in concentration camps but who had been identified by Müller as expendable in the interests of the Third Reich.

At Nuremberg, Naujocks testified:

“Müller declared that he had 12 or 13 condemned criminals who would be dressed in Polish uniforms and left for dead on the spot to show that they had been killed in the course of the attack. To this end, they had to be given fatal injections by a doctor in Heydrich’s service. Later they would also be given genuine wounds inflicted by firearms. After the incident, members of the foreign press and other persons were to be taken to the spot. A police report would then be made. Müller told me that he had an order from Heydrich telling him to put one of these criminals at my disposal for the Gleiwitz Action.”¹⁰⁰

The criminal in question, a Pole, was anesthetized and brought to the radio station, where he was then shot. The body was photographed on the spot for the benefit of the press. The attack on the station then went ahead. A Polish-speaking member of Naujocks’ team broke into a broadcast in accented German, and said: ‘This is the Polish rebel force radio station: Gleiwitz is in our hands. The hour of freedom has struck!’ ”¹⁰¹

Müller had pretended to his Polish-uniformed prisoners in “canned goods” (code name for the operation) that they were taking part in a film and that, in exchange for their patriotic participation in the action, they would be pardoned and set free. The radio station secured, Naujocks and his men promptly retired. The dead bodies of the conscript actors were left on the scene. They were not the only witnesses to be disposed of, which goes some way in explaining why details of the affair did not leak out. All participating members of the SD, with the exception of Naujocks, were liquidated.¹⁰² The entire affair was a source of immense satisfaction to the Berlin SS Mandarins. This was a highly successful operation between the SD and the Gestapo, as well with Canaris’ Abwehr, represented by Schindler and his team.¹⁰³

Hitler’s plan to invade Poland was disguised by the code words *Fall Weiss*. At 4:45 a.m. on September 1, 1939, the war began. By September 6, Krakow was occupied by German units belonging to the 14th army of the Wehrmacht. General Sigmund List had secured the city, despite fierce opposition from the Polish forces.

On October 17, 1939,¹⁰⁴ Josef Aue, who had been avoiding Zeiler, met him by chance in a street in Moravska Ostrava. Zeiler invited Aue back to the Café Royal to talk about possible work. There, Zeiler introduced Aue to his Abwehr associates that included his present woman friend, a Pole named Marta.¹⁰⁵ Both Schindler and Aue witnessed the rounding up of Jews in the city and then watched them being marched to the railway station. The Jews were being deported by train to the Lublin region of Poland, an area initiated by the Nazis' Jewish resettlement policy. That same day the Abwehr in Moravska Ostrava was transferred to Krakow.

Reflections:

Before moving on to the greater part of this documentation, I will reflect on the facts and circumstances surrounding Schindler during this period. So far, what does the information tell us about the man – his personality, his judgment, and commitment to the Nazi Party? I will disregard his letter to Dr. Ball-Kaduri and deal with his motives and actions in light of what was happening at the time.

From his early teens, Schindler was a flamboyant personality. He was a drinker, gambler, and womanizer. He was both sensitive and impulsive. He suffered a double blow when his mother died. Not only did he lose her, he also lost his father because of a massive row. In effect, when he was 28, he had lost both parents. Schindler lost his inheritance as a result of the economic climate and, for the first time in his life, he was without insurance. His marriage to Emilie Pelzl proved a mistake. He had reverted to the ways of a single man living in bars and clubs, reflecting on what might have been. His immoral nature, in the end, saved him and set him on course, albeit with a few disasters along the way.

His initial Abwehr experience exposed his character as naive, inept, and impulsive. Schindler was a quick learner and, by the time he had been released from prison, his persona was well equipped for his new posting. The political circumstances at the time allowed him a second chance. Schindler was well thought of by his superiors. He spoke German, Czech, Polish, and some Yiddish. He represented the Abwehr at secret meetings and acted as interpreter for senior ranks. He was considered a bold and capable informer with the result that he was privy to the most delicate and secret war decisions of the Reich.

What Schindler knew about the policies of Nazi Germany at that time is uncertain, but I conclude that Schindler's patriotism was in no way influenced by the Nazi racial ideology. For Schindler there was no "Jewish question." He was a member of the Nazi Party,¹⁰⁶ joining the movement on February 10, 1938.¹⁰⁷ He worked to support the war on behalf of his superiors.

Reich	Ortsgruppe und Wohnort	ab
Zweit	OG: Zwittau II	28.3.40
Ostr.	Mr. Ostrau Parkstr. 25	6.3.40
4.41	Krakau, Westring, innere Stadt 23/III	
Name: Schindler Oskar		
Beruf: Angestellter		
Wohnort: Zwittau, Kr. 27		
Geb.-Datum: 27.1.08 Geb.-Ort: Zwittau		
Mitgl.-Nr. 6,421,477		Eintritt: 1 NOV. 38
Pol.-Nr.		Exp.-Nr.
Austritt:		Unbek. verzogen:
Istverloren:		Istverloren an Gau: Gen.-Gouvern.
Istschluß:		

Figure 32: Schindler's Nazi membership card with address.

In my view, the crucial point was that Oskar Schindler was non-racial and a man of independent mind and would remain so throughout the duration of the war. Herbert Steinhouse sums it up by quoting from a letter he received from one of the Kanter boys (Schindler's Jewish neighbors in pre-war Svitavy) just after the war:

“He was a Sudetenland fascist and a member of the Henlein Party which was later absorbed into the Greater Germany’s Nazi Party. Schindler was a true believer in everything but one factor – that was the racial policy. He was a friend of many local Jews in Svitavy. Schindler was friendly with our family, particularly with my father the Rabbi. He would have talks with my father about sophisticated Yiddish literature in Poland and Czechoslovakia, about folk tales and the mythology and the anecdotes and the ancient Jewish traditions of the villages of Eastern Poland and Moldova. And what all that showed, of course, was unlike the portrait painted later by the Spielberg film.”

The Gleiwitz operation was acceptable to Schindler. It was all part of the prosecution of the war strategies. But had the deportation of the Jews from Moravska Ostrava raised a doubt in his mind? We will see how Schindler reacts when he is confronted with the reality of the German occupation in Krakow and the bloody work of SS-Hauptsturmführer Amon Goeth and the SS.

Chapter Four

Schindler in Krakow



Figure 33: Oskar Schindler: Krakow 1941

Political Maneuverings

Within just one month of the German occupation, an independent Poland ceased to exist. On October 12, 1939, the General Government, with Krakow as its capital, was established. In the old Krakow Royal Palace, the Wawel, government meetings of the “New Order” headed by Governor Dr. Hans Frank,¹⁰⁸ were held.

The regional network of the General Government administration closely paralleled the regional machinery in the Reich. There were four District Governments in Poland in 1939.¹⁰⁹ The Governor of the Krakow District was SS-Brigadeführer Dr. Otto Wächter.¹¹⁰

Heading the Police Security apparatus in the General Government was Higher SS and Police Leader SS-Obergruppenführer Frederick Wilhelm Krüger.¹¹¹ The RSHA, now under their new security umbrella, worked out of 2 Pomorska Street, Krakow. SS Chief of Operations was SS-Oberführer Scherna; and SD Chief of Operation was SS-Obersturmführer Ralph Czurda. The Abwehr’s local commander was Lieutenant Martin Plathe. SS security services were very much their own masters working out of their offices in Katowice, Oprawa, and Breslau. The old rivalries among the SS, SD, Gestapo, and the Abwehr continued despite the act of agreement of the Ten Commandments. The Mayor of Krakow at this time was SS-Obersturmbannführer Pavlu and his deputy, Sepp Rohrl.

We arrive at a very important juncture that I would call the “where loyalties lie” point. The questions I would like to pose are these: Was Schindler still an agent of the Abwehr in 1939-40, and if he was, what was he doing buying up the Emalia factory? Why hadn’t Schindler been transferred to other duties once Krakow was secured? To find the answers to these questions I think we must look back over the role that Canaris was playing within the German High Command. All the evidence shows that there was a certain faction of the German High Command that was against Hitler. To the likes of Canaris the SS, SD, and Gestapo were an anathema. Despite the patching up of their differences in the past, the personal rivalry between Heydrich and Canaris festered again without respite, each more suspicious of the other. The patching over of old disagreements had now collapsed into open warfare.

Since 1938, Heydrich kept a secret file on Canaris, named “Schwarze Kapelle” (Black Orchestra).¹¹² This file contained incriminating evidence against Canaris regarding his suspected disloyalty to the State. Heydrich had been reluctant to use the material, fearing a collapse in confidence within the armed services. The file gathered weight over the years and was eventually used to bring down Canaris in 1944 after the attempt on Hitler’s life and as we shall see later, Canaris was executed and

the Abwehr dissolved. The residue of the Abwehr was swallowed up in the elephantine structure of the RSHA.

To answer my own questions about Schindler, I am inclined to agree with Keneally: Schindler was deliberately placed in Krakow by Canaris as a “spy on the wall,” to watch over the SS, SD, and Gestapo, and to filter reports back to Canaris’ headquarters. Canaris was a very powerful man, and this would explain how Schindler was able extricate himself from the various situations he found himself in when the Gestapo arrested him on no less than three occasions. Schindler had a trusted procedure that went into effect the moment danger loomed.¹¹³ Within hours of a cry for help, Schindler would benefit from the full force of his backers. The local SS chiefs were unable to resist the commanding orders.

What of the Jews in Krakow at the End of 1939?

A decree dated November 11, 1939, concerning the Judenrat in the General Government, was issued by the governor, Dr. Hans Frank. It set out the regulations for the formulation of the Judenrat and the appointment of an Elder of the Jews. There followed an explosion of edicts under the pen of Dr. Wächter, which amounted to the strangulation of civil rights in the ghettos of Poland.

The Judenrat, or Jewish Council,¹¹⁴ comprised of 24 members, was set up by the edict of December 1939. On the face of it, the Judenrat was supposed to fulfill the pre-war functions of the Jewish community; but, in fact, its main occupation was to serve the Germans. It was very convenient for the Germans to have their orders carried out by the Jews. From its very inception, the Judenrat was controlled by the Gestapo. All inquiries and prosecutions were administered by Department 111, Room No. 302, Pomorska Street.

The Judenrat’s duties included general administration, compiling statistical data and lists of residents, registering stores, distributing food, and providing fuel for the Jewish inhabitants of Krakow and later for the ghetto. In addition to these duties, the Judenrat had its own publishing house to print the many regulations of the occupying authorities. The Jews welcomed this last vestige of control over their beleaguered people.

As the German occupation tightened its control and the implementation of forced labor squads began, the Judenrat met to soften the ferocity of the German demands. To avoid arbitrary abductions or dragnets, several Jewish leaders suggested the establishment of quasi-autonomous Jewish councils to fill the quota of workers fixed by the Germans. The Krakow Judenrat suggested that in order to prevent Germans from seizing Jews off the streets for labor, it would set up a labor registry available to the Germans when needed. The Police Chief, Wilhelm Krüger, liked this idea and issued a decree on December 2, 1939, empowering all the Judenraten to organize forced labor columns. Apparently, the Warsaw Jews had a similar idea.¹¹⁵

During the period of forced expulsion from the city, as the chairman of the Judenrat, Mark Bieberstein, and his council tried to obtain permission for more Jews to remain in Krakow, they began bribing officials. The bribes were discovered by the Gestapo with tragic results.¹¹⁶ The Krakow Judenrat allocated 200,000 zloty for this purpose. Bieberstein and Housing Secretary Chaim Goldfluss approached contacts within the German administration. In return for money, the administration was to permit 10,000 Jews of Krakow to remain unmolested. Too many people knew about this proposed deal with the result that Bieberstein and Goldfluss were arrested on bribery charges. Bieberstein was sentenced to a two-year imprisonment in the Montelupich prison, Goldfluss to six months in Auschwitz, and the German intermediary, a Volksdeutsch named Reichert, to an eight-year imprisonment. After his release from prison, Bieberstein was sent to the Plaszow camp, where he later died.

The Judenrat policy became one of institutional compliance and the Judenraten became “implements of the German will,” moving Jews through the various phases of what was to become the destruction process. Each Judenrat in the occupied territories had its own way of doing things, and its relationship with its Jewish community varied from one to the other. Many of the Krakow Judenrat officials were accused of abusing their authority by favoring relatives, tampering with labor lists, and generally enjoying a far higher standard of living than that of their own community. In the Krakow German newspaper *Krakower Zeitung* of March 13, 1940, a Dr. Dietrich Redecker reported that on a visit to

the Judenrat office he was struck by the contrast between its carpet and plush furnishings and the squalor of the Jewish quarters in Kazimierz.¹¹⁷

With the end of military government on October 25, 1939, the civil administration, pervaded by the SS, fell upon the Jews. Measures already in place in Germany and Austria were now applied to the annexed and occupied zones of Poland. Dr. Otto Wächter was now issuing decrees from the Wawel Castle.

November 18, special signs to be carried by Jews in the entire district were ordered: "All Jews over twelve years of age should carry visible signs, namely a white band with a blue Star of David on the right arm of their outer garments."

This instruction also contained a definition of the term Jew as the Nazis understood it: "He is a Jew who either is an adherent of the Judaic faith and everyone whose father or mother are or were of Judaic faith." The Germans cut through this definition when it suited them: "You were a Jew if you went to the synagogue." The problem posed by those Jews from mixed marriages, "Mischlings," was never adequately solved.

In December, obligatory work for Jews was enlarged by the decision that every Jew aged 12 to 60 had to work for two years in a compulsory labor camp. The successive orders obliged Jews to hand over their automobiles and motorcycles (December 4), forbade them to change their residence (December 11), and forbade travel by train in the General Government (January 26, 1940).

The workers at Bucheister's continued as usual and awaited the next turn of events. On the morning of December 3, 1939, Schindler made a further visit to see Stern. On this occasion, there was a clear message to all those present. In a raised voice he addressed Stern, "Now it's starting; Jews will be surrounded and murdered. The Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, Josefa, and Izaaka Streets, are going to know all about it."¹¹⁸

Schindler Gets to Work

Oskar Schindler, as we know, was a highly placed espionage agent within the Third Reich. It was a Canaris directive that his top agents who had taken advantage of industrial opportunities to make money in the occupied areas, were also a camouflage for their main responsibility: to keep an eye on the SS/SD, whom the Canaris clique considered the real enemy of the new order. Schindler had no experience of industrial management, but in the turmoil of the war, he used his initiative and guile to make money...with Jewish labor.

Upon arriving in Krakow, Schindler and his team went directly to his apartment on Straszewskiego Street,¹¹⁹ not far from the Wawel Castle. Schindler had bought the apartment from some wealthy Jews, and its luxurious furnishings included porcelain vases, Persian carpets, and heavy velvet curtains. The windows opened to the Planty: a series of parks which followed the contours of the old walls near the Wawel fortress. This was the apartment to which Schindler would take his women friends, particularly Amelia (or Ingrid, in Keneally's book), and a Polish girl called Viktoria Klonowska. Amelia was with the Abwehr, while Klonowska improved Schindler's relationship with the Gestapo.¹²⁰ When Emilie visited the Krakow apartment, Schindler's lovers disappeared. Emilie knew the situation and chose to ignore it.

During one of Mrs. Schindler's initial visits to Krakow, she was overcome with serious back pain which nearly paralyzed her. Polish doctors were unable to help her, but her husband, with his contacts, had her referred to specialists in Berlin at the Auguste Hospital, to which only the aristocracy and high-ranking German officers had access. Her personal doctor was Professor Kurt Enger, who diagnosed a serious problem with her spine. Emilie spent several months in the hospital and later in convalescence in Austria. During this long period, her husband never wrote or visited her. When Emilie returned to Krakow, Oskar met her, holding a bouquet of flowers. He apologized, giving the weak excuse of problems with traveling documents. He showed no interest in her medical condition.¹²¹

Josef Aue stayed with Schindler in the Krakow apartment for about three months during which time Schindler took him to the offices of the Treuhänder,¹²² who were supervising the takeover of Jewish

premises. Schindler introduced Aue to Walter Muschka, an agent of the Abwehr as well as the head of the Trust Office. Schindler told Muschka that Aue was an administrator from Moravska Ostrava and should be placed in a suitable business. Aue, who had now been given the name Sepp Aue, was handed over to another agent and trust administrator, Ervin Kobiela. Kobiela suggested to Aue that he take over the import/export business of the Jew, Salomon Bucheister at 15 Straddon Street, Krakow.

Ervin Kobiela took Aue to the Straddon Street location, where he was introduced as the new administrator. Kobiela ordered the owner, the Jew, Salomon Bucheister, off the premises. The remainder of the staff was all Jews who helped Aue understand the running of the business. The chief accountant at the firm was Itzhak Stern (69518), who had worked for Salomon Bucheister since 1924. On Stern's advice, Aue immediately re-engaged Salomon Bucheister, who became just another worker; however, he was treated respectfully by Aue.¹²³

Aue's behavior immediately aroused Stern's curiosity. Although he had begun Aryanizing the firm and firing some of the Jewish workers as he was instructed to do, at the same time Aue left the discharged Jews' names on the social insurance registry, enabling them to maintain their all-important worker's identity card. He secretly gave these hungry men money as well.¹²⁴ Such exemplary behavior could only impress the Jews and astonish the wary and cautious Stern. Only at the end of the war was Stern to learn that Aue was Jewish, that his own father had been murdered in Auschwitz in 1942,¹²⁵ and that the Polish he pretended to speak so poorly was actually his native tongue. Aue had already taken on the guise of a double agent.

Not knowing all this, Stern had no reason to trust Aue. Certainly he could not understand the man's presumption when, only a few days after having taken charge of the import/export firm, on November 19, 1939, Aue brought an old friend, who had just arrived in Krakow, to see Stern. Aue said quite casually, "You know, Stern, you can have confidence in my friend Schindler." Stern said nothing, but exchanged courtesies with the visitor and answered his questions with care.¹²⁶

There was an interesting development in the relationship between Aue and Stern. Aue gave Stern a document which he had received from the Reich Secretary of State, Eberhard Von Jagwitz of the Economic Ministry. This document set out the policies to be adopted in the Aryanizing of Jewish businesses. It contained confidential information concerning issues about the Jews and the intentions for all Jewish businesses, including Bucheister's.¹²⁷

Some days later, Schindler returned to Bucheister's specifically to see Stern. He asked his advice on opening a business. Stern was able to take advantage of the information he had seen in the Ministry document and advised Schindler to lease or, better still, buy, but not become a trustee. Stern realized that, from a Jewish point of view, an owner was not limited to the number of Jews permitted to be employed.¹²⁸ Schindler was impressed by Stern's analysis and left to think it over.

At the Schindler apartment it was a continual round of entertaining high-ranking officers of the SS, Wehrmacht, and Abwehr. Although Emilie kept very much in the background, she speaks of endless discussions with these gentlemen on Nazi policy. Major von Kohrab, Chief of the Polish section of the Counter Intelligence Service, had become a close friend of Schindler. According to Mrs. Schindler, it was von Kohrab who introduced her husband to Abraham Bankier (69268), the bankrupt owner of Rekord on Lipowa Street. Schindler, after discussions with Bankier and Stern, convinced himself that it was Rekord he had to play for. Again, on Stern's advice, Schindler went ahead and applied to the Polish Commercial Court where he obtained a short lease of the bankrupt Rekord Company, at 4 Lipowa Street. With most of the Krakow Trust Administrators also in the pay of the Abwehr, Schindler had no difficulty in concluding the transaction.¹²⁹



**Figure 34: Abraham and Rega Peller Bankier,
former owners of the Emalia factory**

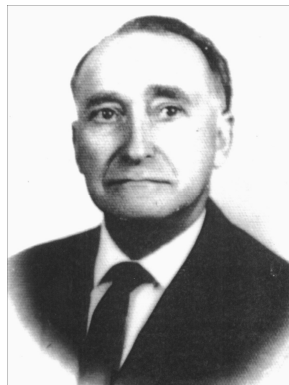


Figure 35: Itzhak Stern (69518) 1950¹³⁰

Administrators were installed at occupied Jewish businesses in Krakow by the Nazis. Schindler, who arrived in Krakow on October 17, 1939, took advantage of his long acquaintance with Simon Jereth and now Abraham Bankier. In November these individuals helped Schindler acquire the Rekord factory for the production of enamelware. Bankier also kept the fictitious company records and helped Schindler gain the necessary orders – he brokered contacts with the black market in Krakow. Schindler's address – Krasieńskiego 24a – appeared on the first signed documents.

Later, in 1941, Schindler employed his first 190 Jewish workers. On October 21, 1941, the successful entrepreneur finally became the owner of the entire D.E.F. factory and made plans to expand production. Schindler, an Abwehr agent, kept his door open to the Nazis and managed to “selflessly” compensate these authorities. Always finely dressed, Schindler made sure he never missed any party hosted by the Nazi nobility. The global conflict provided him ample orders, and cheap labor from Jews guaranteed high profits. Employment in the arms industry meant protection for Jewish workers against possible deportation to the camps. Itzhak Stern and Roman Günter, members of the Jewish council, therefore tried to find work for as many people as possible. Like the entrepreneur Julius Madritsch, Schindler understood the opportunity being offered.

Schindler's newly acquired Rekord factory had been founded by Jewish partners in 1937. Despite the fact that the bank accounts of Jews were frozen, there was still enough working capital in cash for business operations. Aided by experts from Ostrava, Schindler managed to use these funds to successfully launch production. The name of the factory was changed to Deutsche Emailenwaren Fabrik – D.E.F. The factory hall was located at Lipowa St. No. 4 in the Zablocie quarter.

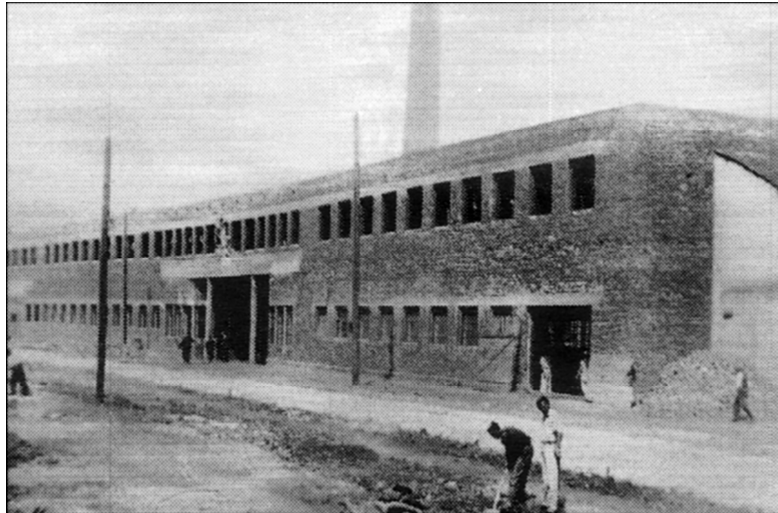


Figure 36: Construction of the Emalia administration building in 1942



Figure 37: Schindler with his Jewish workers in Emalia



Figure 38: Schindler (second from left). Abraham Bankier (third from the right) with their Polish staff in Emalia 1940

Apart from this initial meeting of Schindler and Stern in December, 1939, they were not to renew their relationship on a more positive level until March 13, 1943, when the ghetto was liquidated and

Stern was moved to Plazow concentration camp. It was Schindler's view that the Jews had to be saved and that Itzhak Stern was to be the tool to bring this about.¹³¹

The Stern/Schindler relationship was founded on this early warning and was the pivotal axis that, in my opinion, was to decide the destinies of both Schindler and the Jews that remained with him. The relationship was bonded by mutual respect, a friendship which lasted until Stern's death in Tel Aviv in 1969. It is said that upon hearing of Stern's death, Schindler collapsed and shed tears like a child.

Chapter Five

The Wiener Affair and Kazimierz: the Jewish Quarter

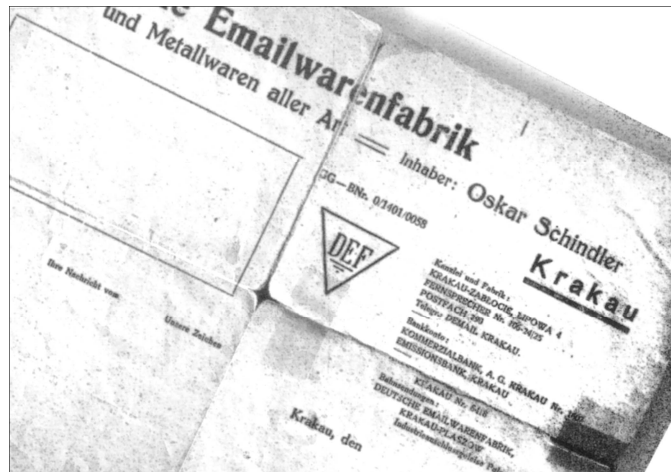


Figure 39: Schindler's correspondence obtained by the author in 1992

Schindler called the SS. ... A few SS men came and took Wiener to an adjoining office and beat him up. There were groans and screaming. When Wiener appeared he was covered in blood and wounds. The SS spoke to Schindler: "We took care of him, you get rid of him!"

Natan Wurzel, November 26, 1956

In my introduction, I mentioned that Schindler was a controversial figure. I think we must call into question at this early stage the darker side of his character and not rely on the highlighted events that we have come to know. I want to discuss the part he is alleged to have played in the Wiener Affair.

In the early part of 1940, the Aryanizing program was gathering momentum. It was now the practice that if a Jewish company became a nuisance or an obstruction to some other purpose, the Jewish owner was thrown into the street. The niceties of the law were conveniently ignored.

Schindler was now in business at 4 Lipowa Street. The Emalia factory was an imposing building which was fronted by a large arch at the entrance. Behind the facade was a number of smaller industrial units owned and used by independent manufacturers.

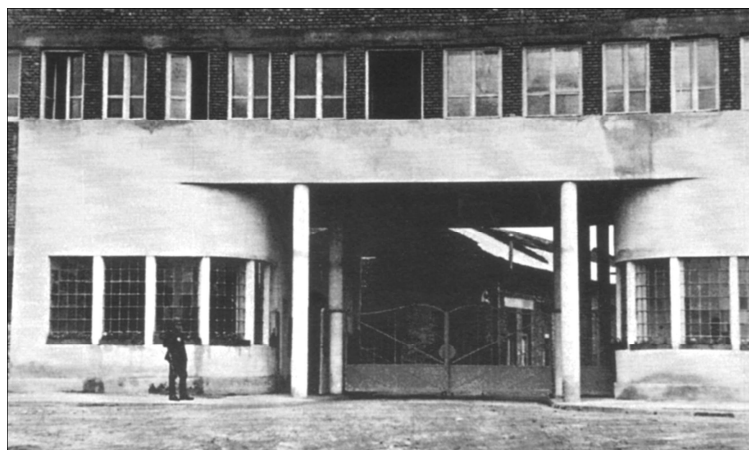


Figure 40: Outside Emalia 1942

The occupier of one of these small industrial units was Natan Wurzel, a Jew, born November 5, 1900, a small-time manufacturer of kitchen units. Schindler had now taken over these premises under the Aryanizing regulations, but employed Wurzel on the trade counter in his Emalia factory. By all accounts, although Wurzel had been ousted from business, he was at that time on good terms with Schindler.

Schindler had his eye on another business, in Stradom Street, Krakow: the Chamber of Commerce Wiener, another kitchen wholesale supplier's outlet. This business was owned by a Jewish father and son, Salomon and Julius Wiener. Schindler had placed his Abwehr woman friend Marta, now a Trust Administrator, into the premises. Marta may have been a proficient Abwehr agent but she utterly failed to supervise the Wiener business and, according to Schindler, was getting the run-around by the Wieners.

Both the Emalia and Wiener businesses were being used as an outlet of goods to the black market. There was a proviso that all transactions would go via the Schindler works, a position that Marta failed to control. Therefore, she sought the help of Schindler. Instead of working their deals with Schindler, the Wieners were operating separately, to Schindler's disadvantage. There was one subtle difference between the two sites: Emalia was controlled by the Sudetendeutsch Oskar Schindler, who was a party to the occupying power, while the Wiener outlet was being controlled by Jews. To say the least, there was a mighty clash of interests – falling out among thieves – and Schindler was not about to lose the argument, especially to a Jew!

One morning, when Wurzel was at the trade counter in Emalia, Julius Wiener called in to collect merchandise in order to pay off a collecting agent of the SS. According to Wurzel, Schindler was in a furious mood and was threatening to kill the Wieners. The following morning, when Julius Wiener returned to the Emalia factory, working at the trade counter, a number of SS men entered the reception area, seized Wiener, and took him to another room where he was badly beaten up. On their way out of the factory, one of the SS men said to Schindler, "We took care of him; you get rid of him." That same day, both Wieners left their premises, leaving the spoils for Schindler.¹³²

The Wiener Affair became a *cause célèbre* within the inner circles of Yad Vashem. When Schindler was nominated in 1963 to become a Righteous Gentile, questions were asked about his credentials. This is a point I shall explore later. After the war, Julius Wiener immigrated to Buenos Aires, only to find himself in the same city as the Schindlers. Julius Wiener initiated civil proceedings against Schindler for robbery and seizure of his businesses and assaults by the SS. Wurzel, who had now changed his name to Antoni Korzeniowski, immigrated to Israel. There was an exchange of letters between Wurzel and Wiener to gather the evidence needed by their respective solicitors. After a few years, it was Julius Wiener who was to withdraw litigation due to ill health, and the matter rested. It did, however, open up old sores. It is interesting to note that on the Schindler list the name Julius Wiener (69290), born September 5, 1904, appears. Wiener was in fact saved by Schindler and lived to take vengeance against him. To be saved by the list does not mean that that person agreed with Schindler's actions, as we shall find out later from another Jew, Joachim Kinstlinger (68861).

During Schindler's first year at Emalia, he employed about 70 Polish workers, including only seven Jews.¹³³ This balance gradually changed, as, with time, he employed more Jews. This was not because he had a love for Jews; quite simply, Jews were cheaper to employ. This was a win-win situation. Employing Jews was financially advantageous for the factory. It was also advantageous to the Jews who received the protection of the Kenkarte (working card), followed very quickly by the Blauschein (blue sticker), an endorsement of the Kenkarte. The changing nature of these working cards was to sift through the work force for the gradual process of elimination.

Life for the Jews in Krakow became increasingly oppressive. SS labor squads roamed the streets, picking up Jews for labor battalions elsewhere. Schindler was in touch with the Jewish labor office to take on more laborers as his business grew. Sometimes he was the recipient of these SS labor squads.

Solomon Urbach (69427):

"Walking in the street, I was suddenly stopped by the SS. I was taken with a load of kids to the Emalia works. We were lined up for inspection by Director Schindler. He said he would

take the men but not the kids. The SS said when we bring you Jews, you keep them. The SS left and we joined Schindler. I survived because of this man.”¹³⁴

On some occasions, if Schindler was in need of a particular skill, he would go into the town and select the man or woman he wanted. This was usually done on the advice of Bankier.

Richard Rechen (69233):

“It was like falling onto another planet. Director Schindler came into the garage where I was working. He greets me and gives me his hand. He told me not to be afraid. He said he had heard that I was a good mechanic and invited me to come to the Emalia factory where I would never be hungry. I was assured he was not a bluffer.”¹³⁵

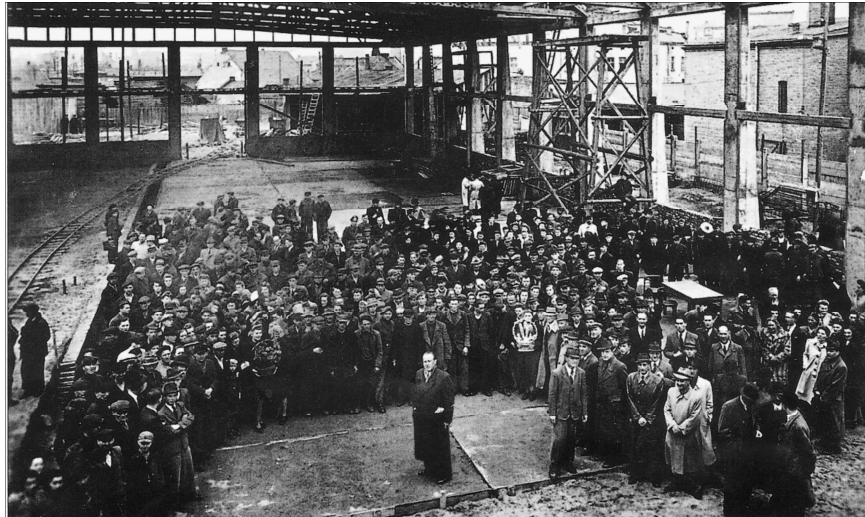


Figure 41: Schindler's workers at Emalia 1943

Kazimierz: The Jewish Quarter



Figure 42: Gate of the Krakow Ghetto drawn by Josef Bau (69084)

As the Nazis tightened their grip on the Jewish community, word spread that the Schindler works were a good place to be. Three new employees were taken on the direct recommendation of Stern: Magister Leib Salpeter (69282), Samuel Wulkan (69267), and Stern's brother, Natan Stern (69275).

These three were all old ranking members of the Polish Zionist movement. Unknown to Schindler, but organized and arranged by Stern and Abraham Bankier, two other employees were taken on: an engineer named Pawlik, who was an officer in the Polish underground movement, and a man named Hildegeist. Both were non-Jews and were connected to outside underground agencies. Hildegeist had known Schindler before the war. Because of his political views Hildegeist was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp, where he served three years. It was Schindler who personally had him released and brought to Krakow. Although Schindler remained aloof from this intake of dubious employees, he kept himself fully informed of their activities.

On May 18, 1940, the German Mayor announced that Jews could leave the city "of their own free will" and "those who would leave willingly" would be allowed to take baggage of 50 kg per person. The last day for leaving was set for August 15, 1940.¹³⁶ Rumors had already spread that the Germans planned to put the Jews into an enclosed area: Judischer Wohnbezirk, or Jewish Quarter.¹³⁷

Governor Dr. Hans Frank had decided on a little evacuation program of his own. His resettlements were to take place within the General Government. Dr. Frank wanted to remove the entire Jewish population from Krakow. Addressing his main divisional chiefs on April 12, 1940, Dr. Frank described conditions in the city as scandalous. German generals were forced to live in apartments occupied by Jews. Frank wanted Krakow free of Jews by November 1, 1940. Only skilled Jews would remain. The Krakow expulsions were divided into two phases: voluntary and involuntary. Up to August 15, 1940, the Jews could move freely, but after this date the Jews would be forced out. However, no sooner had Frank expelled the Jews from the city than the city began filling up again with Jews from incorporated territories. In the first two weeks of August, a third of the Jews of Krakow had been expelled to Warsaw, Radom, Lublin, Czestochova, and other Polish towns. Some Jews made it over to the Russian zone. Expelling Jews in this way enabled the Nazis to make room in the city for the new intake of immigrants that would Germanize the area.

On March 3, 1941, Governor Wächter published an order in the *Karakul Zeitung* for a Jewish residence zone named Gen. Gub 44/91. This order was also posted on walls and announced through loudspeakers from mobile vans. The Jews had to move into this residence zone of Kazimierz by March 21, 1941. Kazimierz, a district of Krakow, was historically associated with the Jews of Krakow for over a thousand years.

Thousands of Jews left the city in order not to be enclosed. The ghetto was set up in the suburb of Podgorze, tucked into the elbow of the Vistula, the east end by the railway line to Lvov, the south side

by the hills beyond Rekawka, and the west by Podgorze Place. The face of Kazimierz changed overnight. Its character, built up through the centuries, rapidly disappeared. There was no longer the sight of Jews dressed in long black kapotes and felt hats, skull caps, and fur hats, beards, and long sideburns; gone were the discussions on the street corners with characteristic gesticulations. This was the beginning of the end for one of the finest cultural centers of Eastern Europe.



Figure 43: Gate of the Krakow Ghetto 1942

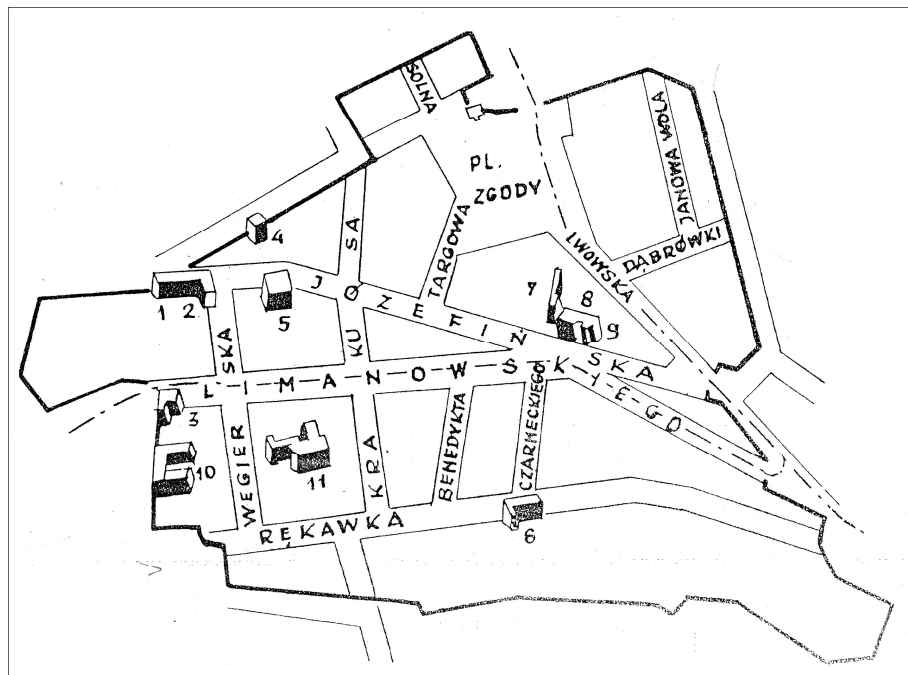


Figure 44: Map of the Krakow Ghetto¹³⁸

1. Labor Exchange
2. Hospital
3. Gmina
4. Public Bath
5. Jewish Welfare Community
6. Contagious Disease Hospital
7. Prison
8. Jewish Ghetto Police
9. Boarding School
10. Madrisch Factory
11. Optima

The creation of the Krakow Ghetto

The Nazi administration in Krakow continually tried to strip Jews of all of their rights and remaining privileges. After the closure of Jewish schools in December 1939 Jews were forbidden to have radios

and telephones. Jews were required to report all their property, they were banned from using public transport, and on May 18, 1940, a three-month deadline was established for "voluntary departure from the city" with only a small amount of luggage. On August 1 the mass expulsions of Jews began, mainly to the Warsaw and Lublin Ghettos. Of the original 70,000 Jewish residents in Krakow, only 16,000 remained in February 1941. This population was under the direct control of armed SS units. The Podgorze Ghetto was officially created on March 3 1941, and all Jews were ordered to move there by March 21. Once Jews were concentrated in the ghetto they were under the constant control of the police and SS guards. It often happened that groups of Jewish workers employed in factories in the city would never make it to their jobs. According to their needs, the Nazis used these workers to clean public spaces. Jews in processions were often terrorized by guards.

Using Jewish labor, the Germans erected a wall surrounding the ghetto, set bars in windows of apartments looking out onto the Aryan quarter, installed security posts, and constructed gates, with three providing access to the ghetto. The main gate was at Podgorze Square and above the gate was a large six-pointed Star of David with the inscription in Hebrew: "Jewish Quarter." Located at the main gate were the central post of the German police and the seat of the Judenrat. During the first few weeks of the ghetto's existence, one could gain access with relative ease, usually when it was necessary to reclaim cash from the Jews. On both sides of the gate were dark blue lamps. A trolley ran through this gate along the streets of Limanowska and Lwowska, right through the ghetto, connecting with the Aryan quarter of the city. It sometimes served as an intermittent link between Poles and Jews; many packages were delivered without the knowledge of the ghetto police.¹³⁹ The second gate was at the end of Limanowska Street, and the third was in Plac Zgody (Peace Square) opening onto a bridge spanning the Vistula. All three gates were guarded by the Polish blue-uniformed police and by the Jewish Police, the OD (Ordnungsdienst).¹⁴⁰

About 15,000 Jews were transferred from the city into the ghetto, and an additional 2,500 remained outside, living either in the orphanage, a residential home for the elderly, or huts at the Optima factory.¹⁴¹ Once a chocolate factory but now used for producing German military uniforms, Optima was the target of frequent attacks by the Jewish fighting organizations that seized large quantities of warm clothing and distributed them to Jewish fighting units around Lublin and Biala-Podlaska.

From early morning until late at night on March 21, the scene was one of pitiful dejection. Families with their possessions were in utter confusion, criss-crossing the streets with their bundles and carts laden with furniture and other worldly possessions, in their haste to beat the deadline. The scramble for the best accommodation was frantic. At the end of the day, several families found themselves sharing one apartment, there being no place else to go.



Figure 45: The Krakow Chemist Tadeusz Pankiewicz with his staff 1942

No Aryan was permitted to live in the ghetto; only the staff and guard of the court and jail were allowed to remain within, with one exception – the pharmacist Tadeusz Pankiewicz, who lived in the pharmacy accommodation in Plac Zgody, the heart and pulse of the Podgorze ghetto.¹⁴² From the moment of the creation of the Jewish Quarter, Pankiewicz was the owner of the pharmacy Under the Eagle on Plac Zgody. This was the only one of the four pharmacies in Podgorze that was located in

the ghetto. He was the only Pole who lived and worked there without interruption (for two and a half years) until its ultimate liquidation. From a window in the pharmacy he could look out onto Plac Zgody, viewing the most horrendous crimes committed against the Jewish population by the occupier.

In March 1941, Schindler returned to Svitavy to see his father, who was now in poor health. Oskar intended to patch up past differences. To some degree, he was successful, and when he left, they mutually agreed to bury the past and look to the future.

Schindler returned to Krakow and went via Moravska Ostrava to see his wife, who was still occupying their Abwehr apartment. According to the Ball-Kaduri documents, Schindler gave Emilie an update on his business activities, but made no mention of his relationships with his secretary, Klonowska, or his German mistress. Mrs. Schindler had long accepted that her husband could not hold to their marriage vows. When interviewed on this point by the film Director Jon Blair, she replied:

“He was a man who loved life. He liked all women. You can fight against one, but not against ten or a hundred. So you’d better swim with the current ... isn’t that true? But it didn’t bother me at all; you can’t change a man who is like that. He loved women, he loved parties. That was Oskar, and I knew I would never change him – I didn’t want to change him.”¹⁴³

In Krakow, Schindler was visited by representatives of the Armaments Inspectorate. Emalia was to take on necessary armaments work. Another blow to Schindler was that all wages to his Jewish workers would now be terminated and alternative pro-rated payments would now be paid directly to the SS. The dues he would pay to the police chiefs were the standard SS Main Administrative and Economic Office fees: seven and a half Reichmarks per day for a skilled worker, five Reichmarks for unskilled men and women. These changes took effect immediately and affected all the Aryan factory owners in the General Government. This was a crucial turning point in Schindler’s relations with his Jewish workers. They were literally dependent on him for life and subsistence. Schindler bought food for them on the black market at very high prices. He got money on the black market for food – for equally outrageous prices – by selling large quantities of the enamelware that his Jewish workers produced. There is an irony in this, for it means that Schindler paid his workers with the profits of their own labor.¹⁴⁴

On the western side of the ghetto, a kilometer from Emalia, were two clothing factories of an Austrian member of the Nazi Party: Julius Madritsch, and his manager, Raymond Titsch. On the ghetto gate at Podgorze Square was the name of another member of the Nazi Party: the Austrian Police Sergeant Oswald Bousco. Including Schindler, these four members of the Nazi Party were to be at the center of events in the plight and later rescue of the Krakow Jews.

Chapter Six

Julius Madritsch: Partial Liquidation of the Ghetto



Figure 46: SS guards whipping prisoner (Josef Bau)

“Save us! Abandon us not in our hour of need!”

Julius Madritsch

It is thus that Julius Madritsch opens his volume of memoirs, *People in Distress*. Madritsch was born on August 4, 1906, in Vienna, the center of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy of Franz Josef.¹⁴⁵

A pacifist by nature, Madritsch was drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1940, but did his utmost to be discharged. Madritsch was against the Nazi racial policies, which he witnessed in the streets of Vienna. He saw his opportunity to escape the Wehrmacht when his organizational talents were recognized. He was invited by the war recruiting board to move to the General Government and become a purchasing agent for the Wehrmacht. He was subsequently appointed a Trust Administrator of two textile plants in Krakow.¹⁴⁶

One of Madritsch's eager and ardent accomplices was Raymond Titsch, who was to become the lynchpin between many of the anti-Nazi conspirators in Krakow. As the traveling manager for Madritsch, he visited Bochnia and Tarnow to ensure that their Jewish workers were cared for. He kept diaries and took photographs of the Nazi oppression, which were important evidence after the war.¹⁴⁷

New edicts were announced with monotonous regularity. Jews were only allowed to work in armament industries and even this was to be short term. The Jews were to be replaced by Aryan workers shortly thereafter. It was this edict that brought together Schindler and Madritsch at a conference with the Judenrat labor office to discuss the implications.¹⁴⁸

Unknown to both Madritsch and Schindler, another conference had taken place. This conference lasted only 90 minutes, but those 90 minutes sealed the fate of European Jewry! Reinhardt Heydrich, chief of the Gestapo, invited 15 German officials representing various government departments to meet for lunch in a pleasant lakeside suburb of Berlin. What was to become known as the Wannsee Conference took place on January 20, 1942. Its purpose was to coordinate solutions for the various problems related to the Final Solution of the Jewish question. Dr. Hans Frank had sent two representatives to the conference: Under-Secretary Dr. Buhler and Commanding Officer of the Security Police, SS-Standartenführer Dr. Karl Schongarth.¹⁴⁹

By 1942, the drain on German manpower became so acute and the need for armaments so great that second thoughts had to be given to the ongoing wholesale slaughter of the Jews. In February, Himmler presented a plan to Hitler and to Albert Speer, the newly-appointed minister for armaments

and munitions. Himmler's proposal was to build armament plants inside the concentration camps and put able-bodied inmates to work on armament production. Propaganda Minister Goebbels recorded the following in his diary for March 27, 1942:

"The Jews in the General Government are now being evacuated eastward. The procedure is a pretty barbaric one as not much will remain of the Jews. On the whole it can be said that about 60 percent of them will have to be liquidated whereas only about 40 percent can be used for forced labor."¹⁵⁰

A new department was created, the Wirtschafts und Verwaltungshauptamt (Economic and Administrative Main Office), or WVHA, to deal with economic problems of the Reich.¹⁵¹ At the same time, all the camp commanders were told that this employment must be in the true meaning of the word "exhaustive," in order to obtain the greatest measure of performance.¹⁵²

Himmler had an obsession about being fiddled with by his SS camp commanders. In response to a memorandum from General von Ginant, dated October 9, 1942, he points out in Paragraph One:

"I have issued instructions, however, that ruthless steps are taken against all those who consider they should oppose this move in the alleged interest of armament needs, but who, in reality, only seek to support the Jews and their own businesses."

From around the beginning of 1942, the demand for manpower from any source was now overwhelming. No German establishment had to be coerced into taking labor. On the contrary, the firms had to use their influence and persuasion to get all the help possible. The private companies poured millions of Marks into the coffers of the SS for the privilege of using camp prisoners. An elaborate accounting system was set up to be sure that the companies paid the SS for every hour of skilled or unskilled labor and that deductions for the food provided by the companies did not exceed the maximum allowed. The inmates, of course, received nothing. They remained under the control of the SS but also under the immediate supervision of the companies that used them. The companies were required to see to it that adequate security arrangements, such as auxiliary guards and barbed wire enclosures, eliminated all possibility of escape. These new regulations, of course, were mainly directed at the Farbens, Krupps, and Siemens, etc. The likes of the Schindlers and Madritschs were insignificant by comparison, but no less supervised by the SS.

The effects of what had been decided at Wannsee were soon being felt in the Krakow ghetto. The OD was being reshaped, re-equipped with new-style uniforms, and strengthened with collaborating Jews of the ghetto. One appointment was that of Symche Spira, who had been a glazier before the war, but was now the head of the Jewish police. Spira, a much despised individual, seemed to relish his close association with the Nazis. Spira took his orders not from the Judenrat but from Untersturmführer Brand and the Gestapo.¹⁵³ He even organized his own political section, which was used with devastating effects to the advantage of the SS.¹⁵⁴



Figure 47: Jewish Police in the Krakow Ghetto 1942: Second from right Symche Spira¹⁵⁵

In June and October 1942, the Nazis carried out the partial liquidation of the ghetto, an event that cannot be passed over without some detailed comment. During the last days of May 1942, the ghetto was surrounded and sealed at night by a strong cordon of Sonderdienst (Special Police). The Gestapo and officials of the labor office met in the building of the ZSS (Jewish social self-help). A selection began. The Jews lined up, and rapid decisions were made on who was to go and who was to remain in the ghetto. Within two days the selection was complete.

On the morning of June 2, 1942, the deportations started. From then on, a familiar scene in the ghetto was the sight of the Jewish policemen, led by SS storm-troopers, bringing the Jews from their homes to the gathering point in the Optima yard, and from there to the freight train station at Prokocim. The first to be expelled were the old people, women, and young children. Most of them were sent to Bełżec and gassed, but hundreds were murdered on the way.¹⁵⁶

To give some idea of the catastrophe which was engulfing the European Jews, I made an in-depth survey of the numbers deported to the Bełżec death camp for the period of its operation: March through December 1942: Table 4 for June 1942, shown below, includes the 10,000 Jews deported from Schindler's Krakow ghetto and 11,500 Jews deported from Madritsch's Tarnow ghetto¹⁵⁷ The numbers for the month of June were low because the first prototype experimental gas chambers were demolished and replaced with a building twice the size, doubling the capacity to six gas chambers capable of killing 3,000 Jews in just one operation. See a similar chart for October 1942 in Chapter Seven of the murderous activity occurring in the name of National Socialism.

	Town	Deported	Numbers
13	Czortkow	June 6	1100
14	Kolomyja	June 21	3000
15	Gwozdziec	June 1-4	
16	Kosow		
17	Kuty		
18	Obertyn		
19	Zablutow		
20	Kopyczynce		1100
21	Krakow	June 1-8	10000 ¹⁵⁸
22	Lviv	June 24-26	5000 ¹⁵⁹
23	Niemirow	June 19	500
24	Olkusz	June 11-19	3000
25	Tarnow	June 11-18	11500 ¹⁶⁰
26	Dabrowa Tarnowska	June 11	450

Table 4: Deportations to Bełżec 1942

The Germans were not satisfied with the number deported. They calculated that many who did not have stamps on their passes did not report. During the nights of June 3-4, 1942, the Gestapo and OD men made surprise raids into the ghetto – inspecting papers, stopping and searching people in the streets, and entering hospitals, apartments, and houses. This time, several thousand Jews were marched to the Plac Zgody. The roundup was brutal and many of the Jews – the old, sick, and the children – were shot in the streets. This scene is vividly portrayed in the Spielberg film and in the recollections of Tadeusz Pankiewicz.

The president of the Judenrat, Dr. Arter Ahron Rosenzweig, was summoned to Plac Zgody, where the SS dismissed him from his position. Rosenzweig and his family were immediately deported to Bełżec. They did not survive.¹⁶¹

From his pharmacy in Plac Zgody, Tadeusz Pankiewicz watched the partial liquidation of the ghetto. He gives an eyewitness account of events on the evening of June 4, 1942:

“By the following morning, seven thousand had been assembled. There they were kept throughout the hot summer morning, then driven to the railway station, and sent off to an

unknown destination. The roundup was repeated the following day, the sixth of June. The scorching sun was merciless; the heat makes for unbearable thirst, dries out the throats. The crowd was standing and sitting; all waiting, frozen with fright and uncertainty. Armed Germans arrived, shooting at random into the crowd. The deportees were driven out of the square, amid constant screaming of the Germans, mercilessly.”¹⁶²

The ghetto now had a new commissioner appointed by the Germans – David Gutter. Gutter, formerly a traveling salesman who sold magazines, was now the “supreme” in the ghetto and behaved like a megalomaniac in the execution of his duties on behalf of the Germans. Gutter created a web of Jewish spies and informants within the ghetto.¹⁶³

Both Schindler and Madritsch met with the Judenrat in the ghetto to discuss ways of relieving the employment situation. One of the solutions, thought up by Madritsch, was to employ more Jews per sewing machine, and to open other factories in the towns of Bochnia and Tarnow, giving hope to an additional 2,000 Jews under the cover of essential armaments contracts. Madritsch’s first priority was to change the status of his factories to armaments factories, and thus receive the protection, like Schindler, of the Armament Inspectorate. The Madritsch enterprises in Krakow-Podgorze had a capacity of 300 sewing machines and about 800 workers, most of whom were Jews. His companies in Bochnia and Tarnow had a similar capacity. In Krakow, two shifts of Jewish workers marched daily from the ghetto to their workplace in the Madritsch and Schindler factories. For the time being, if the Jews held their work cards, they were safe.¹⁶⁴



Figure 48: Cyla Bau’s (wife of Josef Bau) ‘Kennkarte’ 1942

Shortly after the June deportations, a Kinderheim (children’s home) was opened by order of the Germans. At the opening ceremonies, Gutter and Spira were present. It was quite an occasion: new lies, new swindles, again designed to discourage vigilance. Parents going to work could bring their children, up to the age of 14. Cared for by experienced personnel, the children would be busy with all kinds of tasks, such as sealing envelopes and weaving baskets. The Kinderheim was filled every day with scores of children who entered willingly and innocently. Imagine that all this was done just a few weeks before the pre-set date for the murder of all these children who attended the Kinderheim.¹⁶⁵

According to Itzhak Stern, the killing of the children in the Kinderheim was the crucial incident that unsettled Schindler’s mind. Schindler changed overnight and was never the same.¹⁶⁶

At Emalia, production was continuing, but elsewhere in Krakow there was turmoil and panic. The seizure of Jews on the streets continued, and transports were leaving daily for the death camp Bełżec. Mrs. Edith Kerner, who worked in the offices of Emalia, was beside herself, having seen 14 Emalia workers seized by the SS in the street and arbitrarily added to an annihilation transport leaving the ghetto for the Prokocim railway station. Among those seized was Abraham Bankier, Schindler’s trusted factory manager.¹⁶⁷ Spielberg depicts this incorrectly because he shows Stern as the person taken off the transport. I was disappointed with Spielberg’s portrayal of this occurrence, as there are

relatives of Abraham Bankier still living who must have been aghast at this inaccuracy. For me, the Spielberg film lost much historical accuracy as a result.

Mrs. Kerner tried to contact Schindler at all his known haunts. After some hours, she managed to speak to him. Schindler drove directly to the railway station. He patrolled the platform, shouting for Bankier. The wagons had been in the sidings all day, the occupants sealed in with no food or water. The SS officer in charge relented under pressure from Schindler and released Bankier and the other workers from the transport with a receipt for their bodies. The Emalia workers had simply forgotten to go to the Jewish labor office to obtain their new blue work permits. Three of the 14 were Szulim Lesser (68938), Jerzy Reich (69010), and Bankier (69268).¹⁶⁸ In the three stages of the first June deportations from the ghetto, 7,000 people were expelled. It was learned later that all the transports were routed to the extermination camp at Bełżec. There were no survivors.¹⁶⁹

To combat further seizures of this nature, both Schindler and Madritsch made use of their contacts with the SS, the Jewish labor office, and the ghetto police. Repeatedly, when receiving information that a roundup and transport were about to take place, they kept their workers at the factory under some obscure pretext, so as not to expose them to the SS Action squads.¹⁷⁰

On October 28, 1942, another 5,000 Jews were expelled from the ghetto, leaving 14,000 inside. In December 1942 the Germans ordered the ghetto to be divided into two parts: one for the working Jews and the other for the unemployed. At the same time, scores of Jewish settlements near Krakow were wiped out, and refugees who succeeded in escaping to Krakow enlarged the population of the ghetto. Also arriving daily were the labor units that were to work on the extension of the Plaszow 1 labor camp.¹⁷¹ The Bejski family, three boys and parents, were all transported to Bełżec. By a quirk of fate, the Nazis urgently wanted laborers for the building at Plaszow. The Bejski brothers were taken to Plaszow, but their parents were gassed in Bełżec. The brothers – Moszek (69387) (the Judge), Urysz (69384), and Izrael (69385) – survived with Schindler. One lady who did not survive was Fransica Dortheimer, the mother of Viktor Dortheimer. To escape the turmoil in the city, Mrs. Dortheimer moved to the small town of Skawina, 30 miles from Krakow. Fransica did not escape. In August, 1942, a deportation train coming from Zakopane stopped at Skawina to pick up the Jews (including Fransica) who had been rounded up the previous night. The transport continued on via Krakow, Tarnow, and Bochnia to Bełżec. There were no survivors.

The Armaments Inspectorate visited the Emalia factory and told Schindler that he was to switch production from enamelware to armaments. The alternative was closure. The factory was re-tooled to manufacture shell casings for bazookas.



Figure 49: Fransica and Viktor Dortheimer 1940

Chapter Seven

Krakow's Jews Deported to Belzec



Figure 50: SS Guards in Belzec 1942

Final Solution: Number of Victims

Of the estimated six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, the death camps account for about 1.7 million. This reassessment focuses on the Jews deported from within the General Government, incorporating the Districts of Galicia and the environs of Lublin, from which the Jews were transported to Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka between March 1942 and October 1943.

One of the most fundamental and controversial issues in the history of the death camps is the imprecise number of its victims. The exact numbers of Jews who were killed in Belzec will never be fully established because decisions and facts relating to the extermination were rarely committed to paper. History has not been helped by the obliteration of all traces of the Belzec camp in 1943 and, in addition, standing orders for destruction of evidence from the Reichsführer SS.¹⁷²

The catchment area for deportations to Belzec was extensive. Deportation trains to the camp arrived from the towns and villages of Chrzanow and Zywiec in the west, to Tarnopol in the east; from Schindler's Krakow and Madritsch's Tarnow and Bochnia in the west; to Kolomyja and Stanislawow in the south; from the environs of Lublin, to cities of Western Europe. Belzec engulfed entire communities and was the commencement of the final chapter in the 1,000 years of Jewish history in Europe.

Table 8: October 1942 was at the height of the deportations to the death camp at Belzec. The decision had been made by the Reichsführer SS to exterminate every living Jew within their grasp. A respite was granted to those Jews (14 - 30 years) who would be utilized for labor and they would be held in concentration camps. I remind the reader that similar deportations were subjected to a similar fate at the death camps of Sobibor and Treblinka...and elsewhere.

Town	Deported	Numbers
1 Annopol	Oct 1-14	2000
2 Belzyce	Oct 1-14	3000
3 Bilgoraj	Oct 15-31	500
4 Bolechow	Oct 15-31	400
5 Bolszowce	Oct 26-30	1000
6 Brzezany	Oct 10	4000
7 Buczacz	Oct 12	1500

8	Bukaczowice	Oct 26	300
9	Bursztyn	Oct 10	4000
10	Bychawa	Oct 11	3000
11	Chodorow	Oct 18	350
12	Chorostkow	Oct 19	2200
13	Czortkow	Oct 3-5	2800
14	Drohobycz	Oct 23-29	2300
15	Boryslaw	Oct 10	1500
16	Sambor	Oct 17-22	4000
17	Dzierkowice	Oct 1-14	146
18	Firlej	Oct 1-14	317
19	Grodek Jagiellons.	Oct 14	450
20	Grzymalow	Oct 14	200
21	Jablonow	Oct 3-13	Hundreds
22	Kamionka Strumil.	Oct 28	500
23	Kolomyja	Oct 3-13	4500
24	Konskowola	Oct 1-14	2000
25	Koropce	Oct 8	1000
26	Kosow	Oct 2-13	Hundreds
27	Krakow	Oct 28	6000
28	Krasnik	Oct 15	Hundreds
29	Krasnystaw	Oct 16	Thousands
30	Krowica	Oct 15-31	10000
31	Kuty	Oct 10	Hundreds
32	Leczna	Oct 3-13	Hundreds
33	Lopatyn	Oct 23	1000
34	Lubaczow	Oct 22-23	400
35	Lubartow	Oct 10	2000
36	Lubycza Krolewsk	Oct 1-14	4500
37	Modliborzyce	Oct 10	1000
38	Mosciska	Oct 1-14	2500
39	Opole Lubelskie	Oct 10	2000
40	Mosty Wielkie	Oct 14	3000
41	Oleszyce	Oct 22-24	1000
42	Pistyn	Oct 10	Hundreds
43	Podhajce	Oct 3-13	Hundreds
44	Podwoloczyska	Oct 30	1500
45	Pomorzany	Oct 22-24	1000
46	Radomysl nad San.	Oct 22-24	Hundreds
47	Radziechow	Oct 29	Hundreds
48	Sadowa Wisnia	Oct 22-24	1000
49	Sandomierz	Oct 10	500
50	Skalat	Oct 29	3230
51	Sniatyn	Oct 21-22	3000
52	Sokal	Oct 3-13	Hundreds
53	Stryj	Oct 22-28	2500
54	Szczebrzeszyn	Oct 18	2000
55	Tarnopol	Oct 20-21	1000
56	Tartakow	Oct 5-7	750
57	Tluste	Oct 22-24	900
58	Turek	Oct 5	1000
59	Ulnow	Oct	Hundreds
60	Urzedow	Oct 15-31	1500
61	Witkow Nowy	Oct 1-14	500
62	Zablutow	Oct 22-24	1000
63	Zakrzówek	Oct 3-13	Hundreds
64	Zamosc	Oct 1-14	1176
65	Zawichost	Oct 15-30	4000
66	Zbaraz	Oct 15-31	5000
67	Zwierzyniec	Oct 21	1000

Table 8: October 1942

By treating the resettlement transports from the Galician District to Bełżec individually, we are able to establish a clear pattern of deportations throughout the General Government. The calculation method is, as stated, inhibited by the lack of documentation relating to transports of Jews deported to the camp. The only evidence of non-Jews murdered at Bełżec mentions approximately 1,500 non-Jewish Poles sent to the camp for execution because of anti-Nazi activity or assisting/hiding Jews. In Lvov, a special “operation” was directed against non-Jewish Poles who were seized in the streets, stores and public places. A transport consisting entirely of non-Jewish Poles was sent to Bełżec, where they shared the same fate as their Jewish compatriots. This occurred on just **one** occasion.¹⁷³

An overview of the deportations for Bełżec shows that during a matter of selected days, complete geographical pockets of the Jewish community were targeted and transported. For example, we see Zakopane is followed by Skarwina, Krakow, Tarnow and Bochnia. Office-bound bureaucrats had devised a coordinated, systematic method of destruction. There is one incontrovertible fact: although we may never know the exact numbers, the tragedy of the genocide is not in dispute.

Schindler Learns about Bełżec

Only a handful of Jews escaped from Bełżec but one of this small number was a young pharmacist from Krakow, named Bachner. In June 1942, Bachner was part of a large transport of several thousand Jews from Krakow destined for the nearby death camp at Bełżec. Against all the odds, Bachner made good his escape and returned to Krakow to tell his tale.

No one knew how he had got back inside the ghetto, or the mystery of why he returned to a place from which the SS would simply send him off on another journey. But it was, of course, the pull of the known that brought Bachner home. All the way down Lwowska Street and into the streets behind Plac Zgody he carried his story. He had seen the final horror and was now mad-eyed and his hair had silvered in his brief absence. All the Krakow Jews who had been rounded up in early June had been taken to Bełżec, a camp situated on the Russian border. His account continued: When the trains arrived at the railway station the people were driven out by Ukrainians with clubs. There was a frightful stench about the place, but an SS man had kindly told people that it was due to the use of disinfectant. The people were lined up in front of two large warehouses, one marked “Cloak Room” and the other “Valuables.” The new arrivals were made to undress and a small Jewish boy passed among the crowd handing out lengths of string with which to tie their shoes together. Spectacles and rings were removed. So, naked, the prisoners had their heads shaved, an SS NCO telling them that their hair was needed to make something special for U-boat crews. They were assured that it would grow again, maintaining the myth of their continued usefulness.

At last the victims were driven down a barbed-wire corridor to bunkers with a Star of David on the roof which was labeled “Baths and inhalation.” SS men reassured them all the way, telling them to breathe deeply as it was an excellent means of disinfection. Bachner saw a little girl drop a bracelet on the ground, and a boy of three picked it up and went into the bunker playing with it. They were all gassed. Afterwards, the camp work Jews were sent in to disentangle the pyramid of corpses and take the bodies away for burial.

While waiting in a great enclosure for his turn Bachner had become alarmed by the tone of the reassurances issuing from the SS. He lowered himself into the latrine pit where he slept standing for three days, the human waste up to his neck. His face a hive of flies, he remained standing, wedged in the hole for fear of drowning. At last he crawled out at night and slipped away under the wire, following the railway line back to Krakow.¹⁷⁴ Bachner was the only survivor of a transport that had contained several thousand Krakow Jews.

There is no record of what happened to Bachner after his return, but one of the indictments against Goeth, the commandant of Plaszow camp, was the shooting of a Bachner family in Plaszow in 1943.¹⁷⁵

Oskar Schindler knew about Bełżec. It is inconceivable that he did not know as Bełżec was the designated death camp for the environs of Krakow. Also, Amon Goeth (the Mad Dog of Lublin) was part and parcel of Aktion Reinhardt in Lublin. Goeth was the planner and instigator of the modus operandi for clearing the Jewish Ghettos in the Lublin and Galician districts so graphically described in the film *Schindler's List*. Schindler, on hearing Bachner's story, went to Bełżec to verify the details but was turned back by the SS-guards. Schindler had on a number of occasions attempted to penetrate the security cordon around Bełżec but was unable to do so, even with his security clearance documents. According to Mrs. Schindler he never got nearer than the small town of Tomaszow-Lubelski, some five kilometers from the camp.

Personally, or through the use of couriers, Schindler sent the Jewish Defense Committee in Budapest information about Bełżec and the tragic fate of Jews in the General Government. Schindler distributed secret Hebrew letters concerning the situation and conditions in the Plaszow camp, deportations, and Nazi terror. Oskar Schindler was travelling very close to detection and arrest. It is a fact that any person, high ranking or not, found within the Bełżec camp perimeter without authority from the highest level (Odilo Globcnik at Reinhardt headquarters or the Reichsführer SS Himmler) was summarily shot. Schindler would have been no exception.

To this day the residents of Bełżec village are still burdened by the former death camp, which was the deadliest and most brutal of all the Nazi killing grounds. Bełżec is the forgotten camp of the Holocaust and has not been treated extensively by historians despite being the blueprint and precursor to Sobibor and Treblinka. It was Oskar Schindler who brought news of what was going on in the east and alerted the world.

Between March 15 and December 12, 1942, no less than 500,000 Jewish men, women and children were murdered by gassing in the extermination camp at Bełżec.

Chapter Eight

The Mad Dog of Lublin



Figure 51: SS-Hauptsturmführer Amon Leopold Goeth, Plaszow 1943

Amon Leopold Goeth was born in Vienna on December 11, 1908. He was married and divorced twice – in 1934 and 1944 – and had two children. He studied agriculture in Vienna until 1928. From 1928 until 1939 he was employed by Verlag für Militar und Fachliteratur, a company in Vienna. In 1930, Goeth joined the NSDAP, and in 1932 he became a member of the SS. On March 5, 1940, he was called up by the Wehrmacht with the rank of Unterfeldwebel. He was promoted in succession to SS-Obersturmführer (1940), Untersturmführer with the letter 'F' [professional officer in war time] (1941), and Hauptsturmführer (1944), and was the holder of the Cross of Merit with Swords.

Goeth joined the staff of SS General Odilo Globocnik as an inspector of concentration camps, serving in Cieszyn, Katowice, and Lublin. In February 1943 he left Lublin after a conflict with SS Major Hermann Hofle and was transferred to Krakow with the rank of SS-Unterscharführer, as the Commandant of the Plaszow labor camp. Goeth's duty in Krakow was from February 11, 1943 until September 13, 1944.

Goeth arrived in Krakow after February 11, 1943 with the commission to liquidate the ghetto and set up a concentration camp in the Krakow suburb of Plaszow. While commander of the camp Goeth became acquainted with Oskar Schindler. The two men shared common interests – a life of luxury, women, and alcohol. Goeth's influence among the Nazi elite was indisputable and Schindler needed additional army contracts. Goeth was the person who provided Schindler with Jewish prisoners from the camp; he arranged everything Schindler required to achieve his goals. Schindler managed to reward Goeth: the corruption prevalent among Nazi administration led to unimaginable opportunities. Oskar Schindler was well aware of this fact and was able to use it to his (and the Abwehr's) own advantage.

It was clear that Goeth had come with a brief to destroy the remaining Jews of Krakow. To do this, the Nazis chose a most symbolic site – the new Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of the city, in the suburbs of Plaszow. Huts were constructed there in desecration of the freshly dug graves and a fraudulent sign was hung up, reading Arbeitslager (labor camp).

When the Jews from all the ghettos within the area fell into the grasp of the SS, the true nature of the sign was revealed: concentration camp. In the beginning, the sparsely wooded camp did not awaken any special misgivings. The first residential huts, the kitchen, bakery, latrines, and workshops geared

to local needs did not give rise to any great panic. Fears, however, very quickly returned. It was actually a prototype of a concentration camp, with all the infamous facilities meeting the exact requirements necessary for the mass extermination of the enslaved population. The camp led off from the cemetery, where the road was paved with tombstones from the desecrated graves. A special detachment of prisoners ground the magnificent tombstones into pebbles and gravel, and a second group of prisoners pressed the pieces into the earth of the cemetery with the aid of sledgehammers and hand rollers.

Slowly and in stages, the camp began to occupy more and more space; it expanded, swallowing up huge chunks of land, homes, and plots until finally its perimeter stretched for about two kilometers. The camp was built to hold about 10,000 Jews who were destined to be the raw material for the new factories at nearby Auschwitz. Towards the end of 1943, the number of prisoners in Plaszow grew to more than 25,000.



Figure 52: Paving slabs (Josef Bau)

SS-Hauptsturmführer Amon Goeth is described here by Josef Bau (69084) as:

“... a hideous and terrible monster who reached the height of more than two meters. He set the fear of death in people, terrified masses, and accounted for much chattering of teeth. He ran the camp through extremes of cruelty that are beyond the comprehension of a compassionate mind, employing tortures which dispatched his victims to hell.

For even the slightest infraction of the ‘rules’ he would rain blow after blow upon the face of the helpless offender, and would observe, with satisfaction born of sadism, how the cheek of his victim would swell and turn blue, how the teeth would fall out and the eyes would fill with tears.

Anyone who was being whipped by him was forced to count – in a loud voice – each stroke of the whip and if he made a mistake was forced to start counting over again. During interrogations, which were conducted in his office, he would set the dog on the accused that was strung by his legs from a specially placed hook in the ceiling. In the event of an escape from the camp, he would order the entire group from which the escapee had come to form a row, would give the order to count ten, and would, himself, kill every tenth person. At one morning parade, in the presence of all the prisoners, he shot a Jew because, as he complained, the man was too tall. Then, as the man lay dying, he urinated on him. Once he caught a boy who was sick with diarrhea and was unable to restrain himself. Goeth forced him to eat all the excrement and then shot him.”¹⁷⁶

Women prisoners were not exempted, as Gena Turgel describes:

“My sister Hela was in a group of women sitting, breaking tombstones into tiny pieces for building roads. Another older woman was working with Hela, when Goeth appeared and told the older woman she was not doing it right. Goeth showed her how to do it. When the older woman returned to her work, Goeth shot her.

The first thing in the morning was that Goeth would walk over to the men’s side. It was so quiet; you could have heard a fly buzzing. The atmosphere was tense and full of fear. I could hear the echo of Goeth’s shouting, and the growling of dogs. Goeth would appear with his bodyguard. Goeth walked slowly staring at each man in turn. He would say, “You haven’t shaved today,” and shoot the man down; or to another, “you look too clever” and shoot him down.¹⁷⁷

To emphasize the brutality of Goeth, outlined below are many of the incidents that formed the basis of the indictments against him when he was finally arraigned before the military court in Krakow shortly after the war. The record also shows his complicity within the corruption of the Plaszow camp. The archived material on Goeth is substantial, and the selection is based on record cards which contain factual accounts of incidents relating to Goeth while he was Commandant of the Plaszow concentration camp. All the incidents are supported by evidence obtained during the course of Goeth’s interrogation – first, by the SS during the war, and second, by post-war investigations into his conduct. This evidence formed the basis of the indictments against Goeth in the Polish courts after the war:

1. In February 1943, he shot four Jews in KL Plaszow. (1/106)
2. He shot the Jew Szab in the camp. (1/219)
3. Goeth did not obtain a receipt from the Jewish gravedigger, Ladner, for gold found on the corpses, which was contrary to regulations. (39/298) [Ladner was on special duty for the Commandant. Whether the gold came from a Jew or not, he handed property to Goeth, who should have signed for it. The SS accountants were ruthless about non-compliance. Goeth just pocketed the goods. In Nazi Germany you could kill Jews, but stealing their property, which was the property of the Reich, meant a death sentence. Many SS officers were shot, not for abusing or killing Jews, but for stealing their property, an offense against the Party.]
4. On March 14, 1942, he was present at the execution of 300 Jews in KL Plaszow. (774/84)
5. On March 13, 1943, he supervised the extermination of the Krakow ghetto, and, to acknowledge his contribution, he was promoted two ranks (from SS-Untersturmführer to SS-Hauptsturmführer). Goeth claimed that he was not present in the ghetto on March 13, 1943. (2586/52)
6. Goeth organized a range of workshops in the camp to use prisoners as slave laborers. He started full-blood horse breeding and a stock farm; he gave pompous parties for high-ranking SS officials; he organized a brothel for the camp guards and personally selected good-looking Polish girls from the assembly ground. (968/3)
7. He organized a brothel in the SS barrack 173. (843/248).
8. He claimed that the camp in Plaszow was self-sufficient, had its own farm with vegetables, cows, and pigs. (2586/50)
9. In the summer of 1944, in his presence, 70 parachutists and nine Jewesses were shot. (774/156)
10. On September 3, 1943, he took small children with mothers on a transport from Plaszow to the Tarnow ghetto and shot them. (774/)
11. In February, 1943, he shot Sonnenschein, Spielmann, and Schwed in the Plaszow camp. (954/1)
12. In February, 1943, he shot four people from the Balsam family in Plaszow: Dr. Shtermer and three people from the Bachner family. (967/6)
13. Goeth shot all the sick, the doctors, and the workers from the Jewish hospital; he shot Schoenfeld, Fleiss, Sonnenschein, and Ferber. (971/1)¹⁷⁸
14. Goeth personally chose dates of selections and supervised them. (774/162)

15. Without authorization, he extended the imprisonment of prisoners in the camp. (774/125)
16. In September, 1943, he shot Inberg for slow progress of building work supervised by him. (774/109)
17. Inberg (proxy of Bonarek's brick yard) was shot for errors during the allocation of labor. (2586/30)
18. From September 1943 to February 1944, he supervised the liquidation of the Szebnie camp. On September 2, 1943, he personally selected people in the Tarnow ghetto for transport. (774/134)
19. On September 13, 1943, he supervised the liquidation of the Tarnow ghetto. He misappropriated property of the Tarnow Jews. On September 13, 1944, he was arrested by the SS and Polizeigericht VI in Krakow for large scale fraud. (2586/32-980/3)
20. Goeth was also interrogated by the Sicherheitspolizei for giving information to the engineer Grunberg about the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto. (2586/119)
21. Grunberg, a German Aryan, was sympathetic to the Jews and was closely associated with Stern, Pemper, and Schindler. He passed the information on to Schindler who, in turn, warned the ghetto leaders. Goeth arranged the escape of the collaborating Jews Chilowicz and his wife. He informed Koppe about a planned riot in the camp and received approval for the liquidation of Chilowicz and his wife as leaders of the planned riot. They knew too much about Goeth. (2586/32)
22. He beat the prisoner Olmer with a riding whip, then shot him.
23. During the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto, he shot about 50 children.
24. He shot his Jewish maidservant in order to destroy evidence of "racial disgrace."
25. He shot his orderly because he gave him the wrong horse to ride.
26. On March 14, 1942, he was a participant in the execution of 300 people in the camp's limestone quarry. (774/84)
27. On August 3, 1943, on his order, a 16-year-old boy named Haubenstock was hanged for singing a Russian song.
28. The engineer Krautwirth was hanged for making comments about camp guards. (2586/33)
29. According to Goeth, both Haubenstock and Krautwirth were hanged because they incited mutiny amongst the Ukrainian guards. (2586/53) ¹⁷⁹
30. On March 29, 1943, Goeth interrogated and tortured Frankl and Lieberman after their attempt to meet their families in Julag. (774/158)
31. There was a similar incident with a German Jew. (1044/4)
32. In 1942, Goeth was a participant in the extermination of the Rzeszow ghetto. (972/6)
33. During the liquidation of the Tarnow Ghetto, he shot a girl who asked him for a transfer to a different working group to be together with her fiancé. (774/134)
34. In March, 1943, Goeth murdered Kapo Hirschberg. In November, 1943, he murdered Kapos Penner and Scheinfeld. He also ordered the killing of Odeman Bloch and ten prisoners.
35. In May, 1943, he ordered the killing of Kapo Beim.
36. In the summer of the same year, he ordered the killing of 16 people working in the firm Kabel. (2586/33)
37. Under the leadership of Hässe, he prepared the plans for the extermination of ghettos in Tarnow, Bochnia, Rzeszow, and Przemysl. (2586/29)
38. On September 3, 1943, during the liquidation of the Tarnow ghetto, he shot the wife of Chaski Klappholz and a number of other people, including all the children. (2586/35) ¹⁸⁰
39. On September 13, 1944, after his arrest by the SS, he was accused of allowing prisoners of Jewish nationality (Mietek Pemper) to inspect personal records of camp officers. (2586/71) ¹⁸¹

Viktor Dortheimer:

“It was May, 1943; there were about 50 of us in the painters’ barracks in Plaszow. Goeth arrived and asked how many prisoners were present. Ferber replied 50 or 51. Goeth shouted, ‘Are there 50 or 51?’ Kapo Ferber said that maybe one had gone to the toilet. Goeth pulled his pistol and shot Ferber in front of me. He was dead before he hit the ground.”



**Figure 53: Viktor Dorthheimer (left) and Josef Bau
Israel 1995**

At the rear of the women’s barracks was the death pit – a vast open grave measuring 20 meters long, 6 meters wide, and 3 meters deep. All those who were executed by the SS or who died by other means were dumped unceremoniously into the pit and left to rot. Those prisoners brought to the pit by the SS for execution were shot at the edge of the pit and, with the momentum of a bullet in the nape of the neck, would tumble in, to be covered by a shovelful of lime.

Schindler and Goeth

Schindler met Amon Goeth at the newly constructed Commandant’s villa, *Rotes Haus* (Red Villa), occupied by Goeth and his mistress, Ruth Kalder. This informal dinner party was attended by all the bosses of the establishment, the armaments and supply factories, security and police chiefs – the establishment of the New Order. Schindler was there because of his persona and reputation for giving charitable gifts. He was also there doing his duty for Canaris.¹⁸²

Emilie Schindler remembers her first meeting with Goeth:

“He was the most despicable person I ever met, a schizophrenic: one side was that of a refined Viennese gentleman, and the other was dedicated to terrorizing the Jews under his jurisdiction. He was two meters tall, with feminine hips, dark hair, and fleshy lips. I remember him as being thin, not overweight as in the film. Whilst we ate, Goeth drank incessantly and Oskar began to follow the rhythm. Before knowing the Nazi society, he hardly drank (contrary to all the evidence), but now I was afraid he would become an alcoholic. During the day, he [Goeth] would kill for the sake of killing. In the evening he could criticize the pitch of any one note in a piece of classical music.”¹⁸³

In early January, 1943, Schindler astutely read the situation that the Jews were destined for disaster. Many of his workers had been taken to the Plaszow labor camp, which entailed a daily march from

the camp to the Emalia works, escorted by the Ukrainian guards. Schindler bought a plot of land adjacent to his factory from a young Polish couple. Through his contacts with the Armaments Inspectorate, he acquired the necessary permission to build barracks within the Emalia complex. He then applied to the SS offices at 2 Pomorska Street, Krakow, for planning permission to construct the barracks in accordance with the known regulations. Site meetings were called and final approval came from the SS bureaucracy and from Amon Goeth for the release of the Plaszow prisoners to the Schindler factory barracks.

Approximately 900 Jews worked for Schindler in 1943. These workers came to Emalia from the Plaszow camp without the typical prisoner convoys under SS guard. Schindler was able to convince Goeth to allow him to set up a sub-camp next to his factory in Zablocie. The camp was established on May 8, 1943, under the command of Albert Hujar, Eberhard Behr and Edmund Zdrojewski. By May 22 1942, a total of 66 Jews were living in the camp; three days later this number had risen to 558. A total of 11 quarters were located in the camp – seven for prisoners, the camp kitchen, infirmary, and quarters for SS guards and the Jewish police units.

The Emalia factory grew continuously, as did the number of workers employed. In 1942 a total of 550 people worked at Emalia; this figure was by no means the final count. Upon request from Jews themselves, Schindler set up a “rest area” for workers adjacent to the workshops in 1942. Guard services in the sub-camp were performed by Ukrainians and “Werkschutz” – factory guards. Peretz Selinger became the head of the camp. Order units were charged with registering prisoners when they arrived for work and for inspections on their return.¹⁸⁴

A distinct advantage to the SS was that they would no longer have to supply daily escorts for the prisoners who were traveling some three kilometers daily from the Plaszow camp. Instead, the Jewish labor force would be within 50 meters of Schindler’s armament production factory. Goeth supported Schindler’s plans and facilitated the project by supplying experts from the Plaszow camp to work on the construction of the barracks. Adam Guard (69515), a young engineer, was transferred by Goeth from Plaszow to the new building project at the Schindler works.¹⁸⁵ In the new Schindler barracks, kitchens, a laundry and even showers were installed. These new facilities were questioned by the SS, but Schindler just mentioned the control of typhus and lice to end any argument.

It cannot be repeated too often that his factory became a haven for Jews, a haven in which Schindler sheltered many who were old and weak, and, therefore, inefficient workers. It is important to keep this fact in mind when one hears the charge that Schindler’s self-interest was most important when he built his sub-camp. Without a doubt, there is some truth in this. By saving his workers from daily harassment and torture, he increased their efficiency and the output of his factory and profits. But it is equally evident that his compassion often outweighed his profit motive. Schindler took advantage of the rivalries between the Armaments Inspectorate, the Gestapo, and the SS, since he knew the Armaments Inspectorate was likely to support any scheme that would add to the difficulties of the SS. It is not hard to imagine the pleasure and sense of power he got from playing various Nazi institutions and officials against each other. Schindler made good use of his contacts within the Armaments Inspectorate throughout the war, thereby acquiring the reputation of an industrialist interested in producing weapons required by the army. The result of this reputation was that he was able to increase the leeway he needed to pursue other purposes. Similarly, the more invaluable his reputation made him, the more help and protection he could offer his workers and other Jews outside the camp.

This episode did not come cheaply to Schindler. Emilie Schindler recalled:

“My husband built the barracks under SS supervision. Goeth, of course, arranged the transfer of labor from Plaszow, but it was all based on my husband paying him. That was done with diamonds, presents, and other things, as money had no value.”¹⁸⁶

From a report Schindler wrote in July, 1945 to Dr. Ball-Kaduri, we are able to grasp the turmoil confronting him:

“Because of the persecution of the Jews in the whole of Poland, the elimination of their earning capacity, the liquidation of the ghettos, and the opening of concentration camps in

1942, I had to make a decision – either do without my Jewish workforce or leave them to their fate, as did 99 percent of Krakow businesses who employed Jews; or to build a private, respectable company facility and encamp all my Jewish workers there. My attitude towards the Jewish workforce helped me overcome the threatening difficulties that confronted me. In only a few days we were able to erect and build our new camp. This saved hundreds of Jews from deportation. I, myself, resided near the camp. Jews came from neighboring camps, i.e. NKF, a cooling and air parts factory called Hodermann, the Krakow crate company Renst Kuhnpast, and the barracks of the army garrison administration, also the engineering works, Chmielewski. Thus, I saved another 450 Jews from deportation. I am proud to say that it was through my initiative that these Jews remained in my work camp. With no fear on my behalf, I conducted all the negotiations regarding the Jews directly with the governing body of the SS. The establishment of my work camp had to be financed entirely out of my own funds. It was enough for the SS if their safety regulations were adhered to.”¹⁸⁷

At one time I was dubious about the credibility of his statements. I am becoming persuaded that they must receive due credit as the Schindler story has now unfolded. Corroboration of his activities comes from independent sources, by Estera Pinkas (76399) and Leopold Dagen (69434), whose accounts of the new barracks were reported to the French Military Police on their flight to the Allies after the war. Affidavits from these two witnesses plus a number of others are in the archives at Yad Vashem. Estera Pinkas (the wife of Richard Rechen) was interviewed in Haifa in 1995. The Dagen affidavit not only corroborates Pincas but refers to Schindler offering the same protection to his 600 free Polish workers who were in constant danger of labor transports. Dagen refers to Schindler having to go to the SS to rescue his Polish workers who had been seized off the streets. This is significant when assessing the motives of Schindler.

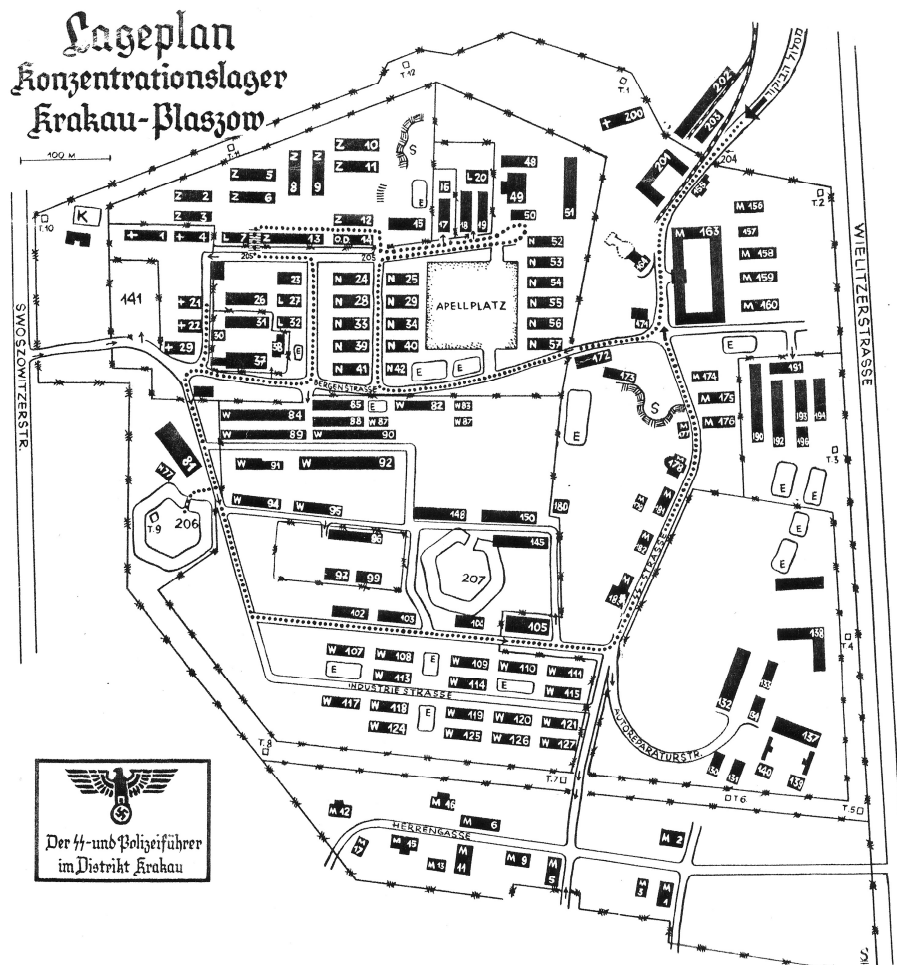


Figure 54: Plaszow Camp as drawn by Josef Bau

Z.....Women's Barracks	
N.....Men's Barracks	
W.....Workshops	
M.....Houses for Germans	
+.....Hospitals	
L.....Latrines	
K.....Crematorium	
E.....Pools	
T.....Watch Towers	
S.....Quarries	
Hospital.....	20,21,22
Epidemic Hospital.....	1,4
Quarantine.....	18,19
Jewish Police.....	14
Central Latrine.....	27,32
Food Storeroom.....	31
Bakery.....	38
Bath House.....	49
Brush Manufacturer.....	95
Blacksmith.....	84
Cobbler.....	82
Electrician.....	87
Paper Utilisation.....	90
Printing Shop.....	92
Barracks for Watchman.....	163
Morgue.....	164
Telephone Exchange.....	155
The Grey House.....	171
Administration.....	172
Brothel.....	173
Officers Villas.....	177,181,179,182,183
Hospital for SS.....	200
Commander.....	201
Railway Station.....	202,203
Women's Camp Gate.....	205
Mass Grave.....	207
Madritsch.....	127,126,125,111,115,121
Fumakers.....	114,119
Pig Sty.....	137
Bookstores.....	133,134
Rabbits.....	139
Chicken Run.....	140
Latrine for Quarantine.....	20
Laundry.....	23
Meat Storeroom.....	30
Kitchen.....	37
Clothing Store.....	48
DeliCing Center.....	50
Hairs for Brushes.....	77
Central Store.....	85,88,105
Watchmaker.....	83
Potato Store.....	81
Carpentry.....	91,94
(Wachkaserne)	
(Leichenhalle)	
(Graues Haus)	
(Verwaltung)	
Dog Kennels.....	180
The Red House.....	176
(Kommandatur)	
Main Gate.....	294
Hijowa Gorka.....	206
Tailors.....	117,118,124,107,108,113
Upholsterers.....	120
Chemical Laboratory.....	130,131
Car Repair.....	132
Horses and Carts.....	138

Figure 55: Legend: Plaszow Camp

Chapter Nine

Destruction of the Ghetto



Figure 56: Amon Goeth, Plaszow 1943

The ghetto in Podgorze existed until March 13, 1943.¹⁸⁸ In the final “Action,” the SS, with the help of Ukrainian volunteers, brought to an end the Jewish community of Krakow, known also as “Kehila Kedosha Kruke” – the holy community of Krakow. Only its famous synagogues, the Alte Schul, the Remu synagogue, the synagogue of Rabbi Isaac and others, are preserved to this day.

The population of the ghetto decreased each day. Almost daily, transports were sent to the camp in Plaszow. They started billeting people who worked on the barracks in Plaszow and also those who were employed in many other shops, offices, and factories beyond the ghetto area – such as Schindler’s Emalia, the airport and cable workshops at Montelupich, the clothing manufacturing firm of Madritsch (Podgorze’s Main Square 2), Deutsche Rustungsfabrik in Zablocie, and the brick factory in Bonarka. Jews were billeted in only a few places. The others were brought to work under close guard from the camp and were returned to the camp in Plaszow after completing their work. Long columns of people could be seen, wretched and abused physically and mentally, filing slowly through the streets of the former ghetto.

The first doctor from the Krakow ghetto who was sent to the Plaszow camp was Dr. Leon Gross. He later became chief camp doctor, elevated to that position because he was the first one who came to Plaszow,¹⁸⁹ and he was used by the Nazis for selections in the camp. Dr. Gross and his stepson were on the Schindler list that left Plaszow for Brännlitz via Gross-Rosen. All fathers and children were later transferred from Brännlitz to Auschwitz in late 1944. Much against his will, Dr. Gross was again used by the Nazis for selections. Dr. Gross and his stepson survived the war. On direct orders from the Reichsführer SS, the destruction of the ghetto was carried out under the command of SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, Commander of the Police and SS Forces in the General Government. Krüger was assisted by Amon Goeth and SS-Sturmbannführer Willy Hasse.¹⁹⁰

The Nazis had prepared the ground beforehand. In November 1942, Jewish work details¹⁹¹ were employed, building barracks for the new extension to Julag 1. The area to be extended was between Abraham and Jerozolimska streets, where two Jewish cemeteries belonging to the Krakow and Podgorze communities were situated. Both cemeteries were completely destroyed during the course of leveling the ground. The newer cemetery on Miodowa Street was devastated. Here the tombs and tombstones were overturned and broken, granite and marble monuments were torn out. Large black marble slabs were prepared for export, because they were needed for paving the walks leading to the villas of German dignitaries; two more remote cemeteries were totally destroyed. Only one solitary headstone remains standing on the site, the headstone of Chaim Jacob Abrahamer, who died on May 25, 1932.¹⁹²

At the beginning of 1943, the ghetto was divided by a wooden fence and barbed wire into two parts: Ghetto A for those who were working and Ghetto B for those who were not working. In Plaszow there

were now three camps fully equipped for the intended intake of prisoners: Julag I in Plaszow, Julag II in Prokocim, and Julag III in Biezanow. Julag I, the main camp under the command of Amon Goeth, was to be used exclusively for Jews. The Jews who lived in Ghetto A were rounded up and paraded on Plac Zgody, where the selections began. The men were separated from the women and children. The children were separated from the women, with the assurance from the SS that they would be taken to a special barracks in the Plaszow Kinderheim. Many of these mothers did not trust the SS and were unwilling to leave their children alone. Taking their children, they would cross from Ghetto A to Ghetto B. Their survival was not calculated to last 24 hours. Transfer from the good to the bad was allowed – i.e., from A to B, but movement from B to A was forbidden. Spielberg gives us a graphic account (I believe taken from the Pankiewicz documentation) of the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto, the brutality and the fear, the hopelessness and despair, the surrender of the weak against the full might of the battle-tested SS.

Under the directions of SS-Obergruppenführer Schermer, the gates of Ghetto A were opened, and in columns of four-abreast, the Jews designated for Plaszow were marched out of the ghetto and headed to the Plaszow camp. The preliminaries were completed. Late in the afternoon, the last inhabitants of Ghetto A departed, with the exception of the OD, Gutter, and a few members of the Judenrat, who were ordered to stay until the liquidation of the ghetto was complete.

During the evacuation of Ghetto A, many people tried to escape, but were shot on the spot and left lying in the road. Others had devised clever escape methods by lifting off the covers to the main sewers that crossed under the streets of Podgorze and disappearing into the stinking waste and crawling to the outlet on the Vistula. This was how Dr. Julian Aleksandrowicz escaped with his wife and small son.¹⁹³ There were two main escapes into the sewers: one at the junction of Jozefinska and Krakusa streets, and the other at the crossing of Jozefinska and Wegierska streets. Many escaped this way until the SS discovered this route, waited at the outlets, and shot the escapees.

Now it was the turn of Ghetto B. At dawn on March 14, the Sonderdienst (auxiliary police units) composed of Lithuanians, Latvians, Ukrainians, and the Blue Police, surrounded the ghetto. People in the ghetto were running in all directions in absolute panic. Shouting, crying people were loaded down with possessions looking for a sanctuary where there was none. Then, there was utter silence and all those in the area froze, their eyes turned towards Targowa Street. Dressed in a black leather coat, holding a riding crop in one hand and a short automatic rifle in the other, accompanied by two large dogs (Rolph and Ralph), and surrounded by his personal bodyguards, stood Amon Goeth. Other dignitaries arrived and selected their favorites, their informants, and selected personnel who were not to be subjected to the upcoming liquidation.¹⁹⁴

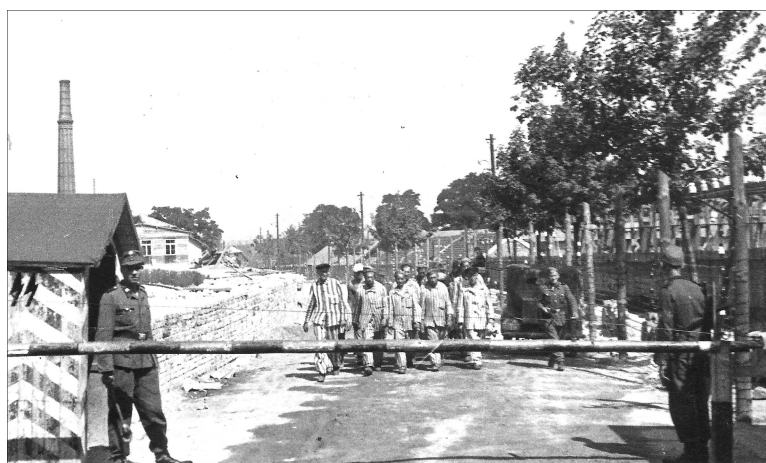


Figure 57: Jews marching five abreast in Plaszow 1943

Following are contemporary accounts of this day. Tadeusz Pankiewicz notes from his observation post only meters from the Action:

“Ghetto A had been completely liquidated; all close and distant friends were gone. People were moving like lunatics in corridors, cellars, and attics of the buildings in Plac Zgody. There were the old, carrying religious books and ritual attire under their arms. Children were wandering on their own, holding one another’s hands. They sat down on asphalt in utmost composure. They were laughing. And the throng was swelling; the square was getting more and more crowded. And now the SS and Sonderdienst units enter the gate on Plac Zgody. Helmeted, fully armed, the sons of Herrenvolk (master race) draw up in a double line. And again the scenes in front of our windows are similar to those already seen; but now the butchery expands in ever widening circles. It looks as if the Germans wanted to choke with blood to satisfy their hunger for it. Everyone is shooting; everyone who wants, everyone who is willing.

I saw how the OD man Immerglück led his own mother. As a token of recognition for his dedicated service in the OD, he was permitted to accompany his mother. He covered her with a blanket, gave her last directions for the journey, embraced her, and smoothed her hair. The farewell – a long, suffering, unending kiss, the son’s tearful eyes and the infinite terror in his mother’s face. When he left the square walking slowly, she stood with her arms outstretched. The Germans stood nearby, but somehow this time, they did not laugh. Several hours later, the son was stripping off his mother’s clothes and carried her still warm corpse to the platform where the murdered were collected. Thus, she was saved from deportation.

Deathlike silence lies heavily on the empty streets and houses of the ghetto. Emptiness breathes from every corner, every street, and every threshold. The ghetto ceased to exist...”¹⁹⁵

Victor Dorthheimer (69124):

“On March 13, 1943, when the ghetto was liquidated, I was selected for labor and taken to the Plaszow labor camp. I was ordered to join a detail to dig mass graves. The next day, at 10 a.m., flat topped wagons loaded with corpses and covered with tree branches started to arrive. We buried thousands that day. All the Jews left in the ghetto had been shot. My father joined me in Plaszow, and he was put to work in the stables.”¹⁹⁶

Victor was 24 years old.

Solomon Urbach (69427):

“On the night of March 12/13, 1943, I was working in the Emalia factory. Schindler told us not to return to the ghetto. He told us that there was trouble in the ghetto. The ghetto was liquidated, together with my family, my parents, two sisters, and two brothers. One brother was shot down as he crossed from one line to another. The rest of the family’s fate is unknown to me, but I suspect they went to Auschwitz.”¹⁹⁷

Solomon was 17 years old.

Moshe Pantirer (69040):

“Goeth himself, together with the SS, were in charge. Children and sick people were shot on the spot and the bodies were brought up in flat trucks into our camp in Plaszow. I myself, with a group of other boys, had to unload the corpses. In one case we asked a German to give a ‘kindness’ shot to a young kid who was still alive. The German told us it was a shame to waste a bullet on a Jew. We had to pour gasoline over the bodies and keep burning them. My father and mother, my younger sister and youngest brother were all split up. The Germans put the men to one side and the women and children to another side. My father decided not to be separated. My mother was holding a child in her hand and my father was holding a child by the hand, and the SS shot him on the spot. I know that for a fact. A few days later people who witnessed this told me and said that my father was a hero, and that’s the insanity of it. That we, the innocent, felt guilty for what the murderers did to us.”¹⁹⁸

Moshe was 17 years old.

Young children were led by the hand by the SS around a corner and lined up, one in front of the other. With a single rifle shot several children were killed with the one shot – a scene that was graphically displayed in Spielberg's film.

Elsewhere in the ghetto on that morning, 3,000 Jews were rounded up for deportation. Even before the trains could leave for Birkenau, several hundred small children were shot in the entrance to one of the houses, and several hundred old people were shot in the streets. The sick were also killed. When the Gestapo entered the hospital, an officer ordered Dr. Zygmunt Fischer to abandon his patients. He refused to do so and was shot, together with his wife and child. The patients were then killed in the wards. Also murdered were doctors Blau, Bruno, and Palin. Dr. Wladislaw Sztencel was murdered in Plaszow and Dr. Stanislaw Eibeschutz had been deported in one of the transports to Bełżec. Two women doctors, well-known in Krakow, were transferred to the camp in Szebniach: Dr. Paulina Wasserberger and her sister, Dr. Door. They were both killed in the liquidation of that camp. Dr. R. Glassner perished in the camp at the airport.

From his observation post, the ghetto pharmacist Tadeusz Pankiewicz saw other SS officers personally known to him: W. Kunde, K. Olde, Heinrich, K. Heinemayer (chief of the political division of the Gestapo and his deputy, specialist SIPO Koener), and, of course, Goeth's personal bodyguard, Oberscharführer Albert Hujar, who was personally responsible for shooting all the patients in the main hospital at Jozefinska Street. Pankiewicz noted, "Hujar was running amok like a rabid animal through the entire building, leaving a trail of blood and corpses; he shot the guard at the gate and the dog cowering in the dog house."

Many of the Jews committed suicide, mostly with cyanide. At first, getting a supply of the poison was difficult. Later, a source was found: the lamp factory of Wachs on Lwowska Street used cyanide in the manufacture of their products. People were able to obtain the poison there which was coveted as a priceless treasure. Entire families always carried it with them in small bottles just, as the saying goes, in case.¹⁹⁹

For three days it was carnage on the streets of the ghetto. There were sad hearts and an air of depression everywhere. There was not one person who was not affected by the events in the ghetto. Schindler had witnessed the carnage from the vantage point of Krzemionki Hill overlooking the ghetto.

In another incident during the liquidation of the ghetto, Julius Madritsch was hard at work in his clothing factory within the ghetto. As an SS subsidiary factory manager, he was obliged to issue his workers with identity papers. While finalizing these papers, he received terrible news. All the small Jewish children were to be resettled. Madritsch frantically wrestled with himself. How could he at least save the children of his workers?²⁰⁰

Oswald Bousco,²⁰¹ a German-Czech, had joined the SS when in Vienna, but he was now Lieutenant Bousco, assistant to the German police commander in Podgorze. He was well-known and respected by the Jews in the ghetto. Bousco came to Madritsch in his greatest hour of need. Bousco, Madritsch, Schindler, and Titsch smuggled men, women, and children out of the ghetto, to the safety of the Madritsch factory. In order to do this, Bousco had to dope some of the smaller children with luminal and codeine which he had obtained from Pankiewicz, the Podgorze chemist, and put the small children into rucksacks. With the help of the other conspirators, he smuggled them out of the ghetto to safety on the Aryan side. Many Poles came forward to help in this rescue. Olek Rosner, the six-year-old son of Henry Rosner (69261) [Goeth's music maker] was one of these children.²⁰²

Even soldiers of the Wehrmacht were appalled at the brutality of the ghetto liquidation. Some of these Wehrmacht soldiers assisted in spiriting away women and children to the Tarnow ghetto, away from the danger.²⁰³ The full might of the Third Reich bore down on an unarmed and defenseless people with no sign or suggestion of retaliation by force of arms. These were the heroes of National Socialism, the SS. It was a massacre.

"How much longer will we go as sheep to the slaughter? Why do we keep quiet? Why is there no call for escape to the forests?"²⁰⁴ asked Emanuel Ringelblum in a speech he gave in mid-June, 1942, to the head of the Jewish Social Relief Organization in Warsaw. This is the one central question that has

been intensely on the minds of many. Pankiewicz was no exception and gives us his simple and logical explanation:

“I was frequently asked, in the company of my Polish acquaintances, whether the Jews were so oblivious that they could not realize what was in store for them. Why, knowing that they were to be deported and would be killed, did they take these things with them? [Pankiewicz was referring to the bundles, packages, bedding, and household items which the Jews took with them on the transports, knowing they were going to their deaths.] Why didn’t they resist in self-defense? Why did they let themselves be led docilely like sheep to the slaughter? Such questions could only be asked by people who were not eye-witnesses to these events, whose information was received obliquely and not quite completely.

Anyone who did not see first-hand the awesome horror could not understand or grasp the dire circumstances that plagued these people. They could not fathom the perfidious lies which misled them the day before their death. **If my questioners could spend even a few hours in the funereal atmosphere in which these “Actions” took place they would understand.** Every few steps someone was killed, beaten, humiliated, and tortured. If one could look behind the scenes of these crimes and see the perpetrators, observe the means they used to instill fear and terror, cruelly shooting, and deceiving the ‘resettled’ with a hope that they would live; if the inquirers knew about the threats of revenge on the entire family for even thinking about escape, for sabotage, and for any self-defense act – he would no longer ask “why.” Besides, unlike the Warsaw ghetto, for instance, the Krakow ghetto could not use resistance because of its geographical location. **After all**, deep in the heart of all glimmered the hope of survival that was a wonderful word in those days; this was my impression arrived at in those fateful days as a result of my experiences in the ghetto.”²⁰⁵

Within a few hours, the Germans had killed approximately 1,500 persons and a further 3,000 were transported to Auschwitz. The Sauberkolonnen (cleaning up teams) worked in the ghetto until December 1943, selecting and storing objects, furniture, equipment, etc., left behind. The ghetto enclosure was then taken down and the area reverted to dwellings for the Polish inhabitants of Podgorze.

Julius Madritsch, who had a previous warning of the impending massacre, had been able to hold on to his workers but there were still hundreds of Jewish families evading and fleeing selection. Madritsch transported scores of them at night to the cellars of his workshops and then over a period of time removed them to his other factories in Bochnia and Tarnow, and even later, to sanctuary through Slovakia to Hungary.

Jacob Sternberg (68882) writes:

“Madritsch was entirely aware of the acts of rescue being carried out through his workshops, and, obviously, he thereby exposed himself to great risk. Nevertheless, he did not interfere, and so, greatly imperiled his own life. I was a witness to these acts of mercy and to Madritsch’s involvement and sense of responsibility, as I was, at the time, in charge of the kitchen in the cellars, which was a focal point of the operations.”

Stern and Schindler Cement Their Relationship

A very special relationship had now developed between Schindler and Stern, the compassionate helper and altruist. Two charismatic men of diverse personalities had come together in the Jews’ greatest hour of need. Contrary to popular belief, Stern and Schindler had been leading quite independent lives in Krakow. Apart from their initial meeting in November 1939, they were not to realize their true friendship until after the liquidation of the Krakow Ghetto. Stern, working independently, had proved himself to be essential to the Ghetto Jews. An articulate report writer, he satisfied all needs. He was respected by both the Judenrat and the German administrators. In lieu of payment from the Joint Distribution Committee, he accepted luxuries such as milk, cocoa and cheese, which he distributed to the children and to the main hospital. Although the Stern / Schindler activities

were quite independent of each other, Schindler ensured that Stern's funds were adequate by topping up the coffers at the most unexpected times and places.

In addition to his charity work, Stern sought security working on a part-time basis for a previous employer, Unkelbach. Unkelbach was from Bavaria. He was a product of the Hitler Youth, the NSDAP, and a former member of the Einsatzgruppen in Russia and had boasted of killing thousands of Jews. Wounded, he sought the quiet life of an administrator in Krakow.²⁰⁶ Schindler knew all about Unkelbach and had warned Stern to be very careful in any dealings he might have with him. Schindler was privy to this information through his past and recent contact with SS-Standartenführer Dr Karl Eberhardt Schoengarth in the drinking establishments of the officer's clubs in Krakow.²⁰⁷

Stern was now at the very center of the turmoil engulfing the Jews. He was privy to some of the most sensitive intelligence concerning impending operations by the SS, which had been imparted to him by Schindler. He was clever enough to glean information from Unkelbach and balance this information with his loyalties to Schindler, the Judenrat and his fellow Jews. With the liquidation of the Ghetto, Stern found himself in the melting pot of Plaszow labor camp, and he knew that they were on the last stages of "resettlement." His and his fellow Jews' last hope now was with Schindler.

It was not long before Unkelbach's workers brought trouble to the "Progress" factory. Shortly after the concession from Goeth, three employees from "Progress" disappeared, provoking a scandal. An inquiry was held, and it was established that, once delivered by the guards, the workers were allowed to wander around unguarded and unsupervised in the factory grounds. They were able to walk into Krakow to taste life's freedom. Because of this scandal, the factory was closed and all workers returned to Plaszow. The disappearance of the three Jews was, at first, not followed up. Maybe Goeth wanted to protect Unkelbach? They were both friends.

The Jews, when in the ghetto, had been under the jurisdiction of the Gestapo, who benefited economically from them. As soon as the Jews were put into camps, they were placed under the jurisdiction of the SS, who then rented them out to various companies. The friction between the Gestapo and the SS affected the Jews. Some members of the Jewish Council and the Jewish Security Police worked with the Gestapo to track down hidden Jews. The Jews believed that by their cooperation they might survive the war.

For whatever reason, the missing Jews from factory "Progress" were reported to the Gestapo, who lost no time in accusing Goeth of negligence. Goeth issued an ultimatum to the whole camp: "*Give me their whereabouts or you will all be shot...*" Goeth seized Stern as a hostage. Within hours an address was forthcoming. An armed posse of SS went to the address in Krakow. It proved to be correct and there was a bloodbath. Stern was saved.

Unkelbach had lost the confidence of Goeth and was arrested. He was accused of taking bribes from Jews to allow Jewish children to be smuggled into the camp. Despite Unkelbach's utterance of wanting to kill all the Jewish children, he was disarmed and arrested. According to Stern he was never seen in the camp again.

An insight into Stern's character was given to the author by Menahem Halberthal, who worked closely with Stern after the war. Reflecting on their special relationship Menahem recalled:

"Stern was not religious, but he retained a close interest in religious matters. His knowledge of Judaica was immense. He was a man of compromise, a negotiator, a man of understanding. He was always philosophizing and had a quotation or anecdote for every occasion and always tinged with humor. He never argued but persuaded by gentle coaxing. This was his strength and the strength that supported all those around him, even Schindler."²⁰⁸

Stern's attitude, even under pressure from the SS, did not fail him. Dr. A. Lilienfeld, a doctor at the Gestapo prison in Lvov, was interviewed after the war by Ball-Kaduri and stated that in his experience, "...sadistic instincts are less aroused when not showing fear."²⁰⁹

In the Plaszow camp, various small workshops were sprouting up. Every extension to these workshops meant more work for the Jews and, therefore, greater security. It was apparent that there were four stages in carrying out the "Final Solution": concentration, segregation according to the fitness and exploitation through physical labor, extermination, and finally physical destruction of the

habitat. This plan had held up well in the ghettos and camps of Eastern Europe with characteristic German efficiency, though, as will be noted, some unforeseen developments altered both the timetable and the course of the operation.

The chief architect of Plaszow camp was a Pole, a man named Zygmunt Gruenberg, a particular friend of Stern. Gruenberg suggested to Goeth that he put Stern to work in the “works” office as he had vast knowledge of managing small industries and was a professional book-keeper. Goeth agreed and Stern joined a team of outstanding Jewish workers in the administration offices of the camp. Among them were the Jews Joseph Bau (69084), Moshe Bejski (69387) and the man who was to hold the key to essential intelligence of the forthcoming events, Mieczyslaw Pemper (69514).

Stern was to make two personal interventions and seek the help of Schindler. The first was in respect of Peltzmann, of South African birth, who was living as an Aryan on forged South African papers. Her parents, Gusta Peltzmann (76392) and Hersch Peltzmann (68967), were suffering physically in Plaszow. Mania Peltzmann made a direct approach to Schindler and requested help in getting her parents into Emalia. The second intervention was in respect of Rabbi Jacob Lewertow (68872). Rabbi Lewertow was being harassed by Goeth and it was only a matter of time before Goeth would deal with him. In both cases, the three fugitives found their way into the temporary safety of Schindler’s factory.²¹⁰

Julius Madritsch had been able to hold on to his workers. Although they were now in the Plaszow camp, they left the camp daily for his factory and in the evening would return to the gates to be searched before entry. There were still hundreds of Jewish families evading selection. Madritsch continued to transport scores of them, at night, to the cellars of his workshops and then over a period of time remove them to his other factories: Jacob Sternberg (68882) writes:

“Madritsch was entirely aware of the acts of rescue being carried out through his workshops, and obviously he thereby exposed himself to great risk. Nevertheless, he did not interfere, and so, greatly imperiled his own life. I was a witness to these acts of mercy and to Madritsch’s involvement and sense of responsibility, as I was, at the time, in charge of the kitchen in the cellars, which was a focal point of the operations.”²¹¹

The final act in the destruction of the ghetto was on December 14 and 15, 1943. In the early evening, truckloads of helmeted and armed SS, under the direct command of Amon Goeth, surrounded the OD building. All members of the OD, with their families, were loaded onto trucks, driven away and executed in Plaszow. For some reason a Mrs. Katz and her children and Dr. Kessler with his wife and children escaped execution. It became known at a later date that these survivors of the OD executions were as the direct result of the intervention by Tadeusz Pankiewicz.

Chapter Ten

Emalia, Plaszow and Jewish Resistance



Figure 58: Celebrations for the fourth anniversary of the founding of D.E.F (Emalia) were held in 1944: Polish workers with Oskar Schindler

The liquidation of the ghetto left a lasting impression on Schindler. Months, even years later, he still had difficulty believing what he had seen. As he put it, he knew that he saw what he saw, but it remained beyond belief.²¹² The liquidation of the ghetto signaled, as in other Polish cities, the end of even the last shreds of hope for the Jews. Thousands were massacred and thousands were deported to labor camps and to the death camps, where the Final Solution was in full swing. In Krakow, miraculously, one-half of the Jewish population survived the liquidation of the ghetto.

The newly-erected barracks at Emalia were a great success. No longer did the Schindler Jews have to march the three kilometers from the Plaszow camp to the Emalia factory and endure the harshness of the discipline in Plaszow. The punishments of 25 lashes disappeared; the persistent parading and the fear of the evil-eye of Goeth descending upon them were now in the past. Whenever the SS visited the barracks, Schindler forewarned them, allowing for the hasty disappearance of unauthorized artifacts. Even when Goeth made an impromptu visit to see Schindler, the shutters of the barrack windows were closed. No SS man ever walked into the barracks without Schindler's personal agreement.²¹³

Approximately 900 Jews worked for Schindler in 1943. These workers came to Emalia from the Plaszow camp without the typical prisoner convoys under SS guard. Schindler was able to convince Goeth to allow him to set up a sub-camp next to his factory in Zablocie. The camp was established on May 8, 1943 under the command of Albert Hujar, Eberhard Behr, and Edmund Zdrojewski. By May 22, a total of 66 Jews were living in the camp; three days later this number had risen to 558. A total of 11 quarters were located in the camp – seven for prisoners, the camp kitchen, infirmary, and quarters for SS guards and the Jewish police units. The Emalia factory grew continuously, as did the number of workers employed. In 1942 a total of 550 people worked at Emalia; this figure was by no means the final count. Upon request from Jews themselves, Schindler set up a "rest area" for workers adjacent to the workshops in 1942.

In accordance with requirements, his sub-camp had guard towers and an electrified fence, like any forced labor camp. A small SS garrison was assigned to it. But Schindler's talents to fool the official world by displaying a Nazi facade when his purpose required it made it possible for him to forbid the SS to enter his factory or barracks. When he had his sub-camp, it was, of course, easier for him to perform acts of kindness for his workers. He took to visiting the factory daily, where he spoke to

small groups of workers, reassuring them and giving them hope. How important his reassuring words were was brought to my attention by many of those interviewed.

In the Wundheiler documentation (see Bibliography), she refers to the individual concern Schindler expressed for his workers:

“Among them was a 14-year-old girl, an orphan; Schindler gave her a weekly allowance for her personal necessities. He never gave the allowance personally, but asked someone else to deliver it to her. The girl, now of course an elderly woman, never doubted the reason. ‘He did not want to embarrass me – he was always very considerate of other people’s feelings.’”²¹⁴

The financing of the new barracks came out of Schindler’s own pocket; the funds were procured by the various black market deals he operated. He was selling 80 percent of all goods produced on the black market. Food for the works kitchen was the result of more black market sales and the bartering of rationed goods. Medicine and clothing were also acquired in this way.

A considerable expense was incurred by Schindler in paying enormous bribes to influential Party members, SS leaders, police and camp commanders, and other parasites in order to continue his activities. Schindler bought diamonds, famous paintings on the black market, anything that had value²¹⁵ at that time or would have in the future. Only in this way could he afford to bribe those people that he needed for his particular purpose. Three shifts were working 24/7. Throughout the duration of the Emalia, Schindler was paying five zloty per day per worker to the box office of the SS and the police. This was in addition to the usual bribes and favors.

Although the Emalia barracks were becoming overcrowded, he tried to keep families together. There were often conflicts of loyalty among the workers because their overwhelming desire was to keep their kinfolk safe. Schindler employed disabled and capable workers, the old and infirm as machine operators and the children as metal polishers. He falsified factory records, an act that can only be described as extremely reckless. Old people were listed as being 20 years younger; children were listed as adults; lawyers, doctors, and engineers were registered as metal workers, mechanics, and draftsmen – all trades essential to the war effort.

One of Schindler’s habits was that upon entering the workshops he would light up a cigarette and then immediately stub it out and drop it on the floor, knowing that it would be picked up and used for barter. His workers accepted that they would receive harsh treatment from him in the presence of the SS. The workers would be sworn at, cuffed around the head – all actions appreciated by the SS. Goeth had given notice that an inspection of the Emalia factory would take place. Accompanied by a full retinue of high-ranking officials, Goeth walked with Schindler on a tour of the factory. Goeth noticed a poor Jewish wretch pushing a cart very slowly across the factory yard. Consistent with his erratic behavior he ordered his bodyguard, SS-Unterscharführer Franz Grunn, to shoot him! The unfortunate Lamus was taken and positioned against a wall, awaiting his fate. Schindler intervened with Grunn, pointing out that Lamus was an essential worker, the usual Schindler protestations. Schindler’s promise of brandy made Grunn relent and Lamus was dismissed. A witness to this extraordinary incident with Lamus was Benzion Florenz (69362): “Grunn was aiming his pistol at Lamus when Schindler said, ‘Why waste a bullet, he will die anyway. I have some real Martell in my office, let’s have a drink.’”²¹⁶

On another occasion, the SS visited Emalia with orders to arrest the Wohlfeiler family for falsifying and possessing Polish (Aryan) personal documents. This family of five had been betrayed by an SS informant. Incriminating documents were produced to Schindler, implicating the family. Schindler produced some of his best brandy. Three hours later, the two drunken SS investigators left empty-handed. Another prayer had been answered.²¹⁷

Jews themselves had different names for Schindler’s factory and the camp. The most common terms to describe these places during and after the war were: an oasis of hope and humanity, Oskar Schindler’s ark, a safe harbor, paradise in comparison to the hell of Plaszow, a synonym for salvation, a sanctuary of freedom, life insurance, Noah’s Ark, an oasis of humanity in the desert of moral apathy, an island of survival in the sea of mass murder. Despite Schindler’s friendship with Goeth, the

persecutions continued. On a Friday shortly after the Wohlfeiler affair, two Orthodox Jews, the Danziger brothers, accidentally broke an old press in the factory. Again they were reported by an informant. Schindler was away at the time and had no influence over the consequences that were to follow. The brothers were arrested and taken to the Plaszow camp. Goeth issued orders that the brothers were to be executed by hanging. The gallows were already erected and 25,000 Jewish prisoners were paraded to witness the event. Schindler, who had now returned to Krakow, heard the news and went directly to Plaszow to see Goeth, taking with him various offerings of inducement, probably diamonds. He remonstrated with Goeth, telling him that the press was old and it was only a matter of time before it would break down completely. Goeth listened and accepted Schindler's protestations.

Whatever the reasons, the Danziger brothers were released and were taken back to Emalia. This is another example of Schindler conceiving of and initiating his own actions, and behaving totally spontaneously.²¹⁸ The Danziger incident was witnessed by many of the Schindler survivors including Bejski, Bau, and Pemper. The three women of the Wohlfeiler family – numbered on the Madritsch list as Roza (8022), Halina (8020), and Rena (8021) – all worked for Julius Madritsch when Emalia closed. The men of the Wohlfeiler family all remained with Schindler – Henryk (69330), Ignazy (68842), and Roman (69414). All six of the Wohlfeiler family survived because of Schindler.

Resistance

It is not possible in this assessment of Schindler to ignore the Jewish resistance. Within and outside the Plaszow camp, in the wake of the great wave of killings and deportations, the youth of the Jewish political movements began to organize armed resistance to the Germans. Deprived of family, they gained their individual freedom and no longer felt inhibited. The knowledge of the death camps and sense of death's inevitability pushed caution aside and they prepared themselves for the final test.

The idea of self-defense had never been extinguished in the ghettos of Poland, and despite the destruction of the Krakow ghetto, and many like it in other parts of Poland, the Jewish youth maintained the idea of survival. The young and inexperienced, as well as the experienced, had realized in the early ghetto days that they were no match for the heavily armed SS. In addition, there was the knowledge of reprisals should there be any active offensive against their jailers. The cost of human life and misery under occupation for such actions would surpass any benefit. However, when it became clear to the underground that no option but death existed, the idea of resistance took on another aspect.

Again they realized that resistance would not save the remaining Jews under occupation, but at least they would redeem their honor. The resistance likened itself to the suicidal stand of the zealots of Masada against Rome's imperial legions. Fatalism and the surrender to death haunted many young people. "We are going on the road to death, remember that," said Aaron Liebeskind, Akiva activist in Krakow. "Whoever desires still to live should not search for life here among us. We are at an end."

At the head of the organization stood a united command: Heshek Bauminger and Benek Halbreich from Hashomer Hatza'ir; Dolek Lieberskind and Shimshon Dranger from Akiva; Golda Meir from Akiva and associate splinter groups; Abraham Laban-Leibowitz from Dror, and Elimelech Eisenstein from Akiva Beth (splinter group from Akiva). Each group continued to act separately, but important decisions were made jointly.²¹⁹

The organization's accomplishments included many acts of sabotage and decisive tactics against the Germans. In October 1942, an attempt to assassinate the Gestapo informer Marcel Gruner and his wife occurred. Another warranted exploit of the resistance was the execution of Adams, of the Department of Press and Propaganda of the General Government. In September 1942, the ZOB (Jewish Fighting Organization) started to publish a Polish language journal, *Democrat's Voice*. In October 1942, the assault division GL, to which the Iskra (spark) of the ZOB belonged, under the command of Jakub Halbreich, set fire to a garage on Wloclzkow Street where three cars and barrels of gasoline were stored.

On December 24, 1942, Iskra, headed by Idek Liber, bombed the coffee house Cyganeria on Szpitalna Street in Krakow. Eleven Germans died in this attack and 13 were seriously wounded. Perhaps these attacks were futile, but they lifted the morale of the Jews to heights not experienced before.

In Krakow, the Jewish underground was able to penetrate to the heart of their people. The Akiva newspaper, *Hechalutz Halochem*, which published about 250 copies every Friday, included about ten typewritten pages and was distributed by pairs of fighters in Krakow. The paper, written in Polish, called for help and military intervention against the Germans and their collaborators by the free nations in the war. A copy even found its way into Schindler's Emalia. Victor Dortheimer and Roman Wohlfeiler (69414), both working in the factory, were reading the newspaper when Schindler suddenly walked into their workshop. Wohlfeiler hurriedly hid the newspaper behind a cupboard. Schindler, by some sixth sense, went directly to the cupboard and removed the paper, saying, "You are stupid, do you know what would happen if you are caught?"²²⁰

Resistance took on a more urgent guise. It was imperative that the information known by many in Krakow had to be got out to the outside world. Towards the end of 1943, Stern was called to Schindler's factory. A ghetto policeman had orders to escort Stern from Plaszow to Emalia. On entering Schindler's office Stern was confronted by Schindler and two strangers. The strangers immediately asked Stern what was going on inside Plaszow camp. Stern took Schindler aside and questioned the wisdom of talking to these people. As it turned out, one of the gentlemen was Dr. Sedlacek working for the "Joint" (Joint Distribution Committee) and the other was from a dubious source but as Stern recollects he was an agent from the Canaris office (Franz von Kohrab). Schindler had stated that the men had recently come from Hungary and Turkey. Stern gave them a run-down of the situation and suggested they visit the camp to see the mass graves. Schindler agreed to this and contacted Goeth to inform him that he had some special armament visitors and that that night he would be giving a party to which Goeth was invited.²²¹

This was an amazing front by Schindler but it worked. That night during the festivities Goeth invited the armament contractors to visit the workshops in the camp. Schindler received authority to speak to Stern and have him accompany the inspection. Stern was instructed to stop near the site of the mass graves and attend to his shoe-laces. Photographs of the scene taken with a concealed camera were later smuggled out to Budapest to his old contacts Kastner and Springman and then on to Palestine.²²²

German Resistance

The doves of past liberal and democratic Germany were circling Hitler's clique. Headed by Admiral Canaris and his compatriots, including Oskar Schindler, they were just waiting to strike. Only three groups succeeded in mounting a positive resistance. There were the conservative circle around Carl Goerdeler, a former Mayor of Leipzig, and Ludwig Beck, a retired army chief of staff; the Kreisau Circle, led by Count Helmuth von Moltke and dominated by a Christian and socialist philosophy; and the regime's opponents within the military, including Canaris and the likes of Schindler.²²³ Admiral Canaris was later to be implicated and executed for his support of ridding Germany of the Führer. On July 20, 1944, the attempt on Hitler's life was broadcast on the radio. Schindler shared this brief moment of history, listening in the company of Adam Garde (69515). Both were to be disappointed when, later in the night, they heard the Führer's voice on the radio.²²⁴

Chapter Eleven

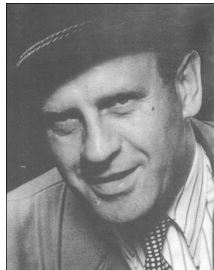
Schindler in Budapest



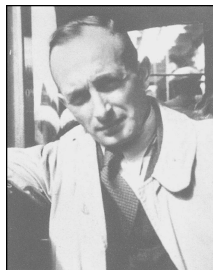
Rudi Kastner



Joel Brand



Oskar Schindler



Adolf Eichmann

Figure 59: The Hungarian Quartet

By his actions, it is conceivable that Stern altered the fate of many Jews. Through his work, he gained an extraordinary insight into the day-to-day activities, the confusion, and the confrontations within the German administration. He distributed money and medicines to the needy on behalf of the Joint Distribution Committee. Itzhak Stern was a loner and had previously occupied a small room in the ghetto where he carried on his welfare work in the Krakow district.²²⁵ Before the enforcement of the ghetto residence regulations, there had been a serious outbreak of typhoid in the shtetlekh on the outskirts of Krakow. Stern bought vaccines with the allotted zloty from the Joint and singlehandedly organized a mass vaccination program. Within two days, all the Jews had been vaccinated. TOZ (the Joint Distribution Committee) received a thank-you letter from the German Health Authority.²²⁶

In her psychological analysis of Schindler, Dr. Wundheiler makes the following interesting comments:

“As stated before, it is one of my purposes to show that Schindler underwent a development from a person whose concerns were limited to people he knew, to someone whose concerns included many human beings he did not know at all. Firstly, one needs to consider that he employed many at Stern’s request. He not only knew Stern, but a very special relationship between him and Stern had already begun to develop. From early on, Schindler seemed eager to please Stern.”

Dr. Wundheiler’s analysis of Schindler is, in my opinion, correct. We must remember that the Schindler/Stern relationship went back to November 1939, and that Stern, the Zionist, was working for the Joint and was very influential in securing employment for selective activists in Emalia. Above all, the relationship between the two men was symbiotic. Stern may have been the first and only human being to recognize Schindler’s deepest motives and bring out his greatest talents. Stern admired his intelligence and inventiveness, his courage and love of taking risks, and he called on and developed Schindler’s compassion. He brought out the best in him and Schindler thanked Stern by loving him. We are dealing with an exceptional relationship between these two men – indeed, so exceptional that it may have altered the course of survival for the Jews of Krakow.²²⁷

Working conditions for the Jews in the ghetto were becoming critical. Many of the Jews sought security by working for the Wehrmacht as they felt that this afforded them a certain protection. Stern also considered this action prudent and procured for himself a job at the Broadcasting Equipment store in Krakow. In addition to this job and his voluntary work, Stern worked for the Trust Administrator Unkelbach, referred to earlier. Stern audited the books for Unkelbach once a month. He wrote the accounts for the Treuhändstelle, which had to be written on special forms and done with typical German thoroughness. For these jobs, Stern was allowed out of the ghetto, giving him some freedom of movement and useful opportunities to further his charity work and report on the day-to-day situation.

In October 1942, Stern was taken ill with suspected appendicitis and was taken to a hospital in the ghetto. He was due to have an appendectomy the following day. Unkelbach, a well-known SS murderer, came to the hospital. Unkelbach confronted Dr. Hilfstein (68895), and ordered him to abandon the proposed operation on Stern and to send him home immediately. Failure to comply would result in the shooting of all the doctors. Nobody knew why Unkelbach had issued this ultimatum, but Stern went home immediately. Three days later the reason became apparent.

The Jews of the ghetto braced themselves, trembled, and again prayed to the Almighty. The SS were more thorough than in the June Action. Selections, deportations, and killings proceeded in an orderly way. Hospitals in the ghetto were surrounded and raked with gunfire. Doctors, patients, and orderlies were shot on the spot. Stern's life had been saved.²²⁸ In an interview with the author, Mrs. Stern confirmed this incident and stated that her husband was only running a high temperature and, therefore, an operation had not been necessary. Later it was learned that Stern's sudden removal from hospital had been instigated by Schindler, who used Unkelbach to repay an old debt.²²⁹

It may have been that Unkelbach had double-crossed Schindler. A few days after Stern's release from hospital, Schindler was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Pomorska Street, where he was interrogated over alleged black market deals. His company's books had been seized and inspected for irregularities. The exigency plan was activated by Schindler's secretary. Wherever the phone calls came from is not known, but within hours Schindler was released without charge. The pressure from above was too much for the Gestapo and the SS.

It was not long before Unkelbach's workers brought trouble to the factory Progress. Shortly after the concession from Amon Goeth to allow selected prisoners to move freely about the town, three employees from Progress disappeared. There was a huge scandal. An inquiry established that, after being delivered by the guards, the workers were allowed to wander around unguarded and unsupervised in the factory grounds. They were able to walk into Krakow and taste life's freedom. Because of this scandal, the factory was closed and all workers returned to Plaszow. The disappearance of the three Jews was at first not followed up. Perhaps Goeth wanted to protect Unkelbach, his friend.

In the ghetto, the Jews were under the jurisdiction of the Gestapo who benefited economically from this labor. As soon as the Jews were put into camps, they were placed under the jurisdiction of the SS, who rented them out to various companies. The friction between the Gestapo and the SS affected the Jews. Some members of the Jewish Council and the Jewish Security Police worked with the Gestapo to track down hidden Jews. The Jews believed that by their cooperation they might survive the war.

For whatever reasons, the missing Jews from factory Progress were reported to the Gestapo, who lost no time in accusing Goeth of negligence. Goeth issued an ultimatum to the whole camp: "Give me their whereabouts or you will all be shot." Goeth seized Stern as a hostage. Within hours an address was forthcoming. An armed posse of SS went to the address in Krakow. It proved to be correct and there was a bloodbath. Stern was saved. Unkelbach had lost the confidence of Goeth and was arrested. He was accused of taking bribes from Jews to allow Jewish children to be smuggled into the camp. Despite Unkelbach's claim of wanting to kill all the Jewish children, he was disarmed and arrested. According to Stern he was never seen in the camp again.

An insight into Stern's character was given by Menachem Halberthal, who worked closely with Stern after the war. He reflected on their special relationship:

“Stern was not religious, but he retained a close interest in religious matters. His knowledge of Judaica was immense. He was a man of compromise – a negotiator, a man of understanding. He was always philosophizing and had a quotation or anecdote for every occasion and always tinged with humor. He never argued but persuaded by gentle coaxing. This was his strength and the strength that supported all those around him, even Schindler.”²³⁰

The Chief Architect of the Plaszow camp was a Pole, Zygmunt Gruenberg, and a particular friend of Stern. Gruenberg suggested to Goeth that he put Stern to work in the works office, as he had vast knowledge of managing small industries and was a professional bookkeeper. Goeth agreed and Stern joined a team of outstanding Jewish workers in the administration offices of the camp. Among them were the Jews Josef Bau (69084), Moshe Bejski (69387), and the man who was to hold the key to essential intelligence of the forthcoming events, Mieczyslaw Pemper (69514).²³¹

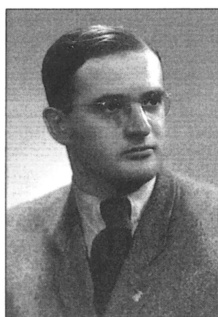


Figure 60: Mietek Pemper

Shortly after, Schindler was smuggled out of Krakow in the back of a newspaper van to Budapest to meet his Jewish contacts.

Many of us know of the infamous “blood for trucks” deal proposed by Adolf Eichmann when things began to go against the Nazi war machine. Under the macabre offer, thousands of Jewish lives would be bartered by the Germans in exchange for 10,000 military trucks to be turned over to the Nazis. How seriously the West considered the offer came to light in the report of a disclosure by Schindler. Jewish authorities in Budapest wanted desperately to know as early as 1942 whether the Eichmann offer could be trusted. Schindler had given personal testimonies to the death factories and to the terror being unleashed upon the Jewish people. Having delivered his message, he was taken back by the same route. From Schindler, the West had confirmed the facts of German murder. This singular exploit brings into focus the true man.

At an informal select gathering, Schindler was introduced to Dr. Sedlacek by his old boss in Krakow, Major von Kohrab. It was suggested that he should make a trip to Budapest²³² to meet with the Jewish Relief Organization, and pass on the true nature of the extermination of the Jews in Poland. Firsthand knowledge was essential as the information coming out of Poland was unbelievable to the Jewish agencies and more importantly, elsewhere. Schindler, in his position as an agent of the Abwehr, was the holder of a special security passport that enabled him to travel within and outside of the Reich. Usually, he would drive his Hawk motorcar across borders but, on this occasion, he was smuggled across the borders in the back of a newspaper van.

In Budapest, he was to meet with Samuel Springman and Rudy Kastner, members of the Zionist rescue organization and leading figures in the Jewish Relief Organization. After the war Samuel Springman recounted his meeting with Schindler at a reception held in Jerusalem in Schindler’s honor:

“I am not of Schindler’s men. My acquaintance with him started during meetings in Budapest. The first meeting was in a Budapest hotel. Schindler looked around to see if we were not followed – and he gave us a report of what was going on in the camps. The information given

by him was forwarded to the Jewish rescue committee. I was happy I had the opportunity to meet him again.”²³³

To Springman and his associates he handed evidence of the Jewish transports to the death camps and the cruelty inflicted on the Jews of Poland. He gave his listeners hard numbers: 80 percent of the Jews of Warsaw had already been murdered as well as 66 percent of the Jews of the Lodz ghetto and 50 percent of the population of the Krakow ghetto. Those who were still alive after the ghetto liquidations rapidly disappeared into forced labor camps. After his report, the Zionists in Budapest trusted Schindler enough to ask him to transmit rescue money to the Zionists in Krakow and to enlist his long-term cooperation in rescue acts. On Schindler's return to Krakow, he handed a large amount of zloty to the Jewish Defense Committee in the ghetto. Schindler also had a list of important Jewish Zionist activists who were working undercover, both in the ghetto and on the Aryan side. He was requested to get them into Emalia as one of the few havens in Krakow. Over a period of a few months, Schindler had traced 18 persons on the list and had taken them into his factory.²³⁴

Dr. Wundheiler's observation on the Budapest Action is interesting:

“His long-range cooperation with the Zionists is possibly the most important evidence of development that I am trying to sketch. Certainly, this cooperation was risky, and one might argue that Schindler did what he did because he enjoyed taking risks. Perhaps that is true, but so what? Is an action less high-minded and admirable because the actor enjoys it? Besides, one should keep in mind that the typical hazarder likes to take risks because any victory in a life full of risks adds to the risk-taker's glory in his eyes as well as in the eyes of others.”²³⁵

Since Schindler's activities had to be entirely clandestine, there was not even the reward of temporary glory. There was no monetary reward either, since unlike some others who transmitted money to Zionists in various Eastern European cities, Schindler never kept a percentage of the money for himself.²³⁶ Whether or not his cooperation with the Zionists appealed to the gambler in him, it drew on his compassion and altruistic feelings in that it required selfless actions on behalf of people who were strangers to him and about whom he knew nothing except that they were in terrible danger. In summary, during this period he continued to shelter Jews he knew and, in addition, he took many under his wing – those whom he did not know, but who needed his protection.

It is difficult to imagine what state of mind Schindler was in at this time. In his report to Ball-Kaduri he writes of coming near to a nervous breakdown and of being at his lowest ebb. Well after the war, Moshe Bejski (69387) asked Schindler why he had gone to all the trouble to help the Jews and at the same time lay himself open to detection by the SS. Schindler simply stated:

“I knew the people who worked for me. When you know people, you have to behave towards them like human beings. If I'm walking in the street and I see a dog in danger of being crushed by a car, wouldn't I try to help?”²³⁷

I have already referred to Schindler's utter depression when the children of the Kinderheim were transported. Because of its importance, I will refer again to the Wundheiler notes relating to Schindler's love and compassion for children. During some of the worst excesses of the SS, Schindler, with the help of Bousco and Madritsch, smuggled a number of children out of the ghetto by delivering them into the caring hands of Polish nuns. Exact data concerning the number and ages of the children is hard to come by. According to Wundheiler, a German doctor named Stroder, who was a pediatrician at the hospital in Krakow, stated that many of the children he attended were Jewish and he believed that most of them came to the hospital with the aid of Schindler.²³⁸

This was an act of compassion, deepened and enhanced by Schindler's identification with the children as well as with their parents. These parents surrendered their children to strangers, in the anxious and uncertain hope of saving them and seeing them again. Schindler recognized that the greatest need of these parents was to have their children saved, that the pain of the temporary loss with the hope, however slim, of seeing them again at some time, is infinitely more bearable than total loss through death. It is noteworthy that this was probably Schindler's main motive behind all his rescue actions

during this period. Furthermore, we must remind ourselves that Schindler was still an active agent of the Abwehr, albeit directed against the enemy within.

Chapter Twelve

Hungarian Deportations

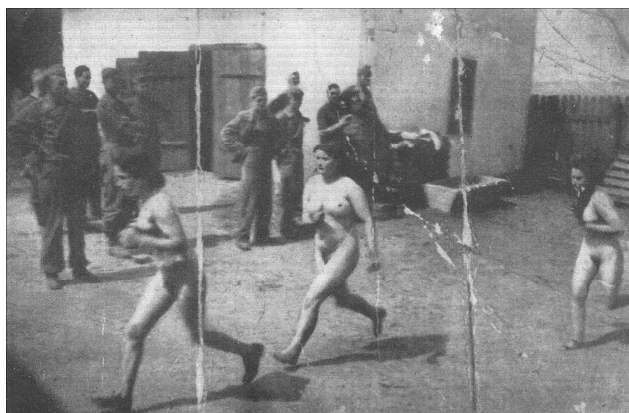


Figure 61: Women in Plaszow May 7, 1944

“Everything else was a game. This was the true contest. With your stomach turning and breath thin, you ran – beneath the throb of the lying music – for your golden life.”

“To the inexperienced children, it would be complete panic; they would stand in the open and believe themselves invisible.”

Another indication of the desperate situation now confronting the Plaszow Jews was the arrival of thousands of items of blood-stained clothing that had been sent to Plaszow for laundering and repair. Stern was told by a Ukrainian police officer that he should escape or else he would be like those in Tarnow.²³⁹

When the Krakow ghetto was liquidated, Julius Madritsch transferred 232 men, women, and children from Krakow to Tarnow on March 25 and 26, 1943. On September 1, 1943, the Tarnow ghetto came to a brutal and violent end. The day before the liquidation, Madritsch and Titsch were invited to a ceremonial dinner for Commandant Goeth and other high SS officials. When Madritsch requested to leave, SS-Obergruppenführer Schermer ordered him to stay until dawn and left him with two SS officers to keep him company.²⁴⁰ At 5 a.m. the following morning, Madritsch and Titsch were released. They drove directly to Tarnow where they saw Goeth, who informed them that the ghetto had been liquidated and was no more. Goeth assured Madritsch that his workers were safe for the time being. Large bribes weren't offered but were demanded by Goeth and Schermer. Madritsch later noted that there had been a fierce resistance in the ghetto and that many Jews had been shot. All Jews who survived the onslaught were transported to Birkenau and gassed. Only the Madritsch Jews survived.²⁴¹

Like Schindler, Madritsch was taking dangerous chances to protect his Jewish workers. Never did a week go by when these two entrepreneurs didn't risk their luck for the sake of their workers. Madritsch refers to many instances of help he received from the Wehrmacht and, in particular, from a sympathetic German officer named Lt. Col. Mathisen, who assisted in evacuating Jewish families to safe areas.²⁴²

It seems that the bigger the lie you tell the greater chance you have of getting away with it. Stern, Pemper, and Schindler decided on an audacious ploy. Mietek Pemper (69514), who worked in Goeth's office, had seen the report from Oranienburg requesting that an immediate list of inventory of machinery and prisoners be made. In his position as administrator of the workshops, Stern compiled a highly inflated projection of production in the camp. All this information was printed neatly in book form, with many graphs and drawings. Pemper submitted the material to Goeth, who immediately checked it. He found the information was incorrect and raved over the fraud. Then, according to Pemper, he laughed and said nothing. In an odd way, Goeth, Schindler, Bejski, Stern, Bau, and Pemper got on well; accepting the status quo was in everyone's interest. Goeth knew that this was an

effort to save the camp and obtain concentration camp status. As it was also in his interest, Goeth signed the account, which was sent on to Berlin.²⁴³

Some days later, the camp was visited by a team of statisticians from the main office in Oranienburg to check the projected productivity of the workshops. The team was headed by SS-Obersturmführer Mohvinkel and his assistant, a German Huguenot named LaClerc. The books and plans were scrutinized, while Stern and Pemper could only wait and hope. The inspection was short and sharp. Stern was at the beck and call of the inspection team that kept him busy bringing books and plans. Stern did not flinch; he was respectful, direct, and cool. Stern knew that he had the responsibility on his shoulders to ensure the safety of the camp.

At the end of 1943, no decision had yet been made; now, everything depended on receiving orders from the Wehrmacht. Plaszow's output was mainly through its tailoring shops, but to survive they needed to transform the workshops into metal stamping and press machinery. Goeth sought the help of Schindler; after all, it was in everyone's interest that the camp's status be upgraded. Frantic work went on in Plaszow to be ready for an inspection that was soon to take place. On the last Sunday in December 1943, a high-powered inspection team, led by SS-Obergruppenführer Krüger, arrived at the camp. The inspection team toured the camp with Goeth. In the workshops, which Schindler had realized would not stand scrutiny, he made a special arrangement. As the tour commenced, there was a sudden blackout in the workshop. The inspection went ahead in the gloom so that everything appeared enhanced. Whatever the assumptions, it appeared to have worked. In fact, Schindler had arranged for the electricity to be cut during the early stages of the inspection.²⁴⁴ In January 1944, Plaszow was designated Konzentrationslager under the central authority of SS-Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl's SS Main Economic and Administrative Office in Oranienburg, in the outskirts of Berlin.

Plaszow's change of status brought a slight relief to the prisoners. No longer were there to be summary executions. Everything had to be sent to Berlin in triplicate, and hearings and sentences had to be confirmed by the new head of Department D, SS-Obergruppenführer Gluecks.

Mieczyslaw Pemper²⁴⁵ had a photographic memory, and for many months he was memorizing the highly classified documentation that went through Goeth's office. Over a period of some weeks, Pemper had pieced together secret information transmitted from Gerhard Maurer, Hitler's Chief of Concentration Camps, to the Commandant of Plaszow. The information was depressing. Several thousand Hungarian Jews would be arriving at KL Plaszow, and room was to be made for them. Goeth was frantic as Plaszow was already overcrowded.²⁴⁶ Goeth asked permission to cull the camp to make room for the necessary space.²⁴⁷ Gluecks authorized this course of action in another memorandum, which Pemper just happened to memorize. KL Plaszow was to disperse its labor in all directions and to give its excess to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Pemper's contribution in this war of information cannot be underestimated. Goeth's personal secretary was a young Polish girl (Keneally refers to her as German – Frau Kochmann), who was very efficient in her general work but who, because she had problems when inserting multiple sheets of paper and carbons in the typewriter, always asked Pemper to help. On many occasions, he would slip in an additional piece of carbon paper and retrieve it after the typing was done. By holding the carbon to a mirror, Pemper was able to clearly read the most secret information. This extra carbon would be spirited out of the camp via Stern and Schindler. Schindler then passed this vital information – which was central to the West's grasp of the Hungarian transports – to the Jewish agencies in Budapest.

Amon Goeth was busy. Under the code name *Die Gesundheitaktion* (the Health Action), he set about the partial liquidation of KL Plaszow. Space for 10,000 had to be made in the camp. Auschwitz was working over capacity, but would be able to take these Hungarian prisoners in a matter of weeks when the pressure on the crematoria had subsided. The selections at KL Plaszow began on the morning of May 7, 1944. On the Appellplatz, row upon row of prisoners in barrack formation, stood silent. They knew it was their last chance. Block by block they were marched to the reception area. Ordered to strip naked, as each name was called out the prisoner presented him or herself to the examining teams of doctors headed by the SS Dr. Blancke. Also assisting in this selection was Dr. Leon Gross. The women had to line up and walk forward, one by one, and jump over a series of large holes that had been especially dug to test their level of fitness and, consequently, their right to survival. Prisoners

were made to run up and down in front of the examiners. Some women who were suffering from chronic diarrhea rubbed red cabbage leaves into their faces to give them color.²⁴⁸ During the course of the SS Aktion, Goeth turned his eye to the 280 children housed in a separate compound (the Kinderheim), where working parents could bring their children up to age 14. Cared for by experienced personnel, the children were kept busy and safe. Now was time to deal with the children. Sensing trouble, Goeth sought reinforcements from Krakow. Parents seeing their children separated and confined without the opportunity of proving their worth began to wail and scream for their loved ones. There was panic and pandemonium everywhere. Whole families were separated in the selection, some to the left, and some to the right. No one knew for sure whether they were on the good or the bad side. To the experienced prisoner it was not difficult to guess; looking at the group which contained the elderly, the sick, and the disabled was a sad realization.

Some children, the urchins of the camp, had their hiding places already prepared. Even so, when they dived for cover they would find that their space had been taken by someone else, and they ran in frantic search of another sanctuary. To the inexperienced children, it would be complete panic; they would stand in the open and believe themselves invisible.²⁴⁹

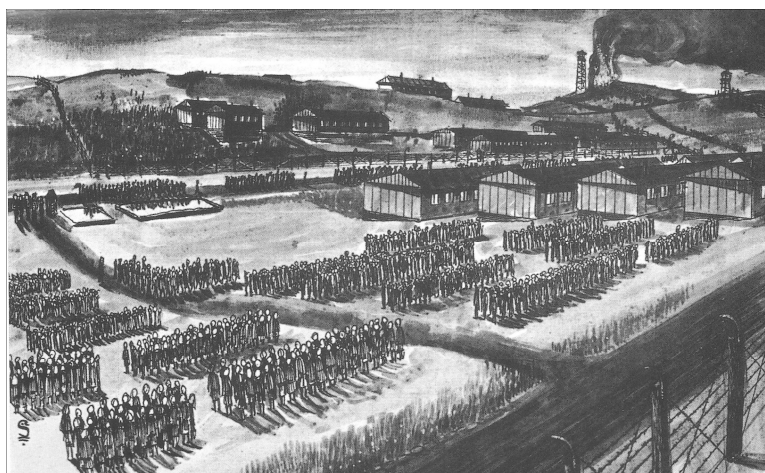


Figure 62: The Appellplatz drawn by Josef Bau

On May 14, all became clear. That day, everyone standing at attention on the Appellplatz knew their fate. There was an air of sad resignation around those selected for transport. Those Jews not selected for deportation were distressed and saddened seeing their parents, grandparents, children, and friends marched off to the waiting wagons destined for Auschwitz. It wasn't uncommon for mothers, in order to protect their teenage daughters, to change coats and join the column marching out to the transports. The individual camp number sewn in the breast of their coats was sufficient identity when being checked by the guards.²⁵⁰ During the course of the Action, dance tunes and lively music were broadcast over the loudspeakers, providing a musical background for the sick and the young children who were being sent to the ovens of Auschwitz. As the Jews marched to the train, the radio technicians, with their sense of German humor, could be heard singing the German lullaby, "Goodnight Mommy."²⁵¹

Schindler visited the camp a few days after the main transports had left. He was dismayed to see another transport of several wagons in the siding, guarded closely by the SS. This transport was destined for Mauthausen. On this very hot day, with the heat shimmering off the roofs of the wagons, the wailing and shouts for water could clearly be heard. Outraged and in the presence of Goeth and his posse of SS officers, Schindler persuaded the Commandant to allow hoses to be directed onto the wagons.²⁵²

A shimmer of steam from the locomotive broke into the air. Schindler played probably one of his final cards by imploring Goeth to allow this indulgence, much to the mockery of the SS present. As in the Spielberg film, Schindler brought in additional watering appliances to quell the heat of the wagons. He gave the guards on the transport baskets full of liquors and cigarettes and requested that at each

stop the prisoners should be given water and the doors opened. Well after the war, two survivors of that transport, doctors Rubenstein and Feldstein, confirmed to Schindler that this was done.²⁵³

The selections and transports made in May to make way for the 10,000 Hungarian Jews were the most difficult accounts to relate for many of those that I interviewed. The late Dr. Moshe Bejski had to have several breaks in the interview before he could bring himself to complete his account.



Figure 63: Author with Dr. and Mrs. Bejski, Tel-Aviv 1996

The End of the Plaszow Camp

The Red Army's great offensive in 1944 resulted in the hasty retreat of German forces. Transports began to leave the Plaszow camp for extermination camps as early as February. Defense inspectors began to visit Plaszow as well as Schindler's Emalia. Both Goeth and Schindler made efforts to ensure that the camp and factory were deemed essential for the needs of the military. The Plaszow camp was completely overcrowded with 30,000 prisoners. A special SS commando unit arrived at Plaszow with the task of obliterating all traces of Nazi operations. A work force comprised of Jews exhumed mass graves, burned the remains, and created new graves at execution sites.

After the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising on August 1 1944, a total of 7,000 Polish men were taken to the Plaszow camp. Schindler intervened on behalf of his Polish workers and helped some of them leave Krakow.

Chapter Thirteen

Schindler's Lists

“To me, Schindler was still a German, a Nazi. I’m never going to believe he was a Jew lover. To me, he represents the German system – Nazi – and he was a guy who made money.”

Joachim Kinstlinger (68861)



**Figure 64: The Davar List, the original “Schindler List”:
the list of Emalia employees (with dates of birth) that was published
in the newspaper *Davar* in Palestine on September 1, 1944**

There have been two major revelations concerning the list by the author: (1) the original Madritsch list of Jews selected to join the Schindler group in late 1944: the list was drawn up by Raymond Titsch, and (2) the Davar list of September 1944. These documents came into the author's possession from outside sources. The Madritsch list, in particular, is perhaps the only authentic list to have survived the war. The Davar list relates to clandestine internal movements of Jews within the Krakow factory complex. The importance of all other lists purporting to be the Schindler list is, in the author's opinion, exaggerated. In 1996, the author corresponded with Genia and Nachum Manor (Monderer 69439). Nachum kindly read the author's MA dissertation on Schindler and suggested a number of corrections and possible additions which should be considered when discussing the lists of Oskar Schindler.

The *Davar* newspaper was a very important and popular newspaper in Palestine. The issue of August-September 1944 contained lists of names of the Jews that Oskar Schindler saved from going to the Plaszow camp. It is believed that these lists were given to the Jewish Rescue Committee in Istanbul by Schindler. If this is so, then during the war years, the lists in the *Davar*, as well as the Madritsch list, take precedence as genuine original lists that were compiled many months before the so-called Brünnlitz lists.

There are five Davar lists numbered 1-5: List 1, dated August 31, 1944; List 2, dated September 1, 1944; List 3, dated September 3, 1944; List 4, dated September 4, 1944; and List 5, dated September

5, 1944. Lists 1- 4 were primarily details of Jews in the Plaszow camp. List 5 is our Schindler's list. This list contains some 200 names that were selected by Schindler for transfer to the Neue Kuehler Fabrik – NKF, a factory where refrigerators and aircraft parts were manufactured. The original list was published in Hebrew in the newspaper *Davar* and was taken by Schindler to Hungary when he made a clandestine visit to meet influential Zionist sympathizers and inform the world of the destructive events in Poland at that time. Schindler's employees stopped being anonymous – their names became known all over the world!

The veracity of the lists is complicated and to assist in untangling the different versions, read the Introduction to the JewishGen database "Schindler's Lists" at the link below. The searchable database contains 1980 names from two lists:

http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/0126_Schindlers-lists.html

The Madritsch and Davar lists will be examined in the context of the information available. In August 1944, the order came from the Director of Armaments for the disbandment of Schindler's factory and for all Jewish workers to be taken to KL Plaszow. There were now about a thousand Jews working in Emalia. Three hundred were to remain to dismantle the factory; the rest were sent to KL Plaszow and/or KL Gross-Rosen.²⁵⁴

The 700 Schindler Jews marched out of Emalia for the last time to the unknown of KL Plaszow. The 300 that remained were bona-fide technicians who stayed in Emalia to carry out their work. Solomon Urbach (69427) was one of the lucky 700. As the main body of people was lined up and ready for the orders to march, Urbach mentioned to Schindler that there was no carpenter left in the camp. Schindler took him at his word and physically put him with the group that was to remain.²⁵⁵

On August 17, 1944, Emalia awoke to a mighty explosion. Barracks were on fire and secondary explosions were erupting all over the area. An allied Liberator bomber had crashed on the Emalia sub-camp. The aircraft was part of 205 Group, Royal Air Force (one of 178 Squadron Liberators) supplying the Jewish insurgents in Warsaw from their bases in Italy. The Australian navigator of this aircraft, Squadron Leader Liverside, was killed. Another Australian, Flight Lieutenant A.H. Hammet, although wounded, parachuted to safety and was hidden by a partisan group until January 1945, when Russian troops occupied the area. The remainder of the crew died in the crash: F/Lt. Pilot William D. Wright, RAF, and F/Sgt. A/G John D. Clarke. A commemorative plaque to the memory of these officers is affixed to the wall at the Emalia factory at 4 Lipowa Street, Krakow.²⁵⁶ The graves register states that Liverside died in action over Poland on August 17, 1944, and was buried in the Krakow Military Cemetery, Plot 1, Row C, and Collective Grave 6-8.²⁵⁷

In August 1944, the operations from Italy were mainly aimed at the Ploesti oil fields. There does not appear to have been operations against Polish targets.²⁵⁸ According to several of the Schindler Jews who were present at the time, the Germans accorded full military honors to the dead airman in the crashed Liberator aircraft.²⁵⁹ In 1997, I visited the Krakow Military Cemetery and laid a wreath on collective grave 6-8.

It was at this time that Schindler visited Plaszow to see Stern and to bring him the news of the death of Oswald Bousco. Bousco, the police commissioner in the ghetto, was held in high esteem. His kindness to and consideration of the oppressed in the Krakow ghetto had not been forgotten. Without the power, position, and panache of Schindler and Madritsch, Bousco had carved a very special niche in the hearts of the Jews of Krakow.²⁶⁰

Schindler was now looking for new territories where he could transfer his machinery. He went to Berlin seeking the assistance of Colonel Erich Lange, Chief of Staff of the Armaments Inspectorate at Army Headquarters. He was passed from department to department but eventually acquired the authority to transfer his factory.²⁶¹

We have arrived at what I would term "the crucial period" of Schindler's activities. Schindler had amassed great personal wealth, which afforded him a guarantee of his personal safety out of the Reich to Switzerland. He thought long and hard of his circumstances, his wife, and the people that looked to him as their only chance – their last chance. This was not a game; this was not now a money-making venture where he could see the profits mounting up. This was reality, the reality of life and death, not only to those who were with him, but to those who languished in rotten Plaszow. The stuffing had

been knocked out of him and he was on the brink of a very serious mental disorder, living on the edge of madness.²⁶² After the war, Moshe Bejski asked the question, “Why didn’t you go when you had the chance? Were we that important?” Schindler replied, “Yes, you were that important. If I had run I could never have lived with myself. I am not proud of myself; I have a lot to answer for. I knew that I had no choice; I just had to see it through.”²⁶³ This was Schindler, the altruistic and compassionate helper. His common sense of right had overridden all possibilities.

The Brünnlitz venture made Amon Goeth appear like a good friend, despite his cruelty and murderous ways. At least he knew with whom he was dealing. In the environs of this Judenfrei district of Moravia, the battle to bring his factory and Jewish workers was only beginning. Schindler even pondered Berlin’s offer to remove his factory from the Rhineland to a village near Semmering, but without his Jewish workers.

The new factory back in the Sudetenland was between his home town of Svitavy and the industrial city of Brno; but, to be more precise, it rested between the villages of Brezova-Brnenec and Moravska Chrastova. The factory nestled in a valley, surrounded by mountains, and was chosen because it would be difficult to bomb from the air.

As soon as it was clear that Schindler’s efforts to gain permission to move his factory to the safer interior would be successful, preparations for the transfer began at a feverish pace. The commander of the Plaszow camp, Amon Goeth, was arrested by the Gestapo on corruption charges and replaced by SS-Obersturmführer Arnold Büscher. Schindler obtained the consent of authorities to move a thousand Jews to the newly established camp at Brünnlitz near Schindler’s hometown.

Schindler was to occupy part of the Brueder Hoffmann spinning mill. Herr Hoffmann, a former trustee of this mill and well-decorated with Party protectionism, made the move very difficult for Schindler. Hoffmann was a typical Nazi bureaucrat. In former years he had been a dairy salesman from Vienna. Now he would hinder all moves to establish Schindler’s new armaments factory. Hoffmann had considerable influence with the District Magistrate, the Gestapo, and the Kreisleiter. A typical remark by officialdom was, “Do not allow this Schindler to poison our area with Jews. He will bring typhoid and other diseases along with his Schindler gang.” Chaos and bureaucracy, jealousy and spite – these were some of the hurdles Schindler had to overcome. The opposition continued but the decisions of the SS-Reichführung were final.

Schindler resorted to inviting high-ranking SS officers to Brünnlitz to impress the local dignitaries of his influence within the Establishment: Heinz Bignall, adviser to the SS and Polish leaders in Krakow; and SS-Standartenführer Ernst Hahn and his adjutant, SS-Obergruppenführer Heissmeier. These high officers of considerable power and influence had nothing to do with the employment of Jews, but thanks to their pompous uniforms, the visit was a great success. The locals were impressed and Schindler was able to proceed.

Schindler’s initiative, which had established a principle at the very highest authority, had penetrated the anti-Semitic bureaucracy of Moravia. Through this action alone, the Armaments Inspectorate was to release 3,000 mainly Polish Jewish women into other camps in the previously Judenfrei area. These women prisoners, in groups of 300, were allocated to small textile factories: Trautenau, Freudenthal, Jagerndorf, Liebau, and Grulich. This was a major accomplishment which has been overshadowed by events in Emalia.

The considerable funds needed to move from Krakow to Brünnlitz made a heavy dent in Schindler’s accumulated fortune. Then there were the usual inducements to the bureaucrats. He personally delivered luxuries to keep the “SS-gentlemen” in a cooperative mood. There were gifts to Berlin and for the SS leaders in Krakow, the little officials of the Eastern Railway, the Armaments Inspectorate, and the Commandant of Gross-Rosen, SS-Standartenführer Hässebroek, who would be supervising Brünnlitz. Schindler estimated that these gifts alone cost him 100,000 Reichmarks in addition to the 200,000 Reichmarks set aside for the move to Brünnlitz.²⁶⁴

JULIUS MADRITSCH KRAKAUER KONFEKTION KRAKAU - PODGORZE, RINGPLATZ 3 TELEFON 110-20			
ZWEIGSTELLE: TARNOW, LEMBERGERSTR. 7 TEL. 850 — BERNARDINERSTR. 5			
Verzeichnis der von der Fa. Schindler in KL Plaszow genommenen Leute unserer Betriebe. R. Titsch			
Die Arbeiter	Die Arbeiter	Die Arbeiter	Die Arbeiter
1. Serenbaum Josef 6925	14. Feigenbaum Herta 8445	27. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	40. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
2. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	15. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	28. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	41. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
3. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	16. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	29. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	42. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
4. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	17. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	30. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	43. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
5. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	18. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	31. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	44. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
6. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	19. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	32. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	45. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
7. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	20. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	33. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	46. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
8. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	21. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	34. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	47. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
9. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	22. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	35. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	48. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
10. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	23. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	36. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	49. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
11. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	24. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	37. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	50. Feigenbaum Janina 8445
12. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	25. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	38. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
13. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	26. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	39. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
14. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	27. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	40. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
15. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	28. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	41. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
16. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	29. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	42. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
17. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	30. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	43. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
18. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	31. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	44. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
19. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	32. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	45. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
20. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	33. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	46. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
21. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	34. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	47. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
22. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	35. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	48. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
23. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	36. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	49. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
24. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415	37. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	50. Feigenbaum Janina 8445	
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49. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415			
50. Feigenbaum Ludwik 7415			

Figure 65: Madritsch List: Handwriting at the top of page reads,

“Inventory about people of our company who were taken over by the Schindler Company at our request.” R. Titsch.

The signature below is of Marcel Goldberg.

Rumors were spreading in KL Plaszow that Schindler had acquired a new factory in Czechoslovakia and was selecting workers to go with him. Schindler had conferred with Stern, Bankier, Madritsch, and Titsch over the decisions about the personnel to go on the list. First to be chosen were the 300 Jews presently engaged in the decommissioning of the Emalia factory. Schindler’s plan was to join forces with Madritsch and transfer their labor collectively. Madritsch supplied only 60 names – 40 men and 20 women. When Schindler inspected the Madritsch list he noticed that between the last name on the list and the signature of authorization there was a large space. Schindler engineered a further 20 names and, on his own account, added a further 30 names. Thus, 50 more workers won the lottery of life.²⁶⁵

Jacob Sternberg:

“Schindler gave the commander of Plaszow concentration camp the list of his employees in his enamel factory, including the names of other metal workers who he was allowed to transfer to Brunnlitz in order to employ them in the munitions plant which he erected there. Due to the pressure on Raymond Titsch, Schindler got permission to add a further twenty workers to the Madritsch list, in spite of the fact that they were not metal workers. Schindler then, in tiny handwriting, added a further thirty names (50 in all).”²⁶⁶

Acrimony suddenly surfaced between Madritsch and Schindler. Schindler felt that Madritsch, although having looked after his workers up until 1944, was not now fully committed to the cause. From the Madritsch personal papers there are indications that Madritsch did not fully approve of Schindler’s ethics, not specifically because of what he did to the list. To be fair to both men, there was turmoil in KL Plaszow at this stage and everyone was under suspicion for one thing or another.²⁶⁷ And, of course, these were two very different men from different backgrounds.

The Madritsch and Davar lists, as I have suggested, are perhaps the only genuine Schindler lists to survive the Holocaust. The Madritsch list came into my possession in 2000. The handwritten name of Goldberg will be noted. Every one of the 60 Jews selected by Madritsch and Titsch for the Schindler transport has a story to tell. Over the years, the author interviewed many of them, and some interesting facts emerged. I believe that the name Goldberg shown on this original list corroborates

the view that he (Goldberg) was at the very center of the Brännlitz list compilation. Although the list was sent from Madritsch to Schindler, it was Goldberg who handled selections ... for reward.

With Schindler's commitment to the new factory in Brännlitz, he handed over the compilation of the list to the Jewish labor office in KL Plaszow, which at that time (in the absence of Amon Goeth) was being administered by SS-Unterscharführer Franz Müller, who controlled the office of work distribution. Also working in this office was the Jew Marcel Goldberg (69510).²⁶⁸

Both Simon Jereth and his wife Chaja (76316) were placed on Schindler's list despite Goldberg's efforts to remove them: Jereth was a very religious man. Oskar got tefillin for him (two small leather boxes in the shape of a cube with a wad of parchment with hand-written texts from the biblical Exodus. During the Morning Prayer service, the men over 13 years old fix tefillin with the leather thongs to the forehead and the left forearm). Jereth lent his tefillin to anyone who wanted to pray with him. Every morning there was a queue and he called, "Who is next?" When Schindler was about to leave Brännlitz in his bid to get to the west, Jereth sacrificed his golden bridge put in by a dentist in Krakow before the war. He had the bridge taken out by the dentist, Hirsch Licht (68987), and it was converted into a ring with the text written in Hebrew: "*Whoever saves one life saves the world entire.*"

Amon Goeth had taken leave and visited his father, Amon Franz Goeth, a publisher in Vienna. During his absence from the camp, officers of the SS Bureau V RSMO (Reich Security Main Office) descended on the camp and began a full-scale investigation and audit of Goeth's affairs. Just prior to going on leave, Goeth had been covering up his criminal activities. He had the well-known informers and collaborators who had been assisting him, the Jewish families of Chilowicz and Finkelstein, shot. Bureau V of the SS consisted of professionals who systematically worked through every aspect of Goeth's activities. There was no shortage of informers among other SS officers of the camp. To the relief of everyone, Goeth was not to return to the camp. He was arrested by the SS investigators at his father's address in Vienna and taken to the SS prison in Breslau, where he remained in custody.

A new Commandant was appointed to KL Plaszow, SS-Hauptsturmführer Buscher, who was aware of the impending closing of the camp. Buscher wanted a disciplined rundown and cooperated with Schindler's transfer activities.

Meanwhile, the list had permanently passed into the hands of Marcel Goldberg, who was now the sole arbiter and chose to use his authority and power to make himself a very rich man indeed. Dr. Alexander Biberstein (68913), who had been one of the most influential persons in the ghetto and privy to all of Schindler's dealings with the Jewish Resistance, was to find that he and his family had been removed from the list at Goldberg's intervention. The list was subtly changing its format to reveal that most people on the list were now wealthy camp functionaries. In order to make room for the wealthy, Goldberg even had some nominees evacuated to Auschwitz. Schindler was in Brännlitz and too preoccupied with setting up his new camp and saving his own neck now that Goeth was in custody.²⁶⁹

To be saved by Schindler and the list did not mean that that person agreed with Schindler's actions:

Joachim Kinstlinger (68861) remarked: "To me, Schindler was still a German, a Nazi. I'm never going to believe he was a Jew lover. To me, he represents the German system – Nazi – and he was a guy who made money."

Julius Wiener (69290). Although protected and saved by the list, he sought litigation to expose Schindler as a criminal, as shown in the Wiener Affair.

Ruth Kalder, mistress of Amon Goeth, said: "You think Schindler liked Jews? He loved them? Oh, no, no. He was a loveable opportunist and he needed them – so he worked with them. But he didn't take them to his heart."

The doctors nominated would, at first glance, draw no special inference. The fact was that these doctors were all contributors to and associates of Goldberg. Many doctors who Schindler specifically requested did not make it onto the list. The following doctors are shown on the list for Brännlitz: Chaim Hilfstein (69295), Mirko Koniowitsch (77192), Matilda Low (76354), and Leon Gross.²⁷⁰ In spite of urgent pleas by Mietek Pemper, Itzhak Stern, and Jerzy Schek (68836), Dr. Biberstein and his family were not reinstated. Another unfortunate was Dr. Idek Schindel, who had come up against the

unscrupulous Goldberg. Dr. Schindel had requested inclusion on the list along with his two young brothers, but Goldberg insisted on diamonds. This was a well-known fact with many of those I interviewed.²⁷¹

On October 15, 1944, at 5 a.m. on the Appellplatz, the list of workers going to Brännlitz was read out. The Bibersteins and the Schindels, although not called, joined the group anyway, only to be removed by the SS at the last moment of boarding the transport.²⁷² According to Biberstein's account after the war, the seven wagons were for the men on Schindler's list to Brännlitz via concentration camp Gross-Rosen. Something underhanded was going on as the properly listed personnel were being refused. It wasn't until later, when the transport arrived at the intermediary camp, that the reasons became clear.

Transport of Men from Plaszow to Gross-Rosen:²⁷³

After being lined up and registered, the men were undressed and inspected. They received prisoner uniforms from the camp warehouse, wooden clogs, and wax paper prisoner clothing. After being deloused and disinfected the prisoners were herded into camp quarters. The commander of the camp was SS-Sturmabführer Johannes Hassebroek. Schindler struck up a "business" relationship with the commander and Hassebroek became a customer of goods in short supply: kilograms of tea, sardines, a porcelain service, and liters of alcohol. On October 15, 1944, 700 of Schindler's men departed, crammed into eight wagons without food, water or toilets; they arrived at the Gross-Rosen marshalling yard one day later where they were stripped and all personal property was confiscated.

On the following morning, seven wagons were sent straight to Brännlitz; the eighth wagon contained Jews who were to remain at Gross-Rosen or be sent elsewhere. Goldberg was still active: he crossed off the names of 24 prisoners and wrote in the names of prisoners from the eighth wagon in the free spaces. Goldberg also changed the occupations of several prisoners. The final version of the official transport list arrived from Plaszow on October 20, 1944, when the discrepancies were found but too late to retrieve the prisoners.

Having arrived at Gross-Rosen, the men were processed and camp numbers beginning with 68821 were recorded. It is these numbers allocated at Gross-Rosen that remained with the male Jews until the war collapsed. It is these lists showing these names and numbers which have been mistaken for a "Schindler list" when, in fact, these lists were just a record for the purposes of supplying the prisoners with food in the Brännlitz sub-camp. It was at Gross-Rosen that Goldberg's ploy collapsed. Goldberg had given Gross-Rosen his own list of worthies, using official forms taken from the labor office. The official list from KL Plaszow had now arrived at Gross-Rosen, and, of course, did not correspond with Goldberg's. There was a frantic flurry of activity by the SS administrators but it was too late for many of the original nominees who could not be found. Dr. Biberstein was reinstated on the Brännlitz list but it was too late for Dr. Biberstein's family, Dr. Schindel, and many others who had been left behind.²⁷⁴

According to Dr. Biberstein and many other Jews, the conditions at Gross-Rosen were horrendous. Treated like cattle, the men were forced into a small square where they were ordered to undress and leave everything they had in a pile.²⁷⁵ They were then herded to the bathhouse where they were shaven, and after a cold shower, wet and naked, they were prodded like cattle for two kilometers to a store where they received a shirt, clogs, trousers, and a beret. All their personal possessions were taken. Forced into a barrack built to accommodate 40, these 100 prisoners had to sit between each other's legs as there was no room to stand.

Kept in the barracks for three days, unable to see to their natural needs, people became dirty and the barracks stank. The camp administrators clarified the official KL Plaszow list and the prisoners were sent on their 24-hour journey to Brännlitz. Without water or use of private facilities, they arrived at the station Brezova nad Svitavou, where Schindler was waiting for them. In batches of five abreast the men were marched to Schindler's camp, some two kilometers from the station.²⁷⁶ The men had arrived at Brännlitz, but where were the women?²⁷⁷

Josef Bau gives us an indication of Schindler's concern and thoughtfulness:

“At Gross-Rosen all our personal property was taken. Amongst my property was a book of poems and memoirs I had managed to keep throughout the war. We had been in Brünnlitz for a few days when Schindler entered the factory and asked for Josef Bau. He handed me my book of poems and said, “I believe this is yours.” What kind of man would do that? I didn’t know him.”

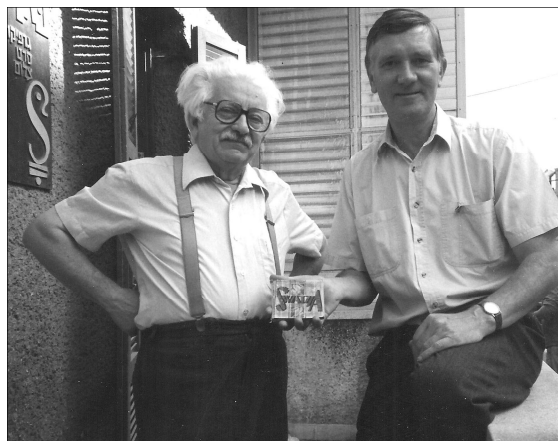


Figure 66: Josef Bau with the author, who is holding the book of poems which Schindler recovered from Gross Rosen. Tel Aviv 1995

Schindler performed a similar kindness for Leon Rosner by returning his violin. The evidence shows that Schindler was never in Gross-Rosen but somehow he had arranged these kind deeds for people he didn’t really know. It says much about his character.

The 300 Schindler women left KL Plaszow for Schindler’s Brünnlitz. Unknown to them, their transport took another direction – Auschwitz.

After October 21, 1942, only 600 prisoners from the liquidation work force remained at Plaszow; on January 14, 1945, these individuals were shipped to Auschwitz. The Red Army liberated the Plaszow camp on January 18, 1945.

Introduction

¹ Viktor was born in Krakow on September 16, 1918. He died aged 81 years on May 8, 2000. One of three sons (Michael, David and Viktor) of Herman and Fransisca Dortheimer. Michael was killed in fighting with the Polish army at the outbreak of war. When the Krakow ghetto was established in March 1942, both brothers married local Jewish girls both named Helena. See Schindler women’s list: Helena Dortheimer 76229 and Helena Dortheimer 76230. Because of their identical names both women were the subject of some difficulty when the Schindler women were rescued from Auschwitz. When the Krakow ghetto was liquidated on March 13 1943, Herman, Viktor and David were sent to Plaszow concentration camp. In Plaszow Viktor, a qualified painter and decorator, was selected by Amon Goeth to paint his villa. Viktor’s father, Herman, was sent to

Mathausen camp where he was killed with a lethal injection of benzene. Viktor's brother Michael was shot by Amon Goeth when he was caught with concealed food on his person. Viktor was sent to Schindler's factory where he struck up a personal relationship with the Director. Schindler repaid Viktor for loyal service by selecting him and the two Helena Dorthheimers for Brünnlitz. On the last day of the war Oskar Schindler offered a memento to Viktor. Viktor chose a signed photograph of the Director which shows him relaxing in a deckchair (Figure 83). Viktor subsequently came to England, residing in North London, where he met and joined the author in a world-wide journey of re-discovering the Schindler story. Viktor Dorthheimer's obituary written by the author was published in *The Times* newspaper on May 16, 2000.

- ² Josef Bau was trained as a graphic artist at the University for Plastic Arts in Krakow, Poland. His education was interrupted by World War II and he was transferred to the Plaszow concentration camp in late 1941. Having a talent in gothic lettering, he was employed in the camp for making signs and maps for the Germans. While in Plaszow, Bau created a miniature – the size of his hand – illustrated book with his own poetry. He also forged documents and identity papers for people who managed to escape from the camp. During his imprisonment, Bau fell in love with another inmate, Rebecca Tennenbaum. They were secretly married, despite prohibition by the Germans, in the women's barracks of Plaszow. After Plaszow, Bau was transferred to Gross-Rosen and then to Oscar Schindler's, camp where he stayed till the end of the war. After liberation, Josef Bau graduated from the University of Plastic Arts in Krakow. In 1950, he immigrated to Israel together with his wife and three-year-old daughter, where he worked as a graphic artist at the Brandwein Institute in Haifa and for the government of Israel.
- ³ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*. London 1985, 8.
- ⁴ Dr. R. Ball-Kaduri: References to this document are to the English translation, 1-103. If one takes a cynical view of this letter one could be forgiven for thinking, "He would say that, wouldn't he." Ten years after the war Schindler was down and out and grasping for survival, what should one make of this letter in the context of what actually happened during the war period? My own view, which I think is supported by the evidence presented, is that Schindler's testament is an understatement of his activities. It is a summary of his feelings. It gives one a glimpse of the true Schindler, an ordinary human being with ordinary successes and failures.
- ⁵ Dr. L.N. Wundheiler, *Oskar Schindler's Moral Development during the Holocaust*. Humbolt Journal of Social Relations, Vol.X111, No. 1-2 (1985) 1-20.
- ⁶ Dr. Moshe Bejski's interview with the author. Jerusalem/London 1995.
- ⁷ Thomas Fensch, *Oskar Schindler and His List*. Vermont, 1995, 45. *Schindler's author gives the film a standing ovation*. The Orange County Register, January 2, 1994, Valerie Takahama.
- ⁸ In January, 1944, Plaszow's status changed from labor camp to concentration camp, indicated by the letters KL (*Konzentrationslager*). Hereafter, all camps are referred to by name only.
- ⁹ The number shown after the individual is the number shown on the 'list' from Yad Vashem, Ref. 01/164.
- ¹⁰ Prior to 1939, the factory premises at 4 Lipowa Street were known as 'Rekord'. Schindler renamed the factory 'Deutsche Emailwaren Fabrik' (D.E.F). To this day the former Jewish employees at the factory refer to it as Emalia.
- ¹¹ Elinor J. Brecher, *Schindler's Legacy*, London 1995, 68. Schindler's personal selection came in different guises; e.g. Helena (Susan) Sternlicht (76464) domestic servant to Amon Goeth. "In September 1944, Goeth was arrested for corruption. Schindler came to me and said, 'Susanna, you're coming with me. I have a list. I built a factory in Czechoslovakia and I'm taking all the people with me'. Schindler took down the names of Sternlicht's family and kept his word. The Sternlicht family survived with Schindler."
- ¹² Dr. Moshe Bejski, interviewed by the author in Israel, 1995, re corruption in Plaszow (the list: compiled by Marcel Goldberg).
- ¹³ Alexander Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie* (Extermination of Krakow's Jews). Krakow 1985, 143.
- ¹⁴ Emilie Schindler, *Where Light and Shadow Meet*, 45.
- ¹⁵ R. Ball-Kaduri, *Protocol and interview with Itzhak Stern (695518)*, Yad Vashem (01/1643) 1956, 1-80. Also includes observations on Schindler, and correspondence with Schindler, certified documentation and depositions with witnesses and interested parties. Hereafter, 'Ball-Kaduri'.
- ¹⁶ The stranger was Frantisek Sperka, hotel receptionist at the Hotel Slavia, Svitavy (previously known as the Hotel Ungar where Schindler was arrested in 1938).
- ¹⁷ Dr. R. Ball-Kaduri, *Protocol and interview with Itzhak Stern (69518)*, Yad Vashem, (01/1643) 1956.
- ¹⁸ Personal documentation from Steinhouse to the author. See also, Thomas Fensch, *Oskar Schindler and His List* (Vermont 1995) 3-19; hereafter, Fensch.
- ¹⁹ Julius Madritsch, *Menschen in Not*, 2nd ed., (Vienna 1962) 28; hereafter, Madritsch. The information at the author's disposal also referred to Schindler and the slave labor system and factory administration in Krakow and Tarnow and his dealings with the German WVHA (Wirtschafts-und Verwaltungshauptamt); the Economic and Administrative Main Office of the SS, formed in 1942 and headed by Oswald Pohl to administer the concentration camps and economic enterprises of the SS.

- ²⁰ Raymond Titsch, a non-Jew from Vienna. Factory manager for Julius Madritsch in Krakow and Tarnow.
- ²¹ Oswald Bousco, a non-Jew from Vienna. He was an Oberscharführer (police sergeant) in the Krakow ghetto.
- ²² Photographs of the Plaszow camp taken by Raymond Titsch were preserved under dramatic conditions. Today the photographs are in the archives at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Israel.
- ²³ Police report of Brno, Czech Republic, found in the police archives in Prague by the author in 1995. Deals with the arrest of Oskar Schindler in Svitavy on July 18, 1938, and notes of his interrogation, fingerprints and photograph. Further documentation deals with the arrest of Joseph Aue (Treuhänder) at the premises of Salomon Bucheister and Co., 15 Stradom Street, Krakow in Czechoslovakia in 1946, and his extradition to Poland and interrogation. The material exposes Schindler as a spy for the German Security Services, his activities around Moravska Ostrava in 1938/9, and the setup of the Abwehr in Krakow where Stern was employed. The documentation was in the Czech and German languages and translated by Dr. Yitka Viklova, Massaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. Read by the translator onto tape (probably a summarized account) and then filtered by the author for factual information.
- ²⁴ Emilie, 33.
- ²⁵ Moravska Ostrava; hereafter, M. Ostrava.
- ²⁶ Although Stern had worked at the Bucheister Company since 1924, he was never aware of the fact that the premises were a front for the Abwehr and that his new German employer, Aue, was an agent and a half-Jew planted there by Schindler in 1939. Stern was not to know about this until after the war, when he was called to give evidence on behalf of Aue, who was on trial in Krakow as a German collaborator in Krakow. Much of this background information comes from many interviews by the author with Mrs. Sophia Stern, née Backenrot (now deceased), in Israel. In 1938, Stern and Sophia Backenrot were engaged and later married in 1945. Sophia was able to survive in the Drohobycz ghetto due to her Aryan appearance. Although Mrs. Stern's recollections are mostly hearsay, they are very important when piecing together the facts. More substantial were the many documents that were made available to the author for scrutiny.
- ²⁷ Mrs. Schindler always refers to her husband as "Schindler".
- ²⁸ All historical notes from the Svitavy Museum are acknowledged: Radislav Fikejz, *In Search of the Star of David*, Svitavy, 2008.
- ²⁹ Following the Munich Agreement many Jewish families from the town moved away and 152 local Jews perished in Nazi camps. One of the labor camps for Jewish men from Poland and the Protectorate was located at the Barthel Company in Svitavy. In 1944 the prisoners were deported to Wroclaw.

Chapter 1

- ³⁰ Certified extract from Registrar of births, deaths, and marriages – Svitavy.
- ³¹ Johann Schindler (born September 5, 1883, Svitavy) described by Emilie Schindler as often drunk and absent from the family home at 24 Iglaustrasse, Svitavy (now 24 Polieska Street). Johann died in the Kisslau camp in Eichstadt on February 19, 1947.
- ³² Francizka Schindler (née Luserova), was born on February 15, 1884, Svitavy. Within the family she was called Fanny. Described by Emilie Schindler as a very pleasant and elegant woman who was always ill. Francizka Schindler died at age 53 years (1935). Their marriage took place on October 12, 1907.
- ³³ Emilie Schindler's memoir describes Elfriede looking like her father: ugly, with chestnut hair and large brown eyes. According to Emilie she was ignored by everyone.
- ³⁴ An interesting newspaper clipping found by the author in Svitavy town archive. No date, but probably early thirties. The document is a half-page section for advertisements by local businesses. There are two of particular interests: (1) Hans Schindler, Zwittau, (Svitavy) Iglaustrasse 24 (Schindler family address). 'Insurance Business; all insurances catered for, fire, theft and personal insurance.' Immediately after this section there is a motif, then, 'All farm machinery of the highest quality supplied; (2) A similar advertisement with the same motif but headed 'Franz Schindler, Zwittau (Svitavy) Lotschnau 187.' According to the translator there is no connection. The motif was used by similar allied trades. According to Emilie Schindler, Johann Schindler specialized in the selling of electrical generators for domestic and farm purposes. He had previously traded in insurances but the business had collapsed.
- ³⁵ After primary school, Schindler attended the Realgymnasium, Svitavy.
- ³⁶ Thomas Keneally's, *Schindler's Ark*, London, 1982, 37. Hereafter, Keneally.
- ³⁷ Thomas Fensch, *Oskar Schindler and His List*, Vermont, 1995, 13. Hereafter, Fensch/Steinhouse. Also included in this letter were references about Schindler by Herbert Steinhouse. (Spielberg commences his portrayal of Schindler as of 1939.) This disclosure by Steinhouse is very interesting as it corroborates many instances from other sources of Schindler's interest in Jewish culture from a very early age. One of Schindler's favorite images of Jewish life in Krakow was the sight of a Hassid scurrying across the square with a goose tucked under his arm ready for Shabbos (as related to the author by Mrs. Sophia Stern, wife of Itzhak Stern).

- ³⁸ Schindler's local drinking house was the Hotel Ungar in the main street of Svitavy. The place where, at age 16, he would taste his first pint of Pilsner beer, where he would celebrate his wedding, conduct his Abwehr activities and the place where he would be arrested for spying and later sentenced to death. The hotel is still functioning and has retained that mysterious atmosphere where small groups of people still conduct their business at all hours of the day and night. The hotel is now called the Hotel Slavia.
- ³⁹ List of previous convictions for minor offenses taken from the police files at Svitavy and Brno Magistrates Court Office and the opinion of local people who knew Schindler at the time.
- ⁴⁰ Wundheiler refers to twin girls in Brecher's introduction, p.xxxiii, of her book *Schindler's Legacy*. There is a photograph of Schindler: Oskar Schindler with female companions, apparently twins, taken about 1940 (photo by courtesy of Pola Yogev).
- ⁴¹ Wundheiler: After Keneally had written *Schindler's Ark* he was approached by a big blonde man who claimed to be Oskar's illegitimate son: "First I thought this guy was a con," said Keneally, "but he had too much information, and he sure looked like Oskar. He said his mother had him and his sister by Oskar, and they had lived a block away from Emilie and Oskar in Svitavy." Source from American press report. In Mrs. Schindler's memoir she confirms that an illegitimate son of her husband lived in Australia.
- ⁴² Official program number 624457, Zavod Brno-Sobesice 13. Kvetna. On May 19, 1928, in the magazine *Sport*, the results of the trials on May 12 are shown. First: Jaroslav Tichy, riding a Terrot, 2.58.6; second, Mirko Wagner, riding a Terrot, 3.17.1; and third, Oskar Schindler, riding a Motor-Guzzi, 3.22.5. Source material from the Svitavy museum. Verified by the author, 1995. See also Keneally, 38-40.
- ⁴³ Herbert Steinhouse, "The Real Oskar Schindler," *Saturday Night*, April, 1994, 77.
- ⁴⁴ Moravska Elektrotechnica (M.E.A.S.). Brno.
- ⁴⁵ Mahren-Schonberg is halfway between Svitavy and Ostrava. It was during this period of employment that he was to meet Ilse Pelikan, agent of the Abwehr.
- ⁴⁶ All genealogical documents were lost in the Second World War.
- ⁴⁷ Emilie Schindler, 42
- ⁴⁸ Emilie also stated that there were other things that the gypsy would not elaborate on. She was not to tell her husband about this incident until after the war when they were en route to Argentina. It has all come true.
- ⁴⁹ Keneally refers to this incident but names the girl as Rita Reif. 41.
- ⁵⁰ Keneally states that she was killed in 1942.
- ⁵¹ Emilie states that her mother was a just woman, which was passed on to her.
- ⁵² Verified by the author, Svitavy 1996 (town records).
- ⁵³ Emilie Schindler, 36
- ⁵⁴ *People Newspaper*, Buenos Aires, 1994, 7 (date of article mislaid). Interview with Emilie Schindler by journalists David Gardner and Corinna Honan.
- ⁵⁵ Since the Spielberg film, Mrs. Schindler has been the center of media attention. She has always given frank observations about her relationship with her husband. The author interviewed Mrs. Schindler on three occasions at the King David Hotel, Israel, in 1994. She has remained the main source of information regarding Oskar Schindler. Her involvement with her husband in his Abwehr duties and her direct action at the Brünnlitz camp cannot be underestimated. Her relationship with Oskar was always strained.
- ⁵⁶ Ball-Kaduri. See also Keneally, 41.
- ⁵⁷ Czech Security Police Documentation/C.J.1553/1/pros.-30. Dated 19.7. 38. Interrogation of Oskar Schindler by Inspector Kirbek of the Security Police Department, Brno. This document is one of a series, and obtained by the author in Prague, Svitavy, and Brno, dealing with the surveillance and arrest of Schindler during his spying activities in July, 1938. Under interrogation Schindler admits his association with the Abwehr, and his methods and contacts used during his activities. It also gives us further information about his personal life. The documentation contains 30 pages of reports and statements, including a full set of Schindler's fingerprints, photograph, and description. Hereafter, Czech Security Document - Schindler.

Chapter 2

- ⁵⁸ Czech Security Document - Schindler.
- ⁵⁹ There are a number of sources where Schindler's character is analyzed by witnesses who were present during these partying activities with Wehrmacht and SS officers. Mrs. Emilie Schindler, who hosted entertainment evenings at their flat in Krakow. Henry Rosner (69212), prisoner in Plaszow. Seconded by Goeth to play the violin during entertainment evenings in Goeth's villa. See Elinor J. Brecher, *Schindler's Legacy* 1-5. Rosner interviewed by the author, King David Hotel, Jerusalem, 1994. The opening scenes in the Spielberg film portray the personality of Schindler accurately.
- ⁶⁰ Author's interview with Mrs. Sophia Stern, Israel, 1995. Although this is very much hearsay evidence I have no reason to believe that this statement is not correct. Subsequent clarification of the statement made by Mrs.

Stern is in some way corroborated. See Robert S. Wistrich, *Who's Who in Nazi Germany*, London, 1995, 29. (Canaris was born on 1.1.1887 and was appointed Chief of the Abwehr on 1.1.35.) Perhaps this was a Schindler story but it would explain his subsequent cover and protection.

⁶¹ Mrs. Schindler: "In 1935/6 Oskar traveled to Krakow where he met and seduced a woman. She worked for the counter-intelligence service and recommended him to her superiors in Berlin. Oskar enjoyed his new job, tracking down foreign spies on the Czech/Polish border."

⁶² Czech Security Documents - Schindler.

⁶³ Wilhelm Canaris intervened to save a number of victims of Nazi persecution, including hundreds of Jews. Many such people were given token training as Abwehr "agents" and then issued papers allowing them to leave Germany. One notable person he is said to have assisted was the then Lubavitcher Rebbe in Warsaw, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn. The assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague, organized by MI6, was done in part to preserve Canaris in his important position. The evidence that he was playing a double game grew, and at the insistence of Heinrich Himmler, who had suspected him for a long time, Hitler dismissed Canaris from the Abwehr in February 1944, replacing him with Walter Schellenberg and merging most of the Abwehr with the Sicherheitsdienst (SD). Some weeks later, Canaris was put under house arrest, preventing him from taking part directly in the July 20 Plot to assassinate Hitler. However, just after the Stalingrad disaster, Canaris had already planned a 'coup' against the entire Nazi regime in which many Nazi officials would be accused for known crimes, while Hitler would be arrested as an insane person based on his exposure to poison gas in World War I, then imprisoned for life. After the July 20 Plot, Canaris' long-time rival, SS leader Heinrich Himmler, discovered that one of the officers involved in the plot, a friend of Canaris' who committed suicide, had kept the plot details in a metal box. The investigations also revealed that a number of other assassination plots (possibly another 10 or 15) had been activated but had failed and were covered up at the last minute. Most people who participated in these plots were people Canaris knew well. Himmler kept Canaris alive for some time because he planned to use him secretly as a future contact with the British in order to come to an agreement to end the war with himself as the leader of Germany. Hitler also wanted to keep him alive in order to get the names of additional conspirators. When Himmler's plan failed to materialize, he received the approval of Hitler to send Canaris to an SS drumhead court-martial presided over by Otto Thorbeck with Walter Huppenkothen as prosecutor, which sentenced him to death. Together with his deputy General Hans Oster, military jurist General Karl Sack, theologian Rev. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Ludwig Gehre, Canaris was humiliated before witnesses and then executed on April 9, 1945 in the Flossenbürg concentration camp, a few weeks before the end of the war. At the time of his execution, Canaris had been decorated with the Iron Cross First and Second Class, the Silver German Cross, the Cross of Honor and the Wehrmacht's Twelve and Twenty-Five Year Long-Service Ribbons. Erwin Lahousen and Hans Bernd Gisevius, two of Canaris' main subordinates, survived the war and testified during the Nuremberg Trials about Canaris' courage in opposing Hitler. Lahousen recalled a conversation between Canaris and General Wilhelm Keitel in which Canaris warned Keitel that the German military would be held responsible for the atrocities in Poland. Keitel responded that they had been ordered by Hitler. Keitel, who also survived the war, was found guilty of war crimes at Nuremberg and hanged.

⁶⁴ A very good analysis can be found in the book by Bloch, M., *Ribbentrop*. London, 1992. Ch. 15. See also Henderson, Sir Neville, *Failure of a Mission*. (Berlin 1937-1939) London 1941.

⁶⁵ Austria annexed March 13, 1938; 183,000 Jews are alerted to the danger.

⁶⁶ Report by Henlein, March 28, 1938: German Foreign Policy, series D, 11, No. 107, as cited in A.J.P. Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War*. London, (Penguin) 1963, 192.

⁶⁷ See AJP Taylor below.

⁶⁸ Keneally, 42. Czech Security Documents - Schindler.

⁶⁹ Ziegenhals 514.

⁷⁰ (1) Czech Security Document - Schindler. (2) Keneally, 43 refers to the Abwehr agent as Eberhard Gebauer and that Schindler's introduction into the Abwehr took place on the Czech/Polish border. Keneally's account is similar but the names and location are contradicted by the evidence of the Czech Security Document.

⁷¹ Czech Security Document.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Czech Security Officers of the Counter Intelligence Branch.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Jon Blair interview with Mrs. Schindler, Slates 165-186, interview Blair/Emilie Schindler, Buenos Aires, 1981, for the film documentary, *Oskar Schindler*. 165/Take 1. 7. Hereafter, Mrs. Schindler. In the 1994 memoirs she refers to the documents being found behind a mirror in the bathroom.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Czech Security Document CJ.Z - 416/1946 - Relate to the extradition and interrogation of Joseph Aue, alias Sepp Aue, born 13.5.1907. Interviewed by the CSO in Ostrava on August 6, 1946. Re Aue's wartime activities and involvement with the Abwehr during the period 1938/9. This material is significant as it gives us new evidence of the Schindler/Stern relationship.

Chapter 3

- ⁷⁹ C.J. 7219/1946 - 11-1. Moravska Ostrava, 9.8.1946. Interrogation of Joseph Aue by the Czech Security Service after the war. A crucial twelve-page document which deals with detailed information of the Abwehr in Moravska Ostrava and Krakow, Aue's involvement with Schindler and the Higher Officers of the SS, SD, and Wehrmacht. Also included is the official position of Treuhänder in the offices of the Jew, Salomon Bucheister at 15 Stradon Street, Krakow. Hereafter, Czech Security Document - Aue.
- ⁸⁰ The Abwehr also had offices in Ostrava.
- ⁸¹ Up until the end of September 1939, all the security departments of the Nazi State were working independently. By the decree of September 29, 1939, all existing German police forces were merged under one umbrella organization – the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Office). There were numerous changes in the RSHA over the years, but essentially the structure was kept until the end of the war.
- ⁸² Jon Blair/Mrs. Schindler interview, 1981, 166/1-8.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Emilie Schindler, 49.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid. See also Blair/Mrs. Schindler interview note, Argentina 1982.
- ⁸⁶ SD Headquarters - Hohenzollern Palace, 102 Wilhelmstrasse, backing onto the Prinz Albrechtstrasse Gestapo building where Himmler also had offices. (After Heydrich's assassination he was succeeded by Dr. Kaltenbrunner.) The bureaucracy had grown and the RSHA offices sprawled all over Berlin occupying no fewer than 38 buildings. See Butler, *Gestapo*, 131.
- ⁸⁷ SS-Obersturmbahnführer Dr. Werner Best.
- ⁸⁸ Rupert Butler, *Gestapo*, London, 1992, 77/8.
- ⁸⁹ Aleksander B. Skotnicki, *Oskar Schindler In the eyes of Cracovian Jews Rescued by him*. Krakow, 2008, 49.
- ⁹⁰ Czech Security Document - Aue. Joseph Aue, alias Sepp Aue, was the son of the Jew, Emily Goldberger. Mother – German National, née Kamily. Parents were not married. Aue's mother married Charles Lederera who died in 1937. Aue was brought up as a Catholic German and was able to avoid persecution. His father died in Auschwitz in 1942.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Ibid.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Sicherheitsdienst: the SD, on paper at least, was the intelligence organ of the Nazi Party, whereas the Gestapo was the Secret State Police. In fact, the two worked so closely together that, at times, they were indistinguishable. The SD laid heavy emphasis on pursuing ideological and racial enemies. Rupert Butler, *Gestapo*, London, 1992, 96-8.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ (1) Mrs Schindler. (2) The Jon Blair/Emilie Schindler interview in 1981 makes interesting reading with regard to *Operation Himmler*. She mentions meetings at about this time of high ranking SD, SS, and Wehrmacht officers, at their apartment in Moravska Ostrava. She speaks of the Polish uniforms being delivered, and boxes which filled her rooms. Mrs. Schindler mentions that her husband was paying cash on delivery for these items. The Schindlers' main concern was the Polish Abwehr, who had been keeping their movements and apartment under observation. She stated that they had already been burgled. She concluded that whoever entered the premises was looking for papers but all that was taken was her wristwatch. Emilie Schindler was part of the Abwehr in Moravska Ostrava but only in a nominal role. She never undertook operational duties but remained privy to all her husband's activities. Mrs. Schindler returned to Svitavy shortly after September 1, 1939. Author's interview with Emilie Schindler. King David Hotel, Jerusalem 1995.
- ⁹⁸ Emilie, 32.
- ⁹⁹ Rupert Butler, *Gestapo*, 98.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² Jon Blair, film documentary, *Oskar Schindler*.
- ¹⁰³ Czech Security Document - Aue. See also, Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, London, 1987, 94/5.
- ¹⁰⁴ Czech Security Document – Aue.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid. The woman, Marta, was to become a trust administrator for Schindler in the controversial Wiener Affair.

- ¹⁰⁶ Schindler's NSDAP record card shows his personal details including changes of residence. He is shown as Member No. 27 Zwittau/Svitavy (6,421,477). Residence on 28.3.40, Parkstra. Moravska Ostrava, 25, 6.3.40. 4.4.40 Westring, inner Stadt 23/111, Krakow.
- ¹⁰⁷ Fensch/Steinhouse, 13.

Chapter 4

- ¹⁰⁸ Dr. Frank began his political career in the Third Reich as a Dragoon in the Sturmabteilung (SA). A lawyer by profession, he gave free legal service to Nazi Party members. He was rewarded by being appointed as the first Bavarian Minister of Justice, then Reichsminister without portfolio. In October 1939, Hitler charged him with exemplary powers to oversee Poland being cleansed of Jewish culture and the suppression of the civilian population. Dr. Frank was answerable to Hitler directly over all matters. Frank was a moody autocrat who displayed sentimentality and brutality. He was powerful but vain. He was one of the principal architects of the destruction process in Poland.
- ¹⁰⁹ After the outbreak of war with Russia (June 22, 1941), the German army overran Galicia and this area became the fifth district. (Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, London, 1985, [3 vols.] Vol. 1, 197. Hereafter, Hilberg.)
- ¹¹⁰ Otto Gustav Freiherr von Wächter, born 1901, was the son of General Josef Freiherr von Wächter, an Austrian Minister of the Army. He joined the Austrian Nazis and took part in the futile Nazi attempt of July 1934 to seize power in Austria. He fled to Germany where he dropped his title of nobility and became a German citizen. After the invasion of Russia in 1942, Wächter moved to Lvov where he remained until being dislodged by the Russians in 1944. He presided over the "ghettoization" of the Jews in the Krakow and Galicia districts and over the deportations of the Jews in Galicia and Italy. Wächter died in Italy in 1949 under the protection of Bishop Alois Hudal. (Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders, the Jewish Catastrophe*. London, 1991, 46/47. See also Hilberg, Vol. 3, 1108.)
- ¹¹¹ Replaced in 1943 by Koppe. Rumored killed on the Eastern Front. No trace post-1945.
- ¹¹² Rupert Butler, *Gestapo*, London, 1992, 168/9. One of the powers behind the throne of Heydrich was Walter Schellenberg (1910-1952), who rose to be head of SS Foreign Intelligence. As such, he was charged with drawing up the Sonderfahndungsliste-GB (Special Search List for Great Britain). It was Schellenberg who had engineered the downfall of Canaris after the attempt on Hitler's life, the so-called bomb plot. Schellenberg knew that the concept of a unified intelligence service was favored by Kaltenbrunner (Heydrich's successor). The bomb plot on Hitler was the green light for the SD to go for Canaris. Himmler and Kaltenbrunner, in their furor of vengeance, soon unearthed damning evidence against Canaris. Their investigators had found a safe in the basement of the Abwehr headquarters at Zossen. They unearthed meticulous notes written in Canaris's own hand. Here were details of the Vatican exchanges, together with a sensational revelation that Oster (Canaris's deputy) and others had betrayed the plans of the German High Command for the invasion of France and the Low Countries.
- ¹¹³ Coded message from Schindler's secretary (Viktoria Klonowska) was sent directly to Canaris Headquarters. See Keneally 70.
- ¹¹⁴ After the invasion of Poland, Heydrich issued a decree dated September 21, 1939, in two parts: (1) under heading – *The Jewish Question in Occupied Territories* – set out preliminary measures against the Jews; (2) dealt with the establishment of the Jewish Council of Elders (Judenrat) to facilitate the evacuation of Jews from countryside to town. Document marked "Secret." See Gutman, *Pattern of Jewish Leadership*, 169.
- ¹¹⁵ See Hilberg, Vol. 1 250, 214. Entries by Czerniakow for October 19-20 and November 2, 1939, in Hilberg, Staron, and Kermisz, eds., *Warsaw Diary*, 84, 86-87.
- ¹¹⁶ Source - Alexander Biberstein (brother of Mark), *Extermination of Krakow's Jews*, Warsaw, 1946. Extract translated by Leo Aftergood, London, 1995 (brother of Bertha Aftergood [76201]). See also Keneally, 88/9. He has got it exactly right.
- ¹¹⁷ (1) Keneally 88. (2) The Holocaust raised some of the most acute moral issues ever faced by humanity. Moral judgments and dilemmas can be seen in their most striking form in connection with the Judenrat. For a comprehensive appraisal of the Judenrat, see Isaiah Trunk's *Judenrat*, New York, 1972.
- ¹¹⁸ Ball-Kaduri, 17. See also Keneally 63. Keneally suggests that Schindler obtained his information from like-minded sympathizers in the offices of the SD and SS.
- ¹¹⁹ Krakow, Westring, inner Stadt 23/111.
- ¹²⁰ Mrs. Schindler's memoir: Schindler had a long-term relationship with Klonowska. Oskar appears to have got his women's loyalties mixed up, i.e. Klonowska, according to Mrs. Schindler, was with the Gestapo (anti-Canaris) and the lady Amelia was with the Abwehr. I think we must accept that even love can override individual loyalties. Who was spying for whom?
- ¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² The term *Treuhänder* appears to have been an innovation brought in by the Germans at the outbreak of hostilities. From the many regulations published in occupied Poland between 1939 and 1944, there appear to be no directives directly concerning the characteristics of a *Treuhänder*. The only requirements for this position were that the person had to be capable of guardianship according to the general principles of the time. Only German and Austrian citizens, and later the *volksdeutsche* were acceptable for this position. Hereafter, Trust Administrator - *Treuhänd* Office/Trust.

¹²³ Ball-Kaduri.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Czech Security Document –Aue.

¹²⁶ Ball-Kaduri.

¹²⁷ It was the policy of the RSHA to Aryanize not just the ownership of companies, but also the management and workforce. The sooner the Trust Administrators filtered out the skilled Jewish employees, the better. Ball-Kaduri, 16. Keneally, 51. For further information on the policy of Aryanization and the procedures, see Raul Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction*, London, 1972, 25.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Within a matter of months, Schindler had bought the factory outright for a reported sum of 300 RM. Victor Dortheimer interview with the author, 1996.

¹³⁰ Yitzhak Stern (69518). His account of the times and, in particular of his dealings with Schindler, are of utmost importance. He was born in Krakow, Poland, January 25, 1901 to Menachem and Perla, née Hirschberg. He was the chief accountant for the Jewish-owned export-import firm of J.L. Bucheister and Co., 15 Stradon Street, Krakow, a position he had held since 1924. He lived until the war at Gruene Gasse 28, Krakow. He married a solicitor, Sophia Backenrot, in 1945. Stern was the vice-president of the Jewish Agency for Western Poland and a member of the Zionist Committee in Krakow. He survived the war with Schindler and, for a time, lived with him in Paris. He immigrated to Israel in 1948. He was interviewed in 1948 by Herbert Steinhouse about his war experiences, which were later published in the book by Thomas Fensch, *Oskar Schindler and His List*, Vermont, 1995, 270 pages. Stern also published a small booklet, *Oskar Schindler the Humanist*, Tel Aviv, 18 pages, written shortly before his death in the summer of 1967.

¹³¹ Mrs. Stern to the author, 1995.

Chapter 5

¹³² The Wiener papers and statements are in the archives at Yad Vashem. Translated from Hebrew into English by Yaël Reicher, Tel Aviv, for the author. See also Keneally, 86/87. Working independently on this issue, I find that Keneally got it just about right. He changed the names probably on advice from his publishers. Keneally's research is very thorough.

¹³³ The share of Jewish workers employed by Schindler at Emalia 1940-1944. 1940-150; 1941-190; 1942-550; 1943-900; 1944-1,000; 1945 (Brünnlitz)-1,100.

¹³⁴ Jon Blair, film documentary, *Schindler*, 1982.

¹³⁵ Author interviews Richard Rechen, Israel, 1992. Rechen played an important part in Schindler's escape from Brünnlitz after the war. He was also the man who, when Schindler died in 1974, was nominated to go to Germany and bring Schindler's body to Jerusalem.

¹³⁶ See Hilberg Vol. 208/10.

¹³⁷ Dr. Arie L. Bauminger. *The Fighters of the Krakow Ghetto*. Yad Vashem, 1990, 23.

¹³⁸ Courtesy of the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow.

¹³⁹ Tadeusz Pankiewicz. *The Krakow Ghetto Pharmacy* (2nd ed. 151), Israel, 1987. 1-10. This edition was translated from Polish into English by Henry Tilles. This is an excellent book, by far the most descriptive account from a person on the spot and who saw everything.

¹⁴⁰ Bauminger, 26.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Pankiewicz, vii.

¹⁴³ Jon Blair, film interview with Mrs. Emily Schindler, 1982. B.A.

¹⁴⁴ See Wundheiler 4, also Ball-Kaduri documentation.

Chapter 6

¹⁴⁵ Julius Madritsch, *Menschen in Not* (People in Distress). Wien, 1963, 1-28.

¹⁴⁶ The clothing factories of F.A. Strassberg & Co. and F.A. Hugo. The takeover as a Trust Administrator was very similar to that of Joseph Aue's. Madritsch gave comfort to the Jews in his employment and made conditions as comfortable as possible.

- ¹⁴⁷ Working for Madritsch were: Raymond Titsch and Dr. Adolf Lenhardt, both from Vienna; Anneliese Pipgorra from Berlin; Maria Herling from Vienna. Also on the books was Oswald Bousco from Vienna, the police sergeant in the ghetto.
- ¹⁴⁸ (1) Ball-Kaduri documentation. (2) Madritsch documentation secured by the author, Vienna 1995.
- ¹⁴⁹ Raul Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction*, London, 1972, 89/90.
- ¹⁵⁰ Benjamin B. Ferencz, *Less Than Slaves*, London, 1979, 18.
- ¹⁵¹ Oswald Pohl, who had joined the Party in 1926 and had risen to the rank of Obergruppenführer, was to be the man in charge of the new RSHA. Glueck's Department D, which was in charge of all concentration camps, was made subordinate to Pohl. Department D11 handled the commitment of inmates for labor and was headed by Standartenführer Gerhard Maurer, who was assisted by Karl Sommer.
- ¹⁵² Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction*, 290.
- ¹⁵³ The specialists for Jewish matters who belonged to the Sicherheitspolizei were: SS Obersturmführer Becher, SS-Oberscharführer Siebert, Untersturmführer Brand. These officials appeared in the ghetto from time to time. SS-Sturmscharführer Kriminalsekretar Wilhelm Kunde, Olde, and SS-Obersturmführer Hermann Heinrich were permanently stationed there.
- The Gestapo were: SS-Obersturmführer Theodor Heiner Mayer, Specialists SIPO Korner and Paul Mallotke. The SSU Polizei were: SS-Oberführer Schermer (Schermer was the highest authority for Jewish affairs in the Krakow district), Sturmbanführer Hässe, SS-Unterscharführer Horst Pilarzik, SS-Rotteführer Wiktor Ritschek, and SS-Rotteführer Zugsberger.
- The Main office of the SSU Polizei was located at Oleanders. See Pankiewicz, 69.
- ¹⁵⁴ Dr. Arie L. Bauminger. *The Fighters of the Krakow Ghetto*. Yad Vashem, 1990, 26.
- ¹⁵⁵ Chris Webb collection.
- ¹⁵⁶ Tadeusz Pankiewicz. *The Krakow Ghetto Pharmacy*. New York, 1985 (English translation), Chapter 2, 29-52. Still the most credible book that deals specifically with the Krakow ghetto. Victor Dortheimer (69124). Interview with the author 1996.
- ¹⁵⁷ Only in May 1942 did the Nazi regime begin the systematic mass deportations of Reich Jews that Hitler had decided upon the previous autumn. A similar fate befell the transports from Slovakia and Western Europe soon thereafter. Between May 4 and 15, 12 transports containing 10,000 Reich Jews were deported to Chelmno where they were gassed. Jews from Vienna were deported to Maly Trostenets on May 5, followed by a further 17 transports June 1942. On June 22, 1942, it was pointed out by Dr Frauendorfer, the Director of Labor in the Generalgovernment, that expulsions of Jewish labor from the ghettos was causing economic difficulties. Frauendorfer explained that Jews were part of the 100,000 skilled workers employed in the armaments industry; 800,000 workers were sent to Germany, and a further 100,000 (including Jews) were employed by the military. He further pointed out that he was solely dependent on Jewish labor and, therefore, Jewish skilled labor should be used and not be fodder for the SS resettlement program. While Globocnik was pulling one way to exterminate the Jews, the military were pulling the other way to retain Jewish skilled labor. A compromise was reached in September/October 1942.
- ¹⁵⁸ County of Krakow (Krakow): Martin Gilbert (MG), 'Map of the Holocaust', Map 128 (7,000), Yad Vashem Archives (YVA); YA (5,000, 1 - 6), TB, table 7, two very large transports between June 1 and 6, 1942. See also YVA KK/1, 6,000 on June 1, 1942, and 4,000 on June 6, 1942. From all other sources 10,000 is the probable number. See also Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *Krakow Ghetto Pharmacy*, NY, 1985, 40-53.
- ¹⁵⁹ County of Lviv (Galicia): YVA, this transport from Janowska camp joined up with the Kolomyja transport for Belzec in mid June. See also YVA LL/1, June 24, 1942, 4,000 deported to Belzec. Lviv was spared further transports until 12 August 12, 1942.
- ¹⁶⁰ County of Tarnow (Krakow): MG, Map 128, YVA, YA, 11-18 June 1942, these were very large transports. See also YVA KK/3, June 11-18, 1942, 12,000. SS-Oberführer Scherner, Police Leader, Krakow, personally directed these transports. These were the first big deportations since the Krakow transports. 40,000 Jews in the open ghetto faced 30 Schutzpolizei, 100 Polish police officers, 150 Gendarmerie, a unit of Sonderdienst and the Polish labor service (Baudienst). Two separate operations were taking place simultaneously: örtliche Aussiedlung (local resettlement) where thousands were either taken to the forests or to the local cemetery, where they were shot into pits. The residue, some 11,500, were deported to Belzec. These actions stalled on June 18, when the remaining (some 20,000) work Jews were sealed into the ghetto. Further actions of this kind took place in August, September and November 1942. When this transport arrived at Belzec on June 13, 1942, there was a spontaneous act of resistance. When the work Jews were removing the bodies from the gas chambers and they saw the situation, they attacked the German and Ukrainian guard. It was reported four Germans and nearly all the Jews were killed. See Archives of PZPR (Polish United Worker's Party), Documents for 1942 - Sikorski Archive London.
- ¹⁶¹ Pankiewicz, 48.
- ¹⁶² Ibid. Ch 2.

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- ¹⁶³ Ibid, 48.
¹⁶⁴ The Madritsch papers from Vienna obtained by the author, 1995.
¹⁶⁵ Pankiewicz, 103.
¹⁶⁶ Mrs. Sophia Stern's recollection of her husband. Interview with the author. See also Wundheiler.
¹⁶⁷ Keneally, 135-138. See also Ball-Kaduri documentation.
¹⁶⁸ Affidavit by Lesser, Yad Vashem, dated 1962.
¹⁶⁹ Pankiewicz, 58.
¹⁷⁰ Madritsch documentation, Vienna, 1995.
¹⁷¹ (1) Bauminger/Pankiewicz.

Chapter 7

- ¹⁷² See: Piper, *Auschwitz*, 9 who quotes *Wspomnienia Rudolfa Hoßa - Komendanta obozu oświęcimskiego*, Warsaw 1965, 18, 204; T. Cyprian, J. Cyprian and Sawicki, *Sprawy polskie*, 438-439.
¹⁷³ PRO, File No. FO 371/50971/85681. British Intelligence report dated 16 March 1945.
¹⁷⁴ Ibid. See also Alexander Skotnicki, *Oskar Schindler*, Krakow 2008, 331
¹⁷⁵ Trial notes and indictment of Amon Leopold Goeth. Although only hearsay, in 1995 I interviewed Sofia Stern (wife of Yitzhak Stern, collaborator with Oskar Schindler in Krakow) when she stated that Schindler, on hearing Bachner's story, went to Belzec to verify the details but was turned back by the SS-guards at Sobibor Lubelski.

Chapter 8

- ¹⁷⁶ Joseph Bau (69084), interviewed by the author over several weeks in 1993-6. Recollections of Bau come from a detailed diary of events immediately after the war.
¹⁷⁷ Interviewed by the author.
¹⁷⁸ The Ferber shooting was witnessed by Victor Dortheimer (69124). Interviewed by the author in London 1995.
¹⁷⁹ This hanging was witnessed by the entire camp. Moshe Bejski (69387) related the facts to the author in 1995.
¹⁸⁰ Julius Madritsch and Raymond Titsch witnessed the aftermath of the liquidation. The only Jews to survive from Tarnow were the Jews employed in the Madritsch factory, who were transferred to the Madritsch factory in Plaszow. Madritsch paid well for this concession.
¹⁸¹ Mieczyslaw Pemper (69514) was employed by Goeth as a secretary. Some of the most secret information was obtained by Pemper, including details of the transport of the Hungarian Jews in 1944. I will be referring to Pemper's activities later. Interviewed by the author in Augsburg, Germany, 1995.
¹⁸² I am still strongly of the opinion that the Canaris/Schindler connection is standing firm.
¹⁸³ Mrs. Schindler's memoir, my observation.
¹⁸⁴ R. Fikejz, *In Search of the Star of David*.
¹⁸⁵ Adam Guard (69515) interviewed by the author in Jerusalem, who confirmed this transfer.
¹⁸⁶ Blair interview with Mrs. Schindler 1982.
¹⁸⁷ Ball-Kaduri documentation. See also Benjamin B. Ferencz, *Less Than Slaves*, Harvard 1979, 191-192. Even Jews who worked nearby for Siemans-Bauunion at Krakow/Plaszow described how they could sometimes warm their hands by the fire in the Schindler work hall, where they dared to cook a potato that they had managed to hide or steal.

Chapter 9

- ¹⁸⁸ The Judenrat, and Gutter at its head, tried for several successive days to postpone the date of the liquidation, using whatever means possible. All attempts failed. Haase refused to agree to a delay of even one day.
¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 106.
¹⁹⁰ Goeth and Haase could not stand each other. (Krakow archive record 2586/76) Pankiewicz, from his observation post, noted other SS officers; W. Kunde, K. Olde, Heinrich, K. Heinemayer (Chief of the political division of the Gestapo and his deputy, specialist SIPO Koener), and, of course, Goeth's personal body-guard, Oberscharführer Albert Hujar, who was personally responsible for shooting all the patients in the main hospital at Jozefinska Street, as Pankiewicz noted, "Hujar was running amok like a rabid animal through the entire building, leaving a trail of blood and corpses, he shot the guard at the gate and the dog cowering in the dog house."
¹⁹¹ Part of a 150-person Jewish detail sent to Plaszow to help build the new camp were the Bejski brothers – Israel (69385), Moshe (69387), and Uri (69384).
¹⁹² The headstone was still in-situ; June 1996.

- ¹⁹³ Pankiewicz, 113. Dr. Aleksandrowicz's escape from the ghetto is related in a book, *Pages from the Diary of Dr. Tough*, published in 1962 by the Literary Publishing House.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 107.
- ¹⁹⁵ Pankiewicz, 39.
- ¹⁹⁶ Interviewed by the author, 1995. Dorthheimer Sr. was later taken to Mathausen where he was killed with a lethal injection of benzene. A doctor Eigenholtz from Haifa, a prisoner in Mathausen, told Victor of the fate of his father.
- ¹⁹⁷ Jon Blair documentary film, *Schindler* (1982).
- ¹⁹⁸ Interviewed by the author at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem. Also Jon Blair film, *Schindler* (1982).
- ¹⁹⁹ Pankiewicz, 42.
- ²⁰⁰ Madritsch documentation.
- ²⁰¹ Bousco, sickened with the Nazi policies, fled to the forest dressed as a Polish farmer. He was caught and summarily tried for treason and shot. The date was September 18, 1944.
- ²⁰² Henry and Olek Rosner interviewed by the author at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem. See also Jon Blair film *Schindler* (1982).
- ²⁰³ Madritsch documentation – statement of Raymond Titsch.
- ²⁰⁴ Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 367.
- ²⁰⁵ Pankiewicz, 114-5.
- ²⁰⁶ Unkelbach took over as manager of the factory "Progress." which manufactured cutlery. When all the Jews were moved to Plaszow, Unkelbach, like Schindler, got special dispensation to march his men from the camp to the factory each day and return in the evening. Later Schindler was to reap the benefits of his new barracks when his Jewish labor remained at Emalia, guarded by a very small SS detachment.
- ²⁰⁷ Dr. Karl Eberhardt Schoengarth, SS-Standartenführer (Commander) of the Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD (BdS) in the Netherlands and then the General Government, had much experience in tracking down and killing Jews. He organized three Kommandos. In the middle of July 1941 these Kommandos moved into the Eastern Polish areas and, with headquarters in Lwow, Brest-Litovsk, and Bialystok, respectively, killed tens of thousands of Jews. (See note 26, Hilberg, 296, Vol. 1.) Schoengarth also present at Wannsee on 20.1.1942. A drinking partner of Schindler's, he was a main source of information, which was filtered by Schindler to selected Jews on a need to know basis. He was addicted to alcoholic oblivion. (Rupert Butler, 180)
- ²⁰⁸ Interviewed by the author in Tel-Aviv 1995.
- ²⁰⁹ Another influential Jewish leader that immediately comes to mind, who also had these qualities, was Dr. Elachanan Elkes of the Kovno Ghetto.
- ²¹⁰ Rabbi Lewertow will be remembered in Spielberg's film as the factory worker who was "timed" by Goeth in the making of hinges and then taken out where several attempts were made by Goeth to shoot him. Keneally incorrectly (page 223) refers to the Peltzmann family as Perlman.
- ²¹¹ See the Bejski papers.

Chapter 10

- ²¹² Wundheiler.
- ²¹³ Irene Schek (76431) statement in the Blair film.
- ²¹⁴ Wundheiler.
- ²¹⁵ Leopold Pfefferberg (69006) Blair film.
- ²¹⁶ In 1945, Florenz met Lamus, who asked for Schindler's address and asked Florenz to give his regards and thank Schindler for saving his life (statement by Florenz in Yad Vashem).
- ²¹⁷ Roman Wohlfeiler (69414) and Halina Wohlfeiler (76486), both interviewed by the author. See also Ball-Kaduri documentation. Here, as elsewhere, when Schindler's own report is mentioned, the author is referring to Schindler's report of his activities that can be inspected in the archives of Yad Vashem and that are published in Grossmann, K.R.: *Die Unbesungenen Helden*. Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1989.
- ²¹⁸ See Keneally, 235/6.
- ²¹⁹ Author's interview with Dr. Bauminger and Shlomo Schein, Israel, 1995.
- ²²⁰ Recollections by Wohlfeiler and Dorthheimer of the incident as told to the author.
- ²²¹ Ball-Kaduri documents. See also statement of Stern, Yad Vashem, and Keneally page 243.
- ²²² Ball-Kaduri documents and statement by Stern at a Schindler gathering in 1962 in Tel-Aviv. Keneally, 243.
- ²²³ *The Times*, dated July 8, 1996. – "Review of Plotting Hitler's Death" by Joachim Fest.
- ²²⁴ Author's interview with Adam Garde 1995. See also Keneally, 292.

Chapter 11

²²⁵ Ball-Kaduri, 18.
²²⁶ Ibid.
²²⁷ Wundheiler.
²²⁸ Mrs. Sophie Stern.
²²⁹ Ibid. See also Ball-Kaduri, 48.
²³⁰ Interviewed by the author in Tel Aviv, 1995.
²³¹ Interviewed by the author in Germany, 1995.
²³² Mrs. Schindler – Jon Blair interview.
²³³ Bejski documents to the author.
²³⁴ Ball-Kaduri.
²³⁵ Wundheiler, 13.
²³⁶ Ibid, 14.
²³⁷ Interview by the author with Moshe Bejski, 1995.
²³⁸ Wundheiler, 11.

Chapter 12

²³⁹ Tarnow ghetto final deportations on January 9, 1943. The only survivors were the Madritsch factory personnel who were sent to Plaszow.
²⁴⁰ Personal memoir of Madritsch.
²⁴¹ Ibid.
²⁴² Ibid.
²⁴³ Interview with Pemper. See also Ball-Kaduri document.
²⁴⁴ Ball-Kaduri.
²⁴⁵ Pemper's open access to confidential files in Goeth's office was the subject of charges when Goeth was arrested by the SS investigation team.
²⁴⁶ Plaszow held over 30,000 Jewish prisoners in early 1944.
²⁴⁷ See also Keneally, 280-1.
²⁴⁸ Mrs. Chana Kinstlinger (76328)
²⁴⁹ Recollection by Joseph Bau, interviewed by the author.
²⁵⁰ Ibid.
²⁵¹ Ibid.
²⁵² Original wagons can still be seen in a siding at Plaszow railway station. On a visit there I was shown the wagons, which were all sealed. The stationmaster very kindly broke the seal on one wagon and allowed me to inspect the interior. The small narrow window covered by barbed wire was still intact.
²⁵³ Statements of these two doctors can be seen in the archives of Yad Vashem.

Chapter 13

²⁵⁴ Keneally, 299. On today's maps, Gross-Rosen is shown as Rogoznica (to the left of Wroclaw).
²⁵⁵ Blair film 1982, interview with Urbach.
²⁵⁶ Letter to the author from Group Captain C. Russell, Commandant, RAAF College, RAAF Williams. Point Cook Vic 3028 under reference AF94/2813 Pt 2 dated 2.11.95.
²⁵⁷ Ibid.
²⁵⁸ Ibid.
²⁵⁹ Interviews by the author with Victor Dortheimer and Richard Rechin.
²⁶⁰ As stated, Bousco was found guilty as a traitor and executed by the SS on September 18, 1944.
²⁶¹ Colonel Lang was well known to Schindler, having previously sanctioned the Emalia armaments contract.
²⁶² Schindler's own assessment of his feelings, as shown in a letter to Ball-Kaduri.
²⁶³ Moshe Bejski's interview with the author.
²⁶⁴ Detailed overview of events by Schindler to Ball-Kaduri.
²⁶⁵ Madritsch was never happy with Schindler over this incident.
²⁶⁶ Bejski papers to the author.
²⁶⁷ Madritsch's personal memoir.
²⁶⁸ Alexander Biberstein, *Extermination of the Krakow Jews*, 143. Also interview with Moshe Bejski.
²⁶⁹ Dr. Alexander Biberstein's memoir.
²⁷⁰ One of the most curious aspects of the list is that nowhere is Doctor Gross shown. We know he went to Gross-Rosen and that he was in Brännlitz and later returned to Auschwitz. Nowhere is his name recorded. I find this most odd and when I sought a reason from Yad Vashem (whose expertise is questionable), they were unable to offer a reason. I am not persuaded that we have the final answer to this.
²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid. Dr. Schindel and his brothers were the last prisoners to leave KL Plaszow. Dr. Schindel landed up in Auschwitz but would survive the war. The brothers were forced to march to Flossenbug. One was shot, the other survived.

²⁷³ The Gross-Rosen concentration camp was originally established in 1940 as a branch camp of Sachsenhausen in the vicinity of a quarry. Gross-Rosen became an independent camp on May 1, 1941 and remained so until February 1945. During the period of camp liquidation the number of prisoners reached 100, 000. These were prisoners of various nationalities, though predominantly Jewish. Nearly 50 smaller camps fell under the administration of Gross-Rosen. One of these was Schindler's labor camp at Brännlitz. While the number of people who died at Gross-Rosen is difficult to establish, it is estimated that because of the inhumane conditions one-third of the 125,000 people who passed through the camp and its branch units during the Second World War perished.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Gross-Rosen (Rogoznica) near Scheidnitz in Lower Silesia had been a concentration camp since May 1941. In 1944, it contained 12,000 prisoners. It was one of numerous subsidiary camps scattered throughout the occupied land. On March 21, 1945, the camp was evacuated and moved to Reichenau in Bohemia where it was finally liberated on April 5, 1945.