

50 years International Tracing Service in Arolsen



The National Socialist persecution as reflected in the ITS-documents

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Preface

January 1946: In North Hesse a cold month in the first winter after the end of the war action. For a large-scale move of location, the weather is far from being ideal. And still the preparations are running at full speed in Arolsen, then district town of the Waldecker Land, in order to take over the enormous amount of files of the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). These are exclusively personal records which, for an interim period, have been stored in provisional buildings outside Frankfurt since May 1945. The search for an appropriate location has now finally come to a happy end.

Boxes full of unique documents are to be stored properly and in accordance with the task to be fulfilled. These valuable files often bear the only hope for the numerous former persecutees to receive information about the fate of relatives. The true value of these many tons of paper, however, reveals itself only little by little, for more and more persons concerned are lacking evidence with advancing age in order to assert their rights, because pension matters and compensation claims can only be settled smoothly if a definite proof of the persecution suffered as well as of its duration is available. The access to numerous special funds - as, for example, the Foundations "Mutual Understanding and Peacemaking" only recently opened in Eastern Europe - depends in most cases on the replies issued. At present, still far more than 200,000 requests for certificates arrive at the International Tracing Service per year.

But let us once again look back to half a century ago. Not only thousands of linear metres of archival material, but also a considerable number of specialists - who accompany the extraordinary wagon train - are to be "stored". They alone are in the position to guarantee an orderly evaluation of the documents. In view of the increase in the amount of work becoming evident, the hiring of many additional employees is already absolutely certain. Only shortly after the move, the staff of the Tracing Service that has its home in Arolsen now rises to more than 1,400 employees. To provide places of work and accommodation facilities for this "army" is part of the planning. Certainly, it was not by chance that the town of Arolsen has been chosen. Decisive were, among other things, the location, i.e. the geographical centre of the four occupation zones at that time, and also the available infrastructure, because Arolsen remained largely unaffected by the war events in the years 1939 - 1945. For example, the transport routes as well as the telephone and telegraph network were intact. These are all

prerequisites for a fast and efficient work routine.

The following text is meant to be a contribution to a better understanding of the work and the stock of documents of the International Tracing Service. May it convey an impression of the difficulties in setting up the individual parts of the archives and their card-indexing in the spirit of true pioneering work of those days. Who could do this better than a person directly involved?

An employee of many years' standing and now retired, Mr E. Henschel, outlines the arduous way of building up this institution that is exclusively working in the service of the former persecutees, and he does it from his own personal point of view. The personal story of any other colleague would presumably turn out to be different. However, as far as the stock of documents is concerned, this represents the common denominator as such for all employees of the first hour. May this contribution to the anniversary oblige all 400 employees active at present to continue the humanitarian task and to bring it to a successful conclusion, and may it, at the same time, make an important contribution to "the remembrance of the persecution".

C. Biedermann

Arolsen, in January 1996

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It must have been about January 1933. I was 12 years old at that time. In addition to "hide and seek", we also used to play "hopscotch" on the square stone slabs of the Berlin pavements when we were children. One day, our hopscotch patterns, that we had drawn with chalk, were written over with paint. "*Juda verrecke*" were the words and: "*Deutschland erwache*". This was how the NS-period began for us children, a time that would, later on, bundle me off as conscript, called up from studying, to Poland, Russia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and France (for the invasion). The end was the "Ruhr-Kessel" - after having luckily survived the Ardennes or Rundstedt-Offensive outside Bastogne on 25th December 1944 - in April 1945. On 16th April 1945, I was a prisoner of war of the Americans. After two years of war captivity in Remagen and in Chalon-sur-Saône, I started my work at the ITS on 21st October 1947, because I did not see any possibility to continue my studies.

How could it happen that, within approximately 31 years, counted from 1914 to 1945, two world wars had raged?

Like Hitler later on, Emperor Wilhelm II had the entire world against him. In tsarist Russia, that was opposing Germany, the so-called *October Revolution* of 1917 actually ended World War I with the known consequences: establishment of the Soviet Union and Leninism, later Stalinism. In Germany, the November Revolution of 1918 resulted in the collapse of the monarchical system. On 28th November 1918, Emperor Wilhelm II was forced to resign and went into exile to Doorn in the Netherlands. Germany became a republic. On 19th January 1919, the national assembly was elected in Weimar. The Treaty of Versailles of 28th June 1919 imposed large reparation payments on the defeated Germany, as well as the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to France and of the Province Poznan to Poland, the establishment of the so-called Polish Corridor, Gdansk becomes a Free Town, the Saar region is put under the control of the League of Nations for 15 years, the occupation of the Rhineland and the reduction of the army to 100,000 men. That was the fertile soil for National Socialism. And soon, they became serious. Hitler, who had joined the "Deutsche Arbeiterpartei" (DAP = German Workers' Party) as party member No. 7 in 1919 (in 1920 the party was renamed in "Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei" = NSDAP = National Socialist German Workers' Party), revolted in Munich on 8th/9th November 1923 together with the retired General Ludendorff. Sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment, but already released in December 1924, he wrote the first

volume of "Mein Kampf" in the fortress Landsberg a/Lech, the second volume in 1927. In 1929 the *Great Depression* that led to more than 6 million unemployed persons in 1932. In 1930, Hitler's NSDAP was successful all over Germany. In 1932, it was the strongest political power in the Reichstag. After this election, the German President Paul von Hindenburg¹⁾ appointed Franz von Papen Chancellor of the Reich who abdicated again already on 3rd December 1932. His successor was Ex-General von Schleicher for a few days. Under the pressure of parts of the military and the industry, the aged President von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor of the Reich on 30th January 1933. Vice-Chancellor was Franz von Papen who had helped Hitler to come to power. However, he resigned on 7th April 1933 when his attempts at restraining Hitler had failed. The Reichstag fire on 27th February 1933 gave Hitler the opportunity to cancel the basic rights = Ordinance of the President of the Reich for the Protection of People and State of 28th February 1933. By means of the Enabling Act of 24th March 1933, the democratic separation of powers was annulled. Separation of powers means separation into legislature, executive and judiciary. But already through the Ordinance of the President of the Reich for the Protection of People and State of 28th February 1933, the way was paved for dictatorship, because it restricted: the personal freedom, the right of free speech including the freedom of the press, the right of association and assembly. Moreover, encroachments on the secrecy of post and telecommunications as well as the establishment of concentration camps were possible from then on. Only the Social Democrats voted against the Enabling Act in the Reichstag; the bourgeois parties agreed and, thus, they gave Hitler the opportunity for establishing his totalitarian governmental system. The "Kommunistische Partei" (KPD = Communist Party) had been smashed after the Reichstag fire. Today, it seems quite certain that the Dutch Communist Marinus van der Lubbe was the sole culprit. The Communist delegates were dismissed from their mandate and arrested. The SPD (= Social Democratic Party), suspected of being an accessory, was dissolved in July 1933. Also the bourgeois parties were forced to dissolve themselves, the trade unions were eliminated; their position was taken by the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (DAF = German Labour Front). The press became conformist. The Propaganda Ministry under Josef Goebbels laid down the guidelines.

During the "seizure of power", the SA = "Sturmabteilung" (storm-troopers) basically was a paramilitary party army, that had come out of the organized

1) Complete name: Von Beneckendorff und Hindenburg, ex-field marshal of World War I, in 1925 elected German President; as monarchist, he mistrusted the democratic parliamentarism.

"Saalschutz", with many "old fighters" as they were called at that time. Thus, the SA was the most important terror instrument for the rising NS-Regime. Under the former officer of the German Army, Ernst Röhm, who had already been member and Hitler's companion in the "*Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*", the SA had even more power than the SS = "Schutzstaffel" (protection squad) of Heinrich Himmler, which was Hitler's black bodyguard. However, the unauthorized actions of the SA ran more and more counter to Hitler's aims and led to rivalries between the NSDAP and the SA. For the erection of a police state, the harmless "*Preussische Geheime Staatspolizei*" (Prussian secret state police) - more or less comparable to today's office for the protection of the constitution - in Bavaria called "*Bayerische Politische Polizei*" (Bavarian political police), was changed into Hitler's "*Geheime Staatspolizei*" (secret state police) in June 1933 which had its seat on Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse in Berlin. The permanent rivalries between the SA and the Regime were given vent to on 30th June 1934. This day has gone down in history as the "*Röhm-Putsch*". The chief of staff of the SA, Ernst Röhm, and other higher SA-leaders were shot by the SS. Involved were Heinrich Himmler, later "*Reichsführer-SS*" and chief of the German police, and Reinhard Heydrich who was in charge of the mass killing of Jews by the "*Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des Sicherheitsdienstes*" (task forces of the security police and of the security service) as "SS-Obergruppenführer" and general of the police in the occupied territories in the East during the war. Moreover, as from September 1941, he was deputy "*Reichsprotector*" of Bohemia-Moravia. In that capacity, he was heavily wounded by an attempt on his life, staged by the Czech Government in exile in London, and died in Prague on 4th June 1942. Because of this, the SS destroyed the village *Lidice* where the assassins had allegedly found refuge. But let us still remain on 30th June 1934. I remember that day very well: As a 13-year-old boy - it was during the holidays - I was on the train on the way from my home in Berlin-Charlottenburg to Frankfurt an der Oder to visit my grandparents who were living in a small village near the German-Polish border. Their postal address sounds a little curious and, for this reason, I do not want to withhold it from you: *Neuhöfchen Post Jordan* - The train station on the route Topper - Meseritz was called: *Paradies*. When the train stopped in the station Berlin-Zoologischer Garten for quite a while, I watched a large police contingent and heard about the "Röhm-Putsch". By the way, the power of the SA is also expressed in the Horst-Wessel-Song: "*Die Fahne hoch, die Reihen fest geschlossen, SA marschiert etc.*" which, until the collapse, was broadcasted

everywhere by the German radio at close-down like a second national anthem in addition to the "*Deutschlandlied*". The SA continued to exist, its power, however, had gone over to the SS. As a next step that was important for his role as dictator, Hitler combined, after the demise of Hindenburg on 2nd August 1934, the office of the President (that had been held by *Hindenburg*) with that of the Chancellor of the Reich and, from then on, he was called "*Führer und Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler*".

The first concentration camps were established in Dachau near Munich by the then provisional chief of the police of Munich, Heinrich Himmler, and in Oranienburg near Berlin by the SA and the SS. Dachau that was opened on 22nd March 1933 - please note, even two days before the Enabling Act came into force - was the only concentration camp that existed over the entire 12 years of the "thousand-year Reich" = NS-language. Only during the time from 27th September 1939 till 18th February 1940, Dachau was closed for new entries; some prisoners stayed "in the plantation", but most of them were temporarily transferred to Flossenbürg and Mauthausen and returned on 18th February 1940 = renumbering in Dachau beginning with 1 = 2nd series of numbers of Dachau! Of Dachau and Buchenwald, the ITS possesses almost complete records. However, of the so-called early Concentration Camp Dachau for the years 1933-34, only alphabetical registers and "Schublisten" (transport lists) have come into the possession of the International Tracing Service. There are hardly any writing room cards available from that period of time. In this connection, one ought to know that, obviously, the SS had financial difficulties. This is evident from the fact that the cards of a size of about 90 x 70 mm that are on hand at the ITS were made of the back sides of cigarette packets of the brands that were popular at the time: "*Schwarz-Weiss*", "*Overstolz*" and "*Gold Dollar*". The SA appears in the "Schublisten" as well: "SA der NSDAP - *Der Sonderkommissar beim Bezirksamt Traunstein*" it says, for example, or: (in the letterhead) "*Sonderkommissar für Stadt- und Landbezirk Kitzingen a/M*". The complimentary close of this *order* reads: "Der Beauftragte des Sonderkommissars der *Obersten SA-Führung*".

Of the early Concentration Camp *Sachsenburg*, the ITS only possesses records as from 12th June 1934. Of Concentration Camp *Oranienburg* near Berlin that existed in 1933-1935, there are no records available. Concentration Camp *Oranienburg* was reactivated as Concentration Camp *Sachsenhausen* in August 1936. On 5th September 1936, the prisoners of the early Concentration Camp *Esterwegen*, already existing in 1933, were transferred to Concentration Camp

Sachsenhausen by order of the *Gestapo* Düsseldorf. Another early concentration camp was *Breitenau* near Guxhagen, not far from here, accommodated in the workhouse. Of this camp, the alphabetical prisoners' books with entries about the years 1933/34 are on hand. Only very few records are in our possession about the "Schutzhaftlager" (camp for preventive detention) *Heuberg* and the early Concentration Camp *Ankenbuck*. Further camps are known; it would be taking things too far to list them all. In view of the arbitrary rule of the SA during that time, it is, however, doubtful whether all existing camps became known. The inspection of the concentration camps was not established before 10th December 1934; later on, during the war, that is exactly as from 3rd March 1942, the concentration camps were subject to the "Amtsgruppe D" (= section for concentration camps) at the "SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt = WVHA" (main office for the administration of the economy). I would put the lack of records about many of the early concentrations camps down to the fact that the SA destroyed the records about its "wild" concentration camps. The last "wild" concentration camps, for instance in abandoned factory buildings, barracks and remote magazines, were dissolved between 1934 and 1937. For the "plain honest German" all seemed to be well-ordered, because he only heard talk in whispers, looking around carefully so that nobody else could listen, that concentration camps existed; people said: " take care, or you will be sent to the *concert camp*".

Concerning the beginning persecution of the Jews, a few additional explanations are necessary. For this purpose, we have to go far back into history. The first cases of persecution of Jews occurred already in the 12th century in connection with the crusades. The Jews were collectively reproached for being guilty of the death of Jesus Christ. In order to distinguish between Jews and Christians, their clothes were already marked at that time. All this was taken up again by the Nazis, even though under different aspects and criteria. A respective press, such as the SS-papers "*Schwarzes Korps*" and "*Der Stürmer*" with negative caricatures of Jews as well as the Nazi-party paper "*Völkischer Beobachter*", ensured the discrimination and segregation of the Jews in public. While, in 1933, there were "only" the boycott of Jewish shops and excesses by the SA, the so-called "*Nürnberger Gesetze*" (Nuremberg laws), that is the collective term for the "*Reichsbürgergesetz*" (civil law of the Reich) and for the "*Gesetz zum Schutz des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre*" (law for the protection of the German blood and the German honour), which were passed unanimously at the party convention of the NSDAP in Nuremberg on 15th

September 1935 (there was no opposition, because its members were in concentration camps or in exile), provided the legal support for the persecution measures to come. Through the "*Nürnberger Gesetze*", marriages between Jews and "German nationals (meaning non-Jews) as well as persons of generically related blood", they were called *Aryans* or the Aryan race (the word *Aryan* derives from Sanskrit and means *of noble birth*), were prohibited and were punished with incarceration in prisons and penitentiaries which, in most cases, ended in a concentration camp. For the justification of their anti-Semitic propaganda and their laws concerning the Jews, the Nazis referred to the so-called "*Protokolle der Weisen von Zion*" (minutes of the wise men of Zion) which were allegedly written during a Zionist convention in Basel in 1897 and drivel about a Zionist world conspiracy. However, in fact, the "*Protokolle der Weisen von Zion*" are a forgery and, in parts, a word-for-word reproduction of a pamphlet against Napoleon III, already published in a covered-up form in 1864. The plagiarists had simply invented the new title "*Die Weisen von Zion*". Hitler wrote in "*Mein Kampf*": "... the assertion that they are based on a forgery is the best proof that they are genuine ...", which is wrong as has been proved. The "*Protokolle der Weisen von Zion*" still belong to the variety of anti-Semitic publications of the American Gary Rex Lauck today (the name suggests that he is a German-American; it is incomprehensible that, in the USA, there still exists an organization of the NSDAP abroad!!). On request of the Federal Republic of Germany, Gary Rex Lauck has recently been arrested in Denmark and has been extradited.

With the XI. *Summer Olympics* in Berlin in 1936 and the IV. *Winter Olympics* in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Hitler was still successful in deceiving the world public. For example, this can be seen from the fact that the Olympic team of France marched into the Olympic stadium in Berlin with the Hitler salute.

The inscription on the bell tower of the Olympic stadium in Berlin reads: "*Ich rufe die Jugend der Welt*" (I call the youth of the world) - however, behind the scenes, the preparations for war were already running at full speed, based on the *four-year plan* of 9th September 1936. A Hitler quotation in this connection: "*Gebt mir vier Jahre Zeit*" (Give me four years). The first four-year plan (there was another one during the war) was supposed to make Germany largely self-sufficient as far as raw materials were concerned and to render it independent of other countries as well as ready for war.

In the background, the Gestapo ensured that the existing and the newly established concentration camps "were filled" with "*Rasseschändern*" (persons who

had sexual relations with a non-Aryan), *political prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, workshy persons and professional criminals*. So, Concentration Camp *Ettersberg*, that is the name of the mountain ridge where the camp was established, near Weimar originated from the dissolution of the early Concentration Camp *Lichtenburg* on 15th July 1937; as from 28th July 1937, this camp was called Concentration Camp *Buchenwald* which was already mentioned in connection with the completeness of records. The Concentration Camps *Flossenbürg* near Weiden/Upper Palatinate and *Mauthausen* near Linz/Austria followed and, as far as it is known to the International Tracing Service, they were "in operation" on 2nd May 1938 and on 8th August 1938 respectively. For these concentration camps as well, extensive and quite complete records are available, also index cards which are called "Individual Records" in the ITS-usage. Concentration Camp *Neuengamme* near Hamburg existed as from 13th December 1938 as a Commando of *Sachsenhausen*; on 4th June 1940, it became an independent concentration camp. The records are incomplete. The *Women's Concentration Camp Ravensbrück* near Fürstenberg/Havel *Mark Brandenburg* was not established before 15th May 1939 when the female prisoners of Concentration Camp *Lichtenburg* were transferred. Compared with *Buchenwald* and *Dachau*, only very few records are available, mainly from the wartime.

With the "Anschluss" of Austria in March 1938, Hitler's campaign of conquest began which, soon, was not to stop even at foreign borders any more. Being put under pressure by Hitler, the Austrian Federal Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg had to give up a planned plebiscite about the preservation of the Austrian independence and he resigned on 11th March 1938. After the invasion of German troops on 12th March 1938, the Austrian National Socialist and lawyer Arthur Seyß-Inquart, who had been appointed Federal Chancellor by the Federal President Miklas on 11th March 1938, enforced the "Anschluss". During the war, as from 19th May 1940, Seyß-Inquart was "*Reichskommissar für die besetzten Niederlande*" (commissioner of the Reich for the occupied Netherlands) and, as such, he was also responsible for the deportation of 170,000 Jews from the Netherlands to eastern extermination camps; in October 1946, he was sentenced to death in the *Nuremberg war crime trials* and executed. Under dictatorial conditions, "99.6 %" of the Austrian population "approved" of the enforced annexation on 10th April 1938. Supporters of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regime as well as Socialists and Jews had already been committed

to Concentration Camp Dachau and to *Mauthausen* that was an outlying commando of Dachau at that time. Federal Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuß who had vigorously fought against the "Anschluss" to Germany, already planned by Hitler in 1934, had been murdered by Austrian National Socialists at the Federal Chancellery in Vienna on 25th July 1934 during an attempted putsch.

With the *Munich Agreement* of 29th September 1938 between Hitler, Daladier (France), Chamberlain (Great Britain) and Mussolini, which removed the danger of war that had arisen from the Sudeten crisis, Germany received all Sudeten German territories of Czechoslovakia and annexed the Sudetenland. Soon afterwards, the first deportation of Jews took place which went down in history under the name "*Polen-Aktion*" (Poland action). Records about this are only available at the ITS to a very small extent: they are "registers of names of Polish Jews who were residing in the Land Baden in 1938" and a Polish post-war compilation "Lista wydalonych żydów w Zbaszynie" = list of expelled Jews in Zbaszyn = Bentschen = reception camp for Jews of Polish nationality expelled from Germany.

The "*Polen-Aktion*" is based on the following background: Due to the fear that approximately 60,000 Jews of Polish nationality living in Germany could be imposed on its country, the Polish Government had enacted an ordinance on 6th October 1938 according to which the passports of the Polish Jews living abroad were only valid for crossing the border if they contained a visa that could only be obtained in Poland. The qualifying date was 29th October 1938. After thousands of Polish Jews had been chased over the fields towards the Polish border near the border station Bentschen (Zbaszyn in Polish) on 28th October 1938, the Polish Government took reprisals by threatening with the expulsion of German citizens from Poland. After that, an agreement was achieved with the Polish Government which enabled the approximately 17,000 Polish Jews to temporarily return to Germany in order to settle their personal and business matters. The deportations of 28th October 1938 were the immediate cause of the assassination of the German Embassy Secretary, Ernst vom Rath, in Paris on 7th November 1938, because Herschel Grynszpan, who fired at Rath, was the son of a Jew who had been driven over the border near Bentschen. Herschel Grynszpan had, in fact, wanted to kill the German Ambassador in Paris, Graf Johannes von Welczek, but he only got through to the Embassy Secretary and so he killed him. After Rath's assassination, the SA "staged" the "Reichskristallnacht" in the night of 9th/10th November 1938 under the guise of spontaneous rallies. The name "Kristallnacht" (crystal night) presumably goes back to

the numerous broken windows of Jewish shops. At the same time, the Jewish synagogues went up in flames. Jewish cemeteries were destroyed. I still remember very well that the Jewish synagogue on Fasanenstrasse in Charlottenburg, near the suburban railway station Savignyplatz, was still burning on 10th November 1938 when I drove by on my daily ride to the technical school for graphic arts and book trade at the station Schlesischer Bahnhof. In the course of the night and of the following days, 30,000 Jews were arrested and confined in concentration camps. The pogrom claimed 91 lives, not counting the cases of death in the concentration camps. In the records of Concentration Camps Buchenwald and Dachau on hand at the ITS, these newly committed Jewish prisoners are called "*Aktionsjuden*". Available figures: Buchenwald: 9,845 arrivals from 10th to 14th November 1938. Departures until 3rd January 1939: 8,311. Consequently, 1,534 "*Aktionsjuden*" were still in Concentration Camp Buchenwald on 3rd January 1939. These figures were taken from the reports on the changes in the number of prisoners of Concentration Camp Buchenwald. In the books of arrivals of Dachau of the first series of numbers, the "*Aktionsjuden*" are found in the range between 19,433 and 30,659. Very few prisoners under preventive detention are found within this series. 10,415 of them were released until August 1939, 185 perished and 95 were transferred. In addition to the books of arrivals, reports on the changes in the number of prisoners are available concerning the "*Aktionsjuden*" also for Dachau.

According to estimates, about 10,000 "*Aktionsjuden*", who were committed to the camp on 9th/10th November 1938 and afterwards, are supposed to have been in Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen as well. However, records are not available.

The SA that had presented itself by breaking shop windows and setting synagogues on fire as well as by violating cemeteries in connection with the pogrom was used as the "seething populace" by the SS. For this reason, it seems to be appropriate to say a few words about its structure: arisen from the staff guard for the personal protection of Hitler, the SS = "Schutzstaffel" (protection squad) was, in 1925, a special formation of the NSDAP for security and surveillance tasks and - as has already been mentioned - it was first subject to the chief of staff of the SA. Under Himmler, the SS became an independent organization. Sub-divisions were the "SS-Verfügungstruppe" (troop assigned for special tasks), that had arisen from the "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" (Hitler's bodyguard), and the "SS-Totenkopfverbände", the units used as concentration camp-guards. With the beginning of the war, the "Waffen-SS", which incorpor-

ated the "SS-Verfügungstruppe" and the "SS-Totenkopfverbände", developed in addition to the general SS. Through the combination of security police and security service of the SS and the police, Heinrich Himmler established the "Reichssicherheitshauptamt" = *RSHA* (main office for the security of the Reich) on 27th September 1939; from 1939 - 1942 under Reinhard Heydrich, from 1943 - 1945 under Ernst Kaltenbrunner.

After the cession of the Sudeten German territories to Germany in September 1938, Czechoslovakia that had only been established in 1918 declined more and more. Through the "1. Wiener Schiedsspruch" of 2nd November 1938, an arbitral decision made by the Axis powers Germany and Italy, Czechoslovakia lost the southern border territories of Slovakia as well as the Carpatho-Ukraine to Hungary. Pressed by Hitler, Slovakia declared its independence on 14th March 1939. On the next day, German troops marched into the remaining Czech territory. On 16th March 1939, Hitler established the Protectorate Bohemia-Moravia that was dependent on Germany.

In September 1939, Adolf Eichmann became head of the department for Jews at the "Reichssicherheitshauptamt". On 1st September 1939, World War II had already started. Before, Hitler had entered into a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union = *Hitler-Stalin-Pact* on 23rd August 1939.

Through the intervention of the *Red Army* on 17th September 1939 and due to the inferiority of the Polish Army in number and as far as arms were concerned, the capitulation came very soon. The German-Soviet line of demarcation ran along the River Bug. In April/May 1940, 4,143 of the 14,500 Polish officers who had been taken prisoners of war on the Soviet-occupied territory were shot by the NKWD²⁾ in the forest of Katyn - Smolensk Region.

On the German side, the "Generalgouvernement" (NS-term for the Polish territory under German rule) was established after the end of the "*Polenfeldzug*" (Poland campaign) - NS-language - under the direction of Governor-General Hans Frank (from 1939 - 1944). As one of the principal war criminals, Frank was sentenced to death by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg in 1946. In the territories of the "Generalgouvernement" with a large Jewish population, ghettos were established which, however, were still open at the beginning, that is, one could get in and out unhindered. On 15th October 1941 at the latest, they were closed; *Ghetto Litzmannstadt* = Łódź in Polish, which had a special status, was already closed on 8th April 1940. In October 1941, the first deportation transports with German and Austrian Jews arrived in Ghetto Litzmannstadt; transport lists of these are only partly available at the ITS.

2) NKWD = Narodnyj Kommissariat Wnutrennych Del (= people's commissioner's department for domestic affairs), established in 1934 also including the GPU = Gossudarstvennoje Polititscheskoje Upravlenije (= national political administration = political police of the USSR). Later on, the GPU became the KGB (= Komitet Gossudarstvennoje Besopasnosti = committee for national security = Soviet secret service.)

Litzmannstadt was situated on the territory of the Reich, hence the translation of the name Łódź into German, in the so-called "Warthegau" (the region at the River Warta); for this reason, Ghetto Litzmannstadt was also called "Gau-Ghetto". It existed until January 1945. First, the Jewish population of Łódź = 33 % of the population was confined in Ghetto Litzmannstadt and, moreover, all the Jews from the "Warthegau", for example: from District Włocławek = Leslau in German, from Löwenstadt = Brzeziny in Polish, from Pabianice, Lask and Belchatow. In addition to the Jews from the territory of the Reich at that time, also Jews from the occupied territories (from the Protectorate Bohemia-Moravia as well as from Luxemburg) were deported to Ghetto Litzmannstadt in autumn 1941. According to a report of the *Council of the Elders of the Jews in Ghetto Litzmannstadt*, 19,953 persons arrived in the Ghetto in October - November 1941.

70,690 Jews unable to work were taken to Extermination Camp *Kulmhof* = Chelmno in Polish in the period from January till September 1942. In this connection a quotation from a situation report of the "Staatspolizeistelle" Litzmannstadt of 9th June 1942: " The Jews remaining in the Ghetto are completely assigned to work there. In the course of the formation of the "Gaughetto", it proved to be necessary above all to provide space for the Jews to be settled there". The Jews "to be settled there" were the Jews already mentioned who came from the "Altreich" = the German Reich within the borders of 1937 and Austria, from the Protectorate Bohemia-Moravia as well as from Luxemburg. Quotation continued: "For this purpose, a larger number of Jews unable to work was evacuated from the Ghetto and directed to the "Sonderkommando" (special commando)". Concerned here are the aforementioned deportations to Kulmhof. In an announcement of the German Ghetto Administration, that was subject to the mayor of the town, dated 12th September 1942, it is said (quotation): "*Reopening* of all factories and workshops as from Monday, 14.IX.1942. After the evacuation was concluded yesterday, all places of work of the Ghetto will fully resume operation as from Monday, 14.IX.1942". End of quotation.

According to the wishes of Himmler, Ghetto Litzmannstadt was supposed to be changed into a concentration camp in 1943 in order to thus put it under the control of the WVHA³⁾, "Amtsgruppe D" = section for concentration camps. But it did not come to this; Himmler did not succeed in asserting himself against the "Reichsstatthalter" (governor of the Reich) of the "Warthegau" Greiser and, therefore, the Ghetto existed until January 1945. In August 1944, about 60,000

3) WVHA = "Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt" (main office for the administration of the economy)

Ghetto inmates were transferred to Concentration Camp *Auschwitz-Birkenau* (= extermination camp). According to the investigations of the "Panstwowe Muzeum w Oswiecimiu" = State Museum Auschwitz, only 2,636 of the 60,000 were taken into the camp and registered, the others became victims of the gas chambers.

But let us first return to the year 1940 to my own experiences. While I was in my 4th year of studying *commercial art*, I was examined for the "Wehrmacht" (the armed services of the Third Reich) and for the "Reichsarbeitsdienst (RAD)" (National Labour Service) on 30th May 1940. Result: fit for service, "KV = Kriegsverwendungsfähig" (suitable to be used in war). A horrible word, as I think today. On 1st October 1940, I had to come to the suburban railway station Tiergarten in order to begin my compulsory labour service. We were sent to the "Warthegau", to Bergstadt = Zerkow in Polish, District Jarocin. At that time, I did not know anything about what I have described before. The labour service was interrupted prematurely on 31st January 1941 due to the call-up to the "Wehrmacht" on 4th February 1941; the preparations for the "Operation *Barbarossa*", which was the camouflage name for the attack on the Soviet Union on 22nd June 1941, were started. I was lucky to be able to stay at the Olympic village, that had served the sportsmen of all nations as accommodation in 1936, in Dallgow-Döberitz = military training area until the end of 1942. While the "*Fall Gelb*" (= in NS-language the name for the military campaign in the West) was going off on 10th May 1940, I was still able to draw and design within the scope of my studies.

Back to the theatre of war (also a horrible word) in Russia. There, the "*Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des Sicherheitsdienstes*" = special formations of the SS, which have already been mentioned in connection with the "Röhm-Putsch" and with the "SS-Obergruppenführer" and general of the police Reinhard Heydrich, were raging. They had orders to liquidate the following four groups of persons behind the advancing German troops: functionaries of the Communist Party, persons of Asian ethnic origin, Romanies and Jews. Number of victims, mostly of mass executions by shooting: 700,000 - 750,000⁴⁾ (owing to the fact that such actions were not recorded, the ITS does not possess any respective documents about "Einsatzgruppen"). The German troops succeeded in invading far into the Baltic area and into Russia. But on 1st December 1941, the German offensive strength was exhausted outside Moscow that, according to Hitler's plans, was supposed to have fallen long before, and the "Russian Bear" was supposed to have broken down long before. Hitler had underesti-

4) "Brockhaus" Encyclopedia

mated the military equipment of the Soviets by far, see T 34 and multiple rocket launchers. In contrast to this, the German armed forces were not equipped for a war in the winter (as mentioned before, it was December). Through the Soviet spy Richard Sorge, who established a spy ring in Tokyo disguised as correspondent of the newspaper "*Frankfurter Zeitung*", Stalin learned in October 1941 that Japan would not attack the Soviet Union in the Far East. As a result of this, a considerable number of Soviet units became available in the Far East and could be deployed against the German forces outside Moscow and, thus, they relieved the city. I personally was spared the scene outside Moscow, because I was still at the Olympic village in Dallgow-Döberitz.

From November 1941 till December 1942, deportations of Jews from Germany and Austria were officially directed to Riga/Latvia; their real destination, however, was the Extermination Camp *Jungfernhof* = *Jumpravas Muiza* in Latvian, but not all transport lists about them are available at the ITS. In the German-occupied territories in the West as well as in the East, further concentration camps had been established, e.g. Concentration Camp *Auschwitz* (= Auschwitz I) on 20th May 1940, as from October 1941 Concentration Camp *Auschwitz-Birkenau* (= Auschwitz II = Extermination Camp Birkenau), on 31st May 1942 Concentration Camp *Auschwitz-Monowitz* (= Auschwitz III = work assignment of prisoners for "IG Farben AG/Buna-Komplex". According to "*Brockhaus*", "Buna" is an invented word deriving from **but**adiene and **na**trium, the trademark for various types of synthetic rubber). In Auschwitz I - III, the prisoner's numbers were tattooed on the left forearm of the prisoners provided that the prisoners were taken into the camp and registered. In Auschwitz I, there were only registered male prisoners, so-called "Funktionshäftlinge" (functional prisoners) and, in 1943/44, male and female prisoners who were submitted to pseudo-medical experiments in Blocks 10 and 21. The Crematoria II - V were in Birkenau, the Crematorium I was in Auschwitz I.

Through the occupation of Poland, approximately 3 million Jews came into the German sphere of influence. In the occupied territories in the West, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, there were further 368,000 Jews. In addition to the deportations from the territory of the Reich in October 1941, as already mentioned to Litzmannstadt and Riga, Jews from Vienna, Brno and Ostrava had already been deported to Nisko on San in 1939. Adolf Eichmann, the head of the department for Jews at the RSHA, planned to take the European Jews to the Island of Madagascar, because this French colony declared its loyalty to the Vichy-Regime of Marshal Pétain. This plan was finally given up at the end of

1941. At the conference in the guesthouse of the "Sicherheitsdienst" (security service) in Berlin, Am Grossen Wannsee 56-58, therefore called *Wannsee-Conference*, on 20th January 1942, the SS, under the chairmanship of "SS-Obergruppenführer" and general of the police Reinhard Heydrich - Head of the RSHA -, determined the guidelines for the *Final Solution of the Jewish question* in the German sphere of influence in Europe. Eichmann, by the way, was the keeper of the minutes. For this purpose, assembly camps for Jews had partly already been established in the occupied territories in the West in the summer of 1941 and 1942, such as Assembly Camps *Drancy*, *Beaune-la-Rolande* and *Pithiviers* in occupied France, Assembly Camp *Malines* in Belgium and Assembly Camp *Westerbork* in the Netherlands. These camps for Jews existed in other occupied territories as well, for example *Fossoli di Carpi* in 1944. From these camps, the Jews were deported to extermination camps in the East, mainly to Auschwitz-Birkenau (*Auschwitz II*). Upon arrival in Birkenau where the train drove directly into the camp, SS-doctors carried out a selection on the so-called "Rampe" (ramp), exclusively by having a superficial look at the pitiable human beings coming out of the train. Elderly or frail-looking persons were separated from the others, because they did not seem to be suitable for work assignment. Only those who were able to work were taken into the camp and got their number tattooed on the left forearm or they came to the so-called "*Depot- oder Durchgangslager*" (depot or transit camp) where they had to wait for their deportation to other camps, mainly to armament commandos. The fact that the names of the Jews who were killed in the gas chambers were not registered - of course, this was done deliberately for the purpose of maintaining secrecy - makes it easy for old Nazis as, for example, an SS-member by the name of Thies Christophersen, who was in Auschwitz and is the author of the "*Auschwitz-Lüge*" (Auschwitz-lie), and for neo-Nazis to deny the Holocaust by referring to the (incomplete) number of cases of death registered by the registry office of Camp Auschwitz. These, however, are only the deaths from natural causes, from illnesses and privation, of the prisoners who were taken into the camp with the tattooing of the number. Nevertheless, it is partly still possible to furnish proof about the people killed in the gas chambers, of course not in every single case, but, for example, for the Jews deported from France about whom complete deportation lists are available. The ITS was able to ascertain the names of the Jews from *Drancy* who had survived the selection and it became obvious that each transport was given its own series of numbers. Thus, one can prove that a transport which left *Drancy* with 1,000 persons, for example, occupied only 20

numbers of the Auschwitz-series of numbers of this transport and that the other 980 names are missing in the series of numbers ascertained by the ITS and do not appear elsewhere either. But there are also witnesses like the engineer Kurt Gerstein who confirmed as SS-member, he was "Obersturmführer" and an expert for the disinfection with toxic gasses, the use of hydrogen cyanide ("Zyklon B") and the existence of the Extermination Camps *Belzec*, *Treblinka*, *Sobibor* and *Lublin-Majdanek*. Another witness is Rudolf Höss, the commander of Auschwitz, who was in control of Auschwitz from May 1940 till 1st December 1943 and who confirmed the existence of the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau during the war crime trials in Nuremberg on 5th April 1946. The diary kept by "SS-Obersturmführer" Johann Kremer, medical doctor and extraordinary professor of anatomy at the University of Münster, who came as camp physician to Concentration Camp Auschwitz on 30th August 1942, also contains some very informative entries, e.g.: "2.9.1942: For the first time present outside (meaning on the ramp) during a special action at 3 o'clock. In comparison with this, the *Dantesque* inferno almost seems to me as if it were a comedy. Not without reason Auschwitz is called the camp of extermination". Or: "On 5.9.1942: At midday today, during a special action from the "FKL" ("Muselmänner" = nothing but skin and bones). The most horrible of horrors. Hstf. Thilo (medical officer) was right when he said to me today that we were at the anus mundi (the anus of the world) here".

The Auschwitz records which are only very incompletely available at the ITS do not permit the confirmation of the incarceration there in every case, but it could also be verified on the basis of a transfer, for example to Dachau or Buchenwald, where Concentration Camp Auschwitz appears as origin of the transport. Sometimes, even a prisoner's personal sheet of Auschwitz, that was preserved by chance, is on hand as proof of the incarceration. Often, such prisoner's personal sheets or also prisoner's personal cards were found in the records of Buchenwald and Dachau or other concentration camps where the persons concerned had been transferred. Evidence about the incarceration in Auschwitz may also be taken from the records of the "SS-Hygiene-Institut Auschwitz" (SS-hygiene institute) as the result of illnesses or medical examinations. Or the names appear in the prisoners' infirmary register Birkenau or in the prisoners' infirmary register Monowitz. The "*Meldungen der Häftlingszahnstation*" (reports of the prisoners' dental station) are a list of ascertained "*Tätowierungsnummern*" (tattooed numbers) of dead prisoners whose gold fillings or other precious metals were removed from their bodies before the

cremation by a special prisoners' commando. If the names can be ascertained through other records, the records of the "*Häftlingszahnstation*" are sufficient for issuing certificates or Excerpts from Documents. Let us now turn to the group of the gypsies who, in Auschwitz-Birkenau, were in the "*Zigeunerlager Birkenau*" (Zigeuner = gypsy). About them, the so-called main books are available, however, in a very bad photocopy. The books had been buried for a longer period of time and, therefore, the entries have lost some of their legibility. One of the main books refers to male gypsies, the other to the women and children. Altogether about 20,000 gypsies, 10,000 men and 10,000 women, were registered in the "*Zigeunerlager Birkenau*". In the women's main book, births were entered as well. For the gypsies, a Z was added to the number they received, which was also tattooed; for the few gypsy babies, the number was tattooed on their buttocks.

Before hydrogen cyanide (= hydrocyanic acid, Formula: HCN) was used in Auschwitz-Birkenau as "Zyklon B" for killing human beings in the gas chambers built for this purpose, where death from apnoea occurred very fast, the SS used "Vergasungswagen" (gassing cars) in Russia. For example, this is known about Extermination Camp Maly Trostinec. *Maly Trostinec* was the destination of transports of Jews which, officially, were directed to *Minsk* from the already mentioned "*Altreich*" in November 1941 and from Vienna (transport lists are available) from 28th November 1941 till 5th October 1942. Of the individual transports, a small number of Jews able to work were kept in Camp Maly Trostinec for work assignment. The others were taken away from the camp in "Vergasungswagen" and killed in the forest of Blahovstina - about 4 km from Maly Trostinec - and, there, they were buried in mass graves. Regarding the "Vergasungswagen", a quotation from the "*Nürnberger Dokument PS-501*" from a letter of "SS-Untersturmführer" Dr Becker who, among other things, reported the following to "SS-Obersturmbannführer" Rauff in Berlin, Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse 8, from Kiev in a "*Geheime Reichssache*" (secret matter of the Reich) (quotation): "..... Without exception, the gassing (before he had talked about "Vergasungswagen" of the firm *Saurer* in Vienna) is not carried out correctly. In order to bring the action to an end as quickly as possible, the drivers all drive at full speed. Through this measure, the persons to be executed suffer death from suffocation and not, as intended, death from being put to sleep. My instructions have now shown that death occurs faster when the levers are set correctly and that the prisoners pass away peacefully. Contorted faces and excretions, as they had been seen before, could no longer be found.

In the course of this day, I will travel on to "Gruppe B" (meaning the *Einsatzgruppe B* = task force B) where further news may reach me". End of quotation. A further quotation: "*Nachrichtenübermittlung* (transmission of news, meaning a telex) Riga 15.6.42 to the RSHA Roem.2D3A Berlin - "Geheime Reichssache" - Regarding: "S-Wagen" (meaning the lorries of the firm Saurer Vienna). At the commander of the SIPO and of the SD in White Ruthenia, a transport of Jews arrives every week which is to be submitted to a special treatment. The 3 "S-Wagen" available there are not sufficient for this purpose. I ask for the allocation of one further "S-Wagen" (5 tons). At the same time, you are requested to also send 20 exhaust hoses for the 3 available "S-Wagen" (2 Diamond, 1 Saurer), because those on hand are already leaking. - The commander of the SIPO and of the SD Ostland". End of quotation.

Back to the establishment of concentration camps in the German-occupied territories. Concentration Camp *Stutthof* was already established on 2nd September 1939 as *civilian prisoners camp*, was then called "*SS-Sonderlager*" (special camp) and, as from 13th January 1942, *concentration camp*. Extensive records are on hand at the ITS.

In Natzweiler in Alsace, Concentration Camp *Natzweiler-Struthof* was established in July 1941. Please do not confuse Struthof with the aforementioned Stutthof which is near Gdansk. In particular, the book of numbers of Concentration Camp Natzweiler, which is available in photocopy, is an important proof of incarceration. Unfortunately, it is incomplete.

On the territory of the Reich, the outlying commando *Gross Rosen* of Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen was established on 2nd August 1940 which, as from 1st May 1941, was continued as an independent concentration camp. Commando *Brünnlitz*, which plays a part in the film *Schindler's List*, also belonged to Concentration Camp Gross Rosen. Schindler is known to have been an employer who treated "his" Jews well and fairly. Schindler's list is available at the ITS in photocopy.

Also as Sachsenhausen-Commando, Commando Wewelsburg was established which, as from 1st September 1941, became an independent camp as Concentration Camp *Niederhagen-Wewelsburg* - the original index is available at the ITS - before it became a *commando* again on 30th April 1943, this time under the control of Concentration Camp Buchenwald. For the sake of completeness, I also want to mention the following concentration camps: *Herzogenbusch* (Netherlands), *Kauen* (Lithuania), *Klooga* (Estonia), *Krakau-Plaszow* and *Riga-Kaiserwald*. Concentration Camp *Lublin-Majdanek* was established as

Prisoner of War Camp Lublin in autumn 1941 and was called *concentration camp* as from 9th April 1943. In addition to the concentration camp, there was - like in Auschwitz-Birkenau - an extermination camp with gas chambers and crematoria. In *Vaivara* (Estonia), a concentration camp was established as well on 15th September 1943. The Buchenwald-Commando *Dora* turned into Concentration Camp *Mittelbau* on 1st November 1944. Alphabetical lists are available about this takeover. Partly, the prisoners worked underground for the German armament industry, because everything had been destroyed by bombs above ground. Also the V-1 and V-2 missiles were assembled underground in the work assignment for the "Mittelwerke GmbH"; the name *Mittelbau*, in fact, derives from the name of this firm. The two large sub-camps were in *Ellrich* and in *Harzungen* and were called *Mittelbau II* (= Ellrich) and *Mittelbau III* (= Harzungen). Also for the former Buchenwald-Commandos Ellrich and Harzungen, registers about the takeover on 1st November 1944 are available. At the time of the takeover, the entire Mittelbau-Dora-Complex had a strength of approximately 30,000 to 32,000 prisoners. Talking about large commandos of Concentration Camp Buchenwald, especially Commando *Ohrdruf* - S III - is noteworthy. It was established in November 1944 and was originally supposed to be an independent concentration camp, at least it was, at the beginning, under the direct control of the "SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt" - "Amtsgruppe C" (section for construction industry). The commando was subdivided into a northern and a southern camp. The prisoners came there directly from Concentration Camps Buchenwald, Flossenbürg and Sachsenhausen and were assigned in tunnels and underground plants to build Hitler's "Führerhauptquartier" (headquarters of the Führer). As far as the administration was concerned, the situation in the camp was very chaotic. For this reason, all camp writers from Buchenwald were ordered to go there on 24th December 1944 in order to compile a stock list. Already on that date, the Buchenwald-Prisoner's Numbers of the series from 102,000 to 112,574 were issued; however, officially, the prisoners were not put under the control of Concentration Camp Buchenwald before 15th January 1945. In view of this flood of information, it is probably not necessary to particularly emphasize that the ITS is in the possession of the records. On the right margin of the stock list, subdivided into northern and southern camp, the previous prisoner's numbers of Buchenwald, Flossenbürg and Sachsenhausen are listed. At the beginning of April 1945, the Ohrdruf prisoners were evacuated in the direction of Concentration Camp Buchenwald, Concentration Camp Dachau and to Ghetto Theresienstadt. Due

to the large number of deaths owing to the bad state of health of the prisoners, these transports were called *death marches* or *death transports*. The deaths can only be assumed, particularly in those cases where frail prisoners were arbitrarily killed by shooting, and it is very hard to furnish proof thereof. I should like to add that the S in S III stands for "*Sondervorhaben*" (special plan).

So far, I have only talked about deportations of Jews with the subsequent extermination at the place of destination of those who were old and sick respectively work assignment as concentration camp prisoners of those who were able to work. A special status is taken by Ghetto *Theresienstadt*. Actually, it was a concentration camp like all others, but due to its special structure, it served the Nazis for the maintenance of the "*resettlement legend*". The formation of this "legend" was favoured by the fact that the Ghetto consisted of an entire town (not only of parts of a town like in Litzmannstadt = Łódź or in Warsaw). *Theresienstadt* was founded as a fortress in 1780. After the function as fortress had been given up in 1882, it was a garrison town of the Hapsburg Monarchy Austria-Hungary. After 1918, it was as *Terezin* a North Bohemian town on the River Eger close to its confluence with the River Elbe. After the establishment of the Protectorate *Bohemia-Moravia*, the civilian population was evacuated in 1940 in order to provide space for old and sick as well as for privileged Jews, that is it was a "privileged camp" so to speak. Due to its urban infrastructure, Ghetto *Theresienstadt* had its own theatres, a café and its own bakeries and butcher's shops. The money in circulation was the *Theresienstadt-Crown*. All the Jews who could not be deported "to the East" were sent to *Theresienstadt*. They were: Jews from the territory of the Reich who were older than 65 years including their spouses, children under 14 years of age or Jews who were over 55 years old and frail; Jews who had decorations or medals from World War I; spouses *from a no longer existing German-Jewish mixed marriage*; a particular group of Danish Jews, altogether 466 persons (these Jews were spared the further deportation to the East); Jews from the Assembly Camp for Jews *Westerbork* (more than half of these were deported further to *Auschwitz-Birkenau*). When *Auschwitz-Birkenau* was threatened by the front, Jews from Hungary came to *Theresienstadt* as from December 1944 and, as from 21st April 1945, about 14,000 prisoners from evacuated concentration camps (like the already mentioned death march from *Ohrdruf*) and, thus, finally also non-Jews. Right at the beginning, also Jews from the Protectorate *Bohemia-Moravia* came to *Theresienstadt*. Including the Jews deported from Hungary and the prisoners evacuated from other concentration camps, about 153,000

persons were transported to Theresienstadt altogether. About 87,000 were deported further to Auschwitz-Birkenau; about 35,000 died in Theresienstadt; 1,200 Hungarian Jews came to Switzerland on 5th February 1945, 413 Danish Jews came to Sweden on 15th April 1945. The special status of Theresienstadt can also be seen from the fact that a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr M. Rossel, tried in vain on 23rd June 1944 to get access to the entire Ghetto, as well as to other concentration camps. Similar were the efforts of the Swedish Asia-explorer Sven Hedin (who was used by the Nazis as carrier of advertising, so to speak, because he rejected democracy and adhered to a glorifying image of man) who was worried about his friend, Professor Dr Alfred Philippson, former professor of geography at the University of Bonn. Philippson had come to Theresienstadt with the first transport from Cologne on 16th June 1942, 78 years of age, and was granted better living conditions through the mediation of Hedin, and his own scientific works were sent to him to Theresienstadt. Since even some filming was done for propaganda reasons in Theresienstadt in the time from 16th August till 11th September 1944, it was called the "Hollywood of the concentration camps". The records available at the ITS are very extensive. The town of Terezin has been in existence again since the end of World War II and had 2,700 inhabitants in 1985. In the "*Kleine Festung*" (small fortress) there is a memorial.

For the sake of completeness, Ghetto *Warsaw* is to be mentioned as well. Here, an uprising of the Jewish Ghetto inmates broke out on 19th April 1943. The report of "SS-Brigadeführer" and Major General Jürgen Stroop gives account of it. Stroop's report ends with the date 16th May 1943 with the statement: "There is no Jewish residential area in Warsaw any more". For the salvage and preservation of the materials coming up when the Warsaw Ghetto was broken off, Concentration Camp *Warsaw* was established on 15th August 1943. Already on 19th July 1943, 300 prisoners from Concentration Camp Buchenwald had been transferred for the extension of Concentration Camp *Warsaw*.

One concentration camp has not yet been mentioned by me so far, because it had a special function: *Bergen-Belsen* which was only built up during the war by prisoners of Concentration Camp Buchenwald who came there on 30th April 1943. The camp was only opened in the middle of July 1943 as *residence camp for prisoners intended for an exchange with the enemy states of the Nazis*. These *interned Jews* with passports of western democracies actually belonged in internment camps under the control of the "Wehrmacht" without involvement of the SS. In order to prevent this, the SS used the term *residence camp* as

camouflage name. As from 27th March 1944, there existed also a concentration camp in addition to the *residence camp* (where the conditions, however, were not any better than in the other concentration camps); from March till autumn 1944, the camp also served for the reception of sick prisoners; afterwards, it was reception camp for the evacuation transports from the concentration camps in the East. With one of these evacuation transports, Anne Frank came to Bergen-Belsen as well, who had written her famous diary in her hiding place in the back part of the house on *Prinsengracht* No. 263 - in the middle of Amsterdam; this diary was left behind when she was arrested and, this way, it has been preserved for the posterity. She died from typhoid fever in Concentration Camp *Bergen-Belsen* in March 1945. In the front part of the house on *Prinsengracht* No. 263, there is the *Anne-Frank-Museum* today as well as an international meeting place for young people - similar as in Auschwitz; the back part of the house was left in the state it was in at that time. But back to the year 1945: The documentation with original records - except for the registry office of Camp Bergen-Belsen - is rather limited, but the liberated prisoners were registered for the most part. Due to the typhoid epidemic, the situation was difficult for the liberators, the British Army, who, owing to the danger of an epidemic for entire North Germany, burnt down and levelled off the whole camp. This way, presumably, the stock of files was destroyed as well.

Now, I would like to talk about another category of camps that existed at that time: The *forced labour camps for Jews*. These camps were partly established in former ghettos when these were dissolved. In Upper Silesia, there was a *special commissioner* who was responsible for the establishment of the forced labour camps there. This was "SS-Brigadeführer" Schmelt who carried out a "preliminary sorting" of the transports arriving at the railway station of Cosel in Upper Silesia from Drancy, Malines and Westerbork; this means that those who were able to work were sent to Upper Silesian forced labour camps for Jews as, for example, Forced Labour Camp for Jews *Blechhammer* which was not changed into an Auschwitz-Commando before 1st April 1944. The prisoners who arrived there already in autumn 1942 were given Auschwitz-tattooed numbers of the series: 176,512 to 179,285. Two "very well-known" forced labour camps for Jews were Camp *Borislav* and Camp *Drohobycz* or *Drgobyc* in Ukrainian, south of Lvov = Lemberg in the Ukraine, where the prisoners had to do forced labour for the "*Karpaten-Öl AG*", in oil refineries. The foreign workers in Germany who were not confined in forced labour camps were sent to so-called *labour reformatory camps* for weeks or months even for the

slightest offence; one of these was Camp *Breitenau* near Guxhagen about which the ITS possesses extensive documentary material. By the way, it was located in the same workhouse in Breitenau I have already mentioned in connection with the early concentration camps. But there were labour reformatory prisoners in almost all concentration camps as well where they were distinguished from the others with the description AE = "Arbeitserziehungshäftling" (labour reformatory prisoner).

Finally, there also existed the so-called "*Jugendschutzlager* (camp for the protection of young people) Moringen am Solling", situated about 10 km west of Northeim/Lower Saxony. This is the place where, for example, the "*Hamburger Swingjugend*" (= original quotation) was sent (these were young people who were caught when they were dancing the Swing that was prohibited by the Nazis). This can be looked up in the ITS-documents. "Maladjusted" girls were sent to the "*Jugendschutzlager Uckermark*". The Nazis did not stop at the Polish youth either. They were sent to the "*Jugendschutzlager Litzmannstadt*" that was called "*Polen-Jugendverwahrlager*" (camp for the custody of Polish young people).

Now, I would like to revert to Concentration Camp Buchenwald which has already been mentioned several times and, in particular, refer to the Buchenwald-Commando that was located in the barracks in Arolsen - now empty after the withdrawal of the Belgian Nato-forces. The prisoners had to do forced labour for the "*SS-Führer-Schule*" (school for SS-leaders) that had been transferred from Dachau to Arolsen. Compared with other commandos, it was a "good" commando of so-called "*Funktions-Häftlinge*" (functional prisoners).

Only briefly, I would like to touch upon the documentary material available at the ITS in addition to the concentration camp documents, namely the records about civilian workers who were forcibly assigned for labour. They came from all western and eastern countries; most of them, however, were from the East and were denoted as "*Pole*" (for Poland) and "*Ostarbeiter*" (for the former Soviet Union) respectively. This material stems from inquiries of the military government and was transferred from German original sources, e.g. from registers of births, marriages and deaths of registry offices, from registers of foreigners of firms, as well as from the indexes of the sick-funds, onto forms. In addition to the post-war forms, there also exist original documents - mainly photocopies - as, for example: index cards and lists of names of firms, sick-funds and authorities. So, these are *wartime documents*. Analogous to this, there are *post-war documents* of the UNRRA = *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation*

Administration and of the IRO = *International Refugee Organization* with index cards, called DP-2-cards (DP = Displaced Persons) or *fiche individuelle*, as well as passenger lists of ships and planes concerning Displaced Persons who emigrated.

Another group of documents is preserved in the Child-Tracing Archives. Concerned here are documents which give information about abducted children. In this connection, I want to mention the registered SS-society *Lebensborn*. *Lebensborn* had been established by Heinrich Himmler in 1935 in order to breed, so to speak, the blond Nordic ideal human being. In the maternity homes of *Lebensborn*, approximately 11,000 mostly illegitimate children were born. As from 1941, the "Germanization" of children from the occupied territories, who had become orphans through war events or who were "racially valuable", was carried out in the *Lebensborn*-children's homes as well. In the Child-Tracing Archives, you will also find the so-called *child-tracing files* and all DP-2-cards issued for persons born as from the year "1928". In the child-tracing files, the entire correspondence in connection with the tracing, until the child has been located or until the family has been reunited, is preserved.

The enumeration of the documents available at the ITS must remain incomplete, because it is not possible, if only for reasons of time, to list them all. It is, however, indispensable to mention the following: For example, another proof of the tactics of the SS to cover up unnatural cases of death. In the time from 15th January 1942 till 8th December 1942, so-called "*Invalidentransporte*" (transports of disabled persons) with 2,593 prisoners departed from Concentration Camp Dachau. According to the reports about the changes in the number of prisoners, the transports were subtracted from the number of prisoners in the camp on the respective day of transport. According to the investigations of the ITS, the prisoners - concerned were, in fact, disabled prisoners - were killed in the euthanasia institution "Schloß Hartheim" near Linz/Danube (Austria) a few days after the departure of the transport from Dachau. The cases of death were, however, documented by the registry office of Concentration Camp Dachau, so that the impression is given - above all, owing to the "invented" cause of death in the "Sterbe-Zweitbuch" (second death register) - that those killed had died from natural causes in Concentration Camp Dachau. The registrar of the town of Dachau, who issues a death certificate for a relative, for instance, would not have any doubt that his certificate is correct, even though it is obviously incorrect as far as the place and time of death as well as the cause of death are concerned. Further euthanasia institutions were in Brandenburg/Havel, Bern-

burg/Saale, Grafeneck (Community Gomadingen, District Reutlingen) and Hadamar, District Limburg-Weilburg.

I would also like to mention the fate of German criminal prisoners, the "*Berufsverbrecher*" (professional criminals) who wore the green triangle on their prisoner's clothes. More compulsorily than voluntarily, they were forced into the military SS-formation, called "SS-Brigade *Dirlewanger*", of "SS-Obergruppenführer" Dirlewanger - who had distinguished himself in the *Spanish Civil War* in the German "*Legion Condor*" against the *International Brigade* - in 1944 and took part, for instance, in the suppression of the 2nd Warsaw uprising in 1944 and in the suppression of the uprising against the Tiso⁵⁾-Regime in Slovakia that was supported by Hitler. Dirlewanger lists can be looked at among the Buchenwald documents.

Perhaps, it is noteworthy as well that also the names of prominent figures, such as the 1st Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer, the head of the opposition of Adenauer's Government, Kurt Schumacher (SPD), who was prisoner in Concentration Camp Dachau, as well as Reverend Martin Niemöller, leading member of the German *Confessional Church*, are listed in the documents administered by the ITS.

I could also give some indications regarding experiments on human beings, so-called pseudo-medical experiments in the concentration camps. Names like Professor Dr med Carl Clauberg, who carried out experiments as gynaecologist on female prisoners by means of intrauterine injections within the scope of a sterilization research in Block 10 of Concentration Camp Auschwitz, would have to be mentioned, or Dr Mengele with his experiments on identical Jewish twins, or "SS-Sturmbannführer" Dr Ding-Schuler with his typhus fever research station and virus research in Blocks 46 and 50 of Concentration Camp Buchenwald. But in addition to those guilty, I would also like to mention those who were innocent, a prisoner whom I myself met as colleague, so to speak, under the direction of the IRO at the time, here at the ITS, who emigrated already in the 1950's, who, as prisoner, was writer for Dr Ding-Schuler together with Eugen Kogon - author of "*Der SS-Staat*" -, namely the prisoner's physician Dr Marian Ciepielowski. Kogon and Dr Ciepielowski wrote medical articles for Ding-Schuler which he published as his own works. The collection of photographs of Auschwitz prisoners should be mentioned briefly; of course, it only refers to registered prisoners with tattooed number.

In addition to Martin Niemöller, I would also like to mention Reverend Bernhard Lichtenberg who, as dean of the cathedral "St. Hedwig" in Berlin, was

5) Tiso = Slovakian politician, 1939 - 1945 President of Slovakia that was dependent on National Socialist Germany.

first incarcerated in the prison Tegel, because he had said prayers for the Jews. On the transport to Concentration Camp Dachau, which is known to have had many clergymen as prisoners, he died in Hof in 1943. In spite of the completeness of the Buchenwald records and in spite of separately available "lists of prominent figures", many famous opponents of National Socialism do not appear in the documents. An example is Dr Rudolf Breitscheid, party whip of the Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag; he went into exile to France and was extradited to the Nazis in 1941; he was in Concentration Camp Buchenwald and, like the leader of the Communist Party, Ernst Thälmann, he was allegedly killed during an air-raid on the "Gustloff-Werke" in Concentration Camp Buchenwald on 24th August 1944. Also the names of other prominent figures are missing, for instance: Princess Mafalda of Hesse, daughter of the Italian royal couple (perished on 24th August 1944), members of the von Stauffenberg family, Mrs Goerdeler and children and the former French Prime Minister Leon Blum. By the way, the prominent figures of all camps, among them Reverend Martin Niemöller, were assembled as hostages in Dachau towards the end of the war, were then moved off in the direction of Tyrol and finally liberated by the South Tyrolean home army at the Pragser Wildsee in South Tyrol. In the "Sonderbau" (special guardhouse) of Concentration Camp Flossenbürg, the prominent theologian of the German *Confessional Church* and active supporter of the resistance movement of 20th July 1944, Dr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was murdered on 9th April 1945. Also his name will be sought in the Flossenbürg records in vain, although these are quite complete. What is to be pointed out as well, is the "*Mordregister*" (register of murders) of the "*Volksgerechtshof*" (People's Court) with the names of the executed opponents of the Regime. Harmless actions as, for example, telling jokes about Hitler or Göring were interpreted as: *treason, high treason, aiding and abetting the enemy* etc., especially under the infamous President Roland Freisler. It was not until January 1985 that the German Bundestag annulled the decisions of the People's Court.

In summary, a brief survey of the entire stock of documents. When the UNRRA was dissolved in 1947 and the newly established IRO took over its tasks in the western occupation zones of Germany and Austria, only a small stock of documents was available at the original UNRRA-CTB (= *Central Tracing Bureau*) which, from then on, was called *International Tracing Service* (ITS). These "stem documents", as I would like to call them, were located in an annexe of the "*Neue Schloss*" (= Schlosshotel) which does no longer exist today. They

mainly consisted of photocopies, microfilm enlargements and post-war compilations of the following documents: prisoner's personal sheets and infirmary register of Auschwitz, liberation lists of Bergen-Belsen, alphabetical registers of Buchenwald, Dachau and Flossenbürg, book of numbers of Natzweiler, alphabetical register of Mittelbau-Dora, death register of Neuengamme, book of numbers and death registers of Mauthausen, alphabetical register of Theresienstadt and transport lists of Drancy, Malines and Westerbork. The original records of Auschwitz, Gross Rosen and Stutthof - so far as preserved - were in Poland, partly in the USSR, but were also needed for the war crime trials together with the records of Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbürg and Mittelbau-Dora. Afterwards, the Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbürg and Mittelbau-Dora records were first given to the IRO in Esslingen. The tug of war "Arolsen" or "Esslingen" began; in May 1949, when the ITS moved from the "Neue Schloss" to the former SS-barracks, released by the IRO-Training-Center, the die was cast. The records of Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbürg and Mittelbau-Dora all found their way to Arolsen. After the dissolution of the IRO (31.12.1951), the ITS was put under the control of the Allied High Commission for Germany (HICOG). October 1952: move into the own ITS-building on the Grosse Allee, because the barracks were needed for the Belgian NATO-troops. After the Federal Republic had regained sovereignty on 5th May 1955, the ICRC took over the direction and administration of the International Tracing Service in July 1955. In 1958, from the middle of October till the middle of December, I accompanied the ICRC-delegate Max Bruns to Auschwitz. By means of a Bolex-16mm-film camera, we photographed the Auschwitz and Mauthausen records available at the "Panstwowe Muzeum w Oswiecimiu" one by one (every single picture had to be switched separately). The Mauthausen records mainly referred to Polish citizens, because the individual records of Mauthausen had incomprehensibly been separated according to the prisoners' nationality. This was the beginning of the systematic document acquisition.

Not before 1974 - and I restrict myself only to the main part of the acquisition -, concentration camp documents of various camps were sorted out by a colleague of mine and by me at the Main Commission (*Główna Komisja*) in Warsaw and filmed there for the ITS little by little. Still in the 1970's, we received the Stutthof records on microfilm. Dr Konieczny of the University of Wrocław (Breslau) put his research results about Concentration Camp Gross Rosen at the disposal of the ITS. Due to the evacuation in February 1945, the original records had obviously been destroyed or lost. Also the further docu-

mentary material of Neuengamme is missing which presumably went down in the Bay of Lübeck with the ships *Cap Arcona* and *Thielbek* on 3rd May 1945. With the fall of the Wall and, in particular, after the reunification, many archives that had been closed for the ITS until then became accessible. For example, the ITS could acquire microfilm copies of the death registers of the registry office of Camp Auschwitz which had been desired since 1964. Records of Concentration Camps Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück followed. With these, it is now possible to belatedly issue the requested certificate to quite a number of former prisoners. However, owing to the continuing incompleteness of the records, still too many negative replies have to be dispatched. This fact justifies the continuation of the successful document acquisition still today.

This was, in broad terms, a very incomplete survey of the documents from Hitler's "thousand-year Reich" preserved at the ITS.

I do not wish to keep from you my own further "career" as a soldier of the German "Wehrmacht". At the end of 1942, I was still in the Olympic village in Dallgow-Döberitz and, shortly before Christmas, I was active in my home community, taking advantage of a weekend leave. The church community, that was situated in the new west end, was regarded as prominent community. For example, the following persons belonged to it: The actor, director, author and architect Louis Trenker, the excellent singer Karl Schmitt-Walter, member of the German Opera Berlin and of the Munich State Opera, and the banker Hermann Josef Abs who, after 1945, was the head of several German delegations at international negotiations, e.g. 1951-1953 in London, and who was chairman of the board of the "Deutsche Bank AG" last.

Another prominent Catholic in Berlin was the head of a governmental department at the Ministry of Transport of the Reich, Dr Erich Klausener, chairman of the "*Katholische Aktion*" (Catholic action) in Berlin. I mention him, because he was shot by an SS-commando in his office at the Ministry of Transport on Wilhelmsplatz in connection with the "Röhm-Putsch" on 30th June 1934.

But now back to the year 1942. Shortly before Christmas, I was supposed to draw a stage set for a Christmas performance in the community of "Heilig-Geist". I had almost finished it - thank God -, for on 24th December 1942, when darkness fell over Berlin, the entire Infantry Training Regiment mot. 901, which I belonged to, was on the train on its way to the eastern front, in the direction of Stalingrad. The German command had to fall back upon the reserves, because the 6th German Army under Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus had been encircled in Stalingrad since 22nd November 1942. A relief attack of the 4th German

Armoured Division had finally failed on 23rd December 1942. Our motorized infantry regiment got in contact with the enemy in the Starobjelsk/Millerowo Region around New Year 1942/43. The Soviet troops had meanwhile advanced about 300 km from Stalingrad towards the West. From another encircled area somewhere in this no man's land, dispersed Italian and Romanian units flocked towards the interception lines at night when we were standing guard. In the course of the winter, we retreated to the western side of the River Donets. In my service record, which is still in my possession, this is described succinctly: "Defence battle between the Rivers Don, Aidar and Donets". In April 1943, our operation in Russia came to an end - after the course of the front on the River Donets had been consolidated - and we were sent back, not to Dallgow-Döberitz, but to Wünsdorf near Berlin for the establishment of the Armoured Infantry Training Regiment 901. The infantry units that were very mobile and could be deployed fast, because they were motorized, but that were very vulnerable during an attack, turned into the armoured units that were equipped with "SPW = Schützenpanzerwagen" (armoured personnel carriers). That this concept of the then Inspector General of the armoured troops, Chief Marshal Guderian, was quite forward-looking is shown by the fact that, still today, NATO as well as UN soldiers are equipped with "SPW".

In the meantime, the military situation had deteriorated drastically. On 10th July 1943, armed forces of the Western Allies landed in Sicily. Due to a vote of no confidence of the *Gran Consiglio del Fascismo*, Mussolini was forced to resign on 24th July 1943. King Victor Emmanuel III arrested him on 25th July 1943 and appointed Marshal Badoglio head of the Government who, after secret negotiations, entered into an armistice with the Allies on 3rd September 1943. Further British and American troops landed in Italy. At this stage, in autumn 1943, our regiment, meanwhile equipped with "SPW", was brought from Fallingbommel, where we had been transferred before, to the area of Trieste. In San Pietro del Carso = St. Peter am Karst were our first local quarters. This region, today part of Slovenia, had belonged to Austria-Hungary (Empire of the House of Hapsburg) until 1918. In the Treaty of Rapallo (1920), the western part of Slovenia with Postojna = Adelsberg (where you find the most important dripstone caves in the world) and Idrija became part of Italy. In 1941, after the invasion of German troops in Yugoslavia, another partition took place: Oberkrain **without** Ljubljana = Laibach as well as regions that had been Carinthian and Styrian before World War I (Oberkrain and South Styria) became part of the "*Grossdeutsche Reich*" (Greater Germany); Ljubljana and Unterkrain be-

came part of Italy. As from 10th April 1941, Croatia was reigned by Ante Pavelic, supported by Germany, with his Ustashi-State which was similar to the NS-State. Jews, Orthodox Christians = Serbians and Muslims were persecuted mercilessly by this fascist government. Scattered Badoglio-troops were roving around in this region in September 1943 and turned against Germany together with Tito's partisans. When our unit occupied this territory, another large part of Italy was also occupied by German troops and the Badoglio-troops were disarmed. Mussolini was liberated from his imprisonment on the *Campo Imperatore* at the *Gran Sasso d'Italia* by German parachutists on 12th September 1943 and, supported by the German Nazi-Government, he founded the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* of Salò.

Under the pretence of a division, our operation went along in the Istria Region (peninsula with the port Pola, Pula in German), Rijeka = Fiume, Kocevje = Gottschee = German linguistic enclave where we were welcomed by the population particularly cordially and were catered for with Viennese "Apfelstrudel" immediately; Karlovac = Karlstadt was the last station in this region. Later, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we were in Tuzla and in Zvornik on Drina. In Banja Luka, I was not with them any more, because I was on Christmas leave. I entered the train in Slavonian Brod, but just before Zagreb = Agram, the train was blown up by Tito's partisans. Thank God, nothing really bad happened, because only the engine had jumped the rails, and the first waggon which I was in. Because of three freight waggons that were running with the train in front of the engine, the explosive device had gone off too early. In my service record, this operation is described as follows: "20.9.43 - 16.11.43 guerilla warfare in the North Italian area; 17.11.43 - 16.1.44 guerilla warfare in Croatia".

Then, the preparations for the invasion were already started. Still during my Christmas leave, I got the order not to return to Slavonian Brod, but to report back for service in Nancy. There and in Lunéville, the Armoured Training Division was assembled, including the (already existing) Armoured Infantry Training Regiment 901 and the newly established Armoured Infantry Training Regiment 902. Still during the establishment period, the new division was suddenly transferred by train to the then German-Hungarian border in March 1944, namely to the area of Bruck a. d. Leitha, to the southeast of Vienna = provision for an attack against Hungary. The Horthy Government had participated in Hitler's expansion policy until 1944 - after all, it had gained territory as result of the "Wiener Schiedssprüche" -, but in the Jewish question, it had been rather restrained - in contrast to Tiso-Slovakia, also allied to Germany, that

deported Slovakian Jews to Auschwitz as from 1942. Only the young Jewish men had to do a *Honved*⁶⁾-labour service behind the German lines in Russia. The German defeat that was already becoming evident led to the wish for an about-turn to the side of the Allies in Hungary. For this reason, the new Armoured Training Division was on stand-by on the Hungarian border and got the order for invasion on 19th March 1944. On the very same day, Budapest was occupied. We took up our quarters in Törökbalint, a small wine-growing place west of Budapest with a German population. After the German invasion, the systematic deportation of the Jewish population began in Hungary as well. At that time, however, we, as soldiers of the "Wehrmacht", did not know anything about that. At the end of April 1944, I was on an official trip to Berlin and, on my return journey to Budapest at the beginning of May, I was diverted in Vienna to France where my division had already been transferred. In Nogent-le-Rotrou, near Chartres on the Route nationale from Le Mans to Paris, I met up with my unit again. We stayed there until 6th June 1944. In the night of 6th/7th June 1944, we were transferred to the invasion front and, already on our way there, we had the first losses through fighter-bombers in spite of the fact that we were brought up at night which, however, had been discovered by the English and the Americans. Already since the Yugoslavia operation, I had been with the regimental staff so that, apart from the air-raids, I was spared a lot here. Our fighting units were deployed in the area of Caen in the immediate vicinity of the landing area of the Operation *Overlord*. The danger was not only imminent from the air - the German air force remained invisible -, but we were also raked with gunfire from the sea by the ships' artillery. Dead cattle on the pasture land could not be removed and stank horribly. On 19th July 1944, I was out of danger for the time being, because I was sent to Berlin once again. At the same time, the commander of our regiment also went to Berlin in the staff car. Today, it seems rather certain to me that our chief was involved in the events of 20th July 1944. I learned about the attempted assassination of Hitler on the train Metz-Frankfurt/Main on 21st July 1944 from a headline in the "*Völkischer Beobachter*". The fact that our chief was taken there by his driver was yet to become very important for me. For when I reported to the headquarters in Berlin, my *official pass* was taken away from me and I got the order to return to the invasion front immediately; in that situation, this meant that I was in danger of being absorbed on my way by the next *alarm unit*. Since the address of the commander's driver was known to me, I contacted him at once - full of presentiment, one had given a second *official pass* to me, because my unit

6) Honved = Hungarian name for "defender of one's country", from 1919 till 1945 for the entire Hungarian armed forces ("Brockhaus")

wanted me back - and, after a few days, I was notified that the chief's car was to be entrained in Berlin-Falkensee. The news reached me in "*Heilig-Geist*" on a Sunday. First, we were loaded with the car on a freight train to Würzburg, then, after a few days of waiting, we went on to France, just before Dijon. There, we were already approached by the Americans. So, down off the train we went and drove on our own bat. If I think about it today, I can only say that we must have had a powerful guardian angel. We quickly headed for a military airstrip that had been abandoned by the Germans, but not yet occupied by the Americans, in order to fill up the vehicle with petrol. Then we had "trouble" with some local headquarters that were still existing and we saw to it that we got away as fast as possible. Then new danger was imminent: contact with the Maquis, the French resistance movement against the German occupying forces and against the Vichy-Regime supported by Germany. As we drove in a convoy with several vehicles, we got off lightly out of this precarious situation. After many wandering paths, we met up with our division again in Belgium at the beginning of September 1944 which had retreated there from the area of Caen - Falaise. The new commander of the regiment was glad to have the staff car and its contents back. In November 1944, there was another advance in the direction of Strasbourg in order to attack the French and Allied armed forces on the flank, but the success was not lasting; we were intercepted in Lorraine already. It was not before long that we were on stand-by in the Eifel Mountains in order to start the last German offensive of the Second World War.

It went down in history as *Rundstedt-Offensive* or *Ardennes-Offensive*. During the advance, we received leaflets from a propaganda unit with comparisons with the Seven Years' War of Frederick the Great.⁷⁾ Hitler must have known as well that we - that is all 28 divisions participating in the offensive - were the last contingent. From 16th till 25th December 1944, we were making progress - advance in the direction of Anvers = Antwerp in order to snatch this important supply port away from the Americans and the English. The weather was bad and, for this reason, there were no fighter-bombers in the sky, but also the German air force stayed on the ground. However, on 25th December 1944, after snowfall and subsequent brightening up, we were caught outside Bastogne - there, the Americans had been encircled by us, but they were supplied by air. Our head divisions had advanced up to Saint Hubert and, on Christmas Day, George Patton's Third United States Army put the screws on them. Those were - if only in view of the onset of winter - once again very hard days in foxholes, also for the regimental staff. It was also on Christmas Day that my friend Hugo

7) The leaflets referred to the battle of Frederick the Great on 5.12.1757 near Leuthen, today Lutynia in Polish, Community Nimkau, Miekinia in Polish, in the province of Wroclaw = Breslau. Through the application of the oblique battle formation, Frederick the Great was victorious near Leuthen over the Austrian armed forces under Duke Charles of Lorraine which were superior by far.

Klein was killed with whom I had been together already in Dallgow-Döberitz, in Russia, Wünsdorf, in Slovenia, Croatia, Budapest and in Normandy. A fighter-bomber had approached our radio post. Hugo escaped into the adjacent church and was buried alive; I got off with no more than a fright in a haystack. Hugo was completely covered with stones, only his head could be seen and he smiled in the face of death. In the middle of January, we were safe again. The last stage began which ended with my capture near Iserlohn = "Ruhrkessel" on 16th April 1945. Afterwards, I was in American war captivity in Remagen and in Andernach. There I was handed over to the French and became French prisoner of war in Chalon-sur-Saône, as already mentioned at the beginning. Here, the wheel of my expositions turns full circle. I hope that my diverse explanations and indications will help you in understanding the work of the International Tracing Service better. Its employees do a work that means an important contribution to international understanding and a non-material compensation to the victims, because behind the entries in the documents, there are the fates of people. Henry Dunant could not forget the wounded of the Battle of Solferino in 1859. He, thus, became a supporter of a more humane behaviour towards the wounded on the battlefields and, in 1863, he became the founder of the Red Cross. In the same way, the survivors and the future generations should declare a "*never again*" their supreme commandment. I wish to connect the sentence, which the German Federal President wrote in the commemorative book on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Concentration Camp and Extermination Camp Auschwitz-Birkenau on 27th January 1995, to the ITS-files as well; it reads: "Here the dead open the eyes of those living."

References used as basis for the expositions:

- "*Brockhaus*"-Encyclopedia

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- relevant literature, e.g. Adler: "Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft", Eugen Kogon: "SS-Staat", etc.

- Register of Places of Detention under the Reichsführer-SS (1933 - 1945)

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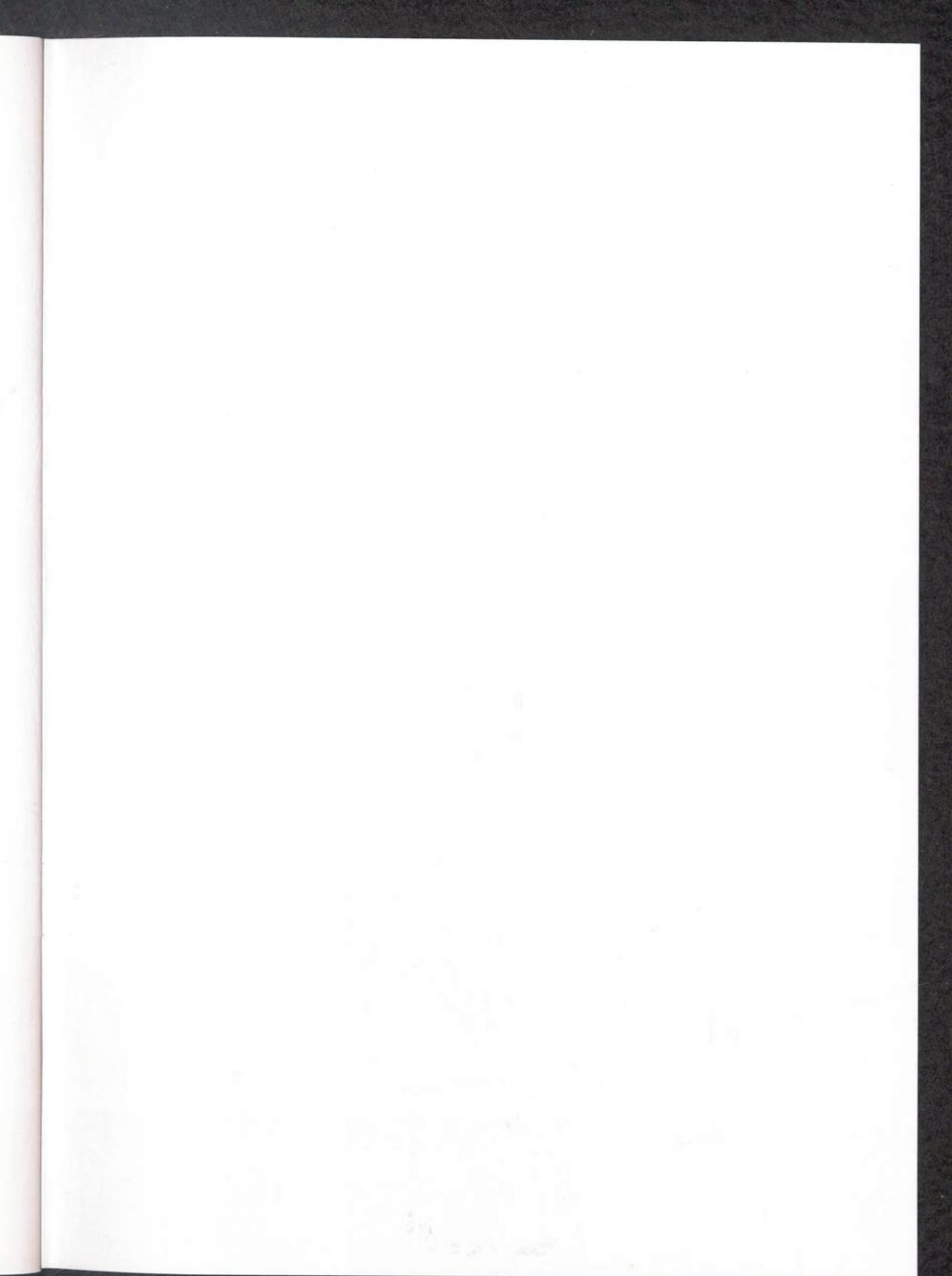
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