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THE LUBLIN EXTERMINATION CAMP

by

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The subject I now intend to write about is too big and terrible to be grasped in its entirety. Undoubtedly, lawyers, physicians, historians and politicians will investigate this frightful affair for a long time to come, and the entire scope and all the details of this German crime against humanity as revealed by these investigations will come to light in the future. At present I am not in possession of all the facts or anything like all the figures; I have conversed with, perhaps, only a hundredth part of the witnesses and have seen, perhaps, only a tenth part of the actual traces of this crime. But having seen only this I cannot remain silent, I cannot wait. I want to speak at once, today, about the first traces of this crime that have been revealed, about what I have heard during the past few days, and about what I have seen with my own eyes.

1.

At the end of 1940 several officers of the German SS troops appeared with surveyor's instruments on a vast tract of wasteland stretching to the right of the Cholm Road, two kilometres from Lublin. Several days later they had measured off an area covering about twenty-five square kilometres. At the Gestapo the plan of this plot was divided up into sixteen enormous squares, each of which was again divided into twenty rectangles of equal size. These rectangles marked the sites of barracks, the squares those of what were called "fields," which were to be completely surrounded by barbed wire fences. This plan bore the heading, which was afterwards obliterated: "Dachau Camp No. 2." The Gestapo began the construction here of a concentration camp of unprecedented dimensions, which was to be an exact copy of the notorious Dachau Camp in Germany, but several times the size of the latter.

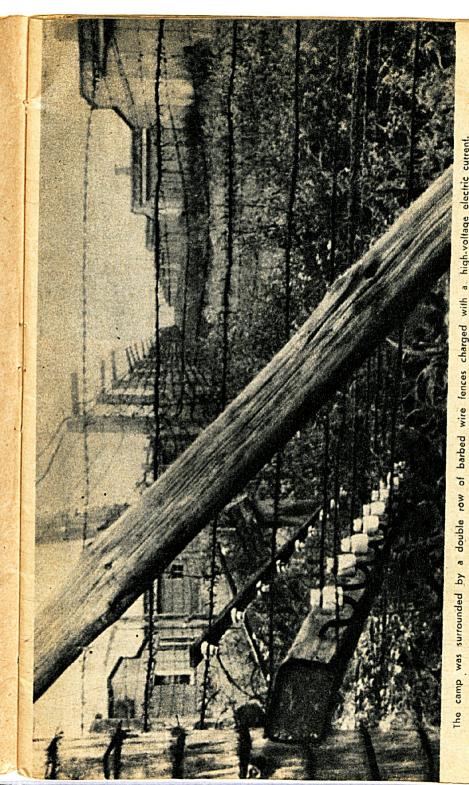
Building operations commenced in the winter of 1941. At first a number of Polish civilian engineers and labourers were employed on this job, but soon to these were added, as the main body of workers, Polish and Jewish prisoners of war who had been captured during the German-Polish war of 1939. Approximately in August 1941 the first thousand Russian prisoners of war and civilians were brought into the camp as labourers. By this time the first field, or "first block" as the Germans called it, was half completed. In it there were ten barracks. Building operations continued throughout the autumn of 1941 and the winter of 1942.

The number of labourers employed on the job gradually increased. Soon after the Russians came large groups of Czech and Polish political prisoners.

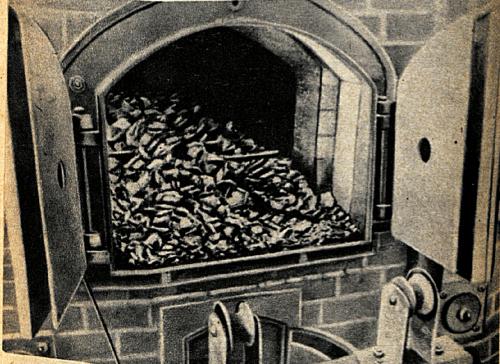
transferred from other camps, where the majority had been confined ever since 1933. In the autumn of 1941 the first couple of thousand of Jews from the Lublin Chetto were transferred to this camp. In December 1941, seven hundred Poles from Lublin Castle arrived. Then came four hundred Polish peasants who had fallen into arrears in the payment of taxes to the German government. In April 1942 transports arrived at the camp with twelve thousand people from Slovakia—these were Jews and political prisoners. All through the month of May transports continued to arrive from Bohemia, Austria and Germany. Building operations were conducted with the greatest intensity, and by May barracks Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, calculated to accommodate forty thousand persons,

May 1942 must be regarded as the end of the first stage of the history of this camp. This had been the stage of feverish building operations, and the striving to increase the general capacity of the camp. Now that barracks sufficient to accommodate forty thousand persons had been completed, that the main, auxiliary and special buildings had been erected and that the entire area had been surrounded by a double fence of barbed wire, for the most part electrified, the Gestapo deemed the camp ready to commence operations. It continued to expand later, and would have gone on expanding indefinitely had not Lublin been captured by our troops, but the tempo of the building operations was reduced. From May 1942 onwards the camp was enlarged gradually, without haste, and all sorts of "improvements" were introduced. In May 1942 this camp, which in official documents was designated "Lublin Concentration Camp of the SS Troops," began, in unofficial documents, in private letters, entries in diaries and in conversation, to be called "Vernichtungslager," which, translated, means "Extermination Camp."

On the wasteland stretching to the right of the Cholm Road, two kilometres from Lublin, the Germans built the largest slaughter house in Europe, the main, the sole object of which was to exterminate the largest possible number of prisoners of war and political prisoners in the simplest, most efficient and speediest way. The form in which this camp was organized was peculiar in all respects, and although the different elements of which it was composed could be found in all the other German death camps, in none of the latter, however, were the frightful methods of human destruction invented by the Germans present in such a complete and, so to speak, so combined and so obvious a form as in this Lublin "Extermination Camp." We know of places like Sabibor, or Belzec, where in an open glade in the depths of a wood doomed people were brought by the trainload on a narrow-gauge railway and shot and cremated. We are aware of the existence of camps like Dachau, Oswiencim and the "Grosslazarett" in Slawuta, where civilian prisoners and prisoners of war were gradually done to death by beating, starvation and disease. In the Lublin "Extermination Camp," however, they combined all these methods. In the barracks here lived tens of thousands of prisoners who were continually building, expanding and re-shaping their prison. Here lived thousands of prisoners of war who, commencing with the autumn of 1942, not being given any work to do and receiving even a smaller ration than was allowed to the rest of the prisoners, died of starvation and disease with frightful rapidity. Here there were fields of death, with bonfires and cremation furnaces, where thousands and







The furnaces in which the German butchers cremated their victims.

tens of thousands of people were exterminated after having been in the camp only a few hours, or days, according to the size of the contingent and the time required to search and strip them naked. Here there was the ordinary type of "murder van," and also strongly built concrete casemates for suffocating people to death with a gas called "Cyklon." Here corpses were burnt in the ancient Indian way, by the most primitive method-a layer of stakes a layer of corpses, a layer of stakes a layer of corpses. Here corpses were burnt in cremation furnaces of a primitive type made in the form of large iron cauldrons, and in an especially built and perfected crematorium for "blitz-cremation." Here people were shot in ditches and killed by blows across the neck with iron rods which broke their spines. Here people were drowned in pools and hanged by various means, beginning with ordinary cross-tree gallows and ending with improved gallows with levers and trapdoors. This was a veritable slaughter house, the daily number of deaths in which was regulated by two circumstances: first—the number of arrivals in the camp, and secondly, the number of labourers required at the different stages of the indefinitely continuing building operations.

The exact number will be ascertained later, but certain preliminary figures are coming to light even now. In all, the camp functioned for over three years. When the Red Army arrived in Lublin it found there only several hundred Russians. According to the evidence of witnesses, when we reached Kovel last spring, the Germans evacuated from twelve thousand to sixteen thousand prisoners from the camp. Even if we take the figure of sixteen thousand there must have been no fewer than seventeen thousand persons in the camp towards the end of its existence. Judging by the daily reports of the Commandant, however, the average number of prisoners in the camp at one time in 1943 was about forty thousand, fluctuating at different periods by several thousand one way or the other. If we take the total number of persons entering the camp during the three years odd we will find that the difference between seventeen thousand and the number of persons brought to the camp will amount to many hundreds of thousands. This approximately will be the number of persons exterminated in the camp, not counting those who went to their death immediately on entering without being registered as prisoners. All the above data are taken from the official reports of the camp administration for the whole period of the camp's existence.

In speaking of the arrival of prisoners during the initial stages of the building of this camp I referred to May 1942. In April and May 1942 large contingents of Jews arrived in the camp from the Lublin and surrounding ghettos. During the summer another eighteen thousand persons arrived from Slovakia and Bohemia. In July 1942 the first contingent arrived of Poles who were accused of engaging in partisan activities. This contingent alone numbered fifteen hundred. In the same month a large contingent of political prisoners arrived from Germany. In December 1942 several thousands of Jews and Greeks arrived from the Oswiencim Camp near Cracow. On January 17, 1943, fifteen hundred Polish men and four hundred women arrived from Warsaw. On February 2, nine hundred and fifty Poles arrived from Lvov. On February 4, four thousand Poles and Ukrainians arrived from Taloma and Tarnopol. In May 1943 a contingent of sixty thousand arrived from the Ghetto in Warsaw. All

through the summer and autumn of 1943, with intervals of only several days, transports arrived from all the principal camps in Germany-Axenhausen. Dachau, Flossenburg, Neuhamm, Grossenrosen and Buchenwald. No contingent contained less than a thousand persons. The people in the camp learned from where these new arrivals had come not only from what they said, but also from their external appearance. Each camp had left its special impress upon its inmates. For example, it was the custom at the Oswiencim Camp to shave the heads of all the prisoners, including women, and instead of hanging a number round their necks, they branded the number on their hands. The people who came from Buchenwald could not bear the sunlight. There was a branch of this camp known as "Dora" where there was an underground factory at which the notorious V-1 flying bombs were manufactured. In this factory only Slavs, mainly Poles and Russians, were employed. They were never allowed to see the light of day, and within six months their eyesight became so bad that they were no longer fit for work and were sent in whole contingents to the "Exter-

mination Camp" in Lublin.

I have mentioned only a few figures and several camps not in order to compute the exact number of people exterminated, but only to give the reader at least some idea of this horrible picture. In addition to this, a few words must be said about the nationalities of the people who were confined in this camp-A large number of those exterminated were Poles. Among them were hostages, partisans, real and alleged, the relatives of partisans, and a vast number of peasants, particularly deportees from the districts which were being colonized by the Germans. Then comes a vast number of Russians and Ukrainians. Equally large is the number of exterminated Jews, assembled in this camp from literally all the countries of Europe, beginning with Poland and ending with Holland. Then come imposing figures, each exceeding several thousands. of French, Italians, Dutch and Greeks. There were smaller numbers, although large in themselves, of Belgians, Serbians, Croatians, Hungarians and Spaniards, the latter evidently Republicans who had been captured in France. Furthermore, among the papers of people who had been killed have been found those belonging to the most diverse nationalities, such as Norwegians, Swiss, Turks, and even Chinese. In one of the rooms of the camp offices, the floor of which was heaped with documents, passports and identity certificates of people who had been killed, I picked up these documents at random, and within ten minutes I had collected documents which had belonged to representatives of nearly all the nations of Europe. Here was the passport of Sophia Yakovlevna Dusevich, of the village of Konstantinovka, Kiev Region, a Ukrainian working woman, born in 1917. Here I found a document bearing the seal: "République Française," which had belonged to Eugène Duramet, a Frenchman, metal worker, born in Havre, September 22, 1888. Here was certificate issued by a school in Banja-Luka to Ralo Zanić of the Islamic faith who had graduated from the school in 1937. The certificate was marked "dobar," which means "good," for "conduct, natural history and calligraphy." Here was a passport issued in Croatia to Jatiranovič, born in Zagreb, who received this document on January 2, 1941. Here was the passport of Jacob Borhardt, born in Rotterdam on November 10, 1918. Here was a document which had belonged to Edward Alfred Sacca, born in 1914, in Milan, 29 Via Plinio,

"height 175, build thick-set, no special peculiarities." Here was certificate No. 8544 issued to Savaranti, a Greek from the Island of Crete. Here was a German passport issued to Ferdinand Lotmann, an engineer from Berlin, born on August 19, 1872. Here was a labour book bearing the stamp "Generalgouvernement," which had belonged to Zygmunt Remak, a Pole, labourer. born in Cracow on March 20, 1924. Here there was a Chinese document bearing a photograph, the ideographs of which I could not read. Here were documents stained with blood and sodden with water, torn in half, and evidently trampled underfoot. This frightful heap of documents was the grave mound of Europe. squeezed into one room.

It is hard even to imagine the horrible details that can be revealed by a close examination of these documents and interrogation of innumerable witnesses. Perhaps here will be found the traces of some of the greatest men of Europe who have disappeared and perished during the period of German rule. I stayed at this camp only a few days and conversed with only an infinitesimal fraction of the witnesses there. But even during these few days I heard the following astounding story. Two engineers from Lublin who were employed as hired civilian engineers at the camp when the drains were being laid, a Russian named Peter Mikhailovich Denisov and a Pole named Claudius Jelinski, told me, among other things, that at the end of April, or beginning of May. 1943, they were in the building materials store at the camp and there met a Jew from Lublin with whom both had been acquainted in peacetime. This prisoner was carrying planks to the store. He turned to the two engineers and pointing to a broken down old man, also carrying a plank, said:

"Do you know who that old man is? That's Léon Blum."

Noticing that there were no SS men around, the two engineers approached the old man and the following conversation ensued:

"Are you Léon Blum?" asked Denisov.

"Yes, I am Léon Blum."

"Prime Minister of France?"

"Yes, Prime Minister of France."

"How did you get here?"

"I came here with the last contingent of French prisoners."

"Why did you not make an attempt to save yourself in your own country? Couldn't you do that?" asked Denisov.

"I don't know, perhaps I could," answered Léon Blum, "but I resolved to

share the fate of my people,"—and tears appeared in his eyes.

At this juncture several SS men came up. With the aid of another man, Blum hastily lifted the heavy inch plank he was carrying and went off. After walking a few paces he stumbled and fell. One of the prisoners nearby helped him to rise. He got up on his feet, shouldered the plank again and went on further.

Denisov and Jelinski visited this store a week later and again saw the man who had pointed out Léon Blum to them. They enquired where the latter was. The man answered laconically, pointing to the sky:

"Up there, where I shall be soon."

This is only one fact about life in this death camp-a stubborn fact, confirmed in all its details by two witnesses who are now in Lublin. How many

frightful revelations concerning the fate of people in the most diverse walks of life, from the most diverse parts of Europe, will be made when all the materials are unearthed and all the witnesses interrogated?

2.

Travelling along the Cholm Road, about three hundred metres on the right off the road, one catches sight of a whole town, of hundreds of low grey buildings, built in straight rows, separated from each other by barbed wire fences. This is indeed a big town, large enough to house tens of thousands of inhabitants. You turn from the road, pass through an opening in a barbed wire fence and enter through a gate. The first thing that catches one's eye are rows of neat huts standing in pretty little gardens furnished with rustic armchairs and benches. These had been the living quarters of the SS guards and the camp officials. Here too is the "Soldatenheim," a small barrack-like building especially built to serve as a brothel, the inmates of which were taken exclusively from among the women prisoners, and where any one of those who showed signs of pregnancy was immediately put out of the way.

Then came premises where the clothes taken from the prisoners were disinfected. Tubes were passed through the roofs down which disinfectants were poured into the premises, after which the doors were hermetically scaled and the process of disinfection was performed. This was actually so: the walls of these barracks, built of planks, and the doors without any iron fastenings, were all too flimsy to enable anything else to be done here except to disinfect

clothing.

But we opened another door and entered a second disinfection chamber built on entirely different lines. This was a rectangular chamber a little over two metres high, and approximately six metres long and six metres wide. The walls, the ceiling and floor were all made of solid, grey concrete. In the first building we had seen shelves for the clothing, but here there was not a sign of anything of the kind. The chamber was completely bare. There was only one large steel door which closed hermetically and was fastened on the outside by heavy steel bolts. In the walls of this concrete tomb there were three apertures, two of them were tubes passing through the wall to the outside, and a third, which was a peephole. This small rectangular window was protected by a close steel grill built into the concrete. The thick glass of this window was on the outside of the wall, so that nobody inside the chamber could reach it through the grill.

What was on the other side of the peephole? To find out we opened the door and went out of the room. Next to this room we found a smaller concrete chamber, and it was here that the peephole was fixed. In it there was also a switch connected with an electric lamp in the main chamber. Through the peephole a view could be obtained of the whole of the latter. On the floor there were several hermetically sealed round boxes bearing a label with the inscription "Cyklon" and beneath it in small print "For special use in the Eastern Regions." It was the contents of these boxes that were poured through the

tubes into the next chamber when it was filled with people.

These people were quite naked, and pressed close against each other they did not take up a lot of room. Into this thirty-six square metres of space the Germans crammed over two hundred and fifty persons. They pushed them into the chamber, closed the steel door upon them, smeared clay over the edges to ensure that it was completely airtight, and then a special gang wearing gas masks poured the "Cyklon" from the round boxes through the tubes. These were small, blue, innocent looking crystals, which, combined with oxygen, immediately gave off a poison gas which affected all the organs of the human body. The "Cyklon" was poured down the tubes, the SS man in command of this hellish operation switched on the light, the chamber became illuminated, and through the peephole he watched the process of asphyxiation, which, according to different witnesses, lasted from two to ten minutes. Through the peephole he could safely see everything-the contorted faces of the dying and the gradual effects of the gas. The peephole was fixed at a height level with an ordinary man's eye and there was no need for the observer to look downwards, for as the victims died they did not fall—the chamber was so crammed that the dead continued to stand.

Incidentally, the "Cyklon" was really intended for disinfecting purposes. Clothing was actually disinfected with it. As far as that is concerned, everything was all in order. It is an entirely different story when this stuff is used on hu-

man beings.

We walked on several hundred paces and came to a vacant plot. Certain signs went to show that some building or other had stood here before. Yes, up to last autumn there had been a crematorium here, but in the autumn another crematorium of an improved type-which we visited later-was completed and this one was demolished. It had been a primitive structure of inades quate capacity, far smaller than the well-planned and perfected gas chamber. This crematorium had been simply a large hut with a cement floor in which two huge iron cauldrons had been placed side by side on brick foundations. But the process of incineration in these cauldrons had been too slow. True, the Germans did not wait until the bones of the corpses had been converted into ashes, but even the decomposition of the bodies into charred bones took about two hours, and this was too long. Fourteen corpses were put into the two cauldrons at once, so that this crematorium could handle no more than a hundred and fifty in the twenty-four hours, whereas the gas chamber even with only one "gasification," as they say here, could handle three hundred in the same time. Consequently, before the new crematorium was built it was necessary, when large parties had to be disposed of, to cart a large number of the corpses in trucks to a field outside the camp and bury them.

The fence of which I have spoken consists of two rows of four-metre posts connected with barbed wire, which is bent over at the top like eaves. There is a space of two metres between the two rows of posts, in which there is a third row of barbed wire running diagonally from the top of one post to the bottom of the other. This row of wire was placed on insulators and electrified. A current of death-dealing power was run through it which excluded all

possibility of escape.

This electrification system was not introduced at once. The barbed wire fences were put up from the very beginning, but no electric current was passed through

them. The introduction of electricity was the result of the following episode. In May 1942 a party of Russian prisoners of war sent to the Krembecki Woods, near this camp, to bury the bodies of prisoners who had been shot, killed seven of the German guards with their spades and escaped. Two of them were caught, but the other fifteen got away. The remaining one hundred and thirty prisoners of war (the only survivors of the thousand that had been brought here in August 1941) were transferred to the civilian prisoners' block. One night, at the end of June, realizing that they were doomed anyhow, the Russian war prisoners-all except fifty-decided to escape. Collecting all the available blankets, they placed them five thick over the barbed wire fences and using them as a bridge managed to get away. The night was dark and only four were shot, the rest made good their escape. Immediately after this the fifty men who had remained were taken out into the courtyard, compelled to lie down on the ground and were shot with tommy guns. The Germans, however, were not satisfied with this. The fact remained that there had been a successful attempt at escape and so they electrified the fences of four out of the five blocks. Only one block remained un-electrified; the one in which women were confined, as it was not considered likely that they would make any attempt to escape.

We are now outside the new auxiliary block. It is not so thoroughly fenced off as the others. Incidentally, there is nothing surprising about this; here were brought the dead or half-dead, or those who were to be put to death, under a strong guard. Here, behind this barbed wire, nobody except the SS men and the crematorium attendants lived more than an hour. In the middle of a bare field we see rearing up a tall, square, brick chimney stack with a long, low, brick rectangular building attached to it. This is the crematorium. It is preserved in all

its pristine beauty.

A little beyond it are the remains of a large brick building. During the few hours that remained between the receipt of the news that our troops had pierced the German defences and the arrival of our troops at this spot, the Germans made attempts to wipe out the traces of their crimes. They failed to blow up the crematorium, but managed to set fire to the auxiliary premises. This, however, has not made the traces of their crimes less evident. The frightful stench of

decaying bodies fills the air.

The auxiliary premises of the crematorium consist of three main chambers. One of them is filled with the half-burnt remnants of clothing which had belonged to the last party which had been put to death, and which the Germans had not had time to take away. In the next room only part of a wall had been preserved. In this wall there were fixed several tubes of a smaller diameter than those we had seen in the other gas chamber. This too had been a gas chamber, and here too people had been asphyxiated (whether with "Cyklon" or some other kind of gas has not yet been ascertained). When an exceptionally large number of people were being put to death and the main gas chamber was unable to deal with all of them, some of the people were brought here and "gassed" right next to the crematorium. The third and largest chamber was evidently used for piling the corpses waiting their turn to be cremated. The whole floor was covered with halfscorched skeletons, skulls and bones. This was not the result of deliberate cremation but was due to the fire which the Germans started before they left. There must have been a large number of corpses—scores, perhaps hundreds, it is hard to

say, because it is impossible to count this heap of half-charred bones and fragments of half-burnt flesh.

A few paces bring us to the crematorium itself. It is a large rectangular building built of Dinas bricks of the highest fireproof quality. Built into this structure are five large furnaces with round iron doors, which close hermetically. These doors are now open. The deep furnaces are half-filled with charred spinal bones and ashes. In front of each furnace lie the charred remains of bodies which the Germans had prepared for cremation. They were burnt as a consequence of the fire which the Germans had started. In front of three of the furnaces there are large skeletons of adult men and women, and in front of the two others the skeletons of children, judging by their size, approximately of ten to twelve years of age. In front of each furnace there are five or six skeletons. This corresponds to the capacity of the furnaces. Each was calculated to take six corpses at a time. If the sixth corpse would not go in, the attendant hacked off the protruding parts-arms, legs, or head-and then hermetically closed the door,

There are five furnaces in all, but their capacity is very large. The crematorium was calculated to incinerate the corpses within forty-five minutes, but the Germans gradually increased the rate and by increasing the temperature they doubled its capacity. They succeeded in securing the incineration of corpses in twenty-five minutes and even less, instead of forty-five minutes as before. Experts have already examined the Dinas bricks of which the furnaces of this crematorium are built, and judging by their deformation and degeneration they calculate that the temperature must have been as high as 1,500° C. Further evidence is provided by the iron stokers which were also deformed and smelted off. If we calculate that on the average each consignment of corpses was incinerated within half an hour and add the universal testimony that beginning with the autumn of 1943 the chimney of the crematorium belched smoke day and night without interruption, that it worked continuously like a blast furnace, we shall get an average output capacity of approximately one thousand four hundred corpses per twenty-four hours.

The necessity of building this crematorium was dictated, to a large degree, by the Katyn Woods affair. Fearing further revelations when the pits in which they had buried their victims were opened, the Germans in this Lublin Camp began, in the autumn of 1943, to exhume the half-decayed bodies of the people they had shot from an enormous number of pits dug around the camp and burnt them in the crematorium in order to wipe out completely the traces of their crimes.

The ashes and charred bones were removed from the furnaces of the crematorium and buried in the same pits from which the bodies had been taken. One of these pits has already been opened and a layer of ashes nearly a metre thick was discovered.

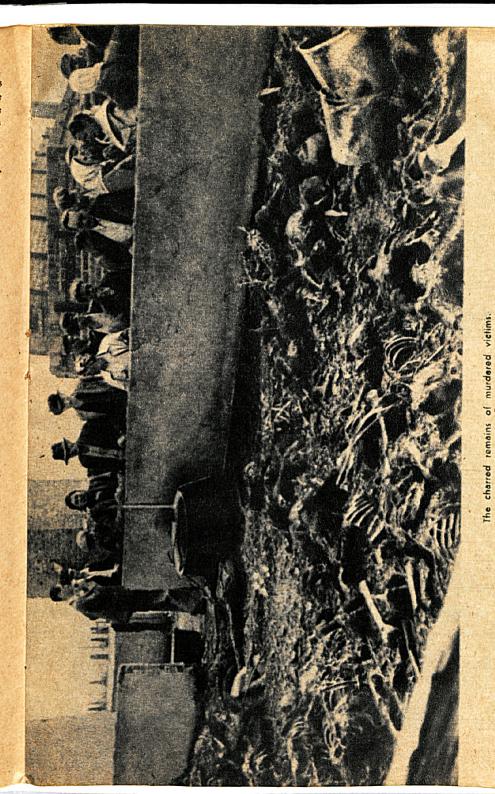
Beyond the camp there is still another unfinished block. Here, behind a barbed wire fence, there is only a brick foundation. The walls had not been built, and only one hut had been finished in which there were no bunks whatever. This hut had not been inhabited. Nevertheless, it is probably the most frightful evidence of what took place here. The floor of this hut, twenty or thirty metres wide and long, is completely covered to a height of over two metres with the footwear of those who have been done to death during the past three years. It is hard to say how many pairs of boots and shoes there are here. Perhaps a million, perhaps more. The building seems to be bursting with its contents, for they bulge and drop out of the windows and through the door. In one place the wall gave way under their weight, and part of it fell out together with heaps of boots

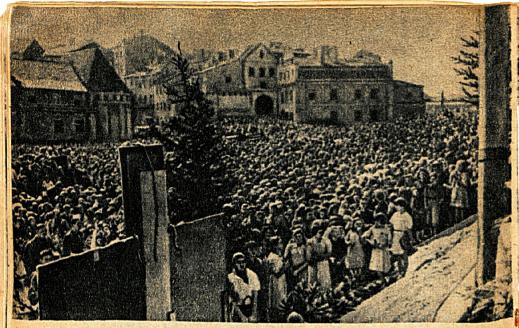
Here there is every kind of footwear: torn Russian army tophoots, Polish army boots, men's shoes, women's shoes, rubber overshoes, and, what is more frightful, tens of thousands of children's footwear: sandals, slippers and tiny shoes of ten-year-old, eight-year-old, six-year-old and even one-year-old children. It is hard to imagine anything more frightful than this scene. Terrible silent witnesses to the death of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. By climbing over the heaps of boots and shoes and reaching the right hand corner of the hut the explanation of the existence of this monstrous shoe store will be found at once. Here, carefully stacked, are thousands and tens of thousands of soles, uppers and scraps of leather. Here the boots and shoes which were no longer fit for use were collected and sorted and the soles, uppers, heels, and so forth, ripped off. Like everything else in this death camp, this store was built for a utilitarian object. Nothing that belonged to the killed was to be wasted-neither their clothing, nor their footwear, nor their bones, nor their ashes.

The last department of this camp is situated in an immense building in Lublin. Here scores of rooms, large and small, serve as a vast sorting station for everything taken from those who had been done to death. In one room you may find tens of thousands of women's dresses, in another tens of thousands of pairs of trousers, in a third tens of thousands of sets of underclothing, in a fourth thousands of women's handbags, in a fifth tens of thousands of sets of children's clothing, in a sixth shaving sets, in a seventh caps and hats.

I talked to some German prisoners of war who had passed by the crematorium and the pits filled with corpses. They denied having any hand in this business. They said that it was not they but the SS men who were responsible for it. But when later on I interrogated one of the SS men who had been employed in this camp he said that the wholesale extermination of people was the work not of the SS but of the SD, that is to say, of the Gestapo. The Gestapo says that the SS did it. I don't know which of them burnt the bodies, or which of them simply did the killing, which of them tore the footwear from the feet of their victims, or sorted the women's underclothing and the children's frocks. But as I gaze at this vast clothing store I think to myself that a nation which gave birth to those who did this must, and will, bear full responsibility and condemnation for what its

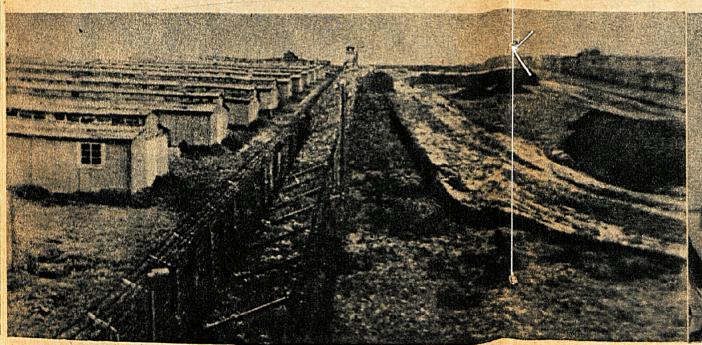
I have related the history of the Lublin "Extermination Camp" and have described what it looks like now. I shall now deal with the evidence given by the witnesses with whom I have spoken. Their testimony constitutes, perhaps, only one-hundredth part of the evidence that later on will serve as material for the Investigation Commission. I had occasion to speak with Dr. Barichev, a Russian prisoner of war, head doctor of the prisoner of war camp hospital, and also with

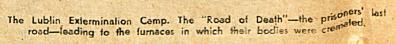


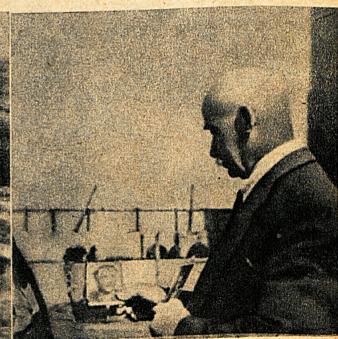




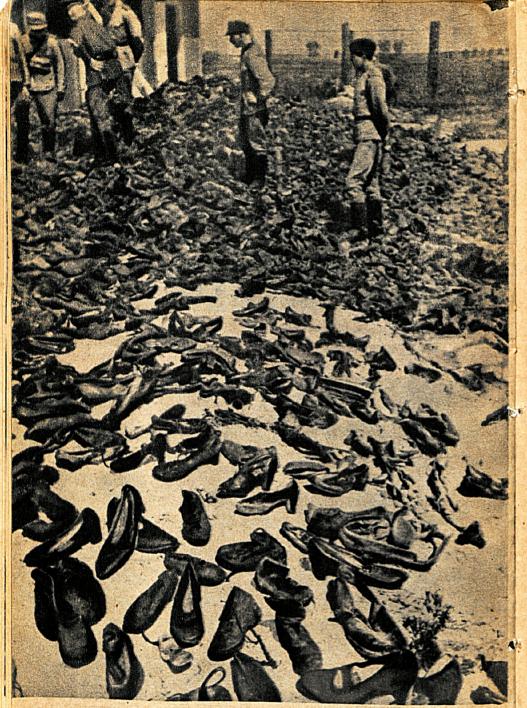
Lublin. The memorial meeting held in honour of the martyrs of the Extermination Camp. Jan Mid at Grubecki, engineer and member of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, speaking.







Cazimierz Korczak, a citizen of Lublin whose two sons, Marjan, aged 30, and Tadeusz, aged 27 lost their lives in the camp.



Footwear belonging to victims of the camp.

the assistant doctor of the same hospital, with civilian engineers and workers employed in building the camp, with civilian prisoners and prisoners of war, and also with SS men who have served as camp guards. From the conversations I had with all these people I obtained a general picture of the life of the "Extermination Camp," and this I must describe here.

The first premise on which the SS men who ruled over this camp based their actions was the following: everybody who comes to this camp, whether prisoner of war or civilian prisoner, whether Russian, Ukrainian, Pole, Byelorussian, Jew, French, Greek, and so on and so forth, will be put to death sooner or later; he will never leave this camp alive to tell what goes on here. This fundamental premise determined both the behaviour of the guards and the methods adopted to exterminate the prisoners. "Dead men tell no tales." They cannot give details or confirm these details with documentary proof. Consequently, there would be no proof, and this was the main thing according to the Germans.

Of course, it was to be expected that rumours about the camp being a death camp would spread among the surrounding population, but this did not trouble the Germans. They felt at home in Poland. For them the "Governor-Generalship of Poland" was a land which they had conquered forever. Those who remained alive in that land must first of all stand in fear of the Germans, and for that reason the latter even deemed it desirable that the frightful rumours about the Lublin Camp should spread throughout all Poland. The stench of decaying bodies that emanated from the camp, particularly on those days when large parties were exterminated, the stench that spread over the countryside and compelled even the people living in Lublin to cover their faces with their handkerchiefs, terrified the surrounding inhabitants. This was intended to impress the entire population of Poland with the power of the German rule and with the horrors to which they would be subjected if they took it into their heads to resist. The column of smoke which for weeks and months rose from the tall chimney stack of the main crematorium was seen a long way off, but even this did not disturb the Germans. Like the stench of decaying corpses, this frightful beacon was to serve as a terrible warning. Everybody saw columns of people numbering many thousands wending their way along the Cholm Road and entering the gates of the Lublin Camp never to return—and this too was to serve as evidence of the power of the Germans who could do anything they pleased with impunity.

I would like to commence my story with the most "humane" institution in the camp—the camp hospital. In conformity with the strictest medical rules everybody who entered the camp was sent to this hospital for twenty-one days quarantine before being sent to the common barracks. From the point of view of medical science this was absolutely the correct thing to do; but to this only one detail must be added: in conformity with the orders of the Camp Commandant, all the prisoners of war who were put in quarantine here were, without exception, placed in the wards occupied by patients suffering from acute tuberculosis. In every tuberculosis ward, already frightfully congested and containing no less than two hundred severely sick patients, another two hundred prisoners of war were crammed. If we take this tiny detail into consideration we shall not be surprised to learn that of the persons who died a so-called "natural death," from

seventy to eighty per cent died of tuberculosis.

Virtually, the hospital was only a department of the "Extermination Camp." Here the Germans employed killing methods that were sometimes more expeditious than those employed in the common barracks. As for their killing methods in general, these were extremely diverse, and progressively increased in diversity

as the camp grew.

The first place where wholesale extermination was practised was a wooden shed that was put up when building operations at the camp had only just commenced. It stood between two rows of barbed wire entanglements. A wooden beam stretched from one end of the shed to the other from which eight leather nooses constantly hung. Here those who had become too weak to work were put to death. In the early stages there was a shortage of labour at the camp and the SS men did not put people to death merely for fun. They did not kill the able-bodied. They hanged only those who had become enfeebled by hunger and disease. In this respect prisoners of war enjoyed a certain privilege. In this shed only civilian prisoners were hung. Prisoners of war who had become too feeble to work were taken outside the camp in batches and shot. Prisoners of war were hung only when there was not enough to make a whole party and it did not pay to take one or two men out into the woods and shoot them. On such occasions, one or two prisoners of war were hung together with civilian prisoners.

Soon the first primitive crematorium with two furnaces, to which I have already referred, was completed. The building of the gas chamber was somewhat delayed and it was not yet finished. In that period the principal method of exterminating the sick and the feeble was the following: there was a small anteroom attached to the crematorium with a very narrow and low door, so low that when a person entered it he was obliged to lower his head. Two SS men stood at each side of the door armed with short, heavy iron rods. As the person entering the room lowered his head, one of the SS men struck him across the back of his neck with the rod. If he missed his aim for some reason the other SS man struck at the victim. If the latter was not killed but only stunned by the blow it made no difference. The fallen man was deemed to be dead and was thrown into the furnace. I must say that, in general, the rule of the camp was: anybody who falls to the ground and cannot rise is deemed

to be dead.

Another method of killing was to leave exhausted people out in the cold for many hours. To this must be added the so-called evening physical exercise. During this exercise people who were in a general state of exhaustion and wearied to the utmost by a hard day's work were compelled, after evening roll-call, to run for an hour and a half, up to their knees in mud in the autumn, in the snow in the winter, or in the heat of summer, round and round their block, in a circumference of very much over a kilometre. In the morning dead bodies were found lying near the fence all round the block.

These were, so to speak, the common, everyday methods of killing. But the savage beasts who had already tasted human blood were not satisfied with this. To them the killing of their victims was not only a duty, but a form of entertainment. I shall not speak of the "jokes" that were ordinarily indulged in at all the German camps, that is to say, the sniping of prisoners from watch towers and the beating to death of hundreds of starving people when they rushed forward to snatch up some bones thrown to them. Here we shall merely describe some of

the specific "jokes" indulged in at the Lublin Camp.

The first "joke" was that an SS man would go up to a prisoner and accuse him of having infringed camp regulations for which he was to be shot. The prisoner was placed against the wall and the SS man put the muzzle of his revolver to his forchead. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the victim would close his eyes in anticipation of the shot. The SS man would then fire into the air while another SS man would strike the prisoner a hard blow on the temple with a stick. The prisoner would drop to the ground unconscious. When he came to several moments later and opened his eyes the SS men standing around him would laugh and say: "There you are, you are in heaven now! Even here there are Germans! You can't get away from them!" As a rule the victim's skull was cracked and bleeding and the man was unable to rise. He was therefore deemed to be done for and in the end, having had their bit of fun, the Germans shot him.

"Joke" No. 2 was connected with a large pool in one of the camp barracks. A prisoner who was deemed to have infringed the regulations was stripped and thrown into this pool. The victim would try to get out, but the SS men standing around would kick him back into the water with their heavy boots. If he succeeded in avoiding the kicks the man was allowed to get out, but he had to submit to one more test: dress within three seconds. The SS men timed him with their stop watches. Of course, the victim could not dress in the time. He was thrown back into the pool and the torture went on until, at last, he

drowned.

"Joke" No. 3 consisted of the following: a person who was deemed to have infringed the regulations was taken to a gleaming white mangle used for wringing clothes and compelled to place the ends of his fingers between the two rubber rollers. One of the SS men would then turn the handle of the mangle until the victim's arm was drawn between the rollers up to the elbow. The shricks of the victim provided the entertainment for his tormentors. Naturally, a man with a crushed arm was unfit for work and, as such, was put

The "jokes" enumerated above were, so to speak, the common ones practised at this camp, but each SS man had his own favourite jokes. I shall quote only one example, testified to by two witnesses. One day an SS man who was guarding the prisoners employed on building the improved crematorium, a lad about nineteen years of age, without any cause whatever, went up to one of the healthiest and best looking of the workers, ordered him to lower his head and struck him across the neck with all his might with a club. When the man fell the SS man ordered two other prisoners to take him by the legs and to drag him along the ground face downwards in order to bring him to. The man was dragged along the frozen ground for about a hundred metres, but he did not come to, he lay motionless. The SS man then picked up a cement pipe of the kind that was being used for drains and hurled it with all his might upon the prostrate man's back. He picked it up and threw it again, and so on, five times. After the first blow the man on the ground writhed in agony, after the second he became motionless again. After the fifth blow the SS man ordered the body to be turned face upwards and opened the eyelids with a stick. Assuring himself that the man was dead the SS man spat out, lit a cigarette and walked away as if nothing had happened. This was not

an exceptional case of a young fiend yielding to perverted passion. In the autumn and winter of 1943 every SS man considered it quite the thing to boast of having killed no less than five prisoners during the given day.

I would like to say a few words about the women. In some months as many as ten thousand were confined in this camp. They were kept under the same conditions as the men, the only difference being that they were guarded by SS women. I will tell you something about one of these furies who had the rank of sergeant and was the senior wardress in the women's barracks. Unfortunately, I have been unable to ascertain her name. The Russian prisoners called her "lagerseerka."* This "lagerseerka" was never seen without her peitsche, or whip. This was a thong, two metres long, of thick wire with a coating of rubber and a leather coating over that. She was a lean ugly hag, distinguished for her sadism due to some sexual abnormality, and was half insane. During morning and evening rollcall she would pick out from among the emaciated and exhausted women one who had most preserved some traces of beauty and for no reason at all lashed her about her breasts with the thong. When the victim fell to the ground as a result of the blow the "lagerseerka" struck her a second blow between the legs and then kicked her in the same place with her hobnailed boot. Usually the woman thus treated was unable to rise and crawled around for some time leaving a trail of blood. After one or two experiences of this kind women were crippled and soon died. It is hard to talk about this. One can only hope that this frightful creature, and the thousands of her ilk, will be named, found and punished, that is to say, will be compelled to bear at least one-hundredth part of the punish-

Up till now we have talked about the torture and death of those who had been in the camp for a more or less lengthy period. But this camp near Lublin was a real slaughter house, and many people perished here immediately they arrived. During the three years the camp was in existence hundreds of thousands of these came and died. They came to the field of death nearly every day. At night the tractor engines were started in order to drown the rattle of tommy-gun fire and the shricks of those who were being shot. When those tractor engines began to work everybody knew that the hour of death had arrived for thousands of people. I shall say a few words about one of these shootings, the largest of them, which took place on November 3, 1943.

Early in the morning of that day the entire guard was roused and the camp was surrounded by a double ring of Gestapo men. From the Cholm Road through the camp passed an endless column of people, walking five abreast, holding each other by the arms. In all eighteen thousand people passed through the camp that day. Half this number were men, the other half were women and children. Children up to the age of eight walked with the women, while the older ones formed a separate column. They too walked five abreast, holding each other's arms. Two hours after the head of the column had entered the camp bands began to play. Scores of loudspeakers began to emit the deafening strains of the foxtrot and the tango. And they blared all the morning, all day, all the evening,

These eighteen thousand people were shot near the new crematorium in the open field. Several trenches were dug, two metres wide and several hundred metres long. First all the victims were stripped naked and then forced to lie in a row face downwards at the bottom of the trench. Then they were shot from the edge of the trench with tommy guns. Then another row of victims was compelled to lie on the first, and these too were shot. And this went on until the trench was filled. The survivors then covered the trench with earth and went off to the next trench where they themselves were shot. Only the last row of victims was covered up by the Gestapo men. Only a thin layer of earth covered the graves. Next day the Germans disinterred the corpses and with unprecedented haste burnt them in the newly built crematorium. Thus, in one day, the Germans killed eighteen thousand people.

In conclusion reference must be made to two Germans, or rather to a German man and a German woman, who have been taken prisoner. The man had a direct and the woman an indirect connection with what took place at the death camp. The man's name is Theodor Schollen. He has not yet met with the punishment he deserves. He is still alive. He is forty-one years old. He was born in Düsseldorf. In 1937 he joined the National Socialist Party and a unit of the SS. In July, 1942, he arrived at the Lublin Camp and there became a Rottenführer of the SS. He is a butcher by trade and had been employed at a Berlin meat packing plant. In the camp he was employed as a storekeeper. It was his duty to strip the prisoners when they came into the camp; to search them and strip them of the clothes in which they came before they were sent to the gas chamber. He says that he was only a storekeeper and that he joined the SS by mistake when he was drunk. He says that he was exceptionally kind to the prisoners, and he wept when confronted with witnesses who had been in his hands and who reminded him how he, with the aid of a mechanic's wrench, had torn the teeth out of prisoners' jaws in search of precious stones which might have been hidden in the hollows, and had torn the gold crowns from his victims' teeth, as this gold did not go into the official list and could be appropriated by himself. He swears that he was only a sergeant of the SS and that it was the SD, that is to say, the Gestapo, who killed people. Utterly exposed, he lies and weeps such large tears that simple people might even believe him for the first few moments.

Such is the man. Here is the woman. Her name is Edith Schosteck. She is twenty-one, and comes from Central Germany. She arrived in the Lublin Camp two years ago in conformity with the law according to which German girls on reaching the age of nineteen are obliged to work for the benefit of the state. She came for one year, but remained two years. She did not kill and did not beat women on the breasts with whips. She had been only a stenographer working for the German director of the Lublin electric power station and her hands were not stained with blood. But when we begin to interrogate her more closely a slight circumstance comes to light: she and her sister, who was also employed in Lublin, had received, as extra pay, articles from the ghastly clothing store to which I referred above. From this store she and her sister had received lace and shoes. Others, perhaps, received underclothing and dresses. Others again, who had children, received children's shirts and shoes taken from murdered children.

^{*} From the German "Lageraufseherin" - camp overseeress.

And so the last link is fitted into the chain that includes the whole of Germany. At one end of this chain is the butcher Theodor Schollen who tore the teeth out of people's jaws and then pushed the people into the murder chamber, and at the other end is Edith Schosteck who only received the belongings of the victims in payment for her work. These two are at different ends of the chain, but the chain constitutes one whole. Some may have to answer more, others less, but all will have to answer for these crimes. Let them not try to throw the blame upon each other. Let them understand once and for all; all must answer for these crimes.

Ist Byelorussian Front

COMMUNIQUE OF THE POLPRESS AGENCY

At the Majdanek Extermination Camp, near Lublin, the German invaders carried out the wholesale extermination of Soviet prisoners of war and of Polish, French, Bohemian, Jewish, Belgian, Hungarian, Serbian, Greek civilian prisoners and prisoners of other European nationalities confined in that camp.

In view of the fact that in this camp the Germans carried out the wholesale massacre and murder of Soviet prisoners of war, the Polish Committee of National Liberation made the following proposal to the Soviet Government: that a Polish-Soviet Extraordinary Commission be set up for the purpose of investigating the German atrocities in Lublin, and that the Soviet Government should appoint its representatives to it. The Government of the U.S.S.R. accepted this proposal and on its part appointed Professor N. I. Graschenkov, Professor V. I. Prozorovsky and D. I. Kudryavtsev as members of the commission.

The Polish-Soviet Extraordinary Commission, consisting of Mr. Witos, Vice-Chairman of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, Chairman of the Commission, and of the Rev. Dr. Kruszynski, Professor Bialkowski, Procurator of the Appeal Court Balcerzak, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence Szyling-Syngalewicz, Dr. Sommerstein, member of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (representing Poland), and Professor V. I. Prozorovsky, Professor N. I. Graschenkov and D. I. Kudryavtsev (representing the U.S.S.R.), has begun to investigate the German fascist atrocities in Lublin with the object of establishing the identity of and revealing the organizers and direct executors of these crimes.

STATEMENT BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL MOSER, EX-OBERFELDKOMMANDANT 372 OF THE CITY OF LUBLIN

To the Command of the Red Army

Moser, Lieutenant General, ex-Oberfeldkommandant 372 of the City of Lublin.

Statement

I, Hilmar Moser, was born in 1880, in Langenorla, Roda District. I have served in the German Army since 1902. I was promoted to the rank of Major General in 1935 and to the rank of Lieutenant General in 1942. For my fighting services I have been awarded all the marks of distinction prevalent in Germany.

For forty-two years I have always been an honest soldier, have taken part in two world wars, and have been severely wounded.

I have no reasons for hushing or covering up the heinous crimes committed by Hitler, and I regard it as my duty to tell the whole truth about the so-called "Extermination Camp" the Hitlerites established, along the Cholm Road, near Lublin.

At the end of November 1942, I arrived in Lublin in the capacity of Commandant of O.F.K. 372.

About three weeks later my predecessor —General von Altrock—was transferred further East together with his O.F.K.

While transferring his affairs to me, he informed me that there was a concentration camp in Lublin subordinate to the S.D. He stated further that in conformity with Army orders, the Commandant of the O.F.K., representing the armed forces, was strictly forbidden to visit this camp or to make any enquiries about what went on there.

Soon after this, General of Infantry Heinicke, the Commander of the Generalgouvernement Military Area, to whom the Oberfeldkommandantur was subordinate, arrived in Lublin.

He repeated the order which had been communicated to me by General Altrock and also stated that it was strictly forbidden to display any curiosity concerning what took place in the concentration camp.



Tins of "Cyklon."



Photographs discovered among documents belonging to victims of the camp.



Passports belonging to victims of the Extermination Camp.

Among other things he said: "Things there are like red hot iron, which must not be touched."

During the first period of my activities I travelled a great deal in order to make myself familiar with the area under my charge. I tried to obtain further information about the concentration camp and learned the following:

The camp stretched for several kilometres along the southern side of the Cholm Road and was several kilometres deep. I believe that its area was about thirty square kilometres. Several branch railways led direct to the camp from the main railway station. The camp was surrounded by an ordinary barbed wire fence, outside of which a strong guard was posted:

How long the camp had been in existence, I do not know, but I do know

that during my stay in Lublin it was considerably enlarged.

While choosing positions for the defence zones of the "Lublin Fortified Area" which ran along the eastern border of the concentration camp (outside the fence), I and other officers who were superintending the work, once penetrated beyond the outer fence of the camp for about thirty metres.

I had no intention of inspecting the camp because, as I have already said,

this was strictly forbidden by the higher authorities.

Nevertheless, I learned a great deal about what was taking place at the

camp.

Everybody in Lublin called this camp the Concentration Camp, or Jewish Camp, because, at first, it was mainly Jews who were confined there. Subsequently, representatives of the most diverse nationalities, so-called political criminals, among whom were Germans, were confined there.

In the winter of 1943-44 a large number of the prisoners—among whom, to my great indignation, were women and children—were exterminated there.

The number killed was round about 100,000.

Part of the unfortunate people were shot and part put to death by means

of gas.

Furthermore, I was told more than once that condemned people in the Extermination Camp were compelled to perform extremely heavy work, far beyond their strength, and were goaded on by extremely cruel beatings.

I learned with indignation that before they were put to death the prison-

ers in this camp were tortured and tormented.

Last spring, an incalculable number of corpses were exhumed and burnt in furnaces especially built for the purpose, evidently with the object of wiping out the traces of the crimes committed by Hitler's orders.

These huge furnaces were built of bricks and iron and constituted a crematorium of a large capacity. Often the stench from the corpses reached the city, at least the east end of it, and consequently, even less informed people

realized what was going on in that frightful place.

I obtained information about this frightful camp in conversation with the following persons: General von Altrock—my predecessor as Oberfeldkommandant; General Renner—ex-Commander of the 174th Reserve Division in Lublin; Major Gleisner—Commander of the 99lst Landesschutzenbataillon; Dr. Klaus and Dr. Osor—Chiefs of the District Department of Food and Agriculture, and Major Hartmann, who for nearly five years had been my adjutant and confidential agent.

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Facsimile of p. 1 of Lieutenant General Moser's Statement on the Lublin "Extermination Camp."

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Facsimile of p. 6 of Lieutenant General Moser's Statement on the Lublin "Extermination Camp."

I, myself, requested Major Hartmann to ascertain what was going on at the camp, and he kept me well informed.

The information I received from other persons was eloquently supplemented by the unbearable stench of corpses which reached my nostrils more than once.

I cannot find words with which to express my indignation at these unprecedented crimes, and I am convinced that every decent German will repudiate the government which issued orders for this organized, wholesale murder.

The fact that the activities of the Extermination Camp were directed by the Hitler government is proved by the visit Himmler himself paid to the

camp when he came to Lublin in the summer of 1943.

I consider it my bounden duty as a General and a soldier of forty-two years' service, who has participated in two world wars, who has been severely wounded and, finally, as the last Oberfeldkommandant of the Lublin District, to help to secure the fullest exposure of all the unprecedented crimes that were committed in the concentration camp. I call upon the soldiers of the Wehrmacht who served in Lublin under my command to give all the information in their possession concerning the crimes committed in the Lublin Extermination Camp.

MOSER
Lieutenant General

29th of August, 1944.

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München I, myself, requested Major Hartmann to ascertain what was going on at the camp, and he kept me well informed.

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