

# Extermination of the Lvov Jews

(Summary)

by Dr. P. Friedman

Translated from Russian by **Gennady Shmukler** (USA) and **Valery Aronov** (Australia)

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## Introduction

The description of the extermination of Lvov's Jews, which we present in this pamphlet, partially rests on the personal experiences of the author, and partially on the reports, the materials of the memoranda, the oral stories and the recorded statements of the witnesses to these events, and also on the literature on this topic, published in the form of books, pamphlets or articles. The entire material was critically researched and investigated by us, which however does not preclude the possibility of errors due to the almost complete absence of sources of data, nor authentic official documents. The archives of the Jewish Council in Lvov were never found, and it is highly improbable that they will ever be located. German official documents were removed by Germans or possibly destroyed during their evacuation from Lvov.

The material contained in the few remaining official reports is very meager. The material published in the Lvov press during the German occupation, be that in Polish ("Gazeta Lwowska"), German ("Lemberger Zeitung") or Ukrainian ("Львівські Вісті"), was not only meager, but also deceitful and falsified.

Only after Lvov was liberated by the victorious Red Army was an investigation carried out by the Soviet Investigative Commission which raised the curtain and showed the abomination and horror of the Hitler regime, especially the monstrous destruction of the Jews.

The reports and materials assembled by the Soviet Extraordinary Investigative Commission and the Report published by the Investigative Commission represent extremely valuable material for researching the history of this gloomy period. The archives of the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland (a number of protocols, testimonies by the witnesses and diaries) also contain many valuable materials on this topic.

In addition to this, a small number of witnesses of the tragedy of Lvov's Jews, who were fortunate enough to escape German hands, left their testimonies at various investigative and scientific

organizations abroad. Some of these were even made in literary form and published (for example, the testimony by Folkman, as processed by Stephen Shende, titled "The Promise Hitler kept", London, 1945). We realize that not all of the reports and publications, especially those published abroad, are known to us, and that many of them would be certain to contain details supplementing the data and facts provided by us in this pamphlet. We also realize that the included bibliography, considering today's state of affairs, will contain serious omissions.

Regardless, we believe that we should not wait with this theme until such times when – possibly, many years from now – the number of sources for the complete, scientifically precise description of the Lvov tragedy will increase. The urgency of the issue requires us to make a complete presentation of the Lvov episodes today. Much higher considerations require us to act despite lack of scientific accuracy. The enormity of the crimes requires us to tell the story now. The conscience of humanity demands the judgment to be made now, while the perpetrators of these crimes are facing the tribunal of the free people of the world. The need to finish with fascism, when some of the sources of this scourge are still active and spare no ideological weapon in the fight against this murderous enemy of humankind, requires us to tell this story now. Each new publication drives another nail in the coffin of this religion of hate and ideology of the extermination of people which was proclaimed and implemented by German fascism.

It is with these thoughts that we present this document-accusation to the reader's hands.

Lodz, December 1945.

**PHILIP FRIEDMAN**  
Author

On the day German army has entered Lvov, its Jewish population was estimated to be between 130,000 and 150,000 people. It is impossible to determine the number with greater precision. According to the census data of December 9, 1931, the Jewish population was listed numbering 99,595 people. By 1939, this number most likely grew by ten or twenty thousands. During the Polish-German war of 1939, many Jews ran away from the German troops to the East. The substantial portion of them arrived from the West and settled in Lvov. After the end of the fighting in 1939, due to the anti-Jewish repressions by Germans in the occupied Polish lands, the process of Jewish flight to the east has continued.

Lvov was dominated by the inhabitants from the Kraków, Lodz and Warsaw regions. In the fall of 1939, Lvov was overflowing with people, and the general feeling was that its population has doubled, i.e., became close to 700,000, including about 180,000 Jews. (Such numbers are given, for example, by Stephen Shende in his book

“The Promise Hitler Kept”, London, 1945, p. 124; however, he does not name the sources he used).

In the summer of 1940, the Soviet regime has exiled some of the Jewish refugees into the depths of the USSR. Their number appears to exceed 10,000. In the beginning of the Soviet-German war, some of the Lvov Jews have tried to save themselves from the Germans by fleeing to the East. Foremost of them, the young communists and political figures, who feared repressions from the Germans, tried to escape to the Soviet Union. Of the few thousands who escaped Lvov, only a handful has reached Russia. Furthermore, several thousand young Jewish men, mobilized into the Red Army, departed the city with the Army and went east.

Therefore, about 130,000-150,000 Jews remained in Lvov. The number 150,000 is confirmed by the unofficial estimate made by the Jewish Council of Lvov on August 28, 1941. Nevertheless, this number seems exaggerated to us.

The last Russian troops left Lvov on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> of June, and the first Germans entered the city on June 29<sup>th</sup>, at about 11 am (Shende, p. 124). Immediately after entering, Germans began to undertake their “historical mission” in respect to the Jews. In the initial hours of the German occupation, posters inciting against the Jews were plastered all over the city. In these posters and in the leaflets handed out on the streets, the Jews were presented as responsible for starting the war, charged with the unthinkable crimes and accused of killing several thousand Poles and Ukrainians. These seeds of hate produced the crop almost immediately. In the first days of the German occupation, i.e. between June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the City became a witness to a spectacle of severe and bloody pogroms. The German soldiers were quickly joined by the dregs of society, among them Ukrainian nationalists as well as so-called Ukrainian (auxiliary) police which was hurriedly organized by Germans. It started in the streets with chasing of Jewish men. Lvov Jews, stricken by panic and fear, predominantly stayed indoors. The majority of them hid in their apartments, in various shelters or in basements and attics. The Ukrainian police and Germans, dissatisfied with a meager catch in the streets, began to comb Jewish apartments in search of their victims. They took away men and sometimes entire families under the pretext of needing to clear Lvov prisons of corpses. Several thousand Jews were thus rounded up and sent to the prisons on the Kazimirovskaya (later, Gorodotzka) Street (the so called “Brigidka” prison), Lontskogo (Stephan Bandera) Street, Zamarstynovskaya Street and Yakhovicha (16 Lipnya) Street, all the while being thrashed and jeered by the mob. In the “Brigidka” prison, a mob of several thousand trapped Jews in the prison courtyard and assaulted them mercilessly. The walls of prison around the court were covered with blood and brain matter reaching to the first floor level (testimony and the personal experiences of the late Lvov attorney Dr. Isidor Eliasha Lan, who lived at number 1, Bernstein Street).

The scenes were just as horrendous at other prisons. Some of the victims were shot. As a result, after two days of slaughter, only a small portion of those initially seized have survived. They were allowed to return home. Still, a few thousands had perished in the terrible torture. Among the victims of this initial slaughter were Dr. Yesheskil

Levin, the Rabbi of the progressive religious society in Lvov and the editor of the weekly "Opinia", as well as Hendrik Heshel, the Editor of the newspaper "Chwila".

After this "blitz-pogrom", the Lvov Jews were not left at rest. German strategy of fighting the Jews was to demolish them by daily harassment and create of the atmosphere of constant threat around them. Germans saw in the Jews the potential enemy of their "New Order", and they constantly attacked this <sup>11</sup> enemy. According to their theory, the Germans attempted to scare the Jews so that they could pursue neither politics, nor "economic sabotage", nor so called "Flusterpropaganda" (i.e., transfer of undesirable information).

The Third Reich had to be on constant alert for the Jewish danger, constantly to be "in the action" against the Jews. Instead of the antiquated concept of pogroms, the Germans introduced a new military-strategic term of "action". The word itself showed the energy, as well as military- tactical means and methods of systematic extermination of the Jews.

At that time, in the summer of 1941, the Fascist-German policy with respect to the Jews was formed and Germans embarked on the path of the complete destruction of the Jews. Hitler, Goebbels and others unequivocally promised the extermination of Jews in their speeches. Especially brutal actions were directed against the Jews who lived in the territories conceded by the Soviet regime. The Germans considered these Jews to be the seeds of communism, and began the brutal campaign of their extermination immediately. While some Jews residing in the western territories, particularly young men, were spared by the Germans in order to obtain maximum of benefit from their exploitation in the military industry, all the Jews living in the Eastern provinces were to be exterminated. In the Lvov region, as in the rest of the territories taken from the Soviets, the Germans had exceeded all of their previous "records" of atrocity and criminal activity.

Continuing to pursue their non-stop action, after only two or three days of "lightning" pogroms, another round of "actions" took place. About 2,000 Jews were dragged to the building number 59 on the Pelchinski (later, Vitovskogo) Street, into the courthouse, where the Lvov Gestapo was headquartered. There, they were subjected to the inconceivable tortures of the especially sadistic, distorted nature.

About 1,400 men who survived the torture were taken by trucks into the forest near Bilogortscha and executed there. Only a small group survived and managed to return home.

At the same time, during the entire month of July, the Jewish activists, political leaders and liberal youth were being hunted all over the city. They were driven to the Lisinichi Forest and executed there (without any justification). Almost simultaneously, on the 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of July, the round-ups were renewed on the streets and in the buildings of the City. Men and women were taken away allegedly to do the work, but were usually killed. These round-ups and murders were predominantly the work of the Ukrainian auxiliary police, and the locals of Lvov called them "Petlyura actions". One of the stories circulating around was that Germans gave Ukrainian collaborators "carte blanche" for three days on the

anniversary of Petlyura's assassination, to reciprocate against the Jews. This was clearly false as Petlyura was killed in May of 1926. Nevertheless, several thousand Jews perished during the called "Petlyura Days".

Actions and murders were accompanied by the systematic robbing of Jewish property. It occurred in two forms: unofficial, individual and official robberies.

Unofficial individual robberies occurred very simply: German officers or soldiers went into the Jewish apartments and took away everything that pleased them. This type of robbery was usually accompanied by beating, harassments and eventually, slaughter of those being robbed. Frequently, the Gestapo would order the victims to pack up the goods and deliver them to a specific address they provided. Jews were lucky to come back alive and uninjured from these "deliveries".

The official robbery of the Jewish population began in August 1941 by the imposition of the 20 million rubles contribution onto the Jewish population of Lvov. Scared by the pogroms and terror of the first days of the occupation, the Jews reacted to the demand of the contribution with some relief. The general feeling was that the contribution would become the form of ransom, and that Germans, after securing such an enormous tribute, would finally leave them alone. Therefore, they approached the collection of the contribution almost with enthusiasm. Jews sold the family treasures and other valuable things for the trifling amounts in order to pay the allotted sum. They sometimes paid out the sums exceeding those assessed by the Public Commission [on Contribution]. In some cases, Christians and Poles displayed their sympathy to the Jews by making substantial anonymous payments to the Commission.

Besides, the Germans used other means as well. In the first days after the imposition of contribution, the German police went around several hundred apartments and dwellings, using the list prepared in advance, and took hostage many of the members of the so-called "free professions", e.g. well-known merchants, business owners, public and cultural workers (altogether, about 1,000 people were taken). Naturally, this influenced the acceleration of the rate of the collection of the contributions. Therefore, many of the Lvov Jews had gotten another common purpose – the rescue of hostages, – who they believed would be freed as soon as the contribution was paid.

The contribution amount was paid in time, with the first payment made on August the 8<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Besides the money, the Jews collected and turned in a lot of gold, valuables and about 1,400 kg of silver. They were then enormously disappointed by the display of the ethics of the "new German". Violating all accepted principles of the civilized world, the Germans did not free the hostages. It became later known that they were all killed. Germans repeated this "trick" with the hostages, and the cynical violation of their "promise", in a number of other cities.

After contribution was paid, the Germans began destroying temples and places of worship. One after another, almost all of Lvov's Jewish temples were destroyed. Among others was the Zholkovky Street synagogue, which was burned and destroyed. Ruins and remains of the walls of this synagogue were removed only the following year, in the summer of 1942.

The outline of the future “Yudenrat” (Jewish Council) was formed as the collection of the contribution was taking place. There was no Jewish religious community in the city during the Soviet times. Germans decided to create one for their own purposes. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, they started negotiations with the representatives of the Jewish community about the creation of the Yudenrat. (This is according to Dr. David Sobol, who participated in these negotiations). They also asked Prof. Maurice Allerkhand, which previously was the representative of the administration of Jewish Religious Community in Lvov, to organize the Jewish Council.

However, Dr. Allerkhand refused due to an old age and poor health. Nevertheless, in the middle of July, the Germans formed the Jewish Council, initially composed of 5 men. The number subsequently was increased with further nominations and co-optations. Finally, the Jewish Council was composed as follows: Chairman – Dr. Josef Parnas, vice Chairman – Dr. Adolf Rotfeld, members of the council Dr. Henrik Landsberg, Dr. Oswald Kimelman, Dr. Edmund Shezher, Engineer Naftaly Landau, Dr. Henrik Ginsberg, [Yakov] Higer, [Samuel] Zaidenfrau, [Josef] Gokh, Dr. Shimon Ulam, Dr. Marcel Buber, Dr. Zarvintser and others. [Names in brackets were added from the following source: Yakov Honigsman, “Yudenrats in the Western Ukraine”].

The Jewish Council, among its other tasks, helped to facilitate the second expropriation of the Jewish property through the so-called “Supply Management” (Besorgungsamt). This was the department of the Council managed by Mr. Teykholtz and Mr. Egid, the sole purpose of the department being satisfying the demands and orders of the German “masters”. German officers and officials on a daily basis presented to the Besorgungsamt a new list of demands. Sometimes, they demanded hundreds of furniture sets. Another time, they demanded so many hundreds of Persian rugs, large quantities of coffee or cocoa, sardines, several hundred meters of original coco carpet runners, gold, diamonds, expensive tableware, bed linens, etc. Their demands were based on belief that all property belonged to them, the conquerors, and was only used by its present owners until it was demanded. (Order dated September 17, 1940. Reichsgesetzblatt 1940, volume I, pg. 1270, § 2, paragraph 1, part 1. Based on the Order dated August 7, 1941, all previously published anti-Jewish declarations were made applicable to all territories occupied during the German-Soviet war).

Based on this rather original “legal foundation”, the Germans knew of no limit to their demands. “Besorgungsamt” maintained the entire staff of workers who were canvassing the Jewish dwellings, confiscating different objects in order to fulfill no longer “modest” orders of the Germans. For the delay with the delivery they were threatened with prosecution, up to and including collective punishment and executions. There was no resistance of any kind to even the most excessive demands. The department was visited not only by the representatives of German military and political organizations, having “the right” to impose their requirements onto the Jews, but also by individual German functionaries from the army, police and SS, all of them with their own wishes and demands. When the department Manager Mr. Egid once dared to object to a particular demand by some policeman, he was shot dead on the spot.

In the first months of their occupation, the Germans began creating dedicated ethnic areas. They began by establishing the German residential area which contained the most beautiful suburbs of the City, with the most contemporary houses and luxury villas. This led to Jews being thrown out of their apartments by force. First impacted were the November 29 (presently, E. Konovaltsa) Street and Pototsky (now, Gen. Chuprinka) Street, as well Lisa Kooley (Kostelivka) Street, Vuletska (now, Acad. Sakharov) Street, Kadetska (presently, Gvardiyska) Street and others, and also the entire area surrounding the Stryjsky Park – Dvernitskogo (presently, I. Svetsitskogo) Street, Saint Sophia (now, I. Franka) Street, and Zhuzhunska and Snopkovska Streets. The Jewish inhabitants of these streets (usually, well-off people) were evicted out of their apartments, with only several hours' notice, without being allowed to take with them anything, even luggage. There were beatings and slaughter as well. At least 200 Lvov Jews were murdered during this “housing action”.

Shortly after annexing “the District of Galicia” to the General-Governorship, on the 1st of August, 1941, a number of anti-Jewish regulations was introduced that were already in force in the rest of the Governorship. Among them were “повязки” (the announcement about the “povyazki” was distributed in Lvov back in July), ban on a number of specific occupations, limitation on communications and movement in and around the city, ban on changes of residence, limits on amounts of personal property owned, laws requiring forced employment, etc. Dr. Karol Lyash, who was until then the governor of the Radom District, became the Governor of the District of Galicia. After several months, in February of 1942, Lyash was removed from the post, and the former Governor of the Kraków district, Brigadier General (Brigadefuehrer SS) Dr. Vekhter, was appointed in his place. Major-General of SS Katsmann was made the leader of the police of district of Galicia, while Dr. Ulrich was appointed the Chief of Police (Schutzpolizei) of Lvov. In the first days after the German occupation, the Ukrainian Professor of the university Dr. Polyanskiy was appointed to the post of the Burgomaster of the City. However, very soon the Germans abolished any pretense of Ukrainian “autonomy”. The office of Burgomaster was abolished, and as a result the administration in the District of Galicia was combined with the General Administration of the Province. This created the Office of Shtadtgaupmann. The first Shtadtgaupman of Lvov became the German official named Kuyat, and after his departure, Dr. Heller became the Shtadtgaupmann of the City.

Germans carried their “divide et impera” (divide and conquer) policy in Lvov as well. The entire system of malicious, petty cavils and public humiliations of Jews in the presence of gentiles was used to create an image of Jews as pariahs, deprived of all rights, being generally beyond the limits of law, and therefore presenting Jews as easy prey for all kinds of criminal elements of society. The vulgar, deceitful and anti-Semitic propaganda served the same purposes, aided by radio, publications, the posters of “performances” by “theaters” and press. By creating the whole hierarchy of privileged and oppressed (Germans, Reichsdeutsche, Volksdeutsche, Ukrainians, Poles, collaborationists, unaffiliated, opposition, Communists, Jews), the Germans placed Jews on the lowest step of this repugnant “ladder”. However, inside each group, and thus also inside the Jewish community, the Germans used the same policy

of separation and demoralization. Thus, there were more privileged and less privileged members inside the Jewish community as well. Those possessing education and skills (specialists, craftsmen, technologists, engineers, some nurses), working in the German military and business establishments, composed the privileged class. The privileged layer also contained the Jewish police, J.O.L. (Juedischer Ordnungsdienst Lemberg). Created in August 1941, it initially numbered 500 persons, and subsequently grew to about 750. Also, members of the Jewish Council and its employees belonged to the privileged layer. Although these were divided into the diverse categories, from the most-privileged (members of the Jewish Council, the employees of the Besorgungsamt and Wohnungsamt) to those the least privileged (physical laborers, part-time workers), there were additional divisions between those who had “hard” certifications and those with “soft” ones (such as certifications for temporary job placement). The other categories were as follows: the independent craftsmen, merchants, dealers, and in the end, the enormous mass of those not classified, deprived of permanent employment, the masses which were constantly the object of the so-called “actions”, “round-ups”, expulsions, and which were chased and persecuted almost nonstop. “Unemployed”, e.g. those who had no protection and not enough money for a bribe, or to obtain the certificate of full-time worker, thus saving them from the round-ups, were doomed and subjected to the most dangers. According to the German law, all Jews aged from 14 to 60 years old were required to work. In September 1941, the Germans created the Labor Administration (Arbeitsamt), with a special division of the labor for the Jews (Judeneinsatz). The employees of this Jewish Division constantly plied around the city, taking away to the forced work all Jews who did not have the working book from the Arbeitsamt. Furthermore, others institutions were taking the Jews away on their own initiative, such as servicemen, SS and police. Most frequently “work” was free, or paid to the ridiculous wages (2-4 zloty a day), oftentimes accompanied by hunger and cold. But very frequently this “work” constituted performing senseless and absolutely unnecessary and agonizing things, all accompanied by beatings and harassment. However, soon another misfortune befell on the community that eclipsed all previous horrors by its cruelty. The Germans created the so-called “educational labor camps” (Erziehungslager), i.e., labor camps for the Jews. Transit camp in Sokolniki was one of the first camps of this kind in Lvov. Work in this camp was very hard. The workers were forced to work predominantly in the swamps, standing waist-deep in the water, surrounded by constant beatings and harassment by German and Ukrainian guards. In the summer of 1941, several hundred (based on other sources, several thousand) Jewish men from Lvov were brought in, all of whom were killed in the next several weeks. Soon thereafter, the Lvov Jews were sent to different other out-of-town camps, Lyatski Murovane, Germanuv (west of Lvov), Vinniki, Kurovichi (on the Lvov-Pidgaytsy line), Kozaki (near Zolochiv), Yaktoruv and others. These labor camps were actually death camps, it was rare for anyone return from there alive, and those who did, were usually invalids unable to work. However, the camps formed inside the City of Lvov were the pinnacle of sadism and brutality. At the beginning, there were two camps, one on Chvartakuv (now, Kvitneva) Street, a side-street in the residential area of SS, between the Pototsky and Listopad Streets, i.e. between

present Gen. Chuprinki and Konovaltsa Streets, not far from the present day Palace of Sport “Ukraine”. The second camp was at the Yanovsky (Shevchenko) Street, 134. The Chvartakuv camp was liquidated in the spring of 1943, after the extermination of the majority of its Jewish workers, but Yanovsky camp continued to function all the way to the surrender of the city by the Germans [Ed: Philip Friedman could not know that it will continue to function the in third millennium as well, now known as Lvov's “thirty”; I repeatedly wrote about it].

The camps were a “Damocles sword” over the Jewish population's head. These consumed hundreds, and at times thousands, of Jewish lives each month. In place of workers, who died in the camps en masse from hunger, cold, diseases, terrible beatings, as well as killings and executions performed as “punishments” or entertainment of the camp guards, the camps constantly required new people, which were caught willy-nilly in the street round-ups, or in their houses. The Jewish population, in particular its poorest members, knew no respite, constantly facing the threat of being sent to the camp of death.

Other misfortunes followed. While trying to isolate the Jewish population from the rest of the society, the Germans were not satisfied just by the introduction of identifying bandages, or by the creation of special sections for the Jews in the streetcars (later, the Jews were generally forbidden to use trams altogether). In October 1941, Germans ordered the creation of the Jewish ghetto. It was supposed to be organized in the poorest and most neglected area of the city, in Zamarstynov and Kleparov districts. The Order was published, requiring all Jewish population from other city districts to move into ghetto in the course of one month, from the 16<sup>th</sup> of November to the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, 1941 [Lemberger Zeitung, 15 November 1942]. Zamarstynov and Kleparov were located in northern part of the City, and were separated from the rest of it by the rail road tracks. Four streets led to the area under the rail road tracks: Zamarstynov Street, Peltevna (presently, Getman Mazepa) Street, Zrodlana (now, Dzherel'naya) Street and Kleparov Street. The Jews were only allowed to enter the ghetto from the Peltevna Street; and the rail road bridge on that street was called “the death bridge” by the inhabitants. Under the bridge, the Ukrainian and German guards thoroughly checked the innumerable masses of Jews continuously flowing into the future ghetto area. Using carts, wheelbarrows, children's carriages, with bags in their arms and trunks on their backs, the Jews transferred their property into their new places of residence in the ghetto. The crowd of these hapless creatures was carefully controlled by the German and Ukrainian guards. If someone did not please them, they were taken inside the barracks, while ordered to leave their possessions outside. Those who appeared poor, sick, exhausted or incapable of work, as well as those who could not produce work certificate, in general women and children, were invited into the old barracks. They were greeted by beatings by the dregs of the Jewish community, which the Germans caught and forced to perform this function. Germans and Ukrainians supplemented the rest. In the evening, thus assembled victims were sent to the Lonzky prison. There, they were stripped naked, thrown onto the trucks and carried into the forest to be executed. This “bridge of death” absorbed in November and December of 1941 several thousand

victims, predominantly women. This was the first vast German action against the Jewish women of Lvov.

The number of Lvov Jews began to rapidly decrease. Besides murders and round-ups to fill the camps, a migration also contributed to this phenomenon. In the majority of small towns and provincial hamlets, life was considerably calmer than in Lvov. Despite explicit ban on change of residence, several thousand of Lvov Jews had moved to the country, hoping that calm will continue to rule there. Overall, the Jews of Lvov had a short respite at that time. After the summer and fall “actions”, the winter of 1941-42 brought a brief break. Naturally, this was temporary. Although there were no mass “actions” or terrible “showcase” pogroms, some small, more targeted “actions” continued. One time, it was the forced expulsion of the Jewish population from the Zholkovsky Street which took place during the severe cold December days; people were suddenly thrown out on the street, and forced to relocate to a distant and sparsely populated Znesennya area, where bands of adolescents and social misfits attacked them. Another time, it was an “action” on the Jewish furs and sweaters (January 1942); then there was the “removal” from the city of all Jewish elderly men, the poor, etc. The round-ups for the camp work did not cease for a minute as well. Altogether, 50-100 Jews perished or disappeared without trace every day. However, the Lvov Jews, taught by the bitter experiences of the past months, became accustomed to this, and considered this amount of victims not too excessive.

In addition to the direct victims of Germans, equal or greater losses were inflicted indirectly, by the destructive methods practiced by Germans. Stealing Jewish property, expulsions from the apartments, deprivation of all sources of earnings, reducing the nourishment below the minimum needs – all of these were meant to continue the destruction and elimination of Jews. Many Jews lost all their possessions as a result of those forced expulsions, expropriation of their property, removal from their previous place of residence, thus preventing them from making a living; others were made invalids as a result of the barbarous beatings, were mutilated and thus incapable of working. Thousands of families lost their breadwinners in the pogroms. Those still capable to work were forced to work for Germans for miniscule wages. The Jewish population could not make purchases in public or communal stores, only in special Jewish stores or special “bread stores”, managed by the Jewish Council. Product allowances for the Jewish population were made ridiculously small, comprising about 10% of the German rations, and 50% of Polish and Ukrainian rations. Jews could get 10 dkg of bread daily (this was later reduced to 50 dkg per week), 10 dkg of sugar per month (this could rarely be filled due to shortages), and occasionally, on average once every three months, they could get half a kilo of black salt, 20-40 dkg of spoiled flour (“Judenmehr”), 20 dkg of jam, half a liter of vinegar. In the winter of 1941, Jews obtained 25 kg of potatoes per person. Clearly, it was impossible to survive with such low standards of nourishment. The majority of Jewish population was unable to supplement these low standards of nutrition with purchases on the free market, because 1) Jews could not buy anything on the open market. Those caught by Gestapo perpetrating such “crime” usually disappeared without a trace, mostly likely they were exterminated in the basements of the

Gestapo. (For example, Dr. Barbashova was arrested for attempting to “illegally” purchase several kilograms of potato from the guard; she perished in the Gestapo prison); 2) Most of the Jewish population by then had neither sufficient money nor valuables to be able to trade with food vendors.

The increasingly poor and hungry Jewish population, lacking warm clothing and frequently moved from place to place in the middle of the winter, was susceptible to diseases. The streets were full of homeless and orphaned Jewish children, who lost their guardians in the “actions”. Naked and barefooted, hungry and neglected, they attempted to survive on their own, by begging, small trade, and thefts. The corpses of children and adults, dead from hunger, exhaustion and cold, ceased to be a rare phenomenon on the Jewish streets of Lvov. The society and individuals could provide little help or comfort in these conditions. In Lvov, the Jewish Community Self-help, being a branch of JSH based in Kraków and managed by Dr. Leib Landau and Dr. Max Shaf, had too small means and resources to offer real assistance in product shortages. Thus, several thousand people died of hunger.

The creation of the enclosed Jewish ghetto in Lvov was taking longer than planned. The order to create the ghetto, dated October 1941, was not executed; it led only to chaos and confusion in the lives of Lvov Jews. The situation resembled a temporary “truce”. Jews sat on their luggage, expecting orders of immediate evacuation in the ghetto. However, Germans were satisfied by this “torture of fear and hope”. The negotiations of the boundaries of the future ghetto, held by the Jewish Council, took entire winter. Meanwhile, changes occurred in the management of the Jewish Council. Dr. Y. Parnas, who refused to collaborate with the Germans in the delivery of work force to camps, was arrested and executed in captivity. After the death of his successor, Dr. Jakob Rotfeld, who died in February of 1942 of natural causes, Dr. Henrik Landesberg became the new head of the Council. Meanwhile, Jewish Council had greatly built up its structure that included all forms of the public and economic life (Germans denied permission for the creation of the division of Culture and Education; also prohibited were performance of any kinds of religious ceremonies, even in private). About 4,000 people were involved in operation of the Jewish Council, as well as some number of tradesmen who worked in the shops belonging to the Council. This was a miniature Jewish state with the enormous authority over the life and death. In reality it was a caricature of a state, whose goal was working for their enemy, and whose apparatus existed in order to serve its enemy as a convenient tool for the systematic expropriation and destruction of the Jewish population.

The Germans wanted to squeeze the maximum amount of Jewish assets and labor before their complete extermination. The new registration of Jewish work force was carried out in March of 1942. About 50,000 Jewish men and about 20,000 women were supplied with new bandages with a large letter “A” and with ordinal number. From this time, only numbered slaves could freely move on the streets and not be subjected to round-ups and persecutions. In spite of this, the mood of Lvov Jews was optimistic.

They thought that since the Germans had obtained such a vast amount of human resources, they won't destroy it, as it was the basis for a substantial part of the industry and transportation in Lvov. Lvov Jews now expected long months of hard, free or poorly paid slave labor, accompanied by harassment, slaughter, danger of mutilation and death; however, they believed it was possible to survive all this, hoping for the time when the Axis powers are defeated and the liberation arrives. However, the events of the next few months showed that these hopes and expectations were wrong.

## II

In 1942, a tidal wave of destructive anti-Jewish actions spread over the entire country. They were preceded by the frenzied, poisonous speeches and articles by Goebbels (Goebbels, "Die Zeit ohne Beispiel", dated July 20, 1941, pg. 526 "Mimikry", "Die Juden sind schuld!" from the 16th of November, 1941, "Das Eherne Herz", pg. 85) and unequivocal bloodthirsty threats in Hitler's speeches. The wave of bloody pogroms went from West to South-East. On March 9, 1942 began the expulsions in the city of Melts ("Archive CZKH channel, Nr 217); in April of the same year, they took place in Kraków; and on June 24th of the same year, in Tarnov (Archive CZKH, protocol Nr. 436). In April of the same year, they happened in Zheshuv (Archive CZKH, protocol Nr. 678). In July 1942, the wave of destruction reached Peremyshl' (Archive CZKH, protocol Nr. 649), and in the middle of March 1942, a horrible expulsion from Lyublin took place (Archive CZKH, protocol Nr. 270). In the spring and summer of 1942, actions in Ternopol, Stanislav, Drogobych, Kolomya and a number of other cities took place (Black Book, p. 152, and further).

In March 1942, the wave of destruction had reached Lvov. Germans used the same "military" tactics here as everywhere else, which consisted of destruction of the Jews by the hands of their adopted brothers (with participation of the Jewish police), accompanied by cynical slander of both the victims and the assassins, claiming that the process was not the extermination but simply "relocation" of some number of Jews from the overpopulated city of Lvov to other locals. To provide some semblance of truth to this terrible falsification, the Germans used the same old, worn out tricks. Thus, it was announced that some number of Jews will be relocated out of Lvov. Those being relocated were allowed to take with them some luggage, with weight not to exceed 25 kg per person, money in the amount of 200 zlotys, and some food. The non-working poor, those receiving public assistance, elderly and other "anti-social" elements were targeted the most. To put a more human face on this "action", the Germans demanded the Jewish Council to be responsible for the round up of people. The Council created small crews that were accompanied by the Jewish Police and headed by the Germans; they broke into the Jewish apartments in the middle of the night, checked the documents, age and physical condition of the inhabitants, and, depending on their assessment, either left them alone or took the people with them to the gathering place for those being relocated. Main gathering place was located in the Sobessky School on the Zamarstynsky Street. There, those arrested were checked

again, and those who had work papers, or were taken by mistake, were freed; the rest of the unfortunates were taken to the train station, loaded into cars and were never seen again. Along the way, they were relieved of their luggage and belongings, as they were no longer needed. This action lasted for three weeks. It soon became obvious to everyone that this was worse than just relocation. Various Jewish communal and political organizations appealed to the manager of the Jewish Council, Dr. Landsberg, even before the start of the “action”. Due to lack of information sources as well as absence of witnesses or testimony of the participants, it is impossible now to reconstruct the meetings which took place. According to the survivor, Dr. David Kahane, who witnessed the meeting of Lvov Rabbinate with Dr. Landsberg (he is presently serving as a Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army), we can re-create the content of one of these meetings. The delegation consisting of Israel Leib Wolfberg, Moses Elhanam Alter, Dr. Kalman Hameides and Dr. David Kahane addressed Dr. Landsberg before the start of the relocation “action”. They asked him not to allow the members of the Jewish Council to participate in the action. Dr. Landsberg was evasive and complained that the Jewish Council did not control all of its activities, and was dependent on the Germans. Nevertheless, the members of the Jewish Council were relieved of this shameful duty in a few days, while the Jewish Service of Orderliness continued to perform its duties in the “action”. During the “action”, the Commission of the Jewish Council was working at the Sobessky School. Its function was to free those who were mistakenly arrested. It has to be said that due to its efforts, a significant number of victims were freed and therefore saved.

The “action” was over on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, the night of the first Seder (April 1, 1942). About 15,000 people became victims of the “relocation”. Nothing was ever heard from them again. Many months later, rumors started circulating around Lvov that they were killed at the newly created “death factory” at Belzec (near Rava-Russkaya), and that they were killed by electrocution.

Following the action, the Jewish quarter became quiet. There was no mourning of the killed. While there was no official mourning declared, the Jewish streets were sad and quiet. People were moving around looking down, avoiding direct eye contact. The Jewish children stopped laughing and playing. They would scatter around and hide as soon as they spotted a German soldier or Ukrainian policeman. Little by little, the community regained its bearings. The incorrigible optimism prevailed again. If the Germans “cleared” Lvov from “unproductive” element, surely it will be quiet now. The most important thing now was to find work. Thus began the crazy pursuit of employment. Huge Jewish factories and workshops “Stadtische Werkstatten” were opened, by agreement with Shtadthauptman Dr. Hoeller and his assistant Dr. Reisp. They were created by Tremsky, Dr. R. and David Schachter after enormous efforts. Thousands of Jewish tradesmen donated their most valuable possessions, their tools and machinery, to the Works, in order to get employment there in return. Dr. Reisp has assured the organizers that in case of a new “action” “Stadtische Werkstatten” will be “an oasis of peace” in the hurricane. Similarly, a huge number of Jews were observed in the Berlin-based firm of Schwartz, located on the St. Martin street, in the “Rohstoffeffassung” company (garbage collection), owned by Victor Kremin and

others. It was the “*sui generis parodia*” when the Jewish intelligentsia was desperately trying to obtain employment as assistants to craftsmen or doorkeepers (members of “the staff” of coachmen at “*Stadtische Werkstätten*” were, among others, the well-known pianist and the professor of Conservatory Leopold Munzer, attorney Juliusz Menkes, historian and journalist Dr. Adolf Friedman, and others). Merchants, traders, teachers were employed at “*Rohstoffeffassung*”, sorting and separating old worn-out clothes. In order to secure this type the position, which, it was universally believed, saved one from being expelled and exterminated – serious patronage was required, or alternatively, bribes to various “brokers” and their German protectors were delivered. The price for being employed at the CityWorks, Schwartz Factory or “*Rohstoffeffassung*” was several thousand zlotys.

In the middle of this “prosperity”, a new “action” unexpectedly arrived, and it was handled with lightning speed. In the middle of the day on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> of June, a mobile SS brigade (*Rollkommando, Vernichtungskommando*) arrived in Lvov specifically for the purpose of inspecting all Jewish dwellings, and had arrested several thousand people, mostly women, elderly and children in the process. The arrested were taken to the Yanovsky Camp and brutally killed. These acts of barbarism created the feeling of oppression and gloom in Lvov, further causing concern and confusion amongst the Jews. Several months later, it became clear that this sudden, “spontaneous” action was only one of the components of a detailed plan. It was an opening step leading to a larger slaughter that was planned for August of 1942 in Lvov.

In July, the Germans demanded yet another contribution (this was the third one; the second one took place in the spring of 1942). The collection of this contribution went with great difficulty. It was difficult to find the required amounts among the impoverished, disoriented Lvov Jews. Optimists still hoped that fulfilling the contribution would protect them from the calamity. But it did not. In early August, the community was disturbed by worrisome news. The Jewish division of the Department of Labor was closed, and the affairs of the division were handed over directly to the SS. Previous manager of the eliminated division, the German by the name of Weber, confided to the representative of the Jewish Council: “From now on, the Jewish affairs will no longer be reviewed from the economic perspective, only from the political one”.

This was clear enough hint that caused heavy depression among the representatives of the Jewish community.

Meanwhile new “employers” of the Jews, the SS, began controlling the Jewish labor. All of the establishments which employed the Jews were surrounded by the SS troops. The Jewish workers were ordered to present themselves to the SS commission that evaluated, on the fly, whether they were capable of working. Those considered unable to work were separated and sent off: women were sent to “*schmeltz*” (e.g., death, in their terminology), while men were sent to camps. The rest of the survivors of these deadly “examinations” received new SS stamps on their work permits. Some

economically less important firms were not allowed to receive the new stamps at all (for example, workers of the Jewish Council and some privately-owned companies).

The principle of societal separation, dividing population into more or less privileged classes, categories of those allowed to live and those sentenced to death, was further taking hold.

The nervousness of the Jewish community continued to increase daily. Opinions on the future of the community were contradictory. Some expected a tremendous shock to the community, while others distributed more calming news which they gleaned, supposedly, from “the most reliable sources”. In reality, the Germans, following their military “strategy”, were the ones spreading these rumors in order to lull into sleep the vigilance of the Lvov Jews.

On Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, at dawn, the new “action” began. This was the largest one to date in the City of Lvov. It was prepared in advance by the German military and political specialists. Plans were made to blockade certain areas and whole streets, to “clear” entire city blocks, and remove the victims, and this plan was followed to a tee. Special SS brigades (Vernichtungskommando), Gestapo, German police (Schupo) as well as Ukrainian police participated in the “action”. In good summer weather, surrounded by flowering and blooming nature, the Germans assisted by their “helpers” were implementing their “action” coolly, quietly and it with attention to every detail. Every day, several thousand Jews were brought to Yanovsky camp. Accompanied by brutal beatings, they were sorted there: women, elderly and children as well as those appearing unhealthy were sent to their death in Belzec.

Some of the men were kept in the camp for work. The Jews did not actively resist. Their passive resistance consisted in trying to hide, escape during transport, committing suicides, etc. A few hundred of “passive resisters” were shot on the spot.

After their “victory” over the Jews, the leader of the “action”, head of SS in the Galicia district Brigadier General Katsman announced that on September 7, 1942, Jewish Ghetto will be being created. Anyone caught outside of it after that date was to be killed on the spot; similar punishment was promised to gentiles caught hiding the Jews. Only part of the previously-planned area was used: parts of the Zamarstynov and Kleparov Streets, and area bordered on the south by the rail-road tracks, from east by Warsaw Street, from west by Zamarstynov Street and to the North, the bank of the Poltva River. Ghetto territory, with its tiny houses, was too small for even the reduced Jewish population of Lvov. People were given two weeks to move into the ghetto. This was not an easy task, considering complete disorganization of the populace, including the Jewish Council, and almost complete destruction of the Jewish communal and family life. Additionally, the move was accompanied by more severe German cruelties. Here's one of the cruelest cases:

Once, the rumor started circulating that some Jew hurt a German in self-defense. The reaction to this act of self-defense was horrendous. On the same day (according to some witnesses, this happened on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September), the corner house on the corner of Yakub Herman, 15 and Loketka Street, housing the offices of the Jewish Council, were surrounded by armed Gestapo troops. They also brought with them Dr.

Landsberg, arrested back in August. The Gestapo grabbed at random a few Council workers and bystanders, and shot them dead. Then they selected 12 policemen, mostly officers, and hung them from the second floor balcony. Since the rope was not strong enough, some of them fell on the ground. They were beaten again and forced back onto the second floor, where they were executed again. (Among those hung was Polish-Jewish writer Ludwig Rat, surgeon Dr. Taffet. For Dr. Tunisover, the Head of the Department of assistance to the campers at the Jewish Council, the hanging was substituted by firing squad.) The leader of the “action”, Sturmabfuhrer Vepke, came up with a special “entertainment” for Dr. Lansberg. He was taken to the third floor of the building and hung on a very thin rope, which immediately snapped. Bleeding, Dr. Lansberg was pleading with his tormentors to let him live, referring to the old custom of sparing the life of those whose execution failed. The Gestapo troops were deaf to his pleadings, and ordered to repeat the execution, this time avoiding the farce with the thin rope. No one was allowed to remove the bodies of the executed for several days, and the curious crowds were drawn from the entire city to witness the newest example of the German's “fairness”.

Life in the ghetto was very hard. Many families had subsisted for weeks outdoors, in the common areas, until they found suitable living space. The “relief” came a few weeks later, when some “Arians” left the ghetto, and some Jews either died or were killed in non-stop “actions”. This, however, did not resolve the issue completely. Officially, one ghetto resident was permitted to use three cubic meters of living space. In reality, this was an unreachable dream in such tight quarters. Each small room contained at least 10 people. At night, people slept on the floor, using every nook and cranny in the room. The beds were stacked two high. Due to a high density of the population, the diseases spread, especially the typhus. As the number of the people in ghetto dwindled, the Germans reduced its size in time. The area was separated from the rest of the City by high wooden fence that was constantly monitored from the outside by German and Ukrainian police. At the entrance, the German police thoroughly checked the documents of everyone entering or leaving.

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1942, a new registration took place at the ghetto, and all those working for the military establishments received letter “W” (Wehrmacht), and those working in military factories – letter “R” (Rustungsindustrie). The total number of those receiving this privileged designation was 12,000 men and women. Using an occasion of the registration, a new “action” led to another 5,000 people being sent to death. After this “action”, Jews with letters “W” and “R” were transferred into the barracks in the best houses and apartments (so called, Ghetto “A”). Those not working were placed in the worst areas of the ghetto, in dirty apartments (so called Ghetto “B”). Life for those not having the “W” or “R” designation became living hell. They were constantly subjected to the round-ups, which Germans called “the mopping-up” of territory (Auskommen). The biggest of these “actions” took place on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 1943. About 15,000 people were killed as a result of this “action”. Simultaneously, the Jewish Council was liquidated. Council Chairman Dr. Ebersohn, members of the Council engineer Landau, Dr. Kimmelman, Chiger, Ulam, Dr. Marcello Buber and others, were all executed. Dr. Leib Landau and Dr.

Shezer managed to escape into the “Arian” quarters; however, soon they were found, arrested and shot. The workers of the liquidated Jewish Council were enticed into the Council's offices, arrested and deported into Belzec, and some to the Yanovsky Camp. Those transported to Belzec were stripped naked or down to their underwear, to make their escape impossible. Nevertheless, some did escape, avoiding the barking dogs and guards shooting at a drop of a hat. They made holes in the floors or walls of the train car and jumped off the moving trains, despite the possibility of being crippled or killed, and made their way through the hostile and heavily policed territory, while being hungry and practically naked. Not many made it. They were called “jumpers”. Usually, the “jumpers” were caught by the Germans quickly, during the first “action”. Some, however, repeated this 3 or 4 times.

After the January “action”, the name of the ghetto was changed, and this completely changed the character of the place. The new official name, “Judenlager Lemberg”, or Ulag in short, stated that this was no longer an enclosed living quarter, but a type of the concentration camp, where only men and women working at German establishments, were allowed to reside. Conversely, the sick, elderly and children were not allowed to live there. In the often repeated “actions”, the remaining “undesirables” were caught and taken away to be executed. Due to constant “actions”, the Germans reduced the population of the Ulag to 12,000 residents with letters “W” and “R”, and several thousand women, elderly and kids living in the camp illegally (February 1943). The SS officers were in charge of the camp; the commandants of the Ulag were Mansfeld, Ziller, their assistants Hainish and Gzhimek. The latter, Gaupsturmfuhrer SS Josef Gzhimek, took over on 19<sup>th</sup> of February, 1943 and had a certain “experience” by then. He was the chief “liquidator” of the Jewish concentration camp in Latsky Murovany as well as “exemplary” Rava Russka ghetto. This degenerate sadist had tormented the populace of the Ulag by the most refined harassment, Prussian-style “drilling” and his maniacal pursuit of “cleanliness”. Constantly hunting the “illegals”, or just using this as excuse, he was responsible for killing of hundreds of Lvov Jews, in particular women and children.

We shall add some statistics to illustrate the rate of decline of the Lvov Jews. The data below is based on the food distribution cards issued by the Jewish Council of Lvov, and given to me by the head of the department distributing them, Dr. Weiser. These numbers can't be absolutely precise. On the one hand, the number likely exceeds the actual number of the Jews, since many families were in no hurry to notify the authorities about deceased members of the family, hoping that they (family members) were simply taken somewhere for forced labor and will soon return, and sometimes just hoping to be able to get extra rations in the time of hunger. On the other hand, some Jews never registered at all and were not known to the Jewish Council, believing that it's better not to be listed in any official documents provided to Germans. Additionally, there were many Jewish escapees, political “criminals”, etc. who were hiding without registration. Finally, ever since the final actions of 1942, many Jews were beginning to live using “Arian” documents. In all of these examples, we're talking about data which could not be reflected in any kind of official or unofficial documents. Therefore, in this statistical data, it's impossible to determine

the deviations, up or down, from the actual numbers. Just as useless is to correct it. In the best of cases, one hopes that deviation, up or down, is no more than 5 or 10%, and in general, they cancel each other. The numbers, which we believe to be generally correct, are:

In October 1941 – there were 119,000 Jews  
November 1941 – 109,000  
December 1941 – 106,000  
In January 1942 – 103,000 Jews  
February – 97,000  
March – 96,000  
April – 86,000  
May – 84,000  
June – 82,000  
July – 82,000  
August – 76,000  
September – 36,000  
October – 33,000  
November – 29,000  
December 1942 – 24,000 Jews

The official numbers exist only up to January of 1943, e.g. the time the Jewish Council was liquidated.

By 1943, even the most optimistic among Jews have realized that Germans intended to completely wipe out the Jewish population. The Jews began their initial attempts to organize resistance, military training of the youth, and attempted to publish an illegal newspaper. All in all, 6 editions were published, with small number of copies printed using a typewriter.

The editor of the newspaper was Michael Hoffman, and Abraham Wahrman was the technical director. The paper published the international news and reported situation on the fronts, based on illegal listening to the radio and reading underground Polish press. Local news was published, in addition to information and editorials, appeals to the armed resistance and fight with the German criminals. However, all attempts to organize armed resistance failed. There were number of reasons for that: shortage of revolutionary, oppositional mood towards the Germans which dominated in, for example, Warsaw. The national composition of the population of Lvov facilitated the German policy to create hostility between different nationalities, especially because part of the Ukrainian population sympathized with the Germans. Around Lvov, there was no strong underground or partisan movement which young Jewish people could join, as it was in Volyn', for example, or in the Belorussian territories, in the areas around Lyublin or Kelets. There were no military combat organizations which would be able to supply the weapons necessary for armed resistance. Jewish illegal organizations were able to stock up small quantities of handheld weapons (pistols, hand grenades) purchased from Hungarian and Italian soldiers. Finally, there were no capable leaders and brave commanders, since most of them left the City with the

Russian army and the rest were executed by the Germans over time. Attempts to organize small groups of partisans and make a break to the forests were suppressed before they took place: for example, a small group of Jewish youths, headed by the Jewish poet Yanko Shudrich, attempted to escape to a forest, but were betrayed by the spies and executed. All attempts of individual resistance and acts of self-defense were suppressed with such severe reciprocation by the Germans that they scared those likely to follow their example. For example, in March of 1943, in the camp on the Chvartakov Street, a member of SS Kail was killed (most likely, by the engineer Kotnovsky). The reaction of Germans was swift and barbarous. In the morning following that day, punitive expedition arrived in the ghetto, where they hung 11 Jewish policemen on the balconies of a house on Loketka Street. They then grabbed, with the aid of the Ulag Commandant Gzhimek, the first 1,500 people and dragged them to the Peski, where they all perished after torture. Furthermore, SS men conducted the punitive action in the camp on Yanovskaya Street, during which about 200 people were killed.

The final elimination of the ghetto had started at the beginning of July, 1943. This “action” was especially brutal and cruel. Afraid of the armed resistance, the Germans were cautious when approaching the Jewish dwellings. There were cases of individual bravery and armed resistance. Many Jews hid in prepared and well-hidden and relatively safe bunkers. The Germans poured gasoline on the buildings and set them on fire, and only then chased those of the Jews who attempted to escape. A small number of Jews managed to hide in the underground sewers and spent couple of months there. Children were brutally murdered or thrown into the fire. Additionally, the German youth practiced shooting on the little kids. Some of the men were sent to the Yanovsky Camp, where weak ones were killed and the strong ones joined the labor teams.

After the ghetto was eliminated, a very small number of Jews were left in Lvov, some in few military establishments and couple of thousand in the Yanovsky Camp. Some managed to escape the Germans: they hid in earlier-prepared hiding places, at the homes of their non-Jewish friends, and they managed to live a life using so called “Arian papers”. Jews using “Arian papers” were constantly chased and caught by the Germans and their helpers among the locals. They were often black-mailed by the local population. Those caught were immediately taken to the camp on the Yanovskaya Street and executed. On some days, dozens, and sometimes up to a 100 people were caught and killed this way. Therefore, the number of surviving Jews was dwindling daily. When the Red Army liberated the city on the 21st of July, 1944, it turned out that only a few hundreds of Lvov Jews (823, according to the numbers carefully verified by the Chairman of the Provisional Jewish Committee in Lvov, Dr. David Sobol, based on the registrations at the Committee) have survived.

### III

At the time of German occupation of Lvov, there were three main places of mass executions and murder of people. Based on the calculations carried out after thorough

examinations, after the inspection of the places of crimes and listening to the witnesses, the Extraordinary State Investigative Commission of the USSR for Investigation of Hitler Crimes in Lvov (complete text of communication to Commission was published in newspaper “Pravda” of 1307, Moscow, 23 of December, 1944), in these three places for execution, approximately 540,000 people perished during the German occupation, namely: 1) on the Citadel, about 140,000 people perished, mainly Soviet prisoners of war; 2) In the Lisinichi Forest – located on the road out of Lvov, when traveling to towns of Vinniki and Ternopol, – more than 200,000 people, predominantly Jews, were shot by the Germans; 3) in the area of Yanovskaya Street Camp and in the Yanovsky Camp proper, the Germans killed more than 200,000 people, almost exclusively Jews. The main place of mass murders was the so-called “Valley of Death”, located approximately half a kilometer from the Camp, between the Jewish cemetery and the so-called Mountain of Executions (“the Gitslya Mountain”) at the foot of the Kortumovaya Mountain.

Clearly, that the number of 540,000 victims consists not only of residents of Lvov. Tens of thousands of people brought from provinces were executed in Lvov. In particular, the Yanovskaya Street Camp (which quickly became known as Yanovsky Camp) was a transit point (Durchgangslager) on the way to death for many thousands of Jews from the cities and places “of Galicia district”. The history of this camp is the history of killing the substantial part of the Lvov Jews, and the whole lot of Jewish settlements and communities.

Before the war started, right behind the Yanovskaya “split”, at the house number 134 on Yanovskaya Street, there was a factory owned by a Jew named Shteinhaus. When the Germans came, they located a gun factory (Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke) there, abbreviated as D.A.W. The D.A.W. Company was under the management of SS. Their work permit was considered to be a “good” one, meaning it helped the owner escape the round-ups and arrests; many Jews came to apply for work there. In time, Arbeitsamt allocated some number of Jewish workers to D.A.W., and in addition, SS daily caught and captured some number of Jews in the streets of the City for employment at D.A.W. Therefore, by the end of September of 1941, there were some 350 Jewish workers at D.A.W. Also in September, new barracks were built and surrounded by barbed wire. On October 1st, the boss of D.A.W., Hauptschurturmführer SS Fritz Gebauer, born in Berlin, gathered all Jewish workers and said: “Ab heute bleibt ihr da!” (“From now on, you stay here!”). A few days later, the entire territory of D.A.W. was enclosed with barbed wire. The guards erected a tall tower, manned by two SS soldiers with machine guns. That was how the Yanovsky Camp was created. The Camp was managed by Schlippe, Schtellwerk and Zernitsa. The latter was usually seen with his shepherd Aza, specifically trained to attack people (based on the Diary of Irena Shaevich about the Yanovsky Camp).

Beginning in November of 1941, the Camp clearly became a forced labor camp: the inhabitants were guarded at all time, and no contacts with the outside world were permitted. The management of the camp passed from Gebauer, who remained in charge of D.A.W., to Obersturmführer Rokita and terrible executioner Gustav Willhaus from Saarbrücken (beginning March 2-nd, 1942).

A former nightclub player, “aesthete” who enjoyed “refined” physical and moral torture, Oberschurtmfuhrer Rokita (since April 1942), Sharfuhrer Kolyanko (born in Ratsibozh on Shlensk), Obersharfuhrer Wolfgang von Movinkel, young sadist, 20-year chief of the investigative division Heine (vel Heinen), the last commandant of the camp Gauptschurtmfuhrer Franz Vartsog, SS man Bentske (Volksdeutsche), former chief of “Ulag Khaynish and others – this was the gallery of the cruel and criminal executioners.

Based on the press reports, which are, however, hard to verify, a special school was created in Germany called “Jagdkommando” by Hitler's order. The school's goal was to create managers of the death camps and it was run by a notorious Dr. Dirlewanger. They say, about 60 of the worst executioners and torturers graduated from this school, and ten or so of them were sent to Lvov to run the Yanovsky Camp (based on Vladimir Belyaev, “This happened in Lvov”, Czerwony Sztandar Nr. 54, Lvov, 25 October 1944). Further research will show how truthful this story is, but we must mention it here. Undoubtedly, it's a valuable indicator which will eventually help discover and learn the entire secret mechanism created by the Germans whose goal was extermination of people using a number of detailed scientific tortures.

Occasionally, some of the SS crew engaged in the camp were sent to the front. Since the camp kept growing, the Germans began to prepare camp guards that were not Germans, especially for lower level duties. Hungarian SS members, Ukrainian policemen, Russians and “Volksdeutsche” arrived at the camp. The contingents formed from the locals were called “Askars” (this nickname meant, years ago in the German colonies in Africa, auxiliary police force formed by the aborigines).

The camp continued to grow. In addition to permanent, multi-thousand people workforce that continued working here until they died, hundreds of thousands of others passed through the camp to be immediately transported to Belzec. These were Lvov Jews as well as those from the province. First deliveries from the provinces arrived in the early spring of 1942; for example, in early April, a large number of people from Gorodok arrived; in May and June, one from Peremyshl came; in July, one from Drogobych, etc.

Only strong and capable Jewish males were selected to remain in the camp. Small contingents of Jews from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Holland, Great Britain, the USA also were brought, usually to be immediately exterminated. It's impossible now to determine exactly how many people passed through the camp. The investigation performed by the Extraordinary State Investigative Commission of the USSR has determined that at least 200,000 people were killed around the Yanovsky Camp, and just as many were executed in the Lisinichi Forest. Supposedly, most of them were workers from the Yanovsky Camp. It is equally impossible to determine the number of people in the camp at any given time. The only official number comes from the report by the German head of the City of Lvov (Schdadthauptman) who reported that on March 1st, 1943 (on that day, a headcount was taken in the City), there were 15,000 Jews in the camp.

Initially, the camp was created for men only. After a large number of “actions”, a separate women's camp was created, completely separated from the men's, in March of 1943. The genesis of the camp was the transport that delivered 70 women from Zholkva after the liquidation “action” there. The women were assigned to work for D.A.W., in a newly-created sewing factory. In the men's camp, the workers were split into a multitude of categories, and each one was treated differently. Jewish office workers were the best off, then specialists (engineers, technicians, craftsmen), then unskilled workers that mostly consisted of the intellectuals, among others. The unskilled workers were given the worst, usually menial jobs; they were constantly beaten and lived in the worst barracks. All the barracks were made of wood, dirty and full of lice, had no furnaces, and were not heated in winter. The prisoners slept on bare wooden boards, without linens or blankets. Following numerous “actions” in 1942, the size of the camp increased manifold.

The camp was improved, first time in March of 1942, simultaneously with the “action” held at the same time in the City. The construction was supervised by the Docent of the Lvov Polytechnics engineer Griffel (the inventor of the so called “Griffel steel”). The construction continued thru the summer of 1942 all the way until the August “action”.

There were many ways the inhabitants of the Yanovsky Camp were exterminated. Besides constant hard and exhausting 10 to 12-hour workdays, everyday beatings and harassment took away the spirits of the prisoners. Willhaus invented special “vitamins” for the incarcerated, BKD (B for “beams”, K for “bricks”, D for the “boards”). After a full day of heavy work, the campers were forced to carry heavy bricks, beams and wood boards, and run with them (im Laufschrift) back and forth, typically from the camp to the Kleparovo [train] Station and back. Hunger had its detrimental effect on campers' health as well. Most of the food ration consisted of bread. Daily allowance of bread was 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the loaf, the loaf weighing 1.3 kg, or about 150-160 grams (about 5 oz). However, personnel responsible for distribution of the rations were often abusing the system, and additionally, when the sticky, poor quality bread was cut, the natural losses meant that every prisoner rarely got more than 100 g of bread in a day. In the morning, cold coffee was served, and for lunch, the prisoners usually received watery soup with occasional cabbage leaves in it, various cereals, and on very rare occasions, symbolic amounts of meat. At times, the soup was inedible. For example, in the winter of 1941-1942, the soup was prepared using frozen unwashed potatoes stored near the soldiers' latrines. The soup smelled like urine, and only hungry prisoners could eat it. Another time, the cook used dead horse's meat to cook the soup. Almost everyone who ate it got sick, and some died as a result. Poor wives, mothers and daughters of the prisoners attempted to surreptitiously send some provisions to them, spending days near the camp's walls, waiting for an occasion. This was dangerous since the SS soldiers often beat and shot at them. In time, this form of assistance was completely banned. In the autumn of 1941, the Jewish Council formed a Committee to help the campers. After a number of expensive gifts were delivered to Gebauer and his wife, the prisoners were allowed to receive parcels twice a week.

Unfortunately, the parcels rarely reached their intended destination. In addition to just stealing those, SS guards oftentimes confiscated them for the most inconsequential violations, while at other times, to entertain themselves, they threw the contents of the parcels to their dogs. In 1943, however, even these meager parcels were banned. Only a small group of the camp residents, who possessed substantial wealth, were able to bribe the guards and receive all kinds of foods. These, however, were rare exceptions. The main source of the “illegal supplies” were secret deliveries handled, often risking their lives, by the work brigades sent daily into the City for various works, for example, “Reinigungskommando” (sewer and toilet cleaning, garbage collection), “Treuhandstelle” (craftsmen for repairs of buildings and internal systems), “Ostbahn” (rail-road brigade), “Bahnwerke”-West (railroad repairs crew), and others [Memoirs of I. Shaevich and G. Taffet].

The anti-sanitary conditions in the camp were a tremendous problem for the residents. At first, there were no restrooms at all. Later, 40 of them were added, for the population of 5,000. As a punishment for late completion of this building, Gebauer did not allow the prisoners to use it for a long time. While the prisoners did not get soap, the un-cleanliness was severely punished. For example, once Gebauer ordered everyone outside, picked five unlucky campers he considered dirty, and forced them into barrels with cold water, while it was -20 degrees (Celsius) outside. They stayed in the barrels until they froze to death.

Regardless, the dirt and lice infestations in the camp were tremendous. Occasionally, the campers were taken to the “lice-cleaners” on the Balonova Street, and once every two weeks the prisoners were allowed to wash in the public baths on the Dzherel'naya Street or the ones on the Shpital'naya Street. The trip to the baths was pure torture; the prisoners were beaten and punished for the smallest trifle mistake. Each trip to the baths left behind new corpses of people killed for “disciplinary” reasons. The washing had no effect on lice population since campers' dirty clothes were not cleaned or disinfected. As a result, disease spread, especially typhus. On the monthly basis: in September, October and November of 1942, during especially severe typhus epidemic, 50 people died daily (based on testimony of Dr. Zvilling). The main “cure”, used by the guards, was shooting the sick. Sometimes, to save ammunition, the sick were just thrown outside the barbed wire fence, thus sentencing them to the agony of slow death. No one was allowed to approach the sick, the punishment for violation being death. As a result, most sick prisoners tried as hard as they could to appear healthy. On some occasions, the sick prisoners continued to work with 100 degree (F) fever. In rare cases, some of the campers did recover from the sickness, this being an impressive testament to the human spirit and will. Due to the efforts of the Jewish Council and its Camp Committee, as well as substantial gifts and bribes to the camp management, permission was eventually given to deliver some especially sick campers into the City, where Dr. Kurtsrok assigned a special building for them at the Jewish Hospital. They were surrounded by helpful staff there. However, in time, this procedure was abolished due to the fact that a “hospital” was established inside the camp.

This “hospital” was a converted former barrack, completely unsuitable for the purpose, with no heat in winter, where sick prisoners were practically not attended by staff. Twice a month, SS members Brombauer and Birmann came to perform the “selection” that meant that some number of the sick prisoners were taken away and shot.

The campers lived in the atmosphere of constant threat of torture or death. The general inspections, conducted almost daily – frequently arranged suddenly, in the middle of the night, – were in reality just sadistic orgies of drunken German guards. In the camp, they created something like “the parade-grounds of torture”. Here, they hung people on the posts with their heads down, connecting their arms and legs, and held them in this position until they died. Another, very cruel torture, was wrapping naked prisoners in the barbed wire and leaving them standing like that for days. Every minor offence was punished by beatings. Women were hung by their hair. Entire brigades were stripped of their clothes and made stand outside for days, in summer or winter. Some of the German torturers had their own favorite methods. For example, Gebauer liked to suffocate people using his scarf on the victim's neck. As was mentioned above, in one case prisoners froze to death, and it appears this was not the only time. Haine liked to poke people with a stick or metal rod. Willhouse liked random shooting of unsuspecting victims; he would often shoot into a crowd of campers gathered near the restrooms or awaiting food. He would organize “holiday hunting” of people from his balcony, assisted by his wife Otilia, while his little daughter was clapping, impressed by the precision of her father's shots. Besides tortures, the Germans loved to mock their victims. For illustration, it is worthwhile to tell here the following episode: in March of 1943, after the second liquidation “action” in Yavorov, the city Rabbi and “shaykhet” (ritual butcher) were among those brought into the Yanovsky Camp. They were allowed to keep their beards, but were ordered each morning, before the brigades left for work, to dance with the open umbrella on the special elevated surface, accompanied by laughter and mocking of Germans (from the recollection of G. Taffet).

Various events of special importance, or anniversaries, were celebrated by SS men accordingly. During the birthday of Hitler on April 20, 1943, Willhaus selected 54 Jews and shot them himself. The day Mussolini was deposed (on July 25, 1943) was marked in the camp in a special way: one of the Gestapo men accused a young and healthy Jewish man, who at the time was paying respects to him, as being insufficiently respectful, supposedly showing hidden irony and glee (Schadenfreude). The Jew was supposed to be punished for this. The blameless youth was hung from his feet on the gallows, his head down, and his penis was cut off and stuffed in his mouth. They accelerated his painful death by constantly kicking his body while it was hanging.

Still, all these various methods of killing the Jews seem too slow for Germans. Therefore, occasionally, they picked thousands of incarcerated campers and took them to “Peski” (“Sands”) for execution. The selection criteria for these kinds of “actions” were very simple: the Germans orchestrated so called “Death Run”. The crowd of prisoners was surrounded on both sides by armed SS guards, who tripped

and pushed the runners, kicked them and shot at them. Those who stumbled and fell were separated into the “unconditionally condemned” group that consisted of injured, sick and emaciated campers, and were sent to the “Sands”.

The camp also had its own orchestra composed of the campers. Leon Schtriks was the conductor, and famous musicians were its members, among them Yakub Mund and Yuzef Herman. On “music lover” Rokita's orders, the musicians composed the “Tango of Death”. Ever since, each group of prisoners sent to death was accompanied by performance of this horrible composition. One of the last mass “actions” in the camp took place on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1943. About 6,000 prisoners were killed then.

Starting at about this time, the Germans expended a lot of efforts to cover up their crimes. To this end, they created the “Death Brigade”, which consisted of a few hundreds of Jews. This brigade, under watchful eye of the German division of special service (Sonderdienst) Nr. 1005, was excavating and burning the corpses, as well as clearing of all remaining signs of German crimes. During the time of the final liquidation of the camp, on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1943, the “Death Brigade” had started a riot. Only a few of the dare-devils managed to escape, while the rest of them perished.

After the remaining Jewish prisoners were exterminated, the camp was not liquidated. A few hundred of Polish, Ukrainian and “Volksdeutsche” remained in it. In May of 1944, there was a small group of about 40 Jews still left in the camp. Most of them were captured in the “Arian zone” of the City, and were allowed to live. They worked as tailors, electricians, in the laundry, as gardeners. During the big air attack by the Soviet air force (in April of 1944) and the resulting panic, 15 Jews escaped from the camp. The rest were transported, while the camp was evacuated to the West, and at that time, some more of them escaped, in the suburbs of Dobromil and Gzhibov.

After the “Death Brigade” riot, the Germans continued to burn corpses in the Lisinichi Forest. This continued until January of 1944. Despite these measures, the Germans failed to cover their tracks completely. The bloody results of their horrendous crimes are now being exposed. Investigations and historical studies are beginning to shed a light on their cruelty, for which the mankind will demand the well-deserved punishment for the perpetrators of so many tragedies and misfortunes.

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The death of the Lvov Jews is not just a horrendous act of physical extermination of 130,000 to 150,000 people, but is also, at the same time, one of many blows directed by Hitler barbarians at the heart of the human civilization. Their pursuit in the goal of exterminating people caused, in addition to material and moral damage, also an injury to the entire human civilization. Many of those whose names belong to the history of the humankind were among the victims of the German destruction of the Jewish community of Lvov. In our “times of neglect”, when the attorney for the “Belzec monster”, Englishman Major Winwood, had a courage to state at the process in Luneburgh that “in the German camps contained the foam of different ghettos of Central Europe”, let this list of the Jewish representatives of culture, literature,

science and skill, killed by Germans in “one of the ghettos of Eastern Europe”, serve as eloquent argument and document against such the opinions and views.

Here is the list of the Jewish representatives of crafts and science killed by the Germans in Lvov:

**Scientists:** the outstanding jurist of the European fame Maurice Allerhand, mathematicians – Prof. Szym. Auerbach, Docent Schternbakh, anthropologist Dr. S. Czortkower, Germanists – Prof. Herman Sternbach. Dr Izydor Berman, Spaet, classical philologists – Prof. Marianne Auerbach, Dr. Jakob Handel, Schulbaumowna; psychologists – Dr. Leopold Blaustein, Dr Igiel, a philosopher Prof. Dr. Stephen Rudnyanski; Polonists – Dr. Wilhelm Barbasz i Włodzimierz Jampolski; physicists and mathematicians – Docent Fuchs, Docent Griffel, the Docents of the Institute Of Judaism in Warsaw Dr. Izrael Ostersetzer and Dr. Moisey Goliger; historians – Dr. Yakub Schall', Magister Felix Hafner, Izachar Madfes, Jewish philologist Dr. Jakob Witler (died of hunger), orientalist Dr. Leon Gutman, a literature historian Ozjasz Tilleman, a librarian Yehuda Kohn, a collector Dr. Maksymilian Goldshtein; teachers – Dr. Izachar Reiss, dyr. Abraham Roth, Sens Taubes, Siwek, Dr. Cecylia Kłaftenowa.

**Jurists and lawyers:** Dr. Leib Landau, Dr. Henrik Landsberg, Dr. Ansel'm Lyutvak, Dr. Leon Hotinger, Dr. Maks Shaff, Dr. M. Ahzer, Dr. E. Shezher, and so on.

Famous **doctors and medical practitioners:** Dr. Adolf Bek, Dr. Allerhand, dentist, professor of veterinary science Gizelt, Dr. Ruff, a surgeon, Prof. Dr. Raiss – an optician, bacteriologist Docent Flek, Dr. Zion' – an ophthalmologist, Dr. Vill'ner, Dr. Schneider, Dr. Adolf Rozmarin, and many many others.

Jewish **writers** and Hebrew specialist: Dawid Konigsberg (translator of “Pan Tadeusch” into Hebrew), Jankiel Schudrich, Grun, Sanie Friedman, Izrael Weinlos, Debora Vogel-Barenbluetowa, Daniel Ihr, S. I. Imber (died in Ozernaya), Alter Kachme(died during escape from Lvov, killed in the suburb of Ternopol by German and Ukrainian policemen), Mojzesz Feld, Zygmunt Schorr.

**Polish writers** and critics: Mauricij Maurycy Szymel, Dr Henryk, Balk (suicide), Aleksandr Dan, Halina Gorska, Ludwik Rot, Dr. Dresdner.

**Journalists and columnists:** Szulim Rettich, Bencijon Ginsberg, Szalom Spiegel, (Director of ITA in Lvov), Z. . Reich, Henryk Heschel, Abraham Bratt, Naftali Hausner, Dr Adolf Kruman, Dr Morus Sobel, Dr Henryka Fromowicz-Stillerowa, senators Jakub Bodek and Dawid Schreiber, etc.

In the area of **arts and theater:** conductors – Jakob Mund, Marcelli Horowitz, Alfred Stadler. Musicians – Leonid Striks, Leon Zak, Eward Steinberger, Leon Eber, Jozef Herman, Hildebrand, Breier. Conservatory Professors – an outstanding pianist Leopold Munzer, Marek Bauer, Artur Hermelin, an opera singer Feller. Painters – Leon Erb and Fritz Kleinman. Rabbis – Dr. Jecheskiel Lewin. Izrael Leib Wolfsberg, Mojzesz Elhanam Alter, Nathan Lejter, Schmelke Rapaport, Samuel Rapaport, Dr. Kalman Hamejdes.

May their memory live forever.

