

A Diary Delayed

Theresienstadt – Auschwitz – Warsaw – Dachau

By Max Mannheimer

Translated by Kathryn Woodard

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Translator's Note

It is an extraordinary privilege to be given the task of translating Max Mannheimer's memoirs. As a translator one always bears a responsibility to capture and represent the original document as accurately as possible. The burden is particularly heavy in this case. The German original is readily available for those who want to undertake a close study. I take full responsibility for any discrepancies found between the two documents, and any mistakes are mine. For the most part the difficulty has been capturing Mannheimer's clear and concise language while also conveying it in an idiomatic English. The original title – *Spätes Tagebuch* – stems from the time period in which Mannheimer set his recollections down on paper, during a health crisis nearly twenty years after the end of World War II (as Ernst Piper explains in the afterword), and it was another twenty years before it was published. In a few instances I have kept words in the original German when they are widely known and

understood – Blitzkrieg and Schadenfreude, for example. I have kept Nazi military ranks and titles in the original German. City and town names are left as Mannheimer recalls them from his youth even if the locations are no longer identified by those names. For the main locations in his narrative, the current name (usually in Czech) is provided once as a reference. A few explanatory notes are provided in brackets; the critical annotations by Wolfgang Benz from the German edition are provided as endnotes.

K.W.

I. My Youth in Neutitschein (Nový Jičín)

Among the first memories I have that would carry meaning for my later life are those from the Christmas celebrations in the Neutitschein kindergarten. I didn't yet know anything about the difference between Jews and non-Jews. But I still thought it was unfair how the kindergarten teacher, dressed up as Santa Claus, distributed the presents. I would have liked to have the lovely rocking horse that another student received, but I was just given two carved wooden gymnasts that rolled from one end of a set of parallel bars to another. At home I complained to my mother about this injustice, and later when I began to understand the meaning of Christmas and the difference between Christians and Jews, I became more and more convinced that the Baby Jesus didn't like Jews.

Only after I entered elementary school did I become aware that I was different from the others. At least I felt I was at a disadvantage not being able

to participate in religion class like the other children, and I was not given any holy pictures in exchange for the collection of aluminum foil, which was presumably for the purpose of freeing black African slaves. I was very sad about this and only took comfort when Frau Mandl, the widow of Neutitschein's rabbi, explained to me that Jews had our own history, which was much older. I always listened attentively to these stories from biblical history and was convinced that the local priest, whom I also greeted with "Praise be to Jesus Christ" just like all the other children, did not know such lovely stories. In addition the Christian children didn't receive sweets like I did during their religion class, though only in exchange for good behavior.

My parents met each other in the last year of the war. My mother worked the counter at my uncle's butcher shop. Uncle Jakob was the oldest of fourteen siblings; my mother, Margarethe, was the youngest. My parents married on March 25, 1919. My mother's dowry consisted of old-fashioned furniture with a ton of decorations. The wedding itself was financed by my uncle, which included arranging a tuxedo for my father.

My father leased an inn at Landstrasse, No. 20 in Neutitschein, which belonged to the family Huppert, and I was born one year later in the room

next to the inn's parlor. My brother Erich was born in 1921, in 1923 Ernst, 1925 Edgar, and in 1927 my sister Käthe.

My first word wasn't "Papa" or "Mama," but rather "Auto." A fascination with four-wheeled transportation would never leave me.

My father had little time for us kids and that's why I always appreciated it when he told us stories. Above all I was impressed by his depiction of an encounter with a good friend whom my father held in the highest esteem above all people because of his faithfulness. It was 1915. The second year of the war. My father's regiment was stationed in Galicia. It was nighttime. My father was standing guard. He was speaking with another soldier. Suddenly he heard a horse neighing that gradually became louder. My father approached and recognized the horse as the one that had pulled the delivery wagon he drove for his uncle's grocery store in Witkowitz. The story of this encounter pleased me so much that my father had to tell it over and over.

My siblings and I were proud of a friendship our father had with a Jewish train conductor by the name of Allerhand. We got to meet him once. His pocket watch, which hung from a long, heavy chain, fascinated us above all else. Its hands reliably indicated the departure of the train, and in our

minds it was as if the watch had the power to set the train in motion.

From my father's youth I can only recount that at the age of twelve he began a sales apprenticeship with his uncle Adolf Guttmann and that he passionately loved to dance; so passionately that he once danced through the night three nights in a row while still working during the day. Apparently, during the third night a bucket of cold water was needed to bring the overzealous dancer back to life after he had collapsed and lost consciousness.

Like most big city folks – Witkowitz is part of Mährisch-Ostrau [Ostrava in Moravia] – my father became a regular patron of the coffeehouses even though originally he hailed from a rural area close to Krakow. Of course, this included shooting pool and playing cards in addition to reading the newspaper. My grandfather on my father's side – my father was a child from his second marriage – was the owner of a wagon with two horses and made a living from transporting goods for several salespeople from Krakow, which was 30 kilometers away. A business that was two horses strong. Besides that my grandfather owned a stretch of land with woods and fields. I am not sure anymore if it was my grandfather or great-grandfather who managed to drink the woods away in a matter of a few years. This incident in the family history made such an

impression that I took it upon myself never to drink, and I've held myself to it to this day. Of course, my upbringing and the role models I had in Sportclub Makkabi played their part as well.

My grandfather apparently had enormous strength. Once when a horse broke its leg while transporting wood, he was able to wrap it in a sheet and carry it over his shoulders to a stall a few hundred meters away. I should note that in Poland there is a type of horse that is only slightly larger than a pony. But for me a horse was a horse and my grandfather's deed very impressive.

My grandmother who lived in Myslenice, a provincial town in Poland, was a good-hearted woman and seemed ancient to me. She held us tightly as she kissed us, and she cooked a wonderful noodle soup with large beans. I particularly liked to watch her bake bread. It was much nicer than just going to the baker to pick up bread. Every Friday evening my grandmother put on a nice dress, lit the candles, and was proud that I could recite the blessing for the bread so well. Uncle Ludwig, my father's brother-in-law, took me to the synagogue on the Sabbath where the service was much louder than in our synagogue at home. A lot of men had long beards and payot, or side-curls (the young boys also had these), and they wore long, black coats and

yarmulkes. As a ten-year-old I couldn't understand how Jews could look so different just a few hours further east by train from Neutitschein, why they lived so isolated from the rest of the world only communicating with each other, and why the women in the synagogue were hidden behind a curtain. However, there were also men in Myslenice without beards and payot, who secretly visited a pub with a bowling alley near the Raba River and observed the Sabbath this way.

My experiences at my grandmother's during the holidays made a deep impression on me. I was very pleased to be able to spend part of my childhood where my father supposedly also had his fun, and at the time I wished I could also grow up in such a lovely area with woods behind the house. Only the soccer field was missing, and so it was easier then to return home after all.

My mother's intellectual capacity surpassed that of my father. Her knowledge was astonishing when one considers that she only went to school for eight years. She read a lot, owned most of the classics, and in spite of the time passed since her schooling, she could recite a French poem fluently. I enjoyed hearing it again and again even though I couldn't understand a word. It was something about spring, flowers and birdsong.

My mother was beautiful. Or at least I saw her so. She was a very affectionate mother, and her talent was to give each of us the feeling that we were her favorite. My mother was very religious and not only for appearance's sake. She did in fact only go to synagogue on holidays but kept kosher and was a patient wife. Because of my father's passion for card-playing my mother was often alone. On Sundays once dusk had fallen, she sent me, because I was the oldest, to the Café Heinrichshof to pick up my father. The thick half-curtains that hung in the coffeehouse windows blocked my view so that I could only glimpse my father's splendid baldhead after jumping up to find him. Then I went in. My father greeted me very warmly as if we hadn't seen each other for months and offered me lemonade – a kind of bribe to draw out the card game that I either accepted or declined depending on my mood.

My mother was alone a lot. Even though she never complained about it, I resolved never to play cards in order to have more time for family. And I've always held myself to that.

As a justification for my father, my mother knew a story that apparently took place in Ungarisch-Brod. A father with a lot of children, who owned a small house, managed to bet away the house in the course of one night's card game. The family had to move out in a matter of days. When

the man died his widow stated at his burial: “You were right to play cards – at least you had joy in life.”

In spite of this weakness my father was a good father even if strict with a strong sense of justice. He was a fair salesman and very respected. In the year 1927 my father acquired a motorcycle with a passenger car that looked like an iron crate, loaded it full with cheese, preserved fish and other similar products and visited stores in the close vicinity. A year later he bought a delivery truck, included chocolate in his deliveries and built up a wholesale supply business. In 1930 my father gave up the business and bought a house. Half of the money he loaned to himself and the other half he took on as debt, as he would explain to those who were curious.

Shortly before my thirteenth birthday I was prepared for my bar mitzvah. It is a great occasion in Jewish life, which marks the transition from youth to adulthood as a full-fledged member of the synagogue community. To this day I can feel the excitement my mother had as I approached the Torah shrine, and I was very excited, too. Soon I would be confirmed as a member of the congregation. When Jews want to pray together, there have to be ten men. Through the bar mitzvah

I was now able to participate in public ceremonies. On weekdays if there was a death and the ‘Kaddish,’ or mourning prayer, had to be recited, I was found at home and would participate in the prayer. Aside from the ‘Tefillin,’ the prayer belt, and ‘Talis,’ the prayer shawl, I received many gifts.

My school years were actually not that exciting. I was never made fun of in school because of my faith although occasionally someone on the street might yell, “Jewish pig.” When I could, I defended myself with my fists. In one case that involved an older and stronger boy, I had to fetch my brother Erich for help. My brother took a horse-apple and stuffed it in the bully’s mouth until he promised never to say “Jewish pig” again.

In the trade school I attended from 1934 to 1936 I was able to observe the first signs of Nazism in my 15- to 17-year-old peers. One student with the last name Haas had a picture of Hitler in one of her schoolbooks, which she gazed at often and attentively. It shocked me a bit since at that time the Jews were already being persecuted in Germany. From a book that had been published in the CSR (Czechoslovak Republic) by a German who had emigrated, I knew something about the situation, but I still didn’t want to see the danger as described in the book. Except for the “Sudeten German Homefront” (SHF), later the “Sudeten German

Party” (SDP), which was underestimated by everyone, we didn’t see any indication that might have meant the demise of the Czechoslovak Republic.¹ The founder and first president of the CSR, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, wanted to build a multiethnic state after the Swiss model out of both the highly industrial and the well developed agricultural areas, which were populated by Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Poles, Ruthenes, Hungarians and Jews. However, the Czechs who had achieved independence after centuries of foreign domination made mistakes that the German minority took advantage of through the means of propaganda; above all, the personal politics involved in filling important, and less important, government posts was handled very poorly.

After completion of trade school I entered the firm J. Schön & Co. in Znaim-Alt-Schallersdorf. The work in the store and the office was not difficult for me because I had already helped out in my father’s store since the age of twelve or so. I worked a lot. The shop, which was a kind of small department store, was open daily from 5:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and even on Sundays from 7 to 11 o’clock in the morning. I spent my free time going for walks, taking excursions with my bicycle, going to the cinema or to soccer games.

The picture that the villagers had of us Jews can be summed up in one sentence: The Jews are good salespeople, let their children study, and keep to themselves. They took notice of my soccer playing as something out of the ordinary because it didn't fit their picture. "Look, a Jew is playing." The news traveled fast and in the halftime break I was surrounded by curious onlookers like a great soccer star. That I also happened to be quite a good player was met with even more astonishment.

The activity of the Sudeten-German Henlein-Party increased more and more, and when Hitler marched into Austria on March 12, 1938, the awareness that Hitler's troops were only 10 km away from us was a particular burden on us as Jews. In the following nights many Jewish refugees crossed the border, some sleeping in my bed while I made myself comfortable on a chair. Early in the morning they were brought to the train station in a taxi in order to travel further inland, mainly to Brünn. The police were fully aware of the illegal immigrants but looked the other way.

A young woman who had stayed overnight with us and was supposed to be taken to the train refused to depart without leisurely applying her rouge and lipstick first even though I told her to hurry (the taxi was in front of our house). At the

time I was angry about this behavior, but later after I had thought about it, I admired this simple woman for her poise. She had to flee and lose so much, yet she held onto her pride and self-control.

The political tensions and the uncertainty led me to return to my parents and siblings in the second half of September.

The constant military maneuvers, the political and diplomatic activity, the aggression of the Nazis and finally the partial mobilization in May 1938 made us aware of the misfortune that was to strike us. We placed our only hope on the political and military alliances that later proved to be just pieces of paper.

When Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier signed the agreement seceding the so-called Sudetenland to Hitler in the Führer's Building at Königsplatz, a new epoch began.² The Jews of the CSR in particular viewed it with concern.

October 10, 1938

Occupation of the Sudetenland

A small town turned upside down. Swastikas flags are everywhere and banners proclaiming, "We thank our Führer!" – "We greet our liberators!" The German troops move into Neutitschein. The

population cheers in enthusiasm. No, it doesn't cheer, it roars. "Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!" Every store window has pictures of Hitler and banners of thanks. I don't allow myself to go to the city plaza, the center of the festivities. The enthusiasm is deafening, fanatical.

We discuss it at home. It won't be so bad. We can't just run away. The house is here. Father is optimistic. He served in the Great War and pays his taxes on time. He is very popular and has a good name. Everyone knows him. Not only the rabbis, also the priests. He was always just a salesman, always apolitical. God willing, everything will work out. God willing.

Two days later the driver for the Markus firm and the son of Piesch the soap factory owner confiscate our Chevrolet delivery truck on behalf of the new leaders for the NS public assistance program. They make a formidable appearance. It's amazing how a pair of boots, riding pants, and a military tone can change people.

After a few more days our driver, Albert, recently dismissed from the Czech military, is allowed to drive 'his' truck for the same program. Bread and canned goods are distributed to the 'starving' population. A grotesque situation. German products from a Jewish truck. Our

company name on both sides of the truck is covered over with NS posters. It was that simple.

“Hitler is doing something for the people,” Albert says. He’s forgetting for the moment that for this ‘something,’ old Mannheimer’s truck is being ‘loaned’ and that is how Albert earns his wages. “Yes, he is doing something,” I answer.

After October 10, 1938
Neutitschein

The town changed dramatically beginning on the tenth of October. Overnight the street traffic was changed from the left side of the road to the right, the policemen received new uniforms, the bilingual street signs vanished. Everywhere there were swastikas, and people wore NS-party lapel pins. Our neighbor, Herr Demel, a grocery store clerk with a small business, assumed an attitude and explained, “We used to be small, but now...” I watched him grow right in front of me. His self-confidence was downright tangible. Frau S. in the Mühlgasse exchanged her picture of the Virgin Mary hanging above an oil lamp for a portrait of Hitler. The new God was apparently highly worshipped by this aging person at home alone – I could tell by the fresh flowers.

Most of our German customers explained to us that they wouldn't be able to buy from us much longer; two Germans on the other hand bought twice as much as before and made no secret of their attitude.

Some of my former schoolmates wore brown uniforms and looked past me when we crossed paths, which suited me just fine. I was glad that they looked past me. They could have spoken to me. But they didn't.

Some Czechs remembered their German mothers and grandmothers and suddenly became German and Nazis. Children born at this time were given names of a different sort. Adolf, Hermann, Horst and girls' names from the German hero's epics were very popular. People with Czech last names suddenly had German names in order to appear German. The traditional German dress ("Dirndl") and cable-patterned socks, already a symbol of true German culture for the Nazis from the last several years, was adopted along with the hairstyles of the BDM leaders. [BDM stands for Bund Deutscher Mädel, or League of German Girls, similar to the Hitler Youth.]

Because of the favorable exchange rate for German marks to Czech Kronen (1 Reichsmark = 8.33 Kc), it was possible for the new leaders to buy out all of the stores in a short time. At first the

salespeople were excited by this surge, but soon they realized that they received bad money for good wares, which they couldn't use to replenish their stock. They were exchanging gold for iron. And they realized it too late. Some small shops closed up, and their owners either put on a uniform or became office clerks.

When I went to our usual barber early in November 1938 I had to wait a bit. Two other customers were ahead of me. The head barber Kunz gave me a copy of "Stürmer" and suggested I read it. With particular pleasure he pointed out a caricature of a Jew and asked me how I liked it. I wasn't at a loss for an answer, but I also wasn't aware of the risk. "The Aryan race is, of course, more attractive!" Kunz didn't say anything. He cut my hair like always and had a hard time with the usual small talk on this day.

The Czech butcher Tonda Neumann had a close call avoiding arrest. He quoted the poster hanging in his window at the wrong moment. When a customer inquired as to why there wasn't as large a variety as before, he answered, "We thank the Führer!"

The past owner of a confectionary shop turned to his successor, an appointed commissary trustee, for help. The trustee had been treated like a son by

his Jewish boss for almost twenty years. The answer to his former boss' plea for help was for him to go hang himself. The advice was followed two days later.

November 10, 1938
"Kristallnacht"

Yesterday the synagogues burned. They burned in Germany. They burned in Austria. They burned in part of Czechoslovakia. If there was a danger of the fire spreading, they were destroyed with explosives. Most of the Jewish stores were demolished. My synagogue was plundered. Fire or explosives was dangerous because of the gas storage catty corner to it. Prayer books, Torah scrolls and prayer shawls lay in tatters in the street. The book that the Jews had held together while being dispersed for two thousand years was tread on with boots. The organ won't be accompanying our songs on the Sabbath and on holy days. There also won't be any more Sabbath, holy days, or songs. Only at home, as long as there is still a home, will Mother be able to light the candles for the Sabbath and Father recite the blessing for the bread and wine. "Lechem min haaretz. Borei p'ri hagafen." And then my mother will take in her hand the prayer book printed in German and read silently the chapters, "Welcoming

the Sabbath,” and “Prayer of the Jewish Woman,” just as before.

The prayer books, Torah scrolls and shawls from the synagogue had been thrown onto the street. Maybe tomorrow they will be tossed out of the houses onto the street. Nothing would change for my mother. She would have also recited her prayers without a book.

Officially this destructive action taken by the Nazis was deemed a spontaneous act of revenge from the “boiling soul of the people,” as a response to the murder of vom Rath, the embassy councillor in Paris, by the seventeen-year-old Herschel Grynszpan. It was certainly a credit to those responsible and their masterly organization since the people’s soul boiled in such equal measure in three different countries.

An open police vehicle drives by our house. Jewish men are sitting on top guarded by cops in green uniforms. Two cops come up the stairs. It is explained to my father that he is to be taken into protective custody, that nothing will happen to him. Presumably because of the “boiling soul of the people.” I’m standing next to the door. “How old is this rascal?” asks the cop. My heart beats loudly. Had Mother given my age, I would have gone to jail, too. The protection didn’t come from the police, it came from my mother.

December 1938

The Jewish men have been released from jail. They had to sign a declaration that they would leave the German "Imperial territory" within eight days and never return. They do it. My father travels from Neutitschein to Ungarisch-Brod, the birthplace of my mother. It lies in south Moravia and is known because of Comenius. [J.A. Comenius (1592-1670) was a Czech theologian, philosopher and educator.] We have to provide the Gestapo with a list of our possessions to be transported for authorization purposes. The furniture truck is packed. The customs officials who observe the process behave correctly. They are old officials from the Empire who presumably learned their service during the Weimar Republic. Marie, our Czech maid, is crying as she bids us farewell. "No one cries about Jews," says the carpenter Jirgal who lives in our house and observes the move with more than a bit of "Schadenfreude." He was so nice to us in past years, and his daughters Minna and Hildegard played with us in the courtyard. Perhaps no one really does cry about Jews.



My family in 1938. Top row from left to right: Edgar, Erich (d. February 15, 1943), myself, and Ernst (d. March 7, 1943). Bottom row left to right: my father Jakob (d. February 2, 1943), my sister Käthe (d. February 25, 1943) and my mother Margarethe (d. February 2, 1943). Only Edgar and I survived. (From the Mannheimer private archive.)

II. Ungarisch-Brod (Uherský Brod)

On January 27, 1939 we leave our home in Neutitschein with the hope that we can lead a life without fear in the unoccupied part of the CSR.

In the meantime Father had found a very old apartment with two rooms and a small kitchen at Masarykplatz 165 in Ungarisch-Brod. It is not exactly big for six people, but we are glad to have escaped. I start work again at the spice and seed shop of Rudolf Holz. A few weeks later I experience German troops marching in for the second time. It's exactly the same picture as four months ago in Neutitschein. The public buildings are draped with swastika flags. Motorcycles with and without passenger car are parked on the main square and automobiles next to them. Masarykplatz where we live is turned into Adolf-Hitler-Platz overnight. The only thing missing is the enthusiasm of Neutitschein. Ungarisch-Brod only has a few German families. Perhaps the troops are a bit disappointed, but they

recognize the difference: While the German border area considered themselves 'liberated,' the Czech population felt 'occupied.' With the exception of the lone Czech fascist or two.³

Because only Jews are allowed to perform manual labor, I take a job in road construction in the summer of 1939. On the first of September 1939, an endless row of military vehicles rolls down 'my' street. It's the beginning of the German campaign against Poland.

1940

There is a lot of discussion in the old Jewish Quarter of Ungarisch-Brod. In cafes, at home, seldom on the street. In spite of the Blitzkrieg against Poland there is optimism. Optimism without apparent reason. Optimism with a purpose. Jews are not allowed out of the house from eight o'clock at night until early in the morning. Restrictions on shopping are also in effect: Jews are only allowed in stores between five and seven o'clock in the evening. Jews are now forbidden from entering park grounds. I am now working in road construction close to Luhatschowitz, a holiday resort. My lodging during the week is a shed behind a garage. From there I go to the resort park in spite of the eight o'clock curfew and the restriction. I count the restriction placards,

“Forbidden for Jews.” There are six in all. Later, around eleven o’clock I pull all of the signs out of the ground and throw some of them in the bushes, some of them in a brook. The next evening all of the signs are back again. I didn’t find the courage to do it a second time. I’m not a hero after all.

The work in road construction is actually not all that bad. It is structural work and there is something to see. The road leads through the woods and only five minutes away there is a reservoir where we are allowed to refresh ourselves after work. And it’s only twenty minutes to the resort park. I overlook the restriction placards simply with the carefree attitude of a twenty-year-old. My colleagues at work, all Czechs, are friendly to me and they value my work for its high standard. They even let me be a part of their workers’ union, which can be seen as high recognition. And when I learn to curse properly, I am ‘their man.’

One day a Mercedes convertible drives past us with three men and two women sitting in it. The car comes from my hometown. I recognize one of the passengers as the son of the soap factory owner, Piesch, the other is the son of a lawyer. The group evidently spent the weekend in the resort. I watch the car until it turns and disappears. I shovel and fill my wheelbarrow and think: By the sweat of your

face... [A German expression referring to Genesis 3:19; often used sarcastically.]

The roadwork is not enough to feed the family. Our reserves have long since been used up. The relocation of several Jewish families from Ungarisch-Hradisch (Uherské Hradiště) offers new, additional service jobs. We move furniture, saw and chop firewood.

My brother Edi learns to make shoes from the master Cingalek. As a thirteen-year-old he sets up a corner in our woodshed for cobbling. Karli Langer, ten years old, was his 'apprentice.' He went looking for Jewish families and offered to have their shoe heels repaired, and his 'master' made the repairs. His prices were lower than at Bata, of course, since naturally he couldn't compete with this global firm.

April 20th, Hitler's birthday, in 1939 has a different meaning for me than for the Nazis. It's the day I meet my first love. Viola is eighteen and I'm very much in love with her. She comes from an orthodox Jewish home, but finds her strict upbringing to be exaggerated and not in keeping with the times. We meet each other secretly on the outskirts of town and make excursions from there with the motorcycle that I was able to keep due to my work. For a daughter from an orthodox family it's risky

just to go for a walk with a young man; to go riding on a motorcycle is considered impossible.

In 1940 Viola resettles with her family to Prague. When I visit her there, her parents suggest that I immigrate with them to Palestine. I think of my parents and siblings and decide in favor of my family. I am the oldest son and have to stay.

At the end of 1940 I become acquainted with Eva Bock. She just completed a 'Hachsharah,' which is practical training for living on a farm in preparation for Palestine. In the beginning we were always together with other young people and discussed politics, literature, and philosophy. We were also interested in psychoanalysis and had a high opinion of Freud and his dream interpretation. It was at least a way to get past some of our inhibitions. We pretended as if we understood everything and tried to impress the girls with all of our 'choice' wisdom. There weren't many other possibilities for us then, so we had to go with the intellectual. And the competition at the time was very strong. To talk about road construction would have had less success in comparison.

I manage to impress Eva. We like one other and see each other every day. When the weather is bad I go to the Bocks' home and 'teach' stenography. It's a good thing I can do stenography.

The year 1941 doesn't bring many new developments for the Jews in Ungarisch-Brod. Most of the men under the age of 45 are required to work. They work in construction, roadwork or with private companies as assistants. From time to time there are raids by the Gestapo. Individuals are arrested and taken to the Gestapo prison in Ungarisch-Hradisch. Later they are sent to the concentration camp.

Since Jews haven't been allowed to own radios for quite some time, the latest news from foreign broadcasts is relayed to us by the Czechs. We discuss them in Café Smetana, the only official meeting place for Jews in Ungarisch-Brod. Among other things I remember one report, which stated that the Jews who had been deported to the east via Theresienstadt had to work in sulfur mines and didn't have any gas masks. Because of this they were poisoned over a period of time, according to the report.

Theresienstadt, the old fortress and military base, is the large assembly point for Jews from the protectorates of Bohemia and Moravia and also from Germany.⁴ Many stay there, mainly elderly people; for most, however, Theresienstadt is a way station before deportation to an extermination camp in Poland.

In the beginning of 1942 most of the Jews from Ungarisch-Hradisch are resettled to Ungarisch-Brod. The Jewish quarters are overcrowded, food supplies are becoming scarce, and the news about those who were deported is very grim.

Nevertheless Eva and I try to make light of the situation to Ernst. It's easy when one is young and hopeful. We are in love and believe in happiness. In spite of the threats to us, we draft plans for our future lives. After work until the eight o'clock curfew we only have one hour to talk to each other, to dream. We don't want to break curfew. Our friends Ilse Jellinek, Ernst Schön and Adolf Rosenfeld had already been arrested for that.

In the year 1942 the transports that pass through the Theresienstadt ghetto are in full swing. Today they arrive in one city, tomorrow another. There is no escape. Not for us either. A man in Ungarisch-Brod has connections to people who can smuggle Jews to Slovakia in exchange for payment. From there it may be possible to make it to Palestine through Hungary and Turkey. My brother Erich passes along the address for this mediator to a young man named Lazarowicz. Three days later my brother is arrested. He is questioned, taken to the Gestapo prison in Ungarisch-Hradish, then to Brünn. To the infamous Kaunitz College – a Gestapo prison with torture methods. Those from

the Middle Ages in the fortress Spielberg above the city couldn't have been worse. Will we ever see Erich again?

My mother cries a lot. We comfort her, as much as we can. The beginning of September Eva and I decide to marry. We want to stay together even after the transport. We go to the rabbi and take care of the formalities. The wedding ceremony reflects the times. The absence of my brother who was arrested is a special burden on us since we don't know whether he is still alive.

We move into a rented room, or more exact, a half-room. The other half belongs to the landlord and is partitioned by a screen. In our fantasies we plan a wonderful honeymoon, which we want to spend in a distant land after the war. And we dream and dream. We don't see the danger that is coming toward us. We don't want to see it. We love each other and forget the war for a moment, the passing transports, the Gestapo prisons.

On January 24, 1943 our time had come. The summons from the security service that we held in our hands ended the months of apprehension. We were to present ourselves at a school close to the train station on the morning of January 27th. All documents are to be brought with us as well as an

inventory of all our belongings left behind in the apartment. The last preparations are made at home. As young people we don't consider our fate at that moment to be particularly poor. It's happening to all of us, we are together, we can work, we've always worked. And in Theresienstadt – no one wants to think further – we have many friends, relatives and acquaintances. There won't be less for us to eat than there is now.

At the school we are divided up into separate rooms and registered, and this information sheet with all possible details will accompany us from now on. In the late afternoon we board a passenger train that will bring us to Theresienstadt. For the first time, I am numbered. The number that I carry around my neck is CP 510.



With Eva Bock on our wedding day in Ungarisch-Brod, September 24, 1942. I saw her for the last time on the death platform at Auschwitz. (From the Mannheimer private archive.)

III. Theresienstadt

End of January 1943

Floodgates. Barracks. Transit room. Straw beds. Names gone. To the departure point to the East. Move to another barracks. For one night. Straw beds. A damp, humid cellar. Stuffed full of humans. No, “sub-humans.”

The East – work operation, we are told. Except for my brother, Erich, who was arrested in 1942, we are all together: my parents, my wife, two brothers, my sister, sister-in-law. In eight days I will turn twenty-three. From the last four years I have become used to road work and breaking stone. For the last few weeks also sawing. The thought calms me. It won't be so bad. Father agrees, too. He pays his taxes on time. He was on the front for three years in World War I, for king and Kaiser. He never had any debts.

Transport numbers are assigned and hung around the neck. My number is now CU 290. A

thousand women, men, and children. Drag themselves. To Bauschowitz. A passenger train is waiting. We are called one by one. Board. Ten to a compartment. A tight fit. But it can't be that bad: a passenger train.

The East – work operation. Operation? Why not just ‘work’? Departure. It is nine o'clock in the morning. We see debris, hear Saxon dialect. Discover notes on the wall of the car. Departure Theresienstadt, 9:00, then Dresden, Bautzen, Görlitz, Breslau, Brieg, Oppeln, Hindenburg. Then nothing. Day and night. On the route we discover Jews. In civilian clothes. With star. With shovels. Throw bread out of the window. They dive for it. Shove each other. Work operation? Will we look like that, too? Bargain? Push? Another day. And a half night. The train stops with a creak. A thousand men, women and children. The military escort moves the train. We have to stay in the train. Not much longer. A row of trucks is coming. Bright floodlights suddenly illuminate the platform. SS officers and guards are standing there. We are on the death platform at Auschwitz-Birkenau.⁵

IV. Auschwitz-Birkenau

Midnight, from the 1st to 2nd of February 1943
Death Platform

Everyone off the train! Leave everything! Panic ensues. Everyone tries to stuff as much as possible into their pockets. The SS people yell: Forward! Step on it! Another shirt is put on. Another pullover. Cigarettes. Maybe to exchange. Men on this side, women on the other side, women with children onto the trucks. Men and women who can't walk can go with the trucks. Many identify themselves.

The rest are divided into rows of five. A woman tries to come over to us. She probably wants to speak to her husband or son. An SS man brings her to the ground with a walking stick. On her neck. She lies still. Is dragged away. Work operation?

An SS officer is standing in front of us. Obersturmführer. Is addressed by a sentry as such.

Presumably a doctor. Without a white coat. Without stethoscope. In a green uniform. With skull and bones. We line up single file. His voice is very calm. Almost too calm. Asks for our age, occupation, health. We show our hands. I hear some of the answers.

Locksmith – left.

Manager – right.

Doctor – left.

Worker – left.

Store clerk from the Bata Company – right.

It's our acquaintance. Büchler from Bojkowitz.

Carpenter – left.

Then my father is next. Assistant. He goes the direction of the manager and store clerk. He is fifty-five. That could be the reason.

Then it's my turn. Twenty-three years, healthy, road construction worker. Calluses on the hands. How good are the calluses. Left.

My brother Ernst: nineteen, electrician – left.

My brother Edgar: seventeen, shoemaker – left.

I try to find my mother, wife, sister and sister-in-law. It's impossible. A lot of cars have left.

We stand in rows of three. An SS sentry asks for Czech cigarettes. I give him some. He answers my questions. The children will go to kindergarten. Men can visit their wives on Sundays. Only Sundays? That's plenty! It will have to be plenty.

We march. On a narrower street. We see a well-lit square. In the middle of the war. No black out. Watchtowers with machine guns. Double barbed wire, floods lights, barracks. SS guards open a gate. We march through. We are in Birkenau.

We stay standing for ten minutes in front of one barrack. Then we are allowed in. Out of a thousand men, women and children from the transport, 155 men are left. Several prisoners are sitting at tables. Money and valuables are to be handed over. Also hidden items. Otherwise there are strict punishments here. I open up a section of my shirt collar. A ten dollar bill. From my father-in-law. For an emergency. Our names are registered. I ask if I should keep the identification card. No is the answer. We will get new ones. We go outside. Then to another barrack. We leave our clothes in one room. We only have shoes and belts. All of our hair is cut off. And shaved off. Because of lice. We are sprayed with Cuprex. Come into a very warm room. Arranged with stairs. Like a sauna. We are naked and are glad about the warmth. We look strange. Comical. Bald heads, with a belt around our naked bellies, and we are wearing shoes. A prisoner in striped clothing comes in. Stands in front of us. We ask about our wives, children. "Walk through the oven!" We don't understand him. We

think he's a sadist. We don't ask any more questions.

It gets warmer and warmer in the room. Suddenly an iron door is yanked open. Leads to another room. Prisoners yell: Forward! Step on it! ... exactly like the SS on the platform. It seems to be a camp language. We are driven and beaten into the ice-cold room under the showers. Ice-cold room. Ice-cold water. After the sauna. Any attempt to avoid the cold stream is met with beatings. After ten minutes the water is turned off. There are no towels. But clothes. Used clothes. Civilian clothes with a bright, red mark on the back of the sports coat, a mark on each of the trouser legs. Seems to be oil paint. There are trousers, a sports coat, underpants, shirt, socks. No overcoat. No cap.

February 2, 1943

My brother Edgar is tall. 1 meter 86 centimeters. The arms on his sports coat are too short. Much too short. He requests an exchange. Receives a punch in the face. Falls on the concrete floor. I help him to his feet. The coat stays the same. So that's the work operation. How long can one stand it?

We step outside. Wait a half an hour. The door to a disinfection room is open. We see two prisoners. They are searching pieces of clothing for

hidden money and valuables. They throw the money onto a pile. Mostly dollar bills. Seem to be worthless here. We wait and freeze. Finally we move. We march. Come to a cabin. Three-story bunk beds. Each plank for six prisoners. The room attendants yell: March, march to bed, leave the shoes underneath. We climb onto the planks. Planks without straw and without blankets. We can't sleep. Let's pray, someone suggests. We pray. Schema Israel...

Stand up, Move, the attendants yell. Some of us search desperately for their shoes. Many don't find them. Old shoes that don't fit are there. They ask the attendants. Punches are the answer.

We are only concerned with one question: Where are our parents, wives, siblings? Where are the children? Where are they?

We line up in front of the cabin. We are freezing. It is still dark. The ground is muddy. To our left is barbed wire. Charged with electricity. Skull and crossbones. Underneath: "Danger." I am desperate. We will be given shovels. To dig our own graves. Those are my thoughts. I say them aloud. My little brother comforts me. I should be his support. Barbed wire charged with electricity. Just touch – done. Won't hurt. My little brother asks: Do you want to leave me alone?

Man in front! To the side! Pack of swine! The cabin elder yells. The room attendants yell. Try to straighten up the rows with shoves. An SS man is coming. The cabin elder reports the number. We are counted. Remain standing for another half an hour. March off to another barrack. We enter. The barrack is completely empty. Another group comes after us a few minutes later. Jews from Poland. From Pruzana. A table is brought in. A lot of prisoners in striped clothing are approaching. With index cards. With tattoo needles. Names are called. For the last time. After that only the numbers apply. The left forearm is the nameplate. Edgar 99 727, me 99 728, Ernst 99 729. Our brandings. Like an animal. So that it doesn't get lost. The prisoners with the tattoo needles are very capable. From experience. They have experience after ninety-nine thousand seven hundred and twenty-eight times.

We wait another hour. Line up outside. We march again. To another camp. Two endless rows of horse stalls. Mud everywhere. Slightly frozen. The camp is devoid of humans. So we are the pioneers. The whole picture is somewhat ghostly. Two long rows of barracks, mud, barbed wire. In the distance one hears the noise of a diesel tow truck. Tuck, tuck, tuck, tuck... We recognize the beds. Three stories. For six people. No blankets. Bare wood. We are ordered to bed. The cabin elder

is doing the ordering. A German with a green stripe: a criminal.⁶ He speaks to us. Birkenau isn't a sanatorium: Discipline, cleanliness. Hard work. That's the only way to survive.

The barrack has gates on the front side. On one side of the barrack is the cabin elder's bedroom. This is also where the provisions are brought: bread, margarine, marmalade, soup, a black broth that is called coffee or tea. On the other side is a toilet. One prisoner is identified as the shit master. He is responsible for order and cleanliness. We haven't received anything to eat since yesterday evening. Now it is midday. For two hours we have been standing around between two cabins and doing nothing. We move our arms, hop up and down, just to keep from freezing. Beginning of February without an overcoat. Without a hat. Without food. Without parents. Without siblings, wives. Without home. Without help. Without hope.

Now comes evening roll call. One hour before we practice lining up. Stop! Forward! The cabin leader comes. An SS officer. The cabin elder announces the number. We are counted. After roll call we go back inside. We receive one ration of bread. A sixth of a commissary loaf. When we work, we will get more, we are told. A tablespoon of root marmalade and black broth. Our good table manners are gone.

After 24 hours. Most of us eat greedily. Me, too. We converse. We talk about camaraderie, solidarity. Our brothers from Pruzsana stick together. We do, too. An instinct formed over two thousand years. To join forces in an emergency. We unite. And yet we are two groups. From East and West. Our accents are different. Maybe our way of life, too? Way of life?

It is already very dark outside. A drill whistle breaks through the peace and quiet. Calls are coming toward us. Pull up the guard chain! From now on we can't leave the cabin. There are sharp shooters guarding us. The first night in the quarantine station has begun. On orders from the attendant we climb onto the planks. We press close together. To keep warm. On my right is Bobek Alt, on my left my two brothers. I cry and pray. I do both secretly. In four days I will be twenty-three. And cry. My parents... Schema Israel Adonaj Elohenu...

February 3, 1943

Get up! Move! The room attendants run between the rows of beds. They have short clubs in their hands. First they strike them against the wooden posts. A kind of gong. Wash up! We walk over two cabins. There is a water fountain outdoors there.

There is no water. Maybe frozen. We go back to our cabin. There is black broth, nothing else. Then we are to line up for roll call. Like yesterday evening. There is a big difference in temperature between the cabin and field. We feel it in the morning especially. If we are freezing, and we are often freezing, we hug each other and rub each others' backs with our hands. We rub until we are warm and tired. We sort ourselves into rows of five. To stand and wait. One hour. The cabin elder comes out. The room attendants who established our order make up the first row. A kind of hierarchy. They carry out their duty in exchange for a small piece of bread. A piece of bread means a lot in Birkenau. Bread is the most often used word in our conversations. When someone says bread, right away everyone listens attentively. We wait for bread from the time we get up. Perhaps we will also work soon, then there will be more.

The cabin leader is coming. Stand at attention! Cabin 18 present with so-and-so many prisoners, reports the cabin elder. His report is short and crisp. One should make note of the tone. All of the "elders" talk this way. And uniform, yes, the uniform is it. Even if just a prisoner's uniform. That of a prisoner with green stripe. Everyone is still alive. Move!

We stand outside until midday. Then we have turnip soup. We have metal bowls that hold three fourths of a liter. In the afternoon we receive strips of linen, needles and yarn. We write our prisoner numbers on them. We draw a Star of David in front. Now we have been properly numbered. On the skin and on the coat. Afternoon is quiet. The water fountain is working. There is water for washing. Only for washing. We drink in any case. We wash only the face and hands. There are no hand towels.

February 4, 1943

On the third day something new happens. After roll call we stay standing between Cabins 18 and 19. We move to Cabin 19. Cabin 20 is also occupied. A transport of Jews from Berlin. Tattooed numbers – 100,000. Where are the previous 99,000? Where are they? And how many weren't even registered?

Now there are a total of three cabins occupied. Three times four hundred – makes twelve hundred. A sizable village according to that number – in three horse stalls. During the day the frozen mud between the cabins thaws. Order for a lice check: Take off shirts. Search for lice! Typhus risk. The reason for quarantine. We search – don't find any. A prison doctor comes. Also searches for lice. He

also doesn't find any. The cabin elder comes. Line up in rows of three. Cabin 19, forward march! It's difficult to move forward in the mud. He commands us to run. Because of the mud he takes back the command. My neighbor, Dr. Rabinowitsch loses his galoshes – he doesn't have shoes, someone stole them. It's impossible to pull them out of the mud. He runs now – with his feet wrapped in rags. He also loses these. No, we don't freeze now. The movement and the agitation, over what is coming or could come, keep us warm.

Is Erwin Rosenblum, whom everyone called Ruzicka meaning 'rosebud,' still thinking about the Grand Hotel Pupp in Karlsbad and the elegant dishes he enjoyed there before the war?

This morning he is holding a lecture about his stay in Karlsbad. Some consider it sadism. Others let him have the joy of recollection. From a time without barbed wire. Without mud. Without hunger.

But now we are here. A barbed wire fence. Within a larger barbed wire fence. In one place a crawl space. Fifty centimeters high off the ground. If you bend down, you can crawl through. We squirm through. It's too slow for the cabin elder. He helps us with his foot. We are at a gravel pit. Prisoners in stripes shovel gravel. Emaciated. With blood running down their wounds. A Kapo yells and beats

the prisoners with a shovel handle. They are actually wandering skeletons. We will also end up looking like that?

Move, the cabin elder calls out. Take off your jackets! Put them on backwards! We button each other's jackets. The buttons are in the back. Crazy, I think. We are supposed to fill the backs of our coats with gravel. With our hands. Some don't take enough. According to the cabin elder. He kicks the prisoners in the stomach. New gravel. Then he is satisfied. The Kapo of the gravel pit approaches the barbed wire. We are to crawl through. With the gravel. It's not easy. If we balance ourselves, the gravel falls out. Everyone, who crawls through, receives one or two blows. From the Kapo. With the shovel handle. Whoever loses their gravel has to go back. New gravel. New blows. How long can we take it?

Back to the cabin. The gravel is deposited between cabins 18 and 19. To dry out the mud. Four hundred prisoners – four hundred loads of gravel. A drop in the bucket. The senseless game is repeated two more times.

February 5, 1943

We only have to fetch gravel two more times. Actually I don't find it that bad any more. It's all a

matter of habit. One even gets used to beatings. Upon our return the camp Kapo is waiting for us. He is an asocial type, he has a black stripe. He's thought of an unusual game. To run the gauntlet. With the gravel. Two rows of prisoners, about ten to a row, stand facing each other. They are holding shovel handles in their hands. The others have to run past. And be beaten. I am assigned to the beaters. I go through the motions without actually beating. I don't notice that the Kapo is watching me. I collapse under his shovel. My back hurts. I do much more with ten Berliners than with you, you filthy swine!

So this is quarantine. A kind of qualification test. An elite. An elite of skeletons. Because it can't last much longer. We are on the fast track. The low calorie liquid diet and the undrinkable water are the causes of diarrhea. The demand for the two-seater latrine is high. The shit-master doesn't worry. Whoever gives him a slice of bread goes ahead. Whoever doesn't have one has to wait. Until it's too late. From now on he is always able to store up some bread. As toll.

The sick ones kneel in front of the oven doors and reach into the oven. Burnt wood is to replace animal charcoal. So in front of the oven there are struggles and arguments.

We line up for evening roll call. Then there is bread and margarine. We receive blankets. Proper blankets. Colorful blankets. No single colors. They come from a transport from Holland. The labels sewn in are proof. Everyone gets a blanket. Everyone is happy. Maybe we are really needed. The East – work operation. We have blankets. Two blankets on top of one another are warmer. Bobby Alt and I sleep under two blankets. Warm wool blankets. From Holland. Blankets, whose owners are possibly no longer alive. Now we can even take off our clothes. We put them under our heads.

February 6, 1943

Today I am twenty-three. My brothers congratulate me. The next birthday in freedom! Our friends join in. I have trouble holding back my tears. Toughness doesn't make one tough. At least not me.

Roll call. Lice check. Gravel duty. Beatings. Around midday we hear loud screaming from the next cabin. A prisoner cut out a section of his blanket. To bind his feet. All three cabins outside! All for one, yells the cabin elder. Sabotage! Parasite of the people! The saboteur lies beaten in front of the cabin. He won't live much longer. We present ourselves on the wide, muddy camp street between the rows of cabins. Camp elders, room attendants,

Cabin elders run back and forth shouting nervously. They shove and beat. Then they are satisfied. This can't be a special roll call. Everyone is standing together. Mixed up. The tension is building. What is going to happen? The camp elder with the black stripe takes command. Stand still!

He threatens us with a hundred strikes, with standing all night, with no food if it ever happens again. Now he has us do deep knee bends. Stand up! Bend your knees! Up! Bend your knees! Up! Bend your knees! At first this is the only order. We try to use our metal bowls that hang from our belts to sit on. Whoever is caught is beaten. After an hour the first ones fall over. Room attendants help with some beatings. The cold, the hunger, the knee bends. After seven hours we are allowed back in the cabins. Those lying on the ground are dragged to the side. Set down in front of the cabin. They won't have to appear at roll call any more. They will be counted where they lay. Handled like the dead. The cabin bookkeepers make note of their numbers. More portions will be left over for the cabin elders today. Also margarine. Or sausage. Yes, it was my twenty-third birthday. I won't forget it so quickly.

February 7, 1943

Many have fever. Who needs to go to the doctor? the room attendant calls out. Many come forward. Stand leaning against the outer wall of the next cabin. Some sit down. They wait an hour. Or longer. We have lost all sense of time. We only see if it's light or dark. Still no day with sun. Only clouds. Gray clouds. Clouds behind which we can't imagine a sun. The sick are now led away. They drag themselves wearily through the mud. We don't see them again.

The gravel duty seems to make less sense to the cabin elder. The space between the cabins is still muddy. Today we march in the other direction. We don't have to wear our coats backwards. We march to a construction site of a special sort. Old prisoners with whom we are able to speak briefly in a whisper tell us: Crematorium. Last station. A few ashes. Strewn across the fields in a foreign land.

We are each required to carry four bricks. This has to be done secretly. It's called 'organizing.' It's not easy to carry four bricks at once. Not in these circumstances. Not everyone was a road or construction worker. Bricks in freedom are not so heavy. A row of bricks is to be laid around the cabin. Better than gravel. For us. There's less beating.

Dr. Beck from Ungarisch-Brod is hiding in the cabin today. He is lying on the lowest plank with a

high fever. We drag him out for roll call. We support him. The next day he lies dying. Two fellow prisoners try to pull off the dying man's shoes. He has good shoes. Shoes mean a lot. In this mud. In this cold. The prisoners shove each other. The stronger one wins. A few minutes later Dr. Beck is no longer living. We recite the Kaddish, the funeral prayer. He is laid in front of the cabin. Counted at roll call. He is not the only one. Many more follow him from other cabins. A corpse detail arrives. That's how it is every day. More and more. Beatings. Diarrhea. Fever. Now I know what quarantine means. A sieve with large holes. Many fall through.

That's how it is day after day. Dead. Dead. Dead. Hunger and the water diminish our rows. Dutch Jews arrive to replenish our cabin. They die like flies. The Jews from Poland are the most capable of resistance. Mostly handworkers or laborers. Physically they are also better off. Not so pampered like the Dutch or Czechs and Slovaks.

The day is taken up by standing around between the cabins, with lice check, eating. The prisoners who aren't yet so emaciated are chosen to fetch the food. Often they try to reach into the kettle with no one noticing. Potatoes are easiest to 'organize.' Someone plops one into his mouth. Of

course, there are beatings for that, too. We take that into account.

The night guard in the cabin sounds the alarm. A prisoner from Pruzana has broken into the cabin elder's room. Two cubes of margarine are the booty. The screams that are the result of the cabin elder's beatings wake the entire cabin. Theft by a comrade! yells the cabin elder. Tomorrow we will have a word! The thief climbs onto his plank trembling. He only wanted to steal what was stolen. Stolen from the prisoners' rations – by the cabin elder.

After morning roll call we are offered a theater piece. The cabin has lined up. The arena is the space between cabins 18 and 19. The tiger is a cabin elder tall as a tree from the next cabin. His paws are infamous. If he decides to beat, he does it in leather gloves. For the effect. The sound effect. I've only seen one person who didn't fall over after one punch from the giant. And it really wasn't worth it. This failure angered the man with the hard punch. His prestige was lowered. He never worked without an audience.

First our cabin elder speaks. This is what happens when there's a theft... The delinquent is standing with bloody eyes in front of the lined up prisoners. Ten meters off to the side there is a pit.

About three meters deep. With well water. The ground is muddy on this day. The tiger's paws are ready for the first punch. He levels one. The victim hits the ground. It's repeated several times. Now there are only two meters to the pit. We recognize the purpose. At best two more punches. No, one is enough. Our fellow prisoner falls into the pit screaming. No one is allowed to help him. An hour later we see him climb out of the pit covered in mud.

A prison doctor comes every two or three days. The cabin has to line up, and our shirts are searched for lice. We have to stick out our tongues. Whoever has a coated tongue is registered and presumably brought to the hospital in the main camp of Birkenau. Many leave. No one returns. Our rows diminish.

March 5, 1943

My brother Ernst has diarrhea. He has a high fever. The prison doctor is here again. We line up. Stick our tongues out. I stand in the first row. It moves forward after the control. Edgar is in the second row. Ernst in the third. His tongue is heavily coated. The doctor and the cabin elder are at the other end of the cabin for the moment. Fast as lightning I pull

Ernst forward. Change places with him. The danger is over for today.

Night from the 5th to 6th of March 1943

Ernst still has a high fever. His lips are dry and cracked. He demands water. We give him some to drink. Night falls. We have two cups for the night. We place them at the head of the bed on the plank. Ask the neighbors not to take the water. Nevertheless, after half an hour the water isn't there any more. There is no water in the cabin. If one leaves the cabin, he will be shot. The barbed wire is two meters away from the cabin. Water, water, water... We don't have any. Our fellow prisoner drank it. Despite his promise.

March 6, 1943

Get up! Line up for roll call! Pepa Brammer takes off his quilted jacket. He is very lucky to own such a jacket. He gives it to Ernst. He takes his thin jacket in its place. Edgar and I hug Pepa. We know him from home. We can't hold back the tears. It goes without saying, he objects. No, it doesn't go without saying. Very few would do this. Pepa belongs to the very few. Edi would do it, too. Me – I don't know. We support Ernst and line up for roll call. Stay back

in the fifth and last row. For security reasons. The cabin leader is coming. We encourage Ernst. Only ten seconds! Just ten seconds! It all depends on that. Then we're through! We let go of Ernst. The cabin leader has passed. And with him the momentary danger. Until evening roll call. It goes well then, too.

March 7, 1943

Twenty prisoners are needed to pick up blankets in the main camp. Edgar and I are among them. We hid Ernst on the lowest bed plank. Covered with blankets. We will be back soon. Ten minutes there – ten minutes of work – ten minutes back. We could be back in half an hour. We march to the main camp. We stop in front of the clothing room. We wait two hours. We are impatient. Ernst is alone. Then we receive the blankets. Ten for each of us. We walk back. A group of prisoners is standing next to a cabin wall. The wall of cabin 18. The sick are led away from there. It's a waiting room for death. We come closer. Recognize the cabin bookkeeper. The camp Kapo. Ernst. He's shivering. We know now. An SS doctor had been here in the mean time. A selection. Edgar and I plead with the records keeper to disappear the card with 99 729 on it. "You think I'll go to the gas in your place?" is his

answer. We aren't allowed to say good-bye. We wave. Roughly twenty candidates for death are led away. We cry. Others comfort us, he's going to the hospital.

March 10, 1943

An SS doctor arrives. He is accompanied by a few non-commissioned SS officers. We have to undress completely. He is standing with legs apart at the gate to the cabin. We have to present ourselves individually, naked. We run five meters. Then stop. Stick out our tongues. Most of us pass. Some are led away. Now we know the procedure.

A half hour later we are taken to bathe. We are glad. It is a shower. Warm water. Soap, stamped with the letters RIF. Some say that it stands for "Pure Jewish Fat."⁷

We go outside. The icy wind doesn't let on that it is almost spring. We line up. Lice check again. We stand there with completely naked upper bodies.

March 12, 1943

Again many fall through the holes in the sieve. One day becomes like the next. We notice a black stream of humanity that is coming closer along the camp street. It is a gypsy transport. Men, women,

children. They stay together. Keep their own clothes. Without disinfection. They are put up in several cabins. One hears German, Czech or gypsy language.

The next day I enter a cabin. Children are screaming, women crying, men cursing. I recognize a gypsy with whom I worked in a sawmill in Ungarisch-Brod before the deportation. "You're going to the KZ, you Jews," he said three months ago to me. With a bit of schadenfreude. Now we are both here. "Do you have bread for me?" He nods. I reach into his coat pocket. I find some bread crumbs. I stuff them in my mouth. Along with the dirt from his pocket. What luck. I thank him. I thank him again. He doesn't yet know that he'll be searching for bread crumbs, too, in a few days.

The hunger is getting worse and worse. I eat the potatoes with the peel. I keep a close eye on those who still have the strength to peel potatoes. I beg for their potato peels. I eat them. No, I don't eat them. I slurp them greedily. Like an animal. As if I were afraid. Of the other peel eaters' jealousy perhaps. There are several of us. Before I couldn't drink water out of a cup. Only from a glass. It can't go any lower. I am ashamed. And I watch carefully for who is peeling potatoes.

March 15, 1943

The six weeks of quarantine are over. We stay in the cabin and wait. An SS doctor and three non-commissioned SS officers are here. It's the same procedure as a few days ago. Run. Stick out the tongue. Some stay behind. We form a line. March. After one hour we arrive in the main camp at Auschwitz. Over the gate is the slogan, "Arbeit macht frei." (Work makes free.)

"Eyes to the left." In honor of our guards in SS uniforms who are standing next to the gate. Counting as we march by. We come to cabin 1. Disinfection and shower. We throw our underwear and clothes onto a pile. We receive blows from the "old" prisoners who govern here, a shower, fresh underclothes, prison uniform, prison overcoat, cap. We line up in front of the cabin. A prisoner from the work operation comes by. Work operation. That's what it was called in Theresienstadt. So it was right. The East actually, too. The barbed wire and gas chambers weren't mentioned. It would have disrupted the discipline.

We are asked about our occupation. Road worker. I stick to it. I come to cabin 17. My squad is called Huta concrete works. A barking cabin elder. Every one is barked at individually. Order, Discipline, Cleanliness! Understood? Yes! I answer.

“Yes, sir” it should be. I am boxed on the ears.

“Yes, sir,” I repeat.

The room is very clean. Three-story single beds. Straw sacks. Blankets. Warm. A blessing after Birkenau. We are all optimistic. Maybe the slogan “Arbeit macht frei” made us optimistic.

At 5:30 a.m. we are woken up. The washroom is clean, the toilets also. We receive a kind of peppermint tea and then line up for morning roll call. At the order “Stand still” the entire camp falls silent. Several cabin leaders are busy counting. Then the work squads line up.

My squad has its gathering place in the camp street not far from the kitchen. Then the marching out begins for each squad. I search for my brother Edgar. I will find him. In the evening I will search the cabins with new additions. He will surely do the same. A band plays marching music. Could be in any resort. That’s how good it is. They are all prisoners. Now we are next. We march as strictly as possible. Left, left, left, right, left... In front of the gate we hear “Caps off! Eyes to the right!” We have been drilled for this moment in Birkenau. And now it’s showing. The man next to me, a prisoner some thirty years old from Pruzana, has stomach cramps. He can’t keep the even pace. The Kapo, a German with a green stripe, notices. Approaches. The man next to me speaks of stomach ulcers, of home, of his

diet. Kapo Helmuth – I heard his superior call him that in the meantime – promises help very soon. He has a good antidote. The sick man is glad to hear there is help available. Me, too. By noon it should be fine again.

We assemble at the work site. To build a canal. Large construction site. Tool warehouse. Shovels and picks are distributed. We go to work. The civil servant and lead worker show us the way. The sick man stays with Kapo Helmuth. Shortly after I hear screams. A shovel handle was the good antidote. At eleven the corpse wagon comes.

The work consists of tilling the earth, fetching cement, transporting concrete. The mixing machine is about two hundred meters away from the pouring location. The concrete is delivered in lorries. Three men – one lorry. On tracks. With me are two former Czech gendarmes. Red stripes. Political. Ready to help. Friendly. The civil servant is Silesian. We pour concrete into a mold. The transport should follow on foot. Luckily the route with the full lorry is downhill. With the empty one we can walk more easily. If we think we aren't being watched, we slow down our pace.

In order to fetch the cement we have to cross the street that leads into the center of Auschwitz. I recognize the street again. I spent a vacation in Auschwitz as a sixteen-year-old – in an Auschwitz

without barbed wire and gas chambers. I think of the walks I took with young people to the Sola River, of nights at the youth club, of the first girl I had a crush on and who lived in this town. They are nice and painful memories at the same time. For one zloty I took a horse carriage from the train station to the city. It was a great experience for me. It was the first trip I was allowed to take alone. To Auschwitz. Will this trip be my last? I try not to think about it. I don't want to think right now. Just survive. At any cost. At any cost?

The cabin bookkeeper brings good news. We are allowed to write a postcard to relatives. To the few who haven't been deported. I write to my sister-in-law. She is my wife's stepsister, half Jewish. I am fine. I am healthy. The sender's address has already been written. Last name, first name. Waldsee. Haus No. 17. Like it's coming from a resort with woods and a lake. Why not Villa No. 17? I hardly expect a reply. The purpose is definitely to assure those who are at home.

There is trouble with fetching cement. A Berliner by the name of Martin can't carry his heavy sack of cement. He lets it fall two times in a row. It lays torn open on the ground. Martin is beaten. He can't go any further. He is lost. We know what will happen

soon. We drive our lorry filled with cement to the mixing machine. Poor guy, says one gendarme. We nod silently.

My cousin Fritz Gelb from Ungarisch-Brod has not been well for a few days. He shovels gravel with difficulty. He has diarrhea and is very weak. He doesn't want to go to the hospital. He is right based on our experiences in Birkenau. The next day he doesn't make it to the squad. He couldn't hold out any longer.

After a few days my legs and feet are very swollen. It gets worse and worse. Edema. In the evenings I press the swelling with my thumbs. In several places. It creates holes that slowly fill up again. I am not the only one. In the evening the feet are swollen, in the morning the face. Feet. Face. I have pain in my groin, in the gland areas. Nevertheless, I march out with the squad. I can't keep the pace. I think of the stomach ulcers. Help at noon. Kapo Helmuth. Corpse wagon. I pull myself together. Left, left, left, right, left... My two good angels order me to just crouch down by the lorry frame. My guardian angels. We've duped Kapo Helmuth. In the evening I present myself at the hospital. The registrar at the entrance to the prisoners' hospital repeats my name. Mannheimer. Mannheimer? Where are you from? He asks. I tell him. He is silent in response to my inquiry about my

brother Erich. Now I am sure he knew him. He doesn't want to say anything. His name is Weiss; he comes from Holic in Slovakia. He has the number 29 000. A coincidence that he is still alive. Jewish prisoners seldom live so long. Perhaps he has his work position to thank.

I have to undress, go to the shower, then my prisoner number is written across my chest with an ink pen. It is all very well organized. Different from Birkenau.

Beginning of April 1943
Auschwitz Prisoner Hospital

In half an hour I am to be operated on. Infection of the inguinal lymph nodes. From the pain I am somewhat apathetic. My left leg is very swollen. I have difficulty pulling off my underwear. Operation table. A surgeon. An anesthesiologist. Both Polish prisoners. Laughing gas. I count to forty-three. I wake up from the anesthesia. Have bandages. Paper bandages. Helped to my feet I walk unsteadily to the wooden planks. I have the top bed of three levels. I climb up to my bed with the aid of the next bunk like up a ladder. I feel secure. The night is very long. Next to me a prisoner is groaning. I can't sleep. The groaning, the smell of the sick room with more than 200 beds. It grows light. I am glad that

the night is over. The feeling doesn't last long. One of the nurses calls out: Everyone out of bed! Take off your bandages! An SS doctor is standing in the doorway. The bookkeeper calls out the prisoner numbers. The two-meter wide and twelve-meter long passage between the rows of beds becomes a track of ashes. Without ashes. That will come later. I sense it. I am afraid. I am very afraid. We have to run those twelve meters. Those who manage can go back to bed. The others stay standing next to the door. My number is called. Run! I run, I run, I run for my life. I don't sense any pain. Those twelve meters seem like an eternity. My arms are held as prescribed. My chest out. More exact, the skeleton of a chest. I may go back to bed.

I recognize the groaning neighbor whose turn it is as my friend Riesenfeld. His whole body is covered with boils. His legs swollen. He can't walk. He drags himself. He is held at the door. Then a few others. The run for one's life is over. There are about forty by the door. The numbers are read out once more. Someone is missing. He managed to escape. Escape? He is pulled out of bed. He screams, screams, screams...

The skeletons, whom we call 'Muslims' in the camp language, receive blankets. But it's April. Those with shirts and blankets go downstairs. After ten

minutes we hear a truck leaving. Those who stay behind know the destination. This week there are no more selections. What will next week bring? How long will I have to stay here? I don't know. No one can tell me.

Second half of April 1943

I leave the hospital. My brother Edgar is working as a shoemaker. He repairs wooden shoes for prisoners. He says I should identify myself as a shoemaker at the work operation this time. Then I would come to his squad. I register myself. My cabin is 14a – my squad: clothing workshop. I am together with my brother.

The next day, I march out with the squad. A large squad. About 350 prisoners. Twenty-minute march on foot. An old factory. Must have been a tannery. A roof overhead. My brother introduces me to the head of prisoners. Just like in civilian life. His name is Lipczak. From Posen. My brother receives five blows from him every day on his behind. With a shoe strap. Even though he likes my brother. I'm supposed to hammer a wooden peg into a leather shoe. I have to bend over. Didn't realize that a shoe strap hurts so much. I am supposed to cut wooden pegs. With a cobbler's knife. In the evening there are more beatings. Too

uneven and too few, says the master. After a few days it gets better. The beatings are only for show now. A whim of the master. A red-blue growth starts to appear under my right collarbone, which is very painful. It's an infection. In the evening I register at the hospital.

I have to have another operation. Again the bath, and the prisoner number written on my chest with an ink pen. A Polish surgeon. I come to cabin 9. Next door is the women's experimentation cabin. The fear of a selection overcomes me. I try not to think about it. I have lost a lot of weight. The rations in the hospital are very meager. My brother Edgar comes directly to the hospital before morning roll call. He whistles. It's a signal from our childhood. The sick room is on the second floor. I tumble to the window. "How are you?" he calls up. "Good," I answer. He can't see my body. "Catch," he calls. A daily ration of bread flies through the window. His ration. He's starving. For me. So that I will get well faster, he says. Tomorrow he'll come again. After two weeks I am released. My brother is waiting outside the cabin. He hugs a skeleton. He holds back his tears. I try to do the same.

The work operation assigns those released. As usual. Just say upholsterer. That's what I'm doing, Edi said yesterday. Cabin 14a – clothing workshop. I know the job. "Upholsterers step forward." The

upholstery Kapo, a green stripe, likes the “tall shoemaker.” That’s how my brother is called in the squad. He is noticeably tall, noticeably young. Seventeen and a half now. I have a good job. But for how long? I comb wool. Greek wool. The Jews from Greece brought a lot of wool with them. Olives and wool. A Pole, a political prisoner, oversees the combing work. He is pleasant and calls me by my first name. He’s called Oleg. Not all Poles are as friendly to their Jewish fellow prisoners. I scrub down the workshop. When I am finished cleaning, a less friendly ‘comrade’ knocks over the pail and gives a kick in my seat. I fall over. Everyone there laughs. Not me. At the request of the upholsterer I am moved to the courtyard squad.

September 1943

Rudi Müller is a former glove maker from Prague. We are in the same cabin, in the same room, in the same squad. We have become friends. He sorts empty suitcases by their quality, all the valuables are taken out. Suitcases aren’t needed. There are enough of them. Every day there are new transports of Jews. New suitcases. “I have something for you,” he says. The Oberkapo notices that we are talking and so Rudi Müller is also sent to the courtyard squad. “What do you have?” I ask him later in the

cabin. He gives me a photograph. I am speechless. Crawl into a corner. It is a family photo of ours. He found it in a suitcase. In our suitcase. I cut it into two strips. I put them in my belt, which is sewn in two layers. My parents and siblings are with me. They will accompany me.

The work in the courtyard squad consists of sawing wood, sweeping the courtyard and other odd jobs. Rudi Müller and I are to chop wood today. It's a warm day. We rest a little. "Dirt bags!" yells the Oberkapo out of a window. He was watching us. "Come here!" We go into the tannery. A large pail. Red-brown water. For skins. The water is a half meter below the edge of the pail. We have an idea of what's in store for us. We are thrown in with our prisoners' clothes still on. We try to climb out. The Oberkapo steps on our fingers. Pushes us back in. Steps on our heads. This is repeated a few times. Then he calls us "wise guys." We climb out with difficulty. We are shivering from the cold, out of fear. Bronchitis is the result for me. Fever. I manage to receive a respite in the cabin. An abscess on my chest starts to grow. I am afraid to go to the hospital. Whoever has been there three times goes to the gas chamber, is one rumor. The experiences of the last few weeks, which affected me only

indirectly, have dampened my spirits. Above all there were three experiences that contributed.

When our squad arrives we are given the order “Caps off! Eyes left!” as usual. We are counted. The music is playing as usual, too. Our eyes move to the left and see the following picture: Six prisoners are lying on planks leaned up against the cabin next to the gate with their stomachs cut open. The intestines are falling out. The faces are smeared with blood and unrecognizable. Later we learn that the prisoners belonged to a farming squad. Evidently they tried to escape.

It is Sunday and the music is playing for the entertainment of the prisoners. Entertainment? A gallows is erected in front of the kitchen. A gallows of a special kind. Left and right a frame, across it an iron bar. Several prisoners are brought out of cabin 11, a bunker. They stand on the chairs already set up, ropes are hung over their necks. The chairs knocked away with one push. For two hours they stay hanging there. As a warning. The music plays on. We don’t say anything. There’s nothing to say.

One evening there is an old mother standing not far from the gate entrance. Her husband is there, too. In front of them a sign. On it one can read: This is what happens when one’s children try to escape Auschwitz. So they are hostages. The old people are greeted silently by us.

We have to get away from Auschwitz. The constant selections. The fear. Always the fear. Are you next? The order: All Jews are to remain standing after roll call, is the signal for these selections. It's Poldi Gelbkopf whom I rely on now. He is a bit thin, but a tough guy. Farmer, used to hard work. If I stand next to him, I don't look so emaciated. My body appears a bit wider. Because of the bone structure. What all occurs to a person, when he wants to survive. And I want to survive. There is a force holding me together. Maybe my brother. Definitely my brother. What's holding the others? I lost the belief in God a long time ago. All this can't happen in front of God's eyes. Why this test, if it is one? Why this sacrifice? Why?

Supposedly a transport from Theresienstadt has arrived in Birkenau. In the family camp. Just like the arrival of the gypsies, the families stay together. My friend Hermann from Troppau is in the roof layers squad and is working in Birkenau at the moment. I try to find out from him if my wife's parents, who were able to stay in Theresienstadt at the end of January, are there. Doctors were given preferential treatment and stayed in Theresienstadt. My father-in-law, too. The seventy-year-old could possibly be among them. He is there. My brother and I send him bread. I have a message delivered to

him. The joy is great. I don't give any information about my wife and sister-in-law. There is no hope – I don't want to hurt the old folks. There is also no hope that my wife's parents survive. I know Birkenau too well.

Weiss, the registrar at the prisoner hospital, finally softens up. He knew our brother Erich well. Erich's feet froze and he went the way of many. We don't ask further. On the same day we come across Lazarowicz, the man who betrayed our brother. To the Gestapo. In Ungarisch-Hradisch. We know the methods the Gestapo use to get prisoners to speak. We talk about inconsequential things, about work squads. What else should we talk about? It won't help anything. We aren't judges.

The women from the experimentation cabin 10 return from a walk. They are all pretty women, cleanly dressed, their ages are between twenty and thirty. Most of them are Jews from Slovakia and Poland. We can't see what happens to them in cabin 10. A Professor by the name of Clauberg⁸ comes to the camp every week to oversee the experiments. That's why some think it has to do with medical experiments, sterilization possibly, artificial insemination or something similar.

A transport from Posen has arrived. I think about Albert Göttinger and the bread that we fetched for him from Nivnice. About his stay in

Posen. About the letters he wrote to Eva full of gratitude. So much gratitude for a piece of bread. At the time we couldn't understand it. In the meantime we have learned. The new arrivals are in the quarantine cabin. I am still able to go in. I ask for Albert Göttinger. A prisoner points to a very emaciated man in the corner of the room. I speak to him. Tears stop my words. Albert doesn't know who I am. He's never heard of me. I am Eva's husband. Eva Bock. Now he understands. We sit silently on the wood planks. I give him some of my bread. And a pullover. He will be leaving on another transport. To the coal mines. To Jewischowitz. The next day I can't find him again. The transport has left.

October 5, 1943

Roll call. All non-Polish Jews are to remain standing after the roll call. The SS Obersturmführer from the death platform in Birkenau is coming. The prisoner cabin bookkeeper is standing with the index card box next to him. Transport, everyone is whispering. We expose our upper bodies. There are about 120 prisoners left. The bookkeeper calls out the prisoner numbers. The first selection that I am not afraid of. The main thing is to get away from Auschwitz.

It is the same doctor from the platform. I look at him carefully. I imagine him without his uniform.

He looks just like a lot of other doctors, too. His eyes, he wears glasses, are very calm. His face is narrow, his profile a bit severe. His hands slender, almost sensitive. He is very tall. Maybe one meter ninety. His posture is straight. We have to show our hands. Stick out our tongues. One after the other. Then put on our clothes. The doctor gives the bookkeeper instructions that we aren't able to hear. My brother is up next: 99 727. Then me: 99 728. We are in about the middle of the group. The bookkeeper gives me a sign. He is our friend. A Berliner. The sign means: Wait. "Only your brother is going," he says. I was worried about that. The wound on my chest that hasn't healed yet. The abscess. Something has to happen. I can't stay in Auschwitz alone. My only brother. Away from Auschwitz. Away from the showers without water.

With cap in hand, hands on the waist of my trousers, I step in front of the lords over right and left, yes or no, life or death. "Herr Obersturmführer, prisoner 99 728 requests to confer!" This sentence came out like a shot from a pistol. All or nothing. Away from Auschwitz. From the gas chambers. Crematorium. Just away. I try to cover my mild Austrian accent with the sharp tone of the camp.

"What do you want?" The formal 'you' ('Sie' in German) surprises me. A glimmer of hope. "Herr

Obersturmführer, prisoner 99728 requests to be allowed to go with the transport. I am completely capable of work.” “You have a wound on your chest!” His memory is astonishing. I had put on my shirt in the mean time. One prisoner looks just the same as the others. “Open your shirt, I want to see. Bookkeeper! To the transport!” “Thank you, Herr Obersturmführer!”

A day later. The provisions have to last two days. Bread. Sausage. Margarine. New clothes. Fresh underclothes. Instead of leather shoes there are wooden clogs. Not Dutch. Wooden shoes made from one piece. A piece of linen at the tip. The tip of the foot goes here. It isn't easy to march in these shoes. The foot has to be spread in order not to lose the clogs. We march to the wagons ready to leave. They are trucks for goods. On the right and left thirty-five prisoners. The middle is empty. For the SS sentries. We don't know where we are going. The sentries don't want to tell us. Going to work, is all they say. We are relieved. Why else would we have new clothes, underwear, provisions? One ray of light is enough and we are perfect optimists. Is it the will to live or naiveté? Through a slit in the side of the wagon someone thinks they can tell that we are going north. We don't know anything else at first. We drive two days and two nights. Auschwitz is far behind. How was it again? The children will

go to kindergarten. Men can visit their wives on Sundays. The truth was different. There weren't any kindergartens. There weren't any visits. There was only hunger, suffering, and death.

V. Warsaw

On the Jewish Day of Atonement we arrive in Warsaw. In the Warsaw Ghetto. More exact: the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto.⁹ On the next track there are wagons that are loaded with old bricks. They are historic bricks. Witnesses to a battle between the courageous fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto and the superpower of Himmler's SS troops. We don't know more. The news trickled into Auschwitz only sporadically. Probably they were brought by Polish prisoners. Now we are standing here on historic ground. In wooden clogs. Brought to break apart the battlegrounds. The dawn breaks. Everything looks so unearthly. Burnt out houses. A great silence. No human for far and wide. We line up. March. The rattling of two thousand wooden clogs sounds ghostly. Their echo is especially sinister in the breaking of dawn. On a street sign we read "Dr. L. Zamenhof." The inventor of Esperanto. For better understanding between nations. After twenty minutes we have arrived. It's Gesia Street. In the

main building there is a prison. Behind it a camp has been built. Wooden barracks with windows. Looks quite good.

We present ourselves at the location for roll call. A camp elder with black stripe is giving a speech. Discipline, cleanliness, hard work! We know it already. Assignment to the individual cabins. One thousand prisoners. Five hundred Greek Jews came right before us. They have been here three months. German CC's (career criminals), too. As the cabin elders and Kapos. The SS loves to fill these posts with career criminals. My brother and I are assigned to cabin 1. The numbers that we are given in Warsaw are 2881 and 2882. The tattooed numbers are no longer valid. New camp. New numbers. There aren't any beds yet. We sleep on the floor. Shoes under our head. Without blankets. The many people warm the rooms. It's only October. It's still doable. Edi and I are assigned to a demolition squad. "Merke," it's called. Presumably the name of the demolition firm. First exit march. A Polish master. Now we have civilian clothes with red stripes on the coat and pant legs. We receive hand picks, climb up the burned out or already partly demolished walls in our wooden clogs and have the task of tearing down the bricks at a dangerous height. They are to be cleaned and stacked. Every day the same.

The work squads are often strictly searched during the march back into camp. “Frisked,” as it’s called in the camp. The basements of the burned out houses often contain hidden treasures. Plates, eating utensils, different porcelain objects. They are popular items for exchange in the trading with Polish civilians. I find a bundle of barley oats. Smuggle them into the camp. I cook them together with friends. We determine: they definitely aren’t good – maybe nutritious. In any case: barley. Better than turnips. One day we find skeletons. From the rebellion. Three adults. Two children. Trapped in the collapse. Or died from smoke inhalation. Or shot. We don’t know. We say Kaddish.

A few prisoners start a cabaret troupe. One Sunday they perform in cabin 6. A corner is turned into an improvised stage. The main initiators: Herbert Scherzer, actor, and Ernest Landau, journalist, both from Vienna. The upper echelons of the camp sit in the first and second rows. All of the career criminals, camp elders, cabin elders, kapos.

The program consists of sketches and songs. We forget that we are in a concentration camp. Only a few were able to get in. For lack of room.

After the performance I see the “artists” come out of the kitchen with a small cauldron of soup. Artist soup. I follow after them. Scherzer disappears

into a cabin. I speak to Landau. I don't know him. "Friend, can I have a bit of soup?" "Grab a bowl!" I run to the cabin, fetch a bowl and can't believe my eyes. Ernest Landau is actually waiting. He gives me soup. I thank him. This act will always define my attitude toward Ernest Landau.

November 1943

There is a call for washers. I am brave. I was already a shoemaker and an upholsterer. Why not washer? I sign up. Where did you work as a launderer. Theresienstadt. Whoever lies quickly, lies well. The laundry for the entire camp. Four prisoners. Two cauldrons. Lots of laundry. Worn for months. By sick people. Disgusting. There are lice. Lice mean a risk of typhus. After two weeks the laundry is closed. New squad. Laundry nightshift. In the city. Outside the ghetto walls. Exciting. It's in the Winter Company, Leszno 20, Warsaw. The laundry comes from the army and the SS. Two SS personnel accompany us. Ethnic Germans from Croatia. A Polish woman with her daughter oversee the nightshift. Washing machines with steam heat. Warm. Centrifuge. Wringing out. Everyone is happy. The others in the camp are envious. We wash our laundry secretly in the loads. At eight in the morning we return to camp. Put on dirty clothes

in the evening. From our friends. In spite of the risk of typhus. There are plenty of lice in the camp anyway. No clean laundry for months.

A friend brings me a folder from the demolition squad. In Polish. I look at it. A diary, written in the last days of the ghetto uprising. A girl's handwriting. I buy the diary in exchange for soup. Have it translated into German. Recently a civilian started working in the laundry. Blond. Young. Pretty. Intelligent. Besides Polish speaks German, French and English. Hydrogen peroxide bleach blond. She is called Cesia. She is especially friendly to us. It is suspected that she is a Jew in hiding. Living on "Aryan papers." As it's called. We don't want to ask directly. The next evening I ask about her parents. She cries. Now I know. I don't tell the others. Behaving differently could be dangerous. She shouldn't go the way of her parents. The diary occurs to me. Cesia could keep it safe for posterity. In case we don't survive. Maybe in a museum. Museums are pretty secure. I talk with her. She agrees. Every day she takes a few sheets with her. The last days of a 14- to 16-year-old girl. Hunger, no light, no water, dirt. Hiding. Resigned to danger.

In the camp there is an outbreak of typhus. Two barracks become cabins for the sick. Edgar falls ill. Robert Sawosnik, a Norwegian medical student,

takes care of Edgar. Ernest Landau is there as a nurse. He volunteered. Courageous. I come every morning to the barracks. After the nightshift in the laundry. The dead from the night lie in front of the cabin. Skeletons covered with skin. Skin with black and blue spots. Typhus spots.

The SS leadership is concerned. From a cabin elder we find out that the main imperial security office has been consulted. Not to liquidate was the answer. The epidemic abates over time. The balance: about five hundred dead.

Saul, a Greek from Thessaloniki works in the clothing room. It's a privilege to be there. He comes to the laundry once a week. With SS in tow. With horse and wagon. He tries to escape. It fails. He is shot. Can't walk.

The following Sunday everyone remains standing after morning roll call. A gallows has been erected close to cabin 6. Saul is hanged before our eyes. His brother Isaac has to watch. The prisoners go to their cabins. Life goes on. Life? Goes on?

December 1943

Roll call. Rows of five. Man in front and turn to the side. The cabin elder's voice sounds hoarse. The dead from the night lie along the length of the side of the barracks. Like every day. The cabin leader

counts off. The living with the dead provide the total. It's correct. Luckily. Move! Stop! Announcement: Those prisoners who are familiar with office work should sign up. Should I, or shouldn't I? I think of the soap and towel in Auschwitz. On the first bath, disinfection. The showers without water. Nonsense! Warsaw isn't Auschwitz. I sign up. We are to line up in front of the commander. Seventeen prisoners have lined up. In front of the Obersturmführer. Next to him the squad bookkeeper – a prisoner. Sixteen “Aryans” – Germans – and one Jew. No chance, I think to myself. “Who knows stenography?” asks the SS officer. One other prisoner besides me appears. Step up! My rival understood “photography.” I am assigned to the prisoners' office. Just before the start of the Warsaw winter. Hope for survival. I think of my father with enormous gratitude. He said to me: My son, stenography is very important. As an aside: I didn't once have to do any stenography.

Many young people today learn stenography. For many it is difficult. They complain. Then I say: Stenography is very important! I don't say anything more. They wouldn't understand in any case.

The work in the office is easy. We have to take out the index cards for the dead, draw up lists for the work squads and similar tasks. The interesting thing about the index is that prisoner numbers

appear up to three times. If someone dies, the number is given to someone else.

The animal caregiver Willy V. feeds pigs for the SS kitchen. He comes to the office. A green stripe. Career criminal. He offers to let me write to my sister-in-law in his name. Germans are allowed to write and receive packages. “Dear Maria, I am doing well in Warsaw. Send me a pair of closed wooden shoes. If it’s possible, Eva’s yellow wedding dress and some marmalade. I am healthy. Hope that you are fine, too.” Four weeks later Willy brings a package to the cabin. I want to give him something from it. He rejects my offer. Almost insulted. Probably he is too proud. The package contains all sorts of food, a pair of closed wooden shoes, sock, sugar, vitamins and a jar of marmalade. In the marmalade is the “yellow wedding dress” – Eva’s golden armband and her small necklace. She understood. And I knew she would understand. I want to exchange the armband and necklace for bread. I give them to a Polish civil administrator – Pawel Sikora from Posen. He brings me one loaf of bread for them. Evidently the SS took the jewelry from him at the ghetto gate. He gave me the bread in pity. I can’t do anything.

The relatives of “Aryan” prisoners have a privilege. They are allowed to request the ashes of

their relatives. If the time comes. For a fee. Sometimes the time comes. Even Kapos and lead workers have to believe it. No, one doesn't die from hunger, not in Warsaw. The discovery of valuables sends them to prison again and again. Not the discovery itself, but the trade. The SS sentries are often involved in the trading. They are the sellers. In Warsaw outside of the ghetto walls. The deliverers usually bring back vodka. Vodka loosens the tongue. Kapos brag about their good connections. Not for long. The contractors in the green uniforms with skull and bones like to have silent operators. "Shot while fleeing," is the cause of death. For the index. For the relatives. The box with the ashes stands next to my desk. I didn't manage to find out if the ashes are from a fire close to the building that used to be the Jewish council. Or somewhere else. This time four urns need to be filled. Oberscharführer Mielenz, who is called "Kappesbauer" by the prisoners, oversees my work. The urns are packed in wooden boxes. The name of the prisoner and the date of death are on them. The caliber of the pistol is missing.

Leon Halpern was in a "mixed marriage" before his arrest. His wife and son stayed in Prague. He wrote for a package. Through a German prisoner. A letter came with the package. "Dear Leon," it began. The official addressee wasn't

named Leon. Mielenz orders me to look for all Leons in the index. He wants to have it in a quarter of an hour. I know Leon well. I only do one thing. I let him know. I can't do anything more. He can be better prepared. For questions. For beatings. Leon is put on the rack. Fifty strikes. He is thin, but tough. Survives. Has himself bandaged later in the sick ward. He is brave. The German is assigned to a different squad. Leon stated that he did it without the German knowing. He is quite a fellow.

There is an arrival in Warsaw. A transport of Hungarian Jews comes from Auschwitz. The new camp that was prepared months ago is occupied. The office is moved as well. It's only a hundred meters further. New SS guard troops arrive. From Lublin. The ghetto and camp there are to be liquidated.¹⁰ Most of the prisoners are busy with demolition from now on. The political news that filters through to us now and again lets us hope for an end to the war soon. It only depends now on making it to the end. Partisan fighters seem to be a danger. The SS, who are allowed to go to Warsaw in their free time, always stick together in groups.

The commander of the camp in Plaszow near Krakow comes to us.¹¹ We are to find workers in the index, who should go with him to Plaszow. The commander, Goeth, is a feared man.¹² I shake as he

dictates the transport list to me. But this transport doesn't take place. One day we received marching provisions. This time there are no freight cars. It's a foot march. In wooden clogs. Direction West.

A long column of emaciated prisoners drags along the main street. SS guards, some with dogs, move us along. Whoever falls behind is shot. We are in a hurry. We sense that the Russians must be close. The nervousness of the SS can be felt. Many of us fall behind. They can't keep the pace. Even though we don't march that quickly.

Around evening we rest in a meadow. The first night's camp will be here. We aren't allowed out of a certain area. So that we can't flee. We are very thirsty. We aren't allowed to search for water. The ground here is very moist. It lets us hope for water. We dig with spoons. There is water one meter down. We all pounce on it. That's how more sources are found that satisfy our thirst in the meantime. Drink, drink, drink... Good water. Many pray. Thank God for the wonder.

The next day we keep going. Many fall behind again. Hunger and thirst plague us. We come to Sochaczew. A river. In spite of the risk for typhus we drink. We have no option. With and without tadpoles. Doesn't bother us a bit. Thirst is worse than hunger. I didn't know until now. It doesn't have to be the desert. Marching on foot is enough.

We are afraid. Of hunger, of thirst, of falling behind.

We stay overnight in a forest outside of Kutno. It's raining. It's pouring. We are lying on the ground. We dig rims around us with spoons. So the water can run off. Our clothes are soaked. There is enough water now. The rain stops. Day breaks. We march to the train station in Kutno. Ninety prisoners have to find room in a freight car. Forty-five on one side and forty-five on the other. The middle has to remain free for two SS guards. We squat on the floor. Close to one another. The stink of urine and vomit is unbearable. The thirst caused by the heavily salted march provisions is getting worse and worse. If we stop at a station, we are allowed out. It's forbidden to fetch water. The SS fetches water. Fill their field canteens. We ask for water. One prisoner breaks off a gold tooth from his dental implant. He gets water for it. Gold for water.

We have three dead men in the freight car. Smothered. Suffocated. Who knows? There is pushing and shoving. The guards threaten to shoot us. It doesn't help. The area doesn't get bigger. It goes on like that for three days and two nights. With stops in unknown stations. Empty the buckets. Hunt for water. We arrive in Dachau. And breathe.

VI. Dachau

August 1944

We drag ourselves to the camp. Take a deep breath anyway. Bath. Disinfection. Registration. Edgar 87 097. Me 87 098. Numbered three times and still alive. We stand on the square designated for roll call. Assignments to the cabins. Cabin 17 is quarantine. It should last three weeks this time. My teeth are very loose due to malnourishment. I go to the dental station. The French dentist suggests carrots, doesn't say where to find them though. Across from the dental station is the surgery room. Right next to it the morgue. A Czech prisoner doctor, Dr. Bláha, asks me: Do you want bread? I want. Bread from the surgery room. What difference does it make? I don't dare ask for carrots. I may come again.

Italian officers come to our cabin. As prisoners. About twenty in number. Old socialists and labor functionaries come, too. Also, old in age. One

needs to go to the sick room. I want to show him the way. He turns me down almost insulted. "I was here already in '43," is his answer. I couldn't impress this "old-timer." A seventy-year-old man in Dachau.

Around evening I am requested in the office. I am to write index cards during the nightshift. The cards are for newly arrived transports. At midnight there is gruel. Tastes good cold as well. Apparently from the diet kitchen. Experiments. Gallows, gas chambers¹³ – and diet kitchens? I don't understand.

In Dachau the prisoner leadership is in the hands of the political prisoners. Not the green or black stripes like in Auschwitz or Warsaw. In the pastors' cabin there are spiritual leaders of all nationalities. German, Polish, Czech, Yugoslav – catholic, protestant, Greek-orthodox. I come across a priest who knew my father well. He doesn't ask about him. He doesn't want to hurt me.

There is a brothel in Dachau as well. A prisoner brothel. For "Aryans." Except for Russians. Entrance is with a ticket. As opposed to appointment. The supposedly volunteer victims are prisoners from Ravensbrück.¹⁴

In Dachau there are lots of Yugoslavs. They are called partisans. And they were in fact. I talk with several of them. I admire their courage. A part of a people goes into the mountains. To fight against a

regular army. With a lot of idealism and few weapons. Under the harshest conditions. I compare. Them and us. We let ourselves be transported like cattle. With numbers around our necks. We willingly bowed our heads. An animal resists being slaughtered. Not us. We obey without contradiction. Except for the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. And two thousand years ago. Maybe that's the reason – that the Jews were considered second-class citizens by so many during the long years of dispersion and therefore, until Warsaw, approached all persecutions passively.

After three weeks of quarantine in Dachau we go to Karlsfeld. A few kilometers away from Dachau. The camp is called O.T. auxiliary camp Karlsfeld.¹⁵ There are stone barracks and three-bed bunks. Just like everywhere the camp elder is delivering a speech that we all already know. We are assigned to individual work squads. Sager & Woerner is the name of my squad. We are to build halls on the grounds of BMW. The work consists of carrying cement. Carrying iron. The squad leader, SS-Hauptscharführer Jäntzsch likes to have fun sicking his German shepherd on the prisoners. He only gives the command “let go” after the victim is bleeding. After a few days I become sick. I'm allowed to stay in the camp. For easy work. So-

called. Easy? Together with a very old prisoner, Albert Kerner from Munich, I transport corpses with a burrow from Karlsfeld to Dachau. To the main camp. To be cremated. Kerner walks beside the burrow, the SS guard next to me. My job is to make sure the corpses stay covered. A sudden breeze and the cover comes off. Those walking by, mostly women, make horrified faces. Corpses from the KZ aren't a nice view.

In one cabin there are prayers. It's usually the Jews from Hungary. They pray every day. They even fast on Yom Kippur – the Jewish day of atonement.

Political news is being passed around. The Americans and English are said to be very near. How near no one can say.

In January 1945 a squad is moved to the auxiliary camp Mühldorf.¹⁶ My brother belongs to that squad. So we are to be separated after all. One person alone doesn't survive so easily. Friends are good – a brother is better. I stay behind. I think of the good soldier Schweijk, who plans to meet his friend at five o'clock in the pub "zum Kelch" after the war. "We will find each other," is our comfort to each other.

Fourteen days later a transport is assembled. Mostly very emaciated prisoners. Very carefully I

inquire. It's supposed to go to Mühldorf. For work. I sign up. My desire to see my brother is stronger than the fear. We receive provisions. Board a freight train. The ride is only a few hours. A small camp. Wooden barracks. We are assigned to cabins. I find my brother the same evening. I had an inkling that we would find each other. The squad that I am assigned to is building a subterranean airplane factory. The work is hard. The provisions bad. There are lice in the camp. Where there are lice, there is typhus. I get typhoid fever. For fourteen days I am unable to eat anything. In the meantime the sick barrack has been "emptied" once. The sick were brought to the camp Kaufering close to Landsberg. A death camp.¹⁷

On April 28, 1945 the order comes down to clear out the camp Mühldorf. Freight cars are standing on the tracks ready for us. I am very emaciated and have to be led from the sick barrack directly to the car. Five weeks of typhus have severely weakened me. Supported by my brother, I reach the wagon. I feel secure – covered. After a few hours the transport leaves. The accompanying troops are not only SS but also regular army soldiers. That calms us a bit. We stop in each small station. We notice that we are traveling west. In Poing not far from Munich we stop for a longer time. On the next track

there is a train with anti-aircraft artillery. Suddenly there is an alarm. Our guards who had surrounded the train have disappeared. An American low-flying attack plane turns its guns on both trains. We leave the train fleeing and run to the woods. Can it be true? Is the war over? In any case we don't intend to go back to the train. A few fellow prisoners are killed by the attack plane. Now, at the last moment. Also a friend of ours. Engineer from Prague. He had lasted five years. For nothing.

The freedom doesn't last long. Suddenly we are surrounded. The guards shoot over our heads and force us back into the cars. The transport drives us further. It is April 30, 1945. We stop at an open stretch. In the distance we see a long motorized convoy. Our guards have disappeared. We open the cars. The gate to freedom. A few hundred meters from us an American military convoy is driving by. We are free. We can't grasp it. I am too weak to get out of the freight car.

Next to the train the Americans erect a provisional medical facility. Two orderlies accept sick patients. Lay them on camp beds. Wash them. Give them refreshments. Ambulances come. The worst cases are taken to the hospital. We are humans again. We can go to the hospital without being afraid. We are free.



In the summer of 1945, a few months after liberation.
(From the Mannheimer private archive.)



After returning to Neutitschein, end of June 1945.
(From the Mannheimer private archive.)



My brother Edgar after we had returned to Neutitschein, end of June 1945. (From the Mannheimer private archive.)

Afterword to the German Edition

By Ernst Piper

Max Mannheimer has provided much information about his life. He gave three lengthy interviews in Frankfurt am Main on January 12, 13, and 18 of 1956. Copies of the manuscript can be found in the Wiener Library (London as well as Tel Aviv), in the archives of Yad Vashem (Jerusalem), and in the KZ Memorial Site at Dachau. For the year 1989-90 the regional capital of Munich held its (hi)story competition with the motto “In München geboren – von München ausgezogen – nach München verschlagen” [Born in Munich – Out of Munich – Out of Place in Munich]. Max Mannheimer appears in the collected writings for this competition with the entry, “Schmerzliche Integration” [Painful Integration]. He is also part of the conversation in the volume of essays, “Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland” [Jewish Life in Germany], which Ingrid Wiltmann published last year [2009].

However, his main offering is the text of this book, which is published for the first time on its own in this volume.

The impetus for writing down what became “Spätes Tagebuch” [A Diary Delayed] was a deep crisis in the life of the writer. In April 1964 his second wife had died of cancer. A few months later Mannheimer had to undergo a jaw operation. When he asked the doctor for the diagnosis, he said the results were negative and he would have them the next day. The doctor forgot the results; the next day was no different nor the following one. Mannheimer who had learned quite a lot about cancer from his wife’s illness, thought he was dealing with a compassionate lie and saw his own end nearing. He overcame the understandable reticence that many Holocaust survivors have to speak about the past. He felt compelled “to write down something about the life of my family” for his seventeen-year-old daughter. Luckily Mannheimer soon found out his apprehension that he had cancer was unwarranted. And so, he didn’t give his sketches to his daughter because “I wanted to die first.”

Twenty years after “Spätes Tagebuch” was written down the “Dachauer Hefte” [Dachau Volumes] began to appear. Barbara Distel, the director of the KZ Memorial Site in Dachau,

offered to have Mannheimer's text included in the first volume, titled "Liberation." The author agreed and his recollections were published for the first time along with the camp diary of Arthur Haulot and other texts, which then had a much wider readership. Wolfgang Benz, at the time employed at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, provided annotations and commentary for the text. We are very grateful to Mr. Benz that we are able to include his annotations in the present publication. "Spätes Tagebuch" has been translated into a number of languages, Czech and Hebrew among others. In German it has only now been published independently with minor edits to the language and supplemented with photographs from the author's private archive.

Already the first publication of Mannheimer's memoirs under the auspices of the "Dachau Volumes" received great attention and since 1986 the author is constantly on the road. He speaks at schools and universities, to church organizations and youth clubs, at meetings and conferences. In addition he regularly leads tours through the Memorial Site at Dachau. Since 1988 he is also the chair of the Camp Society Dachau for the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the Executive Office of the Comité International de Dachau. In addition he is on the advisory board for the

Association “Against Forgetting – For Democracy.” Through his activities Mannheimer embodies the goal of the association as few can, namely to maintain awareness of the past and to strengthen the free democratic basis of our country.

Segregation, persecution, forced labor, expulsion, extermination – those were the coordinates of Jewish existence in Europe while it was ruled and occupied by the Nazis. Max Mannheimer suffered through all of these stations. Almost his entire family was annihilated, and his first wife was also killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Never again, he swore to himself, did he want to go back to Germany, the country of his persecutors. But then he became acquainted with Elfriede Eiselt, who came from a social-democratic family and who had engaged in resistance against the Nazi terror. Their daughter was born in Neutitschein where Mannheimer had returned, but soon after the young family immigrated to occupied Germany. Mannheimer was active in different Jewish relief organizations while his wife represented the SPD in Munich’s city council from 1952 to 1960. In 1964 she died of cancer. Mannheimer married a third time, and in 1966 his son was born whom he named after his murdered brother Ernst.

Today Mannheimer lives in the environs of Munich with his third wife, the American Grace

Franzen (born Cheney). He has also been active as a painter since the 1950s under the name ben jakov and has shown his work in many exhibitions.

Max Mannheimer has received numerous honors and awards for his influence. For Germans it is an honor and distinction that he lives and works among us. May it remain so for a long time to come.

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Annotations by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Benz,
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¹ The “Sudeten German Homefront” was founded on October 1, 1933 by Konrad Henlein, and in April 1935 its name was changed to “Sudeten German Party.” Beginning in 1935 the Party, which functioned to mobilize gatherings across the entire Sudeten German population, was financed by the German Reich. In 1935 it received the most votes (at 15.2%), offered its unwavering support to Hitler in November 1937, then served as an organ of national socialist politics in relation to the CSR and was taken over by the NSDAP in December 1938.

² On September 29/30, 1938 the Munich Agreement was signed by four heads of state as a pact between Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy. It ended the so-called “Sudeten Crisis,” which had lasted since the end of 1937 and had been fomented by Berlin. Under the terms of the Munich Agreement, Czechoslovakia was required to cede territory with a majority German population to the German state (20% of its territory and 25% of the population).

³ In a break with the Munich Agreement and the established protocol for what remained of Czechoslovakia, Hitler imposed a treaty on the Czechoslovak president Hacha on March 14/15, 1939 that robbed the CSR of its sovereignty and made its Czech territory part of the German Reich as the

“Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.” (Slovakia remained an “independent” satellite state.)

⁴ The camp at Theresienstadt had an unusual role in the system of NS Jewish policy. At first it served as an assembly camp and transit station for Jews from the Protectorate who were transported from Theresienstadt to the east. Beginning in the spring of 1942 Theresienstadt was above all an “Elderly Ghetto” for prominent and privileged Jews from the German Reich. The survival rate was hardly any better than in other camps as the following numbers show: Of the total of over 141,000 arrivals, 88,000 were deported and the majority of those killed, around 33,500 people died in Theresienstadt, and barely 17,000 were liberated by the Red Army on May 7, 1945.

⁵ The Auschwitz concentration camp consisted of three complexes with 38 external camps. Auschwitz (I), established on May 20, 1940, was the main and central camp; Auschwitz II (Birkenau) opened on November 26, 1941 and became an extermination camp beginning in January 1942 where the “selection” took place on the arrival platform and where the large gas chambers were located; Auschwitz III (Monowitz) served as a work camp for the Buna Factory of the IG Farben Group beginning on May 31, 1942.

⁶ The prisoners in concentration camps were identified by categories through different colored patches of cloth – stripes – sewn onto their clothing: among others, red for political prisoners, green for criminals, black for

“asocials”, pink for homosexuals, purple for evangelicals (Jehovah’s Witnesses).

⁷ The acronym RIF stood for “Reichsstelle für industrielle Fettversorgung” or “Reichs-Industrie-Fett.” The rumor that it stood for “Rein Jüdisches Fett” [Pure Jewish Fat] was widespread for a long time, but had no basis in reality.

⁸ Carl Clauberg (1898-1957), gynecologist, joined the Nazi party as head doctor at the University Women’s Clinic in Kiel. From 1933 to 1940 Clauberg was professor at the University of Königsberg, then director of the Königshütte Women’s Clinic in Oberschlesien not far from Auschwitz. He sought out contact with Heinrich Himmler, whom he interested in experiments for the sterilization of women without operation. From 1942 to 1944 Clauberg tried out his methods of mass sterilization by injection without general anaesthesia on Jews and gypsies in Cabin 10 of Auschwitz I. The trials resulted in severe pain and often led to death for the victims. In 1945 Clauberg was deported to the Soviet Union and sentenced to 25 years in prison for the assistance in the “mass extermination of Soviet women,” but was pardoned in 1955 and released to the Federal Republic of Germany. He was arrested in Kiel in November 1955 and died in August 1957 shortly before the start of a trial for the “continuing severe bodily harm” to women prisoners in Auschwitz. To the very end Clauberg bragged about these “scientific” accomplishments.

⁹ After 300,000 residents of the Jewish quarter in Warsaw had been deported to the extermination camp

in Treblinka, the remaining 60,000 Jews fought against any further cleansing of the ghetto beginning on April 19, 1943. It took the SS troops under Jürgen Stroop until May 16 to quell the armed resistance. In the process the ghetto was completely destroyed. In order to clear the ruins and stockpile any useful materials, a separate concentration camp was established in Warsaw on August 15, 1943, and the prisoners were evacuated to Dachau on July 24, 1944.

¹⁰ The concentration camp Lublin, also known under the name Lublin-Majdanek, existed from October 1941 until liberation in July 1944. It had ten external camps, and from the summer of 1942 to July 1944 it was an extermination camp. An approximate total of 200,000 people were killed there.

¹¹ The concentration camp Krakow-Plaszow existed from January 1944 to January 1945. It had the official designation “SS work camp” and had previously been a forced labor camp for Jews.

¹² Amon Leopold Goeth, born in Vienna in 1908, was the last in a row of SS Hauptsturmführers (equivalent to captain in the army) as commander of the Plaszow camp. In August-September 1946 he was indicted by the Polish highest court of justice and found guilty of, among other things, the murder of 8,000 Jews in the Tarnow ghetto. The death penalty was carried out on September 13, 1946.

¹³ A gas chamber existed at the Dachau concentration camp, but it was not used for the systematic killing of prisoners as was the case in extermination camps.

¹⁴ Ravensbrück (near Fürstenburg in the province of Potsdam) was the largest concentration camp specifically for women (42 external camps). It was established on May 15, 1939 and evacuated on April 30, 1945. Over 90,000 women died in Ravensbrück.

¹⁵ The auxiliary camp at Karlsfeld was established on July 11, 1944, and the employer was the senior building administration of the Organization Todt at Dachau (OT). OT, named after its director Dr. Fritz Todt, was established in 1938 as a state organization for the establishment of military posts and buildings important to the war effort.

¹⁶ The auxiliary camp at Mühldorf had five sub-camps, among them the “Ampfing-Wald-camp V and VI,” whose prisoners built an underground airplane factory under the direction of the OT senior building administration for Mülhdorf.

¹⁷ The auxiliary camp at Kaufering consisted of a total of nine camps beginning in the summer of 1944. They were situated in different locations in the area of Landsberg, the airstrip camp Lechfeld, and Kaufering. Two of these camps served officially as “sick camps,” and the mortality rate in Kaufering was particularly high.