THE FACTORY NEAR LUBLIN

by KONSTANTIN SIMONOV

NINEPENCE

THE DEATH FACTORY

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With extracts from further accounts by War Correspondents and Nine Full-page Illustrations

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Construction began in the early months of 1941. At first the services of a number of Polish engineers and labourers were utilised; soon after were added Polish and Jewish prisoners-of-war captured in the German-Polish campaign of 1939. These constituted the principal labour force.

In August, 1941, there arrived to serve as labourers a first batch of 1,000 Russian prisoners-of-war. By this time the first "field," or first "block," as the Germans called it, was already half-built, ten of the hutments being completed.

The number of persons engaged in the construction grew steadily. Soon after the Russians there followed a large contingent of Czech and Polish political prisoners, transferred from other camps where most of them had been confined since 1933. In the autumn of 1941 the first 2.000 Jews rounded up in the Lublin ghetto arrived. These were followed in December, 1941, by 700 Poles from Lublin Castle. Then came 400 Polish peasants who had fallen behind in their payment of taxes imposed by the Germans. In April, 1942, 12,000 persons—Jews and political prisoners—arrived from Slovakia. All through May batch after batch was brought in from Bohemia-Moravia, Austria and Germany. Throughout this entire period the construction work proceeded at a high pitch of intensity, and by May the hutments were finished. These were designed to provide accommodation for 40,000 persons.

May, 1942, marked the completion of the first stage in the history of the camp.

It had been a period of feverish construction with the purpose of increasing the total accommodation.

THE "VERNICHTUNGSLAGER"

Now that hutments for 40,000 persons, together with a number of "main," "subsidiary" and "special" buildings, had been erected, now that everything had been surrounded by double rows of barbed wire, most of it electrified, the Gestapo decided that the camp was ready to start functioning.

It continued to be enlarged further and would have expanded endlessly if Lublin had not been freed by the Red Army, but the rate of increase henceforward became slower. From May, 1942, onward building operations were continued gradually and more unhurriedly, all sorts of improvements being introduced.

In this month also the camp, which in official documents was styled "S.S. TROOP CONCENTRATION CAMP LUBLIN," began to be referred to orally and in letters and other unofficial

documents as the "VERNICHTUNGSLAGER"—that is, the "EXTERMINATION CAMP."

One and a quarter miles outside Lublin, on an open plain lying to the right of the Chelm highway, the Germans had built the biggest "Death Factory" in all Europe, a factory with the function of exterminating the maximum number of prisoners-of-war and political prisoners as simply, expeditiously and economically as possible.

Its organisation was exemplary in every respect and, while any of the methods forming part of the system of the Lublin "Extermination Camp" might have been found separately in other German death factories, nowhere else were these products of German fiendish ingenuity represented so inclusively and all-embracingly.

We are familiar with the institutions in Sabibor and Bezhetsa, where the victims were transported by a narrow-gauge railway to a remote and deserted field and there first shot and then cremated. We are familiar with the camps in Dachau and Oswiecim and the "Grosslazaret" in Slavuta, where prisoners-of-war and political prisoners were gradually eliminated by maltreatment, starvation and disease.

In the Lublin Extermination Camp all these methods were combined.

Here in hutments there lived tens of thousands of prisoners constantly employed in building, rebuilding and perfecting their prison. Here also were thousands of prisoners-of-war, who, subsequently to autumn, 1942, were not allowed to work and were placed on a ration even smaller than that supplied to other prisoners, dying in consequence at a frightful rate from hunger and disease.

Here were fields where thousands and tens of thousands of persons were burned on funeral pyres or in furnaces after being in the camp only for a few hours or days, according to the size of the batch in which they came, only long enough for them to have been searched and stripped naked.

Here were murder vans of the usual type, as well as solidly constructed concrete casements where victims were asphyxiated with "Zyklon" gas.

Here bodies were burned in the most primitive Indian cremation style—a row of logs, then a row of corpses, then another row of logs and then another row of corpses. Or else in simply constructed furnaces, shaped liked cauldrons, as well as in perfected up-to-the-minute furnaces, designed for blitz cremation.

Here people were shot in ditches, or killed by a blow from an iron rod on the back of the neck. Here people were drowned in artificial ponds, or hanged on gallows of a variety of types, from the simple gibbet with crossbar to an up-to-date portable scaffold furnished with pulleys and a flywheel.

This was a regular factory of death, where the daily output of slaughter was governed by only two factors: the number of persons entering the camp and the quantity of labour power required to be set aside for the never-ending construction improvements.

The total number of prisoners who perished here will no doubt be ascertained later. However, certain figures that bear upon it can be computed now.

The camp functioned for over three years in all.

When Red Army troops entered Lublin they found in the camp only a few hundred persons. According to eye-witnesses, when the Soviet forces approached Kovel last spring, the Germans evacuated from the camp from 12,000 to 16,000 persons. Even if we accept the higher figure, this means that fewer than 17,000 persons were in the camp toward the close of its existence. (The average number of persons confined in the camp at any one time during 1943, as revealed by the daily reports filed in the office of the administration, was 40,000, fluctuating only a few thousands above and below that figure.)

If we take the total number of persons who entered the camp during the three years or more of its existence, and deduct from it the 17,000 who were there near its end, we get a remainder of several hundred thousand. This must be approximately the number slaughtered of actual inmates of the camp, not counting those who passed through it on their way to death without being registered as prisoners.

The figures for those entering are taken from the official records of the camp administration covering the period of the camp's existence.

VICTIMS ARRIVE

In narrating the arrivals of prisoners during the early stages of construction of the camp, I stopped short at May, 1942.

In April and May of that year large contingents of Jews from the "ghettos" in Lublin and its neighbourhood began to arrive. In the course of that summer 18,000 more were brought from Slovakia and Bohemia-Moravia. In July, 1942, arrived the first contingent of Poles accused of guerrilla activities. There were 15,000 in this first batch alone. In that same month arrived

a large contingent of political prisoners from Germany. In December, 1942, several thousand Jews and Greeks were transferred to the Lublin camp from Oswiecim Camp near Cracow. On January 17, 1943, 1,500 Polish males and 400 Polish women arrived from Warsaw. On February 2, 950 Poles came from Lvov, and 4,000 Poles and Ukrainians from Taloma and Tarnopol. In May, 1943, a contingent of 60,000 arrived from the Warsaw Ghetto.

All through the summer and autumn of 1943, at intervals of a few days, contingents, not one of them consisting of fewer than a thousand prisoners, kept pouring in from all the principal German concentration camps, Achsenhausen, Dachau, Flossenburg, Neuhammer, Grossenrosen, Buchenwald.

It was possible to recognise at a glance from which camp each successive batch of newcomers had come—every camp laid its own distinctive imprint on its prisoners.

At Oswiecim, for example, it was the custom to shave the heads of all prisoners, including women prisoners, and their identification numbers, instead of being hung from their necks, were cauterised on their hands. Arrivals from Buchenwald were unable to stand sunlight. At the branch of that camp called "Dora" was a subterranean factory for the manufacture of the notorious V1—the Flying Bomb. The prisoners forced to work in it were Slavs exclusively—mostly Poles and Russians. They were never allowed up to the surface, and after six months or so of work underground their sight would have become so enfeebled that they were of no further use, and they would be sent off in batches by the Germans to the Lublin Extermination Camp.

I have enumerated only a few of the figures and named only a few of the camps from which the prisoners came. I have not attempted to make any sort of full calculation of the number of persons killed, but only to paint just a part of the picture. To this I think a few words should be added regarding the national composition of the prisoners.

The largest number of those who met their deaths in the camp were Poles. They included hostages, genuine or alleged guerrillas, and enormous numbers of peasants, mainly peasants evicted from areas selected for colonisation by German settlers.

Second to the Poles come the great numbers of Russians and Ukrainians. Equally immense was the number of Jews, brought to the camp to be exterminated from literally every country in Europe from Poland to Holland. Then come impressive figures of Frenchmen, Italians, Dutch and Greeks, running into several thousands each. Fewer, but nevertheless considerable, were the numbers of Serbs, Belgians, Croats, Hungarians

and Spaniards—these last evidently from among the Republicans seized in France. Finally, among the personal documents of the victims have been found some belonging to the most diverse other nationalities—Norwegians, Swiss, Turks and even Chinese.

In one of the rooms of the camp offices, its floor literally carpeted with documents, identification papers and passports belonging to the victims, I myself, picking up papers at random, found in about ten minutes personal documents belonging to nationals of practically every country in Europe.

Here are some:

The passport of Sofia Dusevich of the village of Konstantinovka, Kiev Region, Ukrainian working woman, born 1917.

A passport stamped "Republique Française," Eugene Durame, French metal worker, born le Havre, September 22, 1888.

The certificate issued by the elementary school at Banjaluka to Ralo Zunic, Moslem, marked "Dobar ('Good') for Conduct, Natural Science and Penmanship."

A passport issued on January 2, 1941, in Croatia to Jatiranovic, born in Zagreb.

The passport of Jakob Borghardt, born Rotterdam, November 10, 1918.

The identification papers of Eduardo Alfredo Sak, born 1914 in Milan at Via Plimo No. 29, "height 5 ft. 10 in., stout build, no distinguishing marks."

A German passport issued to Ferdinand Lothmann, engineer, of Berlin, born August 19, 1872.

The labour book belonging to Zygmunt Remak, Polish worker, born March 20, 1924, in Cracow.

A Chinese document with a photograph and with lettering that I could not decipher.

Here were documents smeared with blood and damaged by water, torn in halves and trampled underfoot.

This gruesome file of paper is a grave mound of all Europe compressed within four walls.

What frightful discoveries bearing upon the fate of persons in all walks of life, and from all the corners of Europe, may not be disclosed when all this evidence has been delved into and all the living witnesses have been examined?

A syou drive along the Chelm highway the outlines of numerous low, grey-roofed buildings loom up on your right, about three hundred yards from the road.

These buildings are arranged in precise rows and separated by barbed-wire fences. You get the impression of a fair-sized town, with accommodation for some tens of thousands of people.

You turn off the road and drive through a gateway in the barbed-wire fence, past rows of neat huts with trim front gardens, rustic armchairs and benches.

Here the guards and officers in charge of the camp were quartered. Here, too, was the "Soldatenheim," a smallish hut which served as a brothel for the guards. The women were selected exclusively from among the prisoners, and as soon as any one of them became pregnant she was sent to be done away with.

Further along the drive are the sheds in which the clothing taken from the prisoners was disinfected. The disinfectant was introduced into the sheds through pipes penetrating the roofs and ceilings. When the disinfectant had been introduced, the pipes were closed and the doors hermetically sealed.

These sheds, with their walls of rough planks and their light doors, are too flimsy in structure to suggest that they might have been used for any but their apparent purpose. But a little further away is another disinfecting chamber, built on entirely different principles. It is a room about eighteen feet square and a little over six feet high. Walls, ceiling and floor are all built of solid grey concrete. The other structures were equipped with shelves on which to lay the clothing. There are no shelves here.

This room is absolutely bare. A single large steel door hermetically closes its entrance. This door is fastened from outside by means of impressive steel bars. In the walls of this concrete vault are three apertures. In two of them are fitted pipes which lead out into the open. The third aperture is a spy-hole, a small square window barred on the inside by a stout steel grid fitted into the concrete. A thick pane of glass covering the outer side of the aperture is far enough back to be out of reach of anyone trying to touch it through the grid.

What is on the other side of this spy-hole? To answer this question we leave the chamber and find that next to it is another, a smaller, room, also built of concrete.

It is into this room that the spy-hole leads. Here there is an electric light switch. And here, too, on the floor stand several hermetically sealed cylindrical tins on each of which are inscribed the word "Zyklon" and, in smaller letters, the words "For Special Use in the Eastern Territories."

It was the contents of these tins which were poured through the pipes entering the chamber. This was done after the room had been filled with people.

The people were stripped naked before they were thrust into the room, and they were packed so tight that they took up little space. Into this area of some thirty-six or so square yards would be jammed 250 persons at a time. The steel door was then closed upon them and its edges were sealed with clay. Specially trained operators—wearing gas masks—then poured the "Zyklon" out of the cylindrical tins into the chamber. On coming into contact with the oxygen in the air, the small, bluish, innocent-looking crystals began to generate poisonous gases which affect all centres of the human organism simultaneously.

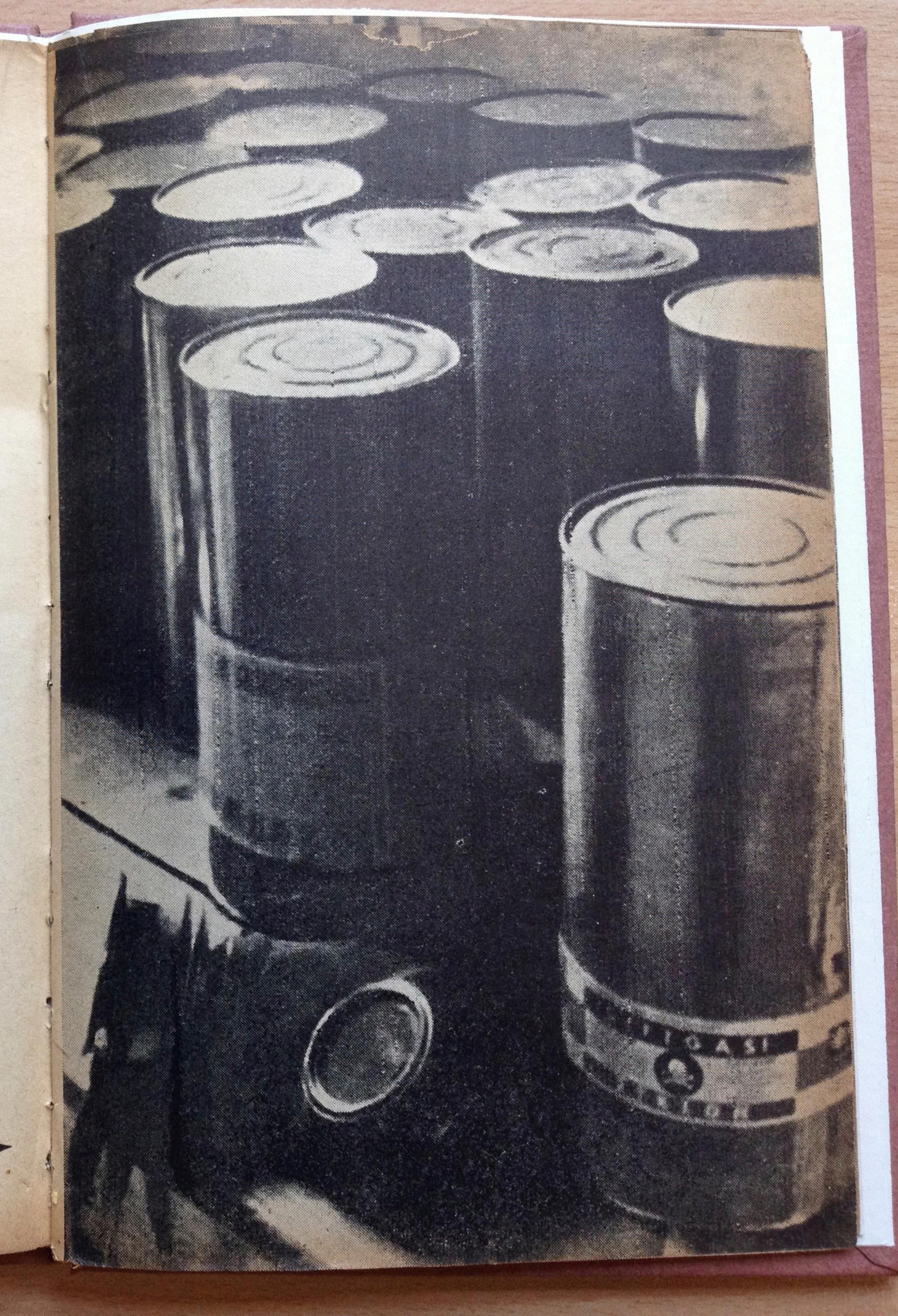
THE SPY-HOLE

The S.S. man in command of the squad then turned on the switch in the next room, illuminating the poison chamber, and watched through the spy-hole all the stages of the asphyxiation process, which varied in duration, according to the statements of the witnesses, between two and ten minutes.

He was able to watch in safety the action of the gas and the faces of the dying. The spy-hole was set in the wall at roughly the height of the human face. He had no need to peer down on the victims, for they were packed so tight that they could not fall as they died, but were bound to continue standing in an upright position.

It should be noted, by the way, that "Zyklon" really is a disinfectant substance. It was, indeed, used also for the disinfection of the clothes in the neighbouring sheds. Thus at a superficial glance its presence might appear fair and above-board. Its lethal character depended entirely upon its use poured in quantity into the death chamber.

We move on a few hundred paces and come to a vacant site where, as plenty of indications remain to show, some sort of structure once stood. In fact, until the autumn of last year there was a crematorium here. That autumn there was installed another, a more highly perfected, crematorium, which I shall describe later, and this one was dismantled.



This first one was primitively constructed and on too small a scale, indeed, its capacity was well below that of the skilfully designed and executed gas chamber.

It was nothing but a large cement-floored shed, with two huge furnaces, each on a brick foundation, arranged lengthwise in the shed. These furnaces disposed of bodies far too slowly. True, they were not intended to reduce the corpses completely to ashes, but it took at least two hours for the bodies they dealt with to fall apart into charred bones. The two together could handle fourteen bodies simultaneously. In other words, this first crematorium could not handle more than 170 bodies in twenty-four hours, whereas the gas chamber could dispose of at least 250 persons per day, even with only one "gassing" as they called it here.

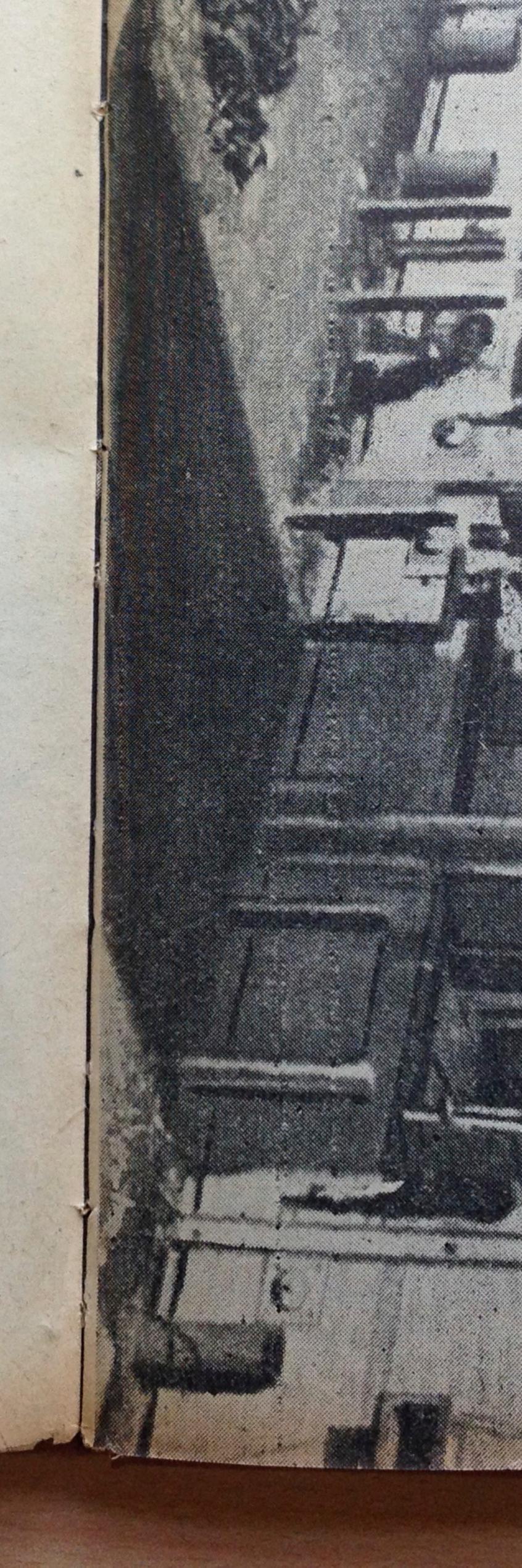
Consequently, before the new crematorium was built, on days when large numbers of persons were exterminated, a proportion of the bodies was removed in trucks to a field outside the camp and there buried.

The fence surrounding the camp consists of two rows of thirteen-foot-high posts strung with barbed wire, which also projects to form a horizontal screen above them. The two rows of posts are about six-and-a-half feet apart, and the space between is occupied by a third set of wires strung diagonally from the tops of the first row to the bottoms of the second. These intermediate wires are fitted to insulators and carry an electric charge powerful enough to kill a man, thus precluding all possibility of escape.

Originally the fence was built in its present form, with the intermediate wiring, but without this being electrified. The Germans electrified it as a sequel to the following episode:—

In May, 1942, a party of 17 Russian prisoners-of-war, who had been sent to the nearby Krembiecki Forest to bury persons shot in the camp, killed seven Germans with their spades and ran away. Two of them were caught, the other 15 escaped. The 150 Russian prisoners-of-war remaining—this is all that were left by then out of 1,000 brought to the camp in August, 1941were thereupon transferred to the blocks in which the prisoners were confined. Some of these prisoners-of-war, seeing that they must inevitably perish if they stayed, decided to attempt an escape one evening towards the end of June. Collecting all available blankets, and laying them five on top of one another, they formed a sort of bridge across the barbed wire and got away. The night was dark and only a few of them were shot; the rest managed to escape. The Russians remaining in the camp, to the number of 50, were immediately led out, made to lie on the ground, and executed with tommy-guns.

". . . a tall, square, brick smoke-stack rising from a low rectangular brick building. This is the improved crematorium."



But the Germans did not leave it at that. They hastily electrified the fences of four out of the five blocks. The fifth was the block in which were kept female prisoners, and doubtless because the Germans considered it hardly to be expected that women could escape in this way, the fences of this block were not electrified.

We now reach another auxiliary block. It is less carefully fenced around than the blocks intended for accommodation of the living. This is not surprising, for here were brought only the dead and the half-dead, or persons for the purpose of being killed, and these were escorted by a heavy guard.

Behind this fence no one but the S.S. men and the crematorium operators lived longer than an hour.

In the middle of an empty field we see a tall, square, brick smoke-stack rising from a low rectangular brick building. This is the improved crematorium. It is preserved intact just as it was built.

A CORPSE STORE-ROOM

A little farther on are the remains of another large brick structure. During the few hours that elapsed between the time that the news was received that the Red Army had broken through and the time that our troops arrived, the German camp personnel tried to obliterate the traces of their crimes. They had not time enough to blow up the crematorium, but they set fire to its auxiliary building. However, the evidence remains.

The air is filled with an overpowering stench of decaying bodies. The auxiliary building of the crematorium consisted of three principal chambers. One of them is filled with semi-charred clothing. This was the clothing belonging to the last batch of victims, which had not yet been removed to the warehouses.

Of the next chamber only part of one wall is still standing. Into this wall are fitted several pipes of smaller diameter than those in the gas chamber already described. This was also a chamber for effecting asphyxiation, whether by means of "Zyklon" or some other gas has not yet been ascertained. On days when the slaughter was exceptionally heavy and the main gas chamber could not cope with the entire job, a proportion of the victims was brought here to be gassed.

The third, and largest, chamber is evidently where the corpses were stacked, awaiting their turn to be incinerated. The entire floor is covered with charred skeletons, skulls and bones. This is not the result of a regular cremation, but of the fire

"In the spaces in front of each of the furnaces !

exposure that resulted from the excavation of the pits in which their victims were buried there, the Germans in autumn, 1943, themselves undertook extensive exhamations on the territory of the Lublin Camp. In order to obliterate the traces of their slaughter they dug up the semi-decayed bodies of the people they had shot and buried in an enormous number of pits around the camp, and then burned them in the crematorium.

The ashes and incinerated bones from the furnaces were then poured back into the pits from which the bodies had been exhumed. In one of these pits which has been opened a layer of cinders and ashes has been found more than three feet deep.

Beyond the camp there is another block which was not yet complete. Inside the barbed-wire fence surrounding it are only the brick foundations on which the walls had not yet risen. Only one shed here had been completed. There were no bunks in it. Nobody lived in it, and yet it remains perhaps the most gruesome evidence of all of what went on in the camp.

This shed, several yards long and wide, is half-filled to a height of more than six feet throughout its length and breadth with the footwear of persons executed here during the past three years.

How many pairs of footwear there are here it would be hard to say. There may be a million, there may be more. They spill over out of the hut through door and windows. At one spot, the weight of them has thrust out part of the wall, which has fallen outwards together with piles of shoes.

Every form of footwear is to be found here, torn Russian military top-boots, Polish soldiers' boots, men's shoes, women's slippers and, what is grimmest of all, thousands upon thousands of pairs of children's footwear, bootees, shoes, sandals, ten-year-old children's, eight-year-olds', six-year-olds', and even babies' shoes.

It is hard to imagine anything more gruesome than this sight, the silent witness of the destruction of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. If one climbs over the mountains of shoes to the rear part of the shed one realises the meaning and significance of this monstrous storehouse. Here are stacked in separate piles tens of thousands of soles, heels, vamps and leather clippings. Here were cut out and sorted parts of shoes that as a whole were unfit for wear—soles, heels, vamps—all sorted separately. Like everything else in the death factory, this storehouse was organised on strictly utilitarian lines. Nothing belonging to the slaughtered victims was to be wasted, neither clothes nor shoes, neither bones nor ashes.

The last department of the camp which I have to describe is housed in a large building in the town of Lublin.

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In its dozens of rooms, large and small, was organised a sort of sorting warehouse of everything removed from the massacred victims. In one room you may see tens of thousands of women's dresses, in another tens of thousands of men's trousers, in a third tens of thousands of sets of underlinen, 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 hats and caps.

I spoke to German prisoners who were passing by the crematorium and the ditches filled with corpses. They denied having had any hand in the matter. They declared it had been the work of the S.S. troops. But when I later questioned one of the S.S. men who had worked in the camp, he answered me that the wholesale slaughter had been the work not of the S.S. but of the Security Service, in other words, of the Gestapo. The Gestapo men, on the other hand, insist that it was the work of the S.S.

I do not know which of them did the killing, which did the cremation, who stripped the shoes from the victims and who sorted the women's dresses from the children's clothing.

But when I gaze at this warehouse it seems to me that the nation that produced those whose handiwork this is must bear full responsibility, and the full weight of the anathemas, for what its representatives have done.

I HAVE related the history of the Lublin "Extermination Camp," and have told what it looks like now. It only remains to recount the evidence of the witnesses with whom I spoke. This is perhaps only one hundredth part of the evidence that will eventually become available to the Investigating Commission.

I talked with the Russian prisoner-of-war doctor Barychev who served as head doctor of the camp infirmary, with civilian engineers and workers who were employed in the building of the camp, and with persons who were confined in the camp either as prisoners-of-war or as ordinary prisoners, as well as with S.S. men who were members of the camp guard.

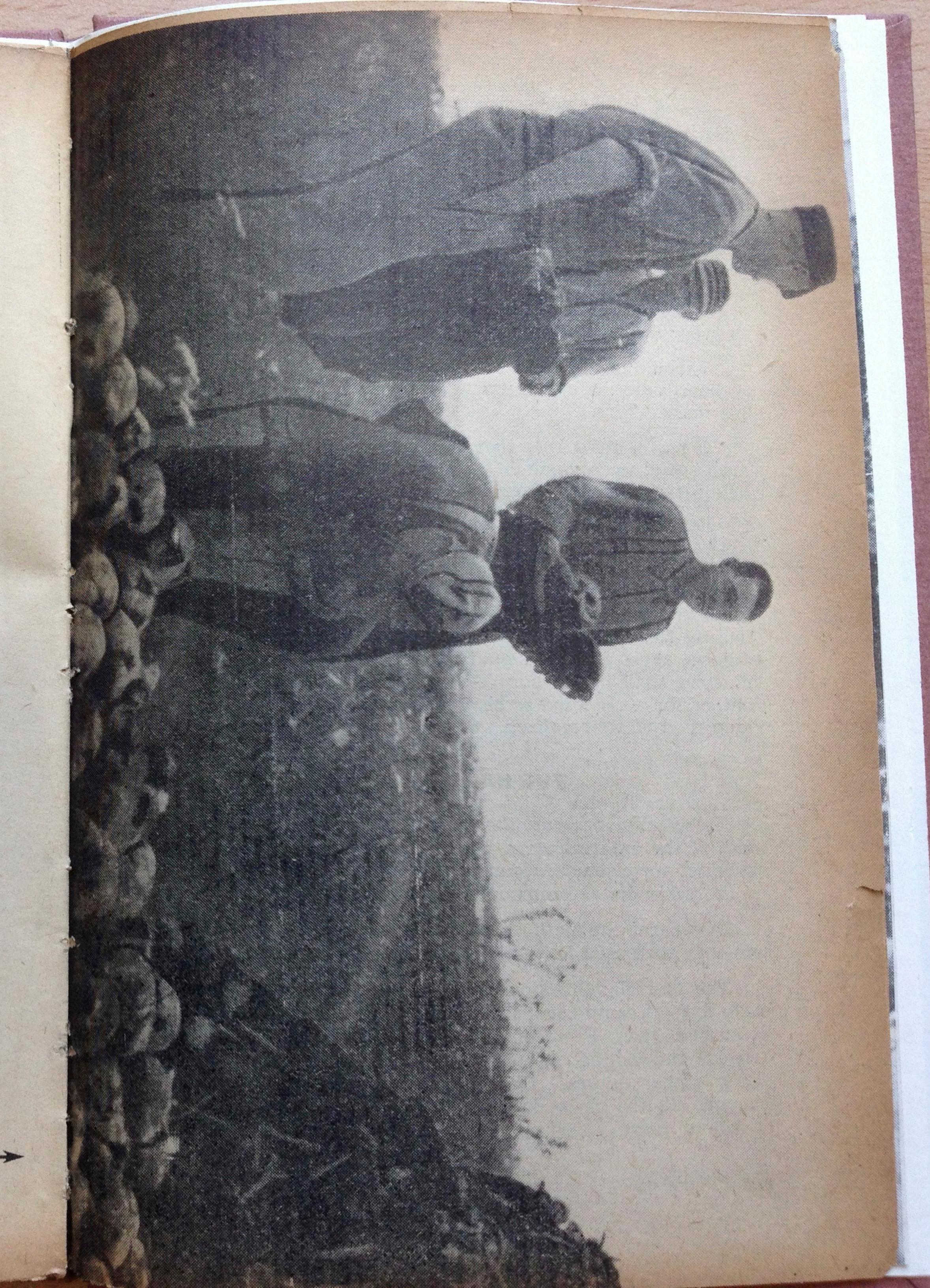
From all these I obtained a general picture of life in the "Extermination Camp" which requires to be related here.

The primary premise that governed the actions of the S.S. men who ran the camp was that everyone brought there, whether a prisoner-of-war or an ordinary prisoner, whether a Russian, a Ukrainian, a Pole, a White Russian, a Jew, a Frenchman or a Greek, would sooner or later be exterminated and hence would never leave the camp alive to relate what took place.

This basic assumption underlay the conduct of the guards as well as the methods of extermination used in the camp. Dead men tell no tales. They cannot relate details, or support such details with documentary proofs. Therefore no proofs would be available, and that to the Germans was the main thing.

Naturally, rumours about the death camp might reach the ears of people in the neighbourhood, but this did not worry the Germans. They felt themselves masters in Poland. The Polish "Government-General" they regarded as land conquered forever. Those who remained alive within its borders should, quite properly, live in terror of the Germans, and hence the gruesome rumours that spread all over Poland about the Lublin camp were even desirable from the German's point of view.

The stench of corpses which, on the days when slaughter was heavy, permeated all the camp's surroundings and made people even as far off as Lublin cover their faces with their



handkerchiefs, would help to terrify all the inhabitants around. It would impress all Poland with the strength of German rule, and with the horrors to which anyone attempting resistance was doomed.

The pillar of smoke that for weeks and months on end rose from the tall chimney of the main crematorium was visible from afar. But this also did not worry the Germans. Like the stench of corpses, this smoke was also a means of inspiring terror. Long columns, sometimes of thousands of persons, were marched in sight of everyone along the Chelm highway, entering the gate of the Lublin camp never to emerge again. This, too, was a proof of the power of the Germans and showed that they could do what they liked and no one could call them to account.

I should like to begin this part of my story with what would ordinarily be the most humane institution of a camp—the camp infirmary.

It was a strict rule that all prisoners arriving in the camp must spend twenty-one days quarantine in the infirmary before being passed on to the general huts.

This was assuredly in accordance with sound medical principle. But one detail must be added: all prisoners-of-war sent to the infirmary for quarantine were, by order of the Camp Commandant, assigned to huts whose inmates included patients in an active stage of tuberculosis. In every overcrowded hut housing 200 consumptives, 200 other prisoners were packed to undergo their period of quarantine. If we bear this detail in mind we shall not be surprised to learn that from 70 to 80 per cent. of these recorded as having died a "natural death" at the camp died of tuberculosis.

THE HANGING-SHED

Essentially speaking, the infirmary was only another department of the extermination machine, one where the methods of slaughter were sometimes more expeditious than those practised on the prisoners accommodated in the general huts.

In general, the methods of slaughter were many and various, and they increased in variety as the camp grew.

The first slaughterhouse was a wooden booth built in the early days of camp construction and situated between two rows of barbed wire. From one end of the booth to the other, just beneath the ceiling, stretched a long beam from which hung eight leather nooses. Here all who became enfeebled were hanged. In the early days of the camp there was a shortage of labour power, and the S.S. men did not therefore destroy

healthy persons merely for their own amusement. They hanged only those who had been weakened by hunger or disease.

Only ordinary prisoners were hanged in this booth. War prisoners enjoyed a privileged status. When they became too enfeebled to be able to work they were led in groups outside the camp and shot. War prisoners were hanged only when there were too few ready for extermination to form a party. It was not worth while to send only one or two under escort into the forest. So then they were hanged together with the ordinary prisoners.

Soon was built the first primitive crematorium with only two furnaces, described above. There was, however, some delay with the gas chamber, and at this period the principal method of slaughtering the feeble and sick was as follows:—

A small room was built on to the crematorium with an entrance so narrow and low that when a man was pushed into it he was obliged to lower his head. Within the entrance, one on each side, stood two S.S. men, each holding a short, heavy iron rod. When the victim squeezed through the door with his head bent, one of the S.S. men hit him across the back of the neck with his iron rod. If the first S.S. man missed, the other struck. Usually this sufficed to kill the victim, but if he only fell stunned this made no difference. He was counted as dead and put into the furnace. It should be noted as the general rule in the camp that any prisoner who fell to the ground and was unable to rise was considered dead.

Sometimes persons in the last stages of exhaustion were killed by being kept in the cold for hours on end. To this method should be added what was called "evening exercise." Persons whom the day's work had left exhausted were obliged after evening inspection to run round and round the living block—a distance of nearly a mile—for an hour and a half, through mud up to the knees, through snow in winter, or in the burning heat of summer. In the morning the dead bodies lying along the fence would be collected.

These were, so to speak, the ordinary everyday methods of killing.

But the beasts who had tasted human blood were not satisfied with regular methods. Killing became not only their job, but also their sport.

I shall not dwell upon the forms of amusement common to all German camps, such as picking off a man from a watchtower with a rifle, or beating to death hundreds of starving persons who fling themselves on a bone thrown to them. I shall mention only some of the forms of "fun" peculiar to Lublin camp.

The first practical joke consisted of the following: an S.S. man would pick on one of the prisoners and accuse him of violating the camp rules, telling him that he was immediately to be shot. The prisoner would be stood against a wall and the S.S. man would press a revolver to his forehead. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the victim, anticipating the shot at any instant, would close his eyes. Then the S.S. man would fire into the air, while another S.S. man, who had crept up towards the prisoner unperceived, would simultaneously hit him violently on the head with a board. The prisoner would drop to the ground unconscious.

When the prisoner came to a short while later and opened his eyes, the S.S. men would be standing over him laughing and saying: "Well, here you are in the next world. Disappointed? You see, there are Germans here as well. You can't escape them anywhere."

If the victim, who was usually covered in blood from the blow with the board, was unable to rise, he was considered as good as dead and finished off with a shot anyway.

"Practical Joke" No. 2 was associated with a large reservoir near one of the barracks of the camp.

The prisoner, after being blamed for something, would be made to strip and pushed into the reservoir. When he tried to climb out of the water, S.S. men standing on the edge would kick him back. If he managed to clamber out despite their kicks, he would be given exactly three seconds to dress. The process was supervised with a watch. If he were not completely dressed in three seconds, and, of course, no one could manage to be, he would be thrown back into the water and the rigmarole would be repeated again and again until the victim drowned from sheer exhaustion.

THE WHITE WRINGER

Joke No. 3 also invariably terminated in the death of its butt. A prisoner picked out for some misdemeanour would be led up to a large and shining white wringer used by the camp laundry, and made to place the tips of his fingers between the heavy rubber rollers. Then an S.S. man, or at times a prisoner forced into doing it, would turn the handle. The human arm up to the elbow, or even up to the shoulder, would be literally mangled. The cries of the tortured prisoner would evoke laughter on the part of the S.S. men. And when the game was over, since a person with his arm smashed and broken is not capable of work, the victim would just naturally have to be exterminated.

These forms of fun were general. But some individual S.S. men had also their own individual ways of enjoying themselves. I shall give only one example, corroborated by two witnesses.

"Thousands of people from Lublin have come to >



An S.S. man engaged in supervising the building workers, a lout of 19, came up to the healthiest and most handsome looking man among those working, ordered him to bend his head and then, for no reason whatever, hit him with all his force on the neck with a rod. When the man fell the S.S. man ordered two other prisoners to take the victim by the legs and drag him along, face downwards, until he came to. When the victim had been dragged over the frozen ground for about a hundred yards and had regained consciousness, the S.S. man grabbed an iron sewerage pipe, hurled it at the prostrate man, picked it up and then hurled it at him again, repeating this five times. After the first blow the man writhed in agony, after the second he was motionless, after the fifth the S.S. man ordered him to be turned face upward and opened his eyelids with a stick. When he was certain that the man was dead, the S.S. man spat, lit a cigarette and went off as if nothing had happened.

Incidentally, such actions were done not only for the sake of the personal amusement of the doers. During the autumn and winter of 1943 every S.S. man considered his duty to be able to boast that he had killed each day no fewer than five prisoners.

I should like to say a few words about the women prisoners. In some months, when the camp was especially full, there were as many as 10,000 of them at a time. They lived under the same conditions as the men prisoners, with the one difference that they were guarded by S.S. women.

I shall tell here of one of these harpies, who held the rank of non-commissioned officer, and served as senior warden of the women's barracks.

Unfortunately her name is not known as yet, as everybody who was heard addressing her called her "Schwester," or by the German name of her office, "Lagerwaerter."

This "Lagerschwester" never appeared without her twoyard-long flexible whip of thick rubber, with a leather thong bound round with wire. A gaunt ugly woman, she distinguished herself by her sadism, the result of some sexual abnormality. She was half mad. At the morning or evening roll-call she would inspect the rows of wretched, starved and exhausted women prisoners and, selecting one who had retained some faint semblance of beauty, would raise her whip and strike the victim on the breasts. When the victim dropped to the ground the "Schwester" would aim a second blow with her whip between the victim's legs, and finish up with a savage kick in the same place with her hob-nailed boot.

She would repeat this several times. Usually the victim was unable to get up and would crawl along the ground, leaving behind her a trail of blood. The prisoners so treated would soon be crippled and die. It is hard to speak of this. It only remains to be hoped that this S.S. woman, this horrible creature and the thousands like her, will be named, discovered and executed.

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"... the anger of the people."



So far we have spoken of the torment and deaths only of those who were kept as prisoners in the camp for a given space of time. But the Lublin camp was a real factory of death and

many perished as soon as they arrived there.

Hundreds of thousands in this category passed through the camp of death during the three years of its existence. Almost every day batches of them were herded to the death fields. At night tractor engines were started running to drown the rattle of the sub-machine guns and the cries of the people being shot. When the tractors started roaring, everybody in the camp knew that the hour of death had come for thousands of people.

I shall say a few words only about these executions, limiting myself to a description of the largest, which took place on

November 3, 1943.

Early in the morning all the guards were on the alert and the camp was surrounded by a double cordon of S.S. troops. Into the camp from the Chelm highway poured an endless column of people. They walked hand in hand, five in a row. Altogether 18,000 passed through the gates that day.

Half of this number were men and the other half were women and children. The men marched apart from the women and children. The children up to eight walked with the women, the older children marched in a separate column. They too walked five in a row, hand in hand.

Two hours after the head of the column had entered the gates, music began to blare over the entire camp and the country-side around. From several dozen loud-speakers came the deafening strains of fox-trots and tangos. The radio blared all morning, all afternoon, all evening, and all through the night.

The whole 18,000 were shot in an open field, near the new crematorium. Several ditches had been dug two yards wide and several hundred long. The victims were made to strip naked before execution and then made to lie flat in the ditches. As soon as one layer of victims had laid down, they were shot from above with sub-machine guns. Then the next layer was made to lie down and was shot in the same way, and so on until each ditch was full.

When one ditch was full, those in the next batch to be executed were made to cover it with earth and then go on to the next ditch to be shot themselves. The Germans had only to cover over the last layers of killed in the last ditch. The ditches were only lightly covered with earth, and the following day the Germans began taking out the corpses and burning them at high speed in the new crematorium.

Thus the Germans in one day murdered 18,000 people.

I shall conclude with a brief mention of two Germans, a man and a woman, whom we have taken prisoners. The man was directly involved in what happened at the death camp; the woman indirectly.

The man's name is Theodor Scholen. He has not yet received the punishment he deserves—he is still alive. He is 41, a native of Duesseldorf. In 1937 he joined the National Socialist Party and was enrolled in an S.S. detachment. In July, 1942, he arrived at the Lublin camp. He became an S.S. Company Commander. By profession he is a butcher in a Berlin meat-packing plant. In the camp he worked as a warehouseman. His job was to search the prisoners on their arrival at the camp, and to strip them before they were sent to the gas chamber.

Theodor Scholen calls himself a warehouseman and says that he joined the S.S. by mistake, while he was drunk. He says that he was extremely kind to prisoners. He weeps when witnesses who passed through his hands remind him how he tore teeth from the mouths of people with a pair of fitter's pliers, searching for diamonds hidden in the cavities and gold crowns that he might steal for himself. He swears that he is only a non-commissioned officer, and that the murders were done by the Security Service—that is, the Gestapo. Cross-examined, he lies and weeps with such copious tears that at first a naive person might believe him.

So much for the man. Now the woman. Her name is Edith Schostek, 21, a native of Central Germany, and she came to Lublin two years ago in accordance with the law under which German girls over nineteen are obliged to work for the good of the State. She came for a year and remained for two. She did not kill, nor did she strike women on the breasts with a whip. She was only a stenographer for the German director of the Lublin power station, and her hands are not stained with blood.

But when you begin to question her more closely you discover the interesting detail that she and her sister, who also worked in Lublin, used to receive as bonus articles of women's clothing from the warehouse of belongings of murdered people. She and her sister received lace and shoes. Others like them received perhaps underwear and dresses. Still others, who had children, got the clothing and shoes taken from the murdered children.

This is the last link of the chain that embraces the whole of Germany. At one end stands the butcher Theodor Scholen, who stole the gold teeth out of his victims' mouths and pushed them into the gas chambers, and at the other end stands Edith Schostek who did nothing worse than take as payment for her work the clothing of murdered people.

They are at different ends of the chain, but it is one and the same chain. They will all be made to answer, some more, some less. They need not try to shift the blame to one another. Let them understand once and for all: they will all be brought to book.

APPENDIX

Additional information on the Lublin Camp available from Press agency announcements and from correspondents who visited it shortly after its discovery.

THE Polish National Liberation Committee, taking into consideration the fact that numerous Soviet prisoners of war were among the victims murdered in the Maidanek Camp, proposed to the Soviet Government the setting up of a joint Polish-Soviet Extraordinary Commission to investigate the crimes.

The Soviet Government agreed and appointed, to serve on the Commission as its representatives, Professor M. I. Grashenko, Professor V. I. Prozorovsky and D. I. Kudryavtsev.

The Polish members of the Commission are the Chairman; Vice-Chairman of the Polish National Liberation Committee M. Witos; Priest Dr. Kuszinski; Professor Bialkowski; Procurator of the Appeal Court Balcejak; Professor of Juridicial Medicine Sziking-Singalevicz; Member of the National Liberation Committee Dr. Zomersztajn.

(Polish Press Agency.)



The number of bodies estimated to have been disposed of in the furnaces is 600,000; the number of killed in all is estimated at between one and two million.

"JUST beyond the entrance is a low wooden shed with the inscription 'BATH-HOUSE' over the door. At first glance there is nothing out of the ordinary about this bath-house, apart from the fact that it contains dozens of showers. About 10 feet long and 6 feet wide, a dozen people could bathe in comfort in it.

"But comfort is the last thing it was intended for. A door leads from the inner end of this bath-house to a gas chamber, and from this gas chamber the bathers emerged corpses. The Germans discovered that the body glow caused by bathing favoured the action of the 'Zyklon' gas and speeded up the process of extermination.

"Next to the 'Zyklon' chamber are two similar chambers where people were poisoned by carbon monoxide stored in long narrow cylinders. The steel doors of these monoxide chambers bear the name of the maker, 'Auert, Berlin.'

"After leaving the furnaces I came to a place that was occupied by high and wide and very long ridges.

of piles of human ashes and fragments of bones. Professor Prozorovsky, who accompanied me, picked up fragments of bones and showed me finger bones, pieces of forearm and so on. These human ash and bone by the personnel of the camp. Alongside the ridges are acres of vegetable allotments with human bones, I pulled up several cabbages and turnips and each time numerous particles of bones came up with the clay . . .

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"Some six miles to the east of the camp there is an area of woodland covered with oak, birch and aspen known as Krembiecki Forest. Krembiecki Forest might be described as an overflow from Maidanek Camp.

"I saw the bodies of several hundred human beings exhumed in only two of the death pits which cover the floor of the forest. Of the bodies in these two pits the majority were those of women, and, most terrible of all, many were those of mothers and babies locked together. At least 100 were of children ranging in age from one and three to six, seven and eight. . . ."

(John Gibbons, "Daily Worker" Correspondent.)

4

THE storehouse where victims' shoes have been stacked was perhaps 20 yards long by 10 wide, and the shoes were stacked up over the whole floor space to a depth of six feet. . . .

"On the basis of the number of pairs which occupied a test box of one cubic metre, the Russians estimated that here were 820,000 pairs of footwear. . . .

"Later I saw the warehouse in Chopin Street, the adapted building of an uncompleted cinema belonging to the Catholic Action Society, where other property of the victims had been sorted and an inventory made.

"I saw rooms full of suitcases, neat shelves full of shoes and trees, medicines, alarm clocks, socks of wool and cotton, dolls, toy trains and bricks, books, exercise books, pens, pencils by the hundred thousand, razors, necklaces, belts, braces and ties, vacuum flasks, and other household goods. . . .

"I saw part of the inventory kept by the methodical manager of the warehouse: 45,000 hand towels, 7,998 woollen jackets, 19,831 suitcases and bags, 38,000 ladies' slips, 55,000 men's socks.

"I saw letters in the store from a German ordering so many pairs of this and that. I saw a letter to a man recommended by an S.S. leader saying he was welcome to visit the warehouse and choose any two suitcases.

"Carelessly thrown in a heap was a great pile of family photographs.

"S.S. Leader Mussfeldt, who presided over the crematorium, had a flat 10 feet away from the chimney. In the corner of his living room is a pile of hundreds of small urns stamped on the lid 'Buchenwald.'

"Witnesses deposed that Mussfeldt sold these urns to families of the dead when possible at prices that varied according to the families' wealth. But they add: 'Of course, they never got the right ashes. . . .

"Nearby is a zinc table with water running over it, where the bodies were placed for removal of gold teeth; if Mussfeldt thought any valuables had been swallowed a post-mortem was held to recover them . . .

"One day a prisoner sent to the crematorium on a mission saw this scene which he described to us:

"A group of men and one girl had been taken to the crematorium to be shot there—this was a variation that occurred from time to time.

"The group was told to undress. The girl refused. Mussfeldt beat her. She cried out: 'I don't know why I have to die.' Mussfeldt said: 'I am going to burn you alive.' The guards bound her; she was put on an iron stretcher and thrust into the furnace.

"'I heard one scream and saw her hair catch fire."

(From the dispatches of Paul Winterton, "News Chronicle," and Alaric Jacob, "Daily Express.")

THOUSANDS of people from Lublin have come to Maidanek to see the camp.

Germans captured in the camp are working in a ditch exhuming the bodies of some of their victims. The Germans work in silence. They start in fright as they hear the roar of fury of the crowd, and crouch lower over their shovels.

A column of over 800 captured German officers and men passes on its way to a further part of the ditch. They are led along the far side to keep them away from the anger of the people. The Germans march silently. Some turn their faces aside, others stare dully at the bodies. Guards show them their work. . . .

In Lublin itself a memorial meeting for the victims is being held. A huge crowd is gathered in the square in front of Lublin Castle.

The choir sings the Hymn of the Holy Virgin—the hymn that the Polish troops sang as they set out to fight the Germans at the battle of Gruenwald five hundred years ago.

Little girls in white dresses are carrying funeral wreaths. Soldiers of the Polish Army stand bareheaded. Red Army men hold their rifles at attention. Many people in the crowd sob out loud.

The priest Kruszinski serves mass. Before the ashes of the martyrs he calls his countrymen to unity. Grubecki, member of the Polish National Liberation Committee, makes a speech. Another member of the committee, Rzimowski, unveils on the wall of the castle a memorial tablet bearing the brief inscription:

"To the victims tortured to death in Maidanek and in the Castle by the German criminals. From the Polish people."

Former prisoners bear forward an urn containing ashes from the Maidanek crematorium. The urn is immured in the wall of the Castle. A delegation from the Red Army bears forward wreaths from the Government and Army of the U.S.S.R.

The 25,000 people in the Square sing the ancient Polish battle-song "The Vow." And, indeed, its words sound like a vow: "No more shall the German spit in our faces. Our children he shall never make into Germans."

(Boris Gorbatov in "Pravda.")

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"The priest Kruszinski serves Mass." (Back Cover) "A huge crowd is gathered in the square in front of Lublin Castle."



