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TRANSPORT

SELECTED TRANSLATIONS OF THE WICHMANN CASE FROM GERMAN MAGAZINES

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and nobody wanted them to have any influence; everyone wanted them to go back where they had come from. But nobody wanted to kill them.

When Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach was asked to comment on Hitler's antisemitic program in Nuernberg, he made the following highly significant statement. "If you are going to buy a good horse, you have to accept a few shortcomings as part of the bargain."

These shortcomings were accepted almost without objection, at least for the moment; of course, the solution of the Jewish problem, such as it was planned by "Good Horse" Hitler, was only revealed gradually. The first, locally limited persecutions in February and March 1933 consisted of an assault on a Dresden synagogue and of a party-controlled boycott of Jewish stores on 1 April 1933 which was expressly approved by Bishop D. Otto Dibelius; those initial measures were followed by a period of several years in which action against the Jews took the form of laws and regulations passed by the government. Jewish civil servants were retired before their time; later on, they were deprived of their retirement pay, University professors were fired, lawyers were disbarred, and Jewish public health service physicians were allowed to treat only Jews.

The most important step along these lines was represented by the Nuernberg laws of 15 September 1935.

The "Reich Citizenship Law" distinguished between citizens of German or related blood, on the other hand, and alien "subjects" -- i.e., Jews and Gypsies -- on the other hand; in practice, this law created two classes of human beings.

Then there was the "Law on the Protection of German Blood and German Honor" which forbade marital and extramarital relations between these two newly created classes of citizens; such relations were called "racial disgrace" and were liable to severe punishment.

This program for stripping German Jewish citizens of their civil rights was illegal because Hitler, in 1933, had taken an oath to uphold the Weimar Constitution which guaranteed all citizens equal rights. This legal-illegal program expressed only the minimum requirements of the race fanatics which were published primarily in Der Stuermer (The Assault Trooper) (1935 circulation: 436,000 copies). This magazine was intended primarily as a means to accelerate the emigration of the Jews, which was the original and comparatively humane version of the final solution.

On 7 November 1938, 17-year old Herschel Grynszpan shot German legation counsellor Ernst vom Rath in Paris; this was the incident, which the antisemites, who were disappointed with Hitler's earlier Jewish policies, had been waiting for. The public and coordinated persecution of the Jews began.

On 11 November 1938, Heydrich reported to Goering: "One hundred and ninety-one synagogues were set on fire and another 76 were destroyed completely. About 20,000 Jews, seven Aryans, and three foreigners were arrested. We have reports on 38 deaths and 36 seriously injured."

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The unofficial revenge for the shooting by Grynspan during the "nights of broken glass" on 9 November 1938 was followed by official action of 12 November. Goering, then still the number-two man in the government, was ordered by Hitler to organize the "coordinated and comprehensive liquidation" of the Jewish problem. The result was there for anyone to read in the Reichsgesetzblatt (Reich Legal Gazette) (November and December 1938).

All Jewish enterprises were immediately to be handed over to Aryan managers, with the stipulation that they were to be sold to non-Jews.

The "anti-German" attitude of the German Jews was punished by making the Jews contribute one billion marks; this sum was used for armament purposes.

The insurance companies were not allowed to repay the Jews for the damages they had suffered from the SA; the Jews had to pay for this damage themselves.

The Jews were forced to sell their jewelry and art objects to government purchasing agencies at low prices.

Jews were not allowed to own automobiles or to take out a driver's license.

Jews were forbidden to go to the movies, the theater, concerts, swimming pools, and public parks; there was a curfew for all Jews from 2000 to 0600.

Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend public schools. All Jews had to pay a special tax.

Lease or rental contracts between Jews and non-Jews were forbidden.

Commented Goering: "This is really going to hit them hard" and "I wouldn't want to be a Jew in Germany now."

After this regulation had been issued, Goering delegated the job of "solving the Jewish problem" to Reinhard Heydrich, who soon tried his own, highly profitable emigration system on about 45,000 Viennese Jews.

Heydrich put wealthy Jews in his concentration camp; he would give them permission to leave the country if they would at the same time deposit ransom and emigration money for two or three poor Jews.

Meanwhile, it was not only the hardboiled antisemites of the party and of the SS, but also the respected conservative politicians who made their services available for this "humane final solution."

Reich Bank President Hjalmar Schacht, appointed expediter for the promotion of Jewish emigration by Hitler on 5 January 1939, conducted negotiations with an international emigration committee in London and submitted a plan for the financing of this forced emigration, which for the moment was approved by the German chief of state.

Schacht thought that the property of the German Jews should be frozen and that it should be used as security for international loan for the financing of the orderly settlement of all Jews from Germany within a period of three to five years. This bold idea of the genius

of financial dialectics failed on 20 January 1939, when the Reich Bank president refused to start printing money, had a disagreement with Hitler, and departed. Thereafter, Hitler rejected the idea of making Jewish property available for any emigration plans.

Four days after Schacht's departure, Goering authorized SD chief Heydrich to set up a Central Office for Jewish Emigration in order "to solve the Jewish problem through emigration or evacuation." Through this decision, Goering opened the way for an insignificant SS captain who was eventually to be the general expediter of the final solution of the Jewish problem by shipping long trainloads of Jews to the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Chelmo, Maidanek, and Belzec (Sic). This man was Adolf Eichmann.

On 19 July 1938, the personnel files of the SS described the chief of Bureau IVB 4 (Jewish Problems) of the Domestic Department of the Central Reich Security Office as a selfconfident and correct SS man, Overall racial profile: "Nordic-Dinaric"; special talents "negotiating, speech making, organizing." SS membership number: 45326; Nazi Party number: 899895.

His friend, Dieter Wisliceny, whom Eichmann later on sent out to manage the deportation of Slovak Jews, called Eichmann a "pedantic and systematic subordinate official. He immediately prepares a report on every conversation for his file in order to be covered at all times," said Wisliceny: "Eichmann's always used to hide behind his boss."

Adolf Eichmann was born in 1906 in Solingen in the Rhineland but his character was formed in his youth in the same German-Austrian region in which his leader had grown up. In Linz, Eichmann's father advanced to the position of manager of the Streetcar and Electric Power Company; at the Linz Senior High School, Adolf Eichmann was taught by the same teacher who several years before had been trying to drill some German history into the head of his pupil Adolf Hitler from Braunau.

Like Hitler, Eichmann was definitely not one of those Nordic types who merely by virtue of their blond hair and blue eyes were destined to be the masters of the "Jewish and Eastern subhumans." Like his leader, Eichmann was not successful in civilian life. The bowlegged engineering student Adolf Eichmann left the Austrian Federal Institute of Electrical Engineering, Machine building, and Civil Engineering after only two years and without taking his final examinations. He became a traveling salesman, first for an electrical appliance firm and later for the Shell Company which fired him in June 1933. Said Eichmann: "Because I was a member of the Nazi Party." The German consul in Linz on the Danube, Dirk von Langen, confirmed this fact to me in a letter."

Using this statement by the consul as proof of his national socialist views, old party fighter Eichmann moved to Germany and soon became a member of the Austrian Legion of the SS in Dachau. On 1 October 1934, he was detached as clerk to the Free Mason files of the SD in Berlin. Said Wisliceny: "He filled out file cards on the typewriter."

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A year later, Eichmann was working in the museum of the SD Central Office, stimulated by the collection of Jewish art objects and coins, he began to study Hebrew. Under file symbol II/112/10-1, his office on 18 June 1937 made application to have SS sergeant Eichmann "take further lessons from a rabbi" and requested "authorization for funds" (about 3 Marks an hour).

This rather unusual request was justified with the argument that it would be a good idea to have at least one SD member who understood Hebrew. SS chief Hmmler, to whom this application was submitted, did not at all like the idea of having one of his men take lessons from a Jew. He disapproved the application and Eichmann continued to study without a rabbi.

The scant knowledge which he acquired in his free time was sufficient to open a big career for this selftaught man. In 1936 he was transferred to the Jewish section of the SD, department II/112. By 1937 he had worked himself up to the position of expert on Zionism and traveled to Palestine and Egypt in order to establish contact with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the number-one enemy of the Jews in the Near East.

After the occupation of Austria, Eichmann became chief of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna. Within a few months he managed to deport so many Jews that Heydrich ordered him to set up a similar office in Prague after the occupation of Czechoslovakia. In 1939 Heydrich made him chief of the Jewish section of the newly organized Central Reich Security Office (RSHA).

Three years later, on 20 January 1942, Eichmann was a member of the illustrious circle of high ministerial officials and SS officers in Berlin-Wannsee who, together with Heydrich, were discussing a plan for the "overall solution of the Jewish problem" in the areas of Europe that were under German control. Now the idea was no longer emigration, as a result of which 360,000 Jews had left Germany since 1933 and in the course of which 177,000 had been deported from Austria and Czechoslovakia since 1938.

Said Heydrich at Wannsee: "We're going to line up the Jews in long columns, separating men from women; those Jews who can work will be marched to the Eastern regions, building roads as they go along; of course, in this process many of them will be eliminated due to natural causes. Those who remain will undoubtedly be the tough ones and will have to be treated accordingly, because they represent the cream and because they could serve as nucleus of a Jewish revival." Adolf Eichmann was ordered to organize these transports.

Of course, the radical solution -- extermination -- had been started in practice several months prior to the Wannsee talks. The armies, which had been fighting in Russia since the summer of 1941, were followed by SD detachments which cleaned out the Jews in the rear areas in two ways.

The traditional antisemitism of the local population, especially of the Ukrainians and White Russians, was whipped up by means of propaganda until it exploded into pogroms (Lvov, Kovno).

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These detachments cleared the rear areas of partisans, commissars, and Jews through mass executions -- a method of extermination which was recently dramatized in the motion picture "On the Green Banks of the Spree River" and which was met with general disbelief, even though it was thoroughly documented.

Here is an excerpt from a statement made by the commander of Detachment D (Southern Ukraine), SS General Olendorf, in Muernberg in 1946. "We had the elders of the Jewish community round up all Jews under the pretext that they were to be resettled. After registration, the Jews were gathered in one place. From there they were driven to the place of execution. The place of execution usually was an anti-tank ditch or some other natural ditch."

The four detachments were led by Police and SS General Otto Ohlendorf, who was the chief of the Criminal Police, as well as by SS Brigade Leader Arthur Nebe (Detachment B), Gestapo official and SS Brigade Leader Franz Walter Stahlecker (Detachment A), and Police General and SS Brigade Leader Dr. Otto Rasch (Detachment C). Their units consisted of specially trained SD and Gestapo officers, police regiments, field security police, and special SS units.

For at least one of these four detachment leaders -- Stahlecker -- command of this squad of hangmen meant a demotion. He had been the chief of the Division of Foreign Intelligence Services in the SD; he knew that Heydrich had sent him to the front "to see what he would do" and he was ready to act accordingly. He distinguished himself through his great toughness. As early as 15 October, 1941, he reported to Himmler that 135,567 persons had been liquidated in his zone of operations -- the Baltic States -- "in accordance with the basic directives." In contrast to this, Arthur Nebe was able to chalk up only 45,476 victims of his special squads during the first five months of the Russian campaign.

These mass executions by firing squads of course could not be kept secret for any length of time and aroused unwelcome attention; Eichmann and his helpers therefore introduced a new, silent method of liquidation.

As early as 25 October, Dr. Ernst Wetzel, chief of the Race Policy Office of the Nazi Party and assigned to Rosenberg's Reich Ministry of Occupied Eastern Territories since the start of the Russian campaign, was able to report to the Reich Commissioner for Eastern Territories, Gauleiter Hinrich Lohse, that the technique of mass murder would soon be greatly improved. Wrote Wetzel "Division Chief Brack of the Office of the Fuehrer has declared himself ready to help in the preparation of the required facilities and in the procurement of the gassing equipment. I would like to point out that Major Eichmann, the specialist for Jewish problems in the Central Reich Security Office, approves of this method. In view of the existing situation, there should be no hesitation in eliminating Jews who are unable to work by means of the methods proposed by Brack."

Wetzel did not hesitate to praise the advantages of this new

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On 6 October 1943, Himmler told a meeting of Reich and Gau leaders in Poznan: "It is easy to say that all Jews must be exterminated. But, Gentlemen, the man who has to do the job will find it very difficult; he will find that it will tax his abilities to the utmost."

Men like Hoess and Eichmann were of course not bothered by too many scruples; on the contrary, Rudolf Hoess, the camp commander of Auschwitz, boasted in Nuernberg that he had 2 1/2 million Jews on his conscience. Barely one year later, while being tried by a Polish court, he reduced the number of his victims to 1.3 million; the British investigator Gerald Reitlinger thinks that this figure is still too high.

Reitlinger calculates that "just about one million people perished in the gas chambers and camps of Auschwitz" and that of this number at least "550,000 - 600,000 died immediately after their arrival." Of course, we will never know the exact figures because Hoess destroyed all material "which might in any way give information on the total number of persons exterminated;" he usually burned the reports after each "action." Said Hoess: "I destroyed all material myself."

Reitlinger was equally skeptical of other successes reported by SD henchmen who wanted to report exaggerated extermination figures in order to make themselves look good in the eyes of their superiors. In a conversation with SS Major Hoettl in Budapest's Hotel Majestic in August 1944, Eichmann boasted that 6 million Jews had been exterminated; Reitlinger thinks that this figure is as unlikely as the casualty list of 5.7 million submitted to the Nuernberg Tribunal by the Jewish World Congress at a time when there were hardly any reliable data available.

As an Englishman, Reitlinger is of course free of any suspicion of trying to make the figures look better; German authors, of course, would automatically be suspected of such a tendency in any objective investigation they might make. By comparing the number of Jewish inhabitants in the area occupied by the German armies with the number of emigrated Jews and the number of survivors, Reitlinger concludes that at least 4,194,200 and at most 4,581,200 Jews fell victim to the policy of extermination.

Said Reitlinger: "More than one-third of the European Jews who disappeared fell victim, not to direct murder, but to overwork, pestilence, hunger, and misery." The latter were some of the indirect methods of extermination in the concentration camps. "More than one million were shot by the execution squads or were killed during raids on Ghettos."

"Despite its tremendous symbolic significance," says Reitlinger, "Auschwitz probably accounted for less than one-fifth of all victims."

Despite painstaking research, even this compilation is not complete. It will be impossible to determine the exact number of victims so long as we do not have statistics of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union and of Rumania; the number of survivors is estimated at between 1,600,000 and 2,650,000 for the Soviet Union. This is one

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